

**Subj: Absolutely Normal Chaos booknotes**  
**Date: 8/18/2004 7:19:59 PM Central Standard Time**  
**From: [Kmorantravel@aol.com](mailto:Kmorantravel@aol.com)**  
**To: [ScottxButler](mailto:ScottxButler)**

**ABSOLUTELY NORMAL CHAOS**

Sharon Creech

**SETTING:** Mary Lou lives at 4059 Buxton Road in Easton, Ohio. Easton is ten miles from the big city. She lives on the farthest edge of the school district (2 miles from school). Another part of this story takes place on Aunt Radene's farm in West Virginia.  
 The start of her journal is on Tuesday, June 12 and ends on Wednesday, September 5.

**CHARACTERS:**

- \*Mr. Birkway – new English teacher to whom journal will be turned in to at the end of summer
- \*Mrs. Furtz – lady who just moved in across the street from the Finney Family
- \*Mrs. Zollar – English teacher, assigned summer journal to students
- \*Sam Finney – father, geologist spending his days drawing maps
- \*Sally Finney – mother, oral historian (tape-records stories that elderly people tell her)
- \*Maggie Finney – 17, oldest, boy-crazy
- \*Mary Lou Finney – main character, 13, her main chore is to vacuum and dust upstairs, likes Alex
- \*Dennis – 12, gets into trouble
- \*Doug – 8, quiet, calls himself a “poor little slob”
- \*Tommy – 4, spoiled, messy eater
- \*Carl Ray – Radene's oldest, cousin to Mary Lou, tall, skinny, blond hair, freckles, tiny eyes, tiny nose, small head, searching to find his real father
- \*Alex Cheevey – lives in Norton, skin is always pink, good basketball player, Mary Lou likes him
- \*Christy/Megan – girls at school
- \*Beth Ann – Mary Lou's best friend, lives right around the corner from Mary Lou, has an older sister
- \*Mr. Furtz – neighbor, funny looking, lots of freckles, bought the hardware store downtown, died of a heart attack, Carl Ray's real father
- \*Derek – Beth Ann's boyfriend
- \*Cathy/Barry Furtz – neighbors
- \*Kenny – Maggie's boyfriend
- \*Mr. Biggers – lawyer representing Mr. Furtz
- \*Mr. Cheevey – Alex's dad, quirky, serious, tall
- \*Mrs. Cheevey – Alex's mom, a little odd, changes moods quickly
- \*Radene – Mary Lou's uncle's wife, lives on a farm in West Virginia
- \*Uncle Carl Joe – Mary Lou's dad's brother (uncle)
- \*Arvie Joe, John Roy, Lee Bob, Sue Ann, Sally Lynn, Brenda Mae – Carl Ray's brothers and sisters

**QUESTIONS:**

- \*Name the character that goes out in the garden and pulls weeds when his kids are driving him crazy.
- \*...does a boy pretend that he is visiting the Murphy's on Winston Rd., when he is hoping to see a girl that he is attracted to.
- \*...does a family temporarily send their son to live with cousins.
- \*.....do cousins in West Virginia have no phone
- \*...does a boy have to go to the emergency room when a bed spring tore right into his knee? (Dennis)
- \*...does a class read the Odyssey and Poems of Robert Frost?
- \*...does a family have a hugely complicated chore system where every year there is a big meeting where they are supposed to swap jobs?
- \*...does a character often respond “Don't rightly know.” ← who says this? ⇒ Carl Ray
- \*...does a character get a job at a hardware store?
- \*...does a character call upon a “muse” (a goddess) who sits around inspiring people whenever she feels like it (Homer).
- \*...are many gods/goddesses mentioned in the Odyssey.

- \*...did a character have the same initials as the man he went to view at the funeral home?
- \*...does a girl get concerned that her parents aren't taking their vitamins?
- \*...does a man's brother take over the hardware store after he dies?
- \*...does a family go to Windy Rock on the 4th of July where there is a legend concerning an Indian maiden who fell to her death from a cliff.
- \*...does a father make a speech to his family about Independence and Freedom, on the 4th of July.
- \*...was a character told that someone, who wants to remain anonymous, wants to give him \$5000 now and the rest of the money to put into a trust fund for college education.
- \*...did a girl count leaves on a tree, to pass time (while Christy was talking to Alex).
- \*...is a family looking thru a Sears catalogue, hoping to hint to Carl Ray about presents they would like to receive?
- \*QUOTE: "It seems that whenever you are sad or just normal, you're always wishing you were happy, but when you're happy, you start worrying about when all this happiness is going to end." (Mary Lou)
- \*...does the main character compare the ups and downs of life to the wheel of fortune.
- \*...does a boy's grandfather give his wife (grandmother) a negligee for her birthday?
- \*...do girls form a GGP (girls going places) club?
- \*...does an English teacher introduce her students to poetry?
- \*...does a character sneak around and never make his bed?
- \*Aunt Radene and her family lived on a great farm in West Virginia with a cemetery in the front (they tell a lot of ghost stories) and a big hill in the back and an enormous barn and a swimming hole.
- \*...does a mother "forbid" her daughter to say "God", "stupid", and "stuff".
- \*...did C.F. give a boy with the same initials, a gold ring with a black stone.
- \*...do a girl and a boy give each other the nicknames "Cleopatra" and "Antony" for one another.
- \*...does a girl look in a thesaurus to find substitute words for "God", "stupid", and "stuff".
- \*...was a character's mother wearing a black cocktail dress, pearls, and a pair of tennis shoes, and on her head was a baseball cap. (Mrs. Cheevey) She shot a bow and arrow at the garage door.
- \*...does a character not tell his family about money he receives and also about a trust that is set up for his college education?
- \*...does the author use metaphors to explain?
- \*...do kids enjoy telling gory ghost stories?
- \*...does a boy wonder what parents teach their children in the city. The girl answers that her parents are big on manners.
- \*...does a girl frequently have very vivid dreams at night which relate to what is currently happening in her life?
- \*...was a boy's favorite meal fried chicken, mashed potatoes and corn on the cob.
- \*...did a character mysteriously receive money, and then buy presents for his aunt, uncle and cousins?
- \*...did a character come to Easton to find his real father?
- \*...did a mother read an article about adoption and therefore decided to tell her son about his real father?
- \*...does a girl reveal to the reader how many times she and her boyfriend kiss?
- \*...do a girlfriend and boyfriend have the following nicknames for each other – Poseidon and Athena?
- \*...does a character use the following words: alpha and omega, deity omnipotent, king of kings – to express herself?