

Jackie French – Q&A Session

Date: July 27, 2021

Levi: Wombats are cute and scary

Jackie: Yes, they can be both!

Vishakha: This is so interesting

Jackie: I'm glad you're enjoying it!

Sophie: Hiiiiiiii

Jackie: Hi to you too!

Charli: How many wombats have you got?

Jackie: There are about 108 on our property, but there will be more when the babies emerge from the pouches soon. But just now there are only three wombats by the house.

Jess: Which book took you the longest to write?

Jackie: I don't know – nearly all take many years of thinking, and the thinking and then the rewriting are the longest parts of creating a book.

Richard: Does Mothball have her own babies?

Jackie: Mothball had at least two babies, and Wild Whiskers is her granddaughter

Aiden: Hi

Jackie: Hi to you too!

Samantha: Hello

Jackie: Hello too!

Chelsea: I've written a 15 page story before

Jackie: That's wonderful. Keep writing!

Tilly: Hi

Jackie: Hi to you too!

Abby: What was the name of the first book that you wrote?

Jackie: I wrote *Tresses* and *The Unghostly Ghost* when I was six years old.

Chelsea: Mind blown!

Jackie: Glad you like it!

Tilly: I love the book *Rain Stones*. Are there any books like it?

Jackie: I think you'd like *Walking the Boundaries*, and *Night Ride into Danger* and maybe the Matilda series and lots of others. Have a look at the web site. If you like shorter stories try the Barney Bean series or Butter O'Bryan

Violet: I have a wombat under my home I can hear it at night under my bedroom. We have to open the gate at night and it has a baby I have two of your books

Jackie: I have a wombat under my bedroom too!

Axle: Hi

Jackie: Hi to you too!

Clara: How far away do the wombats sleep?

Jackie: Wild Whikers sleeps a few metres away under the house in her burrow. Phil lives about ten metres away.

Aiden: Who's the farther of Rosie the wombat?

Jackie: I think Rosie's father is Phil as he is the only grey male wombat here

Eliza: Why do wombats need sharp teeth? Also, you are like my Nanna

Jackie: Wombat need sharp teeth because much of the grasses and bark and roots they eat are tough. Wombats teeth keep growing all their life.

Abbey: What time of day is it there?

Jackie: 10.10 am

Sadie: This is great

Jackie: I'm glad you like it!

Sadie: Great job Jackie

Jackie: Thank you!

Alexandra: Have you done any other books?

Jackie: I've written about 200-300 books. Have a look in your library or on my website!

Roma: How many books has Jackie written this year?

Jackie: I've written about six books this year but four of those were draft picture books ie. only the beginning of the writing process.

Will: Hi

Jackie: Hi to you too!

Stella: How Long has Jackie been writing books for?

Jackie: 61 years

Arki: Hi

Jackie: Hi to you too!

Sadie: I love YABBA's

Jackie: I love YABBA too!

Meleri: What books would you recommend?

Jackie: I'd need to know how old you are, and what things you love.

Arki: Hi

Jackie: Hi to you too!

Josh: How old were you when you made your first book?

Jackie: 6.

Olivia B: Who is your favourite author?

Jackie: I have about 50 favourite authors who I read and re-read

Maoz: Hi

Jackie: Hi to you too!

Sierra: How many wombats are there?

Jackie: We have about 108 on our property just now.

Ethan: What's your favourite book?

Jackie: That changes every day, usually the one I am writing now.

Karen: What's your favourite book that you've written?

Jackie: Usually my favourite is the book I'm working on.

Harry: How long did it take to build your house?

Jackie: It took about six months till I could move into it, but we added more rooms for another 20 years.

Paige: How do you get the ideas for your history books?

Jackie: I like to write about the history that has been forgotten, or was never told, or that we think we know but have only been told a myth, not the truth.

Lawrence: Is wombat poo a cube?

Jackie: Only when it's dry. In wet green seasons the droppings are long and green.

Chantal: How many carrots do you give them a day?

Jackie: Carrots are just a sometimes treat!

Chet: Why do you write stories about wombats?

Jackie: I love living with them, and so I write about them too.

Will: Do you think wombats are cute 😊

Jackie: Yes!

Lisa: What's the biggest challenge for you as an author and what do you do to overcome this challenge?

Every day it's a challenge to begin writing, the fear that it won't match the ideas in my mind's eye. To overcome it? Just begin. If it doesn't work I can trash it.

Violet: Are Wombats naughty?

Jackie: Not really – wombats just do what they want so never think it is naughty.

Selina: When did Jackie become an author?

