

## Jerry Finnegan's Sister

By Jack Neary

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### INTRODUCTION

**ACTOR:** *Every guy has as specific girl-next-door prototype, but in general, she's the girl whom you always admired from afar and were afraid to approach*

**ACTRESS:** *Who me? Cute, kind, unassuming, and honest! Thank you!*  
*(next 2 lines are said concurrently)*

**ACTOR:** *So why am I so afraid to even talk to her? I've known her . . . forever*

**ACTRESS:** *So why is he so afraid to even talk to me? I've known him . . . forever*

**ACTOR:** *It's because she's Jerry Finnegan's Sister*

**ACTRESS:** *by Jack Neary.*

**BRIAN:** Look, you don't know me. That's a problem. I'm telling you this story, see, and it's about me, sort of, but it's mostly about her. I got up this morning and I said to myself: "Today is the day. Today I will make contact with Jerry Finnegan's sister come Hell or high water." There's she been, next door, for most of my life, and here I was, doing absolutely nothing about it. It was so frustrating. From our very first meeting, when the Finnegans moved next door. I was about seven.

*(FLASHBACK)*

**BETH:** Hi!

**BRIAN:** Who's that? Aawww. The new kid has a sister? That stinks!

**BETH:** Hi!

**BRIAN:** No! I don't wanna say hi!

**BETH:** Hi!

**BRIAN:** I'm not gonna play with you.

**BETH:** Okay

**BRIAN:** You can't make me.

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**BETH:** Okay

**BRIAN:** My father sweats through two shirts when he jobs.

**BETH:** My father . . .

**BRIAN:** And he lets me stand on the hamper and watch him bleed when he shaves.

**BETH:** My father . . .

**BRIAN:** And he says if it stinks, it stinks and we should say it stinks!

**BETH:** MY FATHER EATS LIGHT BULBS AT PARTIES!

*(PRESENT – To Audience)*

**BRIAN:** After that I didn't have anything substantial to say to Beth for a long time. She made me crazy. I guess though that my silence was trying to make a point. Although, mainly, I think I was just trying not to get humiliated.

*(FLASHBACK)*

**BETH:** I know you're setting up in your room, Brian. Know what I'm reading? It's a book called "Meet Your Body." It tells you all about every single solitary inch of your body and what you're supposed to do with each part! How come you talk to Jerry but you won't talk to me? Is it because I'm a girl and you're a boy? I've met my body. I know the difference! Well . . . want me to tell you how the book turns out?

*(PRESENT – To Audience)*

**BRIAN:** We had that book the year before. All I could think about when she yelled up at me that day was Chapter Nine. Then I thought about Beth. Then I thought about Beth and Chapter Nine! Then I threw up. It occurred to me at twelve years old that I was no longer able to retain Beth Finnegan as the object of my pre-adolescent scorn. All I had to do was come up with the right words. But the words got in the way. Actually . . . other things got in the way as well.

*(FLASHBACK)*

**BETH:** Boys.

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**BRIAN:** Boys?

**BETH:** I like boys a lot!

**BRIAN:** Don't say that.

**BETH:** Why not?

**BRIAN:** Somebody'll hear you.

**BETH:** Boys, I hope!

**BRIAN:** But you can't just . . . say things like that . . . You have to . . . you know . . . think them and hope the . . . people you're . . . thinking about . . . think back the same thing.

**BETH:** OK, what if it's you? You're at a party and you bump into a girl you like. And she looks right in your face . . . and she says, "I like boys, a lot!" What do you do?

**BRIAN:** I . . . I turn the other way.

**BETH:** A girl looks you in your face and says, "I like boys, a lot!" and you turn the other way? WHAT AM I GONNA DO WITH YOU?!

**BRIAN:** I DON'T KNOW, WHAT ARE YOU GONNA DO WITH ME?!

**BETH:** Brian? You are one sick puppy!

*(PRESENT – To Audience)*

**BRIAN:** She noticed! Anyway, before I can do anything about it, she turned fourteen. I no longer have the nuns as my allies in keeping the boys away from the girls in the schoolyard. Beth Finnegan, the girl next door, is now fair game to each and every budding hormonal case a Chelmsford High.

