

IN REPLY REFER TO

FILE NO. 8



AMERICAN CONSULAR SERVICE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

AMERICAN CONSULATE
Lagos, Nigeria
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Hello, Darling.

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Here I am again, and you are peeking at me over the edge of a file basket. I refer, of course, to your picture, which has joined your famous poem in the celluloid case which I always carry with me. You are extremely beautiful, my dear, and I love you extremely, and wish extremely that you were here in the flesh instead only in image. I know you are with me in spirit, though, and I am proud to say that I have never had a disloyal thought, so that if you are inside my brain, you find nothing there but love for you. I am beginning to feel like the old Methodist "saints", who considered themselves beyond temptation. I have no thought wish or desire that isn't connected with you. At the risk of boring you with repetition, ~~as~~ I will say again that you are the center of my universe; all else revolves around you; there is nothing free from your influence, gravity-like in its all pervasiveness. Darling, don't you know, deep down in the recesses of your innermost soul, that I love you, and only you, and always you? Don't you feel the security and permanance of my love surrounding you? I can't believe that I have failed to convince you because I am so absolutely convinced myself. In another way, though, I know how you feel, for I never get tired of reading expressions of your love in your letters. I wish to God that I could read them in your eyes.

My dearest, will you keep on loving me even if we have to stay apart for a long time? You said in one of your letters that you would, I wish you would say it again, because you must be continually surrounded by all sorts of other interets which might crowd me out. I am not. There is nothing in Lagos, nor, so far as I know, elsyewhere in this world, which can turn my mind even for a moment, but it is especially easy to be single-minded here in Lagos., Miami, I fear, is another quæstion. Anyway, I am frantically eager to have you come over, and as I said in my other letter, the expense, great as it is, would not be too much nor a tiny fraction of what it will mean to me to have you with me. And there is always the hope that the transportation system will improve. Right now it would be impossible for you to get a place on the Clipper, as you doubtless know from your work with PAA, and I will not have you come by ship at the present rate of Atlantic sinkings. However, much can change in a few months. As the Pan Am boys here are never tired of pointing out when things go wrong with their organization, they have only been operating on this Coast for a few months. So we will hope for the best.

Did Cookie deliver my last letter? I'm afriad he was losing a little headway after his initial impetus, because he forgot or neglected or didn't have time to come around to pick up the letter before he left. Then the plane developed motor trouble and turned back, and so I managed

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to get it to him. As he has a fiancée too, I thought he was a fairly safe individual to send around to see you. I am getting on better terms with some of the Ferry pilots, and sooner or later, I might send one of them over with a letter, too, just to keep you informed about how hot it is in Lagos and how healthy I am looking in spite of everything. I have been here three months now and not a touch of fever, which isn't bad, considering that several of the fellows who were on the boat with me have had brief spells. Although it is most unpleasant while it is going on, they have the treatment so well worked out now that a person is rarely in the hospital for more than a week, if that long, and you come out feeling just as good as ever. Bob Mangold, the representative of the Texas Co., has had seven attacks in 13 months; on the other hand, Mr. Jester has never had to go to the hospital in all his 26 months, so all I can do is knock on wood and take my quinine every day.

There has been a new development which I regret is going to cost Us, Unltd., a pile of jack, as they say. I received a telegram yesterday from General Motors Corp., New York, that they have received an export license for a car for me. They will ship against my remittance, which, including freight, insurance and boxing would be \$1353 - almost twice as much as I had figured on paying. However, there is a possibility that the government will pay the freight; I will have to pay the insurance and \$899 for the car, however. It is a five passenger Fleet Master Chevrolet Sport Coupe, black, with cloth upholstery. It has a right hand drive for use in British possessions. I hope you will like it, for I dare say we will be using it as long as the war lasts and for some time ~~xxxx~~ afterwards, until things get back to normal. Oh well, the car will probably be worth more than cash in the bank to us when the war inflation is going on. I don't think I ever heard you say whether you drive or not. Regardless of the answer, I love you.

