

Praise for The Imagination Station® books

These books are a great combination of history and adventure in a clean manner perfect for young children.

—Margie B., *My Springfield Mommy* blog

These books will help my kids enjoy history.

—Beth S., third-grade public school teacher

Colorado Springs, Colorado

[The Imagination Station books] focus on God much more than the Magic Tree House books do.

—Emilee, age 7, Waynesboro, Pennsylvania

My nine-year-old son has already read [the first two books], one of them twice. He is very eager to read more in the series too. I am planning on reading them out loud to my younger son.

—Abbi C., mother of four, Minnesota



Attack at the Arena

BOOK 2

**MARIANNE HERING • PAUL McCUSKER
ILLUSTRATED BY DAVID HOHN**



**FOCUS ON THE FAMILY • ADVENTURES IN ODYSSEY
TYNDALE HOUSE PUBLISHERS, INC. • CAROL STREAM, ILLINOIS**

Dedicated to Jim Ware, an inspiration

Attack at the Arena

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With the exception of known historical characters, all characters are the product of the authors' imaginations.

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Voyage with the Vikings

Peril in the Palace

Revenge of the Red Knight

Showdown with the Shepherd

Problems in Plymouth

Secret of the Prince's Tomb



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Prologue



Mr. Whittaker is a kind but mysterious inventor. His workshop is in a large house called Whit's End.

Mr. Whittaker's favorite invention is the Imagination Station. The machine can take you anywhere you can imagine—it's kind of like a time machine.

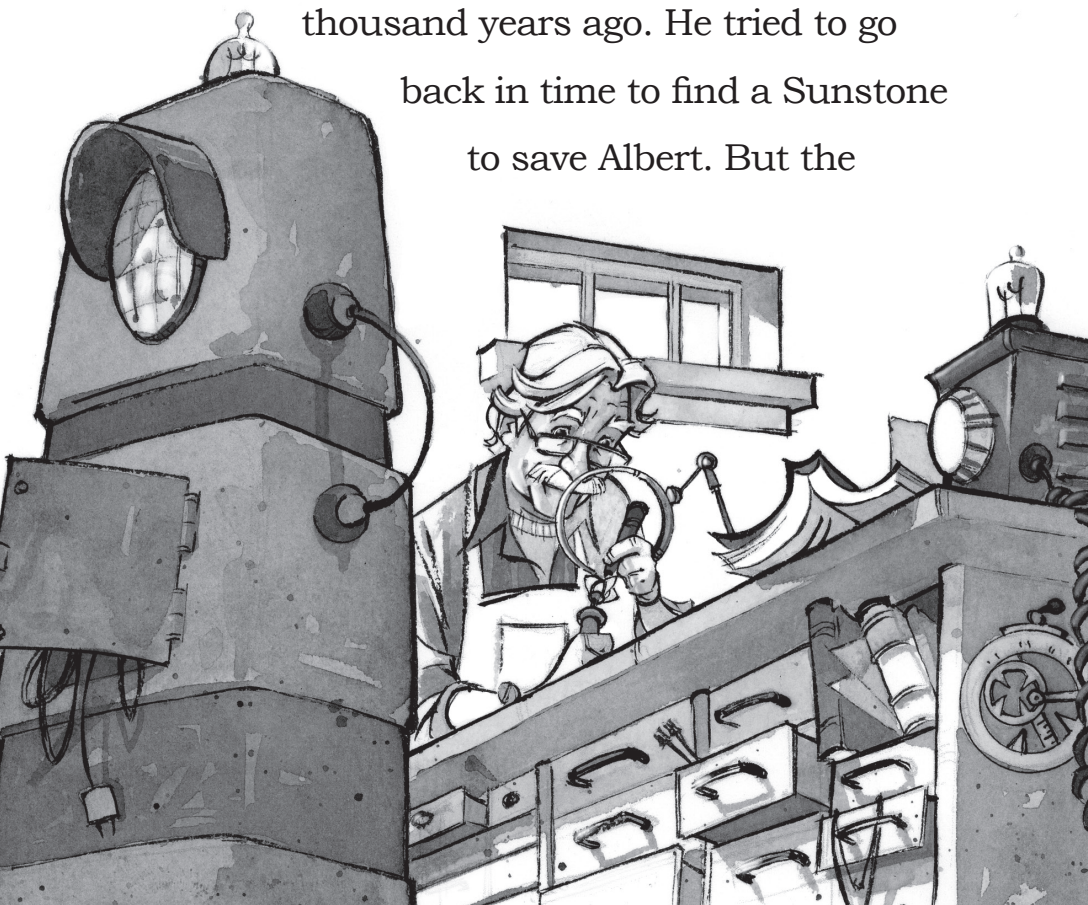
One day Mr. Whittaker found a letter inside the Imagination Station.

