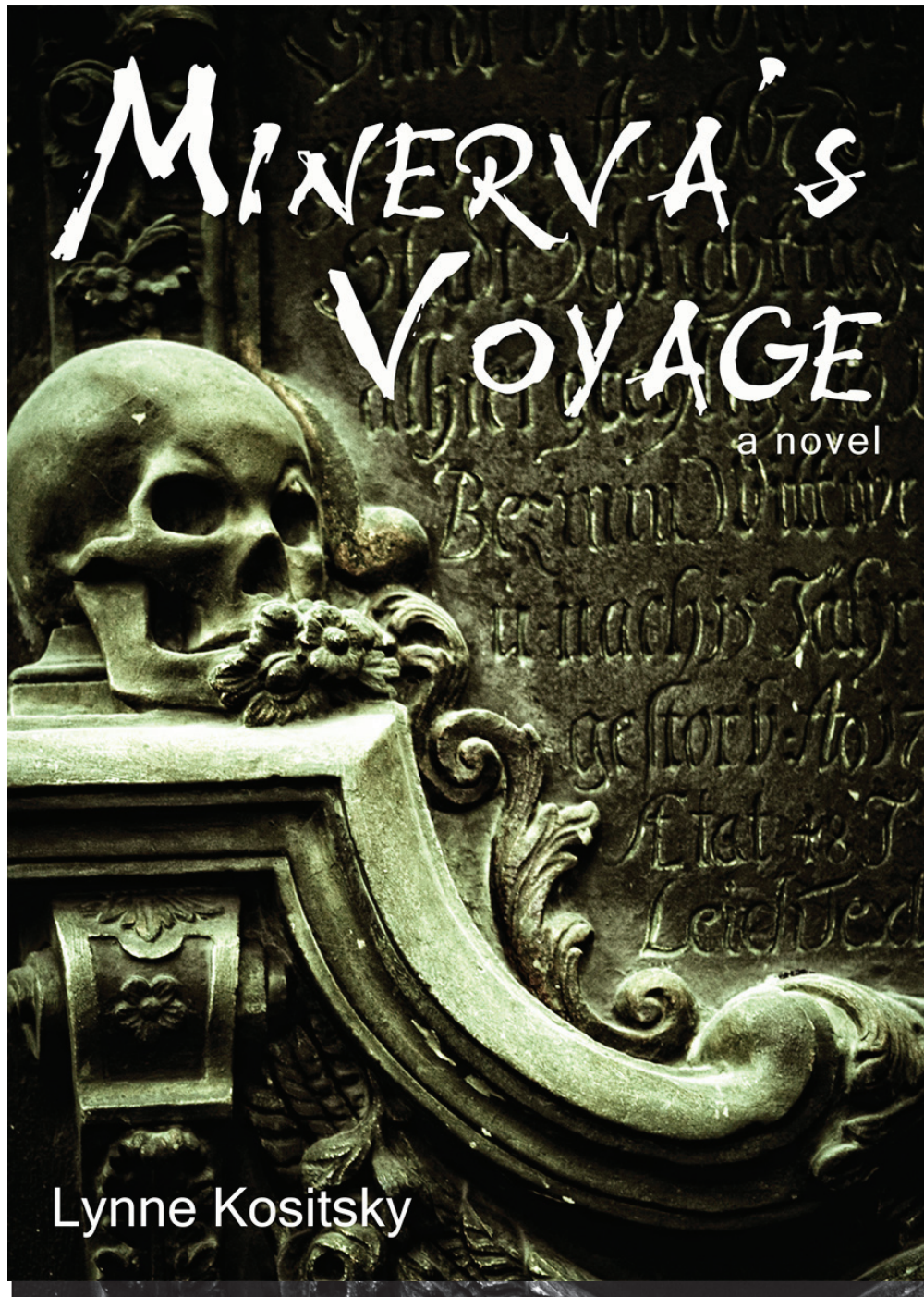


TEACHER'S GUIDE

Grades 7 – 8



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Minerva's Voyage recounts the tale of a young orphan boy who is forced aboard a ship bound for Virginia, as the personal servant of the villainous (and manner-less) William Thatcher. Renamed "Robin" by his captor, the young boy leaves behind his life as an urchin on the streets of 17th century Bristol, England, and becomes involved with a treasure hunt that leads to friendship, shipwreck, mystery, and adventure.

This resource guide is designed with the needs and interests of young adolescents in mind; however, the activities are easily adaptable to the skills and interests of a wide range of ages.

Pre-teen and teenage readers will easily identify with the resilient hero and his conscientious friend as they journey not only over rough seas and unforgiving desert islands, but also through the course of their own accelerated personal growth.

This resource guide contains comprehensive chapter summaries, a glossary of difficult terms and literary references, topics to consider before reading, questions for discussion and personal response during reading, and activities suitable for assessment after reading. The written activities are designed to expose the student to a variety of text forms including essays, poetry, factual answers, opinion pieces, personal letters, and news reports.

