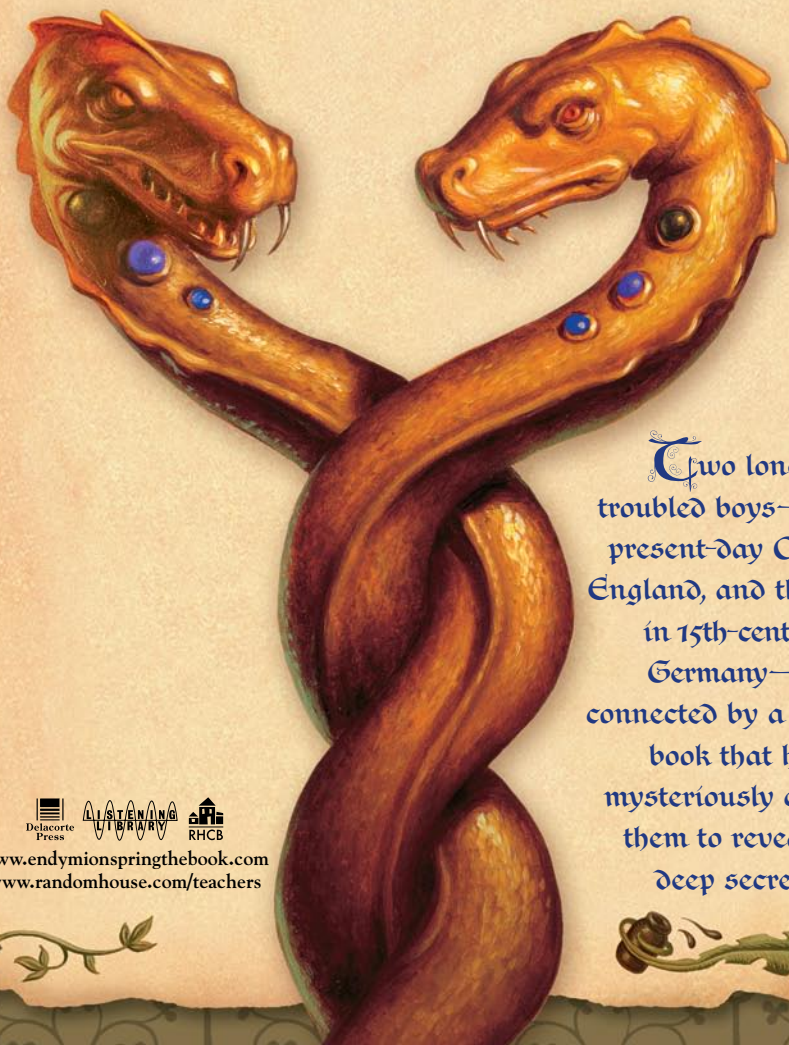



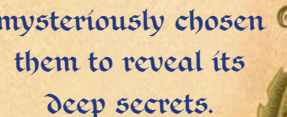


# Endymion Spring

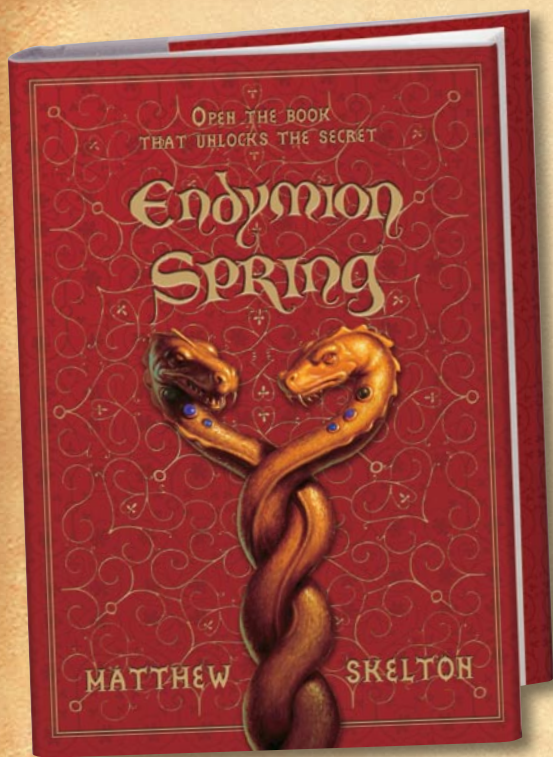
## READERS GUIDE



Two lonely, troubled boys—one in present-day Oxford, England, and the other in 15th-century Germany—are connected by a strange book that has mysteriously chosen them to reveal its deep secrets.



