

Chapter Twenty-Six

Hong Kong and Shanghai: May, 1939

Hong Kong – May, 1939

It is Friday afternoon in the harbor at Hong Kong. Herb begins a very long letter to Louise.

Honey, it's going to be hard to find words to tell you how much I love you after the way you treated me yesterday. ... Shortly after arriving at Hong Kong boats were sent after our mail to the post office ashore and to the other U.S. ships in the harbor.

Finally, when the mail was all sorted and put out around ten o'clock last night, can you guess how many letters for me from you there were sweets? No less than nine, my love and here they are heaped high before me and boy have you got me smothered under. I read them all through once before I turned in last night and I could hardly fall asleep, thinking of the various sweet things you wrote. It was as if you were almost in my arms, but elusive and not quite there. ... Gee, but to be remembered so much by you ... you always make me very happy.

Well darling, I can't say when or where I'm ever going to get your nine letters answered but if I ever want to, I had better start right away. O.K. then, here's letter No. 1 postmarked March 25. Letter No. 9 is postmarked April 11. (May 12)

He responds to her going to the dance with Anita. "I'm glad you and Anita had so much fun at that one dance. Well; why wouldn't my darling be popular? I'll bet she was the sweetest and most charming girl on the dance floor." He writes that he doesn't mind them going home with different people at times. "I'd stake my life on your being true to me; I'd want to give mine up were I not true to you" (May 12).

He responds to her fixation with how they are dealing with their remaining time apart. He doesn't want to be condescending about it, but he writes "If you don't want to fuss any more over the time left to do darling that's your affair. ... I thought we both agreed to be philosophical about that time anyhow" (May 12).

He begins answering letter number two, postmarked March 27. It was after dinner time, and the evening was cool. Herb puts on a sweatshirt to keep warm while sitting and writing.

Hmm; come to think of it there are memories attached to this ole white sweatshirt. Very dear memories. Were not the sleeves of this shirt once embraced around the dearest girl in the world? As I held her so close and tight to me. No wonder I felt so content when I just put it on. It's funny; almost childish isn't it how one clings to simple little memories like that. (May 12)

Then Herb comes to the part in her letter where she continues to express concern about the amount of time remaining, and about his attitude about it.

Alright; alright; dearest! You don't need to resign yourself to anything if you don't want to. Sure, hon, I realize that these extra months do mean a lot. A lot more than I'll admit they do. And I don't blame you for not being able to resign yourself to it because I can't either. Oh, I fool myself for a time, but then every once in a while, I realize just how much and how soon I want to be with you too.

Ha; I wouldn't even want you to be meek about it dear. I probably wouldn't like it if you didn't care about those extra months. Darling, you know I don't want to be condescending about it. I was just trying to somehow or other put you in a frame of mind so that you wouldn't mind it so much. (May 12)

Herb feels the need to try to explain what she means to him; how he will remain faithful.

Darling; I do need you so much. Lord, it's not human loving someone as much as I love you and having to be this far away from you. I can't tell you just how much I really need you, Louise. Physically, mentally, morally, spiritually; I need you and need you more than I almost dare admit to myself dear. Living like this, wanting you so; it does things to a person.

You see, I've always maintained that no man, no matter how much he loved someone is pretty weak as far as the flesh is concerned. I've seen so much of that. ... But I was sure when I came out here that I'd have no trouble in that respect. ... But I loved you so much darling, the instant you said you could wait that long for me; there wasn't a doubt in my heart that I could wait and be true to you that long too.

That's why you'll always be the most wonderful person in my life. The way you exerted an influence like that over me. (May 12)

He tries to be empathetic.

I can imagine how you must have felt at times; many days, lonely nights, blue moments; and I haven't realized that you are a girl; a soft sweet woman, under a world of strain; not just a happy-go-lucky sailor with plenty to divert his mind from unhappy moments.

I am lucky! To be going on a cruise like this and visiting different places and having different things to do. Time must pass so much slower for you when your movements are confined to such a small area. Don't think I don't realize and appreciate that fact honey. (May 12)

It is now Sunday afternoon, and Herb finds the time to continue his long letter. "Before I continue with your letters, I'll tell you what all I did, and bought ashore yesterday" (May 14).

