



THE WATCHERS

Jennifer Bassett

Storylines 1

THE WATCHERS

1 The big caves

My name is Taras. I am old . . .
3,000 years old. I sit here, under
the Palace of Knossos. My sister,
Aketa, sits next to me. She, too, is
old. 3,000 years.

We do not eat, we do not drink, and
our eyes never close. Are we dead,
or alive? It is not important. We sit,
and we wait. And we watch. For
3,000 years. We are the Watchers.

The god is here, too. The god
Poseidon, god of the sea, stands
here in this hall. We watch his
statue. It is gold, all gold. He stands
here, five metres tall. His arms are
gold, his hair is gold, his face is
gold. And his gold eyes shine in this
dark hall.

We are his Watchers.

Jim and Stella, his sister, are on holiday in Greece. They are staying at a hotel in Iraklion, on Crete. They are talking to their friend, Nikos. Nikos is a Cretan and lives near the Palace of Knossos.

Stella What are we going to do tomorrow? Can we go to Knossos?

Nikos Yes. Why not? It's a very famous place. And very, very old. About 3,000 or 4,000 years old.

Stella Yes, I'd like to ...

Jim Nikos! Stella! Look at this. It's about Knossos. It's very interesting.

CRETE NEWS

10 August

Caves Under Knossos

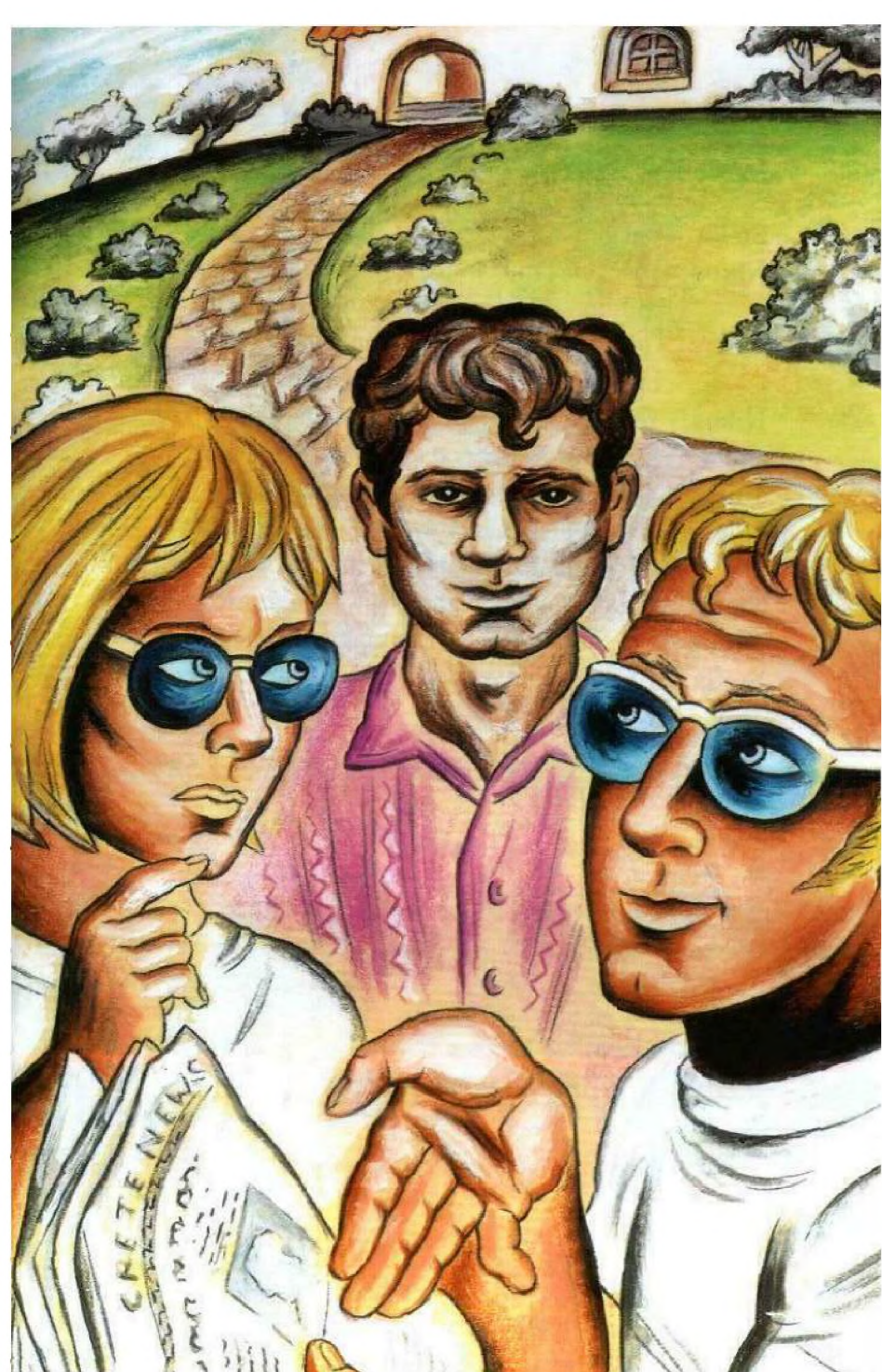
Iraklion, Crete

UNDER the famous Palace of Knossos there are many caves. Some of these caves are very big, and some are many, many metres under the

ground. What is in these caves? Nobody knows. The caves are very dangerous.

