



# TEACHERS' RESOURCES

## RECOMMENDED FOR

Primary  
(ages 6–8)

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## KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- **Learning areas:** English

## REASONS FOR STUDYING THIS BOOK

- Introduces children to the concept of mental illness
- Helps children recognise and learn to cope with negative emotions

## THEMES

- Depression
- Feelings

## PREPARED BY

Penguin Random House Australia

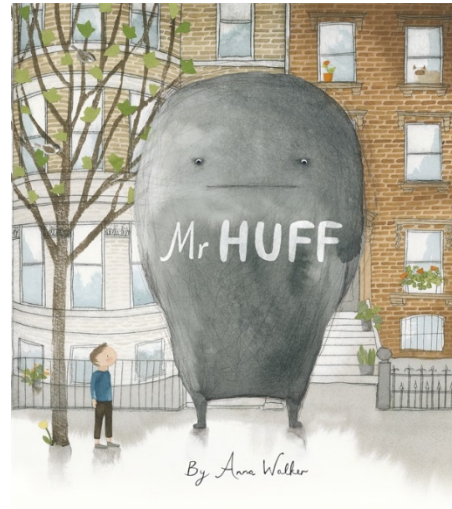
## PUBLICATION DETAILS

ISBN: 9780670078042 (hardback)

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## Mr Huff Anna Walker

## PLOT SUMMARY

*Bill is having a bad day.*

*Mr. Huff is following him around and making everything seem difficult.*

*Bill tries to get rid of him, but Mr. Huff just gets bigger and bigger!*

*Then they both stop, and a surprising thing happens . . .*

Award-winning and much-loved author and illustrator Anna Walker gives us a gentle, poignant, affirming and wise picture book sure to delight all ages. *Mr. Huff* is a story about the clouds and the sunshine in each of our lives.

Winner, 2016 CBCA Book of the Year Awards  
Early Childhood

Notable, 2016 CBCA Book of the Year Awards  
Picture Book

Shortlisted, 2016 Prime Minister's Literary Awards  
Children's Fiction

Shortlisted, 2016 REAL Children's Choice Awards  
Picture Story Books

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Anna Walker writes and illustrates children's books and is based in Melbourne. Her charming studio is shared with a printmaker, Rosy the lamp, a few friendly plants, and knitted, woolly creatures. Working with pencil, ink and collage, Anna develops her characters and enjoys spending time with them before they venture out into the world. Her illustrations are inspired by the everyday details of life and the amusing antics of her menagerie. Anna's latest book with Penguin is *Mr Huff*, an exploration of how kids deal with the worrying feelings that can accompany a bad day. Together with Jane Godwin, Anna has also recently created a beautiful picture book for Christmas, called *What Do You Wish For?*

## BEFORE READING

Examine the cover illustration of the book. Ask students to predict what they think the story might be about. Sample questions might include:

Who is Mr. Huff? Is he the large grey figure or the small boy? Ask students to elaborate on their answers e.g. Why do you think Mr. Huff is the large grey figure? What type of creature do we think Mr. Huff is? Do we think Mr. Huff might be scary? Why? How do we think Mr. Huff might be feeling? Who is the boy? How do we think he feels about Mr. Huff?

Open the book wide and further explore the front and back cover as one large image. Ask students to theorise on where they believe the story is set? City or country. Ask students to support their theories with further information.

Exploring the endpapers – Examine the front endpapers. Discuss with students how the story feels as a result of colour choices in the illustration. What kind of neighbourhood do they think the book is set in? Does the neighbourhood seem light and friendly or grey and unfriendly? Can they tell what season it is from the way in which people are dressed? Look closely at the trees for clues. Closely examine the windows of the buildings. What can students see in the windows? When they spot Bill and Mr. Huff ask them to think about why Bill and Mr. Huff are in the same building? Do they live together? Why might Mr. Huff be in Bill's building? Do Bill and Mr. Huff seem happy to be inside together? Why might they be unhappy?

Anna has written in her dedication on the first page "If you have felt the clouds when the sky when the sky is blue, this book is for you." Ask your students

what they think this might mean. Have they ever felt this way? Did they talk to someone about their feelings? Who did they talk to? Did they feel better after talking about their feelings?

## READING MR HUFF

Anna Walker is an author and illustrator. Just as much, if not more, of the story being told is conveyed through the illustrations in Mr. Huff. It is important to pause and ask students to examine the illustrations on each page carefully for further information and clues to the story. Whilst asking students questions about the text, look for questions that can be answered with the illustration on the page.

### Page 1

- What can we learn about Bill by looking carefully at his bedroom? What might his favourite animals be? Does he play a sport? How do we know these things?

