



## Each Little Bird that Sings

*Deborah Wiles*

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Ten-year-old Comfort Snowberger has attended 247 funerals. But that's not surprising, considering that her family runs the town funeral home. And even though Great-uncle Edisto keeled over with a heart attack and Great-great-aunt Florentine dropped dead--just like that--six months later, Comfort knows how to deal with loss, or so she thinks. She's more concerned with avoiding her crazy cousin Peach and trying to figure out why her best friend, Declaration, suddenly won't talk to her. Life is full of surprises. And the biggest one of all is learning what it takes to handle them.

Deborah Wiles has created a unique, funny, and utterly real cast of characters in this heartfelt, and quintessentially Southern coming-of-age novel. Comfort will charm young readers with her wit, her warmth, and her struggles as she learns about life, loss, and ultimately, triumph.

## Each Little Bird that Sings Details

Date : Published August 1st 2006 by HMH Books for Young Readers (first published 2005)

ISBN : 9780152056575

Author : Deborah Wiles

Format : Paperback 288 pages

Genre : Realistic Fiction, Fiction, Childrens, Middle Grade, Death, Young Adult

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## From Reader Review Each Little Bird that Sings for online ebook

### Lori says

Yes, this is a book written for children and I adored this sweet story. I'm off to buy my own copy to add to my read again shelf.

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### Jeanette says

After finishing Love, Ruby Lavender I immediately started the second book in the loosely connected Aurora County series.

Each Little Bird That Sings was just chock-full of wonderful characters. I loved Comfort, I loved her family. They were all so wonderfully drawn and believable. Comfort is the same age as my daughter and I could hear and see my daughter in Comfort. She was such a realistic character.

Like Love, Ruby Lavender the story deals with death and packs a bit of an emotional punch but Wiles tells a beautiful story.

I love Deborah Wiles writing and I love this book!

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### Nicole says

I thought this book would be a happy book, but it turns out sad till the end. But it taught me some great things later on.

Each Little Bird that Sings by Deborah Wiles talks about a girl name Comfort that has to deal death with every day, almost every day. Comfort is 10 years old, and her family's work is related to arranging funerals. Unfortunately, Comfort lost two of her family members in a year. They are Uncle Edisto, and her great-great Aunt Florentine. They both taught her a lot about life.

Death is a really hard issue to deal with, even for adults. Imagine how life would be like if you lose someone you love when you were so young. Comfort had to learn to deal with this herself. Maybe if her dog, Dismay was with her. Comfort followed the quota that had been in her family for a long time, its saying that if you want to get through your problems/ life, the only solution is living and moving on.

Oh, Comfort also writes short biographies about whoever passed away, telling everyone to join the funeral. But she has a hard time getting it published.

This is a book is like a combination of death, love and a little bit of humor. It will show you how to get through difficult times. This book is perfect for anyone that had lost someone you loved. It would make you appreciate the things you have right now, and be thankful.

This is not the right book if you like exciting, drama-ish happy books. But don't be afraid to give it a try.

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### **Brittany McCarty says**

“Each Little Bird That Sings” by Deborah Wiles

GR Level: T, Lexile Level: 800, Grade: 5, Publisher: Harcourt Inc., 2005, Genre: Children’s Fiction, Chapter Book, Pages: 247

Comfort Snowberger is a young girl whose family owns a funeral parlor and has been given the responsibility of taking care of her young cousin Peach. Comfort is “used to” funerals and knows the in-and-outs of her family’s business. When her aunt dies unexpectedly however, she must confront death in a different manner. This makes it her 248 funeral but this time there is nowhere to hide and nobody to avoid but her family. Comfort must come to terms with the grief this has brought especially when her uncle later dies as well and her best friend starts acting very mean. With the help of her dog, Dismay, Comfort has to resist sitting in her closet alone and come out and be with her family in their time of need. This story gives a look into the perspective of a loss in a family from a young girl’s point of view. It also shows the responsibilities that some people have and how they are affected when tragedy strikes.

