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GENERAL

Lagos, Nigeria  
November 2, 1943

Dear Family,

On October the twentyseventh of the current year we gave aprty for Miss Thurgood, henceforth to be referred to simply as Harriet. As usual with single girls, she got off to a flying start, and as I understand it has not had a quiet evening at home since her first night. Gentlemen friends call her up at all hours of the day and night. The natural result of all this is that she likes Lagos very much and has a bad cold. Ah youth, youth!

I'm afraid I've forgotten what we did on Thursday, but it was probably something hectic--- oh no I haven't! Pat Thompson invited us to her house for drinks and to the club for dinner. The clubs chop isn't particularly wonderful, but we had a good time just the same. The faithful Norman Smith was there of course. He fills in for Bill Bruns now that Bill is away, and acts as doormat extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary for Pat in her dealings with the world. Delivers her letters to Bill to the Consulate, mixes whiskey sodas for her guests and lemonades for her, sits at home of an evening when she is tired of going out, and is a thoroughly nice and decent person. Perry Jester had a knock-down bang out fight with him a year or so ago in connection with his position as Acting Chief Censor, so we are glad to be re-establishing friendly relations with Censorship. Pat doesn't really treat him as nonchalantly as what I have said would indicate, but she does have a tendency to say Norman fetch me this and Norman fetch me that. He's happy as a lark to do it, however, so I suppose in the end everyone's made happy.

On Friday to the Barber Line Staff house for dinner with Fitz and Colonel Maffey of that company. They had fish chowder, I had a good steak with plenty of onions. Frank and Vera were there. Vera is, I'm glad to say, taking her duties as the wife of Lt. (j.g.) Francis Barry with a gret deal of earnestness. (My spelling is going from bad to worse, isn't it?) and is creating a good impress on on the people, such as myself, who thought that Frank had made a mistake of the first water. Therefore, William and I are writing off a rather unfortunate past history. The Colonel (honorary) was a much of a southern gallant of the old school as ever, full of flowery phrases and ah's rather than i's. A good type.

Saturday we had a hectic day at the office. Miss Harriet T. is used to doing passport work only, and has to be initiated into a thousand mysteries that grow in small offices where no one can specialize. Result, the combination of doing everything myself

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and trying to tell her what I'm doing at the same time. She's a great help with the coding already, however. Well, anyway, we didn't get over to the beach till about five o'clock that afternoon, and missed a swim, but had a lovely time in the evening quond meme, reading James Thurber to the light of a kerosene lamp and drinking beer to the accompaniment of the crunching of crackers and cheese. Fun! The next day being Sunday, we had invited four guests, who brought along three guests of their own at the last moment, so that the curry was spread rather thin and the boat coming back had fourteen people in it. Dear John Houser was in town and came along. He suffers just as much in boats as he does in airplanes, wo was miserable on both crossings. Likewise he detests curry, and we made him bring his own sandwiches as long as he had such funny ideas. Anyway, inspite of all this, a good and merry time was had by all. To a good movie at night.

Last night I washed my hair and we were in bed and ASLEEP LIKE BEES by eleven, so this morning you may bring on your reserves, because I'm ready for anything. I'd better be, because the rest of this week is going to be strenuous.

I forgot to tell you about the speech I made on Thursday afternoon after work. Anyway, I made one. Soon I shall qualify as a lady lecturer, which appeals to me as being rather a queer idea. I made the second speech of my lecturing career in front of a group of British soldiers out in Yaba, five miles or so from the Consulate. Or is it speech? yes, it's speEch. They are being educated inspite of themselves, and I was chosen to educate them on the subject of current events with small small historical background in the United States. After an initial stage where they were so frightened by the sight of a young woman that they hardly breathed, I finally got them to laugh at one of my hysterically funny anecdotes. Poor dears. I was invited to make another speech in the vague future, so maybe I will. However, having exhausted, more or less, the subject of the United States, I am somewhat at a loss for a subject. I might tell them about occupied France, but there's not much to be ~~said~~ said on that subject really. Sergeant Major Stubbings (please notice that I spelled "sergeant" right) who asked me to make this talk is coming to dinner tonight with a small group of intensely intellectual people who come to the Discussion Club. I prophesy a talkative and earnest evening. This afternoon we have been invited to tea at the home of Doctor and Mrs. Agair, the missionary minister who married us as well as Frank and Yera. That should be a riot. William has a way with missionaries (long practice) but I have so much difficulty trying to think up something to say and worrying all the time for fear I'll say smething that a missionary objects to, that I'm afraid of the adventure. I will remove most of my lipstick and not take along any cigarettes and hope bravely for the best. The relieving feature is that they have a nice newborn which I can spend most of my time admiring, and the whole matter can be chalked up to useful experience.

Fiday, Nov. 5

The nice part of fearing the worst is that one is always so pleased when it doesn't happen. I rather enjoyed myself at the tea party, sitting around eating peanut brittle in the garden under a palm. The dinner that evening was a great success, such a success in fact that our guests stayed a little later than we had hoped they would. Wednesday monopoly at Mike Reid's, and last night to dinner at Wallie Ety-Leal's mess, where everyone was teddibly British Officer, but pleasant and gay just the same.

Must close - with love,