

xx 19

Lagos, Nigeria  
May 22, 1942

Darling, ø

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Once again I am having to steal some of the government's time to get this written. We get such conflicting reports here about when the planes are going to leave that it is hard to get things ready at the right time. I don't like to write the letters and then have them hang around the office for several days waiting for an outgoing plane, although this has happened several times. This time, we were told to have the mail ready to leave Sunday or Monday, but now it looks as if it would have to go to PAA this afternoon instead.

Your letter of May 10th arrived yesterday - the one that tells about your lovely new house. It must be a wonderful place, and will be even better when you have adapted it to your tastes. There certainly is a lot you could do to this house, given the opportunity and a little material which probably isn't here. Among the funny shortages peculiar to this place is the almost total lack of lamp shades. The one we have in our living room is a ghastly old wreck of the 20's, dirty and fly-specked. We have looked around to try to find something better, but apart from a few frights which were locally made for one of the electric shops, there is nothing, so we decided to struggle along for a time with the old one, in the hope that something better in the way of ideas would offer. I have the feeling that you would be able to find something in a jiffy, but Mac and I don't have much time to spend on housekeeping. I hope I will get to see your house; it sounds so attractive, although I must admit that you are the real attraction. I would come to you if you were living in a mud hut.

This has been a happy week as far as you and I are concerned. For some reason I have felt very close to you ever since your letter of April 3rd came last Sunday. Perhaps it was the two photographs which arrived about that time. I don't know. Maybe it was the way your letter was worded. Anyway, I had less of that feeling you mentioned having that you have seen me at a public reception years ago. There was more intimacy of feeling; it was more as if you were really mine and we were just separated for a short time. The pictures always remind me of you (as if I needed reminding) and make you seem more like a real person and not someone I met in a dream that faded with the daylight. It has been a good, chummy feeling, and I have enjoyed it and tried to keep it going. Your letter just received served to strengthen it. I have been loving you very much indeed and missing you as always. You asked in your letter whether I would marry you. I hadn't thought of it before, but, since you mention it, it might be a good idea. I agree. You seem to forget, darling, that I married you

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on a bleak Monday night last October (was it only last October?). I have felt since that moment that you were mine by every rite that I hold sacred. The church ceremony, when it comes, cannot be half so impressive as the moment when we stood there, alone, with our teeth chattering, and faced the fact that the past, as we had lived it, was irrevocably gone. There in that moment I realized for the first time that the future was for us together, William Krieg, Foreign Service Officer unattached, had disappeared. Mrs. James Jones Jr. was gone. There were only us, alone with God, who witnessed all and who knows that our hearts were innocent. To be united in the eyes of the world is nothing to be compared to that.

It was good to hear of your recollection of our last taxi ride in Lisbon. Your impressions were in general much different from mine. About the taxi I don't remember much, except telling him to go slower, to give one more precious minute together. I can only recall making a terrific effort to hold on to myself, to keep up a semblance of civilization. I know I squeezed your hand very hard. I was half afraid to look at you. And then on the boat, waiting for you to come back to the cabin, trying to talk to Parry in a normal fashion. With me, too, the last farewell is rather blurred. I think nature was kind to us, in that we were both so dazed with the rapid changes that had taken place that we were unable to realize exactly what the separation was going to mean to us, nor did we stop to consider how long it might be. It was just as well that we didn't, for that would have made a sufficiently painful moment absolutely unbearable. For instance, it would have been impossible for me, if I had realized how long we would have to wait, to have gone quietly away as per agreement before the ship sailed. That would have been awkward and there might have been a scene. I know that I was absolutely dazed when I left the ship. I told you in my first letter how I got into a taxi and couldn't think of any place to tell him to go. I must have felt intuitively that the only place for me was with you, and that to go the other way was wrong. How empty Lisbon was without you! Just the hollow shell of the old life, and yet somehow it went along. Meals alone in the Casa de Santo Antonio were a painful bore, but all the other places I went were crowded with memories too: Nina's, the Leao d'Ouro, the Consulate. I was glad when the time came to go, and I could start out into a new world, carrying with me hope for the future, which is you, and leaving behind the rest.

