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Chasing Redbird

By Sharon Creech



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It started out as an ordinary summer. But the minute thirteen-year-old Zinny covered the old, overgrown trail that ran through the woods behind her family's house, she realized that things were about to change.

Right from the start, Zinny knew that uncovering the trail would be more than just a summer project. It was her chance to finally make people notice her, and to have a place she could call her very own. But more than that, Zinny knew that the trail somehow held the key to all kinds of questions. And that -- the only way to understand her family, her Aunt Jessie's death, and herself, was to find out where it went.

From the author of the Newbery Medal-winning *Walk Two Moons*, here is an intricately woven tale of a young girl who sets out in search of her place in the world -- and discovers it in her own backyard.



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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Always the quiet (and often forgotten) middle child in a bustling family, Zinnia's life begins to change when she stumbles upon a hidden, overgrown pathway that stretches from the edge of her family's farm into the great unknown. Determined to find where the path leads, Zinnia begins the daunting task of uncovering brambles and weeds along every inch of its length. In powerful, honest, down-home prose, Newbery-winner Sharon Creech delivers a dazzling portrait of a girl who's not afraid to journey into her family's mysterious past in order to find her own way into adulthood. Watching Zinnia bloom will warm your heart.

From School Library Journal

Grade 5-8. Creech returns to Appalachia in this story of 13-year-old Zinny, a middle child struggling to find and accept herself plus look for a way to come to terms with the death of her beloved Aunt Jessie and her feelings of responsibility for that death. The novel revolves around an old overgrown trail that Zinny discovers and proceeds to resurrect. Meanwhile, her admirer, Jake Boone, is persistent about bringing her presents yet fails to convince her he is not really after her sister, May, as so many other boys have been. Uncle Nate seems to be losing touch with reality after his wife's death, and guilt rooted in the past resurfaces to confuse Zinny, who comes to feel that the trail she is uncovering will somehow bring sanity, safety, and a sense of identity to her life. It does, but in ways she could never have predicted. The journey for Zinny and readers is intriguing, delightful, and touching. Reminiscent of many novels about the rural South with wonderfully quirky characters and a focus on the setting of the natural world, this story seems much fresher and tangibly more in the present than most. Not as complex as Creech's *Walk Two Moons* (HarperCollins, 1994), there is still plenty to discuss such as the symbolism of the redbird in the title and the ethical issues surrounding Jake's gifts and Zinny's mistrust of his affection for her. ?Carol A. Edwards, Minneapolis Public Library

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From [Booklist](#)

Gr. 6⁺-9. Thirteen-year-old Zinny Taylor is on a mission. She wants to clear the overgrown trail that begins on her family farm and strew it with zinnias. She wants to do something important, and she wants to do it alone. Perhaps if she can complete her project, she will also untangle family secrets about her dead aunt and cousin and the ghost her uncle sees and will come to understand the passion a local boy has for her--or is it for her sister? Creech's work is ambitious, and in some aspects, she succeeds admirably. The characterizations are strong, especially the subtly shaded Zinny, who has her feet in both girlhood and adolescence, the past and the present. But Zinny's trailblazing as a metaphor for her perilous journey of self-discovery is overdone and, at times, flat-out unbelievable (Zinny's parents actually allow her to spend weeks camping alone in the Kentucky hills). A choice for better readers, who will find much to admire and who have the ability to move through the book's more ponderous moments. *Ilene Cooper*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Sheila Cyr:

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Charles Buffington:

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