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opening extract from

Krazy Kow Saves the World

written by

Jeremy Strong

published by

Penguin Books Ltd

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Ask Jeremy



Of all the books you have written, which one is your favourite?

I loved writing both **KRAZY KOW SAVES THE WORLD – WELL, ALMOST** and **STUFF**, my first book for teenagers. Both these made me laugh out loud while I was writing and I was pleased with the overall result in each case. I also love writing the stories about Nicholas and his daft family – **MY DAD**, **MY MUM**, **MY BROTHER** and so on.

If you couldn't be a writer what would you be?

Well, I'd be pretty fed up for a start, because writing was the one thing I knew I wanted to do from the age of nine onward. But if I DID have to do something else, I would love to be either an accomplished pianist or an artist of some sort. Music and art have played a big part in my whole life and I would love to be involved in them in some way.

What's the best thing about writing stories?

Oh dear – so many things to say here! Getting paid for making things up is pretty high on the list! It's also something you do on your own, inside your own head – nobody can interfere with that. The only boss you have is yourself. And you are creating something that nobody else has made before you. I also love making my readers laugh and want to read more and more.

Did you ever have a nightmare teacher? (And who was your best ever?)

My nightmare at primary school was Mrs Chappell, long since dead. I knew her secret – she was not actually human. She was a Tyrannosaurus rex in disguise. She taught me for two years when I was in Y5 and Y6, and we didn't like each other at all. My best ever was when I was in Y3 and Y4. Her name was Miss Cox, and she was the one who first encouraged me to write stories. She was brilliant. Sadly, she is long dead too.

When you were a kid you used to play kiss-chase. Did you always do the chasing or did anyone ever chase you?!

I usually did the chasing, but when I got chased, I didn't bother to run very fast! Maybe I shouldn't admit to that! We didn't play kiss-chase at school – it was usually played during holidays. If we had tried playing it at school we would have been in serious trouble. Mind you, I seemed to spend most of my time in trouble of one sort or another, so maybe it wouldn't have mattered that much.

14½ Things You Didn't Know About

Jeremy Strong

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

1. He loves eating liquorice.
2. He used to like diving. He once dived from the high board and his trunks came off!
3. He used to play electric violin in a rock band called THE INEDIBLE CHEESE SANDWICH.
4. He got a 100-metre swimming certificate when he couldn't even swim.
5. When he was five, he sat on a heater and burnt his bottom.
6. Jeremy used to look after a dog that kept eating his underpants. (No – NOT while he was wearing them!)
7. When he was five, he left a basin tap running with the plug in and flooded the bathroom.
8. He can make his ears waggle.
9. He has visited over a thousand schools.
10. He once scored minus ten in an exam! That's ten less than nothing!
11. His hair has gone grey, but his mind hasn't.
12. He'd like to have a pet tiger.
13. He'd like to learn the piano.
14. He has dreadful handwriting.

And a half . . . His favourite hobby is sleeping. He's very good at it.

1 How I Gave Birth to a Cow

I'm going to be famous. My name will be known all over the world. People will say: 'Look! There's Jamie Frink! I've met Jamie Frink! Let's ask him for his autograph!'

And I'll say, 'Yeah, sure, have three!'

You'll see. Everyone will see, even my Big Bro.

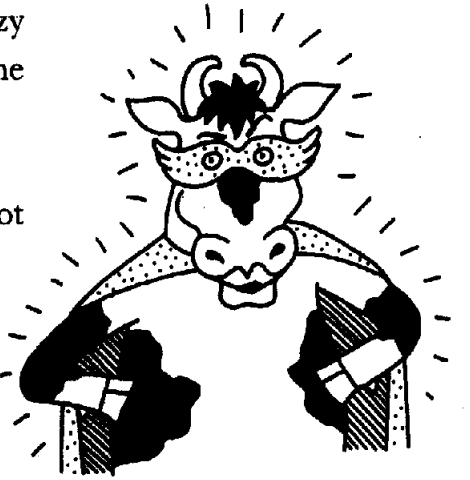


Yeah, that'll show him. He thinks he's so clever, but when I'm rich and famous he'll look like a widdly-weeny ant next to me. He'll be nothing.

When he wants something, he'll have to come to me. And I'll say, 'Hmmm, maybe.'

And you know what's going to make me rich and famous? A cow. Yeah, a cow.

Her name is Krazy Kow. This is what she looks like.



She's fantastic, Krazy Kow. She's got a lumpy head, a lumpy back and wobbly lumps underneath. She can talk too, and she's got a Swiss army udder. She has, really! You know what a Swiss army penknife is like, with lots of gadgets? Well, Krazy Kow's udder doesn't just squirt milk. She also has a flame-thrower, rocket launcher, water cannon, high-beam spotlight, mega-powerful vacuum cleaner and mirror for checking her make-up. (Plus a small prongy thing for getting stones out of horses' hoofs.)

She's got four stomachs too, and that means she can do four separate burps, all at the same time and on different notes. (Did you know cows have four stomachs? It's true. I'm not kidding.) And she can do karate. Just in case things get close and personal.

