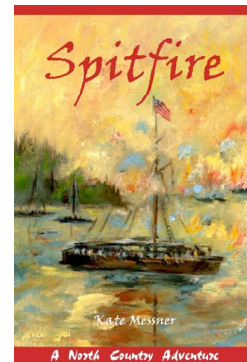


Spitfire
by Kate Messner
Study Guide for Teachers

About the Author:

Kate Messner is a children's writer and National Board Certified Teacher of Early Adolescent English Language Arts. She teaches 7th grade English on an interdisciplinary team, conducts staff development activities for the Plattsburgh City School District, and has presented workshops at the New York State English Council and New York State Reading Association Annual Conferences.



A Note from the Author:

As a teacher of 7th grade English Language Arts, I know how time-consuming it can be to develop materials to accompany the literature you use in your classroom. I hope this study guide will provide you with some help as you enjoy *Spitfire* with your students.

The study guide includes several components for each chapter: historical notes, discussion questions, interdisciplinary activities, vocabulary words, and a short series of multiple choice and short constructed response questions that mirror state assessment questions.

I've included these questions because as a teacher, I know that specific test preparation is part of what we do in this era of standards and assessments. However, I would respectfully ask that you use the questions periodically, rather than after every single chapter. *Spitfire* is first and foremost, a fantastic story about the American Revolution, and as a teacher/author, I would hate to see that story interrupted too often.

I'd like to invite you and your students to visit my website regularly for updates and activities.

www.katemessner.com

Students are always welcome to email me their questions about *Spitfire*. I love email from kids, and I will always take the time to answer their notes.

kmessner@katemessner.com

I hope you enjoy *Spitfire* and have success using it in your classroom.

Regards,

~Kate Messner

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Chapter 1

Historical Note: In the weeks leading up to October 5, the British and the Americans had a race to see who could build the most boats. The goal was to gain control of Lake Champlain. Waterways were the highways of Colonial America, so whoever controlled the lake had a distinct advantage. As Abigail sets out in her rowboat, the American fleet is at anchor off Valcour Island near the New York Shore, and the British ships are sailing south from Canada.

Discussion and Journaling Questions:

- Why is Abigail out on the lake?
- What is Abigail's attitude toward Mrs. Dobbins and the way her household is run?
- At the end of Chapter 1, Abigail says, "I was cold and exhausted, but I was pleased. No one could mistake me for a proper young lady." Why do you think this makes her feel pleased?
- What predictions can you make about what might happen next? What evidence in the text led you to make those predictions?

Interdisciplinary Connections:

- *Social Studies*... Abigail mentions Quebec City and Isle aux Noix in this chapter. Use the following links to investigate these two places as they relate to the American Revolution.

This article from American Heritage explores Benedict Arnold's role in the Raid on Quebec.
http://www.americanheritage.com/articles/magazine/ah/2007/2/2007_2_58.shtml

This website explores the history of Isle aux Noix, the site of a major smallpox outbreak after the Raid on Quebec.

http://www.historiclakes.org/canada/fort_lennox.htm

- *The Arts*... 18th Century clothing was very different from what we wear today. Use the website below to explore what a young lady like Abigail might have been expected to wear.

<http://www.englishcountrydancing.org/clothing4.html>

Name _____ *Spitfire* Study Guide: Chapter 1

VOCABULARY

petticoats: _____

bodice: _____

frayed: _____

coarse: _____

1. Based on the evidence in the text, Abigail's main reason for going out on the lake is:
 - a. to get away from Mrs. Dobbins.
 - b. to have an adventure.
 - c. to fight for American Independence.
 - d. to find her uncle.
2. Even though Abigail is struggling against the waves, she laughs because:
 - a. she is excited to be joining the American fleet.
 - b. she imagines what Mrs. Dobbins will think when she is gone.
 - c. she imagines what the trip would be like in her regular girl clothes.
 - d. she remembers a funny story about her uncle.
3. "She'd been horrified when my father delivered me in a frayed, grass-stained dress and old shift on the day he left for Quebec." Based on the context of this sentence, a shift is probably:
 - a. a suitcase
 - b. an article of clothing
 - c. a small house
 - d. a change

Answer the following question in a short paragraph: Abigail says at the end of the chapter, "No one would mistake me for a proper young lady." Do you think she's right? Support your answer with evidence from the text.

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Chapter 2

Historical Note: The 18th century map at the link below shows the channel between Valcour Island and the New York shore. This is where Benedict Arnold kept his fleet, waiting for the British to arrive.

http://www.historiclakes.org/graphics/valcour_fadenmap.gif

Discussion and Journaling Questions:

- Look at the map of Valcour Island and the New York shore. If you were in charge of the American fleet, would you want to fight the British in the channel or out on the broad lake? Why?
- What does Pascal learn from eavesdropping in this chapter?
- Why is Pascal worried when he sees the rowboat?
- What predictions can you make about what might happen next? What evidence in the text led you to make those predictions?

Interdisciplinary Connections:

- *Social Studies*... Life on board a ship was no luxury during the American Revolution, especially the food! In this chapter, Pascal describes the soup made from dried peas. Ship's bread, or hardtack, was another staple for soldiers and sailors. The Gettysburg website has an article about hardtack and other soldier food. (This site is about the Civil War, but even though it happened many years later, that hard, tough bread was the same!)

<http://www.nps.gov/archive/gett/gettkidz/hardtack.htm>

- *Mathematics*... Use the details and dates in this chapter as clues to figure out the date and year of Pascal's birth.

Name _____ *Spitfire Study Guide: Chapter 2*

VOCABULARY

scant: _____

frazzled: _____

retrieve: _____

crevice: _____

4. Why isn't there much to eat for lunch on board the ship?
 - a. The crew members had a huge breakfast.
 - b. The General forgot to write for supplies.
 - c. Pascal spilled the soup he was cooking.
 - d. The new supplies have not yet arrived.
5. Based on the evidence in the text, Pascal's step-father could best be described as:
 - a. kind and generous.
 - b. intelligent and warm.
 - c. dishonest and selfish.
 - d. hateful and vicious.
6. When Pascal overhears the men in the cabin, they're arguing about:
 - a. where to fight the British.
 - b. what supplies should be ordered.
 - c. whether or not to surrender.
 - d. what to serve for lunch.

Answer the following question in a short paragraph: Would you like to be living on board one of the ships in the days leading up to the battle? Would it be comfortable? Use details from the text to show why or why not.

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Chapter 3

Historical Note: Benedict Arnold led one part of a two-part invasion of Quebec in the fall of 1775. On September 19, Arnold led an army of just over a thousand men through the wilderness of Maine in what was, for many, a death march. Because of poor weather and rough terrain, the journey took longer than expected, and supplies ran low. There were reports of Arnold's army eating everything from candles to shoes – even their own dogs – to stay alive. On the night of December 30-31, Arnold and the other commander, Richard Montgomery, attacked the British at Quebec. The raid was not successful. Montgomery was killed, and Arnold was wounded in the leg before retreating with his men to Isle aux Noix, where the smallpox that had begun spreading through the troops claimed many more lives. This is where Abigail's father and brother died in the story.

Discussion and Journaling Questions:

- Why do you think Abigail got all the way out to the ship before thinking about what she'd say to the men on board?
- Abigail remembers asking her mother once if a woman who just gave birth was laughing or crying. Her mother answers, "Tis just a quick breath that separates the two." What do you think she meant?
- Abigail's father told her, "The truth is best, if for no other reason than lies are too hard to remember." In your experience, is this true? Have you ever known someone who got in trouble because he or she was caught in a lie?
- Abigail decides to go against her father's advice at the end of this chapter when she introduces herself as Adam Smith. Do you think she made the right decision?

Interdisciplinary Connections:

- *Science...* During the American Revolution, more men died of disease than from wounds suffered in battle. Smallpox was especially deadly and especially feared. Imagine that you are a Revolutionary War doctor at Isle aux Noix. Explore the following websites about smallpox. Then write a journal entry about what symptoms you see in your patients.

Centers for Disease Control

<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/smallpox/overview/disease-facts.asp>

KidsHealth

http://kidshealth.org/teen/infections/bacterial_viral/smallpox.html

Name _____ *Spitfire* Study Guide: Chapter 3

VOCABULARY

accompany: _____

absurdity: _____

admonition: _____

decimated: _____

7. Why does Abigail most likely laugh when she reaches the ship?
- a. She realizes how funny her hair must look.
 - b. Laughing releases some of the emotions she has been feeling.
 - c. One of the sailors tells a joke.
 - d. She is happy to have made it to the ship.
8. Abigail says that being in the rowboat is “like riding in the hand of a clumsy giant.” This is an example of:
- a. a metaphor
 - b. alliteration
 - c. a simile
 - d. exaggeration
9. Papa most likely called Abigail a spitfire because:
- a. she liked to spit watermelon seeds.
 - b. she was a lively, spirited young woman.
 - c. she was good at firing a gun.
 - d. she was often mean and cranky.

