

Chapter One

Jun and her school friends, Rafi and Daniel, sat quietly in the tourist centre. They were listening to an instructor giving them safety tips about climbing Mount Merapi. Jun was very excited – she couldn't wait to climb the famous mountain.



‘Listen, everybody,’ said the instructor. ‘Tomorrow, you are going to climb to the top of an active volcano. My job is to keep you safe. We all have to be very careful. And most important of all, this is not a race to be first to the top. This is an experience to remember forever!’

Jun smiled at Daniel. ‘The rest of the class is lucky that it’s not a race. No one would have a chance of beating me to the top!’ she said.

Before Daniel could reply, the climbing instructor pointed at Jun. ‘Remind me of our golden rule for tomorrow.’

‘Ah, speed,’ Jun mumbled. ‘Er no, I mean *safety*,’ she corrected herself.

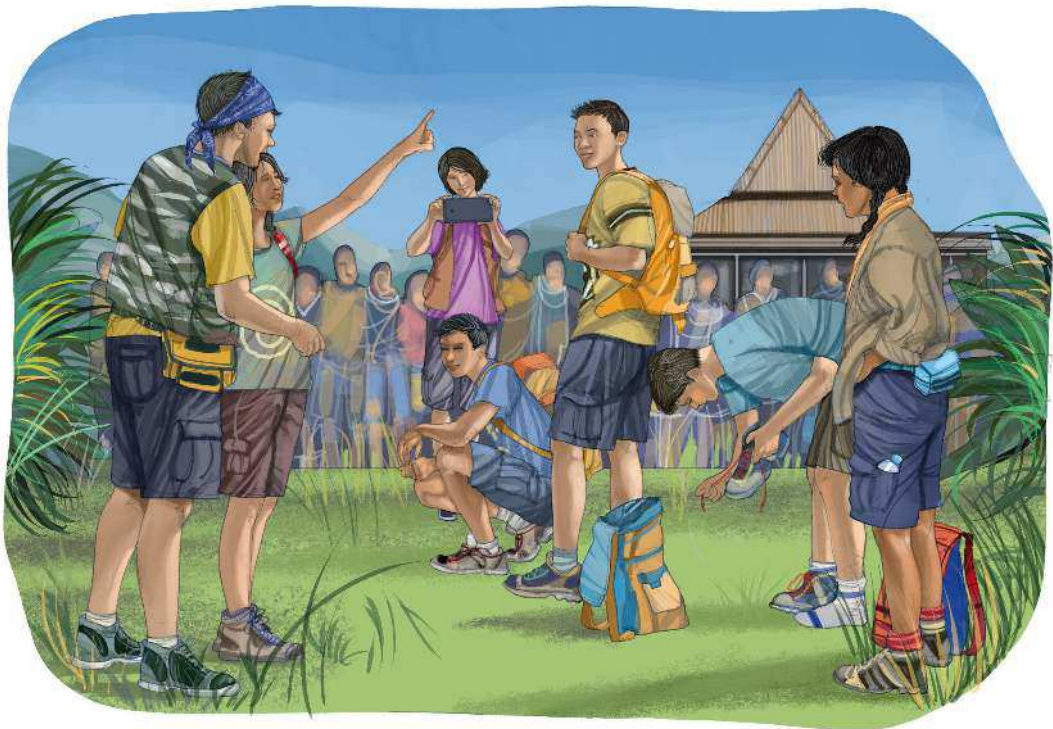
Her friends giggled.

The instructor frowned.

Early the next morning, they met Agus, their guide, at the foot of the mountain.

‘Mount Merapi can be very dangerous,’ he explained. ‘We need to take care to stick together, otherwise you can get lost or hurt yourself. There will be no one to help you up there. And remember, this is an active volcano. There have been one or two small tremors recently. If I say we have to turn back, we do exactly that!’

‘Yes, of course,’ said Jun. ‘But I’m going to be first to the top,’ she muttered to herself.





After an hour of climbing, Jun had already pushed her way to the front of the group. Daniel and Rafi jogged after her, reluctantly.

‘Remember, it’s an *experience*,’ Rafi cried.

‘Yeah – I want to experience being first up the mountain,’ laughed Jun.

‘Hey, you at the front, please slow down,’ Agus cried. ‘I must be able to see you at all times. Climbing Mount Merapi is very risky. Your life is in my hands.’