

# ***Each Little Bird That Sings***

**By:** Wiles, Deborah

**Publisher:** Harcourt

**Copyright:** 2005

**Genre:** Realistic Fiction

**Lifeskills:** Resourcefulness, caring, patience, responsibility, cooperation, friendship, courage, initiative, problem solving, trustworthiness, common sense, truthfulness, flexibility, perseverance, pride

**SYNOPSIS:** Comfort Snowberger is well acquainted with death since her family runs the funeral parlor in their small southern town, but even so the ten-year-old is unprepared for the series of heart-wrenching events that begins on the first day of Easter vacation with the sudden death of her beloved great-uncle Edisto.

**BOOKTALK:** Comfort Snowberger's life is turned upside down with the deaths of dear great-uncle Edisto and then sweet great-aunt Florentine. Then to compound her misery, Comfort is expected to take care of her whining and unpredictable cousin, Peach. When her best friend, Declaration, suddenly becomes downright mean to her, all she really wants to do is go into her closet and sit with her faithful dog, Dismay. Life is full of surprises and Comfort must endure one more surprise that will take all her will to handle. Find out how Comfort is able to survive life's sudden changes...good and bad.

## **AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH:**

### **Deborah Wiles**

Deborah Wiles was born in Alabama and spent her summers in Mississippi. She applies her Southern upbringing to her books. She now lives in Atlanta, Georgia. To find out more about the author, click on this website:

<http://www.deborahwiles.com>

### **Other books written by the author:**

*Freedom Summer*

*Love, Ruby Lavender*

*One Wild Sky: A Bedtime Lullaby*

### **CHALLENGING WORDS (pronunciation, spelling, defining):**

Chapter 1: keeled (p. 1), scuttled (p.5), apoplexy (p. 8)

Chapter 7: cavernous (p. 65)

Chapter 11: morosely (p. 93)

Chapter 12: reconnoitered (p.97)

Chapter 15: garrison (p. 117)

Chapter 22: lamentation (p. 174)

Chapter 23: intrepid, interment (p. 184)  
Chapter 24: cogitating (p. 188)  
Chapter 25: decorum (p. 196)

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. What emotions have you experienced when a loved-one dies?
2. How would you approach a friend you had just had a death in the family?
3. How would you react to someone who had a “different” kind of name, such as Peach or Comfort?
4. Have you ever been to a funeral? What did you wear? How did you act? How long did it last?
5. How would you handle it if your best friend suddenly told you he/she didn’t want to be best friends anymore?
6. Why do you think Comfort calls her newspaper column “Life Notices” instead of “Death Notices”?
7. How did Comfort change after dealing with the losses in her life?

### **SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:**

1. Write an autobiography of Comfort, or Peach or Dismay. Now, write an autobiography of yourself. Mix them up in your class and see if your classmates can identify the story to the writer.
2. Format a newspaper. Assign topics to your classmates. Paste their articles onto large newsprint.
3. Ask each student to bring in a favorite recipe from home. Compile a cookbook.
4. Practice Random Acts of Kindness. Tell your best friend how much you appreciate them.
5. Take special care of your pets. Volunteer at a humane society shelter

### **LITERARY LINKS**

<http://www.kidsreads.com/reviews/0152051139.asp>

You can read excerpts of the book, reviews and an author interview.

<http://suzyred.com/2006eachlittlebird.html>

This website has a review and research links.

<http://www.americanfuneralhomes.com/>

Multiple links to everything related to funerals.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grief>

Encyclopedia entry on “Grief”.

### **Grades 4-6 Indiana Standards met by this Intermediate book:**

**Language Arts:** 4.3.2, 4.3.3, 4.3.5  
5.3.2, 5.3.3, 5.3.4, 5.3.5  
6.3.1, 6.3.2, 6.3.3, 6.3.6, 6.3.7

**Created By:**

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