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opening extract from

My Mum's Going to Explode

written by

Jeremy Strong

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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

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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 August: Mum Makes an Announcement

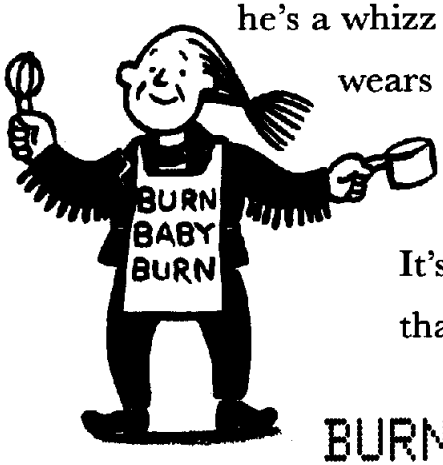
Big news from my family! There's no easy way to tell you, so sit down and brace yourself. My mum's ...

... Well, I guess that first of all I'd better tell you how we found out.

There we were – me, Mum and Dad, just about to sit down and eat our lunch with Granny and Lancelot. They're living with us at the moment because they had a small problem with their house. Well, actually, it wasn't really a *small* problem but a pretty big one – their house fell down. A whopping great hole opened up in their garden and half their house fell into it. So, they've moved in with us until they find a new house.

It's nice having them back. Granny

always makes me laugh, and Lancelot is a brilliant cook. He might be a sixty-five-year-old Hell's Angel, but I have to admit that he's a whizz at the stove. He wears a special Hell's Angel apron when he's in the kitchen. It's got silver studs that say:



BURN, BABY, BURN

Lancelot had just dished up some chicken in white-wine sauce when Mum made the announcement.

'I'm pregnant,' she said, as if it was something that happened every day, and carried on eating.





Dad was so surprised he dropped his cutlery. The knife landed on a particularly sloppy bit of the plate and splattered white-wine sauce all over Mum. A split second later, Dad's fork landed handle first and broke the plate. The rest of the sauce spilled on to the table, spread to the edge and dribbled into his lap.

My dad's like that. Things happen to him that don't happen to anyone else. He's great!

Granny wagged a finger at him. 'Don't play with your food, Ronald! I thought a big boy like you would be more sensible.' She turned to my mum. 'What was that you said, dear?'

'I'm going to have a baby.'

Granny's eyes popped. 'You've got

rabies? Oh dear.' She reached across the table and patted Mum's arm. 'Never mind, I've got some nice handcream upstairs.'



Mum gave me a long-suffering look. Granny's a bit deaf and sometimes she gets rather muddled. Mind you, I don't know what good handcream is if you've got rabies.



'Look at the mess you've made, Ronald,' Granny went on, as if my dad were still a little boy. 'I think you should take Brenda to the doctor. She's got rabies. I have some cream she can use, but it will only treat the spots. I haven't got anything for foaming at the mouth.'

Luckily, at this point, Lancelot took over. He's been married to Granny for a year now and he knows what she's like. He put his mouth to her left ear and bellowed, 'Brenda's pregnant! She's going to have a baby!'



Granny jumped back in her chair. 'There's no need to shout. I'm not deaf.'

By this time Dad seemed to have slipped into a state of deep shock. He just sat there, rocking slightly from side to side. His eyes had gone glassy. Mum flicked her fingers in front of his face. 'Hello? Hello? Is anyone in?'

Dad slowly turned and gazed at her. 'A baby?' he croaked. 'How did that happen?'

I giggled, and Mum's eyebrows slid up her head. 'I don't think I'll go into any details at the lunch table, but you were involved, Ron.'

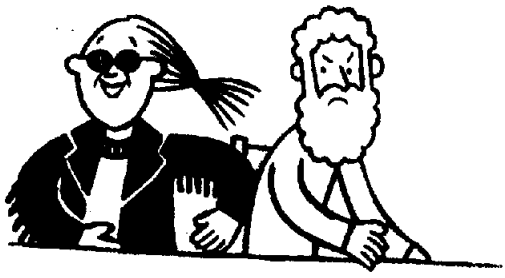


Lancelot gave my dad a nudge. 'Well done! Another nipper in the family!'



I didn't like the way this was going. Another nipper? *I'm* not a nipper! Is that what they think? I'm ten!

Granny began clapping her hands with delight and bouncing up and down on her chair. 'Oooh! I'm going to be a granny!' she cried.



'You already are a granny, Granny,' I pointed out.

She stopped for a moment. 'Oh yes. So I am! But it's very exciting, isn't it?'

I gave her a weak smile, but inside I was thinking that it wasn't very exciting at all. Worrying? Yes. Depressing? Yes. Exciting? I don't think so. I glanced round the table. Everyone was smiling. Everyone seemed over the moon.



All except for me and Dad. Dad gazed down into his lap.

'I think I've wet myself,' he said glumly.