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Letter from Linda Grace Hoyer to John Updike, March 1, 1951

Linda Grace Hoyer

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March 1, 1951

Dear John:

My chief achievement since writing to you has been the discovery on page 198 of the second volume of Prescott of the following note:

"One of the most accomplished scholars of the age; Nunez de Guzman, of the ancient house of that name, professor for many years at Salamanca and Alcala, and the author of the Latin version in the famous Polyglot of Cardinal Ximenes; he left behind him numerous works, especially commentaries on the classics."

So what I had fondly supposed was my inventive genius was only a poor memory. The fact, however, that the Don Perez Nunez de Guzman to whom Juan was entrusted as a page was never mentioned in the Moorish war history and crops up in 1517 as a vague but important friend of both Juan and the king would make it likely that he was doing something important in a non-military sense all those years. If you have no definite argument against this assumption, waste no more time on the Guzmans, Nuno or otherwise. The moral is that persons of infinite ignorance should not attempt ambitious books and I apologize for expecting you to track down this elusive guy at all. Supposing that Don Perez Nunez and Nunez are the same person and a college professor of importance, what do I know about the Spanish universities of that or any other time? Small wonder the cagey Somerset Maugham dropped the idea years ago. So should I, even now. But of course, I won't.

I've been typing all day and have a shirt to iron and feel like I have a shirt to iron. Things seem to be happening here in Plowville but no one knows exactly what. The robins are here in large flocks, looking very judicious. Mrs. Steve Moyer had another son yesterday. The Rangers on Record show dedicated a song to James Burkhart who has come out of his oxygen tent and is expected to be able to drive faster than ever after a while. Mr. McElroy's class studied the works of one of the Lampon graduates the other day. And when he asked the youngsters whether they ever knew anyone on the Lampon staff all hands went up. So, being overlooked by the Chatterbox probably will not be too great a handicap. Good night and good luck.

W. H. H.