

Lissa Fouetly
70 Steven Court
Fairfax, CA 94930

ACCEPTED 10/1/12
SIGNED CONTRACT RECEIVED 10/16/12

#94 Arizona, May 2013, Unexpected Treasures

Hi Joelle – Sorry there are so many extra words. I love you!

*Dear Arizona,
I'm always feeling disappointed. I get my hopes up, but things never work out the way I want. What can I do to make life go my way?
Disappointed in Denver*

Dear Disappointed,

For spring break, my family and my cousins Sam and Kate's family rented a cabin on a lake in the mountains. I had the best plan in the world for how my vacation was going to go. The cabin was a four-hour drive from my house in San Francisco, so I had lots of time to make my list.

"You've been writing for a while back there, Arizona," said my Dad. "Are you working on the next great American novel?"

Maybe next week," I joked. "Right now I'm making my *to do* list of all the things Sam and I are going to do in the mountains."

"What about Tex and me?" Said Indi. "And Kate! How come you don't want to do any of that fun stuff with us?"

"Of course I'll play with you guys too," I explained, but Kate's your guys' age and Sam's my age and Sam and I just usually end up hanging out when we all get together."

"Will you read us your list?" Asked my mom.

Here are a few of the things I read to them: Go canoing, make a raft out of branches. Hike to the top of the mountain, climb a tree, have a stone-skipping contest, roast marshmallows over a campfire, see a shooting star.

When we finally arrived, there was a delicious lunch waiting for us.

"I can't believe how much you kids have changed since we saw you last year!" My Aunt Jenny said, doling out her special homemade potato salad.

As soon as lunch was over, Tex and Indi and Kate went outside to kick the soccer ball around.

“Hey,” I said to Sam. “How about while the little kids do that, we go check out the lake?”

“Nah,” said Sam. “I’ve got something way more fun for us to do!”

“Awesome!” I said, all set to start checking activities off my list.

“Which bat fighter do you want to be?” Sam said, turning on his computer.

“Bat what?” I asked.

“I just got the best new computer game called Bat Fighters,” he answered. “Bats are actually the coolest little creatures, and even though there’s a lot of action and strategy in this game, you also learn all these interesting facts about bats. First you pick which kind of bat you want to be. There’s Star Bat, Water Bat, City Bat, and Tree Bat. I’m gonna be Water Bat cause you get mega bonus points if you catch the monster fish.”

“Um, this looks really fun,” I said. “But it’s not exactly on my *to do* list.”

“Your what list?” Said Sam.

“I made a list of all the things I want to do this week,” I explained. “And they’re pretty much outside naturey things rather than inside computery things.”

“Oh, that’s cool,” Sam said, flinging super power balls at the sea monster thingamabob. “You go do your thing, and I’ll just switch from two player to one player mode. I’ll see you later.”

Right about then is when it got pretty obvious that my plan to do everything on my list with Sam was about to get un-planned. I wandered out the cabin door, and Kate called, “Zona! Yay! Are you coming to play soccer with us?”

“Sure, I guess for a minute,” I said, kicking the ball gently in Kate’s direction.

Then – pow! Kate gave the ball a huge kick. It went flying down the hill, and Tex raced off to get it. We waited forever, but he wasn’t coming back – so we finally went to go find him.

“There you are!” Said Kate. “What’s taking you so long?”

“Shhh!” Whispered Tex. “You’ll wake them up!”

“Wake who up?” I whispered back.

Tex pointed at a small flat crack in a great big rock. When we looked inside, we saw the most incredible thing – two fuzzy little bats, as tiny and sweet as could be! Their twinkly eyes, black noses and mousy ears were facing us, and their furry brown wings

were spread out flat as pancakes. It felt like we'd happened upon the most magical, secret treasure, and it was better than anything on my list!

"Oh my gosh!" I laughed. "We have to show Sam. He knows all about bats!"

And sure enough, Sam was totally into our discovery. After a while, we all went in to look up bat facts on Sam's computer. We discovered that our bats were *Myotis*

Lucifugus – commonly known as Little Brown *Myotis* bats:

Description: Body length about 2.4-4.0", with a 9-11" wingspan. Glossy pale tan to dark brown, evenly colored fur. Long hairs on toes. Small, black pointed ears.

Range: Woodland, forest bat. May be the most abundant bat in North America. Ranges from Alaska to Monterey, then down Sierras, across Canada and US. Typically absent from hot, dry lowlands.

Habitat: Roost in large groups in caves, rock crevices, hot attics, buildings and bat houses. Also use dead and dying trees near water. Migrate to hibernate in caves and mines.

Diet: Emerge at late dusk. Eat aquatic insects including gnats, crane flies, mosquitoes and mayflies, as well as beetles, moths, bugs, flies. Can eat more than their body weight each night.

Behavior: Lifespan 34 years or more. Forage over water and around trees and lawns. Give birth to one pup which can fly at 14 days. Baby kept beneath wing during day.

So Dear Disappointed, I guess what I learned is how important it is to be flexible. It's great to have lists and plans and hopes and dreams, but it's also good to stay open-minded, and know that life almost never goes exactly how you planned. Don't get me wrong. I agree that it's incredibly depressing when something you've been counting on falls apart. But if you're open to the possibility, something even better than that thing you were so looking forward to, can pop up out of nowhere and totally make your day!

Ciao for Now,
Arizona

