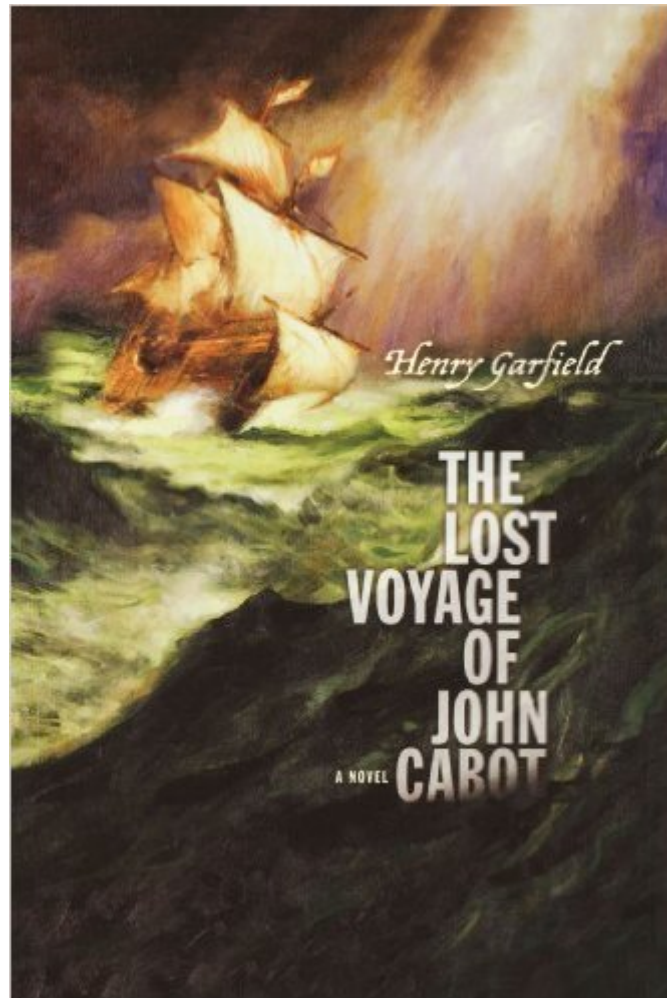


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The Lost Voyage Of John Cabot



Synopsis

1498. Sebastian Cabot age fifteen, can only wait and wonder. His famous father has abandoned him at home in Bristol, England, but has taken the boy's older and younger brothers, Ludovico and Sancio, on his second voyage in search of the Asian mainland. On his first journey, sailing north across the Western Ocean in 1497, John Cabot had discovered the New Found Land. He returned to England a hero. Five years earlier, Spain had given Christopher Columbus a similar welcome. He had found Asia, he claimed. And by a southern route. Cabot was skeptical and set out to the north again to prove his old friend a fraud. But silence followed. Now, Sebastian and history are confronted with a tantalizing mystery. What has become of Cabot's second endeavor? Letters to the boy from fourteen-year-old Sancio tell of a fearsome storm and its aftermath. They, and the surprising climax to Sebastian's and Sancio's shared story, make for unforgettable voyaging.

Book Information

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

The early explorers faced oceans of unknown terrors when they set sail to look for a shorter route to the Asian mainland. In 1492 Christopher Columbus thought he might have discovered Asia. But his rival and friend, John Cabot, felt that Columbus had not found a southern route to Asia. Based upon study, calculations and his own explorations, Cabot set out in 1497 to possibly prove his old rival wrong and to find this route himself. When Cabot leaves Bristol, England, he takes his two sons,

Ludovico and Sancio. He leaves 15-year-old Sebastian behind to care for the explorer's patient wife, Mattea. While Sebastian resents being left behind, he finds comfort in the letters he begins to receive from Sancio. The letters are filled with the long days of boredom and also some of the excitement as they embark into less explored areas. However, the letters stop abruptly and everyone is left to wonder what has happened. The only information they get comes through rumor and gossip as sailors come and go in the busy port. History sheds no light on this last voyage of John Cabot, but through the skillful storytelling skills of Henry Garfield, we catch a glimpse of what might have happened to this group of daring and brave explorers. The letters to Sebastian from Sancio continue to be written but are not mailed, and it is this clever twist that allows readers to follow an intriguing path of the sailors' fates. Sancio, who is skilled in languages, writes to his brother that there is unrest among the men. This unrest possibly comes from two things: they feel that they have reached an Asian coastline, so it is time to return, and they are lonely for female company. "I think the sight of the native women has reminded some of the men of the loneliness of sea travel. There were two fights today." Sancio continues to assure his brother that he feels his father has discovered an important land mass from England. "When we return to England, Sebastian, we will bring with us the certainty that a great mass of land, reachable by ship from the shores of Europe, does indeed lie in the Western Ocean. It is Father's discovery, and he will become famous for it. I daresay the world as we know it will never be the same." The political maneuverings, the intrigues and deceptions are all captured in the rush of adventures that flow throughout this book. Henry Garfield presents a realistic picture of the possible horrors and heartbreaks that might have been experienced by Cabot's crew. Clipper ship tales are quite popular these days, and this exciting story of John Cabot's last voyage is sure to be enjoyed for its insights and wonderful historical pictures. --- Reviewed by Sally M. Tibbetts
(stibbetts@maine207west.k12.il.us)

I think that Henry Garfield did an absolutely perfect job wrighting this book. This book hints that Columbus, Cabot's childhood friend, really wasn't as fearless and daring as history books insist. According to this book, Cabot was much more intent on knowing, without a doubt, that the land he reached was, in fact, Asia. Columbus, finding land after crossing only half the distance to Asia, immediately wished to end the voyage. Knowing that he hadn't found Asia, yet not willing to return home a failure, he told the queen that he had found a string of islands off of Asia's coast. Cabot, reading the signs that Columbus showed, knew that he hadn't really found Asia. He knew that if he left, proved Columbus a liar, and then returned home to King Henry, he would become famous!

Putting this into mind he left for Asia. While Cabot leaves to find Asia, he leaves his middle son, Sebastian, at home. Sebastian, jealous of his father's occupation, becomes a river pilot. Sebastian learns a lot about Columbus and the world around him while his father is gone. If you want to know more, read the book to find out...

It is becoming increasingly difficult to get lost. While today's voyagers and adventurers are no less intrepid than Cabot, Columbus, and others, the means to keep in touch have greatly lessened the odds of slipping over the side of the earth, unnoticed. The value of *The Lost Voyage of John Cabot*, besides great research about a period of history almost obscured by the mists of time, lies in the courage it took for Cabot to undertake this journey at all. Henry Garfield's portrayal of the son left behind, not knowing what has taken place yet determined to find out, is a thought-provoking look into the psyches of persons known and unknown. The combination of the mystery and the unraveling of it make for a great read. For lovers of historical fiction, this is a real gem.

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