Next week Yannis Papadakis is going to





Jim We're going to find these caves, Stella! Are you coming with us, Nikos?

Stella But Jim ...

Nikos Yes, yes, I'm coming with you. You can stay with me at my mother's house near Knossos.

Jim Good. We're going to need a lot of things. Lights. And food and water. And we need ...

Nikos Yes, but it's OK. I can get everything.

Stella Jim, the caves are dangerous.

Jim Yes, but Nikos knows a lot about caves.

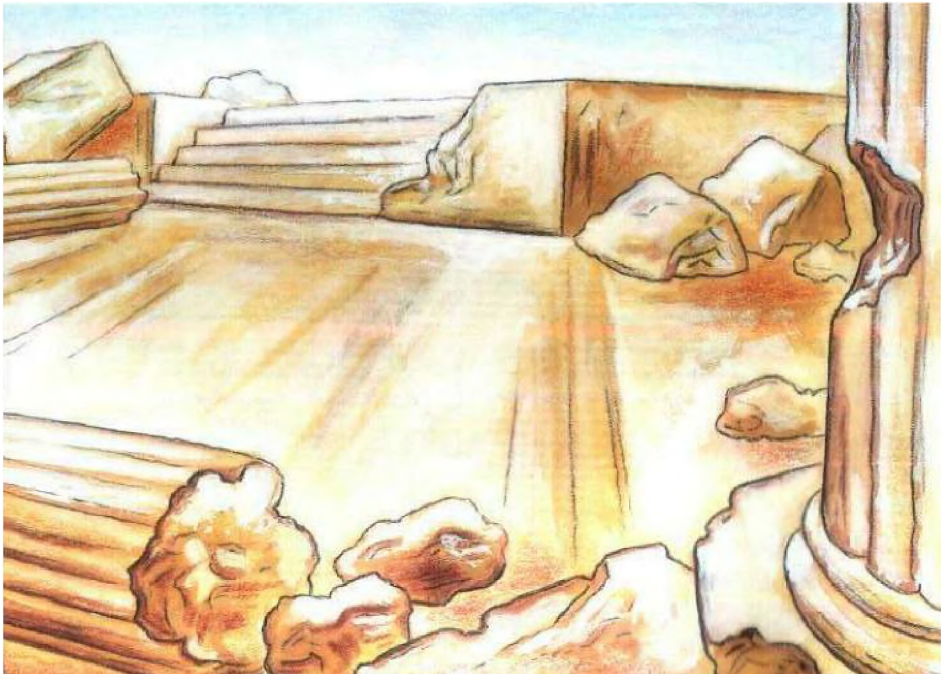
Nikos Yes, I do. And I know the Palace of Knossos very well. Don't forget ... I work there!

Stella But do you know these caves under Knossos?

Nikos No, I don't. But we're going to be careful.

Stella Oh, all right. When are we going?

Jim Tomorrow!



Sometimes there are lights in these halls. And music. The people from the Palace come down here. They are small, quick people, with dark eyes and dark hair. They bring lights, and food, and water ... and they dance the dance of the god. They are the god's people.

No, no, I forget ... They do not come now. These halls are quiet ... dark and quiet. It is always night now. There is no music, no dancing. There are no people in the Palace now ... not after the fire and the water from the sea. They are dead ... all dead.

And we, Aketa and I, sit in the hall of the god. We wait and we watch. We are the god's Watchers.

2 The first day

At the palace of Knossos. It is seven o'clock in the morning. Nikos is looking for the door to the caves. Jim and Stella are waiting for him. The sun is hot.

Stella I'm thirsty. I'm going to drink some water.

Jim Don't drink a lot. We need it in the caves.

Stella Have we got everything?

Jim I think so. The bags are very heavy.

Nikos Jim! Stella! The door's here! Come on, we can go down now.



Nikos Be careful!

Jim It's very dark. I can't see anything.

Stella Here, hold this light. We need all the lights now.

Nikos Walk slowly. And be very careful.