Chapter Response Questions

The chapter response questions are divided into three major literacy skill areas: *Understanding the Text*, *Making Inferences*, and *Personal Response*. It is helpful to call the student's attention to these categories, and to the response strategies that lead to success at each type of question. In general, the answers to *Understanding the Text* questions can be found directly in the text, and are effectively answered through close reading and attention to detail. *Making Inferences* questions are answered by drawing conclusions from clues, insinuations, or suggestions made in the text. The answer is one clearly communicated by the author, yet it is communicated indirectly rather than explicitly. *Personal Response* questions require the student to connect the themes and ideas of the text with their own opinions and experiences. The answer to the question is not found in the text, although an effective answer will relate the ideas to content from the text. A good image to keep in mind when answering this type of question is that of a conversation: you are having a conversation with the text. When you converse with someone, you do not parrot back what the other party is saying, nor do you add your own thoughts in disconnected way, ignoring what was just said. Rather, you listen attentively, and show that you have understood. You then add your own thoughts, showing how they connect, relate, compare, or differ from the thoughts just expressed by the speaker. For this reason, questions of the *Personal Response* type often insist on the inclusion of "evidence from the text," even though they are asking for a personal opinion.

If a student is stuck on a question, ask him or her: "What type of question is it?" and "Where can you expect to look for the answer?" When taking up answers, you might also ask "How would you know that this is a *Personal Response* question, even if it were not labelled?" or "Can you create three more questions about this chapter – one of each type?" Teaching students "question-literacy" will assist them greatly when they encounter reading response questions on future assessments, including the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test, as most questions we can ask about prose literature fall into these three categories.

Themes

Minerva's Voyage explores themes of friendship, honesty, treasure (material vs. immaterial), belonging, identity, conflict, destiny, and growth.

Genre: Adventure Story

What are the elements that make *Minerva's Voyage* an adventure story? Students may readily identify the fact that there is a hero, and that the hero faces many challenges on his quest to attain a mysterious prize. Call their attention also to the more abstract attributes of adventure stories: the hero is good (albeit flawed), and those who obstruct him are evil. There are stereotyped characters, including the orphan-hero (described below), and the "wise old sage" who transforms the final prize into an icon of great meaning. The hero is of the only character who experiences much in the way of character development. There is a sense that the quest is somehow destined to be followed by the hero, and the prize is not attainable until both external and intrapersonal challenges are surmounted. Invite your students to suggest other epic/adventure/fantasy stories that they have read, containing these same elements.

The sophisticated young reader might extend this analysis into questions about whether or not *Minerva's Voyage* is a realistic story, recognizing that this is not a black-and-white question. The novel is set in the real world, in a real historical period, and is based on actual historical documents. However, what might be the consequence of likewise imagining ourselves as the heroes of our own personal adventure stories? Is it realistic to view our adversaries as "evil obstructions," and our companions as "stereotyped accessories" to the drama of our own lives? Is it tempting to perceive our lives in this way, anyway? Is it true and good to consider the events of our lives to be "our destiny"? Will each chapter of our lives end with personal growth and a tangible reward? Finally, even if we determine that adventure stories are in many ways not true descriptions of the emotional landscape of our lives, what makes them so compelling?

Orphan-as-Hero

How might the story of *Minerva's Voyage* be different if Robin were not an orphan? If Peter had kind and loving parents? Many decidedly less dramatic possibilities come to mind. The idea of an orphan-hero (or heroine) is a central fixture in Western literature, ranging from Frodo Baggins, to Anne of Green Gables, to Luke Skywalker to Cinderella. Perhaps your students can think of more?

Some literary critics suggest that it is easy to relate to the orphan hero, because there is a part of each of us that feels we do not entirely belong to our families of origin, or to our immediate social circles. The orphan-hero is a dramatization of that feeling that we are somehow alone, staking out our place in the world against incredible odds. The teen/young adult reader in particular relates readily to this type of character.

Students completing independent or enriched study projects based on *Minerva's Voyage* might choose to explore this story element and do further research on literary archetypes.

Shakespeare's England

While *Minerva's Voyage* takes place shortly after the peak of Shakespeare's writing career, it may serve as an effective introduction to the sensibilities of his time for students who have not yet studied Shakespearian plays. It is a particularly apt introduction to *The Tempest*, since author Lynne Kositsky's source text (*A True Repertory* by William Strachey) may have also served as the basis for Shakespeare's play. Otherwise, *Minerva's Voyage* introduces students to the social realities of late-Renaissance England, along with a vocabulary words and styles of humour derived from that time.

Chapter 1

Noah Vaille, an orphan living in Plymouth, England in the early 17th century, is accosted by Master William Thatcher (aka "Scratcher"), and lured into joining him on a yet-unspecified voyage, where Noah is to work as the bearer of a mysterious treasure chest.

Chapter 2

Much to Noah's horror, the voyage turns out to be a sea voyage. He tries to escape, but is physically forced aboard the vessel by Scratcher. Noah, who claims that his (much resented) name has been forgotten, is renamed Robin Starveling by Scratcher. The name, like most of Scratcher's comments in the chapter, is intended to denigrate Noah. Noah (Robin) later meets the admiral's young servant, as well as a helpful sailor named Piggsley, and Mary Finney, who appears to work as a prostitute. Robin learns that the boat is bound for Virginia.

Chapter 3

The admiral's servant introduces himself to Robin as Peter Fence. Peter seems amiable, but Robin chooses not to reciprocate the friendship. Later, Robin feigns illiteracy when questioned about his abilities by Scratcher. Scratcher reveals to Robin that the treasure chest contains emblems—illustrated symbolic messages accompanied by verses. He shows one to Robin, unaware that Robin can read the text.

