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Eliza's Kindergarten Surprise

Holly Dickman

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McGinty, Alice B. *Eliza's Kindergarten Surprise*. Illustrated by Nancy Speir. Marshall Cavendish, 2007. ISBN 9780761453512. \$14.99. 29 p.

Reviewer: Holly Dickman

Reading Level: Primary, intermediate

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Contemporary Realistic Fiction;

Subject: First day of school—Juvenile fiction; Mother and child—Juvenile fiction; Schools—Juvenile fiction; Books—Reviews

As she says goodbye to her mommy, Eliza braces herself for her first day of kindergarten. Eliza's mother kisses her own fingers and slides the kiss into Eliza's front pocket, so that Eliza can carry it with her throughout the day. As her mother leaves, Eliza feels sad and lonely, and when she checks in her front pocket, it feels empty where the kiss once was. Throughout the day at school, Eliza finds things around the classroom and playground that remind her of her mother. Eliza decides to keep the items in her pocket. During craft-time, when Eliza felt the day could not get any worse, she has a brilliant idea. She makes a doll resembling her mother out of the items she has picked up around school. With a napkin for a dress, yarn for hair, and blue buttons for shoes, Eliza's doll is complete. She puts the doll in her front pocket, and now Eliza can enjoy kindergarten because her mother is always with her!

Illustrator Speir uses acrylic paint to create darling illustrations that not only reinforce the story line, but also give the reader a chance to get to know Eliza through her expressive face. The illustrations are colorful and lively, able to keep any reader's attention. This tender story of the strong love between a mother and daughter will be an enjoyable read-a-loud at home. The author also addresses many schoolchildren's fear of the first day of school, making the book a useful addition for a young elementary classroom.