

Q&A with JENNY PEARSON

Have you ever witnessed a miracle?

Freddie and his Grams would say that depends on your definition of a miracle. I may not have a very stringent definition because I am very easily amazed, and I think most things are miracles. Getting my kids to school on time; the invention of computers – in fact most technology is mystifying to me; that I've written a book and that I am even answering these questions. And I suppose life, the universe and human beings in general are pretty miraculous.

What's the longest journey you've ever been on?

A twenty-six-hour coach trip to Italy in Year 9. I ate so many lemon sherbets that I ended up with a mouthful of ulcers.

What's your favourite journey snack?

Not lemon sherbets.

They're not always easy to source and they do not make me all that popular on public transport – or indeed with my own family – but I am quite partial to cockles with lots of salt and vinegar.

What inspired you to write THE SUPER MIRACULOUS JOURNEY OF FREDDIE YATES?

So many things. I think the subject of miracles and how our perspective shapes our beliefs is so interesting. Looking back now, the fact that I hadn't long since lost my stepdad when I began *Freddie* must have had an influence on me writing about grief. I also wanted to write a book about a strong boy friendship, like the ones I see in school. Freddie, Charlie and Ben are based on so many of the children I have taught.

There's a lot of heart amongst the humour in the book; is there anyone in your family who particularly inspires you?

Wow, this question is setting me up for a massive family row if I leave someone out. I will have to say them all.

Which is actually true.

But also, my stepdad and my mum for how heroically they dealt with his illness.

As a teacher, why do you think funny books are so important?

Everyone loves to laugh, and I think humour in books is one of the essential ingredients to start readers on their lifelong reading journey. But it goes beyond engaging children with their reading, it's about helping them navigate through life. Humour helps us cope with difficult situations. It enables us to build friendships. And learning to laugh at yourself is so important; if you can laugh at your own failures, it enables you to keep trying.

What are you writing at the moment?

I really love writing, so you can expect more middle-grade funny books! My next book is about Lucy and her quest to break a world record in a misguided attempt to make Lucy's mum happy again.

And I'm currently writing about a young boy called Frank who mistakenly inherits a whole load of money and the instructions to look after his grandfather. He decides the best way to help his grumpy grandad live his best life is to force him into activities like monster trucking and parkour...

Find out lots more about the super miraculous Jenny Pearson at www.jennypearsonauthor.com