

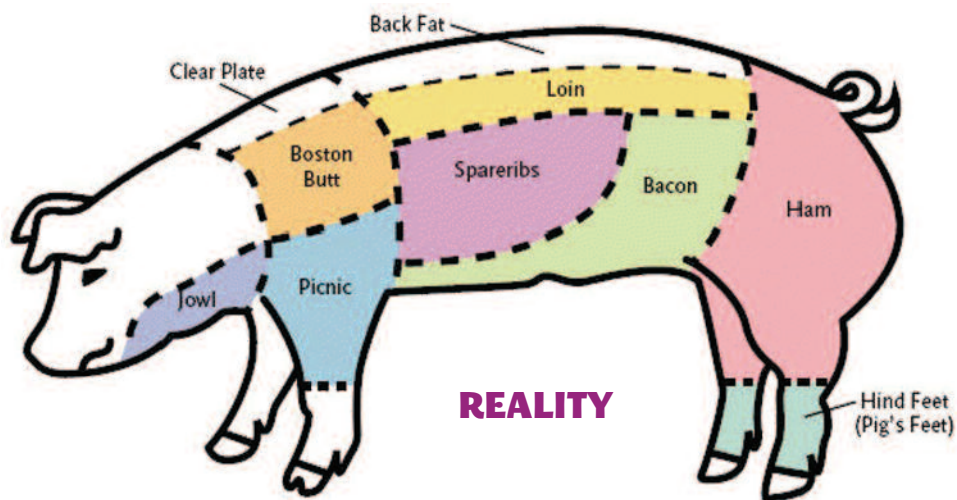
extra fingers

Newsletter number 42 • March 27, 2015

[VISIT THE WEBSITE CLICK HERE](#)



FANTASY



REALITY

How can it be happy?

AMELIE: "Dad, there was this meat shop and they had this happy pig on their sign and I'm, like, well it's not going to be happy if it's dead. How can it be happy?"

One step ahead

DAD: “Amelie. C’mon! Come out from behind the fridge please. I know what you’re up to. C’mon. Out you come. I know you’re there. You ran out of the kitchen to pretend that you’d left so that, once you were out of sight, you could quietly tiptoe back so that you could stand behind the fridge where you might . . . you thought that you might be able to hear the secret I wanted to tell Mum. That was it, wasn’t it?” Because Mum and I were talking very quietly, weren’t we?”

AMELIE, giggling as she came out from behind the fridge: “Ye-es!”

DAD: “You didn’t do enough steps, darl. That was your problem. Your steps didn’t last very long so I knew you were up to something.”

AMELIE: “Oh!”

DAD: “You needed more steps. You hadn’t done enough of them to make me think that you’d gone off to do your cello practice.”

AMELIE: “Yeah, I was thinking that as I was doing them. Let me do it again. No! No, no, no . . . whoops!”

It’s kind of fair to let them choose

Part of a very long conversation near bedtime covering everything from animal rights to the Ten Commandments.

DAD: “What should we do with human beings that get old and are in pain?”

ISABELLA: “Well if they want to be killed then they can be. Don’t they just take sleeping pills or whatever they’re called?”

DAD: “Ah, well, we’re not allowed to do that.”

ISABELLA: “What?”

DAD: “If a person wants to die then it’s against the law to help them do that.”

ISABELLA: “No. We wouldn’t help them. They’d just do it themselves.”

DAD: “No but even that is against the law because it’s—”

ISABELLA: “Wait. If you’re dead it doesn’t matter.”

DAD: “No I know that. I know that. That’s sort of how they get out of it. They don’t get punished because they’re dead.”

ISABELLA: “It shouldn’t even be law because if you’re dead—”

DAD: “Yes I know, darl. It is a bit silly, isn’t it?”

ISABELLA: “Yeah. And, they choose to die. What’s wrong with that?”

DAD: “Well—”

ISABELLA: “Why don’t they like that?”

DAD: “What about if a person—”

ISABELLA: “Unless, like, they don’t know if they, like—”

AMELIE: “I really want to hear the end of Dad’s sentence.”

ISABELLA: “Fine.”

DAD: “Well actually I think Issy was just about to go on to it. If a person is too young to make a good decision—”

ISABELLA: “Oh right, yeah.”

DAD: “We shouldn’t let that happen, should we? But also, what happens if the person is not well in the head?”

