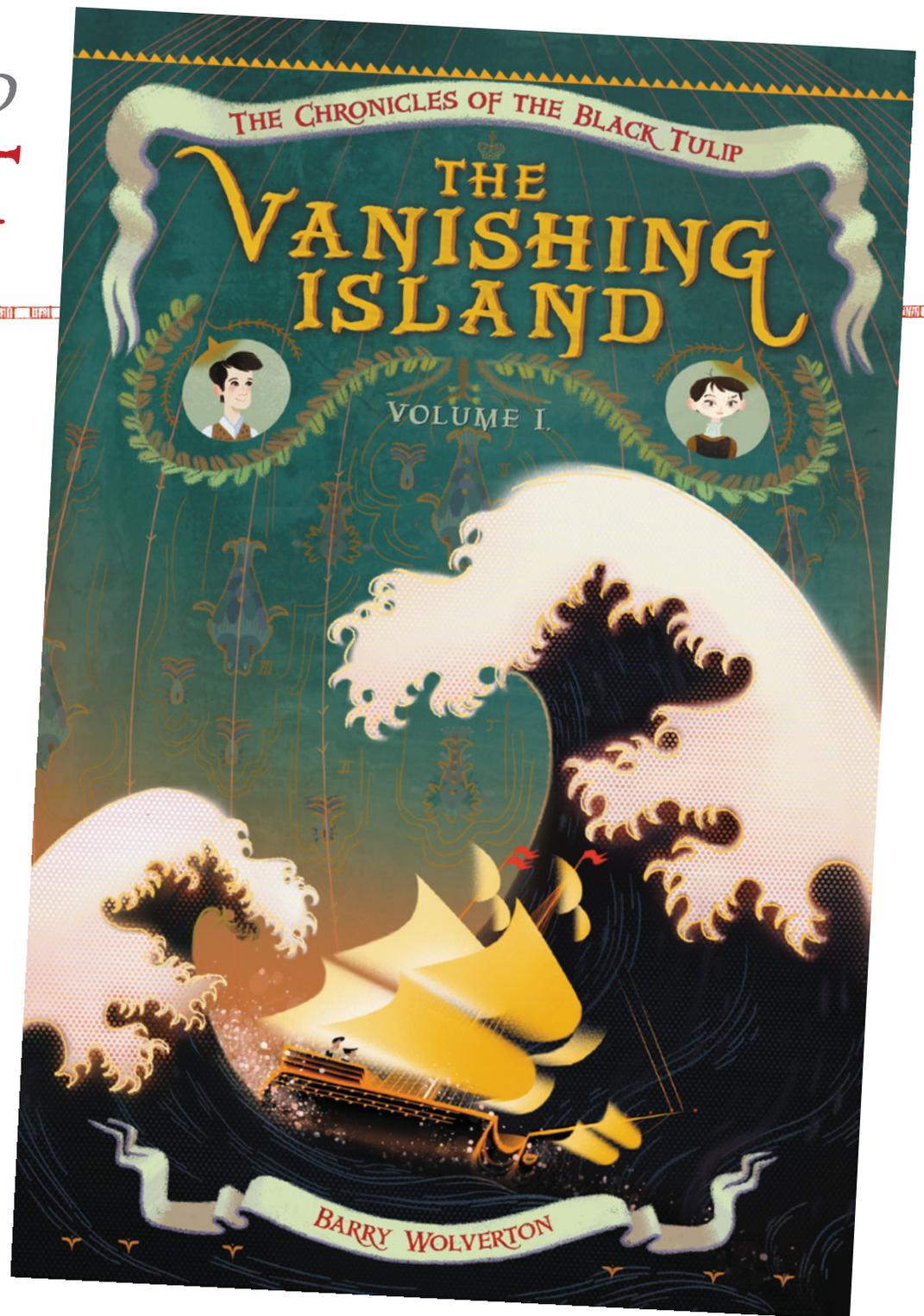


# THE VANISHING ISLAND ACTIVITY KIT

An Activity Kit for Educators,  
Librarians, Booksellers, Book Clubs,  
and Other Seaworthy Readers

To introduce Volume I of  
*The Chronicles of the Black Tulip* series  
by Barry Wolverton



# ABOUT THE KIT



To deepen the reader's engagement with this Age of Discovery novel, we present you with a series of activities and event ideas that can be:

- ✿ incorporated into classroom lessons;
- ✿ serve as programming at a library or bookstore;
- ✿ used with a book club; or
- ✿ experienced individually by a curious reader.

