

Mr Impatient

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Daddy parks real funny, like he can't draw within the lines, and rushes in, with his brolly, but it isn't hardly even raining, and he even gots a coat and a hat! I stay in the car and watch the seagulls trying to eat a milkshake in the car park, it's so funny, they should make a movie of it. On the hill with the castle, full of water on top, I can see this real far-away boy holding this flappy yellow kite. I don't think it's one what's got a string, it's got a metal rod holding the boy's arms straight upwards. The gravity is real powerful. Didju know Isaac Newton invented gravity?

The windows go all white after a while and I play noughts and crosses in the window with myself and I win like seven times in a row. I don't undo my belt, Daddy said I'm not allowed, so I have to squeeze real hard to reach over on Daddy's side and get a tomato sauce packet to suck on from McDonalds, from down the squeezey bit down the back of Daddy's seat. I sat on one one time and it popped under my bum and I had to change my shorts. It's Heinz sauce, that's the best, that's the one they use in the movies when Jason Statham gets shot doing a bank stickup. There's this whole list Dad printed with blue ink 'cause he ran out of black ink and his list goes cash loans and credit and it's got the addresses of banks on the dashboard and it's like sooooooooooooooooooooo boring to read, there's not even no pictures, I wish I woulda had a remote to change the channel on it. On the other side of Daddy's list it goes you get a free pink piggy bank with a overgiraffe account but there's like a mini-Mum of all this money you have to posit. I wish we had some money to posit. The piggy banks'd be real cool. I'd get like ten of them.

I'm still counting 500-Mrs. Zippy, 501-Mrs. Zippy, 502- Mrs. Zippy when the door rips open and he biffs his hat and brolly at me with something hard and metal in the middle, it's as scary as a surprise prickly you stand on and I can hear myself gulp all the air in the car. My lungs are gonna pop.

'Outta here like a bald man,' Daddy goes. He's doing that concentrate thing with his eyebrows. His skin has gone the colour of saveloys, what are my favourite when you dip them in tomato sauce. Heinz tomato sauce is my favourite food except for saveloys.

'BELT,' he goes, 'Make it click, hurry up,' and I'm like 'Ouch,' putting my hands over my ears. Daddy stabs the glinty metal bit into this orange and black plastic thing and he's like, 'GO! GO!' but he's driving, not me, I can't drive a car, stupid! Eew, you got Down syndrome if you reckon that!

We hear like a ambliance somewhere around, going wee-oob, wee-oob, and Dad keeps looking in all his rear-views like he's trying to find something in them.

'Are you a robber?' I go.

'Robber,' he goes –

'ROBBERJINX!' I go, 'I jinxed you. You're not allowed to say anything for all day.'

'Uh huh,' he goes, watching the rear-view like it's a real interesting chase in a

movie. I punch him in the arm because he talked when he was jinxed but he doesn't even notice my punch, he must be made of titanium.

You're sposed to stop for the red light but he just slides real slow and he squeezes the wheel and blurps 'WHEN'D THEY BUILD THESE?' and then the light lets him go 'cause I think the light can tell Dad's Mr Impatient today.

'Stop on the red light, go on the green, don't mess with Mr In-between, Daddy.'

When his breathing slows down, he goes, 'Anything happen? Errrrnn.' He makes this sound like a balloon fizzling out and holds his coat real tight over his guts. He mighta ate too much Nutri-Grain and he has to do one of those poops that hurts real heaps like Ricky Brown done on sports day in the sand pit. I can hear all this bubbling inside him that's real gross. You're not allowed Nutri-Grain two mornings in a row, you're sposda have toast.

'Still into your ambulances and fire trucks and that?'

'No, Daddy.' Not today.

There's red spots under his bum on the seat. They hadn't been there before. He could of sat on some tomato sauce but I don't wanna say 'cause I'll get Time Out.

He goes through a orange light and I cross my fingers and look up for God. You can see him in them light spots in the clouds sometimes.

'No money left in them chumps,' he goes, and gulps and blows bubbles in his throat and wipes tomato sauce off his lips. I don't like the way his teeth have gone purple. 'Got a drink on ya?'

'You said I couldn't get one 'cause of my teeth.' My lips get all fat and my eyes sting real bad and I start rubbing them.

'When the hell'd you stop being into ambu - Whoawhoawhoa - Cheer up, matey potatey! You're okay, aren'tcha? Aren'tcha? Eh? Told ya.'

I hate when he sounds like The Wiggles, I'm growed up now, he keeps forgetting. 'Yes, Daddy. Want a napkin? There's some McDonalds ones.'