ISABELLA: “Oh yeah.”

DAD: “And also, Issy, what about if somebody was just feeling really down? They’re in a lot of pain.”

ISABELLA: "Yeah."

DAD: "You know, they're really depressed. They're feeling terrible and they just don't want to live anymore because life's too difficult. Should we let them kill themselves? They're not in any physical pain; they don't have a disease—"

ISABELLA: "Well maybe we should give them a chance to try and get over it. You know, like, just wait for them to try to be a bit more happy. You know, try. And then if that doesn't work we should be able to let them . . . but you should try and help them first. Like, say if I had a friend who was really down all the time. I should try and help them before, you know, I let them do that. I should try and make their life a bit happier. Maybe, like, if things weren't going well at home, you know, I could try and invite them over so they could have a bit more social time. So they could have more fun."

DAD: "Okay. I understand what you're saying. But what happens if you've tried really hard and they're still feeling quite miserable?"

ISABELLA: "Well, I don't think you . . . oh, I don't know. But you probably should let them have their right to do that. If they want to do it, it's kind of their choice. You shouldn't let them live a life that they're not even going to want to live. If they don't want to live it. It's kind of fair to let them choose. Shouldn't be able to have to make them live or whatever. Even though they're finding life so sad and everything's going bad. That's not a nice way to live."

DAD: "No it's not. Amie, you might be a bit young to have an opinion on that one. Are you a little bit too young?"

AMELIE, who drifted off, now suddenly awake: "What? What?"

DAD: "Do you think you're a bit young to be able to talk about that one?"

AMELIE: "World War One?"

DAD: "Okay . . . um, should a person be able to die if they want to die if they're old enough to make a good decision? Do you think they should be able to?"

AMELIE: "Dad, come on! I'm nearly ten. I should be able to answer that one."

DAD: "You've only just turned nine but anyway—"

ISABELLA: "You're not nearly ten, Amie."

AMELIE: "I am."

ISABELLA: "No you're not."

AMELIE:
"Come on!"

DAD: "Well, answer the question then if you think you can answer it."

ISABELLA:
"Yeah."

AMELIE:
"What was the question? I can't remember."

DAD: "Alright, I was just saying."

AMELIE: "Yeah."

DAD: "If a person wants to die . . ."

AMELIE: "Yeah."

DAD: "And they're old enough to make such a decision; they're not a little kid."

AMELIE: "Yeah."

DAD: "Should we let them?"

AMELIE: "Well . . . I don't really know because maybe if people keep wanting to die, and we're letting them do that, then we

“If you just don't want to, if you just refuse, then, okay, you've got to let them die.”

Spare me the pattertudes

DAD to **HOLLY**, **ISABELLA** and **AMELIE**, regarding the washing and wiping up: “Come on you three! Why don’t you get up from the table now and get the job done? Come on. Work as a team.”

ISABELLA: “Dad, you don’t have to make it sound so cheesy. Working as a team! That’s so cheesy. It’s like resiliation (sic) or whatever it’s called. All those cheesy words that no one ever achieves. It’s like in *Alive* [one of Isabella’s subjects]. We were doing what’s called a melting

muscle activity to get all the stress out of our bodies and all I was doing was slumping against a wall with my eyes closed half asleep because I had no friends — they were in another class — and the teacher thought I was doing really well at the activity. She said, ‘You look like you’re getting into it. Well done! Really well done!’ And I thought, ‘Oh great. So easy.’ All those kinds of activities are always so easy to do. I didn’t even have to do anything and I had a melting muscle moment.”

won’t have enough people in the country. And, there’s another one. Well, we kind of just should let them not really die because, like, it’s a bit . . . we don’t want people to die in this country. We want them to be happy and have a good life. But, if they’re in, like, a really bad life I don’t know whether . . . maybe we should just say well, ‘C’mon. You’ve just got to have a go. Be a bit more happier.’”

ISABELLA: “Amelie, you can’t just be more happier if you want to.”

AMELIE: “And then, if you just don’t want to, if you just refuse, then, okay, you’ve got to let them die.”

That’s the best one. Because I speak it.

ISABELLA, suggesting a topic to talk about: “Language?”

DAD: “Yeah, that’s a good topic. What did you want to talk about regarding languages, Is?”

ISABELLA: “Oh, all about them. I don’t know. Just languages in general.”

DAD: “Well, do you think we should have lots of different languages throughout the world?

