

**S**hrimp-o!

Runtsville!

Shorty Pants!

Stink was short. Short, shorter, shortest. Short as an inchworm. Short as a . . . stinkbug!

Stink was the shortest one in the Moody family (except for Mouse, the cat). The shortest second-grader in Class 2D. Probably the shortest human being in the whole world, *including Alaska and Hawaii*. Stink was one whole

head shorter than his sister, Judy Moody. Every morning he made Judy measure him. And every morning it was the same.

Three feet, eight inches tall.

*Shrimpsville.*

He had not grown one inch. Not one centimeter. Not one hair.

He was always one head shorter than Judy. "I need another head," he told his mom and dad.

"What for?" asked Dad.

"I like your head just the way it is," said Mom.



“You need a new *brain*,” said Judy.

“I have to get taller,” said Stink.

“How can I get taller?”

“Eat your peas,” said Dad.

“Drink your milk,” said Mom.

“Eat more seafood!” said Judy.

“Seafood?”

“Yes—*shrimp*!” Judy said.

“Hardee-har-har,” said Stink. His sister thought she was so funny.

“What’s so bad about being short?” asked Dad.

“I have to drink at the baby fountain,” said Stink. “And stand in the

front row for class pictures. And I always have to be a mouse in school plays. Just once, I'd like a speaking part, not a *squeaking* part."



“Being short isn’t all bad,” said Dad.  
“You still get those free coloring books  
you like at the doctor’s.”

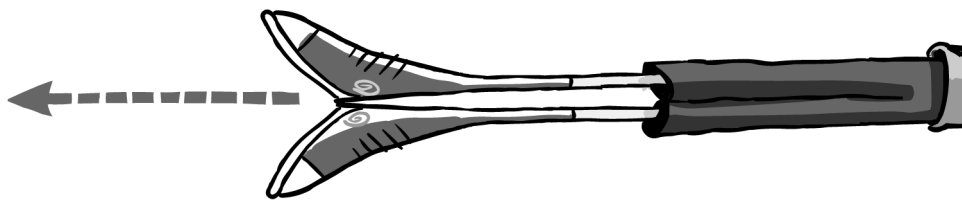
“And the Spider-Man pajamas you  
love still fit you,” said Mom.

“And you still get to use your baby  
step stool just to brush your teeth,”  
said Judy. Stink rolled his eyes.

“You’ll grow,” said Dad.

“Growing takes time,” said Mom.

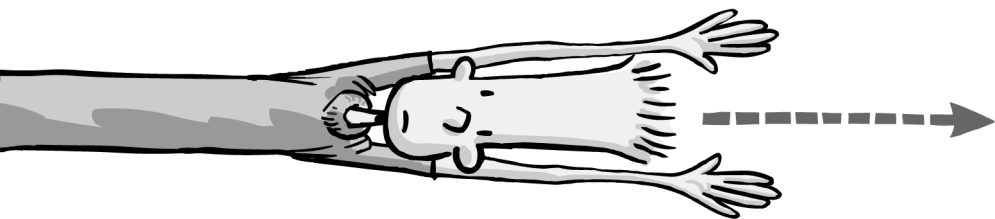
“Lie down on the floor,” Judy told  
him.



“What for?”

“If I pull your arms, and Mom and Dad each take a leg, we could stretch you out like a rubber band. Then you’d be taller.”

Stink did not want to be a rubber band. So he ate all his peas at dinner. He did not hide even one in his napkin. He drank all his milk, and did not pour even one drop into Judy’s glass when she wasn’t looking.



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“Measure me again,” Stink said to Judy. “One more time. Before bed.”

“Stink, I just measured you this morning.”

“That was before I ate all those peas and drank all that milk,” said Stink.

Stink put on his shoes. He stood next to the Shrimp-O-Meter. He stood up straight. He stood up tall.

Judy got out her Elizabeth Blackwell Women of Science ruler. “Hey, no shoes!” she said. Stink took off his shoes. He stood on tiptoe.



“No tippy-toes either.”

Judy measured Stink top to bottom. She measured him foot to head. She measured him head to foot. Something was not right.

“Well?” asked Stink.

“Bad news,” said Judy.

“What?” asked Stink.

“You’re shorter than you were this morning. One quarter inch shorter!”

Stink made a face. “Not possible.”

“Stink. The Women of Science ruler does not lie.”

“Shorter? How can I be shorter?”

“Simple,” said Judy. “You shrunk!”

“You’ll grow,” said Dad.

“You’ll grow,” said Mom.

“But you’ll never, ever, *ever* catch up to me!” said Judy.