



Higgledy Piggledy Hearts

Featuring *Magical Maisie*
Part of the *Magical Maisie* Collection

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Illustrations by Monika Marzec



Written by Emma Farrell
Illustrated by Monika Marzec



Thanks to

Cheryl for grounding me through my school years

Shirley and Debra for all the personal and professional support and guidance over the years

Kira for being my annoying big sister

Ann for the opportunities, inspiration and being my cheerleader in everything I do

To family and friends not specifically mentioned.

Thank you, without you I wouldn't be me

And lastly to my grandad who would be the proudest man if he could have read this

A note to parents, teachers, relatives and friends

Communicating with children about big emotions can be difficult. A child's developing brain is imaginative, creative and beautiful. Their communication is through play and metaphor rather than the verbal language of adults.

This book discusses the big issues of bereavement and loss through the story of two children whose Grandfather dies. It explores themes of loneliness, isolation, anger, sadness and hope whilst offering solutions through story.

Some children can appear fixated on a story and want it read over and over. Bear with them, they are strongly identifying with an aspect of the story and are processing this difficulty through repetition.

Grief can be experienced at different times and in different ways. Some people start grieving when a loved one becomes unwell, some upon death and some months or even years later. Negotiating key events, such as birthdays, anniversaries and religious festivals can often be a pull back into the grief process. Societally we often hear phrases such as 'getting over' or 'moving on' from grief. I wonder what these terms even mean! I would like to offer an alternative perspective. Grief is a natural process associated with loss. Over time we build a world around that grief. They

say that time is a healer. Time provides the opportunity to build healthy experiences and memories around the loss we have experienced.

Children can experience many emotions associated with loss. They may feel overwhelmed, guilt that they could not prevent the death, anger that the person has left them or a variety of other emotions. These feelings often come out through behaviour rather than speech.

It is not commonly believed that children under the age of 5 can cognitively understand death. Around 5 years old, children could view death as sleeping and are not believed to understand its finality. Around 7 years old it is believed that they understand that death is irreversible.

It's also important to note that children may revisit their grief at future developmental stages.





Magical Maisie

Magical Maisie is Lilly's and Stephen's best friend. Maisie is a sensitive little dog who goes everywhere with them and has secret superpowers. Maisie seems to be able to read minds. She somehow knows how Lilly and Stephen are feeling and is always there for them when they need her. Maisie's magical powers don't stop there, she is cuddly, super playful and is always able to cheer Lilly and Stephen up and make them smile.

Stephen and Lilly believe that Magical Maisie's superpowers are very special. Maisie's big ears help her to listen in a very special way. Her nose lets her sniff out what Lilly and Stephen really feel. Sometimes Lilly and Stephen say that they are okay and Maisie's nose is able to sniff out that they are actually feeling angry or sad. When Maisie listens, Stephen and Lilly feel warm, fuzzy and safe.

When Stephen and Lilly have big feelings, Maisie sits patiently and calmly waiting for them to pass. When Lilly and Stephen are grumpy, Maisie uses her big ears to listen to what is really going on, knowing that a sneaky feeling will be hiding behind being grumpy.

Maisie is very patient, and Stephen and Lilly don't feel rushed. Whatever is happening, however they feel, Maisie is always there wagging her tail, wanting to help.



Stephen and Lilly went to school like any other day, happily playing with their friends without a care in the world.

After school they were going to get an ice cream, so they were very excited for home time.



Stephen and Lilly got to the ice cream shop and picked their favourite flavour.

Stephen had strawberry and Lilly had chocolate. With big smiles on their faces, they licked their lips and enjoyed their ice cream in the park.