

Worry Angels

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ISBN: 9781781126950



Worries

Anxiety

Empathy

Coping with changes

Family

Refugees

The Syrian war

About the book

After her parents split up, Amy May's world is shattered. She and her mother have moved into a garden flat with no garden and her father has moved to an old cottage with no phone signal. Plus, Amy can't face going to her new school because of her anxiety. But Grace's art-school is very different. It's a safe and supportive place and Amy makes a new friend there, Rima – a girl who has just moved from Syria.



Time to talk

1. How does the story make you feel?
2. How does Amy May react when her parents separate?
3. Why is Amy May worried about her father?
4. How does breathing like the sea help Amy May?
5. How does Amy May feel about school? Do you sometimes feel that way about school too?
6. How does Grace's art-school help Amy May?
7. Amy May and Rima speak different languages. How does this affect their friendship?
8. Amy May compares herself to Rima. What does Grace tell Amy May about comparisons like this? Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of comparing yourself to others.
9. "Feel about it!" What's the difference between feeling and thinking? Why does this affect Amy May so much?
10. Why does being remembered by Amy May's father mean so much to Grace?
11. How have Amy May and Rima changed by the end of the book?
12. Read Rumi's worry poem, Let Go of Your Worries. What do you think of it?



Welsh versions of this book and guide are also available.

DARLEN **READING**
YN WELL **WELL**

Cross-curricular learning

Expressive Arts

- Design and create your own worry angels from papier mâché or your own clay animal.
- Chocolate cake is Amy May's favourite. Find a recipe for your favourite cake and bake it.
- Choose one of Amy May's letters to her father to illustrate.
- Act out Rima's story about the man with the water pots. Be as creative as possible to show the fruit trees growing and blooming.

Science and Technology

- What flowers does Amy May grow? Research the ideal growing conditions of these flowers. Why not plant your seeds and grow your own flowers?
- Sand therapy is important in Grace's art house. Experiment with different ratios of sand and water to find the best mix for making sand sculptures.
- Research kilns. What is a kiln? What do they do?

Humanities

- Where is Syria? What do you know about the war in Syria? What can you learn about the country?
- Who are Refugees? What do you know about the refugee crisis? What can you learn about refugees?
- Research the poet Rumi. Who was he? When was he alive? In which language did he write?

Languages, Literacy and Communication

- Grace and Amy May learn to say welcome and hello in Arabic. Can you learn these and other simple phrases? Does anyone in your class speak another language? Learn to say hello and introduce yourself in those languages too.
- Write a letter from Amy May to her mother explaining how she feels about her anxiety and her new life since her parents separated.
- Imagine Amy May meeting your favourite character from another book or TV programme. Write a dialogue between them. How would they become friends?
- What does the story say about different ways of communicating, such as letter-writing, non-verbal communication and body language?

Mathematics and Numeracy

- Amy May bought ingredients to make a chocolate cake. The total price of ingredients was £5.62. What different combinations of coins could you use to pay for these ingredients?
- Look at the money scores on page 74. What is the total amount of money? How many times have the children said what is on their mind?

Other books: Worries

Questions and Feelings About... Worries*

All Birds Have Anxiety*

Me and My Fear

Outsmarting Worry: An Older Kid's Guide to Managing Anxiety*

Ruby's Worry*

Gobblechops



*Welsh versions of these books are also available.

Additional discussion points

Before you start reading

- What do you think this book is about?
- Read the blurb. What sort of school do you think Grace's art house is?
- What are your first impressions of Amy May and her family?
- Are you looking forward to reading the book? Why?

Chapter 1: Broken Pot

- How do you think Amy May feels when she hears her parents arguing?
- *"That's not exactly an answer, is it?"* How does hearing this make Amy feel? Why do you think her mother avoided answering the question? How do you feel when you don't get answers to your questions?
- What is the end of the chapter? Why do you think the text is in italic font?

Chapter 2: The Cul-de-sac

- Why doesn't Amy feel lucky?
- *"Remember, your imagination can take you wherever you want to go."* Imagine a nice place to go to. Are you thinking of a real or an imaginary place? What's so nice about it?
- How does this chapter make you feel?

