

IN REPLY REFER TO

FILE NO.



AIR MAIL

THE FOREIGN SERVICE  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL

Lisbon, Portugal  
November 2, 1941  
(Sunday noon)

My darling Philinda,

Here it is Sunday and the long, dull day is unrolling in the conventional fashion. Today is one of those funny days which are mostly clear, but suddenly it begins to rain, and although I was ready to come over to the office at 11 o'clock, I had to wait for fifteen minutes or so until the rain stopped. I used the interval to think about you (as if I hadn't been doing that all the time anyway), and the time passed very quickly. I think if a doctor could see my thought processes at this time, he would undoubtedly certify me as mentally incompetent. A lot of my thinking is double. First I think of something, and then I "rephrase" the idea as if I were telling you about it. I have the urge to tell you my every little thought, and when I occasionally have a thought which I would not want to tell you, I quickly put it out of my mind, because my mind is yours as is all the rest of me, and there is no room there for ideas which you cannot share. When I am not engaged in this strange form of diversion, I am composing letters to you in my head. I must have spent hours during the last ~~fx~~ two days doing that, and in fact I was going to put them in writing yesterday, but when I came over to the office, there were so many people here I couldn't get away. As my thoughts are pretty much at random, having only you as a central point, I'm afraid that you will find this letter rather nonsensical. I am sitting up in Miss Wedemeyer's room for greater privacy, and I hope no one will disturb me, for I want to be alone with you. *(P.S. No one did.)*

After I left you on the boat, the bottom pretty well dropped out of everything. I got into a taxi but I couldn't think where to tell him to go, so I finally said, "Just drive up the Avenida da Liberdade". I finally got out near the Tivoli with the idea of going into the bar and sitting in the same booth which we had used in the morning, but then I remembered that Miss Kearney had asked me to arrange for one of the girls from the office to bring her fur piece ashore which she had left by mistake, so I hurried up to the Consulate. Miss Wedemeyer was just leaving, and she promised to retrieve the fur, and then I went into the office and sat with my head on my chest for quite a long time, and then went with George Miller and Bill Cordell to the Tivoli for a drink. Just as we were leaving, I met Parry walking up the street, and he said he had seen you and Mrs. Parry leaning over the rail and waving when the ship pulled out. In a way I wish I could have been there, for every glimpse of you is a precious thing, but I suppose under the circumstances things worked out as well as ~~they~~ possible. Casey came with me to the Casa de Santo Antonio and sat around while I ate dinner, then we had a Maciera (spelled wrong) and went to bed. And those were my first hours without you, my darling. I loved you every minute of the time, and I still do. There are no signs of abatement yet, nor do I think there will be any.

Yesterday I had lunch with Parsons at the Victoria and then took a nap (and thought of you) until about five, when I came to the Consulate to write to you.

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Herve, Dr. Faget and Parry were here, and they thwarted this, and then Cordell asked me to have dinner at his place. Before going there, we had drinks at the Tivoli, and I'm afraid poor old Bill drank too much. While I was there, he must have put away about four litres of beer, and was constantly exclaiming, "I don't know where I put it all!" Shortly after this, he left the table very suddenly, and I discovered him in the men's room, very sick indeed. For some reason, he started to sneeze, and he "let'er go" in the approved Arkansas fashion. The result was something like the sound effects which accompany a bursting shell. After the third or fourth spasm, I looked up and saw the bartender, the waiter, and two bell-boys standing in the doorway looking on with amusement and, at the same time, incredulity written all over their faces. If they hadn't seen him do it, I don't think they would have believed a man could make so much noise. After this episode, we went to his house, where he drank another beer and quietly went to sleep with his head on the dining room table before he had eaten his dinner. His maid took very good care of him, as if he were a baby. She trotted in very competently with a pillow to put under his head, and I finished the meal in silence, broken only by a few gentle snores from Bill. After I had finished eating, Maria and I tried to get him to bed, but you have no idea how heavy he was. Absolute dead weight. Fortunately, he came to at this point and was able to proceed more or less under his own steam. I walked home, thinking how much I love you. All this leads me to fear that Bill is not as thoroughly reformed as I had hoped. The fact that Maria was so little surprised was a bad sign. However, I hope it won't be too bad, as I really like Bill. He remarked absolutely spontaneously (and before he was tight) what a nice girl he thought you were. I almost told him what I thought about you.

And what are you doing, my love? You are on the sea as I write this, and I am praying as I haven't prayed in years for your safety. You must come back to me, my dear; I can't imagine life without you now. Now I have seen the vision and I must follow it; I can't turn back. You see, dear, I'm no hero either, and I don't think I'm going to have any luck trying to be. All I want is YOU, and all other ideas must be subordinate to that. I can't express myself on paper, dear. My heart is so full of so many things to tell you, and the waiting time seems so long. But the promise of happiness afterwards is so great and so sure that I can endure any amount of time it takes.

This morning a telegram came in from Lagos saying my presence was urgently needed there and asking if probable date of arrival was known so they could arrange living quarters. I haven't seen Herve this morning, so I don't know what answer he intends to send, if any. Jack Ives has some contacts with the British Overseas Airways, and perhaps he may be able to fix things up here. In any case, I am anxious to get away, especially if they really need me down there. It's always better when you feel you are wanted. And do you know that I want you very, very much? Herve was funny yesterday. When we were alone, I was saying what a wonderful person you are. He said, "Yes, she's very fine and very good looking. She has a pretty face, but I wouldn't say that her face was beautiful". I said, "I would," and he laughed. And I do. I have never seen such lovely, expressive eyes in my life. You can convey all kinds of meanings with your eyes. Then your hair is beautiful, and your mouth is beautiful, and I can't imagine you with any other kind of nose; you wouldn't look right. In other words, "My love, thou art altogether fair" and I love thee and I shall love thee as long as I live.

Better write to me here at Lisbon until further notice. Letters can always be forwarded.

Yours always,

Bill

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