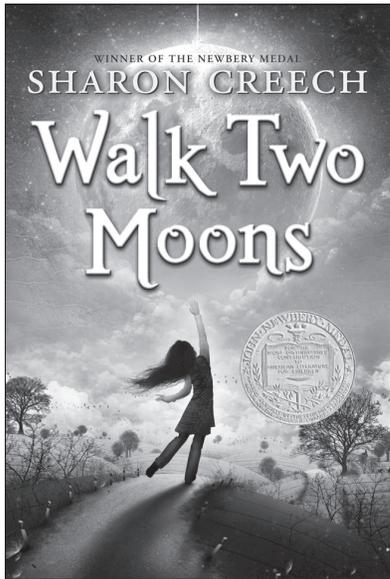


WALK TWO MOONS



Setting the Scene

Salamanca Tree Hiddle, Sal for short, takes a trip with her grandparents from Ohio to Idaho to visit her mother, who mysteriously never returned from her own journey there. By the end of the novel readers discover that Sal's mother in fact died while on her trip. As the road trip with her grandparents progresses, Sal struggles to understand her mother's death and to fit her memories into a life that keeps moving forward. An additional story unfolds as Sal entertains her grandparents with the tale of her friend Phoebe, whose mother unravels alongside Sal's own story, as the girls discover many truths about love, loss, and the complexity of human emotion.

Before Reading

Draw students' attention to the saying in the front of the book: "DON'T JUDGE A MAN UNTIL YOU'VE WALKED TWO MOONS IN HIS MOCCASINS." Discuss what this saying might mean. What does it make them think the story will be about?

Discussion Questions

1. Sal says that behind Phoebe's story is her own. What does she mean by this? What are some similarities between their stories? What are some differences? Why do you think each of the girls' mothers believed she had to leave?
2. Sal's father sometimes tells her she's "trying to catch fish in the air" (p. 115). Explain this figure of speech. How does it apply to Sal?
3. Describe the relationship between Sal's Gram and Gramps. Use examples from the book to illustrate your description.
4. When Sal's class is asked to draw their souls in fifteen seconds, Sal and Ben draw identical pictures. Why do you think each chooses the symbol of "a circle with a large maple leaf in the center" (p. 130)? What do Sal and Ben have in common that might cause them to see their souls in similar ways?
5. What is Sal's father's relationship with Margaret Cadaver? How is it different from what Sal thought it was?
6. Why do you think the author created ambiguity around Sal's missing mother? Why didn't she just make it clear that Sal's mother had died?
7. "In the course of a lifetime, there were some things that mattered" (p. 260). What does Sal think those things are? What do you think they are?
8. Throughout her trip to Idaho, Sal prays to trees because "this was easier than praying directly to God" (p. 7). Why does Sal trust trees to answer her prayers? What kind of relationship does she have with trees?
9. Sal imagines that worry would be the one bad thing in a box of good just as hope was the one good thing among the bad in Pandora's box. In what ways is worry the opposite of hope? How does each help and harm?
10. Mr. Birkway discusses a poem by e. e. cummings entitled "the little horse is newLY" (p. 123). Why does Sal relate to the poem? Why does her first kiss with Ben remind her of the poem?