Chapter 3: Weeds

- Amy asks a lot of 'What if...' questions. Do you think this is a good thing? Do you think she can answer these questions?
- How does Amy May and her mother feel when they see Sandcastle Secondary?
- *"I don't feel like a refuser."* How do you think Amy feels? Do you think this feeling has a name?

Chapter 4: Crackly Line

- What are your first impressions of Mrs Nuala?
- How does Amy May feel when Mum hugs her? How do you think Mum feels?

Chapter 5: The Art-house

- What are your first impressions of the art house?
- What do you think are Amy May and her mother's first impressions of it?
- When she sees the toys and the sandpit, Amy May thinks it's a place for primary school children. Do you think that someone's age has to define what's fun, suitable and useful?
- *"Little group of students – that's all it takes to set me off."* What does this mean for Amy?
- Why do you think Amy wants Grace to make her an angel?
- Why do you think Grace needs an interpreter?



Chapter 6: Fragile

- How do Amy May and her mother's reactions differ after her first day at the art-house?
- What do you think about Mum's reaction to the card and parcel from Amy's father?
- How does Amy feel when she opens the parcel?

Chapter 7: Welcome

- How do you think Grace and Amy May feel before the new family arrive?
- What are your first impressions of the family?
- How do you think the new family feels on arrival at the art-house?
- What does Amy think about Iman's interpreting?
- *"They haven't had cake for so long ... and it will take time for them to learn again that they won't starve."* Why haven't the boys had cake for a long time? Why do they think they'll starve?

Chapter 8: Breaking News

- In your opinion, how does Tanya feel about Amy, the art-house and school?
- Why do you think Amy made Clay Cottage in the sand?
- How does this chapter make you feel?
- How do you feel about Rima?

Chapter 9: A Penny for Your Thoughts

- Why do you think things are easier when the twins are in the art-house?
- What do you think about Rima's story about the man with the water pots?
- What do you think Grace thinks about the story?
- Why do you think Tanya has started to arrive early to collect Amy?

- Do you agree with Amy that you don't have to speak the same language to be able to explain things to other people?
- How is Amy similar to Rima and her brothers?

Chapter 10: Angels

- Why does Grace say that it's ok to forget about yourself sometimes, but not all the time? What do you think about this?
- Why do you think Rima wants to know about Amy May just like Amy wants to know about Rima?
- *"We need more than one language to show how we feel."* What does this mean to you?
- What do you think about Tanya's reaction to Amy May's angel?
- Why does Amy want to make sure her parents don't argue when they meet?

Chapter 11: Trust

- How do you think Amy feels, waiting at the station to meet her father?
- *"You've made a true friend there."* What does this mean to you?
- What does Amy learn by trying to gain Sable's trust? Do you think there are any similarities between Amy and Sable?

Chapter 12: Old Friends

- Why do you think that Amy is relieved that Grace has a plan to help her and Rima when they start school?
- Why do you think it's such a compliment to Grace that Ned remembers her?
- Why do you think Ned remembers Grace after such a long time?
- Why does Amy May want to give her father an angel?



Chapter 13

- “She says those roses are ‘the smell of welcome.’” Do you think that the senses can hold memories and feelings?
- Do you think Amy and Rima are doing well in their secondary school?
- Why do you think Rima and her mum made curtains and a quilt for Amy?
- How do you think Amy May feels about that?
- “It is a very good closing and opening for us.” What do you think Rima means? Do you think this is a good ending for the book?

Let Go of Your Worries

- What does this poem mean to you?
- Why do you think Grace read this poem with Amy May?
- How does the poem make you feel?

After Reading the Book

- How does the story make you feel?
- How does Amy May develop throughout the story?
- Do you have a favourite character? Who and why?
- Have you learnt anything by reading this book?
- Did you enjoy the book? Was it different to your expectations?
- Would you recommend the book to anyone else? If so, who and why?
- Describe the book in a sentence.



