

Sound Out
City Secrets

Sinking City

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High Noon Books

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ITALY



A Hiding Place

The robbers needed a place to hide. They steered their boat into the Floating City. They knew that no one could find them there!

The Floating City was also known as Venice

(VEN-iss). It was not just one place. Up to the year 900, Venice was a group of islands. The islands were close to each other. A boat could sail back through the islands. Venice was a good place to hide.

The islands were small. The land was flat and muddy. It was not

firm. People could build small houses with straw roofs. But big houses would sink quickly in the mud.

Venice was in a good spot. It was by the sea. Ships liked to stop there. People traded cloth and grain that came from the ships.

More and more people



Venice was in a good spot. It was by the sea.

wanted to live in Venice.
The people wanted the
city to grow. They would
need tall buildings to
hold more people. But
tall, heavy buildings
would sink. They had to
come up with a plan.

How to Grow?

The city leaders worked on plans for building Venice. They needed to make a base for the city. But how would they do it?

First, they drained the wet land that spread all

around. This was a very hard job. They poured tons of rock to make the land firm.

Building the soil helped. But it did not do the whole job. That is because Venice is next to the sea. When the tide comes in, the land gets soft again.

The city planners sent

workers to a far-off land.
The land had lots and
lots of trees. The
workers camped in the
woods. They cut down
many, many trees. When
they were done, there
were no trees left in that
place.

Then the workers put
the trees on long boats.
They shipped the trees



The land had lots and lots of trees.

to Venice. The city would use the trees to make the city bigger.

Holding it All Up

What did the people of Venice do with all those trees? Workers cut them into long, thick poles.

The poles were sunk deep into the mud. They put the poles right next to each other so that the

sides touched.

Then the tops of the poles were sawed off. They were cut to be flat on top. These poles are called pilings. The pilings made a wide, strong base.

The workers did this same thing over and over. Would the new pilings make the land



Then the tops of the poles were sawed off.

firm? Would the pilings
sink some day in the
mud? No one knew. But
the city planners did not
care. They would make
Venice a great city now.
Who cared what might
go on later in time?

Secrets of Venice

People in Venice began to build huge houses. They built tall churches. The city had many shops. Venice became a city with great wealth and charm.

Many buildings were

made out of rock. People thought the rock would not rot. They also hoped that the rock walls would keep out the sea water.

Venice grew and grew into a big city. There was still a lot of water all around. But people knew how to live with that. They built thin boats.

People rode boats from place to place. Today, people still ride boats all over the city.

For a long time now, Venice has kept secrets. What are they?

The first secret is that Venice is flooding more and more. When the tide gets high, the streets flood with a few inches of

water. Sometimes they get much more.

People have tried to put more rooms on the top of their houses. They hoped that would keep them up away from the water. People use rain boots to walk around town. Flooding is now a fact of life in Venice.



When the tide gets high, the streets flood with a few inches of water.

A Sinking City

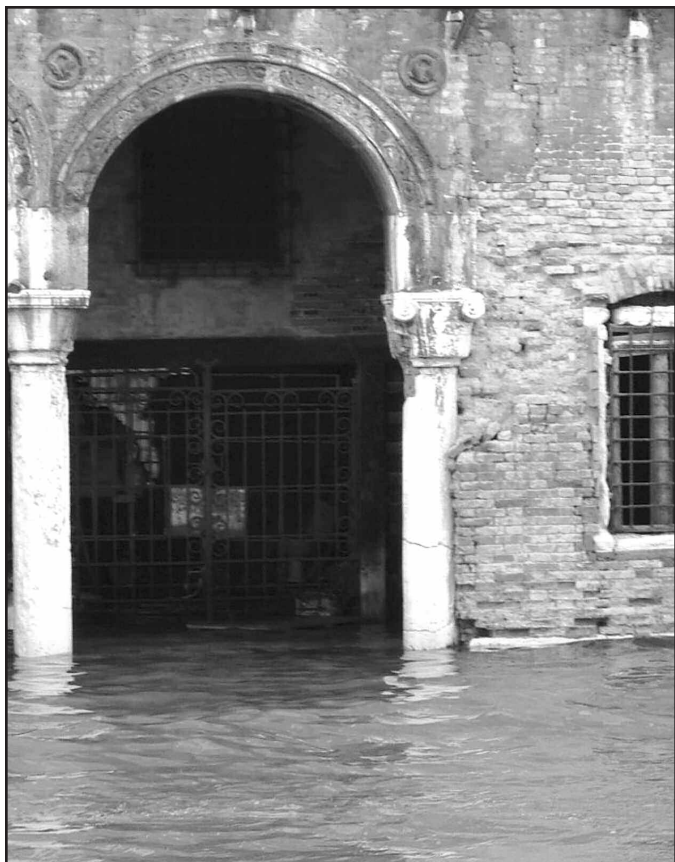
There is another thing
the people of Venice have
not wanted the world to
know. The old wood
pilings that hold up the
city are breaking apart.
Buildings are also
crumbling in the salt

water.

The land under Venice is also sinking. This is partly because the sea around the city is getting higher and higher.

We know that ice caps on the North and South Poles are melting. This has caused water to rise all over the world.

The land under Venice



The land under Venice is also sinking.

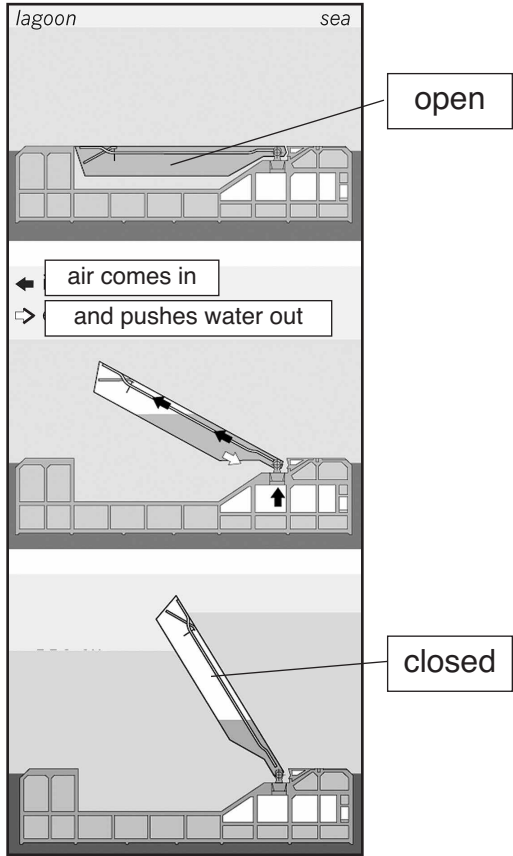
has always been like a sponge. Now it is taking in more and more of the rising sea. The old city is sinking lower and lower into the wet ground.

What to Do?

Time is running out for the city of Venice. Today, parts of the city are always wet. One place called St. Mark's Square used to flood nine times a year. Now it floods over 100 times a year!

Many people have moved out of Venice. They fear what might be coming. The people of Venice must try to save their city.

There is one plan that might work. They want to build a big gate. It would sit a little way out in the sea. When the sea rises, the gate would



When the sea rises, the gate would close.

close. That might keep the city from flooding.

The gate would cost a lot of money. No one knows if it would work. But something must be done soon. If not, Venice could become a place you can only read about in books. That would be a great loss to the world.

High Frequency Words

a	how	them
and	into	there
around	it	they
as	just	to
but	like(d)	up
by	make	want(ed)
came	no	was
come	not	were
could	one	with
do	stop	work(ed)
find	that	would
from	the	
good	their	