Meet Me Halfway
Educator's Guide

About the Novel

When classmates Mattie and Mercedes discover they are actually half sisters, it isn't exactly celebratory news. The girls, while they look similar, are polar opposites, and the road to friendship is rocky. But when their curiosity and determination to find their mutual Colombian dad wins out, the girls must work through their differences and join together to finally learn more about their mysterious, absent dad—and meet him. (*Booklist*, Sept 2022)

Curriculum Connections

Social Studies

- The study of the past provides a representation of the history of communities, nations, and the world.
- That learning about the past requires the interpretation of sources, and that using varied sources provides the potential for a more balanced interpretive record of the past.

Example 1: *Francisco Flores Gómez is an anthropologist who studies the mythologies of indigenous communities in Colombia. Readers will see how the stories of different cultures (Arhuaco, Greek, Roman, etc) have similar stories that attempt to explain the natural world, including the stars and astronomy.*

English Language Arts

- Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot).
- Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and explain how it is conveyed in the text.

Example 1: The mythology project from Mrs. Ellingham forces the two girls to work together; the book of stories written by their father Francisco Gomez helps them to understand his work; and the story of Tima and Yuí show them another set of siblings.

Example 2: Mattie and Mercedes have a lot of feelings about their families, but they don't always express exactly how they feel. Through their dialogue and narrative, readers can infer that Mattie isn't happy with her stepbrothers and that Mercedes loves her brother's dad.

Example 3: Although this is an adventure story, readers can infer reasons why the author wrote this story based on her biography.

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HALFWAY
ANIKA FAJARDO

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Discussion Questions

1. Why isn't Mattie very happy that she and her mom had to move to California?

    - Have you ever had to change schools or been the "new kid"? What was it like and how did you handle it? Have you ever helped someone who was new?

2. Why doesn't Mercedes want her friends to know that Mattie is her half-sister?

    - Have you ever had to struggle with being excluded from a group? Have you ever worked to be or become popular? Were your experiences similar or different from Mattie's and Mercedes's?

3. How does Mattie manage her worries?

    - Do you ever have worries? How do you handle them?

4. What is an example of Mercedes's temper ?

    - How do you act when something makes you angry? Do you think anger is good or bad?

5. What does the story of Tima and Yuí explain for the Arhuaco people?

    - What is your favorite myth or story?

6. Why do you think Mrs. Ellingham only wants the students to study Greek and Roman mythology—and not the myths of the Arhuaco?

7. What are three places that Mattie and Mercedes visit at Northern Madrone College?

    - Have you ever visited a college or university? Have you thought about whether you want to go to college? What would you like to study?

8. How do Mattie and Mercedes get punished for running away?

    - Have you ever wanted to run away? If you tried, what made you do it? If you decided not to, why is you change your mind?

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