



M in the Middle: Secret Crushes, Mega-Colossal Anxiety and the People's Republic of Autism

The Students of Limpsfield Grange School , Vicky Martin

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I'll never have a Card Emporium series of life events: a boyfriend, a fiancé, a husband and a future. A future with lots of sparkly cards celebrating all these big life events. I was on course and now I'm not.

Life after diagnosis isn't easy for M. Back in her wobbly world, there are lots of changes and ups and downs to get used to, not just for M, but for her friends and family too. Faced with an exciting crush, a pushy friend and an unhelpful Headteacher, how long until the beast of anxiety pounces again?

Written by Vicky Martin and the students of Limpsfield Grange, a school for girls with Autism Spectrum Disorder and communication and interaction difficulties, M's story draws on the real life experiences of teens with autism.

M in the Middle: Secret Crushes, Mega-Colossal Anxiety and the People's Republic of Autism Details

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From Reader Review M in the Middle: Secret Crushes, Mega-Colossal Anxiety and the People's Republic of Autism for online ebook

Sandra Mansell says

Fantastic! Amazing! Highly recommended!

Schenley says

I absolutely adored M is for Autism, so I was thrilled to see that they had written a sequel!

Our female main character and narrator is now in year 8 in England (so age 12 or 13). She got her autism diagnosis a year ago, and her wonderful therapist has been helping her understand herself and develop strategies for dealing with her often-crippling anxiety.

I do want to caution those of you who struggle(d) with anxiety. The authors do an incredible job of provoking empathy for their anxious narrator. Pretty much any time M was taking deep breaths or using another calming strategy, I found myself taking deep breaths along with her. I read the book in one day – partly because it was so good, and partly because I didn't want to drag out my time living in her anxious mind.

We get a fuller picture of M's life in this longer book. She deals with INCREDIBLY frustrating adults who do pretty much the opposite of what this poor girl needs, fueling her anxiety and pushing her towards mutism. She encounters a few people who "get" her, show her kindness, and help her find her voice again. She has "friends" who turn into horrible bullies and she has *friends.* She has an obsessive crush on an older boy, and wonders if she can have a "normal" future. She tries so hard to fit in. She tries so hard to have friends. She tries so hard to do the right things at school. She tries so hard to combat her anxiety. She tries so hard to connect with her family while recognizing she can't do the things they want her to do to show that connection. She tries. So. Darn. Hard.

While writing this, I recalled watching the video about the Limpsfield Grange School girls. I just realized that one of the plot points (involving the crush's photos) was inspired by a real experience of a girl at that school.

I strongly recommend this pair of books - for autistic girls to feel less alone, and for people who aren't autistic girls to stretch their empathy muscles. It's an emotional ride, but they both end with glimmers of realistic hope.

Rebekah Gillian says

This is the book I wish I had read a few years ago, following my own diagnosis, or as a younger teenager. Written by autistic teenage girls with the help of their teacher, it shows a unique and empathetic insight into

the lives of autistic people navigating the real world in a way non-autistic people would have a hard time understanding.

Emma Vardy says

Just wow! This is a fantastic book. Drawing on the real lives of girls with autism this follows the story of M a teenage girl and her life being autistic. The account is raw and leaves you feeling sad and wanting to give M a big hug- although she wouldn't like that. The story doesn't hold back on the schools lack of support for a pupil with autism. A must read book for all those with an interest in autism, a parent, a teacher, healthcare professional or other teens with autism. Finished the book in one day!

Lizzie (Littlehux) Huxley-Jones says

M is back! M is the main character of M is for Autism, the first book by Limpsfield Grange School's students & Vicky Martin.

M has her diagnosis of autism, but still no one seems to understand her. Not her mother, her fiercest defender. Not her father, who has moved out and sometimes sleeps on the sofa. Certainly not her brother who seems embarrassed by her. And definitely not her school, who don't seem to believe that she even has autism.

But when M gets her first crush on the wonderful Lynx, she wonders if this could be the beginning of her life of normal but magical moments. Or will it be just another series of misunderstandings?

I really love the M books and while M is for Autism was more of a primer on understanding the diagnostic process for children, M in the Middle is a novel in its own right. M is wonderful, her story relatable to many people – not just autistic people!

I also think the descriptions of anxiety in this book are the best I've ever read. I didn't know I had anxiety as a teenager until someone explained to me that the fear of impending doom I was describing was anxiety – it seemed like such a simple word for such an encompassing thing! M calls it the Beast of Anxiety, describes it similar to the black dog of depression.

