

BOOKNOTES

EDUCATORS GUIDE

thematic connections

**Friendship • Courage
Fear • Self-Discovery
Forgiveness**

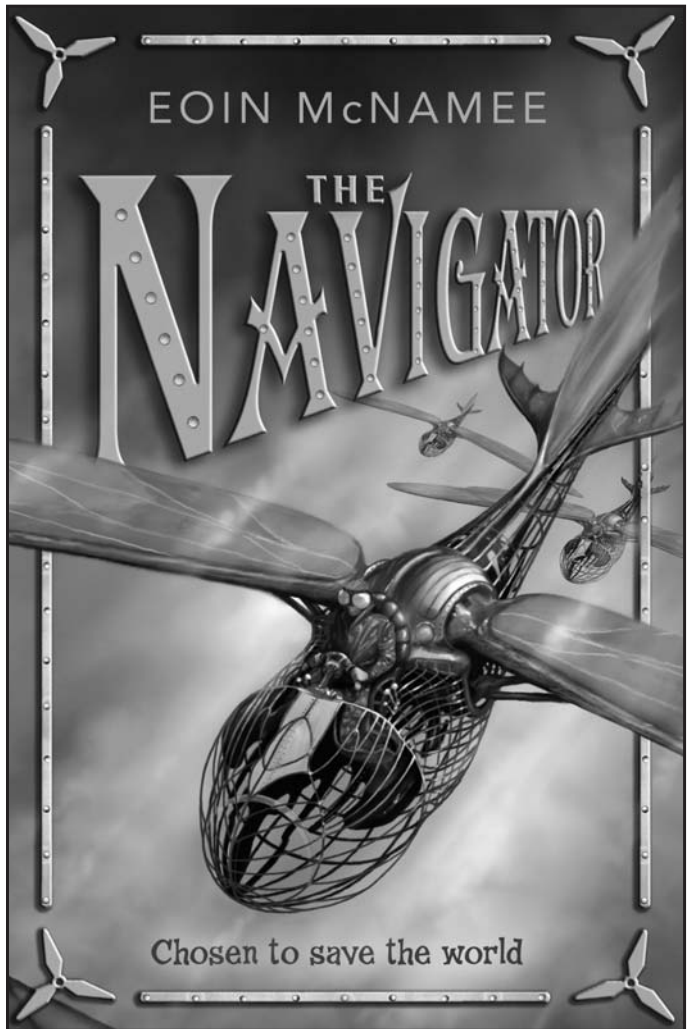
Grades 4–7

about the book



There was something different about the afternoon. It seemed dark although there wasn't much cloud. It seemed cold although the sun shone. And the alder trees along the river stirred and shivered although the wind did not seem to blow.

So begins *The Navigator*. The day was indeed different for Owen, for on this day time begins to move backward and he finds himself part of the Resisters, a band of time fighters called upon throughout the centuries to battle the Harsh, the ancient evil force that seeks to turn back the clock to a time of total cold and darkness. Owen realizes he has an important part to play in the Resistance, but can he build the trust of those around him? And can he summon enough strength and courage to do what must be done?



Wendy Lamb Books HC: 978-0-375-83910-8 (0-375-83910-0)
GLB: 978-0-375-93910-5 (0-375-93910-5)
Listening Library unabridged CD: 978-0-7393-3887-2 (0-7393-3887-0)

**“People don’t like things that
they don’t understand.”**

—Mary, in *The Navigator*

pre-reading activity

Time and memory are two important components of *The Navigator*. Lead students in a discussion about the importance of marking time (birthdays, holidays, annual traditions), and how one's personal memories are such an integral part of the fabric of life. Give students time to write a short passage describing an important memory from the past. Encourage volunteers to share their writing aloud.

thematic connections

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

Friendship—After they first meet, Cati and Owen quickly develop a bond of friendship that strengthens as the story unfolds. Why do you think that Cati and Owen become such close friends? What common personality traits do they possess? In what ways are they different? How can differences between friends be complimentary and serve to strengthen the relationship? Even though Owen does not have friends in his own time, he has an innate ability to be a good friend to others. In what ways does Owen demonstrate this capability?

