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For Readers 10 to 14.

I'm sorry ma'am, but customers aren't supposed to go down there. My uncle wouldn't like it."

"Oh, bother your uncle. If he asks, tell him he has nothing to fear from me. My name's Willa Cather and I'm not really a customer."

Fifteen-year old Molly Klein knew her uncle wouldn't want a customer to see the basement coop of his poultry store, where chicks were born and raised in total darkness. Molly herself hated to visit the cellar. But this woman would not accept no for an answer.

Imagine Molly's surprise the first day of school when she discovers the woman wearing the crisp white shirtwaist is also her new teacher—Willa Cather. It's one more challenge for Molly in her new world, where her mother still acts like a greenhorn, her father and brothers are missing, and her best friend, Cleo, faces a horrible burden.

New World, New Challenges for Young Molly Klein.

Molly's a spirited immigrant tackling a new world in the Pittsburgh of 1900.

"Faigen... tells a vivid and compelling story that will have special resonance with many of us who have heard personal stories of our own family's immigration."

Roberta Mintz Levine's review in *Pittsburgh* magazine

"...Anne Faigen has written a compelling piece of historical young adult fiction... Faigen succeeds at capturing the essence of turn-of-the-century Pittsburgh and of the immigrant experience, expertly weaving historical fact and fiction into a well-written, well-researched book. Young adults and even not-so-young adults will enjoy this captivating read."

Hilary Daninhirsch's review in *The Jewish Chronicle*

"Molly's high-spirited adventures are interspersed with family scenes of real tenderness. Faigen evokes heartfelt emotions as well as a sense of time and place."

Rebecca O'Connell, Children's Librarian,
Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh:

Her brother may call her bossy, but it's Molly's spirit that guides her in this new novel for 10-14 year old readers. Anne Faigen bases her richly detailed story, set in Pittsburgh in the early 1900s, in historical fact: Willa Cather's first professional employment after her graduation from the University of Nebraska was, indeed, at a publication office in Pittsburgh, and she did teach Latin, then English, in two city high schools.

1906 Pittsburgh was a city of contrasts. Immigrant families like Molly's, often separated from loved ones, struggled to assimilate, while wealthy philanthropists, including Mellon, Westinghouse, Frick, and Carnegie, were already enriching the city's cultural life with a great museum, elegant concert halls and theaters, a fine symphony orchestra, and an unparalleled system of free, public libraries.

Anne Faigen vividly captures both worlds through the eyes of her young heroine, Molly Klein, who is equally sure to capture the imaginations of young readers.

A Teacher's Study Guide is available providing teachers with complementary curriculum activities in social studies, reading, vocabulary, and writing.

From the book:

Molly didn't tell anyone—not even Cleo—how scared she was for [her father and brother back in Poland]. At any time the Polish police could decide the Jews were the town's troublemakers. It didn't matter if they were honest shopkeepers minding their own businesses, trying to take care of their families. The police could storm in, arrest them for invented crimes, use any excuse to beat them.

Waiting for Cleo that evening outside the boardinghouse, Molly thought about the woman whose probing questions had angered her uncle. She wondered if, when she was older, she could be as bold and fearless as Miss Cather. She doubted it; maybe a person had to be born in America to feel like that.

They walked along Wylie Avenue toward the place where they were meeting Victor. Molly liked to look at the windows of the Italian groceries where long sausages, fat balls of cheese wrapped in cord, and chains of dried red peppers and garlic hung from hooks in the ceiling. As customers opened the doors, heady, ripe aromas wafted on the warm evening air.

Outside, the air was chilly, despite the sun. When the wind blew, bits of grit from the smoke stacks stung Molly's face. Miss Cather took her arm and they hurried along, heads down to avoid the wind, occasionally dodging others doing the same.

As they neared the boarding house they heard the shrill call of a newspaper boy with a thick stack of Pittsburgh Gazette's tucked under his arm. He held one up to tempt passersby.

"Get your paper here. Read all about the accident at the mill. Three workers scalded to death. Read all about it."

Molly and Cleo moved to the dining room where they saw a huge table draped in lace and laden with platters of tiny sandwiches, an array of pastries, fruits, and candies. Seated at one end of the table, Mrs. McNary presided over a silver tea service that glowed in the soft light from a crystal chandelier. Molly studied the rainbow of colors shimmering in the glass prisms, trying to memorize every detail so she could describe this house to her mother.



The Author:

Anne Gussin Faigen's first young adult novel, *Finding Her Way*, was published in 1997. A native Pittsburgher, she has taught college literature and writing classes and has had a long career teaching English to high school students.

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The Local History Company
112 NORTH Woodland Road
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15232-2849
Phone 412-362-2294 Fax 412-362-8192
For Orders Call Toll Free 866-362-0789
sales@TheLocalHistoryCompany.com