One teaching idea would be to have the students write a letter to someone in their life that has died. It could be a family member, friend or even a celebrity for the students who may not have experienced a loss. The students would have to include why they miss this person, what was special about them and if they could see them for one more day, what they would do together. (W.5.4, W.5.2)

Another teaching idea would be to have a discussion with all students about some of the challenges Comfort faced within the book. The students would then give ways and helpful hints to Comfort about how she could confront her problems and help herself and her family. (W.5.1)

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### **Krysten says**

Summary: Comfort Snowberger's family owns a funeral home, so she is used to death. First her Uncle Edisto dies, and then her Aunt Florentine. She dislikes her cousin, Peach, very much, and does not want him near her, ever. Her best friend, Declaration, starts acting really weird and mean and Comfort is very upset. At Aunt Florentine's funeral, Comfort, Peach, Declaration, and Comfort's beloved dog, Dismay, start walking to the cemetery but get caught in a flash flood after Declaration says some awful things to Peach. Comfort must save Peach and accidentally loses Dismay in the process. Though she loves her family, the loss of Dismay at such an unexpected and horrible time really upsets Comfort. At Dismay's funeral, the town shares their good stories about Dismay, the funeral dog, and Declaration finally starts to be nice again. Comfort realizes she does love Peach since she saved him, and they become friends, though Peach still really bugs her.

Evaluation: This book was actually really heart-wrenching when Dismay gets lost. I loved how real the feelings were, how Comfort acted exactly like a stubborn little girl that has been betrayed by her best friend. Though it started off slow, I really enjoyed this book. I think it would be a great read-aloud book for younger kids.

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### **Charlotte says**

sad

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**Paige Miller says**

Omg this book was great but made me cry like, 10 times and I am not an easy crier! Animal lovers will love it and sob along w/ me!

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**Laura says**

I cried for the entire last two discs. Not such a great way to start the work day. [sob:]

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**Amy says**

I loved this book! If you like "Because of Winn-Dixie", you will probably love this book, too!

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**Linda Lipko says**

Oh how I love this tale! Told from the perspective of ten year old Comfort Snowberger whose family owns the small town funeral home, this is such a delightful book that each page is filled with humor, poignancy and wisdom.

No stranger to the grief of others, Comfort witnessed 247 funerals. When funeral #248 is that of her beloved Great, Great Aunt Florence, quickly followed by funeral #248 of loving, kind Uncle Edisto, Comfort realizes that "Life is full of surprises, not all of them good."

When her childhood friend betrays her and her cousin Peach gets on her every last nerve, she has her wonderful dog Dismay to get her through.

spoiler --- When Dismay tragically is lost, Comfort's grief is severe. Realizing that we grieve in equal measure to the love we received and give, Comfort incredibly shines through.

This is a book of hope, of sunshine through the rain, of images that melt your heart and then make you laugh right out loud.

With characters named Tidings, Comfort, Dismay, Baby Merry, Declaration and Peach, the creativity leaps from the pages.

Highly Recommended!

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**Laura says**

I really liked the idea of this book along with its quirky setting and family. However, when I am mindful that this is a book for children it seems a little confusing. The author made a point of using names that were very unique. Because of this, I spent a portion of the beginning of this story just trying to sort out who people were. The story is about a young girl named Comfort Snowberger who is raised in a funeral home. She has had to deal with death for a living and even writes obituary notices for the local paper. Although she has had to deal with death her entire life, things are a bit different when death comes to the Snowberger family. Comfort has to deal with a difficult cousin and a friendship that seems like it is beginning to unravel. Enduring all of this, she finds solace in the companionship of her dog, Dismay. The novel has a turning point that develops when another crisis affects Comfort. It is then that she needs to discover the things that are most important to her. The book was easy to read, but there was a lot of tragedy. I'm not sure which audience would best enjoy this novel.

