

# THE HOLEWCZYNSKI FAMILY

Tim, Emily, Eileen, Charlotte, Maeve, Lila, + William

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Happy Valentine's Day, and welcome to TWENTY-TWENTY-TWO! I think it's safe to assume that we are all breathing a collective sigh of relief as we enter into this new year, one hopefully filled with more carefree joy and less...well, COVID. We have so much to celebrate this year. **WILLIAM GERALD** joined the family on 5/26, weighing 8 lbs. 3 oz. like his big sisters Leenie and Maeve. Does he occasionally wear pink? Yes. Do I regularly call him "precious girl?" Sure do. But, so far, he has been an excellent sport. He is the sweetest and cuddliest boy, with big saucer eyes that melt everyone's hearts...even his tough ole dad. We affectionately refer to him as "**Willy G,**" and when we finally start our family hip-hop group (currently picking the swear words out of my favorite 90's hip hop songs), he'll fit right in. Do you know what else will fit right in? Our brand new **TWELVE-PASSENGER VAN**. You know, to hold all of our touring and musical gear...along with approximately 5,000 old French fries. Currently accepting suggestions for band names—winner gets aforementioned French fries, and anything else you can find in our seats.

**EILEEN ("Leenie")**, seven years old, is not allowed to get any older. The fact that she rolls her eyes **HARD** whenever I make this joke further proves my point. I appreciate the fact that she always keeps it real with me, as evidenced by her asking me if I was a pants size "3000" when I was pregnant (yes). I recently asked Leenie what she wants to be when she grows up, to which she replied "a mysterious hiker." Hopefully they never reference that fact on any future episodes of 60 Minutes. Continuing down the path of being an excellent little Catholic, I overheard Leenie telling her sister Maeve that if she doesn't go to church, she'll go to jail (correct). She also prays for her "crush" during rosary (again, seven years old is old enough, thank you very much). Always using her imagination, Leenie told us on the way to family vacation in WI this year that she "definitely saw a volcano." Kiki took issue with this—"there are only volcanoes on the moon." I treasure the days that these are their biggest disagreements. Leenie is always thinking and analyzing, a quality I love about her—and the other day, after a long pause, she asked me "did William toot? Or is today just stinky?" My answer was, and always will be, that there are no "stinky days" in our house. Or are they all stinky? Still waiting for my sense of smell to fully return after my Christmastime-COVID...come to think of it, maybe I don't want it back.

The other night, **CHARLOTTE ("Kiki")**, five and a half years old, woke Tim and I up in the middle of the night to tell us that she was "covered in raspberries." Thinking she was having some sort of strange dream, we sent her back to bed, only to discover the next morning...that she was, in fact, covered in raspberries. A bedtime snack gone wrong, she watched my eyes grow wide with horror as she exclaimed: "I warned you, mom!" Kiki has matured leaps and bounds this past year. In fact, she's become a little humanitarian, and recently expressed concerns with the working conditions at the local Dunkin Donuts drive-thru ... "do the workers ever come out of that little box?!" I assured her that their working conditions were far better than her own mom's. After all, they have donuts! Still a picky eater, I was thrilled when Kiki excitedly asked me what I was making for dinner the other night...of course, it was a red pepper tortellini that I had worked very hard on. She remarked that it smelled great –"just like Combos" (dad's favorite snack). Kiki's favorite question is: "can I please have more money?" She'll need it—at the top of her Christmas list this past year was a "TV with a car in it." She's not as fond of the Holi bus as the rest of us! After a stint of COVID-related truancy post-holidays, Kiki decided that she didn't want to go back to school. I explained, "okay, but if you don't go to school, I go to jail." Maeve burst into tears. Kiki thought about it for a minute, and replied: "okay, that's fine." At least I can count on Maeve to care for me in my old age.

**MAEVE**, four years old, is still the world's best smiler and such a cuddle bug, which we love. The only problem is, that she has the expert ability of smiling so adorably that you hardly notice she has stacked twenty-five magnatiles on top of mommy's wine glass. Now what?! She absolutely cannot keep her hands off of William—no matter how much

we beg and plead. We are praying this translates into a sweet friendship someday, but for now, William might need to go into witness protection. Of course, Maeve would miss him dearly. Sometimes I get a glimpse of the wild inner-workings of her four-year-old mind, like when she asked me the other day: “will William ever get lost in a hole?” Another straight-shooter, I was getting dressed up for a rare date night out earlier this year and Maeve asked me: “Mom, what are you doing with your clothes?” Fair question—my COVID uniform has been fairly bland. Maeve is also our most natural storyteller. If you ask her how old she is, instead of the facts, you will instead hear a 20-minute version of that one time a leprechaun turned our pancakes green (true story). While playing “Castle Guards” with her sister Leenie the other day, she took issue with the “open sesame!” command—they get stuck in her teeth. When we all came down with COVID before Christmas this year, headaches were our chief complaint. Maeve came out unscathed, thankfully. She reported: “I have a good head. If I wobble it, it doesn’t make any noises.” And that’s all any of us can hope for.

**LILA**, two years old, has transitioned from the world’s best baby to a grumpy old man. That’s right, ladies and gentlemen, we’ve got ourselves a mini Kiki. Buckle up! Lila took her sweet time transitioning, too—in fact, she did not decide to start walking until 6 weeks before William arrived, which felt like a very personal attack. But once she took off, she couldn’t be stopped. Lila loves to ride her battery-powered Thomas the train around our backyard like she’s riding her very own Harley, and thinks it’s funny when she “accidentally” rolls over her sisters’ toes. Another memorable episode of Lila’s trolling? I brought home a box of peaches and left it in the front hallway, only to return to every single peach with one bite out of it. The kid doesn’t even like fruit. Her favorite article of clothing is a pair of Halloween socks that make her look like she has monster toes...perfect for our little monster. I quickly learned my lesson when it comes to asking Lila for help—whenever I ask Lila to put anything anywhere (and I mean anything! Clothes, TV remotes, delicious grilled cheese sandwiches...you name it), they swiftly end up in the toilet. Touché. I have visions of Lila and Kiki throwing elaborate keggers at our house someday and charging \$100 covers to get in. I just hope that Tim and I are cool enough to be invited. My ego takes a slight hit at bedtime every night, when I tell her “I love you!” and she replies: “I love Bluey” (in her defense, it’s a great show). But, I’ll keep saying it—just in case her answer someday changes.

This year, **TIM AND I** survived emergency kidney stone surgery, two weeks of a broken washing machine, a whole-family-COVID outbreak, my recent MS diagnosis, and many more bumps along the way. And we still like each other! My goal for next year’s letter is to mention COVID less than 100 times—reasonable?! We spent the end of 2021 binge-watching Summer House and Love Island, and while we were not jealous of the drama, we were extremely jealous of the weather. Of course, we cherish these cold, cozy days at home, too, with all of our kiddos under one roof—they pass by more quickly each year. But still, there’s that sweet sense of relief, that whisper of brighter days ahead, right when that stubborn ice begins to thaw...

***Sun, sun, sun, here it comes.***

May God bless each of you as this new year begins. Happy Valentine’s Day—sending you all of our love.

E, T, E, C, M, L + W