

Tea Party Girl

August 28, 2002

The thing that is causing the most tension in our household is not that school has started, not that we have 16 8th grade boys living with us, but Katie. My older boys are outraged with her.

She can say Da-Da and Mama. But her third word was not JT or Matthew.

It was Jessie.

The dog.

This has NOT gone down well with the boys.

Katie has also caused some tensions with Nancy. Although I was the one who really pressed for a girl, Nancy has discovered within herself an intense desire to have tea parties with her female child.

But what we have discovered about Katie is that she is a bread fanatic. After the babies have eaten breakfast, they play on the floor for a half hour and then the rest of the family eats breakfast. We put them in their chairs and give them cheerios.

Until Katie sees the toast. Then she makes a series of long deep guttural noises indicating that she wants more bread. I can't think of a way to suggest what the sound is like, except you might hear it in someone who lacks fiber in his or her diet. Every time Katie makes the sound, JT says 'There is your tea party girl, Mom!'

I'm working in Guidance this year (and at this point, may I suggest that all of you who have hilarious things to say about that remember that taking too easy of a shot is not a CHALLENGE) and with school starting, it has been busy. Since I come from corporate America, I had not realized how many classes get changed because Ha-Sun is in period one biology and I can't stand how she flicks her hair back after she finishes a test so I need it fourth period. It's been eye opening.

We are set to deliver the food on Saturday. Coordinating food delivery, purchases, and strong arms and backs (each bag weighs almost 200 pounds) has been a great challenge, especially when dealing with people who don't have phones and emails. This has been a typical conversation.

ME: Do you have beans?

THEM: Yes, many bags.

ME: I agree to your price. NEXT DAY

THEM: I do not have any beans.

ME: Why did you agree to sell them if you do not have any?

THEM: I thought I might.

That has happened to me several times, and it stems from people hoping they can find beans and sell them to me even if they don't have them. Because my car can't handle the three tons of food we are buying, I have had to hire a truck and driver, and the negotiations have been **fascinating:**

ME: I will pay 11,000 shillings.

THEM: And my lunch.

ME: OK

THEM: And my dinner.

ME: No

THEM: I will cancel.

ME: Good.

THEM: I do not want lunch either.

When I was in Kenya before, the life changer was delivering food to a school and seeing all the children lying on the ground. When I asked the teacher why, she told me that it was Thursday, and most of the children hadn't eaten since Monday, and when they sat up straight, they fainted.

We're not in a famine now. This is a long-term investment in children staying in school, but I can still see those children lying on the ground.

Your pal

Steve

PS. Peifer children!



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