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Missing May by Cyntia Rylant

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Author: Rylant, Cynthia

Title: *Missing May*

Year of Publication: 1992

Publisher: Orchard Books

ISBN: 0531059960

Number of Pages: 89

Rating: Excellent

Reading/Interest Level: Young Adult; All

Keywords: Realistic Fiction; Bereavement; Death of Loved One

Review:

When Aunt May dies while gardening, Summer believes her aunt is gone forever, even though Uncle Ob claims to feel May's presence around the house—especially from the gardening area where she died. Uncle Ob hears a story from Cletus, one of Summer's classmates, about Reverend Miriam Young, who can speak with those who have passed on. After arriving at the church where Reverend Miriam Young preaches, Ob, Summer, and Cletus learn that the reverend has died and that her son does not have the same ability to talk with the dead. While driving home, Uncle Ob feels all is lost, until he miraculously picks up his spirit. Ob has a great time showing Cletus and Summer the capital of West Virginia, and when the three travelers return home, Uncle Ob is back to his normal self.

The book's central theme is moving on from the passing of a loved one, and Cynthia Rylant does an amazing job of addressing all the different ways of mourning a loved one: wishing they were still there, seeking out psychics, and just plain moving on. Rylant works to give the reader an image of how both a teenager and a surviving spouse might work through having a loved one pass on. She also shows someone helping the two through the mourning process. This book is a very quick read. Young adults who have gone through a death of someone they love are the target audience, but the story is great for all audiences.

Reviewer: Brandon Holst

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