I went over with a couple of my buddies who also wanted to do some shopping and when we hit the beach, we headed for a big department store which is noted here for its reliable goods and reasonable prices.

We went up to the floor the silk was on, and I asked the Chinese clerk to bring some of his best heavy, brocaded silk. ... I finally got the heaviest Chinese white silk he had, and

the design is a Chinese flower which is frequently spaced all over the material. It was only 18 inches wide so I got 10 yards of it. ... I'll try to get one of my buddies to take it back on the Chaumont in October. It really looks nice all right, and it makes a small package. I thought it would cost more than it did, too ... about \$10.00 U.S.

From there we went on down to some stores where I bought some stuff last year. Sort of lingerie wholesale houses where I bought some pajamas and underwear. I got you another underwear set, pink this time. Then in the next store I got the padded kimono I intended to get for you to match the blue pajamas I got last October. It has a nice design on it, and it should be pretty warm as it is fairly thick. Good for that California fog.

Well, that just about wound my shopping up for this stop in Hong Kong. After we got through shopping, we rode around in rickshaws a while; had supper; took a trolley car ride up and down the city; and caught the ten o'clock boat back to the ship.

Hong Kong is interesting at night with its teeming population of all sorts of colors and races. Its population has just about doubled itself since the war began with all the refugees that have made their homes there on sidewalks, in lots, and shacks; and along the waterfront.

This morning I stowed the stuff away in my suitcase. You know the darn thing is just about filled up already. It sure is going to be filled to overflowing, and heavy, by the time I catch that transport. I have everything wrapped up separately with moth flakes all around. I hope you like all of the things. I'll be able to get some more things in Shanghai and Tsingtao too.

(May 14)

In her letter postmarked March 28, Louise told Herb about the long talk she had with Bernard one evening. Herb answers:

Just as it was Bernard who was with you for an hour when you were alone in the Guest House and in bed, it doesn't matter. I'd never ever be afraid of trusting Bernard because it seems that he's lost his appreciation of feminine beauty and companionship. You know what I mean. He could probably come in contact with a very attractive girl who liked him a lot but it wouldn't act on him like it would other fellows. I don't suppose he'll ever get married. I'm glad you had a nice talk with him. (May 14)

It is Tuesday evening, and the Canopus is on its way from Hong Kong to Shanghai. As soon as they left the harbor they encountered some bad weather, and Herb writes "Right now we are plowing along through some pretty large waves and the old tub is rocking and rolling like a rowboat in a waterfall" (May 16). He continues answering her letters.

Yes, I think I need a wife! To settle me down and besides I sure am in sore need of some huggin' and kissin' sweetheart. It's awful; doing without it all this time. ... But I'd never want to be a bachelor. In the first place I don't believe in this free lance love. I know I can always be sure of you darling. Just as you can always be sure of me. Our marriage will be too wonderful to ever let anything disrupt it. (May 16)

How could I be disappointed in you dear when I come home. I do remember what you look like. And even if I didn't have a single picture of you, I'd still remember you exactly as I saw you on several occasions. ... And the picture of you in my mind that I remember most was when I walked into Dower's the day I arrived at Halcyon last time, and I said "Hello Louise." And you had me spellbound for a second, you looked so terribly sweet and lovable. And I also remember ... how you sang "The First Time I Saw You." Darling to me you're a wonderful girl and you always will be. (May 16)

Three days later the Canopus is at sea, still on its way to Shanghai. He expects they will arrive tomorrow morning.

It's been getting a lot colder every day now and this noon we changed into blues. Seems strange to be wearing blues again, for the first time since I've been out here. It's been cloudy and a little rough for the last couple of days too. (May 19)

Shanghai – May, 1939

The next morning the Canopus was "tied up at a couple of buoys in the Whangpoo River a mile or so down from Shanghai proper" (May 20). He finds time that afternoon to begin a long letter "Darling I have so much to write, I hardly know where to start" (May 20).

We are more or less on the outskirts. Up here there is not so much evidence of the battle which took place here. One thing is noticeable though, every craft on the river, I mean Chinese boats, from the largest junk to the smallest rowboat or sampan all have a Japanese flag flying at the stern. That is not so much a sign of submission as it is to keep the Japs from bothering them.

