

Konnarock, July 2, 1950

Dear Margaret,

Today was one of the most difficult days for a long time. It started with a very bad church service; a congregational meeting following the service derailed when father objected to another \$1000 loan on the new church building for the very obvious reason that the congregation cannot begin to pay what they owe already. Father was subsequently described as conservative and faithless; mother is disturbed about the confusion, and my malicious sense of humor refuses to see anything but the foolishness and the comedy in the whole situation. After we came home and had dinner, I was very sullen because I could not concentrate on anything. I tried very hard to read Kant and ~~XXXX~~ Schiller with no more than moderate success. ~~XX~~ Schiller has a very beautiful chapter on the relationship between play and beauty. What I needed most was someone with whom to play, but all the people around me were horribly grown up, and like a child among adults, I became very difficult and naughty. Finally I lay down on the couch and day-dreamed; I cannot remember about what I was thinking, but when father called up to me, asking me to extinguish all the unnecessary lights, I was rudely awakened, and felt, very sheepishly, like Novalis' Heinrich von Ofterdingen in the passage which we read together.

Thank you for your letter. I agree with you that it would be very wrong, in this case, to force Alex into a trip in which he was not interested. It would be just as wrong, however, to force your parents. We will see each other at the end of this month and I try to persuade myself that it will not be long until then. My thoughts seem to have permanently attached themselves to you, and my imagination is such that even though very far away, you are very real to me. Because of this, you must do me the favor not to write me when you will go together with your family to see Priscilla and not to write me from Milton. I need not explain. It was even difficult for me to imagine you at Cape May, among so many strange and confused people, and I was very much relieved when I realized that when I read ~~XXXX~~ your letter, you were already back in Philadelphia again. Mother has made the plausible suggestion that Priscilla might ~~XXXX~~ consciously or unconsciously put me into an unfavorable light in your parents' eyes. ^{this} does not concern me for myself, - it is much less complicated to be disliked than to be liked, - but only for you because of the conflicts which it might create.

Meanwhile I have been trying to write, of all things, a short story. This is merely the most recent and least unsuccessful of a series of attempts. Ten handwritten pages have already seen the light - I wonder whether there will be another ten? As you know I like very much to write down and to try to make a pattern out of my thoughts and my imaginings.

I doubt very much that I will even begin to succeed, but the attempt in itself has some value and it gives me something to occupy my thoughts. From my parents, of course, I am keeping all this secret, - I love secrets, and I don't know why I am writing you all this, except that I believe that you like to share my secrets, however insignificant and silly they might be. My parents think that I am continually writing to you; they ask me, whether I am writing a good letter, and I tell them that I don't know whether it could be called just that, but that I hoped it was good.

Now I must take a shower, try to read a little bit more, and ponder on tomorrow's installment. Please write me and tell me how you are, because I worry very much about you, and tell Alex that I will write to him soon. I would be ashamed to try to explain how much I think of you, - and how much I need you.

Devin
Jochem.