- 8. Dinnie observes that "for all our differences in nationality, in language, in culture, and in personality, we were all more alike than not" (p. 256). Explain what she means by this. Why is it so important to Dinnie to have a sense of belonging?
- 9. What is Dinnie's relationship with her parents like? How does this affect her fears about being in a foreign country?
- 10. How do Dinnie's dreams illustrate her concerns and thoughts? Select some examples to discuss.
- 11. By the end of the book, Dinnie resolves that she no longer feels like a stranger, even while moving from place to place. Like a snail, she carries her home on her back. What does she discover about the notion of home? How do her experiences in Switzerland lead her to that conclusion (p. 261)?
- **12**. Why do you think this book is called *Bloomability*?

Enter our *Bloomability* writing contest and you could win \$200 worth of Trophy books and a school visit from Sharon Creech!
Visit our website for details.
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Photo by Matth

Sharon Creech received the Newbery Medal for *Walk Two Moons*. After eighteen years of teaching and writing in Europe, Ms. Creech now lives in the United States with her husband.

# Also by Sharon Creech, available from HarperCollins:

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SHARON CREECH

WINNER OF THE NEWSERY MEDAL FOR WALK TWO MOONS

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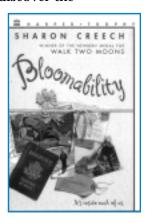
BY SHARON CREECH

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### **ABOUT THIS GUIDE**

Bloomability, the latest novel by Newbery medalist Sharon Creech, tells the coming-of-age tale of Dinnie, a thirteen-year-old girl uprooted from her parents' nomadic lifestyle to spend a year in Switzerland. Although Dinnie has never had a strong sense of belonging in her many residences, she dreads being taken from her family, the only constant in her ever-changing surroundings. But Dinnie's experiences overseas help her embrace and welcome such possibilities, and learn to discover the

"bloomabilities" that such opportunities have to offer. The discussion questions, suggested reading list, and author biography in this reading group guide are intended to spark discussion about the issues and topics raised in this charming and provoking book.



### **ABOUT THIS BOOK**

Dinnie is used to change, since her whole life has been comprised of moving to a new town every time her father excitedly stumbles upon a new opportunity. But when Dinnie's aunt and uncle invite her to stay with them and attend an American international school in Switzerland, she wants to rebel and stay with her family. "I was used to moving, used to packing up and following along like a robot, but I was tired of it. I wanted to stop moving and I wanted to be somewhere and stay somewhere and I wanted my family" (p. 17).

Dinnie arrives in Switzerland homesick, scared, and stubbornly refusing to enjoy herself. Throughout the course of the year, however, Dinnie not only becomes comfortable in her new surroundings, but also sees the appeal of the new experiences, struggles, and opportunities presented to her.

#### **CRITICAL ACCLAIM:**

"A deeply felt novel."

-Kirkus Reviews

"A story to stimulate both head and heart."

—ALA Booklist

"More than enough to satisfy."

—The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books

"Fun, interesting, engaging . . . a vicarious adventure." —Voice of Youth Advocates

## FOR DISCUSSION

- 1. Why does Dinnie refer to her time with her parents as her "first life," and her time in Switzerland as her "second life"? If her "third life" begins at the end of the book, how do you think it would differ from the first two?
- 2. Dinnie observes that both Lila and Guthrie have very strong personalities, and worries about whether she is as interesting as they are. Toward the end of the book, she is surprised when Guthrie calls her interesting. Why does he think this? Do you think Dinnie is interesting? Why or why not?

- 3. What appeals to Dinnie about struggling? How does she use being "full of struggles" to help her deal with her new life in Switzerland?
- 4. To Dinnie, Switzerland is a strange and unfamiliar place that grows to feel comfortable. What similarities does she discover between Switzerland and her various homes in America? What differences? How do both the similarities and differences help Dinnie appreciate her experiences there?
- 5. After Guthrie is rescued from the avalanche, Dinnie has a dream that her bubble is gone (pp. 228–29). What does that signify to Dinnie? How do the preceding events lead up to this revelation?
- 6. Explain the contrasting perspectives of Lila and Guthrie, taking into consideration Guthrie's story of the two prisoners. How does Dinnie's personality complement theirs?
- 7. Discuss Uncle Max's graduation speech about variety (p. 250). How do variety and acceptance at the international school affect Dinnie? How is it different from her previous experiences (consider Stella's advice on moving to a new place and fitting in, such as "Expect the worst" and "Dress plain the first day")? How does it make Dinnie feel about herself?