

# In My World

GUIDE

Short Stories About  
Familiar People and Places

L A U R A B O W L E Y



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# A Guide to *In My World*

## How to Use This Book

*In My World* books are designed for people in the middle-to-later stages of dementia. The books help them rediscover the joy of reading while offering care partners an activity to share. Together, you can enjoy meaningful discussions and reminisce about past experiences.

### Short, Stand-alone Stories

Each two-page spread contains a stand-alone story. Readers will appreciate the sense of accomplishment at the completion of a page, along with the challenge of completing as many stories as they wish.

### Large Colour Photos

Each story is paired with a large, colorful photograph that captures a moment from “in my world.” The photos encourage discussion, often leading to memories like, “This reminds me of...” or “I remember when...” Some readers may prefer simply looking at and thinking about the photos without reading the text.

### Text

The text is printed in a large, easy-to-read font with extra spacing between lines. Sentences are short and straightforward. Readers may enjoy reading aloud, and care partners can assist by pointing to where the reader should begin or helping with tricky words.

### Conversation Starters

This guide includes Conversation Starters for every story to spark engagement. These prompts range from simple one-word answers to more thoughtful questions, like exploring emotions in

the photographs. For readers who love to reminisce, “Tell me about...” questions are provided to inspire storytelling.

## Hints

- Reading *In My World* together offers a wonderful opportunity for connection. While some readers may enjoy exploring the book independently, the real value lies in the one-on-one interaction that happens during the activity. Simple things—like talking, encouraging, celebrating successes, and showing interest in their responses—can bring immense joy and be therapeutic. It’s not just about the book; it’s about the shared experience.
- Each story and photo in *In My World* stands on its own, so you can start or stop anywhere. Let the reader guide the pace and direction. Watch for signs of boredom, stress, or enjoyment, and adjust as needed. If a photo triggers a negative reaction, gently move on to the next page.
- When reading with someone with dementia, try to join them in their world rather than imposing your own reality. Avoid correcting or rushing them. If they need extra time to find words or answer a question, be patient. Resist the urge to speak for them or fill in gaps. If they trail off, decide together whether to continue reading, move on, or pause the activity for now.
- If the questions aren’t sparking conversation, focus on enjoying the book in other ways, like looking at the photos together or simply sharing the moment.

## Conversation Starters

The Conversation Starters are designed to encourage discussion and engagement. Instead of treating them like quiz questions, use them to explore the answers together in the text.

Pay attention to the types of questions your reader enjoys most, and over time, create your own. For example, a scripted question might ask, “What is the girl doing?” If the reader replies, “I don’t know,” you can say, “She’s doing homework,” and follow up with, “Did you do homework when you were a child?” If they say, “Yes,” you could ask, “Was it alphabet homework?” If they respond positively, you might sing the alphabet song together.

Remember, not every question will spark a memory, and that’s okay. Avoid pressuring the reader to remember something, as this can cause stress if they feel they should recall it but can’t.

If a question brings up a “memory” that you know isn’t accurate, resist the urge to correct them. Instead, step into their reality and go along with it. The goal is to make the experience enjoyable and engaging, supporting your reader in thinking and having fun.

### **Story 1: Annie-May Learns the Alphabet**

- Is the mother smiling?
- Is the girl wearing a blue shirt?
- Are they sitting in a chair?
- What is the girl’s name?
- Whose lap is Annie-May sitting on?
- What letter is the mother holding?
- What letter comes after “C”?
- Tell me about something that you had to teach [me/us/your children/someone].
- Tell me about one of your favourite activities as a child.
- Tell me about your children/grandchildren.

### **Story 2: A Summer Picnic**

- Is the family having a picnic?
- Are they sitting at a picnic table?
- Are they eating watermelon?
- Do you like picnics?
- Is the dad telling a funny story?
- What is your favourite picnic food?
- Do you like to camp?
- What makes you laugh?
- Tell me about a time when you went camping.
- Tell me about a time when you went to a picnic.

