



The Pirate Queen – A Timewalker Journey
By Christina Bauer
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Study Guide:
The Pirate Queen – A Timewalker Journey

Part 1: Overview

About the Author

Christina Bauer has been a professional writer for more than a decade. A *cum laude* graduate of Syracuse University, Ms. Bauer's career began as a copywriter for advertising agencies in New York and Pennsylvania. Over time, Ms. Bauer moved into corporate marketing and public relations, where she wrote promotional materials for technology companies in Virginia and Massachusetts, including a series of popular by-lined articles for *Computerworld Magazine*. *The Pirate Queen* is her first foray into young adult fiction.

Before writing *The Pirate Queen*, Ms. Bauer founded Mindful Technologies, a software company headquartered in Boston, MA. Her involvement in the growing community of women technology entrepreneurs extended to public speaking. From the Massachusetts Institute for Technology to the Cambridge Center for Adult Education, Ms. Bauer has presented on the relationship between women leaders of today and the often-unknown historical figures preceding them through her seminar *Hidden Heroines: The Secrets of Success from Lesser-Known Women Leaders throughout History*.

Ms. Bauer lives with her husband, son and private library in historic Boston, MA.

About the Inspiration

To prepare for her role as CEO of a technology start-up company, Ms. Bauer researched other successful female leaders throughout world history. She quickly amassed an extensive collection of books, articles, and web sites about powerful women scientists, architects, business owners, warriors and, of course, pirates. Although many of these women were household names in their time, their deeds and strategies were unknown to most people in the present. She named these ladies *Hidden Heroines*.

Ms. Bauer's unusual collection led to a series of public speaking appearances, including teaching a class entitled *Hidden Heroines: The Secrets of Success from Lesser-Known Women Leaders throughout History*. Meanwhile, one Hidden Heroine captured her particular interest: Grace O'Malley, the sixteenth century pirate queen. Soon Ms. Bauer found herself writing about this fascinating leader, and the result was the historical fantasy of *The Pirate Queen*.

About the Story

While vacationing in Ireland, 13 year-old Jessica Ross is haunted by strange dreams of a mysterious figure. That otherworldly presence turns out to be Grace O'Malley, a real-life, sixteenth-century pirate queen. After the ghostly queen asks Jess to "find her treasure," Jess travels through time to relive scenes from the Pirate Queen's thrilling life, such as fighting an epic sea battle, planning a secret wedding, and battling her family's arch-enemy, the evil Clan Mannix.

Along the way Jess discovers a secret society of Timewalkers who have powers just like her own. One ex-member, Selma Mairéad warns her that she must find the Pirate Queen's treasure before she leaves Ireland... or else!

In just six hours, Jess unearths the hidden treasure, gets her mischievous brother out of trouble, and confronts the Shadow Cat, a spectral assassin who has taken a deadly interest in Jess's quest. As a reward for finding the treasure, Jess receives a unique gift from Grace O'Malley: the strength to see into the future — and to face her next Timewalking adventure.



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The Characters

- Jessica Ross, the main character. Jess is a 13 year-old American unhappily traveling the world with her father and brother.
- Jake Ross. At 10 years old, Jake is the ultimate little brother: a trouble-maker extraordinaire.
- Amanda Ross, her mother. Amanda was pronounced “missing, presumed dead” two years ago.
- Nathan Ross, her father. Distraught over Amanda’s apparent death, Nathan moves his family around the world with his one-man software consulting business.
- Selma Mairéad, bookstore owner and one-time member of a secret society called the Timewalkers.
- Stewart Darnley aka “Stewley,” local tavern owner and greedy busybody.
- Grace O’Malley, pirate and chieftain of Clan O’Malley (1520 – 1603)
- Magnus Breakspear, a shipwrecked sailor. Grace takes him under her protection when his whaling ship washes up on her shores.
- Murrough Mannix, chieftain of Clan Mannix and arch-enemy of Clan O’Malley
- Cahir Mannix, Murrough’s twisted brother and right-hand man.
- The Shadow Cat, an ancient Olmec Warrior who has materialized in this dimension with the intent of destroying space-time.



