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Zeke dreams of being a bowling champ. Will steroids make him a clown?

Characters

Narrators 1 and 2: people who tell the story
Sports announcer

Zeke Zimmer: a 14-year-old boy

Mrs. Zimmer: Zeke's mother

Erin

Chris

Melanie

Rico

Darryl

Scene 1

Narrator 1: Zeke Zimmer sits on his bed late at night. He is watching ESPN's *SportsCenter*.

Sports announcer: *Another athlete has admitted to taking steroids to improve his performance.*

Zeke: *(to himself)* Who cares? Everybody's doing it. Who wouldn't want to look like Barry Bonds?

Narrator 2: Zeke turns off the TV and yawns.

Zeke: It's all just a big fuss over nothing.

Narrator 1: Zeke rolls over, mumbles to himself some more, and then falls asleep.

Scene 2

Narrator 2: Zeke's mom bursts into his room.

Mrs. Zimmer: *Cock-a-doodle-doo!*

Narrator 1: Zeke jumps up in bed and stares at his mom. She is holding a live chicken and feeding it ice cream with a spoon.

Mrs. Zimmer: Time for school, Zeke. Breakfast is ready. It's your favorite!

Zeke: Um, blueberry pancakes?

Mrs. Zimmer: Nope. Needles and onions!

Zeke: That's weird. I don't like onions ... and I hate needles! Hey, what's with the rooster?

Mrs. Zimmer: Oh, don't be silly, honey. This isn't a rooster; it's a chicken!

Zeke: Wait. I heard it crow. It's a rooster.

Mrs. Zimmer: That was me. *Cock-a-doodle-doo!*

Narrator 2: Zeke's mom leaves the room.

Narrator 1: Zeke gets dressed and takes the

escalator to the kitchen. Waiting for him is a 3-foot-high stack of blueberry pancakes.

Mrs. Zimmer: Eat up quick before the maple syrup drips into the gutter!

Zeke: Wait. You said we were having needles and onions for breakfast.

Mrs. Zimmer: I said no such thing.

Zeke: And since when have we had an escalator in the house?

Mrs. Zimmer: You're being silly. Now, let's play find the chicken! Come on! *Woo-hoo!*

Narrator 2: Zeke's mom twirls around the room like a ballet dancer. Zeke rolls his eyes and quietly slips out the back door.

Scene 3

Narrator 1: Zeke walks down the street.

He spots his friend Erin doing cartwheels.

Erin: Hey, Zeke. What's up?
 Zeke: My mom is insane.
 Erin: Too bad. Do you want to skip to school?
 Zeke: Wait. I never skip to school.
 Erin: Yes, you do! Come on, let's skip together.
 Zeke: Thanks, but I think I'll pass.
 Erin: Oh, pooh. You're no fun today!
 Narrator 2: Just then, their friend Chris skips up behind them.
 Chris: Hey, guys. What's up? Zeke, why aren't you skipping this morning?
 Zeke: Huh? Why is everyone so weird today?
 Narrator 1: Chris and Erin ignore Zeke.
 Chris: I hope you guys are pumped up for the bowling tournament today.
 Zeke: *Today?* Wait. I thought the tournament was in two weeks!
 Chris: Um, wrong, Zekey boy. It's today.
 Zeke: But I'm nowhere close to being ready!
 Erin: Well, you'd better get ready.
 Narrator 2: All of a sudden, their friend Melanie appears.
 Melanie: Yeah, Zeke. We're counting on you!
 Zeke: Hey, where did you come from?
 Melanie: Just stay focused on the pins, Zeke.
 Chris: Pins and needles ...
 Erin: Needles and cream ...
 Zeke: What?
 Erin: Oh, that's our new cheer song.
 Narrator 1: Erin, Melanie, and Chris start chanting their new cheer song for Zeke.
 Erin: Pins and needles—needles and cream!
 Melanie: We're the best bowlers you've ever seen!
 Chris: Get in our face, we'll let out a scream!
 Erin: Pins and needles—needles and cream!

Scene 4

Narrator 2: Moments later, Zeke is sitting in a rowboat out in the middle of the ocean. There are no oars.
 Narrator 1: Zeke turns around. Rico and Darryl, two tough guys from his school, are sitting at the front of the boat.

