

**MACMILLAN  
CANCER SUPPORT**

# BOOK REVIEWS

Read what people affected by cancer think about...



**Only one of me. A love letter from mum (2018)**

Wells L, Robinson M, Echeverri C (illustrator).  
Llanelli: Graeffeg Limited, 2018.  
34pp.  
ISBN 9781912654642.  
£12.99.

**Average star rating 4.7 (out of 5)**

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Someone with terminal cancer will benefit from this book if they are considering discussing their illness with a young family member. It is an ideal tool when the time is right to explain to a child what is happening and of course what will happen. It doesn't have details of diagnosis, treatment, side effects, or where to get help or answers to questions but that is okay as that is not the intent.

I like the simple, heartfelt text and illustrations. I was captivated by the cover then the synopsis on the back. It is written out of love, loyalty and dread of the heart-tugging thought of leaving behind someone precious.

It is a softly spoken, nurturing, rhythmic book that will gently ease and guide those who don't know how to approach or speak to a little one about their illness. It will help put mother and child at ease. It is a lovely way to help ease the worry of what will happen when the time comes and will help many people who find themselves on this journey. It is a catalyst for the person going through it and for their loved ones.

**Living with multiple myeloma (46-55) (August 2019)**

This is beautifully written in a very positive way. It is almost like a love letter, a legacy of love. It is very suitable for young children and beautifully illustrated. It will comfort a family, while acknowledging that all emotions expressed are OK. It will also be useful other family members, healthcare professionals and teachers.

**Retired Macmillan Nurse (56-65) (June 2019)**

I love this book. It is emotional and clear in offering love, support, kindness and understanding from both sides, parent and child. It is very easy to understand, with language suitable for children, and the illustrations capture the love and caring.

I am not a parent, but the strength and courage of some people to face so many mixed emotions are overwhelming. It takes a different you to be able to share and be the person that people expect you to be. It's all about love, kindness, offering your time to the loved one. I wish more people would realise how short life is, embrace each moment as if it is the last, to be more open to loved ones and feeling free and have the courage to share their feelings and to tell them how much they love them.

I love it – the illustrations and the message – it's very sensible and loving. The love of a parent is unexplainable. To be able to detach yourself from your emotional state, to be so supportive and loving to your family, it's a miracle.

**Family member (26-35) (May 2019)**

This excellent book is written in the form of a poem and is a letter from a mother diagnosed with a terminal illness to her young child. It is particularly suitable for a mother with a young child (and anyone supporting the child) at any point on a cancer journey, and after death as a reminder of how much the mother loved her child.

It looks like a typical storybook for young children. It is a good size for a parent to hold and share with a child. The illustrations are child friendly and there is the right balance of text to illustrations. The story will appeal to a young child, with rhyme throughout. The language is appropriate for young children and easy to understand.

I like that it gives an adult a vehicle for sharing the impact of a terminal diagnosis in a child-friendly and supportive manner. It can be personalised as there is space for the mother to write a special message and add a photo. This makes it something for the child to treasure and share with other adults following their mother's death. It is reassuring, letting them know that their mother will always love them, that it is alright to be sad sometimes, but reminding them to remember the happy memories.

I thoroughly recommend this book to any mother diagnosed with a terminal illness and who needs a way of explaining to her child that she will not always be there but that there will be other special adults who will be there to love and care for them.

**Lead volunteer for a practical and emotional support service (66-75) (December 2018)**

This book has been very cleverly written by a mother who has terminal cancer to prepare a child for the death of their mum. It is well illustrated in a simple yet effective way that fits the story beautifully. The gentle rhyme flows well and is easy for even a young child to understand. The illustrations are fun and the sad business of the child being without mum is told in a light-hearted way. It has been written as a letter from mum to the child, which works very well. Mum says in the book how she is asking other friends and family members to help her child when she has gone. She tells the child how it is ok to feel sad and encourages them to remember the good times.

This is a fantastic book for anyone who finds themselves in this situation. It's a great book to help a child cope with a loss and for another family member or friend to read to the child to help them. I really like how the story is told. It is simple, loving and very easy to understand for even a very young child. I like the simple and uncluttered look as well; the illustrations are excellent and tell the story well.

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



This poem/love letter to a child losing a parent from cancer is heart warming, honest, poetic and comforting. I like how it deals with such a difficult topic in a heart-warming and comforting manner. I really like how it looks too: the gentle, pastel illustrations match the tone and nature of the book. The pictures are uplifting and heart warming, despite dealing with such a difficult topic. The 'love' flows out of the book through the pictures. It is a beautiful book with a beautiful sentiment behind it.

I recommend it if cancer is terminal, to help prepare. It would very comforting for young children and also for family members.

**Parent of child with cancer (Retinoblastoma) (36-45) (January 2019)**

This is a gorgeously simple book for children whose parent is dying or who has died. It conveys what a parent might well want to say to a young child but is unable to for many reasons. I love the simplicity of the message and the premise behind it. The illustrations and simple text convey a heartfelt message of love and warmth from a parent to a child. Effectively and simply done. Brilliant.

**Living with cancer (myelodysplastic syndrome) and former teacher of 3-16-year olds with SEN (46-55) (October 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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