

10.12.63

Dear Diana, I liked your last long letter very much and have re-read it various times. What DO you mean by writing: This letter is unimportant, so you don't have to read it all? I loved Pan and your description of him and your theories about cooking which makes me out to be a hermaphrodite being in my time ~~XXXXXX~~ hours, literally hours, only setting the table with candles and ornaments and wine glasses. and about half a day cooking....and enjoyed it all very much...ALONE. But there was also a rather sad revelation in your letter about yourself, I mean sad in a sense that we have to part company in one subject, and that is about your writing. Darling Diana, I DID NOT know you take your writing so seriously at all. I DO NOT mean that it is not worthy of being taken seriously. You say: 'I've not known a single person who writes who didn't flinch and go into a tremble at some point if criticized.' And then things like: Squeal. Pain. Digging in one's guts. Oh, I am sorry, love. I do not take my writing, if it is considered writing at all, seriously, and nothing said about it would make me angry at all or pain me in the slightest. But obviously I am not a writer, and thanks God for that if it meant I'm going to squeal in pain and have my guts dug into and tremble all over. The AMOUNT of rejection slips, I have darling, with which I'm going to paper a wall with as soon as I have a room of my own...And I don't think I was ever annoyed about any of them at all. I would say there are about twelve or thirteen writers alive whom I consider to be writers and that is all, and if I have taken pains about criticising your works, it's because I wanted to include you in that list. I myself don't at all presume to belong or even to aspire to anything I consider real writing at all, I tell you all this to explain that you've suddenly revealed a ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ sensitivity about your writing which I was not aware of, and which if I had known about, I would have made sure that my criticisms were reflected ones and not just feathery thoughts. I don't mean that I would have lied about what I think, but that I would have taken more pains to convey exactly what I mean.

My train of thought has been interrupted by some debit vouchers which are claimed as credit vouchers and no one here seems to know whether we're going to GIVE the chap some money or take it OFF him. This has interrupted the Major's Mums and Dads and the Capt. is scowling because all this noise is not making him concentrate on what he is doing, and what he IS doing, is carrying on an insurance business with his Italian wife through this office and I like his complete disinterestedness in this set up here. I've cleared up their mess, and now the Major, who does pester the Capt, will light his pipe and say: "You know Bill, those perishing quarter masters are always making mistakes!" "Yes, Fred" and the Capt. is writing madly for his private business. The Major will now hum a few Mums and Dads and suddenly say: "I AM most henpecked, you know Bill"

"Yes, Fred."

"Mums and Dads, Mums and Dadaads. Of course Bill, I'm very weak, you know."

"Oh, well."

"Mums and dads, mums and dads."

The Capt. has given me a bottle of whisky, a most forbidden thing to do, since it comes from the officers Mess and the Maj. has asked me twice to tea, which is annoying the German employees very much. The Capt and his wife have long since decided I'm part of their insurance business, and I'm doing as much work for them as I am for the business proper. Tea with the Major ran along the lines of: We Love Egyptians and our servant Ibrahim. To whom they continue sending Cmax presents each year and receiving, in return, presents which probably cost poor Ibrahim two months wages. I've been promoted two most unexpected grades and get about £40 a month cash now.

I haven't gone gambling. It'll take some time before I'm on my feet financially so I better keep steady at the moment. But how nice it would have been to have lots of money now. Lots of money and to be in London, too. Lovely coloured parcels and buying presents for me and bottles of whisky and I cook marvellous meals in your nice little kitchen. DON'T mention your "Boring job in your accounts dept." I might start dreaming about it, and then the reality of the stupid and meaningless life I am leading here will strike me again. (Remember that fantastic Homos meal we had in your Greek restaurant?....)

Will have to continue to-morrow.

next day.

Yesterday I Received ANOTHER lovely letter from you. I don't open your letters at once but clean my room first, warm it up, make myself comfy with my tea (sometimes beer), light a cigarette, and then read. When I started this letter yesterday, I thought I'd be writing to you about Pan, the Michael one, and discuss this strange but not very uncommon character, mostly found in England and in Sweden. But this new Pan and your strange passionate anger about it all, has strangely disturbed me very much, I don't know why. Listen carefully: Sometimes I have inexplicable premonitions ...intuitions (or however it spelt)...a sort of sense, more usual with women than with men. Listen, I have a feeling this chap is evil. I don't know why, Diana. On the surface his poems and phone calls ~~xxx~~ etc. would be a not uncommon experience for people who are in the sort of renowned position you are now. But I don't know why, I can't understand, I 'sensed' something sinister from your letter. I am worried about you. You are very child-like in many things, and NAIVE at times. For heavens sake BE CAREFUL Diana. You are obviously going to meet him, and I wish I were there to be with you the first time you meet him. Have you told Barry about him? But that is not all. YOUR own reaction to the whole business, smells also of a certain fear. It would be too much to ask you not to see him or have anything to do with him; because you do have a sense of adventure and enthusiasm about life which I don't expect you drown suddenly. Be careful, sweetheart, and do have some-one else with you whenever you meet him. There is a rush of work now, and I shall write during my lunch break.

