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Opening extract from

I Funny

Written by

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One



FLOP SWEAT



Have you ever done something extremely stupid like, oh, I don't know, try to make a room filled with total strangers laugh until their sides hurt?

Totally dumb, right?

Well, that's why my humble story is going to start with some pretty yucky tension—plus a little heavy-duty drama (and, hopefully, a few funnies so we don't all go nuts).

Okay, so how, exactly, did I get into this mess—up onstage at a comedy club, baking like a bag of French fries under a hot spotlight that shows off my sweat stains (including one that sort of looks like Jabba the Hutt), with about a thousand beady eyeballs drilling into me?

A very good question that you ask.

To tell you the truth, it's one *I'm* asking, too!

What am I, Jamie Grimm, doing here trying to win something called the Planet's Funniest Kid Comic Contest?

What was I thinking?

But wait. Hold on. It gets even worse.

While the whole audience stares and waits for me to say something (anything) funny, I'm up here choking.

That's right—my mind is a *total and complete blank*.

And I just said, "No, I'm Jamie Grimm."

That's the punch line. The *end* of a joke.


CHOKE

All it needs is whatever comes *before* the punch line. You know—all the stuff *I can't remember*.

So I sweat some more. The audience stares some more.

I don't think this is how a comedy act is supposed to go. I'm pretty sure *jokes* are usually involved. And people laughing.

"Um, hi." I finally squeak out a few words. "The other day at school, we had this substitute teacher.



Very tough. Sort of like Mrs. Darth Vader. Had the heavy breathing, the deep voice. During roll call, she said, 'Are you chewing gum, young man?' And I said, 'No, I'm Jamie Grimm.'"

I wait (for what seems like hours) and, yes, the audience kind of chuckles. It's not a huge laugh, but it's a start.

Okay. *Phew*. I can tell a joke. All is not lost. Yet. But hold on for a sec. We need to talk about something else. A major twist to my tale.

"A major twist?" you say. "Already?"

Yep. And, trust me, you weren't expecting this one.

To be totally honest, neither was I.