*(FLASHBACK)*

**BETH:** Stanley Tryscinski asked me out! And he's sixteen!

**BRIAN:** So you went.

**BETH:** On a date!

**BRIAN:** Did you enjoy yourself?

**BETH:** Yeah, until he kissed me. That wasn't so wondrous. But it was memorable.

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**BRIAN:** Oh, Beth. Why did you let Stanley Tryscinski have your first kiss?

**BETH:** He was there.

*(PRESENT – To Audience)*

**BRIAN:** I know what you're thinking . . . you're thinking: "There it was, Bozo. That was your chance. All you had to do was find the right words and it would have been your turn." Every time I came in contact with her, something inside me said, "Brian, this is your life's work. This woman is your future. Do something about it." So I tried. In my own way.

*(FLASHBACK)*

**BETH:** Are you going to your prom?

**BRIAN:** I haven't given it much thought.

**BETH:** Well, do you have somebody to go with?

**BRIAN:** *(to audience)* My entire life flashed before my eyes . . .

**BETH:** Brian?

**BRIAN:** *(to audience)* Three seconds it took. And that included the good parts.

**BETH:** Brian . . . why are you looking at me like that?

**BRIAN:** *(to audience)* Was I actually going to say it?

**BETH:** You weren't going to ask me, were you?

**BRIAN:** *(to audience)* Nope. *(to Beth)* No! Oh, no! Of course not!

**BETH:** Oh, well, I was just wondering. I'll go try on the next one.

*(PRESENT – To Audience)*

**BRIAN:** Jerry and I both got into UConn on track scholarships. But, as much as I trusted Jerry Finnegan, I could not, for the life of me, tell him how I felt about his sister. Jerry and I kind of parted ways during my junior year. Which was where things stood last night when I got the call from Jerry telling me Beth was getting married. So, all day today I've struggled to put the words together in my brain. The words are now there. Now they have to get to her. And I have to do

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it by phone. I cannot look her in the face and say what I have to say. (*Dials phone*)

BETH: (*on phone*) Hello?

BRIAN: Hello.

BETH: Brian?

BRIAN: Hi . . . Jerry called me last night. He said . . . you were going to get . . . married.

BETH: Are you going to congratulate me?

BRIAN: Oh . . . yeah . . .

BETH: There is no guy, Brian.

BRIAN: Who is there then?

BETH: I'm not getting married.

BRIAN: But, Jerry said . . .

BETH: Jerry cares very much about you, Brian. He knows you very well.

BRIAN: Yeah, but . . .

BETH: I think this is it . . . I think your best friend has set you up and I think this is your chance and I think you'd better grab it.

BRIAN: You mean Jerry lied to me?

BETH: To get you to call me, yes.

BRIAN: And, the thought that if I were mad enough I'd finally tell you . . .

BETH: Say it, Brian!

BRIAN: (*to audience*) This is it. The time has come to ask the question I've been avoiding for almost ten years. The hardest question ever asked since the dawn of time. And after the question will come the answer that will seal my fate. Talk about crucial. (*to Beth*) Will you go out with me sometime?

BETH: Ok. How about tonight?

BRIAN: (*pause*) No. Now. Meet me in the driveway now!

BETH: Now?

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**BRIAN:** Now!

*(SCENE)*

**BETH:** Ok. I'm here. What's going on, Brian?

**BRIAN:** Beth, will you go out with me sometime?

**BETH:** I already said I would.

**BRIAN:** *(Grabs her shoulders)* Beth . . . will you go out with me sometime?

**BETH:** Oh . . . oh, yes, I will.

**BRIAN:** I did it.

**BETH:** You asked me to my face.

**BRIAN:** Yeah. And you answered me to mine. And I'm still here. I'm still Brian.

**BETH:** Looks that way.

**BRIAN:** You said yes.

**BETH:** I said yes.

**BRIAN:** *(to audience)* Well, that's it. You can go home now.

## **SOURCE INFORMATION**

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## **AWARD HISTORY**

*2003 National Qualifier*

*2004 National Qualifier*

*2005 National Qualifier*

*2006 National Qualifier*

*2007 National Qualifier*

*2008 National Qualifier*

*2009 National Qualifier*

*2010 National Qualifier*

*2011 National Qualifier*

*2012 National Qualifier*

*2014 National Qualifier*

*2015 National Qualifier*

*IL State Qualifier*

*Ohio State Qualifier*

*KS State Qualifier*