




Each Little Bird That Sings

Author:	Deborah Wiles
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Publisher:	Harcourt, Inc.
About the Author:	<p>The daughter of an air force second lieutenant, Deborah's family moved a lot during her childhood. Deborah was born in Mobile, Alabama and lived in Hawaii, Maryland, South Carolina, and the Philippines. She attended college in Mississippi for one semester before getting married. Deborah raised four children and reported that she loved every minute of motherhood. After twenty-five years of living in Fredrick, Maryland, Deborah decided to move back south to Atlanta, Georgia in 2004. Throughout all her childhood moves, though, Mississippi was home base. It is this place that has given her inspiration for the four books she has written thus far. Her first novel, <i>Love, Ruby Lavender</i>, was an ALA Notable Children's Book and has been nominated for 26 state book award reading lists. She has written two picture books, <i>One Wide Sky</i>, a children's Book-of-the-Month Club selection, and <i>Freedom Summer</i>, winner of numerous awards including Coretta Scott King award for illustrator Jerome Lagarrigue. Deborah's newest novel, <i>Each Little Bird That Sings</i>, is a 2005 National Book Award finalist.</p>
 Author's Web Site:	<p>"Deborah Wiles" http://www.deborahwiles.com</p> <p>Life Notice by Comfort Snowberger for Deborah Wiles http://www.deborahwiles.com/aboutdeb2.html</p>
Publisher's webpage:	<p>Harcourt Author Interview http://www.harcourtbooks.com/AuthorInterviews/bookinterview_Wiles.asp</p> <p>Harcourt Trade Publishers http://www.harcourtbooks.com/booksearch/search_results.asp?sf=author&tp=simple&st=title&pg=1&q=Deborah%20Wiles</p> <p>Harcourt Trade Publishers http://www.harcourtbooks.com/BookCatalogs/bookpages/9780152051136.asp</p>
Other Web Resources:	<p>Kidsreads biography and interview http://www.kidsreads.com/authors/au-wiles-deborah.asp</p> <p>National Book Foundation 2005 Award Finalist http://www.nationalbook.org/nba2005_ypl_wiles.html</p> <p>Wikipedia Encyclopedia Biography http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deborah_Wiles</p>