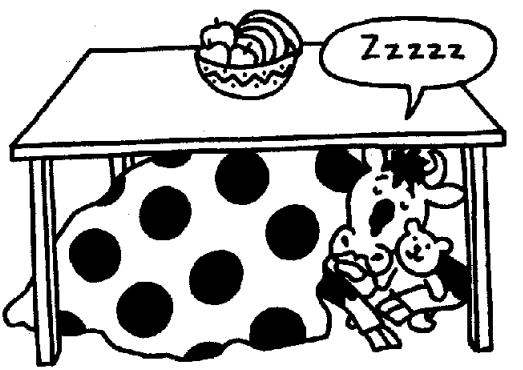
Krazy Kow lives in a house with Mr and Mrs Spottiswood and their two children, a boy called Bromley and a girl called Gosforth.



Bromley has got football wallpaper all over his bedroom walls and a United duvet cover and a lampshade like a football. Actually his head's a bit like a football too – nothing in it but air.

Gosforth's bedroom is full of pop stars. Not real ones, just photographs. Gosforth kisses every one of them before she goes to sleep at night.

Krazy Kow doesn't have a bedroom, because that would be REALLY SILLY. Everybody knows cows don't have bedrooms. Ha! No, she sleeps under the dining table. She curls up beneath the table, with her blanket and teddy.



Of course, she's not real. And the Spottiswood family isn't real either. I made them all up! They're cartoon characters, inside my head, rushing about.

I'm always sketching them. I've drawn cows everywhere, especially on my school books. My



teachers think I've got cows on the brain, and I suppose that in an odd way they're right. I have.

I reckon Krazy Kow is going to be on TV one day, and then she'll be the most famous cow in the world. There'll be Krazy Kow T-shirts and everyone will want them. There'll be Krazy Kow mugs and everyone will drink from them. There'll be Krazy Kow duvet covers and everyone will sleep under them – everyone except my Big Brother, but then he's stupid.





And best of all, everyone will do what Krazy Kow says, and because *I'm* telling her what to say, it means that everyone will be doing what I tell them. Awesome!

Of course, she'll only tell people good things,

because she's a good cow. Baddie cows are the pits. You can easily tell if a cow is bad because baddie cows always have plastic tags with numbers attached to their ears, which shows that they have been in cow prison for being bad.

Krazy Kow is good. In fact, she's a cow superhero and eco-warrior. She whizzes about preventing ecological disasters, Saving the World and stuff like that. Maybe she'll save Big Bro too. I don't know. Hmmm, maybe.

Now, perhaps you are beginning to think: This guy is mad. What is all this stuff about cows sleeping under tables and being put in cow prison for being bad?

I guess I'd better tell you how I thought up Krazy Kow, and why. At school we are taking part in a mega environmental competition. Schools right across the country are entering. The winning school gets a whole room full of computers. AND the winning project gets shown on TV. The person who comes up with the winning idea gets a digital video camera and film-editing system. We are talking Seriously Big Prizes here, and I was

desperate to get my hands on that DV camera. You see, all I've ever wanted to do is make REAL FILMS, with real actors and explosions and cars crashing down cliff sides, bounce, bounce, bang! And hurricanes and poisonous snakes and alien invaders with boiling green jelly for blood, and a nasty evil villain with one eye and steel teeth and claw hands, and giant crocodiles and volcanoes erupting living dinosaurs … and all that sort of stuff.





Taking part in the environmental competition was Mrs Drew's idea. She's our head teacher. She's a great one for Saving the Planet. You should see her car. She's got this tiny little thing that she drives around. It does a million miles to a gallon of petrol, she says. In fact, I don't think it has an engine at all. I think that each tyre has got one of

those rotating hamster wheels strapped to it and she puts hamsters inside and makes them run as fast as possible. She's got a four-hamster-powered car. I don't know what she does if they're asleep.



Anyway, the back window of Mrs Drew's car is plastered with do-good stickers. You know the sort of thing –

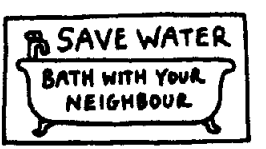












Mrs Drew is really kind to animals. It's just children she doesn't like. No! I made that up. She does like them really. I remember we were in Assembly once and she told us that she had

always wanted to work with animals and that's why she became a teacher. I like Mrs Drew; she's a laugh.

Anyhow, Mrs Drew told us about this competition, and my ears perked up immediately. If there is one thing that a great film director needs, it's a camera so that he can shoot films, so I thought to myself: I've got to win this!

But winning the camera was not going to be easy. I knew that to have any chance of success I would have to do something VERY special, and first of all I would have to make sure that my idea was the one the school would choose.

I reckoned almost everyone would either write something about the environment, or they'd paint a poster. And that was when I had my first, absolutely staggering idea. I would make a film – a proper film! It would have to be the biggest secret ever, because I didn't want anybody else to get the same idea. I don't think anyone in our school had ever made a real film before.

