

November 26, I think
Grafton, Vermont
1941?

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Dear William,

In fact darling, beloved William. At the rate I am writing to you we will soon be able to collect and publish ten volumes of the unexpurgated Love Letters of Philinda and W. L. Krieg. Will you do your part to foster this worthy cause? So far you have been even better than I have about it, but once I start I'm really going to beat the world's record- Edgar Wallace and Walter Scott will be put in the quantity production shade, because their's was not so much a labor of love as this. Writing to you is the only thing I can do now that I can't see and talk to you, so I take to the job with a full heart.

I wrote to the girls at the consulate, enlisting their aid in the mighty task of getting these letters to you as speedily as possible, and begging them to crush to the earth any nasty rumors that might have sprung up. As I had been weeping all over the previous there for the whole week before October thirtyfirst and asking them kindly not to mention the fact, they were practically in on the killing anyway, so I thought it would be the best way of killing two birds with one boulder. I am sure they will be pleased to help the cause of true love, being very nice and close-mouthed girls, as well as being in a position to get my letters off on the right track. Yesterday I sent off another such missive, by steamship mail, which I was informed leaves for Lagos from New York once a month, or did when The Book was published. If you care to you might make use of their services in the same way backwards- I am referring to the ladies in the Consulate at Lisbon now, rather than to the steamship line from New York. They always used to adore sending letters from France to England, so I imagine they will like this ~~xxxx~~ just as much if not better. Many an anguished mother in France has heard about the fate of her sonx in England by way of us. We were quicker than the ordinary mail route.

Father, as I have said in other letters, surprised me by being not at all opposed to the idea of my marrying you, provided I was sure of myself and he was sure of your moral uprightness and suitability, etc. ~~xxxx~~. Naturally he was not a little shocked when Jimmie first told him about the matter, but by the time I arrived he had more or less adjusted his mind to the situation. He had no inkling of any trouble in Jimmie's and my relations, because I had never let him think that there was any flaws in Jimmie's character as a husband. You know how Jones is, he immediately began listing his failings from beginning to end, and finished by announcing that it was all his faultx for having neglected me, been parsimonious unnecessarily from time to time, taking me for granted, drunk too much, griped too much, scolded too much, ad infinitum until Daddy must have thought he was cut out for a wife-beater. Therefore poor Pappa had another surprise coming when he saw that I didn't run in horror from Jones. That is why he doubted whether I was quite sure that I wanted to leave James. I have set his mind completely at rest on that score since, however. Mother could very well understand how it was possible for me to like Jimmie enormously, and find it very difficult to live with him at the same time. It is hard to comprehend that one can become quietly and unobtrusively unhappy over very minor things like being griped at, even when the griper is a very nice, kind person at heart. It is such a persistent thing, and even when the gripee is aware of the fact that the complaints are well founded in, it doesn't make it easier. Ah well. Jones is covered in sackcloth and ashes at this point, and promises that if I could forget you he would be the best husband alive as well as the lovingest, but even if ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ you did not exist (and thank heaven you do) it would still be impossible to face the old things again, because happiness in a situation is irrietrivable.

I wrote a thank-you note to Mr. L'Heureux. I am afraid he will be disappointed by the complete failure of his scheme to let me forget you, but on the other hand he ought to have been able to predict the actions of any young lady favored by such a good, fine man as W. L. K. I love you.

It has been carefully explained to all interested persons that a certain amount of haste is necessary in the preparations for Us, unlimited, as you put it. I should get the divorce business over with first, not being able to predict how long it may take

and there being many things to do after that. If you are doubtful of being able to get home leave, I should like to be free to take advantage of a passport to Africa were it offered to me, and that as soon as possible for fear of war which might arise before I was able to leave. If possible, I should like to have it over with by February or March. However, that may be too optimistic an estimate, everything depending on The Almighty Law. The thing that bothers me is that Father will have to pay the expenses, but I hope, if you are willing, to pay it back soon quick like a bunny.

Such a lot of horrible difficulties may arise! The only sure thing is that I love you and am willing to go through all this in order to live with you and be happy the rest of my life. A year is such a short time to struggle for that! Let's hope and work so that it won't be any longer than a year at most. Tell me what Lagos is like, with all the details and scandal and fun. Also tell me whether or not there is a possibility of your not being granted home leave after six months, so that we will have to start off on the other angle. A war would pretty much disrupt things in either case, so I think I'll join the Amurrica Poist movement.

Sweetheart, days are counted by Before Letter and After Letter, and there is really nothing in between other than musings upon the improbability of your loving me in spite of what you said in your last letter. The only truly happy moments occur while I am reading them for the first time. It is a very dampening complex, thinking that it was all a dream too lovely to materialize, and that you will soon repent of your ways. Gay, happy bachelordom, you will reflect in solitude, carefree independence and lightsome frolic with the stags, ~~xxxx~~ is too precious a thing to fling thoughtlessly away for the first rattle-brained picklepuss that passes by and says, merely says, she can cook! But darling, never fear for your independence. You can lock me up in a closet and forget about me for a week if you feel like it, but just let me look at you from time to time! And I am afraid there is no one to appreciate you as you should be appreciated, if I am not nominated for the delightful office, and no one is more gifted than I in the field of Admiring You. Browning's Summum Bonum just about starts to tell what I think about you. Deary me, and it was I who wanted you to be unspoiled and without conceit! A fine beggining, is all I can say. However, I do ask one thing in return, which is affection. And if possible, fidelity.

Lovingly,

Laura Philwida

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