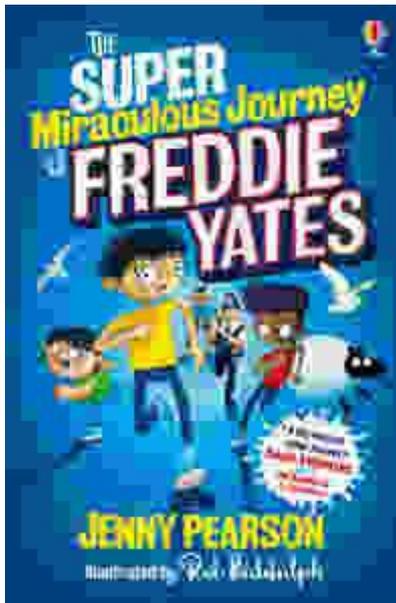


# The Super Miraculous Journey of Freddie Yates

Jenny Pearson, illustrated by Rob Biddulph



I'm not going to leave you hanging until the last paragraph to let you know how I feel about this book. I'm just going to come out with it. Ready? Okay ...

*The Super Miraculous Journey of Freddie Yates* is one of the best funny kids books I've ever read.

There. I've said. And now I'll tell you why: because it's perfect, neat, unforced and very funny with a plot that is 100% adorable. Straight up – there's nothing not to love.

The main thrust of the story is Freddie's determination to find his biological father who, he has just discovered, is living in Wales. With the help of his best mates, Charlie and Ben (and a few whopping lies to their parents) they set off from their home town of Andover. Only, when you're three eleven-year-old kids with a distant destination and limited funds, things are going to get complicated. But it's *how* they get complicated which is the absolutely joy of this story.

Wales is the backdrop, and anyone who lives or knows its pretty pockets and countryside communities will be aware that they are very tightknit; so-and-so knows so-and-so who knows so-and-so. And so it goes on. So, when the boys commit their first conspicuous act of entering an onion-eating competition in the town of Barry, news travels fast. Certainly faster than three boys who don't know quite what direction they're going in. Although there is one place they're definitely heading for and that's Trouble. Because, apart from telling whopping lies and losing their clothes and zig-zagging cross-country with sore bums and hungry tumms, they also manage to rattle the cage of a rather nasty customer known as The Gaffer. The boys are running, the Gaffer is chasing, and running parallel to it all is another story – one that appears in newspapers and on tv: a story that will have tears running down your face.

*Although the capers are hilarious – and I mean, truly hilarious – the heart of this story is family.*

It's the death of Freddie's Grams (his mother's mother) that triggers the quest for belonging and an understanding of what family means. But Charlie and Ben have their share of family epiphanies, too.

The relationship between the three boys is so natural; it has its flare-ups, but there's a real tenderness, and their dialogue will have you in stitches. All the characters will have you in stitches for that matter. There's a brilliant chorus-line of them – from Grams to Big Trev to Phyllis to PC Mike ... If you're an adult reading this, you'll also recognise the 'things people say', and seeing that from a child's perspective makes it all the more funny. But it's not like the more caricatured of the cast are simply there for colour, either. Each plays their own lead part – because this is a playful comedy in several acts.

It's *Race Across The World* meets *Doc Martin* meets *The Incredible Journey* meets *Only Fools And Horses* (the superhero episode) meets an oncoming funny truck... I recognise more in there too, but I have to stop somewhere. So I'll stop at this: so rarely do you get a blend of adventures, characters, heart and hilarity in a plot that snaps so cleanly together it leaves you both fully satisfied and yet still wanting more.

Reviewer: Rachel  
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