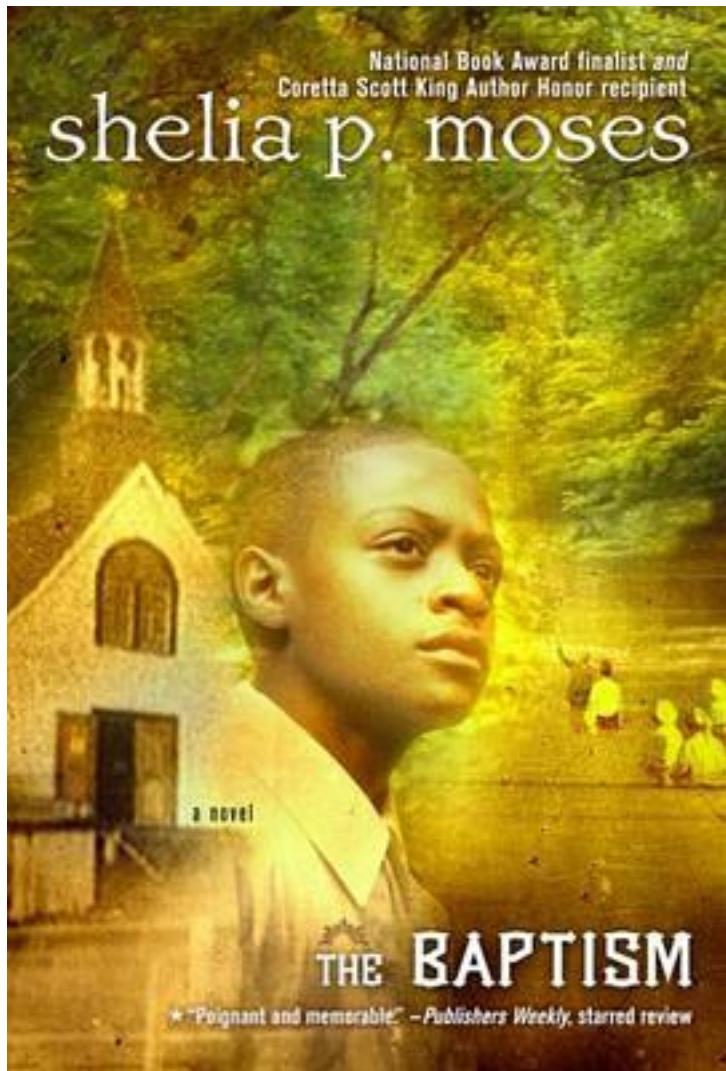


The Baptism



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When you turn twelve in Occoneechee Neck in Jackson, North Carolina, everything changes. You get to do stuff you couldn't do when you were eleven. And it means it's time to get baptized. Twin brothers Leon and Luke Curry turned twelve last month. Ma has given them one week in which to do right -- to cleanse themselves of their sinning ways and get themselves ready for the baptism. Next Sunday they will go down to the "mornin' bench" at church, sit in front of Reverend Webb, and be saved. It will be a glorious day. But that's only if Twin Leon and Twin Luke can keep themselves out of trouble. Which is easier said than done when you've lost your daddy and have a new stepfather; when you have a bullying big brother who plays tricks on you; and when it's summertime and all you want to do is go fishing instead of working in the fields. How Twin Leon and Twin Luke stick together to face the odds as only twelve-year-old boys can do, managing to save themselves while also unexpectedly saving their entire family in a week's time, is the heart of this moving, often funny, and often poignant novel.

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目录:

[The Baptism_ 下载链接1](#)

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