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AMERICAN CONSULAR SERVICE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

AMERICAN CONSULATE
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My darling,

Are you still mine ? I hope so. I'm yours.

Your two letters sent by hand arrived yesterday and caused a great commotion inside me, since they were the first for over three weeks. The letter of March 1 was lovely. It just breathed the spirit of you and our love. I'm so glad that finally you have got in touch with some one who has actually seen me in my habitat even ~~xxx~~ if he didn't seem able to tell you very much about it. I have been trying to remember him ever since your letter came, but without success. I called for him at the hotel, but was informed by some of the other lads that he had had trouble with his eyes in Brazil and had had to turn back. The next time he is coming over, tell him to be sure to come to see me, as I am just as anxious to hear about you and your hang-out as you were about me - maybe even more so. I'm awfully sorry about James Page. I know exactly how he feels. Having been hopelessly (I thought) in love with you myself for months and never dreaming that anything could come of it, I can imagine his intense feeling. You are such an adorable creature, my love; you are much too wonderful for an earth-bound clod like me, and I'm always afraid that some day you will find it out and ditch me.

As a matter of fact, judging from the second letter, started on March 13th and finished on the 16th, it looks as if the idea had occurred to you, too. In case you've forgotten (and I hope you have) you said whenever a letter doesn't come through, you start thinking maybe you'd better begin to encourage the local talent and stop waiting for me. That little sentence gave me an almost sleepless night last night. Darling, I love you so much and I am counting on you so much and putting all my hopes and dreams for the future in you that I beg you not to write things like that unless you really want to drive me wild. I have explained how busy we are and why it is difficult to get letters written. I have written to you every single week during the last month, and I have yet to answer Janie's letters which arrived on March 4th, at the same time with your last batch. Since I have been in Lagos I have written three letters to my father, who deserves better of me, and all incidental correspondence has fallen through completely. You surely know that the mails are highly unreliable. When I don't receive letters from you for three weeks at a time, I know it isn't because you haven't written them, but simply because the mail isn't coming. No regular air mail has arrived here since March 4th, so if you wrote me between February 18th and March first, I have never received the letters. So, darling, we must both be patient, hard though it is; or, if we can't be actually patient (I can't), we mustn't begin to doubt each other just because letters don't arrive.

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I meant to write the above paragraph much more tactfully and, as usual, I haven't expressed myself well. Don't be angry, dearest; it's only that you frightened me so. Up to that moment I couldn't conceive that either of us could even ever joke about giving up our love. I think I can say without exaggeration that loving you is the only thing in life that has any significance to me. All else is only a means to that end. I think of my work as only being something I must do to earn money and maintain a position which will give you the kind of life you enjoy. I told you fully in Lisbon what I thought about the Foreign Service and how I always liked to think that I could get out of it some time if I wanted to. There is no possibility of that during the war. I couldn't resign if I wanted to. Do you realize that if I did that, I would be unable to come to you at all? If I severed my connection with the Government, i.e., just refused to work because they wouldn't accept my resignation, I would be unable to get on a plane to come home, since I would have no official status or priority. There's no use kidding ourselves about that. I'll have to stay here until the Department calls me home or to some other post. I will be eligible for home leave at government expense next year in February, and if you haven't been able to come over by that time, I shall apply for home leave and write a personal letter to the Chief of Personnel, Mr. Erhardt, to explain why it is urgent for me to come (you), and then I feel sure they will let me come home for two months, we will be married, and come back here or wherever they want to send me. That is my idea of about the longest time that we will have to wait, assuming that you can't get over. You must try very hard to get a place on the plane, though. I have been pinning my hopes on the possibility that the situation may improve between now and July or August, whenever you would be ready. I'll grant you that right now the chances don't look so good, but if you have everything prepared, you would have a good chance of getting on the plane when there was a sudden cancellation. All we can do is hope. But darling, please tell me in your very next letter that you can and will wait. You have no idea how the thought that you might not have upset me. I love you so tremendously, so achingly, I need you so much, I want you so badly, you must not fail me, ever.

