

Meet

Claire Freedman

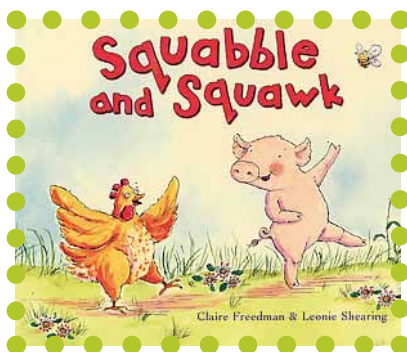
Compiled by GRIZÉLL
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Claire Freedman is the highly successful author of several picture books including **Aliens love underpants** and **Squabble and squawk**. She lives in Essex and when asked what her greatest fear was, she answered, 'losing my husband'.



Claire started work at the age of 16 and her first job was at the BBC as a secretary, then as a personal assistant (PA) at a printing company, a short stint as a dental nurse and later as a trainee buyer at Harrods. Her favourite job, however, is, guess ... WRITING!

Although none of us at the CL have ever personally met Claire, through a contact with a friend of a ... we were in the fortunate position to get in touch with her to tell us a bit about herself ...



When did you first experience the need to put thoughts to paper?

I've always enjoyed writing, but writing poetry as a teenager was probably the first time I felt the need to express my thoughts on paper.

Did you struggle to have your first manuscript accepted?

It took me two years to get published. I wrote loads of stories and constantly sent them out to various publishers, in the hope of get-

ting published. It cost me a fortune in postage, but I was learning and improving my writing skills all the time. At last two stories were accepted together!

Do you feel that you might perhaps want to tackle a different genre?

I feel very comfortable writing for young children, and have found my 'niche', so no, I don't think I would wish to write for a different genre.

Which title of your own publications is your favourite?

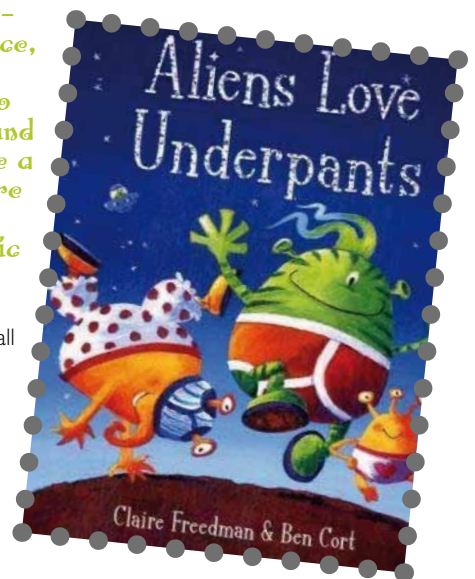
Aliens love underpants – because it is such fun and totally zany.

Any off-beat anecdotes – for instance, do you eat a lot when you write, do you play background music, do you have a special place where you write, do you set aside a specific number of hours per day?

I don't have a routine at all – I'm not that organised or disciplined! When I do get down to writing, I sometimes listen to music – though if I'm really concentrating I need everything to be super quiet, to be able to focus. I need a tidy desk as I am a tidy person.

I ALWAYS write on scraps of paper or bits of old envelopes that I save. I've not bought any actual writing paper for years! There is immense pleasure in seeing a full waste bin of scrunched paper – I feel I've really worked hard then!

Did you have any problems settling down to write your next book after the first one?



I have no problems in writing a new story once I have the idea in my mind. It's the thinking up of new ideas that is the hard part. I do often feel there aren't enough hours in the day to write everything I'd like to.

Where do your ideas come from?

Everything and everyone.

What are kids (age 6-10 and teenagers) interested in these days?

Kids are very sophisticated nowadays, but I think they still love adventure, excitement and learning and they want their imaginations to be stretched.

What skills are needed to become an author?

Perseverance is important – if you can keep going after constant rejection, then you know you really DO wish to be a writer.

Can you suggest some useful links for aspiring authors (in terms of competitions to apply for)?

I know that the *Writers' News* (a magazine for writers) runs many competitions for budding writers. **The Writers' & Artists' Year Book** also lists lots of competitions and has great information for writers of all genres.

Can you give any useful advice on how to get published?

Read, read, read, – especially the genre you are aiming to be published in.

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AUTHOR CLAIRE FREEMAN'S FAVOURITE . . .

Movie: Roman holiday

Television show: adaptations for **The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency**

Place: Bormes de Mimosa - the most beautiful village in the South of France

Fictional hero: Snoopy

Songs: Shania Twain, *From this moment*; The Lighthouse family, *High*; Elton John, *Saturday night*; Diana Ross, *Do you know where you're going to*; Katie Melua, *Closest thing to crazy!*

Authors: Shakespeare and Sophie Kinsella

Children's books: **A little princess** by Frances Hodgson Burnett.