Strength/Courage—Wesley refers to Owen as “Time’s recruit.” (p. 71) What qualities does Owen have that make him able to take on the role of the Navigator? Reread pages 136–139. Discuss how Owen demonstrates courage.

Fear—Owen has a fear of water. When the Chancellor asks him if anything terrifies him “for no apparent reason,” Owen says no. Why do you think Owen lies to the Chancellor? The Harsh are the personification of fear, despair, misery, anger, and jealousy. On page 60, Cati and Owen’s encounter with the Harsh leaves Cati “lost in fear.” Discuss a time that you were so afraid of something that you felt lost in fear. How did you overcome it?

Abandonment/Alienation—On page 3, Mary the shopkeeper says to Owen, “It’s not that they don’t like you. . . . They see something in you that both frightens them and attracts them as well. People don’t like things that they don’t understand.” Have you ever been unkind or unfair to someone that you didn’t know because they looked or seemed different to you in some way? Put yourself in Owen’s place. Describe how you might feel? On page 71, Wesley says to Owen, “I think you’re like one of us, the Raggies. You’ve been abandoned and the world treats you bad, and even though you ain’t as thin as Raggies, I do know a hunger when I see it.” What does Wesley mean by “hunger”? What do you think Owen needs to be fed to satisfy his hunger?

Self-Discovery—On page 132, Owen comforts Cati “with a tenderness that surprised even himself.” What other discoveries does Owen make about himself over the course of the book? On page 160, Pieta tells Owen that “sometimes it’s hard to know your own heart . . . and whether you are a good person or a bad person.” What does Pieta mean by knowing your own heart? Discuss a time when you have experienced the conflict that she describes.

Forgiveness—The Grim Captain wants something “that must be given freely, without being asked for.” (p. 281) What do you think he wants? Do you think forgiveness is something that should be given freely? Is it okay to ask for forgiveness from someone you have wronged? Why or why not? Dr. Diamond demonstrates forgiveness toward the Chancellor, even after learning of the Chancellor’s treachery. Do you think Dr. Diamond was right or wrong to have offered forgiveness to the memory of his former friend? Explain your reasoning.

connecting to the curriculum

English/Language Arts—*The Navigator* is full of fascinating characters: Owen, Cati, Wesley, Dr. Diamond, Pieta, Samuel, Passionara, etc. Have students write a character study on one character from *The Navigator*. Eoin McNamee is a master of descriptive language. An example of this skill is his use of simile, such as “sleet like frozen knives.” (p. 60) Ask students to identify at least 10 examples of simile from the story, and then have them try to write original similes to describe people, things, or events from the book.

Social Studies—Flowers appear throughout *The Navigator*. Have students research the history and symbolism of the three flowers that appear in the book: the rose, the cornflower, and the lily. The latter third of the story is set in the frozen North. Have students trace the path taken by Boat from present-day Ireland to the Arctic Circle.

Science—On page 99, Dr. Diamond describes magno as “the force that binds.” Use *The Navigator* as an opportunity to discuss and experiment with the properties of magnetism. The Nab is full of old junk and scavenged objects used to create Dr. Diamond’s amazing machines. Discuss how Dr. Diamond recycles cast-off items to create new and wondrous things. Give students an opportunity to invent something useful using recycled materials.



Art—*The Navigator* is constructed with many action-packed scenes that lend themselves easily to visual representation. Have students pretend that *The Navigator* is being made into a feature film, and that they have been assigned the task of creating a storyboard of the plot. Help students sequence the main action of the story. Then have each student chose a scene to illustrate. At the conclusion of this activity, student drawings can be placed in sequence to create a storyboard and displayed in the classroom.

