

SUGAR AND ICE Discussion Guide

www.katemessner.com

Chapters 1-4

Based on the descriptions in the early chapters of the book, is Mojimuk Falls a place you'd like to live? What might be the good and bad points about living there?

If you were Claire, how would you have reacted to Andrei Groshev's offer of the scholarship in Chapter 2?

When Claire first meets the other Lake Placid skaters in Chapter 4, does it seem like she'll fit in with them? Why or why not?

Why do you think Alexis treats Claire the way she does before she even gets to know her?

Chapters 5-8

How does Claire's first time actually skating on the ice in Lake Placid seem to compare to what she's used to at the Northern Lights Rink at home?

What advice would you give Claire as she tries to balance her new skating schedule with her homework and family obligations?

Why do you think Claire has so much difficulty skating alone in front of judges? What kinds of situations tend to give you those "butterflies" in your stomach? What advice might you give Claire to help her overcome her anxiety?

When Claire sees Tasanee amid the hustle and bustle of her family's restaurant in Chapter 8, Claire calls Tasanee "a butterfly stuck in a beehive." What do you think she means by that?

Chapters 9-12

Why do you think Claire has so much trouble jumping in Chapter 9? Do you think Groshev's strategy – not letting her jump for two weeks – is a good one?

How does Claire's relationship with Luke compare to the crush she's always had on Natalie's brother, Keene?

What did you think of Hannah's decision to leave Lake Placid? How do you think her leaving affected Claire?

How does Claire's skating affect her friendship with Natalie? Is it just Claire's time away from home that pulls them apart, or is there more than that? Can you think of anything Claire might have done to stay closer to Natalie?

Chapters 13-16

Why do you think Claire asks her mother about dreams while they're sewing sequins on her skating outfit in Chapter 13?

Claire felt ready to skate in the Saratoga competition and had mastered the jump she was supposed to perform. Why do you think she had trouble at the end of her routine?

Claire is clearly talented at both skating and math. How do those two interests fit together for her? Do you think she cares more about one than the other?

What do you think of Kalina's strategies for helping Claire overcome her skating problems? Have you ever used visualization as a strategy to help you accomplish something you wanted to do?

Chapters 17-20

On her way to Vermont in Chapter 17, Claire wonders if she would have made the choice to train in Lake Placid if she'd known everything she would be giving up. What do you think? Have you ever made a decision and then felt like you might have chosen differently if you'd had more information?

The Eleanor Roosevelt quote on Kalina's travel mug says, "No one can make you feel inferior without your consent." Do you think that's true? Does reading that quote seem to help Claire?

Why do you think Claire performs better at the Champlain Valley Open than she did at Saratoga?

Claire and Tasanee have different reactions to watching the other skaters perform in Chapter 18. How do those reactions show the differences between the two girls?

Why do you think Claire's father chooses the Indiana Jones music to send along to Lake Placid?

Chapters 21-24

The description of Claire in Chapter 21 says, "She wasn't the same girl who sat holding her hot chocolate in silence at the Northern Lights rink." How do you think Claire changed? Have Alexis, Meghan, and Natalie changed as well?

Looking back, do you think Claire should have figured things out sooner? Were there clues? Why might she have missed them?

Why do you think Claire made the choice she made at the end of the book? What choice do you think you would have made?

If you were going to write a sequel to *Sugar and Ice*, what would it be about?

For more information...

To learn more about figure skating, visit the US Figure Skating website:
<http://www.usfsa.org/>

Did you know that Vermont, New York, and Maine were the top three maple syrup producing states in 2008? You can learn more about maple syrup production at the North American Maple Syrup Council website: <http://www.northamericanmaple.org/>

Many states and provinces that produce maple syrup have association websites with sugarhouse tours, dates for real Maple Weekends, maple facts, recipes, and more.

Connecticut: <http://www.ctmaple.org/>
Indiana: <http://www.indianamaplesyrup.org/>
Maine: <http://www.mainemapleproducers.com/>
Massachusetts: <http://www.massmaple.org/>
Michigan: <http://www.mi-maplesyrup.com/Contents.htm>
Minnesota: <http://www.mnmaple.org/>
New Hampshire: <http://www.nhmapleproducers.com/>
New York: <http://www.nysmaple.com/>
Nova Scotia: <http://www.novascotiamaplesyrup.com/>
Ohio: <http://www.ohiomapleproducers.com/>
Ontario: <http://www.ontariomaple.com/>
Pennsylvania: <http://www.pamapleassociation.com/>
Quebec: <http://www.siropderable.ca/home.aspx>
Vermont: <http://vermontmaple.org/>
Wisconsin: <http://www.wismaple.org/>

Want to try making your own sugar on snow? Here's a recipe from the Massachusetts Maple Producers Association:
<http://www.massmaple.org/sos.html>

If you'd like to learn more about Natalie's honeybees and beekeeping, visit the American Beekeeping Federation: <http://www.abfnet.org/>

Crossing North is actually the name of a real musical duo from Northern New York. The group sings and plays a mix of acoustic, country, folk, and bluegrass music. You can listen to samples of their music on their website: <http://www.crossingnorth.com/>

Want to learn more about Fibonacci numbers? Dr. Ron Knott at the University of Surrey, UK, hosts a website with information and puzzles you can try:

<http://www.maths.surrey.ac.uk/hosted-sites/R.Knott/Fibonacci/fib.html>

ThinkQuest also has a great series of pages about Fibonacci:

<http://library.thinkquest.org/27890/theSeries.html>

You can learn more about Fibonacci numbers and the Golden section in nature at World-Mysteries.com.

http://www.world-mysteries.com/sci_17.htm

You might also enjoy these books about Fibonacci numbers.

Garland, Trudi Hammel. *Fascinating Fibonacci: Mystery and Magic in Numbers* (Dale Seymour Publications, 1987)

Garland, Trudi Hammel. *Fibonacci Fun: Fascinating Activities with Intriguing Numbers* (Dale Seymour Publications, 1997)