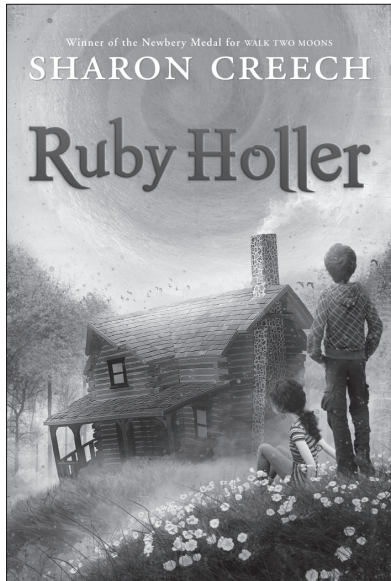


# RUBY HOLLER



## Setting the Scene

“Trouble twins” Dallas and Florida are orphans who have given up believing there is such a thing as a loving home. Tiller and Sairy are an eccentric older couple who live in the beautiful, mysterious Ruby Holler, but they’re restless for one more big adventure. When they invite the twins to join them on their journeys, they first must all stay together in the Holler, and the magic of the place takes over. Two pairs of lives grow closer and are changed forever.

## Before Reading

Ask your students to consider the title *Ruby Holler*. Are they familiar with what *holler* means in this case? Discuss what a holler is and where it might be found. Ask students to observe the artwork found on the front of the book. Do they think they would like to live in a holler? Why or why not?

## Discussion Questions

1. “One person’s trouble is another person’s joy” (p. 65). Consider this statement in relation to the Trepids’ nickname for Dallas and Florida: the trouble twins. In what ways do the twins cause both trouble and joy for their two sets of caregivers?
2. How did Dallas and Florida get their names? Do you think these names fit the twins? Why or why not?
3. Both Dallas and Florida and Tiller and Sairy have trouble imagining themselves without the other. What happens when they go on their separate adventures? Are they capable of surviving alone?
4. When Sairy asks Dallas to tell her about conditions in some of the homes the twins had lived in, “his mind automatically stopped the scene and played a different one” (p. 159). What types of coping mechanisms are used by Dallas throughout the novel? What types are used by Florida or Z?
5. Describe Ruby Holler. What does it look like? How is it different from the Boxtton Creek Home? How do the twins behave differently when they are in each place?
6. Tiller and Sairy teach the twins how to carve things out of wood. Why does this experience frustrate Dallas and Florida? Tiller tells Florida, “You pretend you don’t know because you don’t want what’s inside [the block of wood] to curl up tighter and refuse to come out” (p. 207). How does this sentiment relate to Sairy and Tiller’s relationship with the twins?
7. Tiller and Sairy have lots of interesting names for their recipes, such as mission-accomplished cake, getting-over-being-an-orphan cookies, and welcome-home bacon. Why do they have these names? What do you learn about Tiller and Sairy when they talk about these foods?
8. What do you think happens after the end of the story? Do you think Z really is the twins’ father?



