

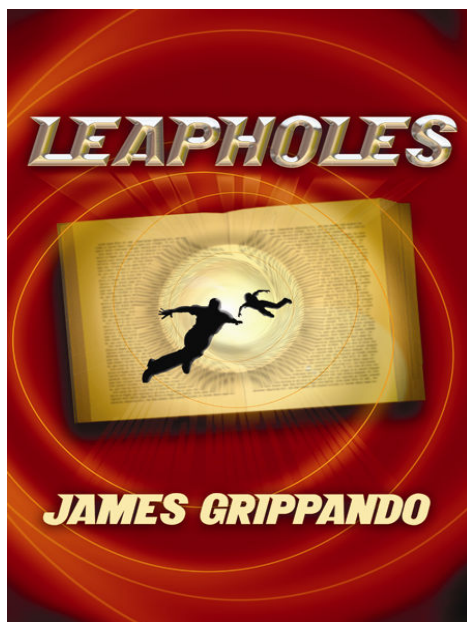
# READING JOURNAL

of

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for

# ***LEAPHOLES***



***BY JAMES GRIPPANDO***

*Please note:*

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## Chapter 1

1. What did you think when you read the first sentence of this book?
2. How does the second sentence change your thinking?
3. What do you think the author was trying to do by opening the book with this contradiction? Did he achieve his purpose, in your opinion?
4. Ryan says to his dog Sammy, "Don't worry, I'll be back." Then a fleeting thought crosses his mind and he says, "But just in case, you take real good care of them, Sammy. You hear?" Where do you think Ryan is going and what does he mean by "just in case"?
5. When an author plants a seed of **foreboding** in the reader's head, it is called **foreshadowing**. It just gives a little hint that something bad, or scary, or disappointing may happen. It also increases the reader's curiosity and makes him or her want to read further to see what might happen. Can you think of any other books that you've read where the author used foreshadowing to get your attention and/or cause you to predict what might happen? Name the book and your prediction.
6. At this point in your reading, would you say the genre of this book is historical fiction, non-fiction, modern realistic fiction, or science fiction? Define your choice.

## Chapter 2

1. Do you think people really acted differently toward Ryan after his father went to prison, or do you think it only seemed that way to Ryan because he was embarrassed and self-conscious? Explain.
2. Had you heard the expression "The apple doesn't fall far from the tree" before you read it in *Leapholes*? In your own words, explain what this old saying means.

3. Why does Ryan say that “this apple” was planted on a very steep hill and rolled far away?

4. Ryan speeds off on his bike, trying to get away from his house, from Mrs. Hernandez, from Teddy Armstrong, his father . . . everybody. Do you think he can improve things by running away from the situation? Explain your answer.

5. In this chapter you learn that Ryan’s father says he’s innocent and yet he confessed. Ryan thinks his father is lying to him, even though his mother assures him that he is not. How do you think it happens that innocent people wind up in jail?

6. Why would someone confess to a crime he/she did not commit?

7. Before you go on to Chapter 3, what is your explanation for the man with the flat face and the car that is equipped like an ambulance?

### Chapter 3

1. Why did Ryan lie about not remembering his last name?

2. Why did he lie about not remembering his address or phone number?

3. Page 13 contains an example of a **flashback**. Writers use flashbacks to go back in time and present a scene that happened before events of the story you are reading. What are the first three words of the flashback? \_\_\_\_\_  
How did you know that it happened in the past?

4. In the courtroom procedure on page 14, the conversation goes like this:

Judge: Mr. Coolidge, how do you plead?

Mr. Coolidge: Guilty, Your Honor.

Judge: Mr. Coolidge, do you understand that by entering a plea of guilty, you are waiving your right to a trial by jury?

Mr. Coolidge: I do, Your Honor.

Judge: Do you enter this plea of your own free will, without any pressure or coercion from any person?

Mr. Coolidge: Yes, Your Honor.

Judge: Very well, then. The court will accept the plea of guilty. Does the state attorney have any recommendation as to the sentencing?

Explain what happened in your own words.

5. Do you think Ryan's outburst in court and his running out of the courtroom could have actually happened in a court of law? Why or why not?