Informational reading, geometry, social studies, and science are embedded into these hands-on learning activities designed for readers ages 8-12.

## ACTIVITY 1: MAPPING THE ALBATROSS

The majority of the action in the novel takes place on board a ship in 1599. The reader comes to know the intricacies of the *Albatross* as the 12-year-old novice Bren Owen does. Readers will use informational text features to map their growing knowledge of the vessel and the story.

*Note: While this activity may be used at an event to introduce the book, it is best used during the reading of the book.*

In line with CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.5, RI.3-6.10

## ACTIVITY 2: NOTABLE KNOTS

At sea, knowing the right knot can save a sail or even a ship. Through hands-on learning with step-by-step instructions, readers use both the text and the illustrations to practice this sailor's skill.

In line with CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3-4.7

## ACTIVITY 3: BATTLE AT SEA

A sea battle in the book is complicated by the appearance of an impenetrable, magical fog. Readers will use their powers of prediction, geometry and deductive reasoning to fight a now-invisible foe.

In line with CCSS.Math.Content.5.G.A. 1-2

## ACTIVITY 4: NAVIGATING WITH A NEEDLE

It was either a battle at sea or the fulfillment of a mysterious wish that sent the *Albatross* wildly off course. Bren, now serving as the navigator's apprentice, must learn the science of measuring longitude, latitude, speed, and distance. In this physical science activity, readers magnetize a needle and float it in water to find north and learn about the magnetic poles.

In line with NGSS.3-P.52-3

## ACTIVITY 5: THE PLOWMAN AND THE CLOUD MAIDEN

The unspoken mission of the *Albatross's* voyage is to find an island that no sailor or navigator has seen in 300 years. Solving the puzzle of Vanishing Island's location involves a Chinese legend and the ability to read Chinese characters. In this activity, readers can practice the brush strokes to make some simple Chinese words and build an appreciation of China's rich written language.

## ACTIVITY 6: JOIN THE ORDER OF THE BLACK TULIP

Entry into the secretive Order of the Black Tulip is only bestowed upon those adventurous sailors and explorers who are open to the world's mysteries—as well as any reader who has finished the book and completed these activities! This activity offers multiple images of The Order of the Black Tulip tattoo and instructions on how to print the sheet using temporary tattoo or decal paper.

# ABOUT THE BOOK

*The Vanishing Island*  
*The Chronicles of the Black Tulip*  
Volume 1

By Barry Wolverton

Published by Walden Pond Press

Does the Vanishing Island really exist? And if so, what treasure—or terrible secret—was hidden by its disappearance?

It is 1599, the Age of Discovery in Europe. But for Bren Owen, growing up in the small town of Map on the coast of Britannia has meant anything but adventure. Enticed by the tales sailors have brought through Map's port, and inspired by the arcane maps his father creates as a cartographer for the cruel and charismatic map mogul named Rand McNally, Bren is convinced that fame and fortune await him elsewhere. That is, until his repeated attempts to run away land him a punishment worse than death—cleaning up the town vomitorium.

There, Bren meets a dying sailor who gives him a strange gift that hides a hidden message. Cracking the code could lead Bren to a fabled lost treasure that could change both his life and that of his widowed father forever. But to get there he will have to tie his fate to a mysterious Dutch admiral obsessed with a Chinese legend about an island that long ago disappeared from any map.

