Three Kids, Two Dogs, a Reptile, a Loving Husband and a Summer to Remember

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I am not going to start this with: “Summer is here! Time for fun and relaxation!” There’s a world out there to experience. You all know that, perhaps we all do — and that maybe more than once we have caught ourselves staring out the window thinking: “Why am I here instead of spending an afternoon on a beach somewhere or in a wood cabin up in the mountains?”

Years ago it was easy for me to pack my bags for a weekend out of town — sometimes even taking a bus ride without planning ahead on where to go or what to do, but those days are over. And besides, my traveling companion is now busy being my husband and father to my three kids.

Now vacation means planning ahead, confirming reservations, packing bags and finding someone to feed the pets and water the plants — the list goes on. Going through each and every entry on the list is tiring. Writing the list was tiring.

We deviated from our yearly vacation plan and all decided to stay at home.

My husband and I both work at home. With school out, we were all every day in one place, with the mall as our nearest refuge for leisure. There’s the movie theater, of course. And summer meant plenty of blockbuster action-packed movies. One after the other. After we had our fill of several buckets of buttered popcorn and soda, we asked, so what’s next?

It was quite ordinary, what we did every day that summer. And that ordinary was what made it so special. That summer was when my husband and I had to prepare our daughter for college. That summer I also got to know my kids better. It was special because I became more than a mom to them. I became their friend.

I also got to learn how to cook. Not just plain cooking of tossing in proteins and veggies to make a stew. I cooked with my heart and served the dishes plated like how professional chefs would do. Surely my love for cooking must have outshone my inexperience in the kitchen for everyone seemed to love my kitchen concoctions.

Several years ago, my husband and I found a shared passion for reptiles. And we were able to find a pet iguana to adopt (with paper and license of course). I liked the idea of having an iguana at home because they’re vegetarians and it encouraged everyone at home to eat their veggies as well. My husband trained the iguana ever so patiently, finding out which types of leafy greens it loves best, which gave me a reason to drag my husband along for our regular trips to the market. We hopped from one market to the other, looking for the best greens in town. I loved those trips because I get to go home with loot bags filled with beetroot, passion fruit, chard, kale, edible flowers and other types of ingredients that are not normally sold in supermarkets. With new ingredients on hand, it meant more new recipes for me to work on.

That summer was also the warmest summer ever recorded. My plants withered, my dogs were sweating like crazy. It was fiercely warm and we all felt it. That was the summer our iguana died. He died from intense heat – something that may have been avoided. For some time we all blamed ourselves for that. We miss the head-bobbing when it tends to claim its territory. It whipped its tail only once a when a cat strayed near its enclosure. He was the perfect iguana and we all miss him.

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