



EDUCATOR'S GUIDE FOR CLASSROOM USE

A PERILOUS JOURNEY OF DANGER AND MAYHEM BOOK 3: THE FINAL GAMBIT

by Christopher Healy

The thrilling conclusion to Christopher Healy's funny, action-packed, acclaimed alt-history adventure!

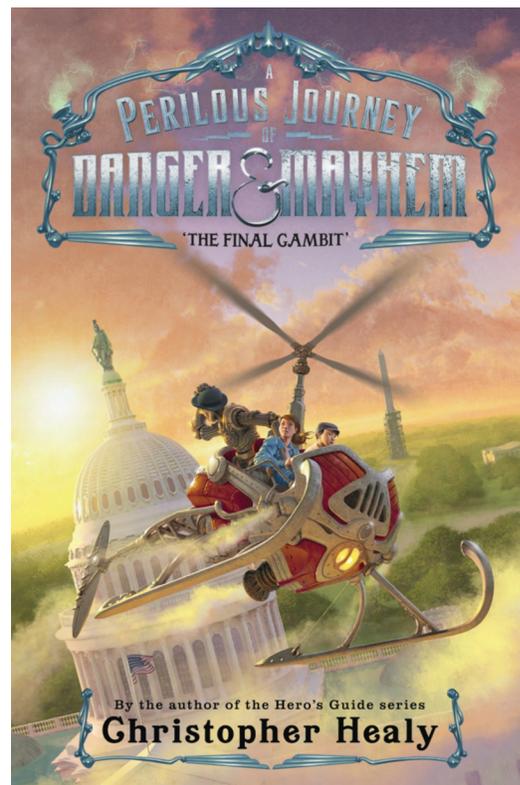
It is 1884, and Molly and Cassandra Pepper, Emmett Lee, and Emmett's long-lost father are sailing back to New York following their death-defying adventure in Antarctica. Having discovered a subterranean world at the South Pole while saving the world from certain doom once again, surely their accomplishments will finally earn them the recognition they deserve.

Unless, of course . . . well, you know by now.

And so do the Peppers and Lees. They're used to having their deeds covered up by the government in order to protect powerful men, and frankly, they're sick of it. And when their return to New York doesn't go the way they'd planned, they decide that maybe it's best to go into hiding and accept that, perhaps, the forces aligned against them are just too great.

As the 1884 presidential election approaches however, our heroes discover a plot against leading candidate Thomas Edison that only they can stop. It'll be up to them to decide whether to come out of hiding, make the perilous journey to Washington, D.C., and do the right thing one last time. Even if it means risking everything they have left.

Christopher Healy is the author of *A Perilous Journey of Danger & Mayhem Book 1: A Dastardly Plot*, *A Perilous Journey of Danger & Mayhem Book 2: The Treacherous Seas*, the "Hero's Guide" trilogy, including *The Hero's Guide to Saving Your Kingdom*, a *New York Times* Book Review Editor's choice, its two sequels, *The Hero's Guide to Storming the Castle* and *The Hero's Guide to Being an Outlaw* as well as the picture book *This is Not that Kind of Book*. Before becoming a writer, he worked as an actor, an ad copywriter, a toy store display designer, a fact-checker, a dishwasher, a journalist, a costume shop clothing stitcher, a children's entertainment reviewer, and a haunted house zombie. He lives in New Jersey with his family and a dog named Duncan. You can visit him online at www.christopherhealy.com





DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1 Cassandra Pepper wears a medallion around her neck throughout this story, which we first see in the Prologue: "It wasn't really a medallion—it was the lid to a pickle jar—but Molly had etched the words 'World's Greatest Inventor' into it as a gift for her." [PAGE XI] Discuss the meaning of this medallion to both Cassandra and Molly. Why is it so important to them? What is the significance of the moment when the medallion returns at the end of the story? [CHAPTER 23]

