

April 15, 1940

Dear Papa & Mama,

We got two letters from you today – one from each, & both worried as can be! It's all my fault, & all quite baseless, my darlings. You needn't have worried one little bit. The affair happened just a week before my luffly job started, so the rush of events and exciting things must have pushed it off the map before I got around to writing you, but you see I didn't mean to be mysterious & secret about my life & doings because I told Aunt Jondie¹ the matter, apropos of something else. This is the whole story: I was tired of standing up for hours in that nasty Préfecture de Police, the police were infinitely annoying, and I had a cold, we had just experienced moving, & I was mad, so I passed gently out & thus left the Prefecture in record time, much to the delight of my restored senses. Seeing that I was tired & cold-germ beloaded, that I was about to embark on a job in a week, & persuaded by the dulcet tones of Jimmie, I decided to go to the hospital & rest up before work. James had often told me of the delightful week he had spent there just after he came to Europe, & was weary & also cold-germ beloaded. I intended to stay a week but after a day or two I became so intensely, horribly, direly bored that I repented, & left as soon as I had finished the book I borrowed from the Hospital Library. I haven't had any fits or visions or spells since then, although I have been back to the Préfecture. I am in fine health and can beat Jones in badminton if I make enough of an effort. If you are worried about the amount of food we get – don't. I eat more than I used to chez moi, & porridge or cream of wheat every morning. The only things you can't get every day are meat & French pastry, but I buy meat ahead so we have it almost seven days a week, which kills me because Jones wants steak practically all the time! I manage to exist without French pastrys every day, & Jimmie seems to also.

I guess that answers all possible questions! Excuse me, my dears for worrying you so, but it was all unintentional as can be.

We have decided to go South on our week's vacation, if we can get permission in time (from the police). We want to go to Avignon or Cannes, & ride around investigating things on bicycles. We'll only take one suit of clothes apiece, & be bums. As I wrote you before, we are happy as larks about everything. The skies are smiling, we are Fortune's favored children. Today is Sunday, & it is the last Sunday that Jimmie will have to work for twenty-four hours at a stretch! Next week he is going to work on the midnight to eight shift, which will be nice, because we can then have a large part of the day free, since usually the men just sleep on that shift. We are

¹ **Aunt Jondie:** Josephine Srahorn, twin sister of Philinda's mother.

looking forward with gleeful horror to having to get up at 7 A.M. on the new Embassy job. We, who always rose regally at noon!

I was afraid I was going to lose my maid, Charlotte, to another woman, but it looks as tho she'll stay after all. She is very good, & her wages are five francs an hour.

The little Scottie belonging to Pertinax,² the political commentator, tried to bite me a few weeks ago, although he is usually my-tail wagging friend – the dog, not Pertinax!

I think Donald Stuart Campbell³ would be a fine name for the infant who is appearing in November. The woods will soon be filled with Philindas⁴, if it's a lady. My love to the young mama, & I do so hope she is over her seasickness! Jimmie & I have been faithfully reading our magazines, and both of us thought the Astounding⁵ in which Final Blackout⁶ began was a very good issue, except for the Treasure of Ptakuth.⁷ We fight over who is to read them first.

I am reading America in Midpassage by Beard⁸, & I'm finding it excellent history as well as well-written. Poppa should find it amusing. It's just from 1929 on.

Don't worry anymore!

Love,

Me

² **Pertinax**: a French political commentator whose work appeared in *l'Ordre* (and possibly other publications). Mention is made of Pertinax online in the digitized version of *the Courier-Mail*, Brisbane, Australia, 1938-12-28. (<http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/38712298> accessed 2015-10-04.)

³ **Donald Stewart Campbell**: referring to "Donald Stewart", the pen name John Campbell used with several of his early novels.

⁴ **Philinda**: The baby turned out to be a girl, and was indeed named Philinda – though as a child she used the nickname "PD" or Peedee.

⁵ **Astounding Science Fiction**, April, 1940 issue, edited by John W. Campbell, Jr. (Philinda's brother).

⁶ **Final Blackout** "is a dystopic science fiction novel by author L. Ron Hubbard. The novel is set in the future and follows a man known as "the Lieutenant" as he restores order to England after a world war. First published in serialized format in 1940 in the science fiction magazine *Astounding Science Fiction*, *Final Blackout* was published in book form in 1948..." (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Final_Blackout, accessed 2015-10-04)

⁷ **"The Treasure of Ptakuth"**, by Leigh Douglass Brackett. "(December 7, 1915 – March 18, 1978) ... an American writer, particularly of science fiction. She was also a screenwriter, known for her work on such films as *The Big Sleep* (1945), *Rio Bravo* (1959), *The Long Goodbye* (1973) and *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980). (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leigh_Brackett#1940.E2.80.931941, accessed 2015-10-04)

⁸ **Charles Austin Beard** (November 27, 1874 – September 1, 1948) was...one of the most influential American historians of the first half of the 20th century... His financial independence was secured by *The Rise of American Civilization* (1927), and its two sequels, *America in Midpassage* (1939), and *The American Spirit* (1943), all written with his wife, Mary. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_A._Beard, accessed 2015-10-04)