

AMERICAN CONSULATE
Lagos, Nigeria
March 21, 1942

L-131 p 1

My sweet:

I guess I'm not in the proper mood to write letters, and especially to you, because I have been having an exceedingly hectic afternoon. Nevertheless, if tomorrow is going to be like today, I had better seize the moment and write to you as much as I can before something else happens. A glance at the calendar will show you that today is Saturday, and perhaps you will remember those quiet Saturday afternoons in Lisbon, where we slept off our dissipations of the previous evening or prepared ourselves for the regular Saturday night festivities. As I had a clerk coming in at 3:30, I knew I wouldn't be able to rest all afternoon, but I did hope that I would be able to sleep for a while after lunch. Well, I didn't. There is a boat in now, and every moment there was someone calling up to see about getting visas for Egypt, exit permits from Nigeria, etc. Two people came in person to see about exchanging money (no soap), and Pan-American helpfully sent around a Russian and two Americans to see if their passports were in order. Then arrived a U.S. Army Colonel and a Lieutenant Colonel to tell about the riot they had had this morning when the security police relieved the Colonel of his camera which he claims contains official photographs to go with his report in Washington. He thought the camera was safe in the hands of Pan-Am, but later one of their boys came around and said that the police had taken the camera away from him. Since then I have had the telephone pressed to my ear for about one hour trying to get in touch with the responsible authorities. (Mr. Jester is away for the week-end.) It appears that they have referred the matter to their biggest shots, so the battle is on. Although the Colonel was probably rude, for which, in my opinion, there is practically never an excuse, he was in full uniform and was carrying a diplomatic passport. He told me, and I am inclined to agree with him, that there is no one here competent to censor his pictures, and I don't blame him for being somewhat annoyed, especially since the interrogatory was carried on by a police sergeant. Anyway, after battling with the telephone people for $\frac{3}{4}$ of an hour, I finally got the number of the head of the security force's phone number, and called him, only to find that he had just gone out. I am trying again about seven this evening (it is now six), and see what they proposed to do about it. I hope to be able to settle it without reference to Mr. Jester, but I think we will cable Washington if necessary.

Let me hasten to add, though, that being in a belligerent mood does not make me think less about you. In fact, I was just thinking now that I wished you were here, ~~as~~ as I think you would enjoy the whole business. How many times a day I think that! I hope that you will be interested in the work of the Consulate, because I certainly

L-131 P2

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would like to talk things over with you. I can imagine making you help me decode telegrams on Saturdays and Sunday and in the evening, and telling you all the thousand and one petty incidents which make up life in the Consular Service. I am sure, on the basis of our experience in Lisbon, that you will enjoy it, even if there will be some work connected with it.

Darling, I am lacking my usual spring-board for writing because I haven't any letters from you to acknowledge. None have arrived since March 4th, and the last one in sequence was dated February 18th, just after you got your job with Pan Am. Of course I know it's not your fault; it's just the mails, but still, I wish the mail would come regularly, instead all at once. If you should happen to get in touch with any of the Ferry pilots or crews, they might be able to help us out. Anyone who has been in Lagos will have met me, because, until day before yesterday, all the men had to have the passports verified before returning to the U.S., which meant that they had to come to the Consulate. Capt. John E. Tremayne was especially nice and offered to go anything for me. Now that we no longer have to verify the passports, I am afraid that I will not be seeing them any more, but I am getting a map of West Africa for Treymayne, and so he will probably be coming in one of these times.

