

April Fool

Kevin sat up so quickly that he almost bumped his head on the shelf above his bed. Someone was pounding on his bedroom door. "Kevin. It's time to get up," he heard his sister calling. "Hurry up. You've slept in again." Kevin stumbled¹⁾ to the door and yanked²⁾ it open. April was standing in the hall. "Hurry up." she said. "You're going to be late." Kevin dashed past her and ran downstairs. The kitchen was empty. The house was dark and silent. As he switched on the light, he glanced at the clock. It was 6:00 a. m. . The calendar beside the refrigerator caught his eye. There was a big red circle around the first day of the month. Kevin let out a loud groan. Behind him, April giggled. "April Fool." she teased³⁾ as Kevin spun around⁴⁾. "I got you, just like I promised." With that, she flipped into a hand—stand and looked at Kevin with an upside—down grin. Kevin turned and stomped upstairs. As he got back into bed, thoughts of his sister cartwheeled through his mind. April Bateman, expert gymnast⁵⁾ and expert joke—player, was driving everyone crazy. She never walked when she could bounce, flip, or somersault⁶⁾. She never missed an opportunity to play a joke on someone. And of course, April Fool's Day was April's favorite day of the year.

Later that morning, Mr. Bateman discovered that his shoes wouldn't tie and his shaver wouldn't shave. Someone had removed the laces from his shoes and the batteries from his shaver. Mrs. Bateman found a huge spider in the middle of the kitchen table. Before she realized that it was plastic, she dropped two soft—boiled eggs on the floor and knocked over a pitcher⁷⁾ of orange juice. Kevin discovered that every one of his T—shirts had been turned inside out.

"Where's April?" he asked when the family sat down to breakfast. "She had an early gym practice," said his father. "There's a gymnastics competition at the Y this afternoon," his mother said as she buttered a slice of toast. "April has her heart set on winning a medal."

When Kevin came home at noon, his mother rushed into the kitchen. "Kevin, April's gym coach phoned. The competition may have to be switched to a different location. If that happens, Mr. Boyer will phone back by 12:30." She paused to catch her breath. "It's 12:00 now and I have to be at the office in fifteen minutes. If Mr. Boyer calls, leave me a note." She pointed to the note pad by the phone. "This is very important, Kevin. Be sure that you write down the message." "Trust me, Mom," said Kevin. "I promise I'll take care of it." Shortly after his mother left, the phone rang. It was Mr. Boyer. "The competition has been switched from the Y to the Oakville Arena," he explained. Kevin wrote down the new address and directions. "Be sure to leave the note where your mother will see it, Kevin," he added. "I'll take care of it, Mr. Boyer. I promise," Kevin assured him.

Late that afternoon, Kevin came home from soccer practice. When he went in to the den, April was sitting in the rocking chair, staring out of the window. "How did the competition go?" he asked. "Did you win a medal?" April looked up. Her face was red and tear—streaked. "No, I didn't. I didn't even have a chance to compete," she said in a shaky voice. "What happened?" Kevin asked. "We were late and I was disqualified, thanks to your stupid joke." April sniffed and tears ran down her cheeks. Kevin stared at her. "What

joke? What are you talking about? "Suddenly their mother appeared in the doorway. She looked right at Kevin. "What happened to Mr. Boyer's message?" she asked holding up a blank note pad. Kevin's eyes widened in surprise. "I wrote everything down like you told me to," he said. His mother tapped the blank note pad. "Kevin, there's nothing written here." She went on quickly. "When I came home and found this, I figured that the competition was at the Y as scheduled. So that's where we went." "But we were the only ones there," April interrupted. She glared at Kevin. "By the time we found out the competition had been switched, it was too late." "Kevin, what happened to Mr. Boyer's message?" his mother asked. Kevin pointed to the note pad she was holding. "When Mr. Boyer phoned, I grabbed that pad and the orange pen that was beside it. I wrote down the message just like I promised I would."

There was a loud gasp⁷⁾ from the rocking chair. Kevin and his mother turned to April. April's mouth was a round "O" of surprise. "You used my trick pen," she spluttered. "What? Trick? Pen?" her mother asked. Each word was a separate question. "I... It's... It looks okay when you write with it." April stumbled over the words. "But when the ink dries, the writing disappears. I was going to take it to school to play a joke on my teacher." She shut her eyes. "Me and my dumb jokes," she wailed.

Kevin looked at his sister. He wanted to say, "Joke's on you, April Fool," but the words wouldn't come out. Instead he said, "There's another competition next week, isn't there?" April nodded and managed a weak smile.