M is for Autism

Students of Limpsfield Grange School and Vicky Martin
Illustrated by Limpsfield Grange School
and Luna Pérez Visairas

Jessica Kingsley Publishers
ISBN: 9781849056847

When you
have a
condition

Autism
School life
Family
Being diagnosed
with autism

About the book

M. That's what I'd like you to call me, please.
I'll tell you why later.

Welcome to my world. It's tipsy-turvy, sweet
and sour, and the beast of anxiety lurks
outside classrooms and stops me from having
a normal existence. I want a NORMAL existence.

I want to be like all other girls my age, who know what to say and what to do. I want to be with
Lynx, the juicy-lipped, hair-gelled love of my life. So why does it feel like I'm on a different plane of
existence to everyone else? And what does normal even mean anyway?

This is a book by the students of Limpsfield Grange School, a school for girls with autism spectrum
disorder and communication difficulties. This story, based on real life experiences, conveys what it's
like to be different in a normal world.



Time to Talk

1. How does M's introduction make you feel?
2. What do you think of M's name?
3. Why do you think M likes Fiona offering her a safe place and waiting for her at 4.00pm on Tuesdays?
4. What is 'normal' for you? Does 'normal' mean the same thing to everyone?
5. Do you like reading M's mother's perspective in the book? Why?
6. How would you describe Joe? Do you think he's a good friend to M?
7. How does M's experience at Shaznia's party make you feel?
8. Do you think M is an embarrassment to her mother? Why? Do you think her mother had anything to feel embarrassed about?
9. What is your reaction to M being diagnosed with autism?
10. What do you think about M's definition of autism?



Welsh versions of this book and guide are also available.

DARLEN
YN WELL

READING
WELL

11. "She'd listened to me. Mum's actually heard me, really, and the beast...it's gone too." How do you think M felt here?
12. What's the difference between listening and hearing?
13. Do you like labels? Do you think that all labels are equally powerful?
14. What have you learned about M's family in the book?
15. How does the book and M's story make you feel?

Cross-curricular learning

Expressive Arts

- Draw, design or compose MOLW, based on M's descriptions of it.
- A little more of Fiona's face is revealed in each image of her. Why do you think this is?
- Draw illustrations for the introduction to every chapter.
- Write your name in the middle of a piece of paper. Write or draw three things about yourself on the paper then ask everyone in the class to write or draw one thing each about you. Have you learned anything about yourself by doing this? What does this say about labels?

Science and Technology

- Make fajitas. Write a recipe and instructions so other people can make them too.
- At Shaznia's party the sound of the music echoes loudly. Echoes are sound waves that reflect off a surface of some kind. Experiment to find out which type of surface produces the strongest echo – a soft or hard surface, a smooth or rough surface?

Humanities

- Research well-known people with autism.
- M says that she won't go on the school trip to Paris. In groups, research Paris and make a poster with the things you have learned about the capital.

Languages, Literacy and Communication

- Why are some words and sentences in a different colour and font? Is this effective?
- How does M describe her anxiety?
- There are several definitions in the book. Look up the meanings of any words that are unfamiliar to you in a dictionary and make a note of them.

Mathematics and Numeracy

- Find timetables for buses that go to your local hospital. Find this information if you catch the bus near school and near your home:
 - Would I need to change buses?
 - How long will the journey take?
 - How much would it cost?

Other books: When you have a condition

Double Felix

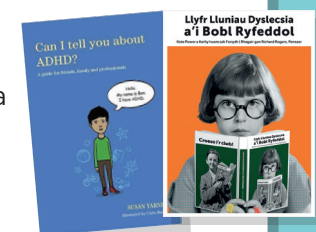
Check Mates*

Can I tell you about ADHD: A Guide for Friends, Family and Professionals*

The Illustrated Guide to Dyslexia and Its Amazing People*

Questions and Feelings About... Having a Disability*

Questions and Feelings About... Autism*



Additional discussion points

Before you start reading

- What do you know about autism?
- What do you think of the book's title?
- Read the words on the cover. What kind of words are these – positive, negative, or both? How do they make you feel about the book?
- School pupils wrote this book with an author, what do you think of that?