Answer the following question in a short paragraph: Is Spitfire an appropriate nickname for Abigail? Why or why not? Give examples of things she did or said to support your answer.

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Chapter 4.

Historical Note: Pascal is on board the *Congress*, the flagship of the American fleet on Lake Champlain. The flagship is the name given to the ship in a fleet used by the commanding officers (in this case, Benedict Arnold). Historical documents show that Pascal and his stepfather Captain Warner were originally assigned to the *Trumbull*. In this story, Pascal switches ships, spending time on both the *Congress* and later the *Spitfire*, though there is no record of that in historical documents.

Discussion and Journaling Questions:

- Why is Pascal concerned that he allowed the rowboat to approach his ship?
- What do Abigail and Pascal have in common? Why do you think Pascal chooses to share part of his history with the newcomer?

Interdisciplinary Connections:

Social Studies/Art... During the American Revolution, soldiers carried powder horns – hollowed out cow horns to hold the black powder they needed to fire their guns. During rare free moments when men weren't training or drilling, some would etch designs in their powder horns, telling the stories of where they'd been and what happened. Explore the following online exhibit of powder horns from the National Park Service Museum Collections. Choose a powder horn from the images, and write a short biography for its owner, based on the images you see.

<http://www.cr.nps.gov/museum/exhibits/revwar/guco/gucohorns.html>

VOCABULARY

defiantly: _____

campaign: _____

rigging: _____

midwife: _____

10. When Abigail mentions smallpox, Pascal immediately thinks of Isle aux Noix because:

- a. News of the outbreak there had spread through the soldiers and sailors.
- b. Pascal was there, too.
- c. Benedict Arnold told him about the smallpox outbreak.
- d. Pascal's father died at Isle aux Noix as well.

11. Pascal tells Abigail that after his father died, Captain Warner "took a shine" to his mother.

This phrase most likely means:

- a. Captain Warner hit his mother.
- b. Captain Warner gave lots of money to his mother.
- c. Captain Warner forced his mother to marry him.
- d. Captain Warner fell in love with his mother.

12. Irony is a literary term used to describe a situation that turns out the opposite of what you would expect. For example, Abigail's mother was a midwife, a woman who delivered babies and was known for healing. Abigail tells Pascal, "She had jars and jars of herbs that saved everyone... Everyone else." This is ironic because:

- a. you'd expect her to use more modern medicine.
- b. you'd expect that a woman known for healing would be able to heal herself.
- c. you'd expect her to know lots of doctors.
- d. you'd expect her to share her knowledge with Abigail.

Answer the following question in a short paragraph: Abigail and Pascal both lost their fathers when they were young. How are the two young people's attitudes about this different? Use details from the text to support your answer.

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Chapter 5

Historical Note: Why did Benedict Arnold have to wait for the row galleys (larger ships) to arrive? They were still being built. The summer of 1776 was a literal race to see which side could build boats for Lake Champlain faster than the other. The British brought their ships down from Canada, and the Americans brought theirs up from Skenesborough, now Whitehall, NY, where carpenters built them in record time. Today, Whitehall is still called “The Birthplace of the American Navy” because of the summer Benedict Arnold’s fleet was built there.

Discussion and Journaling Questions:

- When Pascal tells Adam that there’s talk they may lose the fleet, Abigail says, “What about us then?” Why don’t you think Pascal answers this question?
- Why do you think Benedict Arnold changes his mind about letting Abigail/Adam stay with the fleet?
- Why would Abigail’s father have laughed about the ship to which she was assigned?

Interdisciplinary Connections:

Social Studies/Primary Sources... In Chapter 5, Benedict Arnold is writing a letter. The text of this letter comes directly from a primary source document – a document created at or near the time that is being studied. In this case, that document was Arnold’s actual letter to his commanding officer, which has been published in a collection called *Naval Documents of the American Revolution*. Because this is an old document, Arnold’s language in the letter may sound old-fashioned to you. Read this section of the text, and rewrite Arnold’s letter in more modern language. Share your new version of the letter and discuss how words and sentence structures were different in the 18th century.

Name _____ *Spitfire Study Guide: Chapter 5*

VOCABULARY

channel: _____

grim: _____

haversack: _____

batteau: _____

13. Based on this chapter, Abigail would most likely describe Pascal as:
- a. tough but kind.
 - b. uncaring and cold.
 - c. warm and friendly.
 - d. sneaky and untrustworthy.
14. Today, Benedict Arnold is known mostly as a traitor, but in this chapter, Abigail regards him as a hero. Why?
- a. She is secretly fighting for the British.
 - b. Arnold's hasn't yet committed treason, and her father thought Arnold was a great leader.
 - c. Abigail doesn't understand the two sides of the battle.
 - d. Abigail's father wanted the British to win the Revolution.
15. The man coming out of Arnold's cabin says, "Watch your tongues, lads." What does this expression most likely mean in this situation?
- a. stick out your tongue before you enter the cabin.
 - b. be careful not to eat any food in the cabin.
 - c. be careful with what you say in the cabin.
 - d. be careful going up the steps into the cabin.

Answer the following question in a short paragraph: Imagine that you are Abigail, writing in your journal the evening after your conversation with Benedict Arnold. What would you write?

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Chapter 6

Historical Note: When educators from the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum give school presentations about the Battle of Valcour Island and what it was like to be a crew member on board the boats, this is one of the most common questions children ask: Where did they go to the bathroom? The answer is somewhat unsettling by today's standards. They went to the bathroom off the front of the boat, the head of the boat. They were all men (Abigail is a fictional character), so urinating wasn't a problem at all. When they needed to defecate, they'd simply lean way out over the water to take care of their business. A rope was left hanging into the water, and the men would lift it up and use it to clean themselves up. Since it was the front of the boat, waves washed off any messes as the boat moved forward through the water. Today, you'll still hear sailors talk about "hitting the head" when they need to use the bathroom, and that's where this phrase originated.

Discussion and Journaling Questions:

- Why is Pascal confused by his new friend's worries about going to the bathroom?
- Abigail seems like a smart girl. Why don't you think she thought about the problem with using the bathroom before she decided to go out and join the fleet?

Interdisciplinary Connections:

Social Studies/Technology... There were several kinds of ships involved in the Battle of Valcour Island – schooners like the *Royal Savage*, row galleys like the *Congress*, gunboats like the *Philadelphia* and the *Spitfire*. Read the descriptions of these ships and others at the website below. Given what you know about boats and the way they move through water, imagine what the advantages and disadvantages of the different types of boats might be.

<http://www.continentalline.org/articles/article.php?date=9802&article=980202>

Name _____ *Spitfire Study Guide: Chapter 6*

VOCABULARY

ration: _____

modesty: _____

provisions: _____

16. Abigail is probably most worried about where the men go to the bathroom because:

- a. she doesn't want to see them going to the bathroom.
- b. privacy has always been important to her.
- c. she wants to make sure the bathroom facilities are clean.
- d. she's afraid the men will find out she's a girl.

17. Empathy is a word that means the ability to see life through someone else's eyes, to put yourself in someone else's shoes and imagine what things might be like for that person.

What does Pascal do in this chapter that shows he is beginning to have empathy for Abigail?

- a. He laughs when she asks about a privy.
- b. He tells her about conditions on the boat.
- c. He works with her to tie off lines.
- d. He offers her his bowl and spoon so she can eat first.

18. Which of the following lines from Chapter 6 is an example of irony?

- a. But that was a long time ago.
- b. "We're brothers, after all."
- c. "We're lucky if there's a blanket to sleep under at night."
- d. It reminded me of the time I bit my cheek....

Answer the following question in a short paragraph: Why do you think the powder horn is important to Abigail? Use details from the text to support your answer.

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Chapter 7

Historical Note: In this chapter, Pascal tells Abigail a story about a man named Ananius Tubbs, who was punished for sleeping on his watch. Ananius Tubbs is a real historical figure who fought in the Battle of Valcour Island. How do we know? Another crew member named Bayze Wells kept a journal while he was with Benedict Arnold's fleet. He recorded the incident of poor Mr. Tubbs being punished in one of his entries. In fact, the Journal of Bayze Wells has a number of references to punishments of various crew members. (Perhaps Mr. Wells was worried it might happen to him!)

Discussion and Journaling Questions:

- Abigail notices how different the ship is from a regular home – everything from the food to the sleeping arrangements, to the privy. If you were living on board a gunboat, what do you think would be the most difficult thing to get used to?
- Abigail compares Pascal to a rooster on her family's farm. What similarities does she see?
- One of the crewmen refers to the *Spitfire* as "she" instead of "it." Boats were often referred to this way in colonial times, and sometimes today. What else does the crew member say about the *Spitfire* that personifies the boat and makes it sound like a person?

Interdisciplinary Connections:

Home & Career Skills... Ship's bread, or hardtack, was a common food on board ships in colonial times. It was so hard because it didn't contain the yeast that caused regular bread to rise. Here is a recipe for hardtack that you can use today to find out how it tasted.

