***The Sweetest Sound***

by Sherri Winston

**Annotation**

For ten-year-old Cadence Jolly, birthdays are a constant reminder of all that has changed since her mother skipped town with dreams of becoming a star. Cadence inherited that musical soul, she can't deny it, but otherwise she couldn't be more different - she's as shy as can be.

She did make a promise last year that she would try to break out of her shell, just a little. And she prayed that she'd get the courage to do it. As her eleventh birthday draws near, she realizes time is running out. And when a secret recording of her singing leaks and catches the attention of her whole church, she needs to decide what's better: deceiving everyone by pretending it belongs to someone else, or finally stepping into the spotlight.

**Book Talk**

Read chapter 1 aloud. Ask students to think about a time they were shy about sharing their talent. Have students write their ideas on a musical note cut out from construction paper. Use in a display.

**Author on the Internet**

* Website: https://voteforcupcakes.com/
* Twitter: @sherriwinston
* Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/sherri.d.winston?ref=br\_rs
* Instagram: @authorsherriwinston
* <https://thebrownbookshelf.com/2009/02/25/sherri-winston/>
* <https://aalbc.com/authors/author.php?author_name=Sherri+Winston>

**Items to use in a library display**

* Musical notes cut outs: students could write what they talent they would want to share. Display notes on a bulletin board display: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/315392780124735316/>
* Use old records as balloons and a silhouette of a little girl <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/864620828433795933/>
* A stuffed mouse
* A long pink/red scarf with fringes

**Book Club Discussion Questions/Topics**

* *If you could give the book another title, what would it be?*
* *Which characters would you like to meet in real life?*
* *What do you wish was different about the ending?*
* *Would the book make a cool movie? Video game? TV show?*
* *What is one thing you could ask the author if you could talk to her?*

**First Line of the Book**

“Birthdays are a problem for me.”

**Non-Fiction Companion Title(s)**

* Leontyne Price: Voice of a Century by Carole Boston Weatherford
* Libba: The Magnificent Musical Life of Elizabeth Cottenby Laura Veirs

**What to Read Next**

* President of the Whole Fifth Grade by Sherri Winston
* Brown Girl Dreaming by Jacqueline Woodson

**Other Books by this Author**

* The Kayla Chronicles
* Acting
* President of the Whole Fifth Grade
* President of the Whole Sixth Grade

**Additional Resources**

* Music:

-I Go to the Rock by Whitney Houston <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eubsBeZS79k>

-Blue Moon by Billie Holiday <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ntDnwBiORu8>

-In the Morning by Mary Mary <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uIxJP7fbqd0>

-One Sweet Day by Mariah Carey and Boyz II Men <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UXxRyNvTPr8>

-Cannon in D by Johann Pachelbel <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Af372EQLck>

* Poetry:

Suspense by Pat Mora <http://www.gcisd-k12.org/cms/lib4/TX01000829/Centricity/Domain/1823/Suspense%20poem.pdf>

* Interview with the author:

<https://www.booklistonline.com/Books-and-Authors-Talking-with-Sherri-Winston-Maggie-Reagan/pid=7624517>

<http://littlebrownlibrary.com/lb-school-podcast-sherri-winston/>

**Name that Book**

"You know, church is like that. Sometimes the pastor is talking and all you can think about is eating pancakes when he is done. But sometimes he says something and, just like that, it feels like he's talking absolutely, positively to you!" (pg 17)

“Sometimes when the doorbell rang unexpectedly, for a brief second, I thought she’d be there. Waiting. And I never felt sure if the idea of her showing up made me happy or sad.” (p. 49)

“I was not exactly aware of exactly whenit happened. When I lost myself inside the song and began to sing. Really sing. But I did. My hands were stretched out above my head. I made a fist that pumped to the eighth notes. I felt the rhythmic changes in tempo shift inside ma like a pulse. When I needed to climb the musical scale, I touched my hand to my heart, the same way Aunt Fannie did, and opened my mouth to push out all the air and song in my body.” (p. 108)

“And then…

I drew a breath. Earth continued its orbit. Nothing bad happened. I’d said how I was really feeling, and the Earth continued to orbit the sun.” (p. 221)

“How long had I been waiting and hoping to write a perfect ending for the story of me, center stage and sharing the moment with the woman who’d love me for so many years? In the story I’d wanted to write, that woman had been my mother. Yet, here was someone I love deeploy, who’d been here the whole time.” (p. 237)