

Salutations my friend!

Wow, what a year it has been for myself, my lovely wife Annabelle, and our newest addition Phillip. Usually in letters like this, I would boast about this years victories to you. But I do not wish to do that this year. I do not want this tradition to become a contest to see whose family is better than the rest.<sup>1</sup>

Life has been better to us this year than in years' past. We were blessed with our newest addition Phillip, I left my soul-crushing job at the firm and opened up my own shop, and Annabelle is still my Annabelle. My shop is called Bernard's Shop of Wonders, which is a silly name I know. But the town seems to love it, and business has been booming. Granted, I'm one of the only shops in the town that can cater to a vast array of needs, but regardless I am proud of the progress I have made. Annabelle frequently works the cash register, bouncing little Phillip on her knee.

My work at the law firm was not satisfying enough to stay at, mostly because my fellow coworkers were extremely inconsiderate, boorish, and downright disgraceful. They continually oogled Annabelle, which made me very uncomfortable, and I found their practice to be disorganized and ill-equipped to handle even the smallest case. Annabelle agreed that my job was not ideal, and encouraged me to find a new pursuit.

As I said, this year my wife and I had a son Phillip. At first we were extremely distraught to learn that Annabelle was pregnant. We take the necessary precaution to deter this from happening, as we do not wish this life in a harsh world upon another. However isolation led to carelessness, and carelessness led to our darling Phillip. I wish my father could see my son - he resembles a roguish version of myself, I should say.

Annabelle is a great mother, but an even better wife. Though she laments giving up her job as a secretary, she said she finds working at home and at the shop to be relaxing. She sends her love, as always, and wishes you to come visit us soon. She would probably say more, but you know her - she's more talkative in person than on paper.

Phillip seems to be growing up quicker than we thought though. There are times his bright blue eyes pierce me, and though he is not even a year's age, I feel like his is reading me. Finding my thoughts and feelings and dissecting them for his own pleasure. Perhaps I read too much into this gesture.<sup>2</sup> As I write this letter to you he stares at me now. I feel his gaze upon my neck.

I think the most perturbing bit about his demeanor is his silence. The boy neither laughs nor cries. The town calls him the quietest child they've ever seen. You would think since it is the Christmas season, that the lights and decorations would excite him. But I think Annabelle and I

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<sup>1</sup> That award obviously goes to our neighbor and sovereign the Winfields, glory be to them.

<sup>2</sup> This is probably not his oddest behavioral trait. I often find him in rooms where a moment before were completely organized and clean, and the next have become a whirlwind of possessions strewn willy-nilly.



find more joy in the celebrations than he does.

But no matter, Annabelle and I are thoroughly enjoying our Christmas season. This is our first holiday in our new home, and we have decked our halls with boughs of holly, etc. Phillip's odd behavior will not discourage me from imbibing pints of eggnog and caroling with our neighbors.

I hope that you come visit us in Massachusetts soon. You know you will always have a room in our house. Winter is a terrific season to visit - the views around our home are spectacular. The town sets up a Christmas tree in the center of town every year, and it's a sight that's to be seen. I've included a picture that Phillip drew you, I hope you enjoy it. I personally find it a tad odd, but maybe I do not understand the mind of the child like I use to.

Much love to your family in the New Year,

*Bernard S. Kellogg, Jr.*

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