

FROM THE NO. 1 BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF

MIDDLE SCHOOL

JACKY

HA-HA

JAMES PATTERSON

AND CHRIS GRABENSTEIN

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About the Book

This is the story of Jacky Ha-Ha.

She's a mother - and a very funny writer and actress - who tells her daughters what life was like when she was a twelve-year-old kid growing up with her six sisters and lifeguard dad at the Jersey Shore.

And most important, where she got the nickname Jacky Ha-Ha and how it changed her life - for the funnier!

About the Authors

JAMES PATTERSON is the internationally bestselling author of the highly praised Middle School books, *Homeroom Diaries*, *Kenny Wright: Superhero*, and the I Funny, Treasure Hunters, House of Robots, Confessions, Maximum Ride, Witch & Wizard and Daniel X series. James Patterson has been the most borrowed author in UK libraries for the past nine years in a row and his books have sold more than 300 million copies worldwide, making him one of the biggest-selling authors of all time. He lives in Florida.

CHRIS GRABENSTEIN is a *New York Times* bestselling author who has collaborated with James Patterson on the I Funny, Treasure Hunters, and House of Robots series, as well as *Jacky Ha-Ha* and *Daniel X: Armageddon*. He lives in New York City.

KERASCOËT is the pen name of Marie Pommepuy and Sébastien Cosset, a couple of French graphic novel authors and illustrators living and working in Paris.

Also by James Patterson

**THE
MIDDLE
SCHOOL
SERIES**

THE WORST YEARS OF MY LIFE

(with Chris Tebbetts)

This is the insane story of my first year at middle school, when I, Rafe Khatchadorian, took on a real-life bear (sort of), sold my soul to the school bully, and fell for the most popular girl in school. Come join me, if you dare ...

GET ME OUT OF HERE!

(with Chris Tebbetts)

We've moved to the big city, where I'm going to a superfancy art school. The first project is to create something based on our exciting lives. But I have a BIG problem: my life is TOTALLY BORING. It's time for Operation Get a Life.

MY BROTHER IS A BIG, FAT LIAR

(with Lisa Papademetriou)

So you've heard all about my big brother, Rafe, and now it's time to set the record straight. I'm NOTHING like my brother. (Almost) EVERYTHING he says is a Big Fat Lie. And my book is 100 times better than Rafe's. I'm Georgia, and it's time for some payback ... Khatchadorian style.

**HOW I SURVIVED BULLIES, BROCCOLI, AND SNAKE
HILL**

(with Chris Tebbetts)

I'm excited for a fun summer at camp—until I find out it's a summer *school* camp. There's no fun and games here, I have a bunk mate called Booger Eater (it's pretty self-explanatory), and we're up against the kids from the "Cool Cabin" ... there's gonna be a whole lotta trouble!

ULTIMATE SHOWDOWN

(with Julia Bergen)

Who would have thought that we—Rafe and Georgia—would ever agree on anything? That's right—we're writing a book together. Discover: Who has the best advice on BULLIES? Who's got all the right DANCE MOVES? Who's the cleverest Khatchadorian in town? And the best part?

We want you to be part of the fun too!

SAVE RAFE!

(with Chris Tebbetts)

I'm in worse trouble than ever! I need to survive a gut-bustingly impossible outdoor excursion so I can return to school next year. Watch me as I become "buddies" with the scariest girl on the planet, raft down the rapids on a deadly river, and ultimately learn the most important lesson of my life.

JUST MY ROTTEN LUCK

(with Chris Tebbetts)

I'm heading back to where it all began: Hills Village Middle School. After surviving The Program in the Rocky Mountains, HVMS have taken me back. But, ONLY if I take "special" classes ... Not exactly the "welcome back" I was hoping for ...

THE
I FUNNY
SERIES

I FUNNY

(with Chris Grabenstein)

Join Jamie Grimm at middle school where he's on an unforgettable mission to win the Planet's Funniest Kid Comic Contest. Dealing with the school bully (who he also happens to live with) and coping with a disability are no trouble for Jamie when he has laughter on his side.

