

DORLELETTERS1964 L0001 (English)

Banff, Nov. 14, 64

Dear Ursel,

How are you? Is it getting cold where you are again, too? We've had real winter for a while now, with temperatures at night of -20° Celsius. The sun is so low in the sky that it peeks out from behind the mountains at 10 in the morning, and by 2 o'clock it disappears again. We then look up enviously at the mountains, where it stays sunny for another 3 hours. As soon as the sun disappears at midday, it becomes freezing cold. Christopher sleeps outside in his carriage for 3 hours at noon; when he wakes up, he has cold, red cheeks. André plays outside for about an hour.

We would like to have Christopher baptized in the next few weeks, and I wanted to ask you again if you would like to be his godmother. You absolutely have the right to say no if you don't want to, but on the other hand, it would be lovely for Christopher to have someone in Germany. Since I know you don't much like to write, let's do it this way: If you don't write, then I will assume that you would like to be his godmother, and we will register you as such. But if you would rather decline—and you shouldn't feel inhibited at all—then please write a little card right away.

We have a lot of work to do on the house. There's always so much to do. The forced-air heating is a dream; you can't even tell if it's cold or warm outside, the temperature in the house is always the same. Besides the Volkswagen, we now have a station wagon. It has two rows of seats, but the back one can be folded down, so you have a lot of space for transporting things, or for sleeping. We put a mattress in it, and André plays there during the drive.

Since Eric takes the VW to work to transport his tools, I have the station wagon. I go shopping in Banff once a week with the two children. Christopher is in his car bed and stays there while we shop, and André has his seat with a steering wheel and a horn. While shopping, you can hear him all through the big self-service store as he calls out, in a market crier's voice, the things he can recognize. He'll repeat: "Peas" or "Beans" or "Tea," until he sees something else he can say. Right now, the stores have the Christmas toys on display, and he would love to take everything with him. Yesterday he saw a big red bus for only 88 cents. I could have easily bought it, of course, but if you start that, then he'll think he can have anything as long as he screams loud enough. You see that so often here when you walk through the stores. A screaming child, stamping its foot. People stop and stare, the mother gets embarrassed and quickly buys what the child wants, just to keep it quiet. Our two neighbor boys, 3 years and 1 1/2 years old, are naturally very tidy, calm, and lively. On top of that, their mother never strictly forbids anything. André can't even hold his own against the younger one; they are so savvy and cheeky. When they come into our house, they race through all the rooms within the first few seconds to survey the lay of the land, and then they start in the farthest corner, turning everything upside down. Even the three-year-old is constantly turning the knobs on the stove. André just sits on the sofa, speechless. Yesterday, their mother was hanging laundry in the yard, and both boys stood behind her, pulling the laundry out of the basket and into the dirt. She got furious, tore the laundry from the

children's hands and yelled something (I was watching from the window), and the children, even the 1 1/2-year-old, laughed and delighted in their mother's anger.