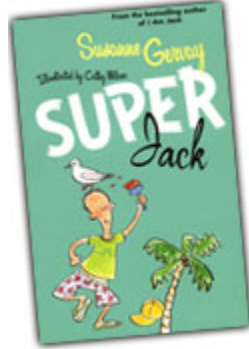


SUPERJACK by Susanne Gervay

READING NOTES



From the Author

My Jacks – *I Am Jack* and *SuperJack* - are inspired by my wonderful, crazy family and the people I love. When you read these books, I am inviting you inside my home to meet fantastic characters – the Nanna who is obsessed with buying bargains, the step-Dad who is the best dish washer in the whole world, the sister who loves dogs, the Mum (me) who does the best star jumps possible and of course Jack.

We went on this great holiday up north, to the Gold Coast. There were so many adventures on the way, as well as when we got there – everything from dolphins to cane toads to the Tower of Terror. I want to thank Dreamworld and their amazing Bengal tigers and Sea World with their awesome polar bears for making it an even better time. I write about the trip north in *SuperJack* and about being a family with all the funny, sad and happy parts.

I love being an author. I used to be a teacher which I loved too. I loved helping recreate *The Hughenden* which is a beautiful heritage hotel in Sydney, associated with Australia's first philosopher. I absolutely love my kids, except when they are making a huge mess inside the house.

I wrote *SuperJack* for my family, the people I care about and for you.

Dedication in SuperJack:-

To the Nanna, Veronika Gervay who will never get old in our hearts.

From JACK

I have a great family, but they drive me crazy sometimes.

There's my Nanna who is obsessed with buying bargains especially underpants. How many underpants does a kid really need?

There's my sort-of-step-Dad who is the best dish washer in the whole world. He doesn't get it. I don't really care if plates sparkle.

There's my sister who is in love with dogs, especially Floppy who is big and flat and stuffed. Sometimes I think something is wrong with my sister.

There's Mum who does star jumps. I wish she wouldn't do them, especially in public.

There's Anna who is ... well, she's nice

And ME. Jack. I'm twelve and a scientist. You should see my fantastic fungus.

We're going on this terrific holiday up north. Beaches and theme parks. Well, it is great, except for LEO. (He's my sort-of-step Dad's son). Shudder. I don't know why he's coming.

Signed

JACK

PS Have a look at the photo of Nanna without her teeth. (Ha, ha)

And there's a great one of Samantha sleeping with Floppy. (She didn't know I took the picture.)

They're in the *Jack Books & Family* – powerpoint presentation.

From LIFE EDUCATION Australia

*Life Education Australia helps Kids and endorses SuperJack –
a book that helps kids.*

Life Education Australia proudly endorses Susanne Gervay's *I Am Jack* and *SuperJack* because these books acknowledge the unique and special quality of each child and their right to be happy and healthy. These books recognize the real life issues facing kids, offering them ways to deal with life in a safe and positive way.

Life Education Australia uses the most effective drug education and prevention strategies, known as the 'social competencies' or 'social influences' approach. This interactive approach uses the real social settings and experiences of students, schools and families, to teach and practice social skills in decision-making, communication, negotiation and peer resistance and refusal, as well as providing accurate information for safe choices.

Susanne Gervay's books are set in real social settings, with real kids, families and schools. The challenges are real – bullying, blending families, making friends, aging grandparents, coping with a world in crisis. The kids are real – loving and fighting siblings, making jokes, adventuring, experimenting, having mates, wanting your parents to love you ... the stuff of life. Her books are a safe place to work out decisions.

SuperJack is beautifully written with humour, love and a recognition of the uniqueness of children.

Life Education on *I Am Jack* – www.drugsafe.org
www.eharold.net

JACK is a friend to kids, parents and families.

In Australia:-

45% of first marriages end in divorce
65% of second marriages end in divorce
75% of third marriages end in divorce

20% of children under fifteen will be raised in a sole parent family

8% of children live in a step or blended family

30% of children will be born outside marriage

20% of Australians are over 65 with increasing numbers of aged parents

Families in Australia are mixed with nuclear, extended, sole parent, blended, defacto, step-parenting relationships and combinations of these.