Just now it seems as if it had been a long time since we had seen each other. Actually it is only five months -- if someone said it was a year, I would believe it. Oh darling, I can't tell you how much I miss you. It has been a cruel trick of fate to find the girl you have been searching for all your life, then suddenly discover that she loves you too, and then leave her within a week. It has been quite different from the way I had always imagined falling in love - and much more violent. What tempests and torrents swept over me during that week in Lisbon. What struggles within me, between love and courage on one side, and conscience and cowardice on the other. You were simply magnificent, as befits the most wonderful girl in the world. I never doubted the depth and sincerity of our love, but sometimes I wondered if we shouldn't make the beau geste and sacrifice it. I think I can honestly say that I didn't think much about myself; I knew I could go on living a dull, routine life, thinking back to the golden opportunity I had missed. But you convinced me that to take that course would mean to sacrifice your happiness as well as my own, and that sacrifice I was unwilling to make. I loved you and do now in this moment and this hour love you so intensely, so from within me, that I couldn't do it. My love, I hope we will never regret this decision which we have made. I see no reason why we should. Everything has gone well except that we are still apart, as per forza we must be for the present. But I am sure and positive and sure again that we will be together in the good time allotted, and we will be happy as very few have been before. I guess everyone thinks his love unique; certainly the outline of our story has been repeated often enough. But no amount of reason can convince me that anyone else's love can be as strong and pure and steady as ours is. As we suffer, so shall we rejoice. But I want you now, my dear, not tomorrow or next month or next year. I want to see you and touch you and see your eyes smiling at me. Until then life just marks time.

Sunday has now rolled around and the office is full of U.S. Army men censoring mail. They are utilizing every available pair of scissors in the Consulate and snipping away to their hearts' content. The matter of the Colonel's camera has been straightened out satisfactorily to all. Last night after writing the above I called the head of the

L-131 p -3-

Military Security. He was very pleasant and said the matter was outside his jurisdiction, but that he was recommending to the civilian authorities that they release the camera with the film intact. This morning about ten o'clock a police sergeant came in very quietly and delivered the offending instrument, so everything is OK.

Did you read the article on Florida divorces in the November Reader's Digest, condensed from the American? It was a trifle disconcerting to me, although I don't think any of the things mentioned would possibly happen to us. The main possibility of difficulty arises from the fact that charges of fraud may be brought if you leave Florida immediately after swearing that it was your intention to reside there permanently. Of course your lawyer will know all about it, but it occurred to me that it might be a good idea for you to plan to remain in Miami for a while after your decree is granted. This shouldn't be difficult if you have a job there, and of course, if they send you elsewhere as a part of your work, that would give you a legal out, as being a circumstance which you could not reasonably foresee. It might be a good idea to discuss this with your lawyer and see what he thinks. Since your latest letter is now five weeks old, I really don't know what is going on, whether you are still with FAA or if the government censor job came through. I think it would be nice if you got the Government job, and then I could address letters to you at the censorship office. This ought to save a lot of time. Please tell me if any of my letters have been opened. All mail here has the censor's stamp on the outside, but none that I have ever received has been opened on either side of the Atlantic.

I forgot to mention in my last letter that I have received letters from my father and step-mother in reply to the one to them teeling about us. Poor old Daddy was pretty hard hit, especially since Janie is getting ready to step off too. He said he hoped and prayed that I was making a wise choice and gave us his blessing. Sarah was more practical and gave me some advice in the care and maintenance of a wife and invited you to come and visit at our house before you leave for Africa. I have thanked her for ~~your offer~~ for the invitation, which will be extended to you in writing when the time is ripe. I suggested, however, that you would be unable to leave Florida before May at the earliest, and that I didn't know whether you would be able to make it. I also had in mind that it would be a tough ordeal for you to have to go out and meet my folks alone unless Janie could go with you, and I wanted to leave the door open for a refusal on your part. While I would love to have you meet the folks, and especially Daddy, I don't know quite how it would be, since everything has changed since Daddy remarried. Janie and Sarah have had some nasty scraps, in which I naturally feel that Janie was right, so the atmosphere might be somewhat tense. Besides, I have always imagined my pride in bringing you home myself and having you meet all my old friends; fortunately it isn't anything that we have to decide now. There will be time for that later when we know whether or not you can come to Lagos.

It has now been 28 hours since I told you I love you, although I have thought it many times. I was indulging in my favorite Sunday morning pastime of lying in bed thinking of you when I was abruptly forced back to reality by the entry of Lt. Tobin, whose office commands a fine view of my bed room. I made him go out for a while, but this didn't prevent another officer whom I had never met from wandering in while I was clad only in shorts. I have as much privacy as a gold fish, and as much time for private life as a movie actor. I hope the arrangement with the

~~... is only temporary. How much do I love you? How high is the sky - -~~