



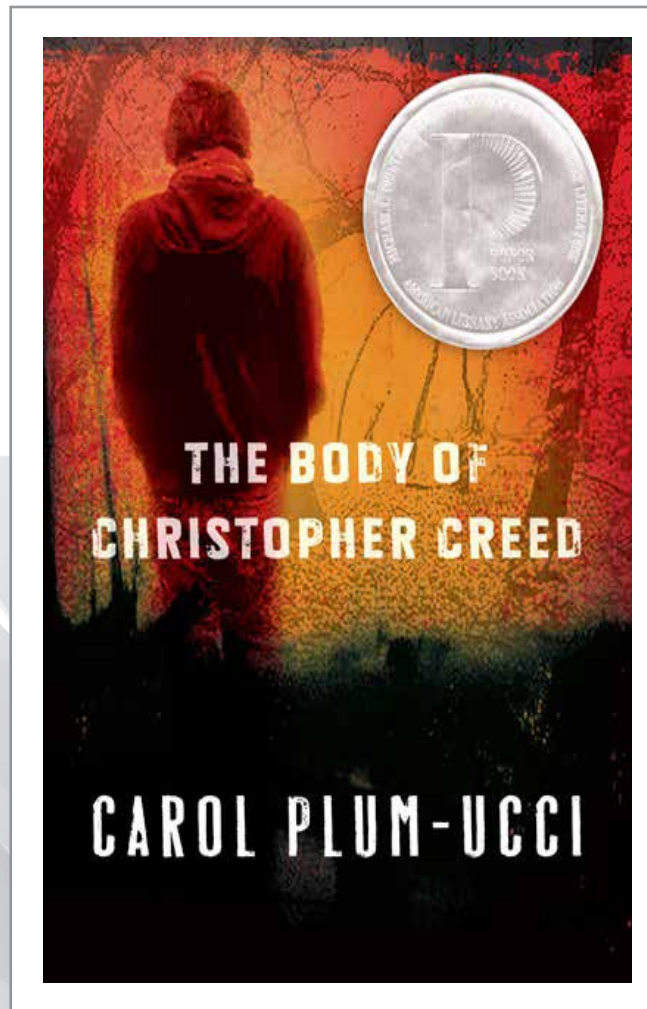
**TEACHER GUIDE**

**GRADES 9-12**

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

# **The Body of Christopher Creed**

Carol Plum-Ucci



**READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT**

# The Body of Christopher Creed

Carol Plum-Ucci

## TEACHER GUIDE

### NOTE:

The trade book edition of the novel used to prepare this guide is found in the Novel Units catalog and on the Novel Units website. Using other editions may have varied page references.

Please note: We have assigned Interest Levels based on our knowledge of the themes and ideas of the books included in the Novel Units sets, however, please assess the appropriateness of this novel or trade book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading with them. You know your students best!

---

**ISBN 978-1-50203-629-2**

Copyright infringement is a violation of Federal Law.

© 2020 by Novel Units, Inc., St. Louis, MO. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, translated, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any way or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise) without prior written permission from Novel Units, Inc.

Reproduction of any part of this publication for an entire school or for a school system, by for-profit institutions and tutoring centers, or for commercial sale is strictly prohibited.

Novel Units is a registered trademark of Conn Education.

Printed in the United States of America.

To order, contact your  
local school supply store, or:

Toll-Free Fax: 877.716.7272

Phone: 888.650.4224

3901 Union Blvd., Suite 155

St. Louis, MO 63115

sales@novelunits.com

novelunits.com

## Table of Contents

Summary .....	3
About the Author .....	3
Characters .....	3
Initiating Activities.....	4
Vocabulary Activities.....	4
Six Sections .....	16
Each section contains: Summary, Vocabulary, Discussion Questions, and Supplementary Activities	
Post-reading Discussion Questions .....	26
Post-reading Extension Activities.....	27
Assessment.....	28
Scoring Rubric.....	29
Glossary.....	30

## Skills and Strategies

### Thinking

Analysis, evaluation,  
prediction, research,  
inference, self-evaluation

### Literary Elements

Similes, metaphors,  
expressive language

### Writing

Description,  
compare/contrast, diary and  
journal writing, letter, poetry,  
newspaper article