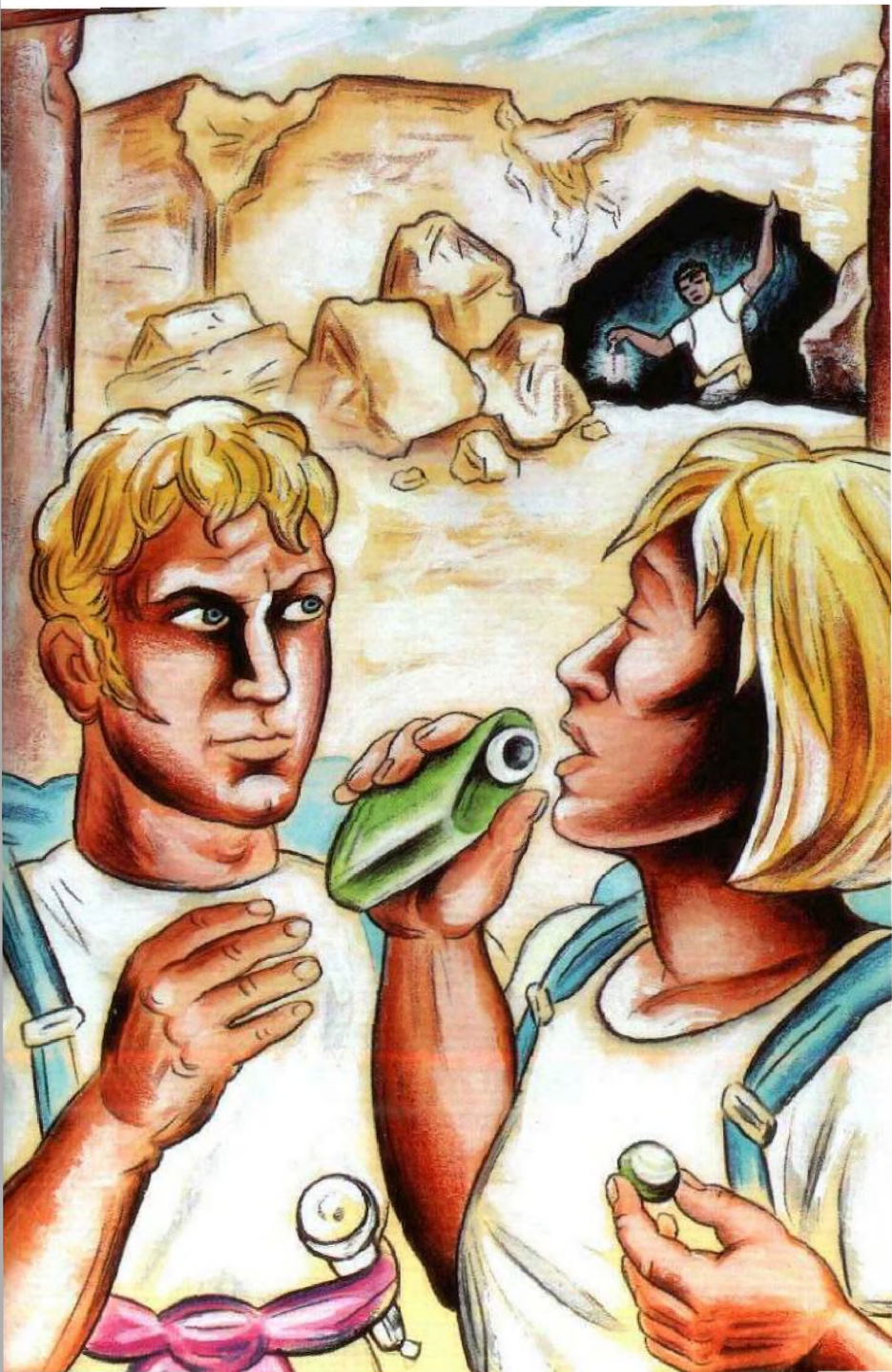
Jim Yes, I know!



Jim How many caves are there? This is the tenth cave now.

Nikos I can see another one in front of us. A long one.

Stella I'm tired. I don't want to look at any more caves today.



Jim How about some food? I'm hungry.

Nikos Yes, let's eat something. And we can stay here for the night.

Stella Good! Where's the bag? The food is in there.

Jim How old are these caves, Nikos?

Nikos I don't know. 3,000 years? 4,000 years?

Stella Do many people come to these caves?

Nikos Not many people, no. Only the old Greek gods. The god Poseidon lives in caves, some people say.

Jim The god Poseidon! There are no old gods in these caves.

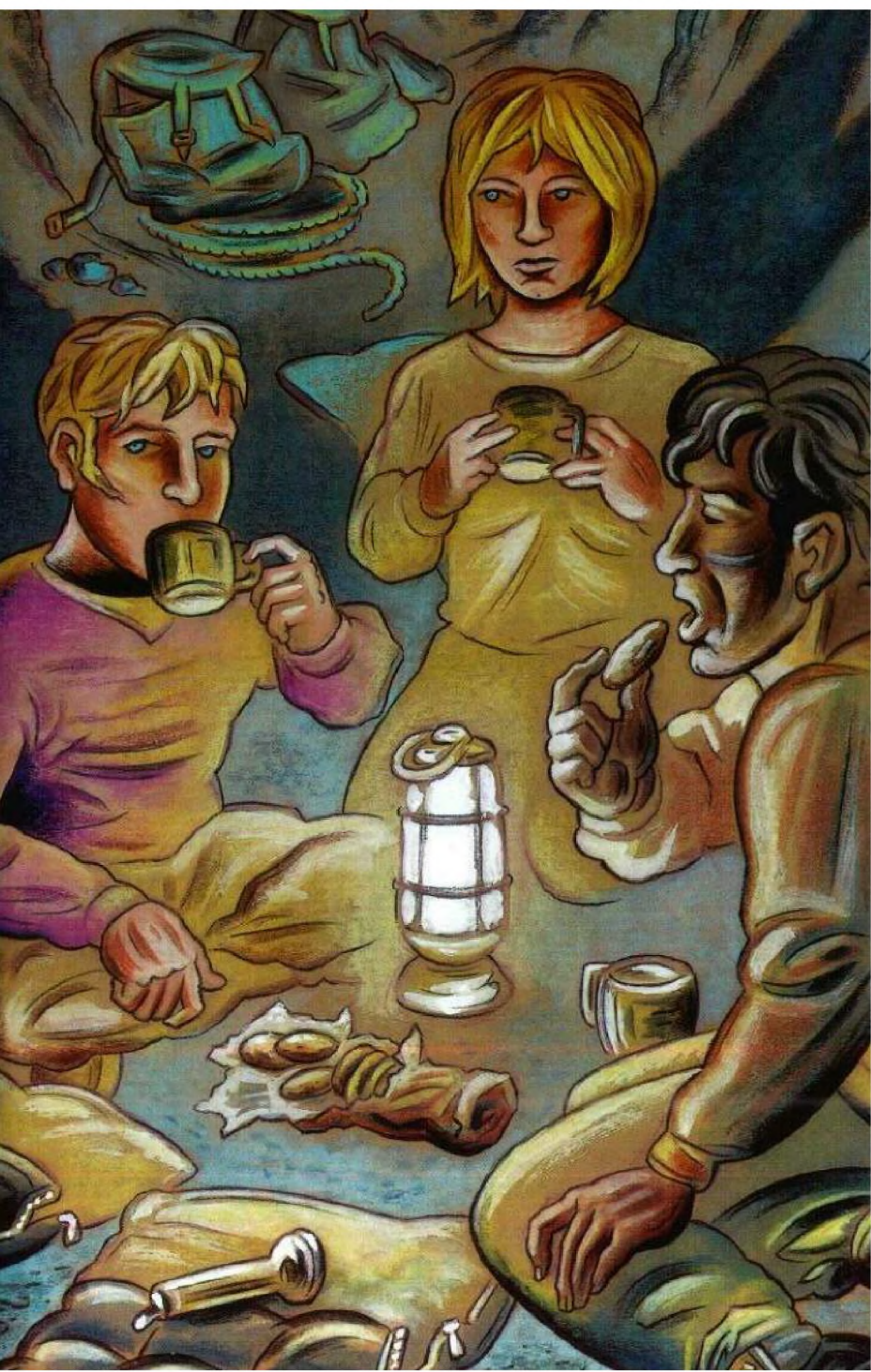
Stella How do you know, Jim?