We passed dozens of Jap transports practically empty on the way in. The troops are all in the field spread all over this province. And as we lay here an occasional launch with Jap soldiers or sailors passes by. And a big hospital ship loaded down with wounded Japs passed us this morning.

That morning Herb received three more letters from Louise. Now he begins answering them; first he wants to explain his attitude about how much time is left before he returns.

Perhaps you are right hon. Because I am afraid of disappointment that is why I don't plan on much of an early return to the states, sooner than February I mean. In fact, for a time, I was afraid that I might not get back until June; and now that I am fairly certain that I'll be back there in March I feel pretty good about it. But when it comes to hoping dear, no one hopes more than I do that I'd get back there this year. (May 20)

Oh, I haven't got too many spare time jobs. I kept that one job after all. Because I get \$10 a month for it now. And it doesn't take up much of my time. I have charge of a lot of athletic gear which I keep stored in a small storeroom. When some team needs outfitting; I outfit them. (May 20)

Herb is feeling very thankful about having Louise in his life. From this he generates a philosophy for living, and shares it with Louise.

So it behooves me to lead the kind of life a thankful man should lead. We'll both live like that; being good; thankful for all the happiness that does come our way; and cheerful and optimistic about the misfortunes that may temporarily be ours. That will be our code of living; wont it honey?" (May 20)

Now he begins answering her letter postmarked April 8.

Ah, I'm so glad you are on your feet again. ... Hmm, soon as you got up you started catching up on shows and dances; didn't you. Which is just as you should do honey, just so you take care and don't catch any cold. I know how time drags for you and the more pleasure and recreation you can get, the better.

That was too bad about your mother's project closing. ... It is tough for you darling managing things for the three of you on just Fred's pension. I know; because my stepmother and half-brothers are going through the same thing. It doesn't seem fair; that so many people in this world have to struggle along with barely nothing while a privileged class have all the luxuries in the world. (May 20)

He begins answering her letter dated April 11, first responding to her account of a neighbor introducing Louise to her son.

You know Louise, that's what had me puzzled when I first met you. "Whew," I figured; "Here's an angel that all the fellows in the county are probably courting" so I figured I didn't even stand a mere chance with you. I thought you were being friendly to be sociable. ... You almost made me conceited, falling in love with me. Didn't figure it was possible. All I can do is to always try to be all that you think I am hon.

It's too bad that your Easter Sunday was marred by a dog fight, and some stupid men. Darling you sure have a lot of spunk. ... Now I have to refer to your mother's letter. Any girl that will pry a dog's jaws open when he is fighting mad to rescue her pet is a girl to be admired for her courage and daring. ... And your mother told me how you once rescued a drowning girl.

Honey, I'd give anything if you wouldn't get discouraged at times. I know how hard it is, honest I do; but I still wish you could keep from thinking its "a very long time" till I come home. It really isn't. ... I guess it's a state of mind you put yourself in. I wish I could do something to comfort you when you feel like that.

I always like to get any picture of you Louise and I'm mean to not send you more than I do. I appreciate them more than I can say and I know you'd like pictures of me just as much - but - I don't know what's the matter with me. I guess that's one of my faults you'll have to overlook darling. Can you forgive me honey? I swear I'll send you some pictures from here! (May 20)

The next evening Herb begins another letter. He shares his impressions of Shanghai.

When I was up here before, or rather at Woosung, I never realized how little of Shanghai the Japs had control of. Really all of Shanghai proper with the modern parts of the city, its busy streets, big stores, hotels, and all, comprise the International Settlement which is a very large area. That is why it is such a thorn in the side of the Japs. And with the

population of 60,000 Occidentals and an investment of over a billion dollars gold you can bet that the foreign powers aren't going to turn it over to the Japs without going to war.

Last week down the coast at Amoy where there is an international settlement on a smaller scale the Japs landed some troops and the French, U.S. and British ships in the harbor promptly landed some forces whereupon the Japs withdrew. The Japs were just testing. They'd like to do that in Shanghai too but they know they couldn't get away with it.

