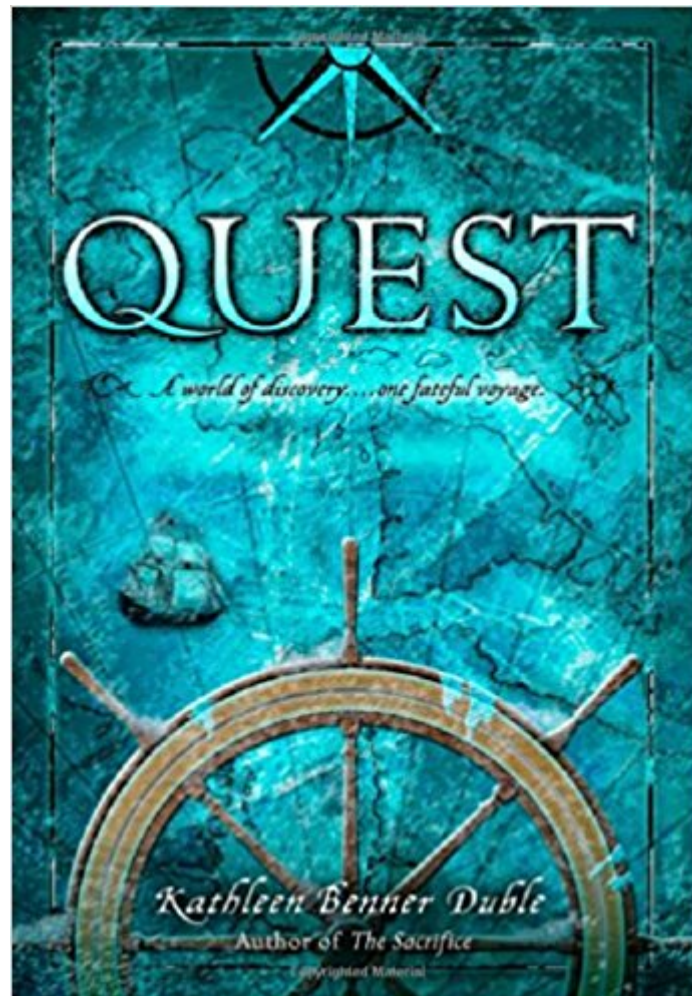




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Quest



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Synopsis

When seventeen-year-old John Hudson sets sail aboard the Discovery with his father, Henry Hudson, he is eager to explore the open seas and the New World. He is not, however, anxious to leave behind his girlfriend, Isabella Digges, a nobleman's daughter. But Isabella has adventures of her own in store as an undercover spy for the king. And while Richard Hudson simply wants his older brother, John, to come home to London, John's shipmate Seth Syms is desperate to avoid returning to the city any time soon. The key to their futures lies in the hands of John's father. But as Henry Hudson's obsession to find the Northwest Passage to Asia grows, so does the unrest of those around him -- both at sea and at home. Letters, diary entries, and personal narratives spill mutinous and surprising secrets, while revealing a struggle of hope, heartbreak, and survival. Through the use of four alternating viewpoints, Kathleen Benner Duple brings historical and fictional personalities to life, showing the widespread waves of one real-life and unpredictable voyage.

Book Information

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Age Range: 10 - 14 years

Grade Level: 5 - 9

Customer Reviews

Grade 7 Up
Told in four alternating voices, each one represented by a unique typeface, this is the story of Henry Hudson's final, fatal attempt to find the Northwest Passage. It relates the man's obsession with his quest, his crew's growing dissatisfaction and eventual mutiny, and the rivalry

among European countries during the age of exploration. The first voice, that of Hudson's 17-year-old son, John, a sailor on his father's ship *Discovery*, is full of excitement over the long sea voyage. Eight-year-old Richard, left at home in London with his mother, tells poignantly of missing his father and brother. Isabella Digges, secretly in love with John despite her noble father's disapproval of a mere sailor as a suitor for his daughter, keeps a journal while the *Discovery* is away. In addition to her thoughts of John, Isabella recounts her own adventure in the Netherlands, where she has been sent to spy on the Dutch East India Trading Company on behalf of England while posing as a nursemaid/companion to the 14-year-old daughter of a prominent Dutch investor. Finally, Seth Syms, fleeing the enraged jealous husband of his lady love by posing as his cousin Nicholas for the voyage, tells his tale in a series of letters to his mother. The author's skillful juxtaposition of these four narratives creates an absorbing work of historical fiction that manages to incorporate the viewpoints of explorers, investors, sailors, governments, family members, and neighbors of those who played a part in this fascinating era.