### **Story 3: A Breakfast Surprise**

- Is the family eating breakfast?
- Are the children drinking juice?
- Is the family in the kitchen?
- What is Dad eating?
- What is Mom doing?
- What is your favourite meal of the day?
- Why are Mom and Dad smiling?
- Where is the family going on vacation?
- Tell me about a time that you took a trip. Where did you go?
- Do you have a favourite place to travel?
- If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go?

### **Story 4: Winter Fun**

- Is it winter in the picture?
- What colour is the snow?
- Are the children wearing mittens?
- Do you like snow?
- What are the children doing?
- Are the children happy?
- How many children are riding in the sled?
- What season do you like best?
- What is your favourite winter activity?
- Did you like to go skiing? Sledding? Or would you rather curl up by a warm fire?

**Story 5: At the Amusement Park**

- Is the boy's t-shirt blue?
- Is the boy riding on a merry-go-round?
- What is the boy's favourite animal on the merry-go-round?
- What is the boy's name?
- Is Joe having a good time? How do we know?
- What rides do you like to go on at the fair?
- Tell me about a time when you went to a fair or an amusement park.
- What activities did you like to do at the fair?

**Story 6: The Big Putt**

- Is the sky blue?
- Is the man playing golf?
- Is the man holding a golf club?
- Will the ball go in the hole?
- How many people are in the picture?
- What colour is the ball?
- What is the man's name?
- What type of golf club is Harry holding?
- Where is Harry's ball?
- What will Harry's score be for the hole, if he makes this putt?
- Tell me about a time when you played a sport. Do you like to play golf?

**Story 7: Buying the Groceries**

- Are the people shopping?
- Are the people shopping in a grocery store?
- Are the people buying meat?
- Is the woman's name Cheryl?
- What is the man's name?
- Are Cheryl and Stan friends?
- What are Cheryl and Stan buying?
- Why are they buying fruit and vegetables?
- Tell me some of the things in Stan's shopping cart.
- When you go grocery shopping, what food do you like to buy?

- Do you like to cook? Tell me about some of your favourite recipes or dishes to make.

**Story 8: The Wedding**

- Is the bride's dress white?
- Is the groom wearing a hat?
- Are they walking down the steps?
- What is the bride's name?
- What is the groom's name?
- What are the guests throwing at Ashley and John?
- What is Ashley holding in her hand?
- What flowers are in Ashley's bouquet?
- Tell me about a time you were at a wedding or a special celebration.

**Story 9: Putting Out Fires**

- Is there a fire truck in this picture?
- Are the people in this picture firefighters?
- Are the people holding hats?
- Are the hats yellow?
- How do we know the truck is a fire truck?
- Count the number of people in this picture.
- What does the sign on the truck say?
- What did the firefighters rescue today?
- How do we know when a fire truck is coming down the road?
- Did you ever visit a fire station? Tell me about your visit.
- What is your profession? What jobs have you had? What was your favourite job?

**Story 10: Dave's Birthday Party**

- Is Dave celebrating a birthday?
- Is there a birthday cake for Dave?
- Did Dave get some birthday presents?
- How many balloons do you count?
- What colour are the balloons?
- How old is Dave?
- What did Dave's friends use to decorate the room for the party?
- What flavour might the cake be?

- What is your most favourite cake?
- Do you have a lot of candles on your cake?
- Tell me about a birthday party that you attended (or another celebration).
- Do you think Dave's party was a surprise?
- Do you like surprise parties?

**Story 11: *Dancing the Night Away***

- Are the man and lady dancing?
- Are the lady's shoes white?
- What is the lady's name?
- What is the man's name?
- What evening of the week do Joan and Harry meet to go dancing?
- Where do they go dancing?
- Who plays the music?
- What kind of dancing do Joan and Harry like best?

- What music do you like to listen to? Do you have a favourite band?
- Tell me about a time when you danced.

**Story 12: *Our Garden***

- Are there apple trees in the yard?
- Did the Smith family pick apples?
- Are apples red?
- What fruit and vegetables do you see in the picture?
- How many people are in the photo?
- What is the man's name?
- What is Steve holding?
- What will Jennifer and Dorothy make?
- What did Steve dig up?
- What did Jennifer and Amy pick?
- Do you like to garden? Tell me about your garden. What do you like to grow in your garden?