

IN REPLY REFER TO

FILE No. 18



AMERICAN CONSULAR SERVICE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

AMERICAN CONSULATE
Lagos, Nigeria
May 17, 1942

My precious love,

L-149
P1/3

I have just finished reading for the first time your letter of April 3-12, and I am starting to write immediately while I am still breathless from the renewed awe and wonder at the strength and beauty of our love. Truly, my darling, we do love each other very much. My heart is beating twice as fast as it should, and my body is glowing with the thrill of knowing once again that you love me, of reading once more that you will wait for me as long as Fate requires. If only I could be with you now! I wouldn't be able to talk; I think words would be unnecessary, because you would know how I feel and why I cannot express in words the floods of emotion that are pouring over and around me. My love for you is the only strong and noble thing about me, darling. I am such an earth-bound clod, I am so far from deserving you, that the knowledge of your love is the only thing that gives me that spark of inspiration which breeds strength for the continued struggle. I honestly have ceased to try to imagine what life would be like without the determination to get to you and make you mine, and make you as happy as ever mortal on earth can be. Life would be so sweet a dream if only you were here to share it. You know that I am a rather passive person. I usually find it easier to adapt myself to circumstances than vice versa. Perhaps that is why I think that, even though most people don't like Lagos, I would be perfectly happy if only you were here with me. Right now the weather is comparatively cool and pleasant. The sun is shining through a haze of moisture, since the rainy season has now started, and it rained a lot yesterday and the day before. If you were here, we would sleep fairly late in the morning (this is Sunday), then we would have our quiet and unhurried breakfast with never a care or thought but of ourselves, for good old Thompson will do all the work. Then we might read or talk or just loaf for a while, because today the cable is cut and there are no telegrams (for the first time since I have been here). Maybe we would go out to Tarquah Bay to swim, or, later in the afternoon, go out to Victoria Beach and just watch the breakers roll in. I don't think today we would call on people, because I don't want to be with anyone except you - just us two alone. In the evening, we would sit at home, and listen to the radio and read, and perhaps just read the love-light in each other's eyes. What a day! Perhaps it would be boring for you to have so little diversion; there isn't much to do here. We would just have to be happy by and with ourselves. As far as I am concerned, that would be the ultimate happiness. I love you, my own darling, far beyond the power of words to describe. I have no other thought than our reunion, and it will remain my one thought until it is accomplished. I guess you know now that you do not need to worry that I will ever surrender our dream. It is all I have; I will never, never give it up. It is the one lovely thing that has happened in my

dull life, a thing of such beauty that I still can hardly believe that it is true. Please remind me often that it is true, will you, sweet? L-149 p2/3

Your letter traveled a long way to reach me, dearest. Capt. Bledsoe didn't pass through here on his eastbound trip, so the letter and the tinted photo went all the way to Basra and back, taking about five weeks on the way. Bledsoe had gotten separated from his baggage, and left here before it arrived. I took him out to Mr. Jester's for a drink, and then we came here for dinner. I showed him all the apartment except McSweeney's room, including what I hope will be our bedroom, and all our lovely new green furniture. You can find out from him what everything is like. The fellow who finally brought the letter and photo was a PAA-Ferries Navigator named Mickle (or Mickel), an awfully nice chap who is also in love and plans to be married in Miami on June 6th. His girl is a school teacher at or near Fort Lauderdale. The lucky devil! I gave him your name and asked him to go to see you if possible. I guess you will have a whole concourse of pilots and crews calling on you. Mickle said he would be glad to carry things for us. I told him, and will tell you for the information of any other messengers of love, that in case they go through to the Near East without passing through Lagos (as is usually the case), they should turn the letter or whatever it may be over to Vice Consul Anderson in Accra, who will see that it reaches me by the next plane at no expense to himself or me. Sometimes it pays to work for the Government! This will avoid hauling the letters all the way to Hell and back and save a lot of time.

Many thanks for the photograph. I like it because it is of you, but I don't think it really does you justice. I like the one of you on the sail boat and the small photo you sent much better. The former is now on the dresser upstairs in my room; the latter still lies next to my heart and will stay there until you come to take its place. You are such a lovely creature that it is no wonder that most photographers can't catch it, and none of them could ever hope to express the real you. All the kindness, all the compassion, all the love in your eyes, cannot be recorded by a camera, any more than my love for you can be expressed in words.