It's strange to find such a modern city out here in the Orient. It has a couple of American newspapers and you can pick up a dozen radio stations, mostly Chinese, but several American. ... It's much like being in Frisco or New York. That is why they gave leave here. I'll tell you more about it after I've been ashore. (May 21)

Below: Images of Shanghai Harbor 1939

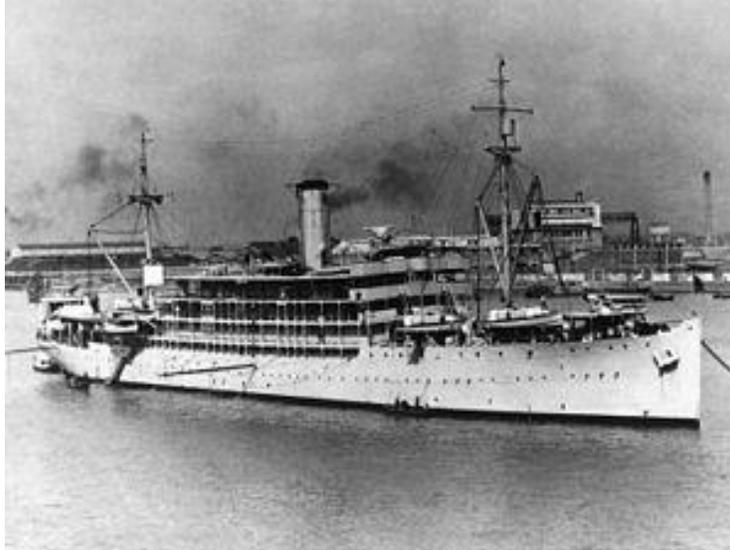


Below: The Heart of International Settlement, Shanghai



Below: Shanghai Shopping District





USS Canopus in Shanghai harbor

Herb starts answering another of Louise's letters, this one postmarked April 18. The issue about when he's coming home continues to come up.

Here we go again. Now you can't fool me, Louise. You can't possibly have a good reason for thinking I'll be back there before March 1st! So, I don't expect you to tell me it.

If I were nice, I'd come home before December 2; if I could! But if Uncle Sam says I can't come home before Feb or March who does that make not nice? Me, or Uncle Sam? Were you kidding about Christmas? Don't you go drawing any lines about my being home for Christmas after I've assured you that I won't be unless you want to deliberately disappoint yourself.

Oh honey; maybe at times I write things that are unconsciously hurtful to you but you know I don't mean to. ... I only want you to adjust yourself to when I know I will come home. (May 21).

Now he responds to the last of the letters he received recently. This one is dated April 25, and it included many pictures. He thanks her for sending them, and comments on each.

Georgie is cute only he looks a little bewildered up there on that rock all by himself. ... And that's a nice picture of Patty holding Georgie. ... Wasn't that picture of you taking a sun bath focused wrong? You can't see your face so plain. Just a pretty figure laying on the sand, or is it grass. ... Last, and best, is the picture of you and Patty sitting down, eating sandwiches. Honey, I love the way your hair curls down around your ear and on your shoulder. You look younger than Patty, know it? ... You are an angel to send me all those pictures! They make me so happy and mean an awful lot to me Louise. (May 21)

Herb paused writing so he could go have dinner and get into a game of handball afterward. Now he picks up where he left off, and explains what happened with his work situation.

Well, I never did get around to going into the storeroom again as you know. Not that it would have been any reflection upon my ability or standing in the Supply Dept. Work rather slacked off after that time things were so mixed up, and I got along a little better with the fellows in here. ... Oh, I can take it all right darling; you don't need to ever worry about that. Only for a while I was afraid I'd get angry all of a sudden some day and say or do something that would get me in trouble, as conditions were then. But now we get along all right again. I was really quite at fault I guess. (May 21)

Three days later, on a Wednesday afternoon, Herb decides to type his letter to get some typing practice. He tells Louise all about his liberty in Shanghai on Monday night, when he and several buddies went to some cabarets.

The first place we hit was a place called "Frisco's" and things were just about starting up. We had a few glasses of beer and then started dancing. Well for a change, unlike all the Asiatic ports we visited up to now, our dancing hostesses were white girls, Russian girls who are notorious as dancing hostesses in Shanghai, Tsingtao, and other northern Chinese ports. They seemed fairly pleasant and spoke fairly good English. Some of them were fairly good looking too ... and they danced all right.

