

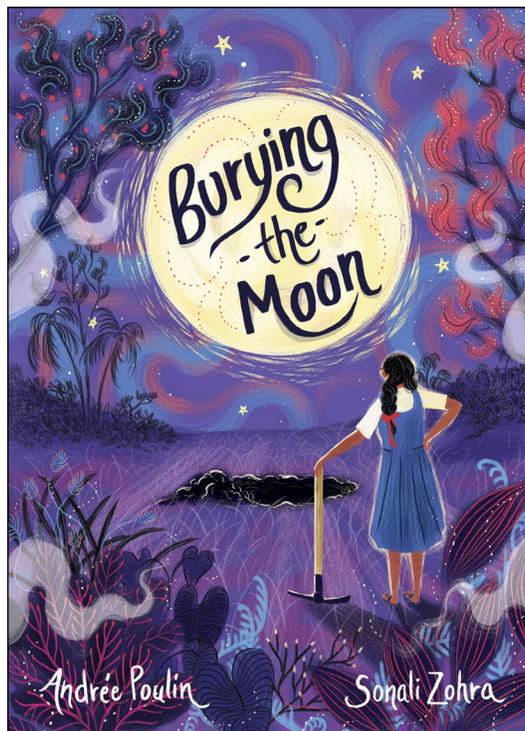


# GROUNDWOOD STUDY GUIDES

## Burying the Moon

*Written by Andrée Poulin*

*Illustrated by Sonali Zohra*



A beautifully illustrated novel in verse about a young Indian girl who tackles the taboos around sanitation in her village.

### **CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS**

Ages 9 to 12 / Grades 4 to 7

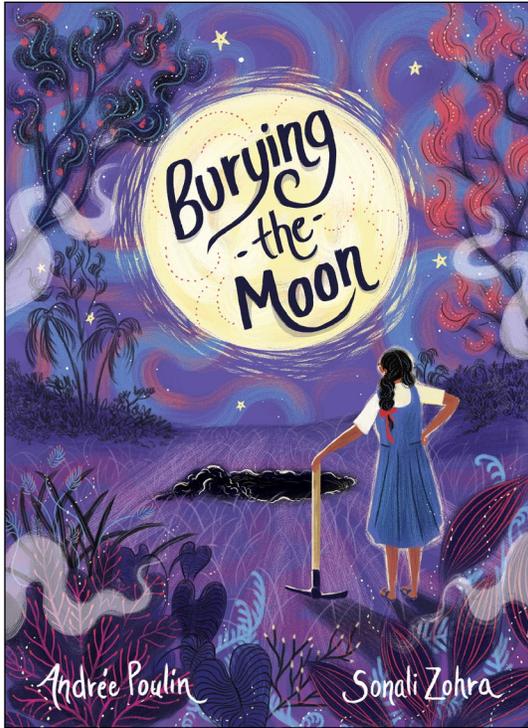
JUVENILE FICTION / People & Places / Asia / Social Themes / Health & Daily Living

Full-color illustrations / 8.5 x 6 / 112 pages

Hardcover with jacket / \$19.99 / 978-1-77306-604-2

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[groundwoodbooks.com](http://groundwoodbooks.com)



## BOOK DESCRIPTION

Young Latika lives in India, in a village with no toilets. This causes serious problems for girls, but no one in the village wants to talk about this shameful problem. So Latika decides to take action by herself.

## TOILETS IN THE WORLD

More than 4 billion people do not have access to toilets, which causes serious social and environmental problems. This global problem is an issue that concerns many disciplines: geography, social sciences, equity and human rights. This topic is linked to learning about the social world, and more specifically openness to the diversity of societies.

Present the following video about World Toilet Day (held on November 19) to explain the importance of access to sanitation:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EPKa8A8Pm3U>

## FREE VERSE

*Burying the Moon* is a novel written in free verse. In this literary form, text is divided into segments rather than in continuous paragraphs. It is called free verse because there are no restrictions on the number of syllables, no need to rhyme and very little punctuation. It is poetry without constraints.



## UNDERSTANDING AND INTERPRETING THE TEXT

### INTERACTIVE READING

*Burying the Moon* is well suited to reading aloud in class, because the text in free verse allows students to appreciate the musicality of the words and the flow of the sentences. You will find suggestions on the next page highlighting the key moments of the story, allowing you to work on inferencing with the students and get them to read between the lines.

BEFORE READING		
	Ask students to observe the front cover. Get them to notice that the little girl is digging a hole. Ask them to make guesses for why she is doing this.	<b>Comprehension</b>
	Read the back cover to establish reading expectations. What will you be asking about as you read this book?	<b>Interpretation and inference</b>
p. 39	Why do you think Latika is so interested in Mr. Samir?	<b>Comprehension</b>
p. 41	Do you agree with Latika's mother when she claims that one cannot speak to the government representative about the lack of bathrooms?	<b>Reaction</b>
p. 72	It is nighttime. Latika has overcome her fear and starts to dig a hole in the field. What will happen next?	<b>Prediction</b>
pp. 76–77	There is no text on these pages, but this scene is important for the rest of the story. What is happening here? Why does this illustration have an impact on the story?	<b>Inferences based on illustrations</b>
p. 79	According to you, is the sarpanch right when he calls Latika a thief?	<b>Interpretation</b>
pp. 30, 32, 89, 91, 94	The author often uses repetition in the story. What effect does this have on our understanding of the story?	<b>Interpretation</b>
p. 114	The story ends with a scene like the one at the beginning (page 9), but something has changed. What is it?	<b>Comprehension</b>

AFTER READING	
Discuss the cover page again and have students consider their initial predictions.	<b>Comprehension</b>
What is the most important moment of the story for you? Why?	<b>Interpretation</b>
What do the illustrations add to your understanding of the text?	<b>Appreciation and reaction</b>
The author has written the text in free verse. Is this style effective to tell this story? Why?	<b>Appreciation and reaction</b>

