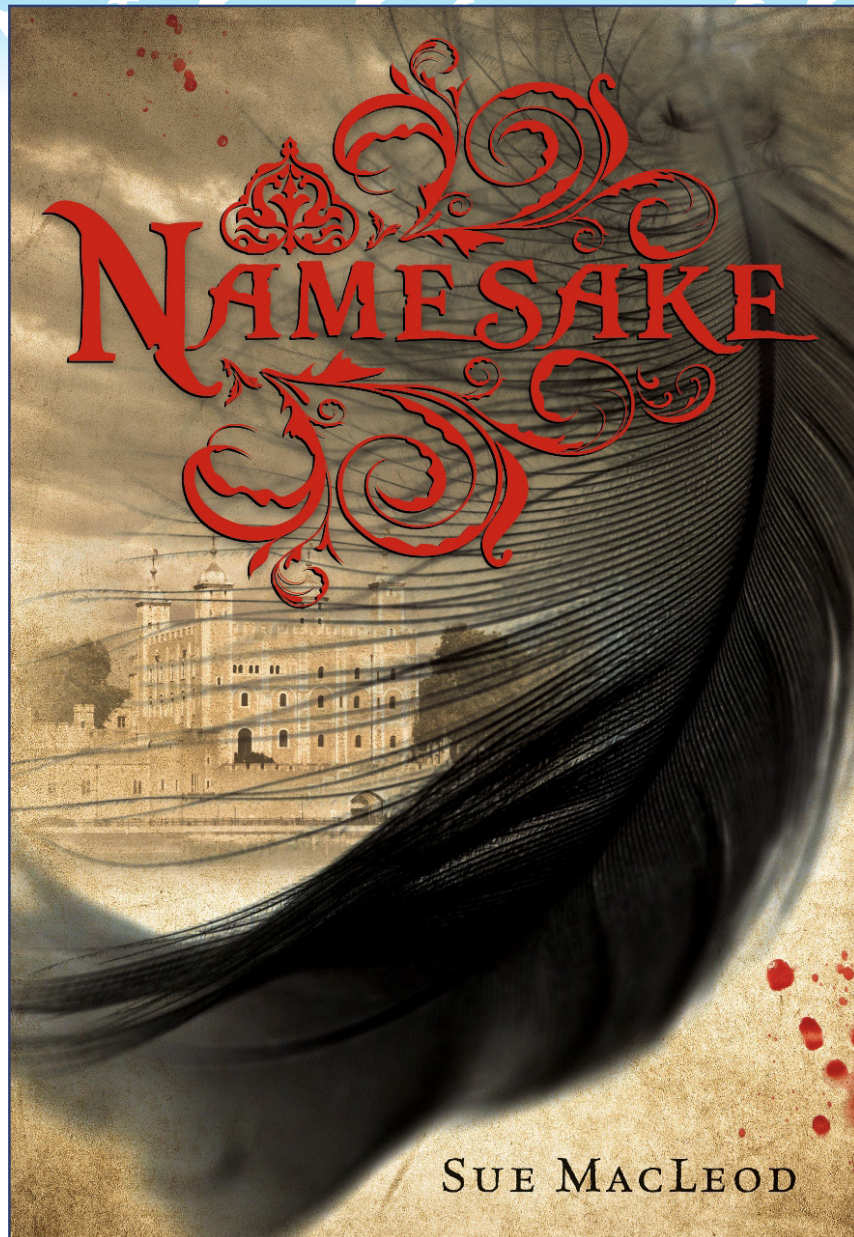


NAMESAKE

Sue MacLeod

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Created by Erin Woods



pajamapress



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STORY SUMMARY

It started with a history project. Mr. Gregor assigned a research paper on a figure from the Tudor era, and of course Jane Grey had to pick her namesake—Lady Jane Grey, the fifteen-year-old girl whose parents schemed to place her on the throne of England, then abandoned her to face the executioner. The project is engrossing from the start, but when Jane opens a mysterious prayer book and finds herself in the Tower of London in 1553, she ends up literally drawn into her namesake’s story.