Chapter 4

Robin accompanies Scratcher on a visit to the captain of the ship, the frail Sir Thomas Boors, who has an all-consuming phobia of insects, both real and imagined. Scratcher presents one of the emblems to Boors, indicating his belief that the emblem is a secret message about treasure hidden on the Isle of Devils, following a shipwreck on that island a number of years prior. Although Robin is ordered by Scratcher to leave the room and fetch food before Robin has a chance to overhear the whole of Scratcher's secret request, it appears to involve re-routing the ship to the Isle of Devils in order to claim the mysterious "Golden Prize."

Chapter 5

Mary Finney witnesses Robin in the act of trying to open the chest, and the two begin bickering. Scratcher returns and spurns Mary's advances. Indignant, Mary retorts with a comment about Robin's unreliability, citing his attempt to open the chest. Peter Fence enters on the scene, and surprises Robin by lying, accusing Mary of pilfering, and defending Robin. Robin and Peter become allies, and agree to combine Peter's arithmetic skills with Robin's literacy.

Chapter 6

Robin tries to win Scratcher's trust by acting serviceably and discreetly. His efforts are rewarded by a second visit to Boors. Here, Robin witnesses Scratcher convincing Boors to issue a general commandment that will inevitably result in the ship being rerouted to a location close to the Isle of Devils, where Scratcher intends to claim the Golden Prize. Although Boors complies willingly, it is apparent that Scratcher is merely taking advantage of the captain's mental infirmity, and that his true co-beneficiary in the treasure hunt is the nasty Proule.

Chapter 7

The heat and length of the voyage is becoming difficult for all aboard the ship. Scratcher and Proule have a loud, drunken discussion about their plan to reach the Isle of Devils, which whets Robin's appetite to find out more.

Chapter 8

At night, while Scratcher sleeps, Robin and Peter steal a cipher from the chest. They are unable to decode the message, however, before they are caught in the act by Proule.

Chapter 9

Robin and Peter convince the illiterate Proule that the cipher is in fact a duty schedule, and he lets them go. Robin memorizes the cipher, and hides it. The heat, rain, and rotting food continue to make the journey taxing.

Chapter 10

Mary taunts Scratcher and Robin, throwing a rock at the pair that cuts Robin's skin. Scratcher is largely incapacitated by drink, but regains lucidity when the onset of a severe sea-storm signals his chance to reroute the ship to the Isle of Devils. A rumour circulates that a sailor has been thrown overboard in the storm, and Robin expresses hope that it is not the helpful Piggssley.

Chapter 11

There is a mad attempt on the part of passengers and crew to bail the ship and plug its leaks. Panic prevails until Admiral Winters emerges and commands everyone to calm down. He orders everyone to throw all their luggage overboard in order to prevent the boat from sinking. Scratcher tries in vain to prevent his treasure chest from being tossed into the sea, but Winters does not capitulate to his pleading.

Chapter 12

The passengers and crew continue to battle fear and discomfort as the storm rages on. Boors and Winters have a brief dispute over who is in charge of giving orders.

Chapter 13

Despair is alleviated by the appearance of St. Elmo's fire on the masts of the ship. As the storm clears, three things are apparent: First, the *Minerva Anglica* has been separated from the rest of the fleet. Second, the ship is gravely damaged, yet miraculously still afloat. Third, there is land nearby!

Chapter 14

Robin and Peter use a piece of driftwood to float from the shipwreck to the beach. Exhausted, they sleep deeply, and awake to feelings of ravenous hunger. Boors and Winters are still in conflict over their coveted position of authority, which, according to Peter, is a perpetual argument between them. Scratcher finds Robin, and, after accusing Robin of causing the loss of his treasure chest, demands that Robin find him and Proule some water. While the two boys run this errand, and also search for food for themselves, they make the ecstatic discovery that Scratcher's treasure chest has washed up to shore!

Chapter 15

Robin and Peter hide the treasure chest so as to avoid its discovery by Scratcher. They covertly set to work on deciphering its secret messages. They find fresh water, and preserve some in bottles for Scratcher and Proule. The boatswain announces that they are indeed on the Isle of Devils, in the Bermudas, a fact that is particularly meaningful to Robin and Peter, as it indicates the close proximity of the secret treasure.

Chapter 16

The passengers and crew are subsisting on tortoises, tortoise eggs, birds, crabs, and fish, as well as roast pig, thanks to the hunting prowess of the ship's dog. Although they have many tasks to do on the island, Robin and Peter make the most of their limited opportunities to secretly collaborate on studying the emblems. They are befuddled by the "x and y" cipher, and by the message to "pay heed to what these emblems really say." A solution comes to Robin in a dream, but he forgets it by morning.

Chapter 17

Robin climbs a tree and witnesses a secret pact made between Mary, Proule, and other men, the nature of which is a mystery that Robin determines to solve. Peter and Robin realize that the "crown" emblem is about Kings of England, and they apply the "x and y" rule to produce the first two letters of the secret message. In the evening, Robin overhears Proule taunt Scratcher with the fact that "he knows a secret," presumably related to the pact made earlier in the day. However, to Robin's disappointment, Proule divulges nothing. Robin observes peoples' vulnerability to having conflicts and arguments while living on the Isle of Devils.

Chapter 18

Robin and Peter solve the second emblem's secret message: "The crown at the end of the path." The two set out to find the path in question, with no luck. Peter convinces Robin to accept the presence and affection of the ship's dog, whom Peter has named "Tempest." Robin tells Peter of the conversation he overheard between Proule and Mary the day before. Robin is secretly interested in gaining from the possible conspiracy, but suspects that Peter is too saintly to understand such desires.

