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Letter from Linda Grace Hoyer to John Updike, October 2, 1950

Linda Grace Hoyer

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October 2, 1950

Dear John:

Daddy, at my insistence, sent you a strange little box this morning which you probably will not find very thrilling. The chestnuts were my idea and the paint brush Daddy's. The gloves to the muffler were holey and we're still looking for a piece of matching yarn to darn them. If you need gloves, I wouldn't advise you to wait for these. The slacks at the London Shop were too light in color and weight for this time of the year. Try to find something in your neighborhood. After seeing Fred Astaire cavort in green pants I'm convinced that you should hold out for a fairly dark pair of green flannel slacks. See what you can do and we'll go back to the London Shop in about two weeks to look at their new assortment.

We sat behind Mr. and Mrs. Yoder at the movies just as we used to do when life was much simpler. They say "they've" been thrilled" by your success. You see just getting to Cambridge, Mass. is success to them. And I can understand their feeling. Three Little Words is a very cute picture with more cute people in it than I ever saw before. In the close-ups of those two red-haired "mamas" I expected your father to run screaming down the aisle. But he behaved admirably, breathing only a little harder than usual.

Things have been going smoothly (for here). The weather has been against Mr. Wells and his hay harvest so that instead of hay we shall have humus. Mr. Moyer, however, appears occasionally in the dead of night, disturbing Jolson a good deal, and takes away from the hay stack in the barn. Speaking of Mr. Wells, he tracted up the road during the beginning of this paragraph and grandpa sent me into the back fields after him to say that we don't want our share of the hay. Yes, your grandfather is cute and still a force to be reckoned with.

Feeling lonely and bereft without our son, we drove over to see Elmer and Anna last evening. The scrubbed-looking Geigers were there and very much interested in your adventure. Somewhere in the dark corners of our minds was the thought that you would be at home doing your Chatterbox work when we came back. But, as you've guessed, you weren't and the house sulked in complete darkness.

Over the money counting and beer drinking on Friday night, Mr. Richards and Daddy had one of their famous conversations. The topic was scholarships and string pulling. Of course your father's ability to repeat a conversation is doubtful. But as he brought the thing home, little Allan rooms alone (and is glad of it) and could have gotten a scholarship too (if the Richards had done all the string pulling we did). Neither of them named the lucky school that can be manipulated by parents on strings. Luckily, no one said Harvard. Anyway, I think page nine of the first issue of the Crimson covers the subject nicely. At last, addy rolled over on his back and said: "Please dear, can I help it if my wife isn't smart enough to teach school like yours." And they parted with love as always.

Love - Mother