

11-5-49 Germantown  
Saturday  
3 P.M. J

Dear John,

The week was not so bad as I was prepared to face. My weekend with you (whether because of you or not, I do not know) seems to have calmed me. Since my American History class was writing papers, I had less teaching and more of an opportunity to talk to them individually. The fact that I must not get so tense was brought home to me very forcibly yesterday. One of my <sup>XI<sup>th</sup></sup> grade Modern History class almost burst into tears over a low mark and a comment I had written on her test paper. (It was not a harsh comment.) I looked at her and realized that we were both worrying too much about things that do not matter.

I have thought of you very often <sup>2</sup>  
This week, as often as I have been able  
to stop and think - as I walked along the  
street looking at the evening sky, and late  
at night. I have looked forward to this  
moment when I could sit down to write to  
you. Now I do not know whether I can  
say even a few of the things I have thought.

I should be able to. The house is  
quite silent; Papa is asleep, and Mother  
and Peter are at the movies. There is a  
fire in this beautiful room and huge,  
bright marigolds on the mantel-piece.  
I slept well last night and raked  
leaves this morning. All my books are in  
New York. I can't work.

Much of what I ~~felt~~ have felt  
about last weekend was not felt at the time.  
The desperation was still there when I left  
you. When I got back to the apartment

I realized that my desperation was the only thing I had. I cried and went to sleep and woke up tired but gentler and more sensitive. When I see you again I hope I will have something more for you than that emptiness.

For myself, I am not worried now. I think that I will be able to live and to think as I ~~will~~ must do in spite of the pressure of work. For you, I am not exactly worried, but I am concerned. Though I know that nothing I can say will probably make any difference, yet I will try to say it. Sometimes, you surprise me by agreeing with me.

What I said half-jokingly - that I was glad that I was not altogether a painful experience for you, I meant very deeply. That you should feel so deeply estranged from me and from

The world that you imagine  
I belong to, troubles me. I think  
it indicates a degree of blindness on  
your part as well as my own inadequacy.  
In the particular instance which troubled  
you last weekend, I was at fault, but I  
know that your attitude embraces much  
more than that small thing - which  
focused and symbolized for you a  
great many things. Please tell me  
whenever I do anything like that.  
But my conversation with Aunt Priscilla  
and my friends - all the things that  
you think are meaningless and  
superficial - well, much of it is. Yet  
people must ~~talk~~ and be together  
and talk about things that do not  
matter and wait for the moment  
when one can say and ~~talk~~ talk  
about things that do matter. I know  
Aunt Priscilla well enough to know  
that there is much strength and  
perception in her. You do not approve

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of the way she has brought up  
her children, but, remember, that she  
has had to do most of this alone. If  
she lets them read silly books,  
remember that she didn't read  
the good ones when she was a child.  
If you <sup>think they should</sup> ~~want her to~~ read other  
books say so and bring the books  
home from the library. That's what  
you're there for. She wanted the  
children to know someone  
different from Stv. By the way,  
don't underestimate Stv. He is very  
steady and gentle.

Now I have said too much.  
I've been pedagogical; you will

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feel misunderstood. It is so much  
easier to argue with you and to  
criticize than to express the warmth  
and affection which I feel for you.  
And it is easier for you to be criticized  
and misunderstood than to accept the  
affection which I would rather give you.

Margaret