

FEB 19 REC'D

222 Phoenetia Avenue
Coral Gables, Fla.
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Dearest,

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It finally came. Your first letter from Lagos, I mean, and here I am bathed in my usual happy tears over it. Darling, I want to take it paragraph by paragraph and talk to you that way, as though we were together and walking up and down the streets as we did in Lisbon. You say that it is hard for you to meet a lot of people, to change your atmosphere suddenly and often. That's where I come in, Angel, because I quite like that sort of thing, as I told you that Sunday. I'm used to it and ~~take~~ ~~xxx~~ real joy in moving around and seeing new people, so when all this is over and we are together at last and forever I hope maybe I can instill in you some of my own ideas on the subject. Not that I want to change you my dearest- it would be an act of vandalism! But it is too bad that a person situated as you are should not get the maximum of pleasure out of his opportunities. If you want I'll do all the meeting and mixing for you (in fact I'll do all the murders, crimes, larceny, sacrificing, lynching, saving, and loving you want me to do) and thus save you from doing whatever is even mildly annoying to you, but in so doing, if you don't object, I'll try to show you what fun it can be. This sounds vaguely like high-pressured salesmanship, only the salesman is hardly ever in love with his prospective client.

I am so very sorry that your apartment isn't all it could be. It's a shame we can't move my little joint over there intact. It also is a furnished apartment, but I've got it all fixed up to look like home, and it's clean and cool in the warmest days. I had a lot of fun decorating it from the five and ten- which I am afraid you couldn't do in Nigeria.

That account of the life in Lagos which I read in the Encyclopoedia didn't mention the fact that the negroes were low-grade morons, in dfact it didn't touch on their IQ's at all, and never referred to what kind of servants they made. Sweetness and light, I hope you find yourself a better joint and a local equivalent of some faithful Uncle Tom to care for you until such time as I come along to give you your Orange juice in the morning. Maybe by that time I shall be an expert housekeeper and you won't need the local Uncle Tom.

It does look as though the most promising of our two unpromising leads is the passport-from-Ma-Shipley one. If all goes as well as is now expected in my particular suit, I should be ready for action by the end of May if not before, so I hope you will start doing whatever must be done about it as soon as possible, because this walking around without touching the ground is getting to be such a bore; and I want to live with you as soon as humanly possible. As far as I am concerned, time is NOT secondary, although I can limp along, I suppose, unwillingly but tenaciously until we get together. The slowness of time will be my greatest enemy till then, after which I shall love it and savor it for the rest of my life. Wouldn't time be a lovely thing if it were passed together? I can see the hours which go so slowly and grimly on your old gold watch picking up speed and soaring off the ground to stay up in the air for a good forty years or so, but the hours that pass before then will probably seem quite as long to me as the rest of them put together. I wish Mr. Einstein were not so horridly right about his theory of relativity, and that Pippa had been more close to reality when she said that God's in his heaven and all's right with the world. To return to the facts of life, tell me what to do about that passport, please.

I was sorry to scare you about those "references"; but you needn't worry about them. Father is naturally a delicate soul, and wouldn't

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write to Newark without your approval, but he did plan to write a discreet note to Dartmouth. Whether he is still going to I don't know, for he hasn't said anything further about it, And what's more, my lad, don't you malign your own character, because I love it with all my heart and won't have anything said against it even by you, Sweetheart, if I sound flippant to you at times, remember that as it often is, flippancy in this case is the cotton batting I put around the things and the feelings I value most. All this I'm going through is rather a strain on the nerves, and the best way to combat the depression which results therefrom is plenty of vitamin A and a liberal sprinkling of the good old light-hearted attitude. Ergo, when I nominate you for the First World Benevolent Dictatorship, you may read between the lines that I love you very deeply, and like you, and admire you sincerely. I can keenly appreciate your feelings in regard to Jimmie because I experience the same or more than you, especially now that it turns out he loved me far more than I ever thought he did. Unfortunately for him, the old maxim "Carpe diem" holds good for emotional situations also, and all the proofs of real love he shows me are turning up too late for effectiveness.