I was most interested to hear about your job. It certainly sounds terrible. You don't actually work from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. every day, do you? If so, I don't wonder that your folks wanted you to quit. While I think it is a grand thing for you to be working, just to keep your mind occupied, I certainly don't think you ought to work so hard as to ruin your health. You're very precious to me, my love, incorporating in your one beautiful, fragile body all that keeps me going on. Please take good care of yourself, for me. Do you ever book people for Lagos, or only for South America? Be sure to keep a look out for Vice Consul John McSweeney, who will be coming through Miami one of these days en route to Lagos. He will be my colleague and live in the same house, so he would be an ideal person to send mail with. You have no idea how irritating it is to meet people day after day who are going to fly off for Miami within a short time. And they complain because they have to stay here for three or four days! While I agree with you that the name "Baby" isn't too good (I have always objected to fellows calling their girls Baby), I think it shows your loving co-workers realize what a genuinely sweet and wonderful person you are. It sounds rather affectionate, especially their giving you a little doll, and not at all malicious. I'm sure they all love you too, although naturally not a tiny fraction as much. For I, my dear, love you out of all comparison, beyond all reason, hasta la muerte y depues.

10 p.m.

I have been to Mr. Jester's for "drinks", as they call cocktail

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parties here. Actually, they are more correct, since they don't serve cocktails, but only beer and whiskey-soda, with a few soft drinks for those who insist. It was a rather large affair, given in honor of Mr. Tom Wasson, who was Consul here before Mr. Jester and has just arrived here from Dakar. Naturally, everybody is anxious to see him, either because they knew him before, or because they want to hear about what is going on in French West Africa. It is a matter of regret to me that I have had practically no chance to talk with him, since he spends most of his time with Mr. Jester and the bigger fry. He is on his way to Washington to take over the West African desk on the Division of Near Eastern Affairs in the Department. Since he will be handling all the reports which come from this office, Mr. Jester is anxious to impress him with his point of view, and the two do not see eye to eye on what our policy towards Vichy French territory should be. From my little contact with him, I don't think Mr. Wasson is likely to change his mind. From the point of view of personality, I think I should greatly prefer to work under Mr. Jester. Wasson seems very prim, proper and precise, not to say prissy. Going back to the party, I don't care much for big parties where you have to stand up all or most of the time. Give me the small, quiet affair, any time.

Besides getting your letters, I have another reason to rejoice this week. Right after I arrived, I ~~received~~ order 8000 Camels and 4000 Spuds. Both shipments arrived this week, so I am now well supplied with cigarettes for what should be a considerable period of time. Just after eating and just before starting the second lap of this letter, I smoked the first Spud I have had for two and a half months. It certainly tasted good. I was a little disappointed, though, that they sent me the regular size rather than the new "Imperial" Spud which I have seen advertised. That, I thought, would be really something. I guess they still had a few of the old kind left, and were anxious to pass them off on the export market. At the price they charge, I can't kick: the 4000 cost \$12.00 delivered. All cigarettes here have to be done up in air-tight packages; otherwise the 85% humidity causes them to mould. Mr. Jester opened a pack of Chesterfields the other day which he had only had for a few months, and they were all mouldy. How the moisture can penetrate the cellophane wrapping I don't know, but it does. All rubber and leather articles rot very quickly here. When you come, don't bring any good leather handbags, or anything of leather. I have already had to discard my nice wrist-watch strap that I bought in Lisbon; it smelled worse than the worst wet dog you ever smelled. My key case is also rotten, and I will have to buy an old-fashioned key ring. My bill-fold is also very high, but I am not thinking of discarding it for the present.

It certainly is hot tonight. As I told you before, this is the worst time of year here. Towards the middle or end of April, the rains will come and cool things off a trifle, although the humidity is even worse. There is a fair breeze outside, but the ground floor of the Consulate is well protected by bushes, and the only breeze I can feel comes from an electric fan. This is the first time I have tried typing here at night. The light is strategically arranged to throw the shadow of my hands over the key-board, which wouldn't bother me if I were a touch-system typist, but then I'm not. The sweat rolling down my neck bothers me a bit. It takes my mind off what I am saying. The Acting Governor said in opening the Legislative Council the other day, that of the blood, tears, toil and sweat promised by Churchill when he took over the government in the U.K., Nigeria has supplied its full quota of the last named only.

There's nothing left to tell except I love you. You are my golden ~~Katrina~~ Madonna, my angel of sweetness, my goddess. Please, please love me forever, as I have promised and do love you. Always yours, *Bill*

[On the reverse of page 3, in WLK hand]

I like the limerick very much and am adding it to my collection. I also enjoy Morris Bishop in the New Yorker, when I get it. I had no idea he was the brother of [your] Mr. Bishop.
Enclosed the photos of the holiday revelry at Tarkwa Bay. They didn't come out well, on the whole.