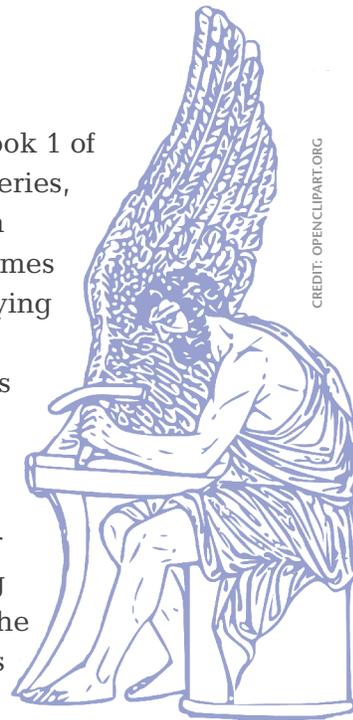


INVENTOR HERTHA MARKS

CREDIT: UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE; SUPPLIED BY THE PUBLIC CATALOGUE FOUNDATION

2 The uncomfortable clothes that women in the 1880s felt compelled to wear is a subject that Molly mentions frequently. For example, she notes that her trek to Antarctica would have been vastly more difficult in the long black dress she ordinarily wore or the corset that her mother and other women were expected to wear in New York City: "As Molly often said, women's garments were not designed for maritime escapades." [PAGE 31] The Mothers of Invention agree with her. As Hertha Marks notes: 'Womenswear is not designed for lengthy imprisonments....Or anything, really.'" [PAGE 313] What are some differences in the clothing that men and women were expected to wear in 1884, when this story takes place? In what ways can these differences be seen as metaphors for the expected gender roles of the time period?

3 In Book 1 of the series, Cassandra Pepper names her first flying machine the "Icarus Chariot." In this book she names her new flying machine the "Daedalus Chariot." What do these names reference? When Cassandra makes her second attempt at this invention, why does she change its name?



CREDIT: OPENCLEARPART.ORG

DAEDALUS

[PAGES 143-144]

4 When the Peppers and the Lees first return to New York City, Molly steals a newspaper from a "newsie." [PAGE 69] What is a newsie? Research the history of newsies in New York City.

5 What is Cassandra Pepper's Big Hat Theory, and how is it used by Molly, Emmett, and Robot when they are in Washington D.C.?

[PAGES 178-179]



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS CONTINUED

6 While Molly, Emmett, and Robot are hiding in the Smithsonian, they encounter a man

wearing a Hephaestus mask. [PAGE 213]

Later, they spot a different man wearing the same unique mask. [PAGE 262] Who was Hephaestus, and why is it appropriate that these people are wearing a mask of his face?



HEPHAESTUS

CREDIT: GORDON JOHNSON FROM PIXABAY.COM

7 Ambrose Rector asks Molly and her team: "Why do you think I went through all those Machiavellian machinations to bring you all together?" [PAGE 283] What does he mean by this? Where did the term Machiavellian originate, and how does it apply to Rector?

8 After Molly, her mother, and all their friends are locked in individual jail cells, Molly worries that she is to blame. She says, "This is all my fault again, isn't it?... Everyone was hiding out safely and happily. But I couldn't leave well enough alone....I'm the bad influence." [PAGES 308-309]

How do the others respond to this? Discuss the idea of influence, and how it can be both a good thing and a bad thing.

9 While they are all jailed, Emmett says: "I'm perfectly capable of making my own terrible choices. Just ask my father." Captain Lee responds with a speech about why that is true, and why it is one of the things that makes him so proud to be Emmett's dad. Read this speech, and then reflect on Emmett's relationship with his father. What do you think it meant for Emmett to hear those words? What do you think it means for Captain Lee to say them? [PAGE 309]

10 "This is the first time I've ever been glad to be wearing one of these torture devices," Mary said, ripping free a long strand of wire [from her corset]. 'Society forces us to squeeze into these things,' said Hertha. 'It's about time we got

something out of the deal.'" [PAGE 312] Discuss the symbolism of this moment, for the Mothers of Invention in particular.