Jackie: My first book was published in 1987 but I had been writing books since I was six years old.

Evangeline: When did you first see the wombats?

Jackie: When I first came here in 1974.

Harry: How did you stick the rocks together when you built your home?

Jackie: Good question: they are bound by a mortar of 3 parts sand, 6 parts hard gravel and 1 part cement mixed with water.

Harry: How long does a wombat live for?

Jackie: A wombat can survive till about 32, but usually live about 16 years.

Reilly: Has Jackie ever seen a wombat burrow?

Jackie: I live with hundreds of wombat burrows. There is one behind the bathroom and one under our bedroom and a giant burrow outside my study.

Rod: We were wondering, How long the wombats have lived on your property for?

Jackie: There have been wombats living here for as long as wombats have existed. This was also an area for prehistoric wombats.

Campbell: How many books have you made?

Jackie: I haven't counted how many books I have written. It's between 200 and 300 by now.

Ella: Do you like living with wombats?

Jackie: Yes, I love living with wombats. Watching wombats always makes me smile, except when they are trying to bite me.

Leonie: Do you like books?

Jackie: I love books. I love reading books and writing books. I always have a book in my handbag and several books in my car.

Ethan: What's your favourite book you have written?

Jackie: I don't know what my favourite book is. Just now it is *Night Ride into Danger* because that is the latest book. If you asked me next week, I will have another favourite book.

Alex: How many wombats have you seen on your farm?

Jackie: We have approximately 108 one beds on our farm. There will be more soon as the baby wombats are about to emerge from the pouches.

Ella: Your favourite dessert?

Jackie: I love fruit salads and ice cream. I also love cherries and watermelon.

Charlie: How big is your land?

Jackie: Our conservation reserve is 110 hectares.

Zoey: Do you want to be a wombat?

Jackie: No, I like being a human.

Maggie: Is your house in danger in floods?

Jackie: Our house is high up and is never in danger from floods.

Shereen: We so want to come and visit you

Jackie: I think you would find the road very rough. And difficult to get here.

Maxx: What is your favourite wombat?

Jackie: My favourite wombat is Phil. He is a great, gentle and very friendly wombat.

Shimie: How do you get ideas?

Jackie: I get my ideas from the same place you get your ideas. When you think I want a pizza for dinner, where does the idea come from? I think and I listen. And I watch the world. And that's where ideas come from.

Asher: Has Jackie patted a wombat?

Jackie: Yes, I often pet a wombat. Sometimes I pet a wombat with my boot. Just in case.

Evangeline: When did you first see the wombats?

Jackie: I met my first wombat in 1974

Chantal: Those cheeky possums.

Jackie: Yes, possums are very cheeky.

Scarlett: What is her fav book?

Jackie: I have about 50 favourite books. Sometimes I want exciting books. Sometimes I want happy books. Sometimes I want funny books. Sometimes I want books that make me think.

Lilli: I love your books, when will you write more books?

Jackie: I am always writing new books. My next book is *Hearts of Gold*. The next book is a picture book for Christmas called *Christmas Always Comes*.

Violet: How do womats inspire you?

Jackie: I look at what the wombats do, and then I write about it.

Kabilan: Why do you like wombats so much?

Jackie: Wombats are so different from humans and dogs. If you say bad dog to a dog, they are ashamed and embarrassed. You can never make a wombat embarrassed. A wombat is always the centre of its own universe. It is a privilege to give with wild animals.

Pukhraj: How many books have you made

Jackie: I have never counted. Have a look at www.jackiefrench.com.

Evangeline: When have you first seen a wombat?

Jackie: I saw my first wombat in 1974.

Annabelle: How small are the baby wombats?

Jackie: A baby wombat is about the size of a Jelly Bean. They grow bigger in the pouch.

Chantal: What town aka state aka suburb do you live in?

Jackie: I live in the Araluen Valley of NSW.

Afonso: Is it hard to get the fruit from the trees?

Jackie: Sometimes the fruit is so high up on the trees it is hard to reach. The birds eat that fruit and we enjoy the birds.

Paige: Do your wombats like helping write books, and are they supportive?

Jackie: I don't think the wombats know I write books. They might be annoyed if they knew I was writing about them.

Shimie: How many wombats do you have?

Jackie: We have about 108 wombats on the property. There will be more wombats soon when the baby wombats come out of the pouch.

Brooke: Do you think you will release another wombat book in the Wombat series?

Jackie: I think there will be one more wombat book in the wombat series. About the first wombat of all.

Vivan: Sonic is the best

Samantha: If covid-19 was gone where would you travel?