Soon, Jane is slipping into the past whenever the present becomes too unbearable, avoiding her mother’s demands, her best friend’s fickleness, her crush’s indifference. In the Tower she plays chess with the imprisoned Lady Jane, awed by her new friend’s strength and courage. And it is in the Tower, keeping vigil as the day of the execution draws near, that Jane learns that she, too, must have the courage to fight for her own happiness.

Sue MacLeod is an author and editor who lives in Toronto, Ontario. Previously she lived in Halifax, Nova Scotia, where she worked in the public library and was the city’s first Poet Laureate. *Namesake* is her first novel for young adults. Learn more about Sue at <http://suemacleod.com>.

RESOURCES

See a digitization of Lady Jane Grey’s prayer book at:

www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=7220&CollID=8&NStart=2342

Find information about the Tudor kings and queens at the Official Website of the British Monarchy:

www.royal.gov.uk/HistoryoftheMonarchy/KingsandQueensofEngland/TheTudors/TheTudors.aspx

PRE-READING LESSON

THE TUDORS

Materials: Chalkboard or whiteboard, pencils, paper, Internet or other research materials

Directions: To familiarize your class with the Tudor period in England, divide them into seven groups and assign each group one of the following topics to research:

- The Wars of the Roses
- Henry VII
- Henry VIII
- The English Reformation
- Edward VI
- Mary I
- Elizabeth I

Have each group prepare one or two paragraphs summarizing important details about their topics, then present them (in chronological order) to the class.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. If you could go back in time and meet anyone from history, who would it be? Why?
2. At the beginning of high school, Megan seems to be changing quickly, leaving Jane behind. Have you ever experienced a similar situation in a friendship? How did it feel? How did the friendship turn out?
3. Do you think it is only Megan who is changing, or Jane as well?
4. After reading the prologue, what expectations did you have about the book? (7)
5. If you found yourself to be invisible and in a strange place, what would you do?
6. Why do you think Jane has so much trouble admitting her mother’s problem even to her best friend?

7. Crisco’s friendship with Megan is obviously difficult for Jane, but Crisco does try to be friends with both girls. Have you ever been in Crisco’s position? How did you feel?
8. Did you believe Tom Kantor wrote the poem to Megan? If not, who did you think did write it? (69)
9. On page 78 Jane thinks about how it feels to babysit somewhere for the first time, the strangeness of being alone in the home where other people live their lives. Have you ever experienced a similar feeling? What might your home indicate about your life? What might be misleading?
10. Why do you think movies about historical figures don’t always stick exactly to the historical details? What are the pros and cons of this? (91)
11. How might Lady Jane have felt when she realized Jane really was from the future? If you were in her position, would you want to know about your fate? (119)
12. What did you think of chapter 16? Was it just a dream? If not, what might it mean? (131)
13. “I won’t leave you,” Jane thinks to her mother. “I won’t tell anyone your secret.” Why do you think Jane felt so strongly about that, in spite of being deeply hurt by Analise’s drinking and mood swings? (135)
14. When you read chapter 21, did you believe it was a dream, or did you think it really happened? Why? What clues did the author leave the reader?
15. “By times I wonder what is written in your history books. People oft-times see what they set out to see. Or fear most,” says Lady Jane on page 187. What does she mean?
16. On page 193 Jane considers the modern use of the expression “waiting for the ax to fall” and thinks, “The stuff we say, not even getting it.” What other expressions can you think of that have lost their original context?
17. When did you realize that Lady Jane’s physicality in the modern world was different than Jane’s in Tudor England? What clues did you notice?

18. Do you believe Lady Jane could have traveled to Jane’s time when she read the psalm aloud at her execution? Why do you think the author left this part of the story open to interpretation?

