

The Petit Proust Questionnaire

from Owlkids Books

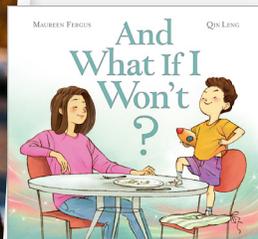
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Meet illustrator Qin Leng

QIN LENG illustrates children's books and magazines and designs backgrounds for animated television series. She has illustrated numerous books that have been published in many countries around the world. She currently lives in Toronto,

Ontario, with her twin sister. Visit her website at <http://qinleng.tumblr.com> and find her on Twitter as @qinleng.



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When Benny's mother asks him to put his dirty plate in the sink in *And What If I Won't?*, he responds by asking: "What would you do if I said no?" Playing on their shared sense of humor and imagination, his mother's answers become more and more outrageous.

When you were a kid, what was your favorite thing to do?

For as long as I can remember, I have always loved drawing. More than going out, running around, and playing with other kids, I would enjoy spending my afternoons in my room, doodling away. My very first drawings were done at the age of 3, on the walls of my home. My parents quickly learned to give me sketchbooks to save their walls!

What did you most dislike doing when you were a child?

I was pretty introverted as a kid, so I would hate to run errands for my parents. Going to the corner store to buy the weekly newspaper or some milk, for example, was terrifying to me!

As a child, where did you dream of living?

I had the privilege of traveling a lot when I was younger. I was first born in China, but then moved very early on to France, then to Montreal, and finally to Toronto. Living in so many different cities has made me enjoy every one of them. I never really dreamed of living anywhere else than where I was at the time.

What did you think you were good at when you were a kid?

Sorry for being redundant, but I think I have always been good at drawing. I have never been great at anything else. The irony is, I am pretty clumsy with my hands when it comes to anything other than drawing.

When you were a kid in school, what did you look for in a friend?

I have a twin sister, so still now, she is my very best friend. But whenever I would meet a new friend, what I would look for is someone who would also get along with my sister.

What did you want to be when you grew up?

In high school, I loved literature. French language was something really rich and beautiful to me. So I remember I wanted to become a French teacher when I grew up.



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What was your favorite book as a child?

When I first arrived in France, friends of the family gave me my very first picture book: *Ernest et Célestine*, by Gabrielle Vincent. To this day, I enjoy flipping through the worn-out pages to look at the beautiful illustrations.

What is your favorite pastime now?

When I am not drawing, I love doing “food-related” activities—like watching food and cooking shows, and cooking my favorite dishes and trying out new dishes. There’s something really relaxing and also very creative about cooking that I enjoy very much.

What do you find an absolute chore?

I am embarrassed to say that exercising is a chore to me. I was never great at sports, and I hated swimming or running. Although I have recently found a passion in rock climbing, so maybe there’s hope!

If you could live anywhere, where would you go?

I think I would love to be able to work from home, and live in a small town, south of France. I would spend my days sketching the beautiful landscapes, sceneries, and people of the town.

What is the one talent you wish you had?

I wish I were a better dancer. My lack of rhythm is embarrassing!

What makes a good friend?

A good friend in my opinion is someone who can talk to you openly and honestly. A good friend shouldn’t be afraid to speak truthfully, even to say things one doesn’t want to hear.

If you weren’t an author or illustrator, what job would you have?

That’s a really tough one, because I think being an illustrator is my dream job. I can’t really picture myself doing anything else. But maybe it would be something in the arts still. Perhaps I would be a painter.

What children’s books have caught your attention lately?

Bonne Journée by Olivier Tallec, *ALPHA* by Isabelle Arsenault, and *Puss and Boots* by Ayano Imai.

If you had to have a motto, what would it be?

Don’t think too much, just do!

