

extra fingers

NEWSLETTER NUMBER 50 • AUGUST 5, 2017

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Bet they're regretting that now

ISABELLA, during the movie *Samsara* as she was watching Buddhist monks rub out a sand mandala they'd painstakingly created so as not to form attachments in the material world: "I bet they're regretting that now."

Backup people

AMELIE, as fire trucks raced past: "Dad, why do they have that fire engine and then they have, like, a small car after it?"

DAD: "Ah . . . that might be the backup water. That might be to have an extra supply of water."

AMELIE: "Or they might be backup people. Just in case they burn down."

DAD: "Who?"

AMELIE: "The people."

DAD: "The people burn down?"

AMELIE: "That's if they get caught in the fire."

Two things I've never seen you do

AMELIE: "Dad, there's two things I've never seen you do. I've never seen you brush your hair and I've never seen you just sit on the couch and put one of your hands under your chin and just think. I've never seen you do either of those two things."

No one thinks like me

AMELIE, on the way home from a concert: "Dad, if I want to remember something for the morning when I'm going to bed I say 'remember this' nine times because that's how old I am. And then, I don't speak for the rest of the night. When the

lights are turned off and I'm meant to be sleeping. And then it works."

DAD: "Are you sure?"

AMELIE: "Yeah. Or I hug a toy and say it."

DAD: "They're the two ways?"

AMELIE: "Yeah."

DAD: "No other ways?"

AMELIE: "No."

DAD: "Okay. Well, you've got to find something that works for you, darl, and it looks like you have."

AMELIE: "Yeah it does. It really does. I go, I'll go, 'Oh yeah!' in the morning. And I remember it straight away."

DAD: "Do you think anybody else would use your method?"

AMELIE: "No. I'm serious. I do not think anyone else thinks like that."

Are you ever glum?

AMELIE, walking through Sydney's Botanical Gardens: "Asian people are always smiling and laughing. It's so weird! I'm, like, 'Are you ever glum?'"

I knew I shouldn't have

AMELIE, after she'd leapt in the air and I had suggested she might like to do a run through the Botanical Gardens: "I knew I shouldn't have done that leap."

When I'm older

AMELIE: "When I'm older I'll be having a bigger head."

DAD: "You think so?"

AMELIE: "Hmm-hmm."

Knew you wouldn't get it

Amelie had been opening and closing an umbrella around a breakfast table strewn with cereal in bowls, despite protests from others who felt she was being particularly annoying.

AMELIE: "You know what the umbrella was, Dad?"

DAD, tersely: "No. What?"

AMELIE: "It was a camera. I was taking pictures with it. I knew you wouldn't have got that."

DAD: "You looking forward to your bigger head?"

AMELIE: "No."

What else can we do?

ISABELLA, as we were approaching Cardiff Station in Newcastle, our destination: "Dad, if we miss this stop we should wave and smile at Grandma as we're going past and point in the direction we're going. So she can drive really quickly and follow us until she catches up to us."

DAD: "That's your plan for Grandma, is it? That's your plan for my mother who's eighty-four years old? If we miss the stop at Cardiff that is."

ISABELLA: "Hmm-hmm. What else can we do?"

Never a lolly shop

DAD to Amelie, as we were walking along a cycle path: "What do we sound like? As in, you know, the sound of our feet on this cycle path? What do our trudging feet sound like?"

AMELIE: "Marching soldiers?"

DAD: "Yeah. That's right. They do, don't they?"

AMELIE: "Yeah. Soldiers are always off to war."

DAD: "You think so?"

AMELIE: "Hmm. They're never off to a lolly shop. It's always a war."

Everyone's always dying

AMELIE, as Grandma was showing her a family photo album of when she was a little girl: "Everyone's always dying in this photo album."

Your call

AMELIE's advice to Isabella, straight after Isabella had finished eating pumpkin soup and was about to bite into two pineapple rings: "If you don't want to fart, wait half an hour. If you do, eat them right now. That's what I say."

Just grab it from the ocean

AMELIE: "I'd really like to get a pet shark. Or a pet ant eater. I don't really mind. Because you wouldn't have to pay for them. You could just grab them."

DAD: "What? A shark?"

