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Judy Blume Answers the Proust Questionnaire

The beloved author on the magic of old friends, lucky charms, and investing in a fancy toilet.

BY JUDY BLUME

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 SAVE

What is the trait you most deplore in yourself? My phobias. I'm down to two, so I take that as a positive sign.

W **What is your most marked characteristic?** I'm an optimist. I like to sing and dance around the house.

What is your greatest fear? That we're going down the tubes as a country (make that the whole world).

Which talent would you most like to have? I'd love to be able to cook the way all our grown kids do. They make it seem easy. Eight people dropping in for dinner? No problem. Me, I'm still having anxiety dreams before a dinner party.

What do you consider your greatest achievement? That I found the courage to write and didn't give up.

What or who is the greatest love of your life? That's easy. It's my husband and soulmate, George. We've spent 43 years together and I've never been bored. He is funny, smart, and loving.

What is your idea of perfect happiness? A balmy, moonlit evening in Key West. George and I are enjoying a pasta dinner on the balcony overlooking the ocean. Ella Fitzgerald is singing in the background.

What is your greatest extravagance? My fancy toilet. When you sit down you hear birds tweeting. It's freaked out a lot of friends, and me too when it first arrived. I thought birds were captured in the walls of our building. I think you can change the sound but I've never tried. I love my birdsongs.

What do you dislike most about your appearance? At 85, I appreciate everything that still works.

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What is your most treasured possession? I have an old Navajo silver cuff. You can see it in every photo and video. Do I believe in good luck charms? I'd have said no, but recently when I thought I'd lost it, I was terribly sad.

What is your favorite journey? Coming home.