



This is the second of Katie Roberts's diaries, which chronicle the triumph and tragedy of two fascinating years of her life. Katie Roberts was just seven when her father died in World War II. Now she is twelve and dealing with the trials and tribulations of seventh grade and twin baby brothers! Katie's journals, letters, and drawings are pitched perfectly to reflect the timeless fears and hopes of any young girl.

Amy Hest tells Katie's award-winning story with characteristic humor and spunk, vividly revealing her world of new beginnings, confusing relationships, and the pull and tug of being a girl and having to face growing up.



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August 7, 1948

Dear Mrs. Leitstein,



Thank you for the GREAT green notebook that you sent me for my birthday—I **LOVE IT, LOVE IT, LOVE IT!** I can't wait to start writing lots of things inside, and filling it up with pictures.

Do you remember that red notebook, the one you gave me last year? That was the day Mama and I were moving to Texas. I was so scared. Remember how you came to the station to see us off? I felt sad waving to you, and you waved back, and your gloves looked like little white dots when the train pulled away. Anyway, about that notebook—the red one—how did you know I used up all the pages! For weeks and months I was writing millions of private things in there, and then one day—boohooo—no more pages. Guess what I am calling my new notebook? I am calling it THE GREAT GREEN NOTEBOOK OF KATIE ROBERTS, who just turned 12 on Monday. Well, I hope 12 is good and great, Mrs. Leitstein. So far it's kind of regular. A long time ago when you were 12, did anything interesting happen to you? Did you maybe like a boy, for example?

Very truly yours,

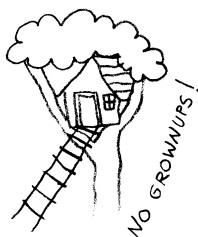
Katie ♥

Your friend (and pen pal) Katie Roberts, age 12

PS: When are you *ever* going to visit us in Texas? You keep saying one of these days, but so far, no Mrs. Leitstein. It's a long way from your house in New York to my house in Texas, but don't worry, you can read a book on the train. Or look out the window. The porter is nice! He wears a cap and helps you with your luggage.

August 7, 7:00 A.M.

This is it! *The Most Private Tree House* of Katie Roberts. No grownups! No babies! Selected visitors by invitation only! Sam built it just for me, for my birthday, and Mama sewed big pillows with my name stitched across, to make it nice and cozy.

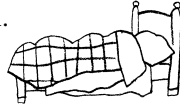


Hey Notebook! Here I am, it's me, Katie Roberts, sitting way up high in my tree house. I love it up here, but I'm still so bad at climbing. I keep scraping different parts of me on the way up, and also going down. Left knee, blood! Right arm, blood! Tiny pinky, blood! It's worth it, though, just to be ALONE. To be in a place where MY MOTHER isn't saying, "Do this, Katie, do that, Katie."

ANNOYING BOSSY MOTHER EXAMPLE #1

No fair! My whole entire life *she* made my bed, every single morning. Now—all because there are BABIES in this house—I have to make it. Every day, too, no matter how many important things I have to do. There are too many bumps

when I'm done, and my pillow's too flat, and the sheets hang down. Which never used to happen when Mama made the bed.



ANNOYING BOSSY MOTHER EXAMPLE # 2

Shocking! Mean! Child labor! Who sets the table *and* clears the table *and* dries all the dishes?

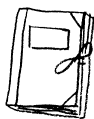
I do. Me. La Servant. And who drops a glass into 2 million pieces 2 times in a row? I do. Me. Miss Clumsy. Bossy Mother Speech #1 . . . “Careful, Katie!” #2 . . . “Again, Katie?” Then she scoops up the babies and hands *me* the broom. Just like Cinderella.



La Servant

Things to do in My Tree House:

1. Write in my brand-new, gorgeous-new, gorgeous-green notebook! Which comes all the way from New York and is a present from Mrs. Leitstein, who used to be our neighbor there. Mrs. L is old, but I don't mind. Because she's extra nice. Sometimes I tell her my problems. We are pen pals! PS: Everything I write in here is personal and private and all about me.