Or do you think there should be just one language that we all speak?”

ISABELLA: “One language.”

DAD: “What do you think, Ams?”

AMELIE: “What?”

DAD: “What do you think? Issy thinks there should be only one language that we all speak. What do you think? Should there be many languages and we should have many different languages therefore spoken, or—”

AMELIE: “I think one language because, um, what if you don’t speak any French and you go away to France and you order a pie and somebody doesn’t understand what you are saying? That would be a problem.”

DAD: “Well, yes. But who is the problem for? Is the problem for you, or the person serving you in their country—”

AMELIE: “Ah . . .”

DAD: “. . . and you’re not speaking their language? Who’s got the problem?”

ISABELLA: “You.”

AMELIE: “No, the person [serving you].”

(Thinks again) No, you. Because you need food. I don't know."

DAD: "Okay, well, look. I've got a very important point to make about this subject which, by the way, I think is a good one. If you think there's only to be one language spoken in all the world, then how on earth are we going to decide which one that is to be considering how many languages there are in the world?"

ISABELLA: "Well, see what language is spoken by the most amounts of countries and then choose that one."

AMELIE: "I think Australia[n]. I mean English. That's the best one. Because I speak it."

DAD: "Well, that's not a reason. Just because you speak it it's the best one? It's the best one for you. And you're one person out of seven billion."

ISABELLA: "No, Dad, these are the people who speak it: New Zealand, Australia, England, America . . . that's getting there."

DAD, scoffing: "Not really! You only listed four countries. Do you know how many countries there are in the world?"

ISABELLA: "No."

DAD: "Well—"

ISABELLA: "Um, nine? Ten?"

DAD: "Issy!"

ISABELLA: "I was just kidding."

DAD: "I'm not sure what the number is but there are probably around 160 counties in the world."

ISABELLA: "Oh my god I thought it was about seventy, not 160."

DAD: "Yeah. Anyway, you've only listed four countries and you think that's some kind of justification for English being chosen as the

only language spoken in the world."

AMELIE: "Dad, my teacher said that, um, there's 372 countries in the world."

DAD: "Okay, well—"

AMELIE: "That's what she said."

DAD, knowing that to be untrue but trying to find the right way of disagreeing with her teacher: "Alright. I didn't think there were that many. But I haven't really—"

AMELIE: "Just kidding!"

The bullet police

AMELIE, on the way to school as a police van drove past her: "Dad, look! The bullet police."

The most important job in the world

DAD: "Who do you think has the most important job in the world?"

ISABELLA: "Well there are so many jobs I can't really decide."

DAD: "Well just think it through. Think it through in your head. Amelie, you can answer the question as well."

AMELIE, after a very long silence had descended on our discussion: "What do you think, Dad?"

DAD: "Well I want to get yours and Issy's answers first."

AMELIE: "And then yours."

DAD: "Yep. I promise."

ISABELLA: "Well there's three I have."

DAD: “Yep.”

ISABELLA: “The emergency services. Fire brigade, ambulance, police.”

DAD: “Yep.”

AMELIE: “I think Issy’s one.”

DAD: “You think so?”

AMELIE: “Yes. Because I think they’re pretty important. But I want to hear from you. (*In a barely audible whisper*) Please, please tell us what.”

DAD: “Well, I think that the most important job in the world is the one that’s being done by all the bacteria in the world.”

ISABELLA, frustrated: “Dad, stop. Why do you always do the sciency thing? I hate it! You always come up with this big scientific answer and I hate it.”

DAD: “Well it’s not a big scientific answer.”

ISABELLA: “Dad, we’re talking about people jobs. You know that.”

DAD: “You were talking about people.”

ISABELLA, in pain: “Oh! So mean!”

DAD: “Well, I just answered it a little bit differently. I didn’t say we had to talk about people. I just said—”

AMELIE: “I thought you were going to say something different like, um, our mums or something.”

DAD: “Well I didn’t, did I? I said bacteria.”

ISABELLA: “I thought you were going to say be a good parent or, a parent.”

DAD: “Well, I surprised you, didn’t I?”

ISABELLA, grumpily: “No you didn’t. Because I knew you were going to come up with this big scientific answer.”

In solidarity with her sister, Amelie just sighed.

THE LAST WORD

Has she died?

AMELIE, after noticing one of her teachers had not been at school for quite a few days: “Has she died?”