

# GENERAL BOOK CLUB DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What did you like best about this book?
2. What did you like least about this book?
3. What other books did this remind you of?
4. Which characters in the book did you like best?
5. Which characters did you like least?
6. If you were making a movie of this book, who would you cast?
7. Share a favorite quote from the book. Why did this quote stand out?
8. What other books by this author have you read? How did they compare to this book?
9. Would you read another book by this author? Why or why not?
10. What feelings did this book evoke for you?
11. What did you think of the book's length? If it's too long, what would you cut? If too short, what would you add?
12. What songs does this book make you think of? Create a book group playlist together!
13. If you got the chance to ask the author of this book one question, what would it be?
14. Which character in the book would you most like to meet?
15. Which places in the book would you most like to visit?
16. What do you think of the book's title? How does it relate to the book's contents? What other title might you choose?
17. What do you think of the book's cover? How well does it convey what the book is about? If the book has been published with different covers, which one do you like best?
18. What do you think the author's purpose was in writing this book? What ideas was he or she trying to get across?
19. How original and unique was this book?

20. If you could hear this same story from another person's point of view, who would you choose?
21. What artist would you choose to illustrate this book? What kinds of illustrations would you include?

## **BOOK CLUB DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR FICTION**

22. Did this book seem realistic?
23. How well do you think the author built the world in the book?
24. Did the characters seem believable to you? Did they remind you of anyone?
25. Did the book's pace seem too fast/too slow/just right?
26. If you were to write fanfic about this book, what kind of story would you want to tell?

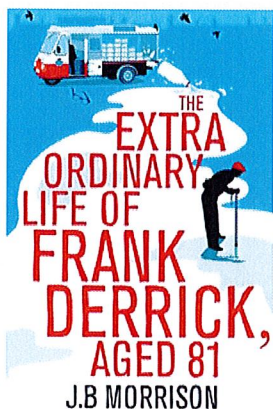


# Page to Stage reviews

London lifestyle, theatre & book blog

Friday, 6 June 2014

## Book review: The Extra Ordinary Life of Frank Derrick, Age 81 by J.B. Morrison



My edition: Paperback, published on 5 June 2014 by Pan Macmillan, 274 pages.

**Description:** Frank Derrick is eighty-one. And he's just been run over by a milk float. It was tough enough to fill the hours of the day when he was active. But now he's broken his arm and fractured his foot, it looks set to be a very long few weeks ahead.

Frank lives with his cat Bill (which made more sense before Ben died) in the typically British town of Fullwind-on-Sea. He watches DVDs, spends his money frivolously at the local charity shop and desperately tries to avoid the cold callers continuously knocking on his door. Emailing his daughter in America on the library computer and visiting his friend Smelly John used to be the highlights of his week. Now he can't even do that.

Then a breath of fresh air comes into his life in the form of Kelly Christmas, home help. With her little blue car and appalling parking, her cheerful resilience and ability to laugh at his jokes, Kelly changes Frank's life. She reminds him that there is a big wide-world beyond the four walls of his flat and that adventures, however small, come to people of all ages.

Rating: ★★★★★

I'm thrilled to be part of the blog tour for this wonderfully funny yet also poignant novel today and to be able to share the below Q&A with author, J.B. Morrison.



Why did you decide to make your protagonist 81 years old?

JB: I was spending a lot of time with my mother, who was 81 at the time. Like Frank, she lived on her own in a first-floor flat in a



Hi there! I'm a London-based blogger (originally from the Netherlands) and I write about books, travel, arts & culture, and other things I get up to! I'm PR-friendly and love to discover new brands, destinations and more, so do give me a shout on [pagetostagereviews@gmail.com](mailto:pagetostagereviews@gmail.com) if you want to work together. Have a look at my social channels below to connect and let's have a chat!



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### Who is the inspiration for Kelly Christmas?

JB: She's entirely fictional, although because Kelly is the same age as my daughter, that hopefully helped me not make her completely unbelievable.

### How did you become an author?

JB: It was an accident. I had a fairly long career in pop music and wrote an autobiographical account of that. Having the book published was such a genuine thrill that I wanted to write more. I've been very lucky being able to somehow follow one pretty dream occupation with another.

