

## Elementary School Readers

A Terrible Thing Happened by M.M. Holmes After Sherman sees something terrible happen, he becomes anxious and then angry, but when a counselor helps him talk about these emotions he feels better.

Aarvy Aardvark Finds Hope: A Read Aloud Story for People of All Ages About Loving and Losing, Friendship and Hope by Donna O'Toole: Our classic Read-Aloud Story for people of all ages about loving & losing, friendship & hope. Aarvy has lost his family and is filled with despair and hopelessness until a true friend helps him learn about the strengths within himself. Beautiful line drawings by Kore Loy McWhirter can be colored in. Aarvy helps us learn that: Grief is a natural healing.

Animal Crackers: A Tender Book About Death and Funerals and Love by Bridget Marshall. A tender book about death, funerals and love. This book explores aging, memory loss and a special kind of love when a young child's Nanny must go to a nursing home and later dies. They all remember Nanny's Animal Crackers!

Anna's Corn by Barbara Santucci. The music of the corn is beautiful to Anna, just like Grandpa's raspy, crackling voice. When winter comes, though, Grandpa dies. Anna hangs onto the dried kernels of corn Grandpa had given her, but she wonders if she will ever hear the corn's music again. Then she remembers her promise to Grandpa . . . Anna's Corn portrays the love between a grandparent and grandchild and gently looks at loss and grief and the hope of new life.

Annie and the Old One by Miska Miles & Peter Parnall. Annie is a young Navajo girl who refuses to believe that her grandmother, the Old One, will die. Sadly, Annie learns that she cannot change the course of life.

Bear's Last Journey by Udo Weigelt. Old Bear is very sick. With his animal friends gathered around him, Bear tells them that he must say good-bye, for he is going on a special journey. ""But ... but ... you're not dying?"" asks Rabbit, and Bear admits that he is. All the animals are saddened by the news, but the little fox is especially upset--hurt and angry and confused. He cannot imagine life without Bear. How Fox and the other forest animals deal with the loss of their friend is a moving story about death, grieving, and the solace to be found in memory.

Beyond the Ridge by Paul Goble. An exquisite blending of folklore, full-color artwork, and the prayers and traditions of the Plains Indians chronicles the spiritual journey of an old woman from death to a reunion with friends and loved ones who had died before.

Bluebird Summer by Deborah Hopkinson. Mags and Cody spend every summer with Gramps and Grandma at their farm, but after Grandma dies, the house is shadowed with sadness and the bluebirds are silent, so Mags decides to revitalize Grandma's garden, and soon the bluebirds return, and Gramps begins to heal, in a heartwarming story of family, loss, and compassion.

Dancing on the Moon by Janice Roper. A young girl experiences jealousy when her brother is born, then anxiety and sadness when he dies. In a dream she flies to the moon to bring him back and make her parents happy again

The Empty Place: A Child's Guide Through Grief by Roberta Temes. When a nine-year-old boy's beloved big sister dies, he is confused, angry and fearful. For the first time he must face the finality of death and the pain of loss. His parents, also grieving, seem distant, until a counselor teaches them all how to cope and heal.

Gentle Willow: A Story for Children About Dying. J.C. Mills. Amanda the squirrel is upset that she is going to lose her friend Gentle Willow, but the tree wizards give advice that help both her and Gentle Willow accept the change that comes with death.



The Giant by Claire Ewart. A young girl, grieving the loss of her mother, strives to find the giant that her mother promised would look after her. But there are no such things as giants—not real giants . . . or are there? She wants so desperately to believe that it seems as if she's always just missed one. Can she dream her larger-than-life guardian into reality? While she dreams, life on the farm with her father goes on. With lyrical prose her story unfolds—the seasons change, crops are planted, summer turns to fall, and the harvest is brought in. Throughout, one constant remains. The young girl does have a giant looking out for her. He's been with her all along.

Grantfather Hurant Lives Forever by Susanna Pitzer. Grigor watches grandfather mend his rug and listens to his stories of his country, Armenia. Grandfather helps Grigor make his own rug. Grandfather and Grigor are rug makers together! Grigor has a lot of feelings after Grandfather dies, but he continues to work on his rug as grandfather taught him.

The Happy Funeral by Eve Bunting. A little Chinese-American girl pays tribute to her grandfather as she assists in the preparations for his funeral.

