

The Pack of Pompeii

I hear Claudia approach my sleeping hollow long before she limps around the nearest cluster of rocks. Of the three of us who work the Gentle Mountain with our two-legged shepherd, Claudia is by far the noisiest dog.

She limps thanks to the sharp teeth of a fox in her youth and, sometimes, her hind leg drags as we work the grassy slopes above the two-leg settlement. I keep her nearby whenever the wolves come raiding. Her ears are flattened against her head today, telling me that she comes to share a worry.

“Trouble?” I drag my head up off a cushion of crushed weeds. It has been an uncomfortable night.

“The goats are acting strangely,” she pants.

“You’d act strangely if the only things you had to eat all day were spiky grass and thistle leaves. Leave them to the shepherd.”

In the morning light, Claudia’s coat gleams like the reflected light off the hillside. She’s the smallest of us and, sometimes, when she curls up beside one of the rocks, I can only find her by scent.



“The shepherd is down in the town with the other two-legs,” she complains. “The sun will be high soon and he is late.”

“You moan as much as the goats, Claudia.” Claudia wishes that we had a more attentive shepherd, but he has his own pack in the town, with his own little one to care for.

Sometimes, I wonder if Claudia would complain this much if I were male. Male alphas have less patience and are quicker to snap. She should be grateful that she has a female leader, but I’m too weary to remind her and the sun drains my energy.

Claudia rests her chin on her large brown and white paws. “They say that the mountain is too warm.”

I roll onto my back, pressing against the stony ground to scratch an itch. “Goats complain about snow in winter and heat in summer.”

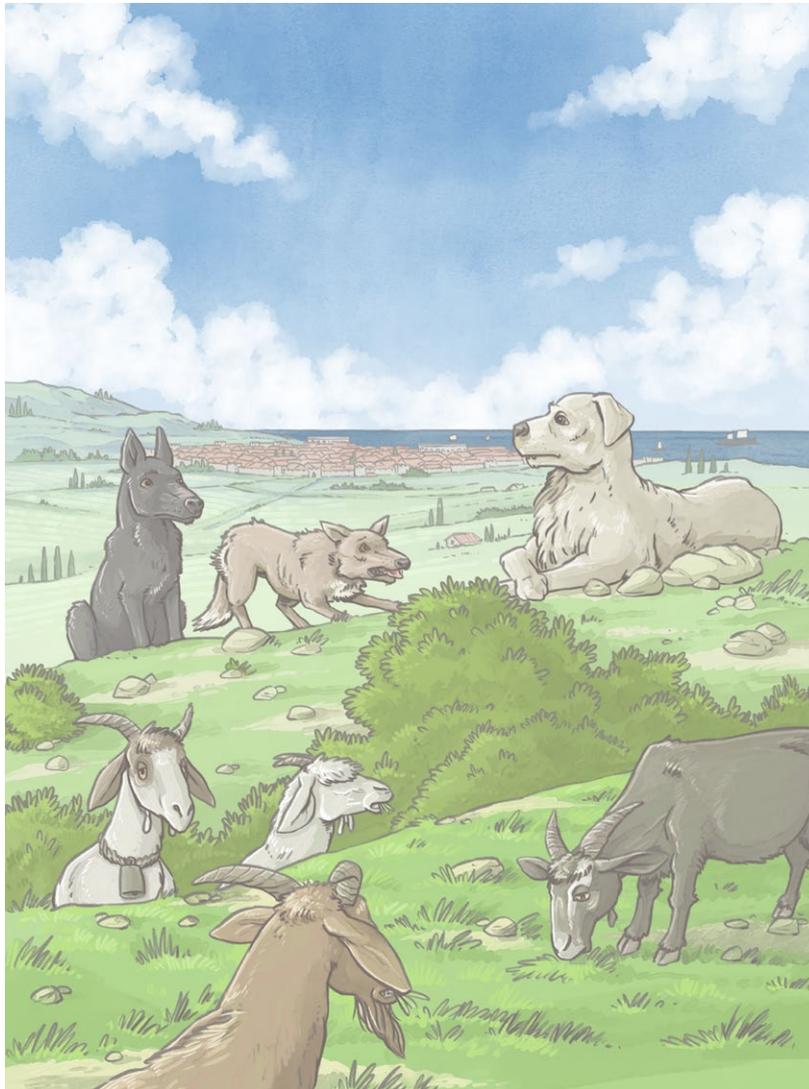
We're joined by Alba, my second. "They say that they want to leave. Where is the shepherd? He should be here."