6. What does Ryan mean when he shouts, "I'm nobody!"

#### **Chapter 4**

1. Explain why Kaylee calls Ryan "Ryan L'new."

2. When Kaylee tells about the similarities between her accident experience and Ryan's, what were you starting to think?

#### **Chapter 5**

1. When you first read this chapter, why did you think the alarm was sounding in the hospital?

2. Ryan thinks he knows the way to safety, but he follows Kaylee and the crowd toward the cafeteria. While close to saving himself, he goes to warn the others

because he couldn't let them be trapped by the flames. What does this tell you about Ryan's character?

## **Chapter 6**

1. Explain what Coach Jenkins meant when he said, "Okay, Romeo and Juliet. Balcony scene's over." If you don't know, try finding out the significance of the words by searching online or asking your media specialist for reference book suggestions.

2. The coach says that the sign AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL ONLY doesn't apply when there's a fire. Do you agree with him? Explain your answer.

3. Why did Kaylee take the time to tear the bandage into three strips and braid it?

4. Using both the writer's description of Ryan's trip down the elevator shaft and your imagination, draw a picture of how you think the scene might have looked. Include details that were in the book.

5. Why did you think the men were wearing outfits that resembled spacesuits?

6. What does: INFECTIOUS DISEASE CONTROL CENTER: QUARANTINED mean?

7. What is “hazmat” short for?

## Chapter 7

1. Why do you think the author made up the disease BODS instead of using a real one? What is BODS is an **acronym** for and what are its symptoms?

2. Explain the following terms:

vaccine –

antidote –

virus –

3. BEFORE you read any further – brainstorm what you might do if you were in the same situation as Ryan, Kaylee, and the other four patients from the hospital. Try to come up with a minimum of three different plans.

## Chapter 8

1. First, they all start blaming each other. Then they talk about voting on the person who should not receive the vaccine. Then Coach says arm wrestling should solve it because of the idea that the strong survive and the weak die. What do you think about these ideas? Is there a fair or right way to solve this problem?
2. Why do you think Ryan says: "This is so wrong. We can't vote on who should live and who should die"?
3. Dr. Watkins suggests that they cast lots to decide who gets the vaccine. Does this seem like a fair solution to you – to leave the solution to "chance" or "providence"?
4. If you had been Coach, would you have let Kaylee choose the pile of sugar for you? Why or why not?
5. Do you think Ryan considered himself a "winner"? Explain.
6. Do you think Ryan would have destroyed all the vaccine? Cite evidence from the book that supports your opinion.
7. What do you think about Ryan's idea to split the five vials of vaccine six ways?
8. What is your explanation for the bubbling, boiling, and violent shaking that took place when Ryan poured a small amount from the five vaccine samples into the cup?

## Chapter 9

1. Detective Malone accuses Ryan of trying to save Kaylee at the expense of everyone else. Is that what you thought Ryan was trying to do?
2. Explain why Ryan is being charged with **manslaughter**.
3. What is a **brig**?
4. Ryan is being tried before a special tribunal of the Court of International Justice. There really is an "International Court of Justice," but the "Court of International Justice" was created by the author. Why do you think the author made up a special court for his story? In particular, why do you think he called it an 'international' court?
5. Ryan **rationalizes** that he is being charged because of his father's reputation. He was just waiting for something like this to happen. Can you get inside Ryan's mind and explain why he feels that way?

## Chapter 10

1. How do you think Ryan's experiences in this chapter may help him **empathize** with his father's situation?
2. Ryan tried to think happy thoughts while he spent the dark, lonely night in the brig. He claims that no one can take your memories away. Write about a memory that always brings happy, positive thoughts to your mind.
3. Ryan is sarcastic and cracks some jokes with one of his guards. Why do you think people try to be funny when they are in scary or stressful situations?



4. Kaylee tells Ryan that she has been put in the cell next to him so that she can get him to confess and then she can testify against him in court. Do you think she is telling the truth when she says she won't tell what he says? Whose side do you think Kaylee is on?
5. Kaylee said she told what happened in the conference room at the hospital because she thought Ryan was courageous and might get a medal or an award. How and why might Kaylee's point of view differ from a family member of one of the patients who died?

## Chapter 11

1. What does Hezekiah say about the **case law books**?
2. On pages 71 through 73, there is a major change in *Leapholes*. What becomes apparent to you for the first time as you read these pages?
3. What case does Hezekiah say will serve as the **legal precedent** for Ryan's case and when did the incident take place? Use a dictionary to define **precedent**.