I was so excited I had to tell someone. I had to say it out loud, so do you know what I did? I got

inside my wardrobe. I pulled the door in close so that it wasn't quite shut, and I stood there in the dark, imagining I was in a room full of people and I told the darkness how brilliant my idea to make a film was. (I realize this might sound strange but I like talking in the dark. You can say anything you want in the dark.)



And then someone knocked on the wardrobe.

It was Big Bro. (It would be.) I slowly pushed the door open and Matt gazed at me.

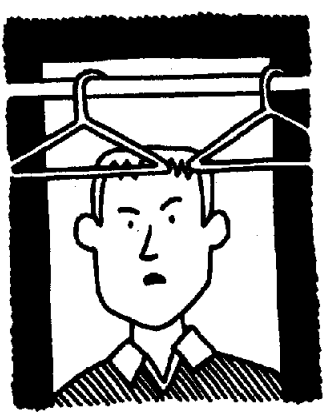
'What are you doing?'

I stood there among my clothes. 'Nothing.'

'You were talking to someone.'

'Oh yeah, like I've got someone in the wardrobe with me,' I said smartly.

'You're mad,' said Matt.



'So are you then,' I snapped back. (We have these really neat arguments sometimes.)

Matt snorted and pushed me back into the wardrobe. I tripped on a pile of trainers and sat down. The door swung to and clicked shut. I pushed against it and, sure enough, it wouldn't open.

'Matt, the door's shut.' There was no answer. 'Matt? Stop fooling. I know you're out there. Open the door. Matt? MATT!'

I clambered to my feet, still shouting. I hammered on the inside of the door and the wardrobe rocked unsteadily. I carried on shouting and hammering and all at once the wardrobe toppled forwards and slumped at an angle across my bed.

I ended up lying in a heap, completely entangled in clothes and wire coat hangers. I tried to get up and shake myself free but the noise was terrifying. It sounded like the Hundred-Legged Coat-Hanger Beast From Mars falling down the stairs.

I gave up. Everything went quiet. I settled back on the pile of clothes, in the dark, and it was surprisingly peaceful. I lay there thinking about

the film I would make. The thing was, I needed a really good main character to fight ecological battles, someone like Superman, or Batman. Then I thought: Why not have a character that nobody would think of? Maybe not even a person. An alien? An animal ...?

And that was when I had my second brainwave.

Oh yes! An animal! A Super Creature! By this time my brain was humming into sixth gear. This was fantastic!

There were footsteps outside. I called out. 'Hello? Is that you, Matt?'

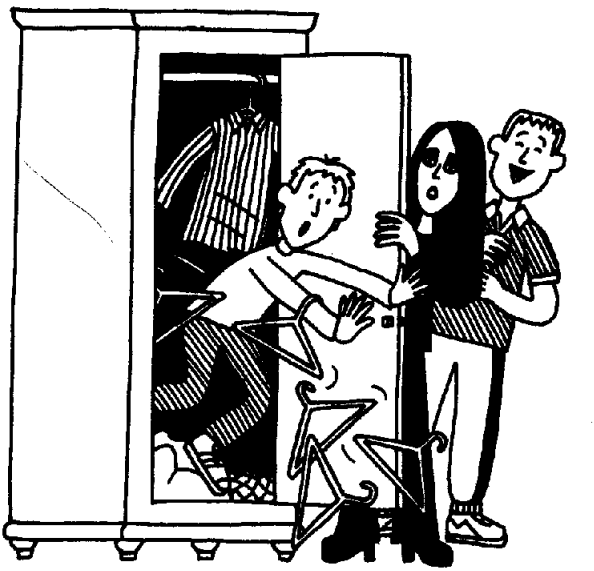
'Jamie?' It was my big sister, Gemma. She's fourteen, but thinks she's at least nineteen. 'Where are you?'

'In the wardrobe.'

'How did you get in there?'

'Just help me out, will you?'

Gemma struggled to push the wardrobe upright. The door clicked open and I tumbled out, festooned with a clattering shower of coat hangers. Gemma looked mildly astonished.



(Which is quite easy for her because of the vast amount of dark make-up she splatters all over her face.) Behind her was Matt, laughing his head off. (I wish it *had* fallen off.)

Gemma helped me to my feet. 'What were you doing in there?'

'Thinking,' I answered.

'What about?'

I smiled at them both.

'A cow. A cow with a Swiss army udder.'

2 Reasons to be Cheerful/Miserable

Reasons to be Cheerful:

1. Can't think of any.
2. Oh yes, I'm going to be rich and famous.
3. That's the lot.

Reasons to be Miserable:

1. My dad likes football.
2. My mum likes football.
3. Big Bro is a football.
4. I don't like football.
5. They think I'm stupid. (I'm not.)

Anyhow, I've got news for everyone out there in the big, wide world. It's OK if you don't like football. That's right, it is NOT compulsory. Don't get me wrong. There's nothing wrong with football as a game. I don't mind watching football. I just don't like playing football. What gets me is