

Chapter Nineteen

Philippines: November-December, 1938

Manila, November, 1938

Having just returned from their trip to Hong Kong, Herb writes:

This old stuffy, tropical port seems worse than ever. Grr, what a place to have to spend most of the year in and to have to call "home port." Here's hoping the Canopus makes more interesting trips next year. (November 1)

Herb then explains again to Louise that when he returns home depends upon which transport is available for him to catch.

I probably will catch a transport in March, 1940 or the first one that comes out here after February. Which means, as I've told you before, I'll probably arrive back in the states sometime between May and June 1940. That is the very latest I'm quite sure honey! It's stretching our original two and a half years a little but we won't mind that, will we sweets? (November 1)

He assumes Louise feels the same way he does, that a slight delay in his homecoming can be tolerated. A few days later he writes to clarify that he really will not be home before March, 1940 and that he didn't want her to be hoping in vain for a return sooner than that. (November 5)

Herb was excited when he got his mail on Saturday. "Darling, three wonderful letters from you and the sweetest bunch of pictures I've ever seen" (November 5). In her October 3rd letter Louise referred to the "spanking" issue. Herb decides to reply, teasingly.

No, I wouldn't ever spank you for that [calling him Herbie]. But you went too far, hon. You said I couldn't spank you, anyhow. Tch, tch, really you as much as dared me too; you know I won't refuse a dare, either. (November 5)

Now answering her letter of October 5, Herb again tries to relieve her from worrying about when he's going to be returning home.

Honey, you really make it harder on yourself when you imagine how nice it would be if I were getting the next transport back. When you stop imagining and face reality again it just seems that much worse. Even if you don't mean it, you should think how it would mix things up if I came back ahead of time. I wouldn't have enough money saved; I wouldn't get rated as quick as I would if I stayed in one place.

That's how I look at it. But sweets, you know I don't really feel that way; I want and need you too, this very minute; oh, darling I do want to see you and kiss you and love you, but, but – we do have to make the best of it.

I'm being selfish dear, and I'm sorry; I forgot that you can't look at it in the same way that I can. Because you are in one place doing the same thing all the time and its harder for you, this waiting, than it is for me. (November 5)

Then Herb longingly admires the photos of her that he just received, which evokes a flood of emotion that he must express.

For the tenth time I just looked at the pictures again. And all I can do is sigh! That's all! But it means everything. Seeing all those pictures of you is almost like being with you for an instant, and then you are gone. But at least not your love.

Oh, to know that you love me, Louise, what couldn't I do for you. It makes me want to do something; I don't know what. I feel that I should do something wonderful to deserve your love. Oh darling, for the thousandth time I love you. Sometimes I feel as if I could almost go to pieces, knowing how much I love you and not being able to do anything about it. (November 5)

Herb continues his long letter to Louise the next morning, Sunday, still answering her last letter. He continues to reminisce about their last night together, as they were each fond of doing, lately; remembering the things they did moment by moment, and what they said to each other, and the important role that Bernard played in bringing them together. Then he reminds her that he had not seen Bernard at all, from 1926 to 1936. "Before that I was just a little kid who used to tease Bernard a lot¹" (November 6).

On Monday Herb received a copy of the Convention issue of *The Temple Artisan*² that Bernard had sent. He writes:

I enjoyed reading it from cover to cover. I liked your mother's address. It was very good, also Fred's. And Pearl made a nice talk. I see my darling did some singing too! Darling, there is something I wish you would make clear to me, if you can. It's about the Master's messages that are written for the Temple at Convention time and other appropriate occasions. I suppose the Guardian in Chief³ always originates them.

But is it something that the person composes due to their inspired position, or are they direct inspirations from the Master.⁴ It wouldn't be a message direct from the ether, would it? Oh, do I seem stupid darling; but you know that is something that the average person would wonder about. Regardless of their origination ... they are really wonderful and inspiring. (November 8)

¹ Bernard was 14 years older than Herb.

² Official quarterly publication of The Temple of The People.

³ The official head or leader of The Temple of The People.

⁴ According to members of The Temple of the People, its work is guided by The Master Hilarion. They believe that this superior being does not live in a physical body, and that the Master's contact with the organization is through the current Guardian in Chief of The Temple.

On November 11 Herb writes “Today is Armistice Day. Ironic, isn’t it, that we celebrate this day even though everyone knows that peace throughout the world is something hanging by a very slender thread” (*November 11*).

