

March 3, 1940

Dear People,

*Enclosed please find one (1) official document signed as directed, for papa. Is that all?*

*Joy and happy sound of trumpets! We are still in our superior apartment, for at least three more weeks. They didn't sell it – it was still a matter of those friends of Horst Bohrmann who were going to come from the US to France, and like angelitos de dios<sup>1</sup> didn't. We were becoming pathological about it, and after a week's search, had found nothing to suit us at any price, let alone one we could pay. Now we have well grounded hopes that we may keep the jernt for x months.*

*Last Wednesday we had Lieutenant Forrest and his wife in to lunch. He is a naval attaché now, but last September he was helping the embassy round up the herd of war-stranded, and it was then that we met him, while asking how to get married. September 20 he took me across the street from the Embassy to the Crillon hotel<sup>2</sup>, bought me a cocktail, and urged me not to get married. Three days later he took me aside and said after all he guessed it was all right. So we are old friends. The dinner I had for them was super-extra. First, dry martinis on the balcony (a lovely spring day) then grapefruit cup, tournedos, stuffed mushrooms à la Philinda-as-suggested-by-mama, new potatoes à l'anglaise<sup>3</sup> (berled<sup>4</sup>, to you), and chocolate floating island pudding. Café noir<sup>5</sup>, too, hard as it is to get nowadays. My femme de ménage<sup>6</sup> came through with a bang, serving beautifully. That evening they had us up to their place on the rue Ste. Honoré for cocktails, then we went to supper together. James had to go back to the office, but they took me on to the Lido, one of the local spots. All the celebration was due to the fact that Mrs. Forrest is going back to the US soon quick to put her small son in school. It was all very nice. They are nice people. Lieutenant F. has just bought some old maps which were very nice & interesting but not as good as Poppa's, of course. I wish I could be sure whether maps were as good as they looked, so that I might buy some for Poppa's collection. They have such a lot of fascinating looking jobs on the Quais that it sort of makes you worry, especially as those stalls are not famed for their complete trustworthiness.*

*The mourning doves on our roof are cooing away like babes. All of a sudden we are having more sunshine & light than we have had all winter, but it remains rather chilly. Daylight saving time is a fine thing. The new food rationing business isn't. It probably won't be a great privation to us, but it will be a nuisance to have those cards, and will undoubtedly entail waiting at police stations, of which I've already done enough for two full lifetimes.*

*Lt. Forrest knows some High Satraps at the Préfecture<sup>7</sup>, so both James & I are "en règle"<sup>8</sup> for months to come, and "in" about 400 francs, which makes us super-joyful. A monthly tête-à-tête<sup>9</sup> with those lovely bureaucrats is the horrendous & much-bemoaned fate of almost every foreigner in France now.*

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<sup>1</sup> **Angelitos de dios:** Spanish, "little angels of god"

<sup>2</sup> **Hôtel de Crillon:** 10 Place de la Concorde, Paris. See Google photo of interior in the photo section (below)

<sup>3</sup> **À l'anglaise:** English-style

<sup>4</sup> **Berled:** boiled. Like "jernt", Philinda's way of making fun of the northern New Jersey accent she avoided in real life

<sup>5</sup> **Café noir:** black coffee

<sup>6</sup> **Femme de ménage:** housekeeper

<sup>7</sup> **Préfecture:** Administrative center of an area, in this case probably the *arrondissement* "city ward"

<sup>8</sup> **En règle:** in order

<sup>9</sup> **Tête-à-tête:** face-to-face (intimate) meeting

Pop wants to know where we live. It is in the 6<sup>th</sup> arrondissement, near Blvd. Montparnasse, between the rue de Sèvres and rue du Cherche-Midi. A little street called St. Romain, often omitted from maps of Paris. On the left bank of course. Number is 17<sup>10</sup>.