The letter said this:

ATTACK AT THE ARENA

*To save Albert, I need a Viking Sunstone before
the new moon. Or Lord Darkthorn will lock
him inside the tower.*

Mr. Whittaker did some reading. He found
out the Vikings had used Sunstones a
thousand years ago. He tried to go
back in time to find a Sunstone
to save Albert. But the



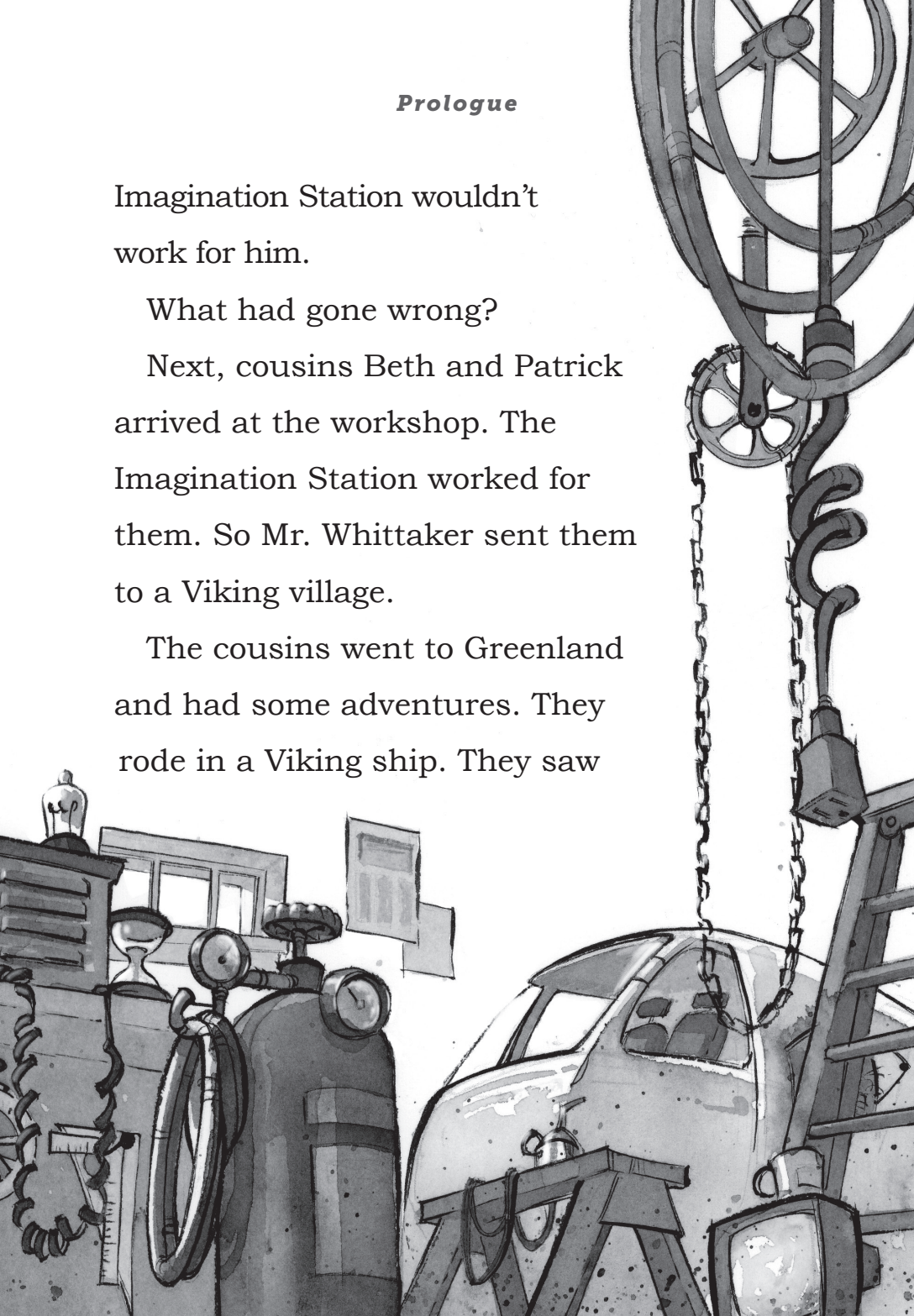
Prologue

Imagination Station wouldn't work for him.

What had gone wrong?

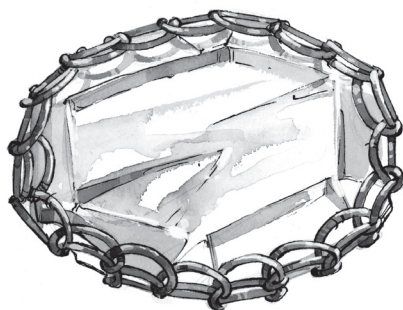
Next, cousins Beth and Patrick arrived at the workshop. The Imagination Station worked for them. So Mr. Whittaker sent them to a Viking village.

