

Unit 9 Reading

My Last Day in Pompeii

<Diary Entry>

August 26, 79

I arrived in Pompeii the day before the volcano Vesuvius swallowed the city. Our ships were heavy with Syrian goods: leather works, dyes, and silk. I oversaw the men unloading the cargo, and when this job was done, I set out with two companions into the city. After our long journey, I **exulted** at the prospect of a decent meal and assumed my friends' desire to satisfy their appetites was as **ardent** as my own. One of them surprised me with a **spontaneous** plan: He insisted that we **deviate** from our goal to stop at the Temple of Fortuna Augusta.

If only we'd had an **inkling** of the city's fate, how many lives would have been spared! But who can predict the whims of the **capricious** gods? Having made our offering in haste, we descended the steps of the temple in a rush to fill our stomachs. We passed the market, winding through crowds of people carrying foodstuffs they had purchased: meat and fish, fruits, breads and cakes. Soon we found a restaurant and sat down to the business of eating grilled goat meat, **copious** servings of vegetables cooked in fish sauce, and a **palatable** wine. Satisfied, we made our way to the baths to wash off the grime of our voyage.

I parted ways with my companions and walked to the home of Marcus Durmius, a wealthy merchant who had invited me to be his guest. Along the way, I noticed an **emaciated** old nobleman dressed in purple silk. As our paths crossed, the ground trembled—one of those minor quakes with which the inhabitants of Pompeii were all too familiar. Afraid the nobleman might fall, I grabbed him by the arm to steady him. The tremor passed, but rather than thank me for my trouble, the old man looked at me with **rancor**, as if I had been impudent to assist him, and he walked off without a word.

I spent the rest of the day with Marcus Durmius in his garden. We exchanged news and discussed the price of wine, staring at the **limpid** water of his fountain, which was surrounded by the **gnarled** branches of his laurel trees. Excited by my report of prices in the East, the **assiduous** merchant outlined a plan for us to ship his wine immediately for sale in Palmyra. I awoke early in the morning and returned to the harbor to make the arrangements, and it was there, awaiting Marcus Durmius's porters, that I felt the shock of Vesuvius's eruption.

Looking over the city, I saw a plume of smoke climbing into the air. An uproar swept over the harbor, the shouts of men overwhelming the sounds of the bay. We watched in horror as the cloud approached, showering the temples in dust, setting rooftops ablaze. Our captain, recognizing the sign of an **omnipotent** god determined to **chastise** the city's inhabitants, commanded that we fill our vessel with as many souls as it could carry, and within two hours we were at sea. In the distance we now saw a second column of smoke rise from the mountain, much larger than the first, like a sinister tree sprouting in the sky. We watched the **poignant** scene as this new cloud spread over the city, and we were certain that Pompeii was doomed.

Unit 9 Examples

1. In their wills many people **allocate** a portion of their wealth to favorite charities or educational institutions.
2. The members of the winning team acknowledged the **ardent** cheers of their fans.
3. Workers who are conscientious in the performance of their duties are, by definition, **assiduous**.
4. Successful political candidates soon learn how to handle tough questions fired at them by **brash** newspaper and TV reporters.
5. Our constitutional system of checks and balances is designed to prevent the use of **capricious** power by any branch of the federal government.
6. State and federal laws now forbid the use of corporal punishment to **chastise** prisoners.
7. The **copious** and detailed footnotes found in most scholarly books are designed to document the authors' sources.
8. Try not to **deviate** from the directions given in the owner's manual.
9. Those who disagreed with the Soviet form of government were often branded as **deviates** and imprisoned.
10. Under our system of justice, the mentally ill cannot be held responsible for their **deviate** behavior.
11. People who suffer from serious eating disorders may soon become woefully **emaciated**.
12. The campaign workers **exulted** in the unexpected victory of their candidate.
13. The **gnarled** limbs of cypresses dominate many of the landscapes painted by the Dutch artist Vincent van Gogh.
14. A certain type of life insurance contract provides double **indemnity** for the accidental death of the policyholder.
15. I had absolutely no **inkling** of what to expect as I entered the room.
16. Snorkelers flock to the **limpid** waters of the Caribbean to view schools of brightly colored fish.
17. Many of the heroes of ancient myths and legends appear to be all but **omnipotent**.

