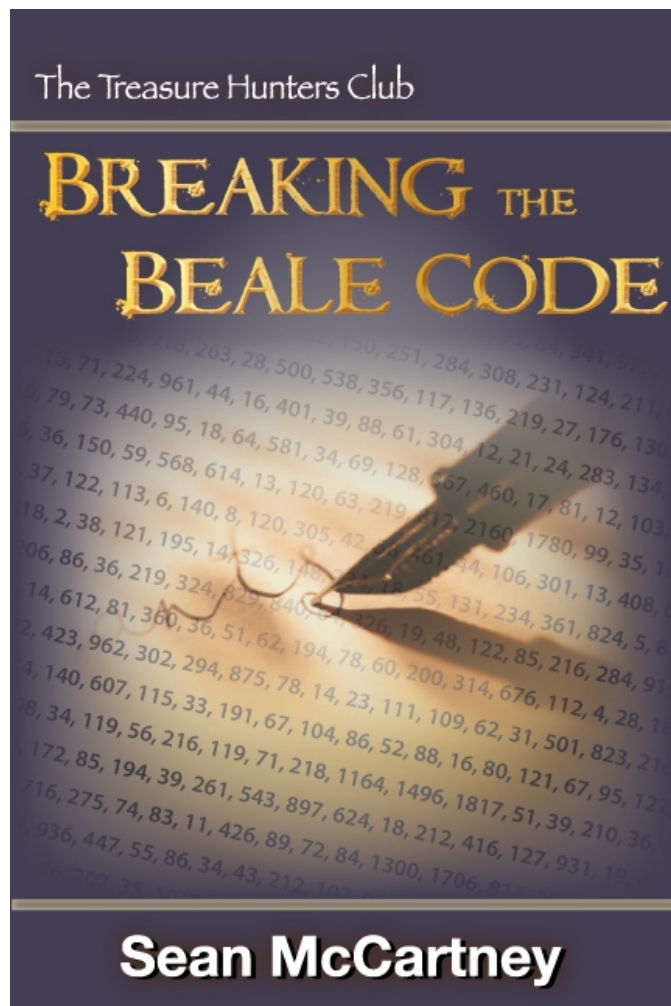


TEACHER'S READING
SUPPLEMENTAL GUIDE TO

The Treasure Hunters Club

**BREAKING THE
BEALE CODE**

Sean McCartney



BREAKING THE BEALE CODE

The Treasure Hunters Club, Book Two

About the book:

In 1821 Thomas Jefferson Beale buried a treasure in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia. This treasure is supposed to be worth thirty million dollars or more. Beale left an inn keeper, Robert Morriss, in charge of a lockbox. Inside the box were codes that told the whereabouts of the treasure and the people it belonged to. Beale promised to return for the lockbox.

He never did. For over two hundred years historians and treasure hunters have been looking for Beale's Treasure with no luck.

But when the granddaughter of a treasure hunter comes across a secret letter, she begins to see the clues that will lead to the Beale Treasure and unfortunate danger. With that in mind she enlists the help of The Treasure Hunters Club.

Breaking the Beale Code is an action-packed follow up to ***Secrets of the Magical Medallions***, and Tommy and the rest of The Treasure Hunters Club must break Beale's codes and find the treasure to save one of their friends. As an old rival has returned and he will stop at nothing to gain the fame and wealth he feels he deserves.

About the author:

Sean McCartney is a middle school teacher and author of ***The Treasure Hunters Club, Book One: Secrets of the Magical Medallions***. He is also the author of the recently released eBook *Black Knight Chronicles: Rise of Evil*. He lives in Canton, Ohio, with his wife and two children.

Author Interview:

1. Was the process for writing book number two the same as ***Secrets of the Magical Medallions***?

Yes it was very similar. I had always kept the Beale story in the back of my mind and wanted to tell the story to younger people. I just did not have a vehicle to tell the story. With the Treasure Hunters Club I did. I spent about six months researching and the next six to nine months writing the story and then rewriting the story. I read the book to my son and he liked it, which was the most important because I am writing for the kids.

2. How much have the club grown up in this book?

It is at the end of their eighth grade year and they are eyeing high school. What is nice is the Reed family is on some solid ground and not as volatile. I think that helps the story because the treasure they seek is such an unknown.

3. Did you worry about the breaking of codes being closely tied to a Dan Brown novel?

No way and in fact I hope they tie me into one of his novels because he is a great story teller. I think cryptology is one of the most fascinating aspects of science because it is our secrets that are coded and must be protected. People who try and break those codes have to be some of the best 'out of the box' thinkers in the world. I am glad the club gets to do something of this nature.

