

IN REPLY REFER TO

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

THE FOREIGN SERVICE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL

Lisbon, Portugal
November 7, 1941
(Friday, 11:30 AM)

My darling Philinda:

It has been just a week since we were sitting together at the Tivoli bar and loving each other very much indeed. I can hardly believe that it has only been a week, because every day that you have been away has seemed like a week in itself. As I wrote in my first letter, you had not been gone two hours before I felt the need of talking to you again, and that need has not diminished with the passing of time. I honestly do not know how I am going to get through the coming months; the only thing that will sustain me is the thought that we will soon be together and that then we will not ever have to be separated again. I miss you so much, my dear, that I cannot even talk about it. It is harder because of having to be very quiet about it all the time and showing no more than the normal amount of interest in your welfare. Once in a while I say a few words to Hervé, but I would like to sit back and talk about how wonderful you are for hours at a time, and of course that is impossible. You are the backdrop in front of which all my life is going on. When the stage is quiet for a time, one can contemplate the backdrop, but even when the action is taking place, one is never totally unconscious of the setting. All my thoughts, hopes, plans and aspirations are centered around you. I have never had any doubts that I love you, and now I know from sad experience that even separation cannot dim its intensity.

I have just heard that the Clipper service is practically at a standstill on account of weather conditions, and I am preparing this letter to be carried over on the ship. It shouldn't take much longer than the Clipper, since it will avoid the stop at Bermuda. Speaking of Bermuda, if your ship is on schedule, you must be there now. This last week has been an anxious one for Parry and me. The fear that something might happen to the ship has never been far from our minds, but with every day that passed, we have been easier on this score. I hope that you are now out of the danger zone. By Monday you should be in New York. I had hoped that my letter of last Sunday would be waiting for you when you arrived, but with the Clippers not functioning, I fear it is still here in Lisbon. Darling, I don't want you to be for one minute without the knowledge that I love you, and I am going to write to you often just to remind you. I hope you will do the same for me. Although I am confident your love will not die in strange surroundings, nevertheless it would do me a lot of good to have you say so. I have so very little tangible of you here. There is just your note which begins, "No heroine I" and your precious poem, which I still carry in my upper left vest pocket. There are still a couple of pieces of black angora around the room which I am trying to preserve, but they are slowly being brushed away by the maid. She is more efficient than I had ~~the~~ thought. I am starving to hear from you. I have just had a brilliant idea about your writing. If you use a typewriter, make a copy and send one

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to Lagos and one here, at least until you hear that I am leaving here. In that way, I will hear from you no matter what. And I will leave some money here with Dorothy to pay for forwarding any letters which may come in after I have left by air mail. Sometimes I am surprised at my own genius!

In my last letter I think I mentioned going to the movies one night with Bill Cordell. The following evening I went to eat at the Leão Douro with Hervé, Parry and Dr. Faget. It was the first time I had been there since we had our last lunch there, and I believe we were sitting in the same stall. We had a very good meal, as usual, and afterwards Parry and I went to see "That Night in Rio" which is playing at the Tivoli. It was light and fluffy and amusing. We both enjoyed it very much, although I wouldn't recommend your going to see it unless you haven't much else to do. Last night I stayed home and read TIME, after having dinner with Parry. I had to get into bed to read because of the cold - we still don't have any heat - and I fell asleep too early. During the wee hours of the morning, some kind of a disturbance took place in the street just outside the hotel. From the sounds I should say that some woman (definitely not a lady) was very drunk and was shouting at the top of her voice. This went on and on without any interference from the hotel porter, and finally I got used to it and went back to sleep anyway. So you see that life here without you isn't very exciting. It certainly seems lonesome without you and Jimmy; I hardly know what to do with myself except to write letters, and even then it's not always easy to find a free typewriter. This is being written on the aged and decrepit machine in Mr. Wiley's office, and since there is no heat in this room, my fingers are getting stiff with the cold. My fingers love you, though, like the rest of me, and they are quite willing to go on typing.

There has been one development in my case since I wrote last Tuesday. The Legation received a telegram from London to the effect that "the officials were planning a route for Krieg will wire results in a few days". No one has any idea what they mean by that. Perhaps they want me to go by ship. I still wish I could travel via the U.S., but I'm afraid that is out of the question. Darling, if I had left here earlier, I might not have found out that you loved me. Think what thin threads our fates hang on! My greatest and only chance of happiness in life depends on you. I hope you won't feel I am taking unfair advantage by telling you this and trying to prejudice your decision. I want you to make your decision in accordance with your own happiness, which is even more important to me than my own, but I cannot be "heroic" and pretend, even for a moment, that I do not hope with all my soul that you will come back to me. I love you, hopelessly and irrevocably. It is so hard waiting to hear from you. I need you so much, my dear, and time passes so slowly. I hope that I may find a lot of work in Lagos. Not that I will forget you, or that I want to; I just need something to occupy my mind a bit, to make the time go more quickly. It is up to you to bring me out of this purgatory into heaven.

Darling, I'm a very bad letter writer. I can only feel the hollowness inside and think of you. And then, there is nothing really to write about, except "I love you". I hope that's what you want to hear.

It is now 12:30. Remember where we were this time last week?

With all my love,

Bill

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