

March 9, 1950

Dear Uncle Maurice,

Yesterday I wrote you shortly before the funeral. I felt very much like talking to you about it, and though far apart we were together in thought at the same moment. I was so sure of it that at the time of writing I was completely unaware of time and distance. It was a perfect illusion; I was just sitting across the desk from you.

I told Vader that at the time of the funeral I was standing very confused. ALL my life I was brought up to expect and feel the differences between Goy and Jew- to expect them to act, react, and behave differently than we do, and here I was standing at the funeral and felt that there was no difference at all- no real difference. For a moment it was as if all my convictions on the subject were wrong. The entire affair, from beginning to end had a real Jewish atmosphere. There was not one discord. It had quiet dignity, and devotion. The atmosphere was permeated with an air of deep love; it was a beautiful day, not a cloud in the sky, mild, gentle, and at the same time a refreshing breathe. I had the impression that it was especially for her. It symbolized her life, good, gentle, without a cloud, and a clear soul and still giving off a refreshing lively breath. I only met her once but with the help of all that I have been told about that woman, this is the picture I formed of her. Of course the funeral was almost Jewish, but at the moment when I was deeply under the impression I lost sight of the fact, that in her case it was the only type of funeral possible; in her feelings actions and attitudes she was like the best of us, and Vader made all the arrangements and he did it according to his feelings and not according to "theirs". He did all just like Rita would have liked it herself. He spoke and though it was in Dutch I understood almost all of it., and at that moment he needed no words to make himself understood. He spoke with his soul as with his entire being and though the words were only intended for one quiet and peaceful listener, they penetrated in the hearts of all those present. He spoke in your name as well, and it was not just him speaking but both of you, and you surely followed him in your thoughts the moment he spoke.

The funeral lasted perhaps an hour and fifteen minutes, but it was able to convey the impression that this "an interval which ushers and leads into an eternity. I cannot say it was sad; it was much more than that--it was sublime, just what that great soul deserved. It left all those who felt close to her with in a state of supreme peace and calmness of soul. She died at a young age; still one had the feeling at the funeral that it is not a work left in the middle- a page torn out ruthlessly, but instead there was felt at the funeral the completion of a cycle. Some people live to a hundred and when the sum total is drawn they didn't live a day; and she lived a short life but a full and complete one- and the funeral was just a rounding out of the cycle. It is hard to say on such an occasion the word "satisfaction" but to be honest that is the feeling with which those who attended were left- the satisfaction of seeing a great work completed --not ended but completed; a life completed right, a mission fulfilled. This is also the Jewish point of view and the great have pleaded for a death of which it can be said that it is not the end but the completion of a life's work. A sentence from the Bible comes into my mind which expresses this perfectly, and as I have here in the office the Pentateuch in Dutch translation, I will quote it to you: "dat mijn ziel moge sterven den dood der braven en mijn einde moge zijn als het zijne!"

Vader will write you in a day or two, as he your sheet cannot do so at the moment.