TIME SLIP

(HISTORY, RESEARCH)

Materials: Pencils, paper, Internet or other research materials

Directions:

1. Ask students to choose a historical figure. You may wish to have them research someone who lived in an era covered by your grade’s curriculum.
2. Have students research their figure and answer the following questions:
 - When did this person live?
 - What is he/she famous for?
 - Describe ten social norms or customs that would be strange to you if you were to travel back to his/her time.
 - Describe ten social norms or customs that would be strange to him/her if he/she were to travel to your time.
 - If you could travel back to this person’s time period, what or whom would you like to see? Why?

QUEEN OR PAWN?

(HISTORY, ORAL COMMUNICATION)

Materials: Research materials, pencils, paper, stopwatch

Directions:

Lady Jane Grey has been viewed for centuries as a pawn caught in the political and religious struggle of Tudor England. Lately, however, scholars have begun to point out the ways in which she used the power she did have. For example, as Jane writes on page 25, “In her nine days on the throne, she let Guildford [Dudley] be her ‘consort’ only, not her king.” Furthermore, she wrote many letters during her imprisonment that advanced the position of the Protestant faith. Her death, which she chose to accept rather than betray her faith, also provided the Protestant church with a new martyr.

In this activity, your class will hold a debate on the following premise: Lady Jane Grey was not merely a pawn, but a powerful woman.

Divide the class in two and instruct half of the students to research and prepare arguments in favour of this statement, while the other half prepare a case against it. Have each side elect representatives to deliver their arguments. Appoint a timekeeper with a stopwatch to time each segment of the debate.

You should choose a debate format appropriate to the age and personalities of your students, but one possible format, which uses three members on each team, is the following:

1. The premise is stated.
2. Pro representative #1 delivers opening arguments (3–5 min)
3. Con representative #1 delivers opening arguments (3–5 min)
4. Pro representative #2 delivers further opening arguments (3–5 min)
5. Con representative #2 delivers further opening arguments (3–5 min)
6. Pro representative #3 offers a rebuttal to the arguments of the Con team (2–4 min)
7. Con representative #3 offers a rebuttal to the arguments of the Pro team (2–4 min)
8. Each team may ask the other three questions. Each question should take no more than 15 seconds to ask and 1 minute to answer.
9. The audience and/or the teacher may ask questions of both teams. Each question should take no more than 15 seconds to ask and 1 minute to answer.
10. The audience or an impartial judge votes on which team was more successful in defending its position.

HEY, MY LADY
(DRAMA, WRITING)

Materials: Pencils, paper, Internet, costumes (optional)

Directions:

1. Jane and Lady Jane learn new vocabulary from each other that sounds out of place in their own time. Have students form small groups to write scripts for a short scene featuring everyday life in the 21st century.

2. Using words learned in *Namesake* and through Internet research, ask each group to adapt its lines to include Tudor vocabulary.
3. Give students time to practice their scenes and present them to the class.

For reviews of *Namesake*, interviews with Sue MacLeod, and further resources, visit

http://pajamapress.ca/news_reviews/?page_id=1583

To watch the book trailer for *Namesake*, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VD0grtjU2VM> (Canadian version)

Or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qXmfEe7AS2E> (American version)

SUGAR ADDICTS

(HEALTH)

Jane mentions that Shakespeare, who lived not long after Lady Jane, ate so much sugar that his teeth turned black. Tooth decay was a common problem in that time period, when plentiful sugar was a new part of people’s diets and dental hygiene was not well understood. In this activity students will conduct an experiment to approximate the action of sugar on teeth.

Materials: a raw egg with no cracks; a transparent, watertight container; white vinegar

Directions:

1. Explain to the class that the bacteria that live on teeth feed on sugar and produce acid. It is the acid, not the sugar itself, that causes tooth decay. In this activity we will use vinegar for the acid.
2. Produce the egg and explain that it will represent a tooth. The egg’s shell is made mostly of calcium carbonate; tooth enamel is also largely calcium. Have students touch the egg and describe what they feel.
3. Fill the container with vinegar and place the egg gently inside. Ask students to describe what they see. They will notice bubbles forming; explain

that these are made of carbon dioxide, which is produced by the reaction between an acid (the vinegar) and a base (calcium).