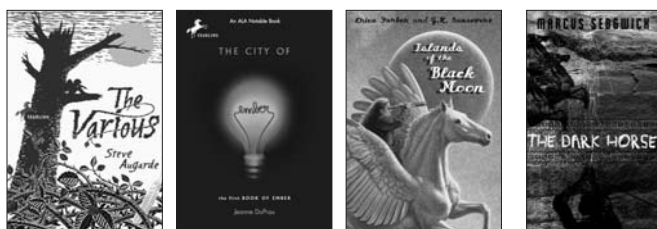
vocabulary/ use of language

Encourage students to look up and learn any unfamiliar words that they come across.

beckoning (p. 1), *shrewd* (p. 2), *derelict* (p. 5), *insignia* (p. 10), *hubbub* (p. 20), *parapet* (p. 23), *ominous* (p. 23), *aperture* (p. 34), *buttresses* (p. 36), *rebuking* (p. 38), *verge* (p. 51), *writhing* (p. 61), *cleaved* (p. 61), *bereft* (p. 64), *malicious* (p. 68), *melancholy* (p. 70), *quay* (p. 76), *relish* (p. 85), *sardonic* (p. 92), *assailed* (p. 93), *gauntlets* (p. 96), *derisive* (p. 101), *parley* (p. 101), *loathing* (p. 105), *annihilate* (p. 105), *cunning* (p. 120), *malevolent* (p. 136), *inkling* (p. 137), *discomfited* (p. 143), *haughty* (p. 181), *crescendo* (p. 190), *vortex* (p. 198), *jeered* (p. 202), *sparsely* (p. 206), *respite* (p. 226), *proximity* (p. 242), *adamant* (p. 248), *fen* (p. 269), *dilapidated* (p. 281), *fissure* (p. 285), *scrutinized* (p. 288), *aristocratic* (p. 290), *duplicity* (p. 304), *tumultuous* (p. 304), and *estuary* (p. 308).

related titles

by theme



The Various **Steve Augarde**

Yearling PB: 978-0-440-42029-3 (0-440-42029-6)
David Fickling Books HC:
978-0-385-75029-5 (0-385-75029-3)
GLB: 978-0-385-75037-0 (0-385-75037-4)

The City of Ember **Jeanne DuPrau**

Yearling PB: 978-0-375-82274-2 (0-375-82274-7)
Random House HC:
978-0-375-82273-5 (0-375-82273-9)
GLB: 978-0-375-92274-9 (0-375-92274-1)

Islands of the Black Moon **Erica Farber and J. R. Sansevere**

Yearling PB: 978-0-440-41706-4 (0-440-41706-6)

The Dark Horse **Marcus Sedgwick**

Laurel-Leaf PB: 978-0-440-41908-2 (0-440-41908-5)

about the author

Eoin McNamee was born in Northern Ireland. He is a critically acclaimed adult novelist who won the Macaulay Fellowship for Irish Literature in 1990. His novel *Resurrection Man* was made into a feature film. He has also written two thrillers under the pseudonym John Creed. *The Navigator* is his first novel for children.

in his own words: Eoin McNamee

Q: What book did you most relate to as a child?

A: It would have to be the Narnia books. C.S. Lewis was brought up about 40 miles from where I was reared. It struck me as strange and wonderful that I grew up in Narnia without even knowing it.

Q: What compelled you to write a children's novel?

A: I actually think it was driven by the landscape—the Workhouse and river bank were the places where I went almost every day when I was young.

Q: What message do you want children to walk away with when they finish *The Navigator*?

A: If I thought that they were saving the last couple of pages because they didn't want it to end, then I would be thrilled.

internet resources

University of Connecticut **arcticcircle.uconn.edu**

This site from the University of Connecticut provides information on natural resources, animal life, and environmental issues of the Arctic Circle.

Nova Online

www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/time/through.html

This page is a companion to *Nova's* special feature on time travel.

CyberSleuth Kids

**cybersleuth-kids.com/sleuth/Science/
Physical_Science/Magnetism/index.htm**

This page offers classroom activities on magnetism.

on the web

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