

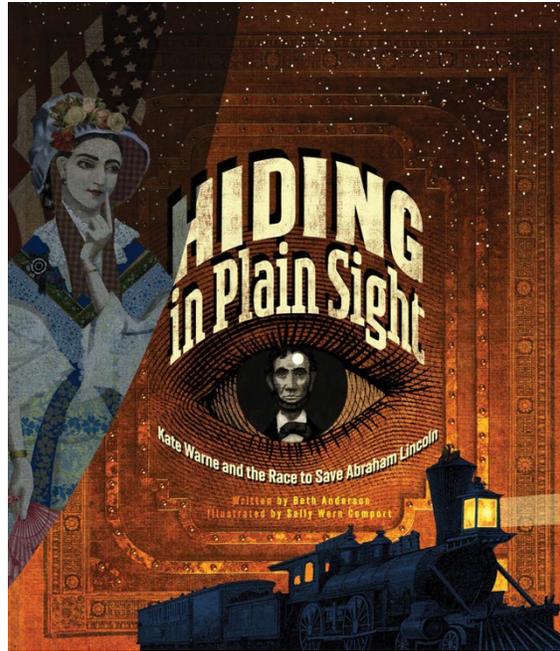
DISCUSSION GUIDE

HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT: KATE WARNE AND THE RACE TO SAVE ABRAHAM LINCOLN

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Grades: 2-5
Ages: 7-12



ABOUT THE BOOK

Kate Warne, America's first female detective, has a mission. Protect president-elect Abraham Lincoln from Southern rebels bent on assassinating him before his inauguration.

Abraham Lincoln faces a dangerous and uncertain future after leaving Springfield, Illinois, for his inauguration in Washington, DC. Luckily for him, detective Kate Warne has his back, even if he didn't know it yet.

Working for the Pinkerton Detective Agency, Kate uses her exceptional acting and conversational skills to help uncover the rebel plot to kill Abraham Lincoln in Baltimore. The only Southern city on his inaugural train route to Washington, DC is planning a deadly welcome. Kate warns Lincoln's staff. President-elect Lincoln is urged to change his route. But he refuses to cancel his commitments. In a race against time, Kate and Pinkerton have one last chance. Using disguises, false names, and the cover of darkness, the detectives put their plan into action.

ASTRA BOOKS FOR YOUNG READERS


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PRAISE FOR *HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT*

★ "Anderson (*Lizzie Demands a Seat!*, 2020) weaves questions through the text to heighten reader engagement in the events and employs a succinct sentence structure that palpably conveys the mission's urgency... Comport immerses us in the drama with sepia-toned artwork that lends an aged feel to the framed pages. Meticulous illustrations employ the 'scrapbook house' collage style of the era, highlights of which include superbly detailed garments and period furniture. The subtle inclusion of timepieces throughout amplifies the exigency of Warne's work... this is a lively choice for U.S. history or Women's History Month displays."

—*Booklist, starred review*

"A lively, luminous account of a lesser-known woman's ingenious contribution to presidential history." —*Kirkus Reviews*

"The tight focus on the duration of the inaugural train makes for an urgent, almost thriller-like pace... (the) collage art... is stunning (and) inspired..." —*Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Prereading:

1. Look at the cover and read the title. What details do you notice? What do you think the story is about? What do you already know about Abraham Lincoln? Make some predictions. What questions do you have?

After Reading:

2. How does the front endpaper showing Abraham Lincoln's route from Springfield, Illinois, to Washington, D.C. help set up the story? What difference do you see in the back endpaper map?
3. How do you think Lincoln felt as he spoke to friends, neighbors, and supporters before he left Springfield? How do you think the people gathered there felt?
4. In 1861, women didn't have the same rights as men, and few women worked as professionals. Why do you think Pinkerton chose Kate to deliver the message to Lincoln's assistant? How did she behave differently with Judd than in Baltimore with the women? How would you gain Judd's trust?
5. What do you think about Lincoln's refusal to cooperate with Pinkerton's plan until after he had finished his scheduled events in Philadelphia and Harrisburg? What would you have done?

