



The Map Trap

Andrew Clements

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This map-tastic middle grade story from Andrew Clements gives the phrase “uncharted territory” a whole new meaning!

Alton Barnes loves maps. He’s loved them ever since he was little, and not just for the geography. Because maps contain more information than just locations, and that’s why he likes to draw maps as well as read them. Regular “point A to point B” ones, sure, but also maps that explain a whole lot more—like what he really thinks about his friends. And teachers. Even the principal.

So when Alton’s maps are stolen from his locker, there’s serious trouble on the horizon...and he’ll need some mad cartographic skills to escape it.

From “a genius of gentle, high-concept tales set in suburban middle schools” (The New York Times), this stand-alone story is off the charts.

The Map Trap Details

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Author : Andrew Clements

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From Reader Review The Map Trap for online ebook

Luann says

Alton Zeigler loves maps. His parents chose his name from a list of towns on a map before he was born, and it just started from there. He grew up with maps on his walls and map-related items as presents from friends and family. He likes to draw maps of all kinds, and he even has a secret folder of maps displaying information that others at school might get upset about, like a topographical map of the heights of those in the sixth grade with the tallest girl displayed as a mountain and the smallest boy displayed as a valley. He also drew a map of his teacher's brain showing what she thought about most when she wasn't teaching, and a map showing how many times the principal says "um" in the morning announcements each day of the week. Then Alton's secret folder of maps goes missing, and he starts to receive ransom messages.

I loved all the details about maps and the creative ways they can be used! Hopefully this will inspire some kids to look at maps in different ways and maybe become map nuts themselves. All the geocaching parts were very well done, too.

My one problem with the book was the end and how the map thief was sort of revealed but not really. I was left with more questions than answers. Some of the "mapnapper's" actions didn't make sense to me. I think one more chapter at the end from one of the adult's point-of-view would have greatly improved the ending.

Laura Haske says

This author understands kids. His books are good read alouds because the chapters are short and the story moves quickly. For a book set in a Chicago suburb, I would expect to see more diversity represented in the characters. It feels more like a small, rural town than a suburb. There are lots of good talking points though, and my son and I both enjoyed it.

Chris says

As usual when I read Andrew Clements, I was not disappointed. I was twice-thrilled to discover that not only did this young man love maps, he was a geocacher, and this was described and mentioned throughout the book. Very cool! Geocaching is the next-best-thing to letterboxing (IMHO) and I've never seen it mentioned in a book before. Alton is a polite, thoughtful young man who instantly drew me in. The (very) young teacher in this book is so unlike me, but I loved her, as well as Alton's friend (whose name I've already forgotten). Short, fun read. This was on just two cds and read by the very talented Keith Nobbs. NOTE: I think there are some cool illustrations in this book that I missed out on by listening and not reading.

Josiah says

Multiple changes in point of view early on give *The Map Trap* a different feel from other Andrew Clements novels, but a few chapters in we're back to the single-lens focus of a student's perspective. Sixth-grader Alton

Ziegler is a worthy main character, his lifelong fixation on maps enough to set him apart as offbeat, but with a good nature that makes him easy to sympathize with as we follow his story. He's loved studying and designing maps since early grade school, taping them to every open inch of wall and ceiling in his bedroom, doing school reports on maps and wearing map-themed shirts, but his most interesting topographical achievement is his only secret one: the maps he's drawn about the social landscape at school and the kids themselves. Who belongs to which clique, and what topics do they discuss? Which students are tallest and shortest? What do particular teachers talk about most that isn't directly related to the subject at hand, and can Alton use that to create a schematic of their brain? This map project has always been secret, but Alton breaks his code of silence after Quint Harrison, one of the cool kids, shows interest in Alton's mapmaking. Surely he could bring his secret file to school and show Quint, if he agreed to keep its contents quiet. Quint might even be impressed and want to be friends with Alton.

Quint is tickled by the humorous maps analyzing the school faculty and student body, but Alton regrets bringing his secret file into the light of day when it disappears from his locker. If those maps end up in the wrong hands, dozens of kids will be furious, thinking Alton's intent was to lampoon them. "Ransom" notes show up in his locker, demanding that Alton perform certain awkward tasks to get his maps back one at a time or have the whole cache be published for the school to see. Can Alton count on Quint to help track down the mapnapper, or is he in on the heist? Will Alton ever be able to resume his unobtrusive pastime of studying teachers and peers and drawing maps that playfully depict who they are?

The Map Trap isn't as thematically tight as Andrew Clements's best books, nor does the story make as much sense, but the characters are likable and fun. Alton is smart, and funnier than he knows, and Quint is funny, and smarter than he knows. Becoming friends with Quint shows Alton that there's more to other kids than he realizes; the information in his social maps isn't comprehensive. The superficial look you get from a map won't tell you what's under the surface. You have to dig deeper to discover that. I'll rate *The Map Trap* one and a half stars. It's not on the same level as *Extra Credit* or the Benjamin Pratt and the Keepers of the School series, but if you enjoy quality characters and plot unpredictability, pick up a copy of this book. At the very least, you'll be entertained.

