

THE EXAM

Andy Hamilton

CHAS: Spike lives near me, so we go home together after school. Anyway, we've got this game we like to play where I shout abuse at passers-by and then he tells them that I suffer from Tourette's syndrome. It's great fun. You can get away with murder. My favourite was when I saw this bunch of nuns and I started yelling that they were 'giant nympho killer penguins'.

ANDREW laughs, a kind of kinship is springing up between them. BEA, meanwhile, is working very hard at pretending not to listen.

So, last Wednesday this chubby bloke walked past and I shouted, 'You big fat git', and ... well, he didn't take it very well, got a bit upset. But then Spike weighs in and goes, 'Calm down mate, no offence, he didn't mean it, he's got Tourette's.' And so this fat bloke goes, 'Oh, right, okay, no problem,' and starts to back off, and Spike goes, 'He didn't mean to call you a big fat git, mister, he meant to call you an ugly fat git.' Then we both legged it as fast as we could up the High Street.

ANDREW: So, what happened then?

CHAS: Well ... you know fat people aren't supposed to be very good at running?

ANDREW: He caught up with you.

CHAS: Well, he would have done, if we hadn't had the brains to climb up this scaffolding, 'cos both me and Spike are shit-hot at climbing, so we ended up two storeys high with Michelin man down below, puffing and wheezing, shaking his fist and stuff. So, we taunted him a bit more about ... y'know ... about his ... not having achieved his ideal body weight. [We feel BEA stiffen.] Then, and with hindsight this was a mistake, we started singing. [Sings] 'Who ate all the pies? Who ate all the pies? You fat bastard, you fat Bastard, you ate all the pies.'

ANDREW: Then what?

CHAS: Well ... you know fat people aren't supposed to be any good at climbing?

ANDREW: Oh no.

CHAS: Like a sodding monkey he was. Coming straight for us. Well, Spike was panicking, but I spotted this way down, namely one of those sort of orange waste chutes that hang down off scaffolding into skips.

ANDREW: [realising]: You prat.

CHAS: I've seen people do it on the telly. That girl, Caroline Thingy, she jumped down one in an episode of Jonathan Creek and all that happened to her was she got a bit dusty. I just thought it'd be like, I dunno, like a helter-skelter at the fairground, only maybe a bit quicker. Actually it was, um, well it was quite a lot quicker, actually. The

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bloke in Casualty said I'm lucky I didn't kill myself. Then he said something I didn't quite catch but it ended with the words 'stupid cretin'.

ANDREW: Jesus, what did our parents say?

CHAS: My mum got a bit emotional ...