



H A R P E R • T R O P H

SHARON CREECH

WINNER OF THE NEWBERY MEDAL FOR
WALK TWO MOONS

Bloomability



It's inside each of us.

~: First Life ~:

In my first life, I lived with my mother, and my older brother and sister, Crick and Stella, and with my father when he wasn't on the road. My father was a trucker, or sometimes a mechanic or a picker, a plucker or painter. He called himself a Jack-of-all-trades (Jack was his real name), but sometimes there wasn't any trade in whatever town we were living in, so off he would go in search of a job somewhere else. My mother would start packing, and we'd wait for a phone call from him that would tell us it was time to join him.

He'd always say, "I found us a great place! Wait'll you see it!"

Each time we moved, we had fewer boxes, not more. My mother would say, "Do you really need all those *things*, Dinnie? They're just *things*. Leave them."

By the time I was twelve, we'd followed my father from Kentucky to Virginia to North Carolina

to Tennessee to Ohio to Indiana to Wisconsin to Oklahoma to Oregon to Texas to California to New Mexico. My things fit in one box. Sometimes we lived in the middle of a noisy city, but most of the time Dad had found us a tilted house on a forgotten road near a forgotten town.

My mother had been a city girl, my father a country boy; and as far as I could tell, my mother spent most of her time trying to forget that she'd been a city girl. Those few times that we lived in the middle of the city, though, she seemed as if she were right at home, in her real home, her permanent home. She'd get a job in an office or a design studio, instead of a diner. She knew how to use buses and weave in and out of crowds, and she didn't seem to hear the horns and sirens and jackhammers.

Those things drove my father crazy. "I *know* there's work here," he'd say, "but there's too many bodies and cars everywhere. You're like to get killed just stepping into the road. No place to raise kids."

My mother would be real quiet after he'd said something like this, and pretty soon he'd be off

looking for a better place to live, and she'd be packing again. My sister Stella had a theory that Dad was keeping us on the move so my mother's family wouldn't find us. He didn't trust a single one of her brothers or sisters, and he didn't trust her parents, either. He thought they had "airs" and would talk my mother into moving back to New York, where she'd come from. He said they looked down their noses at us.

Once, when I was seven or eight, and we were living in Wisconsin—or no, maybe it was Oklahoma—or it could've been Arkansas (I forgot Arkansas—we lived there for six months, I believe), a thin woman with gray hair pulled back in a tight bun was sitting in our kitchen one day when I came home from school. Before I could shake off my coat, she'd wrapped me in a perfumed hug and called me *carissima* and her *sweet kitten*.

"I'm not a kitten," I said, sliding out the side door. Crick was throwing a basketball at an invisible hoop.

"There's a lady in there," I said.

Crick aimed, shot that ball into a graceful high arc, and watched it bounce off the edge of



Kidnapped!

The kidnappers are actually her Aunt Sandy and Uncle Max, but that doesn't matter to Domenica Santolina Doone, better known as Dinnie. She feels as if she's being taken out of the country against her will. Certainly, no one asked *her* opinion. Dinnie is used to change—with her family constantly moving from town to town and state to state while her father searches for one new “opportunity” after another. But when her aunt and uncle whisk her away to an international school in Lugano, Switzerland, Dinnie feels that this might be one “opportunity” that isn't right for her.

Suddenly Dinnie's surrounded by kids from many different cultures, backgrounds, and beliefs. Home, and her first life, seem so far away. Can she adapt to a new country, a new home, and new friends? Or will it just be easier to close herself off—just survive—and never realize all the “bloomabilities” that are possible?

“A deeply felt novel.” —*Kirkus Reviews*

“A story to stimulate both head and heart.” —*ALA Booklist*

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Ages 8–12

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