

Happy Holidays!

I don't know about you all, but the Erickson's are ready to put this wild year behind us. I'm so excited that the whole family will be back together under one roof. Well.. everyone except our oldest, Dana.

Dana has decided to stay in Chicago over the holidays instead of coming home to see her family. Of course I'm not mad. I'll always love Dana. I love her even though she's using this coronavirus as an excuse to tear my heart out and hurt me more than I could ever know. I respect my daughter Dana. She's an adult and can make decisions for herself, but I do have to say that not coming home feels like a calculated attack on me that she's been planning for decades.

I'll be fine, honestly. I shouldn't spend this whole letter complaining! Really it's her father who will be crushed. He was really looking forward to hearing more about that movie series Dana likes with the superheroes and the pretty woman from the divorce movie on Netflix. He was thinking about watching it, but now... I don't know. I think he will spend Christmas Eve in his recliner. Without Dana, I don't even know if dad will come to the table to eat.

My youngest daughter is coming home. She's only 20 and I think she's got a great head on her shoulders since she realizes that even this little pandemic can't stop family. Can you believe Emma, my youngest daughter and a college Sophomore, values family so much she doesn't let the government tell her how to spend her holidays? She says she's doing it for free food, but I know she's coming because she's a fighter.

I don't want to focus on the negatives though. We still have so many great Christmas traditions to look forward to. The Annual Cul De Sac Two-Hand Touch Football Game, the Winter Wonderland Kissing Booth, getting drunk at an 11am showing of Greatest Showman on Christmas Day; it's all going to be a blast!

One last quick thing about Dana though. You know, I told her that I wear a mask everywhere, even to church! I even considered spacing out the chairs around the table to six feet if that's what she wanted. It's like, what you really want, DANA!? Is it for me to pay for the plane ticket? Was that it? I'll send you a check!

Christmas dinner is only going to be a few close family members. My sister, her two kids (who are both coming from out of town and didn't seem to put up a stink at all), my father, his new wife, her granddaughter from Kansas, her boyfriend (he's works at a brewery), and my neighbor (she didn't have any plans this year). I knew a big gathering would make Dana upset so I didn't even consider inviting more people. I know Dana values her health and peace of mind above all else though. If that's what's important to her, well, that's what's important to her.

Dana is in a big city and things are different there. Life in the city isn't like small-town Nebraska where people appreciate everything their parents have done for them. All the sacrifices and soccer practices I've driven too. I just want Dana to know

that I get it. A virus is a virus. A pandemic is a pandemic. A juicy, 12-hour smoked prime rib is a juicy, 12- hour smoked prime rib with all the sides you could ever want. They always say that a pandemic might be forever, but a mother's heart can only break once.

I'm glad Dana feels comfortable telling the truth. I just wish she would have told me the whole truth, like how she hates me for some reason now (probably has something to do with that new boyfriend who wears skinny jeans).

I hope your holiday is filled with joy and peace and that your first-born daughter doesn't disappoint you like ours did! Just kidding of course, we will always be proud of her, even if she's trying to fill us with an eternal sadness.

Best wishes,

Marsha Erickson + the rest of the bunch (minus Dana because she probably hates you too)