



2007

The Lemonade Club

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Polacco, Patricia. *The Lemonade Club*. Illustrated by Patricia Polacco. Philomel Books, 2007. ISBN 9780399245404. \$16.99. 48 p.

Reviewer: Gillian Streeter

Reading Level: Intermediate

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Picture books; Contemporary realistic fiction;

Subject: Cancer--Juvenile fiction; Teacher-student relationships--Juvenile fiction; Schools--Juvenile fiction; Books--reviews;

Marilyn and Traci are best friends--they're in the same fifth grade class, they love their teacher Ms. Wichelman, and they go to each others' houses after school. When Marilyn mysteriously starts losing weight and feeling tired for no reason, Traci is the first to suspect something is wrong with her friend. Marilyn is diagnosed with leukemia and undergoes chemotherapy treatments. Some days are good and others are not. But when she returns to school, she is able to lean on her friends and teacher for strength--and offer support in return, as Ms. Wichelman is battling breast cancer.

Polacco's characteristic blend of pencil outlines and rich watercolor come through strong and familiar in *The Lemonade Club*, as does her use of her own family stories as material: all the characters are real people and no names have been changed. She depicts chemotherapy's side effects of fatigue, illness, and hair loss with unpleasant realism. This book is not so much a light entertainment as it is support for those going through a similar experience. It is not intended for younger readers due to length, subject matter, and reading level. It is strongly recommended for libraries in cancer treatment centers, for informational purposes in school or classroom settings, and possibly for students who know someone going through cancer treatments.

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