



Linda Grace Hoyer Correspondence

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12-11-1950

Letter from Linda Grace Hoyer to John Updike, December 11, 1950

Linda Grace Hoyer

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December 11, 1950

Dear John:

Daddy says he'll be in the Franklin Street station all of next Sunday afternoon. He has more ideas for your return to these parts than I can divulge at this time. I'm sure, furthermore, that you are making suitable plans of your own. We'll be in church from two to about three-thirty on Sunday but will be ready to take a telephone call at another time.

Your grandmother became a Lutheran today. I read your letter on the subject over and over and put off asking Reverend Yocum for the letter of dismissal until the Tuesday of last week. And I certainly don't feel as though I have saved a soul. The attendance was not increased by the "evangelists". In fact there were twenty-seven fewer communicants than at the last communion service. Of course some of the regulars have gone into service, some are dead, and a number of them are sick. Millie Kurt's mother was expected to die yesterday and the minister made a very dramatic announcement of the fact, almost as dramatic as his announcement of your going to Harvard. All in all, it seemed to be the devil's round.

Someone misunderstood your letter about being on the dean's list, second grade, and asked Daddy whether it was true that your marks are second high in the freshman class. Proud as he is of his son, he assured him (it was Allen Richards Jr.) that the report of your prowess had been greatly exaggerated. Was that right? We have not contacted the papers about your Harvard standing, thinking it might be better for you to do it. Frances Thacher has had the Phi Beta Kappa business mentioned so often that it is beginning to irk me too.

I'm sending the dog story to Collier's today. Like all of my serious efforts at writing, it is almost literary. But not quite. My mind or concentrative ability (or is that the same thing) is not keen enough to be really literary. Daddy read it without being prodded. So, you see, I'm making some progress. But he compared it with one of Kay Boyle's stories in your New Yorker collection and prefers the subtlety of hers. Well, yes. But then he couldn't tell me the story and I had to read it myself and explain the conclusion to him. Isn't that the kind of thing I'm working to get away from?

Have a safe trip and call us when you get to Philadelphia or Reading, as you prefer.

Love, *Walter*

P.S. Whenever you make a long distance call you must speak very slowly and distinctly, saying exactly what you want them to do. For example: "I would like to speak to Mr. or Mrs W. R. Updike, Mrgantown 64389." Let them know that you are not full of nonsense and will tolerate none from them.