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Cork
Wednesday.

Dearest,

I didn't intend to write tonight – you're not due for a letter until tomorrow! – but I've been thinking of you so much all day & then I got your letter this evening when I came back from my day off, so that I am putting law on one side until I've written to you.

I'm not sure whether it's a good thing for me to have a day off on my own, although I don't like going about with the others much. The trouble is that I start thinking, & I'm not sure that the results of my thinking are good.

In the first place it makes me wild to think of you cooped up there in a place you dislike, & yet able to move only at the pleasure of the HOLI –

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(Ministry of Labours & Interference!)
As I go about I see so many women who seem to be happy & comfortable, & it makes me feel that it's my fault that you aren't the same.

In addition, the job prospect doesn't seem very rosy. I've done a good deal of reading adverts lately - I looked at the T.E.S. in Lancaster today but won't bother you with them as you've already seeing it.

The conclusions I've come to are as follows:

① The jobs MOH will let you take aren't the ones you want.

② Other jobs that would be suitable often demand qualifications you haven't got, even if MOH would let you take them.

③ Even if you did get a job you liked, you might, remembering your Bath experiences, find yourself moved from the frying pan

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to the fire. Perhaps I'm being unduly pessimistic, but I've been feeling that way all day, so please forgive me, darling. (It's so difficult to write these things properly, isn't it?)

My conclusions from all this will probably shock you, & I don't want you to take them too seriously. I'm only toying to make you knock down the Aunt Sally I'm putting up!

① Apart from the difficulty of living with your Mother & Grace (N.B. this difficulty always seems smaller to me when I'm away from Newhouse, so please make allowances for that), you are actually living in greater comfort than you could be anywhere else - good food, a comfortable house, the occasional use of a car etc.

② We're neither of us growing any younger, & as you say, the war, with all the attendant

discomfort that it implies, will probably last for another couple of years.

(3) If we are going to have a family, now is the time to start one, because

(a) we probably shan't be so well off immediately after the war as we are now, apart from the fact that we should get extra allowances & so on, plus the fact that we should be saving Income Tax at 10/- in the £.

(b) I'd sooner be living with you when we did have a baby, because I should consider it as much mine as yours, but on the other hand, at Newhouse you would not be on your own in case of trouble.

(c) I don't suppose the materid difficulties - clothes, prams, maternity homes etc. - will be any easier for some time after the war.

(d) We've only had a year's married life on our own, I agree,

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but if we leave this family business much longer, we're going to be elderly, to say the least, before the child (or children) is able to leave us to ourselves in peace, & that doesn't seem to me to be a good thing.

Will you please forgive me darling if I've said anything that has caused you the slightest pain. I've never thought of this family business in this way before & I want you to see what you think of it. I'm not even suggesting that we should have a baby. Quite honestly I don't think I've any right at all to suggest it. I'm only bringing this up in case you were intending to have one eventually, because if you say you don't ever want to have one that's perfectly O.K. by me, & no question about it. Have I made myself clear?

The real trouble is that

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because you were so kind as to marry me (for which I can never be sufficiently grateful), and have been so patient with me ever since, I've got the idea that I can unload on to you any ideas I please. Now that I've got it off my chest, you can forget all about it.

All the above, incidentally, is because I've been thinking about you more than usual today, which is because I bought you a birthday present this morning — so you'll have to take the rough with the smooth!

I went to Ulverston to buy your present. Unfortunately my train from Cark was late, so that I didn't catch the next train back to Lancaster, where I wanted to get some more shopping done. As a result I got into Lancaster at 12.30, & by the time

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I'd looked at the T.E.S., all the shops were closed - early closing day. So I went to a flick instead & came back after tea.

I'm sending the present in your biscuit tin when I can get some paper & string. I'll have to send it early, because I'm going to Dalachy on Sunday or Monday, but I don't suppose you'll mind that.

I don't know whether you'll like it. If the colour is wrong I can probably change it for a more suitable colour, but beyond question it's the best they had in the shop. It's what I call a real present, or at least it's intended to be so - something not essential, but a pleasure to have. You don't need to worry about the expense, because I've deliberately cut down my smoking so that the money I've saved is paying for the present.

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The main point, which I hope you'll appreciate, darling, is that I love you so much that I sometimes feel at my wits' end for ways of telling you, & this present is just a very small token of the love I'm sending with it.

Your letter today was like a drink of water to a thirsty man, & I'll now proceed to answer it.

Your telegram, of course, did not arrive - at least, not yet. Abergavenny doesn't seem to be very good at telegrams, does it? This letter was the first intimation I'd had that you knew I'd passed. You obviously saw the paper, as you counted the names. That's more than I did, as I didn't bother once I'd seen my name in the list. As a matter of fact it has made me wish I could take the next exam now, as this new stuff

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seems so easy in comparison with Contract & Post.

I got back to Cark at 7.45 a.m. - in good time for breakfast. As for the fellow & girl I saw in the train at Hereford, if you must go into details! the safety factor as far as I was concerned was not that they were asleep, but that they were both fully clothed! But, as you say, nuff said!

I agree with you about the shock officers are going to get after the war. I notice it myself very much, & am afraid I shan't like it when I'm a mere nobody in a shop or café.

Your weather must have been similar to ours. Today ~~was~~ is the first day we've done any flying since Friday - really solid clamps all the time since then. The Fortress people aren't away

yet, but are hoping to go tomorrow.

We had a bit of excitement last night, because one Nav. aircraft took off when the weather cleared, & came back in a clamp as bad as ever. It landed in a field outside Lancaster. The aircraft was damaged, but the crew were only shaken. Lucky, weren't they? Apparently they saw some lights & thought they were at Cark!

I am definitely going to Dalachy now, & am very pleased. It will be my first visit to Scotland and, as Dalachy is one of Banff's satellites, I should be able to meet some old acquaintances, if there are any left! If I have time, I shall try to go over to Dyce to see Shaw, as Aberdeen is not far away.

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I'm glad you're getting the T.E.S., as it's a hopeless business trying to get a job without it.

I'm feeling very fit indeed, thank you, & hope you are too.

Re the certificates, I entirely agree. That's just the amount I was wanting us to invest. So I now pass to you for action!

All my love, darling. If only we could be together again! I'm cheesed with this b-- war.

Harold.

P.S. I'm gradually coming to the conclusion that I'm not fated to be killed in this war. After expecting to be dead by December '41 (after 3 months in O/s) & then finding myself jusled into instructing, & after having

flown 1300 hours without ever having been in difficulties or in danger, & after trying unsuccessfully for a year to get on to Ops, & now finding myself booked for another spell of instructing, I have now come to the conclusion that I shan't be killed in this war. Is this a case of "famous last words", or an actual prophecy, I wonder? Time alone will tell.

Look after yourself, darling,

Harold.

P.S. Got a very nice letter of congratulation from that tutor who lived in Jarrow. He says he thinks my passing the exam is a good show.

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