

## The joke

I consider myself to be goblin-esque in a lot of ways. I have spindly skinny arms but a lot of mass around the stomach. Pair this with poor posture and before you know it, I'm being cast in the new Hobbit prequel.

My point is that I've always perceived myself as being not very attractive or intelligent. I know this is because of natural human insecurities amplified by the social death rectangle in my pocket, but James at 15 years old didn't have such foresight.

In highschool, my friends were liked for their smarts, looks or 'cool-ness', none of which I had to the same degree. This led me to grow one specific skill to be liked by my peers. The spinach to my Popeye, the ring to my Gollum, the Ant to my Dec.

Comedy.

Unknowingly, I rewired my brain to process all information in a conversation and (when appropriate) churn out the funniest possible response. The closer the friends, the more unexpected I had to be.

Fast forward to 2017 and I'm on my first friend's holiday with about 10 other people (from various backgrounds and ethnicities in case you were worried about diversity in this story). We've flown to Tenerife so we can soak up the Spanish sun and British alcohol.

It's well into the holiday and we're all chilling in the pool. Everyone's having a splendid time and eventually, we start talking about water sports.

Discussion leads to mention of group discounts down at the beach for jet skis, parasailing, peddle boats etc.

Then, it happens.

A speck of inspiration hurtling its way across the universe breaches Earth's atmosphere and collides directly with my brain at immense speed. Immediately, I form a joke. When a comfortable gap in the conversation appears, I interject.

I ask the question rhetorically, squeezing out every ounce of acting ability I possess to appear genuine.

“Hey, do you guys know why SCUBA divers fall backwards off the boat?”

Intrigue spreads like butter. Faces are scrunched and heads are tilted in thought. Everyone plugs into their knowledge matrix to determine if they do, in fact, know why SCUBA divers fall backwards off the boat.

Did you know SCUBA is an acronym by the way? It's 'Self Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus'. You probably did know that though so let me hit you again - *laser* is an acronym.

That's right, the word laser stands for 'Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation'. Isn't that fucked up?

Anyway, I respond. Slowly.

“Well, if they fell off the boat forwards... they'd still be in the boat”.

After a moment to process, everyone performs a unique combination of eye-rolling, reluctant giggling and uttering “oh shut up you dickhead”. I shield my eyes as I'm splashed from all directions and float away on my back in glee.

I can't remember if I heard it somewhere or made it up but I will never forget the moment I told this joke. Goblins *can* be funny.