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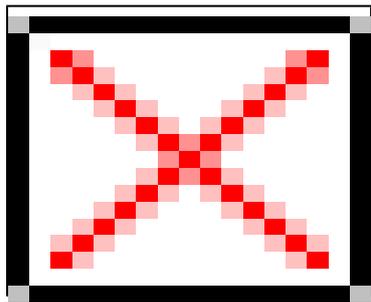
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An interview with the **2018 Lollies** winner



Emer Stamp has been announced as the winner of the [2019 Laugh Out Loud Awards, or Lollies](#) [3] Best Laugh Out Loud Book for 6 - 8 year olds category for **The Big, Fat, Totally Bonkers Diary of Pig**.

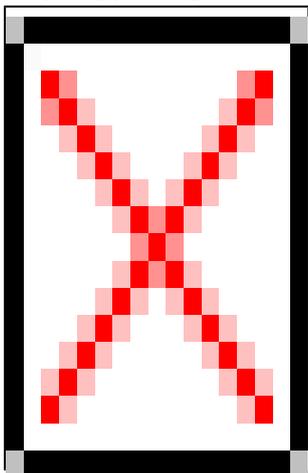
She talked to **Books for Keeps** after the awards ceremony.

Congratulations on winning a Lollie! Tell us why you think it's important to make children laugh

What is the phrase? Laughter is the best medicine? Well I definitely believe it is. And it's not just medicine, it's an important thing you should do every day. It makes you feel good, it makes your face hurt, it gives you a stitch - if it's really good it makes you cry. There is nothing quite like a good fit of the giggles. And it's a great way to get children into reading. Funny books get kids hooked - there's no doubt in my mind this is true. I have never met a young reader who doesn't want to read something that makes them laugh.

What were the books that made you laugh when you were growing up? Do you still find them funny? Have they influenced you?

I still have my copy of Spike Milligan's **Silly Verses**. Even now I think it's funny. I also still have a book called the



Ha! Ha! Bonk! Joke Book, that was a favourite too. When I was a child I was REALLY into Roald Dahl - I loved how his books were funny and yet so moving. Books like **Danny Champion of the World** and **Charlie and the Chocolate Factory**. His work has been a huge influence.

What's your favourite funny scene in fiction and why?

That's a tough one. I am not sure I have one favourite. But right now I am reading the **Rabbit and Bear** books (by Julian Gough and Jim Field) to my son. There's a bit in the first book where the rabbit accidentally reveals he eats his own poo, then spends the next few pages feeling he has to justify why. It makes me and my son howl with laughter. What I love about this piece of writing is that it is based on a true fact - the author hasn't had to fabricate anything - then he's simply run with it.

Give us your children's comedy golden rules - eg timing, things going wrong, bums, breaking rules

I'm not sure I would say these are rules, more good places to mine for laughs:

Bums for sure. There is never anything not funny about a bottom.

Naivety. A character not being able to see the crazy situation they are in, or about to walk into, is always good for a laugh.

The truth. Why spend ages trying to make something hilarious up when you can use one of the millions of funny facts out there already; rabbits *do* eat their own poo, enough said.

The everyday. I really like taking everyday things or situations and looking at them in a different way. There is nothing funny about a pig or a turkey on a farm - but make them friends, and then suppose that one may have eaten the other by mistake and you have the beginnings of a very funny situation.

The Big, Fat, Totally Bonkers Diary of Pig is published by Scholastic, 978-1407153230, £5.99 pbk.

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