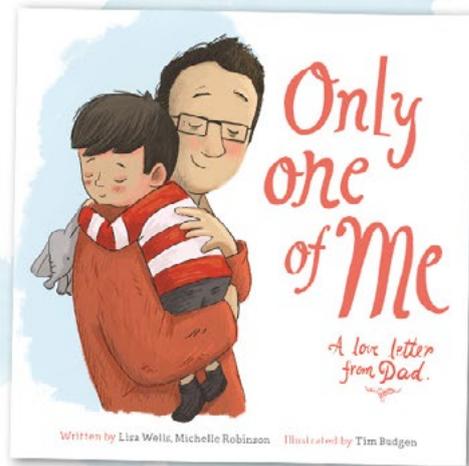


Only one of Me



Written by Lisa Wells & Michelle Robinson, Illustrated by Catalina Echeverri & Tim Budgen

Publication 12 October 2018

Q&A with co-authors, Michelle Robinson and Lisa Wells

www.onlyoneofme.co.uk

MICHELLE: How did ONLY ONE OF ME come about?

LISA: I always enjoyed writing and kept a blog during the course of my treatment. It helps me relax and address my feelings and put them down somewhere.

I'd always wanted to write a children's book. A member of Lisa's Army put me in touch with local children's author Michelle Robinson who lives a few streets away — and *Only One of Me* was born!

MICHELLE: Why did you specifically want to make a book like ONLY ONE OF ME?

LISA: I had read other children's books designed to introduce them to the idea of grief and losing a loved one, but was unconvinced by them. They talk about mummy being in the stars or something. My girls wouldn't understand that. They'd want to know when I was coming back or when they could come and visit.

I wanted to create a book about leaving my children behind in the care of family and loved ones, explaining me dying in a simple, comforting way that my daughters would be able to understand.

I wanted the book to be a treasured keepsake in



Co-authors Michelle Robinson (left) and Lisa Wells

which terminally diagnosed parents could leave notes of their own for their children to read in the future.

MICHELLE: How was ONLY ONE OF ME funded?

LISA: As soon as the poem was shared online it received a LOT of shares. It quickly became clear there was a need for a book like this. Michelle started a JustGiving crowdfund to raise money

to print and distribute the book. The target was reached within days.

We had support from Lisa's Army (my friends, family and supporters), the children's book community and generous strangers the world over. Some children's book artists even donated work for auction.

We initially thought we might need funds to pay an illustrator (this was a month's solid work on top of their existing commitments!), but Catalina Echeverri and Tim Budgen very generously offered to donate their fees towards producing the book.

MICHELLE: What will the ONLY ONE OF ME crowdfund be used for?

LISA: The money is funding the first print run! A small percentage of the fund might be used for the launch party - but as many local firms are helping us out with freebies, including a free venue (Rook Lane Chapel in Frome) which would have been the major cost, we hope to be doing this on a shoestring!

The event itself will also be a fundraiser, with guests able to buy signed copies of the book on the night.

MICHELLE: Who is publishing ONLY ONE OF ME?

LISA: Graffeg, a small independent publisher based in Cardiff Bay.



MICHELLE: When can people buy copies of ONLY ONE OF ME?

LISA: Both the mum and dad versions of the book publish on October 12th 2018.

You can pre-order it now. We are printing hundreds of copies and donating them directly to charities. Copies will also be available for the general public to buy in book shops and online. We very much hope to be reprinting soon, with subsequent print runs being funded by proceeds from the first.

MICHELLE: Where can people buy ONLY ONE OF ME?

LISA: You can already pre-order online via Graffeg, Amazon as well as other online book retailers. It will also be available from local high street book stores - including independent book shops as well as the likes of Waterstones and WH Smiths.

MICHELLE: Where will the money from ONLY ONE OF ME book sales go?

LISA: Profits from book sales, as well as any additional crowdfund donations from here on in, will be used to re-print and distribute more copies of the books. All four of the authors and illustrators are donating their royalties to Mummy's Star and We Hear You (WHY).

MICHELLE: Tell me about the two versions of ONLY ONE OF ME?

LISA: There are two versions: A version for mums with a terminal diagnosis and a version for dads. The mum version is illustrated by Catalina Echeverri. She based the characters on me and my family, weaving in special items and memories along the way. You might spot my love heart locket in many of the pictures, along with our blue camper van on the opening page! The dad version is illustrated by Tim Budgen.

MICHELLE: How did you make ONLY ONE OF ME SO perfect?

LISA: Having such a short mouth of time to create and produce the book meant we had a very tight focus. We discussed every aspect as a team and sought input from qualified counsellors at We Hear You, along with guidance from Dr Konrad Jacobs, Consultant Clinical Child Psychologist at Oxford University Hospitals.

For example, this book is unlike many picture books in that it deliberately addresses and shows children being upset and crying in grief and confusion.

We've made sure that wherever this is the case, the children are clearly being comforted by loved ones.

We had to consider the book from all manner of perspectives, but always kept in mind its intended

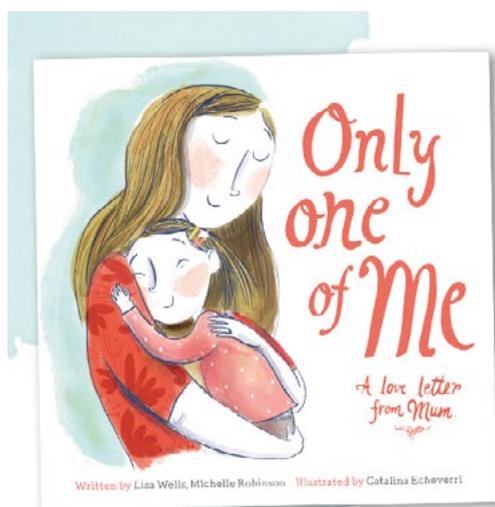


key audience: terminally diagnosed parents and their families.

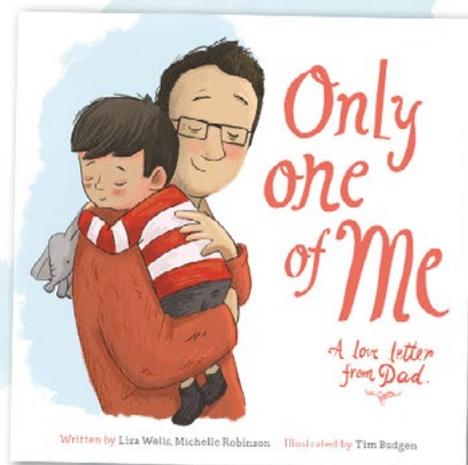
MICHELLE: Where can people find out more about ONLY ONE OF ME?

Lisa: We're making a small website to accompany the book at www.onlyoneofme.co.uk. It will have advice for terminally diagnosed parents and their loved ones on how to share the book, with tips on how children of different ages tend to deal with death.

For anyone interested there will also be a little bit about the background of how the book came about. You can read back through the whole process on Michelle's blog (www.michellerobinson.co.uk).



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