



The Ninja Librarians: The Accidental Keyhand

By Jen Swann Downey

Mission Goal

This library scavenger hunt will train your up-and-coming Ninja Librarians to be freedom fighters for free speech. While they utilize the library catalog to go from clue-to-clue, they'll learn about books that have been banned, famous figures who have been silenced throughout history, and, of course, a little bit more about *The Ninja Librarians*.

What You'll Need for the Mission:

- A Mission Board (We've included an example mission board in the back of this packet, but feel free to create your own using a poster or bulletin board)
- Blank name tags for each student/patron
- Clue cards (provided)
- A photo of each Imperiled Subject (provided)
- Access to the Library Online Catalog
 - » With each clue, they will use the database to find a book or section of books in your library. They will be searching by title, author, or both
- Prizes for the winning team
 - » Ideas:
 - A copy of *The Ninja Librarians*
 - A copy of a book that was once banned
 - Ninja gear (Visit zazzle.com for ninja T-shirts, keychains, coffee mugs, mouse pads, etc.)

Before the Mission:

- Based on the number of expected attendees, divide your name tags into five groups and label each separate group's name tags with "Team 1," "Team 2," "Team 3," "Team 4," and "Team 5"
- Prepare your clues:
 - » From the list of clues provided in this packet, assign three to five per team
 - » The first clue will be given to each team to begin the scavenger hunt, but the subsequent clues will need to be hidden
 - * **For Example:** If the answer to the first clue is *Fahrenheit 451*, the next clue will need to be hidden inside the book *Fahrenheit 451*
 - * **Note:** some of the clue's "answers" are specific book titles, but others are periods in history, or more general subjects related to *The Ninja Librarians*. The goal is to encourage searching specific terms in the library catalog. Therefore, for answers that are more broad (i.e. Women's Suffrage or World War II), we would encourage you to hide the next clue in the first book that shows up when you search for those terms in the catalog
 - » Follow this step until all the clues are hidden. The answer to each team's last clue should be the picture of the team's "imperiled subject." (The team that finds their subject first will be the winner)
- Display your Mission Board

THE NINJA LIBRARIANS MISSION KIT



The Mission

1. When each student/patron arrives, assign them to a team by handing them a name tag
2. Once everyone has gathered lead the group to the Mission Board. Explain:

Each of the historical figures on the Mission Board has been persecuted and threatened for their words at some point in history.

Socrates: Classical Greek philosopher tried for corrupting the minds of the youth of Athens and impiety, or not believing in the gods of the state, and sentenced to death by drinking a mixture containing poison hemlock.

Casimir Liszinski: A Polish nobleman, landowner, philosopher, and soldier who was accused, tried, and executed for atheism in 1689.

Su Shi/Su Dongpo: Chinese writer, poet, painter, calligrapher, pharmacologist, gastronome and statesman. An important figure in the Song dynasty and an opponent of the New Policy party lead by Wang Anshi.

Katharina Henot: A German postmaster and an alleged witch, burned at the stake for sorcery in Cologne, Germany. She was likely the first female postmaster in Germany. May have been the victim of a conspiracy from the authorities of the city.

Galileo Galilei: An Italian physicist, mathematician, astronomer, and philosopher who played a major role in the scientific revolution. He has been called the "Father of Modern Science." He argued that the planets revolved around the sun and was met with much opposition and was said to be false and against scripture.

The mission of the students/patrons is to put their Ninja Librarian skills to work to protect free speech and save these imperiled subjects from danger.

3. Hand out the first clue to each team and explain the rules:
 - a. Each team has been assigned an Imperiled Subject. The object of the mission is to follow the clues to save their imperiled subject from danger.
 - b. Use their knowledge and contextual evidence to figure out the answer to each clue.
 - c. When they have the answer, use the library catalog to:
 - Find where the specific book is located in the library, **OR**
 - Look up the first book associated with the answer (i.e., if the answer is "World War II," look up those terms in the catalog to find the first book that pops up
 - d. Go to that book in the library to find your next clue!
 - e. Repeat steps B and C for each clue until you find the picture of your Imperiled Subject
4. The first team to find the picture of their Imperiled Subject inside a book is the winner!
5. Fill in the "Outcome" column of the Mission Board with "Completed" as each team finishes!