## Chapter 12

1. In order to understand the significance of the title of this book, you first have to have a good understanding of what a **loophole** is. Use several dictionaries to locate definitions of this word. Then, use your own words to describe what a legal loophole might be.
2. What are **leapholes** and how does Hezekiah earn them?
3. What is a Virtual Environment?
4. Why does Hezekiah think that Ryan is **skeptical**?

5. Explain the statement “Nowhere is the imagination less **constrained** than in a library.”

### Chapter 13

1. Hezekiah keeps emphasizing that lawsuits involve real people. He says that the best lawyers understand people and their problems. How do you think this understanding could benefit a lawyer?

### Chapter 14

1. After landing on the *William Brown*, Ryan realizes the “full **ramifications**” of their journey when he sees the life preserver. What does he realize?

2. Draw a picture of a ship that is “listing badly to the port side.”

3. What is your reaction to the idea of sailors using clubs to control passengers during the ship disaster?

4. Define **davit**: \_\_\_\_\_

5. How can you explain the actions of people who trampled the injured or fought for places on the lifeboat when it fell onto the deck?

6. Why do you think Ryan refused to get into the lifeboat without Hezekiah even though they had only recently met?

7. Imagine that you are on a lifeboat in the middle of the ocean, at night, in a cold rain and the captain asks if there are any volunteers to abandon the boat in order to save the others. What thoughts would go through your head? What kind of person would actually volunteer to go overboard?

8. Do you think the idea of casting lots is a fair one to everyone or could there be a different way to determine who went overboard?

9. What did you predict would happen when Hezekiah shouted, "Find a leaphole!" to Ryan?

## Chapter15

1. If you had been Ryan, would it make you feel good or bad that Hezekiah had been fired as his father's lawyer? Explain.

2. Hezekiah says, "Courtrooms are as much about proof as they are about truth, Ryan," what does he mean?

3. Hezekiah doesn't tell Ryan the whole story of his father's case because of **client confidentiality**. Do you agree that what is said between lawyer and client should remain confidential and can you explain why it might be legal?

## Chapter 16

1. Explain the meaning of "sour grapes" and why Hezekiah used this phrase in Ryan's defense.

2. The prosecutor, Ms. Baldwin cites the 1841 case of the *William Brown* as a reliable **legal precedent** for Ryan's case. Explain what a legal precedent is and then state what you think is the relationship between the two cases.
  
3. Define **manslaughter** and tell how this crime is different from **murder**.
  
4. Explain how Ryan used the idea of **empathy** to persuade the jury that both they and the judge in the *William Brown* case might have looked at it differently if they had been there.
  
5. Agree or disagree with Ryan's argument and defend your position: "We all agree that saving ourselves is only natural. But sometimes the bravest thing we can possibly do is to save others. Even at the risk of sacrificing ourselves." Be sure to include your definition of **brave**.
  
6. This is a hard one – but see if you can take apart the words in the judge's sentence and explain its meaning: "The eyes of the victim are the law's immortal soul."

## **Chapter 17**

1. What does Hezekiah mean when he says that a lawyer who is "full of himself" would never be invited to join the Society of Legal Eagles?
  
2. What do you think might be an example of a "Legal Evil"?

3. Why do you think Ryan has never told his father how he feels and discussed the legal issues with him?

4. Later in your reading, you will understand this “riddle” better, but, for now, use your dictionary to define the important words in the sentence: “Legal Evil lives where the brood follows the dam.” Consider the various definitions and see if you can determine which definitions are most likely to relate to the riddle in this context.

5. In this chapter, Ryan learns that the whole hospital incident never happened and that no one died. How do you think you might have upon hearing this, if you had been Ryan?

6. In what ways do you think Ryan “passed the test” and demonstrated that he had what it takes to be a Legal Eagle?

7. On page 123, it is evident that Ryan is angry. With quotes and descriptions of his actions, tell how the author shows Ryan’s anger.

8. Hezekiah tells Ryan that he is making a mistake when he chooses not to be chosen as a Legal Eagle. Explain Ryan’s decision from both his and Hezekiah’s point of view. What would you have chosen?

9. Ryan has demonstrated several times in the book that he is **headstrong**. Find out what this word means and then give several examples of his behavior that you would consider headstrong. Then think about your own life and decide if you have ever acted in this way. What were the consequences?