Mix: 2 cups flour
1/2 cup water (or enough so you can roll out the dough without it sticking)
1/2 tsp. Salt

Knead the dough and roll it out so it's about half an inch thick. Use a sharp knife or pizza cutter to slice it into small squares. Use a fork to poke holes in each square to help with drying, and lay out the squares on a cookie sheet dusted with flour (not greased). Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes, remove from oven, and flip over the pieces. Turn over down to 250 and bake for another 30-45 minutes. Turn off the oven, but leave the hardtack in there, and keep the door closed until it cools (overnight is best). Store in a container that allows some air to circulate (not a plastic bag). Enjoy! And be careful not to hurt your teeth on that first bite!

Name _____ *Spitfire Study Guide: Chapter 7*

VOCABULARY

stifled: _____

attire: _____

predator: _____

19. Which of the following is not something Abigail notices about life on the boat in Chapter 7?

- a. Men sleep in close quarters, crowded together.
- b. Crew members are dressed in filthy, worn clothes.
- c. Many crew members are injured and sick.
- d. Crew members seem tired and overworked.

20. Tasting the ship's bread makes Abigail sad because:

- a. She thinks of her mother's cornbread and is homesick.
- b. She thinks it's going to make her sick.
- c. It reminds her of her father and her brother.
- d. She doesn't have enough to share with Pascal.

21. Pascal tells Abigail, "Ananias Tubbs was cabbed twelve strokes on his naked buttocks for sleeping on his watch last week." Based on the context of the sentence, the word cabbed most likely means:

- a. Taken for a ride.
- b. Burned
- c. Whipped
- d. Offered

Answer the following question in a short paragraph: At the end of Chapter 7, Abigail says, "As the hours turned to days, I turned into one of them." How has she become more like the other crew members? Use details from the chapter to support your ideas.

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Chapter 8

Historical Note: The “guns” to which Pascal refers in this chapter are what we’d probably call cannon today. In Pascal’s time, though, they were referred to as different kinds of guns – the nine-pounder, the 24-pounder – based on the weight of the iron balls that shot out of them. A swivel gun was a smaller gun that could turn, or swivel, back and forth to be aimed. It was mounted on the side of the boat. Even though it was the smallest gun, it still took several men to fire the swivel gun.

Discussion and Journaling Questions:

- Why do you think Pascal is so interested in being on a gun crew?
- Pascal describes a tight feeling in his chest that he can’t name and says the guns are the only thing that can jar it loose. What kind of feeling might he be talking about?
- How do you think Pascal feels at the end of this chapter, based on the comment he made to Captain Warner?

Interdisciplinary Connections:

English Language Arts – Point of View: This chapter is told in Pascal’s point of view. Imagine now that you are Captain Warner. Write a journal entry from Captain Warner, describing his conversation with Pascal and his thoughts on his stepson.

Name _____ *Spitfire* Study Guide: Chapter 8

VOCABULARY

crave: _____

gruff: _____

wee: _____

22. What evidence does Pascal give to prove that he's become a man?

- a. He is able to man a swivel gun by himself.
- b. He helps with all the chores on the boat.
- c. He no longer cries about his father at night.
- d. He stands up to Captain Warner.

23. Which of the following is not a reason Pascal wants to join a gun crew?

- a. He wants to impress Abigail.
- b. He loves the blast of the guns.
- c. He wants to kill a British officer.
- d. He wants to make his father proud.

24. When Pascal tells his stepfather he'd like to be on a gun crew, his stepfather's attitude can best be described as:

- a. Encouraging
- b. Sympathetic
- c. Worried
- d. Mocking

Answer the following question in a short paragraph: When you are interested in a job, you notice little details about that job that others might miss. What does Pascal admire about the men on the gun crews? Use specific details from the chapter in your response.

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Chapter 9

Historical Note: Believe it or not, Benedict Arnold really did send out a few ships to lure the British boats into the channel between Valcour Island and the New York shore to fight. Why would he do such a thing? He thought the larger British ships might have trouble getting into the narrow channel, given the wind on that day. He figured his fleet would have a better chance in the channel than on the broad lake.

You'll read in this chapter about the men drinking rum. In colonial America, rum was a common drink and was regarded as more of an everyday beverage than a special occasion alcoholic drink. Why was rum popular on board the ships? It didn't spoil as quickly as other drinks. Imagine trying to keep milk cold without any kind of refrigeration. Generally, crew members were given small rations of rum, so intoxication wasn't a problem. However, there were men like Philip in this chapter, who made poor choices and suffered for it, not only because they were sick but also because they'd likely be punished the next day.

Discussion and Journaling Questions:

- Given what you know about the size of the British fleet vs. the American fleet, if you were a crew member on board the *Spitfire*, how would you feel when you got the news that the British ships were coming into the channel?
- What conclusions might you draw about Benedict Arnold's personality, based on what you've heard about him in Chapter 9?

Interdisciplinary Connections:

English Language Arts – Literature – An allusion is a literary device used to describe an author's reference in the text to an outside work of literature. For example, in this chapter, there is an allusion to the King Arthur stories that Abigail remembers when she sees the fascine. Use an encyclopedia or online database to learn a little about the legend of King Arthur. How do King Arthur and his knights relate to Abigail's experience on the boat?

Science – Black powder was important to 18th century warfare. It was made up of sulfur, charcoal (this contained carbon, which made the black powder black) and saltpeter (potassium nitrate). Use an encyclopedia or online database to read more about black powder. Although it's no longer used for military purposes, black powder does have some modern uses. Can you find out what they are? How do these modern uses relate to the way black powder was used during the Revolution?

Name _____ *Spitfire* Study Guide: Chapter 9

VOCABULARY

composing: _____

irritated: _____

oblivious: _____

haughty: _____

25. Abigail says, “I’d thought perhaps the large ship that arrived the night before, the *Washington*, would have brought provisions, so we’d be eating better today.” Based on the context of this paragraph, provisions most likely means:

- a. Crew members
- b. Supplies
- c. Weapons
- d. Ammunition

26. A simile is a figure of speech in which an author describes something by using the word like, as, or than in a comparison. Which of the following is a simile?

- a. They reminded me of the King Arthur stories...
- b. His face was red with exhaustion as we took his chapped hands to help him aboard.
- c. “They’ll turn into the harbor as soon as they see we’re here!”
- d. The sun was rising over the mountains like a big ripe peach.

Answer the following question in a short paragraph: As the events of Chapter 9 unfold, Abigail gains a better idea of what the battle might be like. What preparations on board the boat help her to realize how serious the situation is? Give details from the chapter to support your ideas.

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Chapter 10

Historical Note: Pascal's concern over the musket fire coming from Valcour Island was a real one. Several primary sources document this as an issue that the American troops had to face. While Native Americans fought on both sides during the Revolution, those stationed on Valcour Island on this day were helping the British.

The *Royal Savage* really did run aground on a rocky shoal off Valcour Island just as the fighting began, and it was every bit as devastating to the American fleet as Pascal suggests in this chapter. The men kept fighting, but losing one of their largest vessels so early in the battle must have made them feel even more outgunned by the British.

Discussion and Journaling Questions:

- Pascal is young to be engaged in such an intense battle. How do you think he's handling the situation so far?
- Pascal is so wrapped up in helping with the swivel gun, he doesn't notice what's going on in the larger battle. After the swivel gun is fired, what details does Pascal relate about the scene around him?

Interdisciplinary Connections:

The Arts – Pascal offers a vivid description of the battle scene, from the fascine to the swivel guns, to the *Royal Savage* running aground. Choose a scene from this chapter to sketch. See how many descriptive details from the text you can illustrate in your drawing.

Science – The gunboats were flat-bottomed boats – without the V-shaped hulls that most of the British ships had. In this chapter, Pascal acknowledges, "There was no way a fleet of flat-bottomed row boats would be a match for the King's navy on the broad lake." Why are flat-bottomed boats a disadvantage? Experiment. Try folding thick paper in different ways to come up with a few different boat designs. Use the paper and duct tape (or other waterproof tape) to build a couple different designs – one with a flat bottom and one with a V-shape. Test them out in a tub of water. Which one moves through the water more easily, and why? How might this experiment help to explain Pascal's feelings?

Name _____ *Spitfire* Study Guide: Chapter 10

VOCABULARY

kindled: _____

nimbly: _____

determination: _____

gaunt: _____

27. After the first British ship appears, the scene on board the *Spitfire* can best be described as:

- a. Chaotic.
- b. Calm.
- c. Desperate.
- d. Depressing.

28. A simile is a figure of speech in which an author describes something by using the word like, as, or than in a comparison. Which of the following is a simile?

- a. To me, Arnold's idea of fighting at anchor made as much sense as anything else.
- b. She was tipped, her sails empty and snapping in the wind.
- c. I moved briskly but held the cartridge as gently as a baby bird.
- d. The British gunboats had dealt with the north wind better than we'd expected.

