

# TRAGIC MUM-FOR-A-DAY'S BABY GIRL THRIVING IN CARE OF DOTING GRANDPARENTS

Conor Feehan

THE beautiful baby girl whose mother died in a tragic car crash the day after she was born will be the centre of attention this Christmas.

Pictured for the first time, Lily Rose Kenny is now four months old and thriving in the care of loving grandparents Ann and Paddy.

People all over Ireland were saddened when details surrounding the death of young mum Nicola, from Thurles, Co Tipperary, emerged in early September.

Nicola had been travelling to Dublin's Temple Street Children's Hospital where Lily Rose had been taken the day she was born because of concerns over her health.

On the way, her phone rang and Nicola and her mother, Ann, and aunt, Irene, who was driving, pulled on to the hard shoulder of the M8 to take the call.

It was from Temple Street with the good news that Lily Rose was in good health and could be taken back home.

## FATE

As Nicola, who was sitting in the back, relayed the happy news to her mother and aunt, a truck crashed into the back of the car. Nicola was killed, and both Ann and Irene were badly injured.

The Kennys now face their first Christmas without Nicola, and their first with Lily Rose.

"Christmas was Nicola's favourite time of the year," said Ann as little Lily Rose chuckled on Paddy's lap.

"We don't really have the heart for it now but we will do something for Lily Rose and her two cousins.

"You love your grandad, don't you," she added loudly in the direction of the couch where Lily Rose smiled back wide-eyed, in the protective arms of her doting grandfather.

In the warmth of the living room it is plain to see that the little tot is enveloped with love.

While the Kennys say they will be glad to see the end of 2016, they have good reason to look forward to 2017 because Nicola's brother, Paddy Jr, will become a father for the third time in March.

"The new baby and Lily Rose will be very close in age so they will grow up together and she will have a playmate," said Ann.

Lily Rose has a great appetite and is well able to smile and



giggle and hold up her head.

"They're thrilled with her in the clinic. They say she is thriving," said Ann.

She and Paddy have both had to give up work to look after Lily Rose. Paddy looks after the night feeds so that Ann can get some rest.

In that sense, they are more parents to Lily Rose than grandparents, thrust into the parental role once more by a cruel twist of fate.

Their daily routine now revolves around Lily Rose and she is the centre of her family's hearts, and a vital link to her mother Nicola who they miss so much.

"It still doesn't seem real. We're dealing with it as best we can, and Lily Rose keeps us occupied," said Ann.

"She's like a daughter rather than a granddaughter in many ways, and she's very like Nicola.

"Everyone has been very supportive. Nicola's friends and her colleagues in Tesco where she worked, and everyone in the town, are great, as well as Pat's sisters and our neighbours. There is no shortage of offers of babysitters and help."

While not able to talk yet about the crash that claimed

Nicola's life, Ann said she and her family have received tremendous and overwhelming support from people all over the country.

"People we don't know and never met have been sending us cards and letters. Pat goes through them but I haven't had the strength to read them yet. They are all in a box and I will go through them one day," she said.

"We also have a box of memories of Nicola to give to Lily Rose when she is older. Nicola was so looking forward to being a mammy, she loved children," Ann added.

## BEAUTIFUL

Ann suffered a broken collarbone and facial injuries in the crash, and is still receiving treatment and physiotherapy.

Nicola worked in the local Tesco store where manager Robert Foley said everybody knew her.

At the time of the crash, Mr Foley said telling the staff what had happened was an incredibly difficult.

"She was a beautiful, bubbly, friendly young lady. She had been working here since 2008 so everybody knew her and she knew all the customers. We were like a second family to her I suppose.

"The one thing I remember is just how friendly she was, with a constant smile. If there was ever a time I'd be pulling her up on something I wouldn't last a minute because she would just be smiling at you all the time.

"She could get away with anything," he said.



Lily Rose Kenny with her loving grandfather Paddy at home in Thurles, Co Tipperary

**'We have a box of memories of Nicola to give to Lily Rose when she is older'**