The volcano has been simmering as long as I've been alive. The white wisps rise from the top like the fumes that give away a secret smoker. The sides are much like any other ancient, fantastic mountain, covered with old, overgrown growth forests filled with mismatched trees. The farmland below is fertile and around it are the oh so flammable homes in which we all live, but we are happy with our crops and livestock. One day, it will blow, of course it will, but for now the air is sweet and the fruits are good. It's a slice of heaven no-one else wants, so it's ours. Our days are long without the ticking clocks they have in the city, dividing time into ever smaller slices.

Our majestically terrifying volcano lies craggy against the bright blue sky, like a bomb in wonderland. There is no timer, no red wire or green, we live never knowing if it will rain lava and rock, if it will destroy us and all we have worked for. But like anyone who lives with a constant danger, you learn to put it out of your mind. Then one day a stranger comes and has that wide-eyed look that lets you know that they think you're out of your mind completely.

Infer

1. Find and copy the simile in the first paragraph.
2. What does the simile in the first paragraph mean? What does it tell you about the volcano?
3. What might the simile “like a secret smoker” tell you about the person who is writing this?
4. What impression do the sentences starting, “The farmland”, “One day” and “It’s a slice” give you about the community that live beneath the volcano?

Explain

1. Explain how the tone changes between the paragraphs.
2. Do you think that they are written by the same person?
3. Explain what impression the second paragraph gives of the volcano.

Vocabulary

1. Which words in the second paragraph make the volcano seem most dangerous?
2. What does “wide-eyed look” mean?
3. How does the phrase “wide-eyed look” make the stranger appear?

Predict

1. What do you think will happen next in this story?