

- 15

Dearest one,

AMERICAN CONSULATE
Lagos, Nigeria
April 25, 1942

L-143 cc .
P 1/3

Here we are again to Saturday afternoon, and it is time for me to start my week-end~~ly~~ communion with you. I commune with you lots of other times as well, but usually not on paper. In some ways I like the spiritual communion better, since I don't have to subject my thoughts to the limitations of words, but I know that you want to know what I am thinking, as near as I can say it. It is too bad that we are not gifted with extra-sensory perception, so that we could talk to each other across all the thousands of miles that lie between us. God having withheld this gift, we shall continue writing.

My thought for the moment is that I love you terrifically and completely. The letter you wrote on April 8th, though brief, had in it just what I wanted to hear, exactly. You just said you loved me and will keep on loving me, and you said it in the nicest and fullest way possible. Much as I enjoy hearing about what you have been doing, that is and always will be the most important part of any letter as far as I am concerned. I am so lonesome, darling, and I need you and your company and your inspiration so terribly much. Even though, as I will explain in a moment, I am actually much less alone physically than before, I miss and want you more than ever.

The reason for the change is the arrival of McSweeney, who said he saw you for a few minutes only at the airport. I have tried and tried to wring a few more details out of him, but no stranger can possibly give me the information I really want. Cap't. Bennett came as close as any, although he certainly had little enough to say. He told me you jumped up and down when you heard he knew me and was coming to Lagos, and that tells me a great deal. McSweeney has moved in and a bedroom has been set up in the ex-dining room. It is too early yet to have much of an impression of his personality, but I think we are going to get along very nicely. No causes for conflict have arisen yet, except that we want to have the place screened completely (only the bed rooms are screened now) while I think it makes the place too beastly hot. The fundamental difference is that he doesn't mind sitting in the strong draft of a fan, while I prefer to use fans as little as possible. If they are on strong, it gives me a headache. I don't think he realizes yet how stuffy it gets behind the fine-mesh screening they have here. However, it is true that all the bugs that fly around at night are quite a nuisance, and it would be very pleasant to be rid of them. I suppose in the end it would be about six of one and half a dozen of the other, so I shall not protest if he succeeds in persuading Mr. Jester to have screens put up. However, I shall object if it

has to be done at our expense.

L-143 cc p 2/3

Mac's arrival has brought a number of other luxuries with it. He has a phonograph with a record changer and lots of fine records which he can play while we are eating meals or during drinks. He also has an excellent radio, which is not yet in full working order but promises to be quite a source of pleasure when it is. The music and the radio suit me right down to the ground, and I am glad to have them. His car is also here, which is convenient, as I no longer have my little Austin. The owners have come back and taken it, and of course my car will not be here for some time yet. In return for this, I have to give up the unfettered mastery of my own home and consult the wishes of another person. Perhaps it will be good practice for being married - in certain respects only, of course. His being here has already made quite a bit of difference in the work, and will give me quite a bit more time, some of which I hope can be used to see that you get a letter by every pouch that goes. I do love you so much. Tomorrow I am going out to Tarkwa Bay with Mr. Jester. It will be the first time I have been there since December, when those pictures were taken. I hoped it would be just a quiet group, but unfortunately there will be a visiting consul and his wife, and the wife the a rather high government official, so I will have to be on my good behavior. I would have liked to spend most of the time asleep, resting up from ~~ym~~ nine weeks without a day off. I would still be at it if McSweeney hadn't come; he is busily engaged deciphering a telegram right at this minute.

I'm sorry that the pictures didn't fill the bill. I asked Bennett to explain that it isn't so easy to get a photograph around here. The only photographers are a bunch of natives, and the work is simply awful. It makes perfectly well and healthy people look as if they were in the last stages of decay. I have never seen a good picture taken here. The only other possibility is to have a snapshot taken by some private person, and so far ~~none~~ no one has offered to do so, and I can't very well suggest it. You see how Mr. Jester's pictures came out; it certainly isn't very encouraging.

April 28, 1942 Tuesday

Our week-end communion was interrupted when Mac brought in the telegram, which he had not finished. He had to go out to dinner earlier than I, so I finished it for him. I got my revenge the next day, however, when he stayed here and decoded three telegrams, while I went with Mr. Jester to Tarkwa Bay for my first day off in almost three months. We went swimming in the morning, and after lunch I went to sleep on the front porch - the one shown in the group picture I sent you. Although I was completely in the shade, I got a heavy sunburn just from the reflection from the sky - which gives you an idea of the power of the sun here. Imagine, getting sunburned sitting in the shade. Of course, I remember the old Florida sun is pretty potent in the summer also. As a child I spent a month in Miami in July. That was when I learned to swim. We had a wonderful, quiet, restful day, and I look and feel much better for it.

Yesterday Mrs. Grantham, the wife of the Chief Secretary, asked me over to tea. The principal attraction on this occasion was Claire Booth Luce, who will arrive in Miami on the same plane with this letter.

L-143 cc p 3/3

I do not know whether I will be able to get someone to carry this letter or whether it will have to go all the way to New York and back. Mrs. Luce was quite interesting. One of the other guests was our Consul from Madras, who was able to throw some light on the situation in India. Mrs. Luce was not very optimistic as regards the situation in the Far East; indeed, I can see little to be optimistic about. Mrs. Grantham was an American by origin, and even many years in the British Colonial Service hasn't changed her accent or her pep. She is one of those little tiny women who seem to be bursting with energy - two pounds of dynamite in a one pound sack. In the few weeks that she and her husband have been here she has completely changed the appearance of their house. She has had all the furniture recovered and rearranged, rooms painted, and the whole place made absolutely beautiful. I told her she was setting a stiff pace for my future wife. Her husband says proudly that no one but an American could have redecorated the house so beautifully with so little to work with.

This glimpse of domestic felicity has only served to increase the acuteness of my longing for you. As far as I am concerned, you are the model to which all other women are to be compared. I admire or dislike them according to how much or little they are like you. Need I say that I have never found anyone who could come within spitting distance of the original? I am inclined to think that you are unique in the world, combining all the qualities of my dream woman into one beautiful body. I can't begin to say how much I miss you and need you and want you, every hour of the day or night. I shall always be lonesome without you. Time of separation and distance doesn't lighten the load. If anything, it gets worse all the time - more gnawing inside, sharper. Please let me know how your case is coming along, so I will know when to send you letters for presentation to the passport agent in Miami and, if necessary, to Mrs. Shipley in Washington. The procedure will be to have the Department authorize the passport agent in Miami to issue your passport when transportation becomes available. Then you will have to sit down to wait for a chance to get on a plane of some kind. I know the immigration officer well here, and I am sure that he will authorize the issuance of a visa to you. Last January they admitted a girl here without any passport at all in order to marry one of the Barber Line Agents in Lagos, and I know they wouldn't do less for the Consulate. One of our boys here is going to Natal for PAA, so I will have an "in" to further your passage if you get stuck there. Also the air control officer here is a good Joe, so he will help out too, I am sure, if there is anything he can do.

I do hope so much that it will work out. It is about a thousand to one chance, but, as I have often said, we were very lucky to have found each other at all, so we can't kick too much if things are difficult now. You, my darling, are a prize that I would work and wait for for any amount of time that might be necessary. But the shorter the better. I'm very much afraid that I will spoil you, because I love you so much that I will probably give up my will power entirely. Anyway, we love each other and we will win through, somehow.

Enclosed check for \$25.00 for fountain pen, permanent photographs, needles, and swimming trunks.