I was surprised at Poppa's remark about Well of Loneliness<sup>11</sup>. Obviously not a criticism, but nonetheless rather dopey. You might with equal justice say in commenting upon Bermuda that a lot of people go there because it's fashionable; and sum up the Bible by saying many people read it for the Song of Solomon and the seduction of Joseph by Pharaoh's wife. In the first place, it's true. In the second place, it's irrelevant and hardly a critical judgment. Well of Loneliness is a well-thought out tragedy, and as I remarked before, is on a higher moral plane than a large percentage of modern works. It is the story of a well-intentioned soul struggling against its own psychological defects, but because of them, doomed to tragedy. So is Hamlet. So is Racine's Phèdre<sup>12</sup>. One could say that many people read Phèdre to be horribly thrilled by the prospect of a woman tortured by her love for her own husband's son. So what? Not that I would rank Well of Loneliness with Phèdre, I just say it is a fine novel. Excuse me for this long tirade, but it just happened to strike me that Poppa had uttered a boner.

Our femme de ménage hasn't yet grasped the point of the Frigidaire. I feel she looks upon it as a large decorative device for making ice. In any case, she always puts the milk away very carefully outside the Frigidaire. French milk is always two or three hours from the point of sourness, so I have been making cheese madly. I make it according to Fanny Farmers Cottage cheese recipe, but instead of putting in salt and cream leave it as it is. Then we eat it like the French do with sugar in large quantities. It is very good once you have acquired the taste. Also I have been manufacturing some of my old favorite candied orange peel making, myself happily sick with it.

Our Yugoslav friend Lepetik came in last night for a coffee and we tore apart the world and put it back again neatly. He is the man that steered us to the apartment.<sup>13</sup>

Read Huxley's Eyeless in Gaza<sup>14</sup>. Was not impressed. Try to make it through Rogue Herries<sup>15</sup>, but found it so badly written in such a lot of triperie<sup>16</sup> in general that I gave it up in the middle. I've almost finished both shelves of our host's library, so I'm eagerly awaiting the next two volumes of Men of Goodwill.<sup>17</sup>

The New Yorkers continue to come with delightful regularity, making us the envy of our friends less fortunate in their relatives.

James and I have been married nigh on to five months. He is still the apple of my eye, only more so.

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<sup>10</sup> See Google StreetView in photo section below.

<sup>11</sup> **Well of Loneliness**: Philinda discussed reading this book in her letter of February 12, 1940 (1940-02-12 F-40 LPK to DSCM)

<sup>12</sup> **Racine's Phèdre**: "(originally *Phèdre et Hippolyte*) is a dramatic tragedy in five acts written in alexandrine verse by Jean Racine, first performed in 1677." (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ph%C3%A8dre> accessed 2015-05-24)

<sup>13</sup> Referred to in several earlier letters.

<sup>14</sup> **Eyeless in Gaza** is a bestselling novel by Aldous Huxley, first published in 1936. "The title of the book ... recalls the biblical story of Samson, who was captured by the Philistines, his eyes burned out, and taken to Gaza, where he was forced to work grinding grain in a mill."

([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eyeless\\_in\\_Gaza\\_%28novel%29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eyeless_in_Gaza_%28novel%29), accessed 2015-05-24)

<sup>15</sup> **Rogue Herries**, (1936) by Sir Hugh Seymour Walpole (1884 –1941). Probably the best-known of Walpole's many books. This work is a period family novel set in the 18<sup>th</sup> century English Lake District.

<sup>16</sup> **Triperie**: Tripe and offal shop

<sup>17</sup> **Men of Goodwill**: Philinda also discusses this in her letter of February 12, 1940 (1940-02-12 F-40 LPK to DSCM)

Tell John that I liked On The Knees of the Gods.<sup>18</sup> Tell yourself that James and I laughed long & loud at the story of the six chimpanzees in that February 3 New Yorker, called Inflexible Logic. Hope you read it.

I've got to wash the dishes. Ho-hum.

Love,  
Me

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<sup>18</sup> **The Knees Of The Gods:** Possibly referring to Part 8 of E. W. Hornung's *Raffles: Further Adventures of the Amateur Cracksman*. 8. "The Knees Of The Gods". (<http://www.literaturepage.com/read/rafflesfurtheradventures-141.html> accessed 2015-05-25)

## Photo Section



Figure 1 Lobby bar of Hôtel Crillon, Paris. (Google ViewInside accessed 2015-05-24)



Figure 2 Entrance to No. 17, Rue St. Romain. (Google StreetView accessed 2015-05-24)

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