11 While fighting with Molly, Rector says: "Nothing has changed and nothing will. You can't fight the system. The system always wins. That's why I'm going to replace the system, become the system.'" What does Rector mean by this? What is he planning to do, and why? [PAGE 347]

12 Emmett and his father discuss Javert from *Les Misérables*, and Captain Ahab from *Moby-Dick*. [PAGE 66] Do some research on these stories. How do Javert and Captain Ahab relate to the characters in this story?

SCENE FROM HERMAN MELVILLE'S MOBY-DICK





DISCUSSION QUESTIONS CONTINUED

13 "The system did feel rigged against her—against lots of people. It was a broken, unfair system in which so many were set up for defeat from the start. The system did need changing. But not like this. Not Rector's idea of change. Creating real change would take time and effort, and it might be thankless. The people who do the hard work might get no credit, no recognition, no reward other than knowing they've made

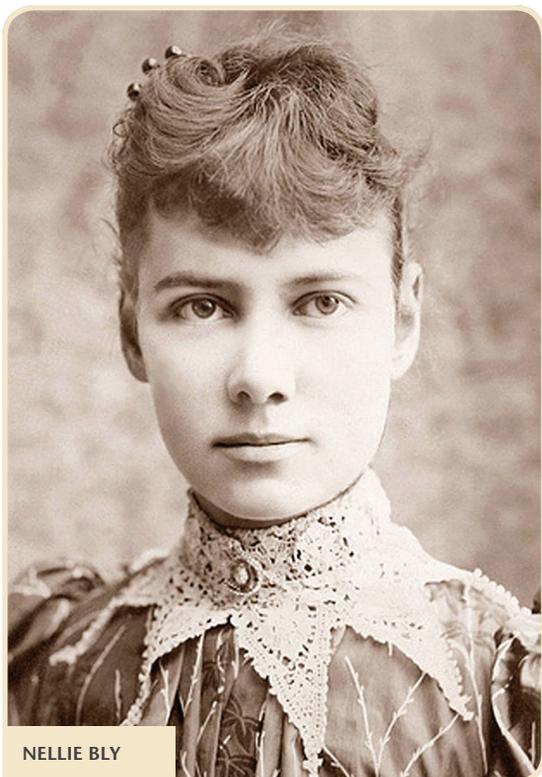
a difference. It was a daunting thought. But Hertha's words rang through [Molly's] head: the future is worth fighting for." [PAGE 349] Discuss this moment from 1884. How is it still relevant today?

14 Molly is captivated by the idea of credit and fame. Rector baits her by saying that she will "never get credit for any of the feats you've accomplished..."

[PAGE 348]. Molly also says it bothers her that her name isn't in any of Nellie Bly's articles. [PAGE 365] And in the Epilogue, she asks Emmett if he thinks "...anyone will ever get to learn what really happened that day? Or at the World's Fair? Or in Antarctica?" [PAGE 376] Why do you think Molly might feel this way after the life she and her mother have lived? Would you feel the same way if you were her?

15 The Mothers of Invention declare that their new Inventors' Guild is 'looking to give a boost to craftspeople whose enormous potential has been stifled by lack of opportunity.' [PAGE 371]. How is this a particularly momentous decision for the MOI, Cassandra Pepper, and Emmett Lee?

16 Discuss the epilogue of the story. Where have Emmett and Molly ended up 50 years later? What has changed during those 50 years? What has stayed the same?



NELLIE BLY

CREDIT: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



ACTIVITIES

1 The crowd that stands around the Washington Monument at the end of this story witnesses some incredible sights. They see a flying machine, a robot, a girl leaping out a window onto a man and his antigravity machine, the Mind-Melter, and more. Put yourself into the shoes of someone in 1884 witnessing these events. Thinking of the technology that was available at the time, write a diary entry describing what it would have been like to see such remarkable sights.

