

MAR 4- REC'D

Feb. 8, I think!

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Dear Superman,

We have received yours of the 10th ins., and noted its contents with enormous care, not to mention a bubble of girlish glee now and then. The way the word "and" at the beginning of this line goes up is a perfect description of the way my spirits take a jump when I get a letter from you. In future I shall spell Laurence as it should be spelled, and I think its ever so much nicer that way than with a vulgar, common "w" anyway!

William, you can't imagine how the thought that I might get to see you in September or thereabouts absolutely floors me with a fiendish happiness- or maybe you can imagine. Somehow it doesn't seem like any time at all to wait. Time in general has been going quite a good deal faster since I came down here, perhaps because at last I am doing something to bring us closer together. In anycase, this is a very pleasant place to be, especially now that it is cold and gloomy up north, and I have gotten to know some helpful and friendly people. Mrs. Page from Virginia (very much from Virginia, which is the center of the world as far as she is concerned) and Mr. Bishop of the Prudential Life are still my particular pals. Mr Bishop, perhaps you will remember, is in my little Spanish class. He is about fifty-five or sixty, I should say, and knows innumerable people around here, so he and I often go visiting of an evening or out to dinner at the houses of friends of his. The night before last we had dinner chez some interesting people who used to be in the newspaper line. The man now writes for the pulp magazines, so there he and I had a contact because of my brother who is quite a man in the Pulp Magazine world now. After eating, Mr. Bishop and I went to see Disney's Dumbo, which is a touching and excellently done full-length job about mother-love among the elephants in a circus, and how a baby elephant whose ears were so big that he developed an inferiority complex, eventually rid himself both of the complex and the ensuing ridicule by learning to FLY! It was riotous, and I did so wish that you could be there with us to see it. Mrs. Page and her son and I always go to the beach on Saturdays and Sundays, with the result that I have acquired a luffy coat of tan. In the meantime I jobhunt and read. Having just finished Wells' Outline of History, and being still in a scholastic mood, I am starting a history of English Literature, determined to be educated or bust. Maybe all this will teach me better spelling, but I doubt it, because I have so little interest in the matter. When I was a little girl in school I used to win prizes right and left for my wonderful spelling, but now that there are no more prizes I refuse to bother about the matter at all, instead letting you develop your latent prowess as a detective by trying to figure out what I mean.

Sweet, you know without my going into it, that I don't care if I have to live in the crater of an active volcano, with nothing but a cardboard roof, so long as you're figuring somewhere in the picture. I have heard that central Africa wasn't good for women, but there you have one of the little nasty things that Bigger and Better things always seem to come equipped with. What does rather worry me is the matter of transportation and the financial tags attached thereto. In a month or two I shall have completely exhausted my small inheritance, and although I hope to be working soon, I shall probably not be making a gargantuan fortune- on the contrary, I shall need the money I earn to supply me with vitamins and a roof. Perhaps I shall be able to save small amounts here and there, which would always help, but certainly not enough to make any large financial deals. The questions that arise in my mind in connection with these

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speculations are: 1) What means of transportation are available for me? 2) How expensive are they? 3) Where do I get them? 4) How do I get my passport and other permits in the face of the probably rock-like resistance of an unromantic State Department? I trust that you will be able to answer at least partially a few of these questions, because I'm absolutely up a tree about them.

For some reason every one I meet down here is divorced if they were ever married at all (what awful grammar!) so it makes me feel somewhat better about the matter. Mr. Bishop, Mrs. Page, all the members of my Spanish class including the professor, several girls I have met, and my landlady have all been divorced. It seems to be quite a habit down here, although not a particularly pleasant one in my opinion. Around where I come from it seemed to me to be quite rare - in fact as a child I remember being rather sensitive about the fact that my mamma and poppa were divorced. I wouldn't have been down here, that's sure. No one seems to be able to stick to one person very long in Florida, why I can't say.

Your grandfather's watch finally decided it was time to rest, and won't move a minute any more. So I have put it on the living room table underneath the big picture of YOU, and bought a soulless new alarm clock that ticks like mad but tells the time all right. Perhaps I shall take your watch to the jewelers to be repaired, although I would rather not carry it around with me for fear of losing it some day. I was sorry to see it stop apparently for good, because I've grown awfully fond of it.