I EVEN FUNNIER

(with Chris Grabenstein)

Jamie's one step closer to achieving his dream! This time, be amazed as he fends off the attention of thousands of star-struck girls, watch in awe as he reduces the school bully to a quivering mess, and join the masses as he becomes the most popular kid in school. Or something like that ...

I TOTALLY FUNNIEST

(with Chris Grabenstein)

Jamie's heading to Hollywood for his biggest challenge yet. There's only the small matter of the national finals and eight other laugh-a-minute competitors between him and the trophy—oh, and a hurricane!

I FUNNY TV

(with Chris Grabenstein)

Jamie has achieved his dream of becoming the Planet's Funniest Kid Comic, and now the sky's the limit! Enter a couple of TV executives with an offer for Jamie to star in his very own show ...

THE
TREASURE HUNTERS
SERIES

TREASURE HUNTERS

(with Chris Grabenstein)

The Kidds are not your normal family, traveling the world on crazy adventures to recover lost treasure. But when their parents disappear, Bick and his brothers and sisters are thrown into the biggest (and most dangerous) treasure hunt of their lives. Evil pirates, tough guys and gangsters stand in their way, but can they work together to find mom and dad?

DANGER DOWN THE NILE

(with Chris Grabenstein)

Bick, Beck, Storm and Tommy are navigating their way down the Nile, from a hot and dusty Cairo to deep dark jungles, past some seriously bad guys along the way.

SECRET OF THE FORBIDDEN CITY

(with Chris Grabenstein)

The Kidds are desperately trying to secure the ancient Chinese artefact that will buy their mother's freedom from kidnapping pirates.



(with Chris Tebbetts)

Kenny is the life-saving, world-famous superhero otherwise known as Stainlezz Steel. He's taken down General Zod twice, beaten Darth Vader at chess ... and lives with his grandma. Ok, sometimes he gets a bit carried away. But G-ma really does need his help now—and he's going to have to be a superhero to save the day.

The logo for 'The House of Robots Series' features the word 'THE' in a simple sans-serif font at the top. Below it, 'HOUSE OF' is written in a smaller, similar font. The word 'ROBOTS' is the largest and most prominent, rendered in a stylized, metallic, 3D font with rivets and bolts. At the bottom, 'SERIES' is written in a simple sans-serif font, matching the style of 'THE'.

HOUSE OF ROBOTS

(with Chris Grabenstein)

Sammy is just your average kid ... except he lives in a house full of robots! Most of the time it's pretty cool. But then there's E, the worst robot ever. He's a know-it-all, thinks he's Sammy's brother, AND he's about to go to the same school! Come see if Sammy *ever* manages to make any friends with a loser robot tagging along ...

ROBOTS GO WILD!

(with Chris Grabenstein)

Sammy and E are finally making some friends at school. But disaster strikes when E malfunctions just in time to be upstaged by the super-cool new robot on the block.

JACKY HA-HA

JAMES PATTERSON
AND **CHRIS GRABENSTEIN**
ILLUSTRATED BY **KERASCOËT**



*For Schaak Van Deusen,
my first drama coach
and favorite English teacher.
—CG*

*For my mom,
my favorite English teacher.
—JP*



PROLOGUE



YES, GIRLS, THIS might just be the biggest night of my life and I'm sitting here doodling.

But doodling is what I always do when I get nervous, and I don't think I'll ever be more nervous than I am right *now* because I'm about to hop into a limousine and head off to the Academy Awards, where I could maybe, just maybe, win an Oscar!

Can you girls believe this? Your very own mom is one of only five nominees for Best Actress! Okay, it wasn't a huge stretch to play a dirt-poor street performer in Atlantic City, but it's not often that a *comedy* gets any awards.

What's even rarer is when funny girls win the Oscar for Best Actress. I think the last time was 1977, when Diane

Keaton won for *Annie Hall*.

