

Excerpts from Regular Guy Series

GUY

Mom, can I ask you something?

MOM

Ask away

GUY

What does ‘The apple doesn’t fall far from the tree’ mean?

NARRATOR ONE

My mother gave the rosebush a last squirt of water, then she turned off the hose.

MOM

It means that people tend to be like their parents. An apple tree produces apples, right?

The parents are the trees, and their children are the apples they produce. Get it?

GUY

Yep.

NARRATOR ONE

I got it all right. What it meant was that no matter what I did, people were always going to judge me by the tree I’d fallen out of.

MOM

Tell me something, Guysie, which do you think is more festive, white cheese or yellow cheese?

NARRATOR ONE

Why did my tree have to be so weird? Why did I have to have a mother who asked questions about cheese? Just then Buzz rode up on his bike.

MOM

Hello, Buzzy! Which do you think is more festive, white cheese or yellow cheese?

NARRATOR ONE

Buzz is used to my mom. He doesn't mind that she says weird things. He thinks it's funny. That's because he didn't fall out of her tree.

GUY

You know what I've been thinking about lately?

NARRATOR ONE

I said to Buzz a few minutes later as we rode off on our bikes together.

BUZZ

What to give me for my birthday?

GUY

No. I've been thinking about fate.

BUZZ

What's fate?

NARRATOR TWO

He licked his palm and tried to plaster down the hair sticking up at the back of his head.

He has a bunch of cowlicks, which make his hair stand up funny sometimes.

GUY

Fate is like when stuff happens out of the blue and you can't really explain why.

BUZZ

You mean like belching?

GUY

No, you gall bladder, like getting hit by lightning. Or happening to meet the person you're going to get married to while you're standing in line at the grocery store minding your own business.

BUZZ

I'm never going to get married.

GUY

You don't know that. For all you know fate has her all picked out for you already. The future Mrs. Buzz Adams could be walking around Cedar Springs right now.

BUZZ

Sheesh, Guy. That's creepy. You mean even if I don't want to married, I have to because f this fate thing?

GUY

You can't fight fate. It's a losing battle.

BUZZ

If we actually do have to get married someday, do you think either one of us is gonna have a wedding like the one your mom had. Remember that?

GUY

Remember it?

NARRATOR ONE

I snorted.

GUY

Are you kidding? She wore a dress made out of Styrofoam cups, and the groom played the wedding march on a hose nozzle. Who could forget something like that?

NARRATOR TWO

My parents are divorced, and my mother got remarried last Valentine's Day. The ceremony, like most things my mother masterminds, was a bit unusual to put it mildly.

GUY

The thing about marriage is I think it's sort of like rolling dice. Everybody wants to roll a six and live happily ever after. But if it turns out you roll a four, then you've got to decide whether to stick with that or take a chance on rolling again," I said. "Sure, maybe you'll get lucky and roll a six the second time around, but then again you could end up rolling a two and be worse off than when you started.

BUZZ

Are the dice real ones, or fuzzy ones?

GUY

What difference does that make?

BUZZ

Real ones roll better than fuzzy ones.

NARRATOR ONE

I stopped pedaling and looked at him.

GUY

Why do you say stuff like that, Buzzard?

BUZZ

Like what?

GUY

Like 'Real ones roll better than fuzzy ones.'

BUZZ

What's the matter with that? It's true, isn't it? Think about it, Guy. Fuzzy things don't roll very well. Take rabbits, for instance. It'd be hard to roll a rabbit, don't you think?

NARRATOR TWO

We both lifted ourselves up off our seats, standing on the pedals in order to put our weight into an uphill climb.

GUY

Do you ever actually listen to yourself when you talk? You say crazy junk like that as if it's normal. Nobody rolls rabbits.

BUZZ

There you go. You just proved my point. The reason nobody rolls rabbits is because they're too fuzzy. Am I right, or am I right?

GUY

You're nuts is what you are.

NARRATOR TWO

The next hill was too steep to ride up, so we got off our bikes and walked them next to each other.

BUZZ

Do you still make a wish when you blow out the candles on your birthday cake?

GUY

Of course I do. Who doesn't?

BUZZ

Personally, I'm thinking about giving it up this year.

GUY

Are you serious?

BUZZ

Yeah, I think I've finally outgrown it. Like Santa Claus and the Tooth Fairy.

GUY

Wishing isn't like Santa Claus. It's a real thing.

BUZZ

Think about it, Guy Wire. Every year you're supposed to make a wish, and the deal is, if you get all the candles out in one blow it'll come true. Right?

GUY

Right, as long as you don't tell anybody what you wished for.

BUZZ

And you believe that? Come on, have you ever gotten anything you wished for?

GUY

Yeah. As a matter of fact I have.

BUZZ

Oh, yeah? What?

GUY

I can't tell you that.

BUZZ

Why not?

GUY

I just can't.

BUZZ

The reason you can't tell me is because it's not true. Just admit it, Guy Wire.

GUY

No, I swear, once I really did get what I wished for. I just don't want to tell you what it was, that's all. It might be dangerous.

BUZZ

Dangerous?

GUY

Yeah, like maybe telling you about it could make the wish come untrue.

BUZZ

That is such bunk. Besides, the deal is we tell each other everything. So if there really is something to tell, spill it or else.

NARRATOR ONE

I wasn't sure exactly why it felt wrong, I just knew it did. But for some reason I took a deep breath and told him anyway.

GUY

I wished for you.

BUZZ

What are you talking about, corndog?

GUY

On my seventh birthday I wished for a best friend. A few months later you moved here.

So my wish came true. Okay?

NARRATOR TWO

We'd reached the top of the hill, so we both got on our bikes and began to pedal.

BUZZ

For real? Did you really do that? Wish for me?

GUY

I didn't exactly wish for *you*. I wished for *somebody*, and it turned out to be you. Can we please just drop it now?

NARRATOR ONE

We rode in silence for a minute, and then Buzz said...

BUZZ

When I turned five, I wished for ballet lessons.

GUY

Get out!

BUZZ

Get in. I swear. There was this girl in my kindergarten class who got to leave school early three afternoons a week for ballet. Seemed like a good deal to me, so I wished for it on my birthday.

GUY

Did you even know what ballet was?

BUZZ

Of course not, you drill bit. Can you see me jumping around in a tutu and tights?

GUY

Depends. What color is the tutu?

NARRATOR TWO

Buzz reached over and grabbed my handlebars, giving them a quick jerk, which set my bike wobbling uncontrollably under me. Then he sped ahead of me, whooping and hollering.

BUZZ

Last one home is a rotten egg!

NARRATOR ONE

He called back over his shoulder.

NARRATOR TWO

I regained my balance as quickly as I could and chased after him.

GUY

That's it, gumball. Prepare to die!

NARRATOR ONE

He zipped out of sight around the corner ahead of me. I heard it before I saw it. Screeching tires and a sickening *thunk*. And then—then—just silence. I pedaled as fast as I could, holding my breath as I rounded the corner.

GUY

Don't let it be. Don't let it be.

NARRATOR TWO

I whispered over and over.

NARRATOR ONE

But it was.