Rico: Well, look at what we have here!
 A loner loser. *(to Zeke)* What's up, loser?
 Zeke: What? Oh, nothing.
 Rico: Why are you just sitting around, loser?
 Zeke: I like the calm. It relaxes me.
 Rico: Oh, man. You are such a loser!
 Zeke: Um, what exactly do you want?
 Narrator 2: Rico and Darryl look around as if they are up to something.
 Rico: One word, loser: *strike!*
 Zeke: What?
 Darryl: Look, we know all about your bowling tournament today. We want to help you win.
 Narrator 1: Darryl takes a small jar from his pocket. He sneaks it into Zeke's hands.
 Zeke: What's this? Steroids?
 Rico: Shh. Not so loud.
 Darryl: Just rub some of this on your arms before the tournament. That bowling ball will feel as light as a ... uh ...
 Rico: A 14-pound bag of candy?
 Darryl: No, you fool! A 14-pound bag of candy still weighs 14 pounds.
 Rico: I like candy.
 Zeke: *(to Darryl)* As light as a feather?
 Darryl: Yeah. Yeah, that's right, I think.
 Zeke: Well, I don't know about this cream.
 Rico: Come on, loser. This is the junk Barry Bonds uses. They call it "the Cream."
 Zeke: Oh, that's original. ... Wait. I thought this stuff takes weeks to get results.
 Darryl: Not anymore. This new brand works in seconds. I like to call it "the Dream Cream." You don't want to let down your team.
 Zeke: Fine. Whatever. I'll try it.
 Rico: Yay! He'll do it! He'll try it! Yay!
 Narrator 2: Rico and Darryl dive into the ocean. They turn into sharks and swim away.
 Zeke: *(to himself)* Well, here goes nothing.
 Narrator 1: Zeke opens the jar. He rubs the steroid cream on his arms.

Scene 5

Narrator 2: Zeke storms into the bowling alley. He is bulked up from using steroids.
 Zeke: *(screaming)* Yahhh! Let's bowl!
 Narrator 1: Melanie, Erin, and Chris point at Zeke and laugh. He doesn't know why.
 Zeke: What are you laughing at, you clowns?
 Melanie: Whoa! You're calling us clowns? Take a good look at yourself, Bozo!
 Narrator 2: Zeke looks down. He sees his huge muscles bulging from a polka-dot clown suit.
 Narrator 1: Zeke's face is painted. Underneath, he looks angry and crazed.
 Erin: Why are you wearing that silly costume?
 Narrator 2: Zeke is confused. He points and sneers at his friends.
 Zeke: Who put this on me? Was it you guys?
 Erin: Um, no, Zeke, it wasn't any of us.
 Narrator 1: Zeke's eyes twitch. He cracks his knuckles and grabs a bowling ball.
 Sports announcer: We're here at Insane Lanes. Zeke the clown has grabbed his bowling ball. He's crashing through the crowd!
 Zeke: Watch me kill those pins, baby! *Yahhh!*
 Sports announcer: Zeke the clown is charging the lane. His friends are cheering him on.
 Erin: Pins and needles—needles and cream!
 Melanie: We're the best bowlers you've ever seen!
 Chris: Get in our face, we'll let out a scream!
 Erin: Pins and needles—needles and cream!
 Narrator 2: With his giant arm, Zeke winds up and whips the bowling ball as hard as he can.
 Zeke: Get down there, boy!
 Narrator 1: The bowling ball slams into the pins. They shatter in every direction.
 Melanie: Now look what you've done, Zeke.
 Erin: You've ruined the game for everyone!
 Chris: Not cool, Zeke. Not cool at all.
 Narrator 2: Zeke clenches his fists in a rage.
 Sports announcer: Oh, tough break. The pins have been destroyed. The game is over.
 Narrator 1: To make things worse, Zeke's clown



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shoes caused a foul. The strike doesn't count.
 Zeke: But ... but I just wanted to win.
 Sports announcer: Sorry, Zeke. You're a loser. Hey, at least you have your health. No, wait ... I guess you don't, huh? Oh, well, cheer up! Here come the dancing chickens!
 Narrator 2: Two dozen chickens parachute down from the ceiling. They land and dance around Zeke. He buries his head in his hands.
 Zeke: Noooooo ...

Scene 6

Zeke: ... oooooooooo.
 Narrator 1: Zeke wakes up screaming. He checks his arms. They are no longer huge.
 Narrator 2: Zeke rubs his eyes and looks around. It is morning. His mother bursts in the room.
 Mrs. Zimmer: What is it, Zeke? Is everything OK?
 Zeke: Um ... yeah, Mom ... I'm fine, I think. Just a bad dream, I guess. I dreamed I was really, really strong—and really, really stupid.
 Mrs. Zimmer: Oh, honey. You're not stupid.
 Narrator 1: Zeke smiles at his mom.
 Zeke: Thanks, Mom. Wait! The bowling tournament isn't today, is it?
 Mrs. Zimmer: No, silly. It's not for two weeks.
 Zeke: *Whew!*
 Mrs. Zimmer: Now stop clowning around, and get out of bed!

—Bryon Cahill