

Hello from the Gillespies

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Extract

Angela finally started the letter, summoning her usual cheery tone. Then she stopped. Her friend Joan's voice suddenly came to her mind, as if she was standing there beside her. 'Go for it, love! Let it rip! Tell the truth! It's good for you.' She actually laughed out loud. Tell the truth? How could she? Angela stared at the screen for a long moment. Then she started a new letter, typing faster than she'd ever typed before...

Hello from the Gillespies!

Yes, it's Angela back again. Can you believe a year has passed since I last wrote to you all? I hope you've had a great twelve months and are now looking forward to special family celebrations together at Christmas.

As you know, I'm usually full of the joys of the season, but this time I want to be honest. It's been a terrible year for the Gillespies. Everything seems to have gone wrong for us.

I'll start with the children.

Genevieve: I'm worried she's been away in America for too long, working as a hairdresser in a fake TV world with fake TV people. She's become obsessed with celebrity news and far too indiscreet about the people she works with. She's also started talking in a strange hybrid Australian-American drawl.

Victoria: I'm worried about her too. Victoria and the (very well-known) radio announcer she worked with as a producer in Sydney have been having an affair. An affair that went horribly public and that has left her unemployed and humiliated.

Lindy: She's already back living at home after her latest attempt at independence in Melbourne landed her in a bit of a mess. A bit of a debt-ridden mess. A big debt-ridden mess, if I'm being totally honest. She spends most days now following me around, talking or crying. Was she always so needy? Or such a drama queen?

As for Ig: My darling Ignatius. I love my little Ig very much. This is why I can say with certainty that he has turned into a very weird little boy. He's back talking to Robbie, his imaginary friend. It isn't normal at his age, is it? But am I overreacting? Should I be glad that he seems so happy in his own company? Even if he isn't exactly on his own?

Then there's my husband, Nick: I think he might be having an affair. It's only a cyber-affair so far, but I am sure something is going on between them. Her name is Carol. She's in Ireland. She works for an ancestry website. That's all I know about her, but he seems to be Skyping and emailing her constantly. I don't know what to do about it. How to stop it happening. How to fix our marriage.

This brings this letter to me.

I think something is wrong with me. Something serious. Not just with my marriage, with my children, with these headaches I keep having. It feels deeper than that. Not just physical. I feel so out of place these days. Overwhelmed. Not myself anymore. I seem to be yearning for something all the time. For everything to be different. To be a different person in some way. To go back and start again, somehow make things better this time, make the right choices.

I feel so lost, confused and alone.

Christmas greetings and best wishes to you all,

Angela Gillespie