2 On page 100 we learn about the Mothers of Invention who formed the group "as a way for female inventors to pool their talents and lift one another up in an

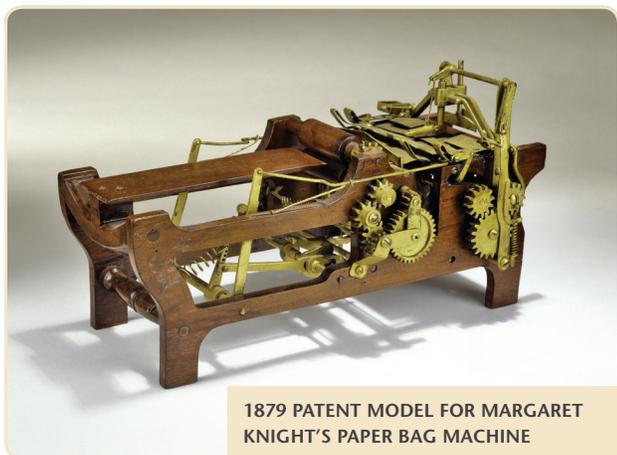
industry dominated by the all-male Inventors' Guild." The individual women of the MOI were actual people. Research the achievements of these and other under-appreciated inventors of this time period. For example, MOI Margaret Knight really did invent the paper bag!

3 Emmett refers to Nellie Bly's journalism as "muckraking." He says, "I guess the World's new publisher—I think his name is Mr. Pulitzer?—is more open to muckraking stories like the ones Nellie writes.'" [PAGE 366] He later refers to Molly's journalism the same way. What is muckraking? What role did the real Nellie Bly play in this form of journalism?

Why do you think muckraking became prominent in the Progressive Era (1890s-1920s)? Why do you think so many impactful muckrakers were women?

4 Hertha Marks observes about Rector: "'He's launching into one of his villain speeches.... That could give us a good ten, fifteen minutes.'" [PAGES 326-327] What is a "villain speech" in pop culture? As a group, think of some other examples of great (or terrible!) villain speeches that you can remember from books, movies, or shows.

5 At one point, Molly sarcastically notes that Rector's: "'analogies are as sharp as ever.'" [PAGE 278] Find some of his mangled analogies in this story. (Here's one, for example: "'Like the underpaid carnival worker who can't afford a home of his own and needs to live in the house of mirrors, nothing happens behind my back without me knowing about it.'" [PAGE 304]) Then try to come up with some analogies of your own! Can you think of any expressions as ridiculous as Rector's?



1879 PATENT MODEL FOR MARGARET KNIGHT'S PAPER BAG MACHINE

CREDIT: NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN HISTORY—SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.



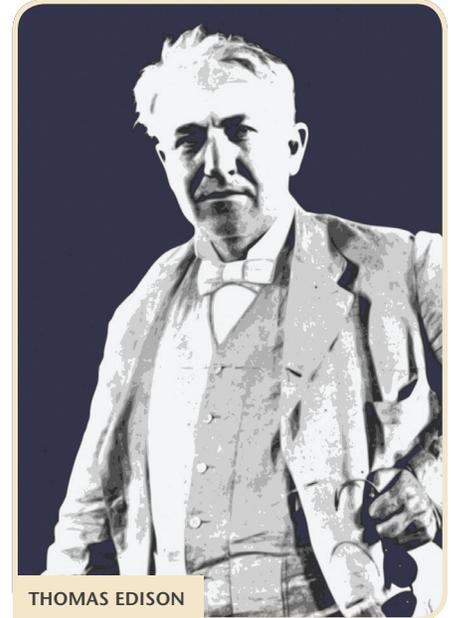
ACTIVITIES CONTINUED

6 One of the most charming characters in the “Perilous Journey” series is of course Robot! Make note of the various descriptions of Robot that appear throughout the story. Here is one description: “The tall metallic humanoid had blocky feet, a barrelish chest, and long pipelike arms. His metal moustache twitched as he tipped his hat—a dirty brown derby....” [PAGE 14]. Working alone or in a group, skim chapters of the book to find other descriptions of Robot. Then draw what you think he looks like... or what you would want him to look like if you lived in 1884 and had a talking robot sidekick.

7 Cassandra notes at one point: “Thomas Edison has obviously been busy in the time we’ve been gone. He had installed electric lights along the paths in Central Park before we left, but now they seem to be all over the city.” [PAGE 70] Do some research on technology in 1884. What types of inventions

were available to people at this time? What was just starting to become possible? What was on the verge of being invented or becoming commonplace, like streetlights?