A song on the radio brought back memories of fun times singing with his buddies in beer joints. This led to memories of his early years in the U.S. Navy, which he shares with Louise.

Once in a while when I first came out to the west coast, I’d be feeling a little lonesome and I’d go sit in a far cornered booth and disconsolately sip at a glass of ale, and listen to music that could seem awful sad at times. ... At times the world used to seem pretty gloomy to me. I never could meet my dream girl. No girl I met would even come close to meeting the qualifications of my ideal. I thought that I’d probably never find her. So I thought then.

Maybe I was in that kind of mood one afternoon aboard a ship when a botsun mate yelled into a compartment where a bunch of us fellows were listening to the radio, and said “Any of you guys want to go to China.” Well, I didn’t see any strings attached to me and I thought it ought to be darn interesting out China way with all that trouble going on so I says “Yeah, boats, you can stick my name down, and I’ll extend for it if its necessary.”

I didn’t think much of it at the time because our division officer didn’t believe in transferring men who were qualified gun men like I was. But about a month later one Monday morning a yeoman came around with the dope. So, I came to China.

*But before I did leave America’s shores I at last did find my sweetheart. It seemed so ironic at the time; and it really was, wasn’t it darling? (*November 11*)*

He then begins to wonder how he and Louise might be able to make it financially, once they are married, referring to two of his coworkers who are married.

We got two new storekeepers on the last draft. One is third class and one is second class, and they are both married. ... They are both going to have their wives come out here. They will have to pay their own transportation too. If I came out here again, you’d want to come along too, wouldn’t you darling?

I was talking to the third class and he was telling me that he and his wife manage all right although naturally they didn’t have much to spare. But just the fact that they did get along is all that matters to me. ... A couple of guys in the office here sounded like they were trying to discourage me. ... But I hope that we can find a fairly nice place to live in for the price that we will want to pay.

Then Herb daydreams about what he would most like to do.

Guess what I’d almost love to do more than anything else. I wish that I could go out of the Navy and get some job at a place near to Halcyon like Santa Maria or San Luis. And then we’d live in Halcyon near all our friends and have our own lot and little house and we’d be so happy.

Honest the idea of knocking around in this Navy for the next sixteen years doesn't seem so hot to me. Neither does all those nights that I won't be home, or the weeks when we will be away on cruises.

Of course, it will represent more definite security in the long run than the average job on the outside. But I guess you wouldn't like the idea of being stuck in Halcyon for the rest of your life, would you darling.

But then only a small percentage of people ever get to travel around very much. And most of them always find out that they are disappointed in the places that they get to see. It is all mostly a lot of publicity humbug.

Guess I'm feeling old already; I'm almost ready to settle down and retire! Honest darling, don't you ever think about all the things that I told you is the matter with married life in the Navy? Are you sure you wouldn't mind it?

But then fortunately there is that one year of married life we will have before it comes time for me to ship over and that will be ample enough time for us to decide how we like it. It's a good thing I'll only have a year to do after we get married instead of three or four years. (November 11)

On Sunday afternoon Herb writes a long letter to Louise, and he tells her all about what he did in Manilla on Saturday.

A buddy of mine and I caught the one o'clock boat over yesterday afternoon. We hit the beach with the intention of taking a couple of rolls of film if possible. With that idea in mind we started walking around. We took a few pictures and wandered across the park to the zoo, where like a couple of kids we became thoroughly engrossed in the antics of a few cages full of monkeys. (November 13)

Herb and his buddy found someone to take a picture of them. The man was accompanied by two young ladies, and he invited them over to his house. He offered them drinks, and told them he had a phonograph and some late records, and they could dance if they wanted to.

That was the part that interested me so I said come on Andy, let's see what the racket is. So we walked across town for about ten minutes and came to the house which was a pretty nice one for Manilla. We went inside and upstairs, and it was a pretty large place. He had an electric phonograph and a stack of records but to my disappointment the phonograph wouldn't work so hot so we couldn't do any dancing. Nor did we offer to sample the drinks he offered us. So we just sat around and talked, the only girl in the place was playing solitaire and didn't bother with us. (November 13)

After an hour or so, Herb and his buddy decided to leave, and told the man they would probably come back after doing some shopping downtown.

We went down town and bought a few cards, and by that time it was getting dark and we just barely finished out a roll of film in the twilight. ... We then headed for the Y where we planned to first eat supper ... and there we met another buddy of ours. So we had supper together and we told him about the afternoons events.