The next place we went to, the "Majestic" was a large place and rather ritzy. And a pretty nice orchestra furnished the music there. A girl I danced with there danced real nice because I told her I was very much in need of practice. Then we visited a smaller, stuffier place after that.

There were five of us and we kept having a better time as we went along. We usually had a few glasses of beer in each place but it doesn't bother you so much when you keep moving around or dancing. However before we knew it, it was getting late and a couple of the fellows wandered off in search of new excitement. Three of us kept making the rounds, Mike, Smitty and me.

Before we knew it, it was 3:30 a.m. and all of a sudden Smitty who must have had a little too much to drink just about went out on his feet, So Mike and I dumped him into a taxi and we went down to the Y. I wasn't feeling so good myself by then either. When we got there all the rooms were taken, anyhow it was 4 A.M. so we dumped Smitty in a bench and Mike and I picked out a comfortable looking pool table for our bed. (May 24)

After just a couple of hours of sleep, Herb tries to get his buddies up. All of them were still feeling the after effects of their late-night carousing, which made it hilariously difficult, as Herb describes it, to get them ready to return to the ship. After coffee and breakfast, they make their way back to the ship on the seven o'clock boat.

Whew but I was tired that day. ... I did manage to do a little work in the morning but in the afternoon I took my bunk down to the storeroom and took a four hour nap. Then I felt a little better. And I got lots of sleep last night.

I feel like I don't want to go ashore for a week now but Mike went over again last night for about the fourth consecutive night and Smitty and Mike are going over again tonight. But not me. And the next time I do go over it's just going to be a shopping trip.

So, that was my first liberty in Shanghai, honey. It's pretty nice over there, a big modern city, and there are no traces of the war there. ... Now I can see why the fellows were so anxious to get to Shanghai. ... It is beyond a doubt the best liberty port on the Asiatic station. You see the exchange rate is about six dollars and fifteen cents in national currency to one dollar of our money. You can get an eight-course dinner over there for about one fifty their money which is only about thirty cents gold. Drinks are cheap, dance tickets are cheap. Is it any wonder that we all have such a good time over here???

I'm always pretty careful when I'm ashore, just on general principles. I never get too noisy or loud and I can always manage to keep looking clean too. (May 24)

Herb tells Louise about the Russian girls.

Most all the Russian girls over there are going to move up to Tsingtao in a few weeks since there will be a lot of navy ships up there all summer and they know it will be an easy living for them. ... I don't know why it is that Russian girls are so morally loose. But I guess it's because they have been refugees for so long. (You know most in fact all of them are White Russians¹, so they wouldn't dare go back to Russia.) And they do what is easiest for them to do. (May 24)

Herb now begins answering Louise's letter of April 24. He comes to the part where she wrote about Freddie, a guy she was dancing with and who wanted to kiss her goodbye.

You know honey, I do appreciate your not kissing him goodbye. Did I say I didn't care? But then in a little way I don't and in a big way I do. ... Why darling, that's only a natural feeling, wanting to kiss a person goodbye after you have been out with him, danced with him, and he has shown himself to be a pretty nice sort of person.

Well, you did find out that you had lots of will power, didn't you sweets. And now you can find out that you did something that made me pretty proud of you. (May 24)

The subject of where they might want to live after Herb returns, has come up frequently in their correspondence. Now Herb wants to share with her what he likes about possibly settling in Halcyon.

Honey, if I thought I could get a steady job around Halcyon some place I know I'd go out of the Navy. Just hanging around would grow tiresome after a while. But living there with a steady job would be wonderful. Think of it, walking around in the evenings visiting here or there or going to a show in any one of those nearby towns; with friends, people we knew, work around us that interested us really dear; wouldn't you like that?

This traveling around gets pretty tiresome after a while dear. Would you mind staying in Halcyon and living there the rest of your life if I were there with you? We could buy

¹ **White Russians** was a loose confederation of [anti-communist](#) forces that fought the Communist [Bolsheviks](#), also known as the *Reds*, in the [Russian Civil War](#) (1917–1923) and that to a lesser extent continued operating as militarized associations of insurrectionists both outside and within Russian borders in [Siberia](#) until roughly [World War II](#) (1939–1945).

our own cute little cottage, and there you could have all the dogs and cats you wanted, and it really would be nice I think darling. (May 24)

Next, he responds to her demands for more pictures of him.