Ashley Randolph says

I wish there had been more illustrations of Alton's non traditional maps. They sounded very interesting. I felt the behavior of the teacher, first year or not, was incredibly inappropriate and childish. If indeed she was the blackmailer, as Alton believed, she should be fired on the spot. What adult behaves in such a manner? What adult believes that it is appropriate to put a child through that level of stress and potential embarrassment? I had no sense that she had some "grand plan" to impart some sort of wisdom to Alton. Her behavior was childish and petty and not the behavior of an adult in a position of authority. In fact, she is abusing her authority over Alton through her behavior. She needed to be fired. The fact that there seemed to be both no repercussions for HER actions or even an apology for the emotional stress and embarrassment she put Alton through is unacceptable. ?What upset me the most is, whether the intention or not, I felt Alton may have some sort of high functioning ASD- to basically force him to change from a shirt he feels comfortable in and likes into a borrowed shirt that is both sleeveless and a bright color that calls attention to himself is cruel and abusive. And no, she may not have known that particular shirt was what he would be stuck with, I'm not sure what she expected him to be able to find mid-day at school. Dropped one star Bc of this characterization.

Marcia says

Since Frindle, Andrew Clements has been a favorite author, and I love the school story genre. He had a few misses in recent years, Above Average for example, but this is a solid book.

Alton Zeigler loves maps, and draws all kinds. He likes to go geocaching and is a neat character. But when his maps, containing potentially embarrassing maps about classmates and teachers go missing, Alton must fess up.

A fun read for upper elementary kids.

Jennifer says

Very clever.

This was a read aloud with my youngest son. He was completely drawn in to the story. I know the story is working well for him when he begs and begs me to keep reading to him.

Alton, a 6th grade boy, is obsessed with maps. He wears shirts with maps on them, goes geocaching (Fun! If you've never tried it, I highly recommend it.), decorates his room with maps and other geographical paraphernalia, studies maps, and draws his own maps. Alton has a set of secret maps with revealing facts about people in the school. They are innocent enough in that he was just examining data from a neutral perspective and was not trying to make fun of anyone. The maps go missing, and Alton stresses. The next few days, he receives ransom notes from a secret "mapnapper." Alton and his friend Quint work together to solve the mystery.

Maryam AlNaser says

heh.

Adam Ochoa says

The Map Trap by Andrew Clements is about this kid named Alton. He has always loved maps since he was young. He loved them so much he started drawing maps and paying attention to small little details. He put all his secret maps that he liked the most into a folder and he showed no one except himself. When the cool kid named Quint looks at his maps he is interested in them and says their cool he shows them to him and the bell rang and they rush out and Alton forgets his folder. Now it is a race to get it back.

I really liked this book. I liked how it the author made the book get suspenseful. The author also did a good job hooking me into this book. The book was also very funny. I rate this book five stars.

I recommend this book to people who have read other books by Andrew clement. Overall I really liked this book and I hope you do to.

Andrew Nguyen says

This book was an interesting read. I chose this book because I just want a simple story that isn't really complex like teens and young adult books about drama, love, violence, etc. If you want a simple story, read it.

Ruth Ann says

There is so much I really liked about this book starting with how Alton got his name and how his family played in to helping him learn to love maps. I loved the creativity that Alton showed in designing his maps and I found Alton's character, even in a tight spot, refreshing. But the twist in the book, finding out that it was the teacher who sent the "blackmail" notes, ruined the book for me. I know teachers are human but I hate to believe that a teacher, even a young one, would show such a lack of judgement. It just gave me an "icky" feeling and completely took the fun out of the book for me.

Kristen says

A cute, quick read with a little mystery and a little humor. I felt like it was bogged down somewhat by all the descriptions of maps and charts, but that's probably because I'm not all that interested in those things. (Or perhaps because I listened to the audiobook? Maybe the print version has illustrations?) I think it's a great upper-elementary/reluctant reader story, and I like that it has positive messages about not judging others and taking responsibility for your actions.

nicole says

A friend mentioned on Facebook that this one had stuck with her for days after reading it and I wanted to see what it was all about. It's wonderful. I love the way Clements balances the perspective of students and adults, giving both equal weight without really putting them at odds with each other. The heart of the story is taking ownership for the mistakes that you made, whether it's misjudging a potential friend or including someone in a map that was meant to never be seen.

For teachers, this pairs really well with map skills. I know I am going to try and use it as the theme for my unit with the fourth graders this winter.

Georgene says

I have loved all of Andrew Clements' books and I was looking forward to reading this one as well. I enjoyed the main character, Alton, who seemed like a nice 6th grade kid who loves maps. He made all kinds of maps,

including some that were embarrassing, like a map of his teacher's brain and how many times his principal says "um" while reading the morning announcements. These maps he keeps hidden until he decides to show them to a boy in his class who he thinks might be his friend. Then the maps disappear. And Alton has to figure out who took them.

When I found out who had the maps and was blackmailing Alton, I was shocked. This ruined the whole story for me. Otherwise, this would be a good book for middle grade readers.

Rina says

I've read a number of Andrew Clements' books and really enjoyed them. *Frindle* and *No Talking* are great books, so I was looking forward to this one. But I was disappointed.

The story has a great premise but falls short on delivery. The mystery was over just a few days after it began although Alton still had a little bit of doubt. We get a summary of his entire school year and then the mystery is definitively cleared up.

Alton's interactions with the "mapnapper" did not seem realistic and I thought the author was trying too hard to make it seem like the "thief" was not the thief. But he/she (I won't spoil it!) was and their reaction didn't make sense.

The many different types of maps were cool and could spark kids' interest in maps and graphs, but I wish there had been a bit more info on how Alton made the maps.
