



The 10pm Question



Kate de Goldi

Published by Longacre

Softcover, 252pp, \$30

ISBN 9781877460203

The 10pm Question is one of those wonderful books for young adults that can be equally enjoyed by adults who enjoy a gripping story with well-developed characters.

Author Kate de Goldi convincingly gets into the head of 12-year-old protagonist Frankie Parsons.

Most people would recall seeing the world as Frankie does populated by characters such as the all-important best friend, Gigs in this case, bothersome siblings, an eccentrically likeable teacher, Mr A, and an assortment of pets and animals with diverse characters and temperaments.

This world is turned over by the arrival of a new girl in Frankie's class. Frankie is captivated by the newcomer, Sydney, and they start a friendship that has all the intensity of unacknowledged, pre-teen romance. Their friendship is doomed from the outset as Sydney's mother is an unsettled figure who frequently up sticks and moves her three daughters around the globe.

The danger inherent in Frankie's new friendship is worsened by the fact Frankie struggles with anxiety. His worries and fears mount every day to the point where the only way he can sleep is to pad down the hall at 10pm to his mother's bedside and ask her the question that is most troubling him that day.

While she can set his mind at rest, the question that most haunts Frankie, and which is the mystery at the heart of this book, is why his mother will not leave the house.

The reader's own anxiety about how Frankie will cope when Sydney leaves, or whether by some miracle she won't have to go, is what makes this book a real page turner.

The 10pm Question was deservedly judged book of the year and overall winner in this year's New Zealand Post Book Awards for children and young adults, plus it recently won the readers' choice award in the Montana Book Awards. JY

Jodi Yeats is a senior journalist for New Zealand Doctor