4. Wait 24 hours and examine the egg again. Ask students to describe what they see now. You may take the egg out of the vinegar and pass it around very carefully. Repeat the next day, and a third if necessary. By then the shell will have completely dissolved and the egg will be encased only in a membrane. Explain that the chemical reaction that created the carbon dioxide has used up all of the calcium, just like baking soda (another base) is used up in a traditional baking soda-and-vinegar experiment (this is a simplistic explanation that could be made more specific in a chemistry lesson).
5. Using what they now know, ask students to infer what happens to teeth when the acid produced by sugar-eating bacteria is not rinsed or brushed away.

Bonus: You can also demonstrate the staining of teeth by leaving an egg for 24 hours in a glass of dark-colored cola. The stain can then be removed with a toothbrush and toothpaste. However, it is likely that Shakespeare’s teeth were not stained, but dead; if tooth decay breaches the enamel, it can spread quickly through the living tissue inside the tooth, causing it to die and turn black.

WRITING HISTORICAL FICTION (WRITING, HISTORY, RESEARCH)

Materials: Pencils, writing paper, Internet or other research materials

Directions:

1. Remind students that historical fiction is a genre that gives an accurate portrayal of a historic setting, event, or person, but in which the author uses his or her own imagination to make the story more complete.
2. Point out the Author’s Note on page 227, which describes some of the real facts and historical events that Sue MacLeod used, as well as some of the liberties she took to make the book more engaging.
3. Have students choose a historical figure about whom they will write a short work of historical

fiction. As in the “Time Slip” activity above, you might have them work with a time period that you have studied or will study in class.

4. To begin their research, students must know when and where their subject lived. They should also have some information about their subject’s lifestyle, such as their social class or their employment.
5. Give students time to research the following aspects of life in their subject’s time, place, and social position: clothing, language, food, transportation, buildings, work, and social activities. Encourage them to write down what their subject might have seen, smelled, tasted, touched, felt, and heard on an ordinary day. Remind them to keep notes of the information they find and the sources in which they find it.
6. Have students write a short story about an experience their subject might have had. Remind them to use facts they know about their subject and sensory details from their research in step 5.
7. Tell students that even though some things in historical fiction are made up, it is important to be accurate in describing times, places, and major historic events. Have them exchange their story and research notes with a partner so that they can check each other’s work. If time permits, you may also have them revisit the books and websites their partner noted down in Step 5 to make sure the facts were transcribed correctly.
8. Have students make any necessary revisions and write a final draft.



Photo by Tiina & Geir/cultura/Corbis

ACROSTIC POEM

(WRITING)

Materials: Lined paper, pencils

Directions:

Simon Wong wrote an acrostic poem using the word “Chemistry” (p. 106) that played on the double meaning of the word as both a school subject and an attraction two people feel for each other. Have the class brainstorm a list of other words with double meanings.

Choosing a word from the list or coming up with their own idea, have students write an acrostic poem that plays on the double meaning of a word.

CALLIGRAPHY

(ART)

Materials: Felt-tip calligraphy pen, steel-tip calligraphy pen and ink, or broad-nibbed fountain pen (the effect can also be approximated with a chisel-tip marker); pencil; eraser; ruler; paper that does not bleed; Internet; Calligraphy handout

Directions:

1. Show the students the images of Lady Jane Grey’s prayer book available at the British Library’s website: <http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminated-manuscripts/record.asp?MSID=7220&CollID=8&NStart=2342>
2. The script used to write this prayer book is a form of calligraphy. In this lesson, students will develop their own calligraphy script. You can find images of calligraphy alphabets and primers on the Internet to demonstrate.
3. Distribute the Calligraphy handout available at the end of this discussion guide. Make sure your students understand the following rules:
 - Always hold your pen so that the nib forms a 45-degree angle with your guide lines.
 - The “x-height” is the height of the body of a letter—for example, the height of a whole letter x or the round part of a d or p.
 - The upper part of a letter like d is called an “ascender.”
 - The lower part of a letter like g is called a “descender.”
 - The height of your guide lines is determined by

the width of your pen nib. See the handout for a diagram that will help you set up your guide lines.

