

A Letter Home

Dear Mom and Dad:

It has now been three months since I left for college. I have been remiss in writing this and I am very sorry for my thoughtlessness in not having written before. I am going to bring you up to date now, but before you read on, please sit down. You are not to read any further unless you are sitting down. Okay?

Well then, I am getting along pretty well now. The skull fracture and the concussion I received when I jumped out of the window of my dormitory when it caught fire shortly after my arrival are pretty well healed now. I spent only two weeks in the hospital, can see almost normally, and get those sick headaches no more than once a day.

Fortunately, the dormitory fire and my jump were witnessed by an attendant at the gas station nearby. It was he who called the Fire Department and the ambulance. He also visited me at the hospital, and since I had nowhere to live because of the burned-out dormitory, he was kind enough to invite me to share his apartment. It's really a basement room, but kind of cute. He is a very fine boy and we have fallen deeply in love and are planning to marry. We haven't set the exact date yet, but it will probably be before my pregnancy begins to show.

Yes, Mom and Dad, I am pregnant. I know how much you are looking forward to becoming grandparents, and I know that you will welcome the baby and give it the love, the devotion, and the tender care that you gave me when I was a child. The reason for the delay in our marriage is that my boyfriend has some minor infection which prevents him from passing his premarital blood test, and that I carelessly caught it from him. This will certainly clear up soon with the penicillin injections I am now receiving daily.

I know you will welcome him into our family with open arms. He is kind and, although not well-educated, most ambitious. Though of a different race and religion than ours, I know your oft-expressed tolerance will not permit you to be bothered by the fact that his skin color is somewhat darker than ours. I am sure that you will love him as I do. His family background is also good, for I understand that his father is an important gunbearer in the African village from which he comes.

Now that I have brought you up to date, I must tell you that there wasn't any dormitory fire, and I had neither a skull fracture nor a concussion. I was not hospitalized, I am not pregnant, I am not engaged. I do not have syphilis, and there is no man of any color in my life. However . . . I am getting a "D" in History and an "F" in Science, and I wanted to be certain that you would see those marks in the proper perspective.

Your loving daughter,
Amanda

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MATHEMATICAL GIANTS

It has come to our attention that the field of mathematics employs some rather long words to designate certain mathematical solids. Thus, the RHOMBICOSIDODECAHEDRON is an Archimedean solid with 62 faces; the TETRACAIDECADeltaHEDRON is a solid with 14 equilaterally triangular faces; the ORTHOTETRAKAIDEKAHEDRON is the truncated octahedron, as referred to by Lord Kelvin; and the PSEUDORHOMBICU-BOCTAHEDRON is an Archimedean solid with 26 faces.

Can any of our readers come up with yet longer words of this sort?

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NUMERICAL INTELLIGENCE

An advertisement that recently appeared in the pages of the monthly journal published by MENSA:

"Want a Wooden Overcoat? Buy Honest John Whitworth's health re-energizing sulfo-uranyl-impregnated 'Comfi-vest' with its unique quasi-xyloid fibers—obtainable only from the Paradise Vending Company, Harpurville Heights, Nineveh, New York."

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SEAS AND OCEANS

Did you know that the five oceans contain the seven seas?

Yes, indeed. When logologists speak of the seven seas, they mean the seven C's:

ANTARCTIC
ARCTIC
ATLANTIC

INDIAN
PACIFIC

Hasn't acquisition of this knowledge made your day a worthwhile one? Admit it!