

Thursday, Dec. 7, 1950, Bethesda

Dear Gramamma,

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Now that I'm back on the sleep-in-the-daytime schedule there just doesn't seem enough time in any one day to do all the tasks at hand, in spite of Mrs. Watkin's helpfulness four days a week. Also, I seem to get tired very quickly, and have to sit down or lie down quite often. I thought I'd get over being tired after I'd been up for a week or two, but although I'm not as bad as I was right after you left, I guess "that tired feeling" is going to stick with me. At least the rush will be over after Christmas and Laurence's birthday are over and past. But as I said before, the day doesn't seem to hold enough waking hours to accomplish all I'd like to be accomplishing.

William is going to take the children to the movies on Saturday afternoon, and the five little guests will come here after their lunches for the birthday cake and ice cream before taking off for the picture palace. We went down to Bethesda today to pick out the kind of cake he wanted. No roses, no birthday greetings. He requested that the baker put a picture of a puppy dog on the cake, so that's how it's going to be! He is very excited about his birthday, and said yesterday that we would simply have to pray to God to make the days shorter till his birthday celebration comes. Laurence let me in on the inside thoughts of the younger generation the other day, and I was most amused. I think he probably revealed a profound truth about child psychology: we were talking about what a happy family we are, and how daddy loves mamma, mamma loves daddy, daddy and mamma love their little boy very much. I said I hoped he loved us very much, too. He was in a thoughtful mood, and paused some time before answering. Finally he replied, "Well, mamma, I guess I love you as much as I love any grown-up." But when he saw my inadvertently startled expression, he added hastily and tactfully, "-But don't take it too hard, mamma. That's just the way little children are." It reminded me of a story in Margaret Wise Brown's Wonderful Story Book, about a little girl whose parents gave her a steam roller for Christmas. She didn't know how to run it very well, and kept running over policemen, teachers, old ladies, etc., but when she found herself about to run over all the children her own age who had come out to see the steam roller, she knew she simply had to stop it somehow, because as it says in the book "she simply couldn't run over all the children her own age!" So I told Laurence I quite understood, and wouldn't take it too hard, because I realized that parents were often a great trial to little children no matter how hard they tried not to frustrate the children. And he gave me a big kiss, so that was that.

Mrs. Watkins took me to Garfinckels and Woodies one afternoon for a treat. I bought myself a lovely dramatic big black velvet hat which goes beautifully with both my black and my red velvet jackets, and which I hope will sort of balance my figure a bit. I couldn't find what I wanted at Garfinckels, but saw just the hat I had in mind at Woodward and Lothrop, for a change, and at less than Garfinckel prices. I asked them if they had any of those darling red flannel pants this year, but the lady said they didn't get any in this year! However, she and Mrs. Watkins both recommended some warm wooly nylon ones, so I bought a pair for you. You may not find them as satisfactory as the fascinating flannels, but I thought at least you could give them a trial for once. They come way down to the knees, and dry quicker than wool.

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I'll try to wrap them and the pen you left behind and send them off to you as soon as possible. But in the meantime I'll ask William to write out a check tomorrow morning to include in this letter, for fifteen dollars. I'd very much appreciate it if you would take the money and buy something for Jimmy which he needs or wants, and something that may happen to strike your fancy, and two things for Leslyn and Peedee as from their Aunt Philinda. I simply don't have the time nor energy to look around the stores for gift ideas for the girls, especially as Peedee is more or less an unknown quantity to me when it comes to what things she would like to receive.

The Davises finally fought their way out of the Cleveland snow a week after it started to fall, and came over here last Sunday evening after supper for a little talk and some canasta, leaving early. It was nice to see them after so many months. We also had an overnight visit from Ruth Havey early this week. She called the night before from New York to say she had been unable to get reservation at the hotel, and could she please come out here to sleep. She arrived about nine in the evening and we had a nice talk with her, too. She brought Laurence some tiny Christmas tree balls to hang on the gum-drop tree she gave him this summer. They look very pretty. Also four "naughty" little angels made of pottery, with their haloes all awry and their Christmas carol books in odd positions. They stand under the gum-drop-Christmas tree. Ruth left the next morning with William to go back to Dumbarton Oaks, and planned to leave that night on a B&O sleeper to New York.

Since it is now ten o'clock of a rainy and windy night, I think I'll wend my weary way to bed. I just don't seem to be able to stop wanting to be in my beddy-bye. Ah'm jes' tahred!

Love to you both,

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