Jim The old Greek gods are only stories. You read about them in books. They're not important today.

Nikos Oh yes, they are. Don't laugh at them. And Poseidon is a dangerous god. All the books say that. He's the god of the sea, and the god of earthquakes, too. We have a lot of earthquakes in Greece. Don't forget that.

Jim Oh Nikos! That's silly! The god of earthquakes? Everybody knows that earthquakes ...

Stella No, Jim. Nikos is right. We don't understand everything. And don't laugh at Poseidon ... not here in these caves.



The years come, and the years go. 3,000 years.
My sister Aketa and I sit ... and wait. It is dark
and cold in the hall of the god. The sun never
shines here.

Sometimes people come to these halls. They are
not the god's people. They look for gold, only
gold. And Poseidon is angry. It is the gold of his
people ... and now it is the god's gold, because
his people are dead. Nobody can take the god's
gold, or look at the gold face of the god ... and
live.

But there are no lights, no people now. Only the
god Poseidon stands here in this dark hall - god
of the blue sea, god of the green sea, god of this
dark hall.

We are his Watchers.

3 The second day

- Jim** Wake up, Stella. Good morning, Nikos!
- Stella** Morning? It's always night in these caves!
What's the time?
- Jim** Seven o'clock. Are we going on ... or back?
What do you think, Nikos?
- Nikos** Mmm. I don't know. How many caves are
there? Fifteen? Twenty?
I don't know. But we can look at the next
... or two.



Jim This is the fourteenth cave. And this cave is big, very big.

Stella Look! This is a road. We're walking on a road!

Nikos Yes, you're right. It's a very old road, too. Look at these stones on the floor. They're thousands of years old.

Stella But whose road is it? And where does it go to?

Jim I don't know, but we can follow it.

Stella But it's six o'clock now. I think ...

Nikos Listen! I can hear water. Can you hear it? There's a river in front of us.

Stella We can't get across a river!

Jim Oh yes, we can!

Stella I don't want to go across. It's dangerous.

