12-1-1950

Letter from Linda Grace Hoyer to John Updike, December 1, 1950

Linda Grace Hoyer
Dear John:

Despite Daddy's bleeding through the skin and my attempts at evangelism, you'll find that your parents have not made any appreciable progress on the steep path to sainthood. It probably was an especially trying week for those who would step heavenward. The weather was alarming, the news demoralizing, and other things were as usual: kids defying your father's ascend upon their ignorance, grandma being a perverse mixture of childhood and senility, and the dogs staying out all night. It's been hard. And that strangely accusing young man from the Harvard studio sits on my writing table somehow complicating the mood. Prepare to give us a detailed account of that young man's problems when you get home. Not having solved our own difficulties very well, I should not even ask questions. But perhaps there is something we can do after all.

We all were very lonely without you during the Thanksgiving vacation and I'm afraid it was rather a faux pas to call Nancy's home in preference to your own. The fact that you called Nancy might have been overlooked if you had not called the Stevens place "home." That was a serious slip of the typewriter. For, in spite of my recognition of her ability as the leading lady of her class play, everything I've ever said about her interest in you still goes. In fact, what I've said goes double because, having seen her browbeat her classmates on the stage, I am no longer amused by the flutterings. They are like the broken-wing act some of the other little birds put on when they are in danger and I certainly hope you see them as such. And in my short conversation with her it was wonderful to see how quickly her flutters changed to undisguised boredom when I told her about your mid-term marks. Of course as you have often told me, I don't know my own strength and I guess was bearing down a bit. But I'm glad I did because I think I know now how much of her energy she uses up in being attractive and how easily her charm will break under pressure. Daddy adds the last straw by saying "she's got him." Be that as it may, don't ever forget that ain't she got me and I can sputter just as long as she can flutter.

Forgive me for getting this off my mind now. I want my conscience to be pure and clean at Christmas time and the conversation to be very Harvardian.

I'm glad you can get six desserts and more than glad that you could eat them. The very thought of it makes this endomorphic's heart palpitate. But since you are now a mesomorphic-ectomorphic aren't you taking a chance on becoming endomorphic too? If it weren't for my being all three, we might be ever so much happier, less confused certainly. Go easy, boy... except when you are locked out of your room. There are two sides to every door but Daddy says it isn't legal for you to get shut out of your own room. Now it is time for the mail to go and I've forgotten what I really meant to tell you. Oh yes, we got no Lampoon. I don't like that either.

Love,

[Signature]