To-day I was interviewed by a Lieutenant Colonel in the intelligence service in regard to the censorship job, and filled out innumerable forms which asked all sorts of personal questions. He seemed to like my qualifications, so I am fairly hopeful about eventually getting a job with the Gov't. again. It appears to take quite a time for them to look up all your antecedents, but then I have nothing but time on my hands. The pay opens at \$1800 per annum, and you can get better if you pass an exam in your language or languages., which of course I shall attempt to do. I am anxious to get some work and stop being a parasite on my deceased great-grandmother, if only to occupy the time with interesting things. Also, as I mentioned before I should love to save a little spare cash for more important things.

Darling, darling how I should like to be with you now! Every time I wash my hair or put on a nice dress or fix up my face I think how pointless it is to be a raving ~~tearing~~ howling BEAUTY, which OF COURSE I am (any one who says I'm not is a meany, although not strictly a liar) when there is no one of the slightest importance to see how gorgeous are the results of my efforts. Briefly, when you aren't here. I'm so glad you know that song "de quoi puis-je avoir envie?", which I have known for ever so long and liked enormously without realizing how true it is. I don't know any of the words except those that you quoted, alackaday. Also I'm terribly glad you don't mind being the recipient of a flood of letters, because I do so love to write them. Another thing that I'm very fond of is imagining that it's a year from now, and that we are together and everything's settled and fine and beautiful and happy and tra-la-la, whereupon I usually dissolve into sticky sentimentality of the gooiest variety. Something seems to be radically wrong with my usual impeccable typing. But it's a small matter, just so I get my point across, which is that I love you. Only fancy, I love you! No one has ever been in love before, because this is a new and wholly original experience in the world. I can see it's an invention of mine, from looking at the faces of other people, who never look at all happy except when they shine with the reflection of the light I cast. Poor old people who aren't in love, to think that they never have had this feeling and never will! Sometimes I think I should tell them about how nice it is, out of charity, but then I realize that it's completely impossible for them

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to realize and appreciate the wonder of it all because they haven't seen you and they didn't invent love and it's not perpetual high noon for them and you never told them you loved them, poor dears! I feel like one of the early, confident Calvinists must have felt when he saw a crowd of people doomed to hell-fire while he was certain of eternal paradise. Whooptedoo! I'm of the Elect! That's how he felt, and that's likewise how I feel about the matter.

I wish this war would begin taking a turn for the better on at least one front, and then quickly, silently pass into limbo. I think we are due for a nice long period of unarmed peace with honour. More and more people are being called up, more and more things are beginning to "manque" as we used to say in Paris, more and more news is getting sad. I'm glad you're a Foreign Service officer and not the other kind, William my dear, selfish as that may seem., because you are very vital to national life, in the person of me. Howsoever if Mr. Roosevelt gets the planes, etc. He calls for in his program things will begin looking sad for the other side and there'll be blue-birds over the white cliffs of Dover as the song says, or haven't you heard the song? I don't think you're missing much if you haven't, but it's quite timely. The song I have developed a minor passion for is a little number entitled Chatanooga Choo-choo, which is quite as silly as the title implies and very sing-able. Why I like it nobody knows. When I was on the train coming down here they had a man who played the accordian in the club car, and who was amazed and astounded at my taste in music: at various times in the evening I had asked me to play "Chatanooga Choo-Choo", "Adios Muchachos", "Parlez-moi d'amour" and (toward the end of a long session) the International. Joe Black the accordianist and I ended up both singing the International in dulcet tones while everyone else was playing pocker, and showing no respect whatsoever to our victorious Allies, the U.S.S.R.

It looks as though given even the most elementary encouragement I could go on talking about nothing forever. Luckily I am getting hungry and you will be spared further ramblings into the realms of an apparently moronic mind. Bear in your thoughts the fact that I am using that new invention of mine day and night, loving you perpetually and completely; all I want is the opportunity to demonstrate the workability and lasting qualities of my patent, angelpuss.

Be good,

Billie