The cousins went to Greenland and had some adventures. They rode in a Viking ship. They saw



ATTACK AT THE ARENA

polar bears and reindeer. They met Erik the Red and Leif Eriksson. They found a blue Sunstone and came back home in the Imagination Station.



The cousins returned to the workshop, and they found another letter. The second letter said that Albert needed a silver cup from Rome. The cousins rushed to get ready for their next adventure.

But they still had some questions:

Who was Lord Darkthorn?

Would they be able to help Albert before the new moon?

Most important—how would they find a silver cup?



The Second Trip



Patrick, Beth, and Mr. Whittaker were at Whit's End on Tuesday morning. They were in the workshop getting ready for the Roman adventure.

Beth came out of the girls' changing room. Patrick came out of the boys' changing room soon afterward.

The cousins were curious about their ancient Roman costumes.

"Why did you give me a plain dress?" Beth

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asked Mr. Whittaker. "The cloth is rough. And the only thing pretty about it is the gold border." She looked down at the gray tunic. It reached to her ankles. The tunic was not long enough to cover her leather sandals.

"You need to blend in," Mr. Whittaker said.

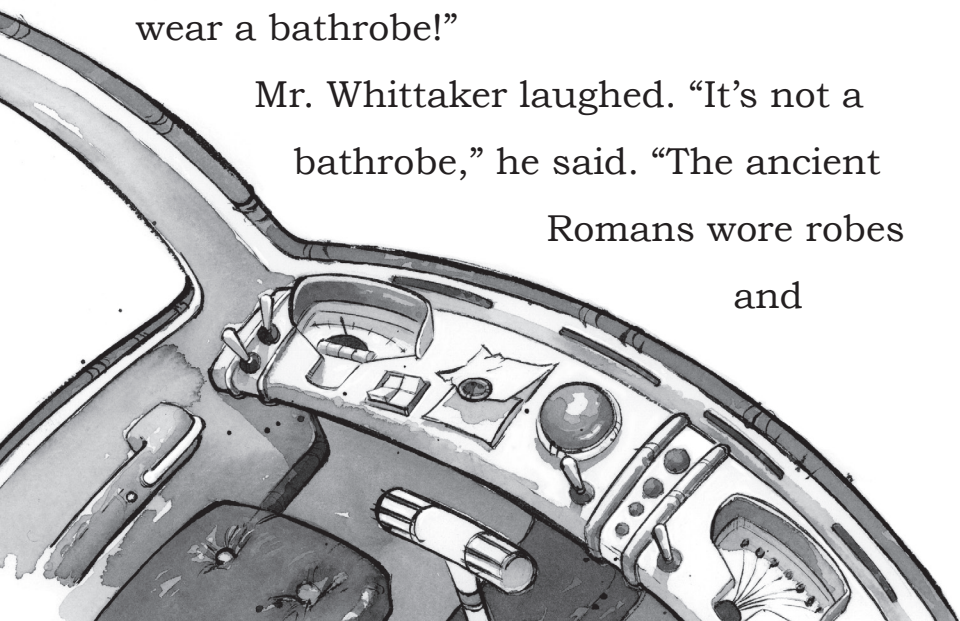
"As what?" Beth asked.

"A slave," Mr. Whittaker said. "There were lots of slaves in ancient Rome."

"A slave!" Beth said. "No!"

"Don't complain," Patrick said. "I have to wear a bathrobe!"

Mr. Whittaker laughed. "It's not a bathrobe," he said. "The ancient Romans wore robes and



The Second Trip

tunics.”

“But the belt is a rope,” Patrick said. “And the hood is weird. When I put it on, I look creepy.”

“No one in Rome will think you look creepy,” Mr. Whittaker said. “In fact, that kind of robe was a sign of peace. It’s what monks wore.”

“Monks?” Beth asked.

“A monk is a holy man,” Mr. Whittaker said. “They can live anywhere.”

“I’m going to be a holy man?” Patrick asked. “But I can’t even sit still in church!”

“It’s better than being a slave,” said Beth.

The cousins walked to the Imagination Station. It reminded Patrick of the front of a helicopter. He looked at Beth and smiled. She smiled back. The cousins wanted to get going.

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They climbed inside the Imagination Station.

Patrick and Beth looked carefully at the dashboard. A red button was in the center. Around it were dials, levers, and flashing lights. On top of the dashboard were two letters.

Two very old and mysterious letters.



The Gifts



“Where is the blue Sunstone?” Beth asked Mr. Whittaker. “It’s not inside the Imagination Station anymore.”

