



## Unstoppable Octobia May

By Sharon Flake

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### Unstoppable Octobia May By Sharon Flake

Bestselling and award-winning author, Sharon G. Flake, delivers a mystery set in the 1950s that eerily blends history, race, culture, and family.

Octobia May is a girl filled with questions. Her heart condition makes her special - and, some folks would argue, gives this ten-year-old powers that make her a "wise soul." Thank goodness for Auntie, who convinces Octobia's parents to let her live in her boarding house that is filled with old folks. That's when trouble, and excitement, and wonder begin. Auntie is non-traditional. She's unmarried and has plans to purchase other boarding homes and hotels. At a time when children, and especially girls, are "seen, not heard," Auntie allows Octobia May the freedom and expression of an adult. When Octobia starts to question the folks in her world, an adventure and a mystery unfold that beg some troubling questions: Who is black and who is "passing" for white? What happens when a vibrant African American community must face its own racism?

And, perhaps most important: Do vampires really exist? In her most and probing novel yet, Sharon G. Flake takes us on a heart-pumping journey.

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## Unstoppable Octobia May By Sharon Flake Bibliography

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### Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Gr 3–6—Octobia May has an untamed imagination. When she moves in with her Auntie Shuma, Octobia spends her days doing chores with her pretend servant friends, talking to the graves of the Before Girls at the nearby cemetery, and trying to unveil one of Auntie's boarders, Mr. Davenport, as the vampire he is. With the help of her friends, Jonah and Bessie, Octobia uncovers the dastardly deeds of Mr. Davenport, although the deeds have more to do with bank robbery and murder than with drinking blood. This story paints a realistic portrait of life for an African American girl in the 1950s, but the characterization and plot are marred by unclear writing. While the plot meanders, little information is offered about Octobia's (or any other character's) backstory, leaving readers ungrounded throughout the tale. Awkward quote attributions and murky action may have been meant to add to the mysterious nature of the plot, but fall short as one passage may take several examinations to comprehend. The way the adults, especially police officer O'Malley, in this story inexplicably flounder about with a cold-blooded murderer on the loose is unbelievable. Short chapters begin with a thick, black border, and a selected bibliography of relevant history ends the novel. While Octobia and other well-rounded characters were enjoyable and the overall plot was exciting, a less complicated writing style would have better highlighted the good this story offered.—Brittany Staszak, Glencoe Public Library, IL

Review

Praise for PINNED

\* "Brilliantly realized...An uplifting story that convincingly celebrates the power of perseverance."--  
KIRKUS REVIEWS, starred review

\* "...constructing two authentic, distinct voices that expose the strengths and flaws of both teenagers..."--  
PUBLISHERS WEEKLY, starred review

\* "Autumn and Adonis, in addition to the supporting characters--parents, teachers, and friends alike--have distinctive personalities and voices, enhancing the story's depth and complexity."--THE HORN BOOK,  
starred review

About the Author

Sharon G. Flake exploded onto the literary scene with her novel THE SKIN I'M IN, in 1998, and was named a Publishers Weekly Flying Start. Since then she has become a multiple Coretta Scott King Author Honor Award winner and many of her novels have received ALA Notable and Best Books for Young Adults citations from the American Library Association. She lives in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Please visit Sharon's website: [www.sharongflake.com](http://www.sharongflake.com).

### Users Review

From reader reviews:

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