

extra fingers

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JOHN LENNON



ELTON JOHN

The 'John' thing

From Songfacts: "Groucho [Marx] was always giving Elton a hard time about his name, insisting that he must have it backwards and really be John Elton."

HOLLY: "Mum, guess who's going to be opening the new Perth Arena tomorrow?"

KARIN, distracted in the kitchen: "I have no idea, Hols. Who?"

HOLLY: "Elton John."

ISABELLA, interrupting: "But he died."

DAD: "What?"

ISABELLA: "Yeah. He died so he can't be opening it."

DAD: "What are you talking about? He's not dead!"

ISABELLA: "Yes he is! Hot got shot. Remember?"

DAD: "That was John Lennon."

ISABELLA: "John Lennon?"

HOLLY, interrupting: "Yeah, I used to think that about the 'John' thing."

ISABELLA: "Oh yeah, that's right. Well, he can then. He can open it if he wants to."

Isabella's latest tip for the homeless

The Money Back Guarantee on the back of Isabella's corn chip packet reads: 'If you're not happy with this product, return it and we will gladly change it or give you your money back. For more information free call . . .'

ISABELLA: "Dad, have you seen this? It says here on the back of my chips that they will give you back your money or another packet of chips if you're not satisfied."

DAD: "Yeah, I know. That's on a lot of things. They're pretty sure, though, that you're not going to bother to do that. No matter how dissatisfied you are. It's just there to make people feel that they stand by their products."

ISABELLA, not listening: "What if you're homeless?"

DAD: "Homeless?"

ISABELLA: "Yeah. What if you're a homeless person? That could be your one chance."

DAD: "What are you talking about?"

ISABELLA: "Dad, a homeless person could buy a packet of chips, eat some, and then keep on saying they're not satisfied all the time and get free packets of corn chips."



I'll do anything to get something

AMELIE, in a Perth shopping mall: "Dad, I'll do anything to get something."

DAD: "What?"

AMELIE: "Anything. I'll do anything. To get something."

DAD: "Look, just because we're around where shops are doesn't mean you have to get something. Okay? You don't even want anything in particular, do you?"

AMELIE: "No, I just want something because then I'll always know you got me things."

You were just waiting to get my idea

Amelie, riding home from the city: "Why do you go around puddles for, Dad?"

DAD: "Do I? Do I go around puddles?"

AMELIE: "Yeah. All the time."

DAD: "I don't know."

AMELIE: "I sometimes go around puddles."

DAD: "Well then, I could say the same thing to you. I could say to you why do you go around puddles."

AMELIE: "Yeah, but, I know why I go around puddles. I go around puddles if they're big ones and they're going to splash me too much."

DAD: "Same here. That's the same for me."

AMELIE: "Well why didn't you say so? Instead of going, 'I don't know'. You were just waiting to get my idea, weren't you?"

They want me to sing it so I sing it

DAD: “Do you think we should have a national anthem?”

ISABELLA: “Well why shouldn’t we?”

DAD: “Because what’s the point of it?”

ISABELLA: “Well it’s just for pride of Australia, Dad.”

DAD: “Do you feel proud of Australia when you sing the national anthem?”

ISABELLA: “Well, I respect others feelings of Australia and I sing it for them.”

DAD: “Hmm-hmm. Okay. Do you really do that?”

ISABELLA: “Yeah. I think, well, they want me to sing it so I’ll sing it.”

DAD: “Okay. That’s fair enough. No, I’m just saying if you really feel something then that’s great.”

ISABELLA: “No, I don’t feel something myself. I just think that other people want me to do it so I do it for them.”

DAD: “But why are you wanting to do it for them? There would be a lot of things that you wouldn’t do for other people.”

ISABELLA: “Well, it’s easy to do it.”

DAD: “Right.”

ISABELLA: “And it’s for respect.”

DAD: “Okay.”

ISABELLA: “For them. And thinking that they want me to sing it so I’ll sing it.”

DAD: “Well what about if you were in France and you had a friend in France and they wanted you to sing their national anthem and feel for them? Would you do that?”

ISABELLA: “Well I’d . . . give it a go.”

DAD: “So, it’s not about our anthem. It’s just any anthem. If someone wants you to sing their anthem you’d do it?”

ISABELLA: “I’d give it a go, yeah . . . Well, I’d try, but it probably wouldn’t work, would it? For some countries, right?”

DAD: “Pardon.”

ISABELLA: “For some countries it wouldn’t really work.”

DAD: “Why’s that?”

ISABELLA: “Because they’ve got different languages.”

DAD: “Well, that’s right. You’d just have to memorise the sounds of the words. I don’t know.”

ISABELLA: “Neither do I.”

DAD: “Yeah. But I mean, so, do you even know the words of our national anthem?”

ISABELLA: “Yeah.”

DAD: “You really do?”

ISABELLA: “I only know one verse.”

DAD: “Oh, well, that’s not the words of our national anthem, that’s just one verse.”

ISABELLA: “Yeah, well I know all the words!”

DAD: "Of the one verse?"

ISABELLA: "Yeah."

DAD: "And for the rest of it you don't know?"

ISABELLA: "Nuh."

DAD: "Well what do you do when our national anthem's on?"

ISABELLA: "We only sing the first verse."

DAD: "Then what happens?"

ISABELLA: "We just stop."

DAD: "Right. Well it must be a bit of a sudden end then."

ISABELLA: "No, they put on this extra whole note. They go (*sings*), 'Advance Australia Fa-i-r-r-r.'"

DAD, singing to encourage Isabella to keep going: "'In joyful . . ."

ISABELLA: "'Strains and let us sing, Advance Australia Fa-i-r-r-r'. End."

DAD: "Oh. Do you know what the words mean?"

