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## Goals for the Cross-Country Tent-Camping Mountain Trip with Jon, Lori, Nicholas, the Dogs and Me

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# GOALS FOR THE CROSS-COUNTRY, TENT-CAMPING MOUNTAIN TRIP WITH JOHN, LORI, NICHOLAS, THE DOGS AND ME

(OR PURPLE MAJESTY REALITY CHECK)

Make the kids as comfortable as possible for the ride to Yellowstone and beyond.

*John fixes the back seat of the rented van (\$1,000 for a month) into a queen-sized bed. He furnishes their "room" with a stereo tape player, travel books, and five hundred dollars worth of candy and gum.*

Inspire them with the beauty of campgrounds.

*John mentions what horrifying, bloody havoc an angry grizzly can effect. We motel it every night except Devil's Tower where Lori confiscates the dog who's had griz experience and stays awake all night waiting, waiting for the bear-assault. Nic takes the German shepherd and sleeps in the van.*

Teach them to boulder hop and mountain climb.

*They take to this like mountain goats, bounding from boulder to boulder and riding the tallis like skateboards, until John reminds them while climbing not to put their hands where there might be rattlesnakes sunning.*

Encourage them to explore, to discover local flora and fauna.

*After they walk through the prairie dog town they see the signs warning of the danger of contracting The Plague by bites from fleas that prairie dogs harbor, and other signs advising that rattlers sometimes take refuge from the weather in the prairie dog holes and just when Lori is going to lay in the sun next to the river and Nicholas is about to catch a huge fish Lori sees a GIANT water moccasin swimming straight for them. She grabs Nic and runs immediately back to camp, crossing the prairie dog town.*

If we can't camp, we will stay in "rustic" cabins.

*I know you can see the outside through the chinks in this cabin and I know that the bathrooms are up the hill, but, really, you asked the owner, there haven't been grizzlies here for eighty years.*

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GOALS FOR THE CROSS-COUNTRY,  
TENT-CAMPING MOUNTAIN TRIP  
WITH JOHN, LORI, NICHOLAS, THE DOGS AND ME  
(OR PURPLE MAJESTY REALITY CHECK)

Impart to them our love of the mountains and their mystical magic.

*In Cooke City, during one of the most heartbreakingly beautiful pink and purple-peaked sunsets they tell us that if you've seen one mountain you've seen them all, and they know that we're counting on spending three weeks out here, so they wouldn't think of asking us to take them home, but they're willing to take a Greyhound bus, and don't worry, Lori's got her own credit card so she can charge the tickets, they certainly wouldn't expect us to pay their way back to Chicago, but, geez, they really want to go home. And anyway, Lori is only eighteen-years-old and even though John says it would be his everlasting honor to be eaten by and sustain the life of one, she's too young to die by grizzly.*

At least show them the beauty of Yellowstone.

*So, we're driving towards the Greyhound station in Livingston, through the majesty that is Yellowstone, the kids are in the back and we hear Lori say, "This is awesome." We are elated; perhaps, somehow, she has absorbed the wonder of this place. Maybe they'll decide to stay with us! Slowly we turn. We look at Lori. She's deeply involved in and awed by... a Harlequin Romance.*

Give them some ~~wonderful~~ nice memories of this time together in the mountains.

*They spend thirty-six hours on the bus, stopping in the seediest sections of small towns and large cities. No one dares harass them. Lori has become Mother Grizzly and her cub is Nicholas.*

Tim meets them in Chicago. They step off the bus and Lori kisses the ground of her city-without-griz, then embraces her adored older brother and her precious and protected younger brother. As they walk arm-in-arm to the car Nic says that someday when he can drive, he will buy a convertible and he invites them both on a trip to Yellowstone.

— Ellen Richter