

Chapter Twenty-Seven

Halcyon: June-July, 1939

June, 1939

During the spring time Louise was quite active. She went to the beach for sunbathing; she went with friends swimming in the creek; she went roller skating; she went to dances; she went to see a show usually two or three times per week. And there was always something going on with Temple activities. Louise was in the choir; she was involved with skits after suppers in the Lodge; she helped out with the children's program.

Time was going by quickly for Louise.

It's now Tuesday, and a week has gone by without her writing a letter to Herb.

Can you ever forgive me darling for not writing sooner? ... I have been going a lot since last Wednesday night. ... Nights are the only time I can write – that's why I haven't.

I went to the Fiesta with Annie on Saturday morning – and at night Anita and I went to the ball – Hal Grayson orchestra. The floor was too crowded for enjoyment. Sunday I also went up! Friday night I went to the show – Thursday to Patty's graduation, and Wednesday to the dance. Last night I went to bed, likewise tonight.

This will be just a short letter – to let you know I still love you and I think of you quite often. Do you like the enclosed pictures? The best I've had, aren't they? I mean of those little ones. I had them taken at the Fiesta Saturday. (June 6)



Louise is so busy that another week passes before she writes to Herb.

I received four letters from you Friday, and two postcards, and gee but I was sure glad to get them. It had been so long since I heard from you. So now I shall proceed to answer them. Your first letter is April 29. And you write most interestingly about those places.

Nine thousand – or seven thousand miles away, it doesn't make any difference. You're still far away. Even if you were only one thousand – if I couldn't see you, it would be the same.

Here ends the first letter. It was long, but not much to answer in it. May 4 is the second one. More fun! Being on watch, eh? I'd like to see you being "stern papa." That was terrible about the sailor who drowned. The whole incident was pretty awful.

May 10 is your third letter. Do you really miss me? I don't see why. You haven't seen me for so long you must have forgotten what I was like – so how could you miss me? Yes, you are good enough for me. Too good my dear.

Your fourth and longest letter – May 15. And you received nine letters from me – gosh!

Maybe I can't be philosophical. You don't seem to have any trouble that way. But I think I am more so now than before.

Yes darling – I'll be true to you – I couldn't do anything else.

Yes you were! Condescending about the time left. ... I'm sorry if I was kind of foolish about the time. But you never told me how much you didn't like it – it bothered me. I know you minded, but you should tell me so. Don't make me guess.

I think the material must be awfully pretty. ... You spend an awful lot of money on me. I'm really not worth it. But it sure will be fun looking at all the things you've bought, when you get home.

No, Bernard isn't the kind of man who will marry.

Gee I love you, Herb. Really, I do. And now darling, I must close. It's the first night for a week that I've gotten to bed at night. And I want to catch up on my sleep.

(June 13)

Louise took the train to San Jose so she could attend Bob's graduation ceremony. On Friday morning she checks into a room at the Montgomery Hotel, and writes a short note to Herb.

It's only 7:30 in the morning, and I'm actually up. In fact, I've been up since 7:30 yesterday morning. ... I left San Luis on the train at 1:00 this morning and arrived here at 6:22. I slept about an hour on the train. ... Bob met me this morning and we had breakfast. Now he has some things to do while I sleep. Then he'll come for me this noon and he graduates at 3:45 this afternoon. (June 16)

Again, almost a week passes before she writes her next letter.

When I got home, Tuesday morning about two, Mother gave me five letters from you – well, I read them in bed and finished at three-thirty – got some sleep anyway. I'll answer your letters first and then tell you about my four-day holiday.

That Harry Pasteur is one guy I can't stand. He's just a stupid German – pro-Hitler and he gripes me! In the [Temple] meetings if I happen to look his way, he's always looking at me. And he's always trying to get me to go to the show with him, or swimming, or to come over to his house and hear the radio.

Please Herb – you've got to stop thinking I'm so wonderful – because I'm not. I'm just a human being, and very ordinary. So don't put me up on a pedestal – I don't want to be up there. Because I make mistakes and have faults – bad ones too.

I don't manage things for the family. In fact, you could hardly call me one of the family – I'm hardly ever there.

It doesn't seem to matter to anyone that I'm engaged. Could it be my fault? I feel sorry for the guys who are interested in me and so I smile – I can't help smiling. (June 22)

Louise then decides to share with Herb something she has great difficulty writing about.

I'll tell you – I've been in a kind of muddle the last four weeks, but I think I'm gradually getting out of it. Today is the first time I've felt I could even so much as mention it to you. I'm trying to think of whether its cowardice or just trying to keep from worrying you.

It's about Leonard. I don't quite understand myself – and I don't know what to say. Oh darling, I love you so much – and its all so confusing. Shall I let it go at this? I think it would be easier to tell you when you come home than in writing. I've done nothing wrong – you know that. But I don't know what's wrong with me. I love you – and only you. I'll always love you, there's nothing complicated about that. Oh well, life is difficult at times.

Do you love me? Do you understand what's wrong with me? ... So now you see why I don't want to be put on a pedestal. Just love me – don't worship me. And please don't think I'm awful. (June 22)

Five more days pass by quickly for Louise. It's now Tuesday.

I've a number of your letters to answer. Three yet of the first bunch – and Saturday I received three more. Nice letters too.

I guess I was quite obvious about who bothers me, wasn't I?... Yes dear, you are right.

You know, I still don't quite believe you'll ever spank me. Sometimes I believe it and then I begin thinking and decide you probably won't.

I'm sorry but I can't and won't change my mind about Christmas.¹ Now you can see some of my stubbornness! Do you mind? (June 27)

Louise is having great difficulty coming to terms with events, and her feelings about them. She tries to explain to Herb, answering his letter of May 25.

As you know now, I kind of lost my "brave stand" so to speak. This whole business is not understandable to me. I don't know why it all happened, and I can't quite bring myself to talk about it yet. Darling can you be patient and understanding until I do bring myself out of it? I know it's asking an awful lot of you – but you need never worry about me not loving you. I love you so much and I always will – and only you too.

Well, I guess I did tell you my troubles, and they're pretty bad aren't they? (June 27)

She now addresses Herb's account² of his misadventures in Shanghai, and compares his behavior to what has happened in her life.

This was your weekend in Shanghai. Boy did they give you enough to drink! It is terribly funny how we seem to slip at the same time isn't it? Darling even if I minded what you did, I'd have no right to say anything now, in view of what I've done. But anyway, I don't mind. It is only a natural thing to do [kissing a girl], and I know that ... nothing more would have happened.

I think that the sooner we both forget everything – the better off we will be. ... And in spite of everything – these temporary slips – oh Herb – do you think I'm terrible? You see some things can't be helped. And I haven't done anything wrong. I mean – I guess it's wrong to kiss someone when you're in love with someone else – but I haven't been any more wrong. Someday I'll look back on this episode and think how foolish I've been. Oh, let's forget it. (June 27)

She closes her letter with thoughts on living in Halcyon.

I think I would just about die if I had to live here the rest of my life without a few years away from here. After a little bit away – I'd be more content here. But I've been here ten years now, and had a little taste of the outside – just enough to make me want more.

You can't do all that you want here without being talked about. Ideas are different here than in the outside world. But you're tired of the other and want what's here. Of course, with you with me, it would be fine – but I think I'd have to get away some. (June 27)

¹ Louise believes Herb will be home by Christmas.

² In his letter dated May 29.