Jackie: I think I would stay here, but my family and friends would visit me.

Chloe: How do you write 6 books a year?

Jackie: I plan my books so that I can write them quickly. And then revise them.

Sam: When did you get the wombats?

Jackie: The wombats already lived here when I came here in 1974.

Hayley: What is your favourite book that you wrote?

Jackie: I don't have a favourite book, or perhaps it is the book I have just written.

Aiden: How many wombats do you have?

Jackie: There are about 108 wombats on their property.

Anushka: Jackie French I just wanted to say that your one of my (with Suzanne Collins and J.K Rowling) favorite authors of all time. Every piece of writing I write is inspired by you and now meeting you is surreal.

Jackie: Thank you so much for that. I hope one day I will read your books. They will be wonderful.

Harrison: Smudge is my grandparents' cat.

Jackie: I love the name Smudge.

Chantal: How long did take to build your house?

Jackie: It took about six months to a year to build the house so I could live in it. We have kept adding new rooms to it over about 20 years.

Violet: How do you name wombats?

Jackie: The wombat's names are accidental. We just find we are referring to them as Chocolate or Bad Bart the biter.

Estella: Do the wombats get into your veggie garden?

Jackie: Our garden is surrounded by reinforcing mesh. This keeps the wombats out.

Paige: How old is Phil now???

Jackie: Phil is about 12 years old now.

Maxx: What was your favourite book?

Jackie: My favourite book is usually the one I have just written.

Charlie: Do you have kids?

Jackie: Yes, and I have grandkids too.

Evangeline: When have you first seen a wombat?

Jackie: I saw my first wombat in 1974.

Sam: What is your favourite book???

Jackie: I don't really have a favourite book. It is usually the one I have just written or the one I am writing now.

Kyra: How many types of wombats are there?

Jackie: There are Common or Bare Nosed Wombats. There are Northern Hairy Nosed Wombat's. There are also Southern Hairy Nosed wombats. Northern Hairy Nosed wombats are critically endangered.

Lexie: Have your wombats ever dug up your garden?

Jackie: The wombats sometimes dig burrows in the garden. The lyre birds, however, dig up the garden much more often.

Maxx Was your farm amazing?

Jackie: Yes, our farm pretty amazing. I love living here.

Ruby: How old are you?

Jackie: I am 67.

Abby: What is your favourite book that you have written?

Jackie: I don't really have a favourite book. My favourite book changes all the time.

Flynn: How long have you been making books for?

Jackie: I wrote my first book when I was six years old.

Robyn Donoghue: You can learn more about Jackie French at

<https://www.jackiefrench.com/>

Tanjil: What was your favourite book that you wrote and how many books have you wrote?

Jackie: I don't really have a favourite book. I don't know how many books I have written. Have a look at my website www.jackiefrench.com I think I have written between 200 and 300 books.

Kyra: How many books have you made?

Jackie: Have a look at my website. I think I have written between 200 and 300 books.

Momin: What are a wombat's strongest weapons?

Jackie: Wombats strongest weapons are their ability to run away. They have very strong jaws and teeth. They also have very tough skin. And strong legs and backs.

Abby: Do you love all the book's that you wrote.

Jackie: Every time I read one of my books. I think of ways I could make it better.

Sophie It's my bday in 2 days

Jackie: Happy birthday!

Ariel: Was it Hard to think of ideas to write the books?

Jackie: I love thinking and I love ideas. There are always more ideas than I can write about.

Jet: Thank you for telling me about the power of books.

Jackie: A pleasure!

Vishakha: Bye

Jackie: I am so glad you liked it.

Chelsea: bye

Maxamillion: This is nice

Axle: hello

Jackie: To B W from the Knox school. Yes, we have a wombat giving in a burrow under our bedroom. Her name is Wild Whiskers.

Jackie: To Balkaran. I get ideas for books. From all sorts of places. From people I have met. From old books and diaries I have read. From stories people tell me. You don't need one good idea for a book. But thousands. You never know when an idea. Will grow and join with other ideas to create a book.

To Jack. I don't know what would be classed as my biggest award. It might be Senior Australian of the year. Or Australian children's laureate? But the awards that mean the most to me are those like Cuba that are voted by the young people who read my books. I think my favourite award was half a mile sport was half a mile's bar awarded by two boys who thought my books were the best so they would give me a Mars bar but ate half of it in the bus on the way to school, because they thought I wouldn't mind sharing. Too thin? We have many wombats on our property which is a wildlife reserve. None of the wombats are pets there all while wombats.