- Always keep the same amount of space between your letters and between your words. Make sure there is adequate white space between your lines to keep your writing legible.

Using the calligraphy handout, have students complete the following steps:

1. On blank paper, set up your guide lines as shown on the handout.
2. Practice drawing straight letters like i, l, j, etc. until your hand is used to maintaining a 45-degree angle.
3. Using examples of calligraphy scripts from the Internet for inspiration, experiment with different letter shapes until you come up with your own alphabet design.
4. Once you can draw all of your letters with confidence, draw new guide lines (faintly) on a piece of high-quality paper.
5. Draw your alphabet from a to z. Erase your guide lines. You may add decorations to the page if you wish. Students in the Tudor period practiced drawing alphabets like this in order to master penmanship.
6. **Bonus:** Choose a quotation or a few lines of verse and practice writing it in your calligraphy script. Once you can write it with no mistakes, set up a piece of high-quality paper with faint guide lines, write your quotation, and erase the guide lines. Add decorations if you wish.



Photo by Anna Kucherova

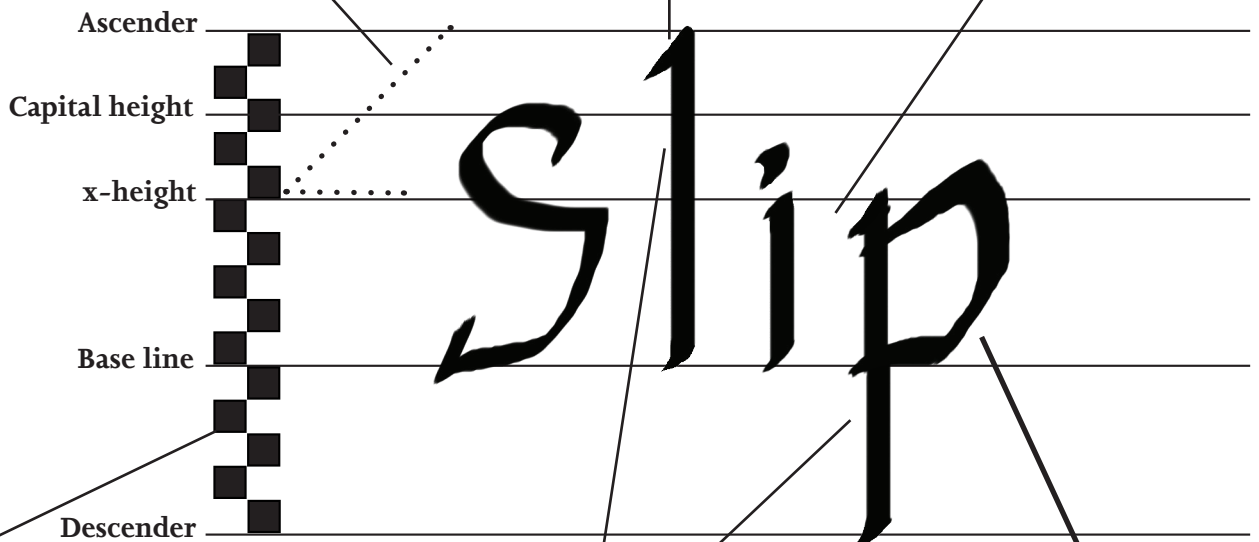
Calligraphy • From the Greek kallos (beauty) and graphē (writing)

Set up your guide lines:

Always hold your nib at a 45-degree angle to your guide lines

This little line is called a “serif.”
Some fonts have serifs while others are “sans (without) serif,” but the two kinds are not mixed.

Be aware of the space you leave between letters.



Measure the height of each guide line with the width of your pen nib. In this example, the ascender, x-height, base line, and descender lines are all five pen nibs apart.

Aim for ascenders and descenders that are perfectly vertical.

Try to make the rounded part of letters like p, a, b, etc. uniform.