



UNDER COPP'S HILL Teacher Guide

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PRE-READING ACTIVITY

Except for Native Americans, we have all been immigrants, have all come from someplace else.

Select books on the immigrant experience such as *Dragonwings*, Lawrence Yep; *Letters from Rifka*, Karen Hesse, *Journey to America*, Sonia Levitin; *A Boat to Nowhere*, Maureen Crane Wartski; *A Real American*, Richard Easton. Include world maps in your discussions. There's also a wealth of material available online about Ellis Island history.

THEMATIC CONNECTIONS

Newcomers and Oldtimers — All of us are newcomers at one time or another, the *new kid* on the team, on the block, in class. How does that feel? What's the worst part? The best part? How long does it take to feel like you belong? Who or what might help you to become a part of the new place? Have you been an oldtimer like the Boston *Yankees*? What happens in your town or school when new people come? How do people view strangers? Do they welcome or exclude them? How? And why?

Differences — There are big differences between Innie's family, the Morettis and the Yankees. What are some of those differences? Which ones will Innie and Teresa wish to overcome? What about Matla's family? In what ways are the Rosens different from the Morettis? From the Yankees? Which differences might be hard to live with? Which might you want to hold onto? Why?

Scary Stuff — In a mystery, characters often have to find the courage to face something frightening. What's the scariest thing you've had to face in real life? How did it turn out? What's the scariest real thing you can imagine? Why is it scary for you? What would be scary for a child of 3? A teenager of 16? A man of 75?

Changes — Life changed dramatically for the Morettis and Rosens when they left small villages in Europe for a large, sophisticated American city. In what ways were their new lives different? Think about food and cooking, transportation, shelter, clothing and other necessities of life. Even after the

families arrived they continued to change. Innie and her generation will make friends among different sorts of people while the older generations may not. How has your parents' generation changed from your grandparents'? How will you and your friends be different? Are these good changes or not? Why?

INTERDISCIPLINARY CONNECTIONS

Language Arts — Innie and the other immigrant girls read and discuss books at the settlement house. Why do you think the ladies thought up such a library club? If you were helping newcomers to America and wanted them to learn about the country quickly, what books would you suggest to them and why? What other activities would be helpful?

Social Studies — Carmella was very worried about her *citizen hearing*. What is a citizen? How does one become a citizen of the United States? What is the *oath of allegiance*? What are the rights and duties of citizenship? How does school today prepare students to become responsible citizens?

History/Fire — The Chelsea Fire of 1908 is one of many *great fires* in the history of American cities. Research the Great Chicago Fire of 1871 and the San Francisco Earthquake and Fire of 1906. Why did fire spread so easily in these cities? What modern methods are used to prevent the spread of fires in cities today? Was there a *great fire* in the history of a town or city near your home? What happened?

Archaeology — When people think about historic Boston, they think about early European settlers or the rebels who fought in the American Revolution, but history keeps happening; events large and small cause places to change; people come and go. Be a historical archaeologist³ dig into the history of your region. Who lived there a long time ago? Who came after? How many layers of settlement can you unearth? What markers have various peoples left behind?

Smugglers — Innie and friends find an old smuggler's tunnel dating back to the American Revolution. What is a smuggler? A customs house? Why did the colonists resent paying taxes on foreign goods?

Geography/Math/Research — Locate a town in southern Italy or in western Russia. Plan the route to America. What means of transportation were available in 1908? Calculate the distances and the time it would have taken to make such a trip then. How much would it have cost? What means of transportation are available now? How long would it take now? How much would it cost?

Fine Arts — Study photos of immigrant life, paying particular attention to the clothing and how people from different cultures dressed. Do you have any special clothing from a different country? When and how is it worn? Innie and

her friends learned songs and folk dances at the settlement house. Pick a country and try to find some songs and dances to share with your class. If your school has a kiln, students may follow the exact process used by Miss Brown in making and hand-decorating pottery.

Family & Consumer Science — Plan a hot chocolate and sugar cookies celebration like the one the ladies served at the settlement house. Invite grandparents, senior citizen friends or relatives and prepare questions about childhood experiences of these guests. Review the basic rules of serving etiquette.