

extra fingers

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I think he's on an iPad

ISABELLA, at Saint Mary's Church in Sydney looking at a statue of a young boy who was holding a small blackboard sometime in the latter part of the 1800s: "I think he's on an iPad. (*Looking closer*) Hey! Wait! It is an iPad."

Not much help

AMELIE, describing a woman at a park who'd been doing tai chi exercises: "Dad, there was this lady up at the park who was standing in the middle of the park and waving her arms around really slowly."


DAD: "Ah-huh."

AMELIE: "She was trying to get her arms warm but I don't think that would have helped very much."

DAD: "No."

AMELIE: "It's not even that important."

Amelie: "Dad, I wonder who died for me. Like, when I was born someone died for me and I don't know who it was. When you're born, someone dies for you. True fact."



DAD: "What isn't?"

AMELIE: "Getting your arms warm."

DAD: "Isn't it?"

AMELIE: "No. Look at the weather, Dad. It's cold!"

Not while I'm having my hair done

DAD: "Issy, where's your drink bottle?"

There was no response.

DAD: "Come on. Quick! We have to get to school as soon as we can."

ISABELLA: "Dad, can't you see? I'm having my hair done."

DAD: "Yeah. So? What's that got to do with anything?"

ISABELLA: "Well, I don't talk to anyone while I'm having my hair done."

DAD: "Issy, you don't have to concentrate on anything while you're getting your hair done. You just sit there while Holly's doing your hair so surely you can answer the odd simple question from me."

ISABELLA: "Dad, I just don't like talking to anyone while my hair's getting done. You're not going to school so you find the drink bottle."

DAD: "Look, this is stupid. It shouldn't have to come down to this every morning."

ISABELLA: "It's your job to find it, Dad. Just look in all the usual places you look."

Seconds later . . .

DAD, turning to Amelie who was thoroughly preoccupied attempting to make a zipper sound: "Amie, do you know where Issy's drink bottle is?"

AMELIE, angrily: "Dad! I'm trying to do my zipper sound. Okay?"

DAD: "What the!"

AMELIE, frustrated: "Oh! Why does everyone always have to . . . Arrghh! Can I just be left alone for a second, please? Issy, does it go like this? *(With pursed lips makes loud spluttering*

Achieved

ISABELLA, referring to a lesson she has each week called Achieve: “Dad, it’s so silly. Everyone was lying down on the floor trying to relax because that’s what we were supposed to be doing but then I got into trouble.”

DAD: “Did you? What for?”

ISABELLA: “Well, get this. I was sitting up. I wasn’t lying down because I was daydreaming and staring out the window and the teacher just said I hadn’t been listening. Which was true. But, Dad, I was relaxed. Really relaxed.”

sound) I’m just trying to get the low sound. Does it go like this?”

What if she was a really young mum?

AMELIE: “Dad, is it possible for a mum to be younger than her baby?”

DAD: “Um, no, darl.”

AMELIE: “What if she was a really young mum?”

Green poo

AMELIE: “Dad, have you ever heard of anyone who’s done a green poo?”

DAD: “No.”

AMELIE: “I have. I think I was in Year One when I saw one . . . for the first time.”

True fact

AMELIE: “Dad, I wonder who died for me. Like, when I was born someone died for me and I don’t know who it was. When you’re born, someone dies for you. True fact.”

Would a sore knee do it?

AMELIE: “Dad, would this sore on my knee stand a good chance if I wanted to get out of Sport?”

DAD: “What’s that?”

AMELIE: “If I needed an excuse to get out of Sport.”

DAD: “What are you talking about? You like Sport.”

AMELIE: “Not anymore. We’re doing AFL and so I’m really hating Sport now. What’s the AFL got to do with your health?”

DAD: “Well—”

AMELIE: “All you ever do is fall over and graze your knee. And you can’t get out of it. Why weren’t we allowed to do running instead? I think I’m going to try and get out of it. I think I’m going to try and say I have this sore knee. But you need a note from your parents to do that. Do you think the sore on my knee is good enough?”

I remember

DAD, after arriving home from the shops with Amelie: “Amelie, do you remember that letter I had in my hand that I was going to post? Do you remember seeing it at all? It’s pretty important.”

