

extra fingers

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I don't think the toys would have done it

AMELIE, as we arrived home one night to find our apartment in complete darkness: "What's happened?"

DAD: "Well, it looks as though we have a power blackout."

AMELIE: "What's that mean?"

DAD: "It means we have no power until

someone works out what's gone wrong and fixes it."

AMELIE: "Oh. I don't think the toys would have done it."

DAD: "You sure?"

AMELIE: "Toys wouldn't do this . . . *(looking in the direction of Isabella)* Would they?"

It's a very expected journey if you ask me

ISABELLA, referring to a poster in Trafalgar Square that was advertising the movie *The Hobbit* that had underneath the title the words 'An unexpected journey': "Why do they say 'an unexpected journey' for? That's such a big lie. They've set up video cameras and everything [to make the movie] so it's a very expected journey if you ask me."

THE FAMILY HOLIDAY TO LONDON PART THREE

Christmas present

ISABELLA: "Dad, how do you know the difference between Christmas present, as in when someone's talking about a present that you get, and Christmas present, when it's just Christmas time that is now? Because it could get really confusing. And what about if it was the heading of a book?"

DAD: "What do you mean?"

ISABELLA: "Well, say a book was called Christmas present. How would you know whether it was talking about a Christmas present or the Christmas that is now?"

DAD: "Context, darl."

ISABELLA: "What's that?"

DAD: "You'd have to read on and find out."

ISABELLA: "That could be a big waste of time."

I don't think you're going to like it

AMELIE, referring to a Christmas present she'd bought for Isabella: "I got you a present today, Issy."

ISABELLA, apathetically: "Oh, that's nice."

AMELIE: "Yeah, but I don't think you're going to like it."

ISABELLA, sarcastically: "Oh great! I'm so glad you're telling me that."

AMELIE: "Yeah, well, I still want to see your reaction. You know, at Christmas."

They already know what it's like here

Isabella and Amelie were playing with some toys they'd bought the day before.

ISABELLA: "I'm not going to take my toys into London today."

AMELIE: "Aren't you? Oh, I am."

ISABELLA: "No, there's no need to do it every day. They were made here so they already know what it's like in London."

Always the literalist

ISABELLA, after I'd told her about the adage 'your home is always where your heart is': "No, your heart is always in here (pointing to her chest), Dad. Not in your home. That would be so gross to have your heart in your home. I'd be dead if I did that. How could you enjoy your home if your heart was in it? And, all my friends would be like, 'Oooh! Why do you have your heart in your house for? That's gross!' You wouldn't be very popular if you did that, Dad."

Lunch shouldn't be that hard

According to its website, the sandwich-making chain that goes by the name Pret A Manger chose that name because it “means ‘Ready to Eat’ in French — all [their] food is prepared in convenient grab-and-go packaging using natural ingredients that are delivered fresh to every shop’s kitchen each morning.” Not that this was anything like an acceptable explanation for Isabella.

ISABELLA, as she was walking into one of their shops: “What’s it called again? (*Trying to pronounce it*) Pret a . . . manager?”

HOLLY, correcting her: “No, Issy. It’s Pret A Manger. It’s French.”

ISABELLA: “Well, they shouldn’t do that.”

HOLLY: “Do what?”

ISABELLA: “They shouldn’t make it so hard to get.”

HOLLY: “What!”

ISABELLA: “They shouldn’t make it so hard to work out. Because otherwise people won’t end up going.”

HOLLY: “But, Issy. It’s just a name.”

ISABELLA: “Yeah, well, lunch shouldn’t be that hard, Holly. That’s all I’m trying to say.”

The Dumbledore dude

ISABELLA to **HOLLY**, as they were coming out of the National Portrait Gallery: “Hey! Remember that old guy?”

HOLLY: “Which old guy? There were so many in there.”

ISABELLA: “The Dumbledore dude.”

DAD: “You mean George V, don’t you?”

HOLLY: “No, Dad. She doesn’t. After that painting of him in there, he’ll never be George V to her.”

Would she be Queen all night?

AMELIE, after being at Madame Tussauds: “Dad, what would the Queen be doing now?”

DAD: “Oh, she’d probably be having tea or relaxing I’d say. But I don’t really know for sure.”

AMELIE: “Oh. Do famous people get much sleep?”

DAD: “Well—”

AMELIE: “Or are a lot of them up singing all night? [A reference to all the pop artists she saw at Madame Tussauds] And would the Queen end up getting much sleep? Or would she have to be Queen all night?”

Way closer

ISABELLA, regarding me buying some souvenirs for her so she could give them to two of her friends when she gets home: “But you promised.”

DAD: “No I didn’t. I did no such thing. I said, and this is exactly what I said because I remember it vividly, that I might think about it a few days before we leave.”

ISABELLA: “Yeah, but you’ve got to admit, Dad. That’s way closer to a ‘yes’ than it is to a ‘no’. Way closer!”

There’s irony for you

DAD, sticking up for Amelie after Isabella had assessed Amelie’s knowledge of English words to be negligible: “No, that’s not true, Issy. Amelie’s vocabulary is really starting to improve now.”

ISABELLA, turning to face Amelie: “You know what the word ‘vocabulary’ means, Amelie?”

They always do something new

DAD to **ISABELLA**: "You can never get sick of squirrels, can you, Issy? I mean I can but you can't."

ISABELLA: "Well, they always do something new. They're all different. Some of them sit on my boot while they're eating their nuts."

DAD: "Yep."

ISABELLA: "Some of them climb up my leg. And they actually cling onto my knee and stay there while they're eating a nut."

DAD: "I know."

ISABELLA: "Some of them just run off. Some of them just turn their back to me. Some of them just sit there. It's all different."

AMELIE, after a long but fundamentally pointless pause: "Um . . . no."

ISABELLA: "Hmm . . . There's irony for you."

'Monkey' needs it

ISABELLA, after it was suggested she put her scarf on so she wouldn't feel cold: "I can't though, Dad."

DAD: "Yes you can. Your scarf's in my bag. I'll get it out for you if you like."

ISABELLA: "No, you don't understand. 'Monkey' needs it."

Peering into my bag moments later, I came across her scarf wrapped tightly around her little toy monkey's neck.

I'm so glad you and Mum stayed together

AMELIE: "I'm so glad you and Mum stayed together after you had me. Because I would have been really angry with you if you'd had me and then quit."

THE LAST WORD

What if someone wants to take a picture of your dog?

ISABELLA: "Dad, what if someone wants to take a picture of your dog? You know how people have to get permission to take a picture of someone's child? Well, do they also have to get permission to take a picture of someone's dog? Or cat? Or, you know, whatever someone's got?"



DOG OWNER HAS APPROVED THIS PHOTO BEING TAKEN