How Can I Help, Papa? A Child's Journey Through Loss and Healing by E. Al-Chokhachy. How Can I Help Papa? is an endearing illustrated children's story about a nine-year-old girl and her terminally-ill grandfather. It was written to meet the emotional and educational needs of children, ages 6-12, with a terminally-ill loved one in their lives. Children need to know that feelings are OK, even the uncomfortable ones. It is important that they gently learn how to grieve and even can say goodbye. In a time of helplessness and uncertainty, children and their families need direction about the things that can be done to maximize their time together. They need reassurance and hope that they will get through this difficulty and that life will return to normalcy, even after the loss of their significant loved one.

It isn't Easy by M. Connolly. It's never easy when someone dies. This is the story of a child, after his brother is killed in an accident. It follows him and his parents through their reactions, their feelings of sadness and anger and pain, and shows how they begin to come to terms with what has happened.

Jasper's Day by M. Parker. Today Riley's family is celebrating Jasper's Day. Everything they do will be in honor of Jasper -- sort of like a birthday. But it isn't Jasper's birthday. The old dog's cancer has gotten really bad. Riley knows they can't let him suffer any longer but letting go will be the hardest thing he's ever had to do. Marjorie Blain Parker's tender story is filled with smiles, tears and the joy of special memories, and Janet Wilson's gentle pastels capture the depth of love shared by a boy and his dog. Together, they speak of acceptance, remembrance and the importance of cherishing life's every moment.

Kate, the Ghost Dog: Coping with the Death of a Pet by W. Wilson. This book teaches children how to cope with the loss of a pet and understand their feelings when they have lost a big part of their lives. The child in this story learns to deal with her feelings and comes to be able to remember Kate with happiness.

Mama's Going To Heaven Soon by K. Copeland. A loving and supportive father tells his children that their sick mother is going to die. Includes advice for caregivers on how to talk to youngsters about death.

The Memory String by E. Bunting. Each button on Laura's memory string represents a piece of her family history. The buttons Laura cherishes the most belonged to her mother—a button from her prom dress, a white one off her wedding dress, and a single small button from the nightgown she was wearing on the day she died. When the string breaks, Laura's new stepmother, Jane, is there to comfort Laura and search for a missing button, just as Laura's mother would have done. But it's not the same—Jane isn't Mom. In Eve Bunting's moving story, beautifully illustrated by Ted Rand, Laura discovers that a memory string is not just for remembering the past: it's also for recording new memories.

Michael Rosen's Sad Book by M. Rosen. With unmitigated honesty, a touch of humor, and sensitive illustrations by Quentin Blake, Michael Rosen explores the experience of sadness in a way that resonates with us all.



The Purple Balloon by C. Raschka. When a child becomes aware of his pending death (children tend to know long before the rest of us even want to consider it), and is given the opportunity to draw his feelings, he will often draw a blue or purple balloon, released and unencumbered, on its way upward.

A Season for Mangoes by R. Hanson. Sareen is attending her first sit-up, a Jamaican tradition that celebrates the life of a loved one who has died. The whole village has come to share memories of Sareen's Nana. Sareen wants to tell her stories of Nana's last mango season and their search for the perfect mango, but she's afraid the words won't come or that she'll begin to cry. It's only when Sareen faces her fear that she realizes it's not the sadness of Nana's death that she'll remember best but the joy of Nana's life.

Tear Soup: A Recipe for Healing After Loss by P. Schwiebert. Tear Soup, a recipe for healing after loss, centers around an old and somewhat wise woman, Grandy. Grandy has just suffered a big loss in her life and so she is headed to the kitchen to make a special batch of Tear Soup.

Thank you, Grandpa by L. Plourde. This glowing picture book, by turns playful and poignant, portrays the tender relationship between a grandfather and granddaughter as they appreciate nature together over the years. They take their first walk in the woods when the little girl is barely old enough to toddle; their last when Grandfather can only shuffle along. Each walk brings a new discovery—a sneaky snake, flashing fireflies, teardrops on a spiderweb—and sometimes a lesson about saying good-bye. One day the girl walks alone, stronger because she learned from her grandfather how to be grateful for life's fleeting gifts.

When Someone Very Special Dies by M. Heegaard  
A practical format for allowing children to understand the concept of death and develop coping skills for life.

Zach and His Dog: A Story of Bonding, Love, and Loss for Children and Adults to Share Together by D. Meagher.

**Questions or concerns, please contact  
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