The ZEBEDIAH MUTINY



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Nelson Literacy Directions

The Zebediah Mutiny

For teachers' inspection ONLY

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Meet the Characters

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Jeremiah

A boy who dislikes cod liver oil.



Abby

A girl who befriends Suzette.



Nathan

A boy with a secret catfish attractor.



Suzette

A newcomer to the orphanage.



Mother Hildegard

A nun at the orphanage.

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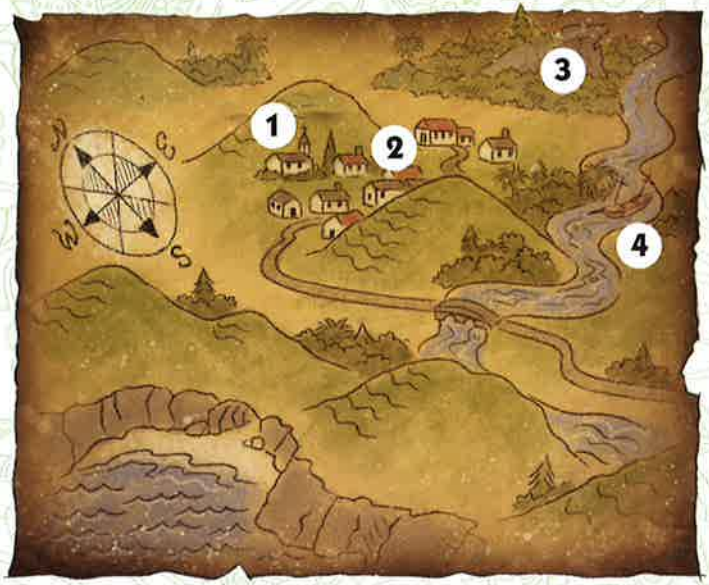
POST CARD

Dear Reader

The runaway orphans aboard the Zebediah are back for another adventure – but this time, they have a new crew member with some different ideas about life aboard the old wreck. When some familiar – but unwelcome – faces also reappear, there's trouble on the horizon for Jeremiah, Abby, Nathan and their new friend, Suzette.

John Parsons
Author

Our Old Map



1. The orphanage
2. The town
3. Misery Peak
4. The wreck of the *Zebediah*

1 A New Arrival

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When Suzette first turned up at the orphanage, she was in a pretty bad way, cleaning her fingernails every day, knowing how to use a knife and fork properly and brushing her teeth without even being told to.

She offered to help Mother Hildegard and the other nuns with chores and sometimes she even said "please" and "thank you". It was horrifying to watch, and Nathan, Abby and I knew we had to help that poor girl.

My name is Jeremiah. Every three weeks or so, my friends and I would go on the run from the nuns, and we'd hide out on our very own shipwreck, the *Zebediah*. Years ago, we'd discovered that nuns are like cats – they don't like getting wet – so escaping to our own deserted shipwreck in the middle of the river was a perfect alternative to the orphanage.



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One summer's afternoon, while I was daydreaming in class about being on the *Zebediah* and catching catfish, a piece of chalk sailed through the air and caught me right in the middle of my forehead. For a nun, Mother Hildegard had a great aim. I looked up and saw she was holding an ominous-looking large, brown bottle of something!

"Master Jeremiah," she barked, scowling at me from the front of the classroom. "I asked you a question!"

"Twelve!" I said, pretending that I'd been listening. I'd always found that saying "twelve" was a good answer to any question. If you were lucky and you'd been asked how many months were in a year, or how many things were in a dozen or how many burps you could do in a row, then it looked as though you were listening.

The other kids in the class giggled and Mother Hildegard looked at me in disbelief. Meanwhile, at the front of the class, where she preferred to sit, Suzette had her hand up.





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"Yes, dear," smiled Mother Hildegard.

"One," answered Suzette confidently. "One teaspoon of cod liver oil every day will help keep us healthy."

"That's correct, dear," nodded Mother Hildegard. She narrowed her eyes at me, and the corners of her lips curled upwards. It was the nearest I'd ever seen Mother Hildegard come to smiling in my direction. "Although I'm sure I could accommodate the twelve teaspoons that Jeremiah thinks he needs."

She unscrewed the lid of the large mud-brown bottle with relish, and proceeded to pour out a teaspoon of slimy, brownish-yellow liquid. The entire classroom filled with a powerfully unpleasant smell.

"Master Jeremiah," grinned Mother Hildegard evilly. "Maybe you'd like to be first."



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"Jeremiah, are you feeling OK?" It was Nathan. He'd finally discovered me in the boys' toilets, where I'd been sitting for an hour. He screwed up his nose.

"What's that smell? How many times have you been sick?"

"Twelve," I replied glumly. This time, I was listening and it was the right answer.

"Wow," he said, sounding impressed. "That's even more times than when we were forced to eat boiled brussels sprouts for dinner last week."

The unfortunate memory of boiled brussels sprouts made me feel even queasier. And – you guessed it.

"Thirteen," I gasped, a few unpleasant moments later.

"That has to be a world record," whistled Nathan excitedly. "I've got to go and tell Abby!"

"Great," I groaned weakly. "Famous at last."



2 A Clever Plan

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I knew it was time for us to escape from the orphanage and experience a healthy dose of freedom aboard the *Zebediah* once more. The thought of slurping cod liver oil every day wasn't very appealing, and I could see Suzette was in need of urgent help.

Abby had told me that the poor girl actually made her bed every morning, rather than just smoothing out the covers so the nuns wouldn't notice. For all I knew, she probably even changed her socks more than once a week.

"Nathan, Abby," I whispered one afternoon, when we were all working in the orphanage kitchen. I was on potato-peeling duty and I'd just finished carving a large potato into the shape of Mother Hildegard's head. Nathan was doing his best to throw out as many carrots as he could from the bulging sack in

