

Interview with Victoria Twead



Interviewer: Hello Victoria, Congratulations on being awarded the HarperCollins Gold Star.

Vicky: Thanks! Still can't believe it!

Interviewer: First of all, what makes you write?

Vicky: I can't take life very seriously, and when I see people smiling, or better still, laughing out loud as they read my stuff, that absolutely floats my boat.

Interviewer: Well, I laughed all the way through, even more at the end than at the beginning! Did they really call you 'Schindler' at work because you're always writing lists?

Vicky: Yes.

Interviewer: And did you really knock over the village fountain?

Vicky: Yes.

Interviewer: What about the characters in the book? They're hilarious - are they real, too?

Vicky: Oh, yes.

Interviewer: My favourite characters are probably Judith and Mother, they had me laughing all the way. And what did your sister and her husband say when they read about themselves in the book?

Vicky: Ah, the Eco-Warriors... I have to admit, I was a bit nervous about showing them those chapters... But they were fine about it. They said in real life, they're much worse than I'd described, so that was okay...phew!

Interviewer: How difficult did you find it settling into such a small Spanish village? You didn't speak any Spanish, did you?

Vicky: Not difficult at all, everyone made us so welcome. But we had to learn to speak Spanish very quickly or life would have been much harder.

Interviewer: What was most different?

Vicky: Gosh, where do I start? Little children playing outside at 2 or 3 in the morning. Shops all closing at 2 in the afternoon. Crocuses flowering in November. The Fiestas - which are totally mad! The lovely Spanish attitude towards the elderly and families. I could go on and on...



Interviewer: I have to ask about the chickens. I can't use the words in this interview, but were those REALLY their names?

Vicky: Oh, yes!

Interviewer: I fully understand why you had to part with Cocky. Was he as bad as you described?



Vicky: He was much worse. He was the most ferocious little creature I have ever come across, except perhaps for Tasmanian Devils which have pretty bad reputations. We really missed him though.

Interviewer: Those little matchstick-men you use as scene breaks. What are they?



Vicky: Ah, the Indalo, the Rainbow Man. That's the emblem for the region, you'll see it everywhere in the Almería region; as statues on roundabouts, on car bumpers, on tourist souvenirs and in people's houses. As I explain in the book, if you buy one and give it to someone else - it's supposed to bring them luck. But if you buy one for yourself, that's VERY bad luck. I'm not superstitious, or I wasn't until I came across the Rainbow Man. You read in the book what happened to us when I bought one for myself! I won't be doing that again in a hurry!

Interviewer: Yes, I remember! I'll take your advice on that one! Now, the recipes... I loved the way you slipped those into the book. Where did they come from?

Vicky: A variety of places. A lot came from Gayle at Orce Serrano Hams. She's a superb cook and tries each one before she posts them on her blog. She often photographs each step as she goes along, too. Other recipes came from characters in the book, and the village ladies.

Interviewer: I tried the Crispy Potatoes - Patatas Bravas recipe. Have to say, it was delicious and I've added it to my own recipe collection.

Vicky: Good, we like that one, too. I just love the whole Spanish Tapas idea. Little bits of this and that - yum!

Interviewer: Have you been on any more Home Exchanges since the one mentioned in the book?

Vicky: No, not yet. Perhaps when my daughter in Australia gets married we'll swap houses with someone in Sydney.

Interviewer: Have you ever regretted moving to Spain?

Vicky: Never.

Interviewer: Have you got plans for any more books in the future?

Vicky: Oh, yes! Every day I gather more material, and I jot things down. I hope to get started quite soon.

Interviewer: Well, thank you, Vicky, for the chat. I thoroughly recommend 'Chickens, Mules and Two Old Fools' as a really good read. I couldn't put it down and I'm really looking forward to the next one.

Vicky: It's a pleasure. Oh, and I brought you some eggs. Laid yesterday.

Interviewer: Well, that's a first! Thank you very much!