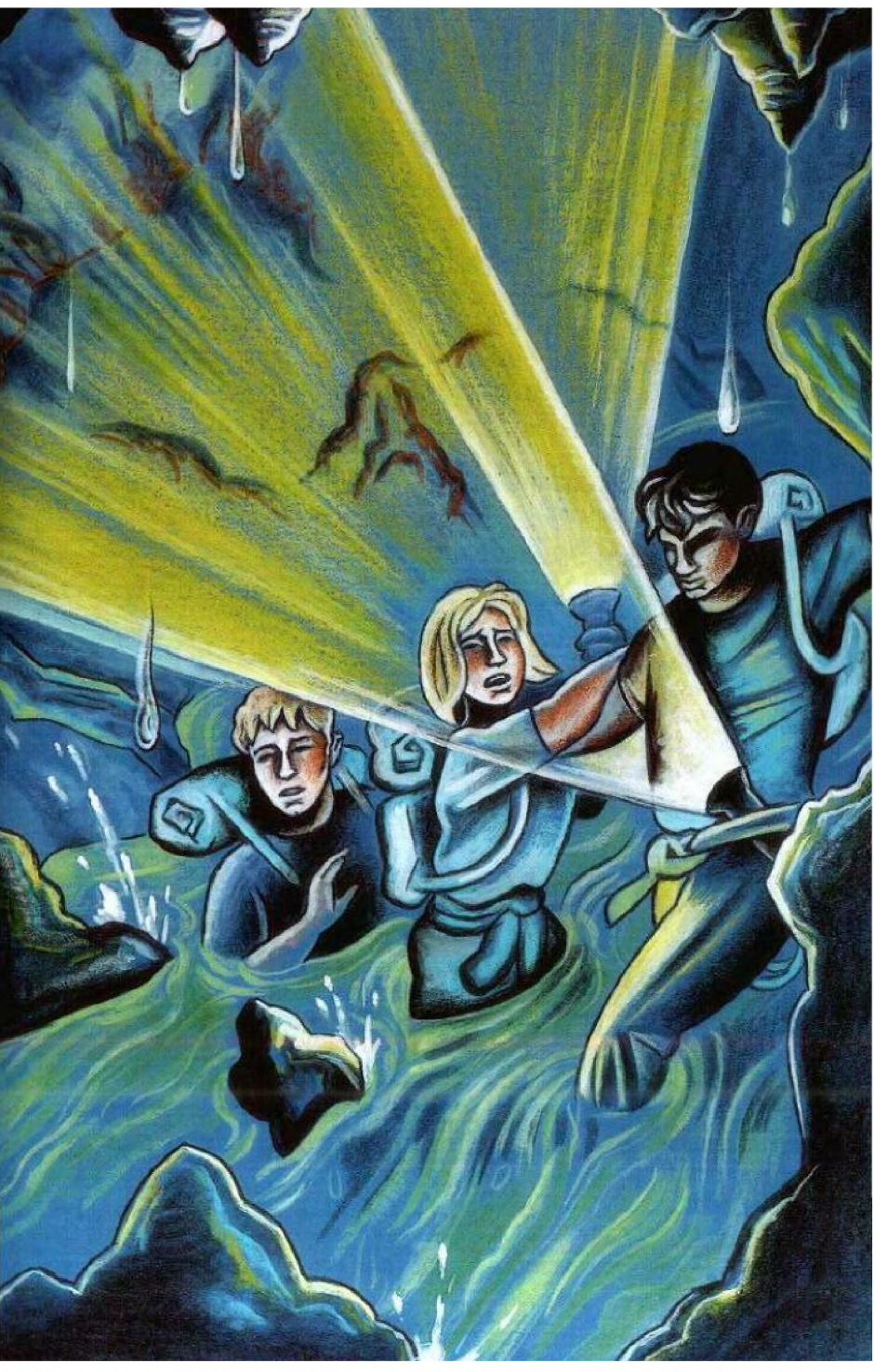
Jim No, it isn't. Come on, Stella!

Nikos Stella's right. Rivers under the ground are dangerous, but ...

Stella Listen! I can hear something ...

Nikos It's only the river, Stella. It's all right. We can go across the river, and then we can stop and stay there for the night.

Jim Yes. We can make a fire, and have some food.



Listen, sister. Do you hear anything? There are people at the river. They are talking and laughing. Listen, sister. They are coming here ... to the hall of the god. Why? Who are they? What do they want?

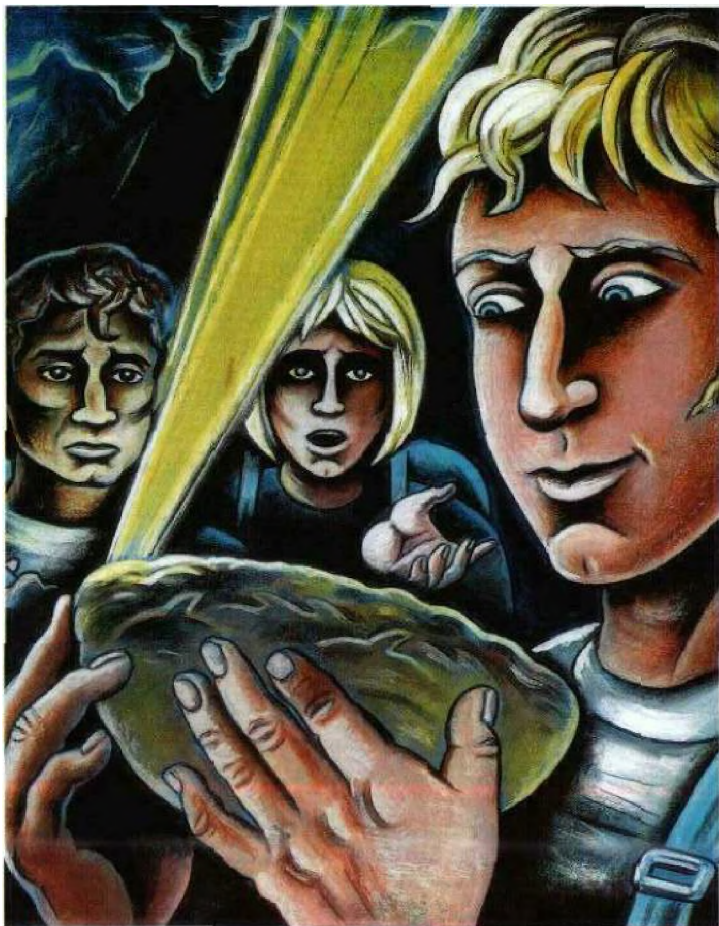
Gold ... They want gold. All people want gold. They cannot eat it, they cannot drink it. But the love of gold is in all men ... and women, too.

But they cannot take the god's gold. We are his Watchers. We call the god, and we say his name. Then the god wakes ... and he speaks.

