

extra fingers

Newsletter number 45 • March 23, 2016

[VISIT THE WEBSITE CLICK HERE](#)



It's a robot

AMELIE, running urgently through the house: "Is Mum here?"

DAD: "No. Why?"

AMELIE: "There's someone on the phone."

DAD: "Yeah I know. I heard the phone ring. Who is it?"

AMELIE: "I don't know. It's a robot sort of voice."

DAD: "Oh."

AMELIE: "Yeah. It's the bank. They said they want to talk to her."

Don't act all surprised

ISABELLA to Holly, as told by Holly: "You know how whenever Mum has friends around she spends ages cleaning?"

HOLLY: "Hmm-hmm."

ISABELLA: "And how she mops, dusts, rearranges and whenever her friends come around they say, 'Gosh, it's neat!'"

HOLLY: "Hmm-hmm."

ISABELLA: "And how Mum always goes, 'Really?'"

HOLLY: "Hmm-hmm."

ISABELLA: "I'm always sitting there thinking, 'Mum, of course it's neat. Don't act all surprised. You spent ages cleaning.' You know how she puts on that surprised voice? I can hear it from my bedroom."

Well, you did ask

TOM [a family friend], on the phone, first speaking to Amelie: "What have you been up to?"

AMELIE, after thinking for a bit: "Well, I woke up. Then I had breakfast. I always have breakfast straight after I wake up. And then, after that, Dad kept stomping through the house trying to find out which dishes were rattling in the kitchen. We have dishes that rattle. Really loudly. But Dad didn't know which ones they were. Every time he walks through the kitchen some dishes start rattling so he was going back and forth stomping through the house – I mean the kitchen – trying to find out which ones they were. All the dishes and plates in the kitchen rattle a little bit but there were two that really rattled a lot and it was a bit funny because whenever Dad did his stomping they wouldn't rattle. Like they knew he was there or something. It was really funny. But in the end he did find out which ones they were and now he's gone and put them somewhere else. I don't know where but they're not where they used to be. So yeah. That's what we've been doing this morning."

2 • ENEWS #45 • MARCH 23, 2016

A happy ending

AMELIE, in the middle of her tea and staring at a wall: "Dad?"

DAD: "Hmm-hmm."

AMELIE: "I had a little dream just then."

DAD: "Oh. Did you?"

AMELIE: "Yeah. I just dreamt you had a girlfriend."

KARIN, quietly to herself: "Oh great! What about me?"

DAD: "Oh?"

AMELIE: "Yeah. And the girlfriend came over and you went out with her while Mum was washing up."

KARIN: "Oh great!"

AMELIE: "No, no, no. No, no, no, Mum! You don't understand. It's got a happy ending. Dad went out, he did some things, and then he broke his arm and came back."

DAD: "Oh."

AMELIE: "But you were out. His arm was all broken still and he was sitting in the kitchen and not feeling very happy but you were out because you had a new boyfriend."

KARIN: "Oh."

AMELIE: "Yeah. But, then you broke up with him – you know, your boyfriend – and you came back home and then you and Dad got back together again after his arm all fixed up."

KARIN: "Oh."

AMELIE: "Yeah. And then the family was all happy again. See? That's what I was saying. *(Back to eating her tea)* Happy ending."

I never see what ends up happening to them

HOLLY, very tellingly: “Dad, where do all the young female newsreaders go? I never see what ends up happening to them.”

What about a shell?

ISABELLA, referring to her S&E* assignment about water scarcity: “Should I say that Dubai uses desalination plants and that means they then get a reliable water supply? Is that what desalination plants would give a city?”

DAD: “Yeah. That’s a fair enough thing to say.”

ISABELLA: “Well, not really.”

DAD: “What do you mean? Desalination plants are reliable.”

ISABELLA: “No. They could get bombed. Imagine if a big bomb was dropped on a desalination plant. Wouldn’t be very reliable then.”

DAD: “Yeah, well, nothing’s really reliable if you’re talking about their potential to be bombed.”

ISABELLA: “No! There are some things.”

DAD: “What are you talking about?”

ISABELLA: “Shells. What about a shell?”

DAD: “A shell?”

ISABELLA: “Yeah. A shell that you find on a beach. That’s protected because no one wants to bomb a shell.”

