

Thursday Nov. 2 [1939]

Dear People,

'Tis done!

Thought I'd wait to mail the letter and include happy details.

Tuesday morning

Well, James & I set off for the hotel of Mrs. Edwards, where we were to meet her & Tom Esten. Previously we stopped in a flower shop opposite the Grand Hotel & the American Express & got me an orchid, because they had curly orchids & chrysanthemums. At Mrs. Edward's hotel in Montparnasse Tom & his wife were also waiting, so we all piled in a taxi and went to the Mairie du XV^{ème}. When we got there we signed two big books, & the people asked us where were our little pieces of paper saying we had published the banns in the other arrondissement? When we said we had positively everything but that, they thought they had us! But just that moment Steve Fulton, one of our nicest friends (at the U.P.¹ w. James) – dashed up, took in the situation at a glance, and dashed off to remedy it. He called up the Mairie of the other arrondissement and got them to certify that the banns had been published in that domain. So finally we all trooped into the huge salon w. a chair on a pedestal, & velvet covered benches. There were about ten other couples & their parties. The salon was very 1900, w. touching murals all around the walls: one of a lady & gent being just too coy w. each other (lady plucking daisy), another of a very family picnic w. the fruits of love scattered all about in rompers and cherubic expressions. It was the quintessence of middle-class Frenchness. But the best was yet to come! At the dignified huisier's² signal, we all stood up & in walked my Lady's idea of a French official: Small, tubby, dressed in black morning coat w. striped trousers, a very broad red white & blue ribbon across his chest, small gray beard complete w. mustache! Monsieur le Maire! When it finally got around to our turn to come up before him we knew when to say "yes" even though not even Steve, who speaks perfect French, understood more than 6 words of what he said. Then we went out, James solemnly put on the wedding ring, and the kisses flew thick and fast. The Maire called us M. and Mme. "Jonas". Then we all left the Mairie & Tom took pictures of us in front of it, which I'll send as soon as possible.

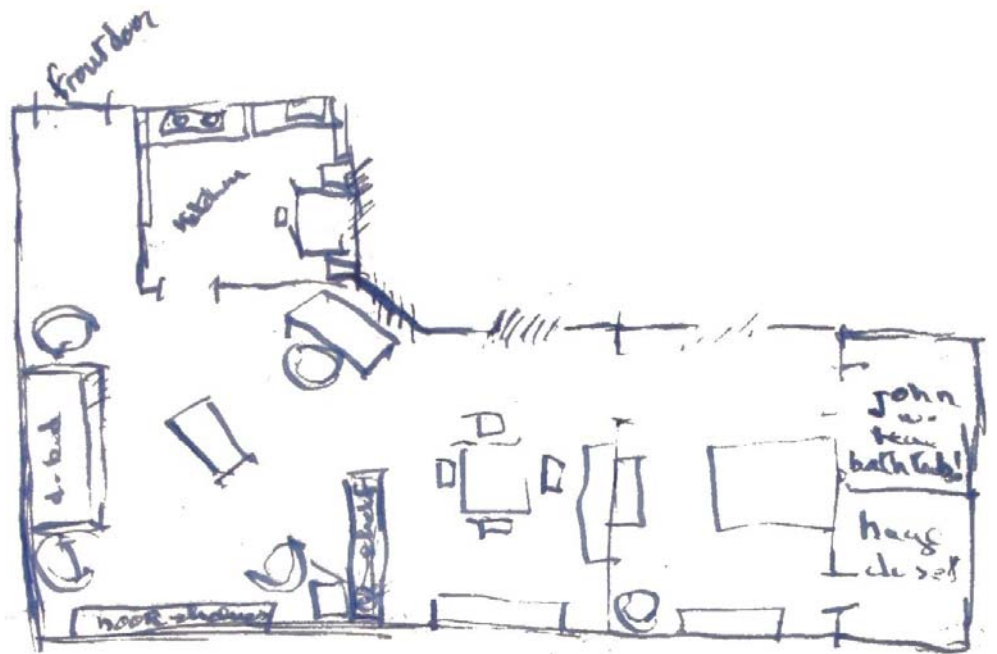
We trooped over to a high-class bistro near the Opéra and all had some wonderful old sherry on Jimmie. Then Tom took all 6 of us to a gorgeous restaurant on the "Champs Elizas" as we call it. Had good chicken curry w. chutney & 87 varieties of superior hors d'oeuvres. Champagne afterwards. Then everyone except Steve (who had to work for Jimmie so he could be free) went to the Bois. Then we came home to our new apartment, which I had all fixed up & beautiful & stayed till time for dinner, talking. Then we all five went to the "Reine Pédauque"³ for supper – more delectable chicken & champagne. We stayed till the waiters began to hint, at 11:30, then went our ways. Fine day!

¹ United Press

² Huisier: a minor French legal official (no exact translation is available)

³ Reine Pédauque: Originally, a mythical Queen of Burgundy with feet like those of a goose, during the Visigoth period (about 500 A.D.). In 1893, Anatole France published a novel titled, *La Rôtisserie de la reine*

I must tell you about the apartment because I'm so very proud of it! I have covered the day bed w. bright red chintz slipcovers, (handmade by that old upholsterer Philinda) also several pillows. The living room now looks very cheerful & comfortable. The kitchen has been outfitted with utensils, already had red & white



checked gingham curtains. It's small and compact but quite large enough to have breakfast in. Today Tom Esten called around & he & I sat talking in the kitchen merrily! The dining room has a small table w. ample room for four people, plenty of space for linnen [sic], etc. There are so many luffly bookshelves we wish we had some books to put in them!

