

THIS ACTIVITY GUIDE BELONGS TO:

NAME:

STUDENT #

SABOTAGE

by Karen Autio

An activity guide by Sono Nis Press

SABOTAGE! BOLD ATTACK ON PORT ARTHUR WIRELESS STATION!

STORY SYNOPSIS

It's 1915 and the Great War is raging in Europe. What does that have to do with Port Arthur, Ontario? Heaps, thinks John Mäki. Sure, he's a prankster, but he's also a hard-working newsboy with a secret dream to be a reporter. So he keeps his eyes peeled, waiting for the big story.

His older sister, Saara, has her own concerns, like her goal of becoming a teacher. And her worry that people are not speaking to her just because she befriends a German girl! She scoffs at John's suspicions. German spies, blown-up bridges...surely not in northwestern Ontario.

Yet John knows that all of Canada's grain headed for hungry soldiers in Europe comes through Port Arthur first. A saboteur could do plenty of damage—to the city, the country, and even the Mäki family!

Sabotage is the final book of Karen Autio's trilogy about a Finnish family in early Thunder Bay. This story, told by both Saara and John, takes us into a real-life world of espionage, sabotage, and paranoia—right here in Canada.

BEFORE YOU READ

The description on the back of the book (reproduced above) is designed to attract readers to the novel. While the saying "don't judge a book by its cover" is a nice sentiment, sometimes it's the only thing you have to go on.

Think about the description you just read above. List three things you now know about the story you are about to read.

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Do those things make you more interested in the novel? Think about why that may or may not be. Next, list two questions you have after having read the description.

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Finally, make three predictions for things you think will happen in the novel. They can be general or detailed. Remember to come back at the end and see if you were right!

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COVER ART

Another way the publisher entices the reader to pick up a book is by choosing exciting cover art. Look at the cover and think about what it suggests to you about the plot. Next, think back to what you guessed was going to happen after you read the back cover blurb. Are some of the events the same? Are they different?

Saara and her brother, John, are pictured on the cover, but we see only their backs. Do you like this choice, or do you wish you could see their faces? Why or why not?

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The cover needs to have the title of the book and the author's name on it. Other than that, it's up to the illustrator or cover designer, working together with the publisher, to decide what goes on the cover. This cover is interesting because it combines several elements. List them below.

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Imagine you are a cover designer. After you finish reading the novel, design your own cover on the next page. You can use any medium (or a combination) when you create your illustration. Think about what elements would draw the reader in and get someone excited about reading the book without giving away the plot.

CREATE YOUR COVER ART BELOW



DANDY. I LET OUT THE BREATH I WAS HOLDING...—JOHN

WHILE YOU READ

Think about the variety of challenges faced by the Mäki family. Racism, suspicion, fear, poverty, uncertainty, illness, and war are all part of the Mäki family's life. What do you think living in that sort of environment would be like? How would it affect your relationship with your family, and with the other people around you?

Can you think of any situations in the world today that mirror all or part of the Mäki family's experience? Are they taking place in Canada, or elsewhere? Do you know about them from the news or personal experience? Who are today's "enemy aliens"? Jot down some notes to the right.

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LIVING LANGUAGES

Though they may seem quite stable to us, languages are living entities that change with the times. New words are constantly being introduced into the lexicon, or collective vocabulary. Imagine how confused people in the 1950s would have been by words like *internet*, *email*, *modem*, *online*, and *chat room*. Over long periods of time languages can change so much that modern speakers can hardly understand the old versions. Consider this passage from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* (Act 2 Scene 2) (published in 1597):

JULIET By whose direction found'st thou out this place?
ROMEO By love, that first did prompt me to inquire.
He lent me counsel and I lent him eyes.
I am no pilot. Yet, wert thou as far
As that vast shore washed with the farthest sea,
I would adventure for such merchandise.

1915 WORD OR PHRASE

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Compare that to the same passage, translated into Modern English:

JULIET Who told you how to find my bedroom?
ROMEO Love sent me searching and told me where to go and I loaned him my eyes. I may not be a sailor, but even if you were on a distant shore on the other side of the ocean I would have risked everything to find you.

