

Harriet Report #6 - LIFE BEFORE PARIS AND CYNTHIA'S VISIT

I felt settled. I had routine. I was used to the life. I always took Arthur to soccer.

EXAMPLE OF "BEFORE" LIFE: PROMISED IKEA STORY

(edited all the "damns" out, it seemed crabby, please put "damns" back as you read)

I took Peter to IKEA one Saturday morning thinking it would be a treat for both of us, seeing all the model room setups and eating at the cafeteria. Way wrong! The worst of three pains was the forced flow through the entire store before you're allowed to exit, an IKEA novelty, great for selling, horrible nightmare for shoppers because this store is huge!

We're talking a five kilometer hike just to get back out of the place and crowded every step like when you play the subway game of dodge-human, trying to gauge your pace to fit the fastest between the slowpokes and others around you. Peter played whining anchor, rather than tail wind. That was the second worst of three pains. The third pain was cramming our huge bags of purchases into the not-big-enough-of-course lockers so we could go back around the whole store again and get to the cafeteria. Yes, yes, you would have given up I'm sure. Some people are intelligent, some are hungry.

But he did like IKEA's park-a-kid where he could watch videos while I shopped, which we of course didn't find until after two trips through the whole store. We took the bus home, complaining the whole way.

"AFTER" LIFE

When Cynthia came to visit we took Arthur to IKEA on his training wheeled bike five minutes after I bought the bike for him. She rode beside and behind him, I rode lead, and he almost got run over by a taxi. Yikes! But at least it wasn't the bus.

We had a great time! Arthur liked IKEA's little kid playroom, check them in so they don't stress you out, fabulous idea. Cynthia was a surprisingly enthusiastic shopper and loved IKEA's offerings, I enjoyed my quiet meal of swedish meatballs in the cafeteria with chocolate tart and nobody worrying me! Didn't get lost trying to get out of the store either. Understood the lockers. Fresh air riding bikes back. No whining.

EXAMPLE OF CHANGED EVERYDAY LIFE

Cynthia arrived on Wednesday morning, soccer day. It started to rain hard. Cynthia went with me to pick up the boys at school. We were cold. We needed to go to soccer in the cold rain. Arthur said "I don't want to" and Peter said "My bike makes a funny noise like twump twump" and I looked at his very flat tire and almost burst into laughter-tears. Isn't this luck! We were right in front of the bike

shop, they would fix it (for free) by the NEXT day and then nobody had to go to soccer and we could veg out in the spacious house and enjoy that it was raining and storming out. But the lead soccer mom said later "Where were you?" and I said "mumble mumble mumble" of course!

Today was actually my first day back to soccer, it was raining, all the mom's sat in the "bar" in the clubhouse. It was smokey. Peter and I sat together and read. I had tea. I couldn't remember any of the mom's around me that I know I've talked to before. They LOOK familiar? I was happy to read in the window next to Peter. Except I was reading a news magazine about Israel and Palestinians fighting and it made me cry. Peter noticed and offered me some dutch m&m's. I love to feel loved!

Today was the first time Arthur rode his own, new bike the six kilometers to soccer. He was really working and on the way home I had to constantly coach him over my shoulder as I coasted as slowly as I could, "pedal Arthur" and "good job, come on!" Was it worth it? It took twice as long as riding him on the back of my bike and there was tons of stress worrying about him in the trafficy parts. He went straight upstairs to the cartoon channel as soon as we got home. I expect him to sleep soundly tonight.

I think that's about it for life before Paris. Now it's life after Paris. Cynthia's gone home and sent a lovely thank you letter that made me feel strong and teary. The boys and I are back from our vacation in London. I'm starting to feel re-settled and it's nice.

I love the life.

sincerely, Harriet November 1, 2000