

Missing Mike

Shari Green

Pajama Press (Sep 14, 2018)

Hardcover \$16.95 (248pp)

978-1-77278-045-1

On the day that her family is evacuated from their home, eleven-year-old Cara's dog, Mike, goes missing. The family rushes to escape the spreading flames, taking only those things that they cannot live without. Though she had packed her just-in-case bag and thought she was prepared to flee, Cara desperately worries about Mike and does not want to leave without him.

Written in flowing prose, *Missing Mike* explores the meaning of home. Cara adjusts to her family's circumstances and watches other people dealing with their losses. She helps at the evacuee shelter, taking care of pets that are separated from their people; she refuses to let go of the hope that Mike will find his way back to her.

Cara also befriends Jewel, the foster daughter of the couple that takes the Donovan family into their home. The two work together to search for Mike, even risking a return to the evacuation zone. Sloane, Cara's older sister, who has withdrawn from their close relationship, also helps in the search.

The emotional intensity of the story never falters. It is full of the longing, loss, and desperation of losing everything. Through that sadness and desolation, the book teaches an amazing lesson about hope, kindness, and the importance of family.

Love, friendship, and loyalty are persistent themes; Cara sees how other people define each as they struggle to overcome their losses, and comes to understand that, even if she loses her house and all of her possessions, she can still find home wherever those close to her are found.

CATHERINE THURESON (September/October 2018)

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