

Dear Family:

25 November 2001

This is written at the conclusion of a long and reasonably fulfilling Thanksgiving weekend. In the past, my practice has been to write the November letter in the car on the way home from Moorestown. It got pre-empted this month by work on the sacrament meeting talk I was scheduled to give today. It ended up coming together better than I thought it would. But Crystal wound up needing to deliver it after the sore throat that's been nagging me since Wednesday developed into something that has almost entirely robbed me of my voice. I guess I'll go to the doctor tomorrow.

If I go, it will just be another chapter in our family's medical odyssey this month. Hannah still has seven stitches just below her hairline; the aftermath of her unfortunate encounter with the fireplace hearth. Don't call the cops, but no grown-ups were in the room at the time, so we don't know exactly how it happened. Hannah doesn't give a consistent account. Depending on which version of the story you find more plausible, she either was pushed over into the bricks by Lucy, or was unsuccessfully trying to balance on one foot atop a stack of old sofa cushions. On second thought, we have a pretty good idea of what happened. Hannah took the whole thing pretty well though. It amazed us that this girl, who can cry for 45 minutes after stubbing a toe and requires the bandages to be changed regularly on barely visible scratches, was relatively calm while being treated for a blood-gushing gash in her forehead.

This has also been a month of out-of-town visitors. We had Peter for a day while Mom and Dad attended the temple. They compensated us for this—as if spending a day with Pete were something for which one ought to expect compensation—by lending us their leaf blower and taking us out to dinner. The next weekend we were treated to a visit from Roland, Marci, and Noah (Crystal's Southern Virginia-based brother, sister-in-law and nephew with whom we lived while Roland attended medical school here). One stated purpose of their visit was to see us. But we suspect it also had something to do with the distinct lack of good ethnic food in Chesapeake. A week later, we got to spend an evening with Crystal's soon-to-be sister-in-law, Mimi George, who was in town filming a documentary.

Unfortunately for them, Roland and Marci's visit coincided with the First Annual White Oak Ward Talent Show. Not unexpectedly, it was a long show that was short on talent. But it was fun and did have some high points. The stake president and his wife, a proper buttoned-down British couple in real life, dressed like Sonny and Cher and did a pretty good "I Got You, Babe." He later came back, outfitted in what looked to be the same wig he wore as Sonny Bono, and did a pretty convincing King Lear soliloquy. (Having a real accent helps.) I guess it wasn't such a bad show. We figure we'll put Hannah in the next one—maybe in a dramatic portrayal of "Suffering Girl With Hangnail." She's a natural for melodrama.

We were a relatively small group at Thanksgiving. Coco's last-minute trip to Vienna coupled with Matt and Andra's decision to spend the holiday with her sister in Arlington left only Grant, Jen, Abby, and Pete with us around Mom and Dad's table. I think all ten of us enjoyed the time together. Abby seems to be growing increasingly fond of Hannah, and increasingly terrified by Lucy, whose name she refuses to pronounce. We theorize that Abby will eventually come around once Lucy stops pushing her down the stairs. In commemoration of Hannah's forehead scar and Abby's apparent fear of uttering her nemesis's name, we adults all went to see the Harry Potter movie. Hannah, who felt compelled to close her eyes and cover her ears during the more intense sequences of *Shrek* and *Monsters, Inc.*, elected to sit this one out. That was probably a good call.

Enjoy the Season.

Love,
Tim, Crystal, Hannah, and Lucy