

IN REPLY REFER TO

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

AMERICAN CONSULAR SERVICE

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AMERICAN CONSULATE
Lagos, Nigeria
February 15, 1942

My sweet,

I have just been reading over your letters, for the umpteenth time, and I have felt more love for you surge up and overwhelm me like a wave overwhelms a toy boat. I love you always and all the time, darling, but at times like these I feel so close to you I want to talk to you rather than to write a letter. I do hope and pray that you will keep on writing that you love me, over and over again. That theme is to me like a strain from an immortal symphony which one could never tire of. Oh my love, I want you so much in this moment.....

Time out to catch breath. Your letter of November 26, from Vermont, and that of January 4th, from Orange, arrived here on the 11th and 14th of February, respectively. It was a lovely valentine, darling. Just the kind I could have asked for. I cannot understand why no more recent mail arrives, and I hope and pray that there is nothing wrong with you but only with these war-crazed mails. I incline toward the latter, since I have received no other air mail communications and so I guess the mail just isn't coming in. It seems so strange that one letter should come in a week and another take six. I hope you have better luck with mine, although of course I can't tell until you begin to answer them. The one I sent you last week with Miss Hilary could not be delivered in person, as I had hoped, ~~but~~ because it later developed that she was going on a plane which would land at Baltimore instead of at Miami. She had promised to go to see you while in Miami. I haven't found any Pan-American boys yet (please don't call them "gentlemen" - it's a travesty on the word) whom I knew well enough to invite to call on you, much less to give you a kiss for me. I'm afraid they would get too much personal interest in it. The pilots for Pan-Am mostly live about six miles from Lagos, and I usually only see them when they come in to have something done to their passports. I hope to be able to find some sympathetic person who is passing through Miami to go and tell you how well and strong I am and how much I am enjoying life here (!!!). As a matter of fact, I think I very possibly might enjoy life if you were here with me. It is the feeling of futile longing that is so hard to bear, plus the fact that we cannot count on being together at any specific time. I only hope that it may be short, although I'm afraid it may be fairly long. Although every day away from you is a torture, I do not for that reason despair. I know absolutely and for certain that my love for you is permanent and indelible, and therefore it will prevail. But waiting is poor pleasure.

Darling, I don't think I mentioned in my last that I had written to Dad to tell him all about us. Well, almost all, anyway.

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I said we met in Lisbon, that we together a lot for several months, and that we were absolutely sure that we loved each other and wanted to get married as soon as possible. However, we hadn't been able to do that because you were married, but that you were getting a divorce. I added that since I did not expect to be able to get home in less than a year, I was planning on having you come over here, and I referred them to Janie for additional details. So far I have had no answer and I do not know what their reaction will be. I don't really see how there can be much reaction, since they don't know you. If they did, they would be very happy. As it is, they are probably vaguely disturbed and hoping that I am not making a mistake. I'm not.

My dear cook-mistress and chef de cuisine, I have some good news for you. Anderson, who lives about the Consulate, is going to Accra to open his new Consulate, and the boss wants me to move in at least until the replacement arrives. However, I have decided, with his consent, to move in for good. This means, my pet, that when you come, you will be able to set your own table and entertain in your own home. It is true that, unless you bring furniture with you - which I doubt would be wise - your home will be distinctly underfurnished, but it will be larger than my present apartment, and, I hope, more satisfactory in the long run. Of course, it is going to cost something, for although I will save in food, I will lose in rent, and I will have to buy cooking utensils. Andy has kindly promised to let me use his in the meantime, and I am putting through a rush order to Macy to send me a selection of necessary articles pronto. If you have any suggestions, make 'em quick! I think you will like this apartment much better than the other. It has wooden instead of cement floors, and I have never liked cement floors. There are fewer ants, more space, and nearer the shopping district. If we live there, and if I succeed in getting a car, you could take the car shopping and anywhere you wanted to without our having to hire a chauffeur to drive the car back from the office to the house, etc. Darling, I think that when we get together, after all this time, we will be so happy with each other that it will not make much difference where we are. We can be in Afrida or in Greenland, I don't care, as long as I have you.

I am anxious to hear what results your Father got from his inquiries about my character. Right now Newark wouldn't be a very good place to inquire, for, outside the family, there are few people who knew me outside of church. Practically all my friends are either out of town on business or are in the armed forces. However, in case Janie didn't mention it, one of my best friends is in New York: Dwight H. Scott, who is with the Purchasing Department of General Foods, Postum Building, Park Avenue. He has known me practically all my life, and we were in fairly close touch with each other until recently. Another good reference is the Dean of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Medford, Mass. Dean Hoskins knew me very well while I was in the School, and we have corresponded since. I am not in the least worried about his finding out anything unfavorable, for I regret to say that I have never been bold enough to do unconventional things. Falling in love with you is my worst dereliction so far.

Sunday, February 22, 1942

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Well, darling, you see a whole week has rolled by without my having completed this letter. If I had had any idea that this would be the case, I would have sent off the first two pages right away by themselves. This week has been an unusually busy and hectic one. In the first place, Andy finally left for Accra, and I had to spend a couple of afternoons after work going over with him the inventory of the household effects which he is leaving to me. He is really a grand person, and talking with him has been a constant source of pleasure for me. I think we understand each other well, although we are very different, and I will certainly miss him. Friday morning I moved down here, bag and baggage, so now I do not even have to go out of the house to find a typewriter to write you letters on. Now that Andy is gone, there should be more time for writing.

