

BOOKNOTES

READERS GUIDE

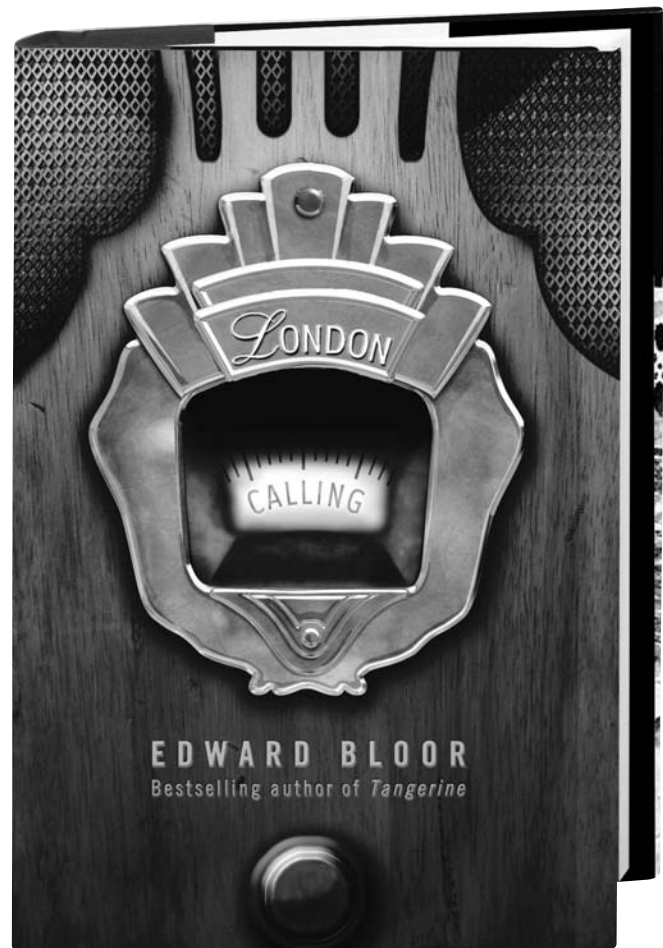
thematic connections

**World War II • Responsibility
Family Relationships
Forgiveness • Courage
Grades 5 up**

about the book

When Martin's grandmother leaves him an old radio after her death, he is able to mysteriously transport through time to 1940 and the London Blitz where he obtains information that may be able to change the course of history.

Attending All Souls Preparatory School on a scholarship makes Martin's life miserable, especially when he becomes the target of the affluent and influential students whose families have attended the school since its inception. However, Martin's revenge is sweet when, traveling through time to 1940, he uncovers the truth about one founding family and its cowardly behavior. Assisted by his sister who works for the Millennium Encyclopedia, and the ancestor of a woman associated with the American Embassy in 1940, Martin is even able to find new information that proves the acclaimed war hero General Hank Lowery was a supporter of Hitler instead of the British people.



Alfred A. Knopf hardcover: 978-0-375-83635-0 (0-375-83635-7)
GLB: 978-0-375-93635-7 (0-375-93635-1)

**“Who decides what
‘the real history of a time’ is?”**

—Martin in *London Calling*

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RANDOM HOUSE
CHILDREN'S BOOKS

pre-reading activity

Martin travels through time with the aid of a Philco 20 Deluxe Radio, but no one believes him. Ask students to visit Nova's Web site to learn what astronomers and scientists say about time travel (www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/time).

The London Blitz occurred from September 1940 to May 1941. Ask students to visit Eyewitness to History's Web site to read about the Blitz. Then have them write a brief paragraph detailing their reactions and thoughts to what they have read (www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/blitz.htm).



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questions



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- Martin freezes after he is slapped in the face by Lowery, but he hates himself for his cowardly reaction. (p. 13) Why does he react the way he does? What would be a more appropriate reaction? Does the punishment he receives fit the crime? Why or why not?
- After Martin and his mother meet with Father Thomas about the fight, Martin's mother tells him, "How you will live in the future depends on how you live now in the present." (p. 27) What decisions does Martin make in the present that will affect his future? How will his decisions positively impact his life?
- Martin's sister and friends show concern for Martin's emotional well-being, fearing he is suffering from depression; even Martin, who says his days are empty and pointless, thinks he needs to do something other than stay in the basement. What other symptoms does Martin exhibit that show he might be depressed? What does his sister do to try to help him get out more? What role do his friends play? How does Martin finally overcome his feelings of depression?
- Due to the power and reputation of the Lowery family, Hank breaks the rules with few consequences, and his family seems to expect special favors because of their status. How does their pride and arrogance affect the other boys at All Souls Preparatory School? Do the families of the other boys have any influence on Hank's behavior?

