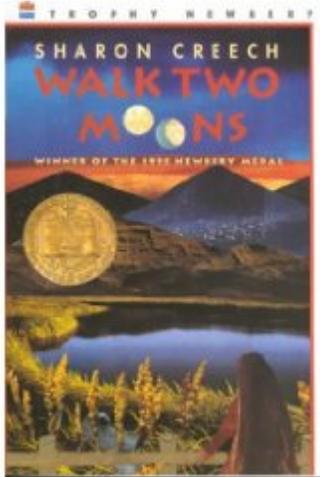


Walk Two Moons by Sharon Creech A Choose to Read Ohio Toolkit



About the Book

For reasons that are unclear to Sal Hiddle, her mother left the family farm in Kentucky for Lewiston, Idaho, and did not return. Sal's grief-stricken father rents out the farm that Sal loves and uproots her to Euclid, Ohio, a suburb of Cleveland. Sal hates her new home and cannot accept her father's disturbing relationship with red-haired Margaret Cadaver, a nurse who has persuaded Mr. Hiddle to move to Ohio for work. Sal refuses to believe that her mother will never return.

That summer, Gram and Gramps Hiddle, Sal's paternal grandparents, take her on a six-day car trip from Euclid to Lewiston, Idaho. Sal's goal is to reach their destination on Sal's mother's birthday. The trio travels westward, retracing the route taken by Sal's mother. To pass the time, Sal recalls the events that preceded her mother's departure and at Gram's insistence, narrates a tale of her experiences in Euclid that past year. At the heart of the story is Sal's friend Phoebe Winterbottom's grief over her mother's sudden disappearance. The imaginative Phoebe insists that her mother has been kidnapped by a lunatic. Phoebe's loss parallels Sal's loss, and Phoebe's story brings Sal's into sharper focus. The mystery is solved when Phoebe's mother returns home with the "lunatic"—a son whom she gave up for adoption years before and whom her family has not been told about.



Sal's story does not have a similar happy ending. Gram is dying of a stroke, and Sal has driven herself to Lewiston to visit the scene of her mother's death. The reader finally understands that Sal's mother, who had suffered from an identity crisis, had set out for Idaho to find herself. When the bus in which she was riding careened off the road in Lewiston, all of the passengers died except for Margaret Cadaver, the last person to have seen Sal's mother alive. The journey ends, Gram's body is sent back to Kentucky for burial, and Gramps, Sal, and her father return to their beloved farm in Kentucky.

Sudden death and the grieving process are not subjects that lend themselves to humor. In *Walk Two Moons*, however, Sharon Creech addresses a child's profound sense of loss in a novel that is often richly funny. In a voice that is homespun and true, Salamanca ("Sal") Hiddle, Creech's thirteen-year-old narrator, captures the peculiar behavior of family and friends as she travels west, following the journey her mother took before losing her life in a bus accident. Only at the journey's end is Sal fully able to accept the finality of her mother's death. And only at the novel's end does the reader grasp the significance of the relationships between the characters and the incidents that occur along the way. Published in 1994, this poignant, comic novel—the author's second book for young adults—won the 1995 Newbery Medal.

About the Author

Known for writing with a classic voice and unique style, Sharon Creech is the best-selling author of the Newbery Medal winner **Walk Two Moons**, and the Newbery Honor Book *The Wanderer*. She is also the first American in history to be awarded the CILIP Carnegie Medal for *Ruby Holler*. Her other works include the novels **Love That Dog**, **Bloomability**, **Absolutely Normal Chaos**, **Chasing Redbird**, **Pleasing the Ghost**, and **Hate That Cat**, and two picture books: **A Fine, Fine School** and **Fishing in the Air**. These stories are often centered around life, love, and relationships -- especially family relationships. Ms. Creech's first novel for children, **Absolutely Normal Chaos**, was based on her own "rowdy and noisy" family. Growing up in a big family in Cleveland, Ohio, helped Ms. Creech learn to tell stories that wouldn't be forgotten in all of the commotion: "I learned to exaggerate and embellish, because if you didn't, your story was drowned out by someone else's more exciting one."



With a knack for storytelling and love of reading, young Ms. Creech aspired to become a novelist: "To be able to create other worlds, to be able to explore mystery and myth -- I couldn't imagine a better way to live, except perhaps to be a teacher, because teachers got to handle books all day long." In college, Ms. Creech took her first writing courses and attended writing workshops. This renewed her enthusiasm for becoming a novelist. Following her studies in college and graduate school, Ms. Creech worked as an editorial assistant before deciding to become a teacher overseas. Now, after spending eighteen years teaching and writing in Europe, she and her husband have returned to the United States to live.