Since my last letter, I have heard nothing ~~about~~ from Janie, and so I still don't know what to do about the ring. I guess the best thing is to do whatever you see fit. If you don't mind waiting a little, we can see if any of the family rings can be got into shape. If you want to, go ahead and get one. You have probably guessed by this time that anything you do is just right with me. I'm afraid Janie has been so much wrapped up with her approaching wedding that she hasn't had much time to think about anything else, including writing to me or seeing about the ring. I have finally received a letter from Dad in which he says that Janie will be coming home for the wedding fairly soon, and I suppose it would be best for me to write to her there. I'm afraid my wedding present will have to be in the form of a check, since there is little or nothing here that I could get for her, and, even if I could, there is no good way of sending it back to the U.S. As an example of this, I might mention that my glasses, which were sent early in

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February by air express, and which have never arrived. They are probably in a big pile with other things, waiting for space on a plane which will never be available. I have asked Dad to try to have them traced and brought back, and then I will have them sent either through the Department or I will bother you with still another package to be handed to some reliable person. By the way, thanks very much for the trouble you have been to to get the bathing trunks, fountain pen and phonograph needles. I hope that you will not have any trouble in finding some one to bring them. I'm sure Cap't. Bledsoe would be glad to oblige, or Bennett or Mickle. The latter seemed like an awfully nice chap - he is the one I told you is going to be married soon in Florida. He said he would be glad to help us out at any time. Of course, the packet I want most of all is you; if he could bring you along, all the other things could go to blazes. Oh well, as I said before, let's not cry until we're hurt. Your passport hasn't been refused yet, and if we can get that, ~~ixkwxixkwxix~~ you'll be in as good a position as there is to take a last minute place on a plane, if there are any. From the reports we hear, the service is being expanded tremendously. With the development of Fisherman's Lake as the principal terminus for the Clippers, they hope to operate over one service to Natal each way a day, and my friends think there will also be adequate service between Miami and Brazil. So it might be possible for you to get over after all. I won't let myself hope, though. It is too much to ask for. I would be happier than people have any right to be in this world. Then, if necessary, we could stay here for the duration, if our health permitted, and I would not have to insist on home leave next year. But I certainly will if you can't come over. In case you haven't heard it often enough before, I love you so terrifically that I will work and wait for you just as long as is necessary to bring us together. I will leave no possibility unexplored, you may be sure of that.

Darling, I have been interrupted so many times that I hardly know where I am and what I have said. I'm sure I said, "I love you", but I'll repeat it now for good measure. I have been struggling all afternoon with various messes arising out of the handling of mail by your company. The New York office fell all over my pal Ray Colcord, because five sacks of diplomatic mail arrived their without manifests. I have been dictating a letter to try to cover the situation. And so it goes. There really isn't much for me to do now since McSweeney came; I can no longer complain about being overworked when I have time to write a three page letter during office hours, even though it has taken me from early this morning till 4:30 p.m. The mail won't leave tomorrow anyway, so I will suspend operations for a while until I can collect my thoughts without having people yapping at me all the time.

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It's O.K. now. It's 6:20, and everyone has gone home, except poor Mac, who is still deciphering a long telegram. You can be thankful that he is here; otherwise, this letter would never have gotten written, today, at any rate. I am glad to hear that your boss, who seems to be a fine man, is trying to reduce your hours and increase your pay. I hope he succeeds in doing both, as I don't like to think of your working yourself to death in the first place, but if you are, you ought to be well paid for it. Or something like that. Will he be able to help to arrange your trip over here when the time comes? You see, I have a single track mind. All I can think of is you, and when we will become one physically as well as spiritually. I love you.