The Ninja Librarians Discussion Questions

1. Ask your students to imagine that librarians really are ninja action heroes. What special skills might they have? Who and what would they protect?
2. In the course of this book, our heroes travel to several different time periods. Where and when would students like to visit if they could travel back in time?
3. Read the dedication of this book to the class: "For my mother, Christine Swann, who believed in books." What do they think it means to "believe in books"?
4. If you could read something out of a book, like the librarians in Petrarch's Library, what would you choose? (Food, animal, a character, etc.)
5. How can we take the mission of Petrarch's Library—the mission to help those whose freedom of speech needs protecting—and apply it to our current time period? How can we apply this mission to our everyday lives at school, at home, and with our friends?
6. What story would you choose to create a mashup with a Greek tragedy, like when they created a *Star Wars*/Greek tragedy mash-up in the book?
7. Petrarch's Library and the Spoke Libraries had a lot of peculiar qualities. What part of Petrarch's Library did you think was the most strange or interesting?
8. What was your favorite part of the story *The Ninja Librarians*?

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The Clues

Clue: This is a large snake that Ebba had read out of a book and into the world of Petrarch's Library. The snake traps its prey by wrapping tightly around it and squeezing (or "constricting") its airflow.

Book Topic/Section: Boa Constrictor

Clue: This is the animal that Dorrie and Marcus were chasing through the Passaic Public Library when they discovered the secret back room and fell into Petrarch's Library.

Book Topic/Section: Mongoose

Clue: Instead of using these kinds of books to make their food, the librarians in Petrarch's Library can read food out of any book. What kinds of books do we use to make food?

Book Topic/Section: Cookbooks

Clue: At the beginning of *The Ninja Librarians*, Dorrie challenges Tiffany to a duel that involves fighting with thin, blunt swords?. What is this sport called?

Book Topic/Section: Fencing

Clue: In *The Ninja Librarians*, what kind of play does Master Casanova put on every year for the Midsummer Festival? The first word is what people from Greece are called. The second word is what a very bad or sad thing is called. In theater, it is the opposite of a comedy.

Book Topic/Section: Greek Tragedy

Clue: Marcus often makes references to this film and storyline. He even introduces himself and Dorrie as Han Solo and Chewbacca when they are discovered in Petrarch's Library

Book Topic/Section: *Star Wars*

Clue: The major events of this social movement took place from 1955 to 1968. The goal of this movement was to end racial segregation and discrimination against black Americans.

Book Topic/Section: Civil Rights Movement

Clue: This book series, written by famous British author J.K. Rowling, has been made into eight films. It is about a very special orphan boy who survived a killing curse when he was a baby and attended a school for witchcraft and wizardry called Hogwarts.

Book: Harry Potter series by J.K. Rowling

Clue: The Women's Rights Movement from 1848 to 1920 fought for this right. It resulted in the 19th Amendment, which gave women the right to vote. Women's _____. The second word rhymes with the word "luggage."

Section/Book Subject: Women's Suffrage

Clue: This conflict took place in Spain from 1478 to 1834. It was intended to keep Catholicism in the Spanish kingdoms, and ordered Jews and Muslims to convert or leave Spain. "The Spanish _____."

Section/Book Subject: The Spanish Inquisition

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Clue: This was a world war that took place from 1939 to 1945. During this war, the horrific genocide of approximately six million Jews took place, known as the Holocaust. This war is known as “_____”

Section/Book Subject: World War II

Clue: “In _____” by Truman Capote. First word is the opposite of hot. Second word is the red liquid that runs through your veins.