The fellows wanted to go back to that place again. I didn't know what to do. I didn't want to go back to the ship yet and I did feel like dancing, in case they had the music box fixed. So a few minutes later we all jumped into a taxi and headed for the place. What my buddies were interested in was that the fellow had told us that there would be some nice-looking girls over at the place in the evening. (So, I shouldn't have gone, should I?) (November 13)

Continuing this long letter, Herb tells Louise all the details of events the night before. "For some reason or another my conscience seemed to be wanting to bother me" (November 13).

We soon arrived at our destination and were warmly greeted by two soldiers down below who were drinking by themselves. Up above, where the phonograph had been fixed, a couple of girls were dancing together, and we went in and sat down.

They came over and asked us if we wanted to dance, but the other fellows didn't feel like it so much; however I did since that was the main reason I went to the place. One girl who singled me out turned out to be a very good dancer, besides being one of the nicest looking Filipino girls that I had yet seen.

It wasn't long before I had her showing me some of the dance steps I wanted to learn. Meanwhile the records played on and on, one after another. However, even when we weren't dancing, I started to realize that the girl was attaching herself to me more than I cared to have her to. So, I tried to get her to dance with Andy or Red but they still didn't feel like dancing. Then I wanted one of them to take her completely off my hands, but one of the fellows was becoming completely interested in a girl in one corner of the room and the other fellow was talking politics to our host; so the best I could do, without leaving the place was to keep on dancing with Celie.

My goodness I even started to do rhumbas and the big apple, and I was enjoying myself solely because of the dancing. I never danced so much in years and I figured that I was really getting in some good practice.

Late in the evening came a time though, when my dancing partner was tending to become just a wee bit too amorous; so summoning up my will power, I made something clear to her. I told her I enjoyed dancing with her but that was as far as I would go. To make it all clear to her I told her that I was practically married and that I was being true to my sweetheart.

And then because there was really something about the girl that appeared to be decent, I started in giving her a heart-to-heart talk. About why she couldn't give up the distasteful career she had chosen. And if some day she wouldn't like to marry some nice Philippine boy and have a happy little family of her own. I guess that amazed her and at the time I didn't think she took it to heart. So, I went over and started talking with the other guys.

Andy said "What's the trouble Herb" and I said "What do you mean what's the trouble, don't you know me enough by now." I said "What's the trouble with you, there's a cute trick that I've been trying to hitch you with for the last three hours."

So I asked them if they were going back to the ship and they said yes, we can get the one a.m. boat. That was about midnight. It took me over a half hour to drag them away from the place, one out of a conversation and the other guy out of a girl's arms. They asked us to stay there all night if we wanted to, and I told the guys I was willing to stay if they wanted to, but they finally decided to shove off with me.

So, we said adieu to that crazy joint and we caught a taxi down to the landing in time to catch the last boat. After so much dancing I was really tired and the old cot sure felt good. (November 13)

That Sunday afternoon, in closing this letter to Louise, Herb asks her an important question.

I like to dance like that when I get a chance to, but when I have to dance with a girl like that would you say that I am going too far? I try to hold everything about you so sacred to me darling; it almost doesn't seem right that I should even touch a girl like that or go to a place where my actions may be misinterpreted. Maybe I shouldn't go ashore unless I go straight to a show or ball game or something. ... That's the trouble with being a sailor, you can't meet any decent people in a strange place. (November 13)

Then Monday evening, with a salved conscience over his weekend misadventures, he has some exciting news to share with Louise.

I have to write at least a line tonight! Why; oh, I've some swell news to tell you! Yep, the rates came back last night and yours truly is now no longer a seaman. Ahem, third class storekeeper is my rate; my friends call me "Stores." But honest honey, I am awfully glad I made it; it gives me a lot of confidence in myself and now I'm sitting on top of the world!

All my buddies are already clamoring for cigars. In the Navy, whenever a man makes a rate, it is usually the custom for him to pass out cigars to all his friends and the fellows he works with. The Chief Pay Clerk even congratulated me and he told me to start studying my second-class course so that I could make it before I go back. I have to wait one year though to become eligible for second. (November 14)

Early Friday morning Herb writes "For almost two weeks now, I haven't heard whether you love me or not, sweetheart. ... But I'll hear, I mean see those three beloved words again soon; as soon as our mail clerk drags our mail bags back to the ship. I'll bet I've got at least three letters from you hon!" (November 18). Then two days later Herb's mood was brightened considerably, when he received four letters from Louise, and that evening he begins answering them. He tells Louise about some of the privileges he enjoys in his new work environment.