DAD: “Yeah, well, I know that.”

ISABELLA: “Or an ant. No one wants to bomb an ant, do they? They just go and crawl down cracks. They’re protected.”

It’s just a big bit of water

DAD, in the middle of trying to help Isabella with her S&E* assignment: “You’ve got here that ‘Dubai is located in the United Arab Emirates, on the coast of the Gulf.’”

ISABELLA: “Yeah, that’s right. It is, Dad! I looked it up.”

DAD: “No, I’m not saying that you didn’t look it up. I’m just saying—”

ISABELLA: “It’s on the coast of the Gulf.”

DAD: “Yeah I know. But what gulf?”

ISABELLA: “I don’t know. Does it matter?”

DAD: “Yes.”

ISABELLA: “But why? It’s just a big bit of water. Alright, say the gulf as in the one that has a big bit of water.”

DAD: “No! You need to put down the name of the gulf.”

ISABELLA: “Oh, Dad!”

DAD: “Let me have a look at the map you’ve included.”

ISABELLA: “But why?”

DAD: “Because it’ll probably have the name of the gulf on it. It might say the name.”

ISABELLA: “Bet it won’t.”

DAD: “Well, let’s just see. (*Studying Isabella’s map*) Yes. Just as I expected. It’s called the Persian Gulf.”

ISABELLA: “Good. That should quieten you down now.”

DAD, a few moments later: “Alright, moving on, Is. Now I see back here you’ve written, ‘To overcome the problem of an increasing population, the Government of Western Australia is planning to use recycled water as a supplement to the existing water supply. In addition to this, The Western Australian government often implements—”

ISABELLA: “That’s the bit you wrote, Dad.”

DAD: “Yes, it’s mostly my words. (*Sighs briefly*) Alright, I think just this bit here will do for tonight. I’m getting a little too tired. You’ve written here, ‘Desalination plants are good in that they give the citizens of a country a good and reliable source of water. However, there is a downside in that desalination plants take out the salt from the water and then dump it back into the sea so the sea near the coast of Dubai has more salt than it started with and that can affect the fish supply.’”

ISABELLA: “Your bit again, Dad.”

DAD: “Yes, once again it’s mainly mine. Although once more I’ve left in some of your words, haven’t I? But—”

ISABELLA: “Dad? I just thought of something.”

DAD: “Alright. What is it?”

ISABELLA: “Is there a sea called The World Sea?”

DAD: “What?”

ISABELLA: “Well, you’ve probably noticed how many seas we have. There’s heaps of them! I was just wondering if there was a World Sea?”

DAD: “Nope. No World Sea.”

ISABELLA: “Oh! How about ‘All The Sea In The World’ Sea?”

DAD: “Nope. Same again.”

ISABELLA: “Imagine how easy things would be if there was. There’d just be one sea to remember and no one’d ever get it wrong.”

DAD: “Nope. You’re right there.”

ISABELLA: “Dad, I wish I could wake up with all your paragraphs and you had mine.”

DAD: “Do you?”

ISABELLA: “Yeah. Because you don’t even need your smartness now. I need your smartness and you don’t. Because I’ve got to get through all my exams.”

DAD: “Well, what about just learning how to write good paragraphs all by yourself?”

ISABELLA, rolling her eyes: “I just knew you were going to say that! I could have betted.”

Dead tired

It had been a long week with many late nights and early starts, so by late afternoon I was beginning to look, and feel, a little ragged. Indeed, everyone in our house was feeling a bit that way. That’s why it came as quite a surprise when Holly wanted to go straight to a nursing home after school to play her oboe and violin. Reluctantly, I acquiesced and drove her there. Not surprisingly, come 6.30pm, I was starting to really feel every one of my fifty years. I can’t be sure, but I think after five minutes of trying to get down just one page of the book I was reading, I nodded off. I don’t know how long I was out, but I was suddenly awakened by hard knocking on the driver’s side window.

AMELIE, in a muffled voice: “Dad! Dad! Holly’s almost finished her volunteering. Dad!”

DAD, coming to: “W-what the!”

AMELIE: “Oh, Daddy! You gave me such a fright.”

DAD: “Did I?”

AMELIE: “Yes. I thought you were dead.”