AMELIE: "Yeah. You could just grab it from the ocean. You'd need to put it in water though. Like, really quickly. And you'd need a lot of water. Like a big tub. Or a tank."

Not so sure now

AMELIE: "I did really well in my English test, Dad."

DAD: "Did you?"

AMELIE: "Yeah. I got twenty-six out of thirty. I got three wrong on the second page and one wrong on the first. But the one I got wrong on the first page wasn't even wrong."

DAD: "Wasn't it? Are you sure?"

AMELIE: "Hmm-hmm. I put 'than' instead of 'then' but they're really the same thing."

DAD: "Ah, no they're not."

AMELIE: "That's what my teacher said. She said the same thing. She said, 'No, Amelie. They're not.' So . . . I'm not that sure now."

Unique Monique

DAD: "Who are you inviting to your party now, Amelie?"

AMELIE: "Oh . . . um . . . Olivia, Caitlin, Monique and maybe Erin."

DAD: "Oh. Who's Monique?"

AMELIE: "She's the one I once went to her birthday party and she has two lamas, a sheep and is allergic to dairy."

DAD: "Oh."

AMELIE: "Yeah. And nuts . . . probably."

Horse's hair is very beautiful

AMELIE: "What are you looking at, Mum?"

KARIN: "Oh it's just a lady that's in advertisements who's in her sixties and she's got grey hair and she's not going to dye it anymore because it takes so much of her time and she doesn't think it's important to do anymore. Her hair looks nice as it is, doesn't it?"

AMELIE: "She looks like a horse."

KARIN: "Well—"

AMELIE: "Her hair's just like a horse's hair."

KARIN: "Yeah."

AMELIE: "Horse's hair is very beautiful, Mum."

Never helps much

AMELIE to Isabella and Holly: "Do you ever have teachers that go way down to talk to you at your desk? Like, they bob down and stuff?"

ISABELLA and **HOLLY**, in unison: "Yeah. Of course."

ISABELLA, continuing: "They do that all the time."

AMELIE: "Yeah I know. I get it all the time too. It's so weird."

ISABELLA: "No it's not."

AMELIE: "Yes it is. Because it never really helps me much. I can never concentrate properly on what they're saying because their face is always so close to me and I'm always looking straight at their face and all their makeup. It's so thick!"

ISABELLA: "What?"

AMELIE: "Their makeup. I'm always thinking about how much makeup they've got on and not what they're saying. I never remember anything they're saying because most of the time I'm not even listening to them. I'm just going to myself, 'Whooh! So much makeup!'"

When I'm 18

Amelie, her friend Erin and I were travelling to a musical rehearsal.

ERIN: "Houses and cars are really expensive. When I'm older I think my mum and dad will help me buy a house. And a car."

AMELIE: "I don't know what I'll end up doing. When I finish school I think I'll just stay in the

I know her

Amelie, about a girl at her school:

“Issy, you know that girl who did all the poos in the toilet? Well, she’s the new music team captain.”

Isabella: “Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. I know her.”

house I’m in now until I’m . . . I don’t know. Twenty-five, I think.”

ERIN: “Yeah. Me too.”

AMELIE: “Well, I’ll be eighteen and you can do what you like then. I think I’ll just stay where I am and watch as many movies as I like.”

Ten hits the spot

AMELIE: “Dad. I found ten cents yesterday.”

DAD: “Did you?”

AMELIE: “Yeah. It was really good. I put it in my shoe.”

DAD: “Did you? Oh! Why?”

AMELIE: “To itch my foot.”

DAD: “Really?”

AMELIE: “Yeah. It was so good for doing that. I moved it around inside my shoe and got it to go to different itch spots whenever I felt like it. It’s a really good coin for moving around and getting it to go exactly where you want it to go. It’s way better than a five cent coin.”

DAD: “Is it?”

AMELIE: “Yeah! Are you crazy! A five cent is way too small and it’s nowhere near as thick. And . . . and. It’s also much better than a twenty cent because that’s too big and hurts. The ten is just right for itching.”

THE LAST WORD

He’s not there

AMELIE, during the movie *Samsara*, as a group of Jews were offering prayers to Jehovah at the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem: “He’s not there!”