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Part 2: Questions for Discussion

1. If you were Jess at the beginning of the story, would you have accepted Grace O'Malley's request to "find her treasure?" Why or why not?
2. Why might Jess be intimidated by finding out more about such a mysterious and interesting character as Grace O'Malley?
3. Of all the characters in the book, Jess is the one who changes the most. Compare how she acts in the beginning of the book to the end.
4. If you could choose to be any of the characters in the story, who would you be? Why?
5. Jess and Jake take care of each other in different ways. How does Jess care for Jake? What does Jake do for his sister?
6. In your own life, do you have a relationship with a sibling or a friend like Jess has with Jake? How is that relationship like the Ross kids' relationship?
7. It takes Jess some time to trust Selma. What are steps does their relationship goes through? How can you tell that their relationship is changing?
8. By the end of the book, Selma takes on a new role for Jess. Can you describe it? Do you have a person in your life like Selma?
9. When Jess gets the job in Selma's bookstore, does she suspect any hidden motivations behind Selma's actions? Can you think of other examples in the book when Selma might have been watching or guiding Jess from behind the scenes?
10. Why would Selma choose to help Jess in secret ways? Have you ever had a teacher or mentor who helped you without you realizing it at the time?
11. In the book, Grace O'Malley has a very different leadership than Murrough, leader of the rival Clan Mannix. How are the two pirates different? How does Grace use that to her advantage?
12. If you could join one of the pirate groups in the book, would you want to be an O'Malley pirate or a Mannix pirate? Why?
13. At one point, Grace says her people do not love her, but they do follow her, even when her orders seem impossible. Why do you think she's an effective leader?
14. Grace O'Malley and Queen Elizabeth I were alive at the same time. In fact, there's evidence the two met, with Queen Elizabeth awarding Grace a pension. As they are portrayed in the book, compare and contrast these powerful women?
15. *The Pirate Queen* often uses action to show changes in a character's personality. How do the following scenes affect Jess: The sea battle with Clan Mannix? The trip into the Cave of Wonders? Finding Grace O'Malley's treasure?
16. If you could experience one of the action scenes in the book in real life, which one would it be? Why?
17. One theme in the book is avoiding your feelings by replacing them with material things. How does this theme relate to Jess? How does it relate to Stewley?
18. Have you ever used material things to make yourself feel differently or better? When do you think this behavior crosses the line to become unhealthy?
19. Stewley calls Jess a "treasure hunter." Is he correct? If so, aside from the Grace's treasure, what other treasure has Jess has *really* been searching for?



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20. Many of the characters in the book gain power through wealth, technology or intellect. The exception to this rule is the Timewalkers. How does a Timewalker develop his or her abilities?
21. If you could be a Timewalker and visit any era, which would it be? Why?

Part 3: Topics for Research and Discussion

Research Topic 1: Women Pirates

Grace O'Malley was far from being the only lady pirate in history. There are dozens that we know of, such as:

- Cheng I Sao — In the early nineteenth century, Cheng I Sao was the most feared pirate leader in the West Indies. She commanded a sizable army consisting of hundreds of rogue boats and tens of thousands of men and women. The Chinese government paid her to retire, giving amnesty to her pirates.
- Jeanne de Montfort, also known as "The Flame." — In the fourteenth century, Jeanne de Montfort was a privateer, a pirate who was sanctioned by one government to attack their enemy's ships. Jeanne raided French ships for England, fighting alongside with British troops in a bid to win independence for Brittany.
- Jeanne de Clisson, "The Lioness of Brittany" — A noblewoman who believed her husband had been executed unjustly by the King of France. She swore revenge against the French government, exchanging her lands for a small fleet of black ships. As a privateer for the English, she raided innumerable French vessels between 1343 and 1360
- Lady Killigrew — In the mid-sixteenth century this noble wife of Sir John Killigrew, vice-admiral of Cornwall, England and the royal governor of Pendennis Castle, was also a notorious pirate. Her deeds eventually caught the attention of Queen Elizabeth I, who sentenced her to death. Before the fateful day, the Queen granted her Ladyship a reprieve.
- Gunpowder Gertie, the "Pirate Queen of the Kootenays" — Born Gertrude Imogene Stubbs in 1879. Her gunboat, the Tyrant Queen, raided Kootenay Lake and the river system of British Columbia, Canada.

With this list of lady pirates, what do you think of the following:

1. What surprised you most about this list?
2. People from all walks of life became pirates — men and women, rich and poor, different races and nationalities. Based on these biographical sketches, why do you imagine some of these women (or anyone, for that matter) became pirates?
3. If you could meet one of these lady pirates, who would it be? Why?
4. Cheng I Sao was one of the most successful pirates in history in terms of plunder. The Chinese government tried to hunt her down, but failed. Instead they paid her and her pirates to retire. Why would the government do that?

Assignment: Research one of the pirates on this list and write a one-page biography.



