The Little Story of Jojo



November — A Little More Grown Up

Age 11 · A family keepsake

PROLOGUE

Little feet, big adventures



Jojo’s story began in Brazil in 2015. One of her earliest companions was Brutus, an English bulldog she loved to play with. She took her first steps a little after her first birthday, attended nursery and started swimming early. Nobody knew quite how far those little feet would take her.

Before she was two, her family moved to China for her dad’s work.

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A world waiting to be discovered



Nursery in China was unfamiliar, and at first there were many tears. Yet Jojo adapted remarkably well. Looking back, Dad remembers that the parents were the ones who suffered most.

The family later returned to Brazil. Her little brother Totti, two and a half years younger, would become part of her adventures.

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Two candles, another adventure



During a family holiday in Thailand, Jojo celebrated her second birthday. It was one of many adventures in a childhood that would span countries and continents. In 2019, the family moved to the United Kingdom.

Jojo loves the anticipation of travelling, the surprises and the discovery of somewhere new. Even airport security is a favourite part of the journey.

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Finding her place



Finding the right primary school in London took time. Once she settled in, Jojo made lovely friendships that lasted throughout primary school.

Art, design, sport and time with friends became important parts of her world. Her family describes her as sensitive, kind and creative.

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More capable than she knew



The secondary school entrance exams felt daunting. At first Jojo doubted she could succeed. But she studied, dedicated herself and put in the effort.

She passed the exams for every school she had selected and earned an art scholarship. Her family was enormously proud. And now, at eleven, there are still so many little moments waiting to be remembered.

A little more grown up

Inspired by real childhood moments, brought to life with a little imagination by Bartô.

November had a rather unusual collection of surprises in store for Jojo. A missing flight, a magical stage, a secret mission and a Christmas list unlike any other.

Some of what follows really happened. Some belongs to Bartô·s imagination. The memories in Dad·s own words are waiting at the end of the book.

NOVEMBER

The flight that didn’t exist



At the airport in Brazil, the grown-ups discovered that their flight to London didn’t exist. There was no way to fly that day. But for Jojo and Totti, the news sounded suspiciously like good luck.

Somewhere in the universe, someone had found a spare day on the calendar and slipped it into their suitcases. One more night in Brazil! What a brilliant mistake.

Jojo’s cousin and friend were there to say goodbye, along with the grandparents. The children immediately asked Dad if they could sleep at his auntie’s house. He said yes.

The grandparents were rather surprised: apparently, they hadn’t been the chosen ones!

If the family had been holding an imaginary competition for the most popular sleepover destination, Dad’s auntie had just won the trophy. The grandparents might have to rethink their campaign for next time.

There was no photograph of that moment. But Dad remembered how happy the children were when a plan fell apart.

NOVEMBER

A whole new world on stage



The family went to their first West End musical, a spectacular show inspired by the African savannah. For Jojo, the theatre was like a doorway into another world.

Colours danced off the stage, patterns took flight and music painted pictures in the air. Jojo?s love of art had found a whole new playground.

The costumes, colours, singing and stage design left Jojo astonished. Dad watched her face.

There would be more theatre visits, perhaps many of them. But there would never be another first time. Photography wasn’t allowed during the performance, and Dad knew that the expression he remembered was more precious than any picture.

A locker full of love



Two secret agents had a very unusual mission: Operation Birthday Smile. Their equipment? Balloons, decorations, little gifts and a carefully prepared shopping list.

Jojo and her friend spent Sunday shopping, then arrived at school early on the celebration day to decorate their friend?s locker. Mission accomplished!

Later that day, Dad met the birthday girl and her mum. Both were delighted by the surprise.

What stayed with him was the care Jojo had taken to organise it all. No secret-agent gadgets were needed after all. Just a thoughtful idea, a good friend and the determination to make somebody happy.

Dear Santa, please see attached



Jojo persuaded the family to buy their Christmas tree earlier than usual, from their traditional place. She and Mum decorated the whole tree together.

The next day, Jojo turned to her Christmas wish list. She no longer believed in Santa, but a simple letter would not do. On her school iPad, she designed a presentation: one slide per present, with pictures and explanations of how she would use each one.



Meanwhile, thousands of miles away at the North Pole, the elves gathered around a screen. They had seen thousands of Christmas letters, but never an entire presentation.

One elf wondered whether they needed a projector. Another suggested a meeting. Santa adjusted his glasses. This was going to take some reviewing!

