Lovereading4kids.co.uk is a book website created for parents and children to make choosing books easy and fun

Opening extract from

Help! I'm a Genius

Written by

Jo Franklin

Illustrated by

Aaron Bletcha

Published by

Troika Books

All Text is Copyright © of the Author and/or Illustrator

Please print off and read at your leisure.

Lovereading4kids.co.uk

For Cedric and Eleanor

First published in the UK by TROIKA BOOKS
Well House, Green Lane, Ardleigh CO7 7PD, UK
www.troikabooks.com

First published 2017

Text copyright © Jo Franklin 2017
Illustrations copyright © Aaron Blecha 2017

The moral rights of the author and illustrator have been asserted
All rights reserved

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available
from the British Library

ISBN 978-1-909991-42-2

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Printed in Poland

1

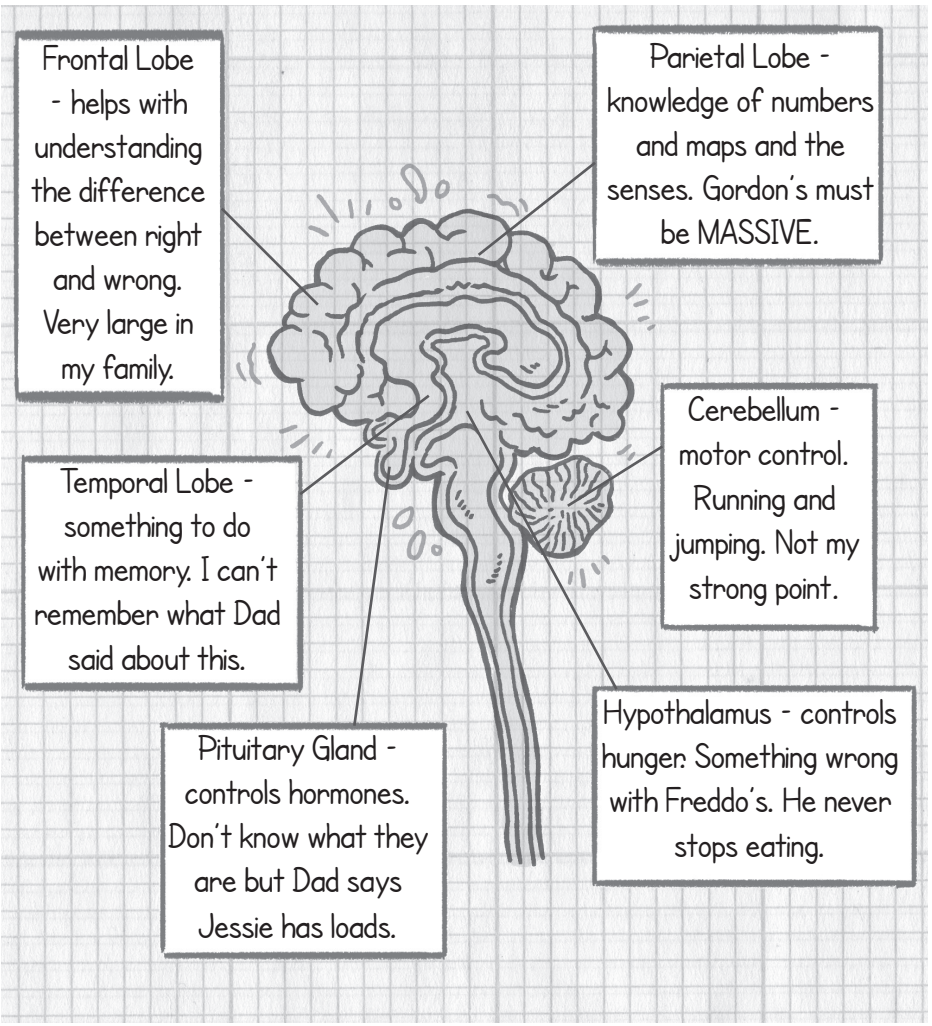
Things You Need to Know About My Family's Brains

All my family are complete and utter brainiacs, except me. I don't know how I ended up being a Kendal, but I'm too young to leave home so I guess I'll have to get on with it.

