I Remember Miss Perry

Marsha D. Broadway

Reviewer: Marsha D. Broadway
Reading Level: Primary
Rating: Excellent
Genre: Contemporary realistic fiction;
Subject: Teachers--Juvenile fiction; Death--Juvenile fiction; Grief--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

Stevie is afraid of starting a new school, but his teacher, Miss Perry, whose eyes almost disappear when she smiles, is empathic. Her fondest wish, to have Stevie join her for lunch, makes his stomachache go away. Everyday Miss Perry has a new "fondest wish" for her class until one morning when she does not come to school and the principal substitutes. After lunch, the students return to the classroom to find many parents. The principal then tells them that Miss Perry has died in an automobile accident. The children cry and ask questions. During the grieving process the following day, the principal and school counselor help the children to remember Miss Perry and to tell stories about their happy teacher. The counselor asks the children what would be Miss Perry's fondest wish today and they reply with a variety of positive wishes.

Expressive ink-and-watercolor illustrations capture a charismatic teacher, her multicultural students, and their range of emotions from happiness to grief. This poignant story deals with the sadness of loss and the power of memories to help happiness return. The book fills a gap in many public and school library collections. Because it could be used with elementary classes who are experiencing a tragic death, school counselors may also wish to add it to their collections.