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The Fourth Grade Wizards by Barthe DeClements

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Author: DeClements, Barthe

Title: *The Fourth Grade Wizards*

Year of Publication: 1988

Publisher: Penguin Group

ISBN: 9780140327601

of pages: 122

Rating: Dependable

Reading/Interest Level: Primary; Intermediate

Keywords: Death; Remarriage; Schools; Realistic Fiction

Review:

Marianne has two wishes: to have her mom back and to become a Master Wizard. Ever since her mother passed away in a plane crash Marianne has struggled to pay attention in school. She is always in trouble along with her friend, Jack, the class clown. To make matters worse, Marianne has a nosy, bossy neighbor friend whose mother has an eye on Marianne's father. Things begin to make a turn for the better when Marianne and her father move into a new house and she gets a wolf-hybrid (half wolf, half dog) for a pet, and they meet their neighbor, Lacy. Marianne and Jack work together at school to stay out of trouble and become Master Wizards.

The Fourth Grade Wizards is targeted for children ages eight to twelve. The story is told from the point of view of Marianne, a fourth grader, and contains some heavy topics such as, the death of a parent, moving to a new location, and dealing with difficult personalities. Though the plot line only skims the surface of the most painful event--the death of a parent--Marianne's relationship with her father is a beautiful illustration of the strength and guidance a parent can provide to a child. The ending is a little predictable with the father meeting an attractive neighbor and Marianne becoming a Master Wizard. However, the growth and hope Marianne experiences from mourning her mother, moving to a new home, and helping her friends succeed, leaves the reader feeling satisfied.

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