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The Flat
Sunday.

Dearest one

I have just been listening to Richard Tauber singing a lovely, sad Schalkowsky song which has always been a favorite of mine. "None but the weary that..." Very moving in the circumstances, and calculated to make this heart of mine ache to have you near.

Here I am, seated by the fire, with the flat to myself, and the only tangible link with my sweetheart this pen and paper. But oh! joy! In a few weeks time my love we shall be having a heavenly time together. Somehow lately my mind has been so full of concrete things + business details that I don't seem to have indulged in any chatter about You & Me & the Future.

But believe me, sweetheart, my whole time is taken planning for your homecoming and the setting up of our little flat, and I spend my days just dreaming of the happiness that will be ours. Oh if only they will say that you are all coming home directly all work at the camp is cleared up. I honestly don't see any reason why it should not be so, and I am going to see what my prayers will bring.

Johnie you have not mentioned your general health lately, and I want to know if you are keeping fit. No more dysentery or chills? No more prickly heat since you started sunbathing. And how about your weight? I want to know how it stands at the moment sweetheart. I shall then get in a good quantity of steaks & other rich foods to fatten you up.

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Poor old Tim lives in despair when I tell him that his buddy is down to 13 stones. Really, sweet, Tim is quite enormous nowadays & is actually talking of cutting out potatoes & generally dieting. Poor chap, he gets such ragging from the rest of the lads!

But to return to Us Sweetheart. Have you decided where you want to go when you come home. Apart from all the gathering of the clans & general get-togethers that there are bound to be - do you still want to go right away for a week or so? Lying in bed this morning I was thinking about this holiday - and suddenly had such a nostalgic longing for Bournemouth. The idea of a swim in the morning at the Baths,

coffee in the Pavilion, dinner dancing
at the Swiss Cafe, intimate supper at
the Buttery brought such a pang of sweet
memories. Remember that heavenly night
at the Royal Balm - when we first went
away together? We dressed, and had
such a glamorous evening, and I kept the
cork of our wine-bottle, just as a tangible
link with that heavenly episode. There
was a full-moon, and we stood on the
steps looking towards the sea. Surely
no girl ever had such a handsome and
romantic escort.

Darling you and I have had some
truly wonderful times together in the past.
It is so satisfying and exciting to have
someone who knows his way around and
enjoys putting on the Ritz sometimes. It
is equally exciting to have someone with

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When to sit for an evening in a crowded lounge + listen to soft music and just talk & smoke & feel gloriously serene and relaxed inside.

Yours mine, darling, we were made for one another.

Reading in your letter of the chronic projectors in the cinemas at home, I have a plan to go with you to the Odeon Leicester Square or some such Super Theatre & sit in comfy bucket-seats & enjoy Hollywood's latest in real comfort. That a date? Really we people in England have no idea of the strains & hardships of the everyday amuseances that you all have to bear quite apart from the dreadful change in climate. Thank heaven, say, that you stay in that

Candy has been reasonably short.

Incidentally the latest letter I have from you is dated 23.10. (no. 87.) and I feel a little out of touch with your doings. Tomorrow must surely bring some mail. - These days when every mail brings its fresh demob buzz I can hardly wait to tear open the envelopes. Which is silly because I am so sure in my heart that you will be home next month. Yes Next month. - December! I don't think of it too much I just go all cosy-woo in my dunny & ~~over~~ want to hang out of the window & shout it to the roof-tops! Waa!

I told you that we all went to the Embassy on Tuesday didn't I? There was one dance about all ones that I'd have loved with you - quite apart from all

1/ Subtinent. - That was the thumba.
Dix & Pat were the only traces in our
mob & I couldn't help thinking you
I could have shown 'em a thing or two.
I mean to say, neither of us is exactly
restrained in the matter of bodans, eh?
And we can waggle 'em with the
best. Yes sir, I bag every thumba
with my husband. Besides I want to
laugh - laugh right down to my tummy,
as we used to do. Gosh, darling,
don't ever go away from me again -
I don't think I could bear it! Life
without you loses so much of its
sparkle. Funny how we all put on
a brave face & pretend to be gay
& hide our real feelings. Takes a
bit of doing, but somehow we all manage

to keep our end up. Pride, I suppose.
Laugh & the world laughs with you.
But I reckon we can show 'em a few
laughs together soon. I'm coming to
go, honey mine!

I spent a very quiet week after
Tuesday - and for three evenings just
stayed home alone & caught up on my
washing, ironing & mending. Also
knitted a few more rows of the shawl.
Never shall I take on a job like that
again. Paid honey that unless some
kind soul does likewise for me, our
babies will be clad in something ready-
made from a shop. Really it takes
every spare moment of mine & worries
me vaguely. Still, I shall have it made
in time, and that's all that matters.