4 The third day

- Stella** When are we going to go back? This is the third day now. I don't like these caves.
- Nikos** Why not, Stella?
- Stella** I don't know. I can hear something . . . or someone. It's not the river. I want to go back, Nikos.
- Nikos** Yes. Sometimes I can hear something, too. But there's nobody in these caves, Stella. Only us.
- Stella** Let's look at one more cave. Then we can go back. OK?
- Nikos** What's Jim doing?
- Stella** I don't know. He's looking at something. Jim, what are you . . . ?
- Jim** Hey! Look at this! It's a bowl . . . a gold bowl.
- Stella** It's beautiful. Can I hold it for a minute? It's very heavy, too. Look at all this gold!
- Jim** Is it old, Nikos?
- Nikos** Yes, thousands of years old, I think.
- Jim** We can sell it - we can get a lot of money for this bowl.
- Stella** We can't do that! It's not ours.
- Jim** Whose is it, then?
- Stella** It's, well, it's . . . I don't know. But it's not ours!
- Nikos** Don't take it, Jim. Leave it here.
- Jim** No, I'm going to take it. It's ours now.

Can you hear them, sister? They are near the hall now. Listen ... They are looking for gold ... gold. All people want gold.



Jim Look at that next cave. Can you see it? It's huge.
It's not a cave ... it's a hall ... a huge hall.

Stella Jim, Nikos, don't go in there!

Jim Why not, Stella?

Stella I think someone is watching us. I don't like it.
Why don't we go back? Please!

Nikos Who is watching us? We're the only people here.

Stella I don't know. But someone, or something, is
watching us. And it doesn't like us.

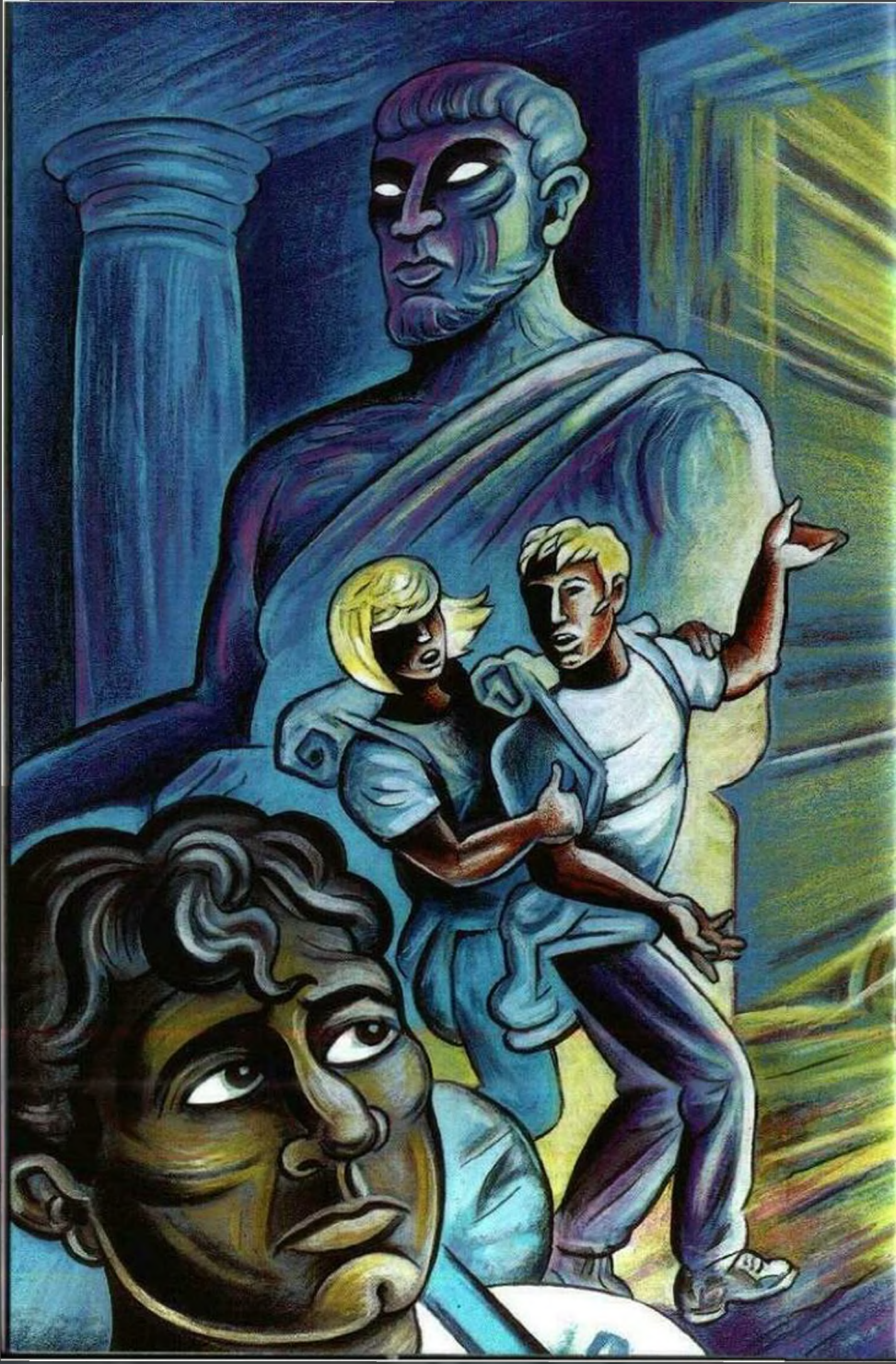
Jim Don't be silly, Stella. Nothing is watching us.
Come on.

