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No danger in letting boys move fun outside

By Craig Wilson

An Englishman is in the States this week with a plan to rescue the All-American boy from a life of video-game mindlessness.

Whether he'll succeed is anyone's guess, but you have to admire him for trying. Mad dogs and Englishmen, as they say.

Conn Iggulden is co-author with his brother Hal of *The Dangerous Book for Boys*. A surprise best seller in England for almost a year now, the book is now on sale here.

Iggulden is making the rounds, reciting his boys-should-be-boys mantra everywhere from the *Today* show to *The Colbert Report* to the L.L.Bean flagship store in Freeport, Maine.

It's a sad state of affairs that such a book had to be written in the first place, but bless the Iggulden brothers for doing so. And for giving it such a perfect title. Nothing titillates a boy more than the hint of danger. Real or imagined.

The only thing missing is a chapter on what this thing called sex is all about, but, hey, you can't have everything. Sometimes knowing how to set a good tripwire can be just as useful.

The book's premise is simple. Want to know how to make a slingshot? A water bomb? Want to decipher codes or write with invisible ink? It's all there for young male minds to devour and digest. The authors dub these activities "the mysteries and adventures of childhood."

The book is a collection of things the siblings say they wanted to know more about when they



By Bob Laird, USA TODAY

were boys. The result is a hands-on guide that warns boys they may even get knocked about in the process. I know. Shocking in this world of pampered and overly protected children.

My brother and I didn't have such a book growing up. Maybe we didn't need it. Life seemed more make-do and hands-off back then. Our mother would usher us out the door in the morning, and we didn't return until dinner. What we did in between was a mystery to both her and us. We even got into trouble on occasion.

I'd like to think there are boys in America who lead such a life still. Their days filled with endless possibilities. Boys whose minds and bodies both

Notes

Mad dogs and Englishmen 「真夏の昼間に外へ出るのは、気が狂った犬とイギリス人だけという歌から」 **recite** 「唱える」
decipher codes 「暗号を解読する」 **devour and digest** 「むさぼり食べ、消化する」 **dub** 「あだなをつける」 **a hands-on guide** 「実戦ガイド」
pampered and overly protected children 「甘やかされ、過度に保護されている子供たち」
hands-off 「無干渉の」

wander.

Today, however, most every American boy is overscheduled, and when not at soccer or baseball practice, is sitting on the sofa playing video games on a TV, even as the sun shines outside. Products of the we-need-our-kids-to-be-occupied-at-all-times generation.

Most of us of a certain age, of course, were not allowed to be inside when the sun was shining out. Did we turn out better because of it? Who knows?

But I do remember a treehouse that allowed me to sit in the sky, a makeshift covered wagon that carried me to the edge of the lawn, a rowboat that floated me out to an island in the

middle of the creek, an island we conquered over and over and over again. We fought foes both real and imagined, and without any casualties on our side, I might add.

We had to entertain ourselves rather than be entertained. We had to fill time rather than have it filled for us. We even battled boredom more than once. And won.

Imagine that.

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Notes

Products of the we-need-our-kids-to-be-occupied-at-all-times generation. 「子供たちにいつも何かをさせている必要があると思っている世代が生み出したもの」 lawn 「芝生」 creek 「小川」 foe 「敵」

EXERCISES

1. **T/F Questions** Mark each statement T (=true) or F (=false).

1. T/F The co-authors of “The Dangerous Book for Boys” are related.
2. T/F Some of the things a boy can learn from Iggulden’s book could cause him physical injury.
3. T/F When the Iggulden brothers were boys, they were pampered and overly protected by their mother.
4. T/F Conn Iggulden is certain that that boys will turn out better if they are outside on sunny days, entertain themselves and fill their own time by themselves.
5. T/F This article’s writer believes American boys are overly occupied because of the schedules prepared for them by their parents.

2. **Vocabulary** Translate the English words into Japanese and the Japanese words into English.

- | | | | |
|--------------|-----|------------|-----|
| 1. mantra | () | 6. わな・仕掛け | () |
| 2. premise | () | 7. パチンコ | () |
| 3. usher | () | 8. 見えない | () |
| 4. conquer | () | 9. きょうだい | () |
| 5. causality | () | 10. 一時しのぎの | () |

3. **Translation** Translate the following sentences into English.

1. そもそもそういう本が書かれなければならないというのが情けない状態である。
2. 危険な香りがするものほど、少年の興味をひくものはない。現実であれ想像であれ。
3. 私たちは時間を過ごさせてもらうのではなく、自分たちで過ごさなくてはならなかった。

4. **Conversation Practice** Listen to the following dialog and fill in the blanks.

- Ichiro: Did you read the USA article about the book titled *The Dangerous Book for Boys*?
- Bob: Yes, I did. In short, the authors want to say “Play outside! Be (1.) . Boys will be boys so let them.
- Ichiro: I agree that nothing excites a boy more than something that’s a little dangerous, real or imagined.
- Bob: Yeah, me too! When we were younger, we liked jumping into the river from a bridge, riding a bike with no hands, walking on a handrail with our eyes closed... . We liked things a little dangerous and scary.
- Ichiro: And such behavior upset our parents . Well, the book by the Iggulden brothers (2.) me of a book my aunt once told me about.
- Bob: What book was that?
- Ichiro: I forgot the title but the book was published in Japan about three or four decades ago and it (3.) children not to obey their parents or teachers.
- Bob: Wow! I bet it was a time of decorum in Japan and to think someone would write such a book.
- Ichiro: Yes, so it became very controversial. My aunt, who was a high school student at the time, bought the book and lots of her classmates borrowed the book from her. One

day, her teacher asked her if she really had bought the book herself and my aunt had no (4.) about telling the truth.

Bob: And then what happened?

Ichiro: Then the teacher asked my aunt her impressions of the book and she said it was all right but she didn't understand what made the book so controversial.

Bob: And...?

Ichiro: The teacher said, "The book contains... you know, it mentions... well, uh... ."

Bob: Contained what?

Ichiro: He didn't finish but my aunt realized, much later, what he wanted to say. The book had a few pages about "intimacy".

Bob : I guess, at the time, bringing up such an item was more (5.) than this dangerous book might be today!