

3071 Indiana Street
 Coconut Grove, Fla.
 July 11, 1942

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Dear love,

Opportunity to write you has been very scarce for a multitude of reasons. Mr. Jester never did come through Miami, so I missed the chance of seeing him. About a week ago my big boss came into the airport and gave me notice that he, Mr. Jester, was expected on the Boeing that was to come in that night, and that he (my boss, this time) had been waiting all day for the pleasure of telling me so. As soon as he saw the name Consul at Lagos he knew who would be singled out to contact him on his arrival. But oh what a disappointment when he didn't show up!

I've been trying all sorts of ways and means to get letters to you, and I wish you would tell me what success we have had with the various means, as soon as you can. What a nuisance that they don't go to Lagos! And what very poor taste!

You sort of scared me by saying that you would try to get home leave next year. Is it as doubtful as all that? I was under the hopeful impression that they didn't keep people down in those places very long. And anyway you haven't been home for four years or so, have you? I hope that if you have any despairing moments you remember that you are not alone, but surrounded by my love, and that that love will always be there when and if you want it. It's quite beyond my capabilities to tell you how much I want you here with me, and how small and incapable of courage I am without you. I suppose that being yourself you are not as lamentably weak as I am, but if at times you do feel alone and among strangers, bear in mind that we are together in this venture and that it is easy for two to be courageous. Easy! Well, accept my words rather than my attitude, because I am not very strong and independent, and the truth is that I could be much more so if I knew that you were nearer to me even by a few thousand miles. But occasionally the thought comes to me that you are there and that we are together mentally at least, and it makes me glad.

I got a letter from Dorothy, the girl in the mail room at Lisbon, full of news and chatter. She said that Jones had passed through there on his way to London, that Mamie, the other girl who was in the mail room when I was, had gotten a better job there in the passport section, that Mr. Parsons had gone home to get married. He had waited a long time also. Mr. Parry is still there, to my surprise, and had Jones out to the Avis for cocktails before his plane departure. Dorothy was full of the Drottningholm business (by the way, Mr. Parsons left on one of the sailings of that famous ship) She said the passengers on that boat were some of the most amazing characters (ye gods what ghastly spelling) that had ever crawled out of the woodwork into the light of day. I can imagine what she means- all the ancient specimens that have been cooped up in Europe for eons at long last venturing back to their native heath willingly or unwillingly. I suppose that many of them had been through out-of-the-ordinary sufferings, however so perhaps our ridicule is uncalled-for. Still, storm warnings were put up way back in 1939. We have been getting stories in the newspapers and magazines about their experiences, some of which are quite interesting. Did I ever tell you that the same motive that impells men to sit on top of poles for seventy days and seventy nights is, according to me, the one that prompts people to stay on and on in the worst possible conditions for no particular reason but just for the beautiful heck of it. In a way I understand them, or think I do. Perhaps

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circumstances forced them into staying on till it became relatively difficult to leave, and by that time they had acquired the unholy appetite for more and yet more remaining, then finally they were really and truly "caught in Europe". Perhaps they wanted to have something to tell the people back home. Perhaps they wanted to test the metal of their souls. In any case, the screwball in me understands them while the sane, healthy mind heaps on ridicule. And anyway, what's life without adventures of that sort? It's all right, I suppose, and a more normal thing- but oh dear, it has disadvantages! Like most people, the part of me that hates the thought of the eight-fifteen suburban local is in constant battle with the part that likes three square meals a day and security. So far I have reconciled them with some degree of success by indulging in mild little ventures with a discreet seasoning of travelers checks, and abject and cowardly as I am ready to admit it is, that's the way I am afraid I want to continue my adventures- with traveler's checks and not above two day's journey to the nearest white-tiled bath tub. How petty! One should either go in for adventure whole-heartedly, and be willing to abjure "merican plumbing completely, or else stick to the eight-fifteen suburban local. But that's how it is- I want to gaze at my cake while I munch on it.

The news is as ~~usual~~ usual: sparse. I meet people fleetingly and they fleet off. I go to the beach on my bicycle, hardly fleetingly this time, I acquire a tan. I spend hours in the library and hours with the results of my search for good reading material. I cook a few meals when I can find an appropriate victim. I work hard and am secretly joyful at the opportunity to be active and useful. I contemplate life and try to work out a philosophy that will carry me through this unhappy period. I look unceasingly for more people with whom I feel at home and at ease. I wish with all my heart that you were here to give a meaning and a center to things, so that I could be working to help you and make you happy and so that I could kiss you when I felt affectionate. I think often how right I was to love you and how good and complete things will be when we are together. Likewise how hollow and pointless they are at present- all negative electrons whirling around in a vacuum where there are no positive electrons to stick to.

The boss tells me I am to get a twenty-five dollar a month raise beginning the middle of August, and commends me, much to my satisfaction. This will be a great material help.

The other day I was surprised by receiving a cablegram from Jones, from London. It just said Hello Angel. I can't figure him out. When I last saw him he was very angry with me and went away in a complete huff of gigantic proportions for no reason in particular, and now this. It came on July fifth, which is the anniversary of a particularly awful day in history, when Jones got very drunk indeed and had to go to the Ingham celebration with a black eye. It's all too complicated for me to understand, although I am glad he is no longer angry.

I wonder all the time if you have the same longing for peace and rest in love that I have with me constantly. It is getting to be an enormous mountain casting a shadow over every place I turn. Nothing is right nor good, everything's a nightmare lit by glaring electric lights with a blue-white tinge. I love you.

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Sorry, darling, but I couldn't find anyone to take this letter for a week and when Bob Francis stopped here I couldn't even find the letter! So glad that company mail does the job so well. I'll remember.

It was a pleasant and hilarious evening we had when Bob passed through Miami- he's a very nice boy, and it was good to hear about the wedding, although nasty to think that he was going to be seeing you in a couple of days.

It looks as if mother were coming down here to visit me soon- when I don't know. I am afraid the projected visit is caused by some rather lonely-sounding letters I had written to her, although I know that she also wanted to come down here even before I said I wanted my mamma. In any case, we shall probably have a fine feathered time of it and I hope she'll be able to stay a long time.

Darling, I love you. You know it very well- too well, according to the books. But we are so far apart, and this expression naturally leaps to mind so often and so insistently, that I can't refrain from reminding you constantly that the best man in the world, if he were someone else than you, would make no headway whatsoever in my heart. Letter number twenty-five, which talked about the Egyptian situation and the famous letter to Mrs. Shipley, came the day before yesterday. Please do send me a sample letter to Mrs. Shipley. Is there anything I could do? the matter of the divorce will soon be settled one way or the other- it's now only a matter of a week or so.

Good-bye my love. I think of you all the time.

Philinda

P.S. The lovely bowls! The fine cigarette-box!
Wonderful William!