

THE MAPMAKER CHRONICLES

Race to the End of the World * Prisoner of the Black Hawk *

Breath of the Dragon

A.L. Tait

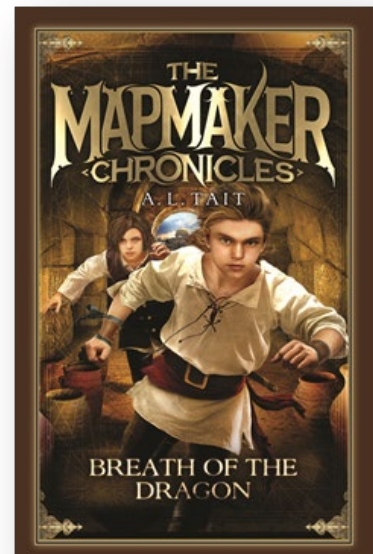
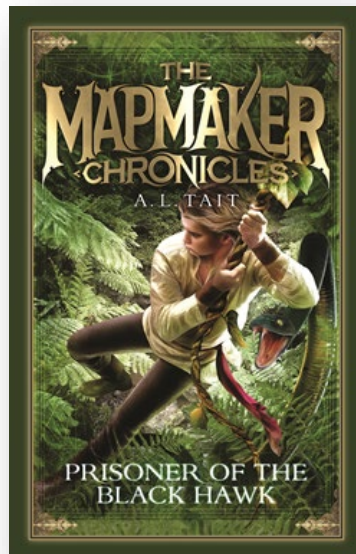
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Adventure and danger lie just off the edge of the map in this swashbuckling new trilogy!



- Part fantasy quest, part peril on the high seas.
- Mystery, monsters, murder, and mayhem.
- Appeals equally to boys and girls.
- Showcases cartography, maps, and exploration.
- By the author of the Maven and Reeve Mysteries and The Ateban Cipher.

And anything Gelyn could do, Verdania could do better.

He frowned, considering the men before him. When he'd first announced his desire to secure a map of the world, he'd offered no prize. He wanted to see who might come forward merely for the glory. Only one man had done so, and he was standing on the far left of the line of boxed heads.

John Dolan, an explorer of some repute, looked stiff with tension. King Orel knew that he was keen to get started — had wanted to set out four months ago, in fact. When he'd heard he had to wait for a scribe to be trained, he hadn't been happy. But, as King Orel pointed out, there wasn't much point in setting out to create a map without a mapmaker on board.

On paper, Dolan, who went by one name to most of Verdania, was a clear favorite for the race, and King Orel knew for a fact that the money changers in the back alleys were taking bets on Dolan returning first. King Orel was not so sure. Every time he spoke with Dolan, he became less and less certain of the man's abilities. Yes, he'd performed creditably in the Crusadic Wars and had managed to draft out a scrappy mud map of the progress of the army through neighboring countries, but the songs sung about him were now at least twenty years old. The Great Explorer, it seemed, had been content to explore only his backyard for the past two decades.

26

Given those misgivings, he had decided to open things up by offering a reward. And it was quite a reward. The explorer who returned with the cleanest and most beautiful map would win the prize of his choice. Dolan had chosen gold. Gold and glory. Which, given the man's previous occupation as a soldier for hire, was probably to be expected.

The man standing next in line was quite a different proposition. Orliso of Blenheim looked ill at ease in his silk stockings, slippers and embossed velvet tunic. As well he might. Standing between two men dressed in worn leather breeches, simple hemp shirts and scuffed knee-high boots, he looked as out of place as a fish on a jetty. When he'd first presented as a candidate for the race, King Orel had looked at him askance. Why would this performed popinjay, particularly one so popular with the ladies, want to put himself through such danger and hardship?

The answer had arrived soon enough. Orliso wanted power. His choice of prize, should he win, was a seat on the King's own council. A prize indeed for a minor Lord like himself, and not something he could ever hope to win without the race. Discreet investigations into Orliso's finances showed that he could afford to buy himself the best and most comfortable ship, an experienced crew and every assistance he could wish for to give him the best possible chance in the race.

King Orel had granted him permission to compete.

27



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