

Daddy Long Legs

by
Jean Webster

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同志社中学校 2年 吉田 麻里子

My Very Dearest Master-Jervie-Daddy-Long-Legs Pendleton-Smith,

Did you sleep last night? I didn't. Not a single wink. I was too amazed and excited and bewildered and happy. I don't believe I ever shall sleep again--or eat either. But I hope you slept; you must, you know, because then you will get well faster and can come to me.

Yesterday was the most wonderful day that could ever happen. If I live to be ninety-nine I shall never forget the tiniest detail. The girl that left Lock Willow at dawn was a very different person from the one who came back at night.

When I came to the house on Madison Avenue it looked so big and brown and forbidding that I didn't dare go in, so I walked around the block to get up my courage. But I needn't have been a bit afraid; your butler is such a nice, fatherly old man that he made me feel at home at once. 'Is this Miss Abbott?' he said to me, and I said, 'Yes,' so I didn't have to ask for Mr. Smith after all. He told me to wait in the drawing-room. It was a very sombre, magnificent, man's sort of room. I sat down on the edge of a big upholstered chair and kept saying to myself:

'I'm going to see Daddy-Long-Legs! I'm going to see Daddy-Long-Legs!'

Then presently the man came back and asked me please to step up to the library. I was so excited that really and truly my feet would hardly take me up. Outside the door he turned and whispered, 'He's been very ill, Miss. This is the first day he's been allowed to sit up. You'll not stay long enough to excite him?' I knew from the way he said it that he loved you--and I think he's an old dear!

Then he knocked and said, 'Miss Abbott,' and I went in and the door closed behind me.

It was so dim coming in from the brightly lighted hall that for a moment

I could scarcely make out anything; then I saw a big easy chair before the fire and a shining tea table with a smaller chair beside it. And I realized that a man was sitting in the big chair propped up by pillows with a rug over his knees. Before I could stop him he rose--rather shakily--and steadied himself by the back of the chair and just looked at me without a word. And then--and then--I saw it was you! But even with that I didn't understand. I thought Daddy had had you come there to meet me for a surprise.

Then you laughed and held out your hand and said, 'Dear little Judy, couldn't you guess that I was Daddy-Long-Legs?'

In an instant it flashed over me. Oh, but I have been stupid! A hundred little things might have told me, if I had had any wits. I wouldn't make a very good detective, would I, Daddy? --Jervie? What must I call you? Just plain Jervie sounds disrespectful, and I can't be disrespectful to you!

I drove back to Lock Willow in the dark-- but oh, how the stars were shining! And this morning I've been out with Colin visiting all the places that you and I went to together, and remembering what you said and how you looked. I am missing you dreadfully, Jervie dear, but it's a happy kind of missing; we'll be together soon. We belong to each other now really and truly, no make-believe. Doesn't it seem queer for me to belong to someone at last? It seems very, very sweet.

And I shall never let you be sorry for a single instant.

Yours, for ever and ever,

Judy

PS. This is the first love-letter I ever wrote. Isn't it funny that I know how?

The End

出典： *Daddy-Long-Legs* by Jean Webster, Puffin Books (1912).