



Monty Python's Tunisian Holiday: My Life with Brian

Kim "Howard" Johnson

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"One of the finest and most accurate records of the making of the film that I have ever read. I just wished I could remember what actually went on then."

--Terry Jones

"If anyone can remember more about making the *Life of Brian* than me, it's Kim 'Howard' Johnson. He came, he saw, he got into costume. While the rest of us were fighting to upstage each other, Howard had a notebook hidden in his toga."

--Michael Palin

"Since I've forgotten everything, it will be great to read what was actually going on in Tunisia. Just as long as I'm the most quoted, the most vital to the shooting, and the most interesting. You don't have to mention my stunning good looks if you don't want to."

--Terry Gilliam

"Of all the books that I am planning to read in my dotage, there is none I am more looking forward to than *Monty Python's Tunisian Holiday*. . . . Not only does 'Howard' Johnson know more about Python than anyone outside of the IRS, he was in Tunisia for most of the filming of *Life of Brian*, and is the only person who captured every thoughtless remark, heated exchange, embarrassing detail, petty insult, and spiteful act of indifference."

--John Cleese

"Kim 'Howard' Johnson was invented by Graham Chapman during an idle moment on the set of *The Life of Brian*. 'Let's invent a person,' he said. 'An American fan from the Midwest,' chimed in Michael Palin, 'who keeps a daily diary of Python filming. And then doesn't publish it for years and years.' How we laughed, and each day we'd make up stuff this 'person' would write about us."

--Eric Idle

In 1978, Kim "Howard" Johnson ran away to join the circus--Monty Python's Flying Circus, that is. The Pythons converged on Tunisia to film their timeless classic, *Life of Brian*, and Howard found himself in the thick of it, doubling for nearly all the Pythons, playing more roles in the film than John Cleese, and managing to ruin only one shot. He became the unit journalist, substitute still photographer, Roman soldier, peasant, Biggus Dickus's double, near-stalker, and, ultimately, friend and confidant of the comedy legends. He also kept a detailed journal of what he saw and heard, on set and off, throughout those six weeks.

The result is a unique eyewitness account that reveals the Pythons at work and at play in a way that nothing else written about them could do. Now, for the first time ever, the inside story of the making of the film is revealed through the fly-on-the-castle-wall perspective. Even the most diehard fans will get a fresh take on the comedy greats through some never-before-revealed nuggets of Python brilliance: what John Cleese offered to exchange for suntan lotion; Terry Jones directing in drag; Michael Palin's secret to playing revolutionaries and peasants; Graham Chapman gets naked; Terry Gilliam gets filthy; Eric Idle haggles; the secret of the Thespo-Squat; Mrs. Pilate; talk of George Harrison; the cake-flinging that jeopardized the production; badminton, impromptu cricket, and erotic frescoes; and the first-ever presentation of "Always Look on the Bright Side of Life."

Here, uncensored, are the legendary Pythons in their prime. It was a period of comedy history that will never

be duplicated, and *Monty Python's Tunisian Holiday* captures the wit, the genius, and the sheer silliness of the six men that comprised Python.

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