Kids are quirky, inquisitive, unique.

When kids are born, they begin their amazing journey of discovery about self, their relationships and the world.

For kids to explore safely, they are dependent on their family

- but families can break down, blend, re-create themselves, conflict, change as the statistics show.

It can get confusing for kids affecting negatively their self-esteem, identity and family relationships.

The *Jack* books can make it less confusing. *SuperJack* is written by author and specialist in child growth & development, Susanne Gervay. Susanne has been divorced, a sole parent of two children and is now in a step family relationship. She wrote *SuperJack* to give kids a hand in navigating the complexity of growing up so that they can make positive decisions about their life.

SuperJack celebrate Kids.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS with Susanne Gervay

1. Families are changing with great increases in divorce, sole parent families, blending and step parenting. How does *SuperJack* help kids caught up in it all?

It presents a real situation, that kids and parents can relate to. Kids understand fighting with your sister, laughing until you're sick, pillow fights. They know why their mother is too tired to cook and it's pizza for dinner. Kids joke and play handball, tease, go to school, discover, have fruit fights. That is the family life in *SuperJack*.

When children and parents read *SuperJack*, they feel the honesty. So when Jack and his family have to work out challenges, they feel it's a true life situation. They feel there are answers inside the pages of the book.

Jack's family is changing and we enter the mind of 12 year old Jack and the problems. How does Jack feel about his father who never sees him? His mother who has Rob now? Is Rob there just for his mother, but what about Jack? Jack wants Rob to be his father. But does Rob want to be Jack's father. His sister runs into Rob's arms and Jack feels jealousy. Then there is Rob's son.

Step families are complex for everyone. However *SuperJack* opens the communication, revealing the pressures and the human need to be loved and safe. *SuperJack* is a friend working it out with kids and parents.

Kids caught in changing families without strategies of dealing with the changes, can be left with low self-esteem and unresolved anger. The family can become stretched to the limit.

SuperJack offers insight and strategies.

2. What problems do parents and children face in stepfamilies? How does *SuperJack* deal with them?
 - Competition between the step children for attention
 - Conflicts between the parents about favouritism over the kids
 - Feelings of rejection by both father's natural son and step-son
 - The anger of the divorced parent over the marriage break-up flowing onto the child when he visits the new family
 - New family relationships
 - How the parents can work out the conflicts
 - Others

It's tough but it can work out with insight and commitment

3. *SuperJack* is inspired by your family. How do you feel about exposing yourself like that?

Divorce, raising kids alone, creating a new family is hard for yourself and your children. I felt that I wanted to make it easier for my kids, and kids everywhere. If I had to expose myself and yes, I'm the one who does star-jumps and shrunk the clothes, that's okay. If I have to reveal myself so that kids don't grow up with feelings of insecurity thinking that their parents didn't love them, believing that they're alone, it's worth it.

So I write the truth for kids to develop insight into how and why they feel like they do and give them tools to make decisions which enhance their lives.

4. The story of Nanna is really important in *SuperJack*. Why?

Australia has an aging population. The baby boomers who have had their kids fairly late, are often faced with raising children and looking after aging parents. It can be tough but also joyous.

Kids are caught up in it as aging parents become dominant issues in the family. Jack gets angry at Nanna because she's old, but then he loves her too and wants to help her. I wanted to show kids and parents that it is okay to be angry at the responsibility sometimes, as long as you love Nanna. Life is always complex with a range of emotions and that is acceptable.

There are solutions.

5. Why is Life Education Australia endorsing *SuperJack*?

Life Education Australia is a major anti-drug education body in Australia reaching children from Kindergarten to year 12. Life Education Australia endorses and promotes both *I Am Jack* and *SuperJack* because Life Ed believes that the most effective way of kids making positive decision, including NO to DRUGS, is through building self-esteem and developing strategies to make informed choices.

The *Jacks* provide a safe and real setting through literature for kids to test their judgements and work out answers that help them access the best in life.

6. Are you writing for kids really? Or adults?

Both. Kids can't make it without the adults in their lives.