I can see them now, sister. Two men and a
woman. They are young. Two of them have blue
eyes . . . They are not people from the Palace.
They are not the god's people. And they cannot
come in here. They cannot take the god's gold.
They cannot look at the face of the god.

Stella Look at those statues there. They're very, very
old. They're ...

Nikos I don't like them. Look at their eyes! Come
away, Stella.

Jim I can see something at the end of the hall.
Look! What is it? It's tall ... very tall. It's a
statue, a huge statue ... and it's shining. It's
gold - all gold!





Stella Don't look at it. Don't go in there. Please, Jim, please! It's dangerous. Stop him, Nikos. Stop him.

They are looking into the hall now. Call the god!
Now, sister, now! Say the name of the god! They
cannot come in ... They cannot come in ...

Nikos Shh, be quiet for a minute. Wait, Jim. Listen.

Jim Why? What's ...

Nikos Shh! I think Stella's right. There's
something ...

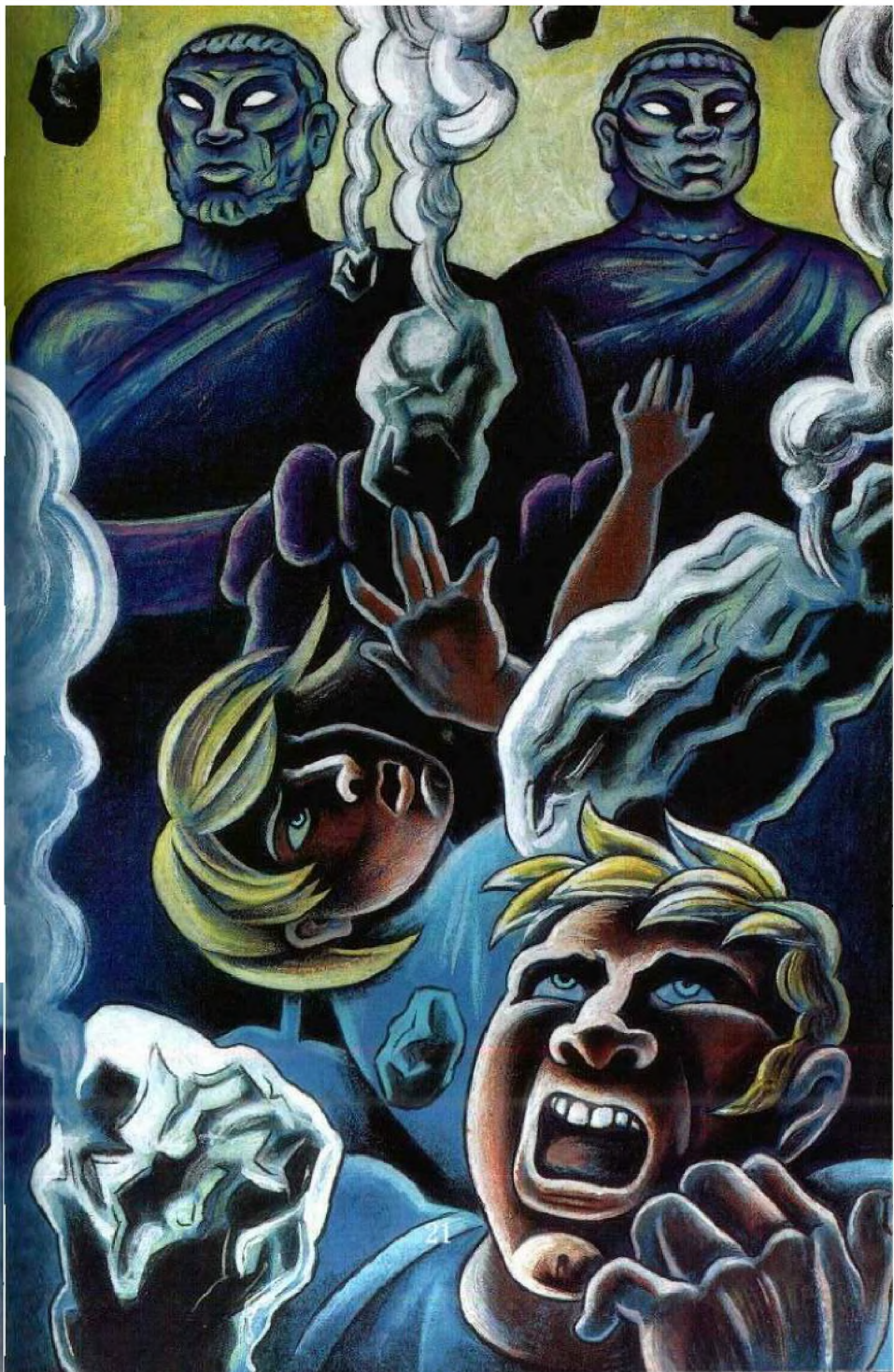
Stella Listen! Nikos, what's that? Can you hear it?

Nikos Oh no! No! The ground is moving ... It's an
earthquake! There's going to be an
earthquake! The stones are falling! Run ...
Run! Back to the river ... Run!