I give Alba's black coat an envious sniff; it makes her almost invisible at night. Better for outwitting wolves.

She slashes her thick tail towards me. Sometimes, I forget that she was a pup less than two summers ago. "I'm hungry, Livia! The rabbit burrows are empty. A raven told me that they fled last night."

"Fled?"

"They must have felt the rumbling," Claudia whimpers. "I can feel it through my paws."



Questions

1. Which of these names belong to the dogs in the story? Tick **three**.

Claudia

Alpha

Gentle Mountain

Shepherd

Livia

Alba

2. Using information from the text, tick one box in each row to show whether each statement is **true** or **false**.

	True	False
Claudia is the noisiest of the three dogs.		
Alba is the smallest of the three dogs.		
Claudia has brown and white paws.		
Alba has a black coat.		

3. What does it mean when Claudia's ears are flattened?

4. Why does Livia think the goats are acting strangely?

5. "Goats complain about snow in winter and heat in summer."

What does this tell the reader about the herd of goats?

6. Who are the 'two-legs'?

7. Why was Claudia worried? Explain your answer using evidence from the text.

8. a. Which of the following words best describes how Livia feels about Claudia? Circle **one**.

protective

irritated

afraid

b. Explain your answer fully.

Answers

1. Which of these names belong to the dogs in the story? Tick **three**.

Claudia

Alpha

Gentle Mountain

Shepherd

Livia

Alba

2. Using information from the text, tick one box in each row to show whether each statement is **true** or **false**.

	True	False
Claudia is the noisiest of the three dogs.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Alba is the smallest of the three dogs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Claudia has brown and white paws.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Alba has a black coat.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. What does it mean when Claudia's ears are flattened?

It suggests that she is worried/she has come to share a worry.

4. Why does Livia think the goats are acting strangely?

All that they have to eat is spiky grass and thistle leaves/they don't eat well.

5. "Goats complain about snow in winter and heat in summer."

What does this tell the reader about the herd of goats?

Accept an explanation that shows that the goats would complain even when everything is normal. For example, the goats would complain about the snow in winter even though it often snows in wintertime. This shows that they are always likely to complain.

6. Who are the 'two-legs'?

humans/people

7. Why was Claudia worried? Explain your answer using evidence from the text.

Accept any of the following points fully explained:

- the goats are acting strangely;
- the shepherd is late;
- the mountain is too warm;
- the rabbits have fled;
- she can feel rumbling in her paws.

Do not accept reference to her being small/being injured/her ears are flattened.

8. a. Which of the following words best describes how Livia feels about Claudia? Circle **one**.

Accept either irritated or protective.

protective

irritated

afraid

b. Explain your answer fully.

Accept an explanation supported by the text. For example

- Livia feels protective towards Claudia because she is the smallest dog and she often 'keeps her nearby whenever the wolves come raiding'. This shows that she wants to look after her.
- Livia is being irritated by Claudia. She says that she 'moans as much as the goats' which shows that she is getting annoyed by her complaining.

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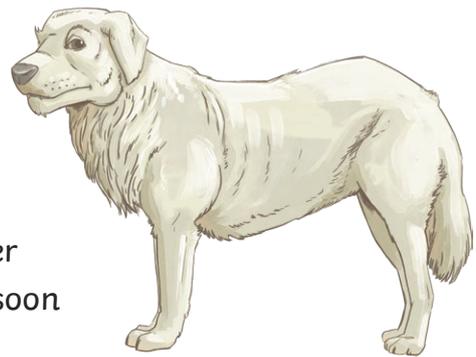
She limps thanks to the sharp teeth of a fox in her youth and, sometimes, her hind leg drags as we work the grassy slopes above the two-leg settlement. I keep her nearby whenever the wolves come raiding. Her ears are flattened against her head today, telling me that she comes to share a worry.

