

# extra fingers

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## In Australia, we pick them up

**AMELIE**, on the way to musical theatre: "You know, in America, say if there's a homeless person and they're struggling or they're bleeding to death and an ambulance goes past. They won't pick them up because they don't have the money."

**ERIN**: "That's mean."

**AMELIE**: "I know. It's the meanest thing I've ever heard. And they're a rich country. In Australia, we pick them up."

## It might be their favourite spot

**AMELIE:** "Dad, why do they have two-hour parking limits? That's so unfair."

**DAD:** "Well, it might look unfair to you but really it isn't because you think about it. You have to realise, Ams, that if councils don't have two-hour parking limits then some people — well, most people probably — will just try and park in those spaces all day. How unfair would that be? That would be really unfair on all the people that would have liked to have used that space just temporarily. Do you know what I mean?"

**AMELIE:** "Yeah, sort of. But what about a homeless person?"

**DAD:** "What about a homeless person? What have they got to do with this? A parking space, occupied or not, shouldn't affect a homeless person."

**AMELIE:** "No, Dad. You don't understand. A homeless person might have wanted to park in the spot and sleep there."

**DAD:** "Yeah but—"

**AMELIE:** "They shouldn't have to have a two-hour parking limit put on them. When you think about it. Because they're homeless."

**DAD:** "Hmm."

**AMELIE:** "And it might be their favourite spot or something."

## I already know quite a lot about the world

I'd returned from the local library one afternoon with a pile of books.

**DAD:** "Ams, look what I've got?"

**AMELIE,** looking up: "What?"

**DAD:** "What do you mean 'what'? Obviously I've got a pile of books."

**AMELIE:** "Yeah I know."

**DAD:** "Well? There are so many good books here for you a look at. *(No response)* There's this one. Look at this one, Ams. Ams? Look up, please."

**AMELIE:** "What!"

**DAD:** "Look at this one. It's called *The Wonders of the Universe*. By Brian Cox. You might have seen him before. On YouTube or something."

**AMELIE:** "Nope."

**DAD:** "Nope. Alright. Well, there's this one. *An Historical Atlas of the World*. It looks really good. You can look at old maps with me and discover how the world's changed over thousands of years. What do you think?"

**AMELIE:** "No."

**DAD:** "No?"

**AMELIE:** "Dad!"

**DAD:** "What?"

**AMELIE:** "Just . . . I already know quite a lot about the world."

## I've never seen you cry

**DAD:** "Why is it so interesting to you to see me cry?"

**AMELIE:** "Because I've never seen it. If I punched you in the head as hard as I could right now I just know you wouldn't cry. I just know it! You would have seen me cry a billion times but I've never even seen you cry once. Not once. That's why it's so interesting to me. When you think about it it's actually quite amazing. When you think about it, Dad."

# Fast time

**AMELIE**, wanting breakfast: "It'd be good if I could 'fast' time."

**DAD**: "You think so?"

**AMELIE**: "Yeah, because then she'd [Mum] already have the toaster out."

## Just rumours

**AMELIE**: "You know Harry Styles from One Direction?"

**DAD**: "Yep."

**AMELIE**: "Well, he ate a vegemite sandwich and spat it out onto a plate and someone got it. *(laughing)* I'm not sure how, but they put it on ebay for, like, a ridiculous amount of money. It was so much! It was, like, in the thousands or millions — I don't know. And then, um, all the girls were screaming and someone bought it."

**DAD**: "Why were they screaming?"

**AMELIE**: "Because they were, like, 'I want it!' And then someone bought it."

**DAD**: "Was it on YouTube?"

**AMELIE**: "No. It was on ebay."

**DAD**: "No but how did you see them screaming?"

**AMELIE**: "Rumours."

**DAD**: "What's 'rumours'?"

**AMELIE**: "Holly told me. Because she saw it on ebay. And then rumours said—"

**DAD**: "So 'rumours' is a website?"

**AMELIE**: "No! Rumours means . . . I can't believe you're asking me this."

**DAD**: "Well, I don't understand, darl."

**AMELIE**: "It means, like, um, it was a rumour. Like, someone told me and then . . . so someone told that person, and then someone found out, and then someone told that person, and then someone told that person; it's gone on for lots of times."

