BIRTHDAY LETTERS
AND OTHERS

encouraging next generations
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first of all congratulations with your 17th birthday, dear maxime - at that age, I can’t remember to have heard about rite de passages - nevertheless at the end of my seventeenth I found myself busy with one of these remarkable moments, happenings, by which we are entering, marking, next phases of life - as there are, in my case, for example, my first trousers when I was ten - and, more important, entering high school at twelve, like you, as you surely remember - now I was seventeen, soon finishing high school, I found myself capable to enlarge my outward experiences at my own - visiting the caves of han under the guidance of my father, and the like, I wrote about before, did not count any more - enjoying such trips as the ones and only, all of a sudden seemed childish to me

I think you guess what’s coming - that year, with a friend of mine, I made my own tour following the river rhine, we went to switzerland - there we put up our tent at a camping near zürich - in the shadow of the pilatus mountain - alas, at the ever raining-thunderstorm side - there we shipwrecked, as you can see - teun, at the end of his teenage years, did wisely better - he also made his own tour - together with harry peter, safely with eurorail - if he forgot the route they followed, we can tell - believe it or not, we received postcards from berlin, zürich (!), milaan, genua, capri, pompeï, rome, florence, monaco - the last one coming from paris - we think now it was a prelude of what yet had to come - which brings me to you, dear maxime - curious as we are about your rite de passage coming summer - if that will be a tour as ours, we long for the postcards you will send

in case of a rite de passage-tour indeed we hope maurik will be one of your stops - if otherwise, you are welcome whenever you want - so I end now - lolkje and grandfather anthony (ton)

ps
my brother albert lent me his moped - father wasn’t informed about the tour - if, he had prohibited it

ps
we like to honor your final results with £ 100,-- for each A resp. £ 50,-- for B’s - we sent your birthday money to your account - raised to £ 100,-- - hope you will agree with that same amount from now on for vincent, oscar, judith - we think our former system tends meanwhile to some age-discrimination
Dear Oscar, dear Judith

First of all congratulations with your 12th birthday, dear Oscar - as well as you, dear Judith, with your 10th birthday the following day - each year, around the birthday of both of you, I realize how tempting the days before Oscar’s second birthday must have been - would mom give birth to Judith at that day? - offering the newborn baby as a present to the little boy Oscar was? - it happened to be the day after, we know now … otherwise it was with me, born as I was at the 4th birthday of Guusta, my youngest sister - Oscar, two years when mom gave birth to you, dear Judith, was not as conscious of that happy moment as he is now - my sister however, four years old then, she was - mother had regularly said she hoped to give her at her birthday a precious present - a living doll - me - imagine!

At the photograph below you see a happy mother - in her arms however a little reluctant me

Think I know where my reluctance did come from - still a little angry I was - mother had forced nature by a medicine that speeded her delivery, while I preferred to stay some days more in her womb - soon however I found myself happy too - since Guusta did have now the living doll she had longed for, nice playing years followed - at the time boys normally don’t play any longer with girls, these years ended at a natural way - for Guusta it was the like - as a youngster she followed from then on her own way … this brings me to both of you - did Oscar, dear Judith, play more frequently with you than your two oldest brothers did? - how is it being the youngest one of four, moreover a girl between boys? - how is it, dear Oscar, to be the youngest boy of three? - a challenge? - please tell

And … do you celebrate your birthday at separate days or did it become one happening by and by?

So I end now - many questions to think about - totally yours - Lolke and grandfather Anthony (Ton)

Ps
Enclosed a present for you, dear Judith - it has to do with horses - hope you and the yours will enjoy

