

Reader Guide



Title: FAITHFUL
Author: Janet Fox
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This reader guide may be duplicated for classroom, book club discussion group, or related purposes.

Author biography: Janet Fox currently lives in College Station, Texas, with her husband and high-school age son. But her heart is in Montana, where the family has a cabin in the mountains not far from Yellowstone. Her work has appeared in *Highlights for Children* and *Spider* magazine; her non-fiction middle grade, *Get Organized Without Losing It* (Free Spirit Publishing, 2006), continues to be a top seller. She is an MFA student at Vermont College of Fine Arts, and an ARA for BV-SCBWI. She is currently working on a sequel to *Faithful*, in addition to several other projects.

Discussion questions:

- Yellowstone National Park is the nation's first national park and is a place of rare geologic features. What metaphors can you find in this setting that may echo Maggie's journey?
- What is the significance of Ghost to the story? To Maggie?
- What about the bears? How are they significant to Maggie? Why?
- Photography plays an important role in Maggie's life. What do you think of that choice of careers? What do you think Maggie's future would be like if she chose to follow that career path?
- Young women in 1904 had few personal choices. What do you think of Maggie's choices? What would you have done in the same circumstances?
- How does Maggie treat Kula? Given what you know about the time period of the novel, do you think Maggie knows what she's doing? By the end of the novel do you feel she has learned something with respect to Kula?
- In Chapter 31, Maggie swims in Lake Yellowstone. Why? What does she hope to gain from this experience?

Cross-curriculum tie-ins:

- *Science* – Students study the geology of the Yellowstone region. In particular, they students examine the Yellowstone volcano and its cycles of eruption, and the global the impact such an eruption would have if it happened today.
- *Art* – Students examine turn of the century photographic methods. Students take photographs or try line drawings of details in close-up.
- *Social Studies* – Students examine events of 1904. Some things to consider: Wright brothers first flight; women’s suffrage; treatment of people of color; rail travel in the United States; advent of motion pictures.

Activities and projects:

Discuss the development of the National Park system from its inception. Describe why it is important to the United States and her citizens. Discuss what might have happened to Yellowstone had it not been protected.

Essay questions:

- Is *Faithful* a love story? Why or why not?
- Did Maggie’s mother die? If so, do you think it was an accident? Why or why not?
- Would you want to live in 1904? What would be appealing or unappealing for you?

Related reads:

- *Hattie Big Sky*, Kirby Larson
- *Anne of Green Gables*, L. M. Montgomery
- *My Antonia*, Willa Cather
- *Sarah, Plain and Tall*, Patricia MacLachlan
- *Jenny of the Tetons*, Kristiana Gregory

Website links:

For information about Yellowstone National Park visit www.nps.gov/yell/

For information about the major events of 1904 visit www.history.com/