Ah, this cup of coffee really is good. We keep a percolator in the office and make coffee whenever we want to except during working hours. So, with a radio too; why we have all the comforts of home. (November 21)

The next day, as Herb is answering her last letters, he reads that Louise liked a song written by a female friend of his from San Francisco, who still writes to him on occasion. He explains about their relationship.

Maisie still writes to me once in a while. ... I told her all about you and she's tickled to know I'm engaged to such a swell girl. She always asks about you when she writes. ... She sent me the song too because I've encouraged her some in my letters. ... She is the one who signed her name "Lefty" in my album. She wrote another song too which she said she'd send to me sometime. (November 22).

This story prompts Herb to explain about others who still write to him.

Oh yes darling, and besides her, there are two other girls who write me a couple of letters a year. Jealous? Both just old pals who I've written to for years. One in N.Y. I went to school with. The other in Wilmington [near San Pedro] calls herself my sis. They both know all about you and always hope we are getting along swell.

It must seem strange to you that three other girls write to me, at times. But then neither of us need explain; we trust each other too much. I wouldn't mind if you still wrote to Milton or other fellows if they were really good friends of yours. (November 22).

The next day he apologizes that he still has no new pictures to send to her.

Well, a fellow got my pictures for me today, and I'm sorry hon but they turned out awful. I'll look through them later on and see if any are worth sending, but I doubt it. I guess my camera needs overhauling. (November 23)

Louise had asked (again) why he loves her, and he answers "I love you because you are the dearest girl I ever expected to meet in my life, and because you see things in me that I'm sure no other woman ever would have seen" (November 23).

Two days later Herb tells Louise how he and his fellow storekeepers sometimes take advantage of their unique position to enjoy themselves.

Just came up from the storeroom where I ate about a pint of ice cream. Red, one of the new storekeepers has the provision storeroom and he is always making something to eat and this morning he mixed up some ice cream and the fellow who runs the ship's fountain mixed it for us. And it sure is rich cream since Red dumped about thirty eggs into the mixture which only made two gallons of ice cream. When he isn't making ice cream, he is concocting egg nogs or puddings or one thing and another.

Now tonight he is going to get a hot plate down in the storeroom and after movies we are going to fry some ham and eggs. So you see what racketeers we storekeepers are. We just about have all the comforts of home, don't we? (November 26)

Herb's career with the Navy was the subject of conversation one day, as he was helping the Supply Officer correct some recent exams. Herb writes about what the man told him.

He asked me if I had ever tried for the Naval Academy and since I had, I told him so, but that I didn't make the age limit so I couldn't take the entrance exam. "Too bad" he said. He said that the Navy was expanding ... it offered a pretty good future, and that I ought to be able to make warrant officer if I stay in. He told me to take the exams as soon as I had a chance to for each rate when I became eligible. I guess I am on the right side of

him and if I can help it I'm going to stay there by doing my work the best I can. (November 29)

Just before turning in that evening, Herb writes

Gosh, I'm getting to be an awful coffee drinker lately, because they're always making a pot here in the office every couple of hours. And its such good coffee, a fellow can't resist drinking a cup of it. (November 29)

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Several days later, Herb apologizes for not writing more, because he had been so busy. "Just before we came in the Navy Yard ... the subs drew half of the stuff out of the storerooms I think, by the number of chits I've had to charge off on the ledgers" (December 4).

On a regular basis Herb had been sending to Louise his copies of the ship's newsletter, called "Iswas." He thought she might find it interesting to read about the activities of his ship and gossip about the lives of the sailors. The latest one, which he encloses with this letter, includes a story about Herb in what he called the "scandal column."

Now I can be glad that I told you all about it long before some of my beloved shipmates had it printed. They are referring to the detailed story that I told you, only they have exaggerated part of it and misconstrued anything that might have happened. I go ashore once in three months; I dance for the first time in Manila; and what happens? They call me a jitter-bug! They insinuate that me and my buddies are "dangerous." They fixed it so we really will get razzed for a couple of days now.