Ps
Of course a little present for you too, dear Oscar - hope you will enjoy the adventures of Winnetou and Old Shatterhand - I wrote about them in my birthday letter to Vincent - you can ask him - think he will enjoy the movies too - Maxime and dad probably also - even mom and Judith, why not!
first of all congratulations with your 14th birthday - at that age, I remember, I was reading western-stories, written by karl may - with old shatterhand and winnetou as famous protagonists - the first one I got was given to me by a neighbor - unfortunately he did not have any idea which sort of books were suitable for the eight year old boy I was - so father took it away - angry about that, secretly I started reading it - but he was right: it did not fit - as said before, some years later, it was at your age, it did - caused also by some westerns, B-films, which were offered to the young ones of our neighbourhood - once these films ended we fought outside as the good guy and the bad, playing for cowboy, red indian as well ... book and film were separated worlds in those years

as beginning adults this changed, wondering the many, many books and novels which were filmed

discussions entered our lives - such as: the book was better, no, the film was - the film did follow correctly the book - or as a pity, did not - and the like - nowadays these competitive comparisons are less relevant - books, novels and film are seen as separated forms of art - as far as they are intertwingled, competition changed into curiosity, curiosity about how films cope with the books they are filming - by the way: the reverse doesn’t exist, isn’t it? ... this brings me to you, dear vincent - grown up with harry potter’s novels, his films as well, these deliberations are familiar to you, I think - do you agree with them? - if not, examine it by yourself - by reading “miss peregrine’s home for peculiar children”, written by ransom riggs - and, after that, by looking at tim burton’s film

hope I don’t intervene your daily life too much with that - once done, please tell

so I end now - totally yours - lolkje and grandfather anthony (ton)

ps
I by myself did read the book, saw the film, enjoyed both - harry potter’s books and films I leaved aside - the daughter of a friend I spoke about tim burton’s film was disappointed - admiring the book, she found between book and film too much differences, she said

ps
enclosed your birthday money - as far as old shatterhand and winnetou (see photo) are concerned, your dad is the happy owner of a totem I bought for him, made by a canadian-indian woodcutter
dear maxime

first of all congratulations with your 16th birthday - at that age, I remember, I was a little ashamed not to have been yet in any foreign country - while after holidays schoolfriends told proudly about, I couldn’t - we used to spend our holidays at the homes of aunts and uncles - that impressed no one - all of a sudden these holidays appeared childish to me - so I pleaded mother and father for taking me abroad - soon, they promised - they did - next sunday father invited mother and me for a trip with his car - where do we go, I asked him - abroad he said - to a place where you can walk from the netherlands to belgian, from belgian to germany, and then back - guess none of your friends did ever do - so you can tell them you was in three countries, the same day gone, the same day back

seeing the photograph below, I think you know I told my friends neither about that

next year things changed positively - we went for a one-day-trip to the belgian ardennes - there we visited the famous cave of han (grottes de han) - proudly I told at school about stalactites, stalacmites as well - about bronze age relics which had been found there, indicating use of the caves from at least 6.000 years ago ... this memory brings me to you, dear maxime - and how time has changed - mobile as we are now, you visited already so many foreign countries - with skyscrapers far more high as caves are deep ... I use this metaphor because I like to return to caves - informing you about world most famous cave nowadays there is: cave chauvet - with beautiful paintings, dated 35.000 years ago - guess where the cave is situated? - in vallon-pont-d’arc - 125 km near goult!

hope there will come soon an opportunity to guide the yours to this extraordinary cave

so I end now - happy with your excellent results at school - lolkje and grandfather anthony (ton)

ps
for better guiding the yours to the cave chauvet see the documentaries enclosed - once visited please tell - hope you did enjoy this birthdayletter

ps
the photograph is taken in vaals, a dutch village, utterly south, at the border of belgian and germany as well - known as three-countries-site - father told me, grandfather had showed him that point too - at that time you could visit there even a fourth country, a very little one, named moresnet
dear judith                              4. pluk van de petteflet                     2 june 2017

first of all congratulations with your 9e birthday - at that age, I remember, I liked comics - very much ! - but alas, at that time teachers were not found on strips - by looking only to the pictures we were supposed not to learn reading correctly - especially my father thought as such - so he did not like to see me prisoned by the comics newspapers were filled with - the more while he did not allow me to open them as first - with each day a new episode I could not wait until the daily newspaper was delivered - once the comics red secretly, I folded the newspaper as new - helas, many times I failed - with an angry father as consequence I was not happy with - lucky for father as well as for me his fear was ungrounded - I learned reading well - so finally he gave up his comic-resistance

from then on he allowed me to read the newspapers as first one - end good all good, isn’t it ?

