

# David Geary – A Good Sign

LES MILLS – IT STARTS HERE

- Why are you wearing socks in the gym?
- Um...my toenails are painted purple. And I don't want people to get the wrong idea.
- The wrong idea?
- I don't quite know how they got purple. I didn't register my toenails until I'd got to Les Mills this morning, and had forgot my trainers, and already put Caleb in the Kids' World Extreme.
- You know, you've been stroking that punching bag for the last five minutes.
- Okay, that's not a good sign. Wow, someone just appeared outside the window with an "I love you!" sign. That's not a good sign either. We're four storeys up.
- Um...no, no actually that's okay. there's someone out there on the reverse bungey with an "I love you" sign.

IT STARTS HERE. We're surrounded by IT WORDS. It's so you can become an IT GIRL or an IT BOY.

CALEB SAYS : I know a word with IT in it, Dad

- Yeah, but is it a nice word?
- I want to graffiti all the signs. Make new IT words.
- No, let's just count the IT words. 1. Commitment. 2. Gravity. 3. Grit.

SANDSTORMS AND CYCLONE BOLA

Dad watches me go down the tuatara slide in the mall outside Farmers. Mum and Dad had a wedding gift registry there. Manchester is a place in England, where there were cotton mills. And that's what linen is called. I know the names of all the nail polishes:

Strawberry electric

Love that Red

Vixen

Totally Toffee

Passion Punch Shimmer

Sheer Nude

Pure Pearl

Sheer Blush

Plum Baby

Sandstorm

Dad says – "Farmers won't know what hit them when IKEA gets here."

The Swiss balls were just the start. Dad got a swiss ball to work on his puku. But he got tired pumping it up. And I stabbed it with a drumstick I broke so it has a slow puncture. It's poked, really poked.

We buy a bottle of water from the gym and take it to pour on the roots of the tree we planted for Mum. The tree came down on a truck from Shannon with a surfer dude tree guy. Shannon is where Owlcatraz is – with all the moreporks that got messed up by Cyclone Bola. They fly from memory. They know where all the trees are. Except when a cyclone hits, and moves all the trees, so they fly and conk themselves on the head. And people picked them up all knocked out and damaged. And took them to Shannon to rehab.

Dad's like a morepork that's had all its memory trees moved.

Mum's tree is a Puketea in Glover Park.

## CRUMBIE

Jasmine was a joiner, a signer-up. She's responsible for the 50 SPAM I delete each day – Extend yourself. Get a Bigger Pleasure Dome.

And then I get this – "You're a big boy, Crumbie." That was one of our pet names. "Crumbie", cos I'd eat the crumbs off my shirt after a meal. She civilised me. But I figure it's like monkeys in a room trying to write Shakespeare. One day, totally randomly someone is going to send you something with "Crumbie" on it.

Jaz had a private box at the post-shop, for her friendship bracelet weaving business. Not tacky stuff. Real paua, and...yeah, Caleb said we weren't allowed to cancel it. He said there was still mail to come for Mum. So every Saturday we come down and check it.

## EXOTIC LOCATION

Caleb wants a cage. Caleb wants to fight someone in his cage. Caleb stays up late watching Extreme Ultimate Fighting on Sky Sports. When Caleb becomes an Extreme Ultimate Fighter he will be called Kinghit.

Dad had to take up Body Combat at the gym so he could train Caleb to become an Extreme Fighter. Because Extreme Fighting was not offered at the Montesorri School in Kingston, the school that Jaz wanted Caleb to go to, or the Brooklyn Primary, which we settled on. Dad and Caleb have a deal – No Extreme Fighting until we get home.

Caleb is going to join the army. He likes to read out the recruitment poster at the Railway Station. If you were in the territorials you could be in a much more exotic location. Call 0800 NZ ARMY or visit [www.army.mil.nz](http://www.army.mil.nz). Dad and Caleb have a deal – They can surf the NZ Army website for ten minutes together, but then they must read a kids' book together for another ten minutes. And then they can extreme fight train.

Jaz and I made out on a train once. In a sleeper in America. We never quite got into sync with the train, but it was a big A for effort.

Dad, where do people go when they die?

Parliament.

## HARMONY IN THE HOUSE

Jaz volunteered at Mary Potter Hospice. She was a good person. She made friendship bracelets for all the people she met. She helped organise "Harmony in the House" – where all those who work in parliament do a benefit gig for the dying. Georgine Beyer sang "Summertime". Jaz got to meet her and she's very nice. Not like the dead boring other politicians on the telly. Louisa Wall is the latest MP.

- What's a lesbian, Dad?
- They're, they're ladies who love women, who love girls who love women who...
- Do you think there are any at school?

Ask your mother...No. No, now I have to answer all the questions. There's no tag team wrestling. Just me.

## IT'S FUN TO BE AT THE SPCA

Jasmine should never have told Caleb about reincarnation.

- Do you think that dog looks like Mum?
- No.
- Or do you think Mum was more likely to become a cat?
- Um...she liked birds more actually.
- If I got a bird in a cage I'd let it out.
- I know.
- I think she's going to come back as a dog. I want a dog that can fight. That one's called JAVA. That starts like Mum's name. What sort is he?

The SPCA GUY says : He's a Rhodesian Ridgeback Cross. But with those ears he looks like a dingo.

- Maybe you want to think about a pup, Caleb? Then you could grow up with it.

The SPCA GUY says : Well, that's okay, but you have to realise that a pup will grow a lot faster than a boy, so you'll end up with a dog soon enough.

- But it says on the cage – NO WALKS, SPECIAL DIET. That sounds like hard work.

Well, he's just young. 10 months. He came in at 15 kgs and we've built him up to 27.

- How much food can a 27 kg dog eat?
- All right, we're keeping him! Dad, I'm sorry about painting your toenails when you fell asleep in front of the telly last night.

Caleb wants a dog. That's a good sign.