## Chapter 18

1. Why did Ryan's mother look at him **incredulously**?
2. Why is "the truth sometimes hard to swallow"?
3. Why is Ryan **skeptical** about the idea of legal magic?
4. What is an "ambulance chaser" and why do they have bad reputations?
5. Define the word **virtual**: \_\_\_\_\_
6. In what way did Hezekiah fail at the "most important mission of his life"?

## Chapter 19

1. What does it mean to "rub someone's nose into something"?
2. Explain why Kaylee questions Jarvis's intentions.

## Chapter 20

1. Predict what you think could happen if Ryan and Jarvis use a loophole that was on the wrong page of the law book.

2. Jarvis tells Ryan that the virtual reality helmet is actually worthless and that it is his belief in leapholes that will activate the magic. What do you think the effect of truly believing in something has on human behavior?

## **Chapter 21**

1. Of all the clothes you own, what do you think you might wear that would not make you stick out as noticeably different from what people were wearing in America in 1857?

2. Other than the fact that your 21<sup>st</sup> Century money would be of no value in 19<sup>th</sup> Century America, make a list of other difficulties you might have if you landed in an unknown spot somewhere in America in 1857:

3. What clues did Ryan use to help figure out where he was and what time period they had landed in?

## **Chapter 22**

1. If you had been one of the detectives interviewing Ryan's mother after his disappearance, what would you have thought of her story? What would you have written in your report?

2. Ryan's mother appears totally shocked by the idea that kids might have been teasing him or that Ryan has anything to be ashamed of. How do you explain her lack of understanding of the very thing that has been troubling Ryan?

3. Why might Dr. Coolidge be upset by the idea that the police are treating Ryan's case as a runaway?

## **Chapter 23**

1. Use an encyclopedia or American history book to look up the Missouri Compromise and summarize what happened and its significance. Try to look at it through the eyes of a leaphole.

2. What do you think is the figurative meaning of the term "sun worshipper"?

3. The author uses the incident of Ryan's mother saving the little girl from choking to show the contrast between Ryan's pride in the name Coolidge at the time of the incident and the way he feels now. Explain if you think this is an effective strategy in plot and character development.

## **Chapters 24 - 25**

1. When Abigail Fitzsimons says that "none of these are runaways, technically," what does she mean?

2. Explain the Dred Scott decision:

3. Why might Ryan think that the Dred Scott case sounded "like Legal Evil at work"?



4. Why might “abolitionist” be a dangerous word for Ryan to speak on the street in St. Louis at this time period?
5. What might explain Jarvis’s presence at the slave owners’ celebration?

## **Chapter 26**

1. With the new developments in the plot and information about the Missouri Compromise and the Dred Scott case, are you any closer to understanding the riddle about “where the brood follows the dam”? Explain.

## **Chapter 27**

1. On page 181, there is a literary allusion: “Ryan half expected Huck Finn and Jim to come floating by on a raft any minute.” To what book and writer is the author referring and how does it relate to the story of *Leapholes*?
2. Research what boll weevils do to a cotton crop:
3. Do you think there could be any other explanation for Hezekiah staying on the Barrow plantation other than the fact that he has no leaphole? If so what?

## **Chapter 28**

1. When Abigail says that Barrow had been “one of the most pro-slavery judges the South has ever known,” she is stating that the judge was biased. Do you think it is possible to serve as a judge without letting your personal biases get in the way? Do you think it is possible to be a good judge if you are biased? Discuss and defend your answers.

2. Explain why Ryan might suspect that “some of the most honest conversations in the history of the world had occurred beneath the blanket of darkness.”

3. Compare and contrast being in prison to being a slave.

4. What is the difference between *believing* something and *knowing* it?

## **Chapter 29**

1. Think about Abigail’s two rules for a rescue mission in relation to your experience and give an example of each.

The important things are always simple:

The simple things are always hard:

2. According to Hezekiah, one of the slaves living in his cabin is an informant for the slave master. Why do you think a slave would become an informant?

## **Chapters 30 - 31**

1. What was the significance of which state Hannah’s baby was born in?

2. History is filled with examples of people intentionally disobeying laws because they feel they are unjust. Even in the “legend” of Robin Hood, he was robbing the rich to give to the poor because he did not think these unequal states of humanity

were fair. Revolutions are also examples of where people broke laws in an attempt to improve an unfair situation. In *Leapholes*, the participants in the Underground Railroad risked their lives to aid slaves in their attempts to escape. Is there ever a time that breaking the law can be the right thing to do? Since people have different viewpoints on situations, whose “right” are we talking about? Is there a way to accomplish the change for the better without breaking the law? React to these issues:

3. Do you believe that time travel is possible? Explain the reasons for your answer.

4. What would have been your reaction to Hezekiah’s explanation of the first leaphole?

### **Chapter 32**

1. What was the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision that explains the riddle of “where the brood follows the dam”?