18. The addition of some seasonings will usually make even the blandest of dishes **palatable**.
19. There is something truly **poignant** about the sight of falling leaves in autumn.
20. An unusual degree of **rancor** may creep into the tone of the political debate in an election year.
21. Adolescents aren't the only people whose behavior might at times be considered a bit **sophomoric**.
22. Actors try to make their performances seem as **spontaneous** as possible.

Unit 9 Choosing the Right Word

1. George Gershwin's early songs gave only a dim **inkling** of the genius that was to express itself in *Porgy and Bess*.
2. During the depression of the 1930s, the nation seemed to take strength from President Roosevelt's **copious** energy and enthusiasm.
3. We must show understanding and acceptance of those who **deviate** somewhat from our own standards of what is appropriate.
4. He seems to feel that it is his mission in life to **chastise** all those who fail to live up to his standards.
5. Since their loud talk and crude manners were anything but **palatable** to me, I politely declined their invitation to dine with them.
6. He tries hard to sound well-informed, but his superficial answers only betray his **sophomoric** knowledge of world affairs.
7. Your **ardent** interest in ecology shows that you care deeply about the welfare of this planet.
8. To make an impression on his fiancée, the young man saved his money to purchase a large faceted diamond that was sparkling and **limpid**.
9. Your simple, **spontaneous** expression of appreciation meant more to me than all the elaborate, carefully phrased tributes I received.
10. Most of the poetry written by the students was **poignant**, filled with powerful imagery that conveyed a surprising depth of emotion.
11. Our meeting last week was marred by a heated debate over how to **allocate** the funds in this year's budget.
12. Though Mom acted surprised, I think she had an **inkling** that we were going to throw her a surprise birthday party.
13. The lecturer explained that the UN is not **omnipotent** and that it can do only what the member states allow it to do.
14. In the concentration camps, the liberating troops found thousands of victims horribly **emaciated** as the result of starvation.

15. Perhaps you have been treated unfairly, but what good will it do to allow your sense of **rancor** to control your mood and behavior?
16. The destruction wrought by a nuclear war would be so vast that any form of **indemnity** to the injured would be impossible.
17. During the scene in which the deer returns to the forest, leaving the young boy behind, our eyes filled with **copious** tears.
18. Lord Tennyson, the poet, speaks of “sorrow’s crown of sorrow,” by which he means the **poignant** experience of remembering happier times.
19. Far from being effortless, her simple, **limpid** writing style is the result of the most painstaking effort.
20. The tastes of the TV audience are so **capricious** that no one can predict in advance which programs will be successful.
21. She was **brash** enough to tell her mother she was going to the dance in spite of the doctor’s orders.
22. What she lacks in skill, she makes up for in **assiduous** attention to every last detail and requirement of the job.
23. The entire student body **exulted** when our team finally won the citywide basketball championship after years of losing to our bitter rivals.
24. I spent the better part of an hour trying to untangle a badly **gnarled** heap of cables and electrical cords.
25. My sister views my interest in horror films as **deviate** behavior.

Unit 9 Synonyms

1. asked **impertinent** questions: **brash**
2. **restitution** equal to our loss: **indemnity**
3. a **bittersweet** tale of love and loss: **poignant**
4. **apportioned** supplies to each member of the group: **allocated**
5. **celebrated** the news from the front: **exulted**
6. **crooked** and weather-beaten fingers: **gnarled**
7. **zealous** supporters of liberty: **ardent**
8. the survivor's **gaunt** faces: **emaciated**
9. **juvenile** literary style: **sophomoric**
10. could find nothing **delectable** on the menu: **palatable**

Unit 9 Antonyms

1. acting **like a grown-up**: **sophomoric**
2. paid a **penalty for damages**: **indemnity**
3. a **cautious** investigator: **brash**
4. **steadfast** in one's affections: **capricious**
5. **hoarding** supplies in case of an emergency: **allocation**

