

Excited about reading, a late Christmas gift, taking down the tree, and more (7 Quick Takes)

~1~

We went to the bookstore to spend some Christmas gift cards earlier this week, and our younger son was afraid he wouldn't find a book he wanted to buy. Then he spotted a book on a display and made a beeline for it.

"Will I be able to read this book?" he asked. He has dyslexia, so reading doesn't always come easily. He works so, so hard to be able to read, but he doesn't always enjoy it.

We turned to a random page, and he read a sentence with just a little help with one word. It was perfect. He couldn't wait to buy the book and start reading.

As I watched him reading the book on the way to the checkout, I could have cried. It was just so wonderful. He has been reading the book, *Finding Gobi*, all week, and he is inching closer and closer to the end.

His brother has been enjoying one of his Christmas books too—*The Mysterious Benedict Society*—so they have both been in reading mode. I came home from work one night, and the house was silent as they were reading.

"We've been reading for the past hour," our after-school sitter told me. "I can't believe it either."

Dreams do come true.

~2~



Way back on Nov. 25 of last year I ordered a pair of hair bows for John's 3-year-old goddaughter, our niece, for Christmas. It was one of the first gifts I ordered for Christmas. But somehow—even though the artisan who made them mailed them right away—they never arrived. It was so strange.

I had given up on them and went and bought some Paw Patrol finger puppets to give her instead. But they finally arrived this week! I have no idea why the package took so long to get here, but the bows arrived before the feast of the Baptism of Our Lord, so it's still technically Christmas.

~3~

I've never taken a live Christmas tree down myself. So when I realized someone had to take down my parents' tree and that my husband's allergies would prevent his assisting me, I was a little nervous to tackle the job. But I underestimated the abilities of our 11-year-old.

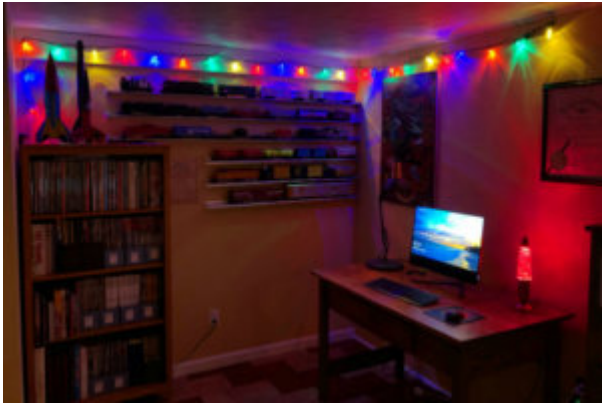


He helped me take the lights off, found a wrench that fit the bolts holding the trunk in the stand, carried the tree outside with me, and even noticed a few straggler ornaments as we were taking it to the curb. Then he vacuumed up all the needles.

Usually I'm sorry to see the tree coming down because it means Christmas is over, but we felt so accomplished and proud.

I'm in no hurry for these boys to grow up, but 11-year-olds are extraordinary.

~4~



We still have our own Christmas tree up, but it's an artificial tree, so there's no rush to take it down.

Meanwhile, my husband decided to install some Christmas lights year-round in our basement, and I love how they look!

It makes me wish we had Christmas lights up all around the house, but I suppose that would be a bit much. I was remembering how we had them in our dorm room in college, and they were so soothing. I hadn't thought of that in years.

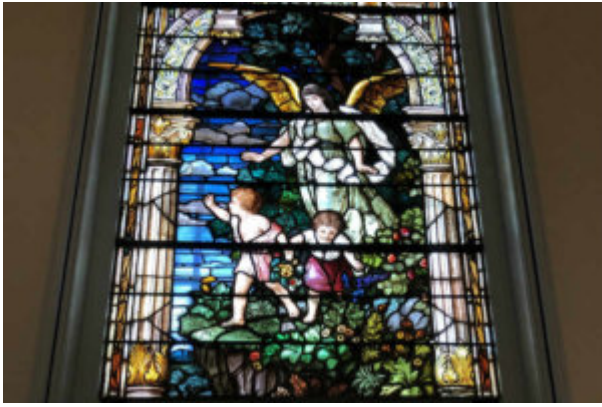
~5~

I ordered Chinese food for our boys and their sitter to enjoy one night while we were out, and I accidentally entered the wrong credit card number online. A woman at the restaurant called to ask me for a different credit card number. But I missed her call and didn't get the message for a while.

When I finally heard it and called to pay, I asked her when the food would come. I was afraid dinner would never arrive at the house. But she said dinner was already on its way.

I was surprised that she sent the food to us without payment. Then I realized we do order from there quite a bit. It was, in fact, our second order in three days. So, she probably knows we're good for it.

~6~



On Sunday we went to Mass at the church where John and I had our first date, St. Mark's in Catonsville. It worked because we had to pick up a beef kabob sandwich from Dimitri's on Frederick Road to take for the person we were visiting at Johns Hopkins Hospital. (I wrote about our visit [here](#).)

We were parishioners at St. Mark's for a few years while we lived in Catonsville, and it always feels a bit like coming home. It was really special because it was Epiphany, and we were travelers in a way.

I just had to take a picture of one of my favorite stained-glass windows there.

~7~

This week I gave myself a gift. I let Pastries for Parents happen without me. Judge away. I adore time with my children. I can't get enough of it. But I do not enjoy those events at school where you go and eat donuts with your child.

We always scramble to get there, we're stressed the whole time, the event itself is noisy and busy, I eat pastries I don't need to eat while my children eat nothing, and I leave disgruntled. So this week? I pretended there was no Pastries for Parents.

The world is still turning, and I'm completely content.

Read more quick takes at Kelly's blog, This Ain't the Lyceum, and have a wonderful weekend.