

99

Bombay.

20.11.45.

Hi me Darling!

Woe, woe is me. Today we saw off George & the boys on their way to the barracks & thence to the ship. What I wouldn't have given to be going with 'em is not worth writing about. Last night George gave a farewell party which ended in the early hours in the usual dazed fashion - a few of the skates present going to battle stations & filling each other in. It was quite a night & today I'm not my usual bright self, but tomorrow will bring back the high spirits & the realisation that I shall be on the next list - I very sincerely hope! I expect I shall see George on Thursday in Bombay, for he's not due to sail before then, & he'll be able to give me a little more guff about the general trend of things - we in this backwater are not kept very well informed.

So come today, Honey, with a breath of home & love. And yesterday I had 119. So I'm bang up-to-date on matter matters, very much to you & me, & it makes me realise more than ever that you, you poor darling, are having a heavy time of it right about now & I rack my teeth in vexation at not being on the spot to do my share.

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You've had a bumper crop of parcels, ain'tcha Pet. You should have had the tablecloth with that pile, it was posted between them, but I suppose it'll be along shortly. I'm surprised to read that you think the sheets are O.K. - that was one deal that I would have betted on being a flop - I'll try for some more like that, but I shan't be able to get double sheets - seems they don't make such sizes in these cloth-rationing days.

I hope the cigars are in good condition - Jim sent 50 more + was told that a beetle had destroyed the lot! If you have company for Xmas, sweet, take a handful + give them out with my compliments - the cheap ones, not the House of Lords!

I'm glad about the food arriving safely for I know well that tinned stuff is practically beyond price - enjoy yourself with it Baby. You were lucky to have eatable olivieri - all the other lady's parcels were alive with ants! Examine the fruit, too - that has ~~discovered~~ been arriving in bad condition.

What a fortunate business this Betty deal is. Couldn't have been better. Now things are more settled when do you plan to move? Have you seen the large room? Is it large? How large? Is there a point fixed in? What are the floor boards like? Is the whole set-up in good order + repair? Does the temporary cooker work O.K.?

Am I driving you crazy with these questions? Heh, heh! I'm a devil for wanting to know things, Jan. I thought various people were going to give you a hand with the scrubbing, etc? I betcha a dollar you didn't ask 'em - I know you, you're such a sweet, thoughtful darling that you hate to think you're putting other people to any trouble on your account - ain't that so? I guess I can't be sweet or thoughtful because I'm afraid if anybody offered help on a job like that I'd snap it up - and really, Sweetie, people are usually quite glad & willing to come forward - most of the people we know anyway.

Glad you've gotten a genuine photo of me - don't look gaunt in that one, do you? "Clean looking" huh. Well, of course, I do wash every day whether I want it or not - I guess the day I had that in took I washed my knees as well - I don't care, do you? But, my goodness! I don't look a good as all what you said I looked - I thought I looked sappy in those shorts, won't usually have a snap of myself ~~to~~ like that on account of I think I look like an overgrown school kid. You have another look, Honey, then take a peek at yourself - you can't honestly ramble on about <sup>me</sup> being too good for ~~you~~ <sup>you</sup>! Cripes + cos lenne! I'm the lucky one, Bella Mia, I'm the one who's eating humble pie every

moment of the waking day in dependence to the Good Lord's Gift of the greatest piece of good fortune a man ever had - you. Can't fool me, darling - I know when I'm well off - I'm hanging on to you for very life's sake.

How does one make time fly? I hate wishing my life away, but I would like the next month to slip by without me noticing it. It's one of the most momentous in my whole life - pregnant with possibilities, at it were. A lucky break & I shall be home in your arms at the end of it. Average fortune & the end should see me plunging through the waves. Rank bad luck & the end should find me prostrate outside the C.O.'s office after the Xth attempt to make him see reason, (let  $X = 1000$ ). I refuse to believe that I'm due for any bad luck this trip - home-sickness apart, it's really been a bowl of cherries - but, on the other hand, lucky breaks are only for those who say their nightly prayers - let's look forward to average fortune. Maybe the stern, proper, Naval people will relent a wee & spread some Xmas cheer around in the shape of V.K. drafts chits, in time for. Damn me! but what earthly good am I doing out here?

'Night Angel. Here's a big smacker coming up -

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