**DAD**: "Yeah, yeah, it's a rumour."

**AMELIE**: "Yes."

**DAD**: "Yeah but I thought . . . you know how . . . you just said it was on rumours. So that makes me think, isn't that how you said it? Or did you say it was a rumour?"

**AMELIE**: "It was a rumour."

**DAD**: "Yeah. But, these days, if you say it's 'rumours' then it makes you think it's a website. You know how they can have a website devoted to rumours? So it can get confusing."

**AMELIE**: "Yeah."

**DAD**: "Yeah. I did know what a rumour was."

**AMELIE:** "Because I was going to say. I can't believe you're asking me this question."

**DAD:** "How could I get to this age and not know what a rumour was? Right?"

**AMELIE:** "Dad, I'm, like, 'Oh, okay! He's dumb.'"

**DAD:** "Oh. Thanks!"

## You won't be gone when I get back, will you?

Amelie and I were out at a restaurant and had just returned to the car after the meal.

**AMELIE:** "Dad, I'm busting. Can I go over to McDonald's and use their toilet? I'll only go and use their toilet and then come straight back. I am responsible you know."

**DAD:** "Yes I know. It's okay, you can go."

**AMELIE:** "I won't get hit by a car or anything."

**DAD:** "Yes I know. See you soon."

**AMELIE:** "Okay. (Short pause) You won't be gone when I get back, will you?"

## You're the 'noiest' person I've ever known

**AMELIE,** still at the supermarket: "I'm going to go and find Mum."

**DAD:** "Alright. If you want to."

**AMELIE:** "She doesn't say 'no' as much as you do."

**DAD:** "You sure? She's just as 'no' as I am."

**AMELIE:** "Ah, no, Dad. You're way more 'noey' than Mum. You're the 'noiest' person I've ever known, Dad. And that's a fact."

**DAD,** about ten minutes later, bumping into Amelie: "How's Mum been going? Has she been letting you have things? Or, has it also been a case of 'no' from Mum?"

**AMELIE:** "She's been going 'no' too. But not as much as you were."

## The expert on rudeness

**AMELIE,** at a supermarket: "Don't buy that book, Dad."

**DAD:** "What book?"

**AMELIE:** "The one just above where you're looking. Don't buy that *Fifty Shades of Grey* book. It's really rude apparently."

**DAD:** "Is it? Why? Have you read it?"

**AMELIE:** "No. Of course not."

**DAD:** "Well who told you it was rude?"

**AMELIE:** "Issy. She's the expert on rudeness."

## Would you divorce Dad if he murdered someone?

**AMELIE:** "Mum?"

**KARIN:** "Hmm."

**AMELIE:** "Would you divorce Dad if he murdered someone?"

**KARIN:** "Well, yes. Of course I would. Yes."

**AMELIE:** "Yeah. Because who'd want to be married to someone who murdered people? Well, what if the police thought he murdered someone but he didn't?"

**KARIN:** "Well, no, of course I wouldn't then. He didn't do it!"

# Unless he has a meeting

**DAD:** "Amelie?"

**AMELIE:** "Yeah."

**DAD:** "Do you want to go to Scitech to talk to the man who's now in the last one hundred people selected for the Mars trip? If he gets to the last twenty-four he'll be in the actual crew. Six lots of four are scheduled to go to Mars, Ams. How exciting!"

**AMELIE:** "Nah! Let me know if he gets in the final twenty-four. Then I might go and talk to him. Because then he'll be going for sure. Unless he's got a meeting on. Dad, what if he had a meeting on when they were going to Mars?"

**DAD:** "Well, then, he wouldn't go to it."

**AMELIE:** "The meeting?"

**DAD:** "Yeah."

**AMELIE:** "Oh."

## You'd just kill them

**KARIN,** moments later: "Wouldn't it be terrible if you got all the way to Mars and then someone on the voyage developed dementia soon after you arrived? Imagine how bad that would be."

**AMELIE:** "You'd just kill them. You'd have to."

**AMELIE:** "Yeah, but what if he was lying and he did do it?"

**KARIN:** "Well, then I would."

**AMELIE:** "Why?"

**KARIN:** "Because I wouldn't want to be married to a murderer."

**AMELIE:** "Oh yeah."

*Part of a conversation that touched on space travel, and explorers in general*

## Would you like to be an explorer?

**DAD:** "Explorers were very courageous people. There were people who explored on the land, and there were people who explored on the sea, and there were people who explored in the air. And all of them had courage and a desire to find out things, to find out what they were capable of, and also find out things about nature. What could be overcome. And if they didn't succeed they learned very quickly what

# Another of those would-you-rathers

**AMELIE** to **KARIN**: "Would you rather divorce Dad and have him hate you forever? Or, would you rather lie on a bed — a stinking bed of cockroaches and spiders — for a week? But still have him love you?"