While both are in English, the second is much more familiar and easy to read for contemporary audiences. As you read *Sabotage*, notice how the way of speaking is fully understandable for modern readers, but even a hundred years ago there were several words in use that are no longer common today. Below, note five of them and, using their context (surrounding words) to help you, their meaning.

CONTEMPORARY MEANING

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HOW COME SHE CAN'T EVER TAKE A JOKE? —JOHN

CHARACTER

1. Pick one character who you think changed the most through the novel and talk about how and why that person changed. Then pick one character who didn't change much and discuss what stayed the same.

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2. The novel is written from the point of view of both John and Saara. Often they complain about each other, but the reader is encouraged to empathize with both. Which character do you like the most? Why?

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3. What do you think was the main purpose of having Helena in the novel?

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4. Who is the bravest character in the novel? Why?

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ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION

In a small group, choose two to three of the topics below to discuss. Are any of your personal experiences relevant to the questions? Can you connect the issues to other topics you are learning about in school? You may also be able to refer to other books you have read.

1. Though the First World War took place in Europe, it affected many Canadians. Discuss some of the ways in which ordinary citizens of Port Arthur were affected by the war. Next, think about the War on Terror that has been going on since 2001. Have you been affected by that war? Does it affect your day-to-day life? How?

2. Racism is prevalent in 1915 Port Arthur. Suspicion of enemy aliens (mainly Germans and Ukrainians) is high, and internment camps are a threat even for innocent families. What other group has Canada interned? If you aren't sure, do some research online and then come back to discuss it. What were the similarities and differences between the other group and the Germans of Port Arthur? Does your student team think that internment camps are a valid way of protecting Canada? Why or why not?

3. Even if they weren't interned, Germans in Port Arthur and their friends faced a lot of suspicion from the general community. This is comparable to the suspicion the Muslim and Arab communities have felt since 9/11. Search the internet for a newspaper article that discusses this (try searching for "Muslim community feels suspicion after 9/11"). As a group, discuss the article you found. How does it make you feel? Do you have personal experience with this? How is it similar to the situation in 1915? Is it justified?

4. Both Saara and John do a lot to help their parents, both financially and around the house. Do you think this situation is common today? How is your experience similar to that of Saara and John? How do you think it might differ?

On the next page, write a short essay about one of these topics. It may or may not be one discussed as a group.

I KEPT SEARCHING FOR A BETTER HEADLINE.—JOHN

WRITING FOR THE NEWS

Newsboy John's big dream is to be a newspaper reporter, so he constantly takes notes and looks for the big scoop. Newspaper articles usually cover the five Ws and H: who, what, where, when, why, and how. They are also written with the most important facts first, so that people don't have to read too far to get what's important. Details come later for people who are interested in learning more.

Below, write an article about an event that could have occurred in 1915 Port Arthur (but isn't in the book). Make up the particulars of the event and ensure that your article covers all the basics above. Be sure to include a catchy headline and illustrate your article with a picture.

HEADLINES

Headlines are designed to catch readers' attention and encourage them to read the articles. John looks for interesting headlines to yell out to people walking by in order to encourage them to buy the paper. Imagine you are trying to sell *Sabotage* to people on the street and write three headlines that might encourage sales. Remember that headlines are short, to the point, and written in the present tense.

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HEADLINE

BYLINE (YOUR NAME)

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IMAGE

CAPTION

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“KEEP YOUR NOSE OUT OF THIS, SAARA. WE WANT A BATTLE.”—JOHN

ANNOTATED SCRAPBOOK

Use the internet to find photos of Port Arthur, products from that time, and people who lived then. Choose one of the characters in the story and make a 4–6 page scrapbook on his or her behalf. Think about what the character might have wanted to record and paste images, short pieces of text, and other decorative items onto a few pages. Make sure to include at least 5 printed images, 3 hand-drawn images, and 10 captions or pieces of text.