Yep, its all in fun, and it looks like we are in for some kidding after all hands get a glimpse of that paper. And the fellows in the office here told me that they bet this is one copy of the Iswas that I won't send you. I suppose you are wondering what my new initials stand for. ... Just because I'm not such a hot dancer they have to kid me about that too so they call me "Trip Toe!"

It's funny how some guys can go ashore and pull all sorts of tricks regularly, and get into all sorts of scrapes and trouble, but no one thinks anything of it. But everyone who knows me, knows that I never fool around when I'm ashore, on account of my girl back in the states; so when they do get a chance to kid me about something they make the most of it. It doesn't bother me in the least, but I make believe it does and they get a kick out of that. (December 4)

Herb was delighted to have received three letters from Louise last night, and tonight after a busy day of work he has time to answer her letters. In her letter dated November 2, Louise wrote about a dance in Pismo Beach, to which sailors from the ship at Avila Beach were invited. Herb responds to the news with:

Well darling if you went to the dance, since you wanted to, I hope that you didn't have to slap any sailor's face because I know only too well that they are often inclined to get

exceedingly fresh with girls. How many tried to flirt with you? Oh, I'll bet that some did! (December 6)

Next Sunday morning Herb has a chance to write a nice, long informative letter to Louise. He is listening to the radio as he writes, and a song plays which stirs a flood of memories.

"Ah, Sweet Mystery of Life." They are playing it now. And how true it is, to me, and you. Love is the secret of happiness, and life. Its wonderful how our composers of old were inspired to write music like that.

You know these open air concerts you usually hear in parks or civic auditoriums and you hear all those old songs by our famous composers. I can listen to those for hours.

Ever since I can remember I've liked music like that. I can recall laying on a nice soft rug besides the Victrola, looking up at the ceiling; I can remember the pictures on the walls; and I was about four or five then.

I can also remember things I'd like to forget. Yes dear, I was quite a brat! I'd ruin anything I'd lay my hands on so it was no wonder that Bernard kept his treasured and well cared for books and toys away from my destructive grasp. I'd pull the cat's tail, and lie, and take things. My! But then my step-mother's influence started to change me; for she really brought me up right. Though she couldn't take the devil out of me. Even until I got out of high school, I used to pull all sorts of tricks. (December 11)

Herb got carried away with his reminiscing, and gave Louise quite a rich sample of pranks that he and his friends pulled. Then he writes "Gosh, darling I didn't mean to bore you with an autobiography. How did I get on that anyhow? Oh yes, music started it all. Its swell that we both like music" (December 11).

On Monday night the Canopus received the latest batch of mail from the states, which included three letters from Louise; after work on Tuesday, he has time to answer them. The first letter, dated November 12, was the one in which Louise confesses about what she did with a sailor at the dance in Pismo.

Herb responds with a reassuring message right at the beginning of his letter.

Darling, may I quote the last sentence in the last of your three letters? "I love you with my whole heart and soul. Does that mean anything to you?" Louise dearest, that means everything in the world to me; of all you wrote, that's all that matters! (December 13)

Further into his letter, Herb tries to reassure her that his feelings for her have not changed.

How could you possibly think that I could respect, love, or trust you any less than I do, just because you kissed someone goodbye? Even though you might have lost your presence of mind when you did. (December 13)

Herb then provides some advice for Louise, with examples, of how to be careful in the future, and he writes "By experience though we learn just where our temptations may be and avoid coming that close to it again" (December 13). Then Herb uses his own misadventures as examples of what he can learn from them; while at the same time attempting again to relieve his own feelings guilt.

And darling things I've done and told you about were just as bad as you kissing someone. Even in Bali, is it nice to admire naked women? Or to rub shoulders with street girls in Hong Kong? Or to dance close to girls in dimly lit apartments in Manila? Even though its as far as I've ever gone, I've felt guilty about it, told you so, and now by experience I know enough not to expose myself to the same things again. So, if you chance to kiss a sailor goodbye have I any room to reprimand you; definitely not!