'What for?'

'Your head's all shiny. Your coat's too hot.'

He looks at how shiny and wet it is above his eyes and puts the air-commissioning on. I watch these fatty and skinny raindrops go a race down the window and Fatty wins.

'Want your hat?'

He pulls his coat tight. 'I - give us that. My man.' Daddy high-fives me. I'm the best high-fiver, Daddy says. I sometimes practice with the Warriors, they're on the Nutri-Grain box. Wade McKitten's the meanest.

His face screws up like he's stood on a tack and he hoons down a green bus lane and the waa-oo waa-oo of the ambliance gets quieter. Or maybe it's a fire engine. He opens up his pack of smokes and pulls a Jetplane out, not a smoke, not even a Spaceman lolly smoke, and starts chewing the spaceman real hard out and foam is all running down his lip, into his hat that he's tooken off. It's one of those black woolly hats the bad guys wear.

Maybe it was a cop car behind us, not a ambliance. *Waa-ooo, waa-ooo.*

'You wouldn't have any smokes, would ya?'

'No, Daddy.'

He looks like he's going to sneeze. He shifts his red bum. You can tell he's got real bad tummy ache. 'Attaboy.'

He squeals across the line through a real deep puddle and parks in one of those yellow boxes with the picture of the man in the little yellow car and he crawls up to the bank door like a crab, pulling his hat down, and turns around and sprints back to me, and closes the door shut and puts his head through the window and goes, 'Wind this up tight.' We've only got old windows, not the electric ones. His eyes are all squinty like he's big-time sleepy and his stomach is pinching him and he's trying to do the same button up on his coat over and over.

'Don't mess with this, alright,' he goes, and tugs my belt to make sure I'm in. 'Daddy's got a sore stummy.'

'I won't.' I want to cry again.

'Honest, won't be a tick. Now SHOW ME THE— '

'MONEYYY!' I put my arms up and they bump the rear-view and it twists around the wrong way and I try to put it back but it comes off the windscreen.

'We'll buy a new one soon,' Daddy goes, 'Buy about ten million of them,' and he throws it out the window, then he gets out and runs over and grabs it and spits on the bottom of his shirt and uses his shirt to wipe the mirror clean and puts it back in the car, not touching it with his fingers. Something gives him a fright, and he stares like you know how the cat goes when it's sneaking up on a bird, and nothing can break its concentration unless you shoot a Roman candle at it? Then he looks around and goes, 'Stuff this,' and gets back in and the car sags down and bounces and he shuts the door real loud. 'Bad luck, I can feel it. Lessee ya fingers.' He sucks the red stuff off my fingers. I don't even wanna look at his driver's seat. I don't think he even knows how much tomato sauce he sat on.

'Where are we going now?' He drives past like twenty warehouses and they all got muddy wheels on the trucks outside, and puddles, and one of the puddles gets ducks in it. There's a big place with trucks scooping out all the dirt. Then there's another place that does real tattoos.

'Where are we going, Daddy?'

'Getcha some Mickey Dees in ya soon, know what I'm sayin?'' He bends my fingers real rough and sniffs and sucks on them. 'Shoulda washed ya hands.'

'How much have you got so far, Daddy?'

He's starting to fall asleep so I tap him real hard.

'Dudday! You're not jinxed anymore!'

'Not enough yet.'

He turns and we wobble along the street. The car's got all holes in it and he has to pump up the wheels every day and we're not allowed to go through drive-thru 'cause the car always stops whenever you slow it down. He pulls into this big giant mansion with this big massive acorn tree what blocks out the sky and I'm like, 'Can I get some bonkers to throw at Ackerman Frog? Ju know he goes down

to school at night and eats moths under the big light?’ and he’s like, ‘Stay in the car,’ but then he stops and munches another jet-plane and goes, ‘Promise?’ and I nod my head and he gets out and the car goes up. He looks at his own butt, what’s gone red, and gets down on his knees. I think he’s playing a game, pretending like he’s looking under the car.

He comes back up and looks both ways and checks what’s inside his coat and chucks a acorn to me and I’m like, ‘Yay!’ and I have one that’s a grenade, ‘cause I pulled the top off it, and I lob it and Daddy swats it like a wasp and he chews another jet-plane like it has a antidote for poison in it. I can still see red stuff dribbling out from under his bum. Uh-oh. I’m gonna be grounded forever.

