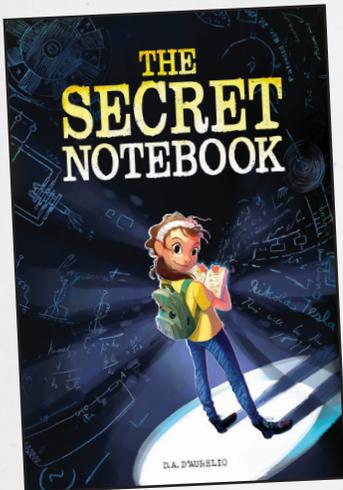


A Discussion Guide For **THE SECRET NOTEBOOK**

By D.A. D'Aurelio

About the Book:



Riley Green is certain her lie detector pen will get her the status she craves in a school full of kids from D.C.'s most powerful families. Her plan collapses when her invention idea is stolen, her favorite teacher goes missing, and a mysterious threat shows up in the schools and offices of the D.C. elite. Before Riley's teacher disappears, she entrusts Riley with her most prized possession, the lost notebook of Nikola Tesla. Now, Riley and her friends must protect the notebook from thieves who want to steal it for the dangerous invention it holds inside. When Riley finds another secret, she must decode the mysterious message before it's too late. Her teacher's life depends on it.

About the Author:



D.A. D'Aurelio grew up in Ocala, Florida, known for thoroughbred horses and lovebug season, which comes twice a year. D.A. has lived in five states along three coasts and visited many states in between. She enjoys finding out how people chose to work, live, and play. She draws on these experiences and combines fact with fiction in her middle grade stories. Currently, she lives in Atlanta, Georgia, with her husband and two children.

Educators Note:

This discussion guide for grades 3-5 provides comprehension and discussion questions, further research ideas, informational and opinion writing ideas, STEM and content activities, and websites to explore.

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Discussion and Comprehension Questions:

1. Readers learn a lot about Riley in the first two chapters. Why do you think Dr. Schwartz calls Riley her apprentice? What do we know about Riley that would help us understand this? (Chapters 1 & 2)
2. Henry is introduced in the first few chapters of the book. He is Riley's best friend. Riley's mom works for Henry's dad. Riley trusts Henry so much that she shares her secrets with him. What characteristics does Henry have that make him a good friend? (Chapters 1-8)
3. Based on how Riley describes Dillon, how do you think he got the idea for his lie detector pen? (Chapter 2)
4. Why do you think Riley lied about what her parents do for a living? (Chapter 4)
5. Riley finds a book in her backpack that isn't hers. The cover makes it look like a bird-watching book, but the inside is completely different. The book has been disguised, and inside is the secret journal of inventor Nikola Tesla. How do you think the book ended up in Riley's backpack? (Chapter 7)
6. Riley uses the word nefarious to describe Dillon. Based on what we have learned about Dillon, what do you think nefarious means? Look up the word to see if you are correct. (Chapter 8)
7. Riley's dad was a police officer and passed away. How do you think Riley and her dad are alike? Does knowing what her father did help you to understand the way Riley acts? (Chapter 9)
8. We meet two guest speakers at Washington Academy Prep: Dr. Marcus Smith and Professor Albert Schwartz. Both present to the students on the same day. Discuss the differences between the behaviors of the two guests. Is it a coincidence that the day after Dr. Schwartz's classroom was vandalized, we meet two speakers who are presenting on Nikola Tesla's work? (Chapters 12-15)
9. Think about Dr. Marcus Smith's profession. Why do you think he didn't give the book back to Riley and inform her that it wasn't meant for him? (Chapter 15)
10. Professor Albert Schwartz's computer was hacked. Do you think this has anything to do with Dr. Schwartz's room being ransacked and the threatening message left on her whiteboard? (Chapter 17)
11. Dr. Schwartz said that there was a fire in the barn where her laboratory was. Based on what we have read, how do you think the fire started? (Chapter 18)
12. Charlotte is new to the school and has become friends with Riley and Henry. Do you think that Charlotte is showing that she is a true friend? Explain your reasoning. (Chapters 1-18)