29. Why does Pascal fall onto the deck at the end of this chapter?

- a. He is overcome by emotion from all that he has seen.
- b. He's been wounded by a musket ball.
- c. He trips over a man's body.
- d. He slips on the blood that coats the deck.

Answer the following question in a short paragraph: Firing a swivel gun demands careful attention to detail and a specific procedure. What are the steps that need to be followed? Use the gun scene in this chapter to make a list of steps for firing a swivel gun.

Spitfire

by Kate Messner

Study Guide

Chapter 11

Historical Note:

Grapeshot was a kind of ammunition designed specifically to cause casualties of crew members. Rather than loading one large ball into the cannon, gun crews loaded a canvas bag or box of smaller iron balls, about an inch in diameter, into the gun. When the gun was fired, the ammunition would scatter like a blast from a shotgun. This is what wounds Philip in Chapter 11.

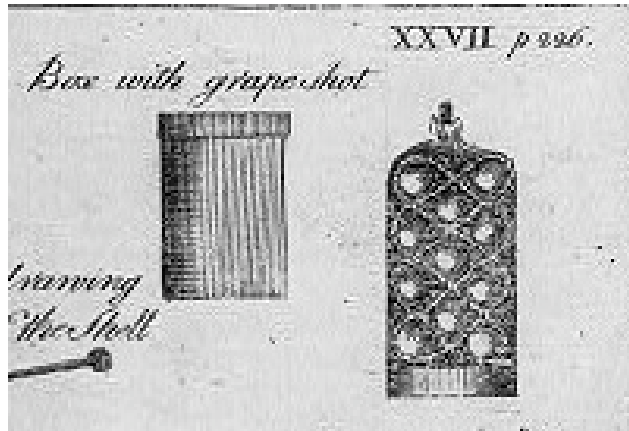


Image from an American Revolution sketch of military devices.
http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/f4/Grapeshot_treatise_closeup.jpg

Discussion and Journaling Questions:

- Who seems more comfortable tending to the wounded Philip – Abigail or Pascal? Why?
- Abigail rips a piece from her shirt and ties it around Philip's arm as she tends to him. Why do you think she does this, and how does she know it might help?

Interdisciplinary Connections:

Science – As Abigail tends to Philip in this chapter, she is concerned about his blood loss. Use an encyclopedia or online database to research blood. See if you can find the answers to these questions:

How much blood is in a human body?

How much blood can a person lose before it is a threat to his or her life?

What are some modern techniques doctors use to help patients with wounds that cause blood loss?

Name _____ *Spitfire Study Guide: Chapter 11*

VOCABULARY

raspy: _____

transport: _____

drenched: _____

30. Abigail knows something about blood loss because:

- a. She's been in battles before.
- b. Her father was a doctor before he died.
- c. Her mother was a midwife.
- d. She took care of animals on the farm.

31. When Pascal tells Captain Ulmer about Philip's wound, the captain barely stops to look. This is probably because:

- a. He doesn't care what happens to Philip.
- b. He's angry with Pascal for interrupting him.
- c. He doesn't think the injury is serious.
- d. He's too busy with everything happening in the battle.

32. Abigail is able to overcome her fear of the battle to transport Philip by:

- a. Focusing on helping Philip and comforting him.
- b. Pretending she's back on the farm.
- c. Chatting with Pascal during the boat ride.
- d. Rowing quickly to avoid the danger.

Answer the following question in a short paragraph: Abigail knows that she and Pascal need to hurry to the hospital ship to get help for Philip. What evidence can you find in the chapter that she is correct about how seriously he is wounded?

Spitfire

by Kate Messner

Study Guide

Chapter 12

Historical Note: We're fortunate today to have advanced medical care in our hospitals and doctors' offices. In the 18th century, things were very different. There was just one hospital ship, with one doctor, to serve the entire American fleet on Lake Champlain. That one hospital ship lacked the modern technology, drugs, and know-how that our hospitals use today. The most common method of dealing with a serious arm or leg wound was amputation, and it was a grueling operation, with no anesthesia except what Philip was offered – a bit of rum and something hard to bite down on. Maybe you've heard someone use the phrase "bite the bullet," to describe dealing with a difficult situation or being tough in the face of pain. That modern phrase dates back to Philip's time, when literally biting a bullet or musket ball might have been the only comfort available.

Discussion and Journaling Questions:

- Pascal and Abigail are thrown into a traumatic situation in Chapter 12. How do you think you would have handled it if you were in their shoes?
- What do the conditions on board the hospital ship tell you about how the battle is going so far?

Interdisciplinary Connections:

Science & Medicine – Explore the website below from the Guilford Courthouse National Military Park.

<http://www.cr.nps.gov/museum/exhibits/revwar/guco/gucomedicine.html>

It gives an overview of Revolutionary War medicine as well as some pictures of the tools used by doctors during this time period. Which tools can you identify from Philip's operation on board the *Enterprise*?

Name _____ *Spitfire* Study Guide: Chapter 12

VOCABULARY

impact: _____

numerous: _____

tendrils: _____

33. Abigail describes the boy on the hospital ship, saying, “But in contrast to the dull, brownish gray that colored our clothes now, his garments bore the scarlet stains of fresh blood.” Based on the context of this sentence, garments are:

- a. Clothes.
- b. Tools.
- c. Shoes.
- d. Hands.

34. During Philip’s surgery, Abigail can best be described as:

- a. Frightened and insecure
- b. Comforting and brave
- c. Cold and indifferent
- d. Emotional and weepy

Answer the following question in a short paragraph: How does Abigail display her courage in Chapter 12? Use specific details from the text to support your ideas.

Spitfire

by Kate Messner

Study Guide

Chapter 13

Historical Note: The tenaculum mentioned in Chapter 13 is one of the tools that would have been used in the later stages of an amputation. It was used to draw the arteries from the arm so the surgeon could tie them off to stop bleeding.



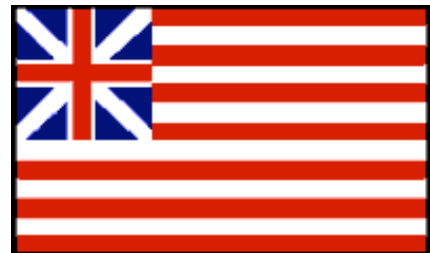
<http://www.braceface.com/medical/CW%20instruments/Tenaculum.JPG>

Discussion and Journaling Questions:

- Why do you think Pascal faints when he does?
- Why do you think Pascal is so frightened when he sees the large British ship approaching at the end of Chapter 13? How does Pascal's knowledge of General Arnold's character contribute to his fear?

Interdisciplinary Connections:

American History – The phrase “striking the colors” used at the end of Chapter 13 refers to lowering a flag as a sign of surrender. In October of 1776, the flag displayed by the American fleet would have been this one – called the Grand Union flag.



Visit the link below to explore how our modern flag evolved from America's earliest symbols of independence.

<http://www.ushistory.org/betsy/flagpics.html>

Name _____ *Spitfire Study Guide: Chapter 13*

VOCABULARY

scurry: _____

resume: _____

dwarf (verb): _____

35. The surgeon operating on Philip doesn't react when Pascal faints. This is most likely because:

- a. He doesn't care about Pascal.
- b. His regular assistant faints all the time.
- c. He's busy focusing on Philip.
- d. He didn't want another person helping anyway.

36. Abigail's attitude toward the doctor on board the *Enterprise* can best be described as:

- a. indifferent
- b. impressed
- c. frustrated
- d. suspicious

37. Pascal's fear grows at the end of this chapter because:

- a. He fears for his life.
- b. Another larger British ship has arrived.
- c. He doesn't think Benedict Arnold will surrender.
- d. All of the above.

Answer the following question in a short paragraph: The doctor's assistant, Simon, is clearly more comfortable on the hospital ship than Abigail and Pascal. What evidence is there that he has dealt with seriously injured patients before?

Spitfire

by Kate Messner

Study Guide

Chapter 14

Historical Note: When a gunboat was hit during battle, there was chaos on board. Splinters of wood – some of them quite large – flew into the crowd and caused serious injuries. The wooden gunboats were also in serious danger of sinking if the damage was severe. Sailors were known to repair damage in the middle of the battle, stuffing rags, bits of wood, anything they could find, into the cracks and holes. Still, many of the boats took on water and had to be bailed out by hand – the job that Abigail and Pascal are assigned in Chapter 14.

Discussion and Journaling Questions:

- How has Pascal's attitude toward Abigail/Adam changed as a result of their experiences on board the *Enterprise*?
- What does Pascal notice when he returns to the *Spitfire*? How have things changed from earlier in the day?
- Why do you think the youngest crew members on the ship are given the job of bailing the water?