‘Where’s this?’ I go as Daddy drives. It feels like we’ve gone back in time, the houses are like Coronation Street and their recycle bins are a different colour. There’s like soccer boys on every side and they’re Chinese, or Japanese (I can’t see from here if their eyes slant up or down.) They’re running to one goal and running back to the other goal, but one boy’s real slow and he’s the behindest. I don’t know his name. I don’t know anyone’s name, here.

Daddy hears the siren again and he gets all twisty, and starts trying to stick the mirror back on the windscreen. ‘It’s, ah.... Pah Road.’ I see a sign what says that’s where we were. I want to get back to the normal part of the city, but he turns the wheel so hard, the car tips into the air, it feels like, and we zig-zag down this one street what’s as bendy as a puzzle piece, then he drives around some glass and squirts his tyres into the carpark of the next place and stumbles towards another bank, holding his stummy, pulling his hat on and unpacking his brolly as he goes.

It’s only about one second this time before I hear POP! explosions and bullets and this old clanger car pulls out and I close my eyes tight shut and text God:

‘Dear God,

My Dad is the super-la-tive in the whole world. Please can you let the bank give him the overgiraffe because we need Sky Movie Channel and Dad Sky Sport.

Please, please, please, and my dad needs a new muffler on his motorbike ‘cause they said it was too loud.

And please, please, please don’t let my Dad get sick again, I don’t like it how he has to go out every morning and get bags of pills to put in the roof, can you make him better?

And that is why I want \$10 million dollars-loan for Dad, please, please with sugar on top.

I’ll be good for the rest of my life, God.

Sincerely,

I. M. Me

P.S. I promise.

(Ju know I. M. Me is secretly actually my name, sort of? Ju know my Daddy’s PIN number is my birthday? Ju know a prairie dog is honestly the same as a chipmunk and a groundhog?

With the fastness of the car, the seatbelt’s starting to squeeze me like a garbage

compactor and I reeeeeeally need to go number ones. I went and visited Daddy when he was in the work farm the year I was in Year Four and it felt as squeezy as this. I count, one-Mrs. Zippy, then I start thinking about that song, you know, Mrs M, Mrs I, Mrs S-S-I, Mrs S, Mrs Si, Mrs P-P,I, and then I start thinking about True Blood 'cause, did you know Daddy let me stay up late to watch it, 'cause he said he wanted back-up 'cause the guy was coming round at twelve midnight to check the roof?

The door flies open, like when you open a door on a plane on a movie and there's this squirty sound as Daddy sits down. As we drive along past the weird green and red-tiled houses with the shiny silver cars, Daddy tells me a story about Inside. He goes 'There's no colour Inside. If you have something colourful, the big kids take it off you and don't give it back. They don't even Indian-give it back.

'Go into the glove box for me alright? I think there's some aspirin in there, the chewy ones. Gimme, hurry up.'

'Watch the road, Daddy.'

'Ta.' He eats the whole packet of chewy aspirin, paper and everything.

'Did you have a piggy bank Inside, Daddy?'

'Wouldn't last a day,' he goes, chewing. 'You better hold onto yours.'

'Ju know you can get one from the bank?'

Then Daddy tells me more stories about losers (that's what my daddy calls Wins, he calls it losers, but I know it's secretly called Wins.) My daddy says they make you fill out these real hard nartsy forms even if you can't read real good, like my daddy, except he always reads stuff to me, even if it's just like saying how Manu Vutterfly got two tries in eight minutes and the rest of the team stuffs it up for him and they're gutless like the engine on his Honda and it keeps breaking down but did you know Hondas is real good for reliable parts? he said.

And Daddy tells me how Inside they take your belt off you so your pants are down around your ankles and that's mean, real, real, totally, fully mean. And you're not even allowed shoelaces, most boys go 'round in bare feet but they give you slippers anyway and some guys rip their towels into strips and tie them around their slippers and use them to get you from real far away and, like, ten guys get you at once.

Daddy stops at the last bank, I really hope it's the last one, and I really, really want him to take us home 'cep there's nothing left at home 'cause even our dinner plates are in the boot and he gets out and runs, holding his round belly, then comes back real sprintily to the car and tosses his broolly in and as I hold it, I feel up the stiff metal thing in the middle, it feels quite hot from him holding it. You can tell Daddy done something naughty today, but I don't want to say nothing and get in trouble about the tomato sauce. I don't want any more POP! or ambiences or fire engines what could be cop cars. I wanna go back to our motel.

