

walk two moons study guide

Walk Two Moons Study Guide

Introduction

"Walk Two Moons," a novel written by Sharon Creech, is a poignant coming-of-age story that intertwines themes of loss, love, and self-discovery. The narrative follows the journey of a young girl named Salamanca Tree Hiddle as she embarks on a road trip with her grandparents to find her missing mother. As Salamanca recounts the story of her friend Phoebe, the novel explores the complexities of family, friendship, and the importance of understanding others' perspectives. This study guide aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the novel's themes, characters, plot, and critical analysis to enhance understanding and appreciation of Creech's work.

Plot Summary

"Walk Two Moons" is structured around two parallel narratives: Salamanca's quest to discover her mother's whereabouts and the story of her friend Phoebe, whose life is filled with family intrigue and mystery.

1. Salamanca's Journey

- Salamanca, affectionately known as Sal, travels from Ohio to Idaho with her paternal grandparents, Gramps and Gram. The purpose of this journey is to find her mother, who has left the family for reasons that remain unclear to Sal.
- Throughout the trip, Sal reflects on her past and her relationship with her mother, grappling with feelings of abandonment and confusion.

2. Phoebe's Story

- Interwoven with Sal's journey is the tale of Phoebe Winterbottom, a friend from Sal's old school. Phoebe's life is marked by the sudden disappearance of her mother, which leads her to believe that there is a sinister reason behind it.
- As Sal narrates Phoebe's story, the reader sees themes of obsession and the search for truth come to life.

The novel culminates in moments of revelation and emotional growth as both girls confront their fears, misinterpretations, and the complexities of their family dynamics.

Main Characters

Understanding the characters is essential for grasping the emotional depth of

"Walk Two Moons." Here are the main characters in the novel:

Salamanca Tree Hiddle

- The protagonist and narrator of the story. Sal is a thoughtful and introspective girl who struggles with her feelings about her mother's absence. Her journey is both physical and emotional as she learns to cope with her feelings of loss.

Gramps and Gram

- Sal's paternal grandparents who accompany her on the road trip. They provide comic relief and warmth to the narrative, showcasing the importance of family support. Their backstories also reveal layers of grief and love that enrich Sal's understanding of family.

Phoebe Winterbottom

- Sal's best friend, whose own family issues mirror Sal's experiences. Phoebe's story is filled with tension and drama, exploring themes of loyalty and betrayal. Her character embodies the struggles of adolescence and the quest for understanding.

Sal's Mother (Chanhassen Hiddle)

- Sal's mother is a central figure in the narrative, despite her physical absence. Her decision to leave creates a ripple effect that influences Sal's emotional journey and understanding of love and choices.

Themes

"Walk Two Moons" is rich with themes that resonate with readers of all ages. Some of the most prominent themes include:

Loss and Grief

- The novel delves deeply into the emotional impact of loss through both Sal and Phoebe's experiences. Sal's journey is a metaphor for her grief, reflecting her struggle to understand her mother's departure and its implications.

Identity and Self-Discovery

- As Sal travels, she grapples with her identity, shaped by her familial relationships and her experiences. The journey represents her quest to understand who she is beyond her mother's absence.

Empathy and Understanding

- The title itself emphasizes the importance of understanding others' perspectives. Sal learns that everyone has their own struggles and that it's crucial to walk in someone else's shoes to foster empathy.

Family and Relationships

- The depiction of family dynamics in both Sal's and Phoebe's stories highlights the complexity of familial love. The novel illustrates how misunderstandings can arise within families, yet love remains a binding force.

Symbolism

Creech employs various symbols throughout "Walk Two Moons" that enrich the narrative's themes and character development. Key symbols include:

- The Journey: The road trip represents the journey of life, filled with ups and downs, and serves as a backdrop for Sal's emotional growth.
- The Trees: Trees symbolize growth, change, and connection to roots. Sal's reflections on trees tie into her understanding of her own family and history.
- The Moon: The moon serves as a metaphor for Sal's search for her mother and the cyclical nature of life and emotions. It represents hope and the idea that love transcends distance.

Critical Analysis

"Walk Two Moons" has been widely praised for its lyrical prose and emotional depth. Critics commend Sharon Creech for her ability to weave together two narratives seamlessly while maintaining an engaging and relatable story. The novel invites readers to reflect on their own experiences with loss, identity, and the complexities of relationships.

1. Narrative Structure

- The dual narrative structure allows readers to engage with multiple perspectives, deepening the emotional impact of the characters' experiences. Sal's storytelling becomes a means of coping with her grief and connecting

with her past.

2. Character Development

- The characters are richly developed, with distinct voices and personalities that resonate with readers. Sal's growth from a confused girl to a more self-aware individual reflects a universal journey of adolescence.

3. Themes of Empathy

- The emphasis on empathy and understanding is particularly relevant in today's context, encouraging readers to look beyond their own experiences and appreciate the struggles of others.

Discussion Questions

To foster deeper understanding and critical thinking about "Walk Two Moons," consider the following discussion questions:

1. How does Salamanca's understanding of her mother evolve throughout the novel?
2. In what ways do Sal and Phoebe's experiences of loss differ, and what can we learn from their journeys?
3. How does the setting of the road trip contribute to the themes of the novel?
4. What role do Gramps and Gram play in Sal's emotional journey?
5. How does the concept of walking in someone else's shoes manifest in the relationships depicted in the novel?

Conclusion

"Walk Two Moons" is a beautifully crafted novel that speaks to the heart of human experience. Through the intertwining stories of Salamanca and Phoebe, Sharon Creech invites readers to explore the depths of grief, the complexities of family relationships, and the importance of empathy. This study guide aims to provide insights that enhance the reading experience, encouraging readers to reflect on their own lives and the relationships that shape them. By understanding the characters, themes, and symbols within the novel, readers can appreciate the rich tapestry of emotions that Creech has woven into this unforgettable story.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the main theme of 'Walk Two Moons'?

The main theme of 'Walk Two Moons' is the journey of self-discovery and

understanding others through empathy and perspective.

Who is the protagonist in 'Walk Two Moons'?

The protagonist of 'Walk Two Moons' is Salamanca Tree Hiddle, a thirteen-year-old girl who embarks on a journey to find her mother.

How does the structure of 'Walk Two Moons' enhance the storytelling?

The novel employs a dual narrative structure, intertwining Sal's road trip with her grandparents and her storytelling about her friend Phoebe, which deepens the themes of loss and understanding.

What role do Sal's grandparents play in her journey?

Sal's grandparents provide support and companionship on her journey, while also helping her confront her feelings about her mother's departure.

What does the title 'Walk Two Moons' symbolize?

The title symbolizes the idea of understanding others by putting oneself in their shoes, reflecting the importance of empathy.

How does the author, Sharon Creech, use nature in 'Walk Two Moons'?

Nature is a recurring motif in the novel, representing Sal's emotions and growth, and highlighting her connection to her mother and her heritage.

What is the significance of the character Phoebe Winterbottom?

Phoebe Winterbottom serves as a foil to Sal, illustrating contrasting responses to family issues and helping Sal to explore her own feelings about loss and abandonment.

How does 'Walk Two Moons' address the topic of grief?

The novel addresses grief through Sal's journey as she grapples with her mother's absence and ultimately seeks closure and understanding of her loss.

What lessons does Sal learn throughout her journey

in 'Walk Two Moons'?

Sal learns about acceptance, the complexities of love and family, and the importance of seeing the world from different perspectives.

What is the role of storytelling in 'Walk Two Moons'?

Storytelling serves as a means of coping and understanding for Sal, allowing her to process her emotions and connect her experiences with those of others.

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