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### **Stephanie Jobe says**

What's a good onomatopoeia for blowing your nose? The cover illustration by Marla Frazee is beautiful but I think the original cover that shows Comfort and Dismay in profile rather than straight on might provide a better sense of the mood of the book. Now don't get me wrong this is an absolutely fabulous bildungsroman (Yes, I love this word.) that deals wonderfully with the monster that is grief. Comfort Snowberger is a ten year old force to be dealt with. She has grown up around death at her family funeral home and she deals with it well even when those close to her great-uncle Edisto die. That is until great-great-aunt Florentine dies and other issues arise such as her terribly annoying cousin Peach and the testing of her friendship with Declaration. I don't want to give things away but this book gets much heavier and more poignant than you expect when you list the cast of characters from dog Dismay to brother Tidings. I was truly amazed at the power of this book and it was one that I had never even heard of but I will make sure others hear of it.

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### **Virginia Messina says**

The Snowberger family owns and operates a funeral home in Snapfinger, Mississippi. The three children—named Tidings, Comfort and Merry (the last presumably because the mom's name is already Joy) have grown up around death, and they understand it in a healthy and respectful kind of way.

Toddler Merry naps in an empty casket while her parents work and has a little bit of trouble distinguishing between people who are sleeping and those who are actually dead. Thirteen year old Tidings (who must be based on the same person in Deborah Wiles' life that inspired Uncle Otts in her later book "Countdown.") keeps the grounds shipshape and directs parking for large funerals.

And because the kids attend every funeral hosted by the business, 10-year-old Comfort has been to 247 of them. She also submits hilarious obituaries to the local newspaper, "Life Notices by Comfort Snowberger: Explorer, Recipe Tester, and Funeral Reporter."

This is a difficult time in Comfort's life as she deals with the deaths of beloved older family members as well as a bad break-up with her best friend, and she has been put in charge of her annoying, whining, nervous little cousin Peach. And nothing in her experience, where death is just a usual part of life, prepares her for true loss. I can't remember the last time I cried so hard at the end of a book. The story is beautifully warm, funny, honest, heartbreakingly, and heartening. It's probably my favorite book this year.

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## I Heart Corgis says

Grade/interest level: 3-5th grade

Lexile level: 760L

Genre: Contemporary fiction

Main Characters: Comfort, Declaration, Peach, Dismay, and Comfort's family

Setting: a small town in Mississippi

POV: 1st person narrator (Comfort)

This book is about a little girl named Comfort who lives at a funeral home that her parents own. Towards the beginning of the book, Comfort's great uncle dies and the family has to prepare and attend the funeral. At the funeral, Comfort's young cousin peach freaks out because he's inexperienced with death. As a result of Peach's actions, Comfort's best friend Declaration gets upset. After that, Declaration starts hanging around other girls and ignoring Comfort. When Comfort's aunt dies, Declaration doesn't want to come to the funeral. Forced to go against her will, Declaration just makes a sad day worse. She scares young Peach and he goes running off. Comfort finds him drowning in a flooded river. She jumps in, along with her dog Dismay. Holding on for dear life, the two children are forced to let Dismay go. It was one of the saddest moments in any book I ever read. The relationship between the two girls is strained even more now that Comfort has Declaration to blame for Dismay's death. After the incident, the family holds a funeral for the lost beloved pet. The funeral helps Comfort cope with the loss, and encourages her to talk with Declaration. The two girls don't fully make up at the end, but it's implied that they eventually will.

This is a great book to discuss loss (both the physical loss of a loved one and the emotional loss of friendship). The book is incredibly sad, so I'm not sure if I would use it in a classroom. I would definitely let my own children read it. It's easier to handle the sad discussions this book would elicit when it's one on one and with someone you can talk completely openly with.

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## Emma Kesidis says

I have read Each Little Bird That Sings twenty-seven times. One summer, I read it three times in one week. In seventh grade I could recite the first five pages from memory. Though slightly childish, Each Little Bird That Sings remains, to this day, my favourite book. Deborah Wiles created characters I considered some of my best friends. I cried when they cried, laughed when they laughed, saw what they saw. Comfort became my sister, Peach my cousin. I was mad at Declaration, and I missed Great-great-aunt Florentine. Each Little Bird That Sings is intense, thought-provoking, and moving. Deborah Wiles links family, friendship, pets, death, and tuna sandwiches with a graceful plot line, and I can't help but read it over and over and over.