So henceforth we can know what to watch out for; and we'll love each other all the more for it. Everything will always be all right because I'll always love you darling. Nothing can ever change. (December 13)

Then there is the issue of Louise writing to Tom, the sailor that she kissed. Herb writes:

What you did was very harmless since it stopped there. He must really be a nice, pleasant fellow. And if he'd make a real friend, by all means I'd want you to answer his letter since you promised to; if he does write. No, I wouldn't mind; don't I write to girls? Why couldn't you have a pen pal too. After all hon what goes for one of us goes for the other. If he knows all about us; if he respects you, he'll write you the sort of letter you wouldn't mind answering. (December 13)

The next day Herb was part of a delegation from US Naval ships in the Manila area that was invited to tour one of the two Japanese warships that came into the harbor for a brief stay. The ship he toured was a cruiser - the HIMJS Yakumo. Herb writes "I really am glad that I was able to visit for it really was worth the long ferry ride over to Manila [from Cavite]. It was an interesting experience." (December 14).

After touring the ship and being treated so well, which included free food and drinks, demonstrations of martial arts, and souvenirs of Japan, Herb makes an observation.

They really seemed like a fine, clean cut bunch of fellows; and they really seemed sincere in their efforts to be very friendly to us. Inwardly though I felt that they were trying to size us up; trying to get an idea of how it would be if they ever had to look at us from behind their guns. And I believe that they were trying to impress us with their rugged games. But they were perfect hosts.

You know its hard to think about hating people after you have such close hand experience with them. ... I guess they are making a good will cruise. (December 14)

Herb was excited on the morning of December 19 when he opened up the package that Louise had sent for Herb's Christmas gift. "Boy those cookies and the candy is swell Louise. And every time I eat one of them, I think that your own sweet hands made them especially for me. You had them so well wrapped, they kept perfectly" (December 19).

He was feeling very upbeat when writing to Louise about all the cards and letters he had received from friends and family, for Christmas. Bernard sent a card with some pamphlets, and Herb writes "They look as though they are going to be deeper than anything yet" (December 19). He also received a letter from Maisie, his friend in San Francisco.

She is sending me something to send to you for X'mas. ... She is a swell kid. Maybe you ought to write to each other. She is also knitting some stuff to give us when we get married. She wants us to visit her and her family when we are in San Francisco. (December 19).

Herb again explains for Louise how he is accumulating his planned \$500 savings.

I don't wonder that you were wondering about that \$500 hon. But it wasn't my plan to have much of it this soon yet anyhow. But before next X'mas I think I will have that \$500 in postal savings. When you get that money from the insurance company that will be a good start. Then I get a hundred and fifty next June when I extend my enlistment. Then I'll save another two hundred easy by next year. (December 19)

Several days later Herb begins his next letter to Louise with "Gosh I've been so busy lately I haven't had time to drop you even a line" (December 23). Earlier in the week, after basketball practice at the Y in Manila, he visited Gabriel's uncle.

And there I learnt all the good news. It was a boy; and it came last month; and both mother and son are doing fine and I was really tickled to hear that. I left word to tell Gabriel and Yoshiko if they ever came to town that I would visit them this weekend. (December 23)

On Christmas Day Herb writes to Louise, telling her all about his visit with Yoshiko and Gabriel. Yesterday morning he went ashore early in the day, and took a taxi into the downtown section.

Well, I got down on the main drag where all the stores are and got a few little things to take with me. A blanket and rattle for the baby and a box of candy for Gabriel and Yoshiko. Then I hopped a taxi for the bus station and we got caught in a traffic jam. (December 25)

Herb just missed the outward-bound bus for Obando. After waiting an hour, and another hour-long bus ride, Herb Made it to his destination.

When I got to the house there was Yoshiko, and a very sweet looking baby boy named Martin. She was very glad to see me; and as Gabriel was out on business we sat and talked for a couple of hours.

He really is cute; I think he looks like his mother more than his father. And she even let me hold him for a few minutes. She says they are spoiling him because someone is always picking him up and carrying him and now, he doesn't like to lay down when he's awake.

Gabriel came home and the three of us talked for quite a while. They showed me the card you sent them. It was very nice. Also, the things you sent.

And darling, I accumulated another picture of you yesterday too. Taken in Santa Barbara, April, 1936. I think it's a sweet one of you and since Yoshiko had two of them, she gave me one. ... The picture shows you, Yoshiko, another girl; and three fellows, in front of a school bus.

From talking with them I know that Yoshiko almost has her heart set on going back to the states someday. They would like to this spring, I guess. Gabriel would like the states for he would have a better chance in business, also he likes American ways I guess; however, he feels an urge to remain here since this is his native land and he can be with his countrymen. It is hard on Yoshiko because she hasn't learned much of this language yet and she cannot talk with any of the older people.