'You seen a toilet round here?' he goes, and turns right around and bumps into this shopping plaza car-park with these ghost ladies wearing black sheets trying to put a barbecue in their van and he smashes the back of our car into a taxi 'cause he doesn't have a rear-view 'cause I stuffed it up. The whole car shakes and all these

little bits of glass fall out of the back window and I'm crying real loud.

He makes that 'Errrrrrnn' sound and does a ouchy face as he touches his belly, and put the stick into forward. If we ever get back home, I'm gonna give him sooo much of those pills from the roof for his poor, sore stomach. The car squeals like a piggy bank that doesn't want to leave the actual real bank, and then we jerk forward and we're sailing again for, like, ages and ages.

We pass over some water the colour of mud, with white triangliar yachts sticking up out of it. Some are on the mud-banks though, turned over, their round orange bottoms shining in this meatball of light that has rolled off the clouds and splattered on our city. It doesn't make me feel good, though, the whole day feels dirty 'cause of Daddy being naughty.

The day needs a bath.

As we come over the bridge I see this giant, massive sign for the next bank.

'Daddy, are you a robber? You have to say if you are.'

He thinks real hard, chewing on a jetplane, or maybe the paper wrapper from the aspirin, then he checks the packet and chucks it out the window. Then he's like, 'It's not me that's charging thirteen per cent interest over twelve months. I'll give it back. They're all crooks anyway, banker-wankers. The Prime Minister, he's the real robber. Don't get me started on that prick. I'm just borrowing a wee bit, little man. That cool?'

He makes me giggle. Banker-wankers! I'm gonna say it so much at school! I'm gonna call Ackerman Frog a Banker-wanker.

'Can you tell the story how you were a pipe-man?'

Daddy zooms through this green light and sticks his head out the window and zooms around a big truck and turns real sharp into a street with heaps of humps in the road and the car bumps and swings and shivers and he stops for a bit and the front is steaming but he keeps revving it.

'Sorry mate, what?'

'The story, Dad. The pipe-man.'

'Aw, that. Kay, see, you know that big, giant concrete pipe you and your little mate play in, that kid with the funny tongue? Yeah? You know the one I mean? Well, like, sometimes they go underground...'

I don't even hafta listen to the story, really. I'm watching Daddy's cactus-throat. It spikes you real hard when he gives you a goodnight kiss. He borrowed some shavers at the supermarket but he set the buzzers off (the ones that sound like a ambliance) and we had to get in the car and go and he didn't even get them, but he got me a tin of sardines in tomato sauce and when we'd got far away he pulled the finger-hole and the lid rolled into a rolled-up pancake and I was allowed to eat two but I had to eat them out the window 'cause last time I got tomato sauce on the car-seat and Daddy got mad 'cause he said he didn't have the time or money to clean it.

It wasn't the last bank, that one before. It's never the last one. The sirens keep waa-ooing. He strangles the handbrake, grabs his brolly out of the backseat and pulls his hat down over his eyes. He runs straight through this puddle and past

this security guy with a towel wrapped 'round his hair and the guard follows him in and I unclip my belt buckle, then I freeze.

One Mrs Zippy –

Two Mrs Zippy –

I click it back in and start biting my fingernails. I'm not sposda bite my nails, but I really don't wanna eat the rest of the tomato sauce where Daddy has been sitting. I'm so starving. I need to go number one so bad.

A real, loud bangy firecracker goes off.

Eighty-eight Mrs Zippy.

A car squeals past me, smoking. I hunch and my face burns so hot. Daddy crumples against the window. The security man is making these crazy hand flingies what I can't see properly and then Daddy takes his arms out of his jacket. He only just made it inside the car. He seems heavier than before; the car jolts real heaps.

The security guard is saying the 'F' word, and Daddy can't close the door properly and I can hear him scratching the paint of the next car – his door is stuck in the side of it. Then the car bursts and rips and bounces and sags and he goes, 'Shit, handbrake,' and races around the corner and dips behind this big massive white house with blue paint on the windowsills and spiky thorn bushes.

I'm up to 250-Mrs Zippy when he pulls his hands out and there are all these pink saveloys and tomato sauce and I squeeze my eyes as shut as I can. The brolly rolls off his lap.

'I DIDN'T UNDO MY BELT, HONEST!'

His fingers are shaking as he pushes a jetplane into his mouth, but then he pauses.

'Want one?'

'Wait for the ambliance, Daddy, you're sick.'

Daddy pulls the shiny, pink roundness out of his belly like he can't believe it's there.

I wait for him to drive the car, but I know I shouldn't be Mr Impatient. I get up to 200-Mrs Zippy. He's got a pink piggy bank covered in tomato sauce.