Interdisciplinary Connections:

The Arts – Drama – A monologue in a play is a scene where one character speaks, seemingly to himself or to the audience. Imagine that you are writing a stage version of the book *Spitfire*. Write a monologue for Abigail that expresses her thoughts during the following scene:

A few times, I noticed Adam at the railing, standing with his empty bucket, staring out over the waters. It was almost as if he were looking for someone.

Revise your monologue so it sounds like Abigail's voice. Practice delivering it with expression in your voice, and then share it with a small group or your class.

Name _____ *Spitfire* Study Guide: Chapter 14

VOCABULARY

massive: _____

casualties: _____

incredulous: _____

38. Captain Ulmer's attitude in this chapter can best be described as:

- a. Defeated and depressed.
- b. Frustrated and angry.
- c. Supportive and encouraging.
- d. Indifferent and bored.

39. Read the following passage from Chapter 14.

"He was wheeling around when a shot that sounded louder than all the rest rang out. A second later, the *Spitfire* lurched. "

What inference can you draw based on these lines?

- a. The boat ran aground.
- b. Too many men were crowded on one side of the boat.
- c. The boat has been hit by a cannon ball.
- d. The boat is sinking.

40. Why is Pascal upset about being assigned to bail water from the ship?

- a. He's exhausted from rowing to the hospital ship.
- b. He thinks the job is too difficult.
- c. He wants to be more involved in the battle.
- d. All of the above.

Answer the following question in a short paragraph: Has Captain Ulmer been a good leader to the men on his ship so far? Use details from Chapter 14 and earlier chapters to support your opinion.

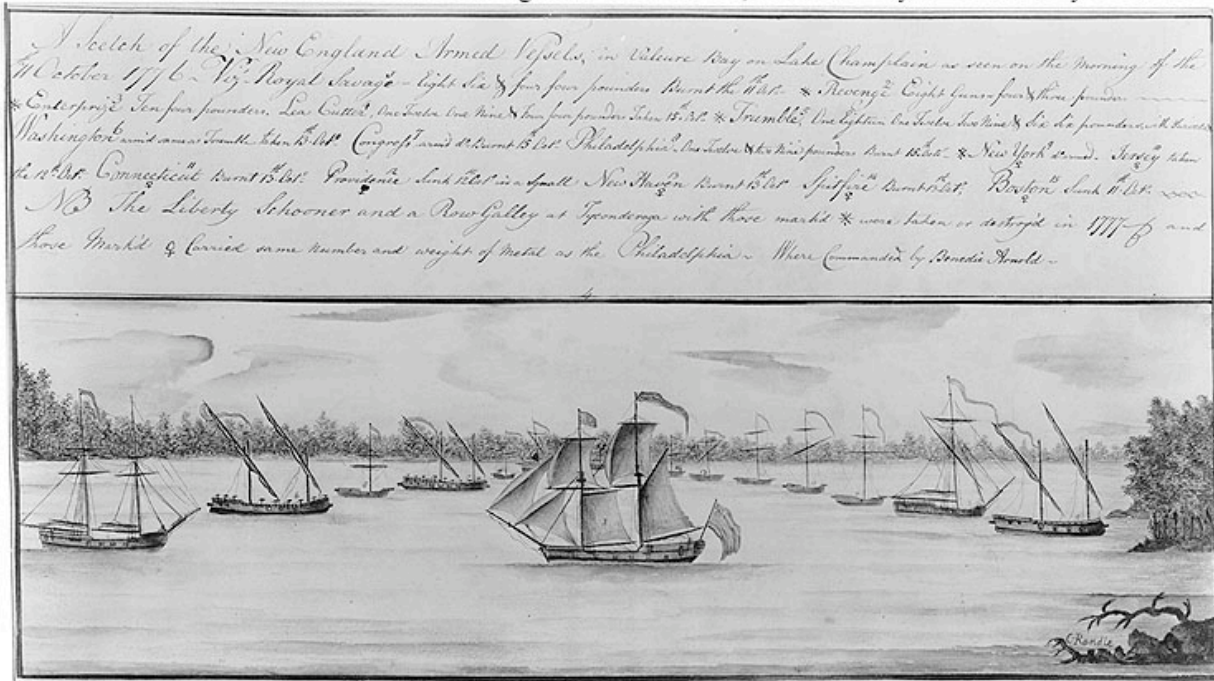
by Kate Messner
Study Guide

Chapter 15

Historical Note: When night fell on October 11, 1776, the American fleet was literally between a rock and a hard place. In those days, the fighting stopped when it grew dark, with the understanding that the battle would continue when the sun came up the next morning. On the night of October 11, 1776, the American ships were trapped in the channel with no way to escape. In the morning, the leaders knew they would face the full force of the British firing power.

The following is a sketch of the fleet, with the schooner *Royal Savage* in the foreground. It's easy to see why losing that ship, and watching it burn as night fell, would have been demoralizing to crew members of the American fleet.

Photo # NH 92864 "A Sketch of the New England Armed Vessels, in Valcure Bay ..." Artwork by C. Randle



Discussion and Journaling Questions:

- If you were in charge of the American fleet, how would you handle the situation at the end of Chapter 15?

Interdisciplinary Connections:

Geography: Study the Battle of Valcour Island map at the website below. How could this map have helped the leaders of the American fleet?

http://www.historiclakes.org/graphics/valcour_fadenmap.jpg

Name _____ *Spitfire* Study Guide: Chapter 15

VOCABULARY

absence: _____

horizon: _____

conserve: _____

41. At the beginning of Chapter 15, Abigail says, “The absence of sound struck me more than any gunfire had that day.” The quiet is noticeable to her because:
- a. The battle had created constant noise and chaos.
 - b. She’s used to Pascal talking all the time.
 - c. She doesn’t hear an officer shouting orders and doesn’t know what to do.
 - d. She can finally talk to Pascal.
42. The fighting stops in Chapter 15 because:
- a. The British have surrendered.
 - b. The Americans have surrendered.
 - c. It’s too dark for the battle to continue.
 - d. Both sides ran out of ammunition.

Answer the following question in a short paragraph: Captain Ulmer tells another officer that there’s no need to conserve supplies at this point. Why do you think he feels this way? Use details from the chapter to support your ideas.

Spitfire

by Kate Messner

Study Guide

Chapter 16

Historical Note: Benedict Arnold's escape plan for his fleet the Battle of Valcour Island is one of the greatest getaways in military history. Keep in mind, there was no sophisticated equipment to help sailors tell how deep the water was when they were out on the lake. They had charts and maps, but there were always questions about how accurate those charts were. The American fleet was made up mostly of flat-bottomed boats that could move through relatively shallow water. On the night of October 11, 1776, the British thought they had blocked the channel. They thought the water close to the New York shore was too shallow to allow the American troops to escape. Benedict Arnold bet his fleet – and the lives of his men – that they were wrong.

Discussion and Journaling Questions:

- Do you think Benedict Arnold's escape plan will work? Why or why not?
- Why do you think Pascal is afraid to hope for a solution in this chapter?

Interdisciplinary Connections:

Mathematics: How did Benedict Arnold know the depth of the lake near Valcour Island and the New York shore? Sailors in the 18th century didn't have depth gauges that exist on modern boats, so they had to take soundings to figure out how deep the water was. They'd lower a long rope into the water with a lead weight on the end. When it hit bottom, they'd mark the spot on the rope they held before pulling it back into the boat. They'd do this over and over again, marking the depths on a map as they moved the boat along.

Try it: If you have access to a river, pond, or lake, you can try taking soundings like Benedict Arnold's troops. Draw a map of the body of water. Tie a heavy object like a rock or large fishing weight onto the end of a piece of rope or string. Lower it into the water from a bridge or spot on shore, and note how much of the rope was in the water. Use a yardstick or tape measure to measure that depth, and record it on your map. Move along the shore and do the same thing. You'll begin to get an idea of how early sailors mapped Lake Champlain (and how tedious a process it must have been!)

Name _____ *Spitfire* Study Guide: Chapter 16

VOCABULARY

resolutely: _____

eternity: _____

succumb: _____

muffle: _____

43. At the beginning of Chapter 16, Pascal is discouraged because:

- a. The American fleet is trapped.
- b. The American fleet is out of ammunition.
- c. Two of the American ships have been lost.
- d. All of the above.

44. Pascal doesn't want to talk with Abigail about their problem because:

- a. He knows she's a girl and is afraid she'll cry.
- b. He's angry with Abigail for not working hard.
- c. He knows Abigail will worry more about her uncle.
- d. He notices how hard Abigail is still working to bail out the boat.

Answer the following question in a short paragraph: Pascal describes the sounds coming from the British fleet and seems even more frustrated. Describe what he hears and explain why those sounds might make him feel discouraged.

Spitfire

by Kate Messner

Study Guide

Chapter 17

Historical Note: In Chapter 17, you read Abigail's account of the escape from Valcour Island, a fictional account based on several real documents from people who were there. Here is an actual first-person account of that same incident from the point of view of a British lieutenant.