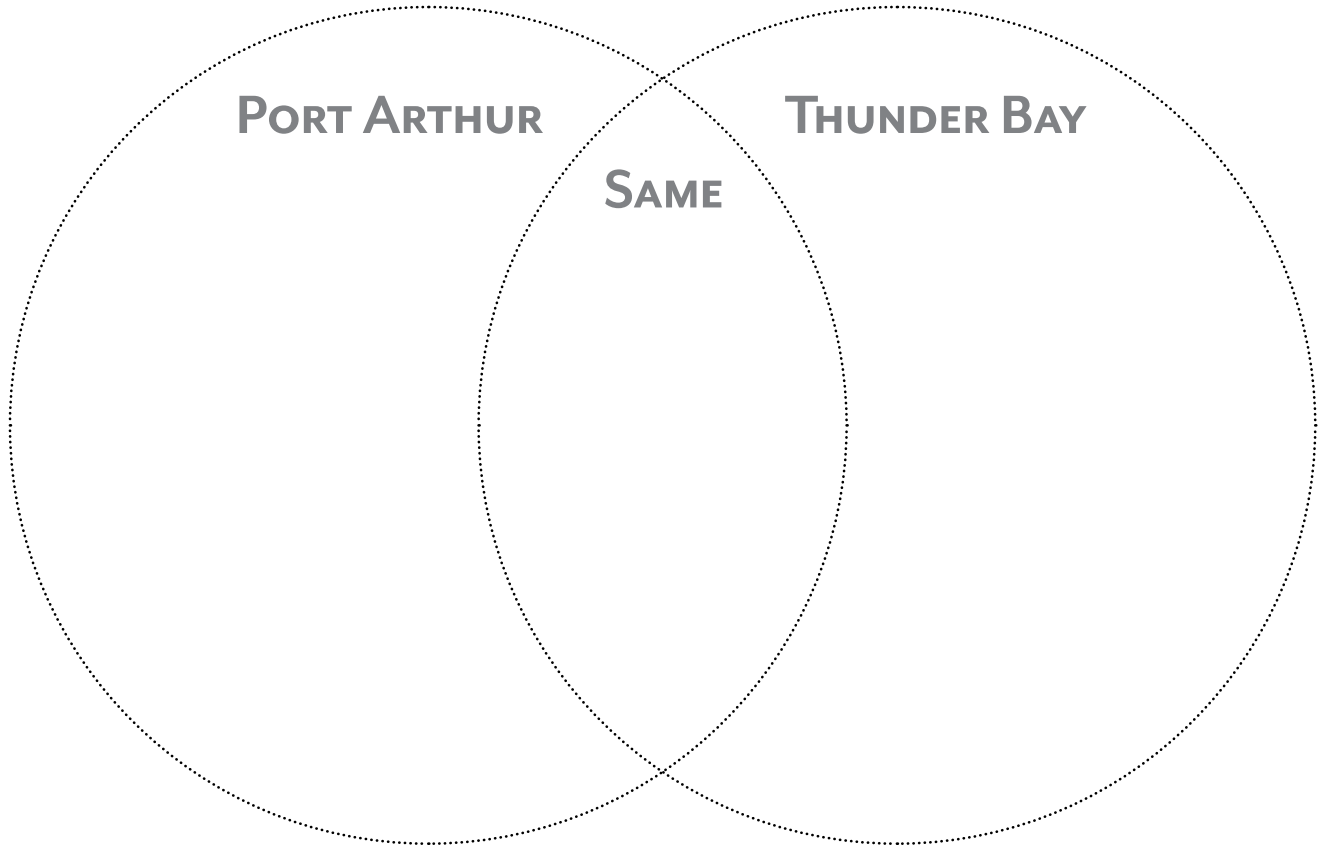
Once you have completed the scrapbook, fill out the self-guided assessment below, and then hand both parts to your teacher for marking.

Criteria	Out of	Student Score
Quality of Scrapbook <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contains all required elements • shows creativity and effort • integrates writing, drawings, mementoes, and other souvenirs in a logical and clear way 	5 10 5	
Historical Accuracy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • key historical facts and events from the book are incorporated accurately (outside sources may also be used) • writing and images show an understanding of how history affects the character’s life, way of speech, and activities 	35 21	
Visual Appeal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mementoes and images are from the correct period and look authentic • scrapbook is interesting and colourful, as well as neat and tidy 	4 5	
Writing Mechanics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • writing uses proper spelling, punctuation, and grammar • all writing is done in first person from the point of view of the chosen character 	8 7	
Total Score	100	

(Marking rubric adapted from: www.angelfire.com/sc3/stevens/scra_eva.htm)

SETTING

1. The city of Port Arthur is now part of Thunder Bay, Ontario. Find out as much as you can about the city now. For example: who lives there, how developed is it, and what are the main industries? Once you gather this information, use the details from the novel to fill in the Venn diagram below to show what is the same and what is different about the city between then and now.



