



# Walker Books Classroom Ideas



## The Loneliest Girl in the Universe

Lauren James  
9781406375473  
September 2017

\*Notes may be downloaded and printed for regular classroom use only.

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## Outline:

Can you fall in love with someone you've never met, never even spoken to – someone who is light years away?

Romy Silvers is the only surviving crew-member of a spaceship travelling to a new planet, on a mission to establish a second home for humanity. Alone in space, she is the loneliest girl in the universe until she hears about a new ship which has launched from Earth – with a single passenger on board. A boy called J.

Their only communication is via email – and due to the distance between them, their messages take months to transmit. And yet Romy finds herself falling in love.

## Author/Illustrator Information:

Lauren James was born in 1992, and graduated from the University of Nottingham UK in 2014, where she studied chemistry and physics. Her first novel, *The Next Together*, a YA reincarnation romance, has been translated into five languages worldwide. It was also long-listed for the Branford Boase Award, a prize given to recognize an outstanding novel by a first-time writer. Lauren is also an Arts Council grant recipient. She lives in the West Midlands. You can find her on Twitter at @Lauren\_E\_James or her website: laurenejames.co.uk.

## How to Use These Notes:

This story works on many levels. The suggested activities are therefore for a wide age and ability range. Please select accordingly.

### These notes are for:

- Ages 12+
- Secondary years 7+

### Key Learning Areas:

- English

### Example of:

- Novel
- Fiction
- Science fiction

### Themes/Ideas:

- Isolation
- Family
- Relationships
- Resilience



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## Discussion Questions:

- Based on the cover and title, what do you think this story is about? How do you think it will begin/end? Revisit your answer when you've completed the book. Was your answer correct?
- Discuss the Sci-Fi genre. What are some tropes or rules of the genre? Name some examples of books or films that are indicative of the genre. How does *The Loneliest Girl in the Universe* fit in this genre? How does it subvert the genre?
- Romy is solely responsible for the future of the human race on Earth II, yet she still has thoughts and desires similar to average young adult on earth, i.e. she enjoys reading and writing romantic fiction, she dreams of a relationship with J, etc. Discuss the idea that most humans inherently have the same needs and wants, no matter what their situation. How is that explored in this book?
- Discuss the language and literary devices Lauren James uses when describing Romy's nightmares about the astronauts. Why do you think she chose to write in this style in these sequences? What effect does it have on the reader?
- Discuss the ways that J manipulated Romy prior to the Eternity catching up to the Infinity. Why do you think he manipulated her like this? Given Romy's life experience, do you think she should have seen through his lies?
- How did what happened to Romy's parents affect her? Discuss all the positive and negative impacts this had on her development.
- Imagine you were in Romy's position when she finds out The Eternity is heading her way. At this point Romy thought she was going to be alone until she raised the embryos on Earth II, however the arrival of The Eternity means that she will have another adult for company. What would be your first thoughts? What would you be excited about? What would make you nervous or cautious?
- How does Romy change throughout the novel? Create a word cloud or mind map of her character at the beginning of the novel and at the end. Which events caused specific changes in her?
- What did you think about the end of the book? What do you think it is saying to you as a reader?
- Hold a class debate with one team arguing that J's motivation to reach The Infinity were justified and the other side arguing the opposite.

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