When her father begins a long-distance romance with a Washington, D.C., zookeeper, twelve-year-old Frankie sends fabricated e-mail letters to the zookeeper in an attempt to end the relationship in this story about family, friendship, and growing up.

ASK THE AUTHOR—The Inside Scoop

How much of the book is based on your personal experience?

Although I based the book on my experience of reading my father’s secret love letters to the woman who eventually became my stepmother, Frankie Wallop is not me. A work of fiction is made up of bits and pieces of an author’s world, but it is a new invention. Here are some of the ways Frankie and I are different and some of the things we share in common:

- I play the dulcimer now. But I didn’t grow up playing the dulcimer like Frankie.
- I am the baby of four girls whereas Frankie is the oldest and has two brothers.
- My father’s secret love was a kindergarten teacher, not a zookeeper.
- I have kept a journal since the age of seven. Writing in my diary was an important way for me to express my feelings.
- I had two cooking fires in my house, but nothing was destroyed.
- Like Frankie, I auditioned for The Miracle Worker. I wanted to play Helen and didn’t make it. My interest in Helen Keller came much earlier than Frankie’s. We had a family friend who was blind. I learned Braille from her when I was in the second grade.
- I grew up in Illinois, not Indiana. But I did go to college in Bloomington, Indiana.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- Sometimes Frankie tells lies. In what other ways is she dishonest? In what ways is she honest?
- Talk about other characters in the book and in what ways they are either honest or dishonest.
- When does Frankie begin to like Ayanna? Why?
- Ayanna teaches Frankie about the behavior of naked mole-rats. What else does she teach Frankie?
- How does her father change? What forces him to change?

SPRINGBOARDS FOR YOUR OWN WRITING

- Write a story about a lie that gets your main character in trouble.
- Create two characters who have a hard time communicating with each other in person. Write a story that is entirely made up of letters that they write to each other. (Note: A story that is told in the form of letters is called an epistolary novel.)
Dearest Naked Mole Rat, Marina Rozen. Follow. Jan 4, 2018 · 4 min read. Roland Gockel/Max Delbruck Center for Molecular Medicine. I love you. Yes, I do. Well, all good things must come to an end, and so I end this love letter with one final thought. There are many people out there who might find you ugly or dirty, who squirm and avert their eyes when they see you. Ignore these foolish humans for they do not understand the awesomeness that is you. If you ever feel sad and unwanted (although I can’t imagine why you would feel this way), remember that somewhere on this earth you have melted the heart of at least one person. Love, MR. p.s. You are very photogenic. The Naked Mole Rat Letters introduced me to Mary Amato’s books and I’ve enjoyed all that I’ve read from her. She’s a tween author worth checking out! Give The Naked Mole Rat Letters to readers looking for a heartfelt humorous read. Full Disclosure: Originally read as a library book, I now own my own copy. Read more. The Naked Mole-Rat Letters is an easy, compelling read from Mary Amato. (Her book Please Don’t Write in This Book is a 2011-12 Lovelace Nominee.) The narrator is twelve-year-old Frankie. She tells the story through a combination of diary entries and email correspondence. As the story begins Frankie has accidentally discovered an email sent to her father from a woman in Washington D. C. where her father has just been on a business trip. “The Naked Mole Rat Letters” is a very interesting and exciting book. This book is about a girl named Frankie she lives with her dad and her two little brothers. The problem starts when she finds a note in her dad’s email; it was from a woman named Ayanna. The letter said that she had a wonderful dinner that night and that she specially loved the kiss.