At this point came in two disgruntled ex-PAA employees to complain that they were not being transported back to the U.S. as per contract, the reason being that the planes are fully occupied by priority passengers. I felt sorry for one, who has quit here because of the serious illness of his child; the other gave all the signs of just being a chronic misfit. I explained four or five times in different words that we have nothing to do with priorities etc., and they finally left. Now it is afternoon.

Darling, darling, you do have many battles to fight to maintain our lovely dream, and it kills me that I cannot be there to share them with you and comfort you. The long delay in this letter's arrival had left unexplained the reference in your note from the office about hectic days, and when nothing was said in subsequent letters, I supposed you just meant that the work had been unusually trying. Like you, I feel terribly, terribly sorry for Jones; I am even more sorry that he felt he had to make another desperate effort to win you back. My dear, you are a pearl beyond price in this world, so I can't exactly blame him for trying. I do blame him for making a nuisance of himself, although it is understandable. I guess of ~~xxx~~ these matters, the less said, the better. In a way, I feel that I have no business to make any comment at all; on the other, the night he left you after delivering his ultimatum, I accepted full responsibility for you just as if you were legally already mine, and I have not and will not

relinquish it until you tell me to, which I hope will be never.

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I think I gave you the wrong idea when I mentioned about Dad's being a little upset when I told him I was going to be married. He has no objection to the fact that you are getting a divorce. He couldn't have, since my step-mother was divorced from her first husband. It was just the natural shock that any parent suffers on receiving news of this type out of a clear sky. Poor old Dad had had no idea at all that I was even thinking about marriage, much less that I had already made up my mind to it, and he was just hoping that I wasn't being rash, for he didn't know exactly how long we had known each other, or how intimately, before we made our decision. On the surface, knowing a person only three months doesn't seem very long, especially to the fond parent who is bound to worry about his off-spring. I explained to him that we had an opportunity to see a lot of each other during that time. It was far from being the usual courtship, wasn't it? Ordinarily, a fellow would see his girl only during the evening after work. She would pretty up, and they would ~~xx~~ have a date, of the more or less conventional kind. We were together very much more, under more normal conditions. And neither of us, because of the circumstances, was out to get the other. If we had been trying, instead of holding back, there might be some possibility of having made a mistake. As it is, we were both holding back with all our strength, and only the most curious chain of circumstances led to the discovery. Just think, my love: Suppose Jones had gotten in the taxi on the way home from Lethe's? The fatal words might never have passed my lips. Ordinarily I would have let my tongue be cut off rather than to have confessed my love for you which I never dreamed could be reciprocated. I don't know now why I did it or actually just what I said. I do remember the quiver in your voice when you said, "You aren't kidding me? You really mean it?" And then you were in my arms, laughing and crying, and we were kissing each other like madmen. As I have said before, it was like a lightning flash which lights up the whole horizon, revealing something before hidden in the black. And, like lightning, it fused us together in its white-hot shock, and left us one. We are for us, darling; otherwise, all this would never have happened. The chances against us were enormous. The obstacles are slowly being overcome. There is no use being discouraged until we have some concrete reason to be. We can worry about passports after your application has been refused, and being right on the spot, it is always possible that you might get on a plane by chance of some priority passenger not showing up at the last minute and none others being immediately available. We have been very lucky so far. Maybe our luck will hold. We are prepared to wait, and we must be, because the chances are certainly against your being able to get over, but - who knows?

Your mention that Janie is now back in New York was news to me. I wrote her ages ago, but have received no answer. Please send me her address, if you have it, and if you write her, say her loving old brother is most anxious to hear from her. The family, too, have cut me off. Dad's last letter was written March 4th and arrived March 12th. I answered it immediately, and recently have written again. So long as you still love me and still write to tell me about it, I'm not worrying, although I hope Dad isn't ill.

Have you ever heard from Hervé or Parry? I hope to write soon to both of them. As far as I know, Casey is still in Lisbon. Hervé was supposed to bring home a suitcase and a hat box for me, but not knowing how he came, I don't know whether he was able to bring any extra luggage with him or not. If not, the stuff is probably gathering dust in Lisbon. In case you've forgotten, I love you much much much awfully terribly forever.

William