In London, Jojo explained that her long list simply gave the family options. Dad was amazed by the effort and design.

A little more grown up

Dear Jojo,

November brought an unexpected adventure, a first encounter with theatre, a thoughtful surprise and a Christmas tradition made new.

I added a little magic to your adventures, but the most special things needed no invention at all: your curiosity, your kindness and the care you put into things that matter to you.

One day, these ordinary November days may feel very far away. Here they are, kept together, with the memories your dad shared waiting on the following pages.

With warmth,
Bartô



A memory from Dad

Parent’s account. Aliases, punctuation and relative week references lightly edited; exact recording date unavailable.

So we were actually disconnected to the hunt that ended up in Brazil. On our flight back, when we showed up to the airport to fly back from Brazil to London, we were informed by the company that the flight didn’t exist. It was a bit of a shock, it was a bit of a stress to kind of reschedule that. But it was not possible to reschedule for the same day. We ended up rescheduling the next day. Kids went nuts. I mean, Jojo was super happy, especially because she had a cousin and a friend took her to the airport. They all became very happy. The most funny part was that the grandparents were there as well at the airport to say bye to us. That they immediately both Jojo and Totti, they asked to sleep at their aunties, at my auntie’s house. And they asked me and asked me if that would be okay. And I said yes. And grandparents were kind of shockingly say, well, we were not the chosen ones. They preferred to sleep in my auntie’s. She’s a super nice, well, she’s super nice with the kids. That was this week’s highlight, I would say. It was not captured by any photos or anything, but it was a super cool one.

A memory from Dad

Parent’s account. Aliases, punctuation and relative week references lightly edited; exact recording date unavailable.

This week I think the main highlight was we always a family but Jojo specifically because she, she loves arts and she kind of got a scholarship in art. We had our first experience at the West End. We ended up going to watch Lion King. And it was a whole very cool experience. We could not take pictures inside because the theater does not allow. But I would, I will probably never forget her face with the performance, her first time seeing live action from actors and actresses that are performing really well and singing and how astonished she was with the costumes as well, the colors, the patterns, the whole setup of the show was something that really kind of brought them into kind of an astonished eye. They were looking across and I think it, it was a, it is a memory that that they will probably forget, I think, because they’ll be going more and more in theaters. But I think I will never forget first reaction.

A memory from Dad

Parent’s account. Aliases, punctuation and relative week references lightly edited; exact recording date unavailable.

In the middle of this week, she had was coming up like the birthday of one of her best friends. And so Jojo organized with another friend to have a Sunday at the shopping mall to buy a lot of things including balloons and decoration and small gifts. They prepared the whole list, organized everything. They went together. They bought it and they, at that day that she would be celebrating her birthday. Jojo and her friend, they went earlier to the school before anybody else. And they opened up the locker of the friend that was celebrating the birthday and they decorated everything as a surprise. So at the end of the day I met with the birthday girl and her mom and they were super, super surprised and they were super happy that she got that special day. So I think Jojo was super nice to do that. And it was good to see how she organized everything and put together such a nice, such a nice birthday celebration for her friend.

A memory from Dad

Parent’s account. Aliases, punctuation and relative week references lightly edited; exact recording date unavailable.

As we approach Christmas. It was super funny to see how Jojo prepared her Christmas list for Santa Claus, though she doesn’t believe in Santa Claus anymore. But instead of preparing a simple letter like she used to do before, because now she has an iPad from the school, she literally prepared a slide deck, a slide per present with images and how she’d be using each of the presents. She acknowledges that the list is still big, but she wants to give families options to buy the presents. And it was so amazing to see the amount of work she put in to get a list properly designed and ready for everybody to look before they buy the Christmas presents for her.

A little addition from Dad

Parent’s account. Aliases, punctuation and relative week references lightly edited; exact recording date unavailable.

Just to add to what I shared this week, one day before writing the letter, she was the one pushing for us to go and buy the Christmas tree. So we got a tradition about buying a particular place here and she was the one that pushed us to go very early on, earlier than usual. And then decorated the entire Christmas tree with her mom. And then after that, the letter that I just described, it happened. So you can make it part of this week’s memory.

Until the next little moment.

The illustrated chapter is an imaginative interpretation of memories shared by Jojo’s dad. The original accounts are preserved separately. Illustrations are not photographs or exact likenesses.

Four little memories, shared over four weeks. Around 30 seconds each. One illustrated chapter to keep for a lifetime.

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