Book: *In Cold Blood* by Truman Capote

Clue: This popular book was written in 1925 by F. Scott Fitzgerald and follows the lavish lives of East Hampton socialites during the Roaring 20s.

Book: *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald

Clue: This book has a delicious small fruit in the title that grows on a vine. It was written by John Steinbeck in 1939.

Book: *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck

Clue: “The _____ in the _____” by J.D. Salinger. The first word is a baseball player who stays at home plate behind the batter. The second word is a type of bread.

Book: *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger

Clue: “The _____ of Huckleberry _____” by Mark Twain. The first word is another word for exciting journeys or missions. The second word is what a fish uses to swim; dolphins, whales, and sharks have one on their back.

Book: *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain

Clue: This is a famous book that was made into a movie. “_____ with the _____” by Margaret Mitchell. The second word is what causes trees to sway, and becomes particularly strong during bad weather.

Book: *Gone with the Wind* by Margaret Mitchell

Clue: “_____ of _____” by Walt Whitman. First word is what you find on trees in the spring and summer. The second word is something that is found on your lawn.

Book: *Leaves of Grass* by Walt Whitman

Clue: “The _____” by Nathaniel Hawthorne. The first word is another word for the color red, can also be a girl’s name. The second word is something that you write and then mail them to a friend.

Book: *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne

Clue: “The _____ of the _____” by Jack London. First word is what you do when you reach someone by phone. The second word is used to describe an animal out in nature.

Book: *The Call of the Wild* by Jack London

Clue: “_____ -22” by Joseph Heller. The first word in this title might be what you’d say to someone before tossing something toward them, or what you play with another person and a ball.

Book: *Catch-22* by Joseph Heller

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Clue: “_____ 451” by Ray Bradbury. The first word is the system we use for measuring the temperature.

Book: *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury

Clue: “To _____ a Mockingbird” by Harper Lee. The missing word is what it means to end something’s life.

Book: *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee

Clue: “Where the _____ Things Are” by Maurice Sendak. This is a children’s picture book about a boy who visits an island of monsters in his room. The missing word is another word for crazy, or used to describe animals that live in the wilderness.

Book: *Where the Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak

Clue: He is a very important historical figure who used his freedom of speech to lead the Civil Rights Movement and fight nonviolently for the rights of all African Americans. He was assassinated in 1968.

Section/Book Subject: Martin Luther King Jr.

Clue: This is one of characters mentioned in *The Ninja Librarians*. He was a classical Greek philosopher who lived in Athens in around 470-399 BC.

Section/Book Subject: Socrates

Clue: He was an African-American Muslim minister and a human rights activist. He was an advocate for the rights of blacks and has been called one of the greatest and most influential African Americans in history. Hint: “Malcom _.”

Section/Book Subject: Malcom X

Clue: “Of _____ and _____” by John Steinbeck. The first word describes small mammals that love cheese. The second word is the opposite of women.

Book: *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck

Clue: This is a picture book in which you search for a brown-haired man with glasses dressed in blue jeans and a red and white striped shirt on chaotic illustrated pages.

Book: *Where’s Waldo* by Martin Handford

Clue: This is a popular children’s book written by Shel Silverstein, which has green cover and is about an apple tree and a boy.

Book: *The Giving Tree* by Shel Silverstein

Clue: This is a famous book, turned TV show and movie, about a little bear who loves honey and his friend Christopher Robin. He lives with other woodland creatures in the Hundred Acre Wood.

Book: *Winnie-the-Pooh* by A.A. Milne

Clue: This is a story about a little orphan boy named James, who enters a gigantic magical peach and has an adventure across the world with six magically altered garden bugs.

Book: *James and the Giant Peach* by Roald Dahl

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Clue: The story of 11-year-old Harriet M. Welsch who loves to write.

Book: *Harriet the Spy* by Louise Fitzhugh

Clue: This book was the real diary of a Jewish girl who lived in the hidden annex of an Amsterdam home with her family during the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands.

