

Mike Dumbleton has many years' experience as a teacher, including time as a deputy principal in a number of schools in disadvantaged areas. His interest in writing probably stems from the fact that his grandfather was a local village poet in Oxfordshire, England, who regularly recited his poems to the family (with or without requests).

Mike is the author of several educational texts and award-winning children's picture books. His new novel, *Watch Out for Jamie Joel* is written for older readers and looks at the complicated push and pull between teenagers, parents and schools.



WHEN DID YOU START WRITING?

'I have wanted to write for a long time but I was always too busy, travelling, playing sport and then helping my wife Linda with our three children, born close together (including twins). I finally started in about 1986 and my first educational book was published in 1989. My first children's book, *Dial-a-Croc* was published in 1991.'

WHAT WAS YOUR FAVOURITE BOOK AS A CHILD?

'As a child I enjoyed reading endless books from popular English series at the time. They included many Enid Blyton titles and all the *Biggles* books, along with the books from two schoolboy series, one called *William* and the other called *Jennings*.'

WHAT ARE YOU READING AT THE MOMENT?

'*Njunjul the Sun* by Meme McDonald and Boori Monty Pryor. We've been lucky enough to have Boori visit my school for the last three years and the kids love listening to him talk about his life and his work.'

DID YOU ENJOY SCHOOL AND WHAT WAS YOUR FAVOURITE SUBJECT?

'I loved sport and reading at school. Everything else was less appealing because it got in the way of sport and reading.'

WHEN YOU'RE NOT WRITING, WHAT DO YOU DO?

'When I'm not writing I work full-time as an English teacher. In addition to that I do fitness, eat out, drink wine, go to movies and watch sport, sometimes on TV. It's hard to see where I find the time to write!'

IF YOU WEREN'T A WRITER, WHAT WOULD YOU BE?

'If I wasn't a writer, I'd be a teacher with more time to relax!'

OF ALL OF YOUR BOOKS, WHICH IS YOUR FAVOURITE?

'I don't really have a favourite. I like different books for different reasons. I like *Watch Out for Jamie Joel* because it's the first book I've written for the age group that I teach.'

WHAT IS YOUR PROUDEST MOMENT?

'My proudest moments have all been to do with things my children have done. It's just as well because they also gave me some of my worst moments, particularly when they were teenagers.'

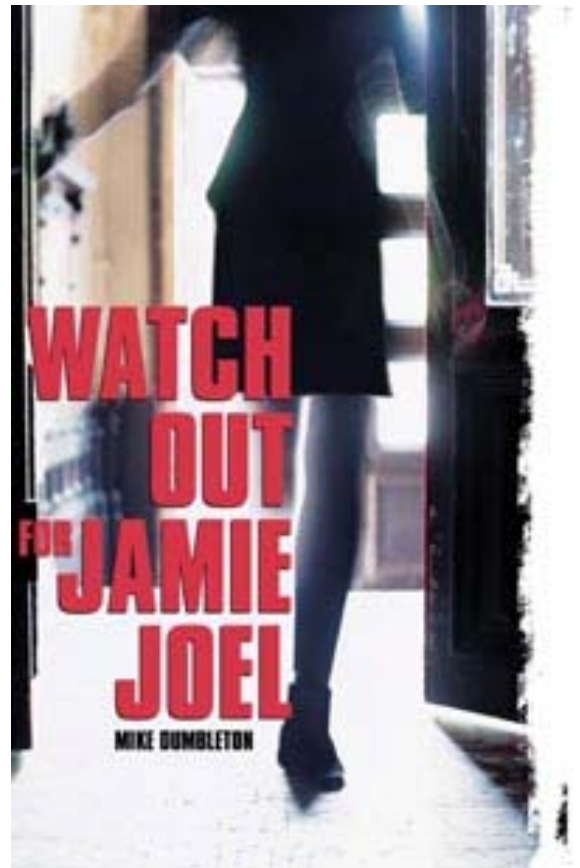
WATCH OUT FOR JAMIE JOEL

'Watch out for Jamie Joel. She's got a real temper and a mouth like a sewer when she gets going'" Jamie imagined the new deputy reading her file, with a photo the size of a Wanted poster and words like 'disruptive', 'unco-operative', 'inappropriate' underneath it - all that teacher stuff that never said what really happened.

I reminded Jamie that student behaviour management was my job, and that part of the issue was now her identity crisis in the corridor. From the way she looked at me, I had the distinct feeling that it wasn't possible to be a deputy principal and a human being at the same time.'

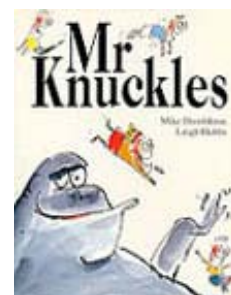
Against the background of a busy high school, a student and a teacher are thrown together in ways that test them both. *Watch Out for Jamie Joel* is a courageous novel - honest, compassionate and wry - about what really goes on in a tough high school. Told alternately from the point of view of the most troublesome student (a difficult but astute girl) and the deputy principal (a sympathetic but overworked man), this story explores dangerous boundaries and reveals uncomfortable truths about parents, students and teachers.

ISBN: 1865085324 \$17.95 pb



ALSO AVAILABLE

For younger readers, *Mr Knuckles* is a hoot of a book!!



ISBN: 186373595X \$12.95 pb

Find out more about the author at
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