Before long, Bren is in greater danger than he ever imagined, and he will need the help of an unusual friend named Mouse to survive.

Barry Wolverton's thrilling adventure spans oceans and cultures, brings together East and West folklore and proves that fortune is always a double-edged sword.

[harpercollinschildrens.com](http://harpercollinschildrens.com)

[walden.com/thevanishingisland](http://walden.com/thevanishingisland)

Trade ISBN: 978-0-06-222190-2  
Ebook ISBN: 978-0-06-222192-6

## CREDITS

Reviewers: Kirsten Cappy, Curious City, Programming Consultant; Kristen Remenar, Librarian, Educator, National Literacy Speaker; Wang-Ying Glasgow & Seung-a Park, Chinese Calligraphy.

Book Jacket © 2015 by Priscilla Wong. Interior illustrations © 2015 by Dave Stevenson. Reprinted courtesy of HarperCollins publishers. All rights reserved.

Photograph of Barry Wolverton © Allison Rogers Photography.

Except where otherwise indicated, all text © Walden Media, LLC. All rights reserved. Walden Media is a registered trademark of Walden Media, LLC. The Walden Media skipping stone logo is a trademark of Walden Media, LLC.

All material in this Activity Kit may be reproduced for literacy and educational purposes only.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Barry Wolverton is the author of *Neversink* (Walden Pond Press). He has extensive experience creating books, documentary television scripts and website content for international networks and publishers, including National Geographic, Scholastic.com, the Library of Congress, and the Discovery Networks. Barry lives in Memphis, Tennessee.

## PRAISE FOR THE BOOK

"Wolverton deftly draws parallels between Western astrology and Chinese mythology and cleverly weaves fiction and legend into history. Fast-paced and entertaining, this fine trilogy opener will keep both fantasy and historical-fiction buffs turning the pages." —*Kirkus Reviews*

"This engaging historical narrative will draw readers in who love stories of adventure and exploration with a strong dose of fantasy." —*School Library Journal*



# EVENT IDEAS

## FOR EXPLORING THE AGE OF DISCOVERY WITH READERS

### AND TO CELEBRATE *THE VANISHING ISLAND!*

*"You're twelve. Let's not be hysterical. Besides that, your idea of life on the high seas . . . I'm afraid you've been reading too many stories."*

*"Whose fault is that?" said Bren.*

—*THE VANISHING ISLAND, CHAPTER 3*

Whose fault is it that your readers get introduced to "too many stories"? Yours. And we heartily thank you for it.

To help you introduce *The Vanishing Island* by Barry Wolverton during a classroom, bookstore, book club, or library event, we have included a whole kit of activities. Each activity includes a supply list, preparation, and suggested read-alouds.

Looking to make the activities into a larger "Age of Discovery Event"? Here are some suggested additional engagement embellishments.

## SAILOR TOGS

For \$1.00 or less apiece, you can purchase bandanas for your readers. With the fold of a triangle-folded bandana placed across the forehead and knotted behind the head, any reader can be turned into a 16th-century sailor. Imagine reading *The Vanishing Island* to a roomful of readers thus outfitted!

## SAILOR TOGS PHOTO BOOTH

Consider securing some props: a coil of rope, a telescope, and perhaps a "pirate shirt" from an online retailer (or your own closet). Take photos of your readers holding a copy of *The Vanishing Island*. Share the photos with your networks or with Walden Pond Press on Twitter (@waldenpondpress).

## SEA CHANTIES

Music always provides atmosphere. Head to the CD location at your library to look for sea chanties. If you prefer **iTunes**, we recommend "Sea Chanties and Forecastle Songs at Mystic Seaport," a Smithsonian Folkways Recording. If you want to teach a sea chantey, you might choose the simplicity of "Haul on the Bowline." You can find lyrics at [www.jsward.com/shanty/](http://www.jsward.com/shanty/) and hear the tune on many YouTube videos. The bowline is a knot taught in this kit!

