Anna Dangerfield presents a relatable and realistic approach to narrative fiction in *Joker and the Rookie*. A short chapter book, *Joker* takes the first-person perspective of Charlie Blue, a precocious fifth grade student and baseball fanatic who is experiencing a number of changes in life. The text is a developmentally appropriate fiction resource for helping children and early adolescents explore feelings associated with loss and transition. Not only does *Joker* address themes of suicidality through its main characters’ reflections of having lost a father to suicide as an infant, the text provides age-appropriate psycho-education regarding potential risk factors and red flags for identifying within others concerns of self-harm. *Joker* uses its characters to explore what might happen when a friend begins to act differently, and models effective strategies through its characters’ thoughts and actions.

*Joker* consists of 27 short chapters of approximately 2 to 3 pages, each of which narrate Charlie’s experiences with adjusting to a new stepfather, difficulties getting along with teammates, and concern for a fellow teammate who may be considering harming herself. The character of Charlie is representative of typical young people, and its audience is likely to find him relatable. The book’s theme of responding to loss and life’s changes is evident throughout, and includes such transitions as adjusting to a new step-parent, divorce, moving, and emotional changes within friends. Each of these difficulties is considered through the perspective of Charlie and his friends.
Perhaps most beneficial is the child-friendly narration that is characteristic of the book. While the topics are by nature themselves difficult and hard to confront, Dangerfield takes a developmentally appropriate approach that comes across as genuine and realistic. The characters are likeable, believable, and perhaps most importantly, relatable. Each theme within the book poses an opportunity for individual or small group guided discussion with older children and emerging adolescents. Charlie’s experiences serve as a starting place for further discussion about these difficult but important topics in young peoples’ lives.

*Joker and the Rookie* offers a child-friendly approach to discussing the effects of not only suicide, but other major life losses and transitions as experienced through the eyes of Charlie Blue, the story’s protagonist. Additionally, *Joker* provides an illustration of how a younger person may go about seeking help if afraid that a loved one may be thinking of harming themselves, and emphasizes the importance of speaking out. *Joker* is a helpful and important addition to the available literature base for children affected by suicide, as well as a general resource for facilitating discussions about loss, transition, and identifying potential signs of suicide amongst peer groups.