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Research Topic 2: Mourning

Selma tells Jess that when people lose something precious to them, their first reaction is often to pretend that the loss never occurred, a state called “denial.” Selma’s advice is based on the famous book, *On Death and Dying*, by Elizabeth Kubler Ross.

1. Can you think of an example in your own life where you lost someone or something important to you, but you didn’t want to believe the loss happened?
2. At the start of the story, has Jess accepted the fact that her mother is gone? If not, how does Jess try denying the loss?
3. During the story, other characters (for good and bad reasons) help Jess realize she is denying the truth about both her mother and herself. Pick one character and describe when and how they do this to Jess. Was their help intentional or unintentional?
4. Jake has also experienced a loss. How does he handle it? How is his way different from Jess’s?
5. Jess’s father is also mourning the loss of his wife Amanda. How has he chosen to deal with the loss? What emotions are motivating him? Does he believe his behavior is hurting his children?
6. In your life, have you ever acted like Nathan Ross... or met someone like him?

Assignment: Research the stages of *Death and Dying* by Elizabeth Kubler Ross. What are the five stages? How did Elizabeth Kubler Ross develop her theory?

Research Topic 3: Treasure

One key theme in *The Pirate Queen* is treasure. However, the word means different things to virtually every character in the book.

1. What does treasure mean to Jess at the beginning of the book? How does that definition change by the end of her adventure?
2. As it turns out, Grace O’Malley is searching for a very different kind of treasure. What does that say about her character in comparison to Murrough Mannix or Stewart Darnley?
3. What is the “ultimate treasure” in your life?
4. Looking back through the scenes of Grace’s life, where did she put her sailors’ safety ahead of her desire for gold? What does that say about her character as a person and a leader?
5. Many characters in the book have a very traditional view of treasure: gold is what’s important, and lots of it. Who are these characters? How is their own greed turned against them?
6. Mrs. Brennan is a comic character, but she also has strange ideas about what is to be treasured in her life. What is it? Is she the perfect match for Stewart Darnley?
- 7.

Assignment: Review the list of characters in the first section of this study guide. What is it that each of them treasures most?



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Research Topic 4: History & Ships

Among sixteenth century seafarers, oar-driven galleys were considered “old technology.” Wind-powered sailing ships (generally called tall ships in *The Pirate Queen*) were much faster and more powerful. However, the use of galleys – combined with the windless waters of Clew Bay – was important to Grace O’Malley’s real-life success as a pirate. British Captain Plessington fought Grace and learned this lesson first-hand:

“This galley comes out of Connaught, and it belongs to Grany O’Malley. [It is] ...rowed with thirty oars, and had on board, ready to defend her, 100 good shot, which entertained skirmish with my boat at most an hour.” (Cordingly, David. *Under the Black Flag: The Romance and Reality of Life Among the Pirates*, New York, 1995, page 73.)

1. How does Grace use older, oar-driven technology to her advantage? Why is Clew Bay important to her strategy?
2. Can you think of an example from your own experience where you – or someone you know – used old technology to beat out the latest innovation?
3. Clan Mannix, the enemies of Clan O’Malley, are described as having fancy sailing ships. What does this say about the leader, Murrough Mannix? How does Grace use this information to win their battle at sea?
4. Sailors use their own language. What special words were used by the sailors in *The Pirate Queen*? What do you think they mean in everyday speech? Can you think of people engaged in other professions who use special vocabulary?

Assignment: Pirates and those who hunted them had many factors to consider when choosing a ship. For example, large ships could hold more people and treasure as well as ride out fierce storms, but small ships were easier to hide and could plunder areas (like shallower waters) which larger boats could not reach. Some examples of ships used by pirates are sloops, schooners, brigantines, junks, man-o-wars and frigates. Choose and write a one-page description of one ship from this list.

Research Topic 5: Pirate Tactics

The ways each pirate attacked his or her foe in *The Pirate Queen* says something about who they are. The following questions are inspired by the state of sixteenth-century piracy:

1. Some pirates used theatrical props to make themselves seem more fearsome when fighting. For example, Blackbeard placed lit fuses into his beard during battles to appear more fearsome, his head encircled with flame, sparks, and smoke. What theatrical device does the author imagine Grace O’Malley could have used in protecting her castle? Would this tactic have scared you?
2. If you were to become a pirate, what kind of tactics would you choose? Why?
3. Can you think of other modern-day professions (aside from acting and the theater) which use theatrics to gain a competitive advantage?