## HARDTACK & SCURVY PROTECTION

If you are looking to serve food at your event, you might consider hardtack, and you can find recipes online. But even the hardest sailors admit it is both hard and bland. Instead you might consider making "Joe Froggers," molasses cookies eaten on ships. Clementines or oranges might be served as "scurvy protection." Serve a berry seltzer as a non-alcoholic jenny.

## READ-ALIKES & RESOURCES

Each activity page offers resources for curious readers. At an event or in the classroom you might choose to present actual books. Consider offering books on sailing, tying knots, Chinese calligraphy, Chinese mythology, astronomy, exploration, and mapmaking. The classics by Robert Louis Stevenson or the Bloody Jack adventure series by L.A. Meyer (featuring a girl sailor) are wonderful seafaring read-alikes.



## ACTIVITY 1

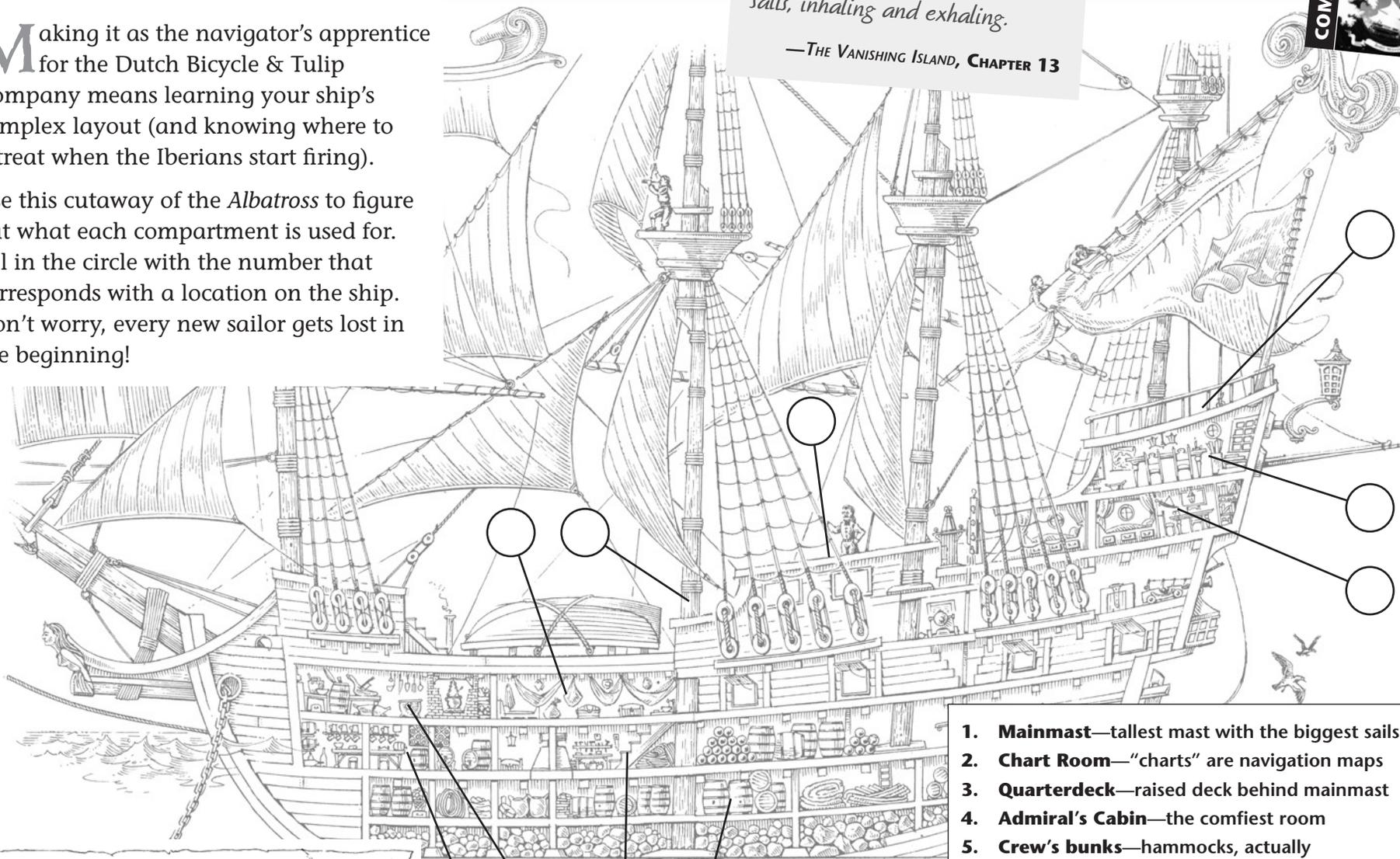
# MAPPING THE ALBATROSS

Making it as the navigator's apprentice for the Dutch Bicycle & Tulip Company means learning your ship's complex layout (and knowing where to retreat when the Iberians start firing).

Use this cutaway of the *Albatross* to figure out what each compartment is used for. Fill in the circle with the number that corresponds with a location on the ship. Don't worry, every new sailor gets lost in the beginning!

*He heard the snap of canvas and looked up in awe at a full set of sails, inhaling and exhaling.*

—THE VANISHING ISLAND, CHAPTER 13



### RESOURCES

Curious about ships & sailing in this age?  
Visit [education.nationalgeographic.com](http://education.nationalgeographic.com)  
and search for "Sailing Through History."