I wholeheartedly recommend M is for Autism. It's a heartwarming story about growing up and trying to be true to yourself. Suitable for children aged 9+.

What to read next:

Am I Normal Yet? by Holly Bourne

The State of Grace by Rachael Lucas

Under Rose Tainted Skies by Louise Gornall

Thank you ever so much to Jessica Kingsley Publishers for sending this copy over to me for review.

Stacey. says

“M in the Middle” is the story of M, a 13 year old girl living with Autism and the unique challenges this presents.

I have worked for a number of years with individuals with learning and physical disabilities including those with ASD. I found M’s voice honest, authentic and insightful into the internal dialogue of those with ASD. I could recognise traits within M in the people I work with, however it is important to remember (as is said in the book) if you meet one person with Autism, you have met one person with Autism.

Anxiety is an issue explored deeply in the book. M’s descriptions of how anxiety made her feel were very illustrative and her language and the changes in font actually invoked a real sense of someone drowning in anxiety and the claustrophobic, strangling, overwhelming, isolating “beast” that it is.

I liked the realism of the family relationships depicted, Toby’s struggles, her dad’s frustrations, and her mum struggling to cope. I also liked the librarian, Jess (Sky), Adam, Joe- I was so pleased M had people in her life who tried hard to understand M, explain things to her and just let her be herself.

There were a few things that pissed me off, firstly that M’s family were given a diagnosis and what seems to be absolutely no support- 1 year post diagnosis how had M not had a social worker, a needs assessment, a special education plan?! How did her mother seem to know nothing about DLA?! Very frustrating.

Worse than this was her school. Fair enough Jessica’s (Sky’s) mum and her boyfriend were ignorant *swear words* but educators? M mum should have sued that school for the discrimination they showed towards her daughter. The teacher who thinks she knows everything about Autism because she sat through a mandatory training session, the principal who seems to think he can discipline the Autism out of M- they make me so. fucking. cross.

In the end things didn’t get magically sorted and M floated off into the sun, but I felt hopeful for M and I think that’s the most believable and realistic ending for M.

Jenn says

I adored M and her honesty about her struggles. I wish her well and hope our paths cross again

Eve says

Just excellent! Very well done. I am an autistic nearly-30 year old, and have never read a fictional book with an autistic girl protagonist, and it was so RIGHT. I could relate to M so much, especially her school experiences (I was mainstream educated, and it was horrible). I can relate to her feelings of 'rightness' having met other autistics finally, and her inner experiences were so familiar that I was baffled by it. Thank you for this book. One thing I was not keen on was 'person-first' language, i.e. 'person with autism' rather than

'autistic person', and seeing autism as separate from the person when actually it is integral and it is who we are -- a neurological orientation. This is my only criticism, and maybe is something that the girls can explore with their teachers and peers in terms of learning about identity-first language, and why it might be important.

Christie says

I won this book in a Goodreads Giveaway and am so in love with it!!! The way the author changed the fonts to place emphasis on the autistic girl's thought patterns was fantastic, the storyline was so sad, but believable and full of hope. This is one of those books that will remain on my shelf for a future reading. Literally finished the entire book in less than 24 hours because it was just that good. Highly recommend this book to anybody looking for an interesting read!

Andria ??? says

This is a YA book about a girl with autism. It's super cute and has lots of doodles within the book which helps the adult get in the mindset of adolescent girl while reading. The thoughts and rationales behind certain anxieties and behaviors associated with ASD are explained quite well.

Sam says

I received this book from a Goodreads giveaway. Having worked for the past 20+ years with lots of young people who are autistic I was looking forward to reading this and wasn't disappointed. M's story is well written insightful, honest and refreshing to read. I have already recommended this for others to read and should be used in schools as required reading for pupils (and teachers)

Raze says

It's so hard to find stories about girls with autism, let alone stories so vividly real and relatable as M's. This is the book that had me crying in public.

Amelia says

This is an amazing book that a lot of thought was put into. It allows a peek into what autistic children endure in every normal day. The only thing I didn't like about this book is I felt like the story was a little long.

Lily says

RECOMMEND TO:

Tweens, especially girls; and Tweens with Autism.

M is back, and still in the middle. And the beast of anxiety still lurks behind her, ready to pounce at every turn. M is a lovable, quirky character that, despite her cognitive differences, it easy to relate to. In this sequel to M is for Autism, We will see M press through another year of school, friends, and people problems, eventually leading to a life-changing decision.

Even if you yourself do not struggle with autism, M can be painfully relatable.