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## Karen says

Favorite Quotes:

“A real friend sees past the trouble and into your heart.”

“It takes courage to look life in the eye and say yes to the messy glory.”

“Open your arms to life! Let it strut into your heart in all its messy glory!”

“It’s not how you die that makes the important impression, it’s how you live.”

“Everything had a grand purpose, and there was nothing amiss in the universe; it was our job to adjust to whatever came our way.”

“Think of disappointment as a happy little surprise.”

“There’s always something good to come out of disappointment.”

“Death doesn’t respect plans or the weather.”

“Death is hard. Death is sad. But death is part of life. When someone you know dies, it’s your job to keep on living.”

“We live to serve.”

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### **Cindy Huffman says**

I read it on the way back from our phenomenal trip to the mountains. It is sad in nature but light-hearted too. And at one point in the novel, the tears flooded and I pretty much cried all the way home. I stopped thirty pages short of finishing because it was just too intense...but I have to say, if you plan to read the book, give yourself a good three hours to read it non-stop because it really does build up and provide that overall "feeling" of the nature of the story.

It is a wonderful story. Sweet, sweet, sweet as can be. The characters are so heartwarmingly adorable. The story is richly fresh and pure. I don't know quite how to describe how enjoyable this book is to read -- to live in it's 259 page world was a great pleasure.

The protagonist of this beautiful novel is 10 year old Comfort Snowberger. Comfort lives with her family, who run the town of Snapfinger, Mississippi's funeral home. And death, while constant in this family business, is not a way to be sad always but to live life...and liver to serve.

We meet Comfort's family & friends: Declaration - her BFF, Dismay - Funeral Dog extraordinaire, Peach - her annoying cousin, Great-Uncle Edisto - a favorite uncle, Tidings - her big brother, and Great-Great-Aunt Florentine...among many many other wonderful people.

I don't want to tell too much of the story as I believe, the element of its spell would be broken if I breathed one word of it.

I had no idea what this book was truly before reading it and thus I became enraptured with Comfort and her story. I laughed. I got mad. I got very mad. I laughed. I hurt. And then I cried. And cried...and cried.

This year is a year for me to read multiple books by one author: Stephanie Meyers, Anita Diamant and now, Deborah Wiles...for there is no way I can not NOT read more of her books.

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### **Garren says**

I've developed a love for Juvenile novels in the last year. They can be so vibrant, so genuine, so worth recommending to everyone, including adults! *Each Little Bird That Sings* is going on my Juvenile lit evangelization list along with *The Evolution of Calpurnia Tate*, *Budd, Not Buddy*, *Here Lies the Librarian*,

and *The True Meaning of Smekday*.

It's a perfect book about death--and life!--for young people who are dealing with it for the first time. It's also about serving others, friendship, cooking, reading, enjoying clouds, and dealing with annoyances with grace. Between many of the chapters are short letters, news clippings, and other nick-knacks to liven things up. It's a funny, poignant, and positive book all around. After the first fifty or so pages, my partner asked what was so funny, so I started on page 1 and read the first 70 pages to her while she drove. We both finished it ourselves the next day with glowing, wet-eyed reactions.

Recommended to parents and anyone else in a position to advise young people on what they'll like reading. Recommended to adults tired of overwrought prose. This is pure, Southern summer goodness, ya'll!

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### **babyhippoface says**

Can I just say how much I lovedlovedloved this book? Incredible characterization. Quirky, unique names. Heart-wrenching speeches. Wow.

Deborah Wiles has such talent. I was in *Snafinger*, Mississippi. I could see the inside of Snowberger's Funeral Home. I was terrified on the rock with Comfort and Dismay. (And annoying Peach.) I wanted to slap Declaration's snooty face. And I was most definitely inside Comfort's closet with her as she sat with her mayonnaise jar of freshly-sharpened pencils.

I cannot say enough great things about this one!

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### **Amanda Thomas says**

The perfect book after a year of both mourning my papa's death and losing my dog for 12 days. Comfort shares some of life's most important lessons dealing with friendship, family, and death... with bells on.

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