Chapter 19

Just as a storm is setting in, Robin and Peter notice Admiral Winters, Mary Finney, and Proule, apparently conspiring behind a large, distant rock. They speculate on the content of the secret discussion, and express bewilderment at Mary's seemingly conflicting alliances and involvements.

Chapter 20

Many of the ship's passengers and crew, including Admiral Winters, Proule, Mary Finney, and Peter have disappeared from the island, much to the consternation of all those left behind. There is debate among the deserted, about whether to stay on the island or to attempt a departure for Virginia. Robin, certain that Peter would not have abandoned him willingly, searches around the island for a clue to their new whereabouts. He finds exactly this hidden in the treasure chest: Peter's glove, pointing south toward another island.

Chapter 21

Robin wakes up to discover that he is on the second island, and that he has suffered a severe head injury. Proule proudly claims responsibility for the violence, claiming that he was ridding the group of "a spy." Proule argues that Robin should be hanged. Admiral Winters expresses sympathy and acceptance of Robin, however, and dismisses Proule's assertions with disdain. As Robin is carried back to the camp to have his wounds attended to, he notes extreme hostility in the glares of Mary Finney and of Proule.

Chapter 22

Robin asks for food, a sign that Peter takes to mean that he is feeling better. He has apparently been convalescing for three days, during which he has not eaten and has been uttering gibberish in his sleep. Robin notes an S-shaped scar on Peter's hand, previously covered up by Peter's glove. Peter reluctantly explains that this was the doing of his cruel stepfather, and among the reasons he ran away to sea. As Robin eats, the two boys exchange stories of the days in which they were separated on the two islands. Robin is dismayed to discover that he has forgotten his memorized final cipher, due to the head injury. Peter is disappointed about this, but conveys the good news that the elusive path mentioned in the previous cipher is apparently on this second island.

Chapter 23

On the premise of collecting food for the captured pigs, Robin and Peter explore the mysterious path. They are stopped and harassed by Mary Finney, but they manage to deflect her interrogations. Once they are deep in the woods, the visual similarity between the emblem and their current surroundings allows Robin to recall part of the forgotten verse, as well as its solution: "Through the labyrinth, to the cave." Peter figures out why they can't see the cave: It is daylight, not night-time, as depicted on the emblem. The two boys have a dispute over what to do next, resulting in Peter turning back, and Robin pressing on. When night falls, the moonlight reveals a secret message carved into a tree trunk, warning of villains but promising wealth. Robin is then terror-struck by the sudden appearance of an old man, coming from what seems to be a labyrinth. Robin flees.

Chapter 24

Robin runs through a severe storm, back to the camp, fearing the "old wizard" all the way. He is relieved to reach the safety of the boys' shelter. However, Peter, annoyed with Robin, declines to hear more of the story before morning.

Chapter 25

In the morning, Robin is confronted by Proule, who had apparently been assigned the task of searching for Robin the previous night. Proule eventually leaves Robin be; however, he threatens to keep a close watch over the boy.

Chapter 26

The two boys find Mary as she is yelling at Proule, accusing him of stealing her shillings. When Proule hits Mary, Peter stands up for her, and Robin cautiously follows suit. Beerson arrives to investigate the commotion, and upon hearing of Proule's violence, reports to matter to Admiral Winters. Mary offers reluctant conciliatory remarks to Peter and Robin, and Proule is ordered to be tied to a tree for three days and then put on trial. Free from their two main rivals thanks to peacemaking and confinement respectively, Peter and Robin agree that the time is right to safely explore the secret path once again.

Chapter 27

Robin is reluctant to explore the path, after the scare he experienced the night he saw the "old wizardy man." Peter is enthusiastic, however, and convinces Robin to join him in resuming their quest. They take with them the dog, Tempest, for security.

Chapter 28

The two boys reach the entrance to the labyrinth where Robin had stopped on his previous journey. Robin suddenly recalls the entirety of the emblem verse, and it comforts him in its promise of safety and success to those "who are of open heart." The labyrinth itself is dark and confusing, but Peter encourages the frustrated Robin to press on. Tempest, who has better night vision than the boys do, leads them toward some clues that guide the way to a clearing. They search for further clues, and come to a dark hole, which they enter, to discover an underground home, apparently that of the "wizardy old man." No one greets them, however, allowing the boys to explore. To their elation, they discover the Golden Prize!

Chapter 29

The Golden Prize consists of a jewel-encrusted gold medallion featuring an engraving of the phoenix. Robin wants to "swipe it and run," but Peter insists on leaving it, arguing that the theft is not only morally wrong, but also foolish in light of the fact that the two were obviously led to it deliberately by the clues, set by someone who was probably watching their every move. Robin resentfully agrees to leave the medallion, but he is hopelessly attracted to it. He speculates on how he might return at some point and take it. Suddenly, Peter hears raspy breathing, and the two boys flee in terror.

Chapter 30

Robin returns to the lean-to that he shares with Peter, and discovers, to his horror, that Scratcher is now on the island. Scratcher, clearly enraged, demands that Robin approach him, but Robin runs away. Scratcher chases after him in vain.

Chapter 31

Peter finds Robin in the labyrinth, and convinces him to come back out into the open (at Winters' request), so that Robin can testify against Proule. Winters had also asked Peter to search Proule's hut, and Peter did in fact find Proule's money pouch there, but it was empty. Robin is uncomfortable. He feels that the old man is watching him constantly, and this unsettles him.