Book: *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank

Clue: This is a story about two children who create a magical forest kingdom that they have to cross a bridge to get to.

Book: *Bridge to Terabithia* by Katherine Paterson

Clue: The story about the friendship between a girl and a pig, and a pig and a spider named Charlotte.

Book: *Charlotte's Web* by E. B. White

Clue: The story about a girl named Alice who falls down a rabbit hole into a fantasy world populated with peculiar creatures.

Book: *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll

Clue: A children's book that follows a little creature who speaks for the trees against the greedy Once-ler.

Book: *The Lorax* by Dr. Seuss

Clue: A children's book about Sam-I-Am who pesters another character to sample a certain green dish.

Book: *Green Eggs and Ham* by Dr. Seuss

Clue: A children's book about a young boy named Charlie who finds a Golden Ticket that wins him an adventure through the chocolate factory of the eccentric Willy Wonka.

Book: *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* by Roald Dahl

Clue: The story of Dorothy, her dog Toto, and their adventure in the Land of Oz, where they meet a scarecrow, a tin man and a cowardly lion.

Book: *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* by L. Frank Baum

Clue: A children's picture book written by Bill Martin, Jr., and illustrated by Eric Carle, about a brown bear who asks other colorful animals what they see.

Book: *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* by Bill Martin Jr.

Clue: This is the reference book that you go to when you need to find the definition of a word.

Book: *The Merriam-Webster Dictionary*

Clue: This book follows a boy named Jonas through the twelfth year of his life. The society he lives in has eliminated pain and hardship by converting to "Sameness." In his twelfth year, he meets a man who shows him the power of knowledge, which changes his life forever.

Book: *The Giver* by Lois Lowry

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Clue: This story follows the adventure of four siblings—Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy Pevensie—who climb into a wardrobe and discover a magical forest in a land called Narnia.

Book: *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis

Clue: This is the book series by Laura Ingalls Wilder about a girl who lives in the country with her ma and pa.

Book: *Little House on the Prairie* by Laura Ingalls Wilder

Clue: This book follows the lives of four sisters—Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy March—and tells the story of their passage from childhood to womanhood.

Book: *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott

Clue: This book by William Golding is about a group of British boys, stuck on an uninhabited island, who try to govern themselves with disastrous results.

Book: *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding

Clue: This coming-of-age novel follows Ponyboy and his group of friends, called the Greasers.

Book: *The Outsiders* by S. E. Hinton

Clue: This children's book tells the tale of Sylvester, a donkey from the fictional community of Oatsdale who collects pebbles "of unusual shape and color." One day, he finds a pebble that grants wishes.

Book: *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble* by William Steig

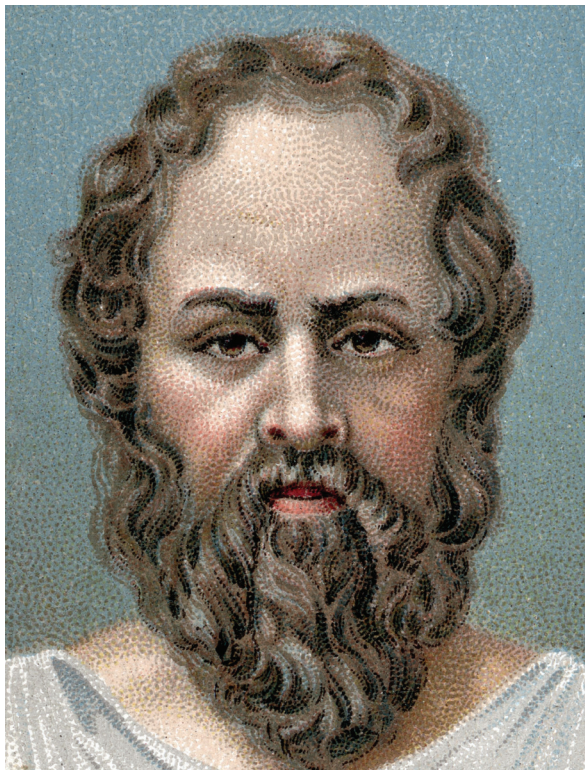
Clue: A science-fiction/fantasy novel about a fourteen-year-old girl who comes in contact with Mrs. Whatsit, Mrs. Who, and Mrs. Which.