Lunch time.

So do be a bit wary. It's this early morning call I don't like. Probably a non-sleeper., and non-sleepers are sometimes dangerous.

I hope George Faludy WILL marry Flora Papastavrou, and that Barbara and her baby are fine. She'll probably dote magnificiently upon him. I also hope he turns up looking like her or his father, and that this father is Anthony.

I wish I had something interesting to tell you; not only to be able to tell you, but because I want something interesting to happen to me. But nothing is. I get paid on the 18th of this month and I should really go and gamble. If I won £100 I'd send you only £20, half of what I owe you, and go ski-ing for a week. Knopf have sent me a contract to sign, very beautiful and ribboned and stamped with red wax and all sorts of things. Have had six inquiries from French publishers up to now and am dying to get hold of some copies. Yesterday I did receive a letter from Knowles telling me André is in Nigeria. His letter crossed mine in which I reminded André I haven't got a contract yet.

To morrow. I mean to-day, I mean NOW.... I'm terribly (double rr) stewed, boozed up (Z) drunk. No, not terribly but beautifully so. Didn't go to bed at all at all. Now I relish that beautiful part in your letter where you described how you relish life and watch and hear your footsteps wanting them to echo for ever and ever. Yesterday, about six, just starting on my way home. No no. ~~XX~~ At five I started driving home when the car refused to go any more. Not another inch. Not one. wouldn't budge, bless her soul, unless I put some petrol into her. So I stood, in the army camp... oh, not far from a petrol station at all. Opposite me in fact. But not a penny, not a pfenning to buy petrol with. I must tell you that I couldn't go on with your letter yesterday and that to-day is NOT yesterday at all. (What nice and pleasant things one writes when one is tipsy). So to-day is to-day and this is what happened yesterday when my car stopped, starved. Someone started hooting behind me and finally shouting, through a car, an expensive one, window: Sie dürfen hier nicht parken! in terrible German telling me, as you have gathered, I'm not allowed to park there. So I went out of my car and said: I am NOT parking, Madam.

"I couldn't care less," she said "What you're doing or not doing. Your blocking the entry to my garage." And so I was. So I started pushing me car away and she came out and helped me and in answer to her question explained that I had ran out of petrol; and when she offered to drive me the two hundred metres to the petrol station and also lend me a 'can' I thanked her most profusely and said it was alright and thank you very much, thanks. I opened her garage for her, watched her drive her car in, waited for her to leave the garage and helped her close the garage, when she suddenly said "Merde"

"Pardon?"

"Oh, I'm sorry," she said.

"Je vous'en prie, madame..." Oh, Diana, French is a gift from heaven

"Je N'ai pas," she told me, "la clef du garage." In excellent, but English & accented French

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Monday Morning.

Sorry Diana dear. I was interrupted writing to you whilst tipsy on Friday. Major begged me to drive down to Munich at once and get his young son by car...he broke his leg. I drove all night and arrived there Sat. Morning and returned Sunday evening (Got petrol and £5). So very briefly to end Thursday's story. This woman, who lived in France for a long time, and is an actress (she's about sixty years old) finally invited me to escort her to a party, she was giving a show for the troops. Got gloriously drunk and came straight to the office, It doesn't seem as delightful to-day, as it did on Thursday.

Diana, darling. I have received not one, but TWO wonderful presents from you! I'd be a hypocrit to pretend to be angry. I loved them both. I found them waiting for me when I returned home early this morning from Munich. I wanted to buy the "Writers at Work" myself, and sweetheart, I don't think any other present would have pleased me more than the nuts. Just what I love, dear. I'm not opening it until Cmax. Thank you very much, love. I'm going to post this letter now, and write you again this week. It's become suddenly very cold, all our pipes are frozen where we live....

love. love and thanks,

Waguih.