You said in one of your letters that you hoped I like history, since you are very fond of it. Although I always considered you the perfect wife anyway, without reference to history, this makes you at least a pluperfect wife. I am very fond of history. I majored in it in college and took my A.M. in diplomatic history at the Fletcher School. I even got through my Ph. D. generals in the same subject, so you can see I am very fond of it. I can foresee that we are going to spend many a pleasant evening at home reading, both out loud and to ourselves, and then talking over what we have been reading. I think we are going to be a wonderful couple, and the envy of all our friends. Surely our love is far stronger than the average; otherwise it could not have crossed so many of the barriers that lay in its path. My darling, it will be a glorious day when we are united. You have no idea how maddening it is for me to see practically every day people on their way to Miami. I don't think they realize how sincere I am when I say, "I wish I were going too". Everybody in Lagos wants to leave, but I think I have a special and better reason.

Since I don't like to complain too much around the office, do you mind if I pour out my troubles in your ear? After all, I have taken you for my wife, and that is supposed to be one of the wifely functions, isn't it? Well, I am still working like a dog. It goes on all the time, without any respite. This morning the telephone has been ringing at frequent intervals. (It rang just as I typed the word "telephone" above). The Department has presented us with a coded telegram of moderate length which I will have to do this afternoon. Trying to keep up with almost all the routine work of the Consulate, especially including the coding and decoding, is a pretty large order, and it is harder because you can't concentrate on any one thing long enough to do it properly. This irks my orderly soul.

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If you were here, I would probably make you help me. Now maybe you will change your mind about coming. It is now afternoon, and I have been working on the above-mentioned telegram, and also sending a couple of my own regarding this car. The Department's telegram turned out to be mostly missing, and a serious assault upon it will have to be made later, whenever the Cable Co. gets around to sending the rest. Cable and Wireless Ltd. have a monopoly on this Coast, and consequently the service is terrible. In trying to send off my two telegrams about the car, I found they will not accept private messages on Sunday.

Outside the office, there is little to say about what I have been doing. This week I didn't have to go out so much in the evening, thank goodness, and so I am not quite so tired now. I have gotten to be rather friendly with one of the directors of the Information Office (Propaganda Agency) who is interested in having a ten minute talk once a week called "America Speaks". I have resisted his blandishments as far as speaking myself goes, but I have helped him get in touch with some good American voices outside the Consulate. I have ~~also~~^{not} thought I would like this type of work, and regret that I don't have any time to give to it. I went to lunch with him and one of his colleagues yesterday noon. We had a bang-up argument with the colleague, who is rather the High Tory type. It is amazing to note the number of English people here who really believe the whole social and economic structure of the country will be revamped after the war. I find here confirmation of ~~the~~ something I have always suspected; namely, that the British aren't nearly so conservative as we like to think at home. Next to the Portuguese, who are undoubtedly the world's greatest reactionaries, the Americans are probably the most conservative people left on earth today. I doubt if there is any group of Tories in England half so conservative as the average member of the National Association of Manufacturers.

Last night I went with a group of Americans to see "Northwest Passage", and of course heaved a few sighs to recall the circumstances under which I first saw it in Lisbon. We did have a lot of fun together this summer, didn't we? (I guess last summer would be more appropriate now. I can see why the old negroes never remember how old they are: the years pass here with so little change between seasons that they easily lose track.) On culling over my stock of memories, there are two evenings that stand out. One is an evening when you and Jones and I and Ben Kramer and his wife went walking. After a while we got a little ahead of them, and we sang "Blue Hawaii" and other songs together. I think we even went so far as to hold hands as we walked and sang. I loved you very much at that time, and the thought that you could never be mine and that I would certainly never have the luck to capture even a faint approximation of you made me a little sad under the gladness of being with you. And then there was the night after we spent the evening talking to the Carasco's (annoying people) and stood in your door way and talked. How I wondered if I could venture a kiss, but thought of course you would be shocked and horrified, and besides, it wouldn't be fair to Jimmie. God knows we didn't let ourselves drift together without a struggle. I think that we will be able to face the future honestly, for we did all two honest people could to prevent what turned out to be the inevitable. Do you remember how you kissed me on the night of my birthday? I was really surprised to encounter so much energy in what I supposed was an unpleasant task into which you had been pushed by Mrs. Parry. And our first kiss was put an end to by the appearance of George Miller at the entrance to the elevator. That was just two weeks before we found out for good about us, and I imagine George has put two and two together in the fashion of the cynical world. But I never did understand, until after it all came out, that evening before