Annotation:	<p>Comfort Snowberger has attended 247 funerals in her short ten years. Her family owns the small Southern town funeral home and their motto is “We live to serve.” Although Comfort is used to the rituals of death, she is not ready for the deaths of her beloved uncle and great aunt, quickly followed by her pet dog, Dismay. Dismay has been Comfort’s loyal companion and designated funeral dog since he came into the family’s life when Comfort was only three years old. He served the family and community and finally meets his demise while attempting to save Comfort and Cousin Peach in a flooding river. In addition to losing these dear loved ones, Comfort is confronted with the emotional death of her closest friend. Changes occur between the two girls as her friend, Declaration, begins to dress more like a girl, hang out with the popular girls in class, and make fun of Comfort. If that isn’t enough, Comfort must deal with her crazy Cousin Peach, an eight-year-old who turns every family gathering into a disaster. Through all of these hardships, Comfort is supported by a loving family and wonderful memories to guide her through her struggle to understand the changes that life has in store for her. Comfort finds that life has many surprises and that she has what it takes to survive them...to even triumph! This funny, Southern coming-of-age story is full of wit and will warm your soul as you get to know the girl who is a self-professed “Explorer, Recipe Tester, and Funeral Reporter”!</p>
Booktalk:	<p><i>Comfort Snowberger is an Explorer, a Recipe Tester, and a Funeral Reporter...but can she deal with what is in store for her?</i></p> <p>The trouble begins as Comfort’s beloved Great-great Aunt Florentine and Uncle Edisto dies. This is only the beginning, as suddenly Comfort’s best friend has turned downright mean and her whiny cousin Peach will not leave her alone! Comfort really wants to hide in her closet and make it all go away, but more is to follow in these difficult adventures of growing up. Will Comfort find the strength to shine through all this messy glory ... called “life”?</p>
Characters:	<p>Comfort Snowberger- main character who is ten-years-old and writes life notices for the family business of a funeral home</p> <p>Dismay-Comfort’s shaggy black dog who helps out the family in many ways</p> <p>Declaration Johnson- Comfort’s best friend who has a falling out with Comfort</p> <p>Great-uncle Edisto- Uncle of Comfort and founder of Snowberger’s Funeral Home who dies from a stroke. Uncle Edisto makes positive quips for the family to remember.</p> <p>Great-great-aunt Florentine- Comfort’s ninety-four year-old aunt that loves to work in the flower garden and passes away there among the flowers. She is very dear to Comfort.</p> <p>Merry Snowberger- Comfort’s toddler sister who Comfort loves very much.</p> <p>Tidings- fourteen-year-old brother of Comfort who loves to mow the property when upset and is helpful with the family business</p> <p>Peach- Comfort’s eight-year-old whiny cousin who seems to make a scene when upset and who irritates Comfort</p>
Conflict:	<p>After so many problematic events, including the deaths of Uncle Edisto and Great-great-aunt Florentine, a whiny cousin that won’t leave her alone, and a best-friend-turned-mean, Comfort feels she can’t face any more- even if it means missing the most important funeral of all. In this interpersonal conflict, Comfort wants to hide in her closet sanctuary and avoid life, rather than face it head on.</p>
Conflict Resolution:	<p>Comfort realizes how strong she really is. When Comfort sees the tears on her daddy’s face and watches him continue to handle his responsibilities, she gathers the strength to face her own difficulties with Cousin Peach and best-friend, Declaration. She follows the family motto, “We live to serve” for inspiration to continue on. After Comfort loses her beloved dog, Dismay, and almost loses her cousin and her own life in a river flood, she rallies around with the support of a loving family to understand “the messy glory of life” in this process called life.</p>

Genre:	Realistic Fiction
If you like this book, you'll love...	<i>Love, Ruby Lavender</i> by Deborah Wiles
Similar interest and genre...	http://search.barnesandnoble.com/booksearch/results.asp?cat=401461&cat=796644&SearchBooks.x=42&SearchBooks.y=12&z=z%3Dy
Interest Level:	3-6
Reading Level:	4.0
Read-Aloud passages:	<p>Chapter 7, pages 60-61: "I have a lot of homework..." (Comfort's positive feelings about doing homework)</p> <p>Chapter 26, pages 217-219: "Dismay Snowberger, Funeral Dog Extraordinaire, has departed Our Fair Town for a new home..." (Comfort's Life Notice for her dog, Dismay)</p> <p>Chapter 30, page 242: "You never know, Comfort..." (Cousin Peach sharing his new realizations about life)</p>
Setting:	The southern town of Snapfinger, Mississippi at the Snowberger's family home and funeral business. The book is set in modern times.
Point of View	First Person (Comfort Snowberger)
Theme:	The title of this book, <i>Each Little Bird That Sings</i> , reflects on the individual's struggle with the grief and glory of life, each having a voice and a story to tell. This book is an honest and profound look at life and death. It offers truth, hope, and, most impressively of all, a great perspective. Humor and small-town charm enable the subjects of death and friendship to be delicately covered in this coming-of-age novel.
Across the Curriculum Connections And Web Resources:	<p>Theme: Dogs Funeral Dogs- http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/04330/417263.stm Working Dogs- http://www.canismajor.com/dog/wkdogs.html Canine Companions- http://www.caninecompanions.org/</p> <p>Theme: Rocks Rocks- http://www.fi.edu/fellows/fellow1/oct98/index2.html Metamorphic rock- http://www.fi.edu/fellows/fellow1/oct98/create/metamorph.htm Igneous rock- http://www.fi.edu/fellows/fellow1/oct98/create/igneous.htm Sedimentary rock- http://www.fi.edu/fellows/fellow1/oct98/create/sediment.htm Floods- http://www.fema.gov/hazard/flood/index.shtm</p>