O-o-o-h, here I have an ultimatum. You want ten pictures of me before the end of October or else. All right then my sweet, you have my sincerest promise, you shall have ten more pictures of me before the end of October.

But I don't blame you hon, I don't know what's the matter with me. Its just that I usually go ashore with a bunch of fellows and the last thing we ever think of is getting pictures of ourselves. ... Fellows usually don't, Louise, its vain; and that more than anything explains why you have received so few pictures of me. (May 24)

Later that afternoon Herb received another letter from Louise, postmarked May 5. Later that evening after supper he begins answering. But first, he has to tell her about a U.S. Navy submarine that sank this morning in about 250 feet of water off Portsmouth, Virginia.

What price, that extra \$25 a month submarine men get? It's a pretty risky business, isn't it honey. Here's a secret! They never station storekeepers on subs. I sure hope that they'll be able to save as many of them that they can. There were about 60 aboard.

Honey I didn't mean to complain about things here as much as I did that one time. Things really weren't that bad I was just feeling sorry for myself and I exaggerated, I think. Because it all blew over, and now I'm getting along all right with the fellows in here. (May 24)

Louise's letter dated May 4 contains harsh criticism about his attitude. He feels he must respond with what he believes to be the truth. And he apologizes.

Did I say that it was decent of Gabriel to go back to the states to please Yoshiko? I didn't mean it that way for I know better. I know they wouldn't have gone back had he been able to land a good job! So you see darling, really, that wasn't intended to be masculine conceit. Unless I unconsciously write it so that it sounded like it was. Of course, I know it's about all you'd expect of a man! My; and I thought you thought better of me honeybunch!

And I'm sorry I said "from ten to fourteen months" honey. I didn't mean to be so vague. Let's see, if you get this letter around June 17th you can say (figuring that I'll be back there around March 17th) "only nine short months now." Now you know, Louise Stenquist, nine months isn't a very long time.

Honey, I must really exasperate you at times. And I don't mean to. ... You know I love you more than anything else in the world and I don't ever want to make you the least bit unhappy or exasperate you. It's just something about me that I guess you'll have to put up with, Mrs. Lentz. (May 25)

Herb had another liberty in Shanghai over the weekend. He had originally planned on having a "calm and sedate liberty" (May 29).

In his next letter to Louise, written Monday afternoon, he writes "I was to meet Mike at the Y at seven o'clock and get a couple of rooms at the Y. We were going to just go sight-seeing over the weekend and see a few movies" (May 29).

But that's not how things turned out.

While waiting for Mike, Herb took care of some personal business.

I went downtown to the main streets and sought out a photo studio. Gosh how I don't like posing for pictures, I feel so foolish. Anyhow I had about three poses taken, the pictures will be post card size, and I have to go over and pick the pictures up Thursday afternoon.

I didn't like walking around in the rain so I went back to the Y to wait for Mike. While waiting I bought the Chinese album I had intended to get and a bunch of pictures of Shanghai. Mike and another buddy showed up at the appointed time and we decided to go out and see a show. (So far, so good!) (May 29)

They were out all night on Saturday night.

Around 11 P.M. the show was over and we decided to visit a cabaret. ... And of course we started drinking a little beer, and dancing. The one older fellow who has been out here a long time liked the place so since Mike and I wanted to stay on the move we told him we'd drop back later and see him. He had an idea of trying to get the middle-aged Russian who sold dance tickets there to fix us up a Russian dinner Sunday afternoon.

So, Mike and I were on our way; here a while, there a while; meeting fellows we knew; and swapping stories as sailors are wont to do. In one place my pal was rather fascinated by a pretty Russian blonde but he couldn't get to first base with her. Anyhow, before we knew it, it was around 3 A.M. so we dropped back to the other cabaret where we had promised to meet our shipmate.

He was there awaiting us and was quite enthused over the dinner he had promoted. We were to come to the address he gave us at 1 P.M. Sunday without fail. And the Russian lady who was with him said we'd all get our necks broken if we didn't show up after she fixed up a chow for us. We finally went down to the Y and got turned in around 5 A.M. (May 29)

Sunday afternoon arrived quickly.