### Page 2 and 3

- Bill seems to be having a rough start to his morning. Ask your students if they have ever experienced a morning where things didn't go quite right.
- There seems to be a growing grey cloud above Bills head. Was this there on page 1? What do we think the cloud means? Is there anything in particular your students notice about the cloud above Bills head?

### Page 4 and 5

- Now we see again the neighbourhood that we were introduced to in the front endpapers. Ask students to revisit the thoughts and predictions they had when looking at these images earlier. Have they learned anything new about the neighbourhood Bill lives in by looking at these pages?
- How do we think Bill is feeling in comparison to the other people walking on the street? What do students notice about the grey cloud above Bills head now?
- Side activity – there are plenty of animals and birds hidden among the windows and tree branches. What animals and birds can your students identify?



### Page 6 and 7

- Suddenly, Mr. Huff is present on the page, fully formed. Ask students to think about where Mr. Huff might have come from. Does Bill seem surprised to see him? Has Mr. Huff been there with Bill the whole time? Do we think Mr. Huff is imaginary? Why/why not?

### Page 8 and 9

- Ask students to look carefully at the other characters in this illustration. Can they see Mr. Huff? How do we know that they cannot? Do they think that people would be afraid if they could see Mr. Huff? Why/why not.
- How do students think Bill is feeling? Does he look afraid? Why is Bill not asking the other characters in the illustration for help? What does a sigh mean? Ask students if they ever sigh and to think about how they are feeling when that happens. Mr. Huff is sighing. Why do we think Mr. Huff is sighing?

### Page 10 and 11

- Ask students why Bill might not want to talk about Mr. Huff. Why does it make Bill feel sad? Have they ever tried to talk about something and not been able to find the words?
- What do we notice about Mr. Huff in this picture? Has he gotten bigger? Why do we think Mr. Huff is growing? Do we think that Bills dog can see Mr. Huff? Why do we think that? Ask students to think about why it seems that Bills mum cannot see Mr. Huff.

### Page 14 and 15

- How does Bill think he can make Mr. Huff disappear? Do we think magic will work?
- Ask students if they understand the sentence “it made Bill tired, trying so hard to ignore something” Discuss with students what they think this might mean.

### Page 16 and 17

- Ask students if they have ever experienced moments when they have tried to be brave, or to fix a problem by themselves. How did it make them feel? Were they afraid? Like Bill, did they worry the problem might stay with them forever?
- Why do we think My Huff is so intent on following Bill? Does Mr. Huff look happy?

### Page 18 and 19

- Bill uses powerful words with Mr. Huff. Do we think he means what he says? Why? Ask students if there has been a time in their lives when they have used such powerful words. How did it make them feel?
- Look closely at Mr. Huff. How do we think he feels about what Bill has shouted at him? Do we think Mr. Huff understands why Bill is so cross with him?

### Page 20 and 21

- Ask students how they are feeling about this illustration. What do they predict will happen next? What would they do if they were Bill?

### Page 24 and 25

- Why do we think Bill gave Mr. Huff a hug and asked him to come home? Ask students what they think has changed between Mr. Huff and Bill and why this change has occurred.

### Page 26, 27, 28 and 29

- Ask students to look carefully at the colours used in the following illustrations. How has the mood of the story changed? How do we think Mr. Huff and Bill are feeling now?
- All of the characters in these illustrations seem much happier now, including Bill. But Mr. Huff seems to be getting smaller. Why do we think Mr. Huff is shrinking? Does Mr. Huff seem sad that he is getting smaller?

### Page 30

- How do we think Bill is feeling in this illustration? Can you spot Mr. Huff? What do we think the sentence “cloudy with a chance of sunshine” means?
- Ask your students if they think Mr. Huff might return and why? Have they ever felt like Mr. Huff or someone like him, was sharing their day? Do we think Mr. Huff is what Bills sad feelings look like? Students might like to draw what their sad feelings might look like if they were a character. Students might like to write a letter to their sad feelings telling them how they feel about them and why.
- Further discussion with students about their feelings and various ways they can manage them and seek help can springboard from here.



## ORDER FORM

TITLE	AUTHOR	ISBN	SCHOOL YEAR	RRP	QTY	TOTAL
Mr Huff	Anna Walker	9780670078042	K-2	\$24.99		
Florette	Anna Walker	9780670079414	Pre-1	\$24.99		
Today We Have No Plans	Jane Godwin & Anna Walker	9780143507185	K-2	\$14.99		
What Do You Wish For?	Jane Godwin & Anna Walker	9780670078110	K-2	\$24.99		
<b>TOTAL</b>						

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