<p>Across the Curriculum Connections and Web Resources: (continued)</p>	<p>Flooding Rivers Videos: http://videosearch.comcast.net/ss-query/viewresult.do?responseRank=0&playbackURL=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.comcast.net%2Fproviders%2Ffan%2Fpopup.html%3Frepeat_search_query%3Dvideos%2Bof%2Bflooding%2Briver%26v%3D82899835%26pn%3D1%26viewmode%3DfullScreenMode&queryId=655910284</p> <p>Theme: Historical Obituaries Writing Obituaries for famous dead Americans- http://www.nytimes.com/obituaries/index.html</p> <p>Theme: Writing Making a news story- http://teacher.scholastic.com/scholasticnews/press_corps/tips.asp Writing a biography for the main character- http://www.scholastic.com/librarians/ab/biolist.htm</p> <p>Theme: Graphing Data Graphing data determining age of death during each decade- http://www1.esc.edu/personalstaff/kwatson/fieldwork_site/cemetery.htm</p>
<p>Activities:</p>	<p>Reading Cube Activity: Individual activity to share visual information about the book on a 3-d object that the student constructs. (See attached template)</p> <p>Board Game Activity: Individual, paired, or small group activity to create a board game based on the book. (See attached template)</p> <p>Puzzle Maze: http://www.puzzlemaker.com/code/BuildHiddenMessageWordSearch.asp http://www.puzzlemaker.com/code/PuzzleSolution.asp?submit2=Solution (Click on boxes at top of page for <i>Each Little Bird That Sings</i>)</p>
<p>Discussion Questions:</p> <p>Chapter 1:</p> <p>Chapter 2:</p> <p>Chapter 2:</p> <p>Chapter 3:</p> <p>Chapter 4:</p> <p>Chapter 5:</p>	<p>Compare the obituary written by Comfort for Uncle Edisto to an obituary in your local newspaper. What similarities and differences can you pick out?</p> <p>Great-great-aunt Florentine called herself a geographer; others called her a gossip. How did she influence Comfort's decision about her chosen career?</p> <p>Compare Comfort's letter to Declaration's. What inference can you make about how each girl's interest in writing that is reflected in their letters?</p> <p>Explain the circumstances when Comfort met her friend, Declaration.</p> <p>Uncle Edisto said to Comfort, "But life's not a line, Comfort; it's a circle. Just look around you and you'll see that." Explain what you believe Uncle Edisto was telling Comfort.</p> <p>"...and watched a cloud turn into Abraham Lincoln's hat, which made me think of Uncle Edisto and his tomatoes. I ate my tuner-fish sandwich." Explain the quote, describing how a cloud turned into a hat on a deceased President and why Comfort said "tuner-fish".</p>

