

I'LL BE WITH YOU SHORTLY

by Ken Bradbury

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SYNOPSIS: These are some perspectives on being short.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(1 either)

NARRATOR (m/f)

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NARRATOR: Go ahead. Admit it. You want to laugh, right? Don't sit there with that look on your face trying to hide your smile. You think short people are funny. You think we're cute. Some of you even think we're cuddly. Very funny. Yeah, that's a real ha-ha.

If I hear one more "short" joke, I'm going to ...

Look, everybody's born short. I mean, it's like a necessity. The baby cribs are only this big. Does anybody walk into the maternity ward and shout, "Gee lady, your baby is really short! Are they cheaper?"

And I've heard all the names ... Shrimp ... Pee wee (I really hate that one) ... Shortstop ... Tiny. Would you want me to walk around this room and do the same thing to you?

"Hi, Weirdo!"

"How's it goin', Paranoid?"

"Havin' a good day, Confused?"

Why is it not okay to call people names ... unless their short?

People don't see me in the hallways. It's dangerous. The even used to step on me. I'd say "Hi" to someone and they'd turn around and try to find me. They thought they were hearing things. I feel like I'm having conversations with other people's belly buttons.

And every place in the world has now been converted to make them accessible to people with problems ... sloping ramps for wheelchairs ... Braille code on elevator buttons. But do you see any little ladders for somebody who can't reach the buttons? Face it, the whole world is built for tall people. Until I was in fourth grade I had to carry my lunch tray above my head.

I've spent so much time looking up that I have a natural curve in my back. It's hard to dance with a girl when you've got to look at the ceiling just to talk to her. I'd be sitting at a table so the girls wouldn't notice my height then I'd stand up and they'd do this "Oh ... yeah ... hi" thing and there I'd be.

You tall people take things for granted. You just assume that when you stand in front of a mirror you can see yourself. I see the back wall. Every morning I put toothpaste on my brush then pretend I'm brushing the curtains.

I dread driving a car. They don't make kiddie seats for the driver's side. I'll have to move the seat all the way forward and if the airbag goes off it'll probably blow me through the back window.

Okay, there are some advantages to being short. When you fall down you don't have far to go. When you do get up you're practically there already. And short people hardly ever bump their heads. I mean, on what? Other people's knees?

Everybody on an airplane wants to get the exit row so they'll have room to stretch out. Heck, I can stretch out in any row. I'm good at playing hide and seek because I can hide everywhere. I'm a whiz at miniature golf.

My mom would always roll up the pant legs of my new clothes. She'd say "Oh, you'll grow into them." Uh ... when's that going to happen, Mom? And I hate it every year when the Wizard of Oz comes on television. The next day at school everyone wants me to sing, "We're members of the lollipop guild! The lollipop guild! The lollipop guild!"

I have never been able to see a concert. Once everybody stands up, my concert is over. Okay, I'll be able to buy child tickets at the movies for the next twenty years ... that is if they think I'm old enough to get in. I can squeeze through crowds ... of course, they can squeeze me back. And my feet hardly ever hang over the edge of the bed.

And some people ... you're not going to believe this ... some people actually ask me why I'm so short. Like I planned this! Sometimes I'll say, "I'm not. I'm just hiding my tallness," or "Why are you so tall?" or "I've got the rest tucked inside my shoes."

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