



Evacuee Letter

Dearest mother,

I know this letter will arrive quicker than you expected, I couldn't wait to write to you! We're not even halfway there yet, but I wanted to get a head start just like you always taught me. Mr Carrington would be so proud of me: he always said I needed a good clip round the ear before I'd put my mind to anything. You wouldn't believe how many children are on the train. Some are only babies. I can't imagine how their mothers must have felt handing them over to the nurses or leaving them with their older siblings. I think I'm one of the oldest on here. I tried talking to the girl in the seat next to me, but she didn't believe me when I told her I was 10-years-old. She said I was too short! I wonder if the fresh air out here will help me to grow taller?

According to the billeting officer on the train, we should arrive at Barnstaple just after 9 o'clock. It's already pitch black out here; there aren't any street lights like at home. I definitely won't struggle to get to sleep! I do hope I get sent to a farm. It would be lovely to wake up and see cows and pigs every day instead of Mrs Todd's big bloomers drying on the line outside my window!

One of the boys said everyone gets placed on a farm, in Devon; he reckons there's nothing else but farms, so fingers crossed. He also said they put you to work doing all the horrible chores that the farmer and his own children don't want to do. I hope he's just scaring us all; I don't want to have to muck out the pigs or chase chickens around trying to catch their eggs.

I bet I'll find some treasure, though. Devon is right near to the sea, so I bet a lot of pirates would have stored their loot in the caves; I'm definitely going to dig some up, then you won't have to work in the munitions factory any more.

Hopefully, you're feeling better by the time you read this. It was tough to leave you crying at the station. It was hard for me to say goodbye, as well. I guess, because I have an exciting adventure to go on, it's a bit easier for me. It won't be like saying goodbye to Danny or papa though, I promise.

If you do hear any news, even if it starts with those dreaded words, the words we don't ever speak at home, please send it to me. Or even better, come visit. As soon as I arrive, I'll send you my new address just like I said I would. You'll be able to see all the brilliant new places that I've discovered; I'll even share my treasure with you!

Please don't worry. The billeting officer said Hitler is about to give up any time now. He said nobody wants to be away from home for long and we all saw what happened last time with the phoney war. He said we'll all be home and dry in time for Christmas goose. Maybe there won't even be time for you to come visit?

I must go, an old nurse is handing out sweets to all of the children!

Your loving son,

Richard



VOCABULARY FOCUS

1. What is a "sibling"?
2. What do you think Mrs Todd's big bloomers are?
3. Look at the word **munitions**. What do you think is made in a **munitions** factory?
4. What do you think the phrase "home and dry" means?

VIPERS QUESTIONS

R

How far into the journey are they when Richard writes?

I

What do you think the **dreaded words** refer to in the letter his mother might receive?

E

Explain why the billeting officer may have told the children the war would be over soon.

R

Why does Richard want to be sent to a farm?

P

How do you think Richard will feel once he arrives and the excitement wears off?

Answers:

1. A brother or sister
2. Underwear
3. Weapons and ammunition
4. Won the war

R: Halfway

I: Danny or his papa being killed in the war

E: They were already scared and worried and he didn't want them to worry more

R: He wants to wake up and see the animals

P: He might miss his family, friends and home. He might be unhappy and homesick