Book: *A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L'Engle

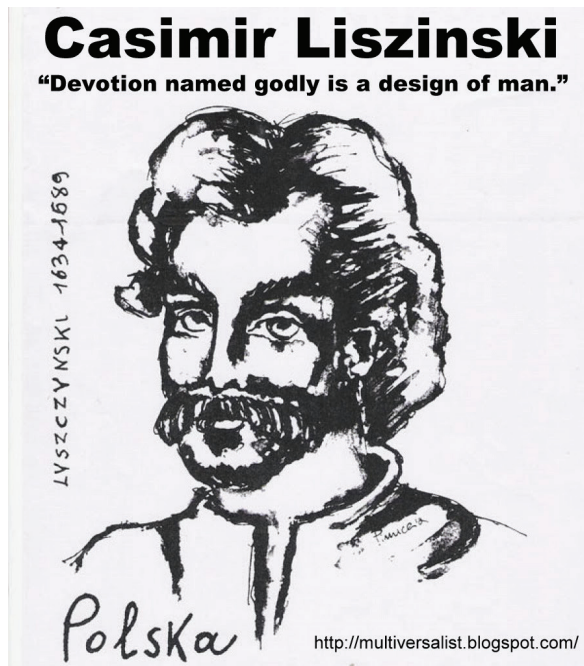
MISSION BOARD



| Imperiled Subject | Nature of Threat | Wherein | Team | Outcome |
|--------------------|------------------|--|--------------|---------|
| Socrates | Poison | Athens, 399 B.C. | Ninja Team 1 | |
| Casimir Liszinski | Beheading | Poland, 17th Century | Ninja Team 2 | |
| Su Shi / Su Dongpo | Exile | China, Song Dynasty-12th Century | Ninja Team 3 | |
| Katharina Henot | Burning at Stake | Cologne, Germany Early 17th Century | Ninja Team 4 | |
| Galileo Galilei | House Arrest | Tuscany, Italy Late 16th to Early 17th Century | Ninja Team 5 | |



Socrates



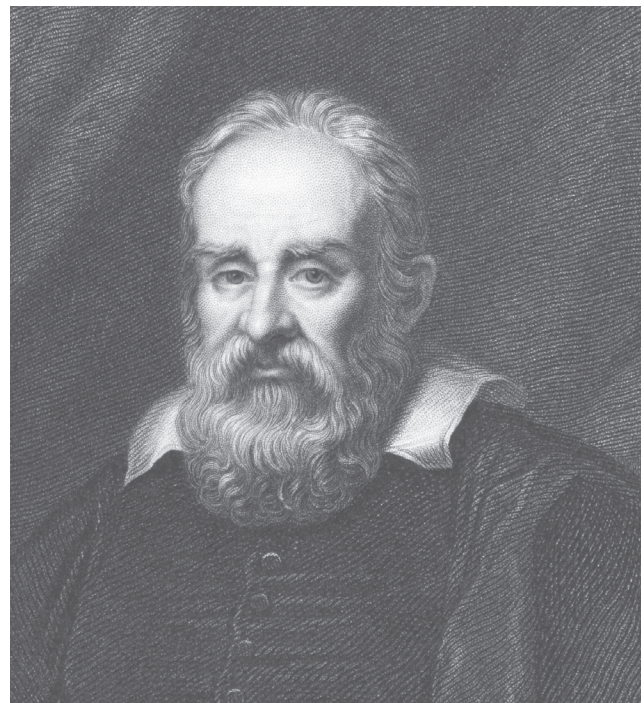
**Casimir
Liszinski**



**Su Shi /
Su Dongpo**



**Katharina
Henot**



Galileo Galilei