

QUEEN OF EVERYTHING

IMAGINE A WORLD RUN BY A RATHER NICE FAMOUS WOMAN

This queen is very approachable.

A lot of people want to talk about [characters from my books such as] Fudge, Margaret, Blubber and Deenie... but everybody has a *Forever* story. I've even had guys called Ralph come up to me and say, 'How could you do this to me?' I love it when people tell me they like *Sally Freedman* as that's my most autobiographical book.

My palace would be in Key West, Florida. I'm based there about eight months a year. It's a fantasy place to live. It's very small so your social group is straight and gay and old and young and we're all out there together. I've never experienced that anywhere else. Normally people socialise with their own age group or [people] who they know, but in Key West you might die but you'll never grow old.

I get my city-fix in New York a couple of times a year... I'm there now, looking out over Central Park, but I need to get to London. I lived in London and I've been many times. As soon as I finish the novel I'm writing I'll go.

I'm a stickler for a schedule. I get up, do my two-mile morning power walk and eat cereal with bananas, blueberries and a peach. Don't ask me to do anything in the morning because the morning is for writing.

I've never had such a lovely study as I have in Key West. It opens up to a beautiful garden which is tropical so there are orchids blooming all year round. It's an amazing place to work.

Time-travelling? No thanks. They say now is the worst time to be a teenager, but didn't they say that when I was a teenager? I'm now writing a novel set in 1952, a decade I thought I'd never want to return to because it was when I was a teenager. It was a decade of secrets; nobody ever told kids anything about the stuff that we were inventing for ourselves. Not telling us the truth was probably worse than what the truth was.

This monarch worries about porn. I hate kids thinking that porn is the way things are supposed to be. Girls see it and think, 'This is what's expected of me,' and guys see it and think it's what sex is about. It's so



Judy Blume

The iconic author would be a power-walking monarch lording it up in on the Florida coast

cold. I'm not saying there isn't a place for it; there's good porn and bad porn and it can be helpful in your relationship, but for kids who don't have any experience, it doesn't show the intimacy that makes sex wonderful.

I'd be understanding of the new generation.

Every generation has always bemoaned the coming generation. They say

'You're not going to be worthy adults,' but I don't believe that. I think every generation makes its own mistakes.

No books would be banned.

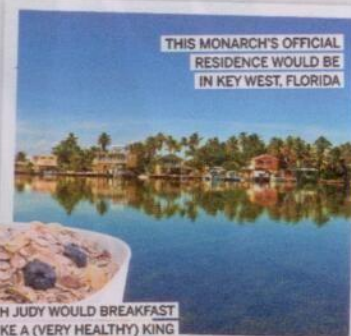
My parents had bookshelves flanking the fireplace and nothing was off limits. And every week they took me to the movies; it fuelled my interest in storytelling. When I was about 10 I saw a movie [starring] Susan Hayward. My mother asked if I understood it and I was embarrassed to say no. Looking back, it was about a woman who had a child out of wedlock. The point is, if kids don't understand what they're reading or seeing, it will either go over their heads or they'll come to you and ask you questions. Of course, a lot of parents don't want to answer their questions.

As queen I'd encourage creative writing. You don't need to know anything to start writing, all you need is imagination. I lived through all of the early women's movement and although I wasn't out there marching, I was thinking. I didn't really make a choice to be a writer, it kind of found me.

I'm tougher now than when I started out. In this business you're going to face critics so you need determination. I don't know where mine came from – it must have been my father. He told me about life; he liked the philosophers, he read widely and I was encouraged. I wasn't going to give up just because some person made me cry by telling me I had no talent. It made me more determined.

You never know what life's got in store for you. I've had a lot of challenges and each one changes you. My first great challenge was the loss of my father when I was 21. We were very close and he died suddenly aged 54. I was with him when it happened and you never get over it, but you move on. I've been divorced and that's certainly tough, but just when I thought it wasn't going to happen for me I met my husband George at 40. [We've been together] 34 years now and it's wonderful. Forty is where it begins again. It was only when I turned 50 that I thought, 'OK, now I'm grown up.'

Makers: Women Who Make America is on PBS America (Sky channel 534, Virgin Media 243), Fridays at 9pm



THIS MONARCH'S OFFICIAL RESIDENCE WOULD BE IN KEY WEST, FLORIDA

HRH JUDY WOULD BREAKFAST LIKE A (VERY HEALTHY) KING