I wasn't even born in 1977. That means you guys weren't, either.

Anyway, there's a twenty percent chance that I might have to give a sp-sp-sp-speech tonight in front of m-m-m-millions of people, which, as you might imagine, terrifies me beyond my ability to put terror into w-w-w-words.

If, by some miracle, I actually do win the Best Actress Oscar for *Cracking Up*, the first thing I'm going to do, of course, is thank you two for making me laugh every day since you were born. Unless I trip on my gown. If *that* happens, the first thing I'm going to do is stand back up and adjust stuff.

Uh-oh, my purse is shaking! Either Los Angeles is having another one of its famous earthquakes or my producers are texting me to say it's time to go.

Before I do...

There's something else I want to tell you guys.

After we finished filming *Cracking Up*, and before I went back to work at *Saturday Night Live*, I wrote a book. *This* book.

It's all about when I was a kid.

That's right. Once upon a time, I was actually your age. Before that, I was even younger. It's true. I have, in my past, been both an infant and a toddler.

The story I want to tell you guys took place when I was twelve. It starts when I decided to climb up to the top of the Ferris wheel on the Seaside Heights boardwalk in New Jersey. It was after midnight, so the ride was locked up tight. But that didn't stop me. I was a girl on a mission.

You could say I was a little crazy back in the 1990s. (Heck, we all were. We danced to music by two guys named Milli Vanilli.)

It wasn't just that I wanted to have a look out over the Atlantic Ocean. I was also wondering what I'd be like when I grew up, *if* I grew up. Maybe I had convinced myself that

by scaling the Ferris wheel and staring out at the ocean, I might be able to see my future, somewhere off on the horizon.

Did I mention I was a little crazy back then?



I did my best to tell the story of that wild year at the shore just the way it really was for me, warts and all—though at twelve years old, it was more like *pimples* and all—because I think there’s a tendency for parents not to tell the whole truth about how it was for them growing up.

So here it is, ladies—the funny, the not-so funny, and the embarrassingly true.

