

24 Bombay.

Wed - 30/5.

My Angel

I've just got in from Bombay today & as I did a few things I thought I'd set right away down to my nice new writing paper & tell you all about what I've done. May I just mention that this pad is a bit larger than the other so I shan't be able to manage 15 sides in one night - but too big, see baby.

Well I went in early today to visit the officers in the British Military Hospital & as soon as that business was over (I've got to go again on Friday), I & another lad on the same game started to go round

the town on a shopping expedition - a week day is the only time the likes of us poor workers can do any decent shopping because all the big stores close before 6 pm.

Up to the top of Hornby Rd. & a visit to Kodak's main place. I had a finished spool to get developed & hoped to get a fresh spool - as luck, you have to be

pretty snappy to get one, then you must produce your camera which they load there another - you even have to sign for the film. On Friday I shall have Anardi's camera which he gave me today (before I left, & there are

5 maps left in the camera which I shall run off tomorrow & hope from then on to get a fairly regular supply. There are about 6 camera shops on

the way down to the Agt Apollo Buid - the post office centre of the town - & I went in every one with no luck.

Oh my, I see the ink comes through - maybe I'll have to use separate sheets.

Halfway down Hornby Rd is the big departmental store of Whitway + Laidlaw's. I bought this pad in there - it's a lovely shop, laid out in the English style, with courteous service & fair prices. I took long & thoughtfully at a snake-skin bag on show - it was a pippin & I liked to buy it for you, sweet - I definitely shall do so one of these fine days but today I had other ideas as to what to do with my money & so I had to reluctantly give it up. But it was a lovely bag. The price? - I ain't gonna tell you, I'll let you estimate the value when you get it. Oh yes, you'll get it, honey, I quite then I can say what I bargain for.

Next stop to be honoured with my visit was the Army & Navy stores further down the road. Again a pleasant shop & there I examined some perfumes. Now I'm very chary of buying perfumes because I realize how individual women are in that matter. I was shown some Jasmine scent & nearly bought it, (pretty good at nearly buying things for you, ain't I sweet?), & I will buy it if you write & tell me it's O.K. Alternatively let me know just what perfumes you prefer & I'll try again. I nearly bought some cigars to send home for storage, but thought that transaction could wait - I nearly bought a leather writing case but

Couldn't think what on Earth I'd use it for - I nearly bought a pipe but discovered they were made in India! The salesman who put himself at my service nearly threw me out, but he was never sure that I wouldn't buy something. I came out of that shop with a fund of knowledge concerning prices but my wallet was no lighter.

After wandering down to the bank, trying to book for the afternoon performance at the Regal ("Sweet's low down" - Benny Goodman etc. - is that it?) & finding out that the first performance was 4.30 p.m. we wandered off to the shop that had been in my mind all day - The Bokhara Palace where all manner of rug & carpets are sold. The outside of the shop is very unpretentious but when you walk in the doorway, up the two steps to the inside of the shop, you are immediately surrounded by an almost mass of carpets that seems to be part of a nightmare where carpets are everywhere, rising up on you, yelling at you, threatening to fall all over you - carpets, & yet more carpets. I walked in that shop with the firm intention of buying, & intimidated ~~so~~ I was by the scene, I told the salesman that he could bring out his selection. Honestly, lacking, it was impossible for me to bring any critical sense to bear on anything he showed me - I must have been shown 200 rugs & carpets, all spread out before me in a bewilderingly swift manner that made my brain whirl. I had to think of my limited purse, & I tried to think of colour schemes & furniture to match,

but it was hopeless, & I gave it up. I decided to rely entirely on my unconscious sense of ~~good~~ taste & about as soon as a design struck me a little more forcibly than the rest I stopped the display at once & decided without pause to have it. I've bought one carpet 6ft. by 3ft. - a pale green theme with a fawnish border - & two small rugs, about 3ft. by 2ft., both really plain fawn with a small design in two corners of each. The whole lot, including postage to U.K., came to £80 & I think that they're good value. The shop will despatch them & they should reach you in about a month. They will be posted not shipped. I do hope you'll like them, darling, & I hope too that

you can find a suitable spot for them. Later, if you think it worth it after inspecting this packet, I'll get the larger rug which should set us up pretty well for a time. I don't guarantee a troubleless passage through Customs, but it's not unlikely that they'll charge on the rugs, & if they do it should only be a nominal charge. In any case I'd contest a charge on the grounds that it's a declared gift & therefore not liable to any kind of duty.

Coming out of the Bokhara Palace I felt as though I'd accomplished something & that it was time I drank & dined - in that order. So away to the Coffee Club, another Chinese Restaurant, (all the best restaurants in

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Bombay are run by Chinese), & there to relax for an hour with good food. I had lobster salad, fruit salad & iced lemon squash, & after nearly a fortnight of camp grub I felt like a king at a state banquet. It really set me up, I can now read of your Thorncliffe gorge with equanimity. Out of the Coffee Club down the road a little & into the Six something, Ezra Canteen - an enormous place, on the lines of the British Museum which has been turned into a canteen & run by the W.V.S. In here you may bathe, shave, haircut, buy clothes, shoes, play billiards, table tennis & any other game, listen to the radio in luxurious chairs, have a meal or a drink, dance & see an E.M.S.A. show - in addition there are facilities for educational lectures & such-like activities. Quite a place, judged by any standard. We'd missed the early truck back to the camp & so there were two hours to wait for the next - the only thing to do, of course, was to get the old sweats down in one of those chairs, which we did. Only bloody fools wander round Bombay after lunch, the heat would melt the headiest.

So at 4 p.m. I came back to camp refreshed in mind & spirit. There no doubt at all that the recent period of depression was entirely due to staying around & getting into a deadly monotonous rut - tonight I feel on top of the world. I've had a go at taking three photographs of our cabin &

Surroundings + it's been great fun. If I can hang on
to Brandi's camera I shouldn't need to buy one for
myself just now - I can afford to wait til the
prices come down & the new cameras start rolling
in. You should be well supplied with pictorial data
of my life in Bombay, honey, & it just goes to show
that if one practices a little ~~patience~~ patience everything
comes right in the end. Ahh? The trouble with
my mob is, whenever I try to take a candid shot
they immediately size for hair-brushes, clean & pressed
clothes, & arrive artificial size - but I think I've
trick 'em yet. Perhaps you'll buy an album,
dearest, & stick 'em all in artistic like - you can
print underneath the days I write on the back
& in the accompanying letter. If \geq buy the album
- wait a minute the price is it I don't see

any sense in that.

So - mighty - night, angel mine, & a good
gird for daddy & remember how much he love you
And that's the truth,

R.

Received
4.6.52

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WAS. K-52

88(a) 1000 Grouse Rd.

POST OFFICE
MARITIME
MEXICO

Washing
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overhead