

JUL 10 1942

3071 Indiana Street
Coconut Grove, Fla.
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Hello my darling

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You know, it's about a year since I first saw you. Not quite, but almost. Anyway, about a year since I first ran across 123-KRIEG, William in the files. Some years are short, but this one was interminable. For some obscure reason it gives me a pleasant sensation to realize that I have known you almost a year. I wish that during this year we had been together all the time, living and eating and being embarrassed and amused and bored and tired and raring-to-go and contented together. I wish I could have seen you every evening from a distance as you came home, and every morning sleepy and ghastly hungry and badly in need of a shave. I wish we could have traveled and gone through customs and immigration and stood in lines together. Because, my pet, I love you! No matter what people say, there is no great joy in happy things unless they are shared with the person you love, and no consolation in melancholy times when you're alone.

I'm not alone particularly. Not actually. I go out with people and talk amiably like a good girl any time the spirit moves me to do so, but I wish I could express how lonely I am for you just the same. You know that good old "Aching Void" they are always talking about? (Or is there an "E" in "aching") Well, any way, I think I know what they mean. It's the feeling you get at parties when one of the nicer guests hasn't arrived yet, or isn't going to arrive. You sit around with the fidgets starting desultory conversations and finishing them before they are really ended, wishing either that it would be time to go home or that you had never come. You keep saving a chair or a cocktail or a good joke for the one that hasn't come, and looking up every time some one comes in the room. There is plenty to eat and drink, the decorations are good, the other guests are interesting enough, but you are uneasy and things are mysteriously incomplete. That's how my whole life has been since October 31, 1941. Always saving a place at table for someone who can't come. Always half-thinking I wonder how he'll like it and then realizing that you'll never see it. Always gleefully comparing other and lesser men to you, then ruefully remembering that I'll have quite a wait before I can prove my point. Heavens, I'm the most amazingly, astoundingly faithful gal in the world, I do believe! I wonder if when we meet again we'll be strangers to each other, and have to fall in love over again? That's what some of my cynical friends have been saying. I don't want that to happen. I want us to know each other well and be able to laugh together right away. But if it does happen, it doesn't scare me much, because I think it will be much easier than they pretend to think. Do you think I'm over-optimistic? You're a shy person. Perhaps the abrupt realization of our dreams will make you embarrassed. But I remember you too well, I think. I remember you from the back and the side very well, because I never wanted you to see me looking at you straight in the face; I remember touching you and not looking at you for fear of showing you what a delightful clandestine pleasure it was just to touch your hand. I can remember seeing you argue in our bull sessions and wishing you wouldn't even try to sing after five scotches. So I am optimistic about seeing you again. I think I was right in doing what I did, and am still right about waiting for you instead of trying to like some of the local boys because it is a lonely and difficult thing to wait when you are twenty-four and normal. I love you now as I picture you and I think my picture is reasonably close to reality.

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Letter number twenty-three came to-day, to my intense satisfaction. I didn't get one last Monday, and they usually come of a Monday. I had gotten two the week before that, and knew it couldn't last. Captain Bledsoe said he had brought one of them with him, but both had stamps on them, so I don't know which. Good old Cap't. Bledsoe! He is a constant source of wonder to me, because I can't imagine how anyone could have a combination of characteristics such as he appears to have: a heart of gold, absolutely pure 18 karat gold at that, always willing to help along the Cause of romance, etc., but completely unable to help us out in the descriptive line. As Lil Abner the comic strip hero says, it's amoozin' but confoozin'. A more reticent man I never expect to meet, and I'm so avidly anxious to hear first-hand information about how you are living and looking and what you said, etc. etc.! By the way, I met a lady who had stayed in Lagos for a month or so with her six-weeks old baby and several other ladies from the far East. She said she had visited at the consulate once or twice, and had been to tea at Mr. Jester's house. Yes, she had met Mr. Krieg among others. No, he probably wouldn't remember her among all those people. Well, Lagos was all right, but she didn't envy people who had to stay there any length of time, although she had to admit that she had had a good time due to the scarcity of ladies. No, she was sorry but she couldn't remember much about Mr. Krieg. Well, as far as she could remember he was a very nice young man and I had chosen wisely. We had a cup of coffee (distributed free by the company) and talked about it all. She told me she had bought some records of native Nigerian music, and that it was very nice and catchy after you got used to it. She let me hold her baby while she washed up, so all in all it was a fairly profitable encounter. But I do wish that some of those people would really get to know you! I had instructed the crew of that particular ship to go and see you at the consulate, but the low dogs told me laughingly that they hadn't been over there where you are, instead being quite a distance away from town!

My last letter I tried a different means, as I hope you know by this time, but unless you tell me that other way reaches you I will send things via the State Department, since ordinary mail seems so unpredictable these days.

Mr. Bishop and Mr. and Mrs. Bliss were very much interested in the Bush English you sent me a month or so ago. I went to the beach with them yesterday afternoon, and we had our regular Sunday night supper with them after that. We have a new recruit now, a Mr. Dwight Ozone (what a name) who is a temporary bachelor due to the departure of his wife for Georgia. I never met the lady, but Mrs. Bliss is not a great admirer of hers because she says her Southern accent is so thick that it obscures the poor lady's whole life, making her incapable of action except that of calling the negro woman, who obligingly does every thing for her. Anyway, Mr. Ozone is a new recruit, and was diligently using us all as victims for his Red Cross First Aid practice. We all took turns at being ~~bandaged~~ ^{bandaged} beyond recognition, and then having artificial respiration applied to resuscitate us. I always enjoy those evenings at the Blissesses more than anything else I do.

Gosh, it's late and I have to get up at five tomorrow as usual! Don't worry about never being happy, angel-love, because we are going to be the world's happiest people- maybe by next year this time! All we need is that nasty virtue, patience. How I hate the very mention of it, and how I wish I had it!

Philinda