

Books by Sharon Creech

A Selected Biography



The Unfinished Angel

Tr 978-0-06-143095-4 • \$15.99 (\$20.99)
Lb 978-0-06-143096-1 • \$16.89 (\$22.89)
CD 978-0-06-180841-8 • \$17.99 (\$22.99)

Infused with hope, happiness, and an appreciation for the little things that make life big, this is the story of an extraordinary angel, a spunky girl named Zola, a group of orphans in search of a family, and a town that's changed forever.

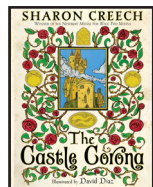


Hate That Cat

Tr 978-0-06-143092-3 • \$15.99 (\$17.25)
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"In a worthy companion piece to *Love That Dog*, Creech employs observant sensitivity and spare verse to carve an indelible portrait of a boy who discovers the power of self-expression."
—ALA Booklist

CCBC Choice
Bank Street College of Education Best Children's Books



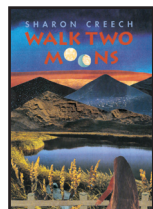
The Castle Corona

Illustrated by David Diaz

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★ "[This] original fairy tale is immensely satisfying both in its telling and its presentation . . . captivating."
—Kirkus Reviews (starred review)

Book Sense Top Ten Pick



Walk Two Moons

Tr 978-0-06-023334-1 • \$16.99
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Pb 978-0-06-440517-1 • \$6.99
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"An engaging story of love and loss, told with humor and suspense . . . A richly layered novel about real and metaphorical journeys."
—School Library Journal

Newbery Medal • ALA Notable Children's Book • NCTE Notable Children's Book in the Language Arts • Bulletin Blue Ribbon • School Library Journal Best Book • Sequoyah Young Adult Book Award (Oklahoma) • Virginia Young Readers Award • Parents' Choice Gold Award



Lyle Kigg

About the Author

Sharon Creech has written seventeen books for children and young adults, including the Newbery Medal winner *Walk Two Moons* and the Newbery Honor Book *The Wanderer*. She was the first American author to be awarded Britain's most prestigious children's book award, the CILIP Carnegie Medal, for her novel *Ruby Holler*. Her other works include the novels *The Unfinished Angel*, *Hate That Cat*, *The Castle Corona*, *Replay*, *Heartbeat*, *Granny Torrelli Makes Soup*, *Love That Dog*, *Bloomability*, *Chasing Redbird*, *Pleasing the Ghost*, and *Absolutely Normal Chaos*; and three picture books, *Who's That Baby?*, *Fishing in the Air*, and *A Fine, Fine School*. Sharon Creech spent eighteen years writing and teaching in Europe before returning to the United States. She and her husband currently live in upstate New York.

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Guide created by Kate Coxon, Teacher at Rocketship One Public School, Palo Alto, California.

Reading Group Guide

SHARON CREECH
WINNER OF THE NEWBERY MEDAL FOR *WALK TWO MOONS*



The Unfinished Angel

By Sharon Creech

About the Book

Meet one extraordinary angel—an angel that floats and swishes high above a tiny Swiss village and lolls about the stone tower of the Casa Rosa trying to guess what its mission is. Luckily, things become clearer once bright, imperious Zola moves in: She’s just a girl, but she is determined to change this village, where neighbors have been longtime enemies, children have been lost, and people have been sleepily living their lives. It’s not easy, though, especially when neighbors toss snakes into her yard and won’t stop their dogs from arfing all afternoon long! *The Unfinished Angel* is a story for lovers of language and for those who, like Zola, realize that caring for people is the way to bring them together, for magic is found in the most ordinary acts of kindness.

