

Sample Written Analysis—*The Devil's Arithmetic*

(Quadrant 1)

The Devil's Arithmetic, by Jane Yolen, **tells the story of** a thirteen-year-old Jewish girl named Hannah who travels to the past and experiences the Holocaust. When the story begins, Hannah is driving with her family to her grandparent's house for the seder meal and feels annoyed that she must go. When Hannah's family arrives, Grandpa Will is watching old photos of the victims of the concentration camps. Hannah doesn't understand why he bothers with it, after all, "it's all in the past" (p. 10). Finally, Aunt Eva lights the holiday candles and the seder meal begins; the family prays, tells stories, and plays games as a way of remembering. For the first time, Hannah gets to drink the watered-down wine along with the adults. Then, Hannah opens the door for Elijah, the harbinger of hope, only to find that she has traveled back in time to a Polish town in the 1940s. She is a girl named Chaya who recently lost her parents and now is living with her Uncle Shmuel, who will soon be getting married. At first, Hannah thinks it is just a dream, but **at the first plot point** she helps her new family get the house ready for Uncle Shmuel's wife to come live with them.

Throughout the first quadrant, **the author creates a mood** that is both negative and positive. The story is set in the 1940s when Nazi Germany invaded Poland, and Jews were under strict and controlled laws. But despite the ominous setting, the story feels joyful and sweet as the family cares for one another and laughs together. Gitl tells Hannah, "A girl's dreams, like her life, should be sweet and full of honey" (p. 33). At first, Hannah is like a little whining bird who doesn't appreciate her freedom. **Will Hannah learn to appreciate the freedom and resilience of her people and transform from a whimpering bird to one that sings?**

(Quadrants 2 and 3)

As the story continues, Hannah is enfolded into the family and community as Chaya. She travels with the bridal party and neighbors to a nearby shtetl where the bride and groom will be married. Along the way, Hannah tells stories to her new friends and dances and sings. She seems joyful and content with her new life, even though she misses her family back home in the present time. When they arrive in Viosk, Hannah shudders when she sees the Nazis surrounding the synagogue. They tell the townspeople that they will be relocated for the duration of the war. Hannah tries to warn the people about the concentration camps, but they don't believe her and tell her to stop frightening the people. **At the midpoint**, Hannah realizes how important it is to remember and "bear witness" to the past because ". . . the past tells us what we must do in the future" (p. 78).

To Hannah's horror, the people are crammed into crowded train cars and transported for four days and nights without fresh water and food. Several people die before they arrive at the concentration camp. Once there, they are separated, stripped of their clothes, showered, and shaved. Hannah is branded with a tattoo and is told, "You are no longer Chaya . . . you are J197241" (p. 100). But Chaya's name means life, and she is determined to remember her name and live. **This is the turning point**, the moment when she is determined to follow the rules to stay alive so that she can keep those who have died alive by remembering and sharing their story.

Throughout the story, the author uses rites of passage as **symbols of** Hannah's entry into adulthood. Hannah wears makeup to the seder meal, participates in drinking wine for the first time, and wears Gitl's bat mitzvah dress. It is clear that Hannah is entering a new stage of life where she will begin to have a more complex understanding of the world around her. A bird **is also a symbol**, representing freedom, personal growth, and independence. These symbols are common in the coming-of-age genre, which is one of the genres of the book.

(Quadrant 4)

Over time, life in the concentration camp becomes routine, and Hannah is worried that she will lose her memories of the past. Many of the people Hannah knew have now been “chosen” (killed in the gas chambers). Hannah whines that it is not fair and worries that they are the monsters for letting it happen. Her friend Rivka tells her that they are the victims, and they are the heroes. “It is much harder to live this way and to die this way than to go out shooting” (p. 142). After trying to escape, the men are shot; and Hannah watches, not because she wants to but because she knows that she must be a witness. **At the final plot point**, Hannah gives her friends hope by telling them about the future—the Jews will survive. **Finally**, when Hannah’s friend Rivka is chosen for the gas chamber, Chaya takes Rivka’s place choosing to sacrifice her own life. As she walks through the door, she is transported back to the present where she is Hannah again. **As the story resolves**, Hannah is at her family seder meal, only this time she recognizes the tattoo on her Aunt Eva’s arm. It is then that Hannah realizes her Aunt Eva is Rivka and Grandpa Will is Rivka’s brother, Wolfe.

The Devil’s Arithmetic **is a** journey and return **story, starting with** Hannah time traveling to Poland in the 1940’s **and ending with** her returning to the present with a new understanding of what the Jewish people endured during the Holocaust. **Across the story, the mood changes from** a feeling of hopeless despair **to** one of hopeful optimism. **The message of the story is** that it is important to remember the past to appreciate and celebrate the present.

