

Caddie Woodlawn Discussion Guide | Scholastic.com

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Questions to Talk About

Comprehension and Recall

1. What happens when Caddie is late for supper after visiting Indian John? *(Caddie finds that everyone at the table is clean and sedate, while she is dirty and her clothes are torn. Paralyzed with horror, she lets go of her shirt, and a flood of hazelnuts rolls across the floor.)*
2. Why do Caddie's parents allow her to "run wild" with her brothers, instead of learning household tasks and "proper manners" like her sisters? *(John Woodlawn believed that letting Caddie "run wild" with the boys would help her regain her health.)*
3. Why does Uncle Edmund choose to take Caddie hunting with him? *(Uncle Edmund feels Caddie is as good as a pointer finding game, and she never reproaches him when he misses.)*
4. How do Caddie and Tom help Miss Parker to restore order in the schoolroom? *(When Obediah Jones puts his feet on Maggie Bunn's desk, Caddie hits him with a ruler. Tom rushes to her defense and holds off Obediah's brother, Ashur, so that Miss Parker can discipline Obediah.)*

Higher Level Thinking Skills

5. What words would you use to describe Caddie? *(Possible answers: brave, determined, clever, honest, skillful.)*
6. In what way are John Woodlawn's ideas about child raising unusual for 1860s Wisconsin? What advantages does her father's ideas have for Caddie? *(Pioneer women were expected to be homemakers, and learn how to cook, sew, make candles and do embroidery. As a result of her father's ideas about child raising, Caddie is learning courage and self-reliance.)*
7. What kind of relationship exists between the settlers and the Native Americans around Dunnville? *(The settlers and Indians are friendly, but stories of massacres make it difficult for the two groups to trust one another.)*
8. How does Caddie's father show that he believes in Caddie's skill and intelligence? *(He invites her to become a partner in his watch repair business.)*

Literary Elements

9. **Setting:** The setting of a story is the time and place in which it occurs. How important is the setting to the plot of *Caddie Woodlawn*? *(Very important. The events of the plot probably could not have occurred in any other time or place.)*

Personal Response

10. In what ways is Caddie like you? In what ways is she different? Would you like to have Caddie as a friend? Why or why not?

11. Would you like to have lived on the Wisconsin frontier in the 1860s? Explain your answer.

Questions to Talk About

Comprehension and Recall

1. Why does John Woodlawn resent the English? *(He feels that people in England are not free to pursue their own lives in their own ways.)*

2. What hurts Caddie the most when the family receives a letter from Uncle Edmund explaining that Nero is lost? *(Nero had been lonely for Caddie, and frightened and unhappy in the city. That hurt Caddie more than her own loneliness.)*

3. Why does Caddie decide to ride to the Indian camp to find Indian John? What risks does she take making this kind of trip alone? *(She wants to warn them. But she has to cross the ice on the river and she is not sure it will hold.)*

4. In what way does Indian John show that he loves and respects Caddie? *(He travels back with her to the Woodlawn home, at great danger to himself; he trusts Caddie to take care of his dog and scalp belt.)*

Higher Level Thinking Skills

5. Compare Caddie's actions when she overhears the settlers' plans to attack the Indians with the reaction of Katie Hyman. What do the girls' actions reveal about the way they have been raised? *(Katie has been raised as a "proper" young lady, and she is shocked that Caddie would go to visit the Indians. Caddie has learned to be unafraid, and this quality has made her a natural leader at school.)*

6. After the "massacree scare," many settlers felt a deeper fear of the Indians. Why do you think they felt more afraid, even when it became clear that the Indians had no plans to attack? *(The scare might have put the idea of an attack in their minds, something they might not have thought much about before.)*

7. Why do you think Caddie decides to spend her silver dollar buying treats and presents for Gussie, Pete, and Sammie Hankinson? *(Caddie is upset when her mother tells her that Sam Hankinson sent his Indian wife away. Caddie wanted to cheer the children up.)*

Literary Elements

8. **Theme:** Explain that the theme of a book is the message about life or nature that the author wants the reader to take away from the story. How would you describe the theme of this part of the story? *(Answers will vary. Students might suggest the importance of trust.)*

Personal Response

9. What do you think of Caddie's plan to buy treats and presents for the Hankinson children?

10. Would you have tried to reach Indian John in spite of the fact that there were rumors of an Indian uprising? Why or why not?

Questions to Talk About

Comprehension and Recall

1. Why do Caddie, Tom, and Warren have to plow the far field? What do they do to make their task more pleasant? (*Mr. Woodlawn feels that all play and no work make for lazy children. Caddie, Tom, and Warren make up stories as they work.*)
2. What frightening experience do the children have at the schoolhouse? Who turns out to be a hero as a result of this experience? (*A prairie fire threatens the schoolhouse. Obediah Jones takes charge of putting the fire out.*)
3. Why is Mrs. Woodlawn so pleased that Annabelle has come to visit? In what way does Annabelle make Caddie feel uncomfortable? (*Mrs. Woodlawn is excited to hear news about her relatives in Boston. Caddie feels that Annabelle is the kind of girl her mother wishes Caddie would be.*)
4. When Caddie, Tom, and Warren play a series of jokes on Annabelle, why does Mrs. Woodlawn single out Caddie for punishment? (*Mrs. Woodlawn feels that boys can be forgiven for rowdy behavior, but that Caddie has forgotten her responsibilities as a lady.*)
5. How does a letter from England upset the family's life? (*Mr. Woodlawn finds out that he can become the next Lord Woodlawn. The family must decide whether to move to England or stay in Wisconsin.*)

Higher Level Thinking Skills

6. "How far I've come!" Caddie says at the end of the book. "I'm the same girl and yet not the same." What does Caddie mean? In what ways has she changed, and how has she remained the same? (*Caddie was in danger of losing Wisconsin, and now that the family has decided to stay, she has accepted her future as a pioneer.*)
7. John Woodlawn tells Caddie that he let her "run wild" because he thought it was the finest way to make a splendid woman out of her. In what ways has Caddie shown she will be a "splendid woman"? (*Caddie has learned to be honest, brave, and self-reliant.*)
8. How do you think Mr. Woodlawn feels about going to England? How do you know? (*He wants to stay in Wisconsin. He is proud to be an American, which is one reason he decides to allow the family to vote, in the American way, and decide whether or not they want to go to England.*)

Literary Elements

9. **Significant detail:** How does the author show that Caddie is afraid of the life the Woodlawns might have in England? (*Caddie has a dream that they are to be presented to the Queen, but when they arrive at the palace her family suddenly vanishes and she is unable to get through the barred gate.*)

Personal Response

10. If you were Caddie, would you have wanted to go to England? Why or why not?
11. Do you think it was fair for Mrs. Woodlawn to single Caddie out for punishment after Caddie and her brothers teased Annabelle? Explain.

- Subjects:

Civil War Period and Reconstruction, American Civil War, Literature, Reading Comprehension, Literature Appreciation, Extended Families, Siblings

- Skills:

Reading Comprehension, Social Studies