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dinner, when we were all at Bill Adams' apartment. He and Jones left the room ~~xxx~~, and after a moment you came over and gave me a real good sound kiss. I'm not sure, but I think you said, "You're a good type, William-puss". (I never did know how that word was spelled.) I was, of course, enormously pleased, but greatly puzzled. I supposed it was just a sort of comradely feeling, or something like that. You see, sweetest, I never once dreamed or suspected that you ever gave me a second thought. Even when you gave forth such a sad and sorrowful look when I mentioned that I would soon be on my way, I never dared think that it was more than a nice friendship. I hoped that Jimmie would pass the exams and that sometime we could all be stationed in the same place, or at least near enough to visit back and forth once in a while. I guess I was pretty dumb, and you, Sugarpuss, were just twice as bad if you didn't know that I was crazy about you. I mean, in all the books I have ever read, girls are supposed to be much quicker in detecting budding love than the slow-witted male. Perhaps that's only the influence of "~~The~~ Good Housekeeping" and the "Ladies' Home Journal", both of which I used to read rather regularly when I was in High School, thus imbibing freely at the source of the idea that THE WOMAN KNOWS ALL, SUFFERS ALL AND TELLS NOTHING. But the joke of it is that I never made any particular secret of my admiration for you. I often mentioned to Jones that I thought you were wonderful and that I would give anything to have a wife like you. I said the same thing quite freely to other people as well, including Herve, Parry and probably other close friends when the subject of YOU came up. That should be enough to prove that I wasn't contemplating any deep-dyed treachery, or I never would have been so frank. I suppose Jones thinks I used Bismarkian tactics: telling the truth when it would never be believed. We only have a few such high lights in our brief but perfervid career, darling; I like to go over them in my own mind, and I thought I would mention the above incidents just to give you an idea of what I like to remember. Honey, in your next letter, would you mind telling me why you came over and kissed me that night at Adams' ? I would really like to know just what you were thinking of at the time. And if you say you have forgotten, I will be disappointed, but I won't believe you.

Then there is something else I would like to know about which is a sort of painful subject for both of us, and especially you, but I still want to know. You just barely mentioned that you stopped in Washington to get Jones to sign some papers in connection with the divorce. What was he like then ? Was he as wild as the night he found Janie in your hotel room ? And was he as bitter towards me as ever ? Not that I blame him at all. Anyone who took you away from me would have a terrible wrath to face, much worse than anything grapes know about. You, my beloved, are something worth fighting for, and I think Jones has been pretty decent about the whole business of the divorce, under the circumstances. Does he begin to understand that it wasn't that I made a deliberate effort to steal you away, but something which just happened to both of us, so slowly that neither of us can remember exactly when we started loving the other ? Perhaps, after years and years, when he has got his emotional life straightened out again, he will understand. And excuse me for raising this subject, but you know we agreed ~~xxx~~ to discuss him naturally, for fear otherwise that we would always have something between us which we were afraid of. And anyway, I love you tremendously, overwhelmingly, collosally, gigantically, and all the other adjectives Hollywood ever thought of, and some they haven't. After getting four letters on March 4th, no more have come in, and I therefore can't comment on your last letter. I fear this one too will be slow in reaching you., I have been trying for 10 minutes to find a new way of saying "I love you". I can't. I just do, that's all.

I love you. William