“Trouble?” I drag my head up off a cushion of crushed weeds. It has been an uncomfortable night.

“The goats are acting strangely,” she pants.

“You’d act strangely if the only things you had to eat all day were spiky grass and thistle leaves. Leave them to the shepherd.”

In the morning light, Claudia’s coat gleams like the reflected light off the hillside. She’s the smallest of us and, sometimes, when she curls up beside one of the rocks, I can only find her by scent.



“The shepherd is down in the town with the other two-legs,” she complains. “The sun will be high soon and he is late.”

“You moan as much as the goats, Claudia.” Claudia wishes that we had a more attentive shepherd, but he has his own pack in the town, with his own little one to care for.

Sometimes, I wonder if Claudia would complain this much if I were male. Male alphas have less patience and are quicker to snap. She should be grateful that she has a female leader, but I’m too weary to remind her and the sun drains my energy.

Claudia rests her chin on her large brown and white paws. “They say that the mountain is too warm.”

I roll onto my back, pressing against the stony ground to scratch an itch. “Goats complain about snow in winter and heat in summer.”

We're joined by Alba, my second. "They say that they want to leave. Where is the shepherd? He should be here."

I give Alba's black coat an envious sniff; it makes her almost invisible at night. Better for outwitting wolves.

She slashes her thick tail towards me. Sometimes, I forget that she was a pup less than two summers ago. "I'm hungry, Livia! The rabbit burrows are empty. A raven told me that they fled last night."

"Fled?"

"They must have felt the rumbling," Claudia whimpers. "I can feel it through my paws."

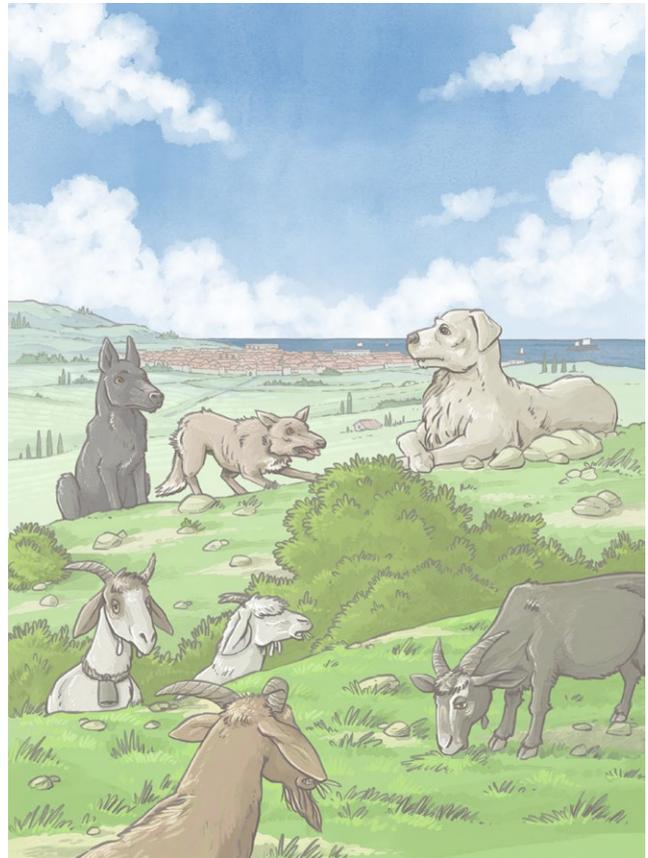
Alba snaps, twitching her pointed ears. "No more talk about the rumbling, Claudia! We must eat."