### Vocabulary

Word map, charades,  
glossary

### Listening/Speaking

Drama, personal experience,  
discussion, debate

### Fine Arts

Skit, art, collage, caricature,  
diorama

### Across the Curriculum

History, Social Studies,  
Current Events

**Genre:** young-adult fiction

**Setting:** Steepleton, a small town

**Point-of-View:** first-person participant

**Conflict:** person vs. society, person vs. person, person vs. self

**Themes:** intolerance, bullying, small-town values, prejudice, coming-of-age, truth

**Tone:** mysterious, somber

**Date of First Publication:** 2000

## Summary

Christopher Creed, an outcast teenager who is tormented and labeled “weird,” disappears from the town of Steepleton. As rumors abound, Torey and his friends create possible scenarios for Christopher’s disappearance. Torey soon realizes that his friends are not such good people, and he begins to spend more time with Ali and Bo, local teens from “the wrong side of the tracks.” As the mystery of Christopher Creed unfolds, Torey befriends Ali and Bo, defends them in front of others, and discovers an inner strength that helps him cope with the pressures surrounding him.

## About the Author

Carol Plum-Ucci (1957–) grew up on the island of Brigantine off the coast of New Jersey, where she resides today. Her father was the funeral director of the town. She lived near a wooded area called the Pine Barrens, a basis for many ghostly tales during her youth. Plum-Ucci attended Purdue University and earned a communications degree. She later continued her education at Rutgers University. While attending Rutgers, she published her first novel, *The Body of Christopher Creed* (2000), which received the Michael L. Printz Honor. This novel was also the winner of the South Carolina Young Adult Book Award, a finalist for the Edgar Allan Poe Award for Young Adult Mystery, and was included on the ALA Popular Paperbacks for Young Adults list. Other works by Carol Plum-Ucci include *What Happened to Lani Garver* (2002) and *The She* (2003).

## Characters

**Torey Adams:** teenage boy; disturbed by Christopher Creed’s disappearance; evaluates himself and others harshly

**Leo:** a student at Torey’s new school; reminds Torey of Christopher Creed

**Christopher Creed:** teenage boy who has disappeared, causing much speculation in the school and the town; never appears in the novel, but his presence is strongly felt by all

**Alex and Ryan:** Torey’s best friends; apathetic about Christopher Creed’s circumstances; theorize about the cause of his disappearance

**Leandra:** Torey’s girlfriend; superficial person who likes to gossip

**Renee Bowen:** teenage daughter of the chief of police; spiteful and hateful

**Ali McDermott:** childhood friend of Torey; earned a bad reputation in school; has a troubled home life

# Word Map

**Synonyms**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Magazine cut-out, drawing, or symbol that shows what the word means**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Word**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Definition in your own words**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Word used in a sentence**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Chapters One–Four, pp. 1–55

Torey Adams has transferred from his school in Steepleton to a boarding school. He narrates the story as he recalls the events that led to his transfer. He tells about a boy named Christopher Creed who disappeared from Steepleton the previous year. Christopher Creed was an outcast who had no friends and was harassed by most students. With only an e-mail to the principal, Creed disappeared without a trace. His parents appealed to the community to help find their son, even as rumors began as to the whereabouts of Christopher. Torey discusses Christopher's home life with Ali McDermott, a disreputable girl who lives next door to the Creeds. Ali describes Mrs. Creed's strange behavior toward her son.

### Vocabulary

embellishing (2)  
ogling (4)  
miffed (5)  
infatuating (7)  
loincloth (20)  
hagged (24)  
sinister (25)  
radical (25)  
winsome (31)  
glum (32)  
inept (33)  
malice (37)  
reincarnation (47)