Chapter 5:	Re-read Comfort's "Top Ten Tips for First-rate Funeral Behavior". List examples of Comfort's sense of humor in this serious article.
Chapter 6:	Explain why you think Comfort writes "Life Notices" and "Funeral Geography" for each of the 247 funerals she has ever attended.
Chapter 7:	"I live to serve" was what Comfort said to her mother when Mother needed help with the family flowers. This was also the motto of Snowberger's Funeral Home..."We live to serve." Explain the meaning of the family motto. List different ways a person can serve others.
Chapter 7:	How did Comfort's mother help Comfort deal with the irritation of Peach and attending Uncle Edisto's viewing?
Chapter 8:	What changes Comfort's mind about going to the viewing of Great-great-aunt Florentine?
Chapter 9:	Who was responsible for the shrieking noise coming from inside Great-great-aunt Florentine's casket?
Chapter 10:	Why do you think Comfort decides to stay in her closet until Peach goes home instead of attending the funeral?
Chapter 11:	Describe Peach's behavior after Comfort tells him to get out of her room. Do you think Comfort's mother was right to ask Comfort to keep Peach busy?
Chapter 12:	Name two disappointing things that happen to Comfort on her way to greet Declaration.
Chapter 13:	Describe how Comfort acts when she figures out she is not invited to the birthday party. Recall a time when you or someone you know was in a similar situation. How did it feel?
Chapter 14:	After sitting down to lunch with the family, Comfort realizes she won't be scolded for yelling at Peach. What happens at the table that is a turning point in Comfort's actions toward Peach?
Chapter 15:	Why do you think Aunt Goldie had Comfort recall the details of finding Great-great-aunt Florentine dead in the garden for Peach? Explain your reasoning.
Chapter 16:	Uncle Edisto always said, "A real friend sees past the trouble and into your heart." After trouble with Declaration, what did Comfort do to follow Uncle Edisto's advice?
Chapter 17:	What did Comfort feel toward Declaration as she sat next to her at the funeral? Discuss signs that show when a person is upset, angry, or happy without words being used.
Chapter 18:	What do you think about Declaration's answer to Mother Snowberger when Mother asked Declaration to walk to the gravesite with Comfort and Peach? Was Declaration sincere? Support your answer.
Chapter 19:	Predict what the effect of Declaration's taunting words about death will have on young Peach.
Chapter 20:	When Peach ran into the flooding Snapfinger Creek, Comfort had to make a choice to save Peach. What do you think will happen to Comfort's dog, Dismay?
Chapter 21:	Describe a time when you have shared a frightening experience with someone. Did you feel closer to that person afterward? Why do you think that is so?
Chapter 22:	Dr. MacRee said the two children had been traumatized. List words from this chapter that tell how Comfort and Peach were doing that led Dr. MacRee to say this.
Chapter 23:	Tell what happened on Comfort's first night after the terrible flood.
Chapter 24:	Tidings writes a report about the search for Dismay. How is his writing style different from Comfort's? Can you hear his voice in the writing?
Chapter 25:	Tell how the relationship has changed between Comfort and Peach?... also, between Comfort and Declaration. Have you ever had a switch in feelings toward someone?

<p>Chapter 26:</p> <p>Chapter 27:</p> <p>Chapter 28:</p> <p>Chapter 29:</p> <p>Chapter 30:</p> <p>Link to Literature Circle Guide</p>	<p>In Comfort's life notice for Dismay, Comfort adds personalized titles to her family member's names. She begins, "Wise in all things _____". (The blank varied for each person) What would you describe yourself as "Wise in all things_____". (Fill in the blank)</p> <p>Comfort helped Peach deal with his sadness about losing Dismay. What two things did she do?</p> <p>As Comfort tries to say her remembrance for Dismay, she has difficulty standing and speaking. Then there is a surprising presence from her friend, Declaration, who speaks of her remembrance of Dismay. Do you think Declaration has changed in the way she treats Comfort? Explain.</p> <p>Describe how Dismay has helped Declaration.</p> <p>Uncle Edisto talked about "All the messy glory" of life. Comfort saw this in eyes of Dismay, Declaration, and Peach. "Grief and fear and hope and love, all somehow woven together, somehow connected." How did Comfort respond?</p> <p>http://teacher.scholastic.com/clubs/lit_circle_pdfs/eachlittlebird_t.pdf</p>
<p>Vocabulary:</p>	<p>(p.8) apoplexy – stroke</p> <p>(p.11) patriarch- head of; founder; father</p> <p>(p.28) peevish- cross or annoyed</p> <p>(p.32) smorgasbord- an extensive variety</p> <p>(p.32) metamorphic -relating to rocks that have undergone metamorphism. Metamorphic rocks are formed when igneous, sedimentary, or other metamorphic rocks undergo a physical change due to extreme heat and pressure. These changes often produce folded layers or banding in the rocks, and they can also cause pockets of precious minerals to form.</p> <p>(p.32) soapstone- A soft metamorphic rock composed mostly of the mineral talc.</p> <p>(p.35) footfalls – footstep</p> <p>(p.35) pomegranates- color of the reddish edible fruit from this tree</p> <p>(p.38) persnickety- snobbish or having the aloof attitude of a snob</p> <p>(p.45) vigil- to watch or wait</p> <p>(p.47) mourners- a person who is feeling grief (as grieving over someone who has died)</p> <p>(p.64) decorum – the manners and conduct</p> <p>(p.68) toupee- artificial hair or wig</p> <p>(p.69) acknowledgements – the credits of a book</p> <p>(p.97) reconnoitered- To make an inspection of, especially in order to gather military information</p> <p>(p.103) entwined - wrapped around</p> <p>(p.113) plummet- falls or lowers</p> <p>(p.117) garrison – to supply</p> <p>(p.117) encampment- place where others are staying</p> <p>(p.172) shock - a sudden or violent disturbance of the mind, emotions</p>