2. Did you predict Jarvis’s betrayal of Hezekiah? Why do you think he is not interested in getting Ryan back to the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

### **Chapter 33**

1. What do you think about the police officers’ manner of dealing with Mr. Coolidge when they came to arrest him?

2. Do you Ryan was justified to doubt his father’s innocence?

### **Chapter 34**

1. Why was Jarvis so angry with Ryan that he would be willing to kill him?

2. Do you think law officers ever take bribes? What do you think would be the consequences if he/she did take a bribe?

3. Why do you think Abraham Lincoln's stovepipe hat served as a leaphole?

### **Chapter 35**

1. What does it mean to see someone's "true colors"? How does this expression apply to Jarvis's character?

2. How did Ryan's experiences through leapholes help him reevaluate his father's legal situation?

3. Ryan chose to use his first leaphole to go back to the case of *State versus Coolidge*. If you could travel through time, what historical event would you like to experience firsthand and why?

### **Chapter 36**

1. From what you learn in this chapter, do you think the prosecution had a strong case against Dr. Coolidge? What evidence would be the most incriminating?

2. Do you think Mr. Coolidge told the truth when he admitted keeping the emerald purposefully? What evidence do you have from the book to support your opinion?

3. What were Mr. Coolidge's reasons for pleading guilty? Why do you think Ryan's parents weren't completely honest with him?

4. If Ryan's mother had decided to plead not guilty, what do you think would have been the outcome of the trial and why do you believe as you do?

5. If you had been Dr. Coolidge's lawyer, what witnesses, evidence, and logical reasoning would you have used in her defense?

### **Chapter 37**

1. How did Ryan's father's case represent Legal Evil?

2. What percent of legal decisions do you think represent Legal Evil? Justify your answer.

3. Why did Ryan decide to take the Coolidge name back?

### **When You've Finished the Book . . .**

1. What do you think the author did best when writing this book?

2. If you had been the author, what might you have done differently with the plot or characters in *Leapholes*?

3. Based on your study of law, do you think the court procedures, legal cases, and historical information in *Leapholes* is presented accurately and realistically? Explain.

4. An **anachronism** is “something placed or occurring out of its proper time; anything out of keeping with a specified time, especially something proper to a former age but not to the present.” Can you identify any anachronisms the author might have written in any of the historical scenes in *Leapholes*?

## **Kohlberg and *Leapholes***

After you have learned about Kohlberg’s “Stages of Moral Development,” think about each of the following characters and their actions in the book *Leapholes*. Name which stage of moral development you feel each character is functioning on, and defend your decision with specific actions from the story.

1. RYAN

2. DR. COOLIDGE

3. HEZEKIAH

4. KAYLEE

5. JARVIS

6. ABIGAIL

7. MR. COOLIDGE

8. HANNAH

## ***Leapholes Project***

Going back in time and swirling around in an orange glow through a leaphole might be fun, exciting, scary, and interesting, if it were possible. Your *Leapholes* project is to investigate one of the legal cases listed on the back of this sheet until you feel as if you were actually present when the incident happened.

1. Choose a case that interests you.
2. Research the case thoroughly, using a variety of reference materials. Try to include a primary source (such as court records, documents, news article from the time period). Take notes on your reading, organizing the information according to subtopics. Also keep careful records of the bibliographical information on your sources.
3. Create a “book” by putting together paper pages and a cover. Design a cover that is appropriate for the case you are studying.
4. Make a leaphole as you think it might look based on the description in the book.
5. Cut a hole or make slits in one of the pages so that facts or “evidence” from the case might literally jump out of the book. You could draw or make three-dimensional items, write “news” articles, make replicas of documents, take photographs, or use creative ideas of your own. Place your leaphole over the opening. How will you make your ideas pop out through the leaphole?
6. Practice explaining the main events of your case and the significance of the items you chose to put in the leaphole so that you can speak fluently in front of the class.

**Criteria for the Project:**

Do you have thorough, organized notes about your case?

Did you use a variety of reference materials and keep a bibliography?