Chapter 32

The mood at Proule's trial is carnivalesque. Proule, however, is furious, and pleads "not guilty" to having physically beaten Robin. Proule also asserts that he has no intentions of submitting to the admiral's rule. Proule's demand for a witness backfires, and it comes to light that not only did Proule beat Robin senseless, but that he also pushed a sailor overboard to avoid paying a gambling debt. Next, Proule tries to frame Peter for the crime of having stolen Mary's shillings, and prescribes a hanging sentence. Winters produces the evidence of Proule's own guilt, however, and pronounces that Proule will be hanged according to the parameters that he just set for Peter. The crown is elated with this result.

Chapter 33

Robin jolts awake at sunrise, and becomes aware of a commotion outside – Proule has broken free, and escaped! The rope that once bound Proule to the tree has been cut, which seems to be the work of Scratcher. Winters orders a search of the island for Proule and Scratcher. Robin and Peter escape to the labyrinth.

Chapter 34

Robin and Peter are accompanied by Tempest the dog, in the labyrinth. Suddenly, they smell Proule's distinctive body odour, and then they overhear him arguing with Scratcher over the stolen shillings. Proule has apparently buried them, and he claims to forget their exact whereabouts. As the boys attempt to follow Scratcher and Proule, they stumble into the old man.

Chapter 35

The old man invites the boys into his home in the cave. He explains that he has put the medallion away, having overheard the boys arguing about the possibility of stealing it. The old man discerns that the boys are frightened of him, and he reassures them that he is no wizard and that the boys have no reason to fear him.

The old man had apparently noticed the commotion of the shipwreck on the other island, and taken a trip over there to investigate, at which point he saw the two boys poring over the papers. The old man seems initially to be unaware of the ciphers, but later claims (without explanation) that it all makes sense. He brings out blankets, and invites the boys to sleep.

Chapter 36

Robin and Peter spend two days in the old man's home. The boys are unsure of whether or not to trust him, noting that he is much kinder to them than the adults in their lives have generally been. On the second day of their stay, the old man tells them a story of a young boy who lived a peasant's life in England. One day a wealthy stranger arrives at the boy's house and takes him to the royal palace, where he spends the remainder of his childhood. A lady identifying herself as "the Phoenix" gives the boy a gold medallion, admonishing him to "remember always who you are." It turns out that the lady was Queen Elizabeth, and that the boy, whose real name is Arthur Dudley, was her secret son.

As an adult, Arthur Dudley is shipwrecked while on his way to Italy, and is forced to reveal his true name and identity to his Spanish rescuers. The rescuers recognized the value of having England's royal heir in their possession, since they were at war with England. They sent Arthur to the Americas to receive a Catholic education and to transform him into a ruler with Spanish sensibilities, but a second shipwreck left him stranded on the Isle of Devils, where he survived in spite of being alone. Years later a French vessel is also shipwrecked nearby, and Arthur makes friends with the emblem-maker Henricus Plumsell who had been aboard the ship. The captain refuses to rescue Arthur from the island because he doesn't trust Arthur, so Arthur resorts to writing a message for his royal mother on a palm leaf, and sending it with Plumsell.

The old man then announces that he is in fact the Arthur Dudley of the story.

Chapter 37

Arthur Dudley and the boys speculate on Plumsell's reasons for disclosing Arthur's whereabouts so cryptically. Robin and Peter experience disbelief at the thought that they are in the presence of the rightful king, and at the thought of the scandal that it would create. The trio decide to sail for England, where Arthur plans to raise an army and confront the "usurper" James I. Robin's initial doubt about Arthur Dudley's sanity transforms into wholehearted trust.

Chapter 38

Arthur and the boys exit the cave, and happen upon Scratcher and Proule, who are wrestling each other over the ownership of the now-unearthed stolen shillings. Proule overhears Robin telling Peter to snatch the money and run away. Furious, Proule lunges at Robin with a knife, but Arthur Dudley steps in to protect Robin, and is stabbed in the process. Proule stumbles, and Scratcher uses the opportunity to fatally wound Proule by

stabbing him in the stomach. Scratcher then turns to take the money, and is enraged to discover that both Peter and the pile of shillings are gone.

Robin stays at the scene, despairing over the sight of Arthur Dudley's apparently lifeless body. However, as Robin removes the gold medallion from Arthur's neck, he makes the ecstatic discovery that Arthur is alive! Their joy is soon replaced by terror, however, as they are nearly killed by Proule, who summons up the last of his energies in an attempt to stab Robin with Scratcher's knife.

Chapter 39

Robin and Arthur flee through the woods, and manage to escape the dying Proule. They reunite with Peter, and the three embark into Winters' pinnace. Peter informs the group that he has returned the shillings to Mary rather than keeping them. As they pull away from the shore, they are joined by Tempest the dog. They pass by "Boors Island," and seeing Pigglesley, they add him to their crew. The group sets off merrily, first for Virginia, with plans to then gather supplies and head for England.

Chapters 1-3

Understanding the Text

Why does Noah Vaile decide to follow a complete stranger (and hardly a friendly one at that) on an unknown adventure? Find at least three reasons provided in Chapter 1.

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Making Inferences

Why does Robin/Noah pretend to be illiterate, when in fact he is a good reader?

Personal Response

Noah says "there is a streak of wickedness in me" (page 9). How does Noah feel about his own wickedness? Give examples of actions that Noah does, and labels "wicked." What might be Noah's reasons for thinking and acting the way he does?

