
Reviewer: Marsha D. Broadway  
Reading Level: Intermediate  
Rating: Outstanding  
Genre: Fiction; Contemporary realistic fiction;  
Subject: Writing--Juvenile fiction; Authorship--Juvenile fiction; Schools--Juvenile fiction;  
Books--Reviews;

An author, Ms. Mirabel, visits a fourth grade class for six weeks to teach students about words and writing. Five young friends learn about themselves, their lives, and what is real and unreal as they write. Lucy's mother has cancer. May's family is adopting a baby. Russell, whose dog has died, babysits his baby brother Oliver after school. Evie's parents are divorced. And Henry calls his parents by their given names and sometimes feels like he is the grown-up.

Newbery Award winner MacLachlan was asked years ago to write a book about writing. After many classroom visits and students' questions, she decided to approach the topic through story. The results are stunning insights into the writing process and the power of story in understanding and dealing with life. When Henry asks Ms. Mirabel why she writes, her voice seems to become MacLachlan's, "I, myself, write to change my life, to make it come out the way I want it to."

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