<p>Indiana Academic Standards met by novel content:</p>	<p>English/Language Arts: Standard 1: READING: Word Recognition, Fluency, and Vocabulary Development Standard 2: READING: Comprehension Standard 3: READING: Literary Response and Analysis Standard 5: WRITING: Applications Standard 6: WRITING: English Language Conventions Standard 7: LISTENING AND SPEAKING: Skills, Strategies, and Applications</p> <p>Science: The Physical Setting The Living Environment</p> <p>Mathematics: Data Analysis Computation Problem Solving</p> <p>Social Studies: History Geography Individuals, Society, and Culture</p>
<p>Bibliography of Resources:</p>	<p>Working Dogs and Canine Companions: http://suzyred.com/2006eachlittlebird.html</p> <p>Collection of biographies and interviews with authors in children's literature: http://teacher.scholastic.com/lessonplans/bookfairs/currconnection/each_bird.htm</p> <p>Fema: http://www.fema.gov/index.shtm</p> <p>New York Times Newspaper: http://www.nytimes.com/</p> <p>Environmental Activities: (tombstone demographics) http://www1.esc.edu/personalstaff/kwatson/fieldwork_site/default.html</p> <p>Indiana Academic Standards Summary:</p> <p><i>Language Arts-</i> http://www.indianastandardsresources.org/standardSummary.asp?Subject=eng&Grade= Scope and Sequence (Grades K-8) http://www.indianastandardsresources.org/files/eng/ela_scope.pdf</p> <p><i>Mathematics-</i> http://www.indianastandardsresources.org/standardSummary.asp?Subject=math&Grade=&Standard= Scope and Sequence (Grades K-8) http://www.indianastandardsresources.org/files/math/math_scope.pdf</p>

Science-

<http://www.indianastandardsresources.org/standardSummary.asp?Subject=sci&Grade=&Standard=>

Scope and Sequence (Grades K-8)

http://www.indianastandardsresources.org/files/sci/sci_scope.pdf

Social Studies-

<http://www.indianastandardsresources.org/standardSummary.asp?Subject=soc&Grade=&Standard=>

