

FEB 14 REC'D

Orange, New Jersey  
January 4, 1942

My dear love,

L-103  
p1

Oh, I know. I just wrote to you about four days ago, but I want to set an example to the world and to you, especially. Anyway, you are sitting in front of me on mamma's living room table with the blandest and most amenable look imaginable, so I thought you wouldn't mind. Unfortunately you are in a frame. There are all sorts of places where you could sit if it were really you, other than mamma's table, but there you are in Lagos instead showing remarkable lack of taste in environments. To be brief, I wish you were here.

Things seem to be moving awfully slowly in regard to Florida, but I still hope to go down there in a week or so, with Miami or Miami Beach as the ultimate destination. That's a fine thing, because that's where these letters leave the United States and conversely, arrive if and when you get there. It occurred to me in the still watches of last night that you might be able to strike up an acquaintance with one of the Pan-American men who come back and forth from Lagos to Miami. After buying him several drinks and inviting him to your house for some more you could casually mention the fact that you know a girl in Miami, and would he look her up? Thus, you see, this Pan-American gentleman could tell me all about you and how you looked last week and whether you are getting the proper vitamins, etc. At first I thought (excuse me, I was almost asleep) that you might kiss him gently, then he would do the same to me and it would be almost as good as the more direct variety, but on second and more mature thought I came to the conclusion that the whole idea was rather whacky. In any case it shows which way my unanchored thoughts are drifting night and day... toward you. It's amazing how silly one becomes when one is in l--e.

My ex-roommate from Swarthmore days drove down from Boston the other day, and she and another roommate of ours who lives in New York came over in the dead of night (well, it was about nine-thirty and they drove over twenty miles to get here) to see me! We had a luffly time and dragged out all the delightful scandal and dope of the past three years over a lush bowl of buttered popcorn. Good old Tebby hasn't changed a mite, is just the same old blowy girl that one can't imagine in the ~~role~~ role of a mathematical genius, which she is. The other roommate is a gorgeous gal who has turned into a remarkable painter, having sold her latest masterpiece for a round five hundred dollars. Not being a mathematical genius myself, nor yet having sold things for five hundred dollars, my only claim to eternal fame is having been looked upon with favor by you, which is after all enough, and more than the most ambitious girl could ask! Anyway, it's all I want, Angelpuss. As I mentioned in my last letter, Rufus Lindsley, my best friend, and I spent a happy if unexciting New Years Eve together in the bosom of her family. At midnight we had two Tom and Jerrys apiece (I never remember when it comes before and vice versa) and of course I made all sorts of wishes about next year that time as well as about your safety. I'm becoming a little mournful in regard to the prospects of our getting together quick like a rabbit, William, if the truth must be told. I begin to feel that the State Department (boo to it) will never give me a passport and will never let you come home. Still, wouldn't it be lovely if they would? It's all so ghastly vague and faint and improbable and distant now- that's one of the reasons I thought about the abovementioned Pan-American gentleman. I should so like to feel a little closer to you, my darling, and now that your sister has gone away there is no one hereabouts that even knows you. There I go getting sentimental and gucky all over the place, but maybe you'll understand how nasty it is.



Why cant this world be neatly arranged like the Fairy Story ones, where all you have to do is slay a giant or a dragon and there you are, all set up with a princess and half the kingdom, with nary a passport or the need of a home leave? I think I'll be an anarchist in my next reincarnation, and go about putting infernal machines under palaces of government. L-103 p2

It snowed yesterday like mad, and all the children (who nonetheless would have preferred it on Christmas day) were delighted. But it saddened me, because I had planned to drive up to Boston for a few days with my pal Tebby and mother was so frightened of the roads being slippery that I decided not to do it. In any case, I hope the lawyer will have received some news from Florida and I should like to be around to do something about it if he has. I'm getting awfully tired of waiting around not doing anything to advance our cause. I'm afraid Jones will have gone to London by the time the various things are ready for him to sign, thus delaying matters even more than they are now delayed. When I get to Florida I shall stop at the YWCA until such time as I shall have found a better place to live, and perhaps a roommate or two to enliven things. Then I shall look for some place where I can learn to sew dresses and things, and another place where I can learn to bake complicated pastries and cook subtle sauces, and still a third place where I can learn to play the piano. All very ladylike accomplishments, but which I have neglected so far and which now seem more important than they did when I was more interested in the Merovingian dynasty and the influence of the picaresque novels on Corneille's drama. Also, I shall look to see if there is any concern or persons needful of my services in any capacity, for unfortunately money is not one of the things that conveniently appears on trees in early spring. Anyway, I should like to have such a full life that I'll hardly notice that you aren't around to make me happy... But maybe I'm just a silly old optimist. Probably.

According to all the books and authorities I'm in the process of ruining my life. Because the books and wisemen all agree that here is no way of alienating a gentleman's affections so sure and inevitable as boring him with the story of how much you love him. Am I boring you, my pet? All I can say is that it never, never, never bores me to hear you talk love-talk, and hoping that like breeds like, I go right ahead happily recounting the gory details of my own hopeless passion. I really do hope that it doesn't annoy you too much, sweet, and even more that it doesn't pall on you. Poor old Rufus, who acts as a proxy for you from time to time, by listening to endless tales of the dear dead days when you were more around than now, asks me if I can't please think of a synonym for "wonderful" because she's very tired of hearing that you'r "wonderful". However, she gives back almost as much as she takes because she's found some sort of soldier who she thinks is very nice in his own way, and who is away most of the time Defending His Country, so that I have the opportunity of paying her back in kind by listening to her complaints. However, she has just disengaged herself from some engineer she was going to marry, because she says all he did was talk about Diesel Engines. So you see, my dear, that it really pays to talk love-talk, because if you don't your liable to be looked upon as one who talks shop too much. The poor Diesel Engine man is left out in the cold, and replaced by this soldier, who apparently is more wide-awake to the Facts of Life.

Speaking of Shop Talk, the war goes on in a way that makes people here listen avidly to the News Bulletins, but which has little effect other ways on daily life. Tires are being rationed quite systematically, and you can't buy a car anymore, but other than that there is as yet no change on the horizon. It was so different in France! Heaven forbid that we should be in such dire need as they are over there. I don't imagine that we will be even after a year or so, because we have so very many more resources in the agricultural and manufacturing line. Nonetheless, prices are going up like mad and metal things, especially copper, are becoming quite scarce. Father's Telephone Company is worried as can be over rubber and copper priorities,

(ye gods, here I am on the third page!) and poor poppa works Saturdays, Sundays and holidays over getting new lines put up between the centers of civilization and the new airfields, army camps, and naval bases.

L-103 p3

I've been reading all the references to Central Africa that I find in the papers and magazines. Recently there have been quite a few, referring to the new airlines, etc. One fascinating item told about the menus planned for the Pan-American men in Nigeria by the Good-Housekeeping institute. Naturally, I was delighted to find out what they had and what they hadn't. Mostly fresh meat, eggs, butter, milk... But then, all this is hardly as fascinating to you as it is to me. There was another by our young friend Eve Currie, telling about some interview she had with some amazing Sultan in Central Africa. She described lovingly the beautiful flowers, gorgeous sunlight, etc. I only hope it wasn't poetic imagination rather than a strictly truthful account, because as she described it it was really quite as one could wish - somewhat on the South Sea Island side. I suppose it wasn't raining when she was there.

Time out for lunch. Now I'm all covered with butter from toast, and can hardly touch the keys. The postman came, but all he brought was a journal of chicken and live-stock keeping, for mother, who has aspirations to be a farmer. How dull, except in the spring.

It's high time I finished this letter, which is beginning to look endless. God bless you, my dear.

Lovingly,

Laura Philinda