

Percy ?oozes? into the Holiday Season with a new adventure for kids and parents



By Brock Weir

It has long been said that the key to being a successful author is to write about what you know ? and is there really any parent out there that doesn't know, for better for worse, all the weird and wonderful things that can ?ooze? out of your kids at the most inopportune times?

For local authors Kariné Marwood, a full-time writer and filmmaker, and Dr. Julie Kim, a naturopath, that answer is a resounding no.

Just in time for the holiday season, Ms. Marwood, a resident of Aurora, and Ms. Kim, a Richmond Hill resident with a practice based in Aurora, have launched their Christmas-themed book ?Percy and the Perpetual Prezzies?, which charts Percy, their ginger-haired hero, grappling with that age-old problem: how do you resist unwrapping all those tempting prezzies underneath your tree in the long lead-up to Christmas?

While we won't spoil things on how Percy fared, this is the second Percy book to be released by the duo after ?Percy and the Perpetual Ooze? in 2011.

?Ooze? was inspired by Isabella, Ms. Marwood's daughter, who lived with what was initially misdiagnosed as an eye infection for over a year but was, in reality, a foreign object lodged in her eye.

?Several doctors just agreed with the [original] diagnosis and kept going, telling us to just apply eye drops and they would go away,? says Ms. Marwood. ?It didn't, and she just kept oozing from her eye and oozing from her nose, and one thing just led to another and I said, ?this child just has this perpetual ooze.?

And a literary star was born!

Well, not quite.

Kariné and Julie grew up in Thornhill together, close friends throughout high school, who both went into university studying the sciences while keeping their love for the creative arts alive. Their respective parents agreed that studying sciences was the practical way forward, but the women retained their creative bent. They took creative writing courses throughout high school, continued to do

so through their university electives, eventually following this path to a screenwriting course.

"Sometimes you just watch a movie and you think, 'I can do a better job than that!'" says Ms. Kim. "Or, you might ask, 'How do they write that?'"

The women put their heads together to write screenplays, two of which were optioned by studios. They subsequently formed their own production company and, after being hired by Canadian producer Leif Bristow, recently completed and optioned their third screenplay, which is based on *The Bible*.

While neither of them describe themselves as religious, they tackled their commission with gusto, learning quite a bit in the process and revelling in the challenges of creating a screenplay out of millennia-old stories.

"It is always hard to come up with character arcs when you just have a blank canvas," says Karin . "With the Bible you have so many strict rules with what you can and can't do because there is already a story created that people already know."

Percy, however, was just one such blank canvas. After finding inspiration from Isabella's story, they tweaked things just a little bit, turning their heroine into a hero to reach a broader audience.

"We eventually decided it should be a little boy because little girls will read about little boys but often little boys won't read about little girls," explains Julie.

Another objective? Not sanitizing things for the sake of kids and parents. In the first installment, the authors don't hold back in showing Percy tossing his cookies or having an emergency pit stop on a toilet.

"It's not Hello Kitty," says Julie with a laugh. "We didn't want to scare the kids, but we just thought kids like poop jokes and they like jokes that kind of gross them out because that is what they are all about."

Adds Karin : "It is okay to ooze. It is okay to throw up, it is okay to have tummy troubles and be on the toilet. We have all been there, whether you are young or old, and it comes up at the most inopportune times! We really believe in having a good message and going back to the basics."

This theme of getting back to basics is one of the driving forces of Percy's second adventure.

"We have seen so many people focus on their gifts, even adults," says Karin . "We have been to Christmas gatherings where adults complain about not getting enough presents. It's like, 'What?!' Sometimes people fixate on the wrong things."

Adds Julie: "Everyone can relate to wanting to open up their gifts right away and to hold onto it. Not being able to wait is something most kids can relate to. We thought we would throw that idea out there to see what the fallout is if you do open up your gifts too soon. It's something all of us would do. Who wouldn't want a sneak peek?"

If you, however, can't resist a sneak peek, *'Percy and the Perpetual Prezzies'* is available from online book retailers, as well as at thepercybooks.com.