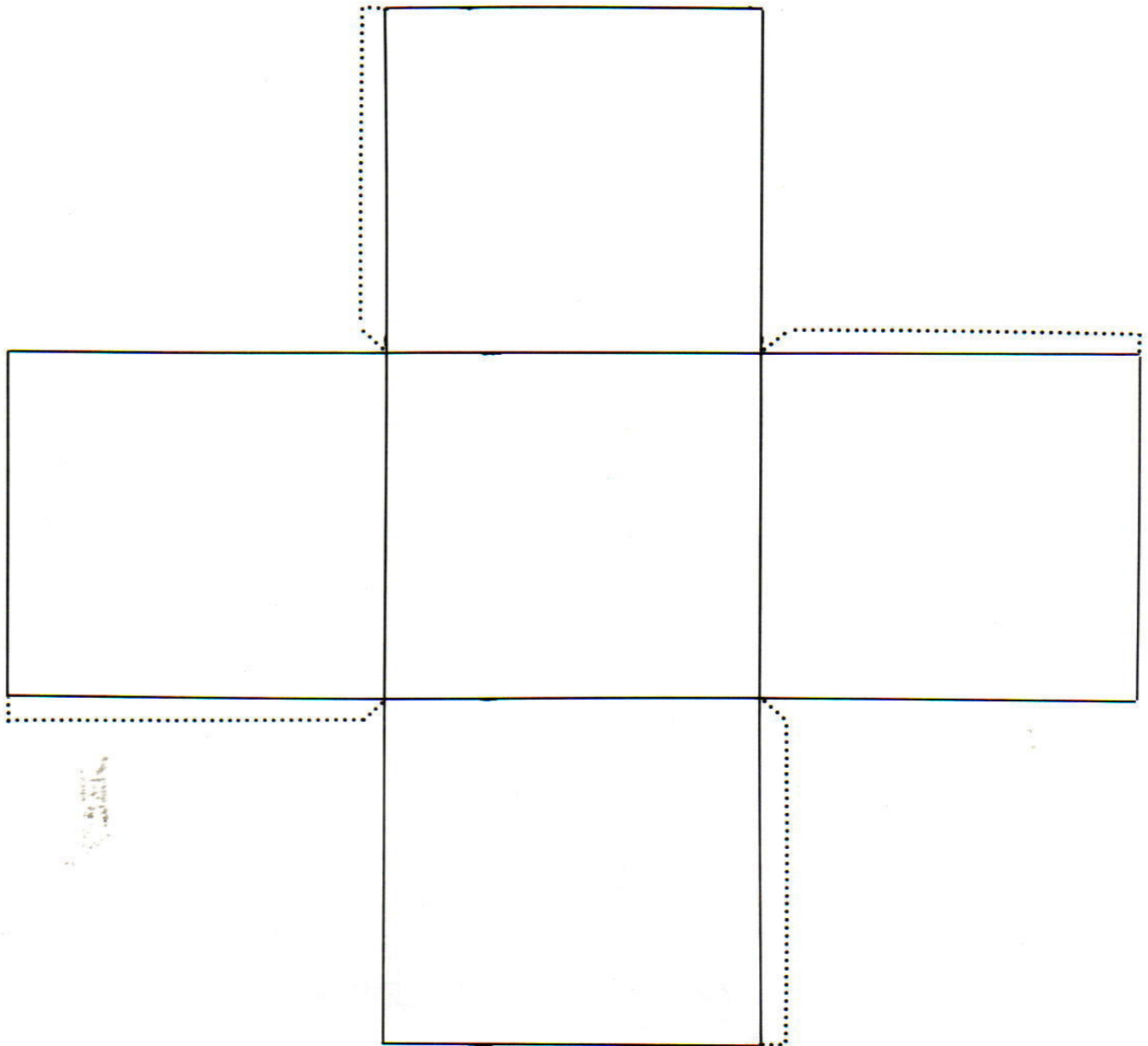
Scope and Sequence (Grades K-8)

http://www.indianastandardsresources.org/files/soc/ss_scope.pdf

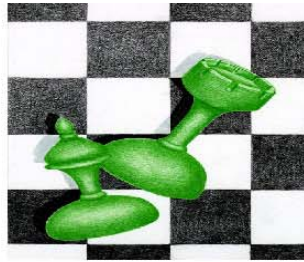
Reading Cube

Name _____

Use this pattern to plan a reading cube for the book you have just read. On one panel write the title and author. On the other sides draw pictures showing events from the book, write words to describe the book, or write a brief summary that would make other people want to read the book. Once you have carefully planned the reading cube, transfer the design to larger paper, neatly draw and color your pictures and glue the sides together.



BOARD



GAME

Create a board game based on the story you have read. Include several events from the story, as well as any facts that are relevant. Use the following guide to plan out your game before you construct it.

Name of the game: _____

Objective or goal of players: _____

Scoring: _____

Rules: _____

Board Design: