

Loukas & Lydia and the Secret of the Disk

Sample Kit – Teacher & Student Materials



Why This Works

- High-interest, history-rich narrative with real science hooks (seismic activity, flight).
- Cross-curricular options: ELA (structure, theme), Social Studies (Minoan Crete), STEM (forces, waves), Arts (fresco study).
- Built-in SEL: sibling teamwork, courage, ethical decision-making.
- Flexible: a single-day lesson or the opening to a two-week novel study.

Annotated Scene: The Queen's Apartments (project or print)

The group moved east, toward the Queen's Apartments — the grand staircase arching beneath them like the ribs of some ancient creature. As they stepped into the Queen's bath chamber, light spilled through a shaft above, bouncing off the faded dolphin fresco on the wall.

That's when it happened.

First, the birds.

Not just one — an entire flock burst from somewhere above the hillside, spiraling into the sky like they'd been startled by something deep and ancient waking up beneath the stones.

Then came the sound — low, long, like the earth clearing its throat. Only Loukas seemed to notice.

He turned to Lydia and leaned in dramatically. "You hear that?" he whispered. "That's the Minotaur. Still down there. Hungry."

Lydia glared at him, but her hand instinctively reached for her mom's.

"That's not funny."

The guide turned her head. "Oh, don't worry. That sound? Just the earth shifting. Very common here. Crete breathes like that all the time."

As if to prove her point, a quick, sharp tremor rolled under their feet — enough to make their mother gasp and grab the guide's arm.

"It's alright, really," she said calmly. "Some days, I count five or six of those. It's the price of living on a living island."

Loukas tried not to look thrilled. Lydia didn't like it one bit.

Still, they all smiled for a picture by the Queen's bath — Loukas standing a bit taller, Lydia still suspiciously glancing at the floor, as if it might open up at any second.

Teacher note: Pause after the birds and after the guide's reassurance. Ask: How do these details build suspense?

Vocabulary in context: fresco, tremor, living island, instinctively — have students infer meaning before defining.

Foreshadowing: the birds and the earth 'clearing its throat' hint that something big is coming.

Anchor Lesson (1 Day)

Objective: Analyze how setting builds suspense; cite textual evidence.

Time: 45–55 minutes · **Materials:** this kit, notebooks, projector

- Hook (3 min): Show a photo of the Queen's Apartments. Discuss daily life clues.
- Read (10–12 min): Read aloud with pauses. Mark mood-shift moments.
- Discuss (10 min): Use Questions 1–3 with turn-and-talks.
- Quick-write (8–10 min): 'If I were Loukas or Lydia at that moment...'
- Share & connect (5–8 min): Connect to real earthquakes in Crete.

Student Discussion Questions

How does the description of the staircase and fresco set the mood?

Why does Lydia grab her mom's hand? What does this show about her?

What is the effect of the guide saying, "Crete breathes like that all the time"?

What clues hint that something bigger might happen next?

Predict what happens next — and explain why.

Vocabulary Mini-Poster (project or print)

Word	Part of Speech	Student-friendly Definition	Sketch Box
Fresco	noun	A painting made on wet plaster that dries into the wall.	[]
Tremor	noun	A small earthquake or vibration felt in the ground.	[]
Instinctively	adverb	Doing something automatically, without thinking first.	[]
Living island	phrase	Metaphor: Crete feels alive because of its frequent tremors	[]

Graphic Organizers

Prediction Chart: Before tremor → During tremor → What happens next?

Character Tracker: Compare Loukas & Lydia

Mini-Unit Schedule (2–3 Days)

- Day 1: Read annotated scene + vocab in context; Prediction Chart.
- Day 2: Character Tracker + discussion; Quick-write revision into paragraph with evidence.
- Day 3 (optional): Research earthquakes in Crete + storyboard what's next.

Extension Menu & Parent/Admin Note

- Design a shoebox archaeology dig with labeled 'finds.'
- Write Lydia's diary after the tremor (first person).
- Create a simple floor plan of the Queen's Apartments based on textual clues.

Parent/Admin: This kit uses a historically grounded excerpt and cross-curricular prompts aligned to ELA and Social Studies. Age-appropriate for Grades 4–8.

Print Pack (Student Pages)

The following pages are student-ready handouts: discussion questions, vocabulary poster, and graphic organizers.

Student Handout: Discussion Questions

How does the description of the staircase and fresco set the mood?

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What is the effect of the guide saying, "Crete breathes like that all the time"?

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Predict what happens next — and explain why.

Student Handout: Vocabulary

Word	Part of Speech	Student-friendly Definition	Sketch Box
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Student Handout: Graphic Organizers

Prediction Chart

Before tremor: _____

During tremor: _____

What happens next: _____

Character Tracker

Character | Details noticed | Reactions | What it shows about them

Loukas _____

Lydia _____