I bark. "We must tend to the goats. Until the shepherd returns, there is only us."

"I'll have withered from hunger by then." Alba sniffs at my nose, before retreating to a spot in the bare sunlight.

I chase away any lingering tiredness by pressing my back into a long, low arch, and look across the valley that sweeps from the mountain above us.

Fields stretch out almost as far as my eyes can see. Some are wild grassland, littered with shrubs. Others are owned by the two-legs. This is where they grow their crops, to eat and trade with the other two-legs.



Questions

1. List the names of the three dogs in the story.

2. Using information from the text, tick one box in each row to show whether each statement is **true** or **false**.

	True	False
Claudia is the noisiest of the three dogs.		
Alba is the smallest of the three dogs.		
Claudia has brown and white paws.		
Alba has a black coat.		

3. What was the cause of the injury to Claudia's leg?

4. *I keep her nearby whenever the wolves come raiding.*

What does this suggest about Livia's character? Explain your answer fully.

5. Livia says: *I give Alba's black coat an envious sniff; it makes her almost invisible at night.*

What does this sentence imply to the reader?

Tick **one**

Alba's coat doesn't smell very nice.

Livia doesn't like Alba's black coat.

Livia wishes that she had a black coat like Alba.

Alba is invisible to Livia.

6. Find and copy a word that means 'caring and hard-working'.

7. Do you think that the dogs should stay on the mountainside? Explain your answer with evidence from the text.

8. a. Which word do you think best describes Alba's character?

immature short-tempered timid greedy

b. Explain your choice fully using evidence from the text.

9. Summarise the events in the chapter using thirty words or fewer.

Answers

1. List the names of the three dogs in the story.

Livia, Alba and Claudia

2. Using information from the text, tick one box in each row to show whether each statement is **true** or **false**.

	True	False
Claudia is the noisiest of the three dogs.	✓	
Alba is the smallest of the three dogs.		✓
Claudia has brown and white paws.	✓	
Alba has a black coat.	✓	

3. What was the cause of the injury to Claudia's leg?

She was attacked by a fox/the sharp teeth of a fox/she was bitten by a fox.

4. *I keep her nearby whenever the wolves come raiding.*

What does this suggest about Livia's character? Explain your answer fully.

Accept any of the following characteristics supported by an explanation: Livia shows kindness/courage/leadership/another acceptable characteristic.

For example, Livia knows that Claudia may not be able move as fast so she sticks with her when the wolves are near. This shows that Livia is a great leader as she looks after everybody in her pack.

5. Livia says: *I give Alba's black coat an envious sniff; it makes her almost invisible at night.*

What does this sentence imply to the reader?

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Alba's coat doesn't smell very nice.

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Livia wishes that she had a black coat like Alba.

Alba is invisible to Livia.

6. Find and copy a word that means 'caring and hard-working'.

attentive

7. Do you think that the dogs should stay on the mountainside? Explain your answer with evidence from the text.

Accept any appropriate reason to stay (such as looking after the goats or waiting for the shepherd) or leave (such as the lack of food or the rumbling is a sign that something dangerous could happen) fully explained using the text.

For example, I think that they should stay to look after the goats because that is their job. It would be wrong to abandon them just because they are worried about what is happening on the mountain.

I think that they should leave because the rumbling means that something could be about to happen and they should run to safety.

8. a. Which word do you think best describes Alba's character?

Accept either immature, short-tempered or greedy.

immature

short-tempered

timid

greedy

b. Explain your choice fully using evidence from the text.

Accept an explanation for any of the words above supported by an explanation using the text. For example:

- **Alba is immature as Claudia says that 'she was a pup less than two summers ago' which could explain why she is focused on feeding herself rather than tending to the goats.**
- **Alba is short-tempered as she snaps at Claudia and tells her to stop talking about food. This shows that she doesn't have a great deal of patience with others and she is being quite rude to Claudia.**

9. Summarise the events in the chapter using thirty words or fewer.

Accept any correct summary that has fewer than thirty words and covers the key points from the chapter. For example: Three mountain dogs are looking after their flock. The mountain is rumbling and their shepherd hasn't visited them, making them question what they should do next.