CHAPTER 1



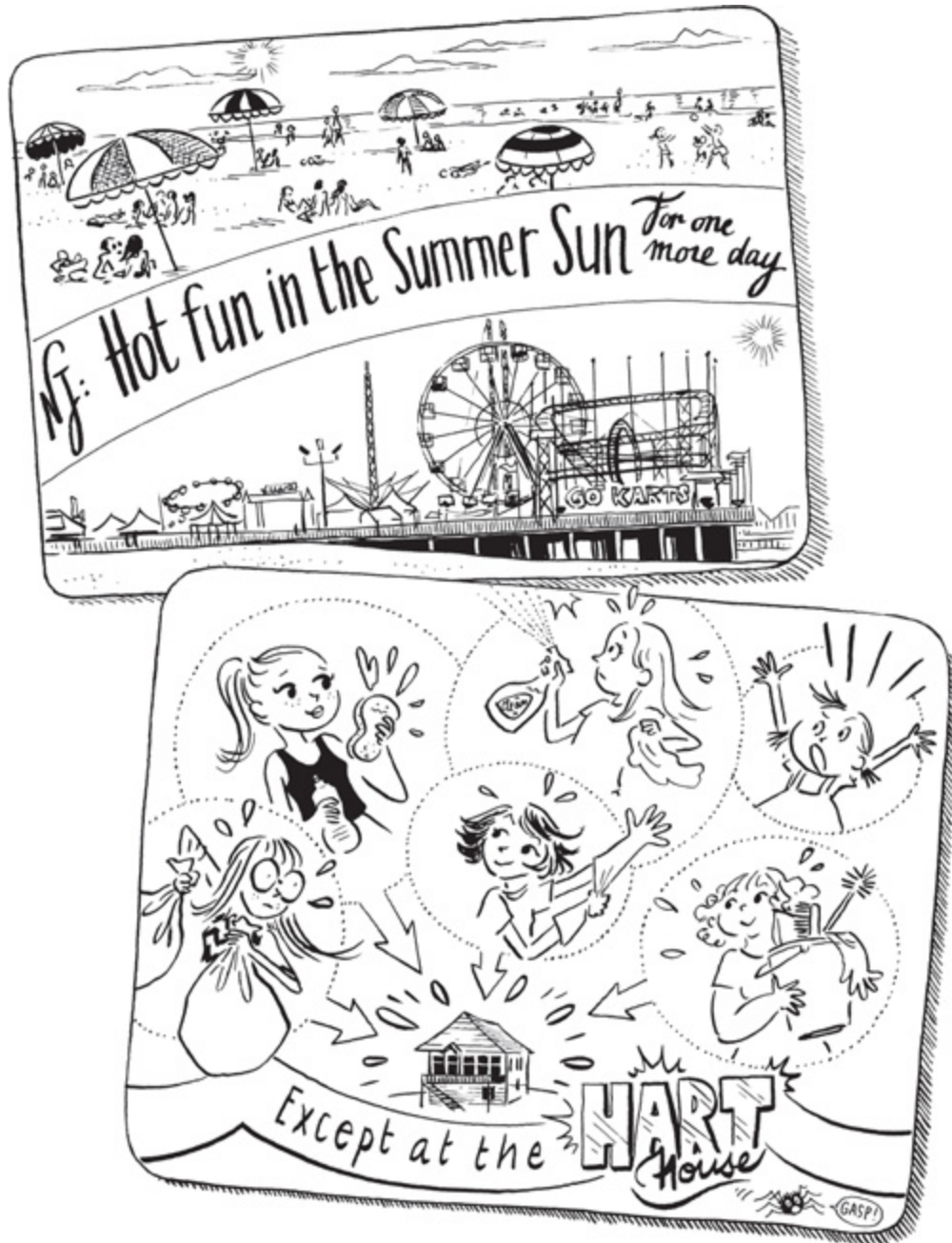
OKAY, LET ME set the scene.

It's the absolutely worst day of any year ever recorded since history has been recorded. That, of course, would be the last day of summer vacation. The day before school starts.

The year is 1990. President Bush (the first one, George *H. W.*) tells the world he doesn't like broccoli and hasn't liked it since he was a little kid, when his mother made him eat it. Donkey Kong is about as good as it gets in video games. And guys are wearing mullets. They're about as hideous as a hairstyle can be—short at the front and sides, long in the back. Kind of like a coonskin cap made out of hair.



I'm living with my six sisters (your aunts) in a tiny house near the beach in Seaside Heights. Think Little Women living on the Jersey Shore, but none of us have questionable names like Snooki or JWovw.



Our father is pretty strict. He makes sure we keep our little house spick-and-span and "shipshape," even though

it's a bungalow, not a boat.

We have to do *all* of our chores before we can do anything remotely fun—even though it's the last day of summer.

“Put some elbow grease into it, girls!” That's Emma. She's only six, but she does an awesome Dad impression.



We all call Emma the Little Boss. She's incredibly stubborn, but fortunately for her, also incredibly cute.

The rest of us gab up a storm while we wash windows, beat rugs, clean up the kitchen, and scrub the toilets. Remember, this was before texting. In 1990, we actually *talked* to each other. Weird, right?

My oldest sister, Sydney, who was nineteen that year, isn't home right now because her summer ended early. She went off to college (Princeton), where she is a freshman.

(Ever wonder why colleges don't have freshmen? Are they all stale? That's the kind of goofy thing I think about sometimes.)

As you might imagine, Sydney is adored by the whole family, parents and grandparents included. She is practically perfect in every possible way.

That means she's the exact opposite of me.

CHAPTER 2



BEING BORN A girl in the middle of a pack of girls makes me about as special as a brown M&M. I'm fourth in line to the throne, which, in our house, would be the toilet I have to scrub with stinky blue chemicals before I can go outside and have some end-of-summer fun. And with seven people sharing our single bathroom, it's no quick thing to get it clean.

