

BOOKNOTES

EDUCATORS GUIDE

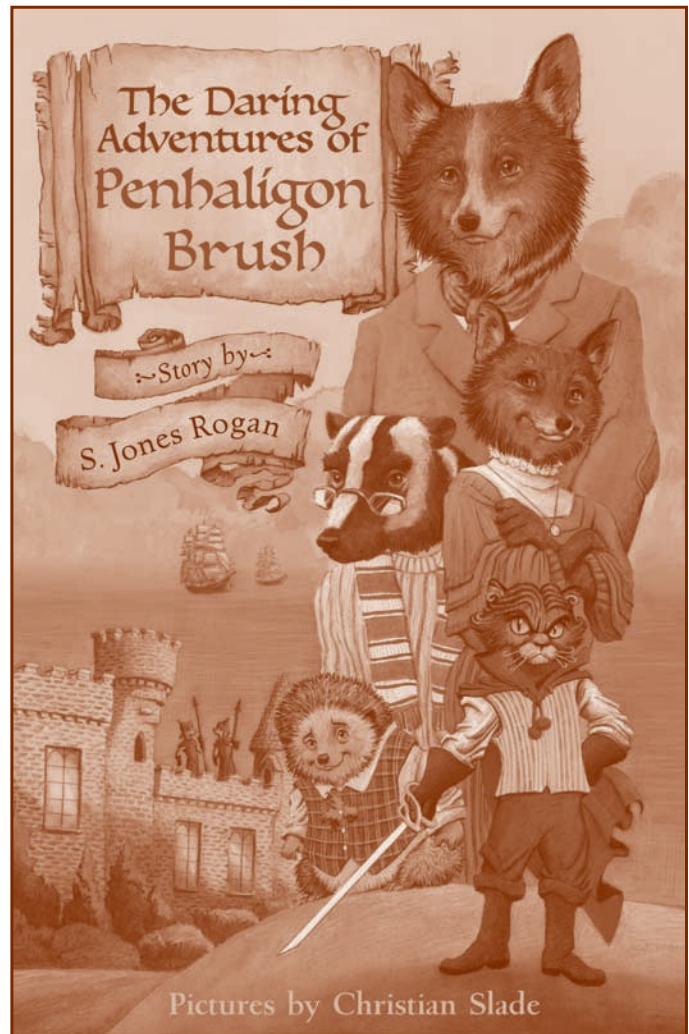
thematic connections

Adventure • Courage & Honor
Trust • Friendship
Grades 3–7

about the book

Penhaligon Brush is bored by his quiet existence in Ramble-on-the-Water as the town's apothecary. When a strange letter arrives from his brother, Penhaligon sets out on a true old-fashioned adventure full of intrigue, suspense, and derring-do. Penhaligon must foil the evil Sir Derek before he runs the wedding ship of the Princess of Spatavia aground to steal the bounty. Will Penhaligon be able to outwit those who imprisoned his brother? Can he save the princess from a watery grave?

A cast of compelling animal characters will steal the hearts of young readers as they cheer for good to triumph over evil. This is the perfect story to explore the literary elements of character and setting as readers will be captivated by both in this charming, swashbuckling tale.



Alfred A. Knopf hardcover: 978-0-375-84344-0 (0-375-84344-2)
GLB: 978-0-375-94344-7 (0-375-94344-7)

pre-reading activity

Show the class the cover of *The Daring Adventures of Penhaligon Brush* and ask them what they think the story will be about. Ask students: Are the main characters animals or human? What type of adventures do you think they will have? Who do you think will be the villain? What makes you think so? What are some elements that all adventure stories have in common?

Read aloud the letter that opens the novel and have students create questions that they hope the story will answer. For example: Why does Mawgan decide to leave his son, Penhaligon, behind? Is it a dangerous journey he went on?

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questions for group discussion

- The opening letter lets readers know that Penhaligon's parents left him as a baby before embarking on a dangerous journey. Does it seem clear that they loved Penhaligon and hated to leave him? When you read the first two chapters, do you think Penhaligon knows this? Does he know there is a secret about his family? Why do you think the author lets the reader know more than the main character?
- Talk about Penhaligon's life in Ramble-on-the-Water. What do you think of his career? Does it sound like a nice life or not? Why does he say, "Everything's right; that's the problem"? (p. 10) Do you ever feel this way?
- One way to get to know a character is to study what he/she finds important. What is important to Penhaligon? How do you know? What details does the author give about the main character so we get to know him? What makes an interesting main character for you?
- How does the adventure begin? Is Penhaligon excited about his trip to his brother's village? What does he find when he first arrives in Porthleven? What would you do if you were Penhaligon? What does he learn from the Hotchi-Witchi family?
- Who is the cause of all the troubles in Porthleven? Do you think he is the antagonist of the story? What makes a good villain? How does Penhaligon hope to make a difference?
- Do Bancroft and Penhaligon face the same fate? What do they learn is Sir Derek's ultimate plan? How do they hope to stop him? Who will help the brothers in their quest?
- Describe Rowan. How do she and Penhaligon get along? Why is Penhaligon so distrustful of her? What things do they have in common? How are they different? Is it good to have friends who are the same as you or different from you? Why?
- Discuss how Penhaligon's preconceptions for the Romany wolves make it difficult for him to trust even those that he should. How do we overcome our preconceptions and prejudices of others?
- What tasks must the heroes complete to foil Sir Derek's evil plan against the princess's ships? Who do you think is the bravest member of the team? Why? How do the characters surprise each other and themselves? Who do you think is changed most by the events in the story? What makes you choose them? How does each member contribute to Sir Derek's defeat?
- How does Sir Derek justify his plan? Lady Ferball says that her nephew was given "not enough attention and too much indulgence." (p. 153) Does this ever happen with children today? How do Sir Derek's laziness and other flaws contribute to his undoing?
- Describe how the relationship between Penhaligon and Rowan changes over the course of their adventure. What do they learn from one another? What do they become to each other?
- In the end, what does Penhaligon discover about himself through the secrets of his family? Do you think they were wrong to hide the truth from him? How would his life have been different if the people of Ramble-on-the-Water had known? Do you think they will accept him now that he's a hero? Do the characters live "happily ever after" or not? Why?



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Name: _____

getting to know the characters

Directions: There are four ways that a reader gets to know characters—by how they act and look, what they say and do, how they treat other characters, and how other characters treat them. As you read *The Daring Adventures of Penhaligon Brush*, make notes (with page numbers) on each of these characters and what you learn about them.

	How he/she acts and looks	What he/she says and does	How he/she speaks to and treats others:	How others speak to and treat him/her
Penhaligon				
Lady Ferball				
Rowan				
Bancroft				
Hotchi-Witchi				
Old Amon				
Hannah				
Donald and Dora				
Sir Derek				



Name: _____

exploring character traits

Directions: Choose one of the characters from *The Daring Adventures of Penhaligon Brush* to explore in depth. Color in the squares that describe the qualities of the character in the novel. Give examples from the novel that prove your opinions using the lines below.

Character: _____

	Not at all	A little	Somewhat	Mostly	Oh, yes!
Brave					
Friendly					
Intelligent					
Cooperative					
Responsible					

Examples: _____

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EDUCATORS: Reproduce this activity sheet to use with your students.