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6. How was the detectives' second plan for sneaking Lincoln into Washington, DC different than their first one? What additional risks did they face by adding the special train from Harrisburg to Philadelphia after his events?
7. The official Lincoln inaugural train continued on its published schedule and route from Harrisburg to Baltimore and then to Washington, DC without Abraham Lincoln. His wife Mary and their three sons stayed on that train. Do you think this was a good idea? Why or why not?
8. What does it mean to "hide in plain sight?" How did Kate do that? Use examples from the text.
9. Why do you think Kate remained undercover after the mission was completed?
10. Return to your predictions. Were you correct? Have your questions been answered by the story? What would you like to know more about? What surprised you about this story?

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS – STORY ELEMENTS

CHARACTER: Traits

Kate Warne proved to be an outstanding detective. Have students create a character map for Kate identifying three traits and citing textual evidence for each. Share and discuss. Connect to self: Would you be a good detective? Why or why not?

SETTING: Using Words and Pictures

What details do you find in words and pictures that show where and when the action takes place? What helps you understand what life was like at that time? How is it different than now? Which scene is your favorite? Why?

PLOT: Characters in Action

Plot is the series of events that make up a story. At the simplest level, it is problem/solution. Older students may be familiar with a narrative plot diagram. Using whatever level is appropriate for your students, identify and sequence the events in the story. Option: hand out strips of paper with the basic plot points and have students sequence them:

- Abraham Lincoln leaves Springfield.
- Kate Warne and Pinkerton uncover details of the plot against Lincoln.
- Kate warns Lincoln's assistant about the plot.
- Pinkerton fails to convince Lincoln to travel through Baltimore ahead of schedule.
- Kate and Pinkerton create a new plan.
- Kate sneaks Lincoln aboard the night train to Baltimore.
- Kate watches as Baltimore learns that Lincoln arrived safely in Washington, DC.

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Identify cause and effect relationships that move the story from one event, or plot point, to the next. Write each cause and effect on separate sentence strips. Create sentences connecting cause and effect using “signal words” *so* or *because*. [CAUSE *so* EFFECT. EFFECT *because* CAUSE.]

INTEGRATING STORY ELEMENTS (grade 3+)

This activity connects character, setting, and conflict to understand how the elements work together to create plot. Demonstrate the activity by examining one event together. Use guiding questions and model the use of text and pictures to glean information—details such as clocks, date headings, scenes, and words or phrases. Then have students work in small groups, each group analyzing a different event from the plot.

Fold a piece of paper in quarters to create 4 boxes. Use the event as the title. Label the boxes as follows.

- Setting (When and where does this event happen? Is there anything special about this setting?)
- Conflict/Problem (What’s the problem? The risks? What’s at stake?)
- Character (What does she/he do? What’s their motivation? Feelings?)
- Result/Solution (Was the problem solved? Is there a new problem or complication?)

Title: event	
Setting (time) (place) (anything special?)	Conflict (problem) (risks) (stakes)
Character (actions) (motivation) (feelings)	Result / Solution (problem solved?) (new problem?) (new complication?)
Why is this event important to the story?	

Share and discuss. How do story elements connect to create plot? Why is this scene/event important to the story?

EXTENTIONS

WRITE TO PERSUADE

No woman had worked as a detective in the U.S. before Kate Warne. When she applied for a job at the Pinkerton Detective Agency, Allan Pinkerton assumed she wanted to be a secretary. But Kate had something else in mind. Making a strong argument, she persuaded him to hire her as a detective.

Using your classroom writing process, have students write to persuade Allan Pinkerton that he should hire them as a Pinkerton detective. Students should support their position with details and examples. (Option: choose another profession and person to persuade.)

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MAKE CONNECTIONS ACROSS TEXTS

Use a Venn diagram to compare and contrast.

- 2 books by the same author. Read *TAD LINCOLN'S RESTLESS WRIGGLE* by Beth Anderson, illustrated by S.D. Schindler. As you look for similarities and differences consider writing style, tone, theme, characters, setting, conflicts, etc.
- 2 books about a detective. As you look for similarities and differences consider writing style, tone, theme, characters, setting, conflicts, illustrations, fiction/nonfiction, etc.

CLASSROOM RESOURCES and PRIMARY SOURCES

[With Malice Towards None: The Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Exhibition, The Journey of the President-Elect](#)

This interactive map from the Library of Congress provides a variety of primary source documents from along the route of Abraham Lincoln's inaugural journey. The documents linked to Feb. 23 include political cartoons and articles suitable for more advanced students.

Guide written by Beth Anderson