1. **Mainmast**—tallest mast with the biggest sails
2. **Chart Room**—"charts" are navigation maps
3. **Quarterdeck**—raised deck behind mainmast
4. **Admiral's Cabin**—the comfiest room
5. **Crew's bunks**—hammocks, actually
6. **Surgery**—the room with the saw (yikes!)
7. **Galley**—the ship's kitchen
8. **Crew's Saloon**—where the crew eats
9. **Poop Deck**—ship's rear deck
10. **Hold**—where cargo is stowed

## ACTIVITY 2

# NOTABLE KNOTS



Knowing the right knot can save a sail and the ship. While Bren was told to learn forty-eight knots, you can probably start your sea journey with these two sailors' mainstays.

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

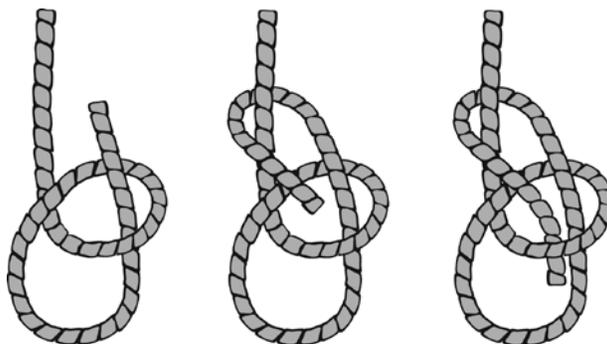
- ✿ A piece of rope. Most rope will do, but ideally you should locate a 24" length that is 1/4" thick. Look for a rope that is flexible, such as old white rope clothesline.

*Sean gave him a rope and a chart of all the boating knots he needed to learn. The chart showed forty-eight different knots, and Bren began to wonder if he was being hazed... Sheepshank, cleat hitch halyard, carrick bend, pile hitch, pig knuckle, goose neck, oxbow, triple axel, horcrux, four-in-hand...how long would this take?*

—THE VANISHING ISLAND, CHAPTER 14

### THE BOWLINE KNOT

Known as the king of knots, the bowline dates back to the Age of Sail. This knot held the square sail toward the bow of the ship and into the wind.



BOWLINE

Non-sailors use a large version of the knot to rescue people who have fallen in holes or over cliffs. That could be useful. Some people claim they can tie the bowline with one hand! Try it once you have conquered it with two hands.