Dad is a university lecturer. He teaches brainy people how to be even brainier about brains. He's something called a neuroscientist but don't ask me what it means because I am not one of his students.

Dad keeps his brain on top of the fridge. Not his actual brain, that's in his skull (I think). The brain on top of the fridge is plastic and breaks in half so you can look inside. The company that made Dad's brain labelled the different parts with weird names.

Dad tried to explain what they meant, so I added my own labels to help me to remember.



Mum isn't a brain expert but she knows everything about everything else. She works as a school receptionist (not at my school, thank goodness) and knows every kid's name, their favourite colour and what size pants they wear, although she wouldn't admit it. She also knows all the parents' secrets because she reads the head teacher's emails. The parents call her The Dobermann. She thinks it's funny.

So do I.

Mum is very fierce and she has a keen sense of smell. She always barks at my best friend Freddo when he smuggles a bag of chips into my bedroom. (No food upstairs. One of her rules.) So Freddo and I call her Dober-Mum. I don't call her that to her face as I don't think she will find *that* very funny and I'm scared she might bite me.

My incredibly annoying older sister, Jessie, acts like she knows everything. Actually, she only knows everything about One Dimension, who are her favourite band. But as it's the only thing she ever wants to talk about, she is a brainiac in her own world.

Timmy is only two years old. I think it's fair to say he's not a brainiac yet. However he does know how to get his own way. Especially with Dad.

If Timmy wants something and Dad says, 'No', Timmy clamps his mouth shut and stops breathing. First he turns red, then he turns white. He would turn blue next but Dad panics because stopping breathing starves the brain of oxygen and kills off zillions of brain cells. So Dad gives Timmy exactly what he wants.

That leaves me, Daniel, aged ten. My growth decided to concentrate on my body, not my brain. So I'm very tall but not very clever.

Mum and Dad are disappointed that I do not share their brainpower. Last Christmas they bought me a book called *A Million Amazing Facts Boys Should Know*. I still don't know any of the amazing facts because I use the book to prop up the wonky leg on my bed.

Both my parents are very competitive about being brainy and race to answer the questions on *Mastermind* and *University Challenge*. There's no point me joining that race. I'd lose every time. Instead I am competitive with my best friend Freddo about being a NOT-brainiac.

Freddo normally gets the lowest marks in any test at school. He's really proud of it. I try to do as badly as him but I've never managed it yet. Maybe I've inherited one or two brain cells after all.

Freddo and I are compiling a list of NOT-brainiac words. We're hoping to find one for each letter of the alphabet. So far we've only got these ones:

F – Fool
I – Idiot
M – Moron
N – Ninny

But today, for the first time ever, I learnt something new and I found out about it before Mum.

I was about to leave for school when the post arrived. A really thick envelope dropped through the letter box. It was addressed to Dad and had

a USA stamp. I was about to ask him what it was when Dad snatched the letter out of my hand.

'Don't tell Mum!' he said. 'It's a secret surprise.'

At that moment, Mum came down the stairs with Timmy. Dad stuffed the letter up the back of his jumper.

'Time for school, Dan,' Mum said. Then she stopped in her tracks, put Timmy down, grabbed my shoulders and did her mind-reading Dober-Mum trick of staring into my eyes to find out what I was up to.

What I was up to was trying to keep Dad's USA surprise a secret. But the United States of America is a very big place and my brain is very small, and the secret was desperate to escape.

'I'm late,' I said and ducked out of her fierce Dober-Mum claws and dashed out the door.

I hope Dad tells her (and me) the secret really soon or my tiny brain will explode.

