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# Reading Group Guide

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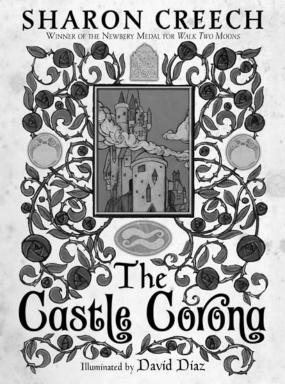
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The Castle Corona

By Sharon Creech

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# **About the Book**

When peasant children Pia and Enzio happen upon a pouch in the forest surrounding the Castle Corona, their lives become intricately entwined with the royal family, and many characters' lives are transformed as a result. As a thief, two hermits, a wordsmith, and a village gossip propel this fairy tale to an unusual "happily ever after," the novel addresses some of life's great questions. In *The Castle Corona* the privileged are far from perfect, the worlds of the rich and the poor have more in common than meets the eye, and discovering true identity is at the bottom of it all.

# **Discussion Questions**

- In what ways is *The Castle Corona* a typical fairy tale? In what ways is it a different kind of fairy tale?
- 2. Pia is likened to an eagle because of her alertness and confidence (page 27). Enzio is likened to an antelope for his swiftness (page 66). Consider what you know about Prince Gianni, Prince Vito, and Princess Fabrizia. What animals would you assign to represent each of them and why?
- **3.** What parts of the book did you find funny? What made those parts funny?
- **4.** On page 20, Queen Gabriella contrasts insignificant things that people think about with "larger" things. In your life, what are some of your larger concerns versus what you see as insignificant?
- **5.** Signora Ferrelli refers to wisdom as "the wind in your face." What does this mean? Do you agree?
- **6.** What prompts Queen Gabriella to visit the village? Why did this visit turn out the way it did?
- **7.** What do the palace garden and the hornbeam tunnel do for King Guido and Queen Gabriella, respectively? Do you have a place like these?

- **8.** There are many instances of storytelling, daydreaming, gossiping, and conversing in this tale. What message or messages does this novel have about stories and storytelling?
- **9.** What do you think is in the Wordsmith's velvet bag?
- 10. Do you think there really was a thief? Explain.
- **11.** In what ways does the saying "The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence" relate to this story?
- **12.** Which characters have changed by the end of the story? How are they different and what caused their changes?

# **Extension Activities**

### 1. Family Seal

In the Kingdom of Corona, the King's seal features emblems representative of the royal family: a castle, a crown, a tree, and a corno. Make your own seal with a design and images that stand for something about you and your family.

### 2. Predictions

Write future headlines for *The Corona Times*, the local newspaper. Write headlines that reveal what you think happens to Pia, Enzio, Prince Gianni, Prince Vito, and Princess Fabrizia when they grow up.

### 3. Story Spinning

Just as Pia and Enzio spin stories by building on each other's ideas, create a pass-along story in your group. One person begins by making up an opening sentence, and each person takes a turn by adding on a new sentence. The story passes around until the group thinks it is finished. The more the group practices pass-along storytelling, the more engaging the stories become.



# About the Author

Known for writing with a classic voice and a unique style, Sharon Creech is the bestselling author of the Newbery Medal winner Walk Two Moons and the Newbery Honor Book The Wanderer. Her other novels include Replay, Heartbeat, Ruby Holler, Love That Dog, Bloomability, Absolutely Normal Chaos, Chasing Redbird, and Pleasing the Ghost, as well as three picture books: A Fine, Fine School; Fishing in the Air; and Who's That Baby? Sharon Creech and her husband spent eighteen years teaching and writing in Europe, where the many castles that Sharon saw served as inspiration for The Castle Corona. She and her husband now live in New York State.

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