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“The shepherd is down in the town with the other two-legs,” she complains. “The sun will be high soon and he is late.”

“You moan as much as the goats, Claudia.” Claudia wishes that we had a more attentive shepherd, but he has his own pack in the town, with his own little one to care for.

Sometimes, I wonder if Claudia would complain this much if I were male. Male alphas have less patience and are quicker to snap. She should be grateful that she has a female leader, but I’m too weary to remind her and the sun drains my energy.

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"Fled?"

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Alba snaps, twitching her pointed ears. "No more talk about the rumbling, Claudia! We must eat."

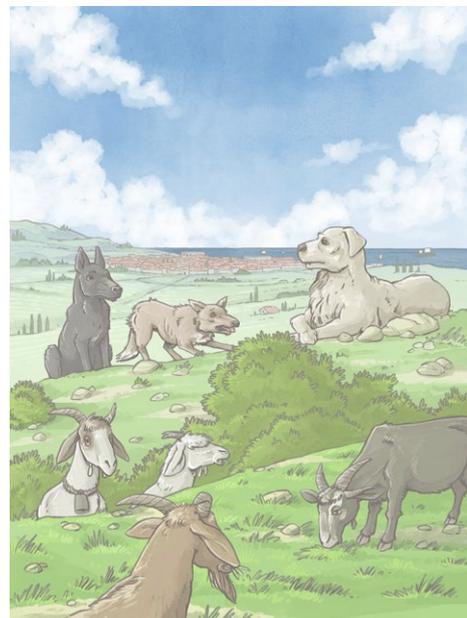
I bark. "We *must* tend to the goats. Until the shepherd returns, there is only us."

"I'll have withered from hunger by then." Alba sniffs at my nose, before retreating to a spot in the bare sunlight.

I chase away any lingering tiredness by pressing my back into a long, low arch, and look across the valley that sweeps from the mountain above us.

Fields stretch out almost as far as my eyes can see. Some are wild grassland, littered with shrubs. Others are owned by the two-legs. This is where they grow their crops, to eat and trade with the other two-legs.

Two settlements lie within walking distance: one to the left of the mountain, another around the headland to the right. Our shepherd gives them names: Pompeii and Herculaneum. Most live in the much larger Pompeii, where many two-legs trade, work and raise their families. Both have spread across the land, replacing the trees and plants with shelters made of stone. All is flat and everywhere, walls of rock separate the two-legs from one another. Some of



their shelters are humble but others are grand, towering with arches and columns of stone. The two-legs' ugly sprawling streets only stop when the earth meets the beautiful blue ocean.

"It's late. Let's go down there and raise the shepherd," I say.

"And see what breakfast scraps we can find?" Alba followed, her tongue lolling.

"Maybe the young two-leg will share her meal with us again," Claudia suggests hopefully.

I don't answer but, as we begin to head down the hillside, I wonder whether Claudia has learned to read my thoughts or has grown as fond of the two-leg girl as I am. The young one's life with the shepherd is a full stomach, a bed to sleep in and a pack who live for more than the threat of wolves and the low, angry moan of the mountainside.

Before our last alpha died, he warned me that it isn't wise to grow too attached to two-legs, even if some of them do provide an easy meal.

Mountain dogs like us need to keep our instincts sharp and our wits even sharper. Free meals can make us lazy and slow – easy prey for hungry wolves.

We trot down the grassy slope towards the edge of the town. On the outskirts, horses whinny nervously and scratch at the ground with their hooves. It seems that all the animals can sense something unusual, heavy and threatening in the air.



Questions

1. Write the names of the three dogs in the story in the order of their rank in the pack.
(1 = highest ranking; 3 = lowest ranking)

1.
2.
3.

2. Look at the first two paragraphs in the chapter. Find and copy a word which means 'a place where people have started to live and establish a community'.

