Dear Charlie, April 2, 1861

I miss you, and regret ever letting you go for every time I think of what could happen to you I get a horrible feeling in my stomach. I wish you would come home, but I know that you are only doing what you think is right by fighting in the war. I only ask one thing of you, Please come home when the fighting is over. Don’t let me get a telegram saying you are dead. As I am already deathly sick with Carditis. Everyday this disease makes my heart grow bigger, and I think about you more. I’ll reassure you I’m getting all the medical treatment I can, but most doctors know nothing about my condition, and therefore don’t have many cures for it. On the bright side our daughters, Elizabeth’s, birthday is in four days. She will be turning thirteen. Our neighbor has brought over a cake for us to celebrate early, but even Elizabeth said it won’t feel the same without you here hugging her, and smearing cake on her face. She seems to be handling the news of my sickness, and you’re fighting very well. Better then I imagined she would.

Dear Anne, April 17, 1861

I will reassure you that I am well although the news of your sickness does bring a bit of sadness to my heart. I make it through these dreadful days or barley any sleep, harsh weather conditions, and death by thinking about you. Praying one day soon I will be home with you, and Elizabeth sitting in a warm cozy living room with the light from a candle twinkling. The aroma from the candle wax filling the air. I want nothing more than to be with you right now. I promise when I get home we will have another birthday party for Elizabeth. Let it be a year or a decade. I also can tell you that I am looking for the best doctor there is to help you. Asking around the camp and all the generals if they know of any doctor that would be willing to help you.

On another note, our troops are getting killed left and right. Just a few days ago during the battle of Fort Sumter One of our soldiers, a soldier I’ve been close to, was down. With four gunshots from a Union troop. I stopped dead in my tacks wanting to help him. Though in the process General Beauregard approached me, and told me to go on with what I was ordered to do. I followed his orders. I have yet to tell anyone this but I feel as though I gave up on him. As if I just let go of him. I have learned myself, and preached to my daughter before to stand up for what you believe in. I believed in that soldier. Yet I still let him down by just running away.

I better be getting to bed now. For I have to be alert every moment of the day. I do not expect great sleep for I share a tent with three other men. Good Night Dear.

Dear Charlie, May, 5 1861

Out of the 1,250,000 men the Confederate army recruited, why did you have to be one of them? The Civil War has split up families. It has left the women and daughters to do all the work. To make money, clothe, and feed themselves. Without even the littlest bit of help from their husband. Brothers fight brothers on the battlefields.

The Number of sick and wounded people are rising here, so I’m thinking about becoming a nurse. Maybe learning a little about medicine would enable me to learn more about my condition. I sure do hope so anyways. The war has enabled me to be stronger then I once was. Not having you here has made me realize that I’m not always going to have to depend on you. Although I miss you a lot I do want you to stay and do what is right, and I’ve learned that I need to start making some money to support me, and Elizabeth.

You did not give up on that soldier; you followed directions. Do not be sorry for that. Do not regret that either. If you stayed to help him out you could be dead right now, or you could get in big trouble with your general. In your situation, you have to put yourself first. Weather you think it’s the right thing to do or not. To make sure you’re safe before you go, and worry about someone else. It might sound cold, but like I just said, you have to put yourself first. It’s better to lose one troop opposed to two troops.

Dear Anne, May 25, 1861

I have no answers to any of those questions. All I can say is that there are many hardships in camp also. When I’m not on the battle field most of my time is spent learning battle techniques and strategies. The rest of the time is spent trying to overcome boredom. I’m deeply sorry for not being there for you, but this is only the beginning of the hardships to come.

I think becoming a nurse would be an excellent idea. Just be cautious of the sicknesses you can catch from the patients. I don’t want you to get sicker then you already are darling. I always knew you’d be okay without me, but I guess you’re just now figuring that out.

Although I do agree that it’s better to lose one troop opposed to two I still think that if I would have died, At least I would have died trying to help a fellow troop. I think it would have been due able to die trying to help someone.

Dear Charlie, June 10, 1861

Charlie, I think I should let you know that I am in the hospital. I am not writing this letter. A nurse is taking what I say, and putting it on paper. My condition has gotten out of control. To where I can’t do anything other than wait, and pray it’ll just pass over. Although I know in my heart there’s little chance that’s going to happen.

Elizabeth is staying with the neighbors, and if anything happens to me, she will stay with them until you come back from the war. So you can see why it is very important you come back from war. Although I might not be able to wait for you, Elizabeth will be waiting, and if you don’t ever show up, the days will just pass by until she to grows old, and dies. ‘Till then she’ll just count away the days to when her father comes through the front door, pick her up, hugs her, and says “I love you.”

I should have payed every penny I had to be treated as best as I could for that would be better then leaving my daughter alone without a mother nor a father. Although I’m sure she’ll be fine, but my worry is on her. Worry that she won’t get the education she needs. Worry that she’ll run away from her new parents. Worry that she won’t ever see you or I again.

Now’s a difficult time for everybody and this just adds onto all that stress. I love you Charlie, and no matter what happens to me, make sure Elizabeth and yourself stay alive, and well.