

## Book Rationale

**School:** Arrowhead

**Teacher:** Freeburg, Johansen, Judd, Vacek

**Title:** *The Body of Christopher Creed* (ISBN-10 0786816411)

**Author:** Carol Plum-Ucci

**Course:** Modern Literature

**Approximate date(s) book will be used:**

**Semester 2**

- ❑ **The entire class will study this book, but students may choose an alternative.**
- ❑ **Some other appropriate books an individual student might read in place of this book:**  
Alternate books may include *Freewill* by Chris Lynch and *Acceleration* by Graham Macnamee.
- ❑ **Ways in which the book is especially appropriate for students in Modern Literature:**  
*The Body of Christopher Creed* deals with the problems that arise when students are excluded, ridiculed, or simply labeled. It also follows the story of these problems through to completion, detailing the fallout and damage that exclusion can do to people on all sides of the interpersonal equation.
- ❑ **Way in which the book is especially pertinent to the objectives of this course or unit:**  
The book is primarily a mystery, so it will diversify the genres represented by the course. It also represents classic literary themes in a very contemporary fashion.
- ❑ **Special problems that might arise in relation to the book and some planned activities that handle these problems:**  
Mild language, discomfort about topic of insiders/outsideers. Classroom discussion will help students deal with these topics.
- ❑ **Summary of the book:**  
The often-tortured class weirdo has disappeared, leaving an enigmatic note on the school library computer. Is he a runaway, a suicide, a murder victim?

Sixteen-year-old Torey Adams and his friends remember beating up Chris Creed when his gentle but obnoxious ways exasperated them. Now that he is gone, they joke uneasily about him to ease their guilt. The town is full of ugly rumors, as Torey's lawyer mother tells them "See, guys, this is what happens when a kid suffers a personal tragedy. Nobody wants to take responsibility. Nobody wants to admit they had a part in it. So, they spend a lot of time pointing the finger, and things just get worse and worse." Suspicion of murder conveniently falls on big, tough Bo Richardson, an outcast "boon" from the boondocks edge of town. Torey's smug assumptions about people are rattled when he discovers that his childhood friend Ali is secretly romantically involved with Bo, who displays surprising tenderness and maturity in caring for her.

The three try to solve the mystery of Chris's disappearance by attempting to steal his diary, but only succeed in implicating themselves, as the town is consumed with rumors and the revelation of adult secrets. Torey begins to find himself distanced from his other friends by his growing understanding of the importance of compassion toward those who are different. *The Body of Christopher Creed* challenges teens to think about the damage done when lines of exclusion are drawn between people.

□ **Awards/ Reviews for this book:**

Michael L. Printz Award for Excellence in Young Adult Literature - 2001 Honor Book

ALA YALSA Best Book for Young Adults

IRA - CBC Children's Choice - 2001