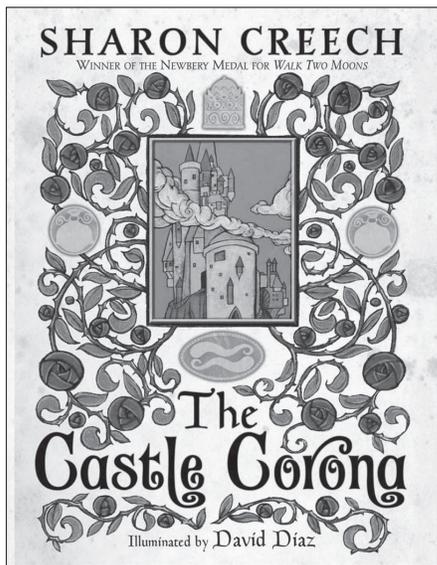


THE CASTLE CORONA



Setting the Scene

When peasant children Pia and Enzo happen upon a pouch in the forest surrounding the Castle Corona, their lives become intricately entwined with the royal family's, 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.

Before Reading

The Castle Corona is an "illuminated" novel. Explain to your students what illuminated means in this context. Show and discuss the types of illustrations in this book. What do they add to the feeling of the novel?

Discussion Questions

1. 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 (p. 27). Enzo is likened to an antelope for his swiftness (p. 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. In what ways does the saying "The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence" relate to this story?
10. Which characters have changed by the end of the story? How are they different and what caused their changes?