M's introduction

- How does the introduction make you feel?
- Are you looking forward to reading the book?
- Do you have any questions before continuing with the book?

Chapter 1

- How are the two definitions of anxiety different to each other?
- Have you ever felt anxious like the dictionary definition or like M's definition?
- Do you think M is bad?
- What do you think of M's name?
- M escapes to her own little world, MOLW, where she feels at home and safe. Do you have a place you can escape to and feel safe? Is that place imaginary or real?
- Do you think M is the problem?



Tuesday 4.00pm

- Why do you think M likes Fiona offering a safe place and waiting for her at 4 o'clock on a Tuesday?
- Do you like consistency like this?
- *"Why am I the problem? Isn't the dinner lady, the whispering girls and Miss Haynes – aren't they the problem?"* What do you think these questions? What do you think of Fiona's reaction?
- Do you think that the counsellor silence, the time Fiona gives M to think things through, is important? Why?

Chapter 2

- What is 'normal' for you? Does 'normal' mean the same thing to everyone?
- What do you think of Toby and his relationship with M?
- How do you think M feels about the letters the school sends to her mother?
- *"Is kindness actually a talent?"* What is your answer to this question?
- Do you have a talent? Do you think everyone has a talent?
- Do you like hugs? Why do you think M says *"I wish I liked hugs."*?

Tuesday 4.00pm

- *"She knows I'm different and I know I'm different and I think she just finds it easy to call me kind."*
- How do you think M is similar and different to other people, to you or to people you know?
- Do you think that differences between people are a good thing?

Chapter 3

- What have you learned about M's family in this episode?
- Do you think M's mum deserves the 'World's Most Rubbish Mother' award?
- Do you have a favourite food?

Chapter 4

- Do you think Joe is a good friend to M?
- Why do you think M is so pleased that she and Joe are "*having a normal conversation*"?
- Do you enjoy parties?
- Do you think that school is a good environment for M?

Chapter 5

- How do you think M's mother feels?
- Do you like to have M's perspective in the book? Why?

Chapter 6

- How does M feel before the party, during the party and after going home?
- How do you feel when meeting new people for the first time?
- "*Adults do this. [...] they talk about me as if I can't hear.*" Can you identify with this? How does it make you feel?
- How would you describe Joe's character?
- How do you think Joe and M's mother feel after M runs home?

Tuesday 4.00pm

- Do you agree with Fiona and think M has done well? Why?
- How do you think M feels at the end of this session with Fiona?

Chapter 7

- What is your reaction to the timetables at the beginning of the chapter?
- How do you think M and her mother feel before they leave the house?
- "*I think I must really embarrass Mum a lot.*" Do you think M embarrasses her mother? Why? Do you think her mother had anything to feel embarrassed about?
- How does this chapter make you feel? Do you have any questions?

Tuesday 4.00pm

- What do you think about M's definition of autism?
- Do you think M should change?
- What could you do to support M right now?

Chapter 8

- Do you enjoy the summer holidays? Do you do different things that you don't do during term time?
- How do you feel about M asking her mother to explain clearly to her?
- What do you think of Toby's reaction?
- "*She'd listened to me. Mum's actually heard me, and the beast ... he's gone too.*" How do you think M felt here?
- What's the difference between listening and hearing?

Tuesday 4.00pm

- Do you feel as proud as Fiona of M for taking control?
- M didn't realize she had taken control; do you always realize you've done something well? Can you think of three things you have done well today?
- Do you like labels? Do you think that all labels are equally powerful?
- "*I took a very deep breath.*" What do you think of this sentence, the last sentence of the book?



After reading the book

- How do M's descriptions of her anxiety make you feel? Can you identify with her descriptions?
- Now that you've read the book, what do you think of the title?
- How does the book make you feel?
- Did you enjoy the book? Was it different from your expectations?
- Would you recommend the book to someone else? If so, who and why?
- Describe the book in a sentence.