Sample Written Analysis—*The Last Musketeer*

(Quadrant 1)

The Last Musketeer, by Stuart Gibbs, **tells the story of** a fourteen-year-old boy named Greg who time travels to the past to rescue his parents. When the story begins, Greg and his parents are traveling to Paris to sell their family heirlooms to the Louvre Museum. Greg is uneasy about this because he distinctly remembers his Grandpa Gus warning the family to protect the heirlooms at all cost! When they arrive at the Louvre, they are greeted by a strangely dressed man, Michel Dinicoeur, who is especially interested in the crystal Greg's mother wears around her neck. When Greg's mother tells him that it is not for sale, he gets angry and jerks the crystal from her neck. Dinicoeur joins the crystal to its other half, and Greg's family and Dinicoeur are transported through a painting at the Louvre to the past. Now Greg's parents have been arrested for plotting to assassinate King Louis XIII, and Greg is on the run from the king's guard. At first, Greg thinks it will be impossible to rescue his parents, but **at the first plot point** he becomes friends with Aramis, a cleric at Notre Dame, who agrees to help.

Throughout the first quadrant, **the author creates a mood** that is negative by setting the story in Paris in 1615. The city is disgusting and has a foul odor. "Gutters [run] straight from the houses into the water, as if the river were one big sewer" (p. 32). Greg's parents have been sent to the worst prison in Paris, La Mort Triste, where prisoners don't survive long. The prison is a disease pit, but it doesn't matter because Greg's parents have been sentenced to hang! It will be difficult for Greg to not stand out in the past, but maybe this is where he was always meant to be! **Will Greg find the inner strength and confidence to put down roots in his new life?**

(Quadrants 2 and 3)

After Greg and Aramis team up, they meet an incredible swordsman named Athos who has been wrongfully accused of mutinous behavior. Greg is starting to think that he and his new friends might have inspired the book *The Three Musketeers* by Alexander Dumas. Greg and his new friends go to La Mort Triste, the prison where his parents are being kept. It is a godforsaken place, surrounded by a large moat and heavily guarded. They will need the help of someone who has been inside the prison and knows its layout. The boys join up with the last of Dumas's famous musketeers, Porthos. He agrees to help the boys disguise themselves and enter the palace to steal a map of the prison. While there, they are discovered by the guards and hide in a room that turns out to be the queen's chambers. There they meet Milady de Winter, the queen's handmaiden, who agrees to take them to the king. **At the midpoint**, they are discovered by Dominic Richelieu, the king's adviser, and Greg's instincts and skills prove to be valuable as the boys must escape the king's guard once again.

Soon after, the boys decide to spy on Dominic Richelieu, who strangely appears to be a younger version of Michel Dinicoeur. When the boys spy him leaving the king's castle, they follow him to Milady de Winter. Greg wonders what the two of them might be plotting, and "he [has] a zillion unanswered questions" (p. 141). When Greg returns to the Notre Dame Cathedral, Dinicoeur and his soldiers trap him in the bell tower. Greg uses his instincts once again to flee down the rope that rings the bell. When he reaches the bottom of the tower, the giant rope comes loose and crashes down on top of Dinicoeur. The impact should have killed him, but unexplainably Dinicoeur is still alive. After that, Greg and Aramis learn that Michel Dinicoeur is Dominic Richelieu, and he has traveled back in time to seek revenge on the musketeers! Greg no longer sees the point of lying and tells Aramis he is from the future. **This is the turning point**, the moment when he finds the inner strength and confidence to reveal his true self to save his parents and the musketeers.

Throughout the story, the author uses innocent victims and corrupt authority figures as **symbols of** how fairness and justice must be restored. Greg and his parents have been falsely accused of plotting to assassinate the king, and Athos has been falsely accused of mutinous behavior. Deception **is also a symbol**, representing hidden truths that must be uncovered. Michel Dinicoeur, Dominic Richelieu, and Milady de Winter all use disguises and deception to attempt to gain power. These symbols are common in the crime genre, which is one of the genres of the book.

(Quadrant 4)

Finally, Greg and his friends are ready to enact their plan to rescue Greg's parents. At night, Greg swims across the prison moat and uses the matches he brought from the future to start a fire. The fire diverts the prison guards so that Athos and Porthos can bring the boat across. Meanwhile, Greg runs through the labyrinth and eventually finds his parents. As they escape, Greg and his parents battle the burning flames. When they reach the exit, they are met by Michel Dinicoer and the king's soldiers. An epic sword fight takes place as Greg and his friends fend off the soldiers to get Greg's parents safely to the boat. When they reach the opposite shore, they are met by Dominic Richelieu, who intends to kill the boys. Just then, Porthos and King Louis the XIII arrive on horseback. The king arrests Richelieu for treason and asks the boys to be his musketeers. **At the final plot point**, Greg finally feels like he belongs, even if it means living in 1615! **As the story resolves**, Michel Dinicoer and Dominic Richelieu have escaped, and Milady de Winter is up to something. This leaves the plot open for a sequel!

The Last Musketeer **is a** journey and return **story, starting with** Greg time traveling to 1615 and plotting a mission to rescue his parents **and ending with** at least one more adventure before returning back to the future. (I think this will happen in the final book of the series.) **Across the story, the mood changes from** an empty and haunting atmosphere **to** one of friendship and adventure. **The message of the story is** that if we want to feel like we belong and have a home, we must first find our inner strength and confidence to be ourselves.

