

# ***Teddy Mars Almost a World Record Breaker***

**by Molly B. Burnham**

## **Writing Prompts**

**I love thinking up ways readers can connect their own lives and thoughts to a book. Here are some prompts I thought up:**

### **Prompts about Character:**

- Lonnie and Teddy have been friends for a long time. Describe how they first became friends, and why?
- In the beginning of the book Teddy doesn't want Viva to hear the story about his little brother. Why do you think he feels this way?
- How do Teddy and Lonnie differ in the responses to Viva joining their lunch table?
- Teddy has a lot of opinions on things. Pick something Teddy has an opinion about---The Destructor, pigeons, Grumpy Pigeon Man, The Guinness Book of World Records, one of his sisters---do you agree or disagree with Teddy?
- Venn Diagrams: Choose a character from the book and compare yourself to that character. Or compare two characters in the book.
- Teddy doesn't like Grumpy Pigeon Man very much, but when he gets sick Teddy becomes very worried about him. Why does Teddy's feelings change?
- Grumpy Pigeon Man is much older than Teddy, is there someone in your life, who is older than you but is a good friend.
- Teddy feels like no one in his family really pays attention to him, do you think he is correct? Why? Do you think at the end of the book things are different?
- Describe a character in a story for example what do they love or hate, how do they interact with other characters in the story, what is a trait of theirs. Now think how their actions add to the story and move the story along?

### **Prompts about Setting:**

- How does setting affect Teddy's life? Would Teddy be different if he lived in a bigger house? Or a different town? What would happen if Teddy didn't live next door to pigeons?
- After reading the whole book compare where you live---your setting---to Teddy's. Do you think you live in a similar setting, a different setting, or something in between?
- If you lived in a tent what are the three most important things you would have with you. (Not including the necessities like a sleeping bag, pillow, or stuffed animal.)
- If you could design a habitat for your favorite animal what would it be like?

### **Prompts about Point of View:**

- Who is telling this story?

- Would it be better if there were more points of view?
- Do you believe Teddy or do you think sometimes because it's from his point of view he might not see the whole picture?
- How does the fact that Teddy is telling this story affect the shape of the story? (How it is told in short sections.)

**Prompts about Language:**

**From Meriam-Webster's online dictionary:**

- **Metaphor:** a figure of speech in which a word or phrase literally denoting one kind of object or idea is used in place of another to suggest a likeness or analogy between them (as in *drowning in money*)
- **Simile:** a figure of speech comparing two unlike things that is often introduced by *like* or *as* (as in *cheeks like roses*)

**In *Teddy Mars Almost a World Record Breaker*, Teddy uses world records to describe how he feels, how he sees the world, and how he experiences life. Throughout the text he employs different techniques---sometimes but not always he uses simile---to compare his life to the world records.**

- Do you think Teddy's comparisons to world records and his feelings help you to understand how Teddy feels?
- Find an example in the book where Teddy compares his life to a world record. Do you agree with Teddy, or would you feel differently.
- Try to make up your own comparisons. Use this sentence to help: The record for...makes me feel...because...

**Prompts about the Arc of the Story:**

- Every story has a problem that is connected to the main character. Teddy actually has a few problems, but what do you think is Teddy's *biggest* problem? How is this resolved in the end of the book?
- The story is told in short sections, almost like a photograph of a moment. All these moments are linked to make a story. What are some of the key moments that move the story along?
- The story takes place over a number of months. Why is this important to the story?