Hi my name is Lizzy and I am a SAFE intern this summer. I want to talk to you today about the book Samantha Sutton and the Labyrinth of Lies by Jordan Jacobs. This is an adventure novel that takes pace at the Archeological site of Chavin in Peru. It is a mystery book, where the site keeps getting looted and Samantha and her family are trying to figure out who the looter is.

I would recommend this book for middle school students as I would have loved to read this as a 12-year-old aspiring Indiana Jones. This is great for kids who are interested in the world archaeology or just a fun adventure read. Though it is fictional, it pulls from real life elements of archeology and the challenges of looting. The author, Jordan Jacobs, is an archaeologist. He has worked at the Smithsonian, The American Museum of Natural History, and UNESCO headquarters in Paris, his work focusing on the policy and protection of archaeological sites in the developing world.

So the book is not only fun but is an accurate portrayal of work in an archeological site and the true damages that looting can do to a site, the archeologists working there and the community around it. I really loved the use of correct archeological methodology through out the novel. We get a real life picture into how a dig works, such as the tools used and potsherds found throughout the novel, Jordan really shows what it is like to be on dig and live in the community, showing the family style dinners as well as bringing in native culture and Spanish and Quichua language.

We also see the damages of looting to the site (though in real life this archeological site was never looted). We see that looting not only damages the site but also can destroy an archaeologists reputation and can reek havoc for the community where looting is happening. Jacobs looks at the short-term benefits of looting such as quick cash and also the consequences that come with it as in the story the police and mayor quickly get involved after the looting takes place. He also looks at the long-term benefits of archaeology and why not to loot, showing how important the site is to the community and also talking about how it brings in tourism and money.

There are also illustrations throughout the novel, which shows you Samantha’s field journal and hints at the mystery ahead. Definitely a fun read!