## CHARACTERS DRIVE THE STORY

The qualities and character traits of a person are directly linked to their behaviour. The chart below shows key moments in the story that can be associated with Latika's character traits. Fill in the chart based on the following list:

- Idealistic: wants to change things
- Courageous
- Rebellious
- Helpful
- Sensitive
- Articulate: able to express herself
- Curious
- Resourceful
- Likes to learn
- Bold: not afraid to venture off the beaten path
- Empathetic
- Proud

	LATIKA'S QUALITIES AND CHARACTER TRAITS	LATIKA'S ACTIONS
1.		She doesn't like the moon, which takes away her dignity when she must relieve herself in the Field of Shame (p. 9).
2.		She tries to find out what an engineer does (p. 49).
3.		Even when her mother tells her not to, she dares to speak (p. 86-95).
4.		She brings water to her grandmother and aunt (p. 20-22).
5.		When the sarpanch is shouting insults at her, she hides behind her grandmother's bed (p. 62).
6.		She gets up at night to "borrow" a pickaxe. She is afraid of scorpions and humans, but she does it anyway (p. 71).
7.		She wants to be like an engineer and build something useful (p. 72).
8.		She dares to think what no one wants to think and do what no one has done before her (p. 43).
9.		She feels bad for her big sister Ranjini who must stop going to school. She does not like to see her older sister cry (p. 87).
10.		She loves school (p. 26).
11.		She explains to Mr. Samir why she wants to bury the moon (p. 99).
12.		She has an idea to solve the problem and decides to go ahead without anyone's help (p. 68).

## GOING FURTHER

### WRITING A VARIETY OF TEXTS

- To explore the letter-writing form, ask students to put themselves in Latika's shoes and write a letter to Mr. Samir, explaining what is happening in the village two years after the construction of the toilets.
- Ask students to write two short stories, either by themselves or in groups of two. The first story can be written in the form of a traditional poem using rhyme and possibly metre. The second story can be written in the form of free verse, in the manner of *Burying the Moon*.

### THINKING ABOUT ETHICAL QUESTIONS

- Going to the bathroom is a taboo subject. It's precisely for this reason that the lack of access to toilets remains such an important problem in the world. How can we talk about difficult subjects to bring about change?
- Resilience is the ability to not get discouraged by difficulties. It is also the ability to rebound after living through a difficult experience and to flourish in spite of challenges. How does Latika demonstrate resilience?
- In Latika's village, things are different for girls and for boys. How? Why? Do you think that equal opportunity is important?

## ORAL COMMUNICATION

### IN A CHARACTER'S SHOES

Ask students to choose a character from a particular scene in the novel. Ask them to write a short monologue (two or three minutes) about what this character thinks and feels during that scene. The student can film themselves reciting their monologue or present it in front of the class.

## VISUAL ARTS

Ask students to make a list of situations they would like to see change, as Latika does for the absence of toilets in her village. Then ask them to choose a topic from the list and use it to create a work (drawing, painting, collage, mural etc.) to bring attention to the situation.

## CHARACTERS DRIVE THE STORY—ANSWERS

The qualities and character traits of a person are directly linked to their behaviour. The chart below shows key moments in the story that can be associated with Latika's character traits. Fill in the chart based on the following list:

- Idealistic: wants to change things
- Courageous
- Rebellious
- Bold: not afraid to venture off the beaten path
- Helpful
- Sensitive
- Articulate: able to express herself
- Empathetic
- Proud
- Curious
- Resourceful
- Likes to learn



	LATIKA'S QUALITIES AND CHARACTER TRAITS	LATIKA'S ACTIONS
1.	Latika is proud.	She doesn't like the moon, which takes away her dignity when she must relieve herself in the Field of Shame (p. 9).
2.	Latika is curious.	She tries to find out what an engineer does (p. 49).
3.	Latika is rebellious.	Even when her mother tells her not to, she dares to speak (pp. 86-95).
4.	Latika is helpful.	She brings water to her grandmother and aunt (pp. 20-22).
5.	Latika is sensitive.	When the sarpanch is shouting insults at her, she hides behind her grandmother's bed (p. 62).
6.	Latika is brave.	She gets up at night to "borrow" a pickaxe. She is afraid of scorpions and humans, but she does it anyway (p. 71).
7.	Latika is idealistic (she wants to change things).	She wants to be like an engineer and build something useful (p. 72).
8.	Latika is bold—she is not afraid to venture off the beaten path.	She dares to think what no one wants to think and do what no one has done before her (p. 43).
9.	Latika is empathetic.	She feels bad for her big sister Ranjini who must stop going to school. She does not like to see her older sister cry (p. 87).
10.	Latika loves to learn.	She loves school (p. 26).
11.	Latika is articulate—she is able to express herself.	She explains to Mr. Samir why she wants to bury the moon (p. 99).
12.	Latika is resourceful.	She has an idea to solve the problem and decides to go ahead without anyone's help (p. 68).

## AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATOR BIOGRAPHIES



**Andrée Poulin** was born in Orléans, Ontario and today lives in Gatineau, Quebec. She has published more than fifty books and has been a finalist several times for the Governor General’s Award and the TD literary award, winning the latter in 2014 for *La plus grosse poutine du monde*. She worked in international development assistance for more than a decade before becoming an author.



**SONALI ZOHRA** is a Indian illustrator living in Bangalore. She studied fine arts and photography, and holds a master’s degree in design from the University of South Wales, in Australia. She is fully aware of the lack of sanitation facilities as depicted in this novel. When she was small, she would often accompany her father, who worked for UNICEF India on projects concerning women’s health in rural areas.