There is a slight correction to be made in the middle paragraph of the last page where I said that I was going to get off a rush order to Macy's for china, silver-ware, cooking utensils, etc. The chief of the foreign buildings division of the Department was here this morning, and he said there was no reason why these articles should not be furnished by the Department, as they do in other places where an officer occupies government-furnished quarters. He invited Mr. Jester to send in a requisition directly ~~to~~ to him with a personal note explaining just what was needed, and he would endeavor to have the things shipped as soon as possible. He thought, however, that it might take a little time. So I am holding up the order to Macy's. Also, I want to know, in case I have to buy these things personally, whether you could pick them out for me? After all, you will be using them, and I have always avoided getting any household items with the idea that I would want to consult you before doing so. The only reason I didn't suggest that in the first part of this letter is that I was afraid that, being in Miami, it would be hard for you to make a selection, and then perhaps be stuck with some of the responsibility for the shipping. The big New York companies have lots of experience in that line, but I don't know whether the same can be said for Burdines. Anyway, let me know right away what you want me to do.

Another thing which has made this week very full is that a fellow of the Royal Navy whom I met on the boat coming down here has just dropped into town. He came to see me right away, and I have been inviting him out to dinner and taking him to the movies, which is about all the diversion this town offers. He is a grand little fellow, and has had a wide range of experience in this war. He took part in the Dunkirk evacuation and has been both air-bombed and mined. He has a fiancée at home and is nearly crazy to go home and get married, so we have a lot in common and can sympathize with each other. We spent at least two hours one night with Scotch and soda talking about our ~~various~~ respective loves. I am sure that I have by far the best of the bargain; in fact, I have the best girl in the world, which makes me very happy, although I wish I could be right next to her right now instead of several thousand miles away. Another evening after work, when I wanted to write to you, was occupied in the sad duty of attending the funeral of a Pan-American employee who died here very suddenly. I was especially touched because this chap had been in the Consulate only a week before, saying how anxious he was to get home and away from Africa as soon as his

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contract was up. He had a wife and two boys, eight and six years old. According to the strict law of the Tropics, the funeral had to be held within 24 hours of death. Everything was arranged in the morning, and at 5:30 in the afternoon a little handful of American gathered in the Colonial Chapel for the service. The Chaplain intoned the Church of England service, and I thought that the one our pastor uses was simpler and more sincere. The grave-side service was especially harsh: the old "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust", and the Padre threw a handful of sandy Lagos soil on the coffin. It "shook me", as the British say. I hastened to add that the Tropics had nothing to do with his death; it was something that could have happened at home just as easily, so you don't need to worry about me.

During the past week two more of your treasured missives have come in, and as usual they transported me into extasy. The miracle of your love for me is a wonder to which I can never become accustomed. I am terribly afraid that, when you see me again, you will be disappointed. You will have created in your mind a me that isn't me at all, but something infinitely better than I could ever hope to become. I could never acquire enough merit to deserve you, my darling. My only hope is that the shock won't be too great. After all, we fell in love with each other after we had seen each other under normal circumstances. Neither of us made any effort to court the other; in fact, you said in your letter of December 31st, which arrived February 16th, that you even occasionally went out of your way to avoid me, all of which made me think that you didn't really care what happened to me. We must be very thankful that we ~~are~~ were permitted to find out how the other felt. If I had left Lisbon a few weeks earlier, how different it all would have been. We passed up the chance the night we talked to the Carascos and Jimmie played bridge with the old ladies. That night I was simply mad about you; I could scarcely keep my hands off you, and I wanted to kiss you so much that I almost tried it. Loyalty and fear of offending you held me back. What if it had again?

You asked in your letter how tall I am. I am 5' 11" - tall enough to look you right in the eye even with your high heels on, my long-legged beauty. I think it's absolutely heatless of you to ask me for another photo when you haven't sent me a single tin type of yourself. In fact, I think you're mean. There now, maybe that will get some action. Mr. Jester took some very poor snaps while we were at Tarqua Bay between Christmas and New Year's, and I have asked him to have some copies made for me. I will send you a full set as soon as he gets them - or perhaps I'll wait until I get some from you!

You also inquired what to do about the passport. My sweet, I'm afraid you'll have to be content to do one thing at a time. You'll have to stop being "Mrs. Jones" before you can apply for a passport to come to Africa to become Mrs. Krieg. When the deed is almost done, I will write a letter to Mrs. Shipley and send it to you, and you will stop in Washington on your way to New York, see the lady, present the letter, and see what she says. I hope she just says, "Bless you, my children. \$10 please" and has the passport typed up. By the way, what do you intend to do about your name when you get your divorce? I seem to recall that some ladies resume their maiden names, while others do not. It doesn't make much difference in any case, because you'll be changing it soon enough again; I rather prefer the former, but you're the important thing, not what you call yourself. Well, my love, paper's out, and it's getting dark. I love you very, very much indeed. *Bill*