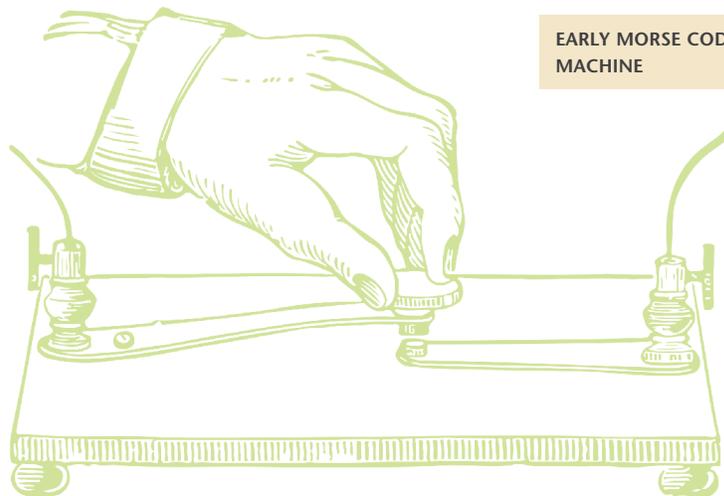
8 Many people in this story use clues or codes to communicate with each other, since telephones were not yet readily available. Nellie Bly leaves written messages in newspaper articles. The MOI send an advertisement for their secret hideout written in coded wording and anagrams. Nellie uses Morse Code to communicate with Clark. And at one point, Rector, disguised as Thomas Edison, asks: “Why do these women have to make everything so difficult? What’s wrong with a good old-fashioned



THOMAS EDISON

CREDIT: OPENCURTAIN.ORG

alphanumeric code? One equals A, two equals B—easy!” [PAGE 256] Look up these different types of codes, and others, to see how they work. Then, choosing the one you like best, write a coded message to someone in your group!



EARLY MORSE CODE SIGNAL MACHINE

CREDIT: OPENCURTAIN.ORG



ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND

THE SMITHSONIAN "CASTLE"

The signature building of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., The Castle was completed in 1855. It is built of Seneca red sandstone in a style based on buildings from the 12th century. The architect, James Renwick, Jr., won a design competition in 1845 for the structure (Renwick also designed St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City). A fire in 1865 damaged the upper floor of the building, and the collection sustained many losses of early archival



material. Today the building houses the administrative offices of the Smithsonian and the main Smithsonian visitor center. Overall, the

Smithsonian operates nineteen museums, galleries, and gardens, as well as the National Zoo. (For more about the Smithsonian Institution go to: www.si.edu)

CREDITS: LEFT, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS; BELOW, PIXABAY.COM.

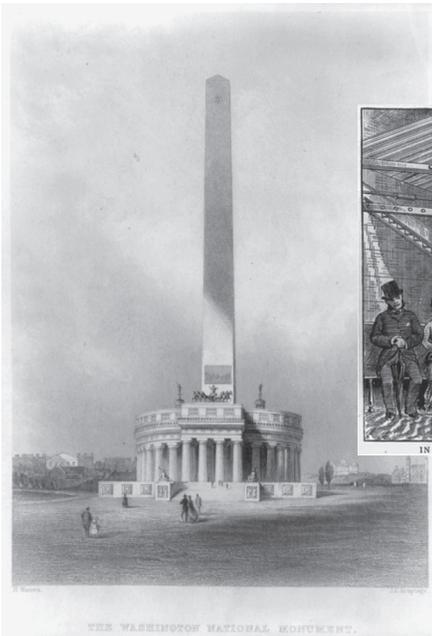


THE WASHINGTON MONUMENT

Work on the Washington Monument was begun in 1848 and completed in 1884. It was actually opened to the public in 1888. The Monument was modeled after obelisks in ancient Egypt. It stands just over 555 feet tall. Its exterior is faced with marble. At the base are memorial stones from the 50 United States as well as foreign countries and other organizations. An elevator ride of about 70 seconds whisks visitors to the top of the Monument and a spectacular view of Washington, D.C.

