

Classroom Guide for

“Infernal Machine”

by Lana Krumwiede

from *River City Secrets: Stories from Richmond*

Vocabulary

| | |
|-------------|-----------|
| fidget | heartily |
| lush | debris |
| sympathetic | ingenuity |
| munitions | ashen |
| throng | tarpaulin |
| exhibition | fugitive |

Discussion Questions

1. Joan’s father told her that fidgeting is a telltale sign of falsehood (lying). Do you agree or disagree? Why?
2. More than once, Joan had conflicting feelings about what happened during her visit. Think of a time when you experienced two opposite emotions about something. Name the two emotions and explain the conflict.
3. Do you think that Joan was betraying her friend’s trust? Is it ever okay to be dishonest?

Suggested Activities

1. Joan and her friend Kate wrote letters when they could not go to the same school anymore. Write a fictional letter from Joan to Kate, or from Kate to Joan. Use what you know about these girls to make the letter sound real.
2. Using Joan’s descriptions, draw a picture of what you think the “experimental underwater vessel” looked like.
3. Read about [etiquette and manners expected of young ladies during the Civil War](#). Are any of these manners still expected today? Write a list of ten social manners expected in your home.