

## Approved for use in 7th grade

### Summary of the Work:

Twelve-year-old Summer finds a home with relatives after her mother dies. After Summer's Aunt May dies suddenly, Summer and Uncle Ob try to establish contact with her spirit, only to learn that it lives within each of them.

### Rationale:

A largely inferential novel, *Missing May*, provides a framework for bringing into focus a character's experience of grief through classroom discussion.

Though the reader is left to infer much of the transformation that the Summer and Uncle Ob experience, the writing is honest, humorous, and deft. Rylant writes from beyond Summer's years, but needs to in order to convey the stories main themes.

### Professional Reviews and/or Critical Essays:

This short novel is a study of grief--chiefly, that felt by Summer after her foster mother's sudden death, but also her sorrow at witnessing the grief of Ob, her foster father--she realizes that she herself may not be reason enough for him to go on living. And for several months it seems as if he may not in fact go on, until Summer and Ob take a short car trip that somehow transforms their lives. In a direct, matter-of-fact voice occasionally laced with irony and wry humor, Summer articulates many discerning insights about sorrow and loss. The reader remains a distant observer of her emotions, however--perhaps because the novel begins after May's death, making her a less immediate figure, perhaps because Summer's perceptions are quite sophisticated, even adult. And the novel's emotional turning point is difficult to grasp, either verbally or intuitively: all Summer, and we, know is that "something happened to Ob" to make him embrace life fully again. Ages 11-up.

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\* Print resources are available from the library media center and libraries in the district. Contact any library media specialist to view the scholarly sources.

\* Scholarly reviews are also available online through Books in Print and Gale. Contact the library media specialist to obtain username and password information to access the subscription database of full-text reviews.

### Noted Distinction:

- Newbery Medal Award Winner 1993

### Readability:

- Lexile Score: 980L
- Readability Level:

### Learning Resources Guidelines:

- The novel meets the Learning Resources Guidelines.

### Standard Alignment: [\(link\)](#)

### Approval:

Submitted to Committee:

Approved for Adoption:

### Notes on the Text:

*(The best way to evaluate and understand a novel is to personally read the book in its entirety.)*

### Connection to the Curriculum:

### Additional Connections:

*(AP, Honors, Essential/Applied, Dramas, Films, etc.)*

The Glencoe Literature Library supplementary materials in the back of *Missing May* explore the importance of human connection in life and after death.