

Bethesda, Jan. 17, 1949

Dear Mamma,

Here I am, with the boy in bed but still awake after an hour! I threatened him with the sleeping medicine, and was greatly surprised by his answering that he wanted some! So I had to give him some, having threatened it. He took a tiny bit in a large glass of water, but it hasn't fazed him yet.

We've been having quite a pleasant time of it. We went to a cocktail party at the Chilean Embassy last Wednesday, and saw six newspapermen get decorated with medals around their necks on ribbons which were too tight for their necks, poor dears. Among them were Drew Pearson and a Mr. Brown, Latin American editor of Time, whom we later got to talk to. It was a very fun party, with different people than we usually see. I wore my new yellow dress. On Friday we had Boise Hart and his mamma, also Tillie and Leon Cowles to dinner. Beef paprika! At last! Tonight we are going to a cocktail party at the home of an acquaintance of Williams in the Canadian Embassy. He deals with Latin American relations of Canada, and that's how William came to meet him. After that we have been invited to come to dinner with Mr. and Mrs. Severson, whom we used to know in Caracas. He is second in command of the Texas Company down there - under our good friend Bill Woodson. It should be fun.

Last Thursday I went crazy. I was sitting there cleaning the refrigerator as good as gold, when the telephone rang, and I discovered it was Virginia Davis in the role of the Temptress. She said "It's a beautiful spring-like day. Let's go downtown and look at the shops on Connecticut Avenue". So without a word to anyone except Leola, I dashed off at ten thirty in the morning and had a WONDERFUL time of it going crazy. We looked at all the windows, and went in to most of the little shops. I bought some darling patent leather shoes to match the patent leather belt of my yellow dress, and I bought a new hat, and also ordered a new dress! Can you imagine that! The dress is of the purest, softest silk, the softest I've ever felt. It is colored a warm light brown, sort of luggage color, and is in two parts. A blouse with wide blousy sleeves and big, big high cuffs, a shirtwaist neck; a skirt that has a stiff waistband coming to a peak in the center, sort of like a cummerbund, and a plain skirt in front, though in back there are many pleats. It won't come for two weeks, but since it's really a spring or summer dress, I don't care much. Virginia and I had a simply lovely time all on our own, and then we had to come back, grab a hamburger, and let me off at the beauty parlor for a permanent. I felt wicked but happy.

Poor Brownie has been having quite a series of adventures. First he got left behind at Sears Roebuck, when L.J. put him down on a shelf to pick up some red cellophane. Then that night he got up to make pipi with L.J., and fell in the john. "My poor Brownie almost DROWNED!" - but he was hastily wrapped in a bath towel and suffered no ill effects other than terror. As if that hadn't been enough to make him a nervous bear, he got carried away in the mouth of a puppy dog the very next day, amid the anguished screams of his master and friend, L.J. Krieg. I had to run down the street shouting "Stop thief", and of course the puppy only ran the harder, although we eventually caught up with him and made him give up poor



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Brownie. Laurence John showers a great deal of affection on the bear, and really treats him quite nicely now. But we had to leave Brownie behind yesterday when we went to the zoo, because as L.J. pointed out himself, "Brownie won't like the lions." But the boy himself was delighted and terribly, terribly quiet about going to the zoo. We exacted perfect obedience from him all morning simply by saying "All right then, no zoo for little boys who don't mind!" It was a wonderfully warm day, and everyone in Washington seemed to be at the zoo. L.J. mentioned that grandma wanted to go to the zoo also. "Poor grandma can't go to the zoo, poor, poor, grandma!" When we came to the badger's cage, L.J. immediately said "Just like the one Mr. Rat and Moley saw!" He was quite conciliatory toward the tigers, shouting politely "Hello Mr. Tiger, hello dear Mr. Tiger!", but you could see he respected them. He was delighted with the camels, and merely remarked "Where are the cigarettes, mamma?" When we couldn't find the entrance to the park, he was quite concerned, and said "The animals are looking for us, they say where are we? Where is Laurence John?" But when we finally found it and drove in, he said happily "Now the animals can see us; here we are, animals!"

I finally got and read "Love among the Ruins", and of course enjoyed it. But the more I read them the more I feel you should read the original Trollope books, because I can see how many references there are to them in Angela Thirkel/ Really, you are losing a great deal of pleasure by not reading those marvelous books, beginning at "The Warden" and going right on to the "Last Chronicle of Barsetshire". I envy you, for being in the position of being able to read them for the first time. Since Virginia had given us so many nice presents for Christmas, I up and bought her "The Wind in the Willows", sort of for Dana's education. I could only get the Arthur Rackham edition, but it's very pretty too, though I prefer the Shepherd's version of Mr. Mole. By the way, in one of Joseph and Stuart Alsop's columns the other day I noticed a reference to Mole, Rat, and Badger of "The Wind in the Willows".

Our other two venetian blinds were finally installed, in the downstairs john and in the hall window. I had no conception of how much the hall would be improved by the venetian blinds! they seem to furnish it completely, and improve the look of those green draperies, too. Of course getting rid of that old yellow blind in the john was a help, too.

I've been on bananas and milk, off and on, for a week now, and I've managed to lose three pounds of the six. What a struggle! I hate to think I'll have to spend the rest of my life not eating delicious food, but that seems to be the case. Whenever I say what the heck and start right in, up goes the old weight. Mrs. Bombauer has a table of caloric contents in the back of the cookbook, and I pore over it sadly now and then. How true, how true, that everything really fun is either illegal, immoral, or fattening! Or both, or all three at once!

On that low, sad, and haunting note I will leave you and go to work on the laundry, a job which is non-fattening, perfectly legal, and highly moral- also not a bit fun!

Love,