Chapters 4–6

Understanding the Text

Why does Robin decide to become friends with Peter Fence, in spite of the apprehension he felt earlier?

Making Inferences

List two reasons why Boors is a weak leader, and support each with an example from the text.

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Personal Response

On page 44, Robin resolves to stay “in the good books” of Boors, Scratcher, and Proule, but to avoid making such an effort for Mary. Explain why Robin chooses this strategy. Do you feel that Robin is acting wisely, or would you advise him to act differently? Explain your thinking using ideas from the text, as well as your own ideas.

Chapters 7-9

Understanding the Text

How do Peter and Robin convince Proule that their activities are innocent?

Making Inferences

Explain the following passage from page 45:

"You s'll soon get your sea legs, lad," Piggsley assured me every time he saw me.

I was waiting for them to be delievered.

Describe the tone of voice that Piggsley might use when saying these words. Describe the tone that Robin might use if he were responding out loud.

Personal Response

Describe how Robin feels about having a friend in Peter (see page 57). Why might his feelings about the friendship not be entirely positive? Predict how each boy might benefit from the friendship as the story continues. Use ideas from the text to support your predictions.

Chapters 10-12

Understanding the Text

Describe the conflict between Scratchter and Admiral Winters in chapter 11.

Making Inferences

Why does Scratchter desire to “go see Boors immediately” on page 63?

Personal Response

Robin has to cope with many hardships while at sea, including

- Nausea
- Rotting food
- Hostile people
- No baths or showers
- Dangerous storms
- Extreme heat and cold

Which challenge(s) would you personally find it most difficult to cope with? Explain your choices.

Chapters 13–15

Understanding the Text

What meaning does Piggswill attribute to the appearance of St. Elmo's fire on the masts?

Describe the events and elements that contribute to Robin's feeling that he is undergoing a personal moral reform.

Making Inferences

On page 83, Robin remarks: "Now, true it is, I had my sea legs." Explain how Robin's situation is an example of irony.

Personal Response

Robin often has difficulty trusting other people, but he readily feels empathy for animals, and is reluctant to kill them, even for food. Show two examples of Robin's compassion for animals, from chapters 14–15, or ahead in chapter 16. Why might Robin find it easier to extend compassion to animals, rather than people? Compare Robin's feelings with your own experience: do you find it easier to feel empathy for, and extend care to people or to animals? Why?

Chapters 16-18

Understanding the Text

Describe how Robin feels as he solves the cipher and discusses its message with Peter.

Making Inferences

Why did Peter name the dog "Tempest"?

Personal Response

Cite two instances from chapters 16 and 17 in which Robin senses the presence of a "supernatural evil" on the island. What effect does he fear might happen to himself and Peter? Do you think that his fears will be realized (come true)?

Chapters 19–21

Understanding the Text

How does Winters respond when he discovers that Proule has badly injured Robin? Describe the conflict between Proule and Winters on pages 129–131.

Making Inferences

Why does Robin repeat to himself, “Nothing, nothing. I will find nothing,” as he opens the treasure chest (page 122)?

Personal Response

Mary Finney is a bit of an enigmatic character. Describe her personality by identifying three adjectives (character traits) that apply to her, and explain your choices using evidence from the text.

Trait	Evidence from the Text

After Winters expresses regret at having brought Proule to the new island, Robin thinks to himself: “I [wish] Winters hadn’t brought Mary either. She [is] sporting a nasty expression.” Who poses a greater threat to Robin’s well-being on the new island, in your opinion? Proule or Mary? Use evidence from the text to support your thinking.

Chapters 22-24

Understanding the Text

The verses on page 151 contain a secret message. Can you find it?

Show how the author uses sight, touch, and sound to create an “eerie” feeling on pages 152-153.

Making Inferences

Show that Peter is experiencing mixed feelings about Robin on page 155.

Personal Response

Considering the verses on page 151, do you predict that the old man is a villain, or somebody helpful? Why?

Chapters 25–27

Understanding the Text

How do the boys “worm their way into Mary’s graces”? (see pages 159–161).

Making Inferences

What does Robin mean when he says of Mary, “she knew where her bread was buttered”? Why does this make Robin feel confident that Mary won’t turn back to her old feelings of animosity toward him?

Personal Response

Some people say “what goes around, comes around,” meaning that if you are kind to people, you will eventually be rewarded, and if you are unkind, you will lose in the long run. Does this belief seem to be true in *Minerva’s Voyage*? Have you found it to be true in your own experience?

Chapters 28–30

Understanding the Text

List two reasons why Robin wants to steal the Golden Prize, and two reasons why Peter wants to put it back where they found it.

Robin	Peter

How can Robin know that he will be safe if he leaves the labyrinth?

Personal Response

Which is worse, in Peter's opinion, lying or stealing? Why? Do you agree with his views?

Bonus

Solve the cipher on page 179.

Super Bonus

Why does the cipher code avoid the letter "J"? You might consider the article entitled "J" on the website www.wikipedia.org to find the reason.

Chapters 31–33

Understanding the Text

Describe the elements that make Robin's sleeping quarters highly uncomfortable.

Making Inferences

Why does Admiral Winters strongly suspect that Scratcher is responsible for freeing Proule?

What motives might Scratcher have for rescuing Proule?

Personal Response

Do you feel that it is right and fair that Proule be hanged for his misdeeds? Use evidence from the text as well as your own ideas to support your opinion.