I guess you could say I'm something of a tomboy. While all the other girls on the Seaside Heights beach are wearing bright red *Baywatch* one-piece swimsuits or teeny-weeny bikinis, I prefer cut-off blue jeans and my baggiest New York Giants T-shirt. I also have a very funny sun hat. Okay, it's a sombrero.



The only sister younger than me (besides Emma, the Little Boss, of course) is Riley. She's eleven.

I feel sorry for Riley. She's in the very unfortunate position of having me as her big sister.

You see, the problem is, Riley looks up to me. She's my sidekick and partner in crime, not that we've ever done anything that's actually, you know, criminal. Okay, some of the pranks we pull are borderline illegal, but I think a halfway-decent lawyer could easily get us out of jail free (my favorite card in Monopoly). Riley is always skating on the edge of the abyss because that's where I like to hang out. In the danger zone.

You'll see.



My parents' other middle child is Hannah.

Hannah is fourteen and too nice for words. She's so sweet they won't let her into the candy stores on the boardwalk anymore because they're afraid of the competition. Also because she likes to help herself to samples of peanut butter fudge. Every day. For hours at a time.

Hannah has a huge crush on Mike Guadagno, a rich kid from Stonewall Prep. It's kind of sad and, also, kind of funny.



My sister Victoria (don't you dare call her Vickie) is fifteen going on fifty.

Victoria has advice about everything for everyone, and she *loves* to share it with you, any time of the day or night. She's a bookworm, a movie nut, and a library nerd. She also keeps a diary and likes to inform you when she intends to write about something you just did. Victoria never shuts up, not even in her sleep. One night, I'm sure I heard her giving advice to the monster in her nightmare on how to scare her better.

Finally, there's Sophia, the second oldest—or, as she likes to say, *the* oldest because Sydney is off at college.



Sophia is eighteen and in love (temporarily) with Mike Guadagno.

That's right. The same rich kid from Stonewall Prep that Hannah has a crush on, hence the sad-funny thing I was talking about earlier. Sophia doesn't know about Hannah's feelings for Mike. Mike doesn't, either. (Victoria does and has advised against them. Repeatedly.)

Mike Guadagno is a nice guy, actually. He's what Mom would call a keeper, which means, basically, he's a fish you wouldn't toss back into the ocean after you hauled it into your boat and ripped the hook out of its mouth. I sort of feel sorry for Mike. We all do. As soon as summer's over, we know Sophia is going to rip out her hook and break Mike's heart. It's her thing. She collects boys the way a botanist collects flowers or a bugologist collects beetles.

My new friend Meredith Crawford, who recently moved to Seaside Heights from Newark, tells me there's no such thing as a bugologist when I tell her about Sophia and how she plays "impossible to get."

"Scientists who study insects are called entomologists," she says.

Meredith is super-smart. I'm hoping she'll help me do my homework when school starts. She already pitches in with the chores around our house because she practically lives at our place and we need all the help we can get.



My mom (your grandmother) doesn't do much housekeeping. No cooking, no cleaning. Nothing. She can't. She's in Saudi Arabia.

CHAPTER 3



ANOTHER THING THAT happened in 1990?

A crazy dictator with a bushy mustache named Saddam Hussein (the crazy guy, not the bushy mustache) invaded Kuwait because he thought they were charging too much for gas.

Hey, I don't like the price the guy on the corner charges, but do you see me invading his gas station?

Anyway, after Saddam refused to remove his troops from Kuwait, President George H. W. Bush (the guy who hates broccoli) ordered the start of Operation Desert Shield.

Mom, who everybody calls Big Sydney—not because she's large or anything but because she came before Little Sydney, my oldest sister—is a staff sergeant in the Marine Corps. The second that President Bush declared Operation Desert Shield, Mom had to pack up her gear and ship out for Saudi Arabia, where America's troops were stationed, waiting for Saddam to do the right thing, which would be to leave Kuwait without breaking anything.