They are still very much in love with each other, of that I am certain from casual observation. ... I had a very swell supper there. They went to a lot of trouble I'm sure, to fix up an American meal. And the three of us thoroughly enjoyed it. (December 25)

Next Herb tells Louise about his interesting and long adventure returning to his ship.

By the time supper was over it was pretty late; around 7:30 and all the busses had stopped running past their place. ... Gabriel wanted to be sure that I got started out o.k. so after I said good bye to Yoshiko we caught a carretela (a horse carriage) to the next village. Next we caught a bus to another village. There I parted with Gabriel and caught some sort of a jitney into the outskirts of Manila. There I got on a street car and rode down town where I caught a taxi and headed for the landing which I made in time to catch the 10:00 p.m. boat back to the ship. (December 25)

The next day herb wrote about a terrible mistake made by the local police regarding an accused killer who had escaped. They killed an innocent man, instead. Herb writes

Boy what a system these savages have out here. I have all I can do to refrain from telling Gabriel what I think of these islands. I don't blame Yoshiko for yearning to return to the states. (December 26)

He continues his observation of life in the Manila region.

Gee darling, Christmas is so different out here. No X'mas trees, none of the things that mark our X'mas's back in the states. About all the people here do is to hang a star out of their window. You see some pretty ones though. And during my wanderings on Christmas Eve, I saw a few processions and parades. But - it just isn't X'mas here. (December 26)

A few days later Herb finds time to write to Louise, and he begins the letter with an apology.

I know I don't need to make explanations but I'm very sorry about it. Long before you receive this, you'll have received a birthday card from me; and probably after you receive this, you'll get a much belated birthday present. Here it is only December 28 and the next ship doesn't leave here before January 9! Imagine that! A ship went out today and I didn't even answer the two letters I received from you yesterday in time to make the next ship. (December 28)

He proceeds to explain anyway.

I spent all day yesterday trying to get a lighter loaded at Cavite ... then this morning I had to go back over to Cavite and finish getting the lighter loaded. Boy its loaded down with 50 tons of stores. Now tomorrow morning, after they bring it out to the ship tonight,

we will have to unload it. So, I'll be busy all day tomorrow. Then I have to close out all my ledgers tomorrow and start getting them balanced before the first of the year.

Gosh Louise, I feel awful about not getting your birthday present off in time. I even forgot to get your card off in yesterday's mail but fortunately I can send it by airmail later on. That's why you'll have gotten it long before this. And now I'll be busy as the dickens for the next week or so. But I'll write every chance I get between now and the ninth of January. (December 28)

In spite of the workload, Herb was fairly proud of himself and shares this with Louise.

Today I checked everything into the lighter and got it stowed just as I wanted it; and nothing turned up missing. I had to sign for every item of that 50 tons too. However, it was my privilege to securely lock it up when we were through with it; and bring the keys back to the ship with me. It stays locked until I unlock it tomorrow morning when they bring it alongside. Ah me, such responsibility; I've aged considerably in the last couple of days. That's what you get for getting rated! (December 28)

Then he answers Louise's most recent letters; he responds to her telling him about exchanging letters with Tom.

So, Tom did write! Well, from what he wrote, he must have been sorry to leave so soon. Does he think he could get serious with you darling; or doesn't he really know? Oh, I'm not worrying; I was just wondering how he looked at it.

Now I wonder; should you feel sorry for him Louise. I've seen so much of sailors that I know that very, very few of them deserve any sympathy under any circumstances. Why? For the simple reason that they are out to get all they can most of the time and their aims are usually pretty selfish. Darling, it isn't just because you are concerned; I'd warn any girl about sailors. (December 28)

Herb tells Louise how much he enjoys the Christmas card she sent. "I still have your X'mas card in my desk drawer, and every time I open it up, I can smell the sweet perfume you put on it. It's a pleasant reminder of the lovely girl awaiting me, way back there" (December 30).

Just think, tomorrow we'll be able to say "next year" sweets! I'm sure that this year was the hardest of any them. '39 will fly, and then ... all the happiness in the world will be ours. Every day will be a happy day, a day of joy and fun and at last we'll be able to live the way we want to. (December 30)

Then he replies to a question in Louise's letter:

Yes darling, I do know how much you love me! And that knowledge makes me happy beyond telling. It's what keeps me going I guess, no matter what ever happens or how I feel. I just have to say to myself "She loves you, Herb" and "Just imagine that, a girl like Louise loves you." (December 30)

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