

Teacher Notes for: BLOOD OF THE INCAS

The adventures of Hiram Bingham are extensions of the readers' own imaginative lives and personal histories.

Students may have some serious fun with these:

Journey into destiny

(This relates to Hiram Bingham's encounter with the condor, while he clung helplessly to the cliff.)

What is one great journey you must make? If you don't go, you'll never forgive yourself, because your destiny is out there, waiting in ambush for you.

Go on, imagine something that seems impossible, then go out and do it.

Your journey may be entirely imaginary.

But I dare you to imagine going somewhere real?

Make research notes about where you will go, who will go with you, what things you need to take, what risks and difficulties you might face, and why that journey is so important to you?

Write one exciting scene from anywhere in your long journey. Finish it on a cliffhanger so we can't wait to read the next page.

The secret

(This relates to the gift his grandmother gave Hiram Bingham.)

Somewhere, hidden in their past, is an object or image that fascinates and compels famous archaeologists to leave home and risk their lives.

One day, they must tell that secret.

You are the archaeologist. There is something in your life that commands you to go out and face unknown dangers.

I hope it's real. But it may be imagined.

But you've lost it. Write the dramatic scene where you desperately search for it.

Where are you? At home, in a jungle, on a raft, in a space shuttle, or a cave? Maybe you find your precious object. Maybe you don't.

Bit by bit, in action, thoughts or dialogue, reveal the secret.

Rescue Mission

(This relates to Hiram Bingham's discovery of the corpses in the cave.)

Pick a moment of tremendous danger in the real past. Vesuvius is erupting. A gigantic tsunami is rolling towards Knossos. The army of Xerxes sets fire to Athens. The Conquistadors attack an Inca fortress...

You are there. There is somebody or something you must rescue. Centuries later, an archaeologist will find clues to who you are and the wonderfully important thing you did.

Research the moment of deadly peril.

Write the scene from within your struggle to rescue that person or thing.

Relic Hunter

(This relates to Hiram Bingham's search for relics in the ruins at Vitcos)

Imagine a mysterious object in a fabulous place.

You are the archaeologist.

We meet you at the moment of discovery. Excited, you explain what you think it is. Your assistant, a local guide, has a wildly different theory based on legends.

Write the heated debate.

But of you are wrong.

Imagine you are the person who put the relic there so long ago.

Write that story.

The Dilemma

(This relates to Hiram's choice whether to eat what he thinks is human flesh, or insult his cannibal host. Another of Hiram's dilemmas was on the cliff, when he and Castillo were trapped between a sheer wall and a collapsing path. If Hiram wished, he could escape across the sheer wall because he was an expert rock-climber. But that would mean abandoning Castillo. If Hiram decided to stay, they could both die.)

What is a dilemma? A choice, but whichever way you choose, you're in trouble.

Moral dilemmas are absolutely vital to adventure stories.

On your own, or with friends, make a list of six real or imagined moral dilemmas.

Turn the best dilemma into a short, exciting scene, filled with conflicting emotions.

True or False?

(This relates to Castillo's pride in his warrior ancestors. It also relates to Hiram and Castillo's competition about who'd known the worse coldness.)

Find a remarkable story about your parents or grandparents or another relative.

Write the story.

Then re-write the memory from the point of view of somebody else who was there at the time. Who was it? They have a different story to tell. Why?

Blind

(This relates to the glimpses of Machu Picchu as Hiram crawled through the jungle covering the ruins.)

Just as you near the entrance to an amazing archaeological ruin, poisonous insects sting your eyes. You're blinded, perhaps until the poison wears off, or for the rest of your life.

You stumble into the ruin. But there's no stopping you. Despite the pain, you must search the ruins. You find some astonishing things, but you can't see them. You can only guess what you're discovering. But don't tell us your guesses, yet.

Write descriptions of three of those things. But no sight is allowed. Your friends try to guess what those things are. Don't make it too easy for them, but give enough clues so they have a fair chance to solve the mysteries.

The Shape-Shifter

(This relates to Hiram's problems with old or inaccurate maps.)

Draw a sketch map of an ancient city. Real, or imagined. Bird's-eye view.

Then, using a computer, or tracing paper, overlay your original map with six different versions. Each of the six versions highlights

special places of importance to the person making the map. For example, a spy's map would highlight gates, guard-posts, weapons stores, escape routes, his informer's house, and so on.

Your versions are:

A spy planning an attack.

A tour guide. (Yes, they worked in ancient cities.)

A pilgrim.

A little child seeing a city for the first time.

A thief.

A slave merchant with a new batch of slaves to sell.

Who owns the past?

Peruvian authorities are negotiating with museums for the return of Inca artefacts taken by Hiram Bingham and his teams.

Write five reasons why the treasures should stay in the foreign museums.

Write five reasons why they should be returned to Peruvian museums.

How would you solve the dispute?

What The?

Choose two scenes from **Blood of the Incas**.

But not from those I've mentioned in my article REALITY CHECK: The Writing of Blood of the Incas, in the Dig Deeper Page.

Which of the two scenes you've chosen are 'historically true,' or figments of the author's deranged imagination, or a mix of true and imagined?

Give your reasons.