2. Create a diorama model of Port Arthur showing things such as the movie theatre, the fancy part of town where Saara briefly works, the grain elevators, and the swimming pool. Use a board or shoebox as your base and try materials like cardboard, Styrofoam, and paint to make your scene come to life.

3. Saara spent time at her aunt's farm helping out when her aunt couldn't care for the house and baby due to tuberculosis. Her life on the large farm was quite different from life in town. Think about somewhere different from your everyday life but where you have spent time. To the right, compose a brief poem or paragraph reflecting on some of the differences you experienced. Use another piece of paper if you need more room.

STYLE

What techniques does the author use to
• bring her characters to life?

• explore the underlying themes of the book?

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WRITING PRACTICE

Complete these longer writing assignments on another sheet of paper and staple your work to this activity guide .

member or friend. Transcribe (write out) your interview, concentrating on the most important stories.

1. Aleksandra and Saara go to the moving picture shows a few times during the novel. Back in 1915, movies were usually silent and didn't have scripts the way they do now. Watch an example of one of Charlie Chaplin's silent movies (there are many to choose from on YouTube). Select a 3–5 minute scene and write the dialogue you imagine might be used if this were a modern-day "talkie."

3. Choose a situation in your life when you interacted with someone from a different cultural background. Write a story about this interaction. First, tell the story from your point of view, then relate the incident from the other person's point of view, thinking about how each of you might have viewed the encounter differently. Observe how the story changes depending on the narrator.

2. Interview a member of your family or a family friend who remembers living during a major war (Second World War, Korean, Vietnam, Gulf, Afghanistan). Find out as much about the experience as you can. Try to ask some interesting or unique questions that will shed light on what the situation was like for your family

4. Do two short pretend interviews with characters in the novel. Ask the imaginary interviewees about their lives, the challenges they face, their dreams, and their hopes for after the war. Use details from the book to help you craft realistic answers to the questions you have posed to your chosen characters.

SPIES EQUIPPED FOR BRIDGE WRECKING ARRESTED IN PORT ARTHUR.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Karen Autio grew up in Nipigon, Ontario. She had heard of the planned sabotage attempt on the Canadian Pacific's Nipigon River railway bridge during the First World War, but she had difficulty believing it truly happened. While researching her previous book, Karen found confirmation of the 1915 event. German agents were arrested and confessed to spying and conspiring to blow up the railway bridge so they could prevent the movement of soldiers eastward. Discovering this information led Karen to additional research, which inspired this book.

Sabotage is the third book in the trilogy that tells the Mäki family's story. The first two books are *Second Watch* (Sono Nis Press, 2005) and *Saara's Passage* (Sono Nis Press, 2008), both shortlisted for the Chocolate Lily Award.

Karen lives in Kelowna, British Columbia. To learn more about Karen Autio and her books, visit www.karenautio.com.

Think of five questions you would like to ask Karen about herself or her books. As a class, pick five questions in total and send a letter to Karen via her publisher. Make sure to include a SASE (self-addressed, stamped envelope), and she will write back with her answers when time allows.

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Canada

Pretend you are an author and write your own biography for the back of your pretend book. Think about what information about your life and books might be interesting to readers.

“STOP YOUR FIGHTING!”—PAPA

FINISH YOUR HOMEWORK

Both John and Saara face their own challenges at school. Below is a short excerpt from the point of view of John, who is sometimes challenged by grammar. Using a pen or pencil, make corrections on the written text below, editing it into proper English.

This piece of writing also demonstrates how languages can evolve. Some of the words, such as *knickers*, have fallen out of common usage in Canada and may not be familiar. Write a contemporary synonym for any of the words you found unfamiliar.