this brings me to you, dear Judith - admiring you (and your brothers) since you are doublelanguaged - reading and speaking in english as well in french language as you do - which one do you like most ? - in which one do you prefer comics ? - which are your favorite ones? - if reacting spontaneously, in which language do you respond ? - in which one do you think ? - assuming thinking as a form of speaking silently in yourself - in which one do you dream ? - or are you dreaming in pictures ? - in fact as comics are made from - or better: in moving ones, as in films - I myself I think the latter - although I am not sure - once awakened, answers ever escape - so I gave it up to know - it makes no difference - my dreams are working after all - even at my age - hope this will happen to be for you the same

by the way, I still fold newspapers after reading as brand new, especially lolkje is happy with

so I end now - totally yours - lolkje and grandfather anthony (ton)

ps enclosed your birthday money - this letter turned out to be too long for writing at the back side of a postcard I used to do - hope you did enjoy

ps at the center pluk van de petteflet, translated in arabic - enclosed also a copy of the film - the strips I did like the most are those from suske and wiske - ask dad for them - he owns the ones I bought from my first pocket money - once you draw an own little comic, with you as a jockey, please send
Dear Oscar

First of all congratulations with your 11th birthday - at that age, I remember, I liked to be outside all the time - living upstairs, in a small, noisy house in the center of the town, it was forbidden to play with my friends there loudly - the customers of the patisserie at the floor my mom served with sweets did not dare to hear we were there - and indeed we were not most of the time - although I was instructed to come after school directly home we often went to a little field - mom was busy in the shop, not really missing me - there we played football - forming teams we made our goalposts out of the coats we did take off of course - forgetting time it became later and later - all of sudden we realized it was time to stop, time to go home - so we did - but alas, in a hurry: I without coat think you know I am talking about - having experiences as the like ? - please tell

Next day I was lucky to have still another coat - so I didn’t tell mom I had forgotten, probably even lost, the one of yesterday - after school we went again to the field, hoping to find the coat of the day before - alas, no coat - make a goalpost now, my friends yielded to me - so, just like the day before, I did take off my coat, laying down it at one side - my friends doing the same at the other side as well as opposite - so we started our match - it was around 1953, and I was Abe Lenstra, the most famous Dutch football player out of that time - my best friend, he was Kees Rijvers - ask dad, he surely will remember these names - forgetting time we realized again we had to stop, time to go home - in our hurry you imagine what happened - again I forgot my coat

Next day I told mom - it was October and cold - before I buy a new one you have to freeze, she said

So I end now - totally yours - Lolkje and grandfather Anthony (ton)

Ps
Enclosed your birthday money - this letter turned out to be too long for writing at the back side of a postcard I used to do - hope you did enjoy

Ps
As a special present I send the highlights of the Dutch team at the world cup 2010 - with the famous trainer Louis van Gaal - they lost the final against Spain - playing brutal, alas - see photo offense Nigel de Jong - according to Johan Cruyff he deserved red
first of all congratulations with your 13° birthday - at that age, I remember, I collected stamps - uncles and aunts delivered letters and postcards - from them I scissored (does that verb exist?) the stamps - by laying them in water they came free - after drying I did put them in the album I bought - although I classified them by country it was a chaotic mess - so I limited collecting to one country only: my own - however new problems did arise: how to reach completeness? - the stamps I got were the most regular ones - exchanging double ones with friends did not help - they suffered the same - only a few nowadays series I successfully completed at that time - let it be series out of the past - for that I had to invest money - the money I did not have

think you know I am talking about - having experiences as the like ? - please tell

so I ended collecting stamps - beer mats (coasters) became now my favorites - I myself, too young for visiting pubs, again uncles and aunts delivered them - once received I pinned them on the walls of my room - classifying not needed! - once the walls were full, even the ceiling, motivation was gone - jumping in time now: at my forties I restarted collecting stamps for some years - as a cultural phenomenon, commenting history, important events, nature, art, science, sports etc., I still like stamps - the same goes for coins and notes - however never collected them, in 1994 I could not help, I bought the note I am offering you as a special present - editing the french fairy tale ‘le petit prince’

did you read the book? - your mam, she did I am sure - your dad, I think too

so I end now - totally yours - lolkje and grandfather anthony (ton)

ps
enclosed your birthday money - this letter turned out to be too long for writing at the back side of a postcard I used to do - hope you did enjoy

ps
examining the note under ultraviolet light, the sheep (left under) colors green - holding the note before lamplight, please focus the little prince - turning the note you will see his clothes colored different - so, fraud was difficult
Dear Maxime