ISABELLA: "Um, (*sings*) 'Australians all let us rejoice'. So, all of us let us rejoice?"

DAD: "Yeah. What's the next bit?"

ISABELLA: "'For we are young and free.' Well, that's not really true for some people. But, yeah, we're free. 'With golden soil and well for toil.' I don't know what that means. 'For we are girt by sea' or something. 'For we are girt by sea' I think."

DAD: "Yeah, what does that mean?"

ISABELLA: "We live by the sea?"

DAD: "Hmm, bit more than that."

ISABELLA: "We're close to the sea? We're surrounded by the sea?"

DAD: "Ah! That's better."

ISABELLA: "Because we're . . . isolated! I get it! (*Continuing on*) 'Our land abounds in nature's gifts.'"

DAD: "What's that mean?"

ISABELLA: "Um, our land is, like, made of nature?"

DAD: "But how is that distinctively Australian? Every single part of this earth is full of nature's gifts. Anyway, keep going."

ISABELLA: "'Our land abounds in nature's gifts of beauties rich and rare.' So our country's very beautiful?"

DAD: "Okay, what's next?"

ISABELLA: "'In history's page let every stage Advance Australia Fa-i-r-r-r.' Um, so, like, in the history book, I don't know I'm just guessing."

DAD: "What history book?"

ISABELLA: "Because it says, 'in history's book' or something."

DAD: "I thought it was 'page'. Because it has to rhyme with 'stage'."

ISABELLA: "Yeah, well, does it mean in the history books we'll say, 'Advance Australia Fair' or something?"

DAD: "I've got plenty of history books and they never say, 'Advance Australia Fair'."

ISABELLA: "No, ones about Australia."

DAD: "Yeah, they don't say, 'Advance Australia Fair'."

ISABELLA, shrugging her shoulders: "Oh, well, I don't know."

DAD: "Well, what would they be thinking with that statement?"

Isabella runs the verse quietly through her head again but is none the wiser.

ISABELLA: "I don't know. No idea."

DAD: "See you don't know much about this anthem, do you?"

ISABELLA: "No I just sing it because I know the words."

DAD: "Yeah, but you're not feeling anything, are you?"

ISABELLA: "Well, I'm just feeling, 'Oh, thank god I get to stand up.'"

DAD: "That's what you're thinking?"

ISABELLA: "Yeah, because we have to sit down during the whole assembly and then, at last, our national anthem."

DAD: "Well you know what you should sing? You should sing, 'I really enjoy standing up, I've been sitting down far too long, I'm so glad I can stand up now.'"

ISABELLA: "No, it [the anthem] actually doesn't make sense. 'Australians all let us rejoice, For we are young and free.' All of us aren't young and free. There are some old people. They're not young! And maybe they're not free because they have to sit down all the time."

DAD: "Can I just say this to you? It's referring to the country being young."

ISABELLA: "What? 'For we are young and free?'"

DAD: "The 'we' is this country, having been settled by Europeans quite late in history—"

ISABELLA: "No, but that means us!"

DAD: "That's right."

ISABELLA: "People."

DAD: "Not specifically us. We, as in all the

people who live on this land, are supposedly young because it's only just happened in the last two hundred or so years."

ISABELLA, not getting the meaning: "But, some people are old!"

DAD: "Yeah, but I'm not talking specifically about people. I'm talking about—"

ISABELLA: "Because the European people came here are probably not alive. Or maybe very sick or unwell or old. So, it doesn't really make sense."

You have to tell

ISABELLA: "Dad, would there be anyone alive today who is related to Hitler?"

DAD: "Oh yes. Definitely. But they wouldn't be advertising the fact. They'd definitely be trying to keep that a secret. And they would have changed their name for sure."

ISABELLA: "Alright then. If that's the case, you're not keeping it a secret that I'm related to Hitler, are you? Because if you are you have to tell, Dad. Alright?"

I can never like them both at the same time

AMELIE: "Holly, do you like Mum and Dad at the same time?"

HOLLY: "What do you mean?"

AMELIE: "Well, I don't always like them both at the same time because when Mum is angry I like Dad and when Dad is angry I like Mum but one of them is always angry so I can never like them both at the same time."

Alright, have it your way

ISABELLA: "Dad! Look!"

DAD, peering into the night sky: "Yep. It's a plane. You've spotted a plane."

ISABELLA: "No, look! They're not plane lights."

DAD: "Yes they are."

ISABELLA: "No they're not."

DAD: "Yes they are."

ISABELLA: "No they're not."

DAD: "Yes they are."

ISABELLA: "No. They're not, Dad."

After about three or four more back and forths

DAD: "Alright. It's a UFO. Have it your way."

ISABELLA, gasping: "Yes! I can tell my friends! A UFO was going to Vic Park*."

*a suburb of Perth

Because it's a good story

AMELIE, referring to Isabella's index finger that had a very small scratch on it: "Issy, just say you bashed it into a bush and you got many thorns stuck in your finger."

ISABELLA: "And why would I want to do something as silly as that for?"

AMELIE: "Because it's a good story. You know, to tell."

You can't count that

One day as I was riding home with the girls from school laden with a violin, a cello, two oboes, three school bags and two sports bags, a rather boisterous man from a hotel yelled out to me: "I'm voting you the world's best dad."

DAD: "Did you hear that, Hols?"

HOLLY: "What?"

DAD: "That bloke back there just said he was going to vote me 'the world's best dad'."

HOLLY: "Yeah, but he was kind of drunk, Dad."

LAST WORD

The long and short of it

AMELIE: talking about time: "I hate 'longs'. I only like 'longs' if I'm on a ride [a funpark ride]. Then they're good. We should have 'longs' if it's a ride and everything else should be short."