

AMERICAN CONSULATE
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L-161 p1/2 cc

My precious,

This time I have been reading over one of your old letters instead of one of the recent ones. It was the one you wrote on November 24th from Vermont, just after you had received my first three letters from Lisbon. I relived again the joy that I first knew when I read it and knew that time and distance had not cooled your love for me. It also reminds me that I love you just as just as I did then and I guess from your letters that you love me too the same way, even though a lot more time has gone by. Mac is upstairs playing the phonograph - the current number is "Till We Meet Again", which seems very appropriate for us. I will love you, my darling, forever and afterwards, if the soul of man retains any consciousness after death. My love is just as strong and sure and all-comprehending as it ever was, and I grow more and more impatient of the long wait that we have ahead of us, barring some miracle. Sometimes I feel as if love were a great sphere resting on my solar plexus. Its weight is very ~~was~~ light, and I want to press it closer to me. But when I try to hold it in my arms, it slips away from me because it is so large I cannot grasp it. Going back a little further, I remember how I felt when I received your cable in London saying that you hadn't changed your mind and wouldn't. I really believe that I was the happiest man in the world, for what can make a man happier than to know that the woman he loves loves him and will wait for him? You see in a sudden flash the future opening up before you, not dull and flat as you had always seen it before, "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing", but a lovely panorama of gently rolling hills, with the sunlight flecking the fields of grain. And as you walk down the road, you are not alone. That is the important thing. I have felt alone so much, and I am so tired of it. I do so long to have you here or there or wherever I am, always at my side, always ready to hold my hand in yours, to be near me when I am lonely in the night. That is the picture that your letters, old and new, paint to me. It doesn't mean any lessening of love to say that the first ones were the biggest thrill, since I had been wanting to know so long, first following the slow passage of your boat across the Atlantic, then leaving Lisbon myself without any word from you. I knew there wasn't time to have received a letter yet, but that doesn't make any difference when you're in love, does it? Then the cable in London, then the long trip to Lagos, pacing the deck humming "J'attendrai" and watching the sea break over the bows of the little destroyers which formed our escort. Idle days, punctuated by meals and BBC newscasts. Your cable and your poem were always with me, would have gone with me in the life boats if we had been hit. Your presence was there too; you made me strong to look forward to another post, an-

L-161 p2/2 cc

other strange town. In you was the hope of other new posts that would not be an ordeal, of the companionship I need so much and can't get from other men. In other words, my perfect woman, you were made to order for me, I love you and want you tremendously, and I will be happy only in the hope of our soon meeting.

Darling, I have been working mightily and struggling in the throes of composition. I refer to the letter which will be enclosed with this addressed to Mrs. Shipley regarding your passport. Although I have worked on it some time, if you don't think it fits your case, just let me know and I will work on another. The events of the past two weeks or so have not been at all helpful to the cause of the United Nations or to Us, Unltd. I mean of course what has happened in Egypt. By the time you get this, it will probably be all over, one way or the other. Right now, it is generally agreed that Egypt is lost, although I hope we are wrong. What the situation will be after that is hard to say. Where the Germans will strike next only Hitler and his buddies know. But if Egypt goes, it is not likely to make Ma Shipley disposed to grant you a passport to come over here. We are now in the course of making arrangements for the horde of refugees which we expect to arrive from Cairo almost any time. At the moment, every effort is being concentrated on getting people as far as Khartoum. There are large hotels there which can care for a large number of people. After that, they will begin to move them to Lagos, and we expect about 500 in due course. Arrangements are already made to billet them with the local people when the hotels and transit camp has given out, as they soon will.

Time marches on! July 6, 1942

In view of all this, I wonder whether it might not be a good idea to wait and see what is going to happen in Egypt before sending the letter to Mrs. Shipley. I'm afraid if she gets it now, she will just say "No", and then it will be impossible later to get her to change her mind. Due to various interruptions, I didn't get the letter for her typed Saturday or Sunday, and as we may close the pouch today, I may have to hold it over for the next one.

The Glorious Fourth was duly celebrated - after working hours. PAA had a blow-out at their mess and all the Americans in town were supposed to come. The party actually started at 3 p.m., but I didn't go until after seven. We found everybody well-oiled by the time we arrived, and the party rolled along very smoothly, except that from some people's point of view there weren't enough girls and consequently not much dancing. I sat around and talked to various people that I met, including one PAA man who travels a lot and had a lot of pertinent remarks to make about the way things are going. Probably because most of the people got pickled early, the party broke up before midnight, and Mac and I invited Mr. Shantz and his house guests to stop at our place on the way home for another drink. They did, and the party continued, in a nice way, for some time longer. On the whole, it was a very pleasant occasion. Yesterday, Mr. Shantz asked Mac and I to go with him and guests to Tarquah Bay, and we had a good afternoon's sleep to make up for the late hours of the night before. Otherwise the day was uneventful. However, it did prevent me from getting the letters finished, and the pouch is closing right now. I'm terribly sorry about that, but since you may have to wait a while to present them, it won't hurt. Keep on loving me, darling; I'll spend the rest of my life trying to make you glad you did.