13. Henry's father is a Senator. His computers are hacked, and he is sent a threatening message. Do you think this has to do with Dr. Schwartz's room being ransacked and the secret notebook? With a partner, discuss and note your reasons why it may have to do with the secret notebook, and why it may not have to do with the notebook. (Chapter 19)
14. How do you think the box with the note and birdseed got into Henry's backpack? When was it placed in his backpack? (Chapter 27)
15. We have seen the man in the blue baseball cap twice. Do you think he is following Riley and Henry? Who do you think it is? Use your notes from the previous chapters to help determine who you think it is. (Chapter 27)
16. Do you think someone tried to hit Riley with a car, or was it a just a bad driver? Are Riley and Henry being overly suspicious after they find the note? (Chapter 28)
17. Tesla had many **idiosyncrasies**. Look up that word and write down the definition in your journal. Note the idiosyncrasies that are listed in the book in one column and write down any that you can relate to in a second column. Discuss these with a partner. (Chapter 30)
18. Riley thinks that Henry is like a "Happy Meal in a gourmet restaurant" when it comes to being in his New York house. She also thinks that if he were a hamburger, she would be the fries. Discuss with your partner what you think she means by that. (Chapter 31)
19. An agent told Senator Marino that they traced the computer hack back to Texas. Riley has been saying that she thinks Dillon's dad is behind the threats, computer hacking, and classroom destruction. Do you think that Riley is correct? (Chapter 31)
20. Henry is hesitant to meet Dr. Marcus Smith at Wardencllyffe. Why do you think he is hesitant? Dr. Smith wants to give Riley and Henry a tour of Wardencllyffe. Based on what you have read so far, how do you feel about Dr. Smith? Discuss with your partner and take notes about what you discuss. (Chapter 33)
21. Freddy agrees to take Riley and Henry to Wardencllyffe, but before they go, he asks them if they are "pulling a flimflam, swindle, or fast one." What does Freddy mean when he asks that? (Chapter 35)
22. Marcus tricks Riley and Henry into a trap in the Wardencllyffe tunnel. Look back at the notes you took about Dr. Marcus Smith. Were you right about him? Think back to the times Marcus shows up (at the school and at Senator Marino's party). Where else has he shown up? Why does Marcus lock Riley, Henry, and Dr. Schwartz in the tunnel when he could have kept the notebook and not locked them up? What is Marcus wanting to accomplish? Write in your notebook a description of Marcus's character. (Chapter 37)

- 23.** Dr. Schwartz, Riley, and Henry are locked in the underground tunnel at Wardencllyffe. How do you think they are feeling right now? How would you feel being locked down there with your friends? Make a list of adjectives and verbs that best describe how you would feel. (Chapter 38)
- 24.** Do you think Tesla's secret really exists? Discuss why or why not. (Chapter 39)
- 25.** Riley and Henry find a secret room in the tunnel. There is another secret notebook. What do you think is in the secret notebook? If there is a secret room, what else could there be? Discuss with your partner and take notes in your notebook. (Chapter 40)
- 26.** Riley and Henry invent something in the secret room to help them get a signal on the cell phone. What do you think they would have done if Riley didn't have tape in her backpack? How could they have gotten their invention to work without the tape? Brainstorm ideas with your partner and write down your ideas down in your notebook. Discuss with your partner which idea you think would work best. (Chapter 41)
- 27.** Riley is nervous that Henry won't want to be her friend anymore after getting trapped in the tunnel. They have a deep conversation and gain an even better understanding of each other. How does Henry respond and reassure Riley that they are still friends and that she belongs at Washington Prep? (Chapter 42)
- 28.** Henry and Riley's first plan to stop Marcus from presenting the invention he stole doesn't work. What do you think of the plan they carried out instead? What would you have done to stall or stop Marcus? (Chapter 44)
- 29.** When Marcus is arrested, Riley makes a discovery about herself. What did Marcus do that caused Riley to change the way she views herself? (Chapter 45)
- 30.** Professor Schwartz recommends that Riley get a patent on her pen so no one can steal her idea. What is a patent? Look it up in a dictionary if you need to. (Chapter 46)

Opinion Writing Topic Ideas:

1. We read about Riley and Henry's friendship. Riley and Henry are very good friends. What do you think makes their friendship a good friendship? What qualities do look for in a friend?
2. Riley attends a Washington Prep Academy private school and feels like she doesn't fit in. Henry tries to help Riley understand that she deserves to be at the school. Why does Riley feel like she doesn't belong? Have you ever felt that you didn't belong somewhere? How did it make you feel? Were you able to overcome that feeling? Can you use your experience and Riley's experience to help others feel welcome?
3. Why do you think Riley and Charlotte became fast friends? Give examples and reasons why.
4. What do you think of Dillon? Why do you think Dillon is the way he is? Use examples from the book to back up your opinion.
5. Imagine that you have been hired as a spy! You can trust one person to help you solve the clues and find the missing statue. After visiting the Spy Museum, you can select your spy tools. What spy tools would you choose? Give your opinion on how these tools are useful, and why you chose the person you did to help you.