•Ginny Gustin, Sonoma County Library System, Santa Rosa, CA Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Told from four vantage points, this story recounts Henry Hudson's doomed last voyage to find a northwest passage leading to the riches of the Orient beyond. Hudson's teenage son, John, a prankster and adventurer at heart, accompanies him on the quest, while younger son, Richard, remains behind in England with his mother. A stowaway of sorts aboard the *Discovery* provides the third point of view, and the final belongs to a young noblewoman, Isabella Digges, who is sent as a spy to the Netherlands to ferret out the Dutch East Indies Company's most secret maps. Alternating the action evenly between the four well-rounded characters is a nice device to keep the intrigue and anticipation of the ship's return simmering throughout. However, readers might be let down by the *Discovery*'s lack of high-seas adventure—much of the time is spent stuck in the ice and starving through a long winter. The ending provides a grim reminder that history is no storybook tale with guaranteed happy endings.

Grades 5-8. --Ian Chipman

This is a very good book. It is well written, the characters are fleshed out and interesting and the story is gripping. The ending is not easily forgotten especially when one is aware that this may have happened to real people.

I bought this book for my grandson for a Christmas gift. I haven't read her books, but he loved the one he read and wanted more. So I'm give this book a 5-star because he thought so much of the author.

Kathleen Benner Duple's *QUEST* is a unique twist on historical fiction. Tracing the footsteps of Henry Hudson's voyage to discover a passage to the Far East, *Quest* is not written from Henry Hudson's perspective, but instead from four very different characters who have just as much at stake in the success of his journey. This is Henry Hudson's third attempt to find an oceanic pathway to Asia, and this time he is determined to succeed at all costs. The *Discovery* sets sail in 1610 with John Hudson, Henry's 17-year old son, aboard. John keeps a log of the ship's progress, reporting on the daily activity on board. His writing veers often into daydreams of Isabella Digges, a nobleman's daughter that he wooed back home. Richard Hudson, Henry's youngest son, remains at home with his mother while his older brother and father are off at sea. Although he is only eight, his misadventures at home are entertaining and his perspective illustrates the hardships he and his mother face, especially when The *Discovery* is out far longer than expected and the Hudsons at home are left in a tight financial predicament. Isabella Digges, John's would-be lovebird, is a complex and strong female character. When her family's social status and finances take a plunge, she takes it upon herself to restore the family name and credit. Isabella cozies up to John to learn more about the Hudson's voyage, which her father has major investments in. Later, when the Hudson's are at sea, Isabella lives as a nanny with a noble Dutch family, gathering confidential naval information to pass to the English. Seth Syms, the last character of the motley bunch, is at sea under the name of Nicholas. Back home in England, he was caught in an affair with a lady and challenged to a duel by her husband. When The *Discovery* gets stuck in ice, the crew is forced to wait it out in uncharted territory until spring for the ice to thaw. The crew blames the situation entirely on Captain Hudson's unhealthy obsession with the East. For John and Seth, just surviving the sea voyage will be a challenge, while Isabella and Richard struggle equally waiting for the ship to return. Duple's approach to this novel is very effective, with each chapter rotating between the four different characters. She is very successful in creating four authentic voices, adapting her writing style to suit each character's own voice. The book jumps forward in time quite sporadically, which is a bit unsettling at times, when the reader is unsure if a few days have passed or a few months. However, Duple generally does a good job detailing all important events in each character's life. *QUEST* is an intricate tale of wilderness, exploration, sailing, and spying that will educate readers while leaving them breathless for more. Reviewed by: Amber Gibson

I loved this book so much! The facts are half true and some of the characters didn't exist, but then, some did! I love fiction books so much but was told I should read some other types so I read Quest, a historical fiction book. This is one of my favorite books. I became attached to the ideas in this book along with the characters. The twists surprised me so much and my favorite characters were interesting to learn about. Isabella, the beautiful spy, John the funny prankster, Richard, John's girl-hating little brother and Seth the man with a secret nobody knows. These characters were easy to love. The way Kathleen wrote it was fantastic! I hope to find other amazing books like this in the future. Great for anybody from 12 and older!

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