9 / Yesterday was very crowded. The office in the morning - but that is taking a very back seat in my mind at the moment. We are not terribly rushed & I have ceased to try to bear all the weight - I do my best & if things are not done, well, my conscience is clear. Morgan is still with us, and still does very little, and we now have Shetford in addition. Remember him? He is a very recent addition, & to date I judge him a rather scrappy worker. He hasn't a clean train - but I shouldn't judge yet. - critical person aren't I sweet?

Directly after the office I entrained for Newisham, there to do some shopping & to visit the flat. My first visit was to Chismans, there to order our

underfelt before it was sold out. I
have been looking around it Lown, and
felt is a fantastic price - I saw
one at 32/6 a yard! True it was
grey & would have served as a carpet
at a pinch. But what a price!

So I ordered ours, it will be ready
for delivery any day, and I am to
ring them when I want it sent to
no. 12. Good enough?

They have a wonderful display of
carpets & rugs, considering how scarce
they are nowadays. But thank heavens
we have all we need. You've done a
grand job honey.

From there I went into the china
department. Plenty of cups, but no
saucers. Silly isn't it? But you can't
buy a saucer anywhere! I guess the

" Situation will improve soon though.
After that I went down to the basement
& bought up some more kitchen ware.
A long fork for turning the joint,
a huge spoon with measures on it,
baking dish, colander, and flour shaker.
Really sweet we are getting quite a
collection of stuff now & it does look
nice. You can just bet how I'm going
to use 'em all!!

And so to the flat. I walked
up Blessington Road from the train,
and you can't imagine what an
appalling sight that road is! It is
scarcely recognisable. All those lovely
detached houses are demolished & the
place is just so much waste ground.
At the top there are doing several houses
up & opposite no. 12 are several Portals.

Quite a different sight from the one we
used to see from our front window.
No 12. is almost completed now, and
it looks as sturdy as ever from outside.
The walls inside are all distempered
cream, and the panework throughout is
in a chocolate colour which looks most
attractive. There were still dozens of
tins of paint on our floor & workmen's
coats hanging around, but I was able to
get the general impression. Unfortunately
the door of our two rooms was locked
& I couldn't get in - I expect it was
drying. I stood & pondered on size
& tried to picture our stuff installed.

I have been working on the basis
of the large room as the bedroom, but on
second thoughts I believe it would be
better to make it the living room. After

all, we shall probably spend most of our time in the dining-cum-lounge, so it ought to be the most spacious don't you think? In any case there was no electric point in the small room & we should have had to wangle wires for the fire wireless. I am hoping that there will be a point in the larger room.

As to size, however, the smaller room is about identical with the room we had at the Drive, and we should be able to fit in the two beds, small cabinet & table lamp, chest of drawers & one wardrobe nicely. Oh & two chairs! There won't be a great deal of gash space, but, well, who wants to walk around in a bedroom anyway. And

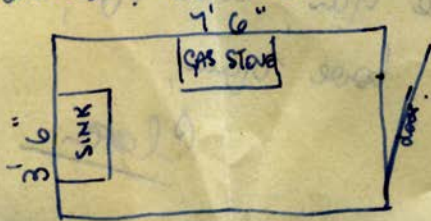
no one could say we are cramped in bed. These two divans together are positively enormous!

That leaves the rest of the furniture for the larger room & honestly sweet? I think it will look scrumptious. Close your eyes & imagine a dining-room suite, our two easy chairs, bookshelves, sewing machine, and occasional table in one corner with huge vase of flowers. OK? Pause for a big sigh. Yes, it's going to look hunky-dory.

The kitchenette, I'm afraid will take no furniture at all, when the stove is fitted - it really is tiny bitsey. However I think an ingenious & handy husband could fix up some shelves, to make the most of the available space.

There is a large sink, which needs a draining board on either side, and when these are fixed - I hope to buy some wood & make some temporary arrangement - I shall hang curtains down & make a kind of cupboard arrangement for kitchen utensils.

Then there will be spaces between draining board & gas-stove, and gas stove & door, which will take small cabinets a little larger than our bedroom are. Maybe you could knock a couple up some time doing. There's nothing so necessary in a kitchen as plenty of cupboards & table tops to put things down. is there?



Oh, I am sure we are going to be awfully happy in our little flat.

I shall definitely go along here next weekend & start cleaning up. The gas stove has still to be installed, so anyway I cannot move in, but I'll get it all shipshape next week so's to be all ready at the word go. Good eh?

Wait until my old man joins me there and makes the place into home - with his baccy and smoke & masculine air, Sands whirling to me.

Woo hoo! It's time for my bed. How's about coming up the upstairs tonight precious, I feel soooooo tired.

'Night. love you, love you,
love you,

Clare

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Plum. L. H. Westenberg

Plm 500221

Miss. Bopanga.

Coastal Forests,

Bombay

INDIA

5 NOV 1945