愚人节傻瓜

凯文一骨碌爬起身，脑袋几乎撞到了床上方的架子上。有人正猛敲卧室的门。“凯文！该起来了，”他听到妹妹在喊。“快点儿！你又睡过头了。”凯文跌跌撞撞地来到门前，猛地把门拉开。阿普里尔正站在门厅中。“快点儿！”她喊道。“你要迟到了。”凯文从她身旁一跃而过，冲下楼去。厨房里空无一人。整个房子暗暗的，很寂静。凯文打开房灯，瞟了一眼挂钟。刚刚早上6点钟！冰箱旁的日历引起了他的注意。本月的第一天标着一个大红圈。凯文不禁发出一声呻吟。身后的阿普里尔咯咯地笑了起来。“愚人节傻瓜！”当凯文转身之际，阿普里尔取笑他。“我到底骗了你一回，我说过的嘛。”说着话，她翻转倒立，头朝下对着凯文嗤笑。凯文反转身，双脚重重地踏上了楼梯。回到床上，满脑子都是妹妹的形象。阿普里尔·贝特曼，既是一个体操好手，又是一个恶作剧大王，她令每一个人都感到受不了。她从来都是能不好好走路就不好好走路，而是蹦、跳或者翻跟头。她从不放过每一个戏弄别人的机会。当然啦，愚人节是阿普里尔一年中最得意的一天。

那天早上早些时候，贝特曼先生发现他的鞋系不上了，剃须刀也不转了，原来有人把他的鞋带拿走了，剃须刀中的电池给取走了。贝特曼太太在厨房桌子中央发现了一只巨大的蜘蛛。惊慌之中，她掉落了两个半煮熟蛋，又打翻了一个橙汁罐，随后才发现那只蜘蛛竟是一个塑料玩意儿。凯文也发现他的T恤衫都给从里到外翻了个个儿。

“阿普里尔哪儿去了？”吃早餐时凯文向家人问道。“她去体育馆晨练去了，”父亲答道。“今天下午在女青年会有一个体操比赛，”母亲一边在烤面包上涂黄油一边说着。“阿普里尔可一直憋着拿冠军呢。”

凯文中午回家时，母亲急匆匆地走进厨房。“凯文，阿普里尔的体操教练刚才来电话了。比赛可能会换在另一个地方举行。如果是这样的话，博耶先生会在12点30分以前打电话

来通知。”她停了一下，喘了口气。“现在12点了。一刻钟后我得到办公室。如果博耶先生来电话，给我留个条。”她指了指电话机旁的便笺本儿接着说，“凯文，这非常重要。一定要记下来。”“相信我，妈妈，”凯文回答说。“我保证办好。”母亲刚离开，电话铃就响了。正是博耶先生。“比赛已从女青年会改到奥克维尔竞技场了，”他解释说。凯文边听边记下新的地址和路线。“一定要留个条让你妈妈看到，凯文，”博耶先生又补充了一句。“我保证会的，博耶先生，”凯文向他许诺道。

下午晚些时候，凯文练完足球回到了家。当他走进小屋时，见阿普里尔正坐在摇椅中盯着窗外。“比赛怎么样？”他问道。“你得到奖牌了吗？”阿普里尔抬起头。面颊通红，泪眼汪汪。“不，不！我连一个比赛机会都没有得到！”她讲话的声音颤抖着。“到底怎么了？”凯文问道。“我们晚了。我被取消了比赛资格。都是你愚人节玩笑闹的！”阿普里尔擤擤鼻子，泪水顺着脸颊淌了下来。凯文望着她，问道，“什么笑话？你在说些什么呢？”这时母亲在门口出现了。她的双眼紧盯着凯文。“博耶先生的口信到底是怎么一回事？”她边问边举起一本空白的便条本。凯文吃惊地瞪大了眼睛。“我确实按您的吩咐记下了所有的话，”他辩解说。母亲拍了拍空白的便条本，“凯文，这上面可什么也没有写，”她继续说道。“我一回家就见到了这张纸条。我以为比赛还按计划在女青年会呢。所以我们就直奔那儿了。”“可是就我俩去了那儿，”阿普里尔打断妈妈的话，怒视着凯文。“当我们弄明白比赛已经换地时，已经太迟了。”“凯文，博耶先生留的口信到底是怎么一回事？”母亲问道。凯文指着母亲手中的便条本儿，说，“博耶先生来电话时，我便抓起那个便笺本儿和旁边的那枝黄笔记录。我就是按我许诺那样做的呀！”

突然间，摇椅那边传来巨大的一声喘息。凯文和母亲一起转向阿普里尔。阿普里尔正呆呆地圆张着嘴巴，不知所措。“你用了我的恶作剧笔，”她急促地说道。“什么？恶作剧？笔？”母亲忙问。每一个词都带着一个疑问。“我……它……你用它写字时看上去没有什么问题。”阿普里尔结结巴巴地解释说。“但是当墨水干了时，字就消失了。我本来打算把它带到学校去捉弄老师来的。”她闭上了双眼。“我和我的笨把戏！”她开始痛哭流涕。

凯文望着他的妹妹，本想说，“你自作自受，愚人节傻瓜”，可是，到了嘴边的话又吞了回去。他转而安慰道，“下周不是还有一场比赛吗？”阿普里尔点了点头，勉强地笑了笑。

NOTE 注释：

1. stumble [ˈstʌmbəl] v. 绊倒，跌跌撞撞
2. yank [jæŋk] v. 猛拉
3. tease [ti:z] vt. 取笑
4. spin around 转身
5. gymnast [ˈdʒɪmnæst] n. 体操运动员
6. somersault [ˈsʌməsɔlt] vi. 翻筋斗
7. pitcher [ˈpɪtʃə] n. (带柄和倾口的)大水罐
8. gasp [gɑ:sp] n. 喘息