[www.endymionspringthebook.com](http://www.endymionspringthebook.com)  
[www.randomhouse.com/teachers](http://www.randomhouse.com/teachers)



**Grades 7 up**

Delacorte Press HC • 978-0-385-73380-9 (0-385-73380-1)

GLB • 978-0-385-90397-4 (0-385-90397-9)

Listening Library Unabridged CD • 978-0-7393-3644-1 (0-7393-3644-4)

## ABOUT THE BOOK

**Blake Winters**, in the library of present-day Oxford University with his visiting-scholar mother, stumbles on an ancient blank book that seems to leap off the shelves into his hands. Gradually the empty book's story unfolds for his eyes only, a story that stretches back to an apprentice of the printer Gutenberg in 15th-century Germany. As Blake struggles to understand the book's secrets, he is aided—and pursued—by adult scholars at the university as well as a mysterious stranger. Troubled by his parents' separation, and reluctantly accepting the help of his younger sister, Blake follows clues to the book's cryptic origins and desperately struggles to keep its long-hidden secrets from someone who would use them for evil ends.

## PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

**The A&E television program** *Biography of the Millennium: 100 People—1000 Years* interviewed many distinguished artists and scientists to pick the most influential individuals of the last 10 centuries. Johannes Gutenberg was rated number one. Have students look up information about Gutenberg to see if they agree with this decision. Who was Gutenberg? How did he develop the printing press? What did his invention mean for people at that time? What does it mean for us today?

**ENDYMION SPRING features words** that relate to life in medieval Europe and the early days of printed books. Have students look up any of the following words that are unfamiliar to them:

**Architecture:** *cathedral, turret, balustrade, half-timbered, lych-gate, lancet window, plinth, stone boss*

**Early Books:** *illuminated manuscript, majuscule, calligraphy, missal, parchment, vellum, Psalter, compositor, quire, ream, florilegium*



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ✦ Compare the characters Blake and Endymion. How are they alike? How are they different? Can you imagine Blake living in the 15th century—or Endymion living in today’s world? Are there similar ways in which they each react to the world around them? Do you think they would be friends if they lived in the same time?
- ✦ Which of the adults at Oxford in the Ex Libris society reminds you of Johann Fust in Gutenberg’s day? Which of them reminds you of Gutenberg? Which one did you suspect was after Endymion Spring’s book? Why do people want it so badly?
- ✦ Endymion works as an apprentice, sometimes referred to as a “printer’s devil.” Some historians believe this term originated because people of the Middle Ages thought that early printing was a magical process, perhaps associated with witchcraft. Why did they develop that belief? What factors of that time might have contributed to that belief?
- ✦ Compare the way people felt about Gutenberg’s printing process to the way Giles Bentley feels about digitalization. What are the differences and similarities in these two processes? Why would people today object to books being digitalized?
- ✦ Consider the saying that Blake finds in a manuscript in the library’s display case: “Wisdom speaks with a silent tongue.” What does that mean to you? Why do the adults think the figure is an old man when Blake is sure it is a boy? What ways in this story are children wiser than adults—in both time periods? Can you think of instances in your own life when you thought that children were wiser than the adults around them?
- ✦ “Bring only the Insight the Inside brings”—these words appear in the magical book to both Endymion in the 15th century and Blake in the 21st century. Jolyon tells Blake that his father’s imagination was “blessed with an insight I have rarely seen.” What does the word insight mean to you? Why are Endymion and Blake the only ones able to read the book’s writing?
- ✦ Look up information about the Faust legend that Blake’s mother is studying. What is the significance of this research in understanding the magical properties of the Endymion Spring book? What is the significance of the name of the library cat—Mephistopheles? Do you believe that Johann Fust could, indeed, have been the original Faust?

- ✦ Discuss the relationship between Blake and Duck. How does Duck assist Blake in his quest? Would he be able to unravel the entire mystery without her? Who is braver—Blake or Duck?
- ✦ Who is Psalmanazar? Why doesn't he speak to the children when they first meet him? What part does he play in helping Blake solve the mystery of the book? Why doesn't he meet with the others in the Ex Libris society?
- ✦ In Chapter 15, Blake says, "Sometimes it's harder to know the question than to find an answer." What does he mean when he says that? What questions does he need to know as the story unfolds? What questions are hardest to know? Can you think of a time in your own life when you couldn't find an answer because you didn't know the right question to ask?