3. Using information from the text, tick one box in each row to show whether each statement is a **fact** or **opinion**.

	Fact	Opinion
Claudia's leg was bitten by a fox.		
The shepherd is late.		
It isn't wise to grow too attached to two-legs.		
Free meals make dogs lazy and slow.		

4. *I keep her nearby whenever the wolves come raiding.*

What does this suggest about Livia's character? Explain your answer fully.

5. "I'm hungry, Livia! The rabbit burrows are empty. A raven told me that they fled last night."

Define the word 'fled'.

6. What does the reader learn about Alba's character in this chapter? Explain your answer fully using evidence from the text.

7. What events have occurred to make Claudia and Alba worried about what is going on? Give evidence from both dogs.

Claudia:

Alba:

8. Number these events in the story from 1-5 in the order in which they happen.

The first one has been done for you.

Alba joins Livia and Claudia.

The dogs head down the hillside.

Claudia approaches the sleeping hollow.

Livia barks that they must tend to the goats.

Claudia suggests visiting the girl.

9. What evidence is there that the dogs like the human girl and that she likes them?

10. Summarise the events in the chapter using thirty words or fewer.

Answers

1. Write the names of the three dogs in the story in the order of their rank in the pack.
(1 = highest ranking; 3 = lowest ranking)

1.	Livia
2.	Alba
3.	Claudia

2. Look at the first two paragraphs in the chapter. Find and copy a word which means 'a place where people have started to live and establish a community'.

settlement

3. Using information from the text, tick one box in each row to show whether each statement is a **fact** or **opinion**.

	Fact	Opinion
Claudia's leg was bitten by a fox.	✓	
The shepherd is late.	✓	
It isn't wise to grow too attached to two-legs.		✓
Free meals make dogs lazy and slow.		✓

4. *I keep her nearby whenever the wolves come raiding.*

What does this suggest about Livia's character? Explain your answer fully.

Accept any of the following characteristics supported by an explanation: Livia shows kindness/courage/leadership/another acceptable characteristic.

For example, Livia knows that Claudia may not be able move as fast so she sticks with her when the wolves are near. This shows that Livia is a great leader as she looks after everybody in her pack.

5. "I'm hungry, Livia! The rabbit burrows are empty. A raven told me that they fled last night."

Define the word 'fled'.

run away quickly

6. What does the reader learn about Alba's character in this chapter? Explain your answer fully using evidence from the text.

Accept an explanation for any suitable suggestion. For example:

- **Alba is immature as Claudia says that 'she was a pup less than two summers ago' which could explain why she is focused on feeding herself rather than tending to the goats.**
- **Alba is short-tempered as she snaps at Claudia and tells her to stop talking about food. This shows that she doesn't have a great deal of patience with others and she is being quite rude to Claudia.**

7. What events have occurred to make Claudia and Alba worried about what is going on? Give evidence from both dogs.

Claudia - accept any of the following: the goats are acting strangely; the shepherd is late; the goats say the mountain is too warm; she feels rumbling through her paws.

Alba - accept any of the following: the goats say they want to leave; Alba is hungry; the rabbit burrows are empty; a raven said that the rabbits fled last night.

8. Number these events in the story from 1-5 in the order in which they happen.

The first one has been done for you.

Alba joins Livia and Claudia.

2

The dogs head down the hillside.

5

Claudia approaches the sleeping hollow.

1

Livia barks that they must tend to the goats.

3

Claudia suggests visiting the girl.

4

9. What evidence is there that the dogs like the human girl and that she likes them?

Accept any point that references that the dogs might be able to get food from her or the idea that Claudia is growing as fond of her as Livia is.

Accept that the girl gives the dogs food.

10. Summarise the events in the chapter using thirty words or fewer.

Accept any correct summary that has fewer than thirty words and covers the key points from the chapter. For example: Three mountain dogs are looking after their flock. The mountain is rumbling and their shepherd hasn't visited them, making them question what they should do next.