

## **A Q&A with Barry**

**How did you go about making the characters in Beaky Malone come to life?** When I was Beaky's age I had A) an overactive imagination and B) a big sister who I argued with constantly, so it wasn't all that difficult to put myself into Beaky's shoes. As a writer, I basically tell lies for a living, so that helped, too. Sometimes, though, characters just come to life without you having to do very much, and that's pretty much what happened when I was writing this book. I could pretend that I'd carefully figured out every character's mannerisms, motivations and all the rest of it, so that you'd think I was dead clever, but if you forced me into a Truth-Telling Machine I'd have to admit that it just sort of happened by itself. Beaky and the rest of the cast just did their own thing, really, and I followed along for the ride. Unless anyone from the publisher is reading this, in which case I worked really hard. Honest!

**Are any of the tricky situations that Beaky finds himself in based on real life events?** A. I don't think any of them are based on specific events, but a lot of it is based loosely on my own life. I think readers will see a lot of their own lives in there, too, though. Lots of us have annoying brothers or sisters, we all get a bit embarrassed by our parents sometimes, or are made to spend time with relatives we don't like. Beaky lies for all kinds of reasons, but (putting on my psychologist hat) I think one of those is because he's sometimes scared of being overlooked. By lying he can make himself seem just a bit smarter, or braver, or just better, and I think we've all had that feeling of wanting to fit in, but also to be noticed. That said, I did once wet myself in a shop, so that part of the story actually happened, I suppose...

**Without getting yourself into too much trouble, what's the last porky you told?** How dare you? I never lie! OK, that's not true. Technically, I suppose that was the last porky I told. Don't tell my wife this, but I quite often tell her I've got an urgent deadline and that I can't be disturbed for the rest of the day, then I shut myself in my office and play the Xbox for hours. Seriously, though, don't tell her or she'll hide all my games.

**Are there any more adventures planned for Beaky Malone in the future?** Yes! At the end of the first book there are some hints about the other situations Beaky is going to find himself in. Now that he can't lie, life has suddenly become more difficult and dangerous. In the next book, Beaky is partnered up with the school bully on a class day out, and has no choice but to be brutally honest with him about his anger issues and shocking body odour, before loudly announcing which girls he fancies. As you can probably imagine, it does not end well...