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#92, Arizona, March 2013, Summer in Winter

Dear Arizona,

It's been nonstop cold, grey, icky weather forever. Do you know where I can get a time machine to transport me to a hot, tropical island?

Winter Woes in Wisconsin

Dear Winter Woes,

Your letter reminds me of something that happened when I was babysitting my brother and sister last Saturday.

It had been nonstop cold, grey, icky weather for us, just like it's being for you.

"Okay Tex and Indi," my mom said on her way out the door. "You guys remember Arizona's in charge."

"It's still okay for me to take them to the little park, right?" I asked.

"Yep," said Mom. "We've got to enjoy this little bit of sunshine when we can!"

My whole babysitting plan was basically to have this super fun pick-nick in the park. We'd have a 'make the sandwiches and snacks' activity, and we'd bring the soccer ball to kick around, and we'd play on the swings and jungle gym, and most of all, we'd soak up the nice, warm, rays of sun. I had it all worked out. It would have been perfect. Except for one little thing.

About ten or so minutes after my mom left, the biggest, blackest clouds imaginable filled the whole entire sky.

Indi was the first to notice, "Uh oh!" she said, pointing out the window.

"There goes our fun pick-nick in the park!" Said Tex.

"Not necessarily," I said all hopefully. "Those clouds might just blow right over."

But just then, a gigantic gust of wind blew so big and loud and strong, it made our whole house shake.

"Yikes!" Said Indi. "I do not think those clouds are going to blow right over, but I do think that wind might blow *us* right over!"

"Oh come on," I said. "We're not going to let a little breeze stop us from having our pick-nick are we?"

And exactly then is when a million tons of rain started pouring down. Let's see, how can I give you an idea of just exactly how hard it was raining? Well, you know the expression 'it was raining cats and dogs'? Well, that day, it was raining elephants and whales!

"Argh!" I cried. "Why can't it just be summer?"

It was kind of weird. You'd think my little brother and sister would have been the ones to be really disappointed about our adventure getting wrecked, but for some reason, they ended up being the ones who were trying to cheer *me* up!

"Hey," said Tex. "Why can't it be summer?"

"Um, maybe cause it's the middle of winter," I grumbled.

"No," said Tex. "I mean why can't we *pretend* it's summer?"

"Yeah! Good idea!" Indi agreed. "You wait here, Zona. We'll be right back!"

They disappeared for a kind of amazingly long time, and I was about to go check and make sure everything was okay, but then I heard a bunch of giggling coming from the living room.

"What exactly is going on in there?" I called.

"Hold on!" Tex called back. "We're almost ready!"

"Ready for what?" I called.

"Hold your horses," Indi called back. "You'll see in a minute!"

Eventually, they told me to come in, and when I finally saw what they'd been up to, I seriously could not stop laughing!

"Welcome to our tropical island!" Said Indi.

"Oh my gosh!" I said. "You two are crazy!"

They were lying on beach towels, had on sunglasses and hats and were wearing their swimsuits and swim trunks over their clothes. They'd moved our two big reading lamps over, and tilted them down to be like sunlight shining right on them. They'd even brought out the shovels and pails we use for making sand

castles, and sprinkled around a few sea shells and starfish from Indi's special treasure collection.

"There's a towel right here for you," said Tex.

"And an extra hat and sunglasses!" Added Indi.

"You guys are the best!" I said. "This is the most awesome summer/winter day ever!"

We ended up having our pick-nick adventure after all. And it turned out that a pick-nick on our tropical beach was even more exciting than a pick-nick at our little corner park.

"Everybody take cover!" Said Tex. "A vicious, man-eating tiger is racing out of the tropical jungle to eat us up!"

It was actually just our silly cat named Cow who'd come poking around for a nibble of our turkey sandwiches, but I'm pretty sure he liked being treated like a big, scary tiger for a minute or two.

After a fun, summery day on the beach, we cleaned up the living room, and thoroughly confused our parents at dinnertime.

"It's too bad your pick-nick in the park got rained out by that nasty storm," said my mom.

"That's okay," said Indi. "We had an even better pick-nick on a super hot, tropical island!"

"With man-eating tigers!" Said Tex.

"Oh really?" My dad asked, curiously.

"Really!" I said, lifting cow up to my lap. "You can ask the tiger yourself!"

And so Dear Winter Woes, as much as I wish beyond belief I knew where to find a time machine that could take both of us to an exotic, sunshiny place when it's icky yicky nonstop cold outside, I highly suggest taking a tip from my creative little siblings, and try imagining yourself a perfect summer day. If you don't want to bother with the towels and sunglasses and tigers, you can take a nice warm bath, close your eyes, and pretend it's ninety degrees in the shade, and you're just doing your best to keep cool by floating in the ocean!

Ciao for Now,

Arizona