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Author Resources:

Sharon Creech's Official Website

<http://www.sharoncreech.com/meet/bio.asp>

Sharon Creech at the National Book Festival - A webcast from the 2003 event

http://loc.gov/today/cyberlc/feature_wdesc.php?rec=3531

Sharon Creech Resource Page from Ashland University

<http://www.ashland.edu/library/irc/creech.html>



Discussion Questions

Before Reading

Have a discussion about cross-country road trips that took hours or days to complete. How long did the drive take? What did you do to entertain yourself while riding in the car with your family? Did you play any games? What kinds? Other discussion topics might include visiting family, grandparents, or losing a loved one or a pet.

After Reading

1. What reasons do Gramps and Sal's father give Sal for going on the trip? According to Sal, what are the real reasons? Why might the real reasons have been left unspoken?
2. How does Sal feel about Mrs. Cadaver? Why, do you suppose, does she feel this way?
3. What does Sal notice about Phoebe's parents that reminds her of the Pickfords, her mother's parents? Do you think she finds either couple very likeable?
4. Sal explains that the first mysterious message means that one shouldn't judge people until one has been in their shoes. Is this advice that Phoebe follows?
5. How would the story have been different if someone else besides Sal were telling it? Would you like the story as much if it were told by a narrator from a third-person perspective?
6. Talk about the ways in which Phoebe's story is like or unlike Sal's. Why do you think Sal told Phoebe's story to her grandparents during their trip?
7. Would you describe this book as a comic novel, a sad novel, or a little of both? Why?



Extension Projects

Language Arts

Have students compare and contrast the process of discovery that Sal experiences in **Walk Two Moons** and that Moon experiences in **Moon** by Chaim Potok. Point out that discovery is an important part of the maturational process and can be about oneself, others, or the meaning of life.

Geography

Point out that by referring to a map of the United States that shows interstate highways, students can follow the route from Euclid to Lewiston. Encourage students to use clues provided in the narrative that identify specific locations in states along the route. Then have pairs of students create a map that shows the route that the Hiddles take to Idaho. They should use enlarged photocopies, or create a map of their own, indicating important stops along the way and locating approximately where the travelers spent each night. Students should illustrate their maps with pictures or appropriate quotations from the novel.

Have students use a map of the United States that shows interstate highways that lead from Euclid, Ohio, to Lewiston, Idaho. Using the scale of miles on the map, they should estimate the distance in miles between the two points and then convert the figure to kilometers.

Social Studies

Pair students to role-play the scene in which Sal is stopped by the sheriff after taking Gramps' car to visit the scene of the accident where her mother was killed. One student should assume Sal's role, and the other that of the sheriff. Students should work together to develop a script for each role.



Additional Resources

Websites

Walk Two Moons book summary from Harper Collins

http://www.harpercollins.com/books/9780060233341/Walk_Two_Moons/index.aspx

Walk Two Moons review and discussion guide

<http://www.carolhurst.com/titles/walktwomoons.html>

from Carol Hurst's Children's Literature Site

Native American Children's Literature and resources

<http://www.carolhurst.com/subjects/nativeamericans.html>

from Carol Hurst's Children's Literature Site

American Indians in Children's Literature: a blog by Debbie Reese

<http://www.americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com/>

Ohio Reading Road Trip comprehensive lesson plan for Walk Two Moons

<http://www.americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com/>

SparkNotes Walk Two Moons quiz

<http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/twomoons/quiz.html>

includes overview with essay topics, character analysis and more

Books for Further Reading

In the Trail of the Wind: American Indian Poems and Ritual Orations by John Bierhorst

Sing Down the Moon by Scott O'Dell

The Girl Who Married a Ghost and Other Tales from the North American Indian by John Bierhorst

The Talking Earth by Jean Craighead George



Cited Sources:

Glencoe Literature Library Study Guide for Walk Two Moons

http://www.glencoe.com/sec/literature/litlibrary/pdf/walk_two_moons.pdf

eThemes Literature Resource

<http://www.emints.org/ethemes/resources/S00001439.shtml>

Kids Read Author Biography

<http://www.kidsreads.com/authors/au-creech-sharon.asp>

Book Details:

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About Choose to Read Ohio

Choose to Read Ohio (CTRO) spotlights Ohio authors and promotes reading across Ohio. The State Library of Ohio, in partnership with Ohioana Library Association, developed this initiative to encourage Ohioans of all ages to share literature by authors native to, residing in, or associated with Ohio. CTRO is adaptable for use in classrooms, libraries, bookstores, by book discussion groups, families, and other community groups.

Explore Choose to Read Ohio resources & toolkits: <http://oh.webjunction.org/ohctrointro>.