“I put it on the dashboard last night,” Mr. Whittaker said. “It was gone this morning. I think whoever wrote the letters took the Sunstone.”

“But how could that happen?” Beth asked.

“I’m trying to figure that out,” Mr. Whittaker said.

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“I thought all the controls are here,”
Patrick said.

Mr. Whittaker frowned. “I built a remote control for the machine,” he said. “I took it with me on my last adventure. I accidentally left it there.”

“Can’t you go back to get it?” Beth asked.

“I would if the Imagination Station would let me,” Mr. Whittaker said. “It won’t work for me right now. I’m trying to find out why.”

“But who is Albert?” Patrick asked.

“Albert is an ancestor of mine from many, many years ago,” he said.

“I want to write a family history,”
Mr. Whittaker said. “I took trips in the Imagination Station to meet my ancestors. I met Albert, and now he’s in trouble.”

“That’s what the second letter says,”

The Gifts

Patrick said. “Albert needs more help.”

Mr. Whittaker reached inside the Imagination Station. A fancy ring appeared on his finger. It was a square of gold with a rose engraved in the middle. The square had eight tiny pearls around the edge.



“Your ring keeps appearing and disappearing,” Beth said.

“It was a gift from Albert,” Mr. Whittaker said. “You can only see it when my hand is in the machine.”

He picked up the letter and read:

*More trouble for Albert. Lord Darkthorn is angry.
The Roman monk's silver cup is missing. We need it before
the new moon. May God be with you.*

ATTACK AT THE ARENA

Mr. Whittaker put down the letter. He took his hand out of the Imagination Station. The fancy ring disappeared.

“Is there anything special about the silver cup we have to find?” Patrick asked. “There might be hundreds of them in Rome.”

“It’s a monk’s cup,” Mr. Whittaker said.

Patrick suddenly smiled. “That’s why you have me dressed like this!” he said.

“A monk’s cup?” Beth asked.

“A monk’s cup looks like a goblet,” Mr. Whittaker said. “Some people call it a *chalice*.”

“What’s so special about it?” Patrick asked.

Mr. Whittaker said, “A monk would use one in a holy ceremony called ‘The Lord’s Supper,’ or ‘Communion.’ ”

The Gifts

“Well, we won’t find it sitting here,” Beth said. She wiggled in her seat.

“You’re right, Beth,” Mr. Whittaker said. “But first I have something else for you.”

He walked over to the computer desk and picked up two items. He brought them back to the Imagination Station.

Mr. Whittaker handed Patrick a wide metal armband. It had rubies in it.

“Wear that high on your arm.” Mr. Whittaker said. “Keep it hidden under your robe.”

“What’s it for?” Patrick asked.

“A man will ask you for something of value.” Mr. Whittaker said. “Use this.”

Patrick nodded.

Mr. Whittaker gave a little leather pouch to Beth. “This is birdseed,” he said.

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“Birdseed?” Beth said. “Don’t Roman birds get enough to eat?” She tucked the pouch into her belt.

“You’ll understand when the time comes,” Mr. Whittaker said. He gave Beth a knowing wink. Mr. Whittaker closed the Imagination Station’s doors.

Beth pushed the red button.

The Imagination Station started to shake. Then it rumbled. It seemed to move.

Beth took a quick breath. She closed her eyes. The machine jerked forward.

Patrick felt as if he were on the subway. He pushed his body into the seat and waited.

The rumble grew louder.

The machine whirled.

Suddenly, everything went black.



The Growl



Patrick and Beth blinked. A bright light replaced the darkness of the Imagination Station. It was the sun. They felt a breeze move against their faces. Their feet settled on warm sand.

The Imagination Station slowly faded.

The cousins looked around. They were in a huge empty arena.

“It’s as big as a pro baseball stadium,” Patrick said.



"The walls are amazing," said Beth.

Rrrrowl.

The sound came from behind them. The cousins spun around.

They were suddenly looking at a black-and-orange tiger. The two froze with fear. The tiger was only twenty yards away. It gazed at them and growled again.

"What do we do?" Beth asked. "Do we stand still or run away?"

The tiger took a step toward them.

"Run!" Patrick yelled.

The cousins turned and ran. The arena was a large oval of sand and tall walls. The many doorways were blocked by metal bars.

There was nowhere to hide.

The Growl

The cousins zigged. They zagged. Their feet kicked up a spray of sand.

The tiger followed slowly. It seemed to know the kids were an easy lunch. It couldn't be bothered to hurry after them.

"This way!" a man's voice shouted. "Come to this door!"

The cousins turned and ran toward the voice. They could hear the tiger's paws thump on the sand. It was moving faster now.

The door was only a few steps away.

But so was the tiger.

Rrrrowl!