Sample Written Analysis—*Sent*

(Quadrant 1)

Sent, by Margaret Peterson Haddix, is the second book in *The Missing* series and **is a time travel adventure** back to the fifteenth century. When the story begins, Jonah and his sister, Katherine, have time traveled with their friends Chip and Alex back to London in 1483. As it turns out, Jonah, Chip, and Alex are famous children from history who were kidnapped by time travelers and accidentally landed in the twenty-first century. Now, they are traveling back in time to fix the past. They learn that Chip is King Edward V and Alex is his brother, Prince Richard. The boys are locked in the Tower of London and believe that their uncle is trying to kill them! Just then, two men enter the room and push King Edward and Prince Richard out the window. The men are shocked when they cannot find the bodies of the boys below the window. Jonah and Katherine think they have saved Chip and Alex's life and are ready to go back home when they realize that the Elucidator (which allows them to time travel) is not working properly and needs to be restored. **At the first plot point**, the children are stuck in the fifteenth century, where their lives are in danger.

Throughout the first quadrant, **the author creates a mood** that is negative by setting the story in London in the 1400s. Kings and noblemen were powerful, and battles for the throne were commonplace. One of the most famous scandals happened during King Edward V's short reign. Jonah worries none of them will survive the dark, shadowed, godforsaken fifteenth century. "Chills traveled down his spine that had nothing to do with the pain in his jaw" (p. 44). He wants nothing more than to return home, where life is easy. **Will Jonah learn to resist the allure of the easy way and stay committed to rescuing his friends?**

(Quadrants 2 and 3)

After the Elucidator stops working, the children realize that they are all invisible. This invisibility saves them from being discovered by the window-throwing men, but it doesn't save Katherine's hair from catching on fire! The children realize that life in the past is dangerous for many reasons! Even with all these dangers, Katherine is determined to find out who plotted to kill the king and why. They leave the Tower of London and take a barge to the coronation. As they view the procession, they hear the crowd shout, "Long live King Richard the Third!" Chip realizes that his uncle must have been planning to become king for a long time. When King Richard is in the church, the children speak to him, and he thinks they are angels. Chip tells him to renounce the throne, but just as he does, the invisibility wears off. They run away and encounter several monks who tell them that the marriage between Edward IV and Queen Elizabeth was not legitimate, and therefore Edward V has been disinherited from the throne. Once again, the children's lives are in danger! **At the midpoint**, Jonah decides that it is wise to find a safe place to hide.

Soon after, the children decide that the best course of action is to find the queen and convince her that Edward and Richard are dead so that they can fix history and return to the twenty-first century. But when they arrive at the sanctuary, they find that Edward and Richard's tracers (ghostly figures who show the original version of time) are there, which means that in the original version of history, they survived! Chip and Alex meld with their tracers and present themselves to the queen, who is overjoyed that they are alive. It is at that moment that Jonah and Katherine are pulled out of history by JB so that he can explain to them what is happening and tell them his plan to save Chip and Alex. JB explains that Chip and Alex are in danger, and Jonah and Katherine can either leave them behind or risk their lives to rescue them. **At the turning point**, Jonah is tempted to choose the safe route but decides to return to the past to save Chip and Alex's lives.

Throughout the story, the author uses a crime scene to represent hidden truths that must be uncovered. When the children sleep in the Tower of London, Jonah jokes that they are “. . . essentially, in the middle of a crime scene” (p. 92). Innocent victims and corrupt authority figures represent the failure of society to protect the most vulnerable as a result of moral decay. Armor **is also a symbol**, representing strength and courage. Jonah and Katherine wear armor when they return to the 1400s to bravely rescue their friends. These symbols are common in the crime and adventure genres, which are the genres of the book.

(Quadrant 4)

When Jonah and Katherine return to the past, this time it is 1485, and they are witnessing one of history’s most mysterious battles. Even though they are invisible, Jonah and Katherine are wearing armor to protect them from harm. They cross the deadly battlefield looking for Chip and Alex. They are worried they might not find them, and even if they do, they might not be able to convince them to come back to the twenty-first century. When they finally spot them, Chip and Alex don’t hear them shouting, and they seem to be looking right through them. Finally, Katherine gets the idea to kiss Chip on the cheek, and he finally recognizes her. At that same time, King Richard III sees Chip and Alex and instead of killing them, he bows down to Chip. He tells him that when the battle is over, he will give him back his crown. When he goes back into battle, Richard is killed. Jonah and Katherine convince Chip that the crown is not worth dying for. **At the final plot point**, they pull Chip and Alex away from their tracers and back into the twenty-first century. **The story is resolved** when the children are reunited with their parents.

Sent **is a journey and return story, starting with** Jonah, Katherine, Chip, and Alex traveling to the fifteenth century to fix history **and ending with** history resolved and a happy return to the future. The epilogue introduces the next adventure—Jonah and Katherine have been asked to accompany another famous child from history to the past. Jonah realizes that it would be easier to say “no”, but he doesn’t want Andrea to have to travel alone, so he chooses to go. **Across the story, the mood changes from** a feeling of doom and gloom **to** one of friendship and adventure. **The message of the story is** that we must resist the temptation to choose the easy way and stay committed to the challenging path of life.