Discussion Questions

1. What is an angel? How are angels like people? What preconceived ideas does Zola have about angels?
2. The angel worries about missing “all the training” and not knowing what its purpose is on Earth (page 2). Do you know that feeling? Do you think things would have worked out differently (or better) if the angel had a training manual?
3. Why do you think Zola dresses the way that she does? Would you wear so many skirts, ribbons, and blouses all together? What does it mean when Signora Divino starts wearing pink?
4. Describe Mr. Pomodoro and his relationship with his daughter. As the angel says, it often seems like Mr. Pomodoro doesn’t know what to do with his “colorful child” and is “relieved” that Zola “is content to be on her own” (page 44). Why do you think this is?
5. Why does Zola tell the story about the chocolate-covered cookies? Who is the story about? Do you know anyone who keeps a secret stash like this? Why do people like to have things tucked away?
6. Why does Zola ask the angel to help the children before she asks the Divinos or the other villagers? Is it right or fair for her to ask these things from the angel before she asks them from others?

7. Why are the villagers mad about the things that have been stolen instead of the awful way the children have been treated? How would you have reacted if you were one of the villagers?
8. What do you think the angel means by saying that people “like to be in the knowing; they like to give permissions” (page 73)?
9. Mr. Pomodoro is tired of many things in the world outside the village and says that he is “weary of *incivility*” (page 9). What do you think he means? How is this village in the Ticino different from the rest of the world?
10. Why do you think the angel was sent to the Ticino, instead of somewhere else?
11. The Divino family and the Pomodoro family are both split up for a large part of the story. Is it important for family members to live together? Is it important for them to live in the same place for a long time? Do you think that you will stay close to home when you get older? Explain.
12. The angel says that young families “are urgent to go to big cities or to other countries. *It will be perfecto there!* they think. *We will be rich!* and *We will have a big house! Big car! Big boat!*” (page 109). What do you think people are looking for when they move away?
13. Zola has the “soft heart of a bunny,” but the angel also says that she has a “smart heart” because it does not go soft for “every puny silly thing” (page 115). When does Zola let her heart go soft? What makes your heart feel soft?
14. Why do you think that inviting Mayor Zapino to sit down and share a meal is so important? Do you agree with the angel about what happens when people are stuffed full of good memories?
15. Do you like the way the angel thinks and speaks? Why or why not? Do you enjoy reading invented words, like “linky,” “chip-chopped,” or “fabbagrating”? What are your favorite invented words from the novel?

Extension Activities

1. **Turenia, Bedenia, My Name Is Eugenia.** Zola often pretends to be someone else—now it's your turn! Design a costume for Zola and write a monologue that describes her adventures with the angel. Put on a performance for your reading group. Then write a reflection about whether it was easy or hard to turn Sharon Creech's character into a living, breathing person.
2. **Angel, You Have to Do Something!** Signora Divino suggests that the villagers form a committee to find better ways to give things to the children. What sorts of committees or other organizations are in your community to help people who need food, clothing, shelter, or even just a dolly and someone to spend time with? With your family or friends, spend several hours volunteering. Try to work with people who need you, though of course any help you can offer in terms of fundraising or organizing donation materials is welcome, too.
3. **A Circle of Mountains and a Blue-Green Lake.** Find pictures of one of the small towns tucked into the Swiss Alps. What does the town look like? What do you think life would be like in such a place? Use your imagination to create a piece of art inspired by the photos of the town. Then, no matter what you've crafted—a poem, a painting, a dance, or something else—write a short explanation about it to share with your reading group. Have your thoughts about *The Unfinished Angel* changed now that you've spent so much time contemplating its setting?
4. **What Is It, That Word?** Sometimes the angel struggles to find the perfect word and other times it invents new words that feel right. Imagine what the angel would say when visiting your hometown. Write a short chapter using the angel's voice to describe your town. Does borrowing the angel's voice make it easier or harder to express yourself?
5. **He Stay for Ravioli, or I Knock Him on the Head.** Organize a potluck or a ravioli share! Invite friends of yours who might not know each other or classmates who you wish you knew better. Enjoy the food and the company, and then reflect on what it was like being the host. How does having something delicious on the table help people get to know each other?