### What do you enjoy most about being an author?

JB: When I really get into a writing flow and I can't get things down quick enough. With my way of writing it doesn't happen too often. It will usually be in a long section of dialogue when the conversation between two characters just takes over and it's like they're actually having a real conversation and I'm just writing down what they say. I also love it when I think of something that in a moment makes the whole story suddenly make sense.

### Describe a typical day in your life.

JB: I'm terrible at the whole getting up at five a.m., taking the dog for a walk, dropping the kids off at school, grinding my own coffee beans and then writing a thousand words before lunch thing. I haven't got a dog and my daughter is twenty-seven, so that doesn't help of course. I really have no discipline or routine other than getting up whenever I wake up, watching BBC Breakfast news roll over and over again and then going on Twitter. As an example, while I'm supposed to be writing this I'm on Twitter pretending I'm at the Q Awards. I do go swimming on Tuesday mornings. In the water I tend to come up with my best writing ideas, which is a bit inconvenient.

Many thanks J.B. for answering these questions! Please find my review for his delightful novel below.

## Review

Frank Derrick is 81 years old when he is run over by a milk float and ends up in hospital with a broken arm and fractured foot. His daughter, who lives all the way in America, worries that he won't be able to take proper care of himself when going home and so she hires him a temporary help. Initially he is reluctant at the thought of frequent visits from a stern carer but that is before Christmas arrives, Kelly Christmas that is.

Kelly brings a breath of fresh air into Frank's house and life, broadening his horizons beyond feeding his cat Bill, making a trip down to the local charity shop and visiting his friend Smelly John - he even gets to go to the big supermarket! As the weeks pass by, Frank finds himself looking forward to Kelly's visits more than anything else and so he tries to stretch his limited pensioner's funds in creative ways in the hopes that he can pay for Kelly to continue coming over.

I love the current trend of books focusing on an elder generation and showing that when you hit 70 (or 81 in this case) life most certainly isn't over. I may not have read novels such as *The 100-Year-Old Man Who Climbed Out the Window and Disappeared* or *The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry* yet, both of which seem along the same quirky lines of Frank Derrick (at the very least they have equally long titles), but I did already hugely enjoy *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel* and *Heartbreak Hotel* and I find a lot of joy in reading about the still very active lives of people 50 years my senior.

There is a space behind the word "extra" in the title of this novel for a reason, because the life of Frank Derrick (age 81) is incredibly ordinary. However, the way author J.B. Morrison describes the daily routine of his elderly main character proves that you don't have to be a boy wizard destined to save the world or a kick-ass archer ready to take down the political establishment to have an interesting story to tell. And while Frank's life may be *extra* ordinary, Morrison's quirky wit and the heartwarming charm of the story make this an *extraordinary* experience for the reader.

*The Extra Ordinary Life of Frank Derrick, Age 81* is a both a delightful and surprisingly moving novel. For all the hilariously peculiar situations Frank gets in, there are also poignant moments of underlying mortality and loneliness. So while this is certainly an enjoyable novel that will make you chuckle out loud while reading, it's also a very thoughtful one that will stay with you long after turning the final page.

You can purchase a copy of the novel from [Waterstones](#), [Amazon.co.uk](#), [Amazon.com](#) or your own preferred bookshop.

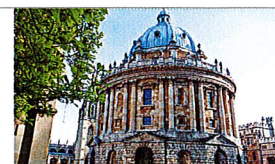
## Author info

Would you like to know more about the author? You can find him online at:

Pan Mac author page: <http://www.panmacmillan.com/author/jbmorrison>

Twitter: @MrJBMorrison / @mrjimBob

Many thanks to the publisher for a copy of the novel in exchange for an honest review.



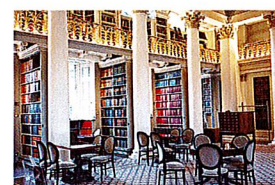
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Vancouver Highlights



3 Great Reads For a Hygge 2017



My Jewellerybox Favourites