The Enemy finding their force diminish'd and the rest so severely handled by little more than 1/8 the British Fleet determin'd to withdraw towards *Crown Point*, and passing thro. our Fleet about 10 o'clock at Night effected it undiscover'd; this, the former position of the Gun Boats wou'd have probably have prevented. All the Enemies Vessels used *Oars* & on this occasion they were *muffled*. This retreat did great honor to *Gen'l Arnold*, who acted as Admiral to the Rebel Fleet on this occasion.

Lieut. James Hadden's Account of the Battle of Lake Champlain. An eyewitness account of the extraordinary events on Lake Champlain between October 11-13, 1776. Transcribed by James P. Millard from Hadden's *Journal and Orderly Books: A Journal Kept in Canada and Upon Burgoyne's Campaign in 1776 and 1777*, by Lieut. James M. Hadden, Roy. Art¹ <http://www.historiclakes.org>

Discussion and Journaling Questions:

- How does the document in the historical note compare to Abigail's story of the escape?
- How do you think you might have felt during the escape if you were Abigail or Pascal?

Interdisciplinary Connections:

English Language Arts – Poetic Devices - Abigail uses several similes in this chapter, as she describes the fleet's escape. A simile is a comparison using the word like, as, or than. It describes something by comparing it to an unlike object. Take a look at these similes. Write a brief description of what you think the author was trying to say through the use of each simile.

Just barely, I could make out the light in the stern of the Providence ahead of us. I glowed like an exhausted firefly, worn down and flickering in the fog and dampness, but still lighting the way.

Perhaps we were afraid speaking that small hope aloud would make it vanish, like a dream when you open your eyes in the morning.

Name _____ *Spitfire Study Guide: Chapter 17*

VOCABULARY

resume: _____

flickering: _____

rollicking: _____

subdued: _____

45. Why is Abigail worried about sneezing or stumbling at the beginning of Chapter 17?

- a. She's worried that she'll get sick or hurt.
- b. She's afraid she'll make noise and ruin the escape plan.
- c. She doesn't want Pascal to know she's there.
- d. All of the above.

46. Abigail's attitude in this chapter can best be described as:

- a. Calm and confident
- b. Friendly but shy
- c. Depressed and pessimistic
- d. Anxious but optimistic

Answer the following question in a short paragraph: Even before Abigail is told to start bailing again, there are small signs that the escape plan is working. What does she see and hear to give her hope that the fleet might escape?

Spitfire

by Kate Messner

Study Guide

Chapter 18

Historical Note: What happened to the *Spitfire*? It was a mystery, until 1997, when the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum's Lake Survey team found an unidentified gunboat in near-perfect condition on the bottom of Lake Champlain. Through much research and scouring of historical documents, the museum was able to identify the boat as the *Spitfire*, the last remaining vessel of Benedict Arnold's fleet on Lake Champlain.

This painting by artist Ernie Haas (courtesy of the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum) shows the *Spitfire* resting on the lake bottom.

Where is the *Spitfire* now? At the bottom of Lake Champlain, safe in the deep water where it was discovered in 1997. The National Trust for Historic Preservation has designated the *Spitfire* an official project of the program Save America's Treasures.



http://lcmmm.org/shipwrecks_history/shipwrecks/spitfire.htm

Discussion and Journaling Questions:

- How did you spend your last birthday? Why do you think the mention of Pascal's birthday in this chapter goes by so quickly?
- Read the following excerpt from the end of Chapter 18.

Arnold was huddled over a table, writing, just as he had been on the day I first brought Adam to him. It had been just days ago, but it seemed like a whole lifetime, in a way.

Why do you think Pascal feels this way?

Interdisciplinary Connections:

English Language Arts – Creative Writing - Imagine that you are the gunboat *Spitfire*. Write a farewell speech to your crew. What kinds of things will you say to them, given what you've been through together?

Name _____ *Spitfire* Study Guide: Chapter 18

VOCABULARY

trivial: _____

billowing: _____

primitive: _____

meager: _____

47. Which of the following was NOT something the crew did to try and save the *Spitfire*?

- a. Bailing water
- b. Plugging the holes
- c. Tying it up to another boat
- d. Throwing guns and supplies overboard

48. When Pascal enters General Arnold's cabin, he notices how different Arnold looks from just a few days ago. This is because:

- a. Arnold is no longer writing letters.
- b. Arnold's clothes are dirty.
- c. Arnold looks exhausted and defeated.
- d. Arnold looks much friendlier.

Answer the following question in a short paragraph: How does the crew react when the *Spitfire* starts to sink, and what is the captain's attitude when it becomes clear that the ship cannot be saved? Use details from the chapter to support your ideas.

Spitfire

by Kate Messner

Study Guide

Chapter 19

Historical Note: In most history books, Benedict Arnold is known as a traitor because later in the Revolutionary War, when Arnold was given command of the American fort at West Point, he offered to hand it over to the British. The plan was discovered when British spy John Andre was captured, and Arnold fled to a waiting British ship. The British made him a brigadier general, and he fought for them for the rest of the war.

Benedict Arnold

Copy of engraving by H.B. Hall after John Trumbull



Discussion and Journaling Questions:

- Why do you think Abigail is so drawn to General Arnold?
- Do you think Arnold knows who Abigail is?

Interdisciplinary Connections:

Social Studies – Dealing with Primary Sources - The letter Benedict Arnold writes in Chapter 19 was real, his actual words to his commanding officer after the battle.

We suffered much for want of Seamen & Gunners. I was obliged myself to Point Most of the Guns on board the Congress which I believe did good execution. As soon as our leaks are stopped, the whole fleet will make the utmost dispatch to Crown Point, where I beg you will send ammunition & your further orders for us. On the whole I think we have had a very fortunate escape, and have great reason to return, our humble, and hearty thanks to Almighty God for preserving and delivering so many of us from our more than savage enemies. I am, General,

*Your affectionate
B. Arnold*

Read Arnold's letter again and rewrite it in more modern English. Sometimes, breaking a document into smaller chunks or phrases can help you to figure out the old-fashioned language.

Name _____ *Spitfire* Study Guide: Chapter 19

VOCABULARY

audacity: _____

sneer: _____

eternity: _____

49. Why can't Abigail ask the questions she wants to ask Benedict Arnold in this chapter?

- a. Arnold is too busy and won't take time to answer.
- b. Abigail's questions would give away her real identity.
- c. Abigail doesn't have enough time in Arnold's cabin to ask questions.
- d. Pascal is with her, and Abigail's questions are private.

50. Why does Benedict Arnold ask Abigail/Adam about a sister?

- a. He remembers Zachariah talking about a daughter.
- b. He thinks Abigail looks like a girl.
- c. He wants Abigail to know he cares about her family.
- d. None of the above.

Answer the following question in a short paragraph: When Benedict Arnold tells Abigail about her father, Zachariah, he describes the time he shared with Zachariah in Quebec. How do you think Arnold felt about Zachariah? Use evidence from the conversation in the text to support your opinion.

Spitfire

by Kate Messner

Study Guide

Chapter 20

Historical Note: While some powder horns were engraved works of art, most were utilitarian vessels that were part of the soldier's required supplies. The following is an excerpt from the article "**Equipment of the Soldier During the American Revolution** by Alfred F. Hopkins, *Field Curator National Park Service, 2001*.

An order of April 6, 1779, issued in Boston and now preserved in the Emmet Collection of the New York Public Library, describes in detail the arms and accouterments of that day. A copy of it in the Morristown exhibit reads:

To Shrimpton Hutchinson Esq.

SIR,

You are hereby ordered and directed, to compleat yourself with ARMS and Accoutrements, by the 12th Instant, upon failure thereof, you are liable to a FINE of THREE POUNDS; and for every Sixty Days after, a FINE OF SIX POUNDS, agreeable to Law.

Articles of Equipment,

A good *Fire-Arm*, with a Steel or Iron *Ram-Rod*, and a *Spring* to retain the same, a *Worm*, *Priming wire* and *Brash*, and a *Bayonet* fitted to your GUN, a *Scabbard* and *Belt* therefor, and a *Cutting Sword*, or a *Tomahawk* or *Hatchet*, a *Poach* containing a *Cartridge Box*, that will hold fifteen Rounds of *Cartridges* at least, a hundred *Buck Shot*, a *Jack-Knife* and Tow for Wadding, six *Flints*, one pound **powder**, forty *Leaden Balls* fitted to your GUN, a *Knapsack* and *Blanket* a *Canteen* or *Wooden Bottle* sufficient to hold one *Quart*.

Discussion and Journaling Questions:

- What pictures might you etch in your powder horn if you were Pascal or Abigail?
- Why do you think Abigail decides to etch on her father's powder horn?

Interdisciplinary Connections:

Social Studies – Dealing with Primary Sources - Read the primary source document in the Historical Note for Chapter 20. Which of the supplies and provisions in that list have you seen in the book so far? Why might some of the characters be without some of these supplies?

