

## Novel Resource for Young Hoosier Book Authors 2007-2008

### *Each Little Bird That Sings*

**By:** Deborah Wiles

**Publisher:** Harcourt, Inc.

**Copyright:** 2005

**Genre:** Family Fiction

**Author Biography:** [www.deborahwiles.com](http://www.deborahwiles.com)

Contact Information: c/o Harcourt Children's Books

**15 E. 26th St.**

**NY, NY 10010**

[deborah@deborahwiles.com](mailto:deborah@deborahwiles.com)



Deborah was born into a military family. Her father was in the air force which is the reason for several moves throughout her childhood. She was born in Alabama and at the age of five moved to Hawaii to start kindergarten. Then to Maryland, South Carolina and the Philippines where she graduated from high school. She was married and raised four children before pursuing her dream of being an author.

#### Connection to *Each Little Bird That Sings*

Because both Wiles's parents were from Mississippi this was always considered *home*. She has many fond childhood memories of people and experiences in this southern state. In the four year period before writing this book she experienced many deaths and the grief that accompanies death. She thanks family and friends for guiding her and states, "I would eventually learn to navigate the world again and write Comfort's story".

#### Other books by this author:

*Freedom Summer, Love Ruby Lavender, One Wide Sky*

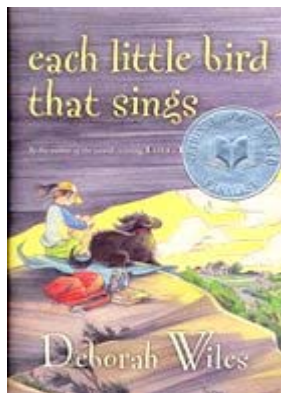
**Annotation:** Comfort Snowberger lives in a Funeral Home and death and grief are a weekly if not daily experience. From Uncle Edisto who founded the funeral home to Dismay, Comfort's dog, the Snowberger's family motto is "we live to serve". Ten year old Comfort learns to deal with death by her family's example which is that death is hard but it is part of life. Comfort uses the art of writing to help herself deal with death and grief. Through writing she also is able to think through the many feelings and friendships that accompany death. Wiles use humor as well to help the reader understand that though death is a part of life things will adjust and change but its our job to keep on living. She helps her characters find meaning in their decisions and the reader feel what it means to be connected with other human beings.

**Booktalk:** Imagine going to a funeral every week. Comfort Snowberger has attended 247 funerals. She comes from a family of a lot of dead people. After all, she lives in a funeral home! Then it happens to her family; great-great aunt Florentine dies in the garden. Dismay, her dog and her constant companion is her source of comfort. It's her cousin Peach and her friend Declaration that are giving her all the grief. On the way to Aunt Florentine's funeral something happens that makes Comfort question all that she knows about death.

<b>Characters:</b>	<u>Name and Age</u>	<u>Relationship to main and/or other characters</u>	<u>Personality traits</u>
	Comfort Snowberger 10 years old	Daughter of the Snowberger family	Optimistic, loves the outdoors and her family, retrospective and thoughtful, creative
	Great-Uncle Edisto	Founder of Snowberger's Funeral Home	Optimistic, humorous, wise
	Great-great Aunt Florentine 97	Favorite person to talk with	Encourager, Leader, lovable, busy
	Dismay 7 years old	Snowberger family dog	Loyal, noble, happy, pleasing
	Declaration 10 years old	Best friend of Comfort	Starting to think Comfort is weird because she lives in a funeral home. Snobbish
	Peach 7 years old	Comfort's cousin	A disaster, nuisance, sensitive
	Tidings 14 years old	Comfort's brother	Leader, likes order

**Conflict:** Two deaths in the span of six months in the Snowberger family has Comfort questioning her sense of security. Not only is death becoming very personal she finds her family's occupation is pushing her best friend away. How can Declaration be treating her so mean when her Great-great Aunt Florentine just died. She decides to just avoid Peach so she won't have to deal with his breakdowns and clingy behavior. Then worst of all her dog, Dismay gets swept away in a flash flood during a storm. Did she make the right decision by letting Dismay go instead of Peach?

**Conflict Resolution:** Comfort faces many of the story's conflicts with the Snowberger family motto, "we live serve". However, she comes to a point of indecision and makes a choice to follow her heart but doesn't exactly know why. Then she questions if she did the right thing. In the end, through the joy and grief of all her situations she realizes she made the right choice and she sees the importance of relationships.



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