



11-18-1950

Letter from Linda Grace Hoyer to John Updike, November 18, 1950

Linda Grace Hoyer

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Did you mark your coat? The cloak room probably
will have hundreds like it.

November 18, 1950
Peter's birth day

Dear John:

Billy Bare was the only member of your class I saw at the play last night. He looked small and slightly lost in his forest green uniform but grinning all over and pleased when we spoke to him. Nancy was lovely as the leading lady of her play. She really was the whole play although Chubby Wein was a spirited and refreshing relief from the feminine conflict. If you ever do separate yourself from Nancy, I can see how tremendously hard it will be. As you once said, she works very hard at being attractive. And, last night, I saw how well she succeeds. She really made the rest of the girls look a little loutish. But definitely. Her clothes were carefully chosen and good for her and the part. Her voice was perfect and in character from start to finish. Yes indeed, your mother was very much impressed. The whole cast had the advantage of a much better make-up committee than your class ever had. Otherwise, I don't suppose their performance was better than either one of the "fifty" plays. Cassie handled her between-the-scenes act with great charm, telling the cast how good and sweet they always were and, afterwards, she insisted to me that they really were as well behaved as she said. All in all, it was an inning for the ladies.

I told two persons about your marks, Nancy and Cassie, who fresh from their own triumphs thought they were wonderful. They are. I wish you could have seen us reading your letter. Grandpa suggested getting on our knees in grateful prayer. But, characteristically, he did not set us an example and so another opportunity for doing good slipped by. Yet we are very grateful to you and ^{the} long chain of circumstances that have made it possible for you to go to Harvard and get on the Dean's list. Does that mean Dean Leighton's list? You'd be surprised to know how often I was tempted to write and give him heck for crowding our delicate child.

The test of all clothing in college is whether or not your roommate wants to wear it. So, I'll relax now, confident in the coat's fitness. It is not the aristocrat of its family, being made of rayon and nylon. The plush ones are the wool gabardines and cost sixty-five dollars. Since Mr. Kennel is slow to pay for his pasturing privilege and all the hay is still in our barn we didn't feel equal to the woollen coat. But of course that is the one you deserved. Looking back, I sometimes shudder at the pictures I have of you and your coats. Was there one warm one in the lot?

The strawberries stand at twenty rows clean and two rows weedy. This, too, is something of an achievement. Today, however, it is cold and windy and certainly not hoeing weather. Daddy is painting the garage doors in spite of having been told about the weather. Mr. Shrawder and Mr. Freed asked him about you yesterday. The ladies who asked were: Miss Leiby, Miss Blatt, and Miss Becker. Daddy is looking over my shoulder and eating liverwurst. That's too much for me (it is my share of the liverwurst he's munching). So, thanks for the good news and get your tooth fixed. Love, Mother

P.S. I forgot to say that Sonny Stoudt helped the stage hands last night and was presented to the audience by Cassie. He wasn't wearing his conductor's suit but his facial expression was the same.