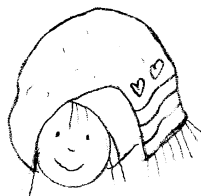
2. Eat cookies before breakfast!
3. Make secret anniversary present! Today is Mama's anniversary—married one whole year to Sam Gold. I like Sam. Sam likes me and loves me so much that now I am adopted. The day the papers got signed, we all went to town for ice cream sodas. I love coffee sodas best. A long time ago before he died in the war, my father loved them, too. We used to get them in a place called Schrafft's. That's in New York City.

Uh-oh, here comes Mama . . . across the yard . . . down the sloping hill . . . one baby under each arm and calling, "Katie, come home for breakfast, Sam is making pancakes." Pancakes! I am sooo hungry and Sam's pancakes are sooo

good . . . Well, bye for now, Notebook
. . . and by the way, welcome to my life,
Notebook . . . I love you already!

August 7, 8:22 P.M.

Presenting Miss Katie Roberts,
the future Miss Texas, tra-laaa!



Hello, here I am again, Notebook, lounging on my bed in my room with tulip wallpaper in my favorite pajamas with pink hearts. My hair's wrapped in a towel, and guess what I smell like? Lemons and limes! Which is the smell of Mama's new shampoo, which I just borrowed, ha! Instant beauty . . . shiny hair, silky hair, a brand-new me. Of course, SHE'S so busy with Sam she'll never even notice. Can you believe they're *dancing*, right there in public, on the front porch! Anniversary dancing, yuck. At least anniversary parties are fun. We had one in the kitchen after supper.

*The First-Anniversary Party
of Mama and Sam*

GUESTS: Me. Mama. Sam. Billy and Seymour.

Ooops!, I forgot to talk about my twin baby brothers . . . Presenting Billy! And Seymour! Cutest little babies in Texas! I'm an expert sister—ask anyone, even Mama. I hold them and feed them and help with the bath. But no diapers, not me. This is how I make them laugh: I sing and dance around. I make funny faces. Lucie, my best friend, has four brothers of her own, but she's in love with my twins. Whenever she comes over, she wants to play with them every single second. Which makes me mad sometimes.



CAKE:

Whipped cream, mmmnn, strawberries from Mama's garden, mmmnn.

PRESENTS:

1. Sweater for Sam. From Mama. She knit it herself for a big surprise, but hey, look what happened, the sleeves are too short! Sam? He doesn't care about too-short sleeves. He loves that sweater just the way it is. Mama made his favorite color, blue.
2. Book for Mama. From Sam. Too many poems inside, and Sam wrote a too-mushy message inside: "I'll always love you, my darling. Sam."

3. ✨ ✨ Special picture made by me! ✨ ✨
Mama and Sam love and adore my picture,
yo ho ho! It's a girl on a trolley car in the city. I
like to draw things I remember about New York.
Whenever I rode the trolley with my father, he
held my hand tight. So I wouldn't get lost.

August 14, 5:30 P.M.

Yeeoowww! Guess who was at the town pool today? The one and only Matthew, who was in my class last year and who better *not* be in my class this year. He was eating a hot dog at the snack bar, and I was pushing Billy and Seymour, with everyone peeking in the carriage, saying, "Aren't they adorable?" and I did NOT say hi (to M). His bathing suit is horrid, with fat stripes. I love my bathing suit. It is red. But I hate how I look in it, so the second I'm out of the pool, I put on my shirt and button every button. Why? Because NO ONE, NO ONE, NO ONE is going to see my development (in certain places), and that's all there is to it.

Extremely private information: PRIVATE

I *used* to like M, sort of, when I was 11. I *used* to think he was cute. We were friends. He helped

me with math sometimes, and I helped him mow lawns around Langley. Then he got this *bad* idea about running away to NY. All because he was dying to meet this famous baseball player, Joe DiMaggio who is a very famous Yankee. So, stupid me said I'd go, too, and there we were— ON THE TRAIN TO NEW YORK! Just the two of us, and I was scared and shaking. But then Sam and Mama showed up, and that was the end of running away. I can't believe I did such a dumb baby thing. Which is why I want to be invisible every time I see M—I want to disappear.

And one more thing. Matthew and I *used* to be the same height. Now look who's taller—I am. I wish I could shrink back to my old size. Mama's always saying, "Shoulders back, Katie. Stop slouching, Katie . . ." a million times a day. SHE thinks tall is good and great and you're supposed to be proud. Wrong, wrong, wrong!

