

BOOKNOTES

EDUCATORS GUIDE

thematic connections

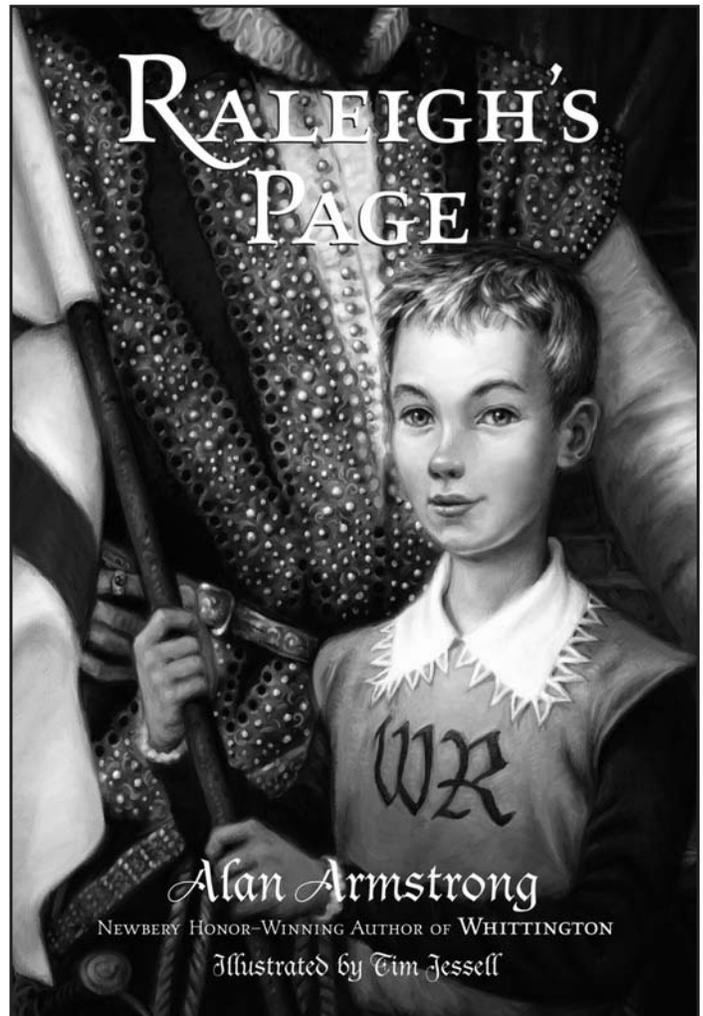
**Courage • Fear • Trust
Secrets • Deception
Innocence & Experience**

Grades 5–7

about the book

Set in 16th-century England, an 11-year-old boy becomes a page for Walter Raleigh and begins a difficult journey toward manhood and his dream of reaching America.

Eleven-year-old Andrew Saintleger has just finished school in his hometown of Plymouth, England. As the youngest son of the family, English law gives him no right to inherit property from his father. But Andrew isn't bitter or disappointed—he has his sights set on something greater: America. His father is an acquaintance of Walter Raleigh, a star in the court of Queen Elizabeth I, and requests that Raleigh take on his son as his page. Andrew moves to Durham House in London where his real education begins. He learns that he must pass many dangerous tests before he can earn the right to join a voyage to America. These tests include disguises, lessons in deception, secrecy, and trust. There are many tough moments, but the most difficult test comes when he finally reaches America and encounters the Native Americans. In the end, Andrew learns firsthand the most important lessons about becoming an adult.



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GLB: 978-0-375-93319-6 (0-375-93319-0)

**By the Newbery Honor-
winning author
of *Whittington***

Visit Teachers @ Random at www.randomhouse.com/teachers

pre-reading activity

Ask students to research the life of Sir Walter Raleigh. Then have the class construct a time line that reveals Raleigh's work from 1578 when he made his first voyage to the New World to his death in 1618. Engage the class in a discussion about Raleigh's contribution as an explorer. What did he do to prepare for his explorations?