AMELIE: “Oh yeah. I remember. You dropped it on the ground.”

Do you remember?

AMELIE: “Holly, what’s the name of the teacher with the really poppy pimple behind her ear that I used to stare at when I was in Year Three and who used to always tell me to put my hat on and when she looked away I took it off? Do you remember?”

Who’d ever want to be a shepherd?

I was talking to the girls about the importance of them having and expressing opinions of their own.

DAD: “. . . I don’t want Amie to think what I’m just thinking. What I’ll always want from all of you are your own viewpoints. The last thing I ever want from any of you is the sound of my voice being parroted back to me without you first thinking about whether what I’ve said is correct. I really can’t stand that. It’s an abnegation of your—”

HOLLY: “You don’t want us to be sheep, do you, Dad?”

DAD: “Exactly, Hols. Very well put.”

ISABELLA: “But that’s kind of what I am. Actually, it’s exactly what I am. I really love your brain, Dad. It’s so good. That’s why I agree with everything you say. And who’d ever want to be a shepherd anyway? I don’t ever want to be a shepherd. Yuk! I want to be a sheep, Dad. Because they’re so much cuter. Especially the little baby ones. The little lambs are so cute, aren’t they, Dad?”

All that and no family problems

AMELIE, describing a friend of hers who, in her opinion, gets to do more things than she does: “She’s got a horse; she gets to go to Hong Kong; she gets all the technology she wants; and . . . and, Dad. She hasn’t got any problems* with her family. None!”

*a reference to children growing up in families where the parents are divorced and the children end up getting spoilt.

Do you die?

DAD, at Scitech, asking Amelie whether she’d like to try a mock guillotine that was part of an exhibition: “Are you going to have a go?”

Amelie shakes her head.

DAD, trying again: “Are you going to have a go?”

Again Amelie shakes her head.

DAD: “Put your head through the hole?”

AMELIE, trembling, as she stuffs popcorn into her mouth: “No!”

DAD, feigning incredulity: “You’re not going to have a go? It’s only a guillotine, darl. You just put your head through there—”

AMELIE, unconvinced: “Do you die?”

I just want to know

AMELIE to **HOLLY,** as told by Holly: “Holly, there was this Year Six girl and she said this thing and the other girl said, ‘Oh, that’s not logically correct.’ Um, do you think it was logically correct, or not?”

HOLLY: “Well, what was this thing?”

AMELIE: “I don’t know. I can’t remember. I’ve been trying to think but I just can’t remember. I just want to know, Holly. She’s a bit annoying sometimes so I want to know whether she was right or not. The girl that said, ‘that’s not logically correct’.

They should say their age

ISABELLA: “None of the teachers will tell you what their age is. They always make it up and say silly things like they’re a hundred. Or much younger than their actual age. Even the young teachers do it. They won’t tell you what their age is either. They should say their age. While they still can.”

DAD: “What?”

You've got five minutes

Amelie and I were approaching the Art Gallery of NSW and I said I'd just have a very quick look inside.

Amelie: "You've got five minutes in the Gallery, Dad. Then I'm pulling you out. Five minutes."

ISABELLA: "You know, while they're still young."

Imagine if an ant got a headache

ISABELLA: "Imagine if an ant got a headache. That'd be so cute. A little ant doctor calling in."

So that's Sport

AMELIE, on the way home from After-school Sport: "Dad, we were in Sport today and this girl did this m-m-massive fart. It was so loud, Dad. And really stinky. And everyone went 'Oooh! Oooh!'"

DAD, trying to focus on the road: "Did they?"

AMELIE: "Hmm. And I was right on the bum."

DAD: "Were you?"

AMELIE: "Yeah. And so I put two fingers in my nose and I moved really away from it."

DAD: "Did you?"

AMELIE: "Hmm-hmm. It was so disgusting and I think she was pretty embarrassed by it. And, Dad, there was another girl and she was doing a cartwheel and her pants came right down. You could see her whole bum. All of it!"

DAD: "Could you?"

AMELIE: "Yeah. So that was Sport."

THE LAST WORD

And you're not allowed to say 'depends'

AMELIE, on the way home from the beach: "Dad, how long would it take to go to a farm by rocket? [Adding quickly] And you're not allowed to say 'depends'."