Of course we can't accumulate things we won't know what to do w. later. Yesterday afternoon I worried lustily about making my first meal quite alone, eventually produced a magnificent collation consisting of mashed potatoes, string beans, canadian bacon, salad, grapes for dessert, coffee; no hitches & everything tasted quite normal. Mrs. Edwards came to dinner even though she knew she might get ptomaine, later kept me company till Jimmie came back. It was ever so much easier than I thought it was going to be. In fact everything is. I'm now wandering around being dreadfully pleased w. everything I do, enjoying marketing, preparing, cooking, serving, even cleaning up ain't so bad. Mostly I'm being pleased with Jimmie, who is the World's Champion No. 1 Angel Pie. He's pleased w. me, too. What I'm leading up to is that I'm happy, there now!

Someday I'm going to buy a pen that works.

No guest to-night, but a good dinner!! Gosh, I feel so foolish about all this. If it were something unusual I wouldn't be so embarrassed, but as it is, everything is so normally, bourgeois happy-like it makes me feel ridiculous to be so happy! Perhaps I'd feel less hen-like were we "living-in-sin". It's a moot point. Or if it had turned out that I couldn't boil water. Or bear the sight of a pot.

What makes it worse is that I am going to have to have a lot of different people in to dinner - and am positively reveling in the thought! I disgust myself as I plan gaily what I'll make 'em. How terribly normal, if you see what I mean. It's getting so that I have to frown deeply so people won't guess that I'm gurgling inside. As soon as possible I'm going to look

Pédauque, (the goose-foot queen's oven) based loosely on the legend. Presumably, the restaurant was named in honor of the novel; however, it no longer exists.

around for some work to take my mind off it. Jimmie & I both want to go to the Sorbonne or the Institut de Phonétique this winter to improve our brains or at least our French. Jimmie isn't satisfied w. his, (French, I mean) a sentiment I encourage; since the knowledge of a language always comes in handy.

Just finished reading John Dos Passos opus The Big Money, because Jimmie said I ought to. Then I had to read Barnaby Rudge quick, as an antidote. Bhrrr...maybe Dos Passos grows on you, but he only annoys me at present. The people from Jugoslavia bequeathed us some good English translations of Tchekov, however, which please both of us very much.

Mama's latest letter was read & reread as they always are. All the possessions she wills to me sound wonderful to me because I only have two tablecloths, three 1) plates 2) cups 3) vegetable dishes 4) glasses, and a very limited amount of knives & forks. Also all the affection sounded good. In re the Jones family, no they don't think I stole their son & heir, & they are not violently southern. Jimmie's aunt is the Prexy of the Am. Birth Control League⁴ – aren't you impressed! I was. Jimmie was afraid you would be against him because he snatched me from your sheltering arms, and from that boosom [sic] of culture, Swarthmore. I'll look around for a picture of him for you if you won't tear it up as the image of my seducer! Please don't, because I love him.

And all of you,

Me

⁴ American Birth Control League: In 1943, this organization change its name to "Planned Parenthood".

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Dear People,

'Tis done!

Thought I'd wait to mail the letter & include happy details.

Today morning

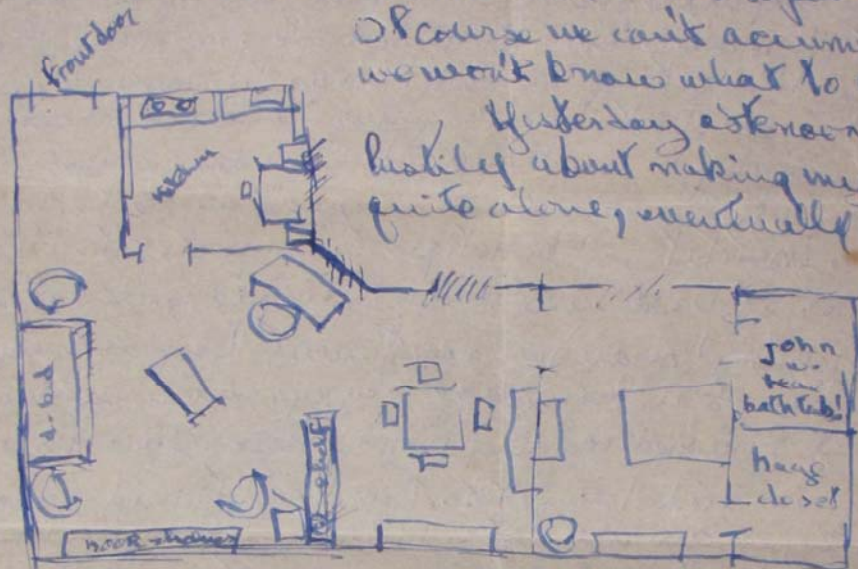
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Halley, dressed in black ~~coat~~ morning coat w. striped trousers
a very broad red white & blue ribbon across his chest,
small grey beard complete w. moustache! Monsieur le
Maire! When it finally got around to our turn to come up
before him we knew when to say "yes" even though not even Steve
who speaks perfect French, understood next on six words of
what he said. Then we went out, James solemnly put on the
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Maire & Tom took pictures of us in front of it, which
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on the "Champ Elizee" as we call it. Had good chicken
curry w. duck leg & 84 varieties of superior hors d'oeuvres.
Champagne afterwards. Then everyone except Steve (who had to
work for Jimmie so he could be free) went to the Bois.
Then we came home to our new apartment, which I had
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