### Discussion Questions

1. Briefly describe the town of Steepleton. (*It is a safe town where people can leave their doors unlocked or walk after dark without being hurt. Most of the townspeople appear to be fairly wealthy, and they look down on the lower classes (i.e., the boons). On the surface, Steepleton appears to be a very nice place to live, where children eventually go to college and become successful adults. p. 24*)
2. What do the comments about Christopher Creed's disappearance and possible death on pages 28–32 of the novel tell the reader about the students at the school? (*Answers will vary. Suggestions: They are callous, unfeeling, unconcerned, insensitive, unsympathetic, hardhearted, pitiless, uncaring, and uncompassionate.*)
3. How have the students harassed Christopher Creed? What is their rationale for it? (*Torey hit him and gave him a bloody nose in sixth grade. He thinks, "I kept wondering if he felt pain" [p. 30]. Other friends of Torey's also hit him, like Ryan who "[tortured] the guy until he cried" [p. 31]. Christopher had no close friends and was not part of the clique; they say he is a wimp and is obnoxious. After his disappearance, Torey says, "I think we tortured the guy enough when he was alive" [p. 32].*)
4. What does the reader find out about Christopher from his e-mail? (*Christopher knows that he had trouble with relationships. He knows that people don't like him. Christopher plans to make that wish come true by disappearing. He has looked around him and wishes that he could be someone else, and then he lists the cool kids, like Torey and Alex. He questions why life has not dealt him the same things the other popular boys have. He tells Mr. Ames that he has no ill feelings toward the popular people, but wants to search out some life answers for himself. pp. 36–38*)
5. Christopher stated in his e-mail that he wanted to be like some of the popular boys. How would you feel if someone wanted to be like you? (*Answers will vary.*)
6. Ali, who once was part of the crowd, is now on the outside. What hints does she give that she is having problems or trouble in her life? (*Torey mentions that she was once part of the group, but in the last year she was not with them much. She has gained a reputation at school; people do not see much of her anymore, and Ali thinks people don't like her. She is sarcastic, and Torey notices a lot of changes in Ali's behavior and appearance. Torey recognizes that something is really wrong, but Ali will not tell him what it is. pp. 42–54*)

- Torey did not realize that “Creed was so down on himself” (p. 39). How could people not have noticed this about Christopher? (*Answers will vary. Suggestions: Most students are too involved with their own group and their own life to take time to think about others’ feelings.*)
- Prediction:** How will Torey’s concern for Christopher affect him?

### Supplementary Activities

- Character Analysis: Begin a Character Web (see page 9 of this guide) for Torey.
- Literary Devices: Begin the Metaphors and Similes chart on page 10 of this guide. Continue this activity as you read the novel.
- Art: Create a collage representing how Christopher Creed might have felt prior to his disappearance. Use your own illustrations and phrases, as well as ones cut out from magazines and newspapers. Display your completed collage in the classroom.
- Writing: Write a two- to three-paragraph essay about a time when you treated someone unkindly or unfairly. Describe how it made you feel afterward and how you imagine the other person felt.
- Research: Research instances of peer pressure resulting in tragedy. Write a brief essay or give an oral report on your findings.
- Debate: As a class, divide into two groups and debate the issue of whether or not Mrs. Creed was a good or effective parent for Christopher. One group should defend Mrs. Creed, and the other group should oppose her. Then, as an entire class, discuss whether Mrs. Creed’s parenting methods could be both positive and negative for her son.

## Chapters Five–Eight, pp. 56–106

Torey begins to mature in this section. Mrs. Creed accuses the boons of murdering her son; meanwhile, she searches Christopher’s room nightly for his diary. Torey goes to see Ali and meet her boyfriend and discovers why Ali hates Mrs. Creed and her own promiscuous mother. Bo Richardson arrives as Ali’s “mystery” boyfriend, and he immediately attempts to protect Ali and Greg from Mrs. McDermott’s abusive boyfriend. Bo decides to retrieve the diary from Christopher’s house next door.

### Vocabulary

accommodate (59)  
 smirk (59)  
 chronic (59)  
 cockeyed (73)  
 groped (74)  
 psychotic (75)  
 leering (76)  
 agonize (77)  
 wafting (84)  
 instinctively (85)  
 ingenious (91)  
 diabolical (95)  
 seething (105)

### Discussion Questions

- How does Torey describe his girlfriend, Leandra? Do you think he really likes her? (*He talks about how attractive she is and how lucky he is to be with her. He feels admired by everyone around him for dating Leandra. Torey comments that she is not very smart, but people like her. Leandra tries to apply her principles, but she does not do it very well. She gossips and accuses the boons of killing Christopher when she has no proof. Torey believes that Leandra is selfish, and her gossiping bothers him. His attraction to Leandra appears to be superficial. There is not much depth to the relationship. Answers will vary. pp. 58–64*)