for group discussion

- After Martin meets Jimmy and visits him in the past, he asks Margaret, “Who decides what ‘the real history of a time’ is?” Margaret responds, “The winners decide.” (p. 119) How does this hold true for Martin when he sets the record straight about General Hank Lowery’s war record and his own grandfather’s role in the war?
- After Martin receives the Philco 20 Deluxe Radio, he begins to have strange dreams, so the first time he meets Jimmy, he is sure it is a dream. What does Martin do that convinces him that he is traveling back in time? How does this experience affect him? What finally helps him make the decision to help Jimmy, even though it is dangerous?
- The painting of Abraham and Isaac seems to show up wherever Martin goes—in his present at All Souls, in his past in Jimmy’s book, and in his future when he goes to London to meet Jimmy’s dad, Mr. Harker. How does this painting symbolize the father-son relationships in the book? What clues does this painting give about the outcome of the story?
- When Martin travels back in time, he becomes braver and more courageous. He says, “I agreed to follow this strange boy into those bombed out streets, for a purpose even he did not understand.” (p. 134) Why did Martin agree to put his life in danger for an unknown mission? Even though Jimmy and Martin live in different times, what do they have in common?
- Martin’s own grandfather was also considered a war hero. What does he learn about him that alters the course of history? How does what he learns change his family’s present and future? What impact does the information have on Martin’s relationship with his father?
- On page 227, Martin asks his father, “What do you think makes one man a disgrace, and another one a hero?” How would Martin answer that question after his experiences in London with Mr. Harker? How does Martin’s discovery about his grandfather make a difference in his relationship with his father?
- When Martin’s father dies, Martin is assured that he can answer the question: “What did you do to help?” (p. 299) How would Martin’s father have answered the question? How would other characters answer the question?

vocabulary/ use of language

The author uses rich vocabulary that creates a text filled with strong images. Ask students to locate the following words and determine their meaning from the context clues: *pertinent* (p. 16), *legacy* (p. 17), *quavered* (p. 22), *resounding* (p. 23), *brazenness* (p. 36), *expletive* (p. 39), *adamant* (p. 56), *imperceptible* (p. 59), *undulate* (p. 74), and *peripheral* (p. 85).

Then have students write an original sentence using the words.

related titles

by theme



B for Buster

Iain Lawrence

Survival • Historical Fiction (World War II)
Coming-of-Age • Courage

Grades 7 up

Delacorte hardcover: 978-0-385-73086-0 (0-385-73086-1)

Laurel-Leaf paperback: 978-0-440-23810-2 (0-440-23810-2)

GLB: 978-0-385-90108-6 (0-385-90108-9)

The Last Mission

Harry Mazer

Survival • Historical Fiction (World War II)
Coming-of-Age • Courage

Grades 7 up

Laurel-Leaf paperback: 978-0-440-94797-4 (0-440-94797-9)

The Transall Saga

Gary Paulsen

Survival • Time Travel • Coming-of-Age • Courage

Grades 5 up

Laurel-Leaf paperback: 978-0-440-21976-7 (0-440-21976-0)

Under the Blood-Red Sun

Graham Salisbury

Survival • Historical Fiction (World War II)
Coming-of-Age • Courage

Grades 7 up

Laurel-Leaf paperback: 978-0-553-49487-7 (0-553-49487-2)

Yearling paperback: 978-0-440-41139-0 (0-440-41139-4)



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about the author

Edward Bloor is the author of the celebrated novel *Tangerine*, which was an ALA Top Ten Best Books for Young Adults, a *Horn Book* Fanfare Selection, and a *Bulletin* Blue Ribbon Book. He lives in Winter Garden, Florida.

internet resources

Nova Online

www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/time

Leading physicists delve into the mystery of whether time travel is possible.

Eyewitness to History

www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/blitz.htm

A historical outline of the London Blitz in 1940.

Philco Radios

www.philcorepairbench.com/cathedralid.htm

Pictures and information about the Philco 20 Deluxe Radio complete with a schematic of the tubes.

Arsenal Soccer Team

www.arsenal.com/index.asp

The official home page for the Arsenal Soccer team in London.

on the web

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