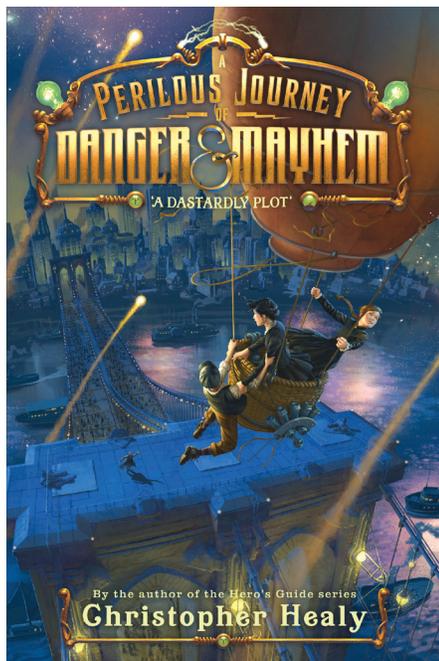
The first elevator ride to the top of the Monument took place on October 9, 1888.

CREDITS: LEFT (BOTH), LIBRARY OF CONGRESS; RIGHT, DAVID MARK FROM PIXABAY.COM.





OTHER BOOKS IN THE SERIES



A PERILOUS JOURNEY OF DANGER AND MAYHEM, BOOK 1: A DASTARDLY PLOT

by Christopher Healy

It is 1883—the Age of Invention! A time when great men like Thomas Edison, Alexander Graham Bell, Nicola Tesla, and George Eastman work to turn the country into a mechanical-electrical-industrial marvel: a land of limitless opportunity. And all it happens at the world-famous Inventors' Guild headquarters in New York City—a place where a great idea, a lot of hard work, and a little luck can find you rubbing elbows with the gods of industry who will usher humanity into the bright promise of the future.

Unless, of course, you're a woman.

Molly Pepper, daughter of brilliant but unknown inventor Cassandra Pepper, lives with her mother in New York. By day, they make ends meet running a small pickle shop; by night, they toil and dream of Cassandra shattering the glass ceiling of the Inventors' Guild and taking her place among the most famous

inventors in America. In an attempt to find a way to exhibit Cass's work at the 1893 World's Fair, they break into the Inventors' Guild—and discover a mysterious and dastardly plot to destroy the city. The evidence points to the involvement of one of the world's most famous inventors, and now it's up to Molly, Cassandra, and a shop hand named Emmet Lee to uncover the truth—even if no one will ever know it was they who did it.

Educator's Guide for Classroom Use [Contains background material relevant to the whole series]

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PAPERBACK: 978-0062341983



OTHER BOOKS IN THE SERIES CONTINUED



A PERILOUS JOURNEY OF DANGER & MAYHEM, BOOK 2: THE TREACHEROUS SEAS

by Christopher Healy

The second book in the new adventure trilogy from the beloved author of *The Hero's Guide to Saving Your Kingdom*.

It is 1883—only a few months after Molly Pepper, her mother, Cassandra, and her friend Emmett Lee saved New York from an attack by the megalomaniacal Ambrose Rector while managing to preserve the reputations of Alexander Graham Bell and Thomas Edison, whose technology was manipulated in Rector's scheme. Their selfless heroism will finally earn them a place in the Inventors' Guild, alongside the greatest minds of their generation.

Unless, of course, no one knows that they did any of that.

Left with nothing but empty promises and a struggling pickle shop after the government chooses to cover up the crisis, Molly, Cassandra, and Emmett have no idea where to turn—until they learn of a daring expedition to the South Pole, where a meteorite

of mysterious power is embedded, and where Emmett's father, explorer and ship captain Wendell Lee, disappeared years ago.

With the fate of the world hanging in the balance, our heroes commandeer an experimental sea craft to make their play on the pole. But the trip is more treacherous than they realize, and there's no guarantee that they will return successful—if they even return at all.

Educator's Guide for Classroom Use [Contains background material relevant to the whole series]

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