Name _____ *Spitfire* Study Guide: Chapter 20

VOCABULARY

shard: _____

flailing: _____

ornate: _____

51. Pascal waits for Abigail on the island, surprised that she's taking so long. He guesses that:

- a. She got lost on her way to the island.
- b. She stopped to help someone in need.
- c. She got in trouble for asking too many questions.
- d. She was invited to stay for a meal.

52. Read the following passage from Chapter 20:

Two more gunboats were beyond saving, so the men cut holes in the planks and scuttled them, surrendering them to the lake.

Based on the context clues, the word scuttled most likely means:

- a. saved
- b. sank on purpose
- c. ran aground
- d. shot at

Answer the following question in a short paragraph: Abigail is quiet in this chapter. Based on the evidence in the text, what might she be thinking about? Use details from the text to support your opinion.

Spitfire

by Kate Messner

Study Guide

Chapter 21

Historical Note: The American fleet had rowed quietly all through the night of October 11th. They spent the 12th near Schuyler Island, just outside of Willsboro Bay and just across the lake from the present-day location of Burlington, VT. The crew members spent that day recovering and doing repairs on their ships. They knew the British weren't far behind them, and their best bet was to flee south to Crown Point and Fort Ticonderoga.

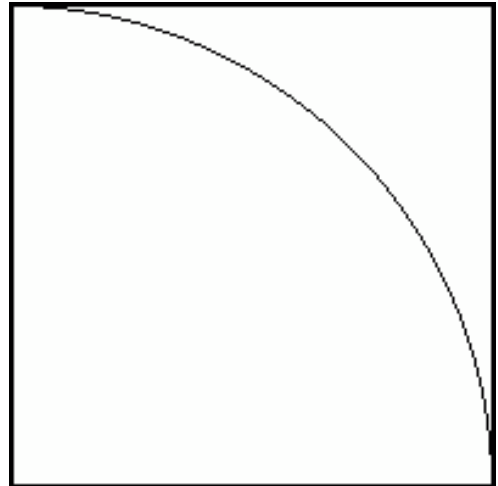
Discussion and Journaling Questions:

- Etching pictures on her father's powder horn seems to make Abigail feel better. Why?
- Were you surprised when Pascal found out that his friend Adam was really a girl named Abigail? Why or why not?
- How would you have reacted if you were Pascal?
- Make a prediction about what will happen when Abigail and Pascal return to the boat.

Interdisciplinary Connections:

The Arts – Soldiers and sailors engraved images on their powder horns to tell the stories of their journeys. What if you had a powder horn? What images would you choose to show the important things that have happened in your life?

Cut a quarter-circle shape from a large sheet of construction paper. On one side of the paper, sketch the images you chose to tell the stories of your life. Maps, words, drawings, and quotes are all fair game. Then roll up the paper so it's shaped like a cone, or powder horn, and tape it to keep it in place. If you'd like, you can run a piece of yarn or leather cord through the two holes in the cone to create a shoulder strap for your powder horn.



Name _____ *Spitfire* Study Guide: Chapter 21

VOCABULARY

solemnly: _____

identical: _____

depart: _____

53. Which of the following was NOT an image Abigail etched on her father's powder horn?

- a. her family's farmhouse
- b. the *Congress*
- c. waves on the lake
- d. the wall of Quebec

54. Pascal convinces Abigail to draw her story on the horn, too, because:

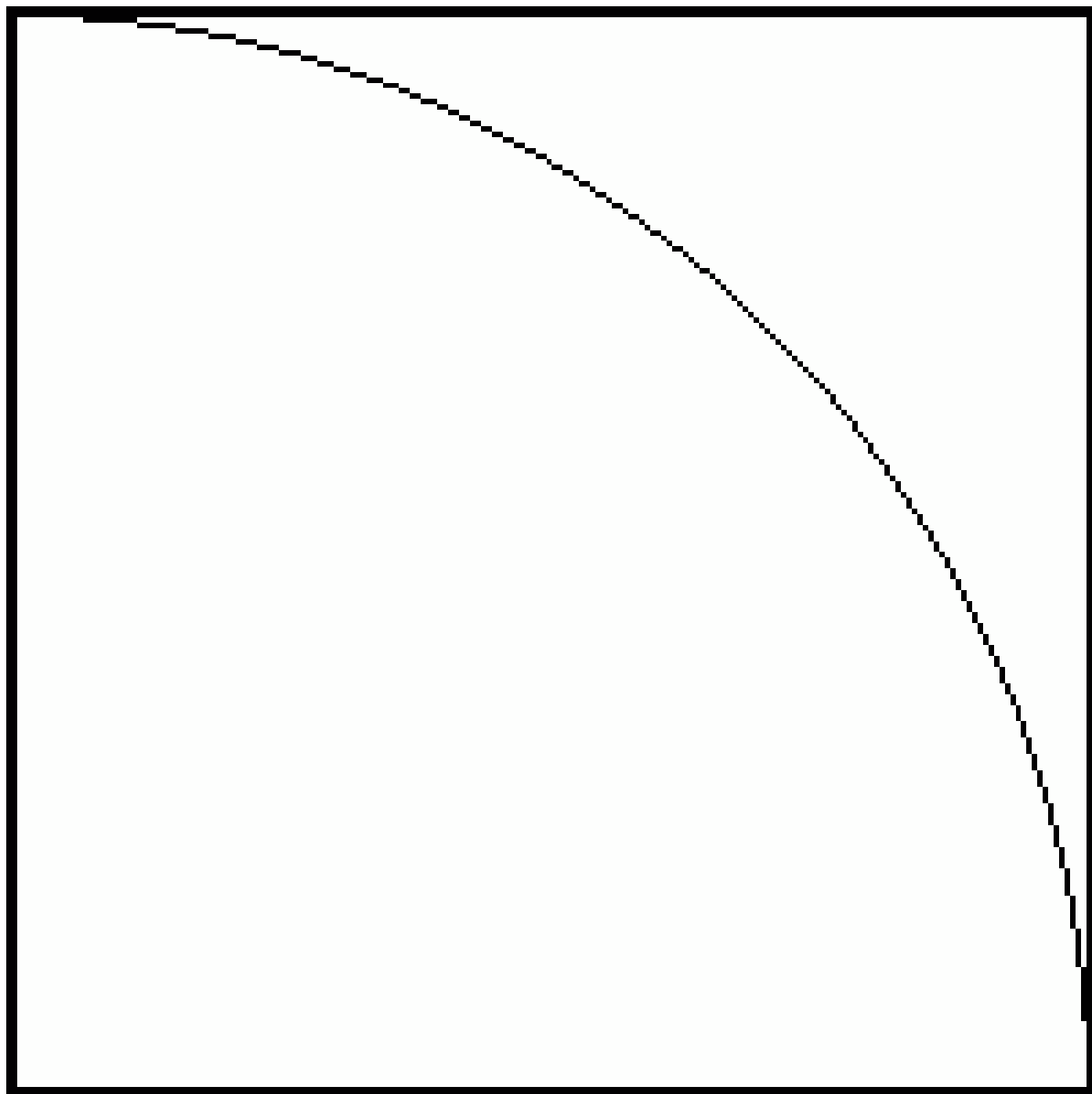
- a. Her children will want to hear that story some day.
- b. Her father would have been on board the *Spitfire* if he hadn't died.
- c. She's the owner now, and a horn is supposed to tell the whole story of its owner.
- d. Her story is more interesting and exciting than her father's.

55. When Pascal discovers Abigail is a girl, his reaction can best be described as:

- a. Amused
- b. Angry
- c. Betrayed
- d. Shocked

Answer the following question in a short paragraph: Make a prediction. What do you think will happen with Abigail and her uncle? Good predictions are based on something, so be sure to include details in your paragraph that explain *why* you made the prediction you did.

Powder Horn Template



Spitfire

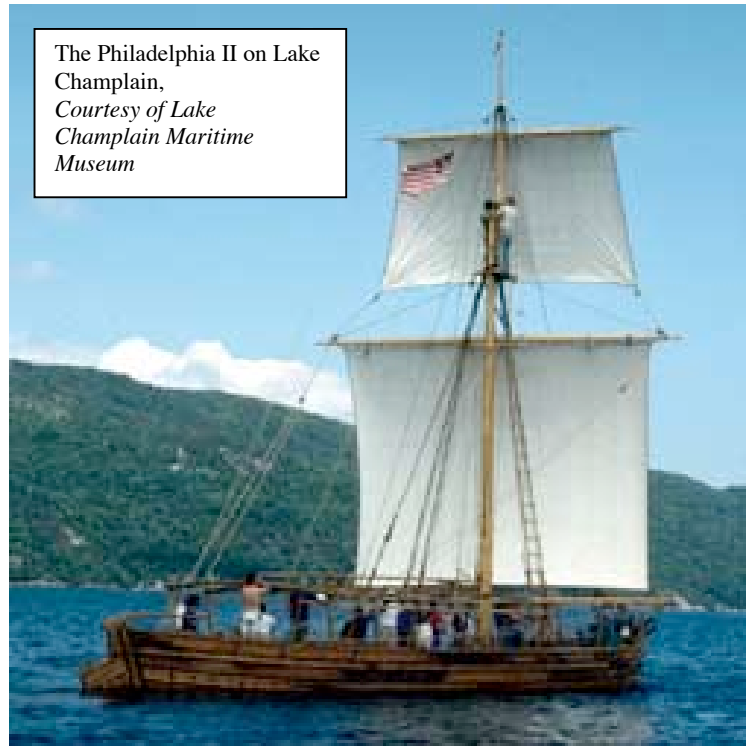
by Kate Messner

Study Guide

Chapters 22-23

Historical Note: *Author's Note:* Every year, the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum in Vergennes, VT hosts a living history event called Rabble in Arms – a weekend to recreate moments from those days on Lake Champlain in 1776. The museum uses a replica – an exact copy – of the Gunboat *Philadelphia* to find out what sailing and rowing that vessel must have been like.