Me and Fred aimed to be first in line to pick up our papers every morning. So as soon as my Big Ben alarm clock started clanging, I shut it off. It ain't the easiest thing getting up at dawn, but first to get papers means we're first to pick our corners to sell 'em. You need a good corner. Not just lots of people, but plenty of buyers. I'm nowheres close to the best scrapper—too puny—so fighting for the best corner ain't an option.

I pulled on my shirt, knickers, and socks. With my bootlaces double knotted, I dashed downstairs. I grabbed the thick heel of yesterday's bread to gnaw along the way.

For once, Fred wasn't already outside waiting for me. I knocked, quiet at first, then louder.

Finally he showed up, rubbing his eyes. "I'm gonna have to learn to get myself up. My father always woke me—" His voice croaked. This was his first morning without his father. Then he elbowed my arm. "Come on, slowpoke Johnny," he said, breaking into a run.

Saara doesn't have the same challenges with English that John does, but she still finds some school work to be challenging. Below are some of the math problems that Saara has to complete over the summer. Try solving them yourself. Are they similar to the questions your teachers ask you to do in math?

1. The foot of a ladder is 15 feet from the base of a building, and the top reaches a window 36 feet above the base. What is the length of the ladder? Show your calculations.
2. Using the space below, graph the temperature at the same time for ten consecutive days.

3. What is the weight of a cast-iron block 6 inches long, 5 inches wide, and 3 inches high? The block is a rectangular parallelepiped and weighs 0.26 pounds per cubic inch. Show your calculations.

ESPIONAGE

- ✕ *Secrets, Lies, Gizmos, and Spies: A History of Spies and Espionage* by Janet Wyman Coleman
- ✕ *Spy, Spy Again: True Tales of Failed Espionage* by Tina Holdcroft
- ✕ *Super Spies of World War I* by Kate Walker and Elaine Argaut
- ✕ *Canada Under Attack* by Jennifer Crump

INTERNMENT CAMPS

- ✕ List of internment camps in Canada during the First World War
 - www.internmentcanada.ca/resources-camp-list.cfm
- ✕ Map of internment camps in Canada during the First World War
 - www.internmentcanada.ca/resources-map.cfm
- ✕ Critical Thinking Source Docs—an online resource for teachers
 - Ukrainian Canadians:
 - <http://tc2.ca/teaching-resources/online-resource-collections/special-collections/pivotal-voices.php>
 - World War I Internment:
 - <http://sourcedocs.tc2.ca/history-docs/topics/world-war-i-internment/daily-life-in-ww-i-internment-camps.html>
- ✕ *Prisoners of Prejudice: The Ukrainian Internment Operations 1914*
 - www.youtube.com/watch?v=xGGlfMqvJ8g (Published on May 17, 2012)

“Prisoners of Prejudice is a teaching and learning resource designed to give a comprehensive understanding of the internment of Ukrainians in Canada in 1914. This is an actual account of Ukrainians, actively recruited by the Canadian Government and considered as some of the best immigrants to develop the Canadian west. Yet, in 1914, the same country that had invited the Ukrainians from Austria-Hungary classified them as enemy aliens and interned many of the men. The Ukrainian Canadian internment was part of the detention of ‘enemy aliens’ in Canada during and for two years after the end of the First World War, lasting from 1914 to 1920, under the terms of the War Measures Act. With this act, ‘aliens of enemy nationality’ were compelled to register with authorities. These citizens were treated as subversives, and many lost their employment. Many were kept in internment camps and work sites—known at the time as concentration camps. Those interned had whatever little wealth they owned confiscated and were used as forced labour. The story for the most part has remained untold.

This resource reveals the historical injustice to the Ukrainian people, who were judged not because of anything they had done, but only because of who they were and where they had come from.” —Prisoners of Prejudice

The following websites and organizations may be useful to you as you complete the above assignments.

- www.youtube.com
- www.wikipedia.org
- www.cbc.ca
- www.theglobeandmail.com
- <http://www.neok12.com/World-War-I.htm>
- www.karenautio.com
- www.sononis.com
- www.pbs.org/greatwar/resources/lesson.html
- www.thunderbay.ca
- <http://tinyurl.com/nvggvkr> (PDF with images of historic Port Arthur beside images from today)
- <http://kclibrary.lonestar.edu/decade10.html>