



It's Just Not Cricket!

March 2006

You cannot simultaneously prevent and prepare for war.
~Albert Einstein

A Day in the Life

I recently described my work schedule as being "typically deviant free." So here's a day in the life of me. The abridged version.

Prayer for Lent

God, who searches for the lost: our season brings the lengthening of days and longer light reveals what had been hidden. Cleanse our hearts as we spring-clean our dwellings, that we give away what we no longer need and justice and kindness have ample room. In the name of Jesus we pray; Amen.

A Bit of English Culture

When deciding whether or not to back Bush in the Iraq invasion in 2003, the UK Parliament spent 10 hours in deliberation. When deciding to outlaw fox hunting, Parliament spent 60 hours debating.

Reading to Understand the Performance:

When it comes to Shakespeare, I usually read the play before seeing it in order to have at least a vague idea of what's going on-language issues. In September I saw the world premiere of Afterbirth written by Dave Florez. Set in North London on a council estate (subsidized housing), it is the story of Baz who returns from a care home to meet his new brother and heal family rifts. The accent threw me in trying to understand what was being said by the actors, but not as much as the poor pronunciation. I've learned since being here that some of the sub-cultures don't pronounce all of the consonants (or whole syllables) of words. For example, "butter" becomes "bu'er;" "give us" becomes "gi's." Anyway, I finally read the play and thus understand a bit more than when I saw it. Not great, but the two hours it'll take to read aren't a waste.

Thursday morning the alarm goes off about 7:50AM. I roll over, find the clock, hit the snooze button, roll over again. Eventually I drag myself out of bed and get around. I walk fifteen minutes to work then ring the bell (our keys were taken away last month, but that's a whole other story and rant) and wait for someone to locate a key and let me in. It is about 9:05. I go into the office, sign the attendance book and check my e-mail (a one line e-mail from my sister with a picture of Wesley Crusher wearing a hideous orange sweater). Now I go downstairs to where Jackie is making mouse sized nibbles into her toast. "Morning Jackie. Hurry up, we're supposed to be leaving in a couple of minutes." "Yeah." "Now." "Yeah." *Nibble nibble.* "Jackie!" "Yeah!" "Quick, or you're not going to college." Her toast and orange are now eaten at record speed and her tea gulped down. This basic conversation structure repeats itself through washing her dishes, getting upstairs, getting her coat on, and eventually out the door. Then it's trying to get Jackie to just shove her keys into her pocket and walking at an average speed to the bus stop instead of inspecting her keys while walking at a snail's pace.

Autism looks a lot like obsessive compulsive disorder sometimes. The rituals! Some of Jackie's include straightening the curtains until they're just so; lining her keys and the ring up just so before putting them in her pocket then making sure they're lined up properly there as well; lining her feet up just so then staring down, straight ahead, or up at a slight angle. The list goes on.

We arrive at the college a few minutes early (either rush Jackie early or don't get there until the next day). Class begins at 10AM. The six students are supported by the teacher and assistant to make up the shopping lists. Sometimes I'm needed to help, so I do. Mostly, the point is to get the students to do for themselves or ask their classmates for help. If I'm not needed I sit outside the classroom and read until I can be useful. If it is Jackie's week to go shopping then I go along (I hate shopping. I'll spare you the description of that painfully slow process), otherwise she bakes and once again, I either am needed or I read.

Lunch break is an hour long. Jackie and I eat the canteen's soup of the day and bread rolls. Then she spends ten to fifteen minutes in the toilet (again, this is a mini-saga all its own; poor Pascal took her to college when I was on holiday and had to wait outside the ladies for half an hour). After there's a "walk" in the garden- she stands in a corner and stares at- or in the direction of- the pebbles.

In the afternoon the students do the prep work for the following day's café. Again I read unless my assistance is required/ requested. Assistance includes helping the students working on folders, writing food, etc. Class is dismissed at 3PM. Jackie stays an extra half hour to work on learning letters or numbers with Reba, the teacher. If Jackie wants me, I observe. Otherwise, I sit out and read.

When we get back to the project shortly after 4, Jackie puts her laundry in the wash then makes the cup of tea she's been asking about all day: "can-I-make-a cup-of tea-when-I-get home?" "YES!" [Don't tell my mother, but I'm beginning to empathize with her frustration at the nagging she got from my sisters and me.] I remind Jackie that she needs to get up the first time she's told in the morning and get around "quick." "Yeah." I'll come in tomorrow morning and have to rush her through everything. :-p'

At 5PM I'm ready to go as soon as someone can open the door.

Meet Laila and Anna!



Laila (22) and Anna (19) Grinberga are tall blonde Latvian London sisters. They fancy themselves comedy geniuses.

Laila studied classics at university She is currently doing administrative work at St. Anne's and helps out with the junior church. She also likes to call people "dollface."

Anna is studying human genetics. She plays the violin and sings in the church choir. She says that speaking to her parents in English is weird so it's all Latvian. English to Latvian in less than 2 seconds.

Things they hate: toast, John Lennon, wasps and cockroaches.
 Things they love: LATVIA!!! [their emphasis], Ethiopia, Eurovision song contest, Latvian song festivals, wearing funny clothes, the pub, the young adult discussion group, St. Anne's, and asking me why I'm not wearing a coat.

They've contributed Cockney rhyming slang for this month's vocab lesson with the claim that people actually say these. Enjoy.

- Borassic lint, "skint"** as in... "I'm borassic", meaning "I do not have any money"
- Bubble bath, "laugh"** as in... "You're having a bubble, mate", meaning "you're kidding"
- Sky and rocket, "pocket"** as in... "I've got a nugget un my sky", meaning "I have a pound in my pocket"
- Adam and Eve, "believe"** as in "would you Adam and Eve it!"
- Butcher's hook "look"** as in... "let's have a butcher's"

Another favorite of the students' café at the college is Greek salad. Presented here to make much smaller amounts.

Greek Salad

- 1 cucumber
- 5 tomatoes
- 2/3- 1 pkg feta cheese
- 1 green pepper
- black olives
- 1 lemon, juiced

Chop the cucumber, tomatoes, green pepper and feta cheese, and halve the black olives. Place all ingredients in large bowl as they are chopped. Pour lemon juice over vegetables. Mix together. Serve alone or on lettuce.



Madam Tussaud's: Pascal and I took Jackie and Tendai to the famous wax museum in mid-March. Here Tendai addresses a press conference flanked by Blair and Bush. (Pascal is on the left.)

The US of A in England

The third year anniversary of the US and British invasion of Iraq was observed here with rallies by various organizations to take British troops out of Iraq, a new plan by the government for bringing British troops home and news reports about Iraq being on the brink of civil war. I watched a news documentary about the men over there. The last patrol of two soldiers was shown. They were killed about an hour after being filmed.



London Eye: At the end of March, Pascal and I took Tendai and Jackie to the London Eye (giant enclosed Ferris wheel). Here's Jackie with a view of North London behind her.

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The Young Adults in Global Mission is a program of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America which provides adults between the ages of 19 and 30 a year of volunteer service. The program offers leadership development, spiritual growth, global awareness and understanding. To find out more about outreach of the church, please visit <http://www.elca.org/globalserve/youngadults/>