**UPDATE:** The following morning Karin was still thinking about it.

couldn't be overcome. Would you like to be an explorer?"

**AMELIE**: "No. I just want to be an ordinary person who wants to do what I want to do. Like, doing stuff with my friends, or doing musical theatre, or, you know, going to places like Europe and Spain and Italy and going to Dover Castle. With the woolly sheep on the hill."

**DAD**: "What's that?"

**AMELIE**: "At Dover Castle. You know when it was really wet and rainy?"

**DAD**: "Yes."

**AMELIE**: "There were sheep on the hill."

**DAD**: "Right."

**AMELIE**: "They were so cute. They looked really happy there. They don't look happy in Australia. Because it's really hot . . . Poor things."

## If you could be any animal in the entire world what would it be?

**DAD**: "If you could be any animal in the entire world what would it be?"

**AMELIE**: "I don't know. I don't know, Dad."

**DAD**: "Okay."

**AMELIE**: "Oh! A human!"

**DAD**: "Yes. I was going to answer it that way as well."

**AMELIE**: "I'd be a human because you could, um . . . like, animals, we have control over them."

**DAD**: "Right."

**AMELIE**: "And they don't have control over us."

**DAD**: "No."

**AMELIE**: "It's really unfair. I think it is because, like, they don't do what they want to do. We get to do what we want to do but they don't. I just think it's really unfair for them."

### ADVENTURE WORLD

## Dead stock

**AMELIE**, on the way to Adventure World, as we passed a farm: "Look at the farm, Dad. There's sheep, cows, pigs, horses . . . they'd be livestock, wouldn't they?"

**DAD**: "Hmm-hmm. Of course. They're alive, and they're stock. What else could they be?"

**AMELIE**: "Dead stock?"

**DAD**: "Well, yes."

**AMELIE**: "If they're dead."

## Don't think you're so smart

**DAD**, now at Adventure World: "Well, it's 3.30. Only an hour and a half to go."

**AMELIE**: "Is it 3.30 already?"

**DAD**: "Yep."

**AMELIE**: "Then I don't have to worry about the sun."

**DAD**: "No. That's right. You don't have to worry about the sun anymore. All you have to worry about now is fun. You've got to worry about getting as much fun in as you possibly can in the next hour and a half because this will probably be the last Adventure World day for this season. And, by the way, 'fun' rhymes with 'sun'. So, a rhyme there for you as well."

**AMELIE**: "I'm going on Abyss, Dad. And, I didn't even ask for a rhyme. That was your idea, Dad, not mine. So don't think you're so smart for doing a rhyme. Okay? Bye."

## I really want to go on Space Mountain

**AMELIE**, moments later: "Dad, when we go to England again can we go to Paris? So I can go to Disneyland and go on Space Mountain? Because I was so little the last time we went. I really want to go on Space Mountain."

**DAD**: "And of course you'll want to see all the museums and wonderful cultural things in Paris, won't you? And all the architecture?"

**AMELIE**: "Um . . . yeah. Sort of. But can't we just go to Disneyland and see how all the rides work there? I can find out how they did everything. They'd be cultural, wouldn't they?"

## They'd have twenty dollars, wouldn't they?

**AMELIE**, in the car on the way home from Adventure World: "If I was a homeless person I'd go and live right next to McDonald's and spend all my money on food there. I'd buy a meal for fifteen dollars."

**DAD**: "Would you? But where would you get your money from?"

**AMELIE**: "From my bank account."

**DAD**: "What bank account?"

**AMELIE**: "They'd have a bank account, wouldn't they? I thought they'd easily have twenty dollars in their bank account."

**DAD**: "Yeah? What made you think that?"

**AMELIE**: "I don't know. I just thought they would. Twenty dollars isn't that much."

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## LAST WORD

**AMELIE**: "Why do opera singers look sad all the time? Is it because they're trying to get all the air out?"