### FIGURE EIGHT KNOT

This is one of the strongest knots in a sailor's arsenal, and the most trusted. On board any ship, ropes can swell and stiffen with water and salt. A knot that swells and stiffens is hard to undo. This is not the case with the mighty Figure Eight. As strong as it is, a sailor can easily undo it, even with wet, cold hands.

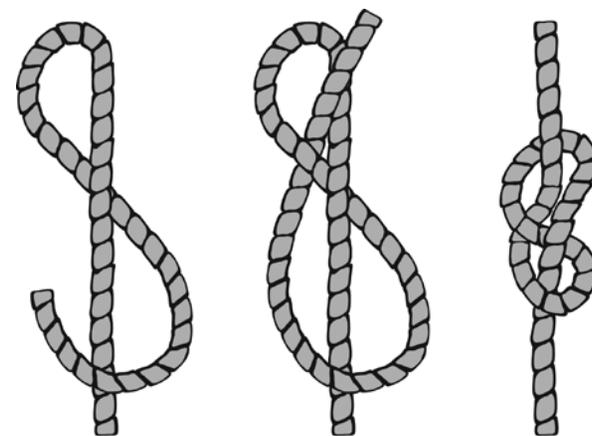


FIGURE EIGHT

### RESOURCES

Curious about other knots?  
Visit [animatedknots.com](http://animatedknots.com)

# BATTLE AT SEA

(PAGE 1 OF 2)



## A GAME FOR TWO PLAYERS

Imagine this. You are in the middle of a battle between a fleet of ships from the the Dutch Bicycle & Tulip Company (DB&TC) and an Iberian fleet when a mysterious fog descends! All the ships become invisible to one another. Despite the impenetrable fog, however, the two fleets continue to blindly exchange fire. Has your ship been hit? Has your return volley missed? Which ship will win the day? Play this game with a friend (or foe) to determine the victor of this battle at sea.

*"We can't still outrun them?"  
"Not if we're full of holes."*

—THE VANISHING ISLAND, CHAPTER 16

## PREPARE YOUR FLEET

- ✿ Choose your fleet. Are you an admiral in the **DB&TC** or an **Iberian** admiral?
- ✿ Locate scissors, tape, and two pencils.
- ✿ Cut out the two ships in your fleet.
- ✿ Find an object to block the other admiral from seeing your game board (following page).
- ✿ Tape both your ships onto your Fleet Game Board, wherever you choose.

### THE DB&TC FLEET

*Cut out your ships along the dotted lines.*



### THE IBERIAN FLEET

*Cut out your ships along the dotted lines.*



## ENGAGE THE OTHER FLEET

- ✿ Notice that your game board has a grid with letters on one axis and numbers on the other.
- ✿ Your enemy will fire at you by calling out a letter and a number (example: A5). These are called coordinates.
- ✿ Where the A and the 5 intersect on your Fleet Game Board is where your enemy's shot will land.

Has your enemy hit you? Say "hit" and mark an "X" on your ship where A and 5 intersect.

Has your enemy missed you? Say "miss" and mark an "O" on the square where A and 5 intersect.

- ✿ After your enemy fires, you can take a turn. Call out your coordinates. Mark an "X" for a "hit" or an "O" for a "miss" on your opponent's Fleet Game Board to keep track of your shots.
- ✿ Each ship can take six hits before it sinks.
- ✿ Whoever has the last ship still floating, wins! (Don't forget to rescue those left without a ship!)

ACTIVITY 3

# BATTLE AT SEA (PAGE 2 OF 2)



Each player will need a copy of this page. Tape your two ships onto the grid of *your* Fleet Game Board anywhere you choose—each ship will take up 6 squares. Use the other fleet's game board to keep track of your hits and misses.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1										
2										
3										
4										
5										
6										
7										
8										
9										
10										



THE DB&TC FLEET GAME BOARD

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1										
2										
3										
4										
5										
6										
7										
8										
9										
10										



THE IBERIAN FLEET GAME BOARD



## ACTIVITY 4

# NAVIGATING WITH A NEEDLE

When a ship gets turned around in a storm, in a battle, or by an ancient paiza, the navigator must use all of his or her skills and instruments to find the ship's longitude and latitude.