Informational Writing and Research Topic Ideas:

1. Inventors to discover: Nikola Tesla, George Washington Carver, Jeanne Villepreux-Power, Thomas Edison, Steve Jobs, Hedy Lamarr, Benjamin Franklin, Shankar Abaji Bhise, Guillermo González Camarena, Margaret Knight, and Deepika Kurup.
2. Patents: How do you apply for a patent on an invention? Why is this important to do?
3. Museums: National Museum of Natural History, Spy Museum, Other Smithsonian Museums, American Museum of Natural History.
4. WardenClyffe Tower
5. Wireless electricity
6. Oil companies and their part in electricity
7. Why Pluto is no longer considered a planet
8. Technological Revolution
9. The Office of Alien Property

Websites:

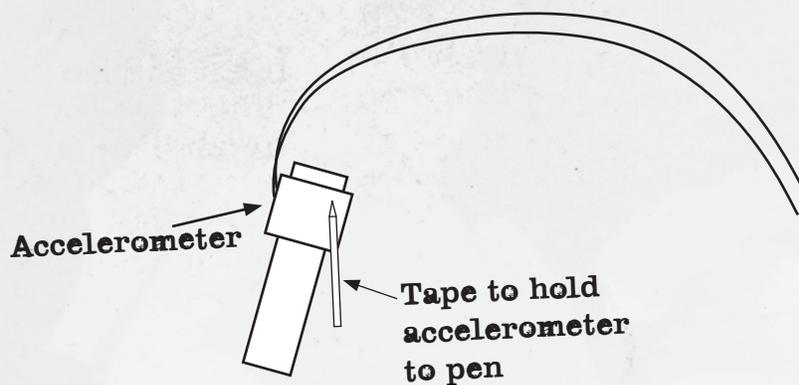
- [American Museum of Natural History](#), New York City
- [Tesla Memorial Society of New York](#)
- [Tesla Science Center](#), New York
- Virtual Tours:
 - o [Central Park](#), New York City
 - o [Inside the Spy Museum Secret Collection Video](#) (17:56 mins)
 - o [New York Public Library](#)
 - o [Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History](#), Washington D.C.
 - o [Spy Museum](#), Washington D.C.
- Virtual Field Trips:
 - o [Spy Museum](#), Washington D.C. (requires fee)

STEM and Other Activities:

Create Your Own Invention!

1. Create a small group of 2-4 students.
2. Brainstorm invention ideas and agree on 1 invention as a group.
3. Take notes of what your invention does and why it will be helpful.
4. Draw a blueprint of your invention and provide labels.
(See Riley's invention below as an example.)
5. Use materials found in the STEM lab/ classroom to build a prototype of your invention.
6. Create a presentation about your invention.
7. Present your invention to the class.

Riley's Prototype



BreakOut!

Create a BreakOut for your class! Your class can be detectives while solving clues, opening locks, and finding the prize before time is up! You can incorporate language arts, math, puzzles, and science clues to solve the mysteries. Your BreakOut can be an online BreakOut or you can use toolboxes, number locks, letter locks, directional locks, and invisible ink. Check out Google BreakOutEdu games and Escape the Classroom games to help you plan.

Hiding in Plain Sight!

Dr. Schwartz hid Tesla's secret notebook in plain sight by disguising it with a bird-watching cover. What other things can you disguise? You want to hide money or jewelry in your room. What is something you can take from your room and change to make it look like something else to hide your treasures in?



Discussion Guide prepared and written by Jami O'Connor, a Media Specialist at Mountain View Elementary School in Cobb County, Georgia. Jami was a classroom teacher from 2001-2015. In the fall of 2015 she moved into the Media Specialist position at her school. Jami holds a B.S. in Early Childhood Education, M.Ed. in Instructional Technology, and an Ed.S. in Media and Instructional Technology. She is a member of ALA, GLMA, and CCALMS. She presents at local and national education conferences. She has a passion for reading, integrating technology into lessons, and working with all the students in her school to help them understand content and develop a love of reading.