

5208 Glenwood Rd. Bethesda, Md. April 24, '50

Dear John,

It was nice to see Peedee and feel like a real aunt. I should like to continue as an aunt, and have Leslyn down here before June. The trouble is the transportation. William is working very hard these days, and taking only one day off a week - Saturday. It may be that we could go up one weekedn, however, but I shouldn't like to ask him to take two weekeds off in a row. I wonder if it would be possible for you to bring Leslyn down yourself over one weekend? I realize that that would involve Peedee also, but you might possibly be able to leave her on the way at grandmothers, if she were willing. Think it over, and answer me so I can make plans. Helen and Pop told me that Leslyn was very anxious to come down here now that Peedee has been, and I feel that I could provide better facilities for entertaining her than could Helen and father. In any case, if you do ask grandmother to invite Peedee for the weekend, be sure to do something about it financially, because I don't know if they themselves would say anything about how terribly bad off they are for money. Jimmy really doesn't have a cent, and would die of embarrassment before mentioning it to you. An extra mouth to feed for a couple of days really would make a hole in their meager finances, but of course mother is the one to contact on the subject of paying Peedee's board. On the other hand, I am absolutely sure that unless they are sick or have made other arrangements, they would be happy to have Peedee down at the farm. And we ourselves would be happy if you could come with Leslyn for one weekend at least, and leave her here with us. We could easily make up enough beds for you. As I say, tell me if you think you can.

Peedee is a nice little girl, just as you say. She is so affectionate and friendly! And Helen tells me that Leslyn is as cute as a button, so I'd like to get to know her also. Now on the Dutch Aunt side: 1) Peedee, like every child in the whole wide world, needs to be taught good manners. They are extremely important, and work like grease in motors. They must be taught continuously from the earliest possible age, so that they become instinctive and positively parrot-like. That's your job, and you shouldn't shirk it, ignore it, go slack on it, or underestimate its importance. I know your'e a busy man! 2) Peedee positively must be taught to help herself to lose weight. You're heading for a sad future if you let her goix on getting fat, and you are not doing her any good whatsoever when you tell her that after she's "cleared" she will be able to eat as much fattening food as she wants to without gaining weight. Granted that she won't have the compulsion to overeat when she is not emotionally uneasy, still her genes will remain the same, and she is going to have to make sacrifices and exert will-power all her life if she is not to continue on the heavy side. The memories of being really too fat as a young adolescent can linger on even after the fat is lost, you well know and so do I. Also, over-eating is a habit, and like all bad habits, extremely long and tedious to get rid of. You ought to help her overcome that bad habit by her own efforts, rather than encouraging her to think that a "deus ex machina" in the form of dianetics is going to solve her problem with no help at all from

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her. Now don't go explaining to me how it's only emotional and with the anxieties removed she won't have the compulsion to over-eat. I'm aware of that. My point is that she is, right now at this very important point in her life, much too fat. Right now at this point she has two choices: she can try to do something about it by force of character, or she can go limp and wait for daddy to fix it. I suggest that the latter course is all wrong in the long run as well as the short run. It's embarrassing to her RIGHT NOW to be too fat- I saw how she winced when she couldn't fit into the clothes of normal little girls her age, and it nearly broke my heart. And in the long run it's unfortunate to give a child the impression, the very false impression, that life is Just a Bed of Roses When You Think Right, and that you don't have to work yourself to achieve your goal. Naturally you are going to do everything you can to erase her unhappy memories and set her on the evenest possible keel emotionally, and I'm perfectly sure that she will be able to get over her bad eating habits eventually with your expert help and that of dianetics. But in the meantime you should do everything you can to strengthen her own will power, and help her to help herself. 3) Peedee should be reading good books and preparing to be an educated, literate woman. She reads far, far too many comic books. Now is the time when she should be reading Robert Louis Stevenson, Kingsley, Doctor Doobittle, Heidi, Dickens, H.G. Wells, Jules Verne, and a thousand others that the literate American woman is expected to have read in childhood. You are cheating her if you don't put the good books in her path so she can avail herself of her heritage. That's your job. She can't be expected to find out what she should read- the books should be there in front of her, and that mental Pabulum in the form of comic books should be relegated to those poor children who are too weak in the head to be able to accept the challenge of connected paragraphs. I know she likes to read; she read those damned silly comic books almost constantly when she was here, and told me she loved the reading period in school best of all. What with television and comic books you are robbing her of the precious time she should be devoting to reading voraciously among authors who could read without moving their lips. I've met other children nine years old, and most of them whom I've admired have had better general knowledge than Peedee has. They have acquired it by reading, out of school. Peedee is a smart girl, and it's your duty to see that she is given an opportunity to develop along the best lines. I repeat as solemnly as possible that you are cheating her if you don't see to it that she acquires good reading habits.

And now, poor John, you will hate me forever, but by gum I seen my duty and I done it. Even your best friends won't tell you, etc. But as I said before, I think Peedee is a sweet child, a sad child, and a lovable child. Perhaps you have been so busy you haven't noticed some of these things, and I really hope you won't hate me but will see most of my points.

Love to you all,