2

The Trouble With Crisps

As I walked to school I kept wondering what the letter from the USA could be about. Mum wants to go on holiday to the States but Dad doesn't like flying so we never go anywhere that involves an aeroplane. Mum sent him on a Fear of Flying hypnosis course, so maybe he's got over his hang-up and booked a holiday to the USA as a surprise.

We could all go on a yee-hah cowboy holiday.

We could get in the Guinness book of records by cleaning every window on the Empire State Building in a day.

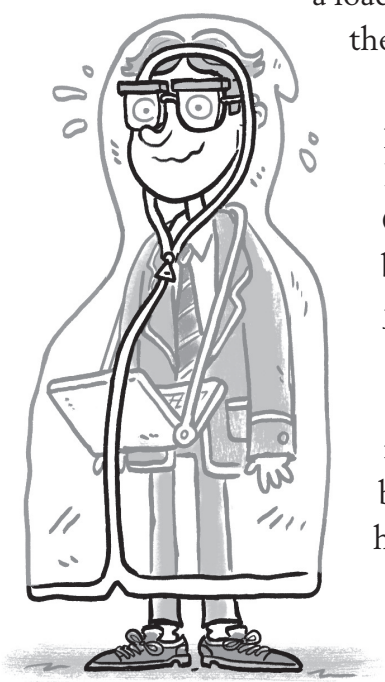
Or we could walk across the Grand Canyon blindfolded.

But where I really want to go to is Florida to visit all the brilliant theme parks like Disneyworld and Universal Studios. And it's sunny all the time so Mum would love it.

I reckon Dad is taking us to Florida. This is going to be the best holiday ever!

There was a lot of shouting in my classroom as I opened the door.

'More! More! More!' everyone chanted but I couldn't see what they wanted more of as there was a load of open umbrellas in the way.



'I suggest you protect yourself, Mr Kendal.' Gordon the Geek, my second best friend, stood just inside the door. He was wearing a long, plastic tourist rain poncho over his blazer. It looked like he was having a baby.

Gordon is a neat

freak as well as a geek and goes to extreme lengths not to get dirty, but I hadn't seen this outfit before.

'What's going on?' I said.

'I have had to make my own hazmat suit,' he said. 'Until my order for a Shield-Max Level-A fully-encapsulating suit with built-in respirator is delivered. It withstands anthrax, sarin and radioactivity. I will be able to seal myself in and survive for three hours.'

'Why do you need to cover up?'

Gordon pointed a shaky finger at the mob of kids who were still chanting.

'Eat! Eat! Eat!' Everyone stamped their feet and slammed their hands on the desks. I jumped up onto a chair, hoping to see what was going on.

Freddo and Rooners, the football captain, were face to face, shoving crisps in their mouths. The floor was littered with empty crisp packets.

Rooners' and Freddo's cheeks were bulging, their faces covered in greasy, salty crumbs.

Another crisp-eating competition! When would Rooners give up? Freddo was the Crispmeister. He likes to make out he's laid back, but actually Freddo is the most competitive person I know.

Freddo licked his lips and swallowed hard. He grabbed another handful of crisps and shoved them in his mouth.

'Freddo is now in the lead!' Spike shouted.

Rooners' cheeks grew bigger as he tried to move his mouthful of fried potatoes and additives to the back of his throat. His shoulders heaved and his face turned green.

Gordon sunk down under his hazmat rain poncho in the farthest corner of the classroom.

Someone opened a packet of cheese and onion and shoved it under Rooners' nose. Rooners clamped his hand over his mouth and looked around the room with bulbous eyes.

Freddo was still chomping but it didn't look good. His whole body wobbled like a demented washing

machine as he tried to swallow his mouthful.

That was the moment Mr Pitdown came in.

'What is going on?' Our teacher tugged the corner of his moustache. The room fell silent except for Freddo chomping and Rooners spluttering.

The crisp-eating contestants paused for a moment, closed their eyes and stood perfectly still.

'Please sit down. I have an important announcement to make.'

Freddo's and Rooners' eyes snapped open at exactly the same time and a volcano of crisp confetti exploded out of their mouths.