Chapters 34–36

Understanding the Text

On page 196, Robin and Peter speculate on Scratcher's recent co-operation with Proule. Describe the difference between the way Robin views this event, and the way Peter views it. Who turns out to have the more realistic assessment of the situation?

Making Inferences

Why does Arthur Dudley say, "I know of no ciphers" on page 202?

Personal Response

At the end of Arthur Dudley's story, he refers several times to "Dame Fortune." Is Dame Fortune a real person? Who is she? Why might an image of the Queen in her black and silver robes come to Arthur's mind when he thinks about "Dame Fortune"?

Chapters 37–39

Understanding the Text

Robin has seen much suffering and death in his short life. Why is he particularly upset about the apparent death of Arthur Dudley? (see page 221)

Making Inferences

To where is the crew setting sail as they leave Devil's Island? Why can't they sail straight for England?

Personal Response

How do Arthur Dudley, Robin, and Peter acquire a boat to sail them to Virginia? How does Robin feel about this situation? How does Peter feel about it? Do you agree with Robin when he says "we have no choice if we want to live till Easter"? Use evidence from the text to support your ideas.

Arthur Dudley hopes eventually to sail to England. Robin expresses his reservations. If you were among this small crew, would you cast your vote for returning to England, or staying in Virginia? Why?

Cipher #1 page 151

Hints:

1. There is a man's name hidden in the poem.
2. This is an acrostic poem.

Cipher #2 page 179

Hints:

1. Each letter of the alphabet is "shifted" up by a certain number of letters (the same number of letters in each case) to produce the code message.
2. The three-letter-code "PDA" occurs twice. What might this common three-letter-word be?
3. The asterisks represent a specific letter.

Solutions

Solution # 1: ARTHUR DUDLEY

Solution #2: YOU HAVE COME TO VISIT ME
FROM THE MESSAGE ON THE TREE
BUT THOUGH I'M FRAIL AND OLD
DO NOT STEAL MY GOLD.

Five-Paragraph Essay Topic Choices

Choose a topic, and either defend or refute the statement, or respond to the question posed, in the form of a five-paragraph essay. Support your views with evidence from Minerva's Voyage.

1. Sometimes, it is necessary to do "bad" things, such as lying or stealing, in order to bring about a good outcome in the end.
2. Neither Robin nor Peter could have succeeded in finding the treasure on his own. They needed each other to accomplish the task.
3. Robin makes many personal avowals to change his character for the better. To what extent does he succeed in this goal?
4. Many of the characters routinely refer to each other (and even to themselves) by unflattering nicknames. Describe how nicknames are used in *Minerva's Voyage*. How do these names affect the way various characters relate to each other and perceive themselves?
5. Good authors use descriptive language and carefully chosen dialogue to create moods that support the overall story or message of the novel, and make it more interesting to read. Identify the moods present in *Minerva's Voyage*, and describe their overall impact on the story.

Making Moral Choices

What is the difference between a good person and a bad person? What are the factors affecting the moral choices that we make? Psychology researcher Lawrence Kohlberg believed that it was important to study not only the way people behave, but also the moral reasoning behind people's actions. His research led him to categorize moral thinking into five (possibly six) distinct stages that we all pass through as we grow and mature.

People begin to progress through the stages in early childhood. According to Kohlberg, nobody skips a stage, although people do grow at different rates, and many people never reach level 5. In *Minerva's Voyage*, Robin and Peter are about the same age, however, their ways of reasoning morally are very different.

Level	Moral Discovery:	Being good means ...	Being bad means ...	Examples
0	(pre-moral reasoning especially characteristic of very young children)	N/A	N/A	"I want it, therefore I should have it" "You're making me wait, and I don't want to wait. Not Fair!"
1	There is such thing as right and wrong, beyond our own impulses. "Right" and "Wrong" are determined by authority figures, and communicated by discipline	Receiving rewards	Being punished	"The teacher smiles and compliments me when I listen attentively, therefore listening attentively is good" "I am punished when I steal, therefore stealing is bad."
2	Different people, ourselves and our authority figures included, have different, sometimes competing, interests.	Looking out for one's interests and respecting fair deals.	Thwarting one's own interests, and engaging in unfair deals.	"It's good to share my school supplies with Ruth, because then she will share her stuff with me." "It's bad to steal a pencil from the strict teacher's desk, because one little pencil is not worth enough to risk getting a detention."
3	Morality means more than looking out for one's own interests and responding to "fairness." Making moral choices involves "being a good person" and living up to the expectations that others have of me.	Respecting important relationships by living up to expectations and acting out of good motives	Failing to live up to the expectations of significant relationships, or acting out of bad motives.	"It is good to behave politely while on a field trip to the museum, because we represent our school." "It is bad for me to drink alcohol, because I promised my mother that I wouldn't." "Rich people who refuse to share with the poor are bad because they are greedy."
4	The roots of morality extend beyond one's immediate social circle. Rather, right and wrong are linked to the needs of society as a whole, in particular its need to be orderly and operate coherently.	Identifying rules that must apply to society-at-large, and requiring individual interests to submit to	Acting in a way that is contrary to the rules or needs of one's broader cultural group.	"Cheating on my taxes is bad, even if I don't like the way in which the government is spending the money. This is because tax fraud is against the law, and there would be chaos if enough people committed it." "It is good to punish a first-time offender with the same prison term as a repeat offender if this is what is written in the law. They may be awfully sorry for what they did, but rules are rules"

		these rules.		
5	Rules and laws exist to serve the people, not the other way around. It is possible to have a smoothly running society that is, at the same time, unethical. If "the rules" contravene some deeper, fundamental value such as human life or dignity, then it is wrong to follow the rules and right to break them.	Respecting the fundamental values such human life, freedom, and dignity. Rules should be the result of a democratic process, not an absolute authority.	Acting in a way that violates the fundamental rights and dignity of any person.	"According to the rules of my job description, I have a responsibility to maintain the financial stability of my company by manufacturing product as cheaply as possible. I also have a duty to maintain order in my company by respecting the requests of my boss. These responsibilities normally lead to right actions. However, It would be wrong for me to follow my boss's instruction to offer the next contract to Company X, because that company mistreats its employees and pollutes excessively."

