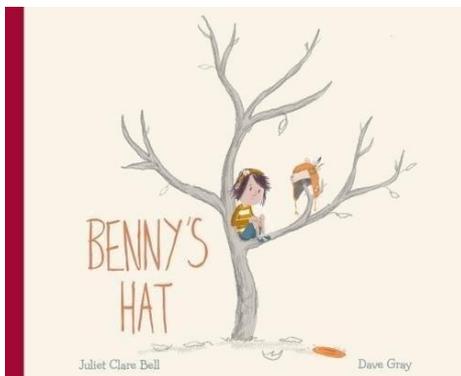


**MACMILLAN  
CANCER SUPPORT**

# BOOK REVIEWS

Read what people affected by cancer think about...



**Benny's hat (2017)**

Bell JC, Gray D (illustrator).  
Coventry: Pomelo Pip, 2017.  
40pp.  
ISBN 9781999729608.

**Average star rating 4.5 (out of 5)**

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This story is told with compassion and honesty and doesn't shy away from the sadness of what happens. The language and format are strongly suited for its target readers. The beautifully created and engaging illustrations help capture a child's attention and understanding of the context throughout. It will help children greatly in all stages of dealing with a sibling's illness especially during illness and bereavement.

I haven't come across this scenario in a book before and I like how the story focuses on siblings and their bond as opposed to that of a parent and child. The story is pure, emotional, and honest. It has been created beautifully throughout to help with the grieving process and is a very useful book for parents to read with their child to help them when a sibling is dying or has died. The activity page at the end is a lovely touch and the perfect end to a heartfelt story.

**My mother died from liver cancer (26-35) (December 2019)**

It would be useful to read this story before and after the death of a sibling. It is told in an honest and respectful way, dealing with the powerful emotions that a child might feel before and after a sibling dies. It shows Benny becoming ill and how he gradually gets worse. I like how it doesn't go into details of his treatment or condition. When he dies, the author shows honestly and touchingly how a child might deal with death.

I really like the look of the book. The illustrations are beautiful, and the pastel colours are in keeping with the feel of the story. The language is suitable for children; there are no technical or medical words.

There are many things I like about this book. I like that it is a story and easy for a child to understand. I really like the space for a child to add a picture of their sibling. I also like how there is a note for parents (by a child bereavement counsellor with Edward's Trust) on how to discuss the book with a child, the questions you could ask, and activities a parent can do with a child, such as memory jars or boxes.

It is very useful for emotional support. The author used feedback from families who were bereaved or pre-bereaved, to help gain insight into what type of story would offer support and help to other bereaved families.

**Parent of a child with cancer (36-45) (November 2018)**



This story is about a young girl whose brother gets very ill and eventually dies in a hospice. It explains how the girl copes with his illness and death in a very touching and realistic way. A lot of young children will be able to relate to it in a good positive way and it will be useful before, during and after bereavement.

I like the way the story is told. It is easy to understand and suitable for children. I really like the simple yet effective illustrations; the book has been well put together.

I would like the book to explain what a hospice is; for most children, this is a new thing. All it says is that the family goes to 'Saplings'; it does not use the word hospice, but you can see it is in one of the illustrations if you look carefully. For that reason, I can't give the book five stars, but it really has been done in a lovely way.

### **Breast cancer survivor with seven grandchildren (46-55) (September 2018)**

This is a lovely, warm and gentle children's book about dying and grief and about how a child may cope with the death of a sibling. It illustrates a range of emotions on all sides of a family, with a good lack of sugar coating. The language of death and dying is used appropriately for children and not skirted around.

The illustrations are simple, muted and effective in conveying what is going on in the story and they provide a starting point for talking and sharing feelings, which sometimes text alone cannot do. I love Benny's hat and want one just like it.

My only negative comment is that the family in the book are 'nice' (though I think that this is the case in most books!), so it may not strike a chord with everyone. Importantly, however, this is a book that could sit happily alongside a range of other picture books anywhere there are books: school; home; hospital; the library.

### **Living with cancer (myelodysplastic syndrome) (August 2018)**

# Further information

## Why does Macmillan Cancer Support review books?

We use reviews to help us compile a list of suggested cancer books, the [Macmillan Core Book List](#). Cancer information centres and public libraries can use this list to select appropriate and relevant books for people affected by cancer.

We add reviews to the [Directory of information materials for people affected by cancer](#) so that people affected by cancer can see what others in a similar situation think about a book. You can also see details of all the books reviewed in the [Book reviews listing](#), which also has links to all the reviews.

We recruit most of our reviewers through the [Volunteering Village](#) and the [Cancer Voices Network](#), people affected by cancer who have signed up to help Macmillan Cancer Support in a number of ways. Volunteers are a vital part of our book review process; since 2007, over 1,500 Macmillan volunteers have written more than 6,000 reviews of over 500 different books.

If you are a health professional who would like to review books for us, please [email Sue Hawkins](#), Information Materials Researcher, Macmillan Cancer Support.

## Information and support for people affected by cancer

If you are looking for support to help you live life with cancer, you may wish to contact one of [Macmillan's cancer information and support services](#). Or you can call the Macmillan Support Line free on **0808 808 00 00** (Mon-Fri 9am–8pm). We have an interpreting service in over 200 languages. Just state, in English, the language you wish to use. If you are deaf or hard of hearing you can use textphone no 0808 808 0121 or Text Relay.

You can also email us using the [website enquiry form](#). Alternatively, [visit our website](#).

## Feedback

If you have any comments, please [email Sue Hawkins](#), Information Materials Researcher, Macmillan Cancer Support.

**We're here to help everyone with cancer live life as fully as they can, providing physical, financial and emotional support. So whatever cancer throws your way, we're right there with you.**

**For information, support or just someone to talk to, call 0808 808 00 00 or visit [macmillan.org.uk](http://macmillan.org.uk)**

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