Jim Quick, Stella! Run ... Run!

Stella We can't! The walls are falling ... Everything is
falling! We can't get out! We can't get out!





CRETE NEWS

14 August

Earthquake at Knossos- Three Young People are Dead Iraklion, Crete

Anna Stavros, mother of Nikos Stavros, says: 'Nikos and his two English friends, Jim and Stella, are in the caves under the Palace of Knossos'. But

where is the door to the caves? Nobody can find it now after the earthquake. My son and his friends cannot get out. They are dead.'

The god Poseidon, god of the sea, is angry. He speaks, and the ground moves, and the stones fall.

But the god can sleep again now, sister. The men and the woman are quiet. They cannot move. They lie under the stones. They hold the god's gold bowl in their hands, but they cannot go back across the river. And they cannot look at the face of the god.

The god's gold eyes shine in this dark hall. We are his Watchers ...



Exercises

1 Read through the story quickly and find this information.

- 1 How old is Taras?
- 2 What is the name of his sister?
- 3 How tall is the statue of Poseidon?
- 4 Where are Jim and Stella staying?
- 5 Where does Nikos work?
- 6 Which Greek god is the god of the sea?
- 7 Which cave is the old road in?
- 8 Who finds the gold bowl?

2 Are these sentences true (v) or false (x)?

- 1 Taras sits in front of his sister.
- 2 The statue of Poseidon is all gold.
- 3 Nikos lives near the Palace of Knossos.
- 4 Stella is Nikos's sister.
- 5 The god's people are all dead.
- 6 The caves under Knossos are not very old.
- 7 The three friends cross the river on the first day.
- 8 They cross the river by boat.
- 9 Stella does not like the caves.
- 10 She thinks she can hear something.

3 Complete the spaces in these sentences.

- 1 Knossos is a very old on Crete.
- 2 Knossos is a very place.
- 3 The Crete News says: The caves under Knossos are !
- 4 The god's people have dark eyes and dark
- 5 Stella: 'Don't at Poseidon, not here in these caves.'
- 6 The old road is of years old.
- 7 Nikos can water.
- 8 Taras: The love of is in all men, and women, too.'
- 9 Jim: 'We can get a lot of money for this !'
- 10 Nikos: 'Run! There's going to be an !'

4 Comprehension questions

- 1 Where do the Watchers sit?
- 2 What do they do?
- 3 What are Jim and Stella doing in Greece?
- 4 Who reads about the caves under Knossos?
- 5 What are the friends going to take to the caves?
- 6 Where are the god's people now?
- 7 Who says: 'Walk slowly. And be very careful.'?
- 8 Who laughs at the old Greek gods?
- 9 Why is Poseidon angry?
- 10 What time do the friends get up on the second day?
- 11 Who wants to see everything?
- 12 How do they cross the river?
- 13 Where does Taras hear the three friends for the first time?
- 14 Why does Stella want to go back?
- 15 What does Jim do with the gold bowl?
- 16 Whose bowl is it?
- 17 Why doesn't Stella want to go into the last cave?
- 18 Why does Nikos say: 'Run!'?
- 19 What is the name of Nikos's mother?
- 20 Why does Taras say: 'The god can sleep again now.'?

5 Discussion questions

- 1 Talk about the Palace of Knossos. Is it famous? Do people live there?
- 2 Talk about the caves under Knossos. How many are there? Are they big or small? What is in them?
- 3 Would you like to visit these caves under Knossos? Why/Why not?
- 4 You are in the caves and you find the gold bowl. What are you going to do?
- 5 Taras says: 'All people want gold. They cannot eat it, they cannot drink it. But the love of gold is in all people.' Is that true? What do you think?

Glossary

alive: living, not dead

arm: your hand is at the end of your arm

bowl: a large, round plate

cave: a very large hole under the ground

Cretan: a person from Crete

Crete: an island in Greece (see the map on page 4)

dangerous: if something is dangerous, it can hurt or kill you, e.g.

Driving very fast is dangerous.

dead: when you stop living, you are dead

earthquake: a sudden, very strong movement of the ground

fall: move quickly and freely from a high place to a low place

fire: something burning, with smoke and flames

god: there were many old Greek gods: Poseidon was the old Greek god of the sea; Apollo was the god of the sun, etc

Greece: a country in Europe (see the map on page 4)

hair: it grows on your head

hall: a very big room or building (in this story, a very big cave)

hear: you see with your eyes, you hear with your ears

huge: very, very big

Iraklion: a town on Crete (see the map on page 4)

Knossos: a very old place on Crete (see the map on page 4)

listen: you look at something with your eyes, you listen to something with your ears

nobody: no people

palace: a very big, beautiful house

Poseidon: the name of the old Greek god of the sea

silly: stupid, not clever

statue: something (made of stone, wood, gold, etc) that looks like a person

stone: a very hard part or piece of the ground

Watcher: somebody who watches

Storylines are lively, original stories with contemporary themes, illustrated in full colour. They are carefully graded at four levels to encourage students to read for pleasure.

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THE WATCHERS

In the caves under the famous Palace of Knossos in Crete, the Watchers sit. They watch the gold statue of Poseidon, god of the sea. Jim and Stella, an English brother and sister, are on holiday in Crete. With Nikos, their Cretan friend, they go into the caves. But the Watchers are waiting for them . . .

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1 Storylines