Activity 1: Peter and Robin's moral reasoning:

When the two boys first discover the medallion, they debate over whether or not to steal it. List two or three statements made by each boy concerning the possible theft of the medallion. Classify the reasoning behind their arguments according to the guidelines above.

Statement:	Level:

At which level does each boy normally reason, throughout the book? Consider moral choices made by Peter and Robin, and include a quote for each to show how each boy justifies his choices (other than in the medallion scene) Classify each justification according to the level of moral reasoning shown, and give a rationale for your classification. An example is provided.

Action/Statement (quote)	Level of moral reasoning	Rationale
<p>Robin: <i>... it was now clear as glass that Scratcher was the boss in this enterprise, I needed to be in the good books of both [Scratcher and Boors]. And Proule, too, if I didn't want to find myself in the bottom of the sea... Mary mattered less than the s--- pail in the hold.</i></p>	2	<p>Robin has moved beyond assuming that his authorities have the final word on what is good and what is bad. He sees them as persons with interests, and considers to be "good" the types of actions that serve his own interests, while respecting the interests of people who impact his own well-being. However, his "good actions" are not applied altruistically, or universally. He perceives that Mary is insignificant to his own personal welfare, and chooses not to bother acting kindly toward her for that reason.</p>

The emblems described in *Minerva's Voyage* are based on an actual historical work. Find out more about them using the *Minerva Britannia Project*, located at <http://f01.middlebury.edu/FS010A/STUDENTS/contents.htm>.

First, explore the emblems listed on the Home Page. Emblems number 1, 165, 180, and 182 are those depicted in *Minerva's Voyage*.

Next, click on "Introduction" on the left sidebar. Use the information in this section to answer the following questions:

1. In *Minerva's Voyage*, the emblems are attributed to a "Master Plumsell." What was the artist's real name?
2. Why might author Lynne Kositsky have chosen to name the ship in her novel the *Minerva Anglica*?

Now, explore some of the emblems by clicking on their titles. Note that a special character (f) stands in for our "sh", "st", "ss", or "z" sound (as in "was^f"), and that "u" is often written as "v", and "j" as "i".

3. Each emblem contains two, six-line verses. Describe the rhyming scheme in each verse:
4. This poetry is written in iambic pentameter. Explain what this means.
5. Explore at least three emblems that include depictions of animals. What do each of the animals seem to represent? (see the "Animals" subsection of the "Essays" page for ideas)

Create your own emblem with verses, patterned after the ones in the *Minerva Britannia*. Your emblem must communicate a moral or spiritual message using symbolic pictures along with explanatory verses. You might consider reading more of the commentaries in the "Essays" section for ideas on how to draw a symbolic picture. Rhyming schemes were strictly observed in British literature of this period – pattern your word rhythm and rhyme scheme after the ones in the *Minerva Britannia* emblems.

What's so exciting about a king?

When the boys discover that Arthur Dudley himself constitutes the secret treasure, Robin cries out in disappointment, "But you mean there s no treasure? There is just you?"

His words may very well echo the thoughts of many readers of *Minerva's Voyage*. While rescuing someone who has been stranded on an island for decades is a wonderful thing, it is hardly what comes to mind when we think of "secret treasure". However, the way we feel about our national leaders and even our cultural heroes today is not at all how the people of early 17th century England felt about their royalty. Conduct a Web search answer the questions and to discover more about "The Divine Right of Kings." (Note: Some of the answer can be found online, others require your own analysis)

Websites Consulted:

- 1) How was leadership (kingship or queendom) passed from one person to the next in England during the Middle Ages and until modern times?
- 2) How did Queen Elizabeth acquire the throne? How did James I acquire the throne?
- 3) Explain, in your own words, the concept of "The Divine Right of Kings":
- 4) How might it feel, to a citizen living in England in 1610, to discover that the "wrong person" is on the throne.
- 5) How might the mood of the final chapters of *Minerva's Voyage* be different if (technological advances notwithstanding) the story were set in our own time, and Arthur Dudley turned out to be "the one who was supposed to be Prime Minister."
- 6) How do Robin and Peter stand to personally benefit from their new relationship with Arthur Dudley? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

Writing a News Report

Imagine that you are a news reporter in Plymouth England, in 1610 or 1611. A small boat containing Robin Starveling, Peter Fence, Sailor Piggsley, Tempest the dog, and Arthur Dudley has just arrived at the dock. Arthur Dudley seems eager to communicate something to you about his “true identity.” Realizing that you have the perfect front-page story for tomorrow’s newspaper on your hands, you instantly whip out your quill, and begin to write...

Assignment: Write a news report of the event described above. Remember to include information answering the 5 W-questions, and to maintain the perspective of a news reporter who does not have background knowledge concerning these characters – you know only what you see, and what they choose to tell you!

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