

Flossie and the Fox

A Presentation about *Flossie and the Fox* by Patricia McKissack

Flossie and the Fox is the oral tale of a Black grandfather during the height of Jim Crow segregation who rewrites the fairy tale, *Little Red Riding Hood*, for his grandchildren. Patricia McKissack, one of the ancestral authors of African American children's literature, retells her grandfather's story in this book.

For links relevant to this presentation as well as the listed questions below, please go here:
<https://bit.ly/flossie-and-fox>

Name:

Issues Raised by <i>Flossie and the Fox</i>	Your Thoughts/Jottings
<p>1. <i>Flossie and the Fox</i> is the oral tale of a Black grandfather during the height of Jim Crow segregation who rewrites the fairy tale, <i>Little Red Riding Hood</i>. The grandfather revises many elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Red's mother dictates a set path for her to follow, a directive to speak to no one, and a warning about impending danger. Flossie's grandmother does not give her any of these rules, just reassurance and a sense of urgency about community needs.</i> ➤ <i>The grandfather/narrator replaces the wolf with a fox: a fox is a cunning animal but certainly not one that could do as much physical/deadly harm as a wolf.</i> ➤ <i>Flossie must trek on her own, not for her own survival (or her blood-relatives), but for larger community sustenance (the text's language suggests sharecroppers).</i> ➤ <i>No patriarch rescues Flossie in the woods. She does it on her own with intelligence and quick wit.</i> ➤ <i>The fox is not killed at the end of the story. Flossie and all of her family live.... to tell the tale.</i> <p>What do you think of the narrator's decision to remix <i>Little Red Riding Hood</i>? What do you think of the changes he made? How do these changes alter the original story? To what effect?</p>	
<p>2. How are Black girls/women (re)imagined in this story (especially in comparison to the racist depictions of pickaninnies)? What's the narrator's message here? Why do you think the narrator chose to center Black girls? What difference does that make?</p>	
<p>3. Black boys are not characters in this story---but they are always key listeners/audience. What is the lesson for them? How are they (re)imagined</p>	

<p>in their relationship to Black girls and women (especially in comparison to the racist depictions of pickaninnies)?</p>	
<p>4. How would you describe Flossie's language? What does Flossie DO with language? How is her language different from or similar to Big Mama's language? What's the narrator's message here?</p>	
<p>5. How would you describe the narrator's language? What does his language DO? What's the narrator's message here about language difference and its (social and political) use?</p>	
<p>6. How is Fox gendered and racialized through his language use? What does his language DO? What's the narrator's message here about race, gender, social status, and language? What/who does Fox represent?</p>	
<p>7. Flossie's job in delivering eggs is a promise to help another family in struggle. Why does she need to protect her EGGS as she moves from place to place supporting and protecting her people? Why eggs?</p>	
<p>8. Flossie says she DISREMEMBERS the Fox. What does this mean? What is the community's relationship to Fox in this act of disremembering?</p> <p><i>Please Note: Disremember is NOT the same thing as don't remember/forgot.</i></p>	
<p>9. Could <i>Flossie and the Fox</i> be an example of Black feminist rhetoric? If so, how? If not, what is it missing?</p>	
<p>10. "Chile, a Fox Be Just a Fox"! What does this really mean? What does Big Mama want Flossie to understand?</p>	