

## Something Special

This was an away week, a game the Saints played in the rain on the Sunshine Coast. It had been planned for the whole year to go to Judy and Marks house and watch this game on pay TV. Their daughter Amanda is my footy daughter. Their newer daughter, four year old Zoe, was our good luck charm when she put an accidental curse on Carlton a few weeks back. Remember, she's my fairy of choice. So I was in charge of the takeaway Chinese, they were in charge of looking after me in the comfort of their home for the twilight match. Amanda was out for the night with friends, doing young people stuff.

I came armed with presents for Zoe. I'd missed her birthday but I also like to bring her gifts, practicing for being a full on nanna in the future, I have my friends son Luke (19 months old) who I am gifted with being a titled extra (third) Nanna, and Zoe who I just love to play with. Being a Nanna and a friend, you get all the fun without any of the responsibilities. And a child can never have too many loving Nannas and friends. Perfect! My Bubba (grandmother) used to say: children are the investment, grandchildren are the dividends. Very wise (on some things) was my grandmother, now long gone. This saying I repeat and repeat to all new grandparents and old grandparents as well.

The gifts I came with had much meaning to me. For those in the world with or without kids, you have to look at the Australian author and artist Alison Lester's books, as many as you can possible get. She is wonderful, imaginative, funny and I have raised my three kids on reading her books. My favourites are her four set hard book series for the very young with titles such as "Happy and Sad" "Crashing and Splashing", "Bibs and Boots" and "Bumping and Bouncing". These simple books were worn out by the time my babies were bigger, and now I buy them as gifts for new families. They are very Australian in the way the families live, simple, messy with family life, out-doorsy, relaxed, living in the dirt in the back yard kids kind of books, country and city. These books are the closest I've found for illustrating the loving reality, the chaos and mess and love of family life.

So as well as this set, my next favourite Alison Lester book is "Imagine". This is the one I bought for Zoe, each page has a brother and sister imagining themselves somewhere great, on an adventure, and then the page of them in that imaginary place; there are pages of Australian farms, African prairies and South American jungles, roaming with dinosaurs, under the sea, in the country, in the Arctic and so forth. There are the names of all the animals, birds or fish around the pictures so you can test yourself as well as the other, on their knowledge. In the back, there are plates with all the items numbered and their names catalogued. I think Alison Lester has covered everything that flies, buzzes, crawls, swims, stomps, swings, runs and roams and her imagery is unique and recognizable.

So while the footy started, Zoe and I started with the colouring, I'd bought connectable textas and coloured paper, and we drew footballs and flowers and animals until she wondered off and I got to watch some footy and catch up with the busy lives of Judy and Mark. Between them, they've had two marriages (inclusive of this one) and, raised 7 kids and the grandchildren continue rolling in. It is busy and hectic but this afternoon it's just Zoe and me and Mark and Judy lazing away on Saturday afternoon.

By the time St.Kilda got ahead, which didn't take too long, we were thinking about our stomachs and ordering Chinese. We left near the end of the second quarter and I instructed Judy to make sure the Saints piled on some more goals before half time. I was looking for lots of percentage points and

confidence points. Mark, Zoe and I went to pick up the ordered food on Church Street, Brighton. It was the best tasting Chinese I've ever had.

When we drove there, Saints goaled. When I picked up the food, the Saints goaled, when Zoe and I talked about how much we loved steamed dim sims, Saints goaled. When we drove back, they goaled again. Judy did good. My Saints were doing very good.

During half time while the Saints and the Suns recovered in their rooms, we ate and drank and talked. And ate and talked. And finally, we drifted back to the TV after cleaning up; it was the beginning of the last quarter. Saints were well ahead. Riewoldt had gotten his 500 and was still goaling. Some faint sympathy swam around somewhere up the back of my brain for the suffering Suns, but it is so rare to beat anyone by this much, we just sucked it up like it was oxygen and we'd been suffocating. And we have Adelaide next week after their bye. Who knows if the bye will make Adelaide rustier or fitter.

Meanwhile, we said goodnight as Zoe headed for bed, and I headed home to watch the replay and listen to the Essendon vs Fremantle game which was another of this years surprises.

On this morning, I had drawn another illustration for the Almanac, after Geelong beat the struggling Blues on Friday night. I was thinking about the imagery of having all these teams flying, literally, Crows and Eagles and Hawks and Magpies and Swans and even the Bombers. All winged, all in flight, all fighting for the prize. Again, I can't remember a season where so many BIRDS were so dominant. Come Sunday morning, when it hadn't been posted yet, I sent in an updated one, with the Bombers wings on fire and the Dockers anchor hindering the Tigers climb. But the birds (live and mechanical) were all circling and the CAT was coming to get them all.

Saints won the game. Suns finished 7.7.49 to Saints 21.18.144.

Yvette Wroby

Monday 11<sup>th</sup> June 2012