



A Conversation with Sharon Chriscoe

Author of
The Sparrow and the Trees

When did you become interested in writing?

When my three children were small, we had a stray cat that decided to have her litter of kittens at our house. Once they were old enough to run around, the mama cat and her kittens discovered our back porch. One day, as they were romping about on the porch, my husband said “You should write a story about those kittens playing. They’re so funny.” My kids jumped at that idea and thought it would be the coolest thing ever. So, the next day I sat down and began writing a story about four little kittens and their mischief. Soon I discovered that writing was a passion I never knew I had before. And I never looked back. That was back in 2005 and I have been writing ever since.

When are you most creative?

There is never a set time for me on creativity. Sometimes it comes when I least expect it. But when inspiration hits, I always answer, even if it is in the form of note taking for later.

What was your incentive to write this particular book?

I love the Native American folklore, *Why The Trees Lose Their Leaves*, and it was exciting to base my own story on that wonderful folklore. It was the story I was meant to write. I was thrilled when Arbordale agreed and offered publication.

What is most rewarding and/or challenging about writing children’s books?



The most rewarding aspect of writing *The Sparrow and The Trees* for Arbordale is knowing that children all around the world are going to read and learn from my book. Arbordale is so fantastic with the amount of educational elements they include with each of their books, from online resources to worksheets to Creative Minds Information --- there is something for everyone to learn. I learned a lot while researching this book!

How did you approach the research for this story?

Since this is a folklore retelling, I made sure to keep *The Sparrow and The Trees* as close to the original as possible but with the addition of kid appeal and lots of cuddle factor.

Are there any children's books or adult books that inspired you to be a writer?

Secret Hum of a Daisy, Circa Now, The Meaning of Maggie, and A Ring of Endless Light.

That's a hard question because in some ways, they all do. Each book I read teaches me something new about the craft of writing. Even though I didn't become a writer until adulthood, as a child I loved to read yet I never attempted to write any stories of my own.

Do you have any advice for parents of young readers and writers?

So there really wasn't one (or even ten) books that opened that door. That actually was courtesy of four kittens and a very insightful husband on a warm summer day.



Read to your children every day. Make it a fun, memorable experience and they will become lifelong readers. One of my favorite quotes is "Children are made readers on the laps of their parents." --- Emilie Buchwald.

What do you have coming next?

My next picture book releases fall 2016. *Race Car Dreams* will be published by Running Press Kids.

Some of my favorite books as a child were *Corduroy*, *Little Bear*, and *Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs*.

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As an adult, I devour all varieties of children's books. I love a great character driven picture book like *Penguin*, *Pigeon*, or *Olivia*. Biographies such as *On A Beam of Light*, or anything written by Dr. Seuss and Mo Willems. Unique and adorable picture books such as *Backhoe Joe* and fun twists on Christmas books like *A Cookie For Santa*.

I also enjoy reading books for older children and I'm currently writing my very first middle grade novel. I love it when a writer invites me into their world and I see it through the eyes of their characters. A few of my recent favorites are *The*

