



Mourning Dove: a family in pain discovers the healing power of love.

Suddenly and without warning, life had become very difficult for young Billy Robinson. His father, Ben, the man that Billy looked to for friendship, love and guidance, had died of a brain aneurysm. Billy's mother, Marion, loved Billy so deeply, but was herself heart-broken, having lost the husband she had cherished for so long. And Billy's Nana and Grandpa, Earl and Vera Robinson, tried to ease Billy's suffering, but they, too, were in pain, because they had lost their son.

And so, for Billy Robinson, there were no more Saturday walks to the ball park with his Dad. And the time spent in the tree house – the wonderful tree house that his architect Dad had made for him – was a constant reminder that his father was no longer around. He did have his best friend, Kenny Montgomery, but even a best friend can't replace a Dad. Nothing can truly replace the bond between parent and child, but maybe there is something – maybe hope, maybe optimism, maybe prayer – that can help a young, pre-teen boy get through the most difficult time of his life.

This is the heart and soul of *Mourning Dove*, a new, youth-oriented novel from the pen of Carolyn J. Morris. For Morris, a career educator (and marvellous story-teller) based in Toronto and the rural regions of southern Ontario, *Mourning Dove* is a true labour of love, a first novel that brims with sensitivity and pure, honest, heartfelt emotion. At its core, this is a story of a family in emotional crisis, each member of the Robinson family feeling the deep, private pain that comes with the loss of a loved one.

What makes the *Mourning Dove* so moving is Morris' effective story-telling style, her subtle, under-stated approach moving the family's story through to a form of healing and resolution. In the end, it is the bond of family love and family history – the ties that bind Billy, Marion, Earl and Vera so closely together – that makes the story so real, so honest and so enriching.

Ralph E. Braden, the author of *The Way We Were Then*, has this to say: "*Mourning Dove* is an excellent short story for readers both young and old. I have read many books, and I have also written a few. Those that catch and hold my attention speak to me mentally, emotionally and spiritually; this story accomplishes all three."

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Carolyn J. Morris grew up on a family farm north of Toronto and now resides in the tiny, rural community of Beeton. She enjoys her country walks and reading in her garden.

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by Carolyn J. Morris
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