I've mostly gotten over the weepy stage, although it comes back when I am suddenly confronted with you in some form. For instance to-day when I read your letter, a few weeks ago when father absent-mindedly announced that a letter had come from London (that was most embarrassing, for the maid was just serving the vegetable course and Helen probably thought I should consult a psychiatrist) and the first few times I saw Janie. That also was highly embarrassing, because it embarrassed her and her friends, made me look like a weak-kneed sissy, and sounded probably more like an alcoholic crying-jag than the result of nervous tension that it really was; I know because it started just as Janie opened the door to usher me in. When she does the same things you would do in similar circumstances I am completely broken up, for some odd reason. Yes my pet, it's because of you, and because to me you "are that good (or bad)", as you put it, and also as you put it, "I guess it's love, that's all". Sorry I don't seem to be able to be as strong and serene as you would like, but the really important thing is that I am doing everything in my power to make it possible for us to marry and get it over with. Please do the same yourself because I can guarantee delivery of a very good wife. (More high pressured salesmanship). I should like to be able to imagine our future life together, but it is just as easy as trying to imagine the new billion dollar National Budget all stacked up in neat rows of greenbacks, - on too large a scale for picayune imaginations. If you are as sweet and "aimable" as you seem to me, Heloise's Abelard will be supplanted in history, and Ysuel's Tristan will seem pale and unpleasant in contrast. Let us fervently hope that we won't have to wait as long nor endure as much as those unfortunates did, before we can prove ourselves. I used to think that the only reason they kept on struggling against so much opposition was that Medieval hours were uncrowded; and Medieval ladies spent more time at home brooding; that there were less opportunities to see other possible lovers, and that it was a current fad to fight against various antagonizing waves of opposition for long, weary years on the strength of a single galvanizing glance such as Beatrice bestowed on poor old Dante. I certainly never thought myself capable of doing approximately the same thing under modern, "streamlined" conditions, with all the opportunities in the world to meet other undoubtedly interesting men, with all the liberating aids of modern psychology and mores. But here I find myself to my chagrin keeping your watch much as the abovementioned ladies and gents kept a lock of hair in their convent cells, brooding just as much, keeping myself to myself just as much, reminiscing and blaspheming against fate just as much as they did. I almost feel like writing a sonnet a la Petrarch, which proves the extent of my fall. Luckily the restraints of

Defunct iambic pentameter have always kept me from inflicting new sonnets-
 on the world, but perhaps it was a lack of inspiration before. I know exactly
 what you mean when you say that you can't put into words what you feel, because I suffer from the same complaint. It's as difficult as describing a color or a musical note- the only thing you can do is compare them to other colors or notes of music, but you can never get at the heart of the matter and say that red is wumph and middle C is a clear, resonant wumph. Perhaps it's because love is a basic thing, like a basic metal, which can only be described by its properties and the reactions it provokes, which fail to reveal its essential character. It's beating around the bush, all right, but I assure you that even if you are unsuccessful in your attempts to tell me that you love me, it certainly does make me happy to hear you flounder around! In fact, your letters are the only thing good and beautiful in life right now, my dear. They, and of course the same old memories of the few times we were together and more or less alone in Lisbon. It makes me want to burst out in a shrill scream when I think of the many times I could have been with you and talked to you there, but instead avoided you so that you wouldn't learn how much I wanted to be near you and touch you and talk to you-- a few seconds pause for the mid-morning weeping. There now, my eyes are a bright vermillion to match my nose and I look as silly as I am. Speaking of eyes, reminds me how the sun used to make yours look light green on the terrace of the Casade Santo Antonio- on the rare occasions when I felt strong enough in my soul to look at them without too much weakening. To counterbalance that, I often think of how exasperated I became with you one time when we were dancing at Nina's, and you said that if you had a wife like me you would love her the rest of your life. My goodness, I smiled through my rage! How dare he say a thing like that when I love him so very desperately! All I could do was grit my teeth savagely while I considered the uninviting prospect of your someday finding yourself a likely girl other than me and doing just that- loving someone else when I wanted nothing more than to be allowed to cook and scrub for you under the cat-can-look-at-king system. I had to stifle an unkind impulse to step on your toes, while you danced serenely on unaware of the havoc your pleasant little remark had caused. Then remember the time when we walked home from the Consulate one evening, and stopped at the corner bistro for a vermouth? You kept talking about politics like mad (we were by ourselves for the first time, too) and as I remember I got bitingly cynical and sarcastic over everything you said because there you were and there was I loving you and we were both so ghastly proper about it all. ~~XXXX~~ If I remember correctly I kept thinking how nice it would be to bite your ear- gently, of course, and patching everything up by kissing it afterwards, but you kept right on about stopping Hitler and conditions in Italy. C'etait a pleurer de rage ! Afterwards we met Flip on the corner and I was slightly mollified because you acted quite embarrassed about being caught alone together, just as if we had been doing something a trifle scandalous instead of wasting our precious time on the international situation. For some reason your embarrassment cheered me up a bit, which proves to some extent the old contention that love is sometimes cruel. Then of course, there is always that lovely long walk we took down to the harbor all alone on a mountaintop of our own. That was the nicest part, wasn't it? Such a long infinity of time has passed since then! And it was so brief while it existed! There again Mr. Einstein rears his ugly head, shouting about relativity, because one moment of that sort of experience may possibly be equal in value to a year of pleasant-enough blah.

I simply must stop this kind of talk before I get bleary-eyed
 than I already am. In case you haven't been able to gather it from all I
 have been saying, I love you very much and shall probably continue "along
 the same line if it takes all the century" to paraphrase Gen'l Grant, or
 who ever it was.

It sounds more like what I mean in Spanish: Querida alma, te adoro
 y te adorre hasta la muerte y despues. There now, be good.

Philinda

P.S.

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A post script in the form of a poem which should have been given to you when it was written, if the sentiments expressed in it had not been possibly a trifle too bold, as of October 31, 1941. You see, I tried to do a sonnet but couldn't, so did my best.

A thrill of exultation fills the soul
And leaps in fierce triumphant joy
To scale the bleak forbidding summit of the mind
In one unthinking surge of ecstasy.
A moment's pause, and all bright day
Melts into somber night. Let's haste, my own,
Before this careless loveliness is fled!
The time is not yet come for us to think.