

Dearest nestling!

Thank you so very much for letter and congratulations. The present came in form of a fantastic desert which though inspired by you, was put into form lovingly by Mrs. Alice. I will thank her, naturally, at the end of this letter. We have now a good idea about your life and goings on, thanks to your letter with the daily schedule. Now I can imagine, almost to the hour, what you are doing. The story about the handcraft (teacher?) is rather sad. A physical drawback, especially a visible one, is often causing the personality to be imperfect as well. He somehow wants to take revenge on other, healthy ones, while he is handicapped by no fault of his own. He does not want compassion which can lead to crooked actions and attitudes. The teacher's pets are those girls which feel sorry for her but won't show it, naturally the teacher prefers them. What I don't understand is that you have bad luck in "composition". They must be alright by contents, I can see it from the way you are writing letters, but maybe it is the form or the construction or the organization, which does not meet the school's expectations. Broad form or tight form? In years past, people wrote novels which filled at least 6 volumes until "they found each other" and in time spent, the whole love affair hadn't taken more than half a year. But everything was being described in smallest detail, the morning, the rain, the tablecloth, the uncles, the creation of the world. Until all the writer knew or guessed, was somehow included, only to keep the reader in suspense as long as possible. Today, there are mostly short stories. one and a half columns in the newspaper. Everything happens at a frantic speed, the end being the same anyhow.

What does the school expect of you? Short and exact or long and broad? The same kind of differences exist in the construction or rather in the organization of the essay. I always wrote, and still do by this rule: "The dog consists of a head, rump and extremities". You can use this for just about anything, for a hike, for a biography, for a characterization, for war or a lunch. Depending whether you want to describe the head in detail or only with a few strokes, you can create either 6 volumes or ten lines. The extremities, as an appendage, can be shortened or lengthened easily. But maybe there is another, better skeleton, pick one for yourself. I am already quite bored with mine. Sometimes I turn it around and start with the arms and legs, except the possibilities for change are rather few. Now, try to find out what the teacher is really asking of you, maybe he has a good idea, one which I don't have. You wrote, that you are cutting silhouettes or do drawings in your spare time, but you don't mention what you are reading. I imagine, you probably have very little time for it, but vacations are coming soon, and you will hopefully be able to read a lot. Should you have wishes concerning books, please let me know, maybe I can get them for you or help you with the choice. What you really should do is to read in English, do you think, you can understand easy books by now? What will you do during vacation? Even if you will stay in Schaffhausen, it will be beautiful. I would think the surroundings there are most beautiful, enough opportunities for swimming, many friends and girl friends, it might make for nice holidays. Mutti seems to have better prospects for England just now, and is working hard for this goal. It could, of course, take many weeks until a decision is reached. One has to have much patience these days and not worry too much or celebrate too early about future plans. Of course, celebrating is always better than complaining and despairing, as so many people do and then have no energy left to really work. I shall keepsake your letter and silhouettes which are very beautiful. But I can't stretch my neck as long as you seem to be able to do, in order to give you many kisses, but I kiss and greet you fervently as your very loving Ogrosl Salem aleikum Dear Mrs. Alice! I don't know for what I should thank you more, for the heartfelt congratulations or the earthly nourishment in the form of a wonderfully tasting cake, whose lifeline is just now being cut into pieces for our afternoon repast. I also give you many thanks for Giulia's good mood and funny letters, which have their source in the orderliness, goodness and affection of your home. We are still waiting for better times here, in order to procure that which makes life worth living. A little freedom and a little more living space, peace and quiet. I wish you all the best and greet you affectionately as your humble Ogrosl

Dear Gretli!

To you, who is always joyful and a little in . . . , I am sending my thanks for your congratulations and a high

official reward for your efficient leadership of the Gross mufti club. Vivat, crescat, floreat! Salem aleikum! The Ogrosviesier. Our kitten is so cute, it sits under the piano and lurks for moths, which it tries to catch with its little paws and jumps after them as if they were sparrows. I am sending you, dear Juliettchen, Gusti's letter, which you must soon return to me, so none of her letters are missing. My flowers are doing well, as far as they are still alive. The palm received some old plaster which had fallen off the side of a building. I stuck it into the earth in the pot and now the palm is blooming!!! and has 5 new shoots. The 4 Fuchias from last year are now in Ellen's blue room, on the window sill, where they get more sun. They are much leafed out but make no move to bloom. Maybe July August, they are late bloomers and last into the fall. Made 4 new pots from Mutti's philodendrons. They are still very youthful, small leaves, thin stems and are looking like very hungry children from the lower classes. But they are growing happily. One ivy shoot is almost 75 cm long. I am trying to teach it to climb up a string which is tied up on the window frame, but it doesn't like it and always falls off again. Norbert's beautiful plant reacted neither to moisture nor to dryness and quietly passed away.