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Call Me Floy

by Joanna Cooke

Themes

RL.4.2/RL.5.2

- Friendship
- Identity
- Pursuit of dreams
- Expectations
- Perseverance
- Change



Florence "Floy"
Hutchings, age 6

A GUIDE FOR EDUCATORS

Grades 4 & 5

About the Book

Florence "Floy" Hutchings is on the brink of turning twelve. She is confident, clever, and adventurous—qualities that aren't typically appreciated in a girl in 1876. She is also stuck in dusty, crowded San Francisco and is aching to return to the majestic place where she was born and where she has always felt free: *Yosemite!* A stroke of good fortune allows Floy to return to the Valley she loves for another summer. Yet she soon finds that, as more and more visitors descend on Yosemite, they bring troubling attitudes not only about a girl's place, but also about the Native people who have lived there for generations. Against this backdrop of change, Floy nurtures her dangerous and secret dream of climbing the mighty rock called Half Dome.

Call Me Floy is an example of historical fiction—a story based on real people and/or true events from the past. Authors of historical fiction research their subjects extensively, but the stories they write are ultimately a creation of their imaginations. Florence "Floy" Hutchings did, in fact, climb Half Dome in 1876 with her father, James Hutchings, and her grandmother, Florantha Sproat. Based on research on the Hutchings family and the community in Yosemite in the 1870s, this story imagines the events and emotions leading to Floy's successful ascent.

Character Analysis

1. Read the scene in which James Hutchings tells the family that he will be returning to Yosemite. Pick two characters and describe their response to his announcement. What is at stake for each of them? How do they react? *NCSS IV.g, RL.4.3/5.3*
2. How do Johnny and Sally Ann show their friendship to Floy? Does her dream get in the way of being a good friend to them? If so, how? How does she overcome this? *RL.4.3/5.3, RL.4.2/RL5.2*
3. Describe the gender role that Floy is expected to follow. Who is telling Floy how to behave in this way? Where does she find support to overcome these expectations? *RL.4.2/RL5.2, NCSS V.b*
4. Analyze the scene where Johnny follows Floy and describe his own struggle with the gender expectations of the time. *RL.4.2/RL5.2*
5. How does the language Floy uses to describe nature—the sequoias, the rivers, the mountains—convey her feelings about it? *RL.4.3/5.3, CA H-SS-AS-HI.2*
6. Grandmother tells Floy that she’s not the only one whose world is changing. What is Grandmother referring to, and why does she think Floy needs to be aware of this? *RL.4.2/RL5.2*

Current Connections

1. Explain how the gender expectations for boys and girls in Floy’s time differ from

those placed on youth today. *NCSS V.b, RL.4.3/5.3, RL.4.2/RL5.2*

2. Compare Floy’s Half Dome experience with what it would be like today. *CA H-SS-AS-CST.3*
3. What does “This is your story” mean to you? *RL.4.2/RL5.2*

Text Analysis

1. Discuss the author’s choice of first person present. How different would the story be if told in the past tense? What if the story was told from Cosie’s perspective? *RL.5.6*



Florence “Floy”
Hutchings, age 15

Activities

1. On a map of California, find Yosemite Valley and the Merced River. Using Floy’s story as a guide, describe how these physical features of the landscape affected the ways people used the land. *CA H-SS 4.1.4, CA H-SS-AS-CST.4*
2. Use Google Earth to explore the landforms of Yosemite National Park, specifically comparing Yosemite Valley to Hetch-Hetchy Valley. What can you conclude about their formation? *NGSS 4-ESS2-2*

Vocabulary

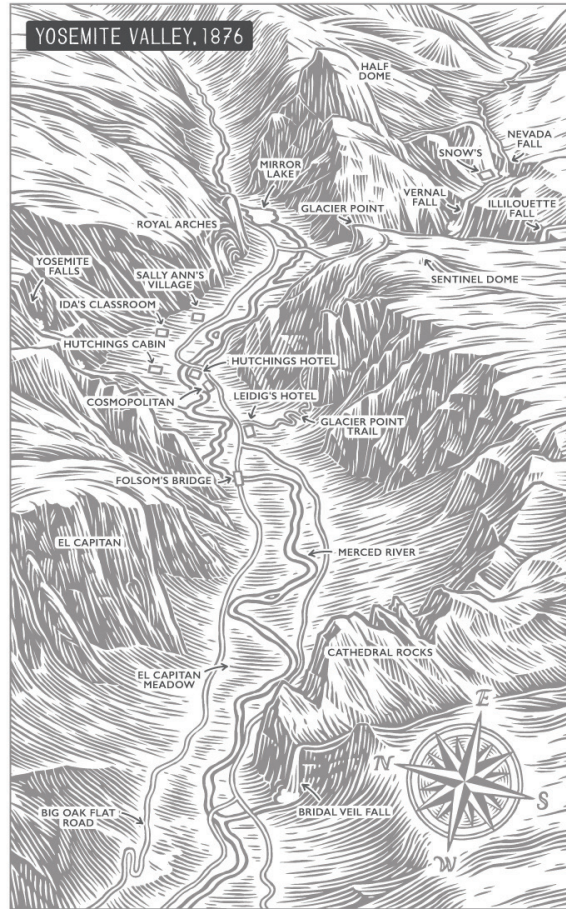
cataclysmic (page 68)
elocution (pages 80, 81)
glacier (pages 68, 69, 156, 173, 174)
glaciated (page 4)
impertinent (page 22)
mesmerizing (page 148)
pontificate (page 67)
sublime (pages 47, 166)
talus (pages 89, 104, 138, 163)
tenacity (page 150)

Landscape and Geology

1. Examine the text in the speeches given by Floy and her father on pages 67–70 as well as the descriptions of Half Dome on pages 145 and 167–169. What can we learn about the rock formation that suggests the changes it has undergone? *NGSS 4-ESS1-1*

2. Discuss how Call Me Floy tells readers about the geology of Yosemite Valley. *NGSS 4-ESS2-1, CA H-SS-AS-HI.2*

3. How does Sally Ann and her Native community view the landscape of Yosemite? How do they use the land? *CA H-SS 4.2.1, CA H-SS-AS-HI.2*



Map by Gary Bullock



Photo: Lukas Zeller

Author

This guide was written by Joanna Cooke, author of *Call Me Floy*. For many years, she taught the natural and cultural history of Yosemite National Park to visiting students. Joanna holds a masters degree in education and works as a substitute teacher for elementary classrooms.



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