Unit 9 Completing the Sentence

1. Under the American system of separation of powers, no government official or agency can ever become **omnipotent**.
2. We were fascinated to see the consummate grace and skill with which the **gnarled** hands of the old carpenter manipulated his tools.
3. When he told me that he was reading *Huckleberry Finn* for the ninth time, I realized that he was indeed a(n) **ardent** admirer of the novel.
4. How can you say that the audience's reaction was **spontaneous** when the director held up a sign reading "Applause"?
5. If you were as **assiduous** in studying foreign affairs as you are in memorizing batting averages, you would have known how to reply to her comments on the situation in the Middle East.
6. Far from being **capricious**, the director's casting choices were based on a solid appreciation of each actor's abilities and limitations.
7. **Rancor** is never so bitter as when it arises among people who were once close friends.
8. Friends and relatives can be counted on to give **copious** amounts of advice on child rearing to the parents of a new baby.
9. Somewhere in a(n) **limpid** pool in the Canadian Rockies is the large trout that will someday grace the wall of my den.
10. Wasn't it rather **brash** of you to offer the soccer coach advice on your very first day as a candidate for the team?
11. Remembering my old friend as a robust 200-pounder, I was shocked to see how **emaciated** he had become.
12. As the speaker's voice droned on endlessly in the hot, crowded room, I suddenly realized that I hadn't the slightest **inkling** of what he was saying.
13. Nothing can arouse **poignant** memories of long ago and far away like an old, well-loved song!
14. It is of no use to **chastise** my little brother for not keeping his room clean—he simply refuses to be tidy no matter how much he is scolded.

15. Some of my friends are mentally rather mature for their age; others are of a decidedly **sophomoric** turn of mind.
16. If you wish to recover quickly, you must not **deviate** in the slightest from the doctor's instructions.
17. The teacher decided to **allocate** a corner of the classroom for an exhibition of student science projects.
18. My travels have shown me that many exotic foods I once considered disgusting are really quite **palatable**.
19. There can be no **indemnity** for the pain and suffering that your carelessness has caused me!
20. General Grant accepted Lee's surrender with quiet dignity, refusing to **exult** over the defeat of a worthy foe.

Unit 9 Vocabulary in Context (Literary Text)

1. "I trust in Heaven you have not **deviated** a single foot from the direct line of our course with so slight a reason!"

If someone has deviated from a course, he has

- ① adhered to it ② **strayed from it** ③ divided it ④ ruined it

2. "A ragged oak... had inclined so far forward that its upper branches overhung that arm of the stream which flowed nearest to its own shore. Among the topmost leaves, which scantily concealed the **gnarled** and stunted limbs, [the enemy] was nestled..."

Branches that are gnarled are

- ① smooth ② straight ③ **crooked** ④ small

3. "The land had been cleared of wood for a reasonable distance around the work, but every other part of the scene lay in the green livery of nature, except where the **limpid** water mellowed the view...."

Water that is NOT limpid is

- ① serene ② unclouded ③ clear ④ **clouded**

4. "...a frightful stillness succeeded the explosion, which had just been heard bursting from the bowels of the rock. But when Le Renard raised his voice in a long and intelligible whoop, it was answered by a **spontaneous** yell from the mouth of every Indian within hearing of the sound."

A spontaneous yell is

- ① **impulsive** ② rehearsed ③ piercing ④ gradual

5. "'That I cannot see the sunny side of the picture of life, like this artless but **ardent** enthusiast,' she added..."

Someone who is ardent is

- ① detached ② **passionate** ③ melancholy ④ insensitive

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If only we'd had an _____ of the city's fate, how many lives would have been spared! But who can predict the whims of the _____ gods? Having made our offering in haste, we descended the steps of the temple in a rush to fill our stomachs. We passed the market, winding through crowds of people carrying foodstuffs they had purchased: meat and fish, fruits, breads and cakes. Soon we found a restaurant and sat down to the business of eating grilled goat meat, _____ servings of vegetables cooked in fish sauce, and a _____ wine. Satisfied, we made our way to the baths to wash off the grime of our voyage.

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