The navigators of the Dutch Bicycle & Tulip Company knew how to find their position at sea with very simple tools. But for those who were not trained to use the tools, the indicators of location might have seemed invisible and mysterious. A scientific mind like yours, though, knows that while some things are invisible, they need not be mysterious. Follow these directions to find the invisible—but powerful—magnetic poles that can show you (and any good navigator) magnetic north.



COMPASS

Property of The Dutch Bicycle & Tulip Company

## WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- ✿ Wide-mouthed bowl
- ✿ Water
- ✿ Scissors
- ✿ Sewing needle
- ✿ Magnet (Most fridge magnets will work)

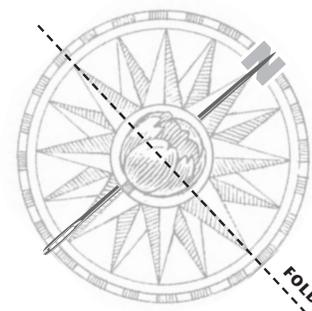
## STEPS TO MAKING A COMPASS

- ✿ Fill your bowl with water and set it aside.
- ✿ Cut out the paper compass on this sheet and set it aside.
- ✿ Pick the sewing needle up by the eye with the point facing away from you.
- ✿ Swipe the point of the needle in the same direction on one side of the magnet 30-40 times. The needle is now magnetized!
- ✿ Fold the compass in half (with the picture on the outside) and look for the "N" for North. Be careful of the point!

*"I can always tell where we are north and south on the map. But east-west? Hope and pray, jongen, hope and pray."*

—THE VANISHING ISLAND, CHAPTER 17

- ✿ Guide the needle through the bend in the compass so that the needle points to **N**.
- ✿ Carefully flatten out the compass. The needle point and the needle eye should now show on the picture side of the compass. The middle of the needle should be on the opposite blank side of the compass. (See below)



## EXAMPLE

Pin Through Compass

- ✿ With the picture and needle point on top, gently float the compass in the middle of the bowl of water.

Does the compass move? Where does the needle point and "N" face? You have found magnetic north! The ship and crew may yet be saved!

## RESOURCES

Curious about the magnetic poles?

Visit [www.scientificamerican.com](http://www.scientificamerican.com) and search for "Find Magnetic North."



# THE PLOWMAN & THE CLOUD MAIDEN (PAGE 1 OF 2)



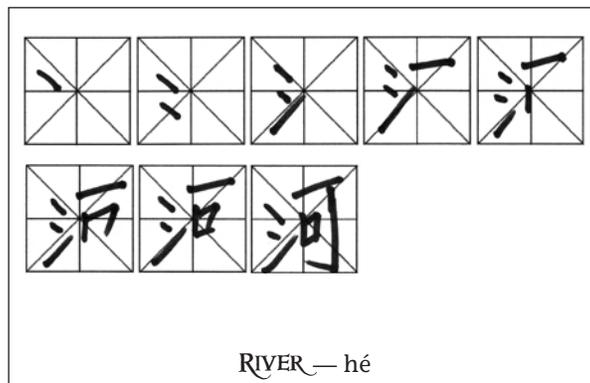
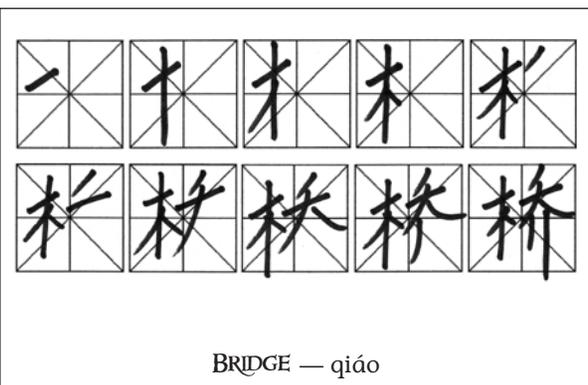
The Age of Discovery drew the men and women of Europe across the seas and around the world. Some, like Bren and the Admiral, were lucky enough to encounter the cultural riches of China and meet seafaring Plowman people like Mouse.