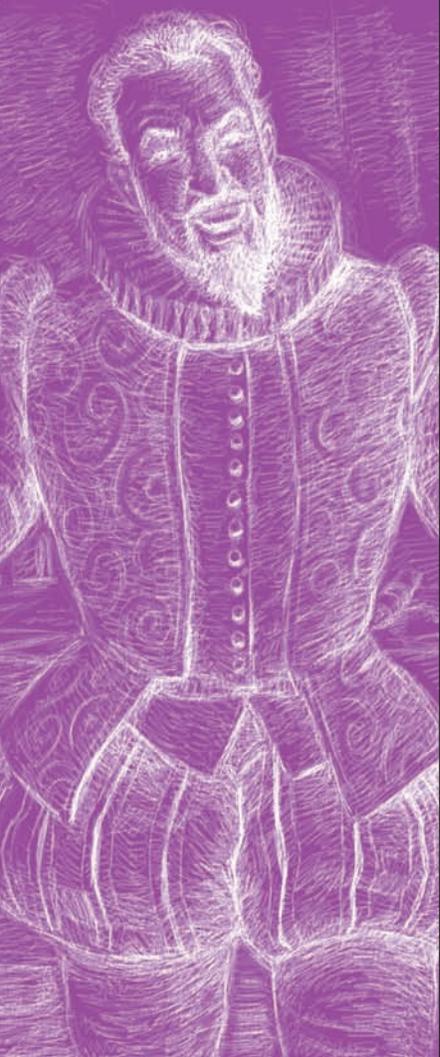


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thematic connections

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

COURAGE—Discuss the meaning of courage. How does Andrew Saintleger show courage when he leaves home to become Walter Raleigh's page? There are times in the novel when Andrew almost loses his courage. Which character helps him through these times? What is Andrew's most courageous act?

FEAR—Andrew is excited about going to London when he finishes school, but he is also fearful of his unknown fate. Describe the weakness that comes over him when he is afraid. Why is he so embarrassed by this weakness? Draw a parallel between Andrew's homesickness and his fears. Discuss how he learns to deal with his fears. How does fear make him courageous?

TRUST—Explain what Andrew's father means when he says, "Generosity can trick the cautious out of their caution." (p. 10) What lesson does Andrew learn about trust? Who is the most trustworthy character in the novel? How does pride interfere with Andrew's sense of trust? Discuss how Captain Lane breaks his honor among the Indians.

SECRETS—Andrew is told to write to his former teacher, Mr. Tremayne, and ask to see him. The message is to be written in a way that only Tremayne will understand it. Why is such secrecy so important? Andrew is instructed to pretend to be homesick when he returns to Plymouth to ask his teacher to accompany him on an important mission. Why is Andrew offended by having to pretend to be homesick? Raleigh says that he is merely asking him to wear a mask. How often is Andrew asked to wear a "mask" in the novel? Discuss the relationship between such masks and secrecy.

DECEPTION—What does Raleigh teach Andrew about deception? Discuss the relationship between deception and betrayal. Talk about the times that Andrew feels betrayed. How do Andrew and Tremayne become a team as they set out to get the maps from the man in Marseilles? How do they deceive the man? Ask students to discuss Andrew's thoughts about disguise, deception, and betrayal throughout the novel.

INNOCENCE & EXPERIENCE—Ask students to trace Andrew's growth from an innocent boy to an experienced young man. Discuss how the other boys at Durham House perceive Andrew when he first arrives. Debate whether his innocence is what Raleigh likes about him. At what point in the novel does Andrew realize that he has become a man?

connecting to the curriculum

LANGUAGE ARTS—Dr. Dee helps Andrew understand Walter Raleigh by telling him the story of the kept dog from *Aesop's Fables*. Ask students to read this Aesop's fable. Then ask them to write an essay discussing how Sir Walter Raleigh might be compared to the kept dog.

Define for students the device of figurative language and the difference between a simile and a metaphor. Discuss how, while indirect, this use of language can often illuminate and clarify abstract qualities. Armstrong uses many similes in his work—for example, “The doctor has a nose for mariners’ secrets like a fox’s for rabbits.” (p. 81) Locate other similes in the text. Ask students to create their own similes to describe aspects of the novel’s characters.