We hurried down and got a taxi and were on our way. It was quite a ride out to the end of the city and it was about ten after 1 when we got there. The other fellow hadn't arrived yet and our Russian hostess was getting impatient. She had a nice apartment and the table was spread for our feast. She introduced us to her sister Nija who was much younger than she (Katie). ... Finally our friend and his girl arrived. ... So, we sat down to eat. (May 29)

Herb wrote in great detail about the dinner, which included several courses of exotic Russian dishes, punctuated with several rounds of vodka.

And we finally topped it all off with fresh strawberries and coffee. And by then darling I was just about completely filled up, feeling rather gay, and almost stupefied. I lay down on a couch and was just about ready to fall asleep. (May 29)

What happened next was difficult for Herb to write to Louise about.

Comes a part in my story I'd almost like to skip. But I must be as honest with you as you are with me and since it makes me feel a little guilty, I'll unburden myself.

Anyhow I was lying on the couch, Mike was reading a magazine and the other fellow was talking with our hostess, and Nija came over and started talking to me. I said I felt tired and like sleeping and she told me to come on and she'd show me her room and I could sleep there if I wanted to.

She had a cute little room and a big collection of souvenirs from cabarets. ... Well, we were sitting there talking and since I was feeling a little high from our dinner, I started getting a little fresh. And I didn't meet with so much resistance. I mean she let me kiss her before I realized what I was doing. Suffice to say there was no affection imparted in it, still the tang remains, I just couldn't resist acting foolish darling. Anyhow she knew it wasn't the time or place for that and suggested we rejoin the others and take a walk in the nearby park.

So we went out in the living room and picked up Mike and the other fellow, and we thanked Katie for everything and said we'd see her later on, down at the cabaret. ... The nearby park proved to be pretty nice and we walked along arm in arm, still feeling good, and we were singing and having a swell time.

Very shortly I told Nija what a swell guy Mike was and shifted her attention to him. He didn't mind that; and I felt relieved. We walked around, looking at a few of the animals, and stopped off to have a drink at a restaurant. I had a drink of orange, to their consternation.

After a while we walked back to where Nija lived and we all went up to her room and listened to the radio. And they sent out for some beer. Which I didn't want any part of. I didn't want to spoil a very nice dinner. That was around seven o'clock and Mike and Nija were rapidly taking to each other fast so the other fellow and I decided to shove off and I told Mike I'd meet him at the Y.

So we went downtown. The other fellow went "cabaretting" but I had had enough for one weekend. Seven-thirty found me in my bed at the Y. all set for a good night's sleep. Mike woke me up around eleven o'clock when he came in. And he said that Nija was pretty good. So, he hit the hay too.

So ends the narration of the weekend I spent ashore. It's all very frankly told darling because I know you'll appreciate and possibly get a kick out of hearing just how sailors do spend a weekend ashore. All except the part where I temporarily slipped. That worried me before I fell asleep last night darling.

Why can't a person resist kissing another? Because it's such a primitive urge and flesh is so weak. Still there is fresh in my mind your recent letter in which you told me how you

had had enough will power to resist kissing a fellow. Why couldn't that have been an example for me? ... Anyhow honey, you know it was all very harmless, don't you? I'm sorry too!

Before Mike fell asleep he said "Hey Herb what was the matter with you; why didn't you keep her when you could have had her!" And I said, "Mike I hope you can meet my sweetheart someday. Then you'll understand how well worth it all is, saving all my love for her." (May 29)

After getting all that out of his system, Herb then updates Louise on what the Japanese are doing in the area.

What a shame it would be if the Japs took over this place as they would like to. ... They have been making demands against the international settlements; and now a couple of days ago they halted and searched some big liners outside of Hong Kong. ... There has been a lot of Japanese activity on the river here lately too; as if they were planning something here.

All day long sloppy looking boats chug by with a few dirty looking soldiers in them. And several big transports came in lately loaded down with Jap troops. They are about the filthiest looking military outfit any of us have ever seen. They look up at us and sneer when they are going by and we look down at them and sneer. No love lost. (May 29)

The next day Herb receives a long letter from Louise, as well as one from Bernard and one from his stepmother. That evening Herb begins writing another letter.