DAD: “Really?”

AMELIE: “Yeah. Your head wasn’t moving or anything and I thought you’d just gone and died.”

DAD: “Well—”

AMELIE: “Nothing was moving! But then, I just saw a bit of your chest going up and down and I thought to myself, ‘He’s not dead! How could he be?’”

DAD: “Right. Well, what do you think would have happened if I was dead? What would you have done?”

AMELIE: “Well, I wouldn’t have been able to get home.”

DAD: “Yes. That’s right.”

AMELIE: “I would have had to go to the police.”

DAD: “Yes. But what about me?”

AMELIE, rolling her eyes: “Da-ad!”

DAD: “No, seriously.”

AMELIE, smiling and continuing to roll her eyes: “Come on, Dad! They would have put you in a grave.”

Why would I have worried about that?

I’d dropped Karin and Isabella to a musical performance and I’d run into a woman who had a spare ticket she couldn’t give away. She asked if I’d like it. I had to decline, though, as Holly and Amelie were at home and I thought they would worry about me if I did something like that. I needn’t have bothered. Upon arriving home and telling Holly about the spare ticket, she wondered why I hadn’t snapped it up.

DAD: “Because I was being responsible, Holly. You were expecting me back and so I thought you would have been very worried about me if I wasn’t home in about thirty minutes. After all, that’s what I said I was going to do. Remember? I said I’d be back in half an hour for an hour before riding back into the city to pick Mum and Issy up.”

HOLLY, shaking her head: “Dad, I wouldn’t have worried about that.”

DAD: “Wouldn’t you?”

HOLLY: “No. Why would I have worried about something like that for?”

Have I got any Sydney in me?

AMELIE: “Dad, have I got any Asian in me?”

DAD: “No, darl. Not a drop as far as I’m aware.”

AMELIE: “What about some Sydney? Have I got any Sydney in me?”

DAD: “No, darl. That’s a city.”

AMELIE: “Yeah, so?”

DAD: “Well people don’t usually have cities in them.”

AMELIE: “Why not? They have countries . . . in them. What about a Sydney accent?”

DAD: “No. You don’t have a Sydney accent.”

AMELIE: “What have I got then?”

DAD: “An Australian accent.”

AMELIE: “Is that all?”

DAD: “Yep. That’s all you’ve got.”

AMELIE, dispiritedly: “Oh!”

Older people's sayings are so stupid

DAD: "What are you doing, Is?"

ISABELLA: "I'm chopping up apple."

DAD: "What for?"

ISABELLA: "To make the pieces smaller because of my braces."

DAD: "Oh, okay. Got ya."

ISABELLA: "How could you have got me, Dad?"

DAD: "What's that?"

ISABELLA: "You didn't even tap me."

DAD: "Tap you?"

ISABELLA: "Yeah. On my shoulder or something. You know. Like in Chasies. Older people's sayings are so stupid because they never make any sense."

Mum is just right

I had just finished reading Amelie a few pages of the novel *Dracula*, when Karin walked in the front door.

AMELIE: "Mumma!"

Amelie had originally wanted Karin to read to her.

DAD: "Yeah, Mum's home now. But don't you think Dad's a good reader too?"

AMELIE: "Mum's better."

DAD: "Oh, thanks."

About twenty minutes later . . .

DAD to Holly and Isabella: "Tell me again. What does Mum do that I don't do [when she's reading to Amelie]?"

ISABELLA: "She squeezes Amie's arm and goes w-o-o-o-o-o-o (*makes the sound of the wind*) for the sound effect."

DAD: "Yeah, but, Amie was saying I put a lot of expression into my reading."

ISABELLA: "Amie said that about you?"

DAD: "Yeah."

HOLLY: "You don't do the arm squeezing though, do you?"

DAD: "No, I don't do that. No."

HOLLY: "I also don't think Amie likes your voice."

DAD: "Oh, great!"

ISABELLA: "It's a little bit low and Mum's is just right."

HOLLY: "Yeah, it's calming because it's higher."

THE LAST WORD

Not really

ZOE [Isabella's friend] to Isabella and Amelie: "You guys treat me just like one of your sisters."

AMELIE, later on that day to Karin: "We don't really. Because you're usually quite mean to your sisters."