THE NERDIEST, WIMPIEST, DORKIEST I FUNNY EVER

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Chapter 1



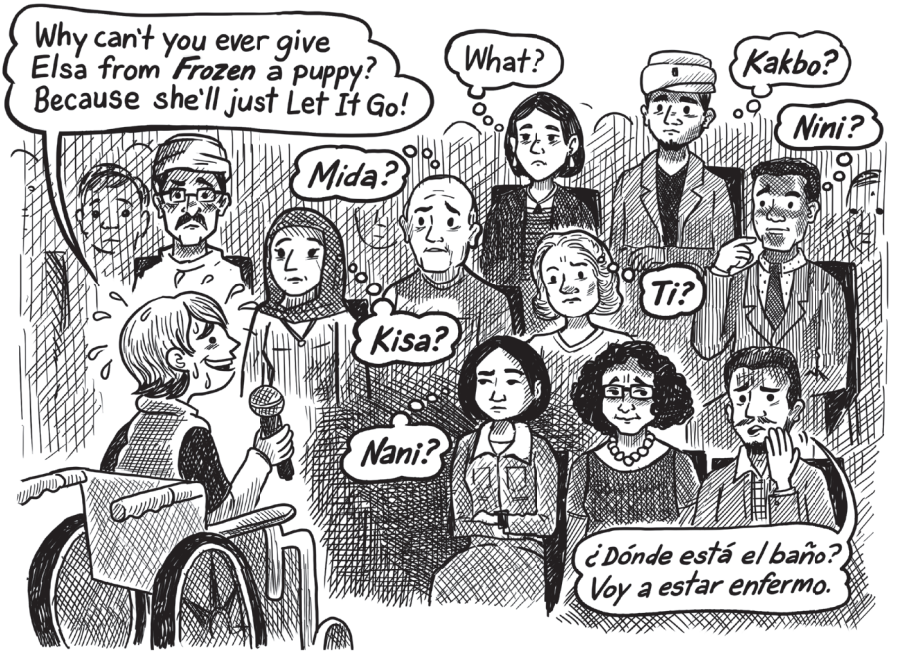
THE JOKE HEARD ROUND THE WORLD

So, have you ever been in exactly the wrong place at exactly the wrong time?

For instance, have you ever tried to tell jokes to people who don't speak your language, which means they'll never laugh because they don't understand a single word you're saying?

This is why I'm sweating like a berserk Super Soaker.

This is also why I probably shouldn't've accepted the invitation to address the United Nations. They wanted me to ask the assembled diplomats to play nice with each other for the sake of kids all around the world.



I think the last time some of these guys played nice, there were snakes involved.

Talk about your mission impossible.

Yes, I've done some amazingly incredible stuff in my young life. I've won the first-ever Planet's Funniest Kid stand-up comedian contest even though, technically, I can't stand up. And I wasn't really up against the planet like I am now, just the United States. I have my own TV show on BNC. I've even kissed a few girls.

But telling jokes that'll make all 193 member

states of the UN General Assembly chuckle? It's a nightmare.

"When you think about it," I sputter into my microphone, "we humans are all one big family."

Dozens of translators instantaneously repeat what I just said into the earpieces of hundreds of frowning foreign dignitaries.

I slide into a joke to soften them up. "Speaking of happy families, the other night, I cooked dinner for *my* family. It was going to be a surprise but the fire trucks showing up sort of ruined it."

I smile. Nervously. And wait for the translators to finish my joke for me in all sorts of languages. When they're done, I'm still smiling and sweating but nobody is laughing.

"Why does this boy set his house on fire?" demands one delegate in a thick Slovenian accent.

"Does he ask us to cook dinner for his family?" asks a German lady.

"I object!" proclaims the Chinese ambassador. "The Happy Family is a Chinese dish and must be stir-fried in a wok with bamboo shoots!"

"You guys?" I plead. "It's just a joke!"

"Sacré bleu!" screams another diplomat. "Did this

boy in the wheelchair call me a joke?" She pounds her desk with a shoe.

"You insult me," cries that Slovenian guy, "and you insult my country."

"Give him the hook!" shouts the American representative to the UN, the lady who invited me to speak in the first place. "Get him offstage!"

Finally, everybody at the United Nations is united around a common cause. They all agree on one thing: I Not Funny.

Chapter 2



TUNNEL OF FEAR

Fortunately, that's when I wake up.

Like I said, me speaking at the United Nations? It's a nightmare. Only I'm having my nightmare in the middle of the day because I grabbed a quick catnap while the crew set up the scenery for the final shot of this season's *Jamie Funnie* TV series. That's one good thing about being stuck in a wheelchair. You always have a comfy seat when you want to nod off.

During the break, Nigel Bigglebottom, the British actor playing the TV version of my uncle Frankie, fixed himself a spot of tea along with some cookies, which he calls biscuits. That still confuses me, along with chips and crisps. Everybody else is guzzling coffee, water, and soda pop. When you work on a TV show, free snacks and beverages are everywhere.


Chip, chip, cheerio!
I think that means he wants two fries and a bowl of cereal.


Tunnel
of
Love

"I can't believe this will be our final scene for the entire season!" Nigel proclaims in a plummy British accent. Everything he says sounds supersnooty, even though he's really friendly. Fortunately, he switches into a New Yawk accent when he plays Uncle Frankie. Otherwise it would just sound weird.

Actually, almost everything about starring in a TV show called *Jamie Funnie* based on my life is kind of weird. Good thing my best buds Joey Gaynor (he's the one with the long hair and a nose ring), Jimmy Pierce (the total brainiac in the porkpie hat), and Gilda Gold (the curly-haired Boston Red Sox fan and comedy film fanatic) are working on the show with me. In fact, Gilda is our director. She's also kind of my girlfriend. Maybe. Don't quote me on that.

"We're back," Mr. Wetmore says through the ceiling speakers in the sound stage. Richard Wetmore is the show's tech director. He's up in the control booth with all the knobs, buttons, and levers. "We're back" means we all need to go back to work. The crew has finished putting together the scenery. The studio audience applauds. They're eager to see us shoot our final scene.

To be honest, it's one I haven't really been looking forward to. Not because the final scene of the final episode means we'll be finished making funny TV shows for the year.

Nope. I'm dreading this scene for another reason.

It takes place at an amusement park. In the Tunnel of Love. You know, one of those romantic rides where you drift down a man-made stream in a dinky dinghy through a very dark passageway.

I might be fine if I were the only one in the scene. But I'm not. I'll be sharing the boat with Donna Dinkle, the Hollywood sitcom star playing Jillda Jewel. Yes, that's the TV version of Gilda Gold.

And guess what the script says we do at the end of the scene, when we come out of the Tunnel of Love?

That's right. We're supposed to kiss.