First I read yours, so cheerful and comforting and I felt pretty good; then mother's in which it's the usual unfortunate story of how bad everything is going at home with her continued ill health, and she well has the right to complain. And then Bernard, who in the prime of life finds so much to complain about. ... To quote one of his exasperating sentences, "I lost my WPA job, you know, and am trying to get on relief, so I can devote all my time and energy again to the Temple and Halcyon. It was a dirty, thankless job, injurious exceedingly to health, and I was happier than an angel to lose it."

Now regardless of circumstances, isn't that a fine attitude for a man to have? ... The idea of a man being satisfied with being on relief. I know how much the Temple and all means to him but it's a terrible impractical attitude to have in this day and age. ... He wishes he could help May² and our kid brothers. I can do that; he never will be; not living like that. Guess I'd better not answer his letter for a few days until I forget about that aspect of his letter. (May 30)

Herb's preoccupation with details and ordering things, so useful in his work in the Supply Department, manifests in his personal life as well. He reveals how he has been keeping track of Louise's letter writing. "You've written me over one hundred sixty letters in six hundred days. A letter about every three days" (May 30).

² His stepmother's name was Mary Eleanor; shortened among family as Mae, pronounced "May."

Then in answer to a question, Herb reassures her again that he doesn't mind her going out, and that he doesn't mind her getting men to take her home after a dance.

Why no Louise. I wouldn't like it if you stayed home more than you do. That angle never once entered my thoughts. What I have been hoping is that you do get out enough and enjoy yourself so that you don't mind the waiting so much. Just so it doesn't interfere with your health or peace of mind. You are the best judge as to that. (May 30)

Herb was assigned an all-day patrol duty for May 31. Waiting for his actual watch to begin in the evening, he walks around "window shopping." He starts writing a short letter while waiting for his patrol duty to begin.

While on patrol, he is with two other fellows, and their assignment is a district nicknamed "blood alley." He writes "It's an area where there are over a dozen cabarets in a two-block area" (May 31). He ate a big meal at the Y when his watch was over, finishing off his letter.

While Herb was in town, he picked up his photos from the portrait studio. He encloses them with his long letter begun two days ago. (June 1)



At Sea – Shanghai to Tsingtao

We left Shanghai around noon after spending the morning fueling from the U.S.S. Pecos which is an oil tanker. So we are now plying northward to Tsingtao through a calm sea.

Herb reveals to Louise that were he not rated, he would in fact be returning home earlier.

What price glory darling; or should I say what price "rate." All the seamen who came out in my draft are going to catch the Henderson back when she arrives in Tsingtao July 10th. They are in excess of seaman on the station so they can afford to send them back six months ahead of time. But alas, we rated men have to wait until the final hour when our services can be spared. (June 5)

Herb was keeping track of the movements of the transports, so he is now able to give Louise an update of his return trip home.

Now the Henderson leaves in July and the Chaumont will be out here in the latter part of August leaving in September, so on September 3rd I'll be able to say "I catch the next one!" No one knows when the Henderson will be back out after this trip though ... sometime between December and February is my guess. So my darling little sweetheart when the Henderson hits Frisco on August 24 you had better start following her movements closely because when she does decide to come back out here again it will be to get me.

Now if I had never got rated, and still been Seaman 1st class I'd be seeing you in 69 days. But you wouldn't want me to get in trouble purposely and get disrated so I could go back sooner, would you hon? (June 5)

He again tries to reassure Louise that it won't be long now before he heads home.

It will be late in June when you get this, if you get it in June; and not long to Convention time, then Xmas; and before you know it Mary Lou I'll be dashing in on you to sweep you off your feet into my arms. (June 5)

He writes about all the pictures he has of her, which help him get through his days.

I have two pictures of you where I can see you all day long. ... [In Shanghai] I got a small picture frame, a sort of little stand with two pieces of glass in it and you can put two pictures back-to-back in it. So now I have the stand on my desk where night and day you can watch over me sweets. Anyhow, every time I open my locker, I have those two large pictures where I can see them too. In fact, lots of times when I open my locker door, someone else wants to see the pictures of the "sweet blonde" too! So all my friends know why I am doing what I am doing out here; and who I am doing it for. (June 5)