## PRAISE FOR ENDYMION SPRING

★ "A magical book.  
Wonderfully engaging, even addictive."

—Kirkus Reviews, Starred

"Marvelously entertaining. Set to be the biggest  
Oxford-produced hit since . . . THE CURIOUS INCIDENT  
OF THE DOG IN THE NIGHT-TIME."

—The Oxford Times





# IN THE CLASSROOM



*Endymion Spring* has many rich curriculum tie-ins. Present your class with the activities below as a starting point.

## HISTORY

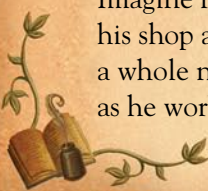
- ✦ Look up information about Johann Fust and Peter Schoeffer. Write a short skit in which you act out the business dealings between Gutenberg and Fust. What part does Peter play in this scenario? Use the Internet to research the document that describes this dispute: the Helmasperger's Notarial Instrument of 6 November 1455. Begin with [www.gutenbergdigital.de/gudi/start.htm](http://www.gutenbergdigital.de/gudi/start.htm)
- ✦ Research the meaning of being an apprentice in the 15th century. What would working in Gutenberg's shop mean to an orphan like *Endymion Spring*? What sort of clothes did a medieval apprentice wear? How long would he have to serve in order to learn a trade?
- ✦ Locate Mainz on a map of medieval Europe: [historymedren.about.com/library/atlas/natmapce1460.htm](http://historymedren.about.com/library/atlas/natmapce1460.htm). Find a route that Fust and Peter might have traveled from Paris to Mainz. Plot a route for *Endymion Spring* to travel from Mainz to Oxford (north of London) on this map. What modes of transportation would he be able to use in that time?

## ART

- ✦ Create your own illuminated manuscript. Decide on a text that you feel is important to you. Copy out the text and create an artistic way to display the initial letter, decorate the borders, and enhance the meaning of your document. What decisions do you need to make as you proceed with your work?
- ✦ Since the 15th century, book lovers have created special nameplates to identify their books. The bookplate, or *ex libris*, is a miniature art form developed to identify the owner of a book in a special way. Research this art in older and more modern formats at these Web sites and others you can find: [www.bookplate.org](http://www.bookplate.org) and [www.myhomelibrary.org/bookplates.html](http://www.myhomelibrary.org/bookplates.html). Create your own bookplate design demonstrating who you are and why your books are important to you.

## WRITING

- ✦ Write the story of *Endymion Spring*'s life from Gutenberg's point of view. Imagine how the inventor felt about the boy and why he brought him into his shop as an apprentice. What was it like for Gutenberg to be developing a whole new way of producing books? Create a journal kept by Gutenberg as he works on his printing press.



# ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Photo Credit © Susan Greenhill.

**Matthew Skelton** was born in England and grew up in Canada. He has a Ph.D. in English Literature from Oxford University. *Endymion Spring* is his debut novel. He lives in the U.K.

## INTERNET RESOURCES

### Endymion Spring

[www.endymionspringthebook.com](http://www.endymionspringthebook.com)

The official Web site of *Endymion Spring* by Matthew Skelton.

### The British Library: Gutenberg Bible

[www.bl.uk/treasures/gutenberg/homepage.html](http://www.bl.uk/treasures/gutenberg/homepage.html)

At this site, you can view actual pages from two of the Gutenberg Bibles that are in the collection of the national Library of Britain.

### The Digital Revolution: Changing Oxford

[www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/librarian/manchesterpres/manchesterpres.htm](http://www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/librarian/manchesterpres/manchesterpres.htm)

Read a lecture on the history of the book by an Oxford librarian with accompanying pictures from his PowerPoint display that show many types of early manuscripts and early printed books.

### University of Oxford

[www.ox.ac.uk](http://www.ox.ac.uk)

This Web site of Oxford University includes maps of the town and colleges and descriptions of the university's history and courses of study.

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Guide prepared by Connie Rockman, children's literature consultant, adjunct professor of children's and young adult literature, and editor of the H. W. Wilson Junior Book of Authors and Illustrators series.

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