Is your book cover eye-catching and creative, and appropriate to your case?

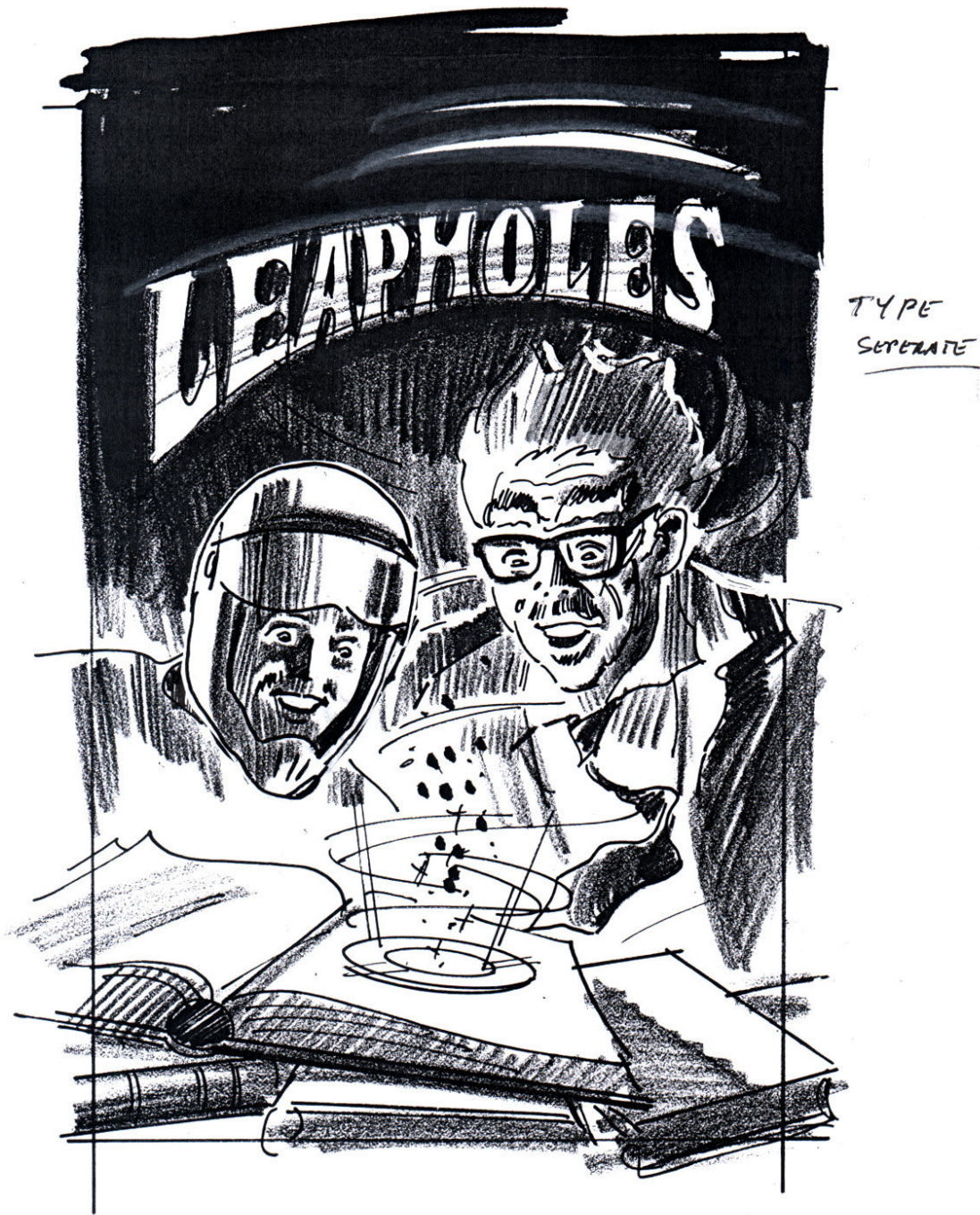
Does your leaphole show creative elements?

Did you put time and effort into your ideas for the items you included in your leaphole and do they accurately represent significant facts from your research?

Did you elaborate on your ideas?

Did you show inventiveness in the “mechanical” aspects of the project?





This is the original artist's concept sketch for the front cover of *Leapholes*. As you can see, the cover design was altered dramatically from this original concept. Which cover concept do you prefer?

Why do you think the book's author and publisher decided to change the concept?