First of all congratulations with your 15th birthday - at that age, I remember, I tried to make my first date - the young girl I liked, I knew where she lived - she at her turn did not know me - but as a pity I did not realize that at that time - since she went to the same school and lived in the neighborhood I thought she did - so, after long deliberating I decided to locate myself for her house - with my bicycle - before school was starting - so, again after long hesitating, one day I did - there she came - “I like to accompany you to school” I said - without any introduction of myself - “why would you?” she asked - “because I visit the same school” I answered - “no reason enough for that” she replied - “my bicycle is elsewhere” - and gone she was

Think you know why I failed - think you would do better - please tell

Now about the stamps and cards I am offering you as a special present - stamps and cards honor the 100th birthday of Fiep Westendorp, a famous Dutch illustrator of children-books - well-known from her drawings of Jip and Janneke in the books for young children about these two - ask Dad to show you where to find them in the bus at the stamp - if he can’t, give him a looking glass - if he can’t either, ask him about “Pluk van de Pettenflet” - that’s another famous book illustrated by her - guess Dad is able to point to that pluk in the bus - if there is a translation his name surely will be pluck - if there is I will send you - so you can tease Dad with something out of his young years - maybe you read it too

If not than Vincent - if not, than Oscar - if not, than Judith - if not, than Mom - if not, Dad again

The chosen format makes me end now - totally yours - Lolke and grandfather Anthony (Ton)

Ps
Enclosed €50,- considering 15 as an age, suitable for to change former present habits - once Vincent, Oscar and Judith reach that age, it will be the same for them - as oldest one you goes ahead

Ps
This letter turned out too long for at the backside of a postcard I used to do - hope you did enjoy
beloved son

0. encouraging next generations

18 may 2016

first of all congratulations with your 46e birthday - at that age, looking back, in all life-aspects I was flourishing well - most of all I was happy with our restart together - I remember the day of our reunion, 14 november 1987, as if it was yesterday - for me that day was as a second birth yours, noticing that on my calendar - almost too heavy was my joy - the same joy was the case with my dear life-partner, which whom I had been so many years already so happy - also as a professional I was functioning at that time at the top - management-consultant health care, interim-manager as well, I was - the load I carried at times because of my reluctant, as a pity for him, unhappy neurotic father, did relieve - since he was gone some years before I started to relate to him more empathetically.

as balanced as I was at that time I think you are - easygoing as well - more than I ever was

this brings me to you and the yours - it’s your turn to be happy now - indeed you are - as before - to say that, to know that, is a joy to me - it’s your turn now to function as a professional at the top - indeed you do - at the same time engaged to your family - I am admiring that, admire that so much - as I said to you at the moment the photo, showed above, was taken - we walked to the river, I stood still, looking at your and mariam’s children, wonderful grandchildren mine - they were gone ahead, running, faster as we did, longing for the other coast, their future - as children do - forgotten for a moment the other ones around, as showed by the photo at the cover of ‘birthdayletters and others’, this digital document - our next generations they are - thanks for that, thanks I am happy to say though they will go their own way surely, some encouragement will help - I like to give - see above the format I did choose, makes me end - so, totally yours - lolkje and (grand)father anthony (ton)

ps

as world-citizens, living in france as well as in uk, distance separates us fysically - moreover since travelling ours is limited by old age - I am, we are, happy nowadays media fill these gaps in a way

ps

now we met again, the absence of my beloved daughter, dear sister yours, so many years now, started to hurt less - that’s to say: initially - as you, alas, know - sharing the pain of her passing away