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Opening extract from

I Totally Funniest: A Middle School Story

Written by

James Patterson

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Chapter 1

START THE COUNTDOWN CLOCK

Hi! I'm Jamie Grimm, and it's great to be back in front of an audience. This way, when I die in three days, at least I won't be alone.



Let me explain.

I've won a few rounds in something called the Planet's Funniest Kid Comic Contest—the local, state, regional, and semifinal competitions. Now, in three days, I'll be in THE FINALS out in Hollywood.

I'm trying my best not to freak out.

Unfortunately, everybody keeps reminding me of my impending doom.

My friends at school.



The cafeteria lady.



Teachers, strangers—even the billboards in Times Square!



My whole life has become this wild NCAA tournament of comedy. I've made it past the Sweet Sixteen all the way to the Elite Eight, where I'm hoping for a shot at the Final Four.

Oh, in case you haven't heard, that shot comes in THREE DAYS.

But don't worry—even if you don't live in the Los Angeles area, you can watch me die. Live. On cable TV's YUX channel.

By the way, *dying onstage* is what comedians call it when they flop, tank, or bomb so badly they're blasted with boos and pelted with week-old produce. It's what I'll probably be doing in, oh, maybe THREE DAYS!

So cue the Olympic fanfare music.

It all comes down to this, like they say on ESPN. It's now or never. Do or die. This is for all the marbles, even though nobody actually plays marbles anymore. In three days, there will be no tomorrow, so who cares about the four-day forecast?

Yep. This comedy gig is about to get super-serious. And, like I said, for this final Hollywood round, there are only eight of us still standing.

Actually, the seven other kids will be doing all

the standing. Me? Not so much.

In case you haven't noticed, I'm a stand-up comedian who doesn't exactly fit the job description.

