



2018

Queen of the Falls

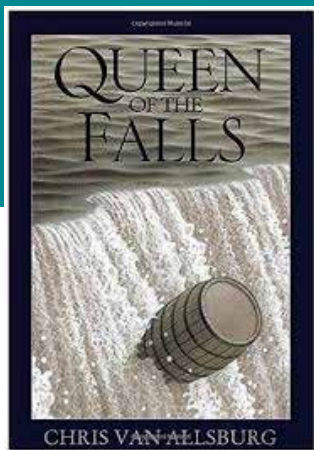
Nicole Clark

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Book Review

Queen of the Falls

Author

Chris Van Allsburg

Illustrator

Reviewer

Nicole Clark

Rating

Excellent

Level

Primary, Intermediate,
Young Adult

Pages

38

Year

2011

Publisher

Houghton Mifflin Har-

ISBN

9780544868137

Aging charm-school teacher Annie Edison Taylor is determined to avoid the poorhouse. With decreased student enrollment at the school, Annie knows she needs a way to replenish her ever-dwindling supply of funds. Her plan? To go over Niagara Falls inside of a barrel! Hoping to make a profit from news coverage and public appearances, Annie hires a manager, and at the age of sixty-two, Annie becomes the first person to travel down the Falls in a barrel. Though Annie's daring feat never earns her the fame and wealth she hoped for, it is the personal satisfaction that makes the stunt worthwhile.

A fascinating account of a little-known historical figure, Queen of the Falls is clearly well researched. Van Allsburg's use of suspense throughout the story is especially effective. The sepia-toned illustrations seem appropriate for the early twentieth century setting, and their realistic portrayal of the events of Annie's life serves to scaffold and support the text well. Known best for his fictional works such as *The Polar Express* and *Jumanji*, Van Allsburg's telling of this true story is wonder-filled while remaining historically accurate.