4. How can teachers use this book and the guide?

Well the guide will be free to download just as the first one was. This is more of a supplement to the larger guide because all of the activities in the **Secrets** guide will work fine in **Breaking the Beale Code**. The discussion questions are obviously different but we did add some extra projects that can be done with the second book. My hope is that teachers use the guide for all sorts of Language Arts activities not just my book but others.

5. What is next for the series?

Start writing book number three which will be a great ride. I am looking forward to it.

About the guide:

This guide includes discussion questions and activities that are meant to use the novel in classrooms, book clubs and other areas of study. It is strongly suggested that you also download the teacher's guide from **Secrets of the Magical Medallions** to help with more beyond the novel activities.

Pre-reading:

Did you read **Secrets of the Magical Medallions**? How did it end? Based on what you read what predictions can you make about the second book? Does the title give you any clues?

Discussion Guide:

1. There have been a lot of changes in the Reed household since the last book. Describe the changes to Tommy's family, specifically his father and mother, and what caused these

characters to evolve. How has the relationship among the club members gotten better and deeper? Give an example by using Jackson and Shannon's argument about codes.

2. The focus of this adventure is on Thomas Jefferson Beale's famous cipher codes. Discuss the importance of having codes and the ability to break them. How has cryptology evolved over the years?
3. Describe the relationship between Andrea and her grandfather. How is it different from the grandfather's relationship with his own daughter?
4. From the reading what can you tell about the character traits of Thomas Jefferson Beale, Robert Morriss and his wife? Create character chart.
5. Slider returns to torment the club and gain his revenge. Why do you think his strategy is flawed from the start?
6. Andrea arrives at Kennedy Middle School and meets Tommy and Chris. How can you tell from their exchange that a relationship could develop?
7. Chris convinces Andrea to share her information with the club. Why is she reluctant? What is the reaction of each club member? Why does Shannon react the worst and what does she show the rest of the group to disprove Andrea's story?
8. Information gathering is the most important form of research. Describe the process the club goes through to try and crack the Beale Code. Be specific and list the steps. Are they similar to anything you have done during a research project? At the same time Shannon is doing her own research. What steps does she take and what does she discover and how?
9. Shannon helps Andrea when Jason attacks her. Even though they have a small rivalry. What does it say about Shannon as character that tells you she is decent, but tough, person?
10. Jack and Elizabeth have taken two very different paths since they destroyed the medallion. Why doesn't either of them seem as happy as when they were treasure hunting? What clues do they give you to let you know their inner thoughts?

11. How does Tommy, Chris and Jackson figure out how they can go on the seventh grade field trip? How were they able to convince their parents? Is it believable? Explain.
12. How does Jackson break the code? How does he come up with such a simple idea? Have you ever been faced with a complex problem and after some thought, came up with an easy solution? Describe.
13. Use Google Earth and locate Montvale, Virginia. Describe the area. Is it an ideal place to hide a treasure? Why or why not? Bedford Lake is private. Is it possible Beale knew this when he hid his treasure? Explain your answer. Use research about Bedford Lake to support your answer.
14. Describe the underwater catacombs. Why doesn't water flood the tunnels? How do Slider's actions reveal his thoughts about finding the treasure? If you were Tommy, why is it important for you to go along with Slider as long as you can?
15. Jack rescues Tommy but Slider fights furiously to stop him. Why does he do this? As the battle continues Tommy reaches his breaking point and starts to consider giving up. Have you ever been in a situation that seemed to be going unsuccessful but you kept working at it? Explain your answer.
16. What happens to the Beale Treasure? Do you agree with Tommy or his uncle on what should be done. Give an answer from both points of view. Why is Andrea relieved about the treasure? How has this adventure brought her parents together? Do you think it will last? Why or why not?
17. Does the Treasure Hunters Club punishment fit the crime? Why? What is the status of the relationship between Chris and Andrea? If things were different do you think it would last? Explain your answer.
18. In the final chapter an update is given about Manuel de la Ernesto. What predictions can you make from his actions and responses to his doctor?

Project:

Language Arts:

- Write a different ending to the story that would change the outcome of the final chapters.
- Slider is the villain. Describe him physically, emotionally and intellectually. How does he change throughout the novel? What causes this change? Use evidence from the story to support your answer.

- Write a letter to your favorite character in the story telling them how your life is like theirs OR different from theirs. Use examples from the book for help.

Art

- Draw two pictures from the story based on the writing. Create illustrations and write a summary below each picture describing it. Be specific in your description. (i.e. character names.)

Social Studies

- In the novel many different codes are mentioned. Pick one and do an in depth report about it and present it to the class using a power point.
- From what you read and saw about the Beale Code you will write your own coded message using a book cipher. Use a famous written work if you want or another text. Partner up and see if they can crack your code.