SOCIAL STUDIES—Walter Raleigh was knighted by Queen Elizabeth I, and from that day forward, he was known as Sir Walter Raleigh. Find out the qualifications for knighthood, and what takes place during a knighting ceremony. Ask students to reenact the knighting ceremony for Sir Walter Raleigh.

The Tower of London was used as a prison in Walter Raleigh’s day. Ask students to use books in the library or sites on the Internet to find out why James I, the successor to Elizabeth I, imprisoned Raleigh in the Tower of London. Write a letter that Raleigh may have written to Andrew from his prison cell. Explain why he is imprisoned and the conditions of his release in 1616.

SCIENCE—Andrew’s mother collects plants to be used as medicines. This practice is commonly called *simplic*. Use materials in the library or sites on the Internet to identify other plants used for medicinal purposes. Make an illustrated chart of at least 10 plants, and the medical diseases and disorders these plants treat. Which ones are used today?

Andrew and Sky, the Indian boy that he meets in America, teach one another science. Write a journal

entry that Andrew might have made that explains the science that he learns from Sky. State how this knowledge benefits him during his stay in America.

Walter Raleigh, John Dee, and Thomas Hariot were fascinating figures of their time. Have students research one of these men and write an essay on his contribution to science.

MUSIC—The boys at Durham House enjoy music. One plays the lute, and another the flute. Andrew sings “Oh Noble England.” Ask students to research other types of musical instruments that might have been used in 16th-century England. Ask a music teacher to share music from that period.

ART—Ask students to make a historically accurate poster advertising Raleigh’s Virginia colony. Direct them to library and Internet resources that depict typical clothing, tools, and ships of the period.

ART/DRAMA—Andrew and the other boys at Durham House make masks and act out the stories about King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table. Divide the class into small groups and ask them to select one of the King Arthur stories to perform as a one-act play. Instruct them to make masks on sticks to use in the play.

vocabulary/use of language

The language in the novel isn’t too difficult, but students may find unfamiliar words that were commonly used in 16th-century England. Have them try to define these words using clues from the context of the sentences. Such words may include: *habiliments* (p. 1), *swaggering* (p. 39), *bilge* (p. 51), *turret* (p. 51), *gallants* (p. 56), *alchemy* (p. 58), *groat* (p. 71), *astrolabe* (p. 76), *tincture* (p. 83), *refectory* (89), *livery* (p. 102), *credential* (p. 115), *vintages* (p. 116), *palisade* (p. 204), and *pinnace* (p. 205).

related titles

by theme

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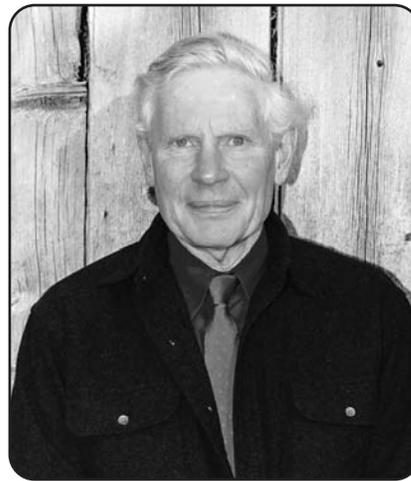


Photo Credit: Jane Feldman

about the author

Alan Armstrong didn't set out to write children's books. He only wanted to write stories that appealed to him. His first novel, *Whittington*, was a 2005 Newbery Honor Book and it marked the beginning of a journey toward merging his interests with that of young readers. He says that he has always loved books, and at the age of eight, he began volunteering in a bookshop. By age 14, he was already selling books. He lives with his wife in Massachusetts.

internet resources

The BBC: Historic Figures

www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/raleigh_walter.shtml

Brief biographical information about Sir Walter Raleigh

Queen Elizabeth I

www.elizabethi.org/us

A biography of Queen Elizabeth I, and other related articles about the House of Tudor

The Tower of London Virtual Tour

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