

Dear Family:

29 October 2000

Though we're little more than a month into Crystal's favorite season, the pretty part of it is all but over. The lovely canopy of foliage providing such an exquisite ceiling over our narrow lane for most of this month has given way to substantially bare limbs and branches. The lovely explosion of red, orange and yellow having nearly completed its annual migration from its breathtaking home in the treetops to its annoying resting place on our lawn, most Saturdays this month have involved at least some raking. The chore is made more pleasant when Hannah expresses her wish to "help." Her "help" mostly entails encouraging me to make the leaf piles bigger and bigger and to watch her dive into them. (It's not enough for her simply to make my job a little harder. She actually insists that I *watch* her do it.)

She remains an odd, albeit loveable, girl. Though she's been potty-trained for some time, she is still prone to accidents, especially recently. If nothing else, these make life a little more interesting. In most instances, so much as a half a drop of urine in her panties is cause for fits of uncontrollable hysteria accompanied by demands that every article of clothing be replaced. Yet on the playground, she might be hanging upside down from the jungle gym with jeans soaked all the way through. Any suggestion that she return home to change her pants in this context, however, is predictably met with, "But that's okay. It will dry." Though hopefully imperceptible to the reader, the writing of this letter was just interrupted by my acquiescing to her prolonged request that we play Chutes and Ladders. She has really taken to abusing her unusual talent of getting what she wants by being oh so cute while endlessly tormenting the person she perceives as being capable of giving her what she wants. I try not to contemplate how she may use this power later in life when her desires have shifted to things less trivial than Chutes and Ladders.

This was also the month for Hannah's short-lived run of dance lessons. An unwitting heir of her father's fidgetiness, she experienced some difficulty following her overbearing (in my opinion) instructor's commands to remain in one place. Her cousin Noah, an unwitting heir of his father's Y chromosome, attended the same class and faced similar challenges.

Lucy turned 1 this month. I, of course, was in Richmond (where it now looks like I'll be until at least mid-December — most of the employees at the Sheraton there now know me by name) for her actual birthday. We eventually celebrated it with Roland, Marci, Grant, Jen and everybody's kids. (We held a pre-emptive celebration a week earlier with Lucy's Great-Grandmother Henrichsen, Grandma Christine, and Coco.) She (Lucy) isn't walking yet, but exhibits fascinating courage/idiocy on the stairs, and can climb into her high chair. While the physical resemblance is unmistakable, Lucy is considerably more sedate than her sister. There needs to be another sentence here, but I'm coming up blank.

Hannah and Lucy were each their usual selves when we attended a screening of *Legacy* at the cool new theater in the Washington Temple Visitor Center. (Lucy crawled all over the place and Hannah had a question every 5 seconds.) None of this seemed to bother our friends, Mike and Thi Trippett who graciously accepted our invitation to see it with us. For those of you who weren't reading me two years ago (most of you, since I only recently started subjecting people other than my immediate family to this) Mike is an old work buddy, Thi (pronounced "Tee") is his wife, and we have attended several things (including two operas and their wedding) with them. With the presence of my friends, I tried for the first time to watch the film (which I'd seen approximately 9,000 times previously) through non-Mormon eyes and concluded that *Legacy* is really geared toward members of the church. I understand *The Testaments* (scheduled to show here beginning in January) isn't though, and I'm excited to see that for the first time.

Crystal turned 29 again on Tuesday and has been the recipient of much sorry-you-feel-so-old sympathy. No one has taken any action, however, to assuage my own anxiety resulting from being *married* to someone who just turned 29 for the second time. But that's neither here nor there. Jen and Grant did their part to lessen the blow by throwing a surprise birthday party attended by every local family member (with the exception of Grandma, who continues to look much better than she feels or is) plus most of the Moorestown contingent and a number of friends from the ward. Dad brought his leaf blower down, and it, he and Matt contributed to making the removal of all evidence of autumn from our back yard a relatively effortless chore. (Do you like the way I started and ended this letter with a discussion of leaves. What's that literary device called? Parallelism? Just call me Walt Whitman.)

Bye.

Love,
Tim, Crystal, Hannah & Lucy