“The Plowman & the Cloud Maiden” (or “The Weaver Girl & the Cowherd”) is a tale from Chinese mythology about star-crossed lovers kept apart by a wide river between their worlds. That tale and the knowledge of Chinese characters will help Bren and Mouse locate Vanishing Island.

You can experience the intricate, beautiful strokes of modern Chinese characters that represent the words **river**, **bridge**, and **bird** by copying the strokes on this page. The task is not easy. In fact, one can spend a lifetime exploring the 3,000-year-old Chinese written language. Trying and practicing can be a bridge across any cultural river.

## WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- ✿ A marker or pen
- ✿ The character guide blanks (next page)
- ✿ A keen eye!

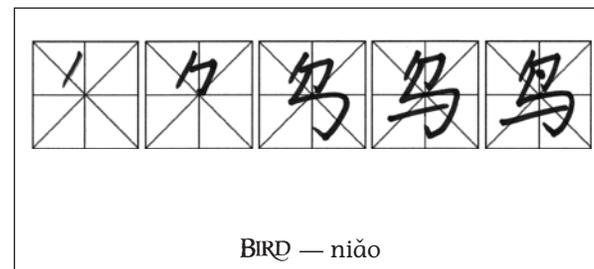


The admiral stood up from his desk and walked over to a cabinet, taking from it a small leather portfolio. He returned to the desk, unfolded a good-size sheet of parchment, and motioned for Bren to sit down. He pushed a pen and inkwell toward him.

“And you’d better be right,” he added. “I’m sure I don’t have to tell you that even small differences in the strokes of Chinese symbols can change meanings entirely.”

“No, sir,” said Bren.

—THE VANISHING ISLAND, CHAPTER 13



## RESOURCES

Curious about Chinese characters?  
Visit [YouTube.com](https://www.youtube.com) and search for the user “ABCsOfChinese.”



# THE ORDER OF THE BLACK TULIP (PAGE 1 OF 2)



Entry into the secretive Order of the Black Tulip is only bestowed upon the most adventurous of sailors and explorers, those that are open to the world's mysteries. Any reader of *The Vanishing Island* by Barry Wolverson deserves admission to the Order.

Not surprisingly, The Order of the Black Tulip tattoo is harder to come by. To turn this image into a temporary tattoo, you must first seek out tattoo paper. We suggest the "tattoo decal paper" and tutorial at [decalpaper.com](http://decalpaper.com). Once you have tattoo paper in your hands, the possibilities are endless.



## WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- ✿ Temporary tattoo or decal paper
- ✿ An inkjet or laser printer
- ✿ Scissors

## HOW TO MAKE YOUR ORDER OF THE BLACK TULIP TATTOO

- ✿ Follow the directions that come with the tattoo/decal paper. Use the next page as artwork for your tattoos.

*"I'm afraid my tattoo has outlived the brotherhood," he continued. "The Order was once an elite group of Netherlanders, committed to exploration of the extraordinary. You see, in our culture, the black tulip is a sort of Holy Grail. All attempts to find or cultivate a truly black tulip, which would be the rarest of rare plants, have failed. Some say it is impossible, that nothing in nature can be black, except in death. Thus the black tulip has come to symbolize the impossible—things that defy nature and religion. Immortality, even. Needless to say, membership in the Order was not easily earned."*

—THE VANISHING ISLAND, CHAPTER 11

# THE ORDER OF THE BLACK TULIP (PAGE 2 OF 2)



Use this page to make your tattoos. We have already reversed the images for you.