In 2001, while I was doing research for *Spitfire*, I had an opportunity to participate in Rabble in Arms. Like Abigail, I dressed in men's knee britches and a work shirt that was too big for me, and like Abigail, I was assigned to “man the sweeps.” I was put in charge of one of the twelve-foot oars that lined the sides of the boat. It was an amazing experience that made me understand just how difficult these flat-bottomed boats were to maneuver. At one point, the wind picked up a bit while we were rowing in the harbor near the museum, and it was a bit of a struggle to get the boat moving in the right direction again.



The Philadelphia II on Lake Champlain,
Courtesy of Lake Champlain Maritime Museum

Discussion and Journaling Questions:

- How do you think Pascal feels about the whole situation with Abigail when he has a chance to think about it?
- Both Pascal and Abigail find comfort in manning the oars on the *Congress*. Why do you think they appreciate this task? Try to support your ideas with examples from the text.

Interdisciplinary Connections:

Mathematics & Geography Challenge! Use a modern chart or map of Lake Champlain to look at the distance between Valcour Island and Schuyler Island, where the fleet stopped to rest. Then estimate the distance from Schuyler Island to Crown Point, NY, where Arnold planned to go. What conclusions can you draw about how quickly the fleet was moving and how long it might have taken the boats to get all the way to Crown Point?

Name _____ *Spitfire* Study Guide: Chapters 22-23

VOCABULARY

sparse: _____

cadence: _____

propelled: _____

dainty: _____

blockade: _____

56. When Pascal thinks about Abigail as he mans the sweeps, his feelings can best be described as:

- a. upset
- b. confused
- c. pleased
- d. furious

57. Abigail's feelings in Chapter 23 can best be described as:

- a. hopeful
- b. frightened
- c. energetic
- d. lonely

Answer the following question in a short paragraph: In Chapters 22-23, both Pascal and Abigail pay attention to the British ships in the distance as they escape. What do they notice? Use details from the text to support your ideas.

Spitfire

by Kate Messner

Study Guide

Chapter 24

Historical Note: Would a young boy of Pascal's age have been on a gun crew during the American Revolution? Probably not, unless the crew was in the kind of dire situation they faced in Chapter 24. More often, young crew members on board ships were set to tasks like Pascal and Abigail saw earlier in the story – things like bailing, fetching powder cartridges, cooking, and just running general errands on board the ship. On land, young soldiers were often used as drummer boys, who played a drum to set a cadence for marching and signal different orders to the troops.

Discussion and Journaling Questions:

- Why do you think the older members of the crew with more experience were the first to become discouraged?
- What evidence is there in Chapter 24 that the messenger knows his news is likely to anger Benedict Arnold?
- What surprises Pascal about the men on board the British ship?

Interdisciplinary Connections:

English Language Arts - Point of View - Chapter 24 is written from Pascal's point of view. Rewrite the story from the point of view of the British boy who is wounded.

Name _____ *Spitfire Study Guide: Chapter 24*

VOCABULARY

realization: _____

battered: _____

lagged: _____

provoke: _____

58. Based on his actions in Chapter 24, Benedict Arnold can best be described as:

- a. Unkind.
- b. Determined.
- c. Rebellious.
- d. Cautious.

59. Why is Pascal assigned to a gun crew in Chapter 24?

- a. Benedict Arnold is impressed with his abilities.
- b. Pascal has been asking to be on a gun crew and Arnold wants him to have a turn.
- c. The other man who was doing the job was wounded or killed.
- d. The other man who was doing the job needed a break.

Answer the following question in a short paragraph: *Be careful what you wish for.* How does this saying apply to Pascal's wish to be on a gun crew? How did the wish not turn out the way he had hoped? Use details from the text to support your ideas.

Spitfire

by Kate Messner

Study Guide

Chapter 25

Historical Note: Lieutenant James Goldsmith was a real historical figure – a documented crew member of the *Congress* who fought in the Battle of Valcour Island. He was injured in the battle, and in documents, there are conflicting reports of what happened to him. Some accounts of the burning of the ships in Arnold’s Bay indicate that Benedict Arnold was the last man off the *Congress*, that he made sure his crew was safe before he jumped from the ship. At least one account, though, suggests that Lieutenant Goldsmith was still on board when the *Congress* blew up, after the fire reached the place where the black powder was stored. One thing that all accounts have in common – there was no surrender. The flag was still flying when Benedict Arnold and his crew abandoned the ship.

Discussion and Journaling Questions:

- Why do you think Pascal collapses and cries after firing the gun?
- Why do you think there is so little conversation when Abigail finally finds her uncle Jed?

Interdisciplinary Connections:

Social Studies – The work of Historians - Imagine that you are a historian assigned to find out what really happened to James Goldsmith when the *Congress* was abandoned. What steps would you take to try and find out? Where would you look for clues? How would you deal with historical documents that seem to contradict one another? Work with a partner to make a list of questions you might ask and strategies you might use to solve this mystery.

Name _____ *Spitfire Study Guide: Chapter 25*

VOCABULARY

frilly: _____

grimaced: _____

notion: _____

60. In Chapter 25, Lieutenant Goldsmith probably asks about Heaven because:

- a. He wants to know what Pascal and Adam think of religion.
- b. He knows that he is about to die.
- c. He realizes that it is Sunday.
- d. He wants to teach the children his beliefs about God.

61. At the end of his conversation with Lieutenant Goldsmith, Pascal says, “Even as it feels like we’re tearing things to pieces, perhaps we’re building something.” This sentiment can best be described as:

- a. Hopeful.
- b. Pessimistic.
- c. Cheerful.
- d. Discouraged.

Answer the following question in a short paragraph: Is Abigail’s Uncle Jeb the kind of man she hoped he would be? Use details from Chapter 25 to support your ideas.

Spitfire

by Kate Messner

Study Guide

Chapters 26-27 & Epilogue

Historical Note: Many of the men on board the ships considered it a miracle that they actually managed to escape the British and retreat to the fort at Crown Point. Why didn't the British follow them? Why didn't they continue up the lake? Most historians believe that the British simply decided they'd had enough for the season. There was already snow on the mountains, and the British had seen enough of Champlain Valley winters to know they'd rather not spend one camping along the lake. Many historians believe that the Battle of Valcour Island bought the American forces just enough time to regroup and gain strength, setting the stage for their victory over the British at Saratoga the following year.

Discussion and Journaling Questions:

- In the epilogue, both characters reflect on what the events of October 1776 meant to them.

Abigail says, "Truly, by heading out to battle on a wild and frigid lake, I found my way home."

Pascal says, "I'd been with a fleet of soldiers and sailors for weeks, but it took a twelve-year-old girl to teach me what it meant to be a man."

How do their reflections relate to the story?

- Why do you think Pascal finally decided to write to Abigail?

Interdisciplinary Connections:

English Language Arts – Read Pascal's letter to Abigail in the epilogue. If you were Abigail, how would you respond to this letter? Imagine that you are Abigail, and write a letter back to Pascal.

Name _____ ***Spitfire* Study Guide: Chapters 26-27 & Epilogue**

VOCABULARY

burly: _____

rabble: _____

plentiful: _____

thriving: _____

solitary: _____

62. Why did Pascal most likely go with his stepfather after they abandoned the fleet?
- a. He saw that he and his stepfather shared the same goal.
 - b. He wanted to get away from Abigail.
 - c. He was ordered to go that way and had no choice.
 - d. He thought it would be a shorter route to the fort.
63. Abigail knew before she opened the letter that it was from Pascal. How did she know this?
- a. She recognized his handwriting.
 - b. She remembered it was his birthday.
 - c. She was expecting the letter.
 - d. She recognized the gunboat on the letter's seal.

Answer the following question in a short paragraph: In the epilogue, Pascal remembers Lieutenant Goldsmith's words about what the battle might mean to the future. Pascal says, "I decided to do it – to build something." Do you think he was successful with this goal? Use specific details from the epilogue to support your opinion.
