

Yours Until Niagara Falls
 High School Scene – 1967
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Izzy's and Lina's first big argument. They are fifteen.

(March 27, 1967)

IZZY

Dear Lina,

My parents had a l-o-n-g talk with me about dating. No, not the "sex" talk. Thank goodness. Just dating. How old I should be. How old the boy can be. How I should not ever get into cars with boys. It was awkward. I told them they had nothing to worry about since no one wants to date me. And they said your parents are coming over to talk about this. Why do your parents want to talk about me dating?

LINA

Dear Izzy,

My parents had a l-o-n-g talk with me also. It's no biggie. It's what parents do. "Born Free" is at the Utopia. Do you want to go? It's about friendly lions.

Dear Lina,

Your parents did come over. I listened from the top of the stairs. They're worried that I'm going to change you. Change you? You're the most stubborn person I know. I can't even make you want to be a famous musician. Even though you should and you could. That dating stuff? *What are they worried about? We can't even date!* I can't date until I am sixteen when I am a senior in high school.

I don't get the stuff about not dating outside of your religion. Doesn't that separate people more than bring them together? Don't your parents want to bring people together?

Yours truly,

Izzy

(LINA is writing a letter. March 30, 1967.)

Dear Izzy,

I don't know what to say. I know what I want to say. "Don't get in a tizzy, Izzy!" But you'll think I am trying to be cute (I am) and ignore me.

My parents were just talking about all of our futures. They're worried that you'll introduce to me to Christian boys. They're worried I might fall in love with one like Chava did in "Fiddler on the Roof." They have a different history than your family. Six million Jews were murdered. They didn't survive so that they could have Christian grandchildren. Can you understand that?

Jeez, Izzy! We visited each other's religion. We shared holidays. You even fasted with me on Yom Kippur. Don't let religion divide us. Then, we're going in the wrong direction.

Yours until the Chocolate Chips (I'm trying here)

Lina

(IZZY writing.)

Dear Lina,

I don't think I am doing the dividing. I think that's your family. Sorry. It's how I feel. First of all, I don't know any Christian boys except for my cousins. All the boys I know are Jewish. And for the record, my mother would be thrilled if I married a nice, Jewish doctor. I don't get why all this pressure is on you. Are you living for others? Don't you want to lead your own life? The terrible things that happened to your parents did not happen to you. Maybe you should talk about it so you can finally move on.

(LINA writing.)

Izzy,

Move on? *Move on?* Are you serious? Those terrible things did happen to me. These "things" get passed down. They're in my dreams. My mother was fifteen at Auschwitz. I will be fifteen in three weeks. The same age as my mother when she had to watch her family stand in line to be murdered. Later, when my parents were liberated and my mother *did* want to talk about it, there was nobody to listen. All she heard was "We all suffered. We don't want to hear about you." So she and my father bottled everything up. But my parents worry that no matter where we live, we are all just a few steps away from the gas chambers. You don't "move on" from that.

(IZZY WRITING.)

Lina,

The world is different. You are not a few steps away from the gas chambers. Remember that even while in hiding Anne Frank said that she still believed people are good at heart.

(LINA writing.)

Izzy,

I wonder what Anne Frank would have written had she not been killed in Bergen-Belsen. You read. You have to know that there are many people who wish the Nazis would have won. I would have thought that you would understand. I told you my family's story. My mother showed you the pictures of her family. We invited you inside to our most sacred remembrances. My parents lived and because of that I am here. And I am going to use my life by being the best daughter, sister, friend, someday-mother that I can be. All within my faith. But I will never move on from the past. That, too, is sacred. I carry my murdered family with me everywhere I go. I think that you may never understand that.

Lina

(IZZY is writing.)

IZZY

Dear Lina,

I can't understand things that I don't know. For years, all I've heard is "I don't want to talk about it." I don't think it's fair that you are blaming me for not understanding things you never explained.

Izzy

(LINA is writing.)

Dear Izzy,

Please use your intelligence to think. I told you everything. Pardon me for not going into morbid detail. I have no intention of becoming the "tragic heroine" in your little drama.

We need a break from each other.

Lina