

West Wing,

July 27th, 1937.

Dearest Maudie,

Well, I don't ever seem to get any letters from you, pretty soon, if you don't keep in close touch with me, you will fade away in my thoughts to just that of a distant friend - so it's up to you to keep your own memory green.

I know it is a dull, trying time for you but at least you do not have to cope with the financial matters every minute of the day. I have been going through a frightful patch, but have bridged it for the moment.

To begin with, as you know the La Motte's rent just paid ours, but that left rates and lights and numerous other things to be met constantly - and my own living - their service charge paid the servants but no more - I got in arrears forty pounds on the rent - it wasn't much and the Crown have never fussed before - but they began to get fussy about it two months ago and to ask about the rent that wasn't due until this month -

To begin with about two months or so ago a man came out here (I think I wrote to you about it) He first had his agents approach me regarding selling West Wing, then one day he came out to see the house and gave his name as Mr. Joseph - said he knew you - years ago and you knew him as Mr. Joseph. I learned that he was really Lord Duveen - well, he was after this house - wants the whole place though - so I had Mr. Jones of Ralph Pay and Taylor come out and we talked it over and decided that as this is the key to the whole property he should pay and pay well - (He has always soaked everyone else in art matters - and while I didn't know it at first, he is a crook of the first water.) So Mr. Jones went to his agents and told them we didn't want to sell, that it was not necessary and we wished just to live here, but if they wanted to buy they would have to pay very well for the privilege and asked forty thousand pounds (Expecting of course to have to come down considerably.) Well, we heard nothing further - Mr. Jones had told them that they would have to negotiate with the Crown for the balance of the property. Immediately the Crown began to bother me about the arrears and to worry about the next quarter's rent.

Then to make things brighter, the La Motte's had to go to Honolulu and that left me with no rent coming in - I went to see Dr. Nathan and he approached the ~~Strawman~~ money lender to whom I had formerly gone - but after about ten days delay, his office said he was ill and away from office and they could do nothing. Then Dr. Nathan suggested that I take the lease to my bank, Westminster.B

The bank manager was away, and only a chief clerk in charge - at first he said he would do it, and Dr. Nathan gave me a really good send off to them - then after over a week's delay they decided they couldn't do it in the manager's absence - So we were right up to the last day nearly - I was nearly frantic - I was just paralyzed - I didn't know in what direction to turn - Finally I decided to ask Robin - She and Etinne are in Austria - Etinne is taking a cure for his rehmatisms as one of the Bades there - I called her up on the long distance and she was horrified that we would lose West Wing and that Duveen would just walk in - She agreed to guarantee my overdraft at the bank for the amount of the rent. She did not hesitate a moment and was a perfect dear about it. Then the next day I went to see her solicitor and we telephoned my bank from his office and the chief clerk agreed to accept her guarantee for it. I already had a small overdraft there. - Then the solicitor arranged for the proper papers to be sent to Robin to be signed etc - Then I went on to see Dr. Nathan and tell him what I had done - and then did some shopping and came home and, then about four o'clock the crazy bank manager or rather clerk telephoned to say he couldn't do it unless my overdraft could come out of it - Well, that was impossible - He had already telephoned Robin's solicitor and told him about the overdraft and etc. He was quite adamant and I didn't know what to do - I telephoned Robin's solicitor and he was furious with the old chief clerk but there seemed nothing to do, so then I telephoned Dr. Nathan and he didn't have anything helpful to suggest - Then I didn't know what to do - (Robin couldn't spare the cash but could do it that way.) The next day was the final day of grace on the payment of rent. I was nearly mad with fright. Then I thought of Mr. Steven of Barclays and telephoned him and laid the situation before him. he said "Sure, come over in the morning and we'll fix it up." I went over and we had a talk and he certainly is a real person and so kind and business like - He and the solicitor fixed it up in five minutes and today Robin's signature should have arrived. He didn't ask me anything about whether you had a lease or not - or pry into our affairs at all - He said he had been up near here not long ago and thought of coming in - but he said, "I thought if I went in they would think I was coming because of the overdraft and I know when they can they will pay it, and I'm not going to bother them." He said - "I would like to have gone on helping Miss Allan, but five hundred was just the limit I could go on with."

Now here is another matter. You remember Norman Ablett - Well, he has managed to get himself invited here quite a lot, and I haven't minded because he helped to amuse the La Mottes but I have no respect for him at all - he is just a sponge - and gossips from morning until night about what he knows and what he doesn't. I had decided to cut him out entirely - He really is no use to anyone. Boasts a lot about the important people he knows but he doesn't really - makes up the most extraordinary things - we all know it and laugh about him, but he really is dangerous - However I didn't want to make him an enemy so decided just to taper off - we haven't seen much of him for several months.

The night before Zero day, he telephoned me about eleven o'clock at night - and he had the whole dope about my not being able to pay the rent and that it was due the next day and that he was sorry we were going to have to leave here etc - My heart went right down in my boots and stopped beating, but I just laughed and joked and said how ridiculous and that wherever he got his information had given him the wrong goods etc - that the rent was paid and always was - I never heard such nonsense. I succeeded in putting him off the track, but I was a wreck when I came away from the phone. But it did make me decide to phone Robin. He had been having some dealings with Duveen re a worthless picture of his.

I've written it all to Mama and I am so tired I cannot carry on much longer, so go and see her and she will tell you all about it and the solution - but don't ask her to over the telephone - I advise you very strongly on that -

Anyhow we have left the big bad wolf at the door but it has given me a great fright - and I am determined if we get any more offers to sell to try and get out from under - We cannot go on like this and it isn't right - When Lester helps I think it might be just putting more good after bad to keep on pouring it into this place - I love it all so much and don't like to think that way, but I am just so tired, Maudie my dear, that I can't carry on much more - this last has taken it out of me dreadfully and I just can't seem to pull up at all from it. I think a nice little flat here in town and a pretty place in the country without worry would be so peaceful and liveable - and I am sure we both would be much happier once we got used to the change.

Now dearest, I know this letter may make you unhappy, to know all I am going through with here, but we have just got to face things and see what is the best way to get out of it

and get what we want - we don't either of us want worry and worry - and if a good chance comes to sell I think we should take it. In the meantime I am trying to get someone in place of the La Mottes - but it will be hard to have strangers there - they have been so sweet and loveable - I could not have had people more like my own there than they have been - I am so sorry they must go -

Pitter sails a week from Saturday and so will probably be home in about three weeks - She is a nervous high strung little creature and while I have been very glad to have her here and do everything I could for her, still she has been a strain - she is so nervous and impatient at times - though she doesn't really mean to be. I know she is carrying big worries but so am I and I haven't the strength to cope with everything - and I have wanted things to be right for her - for your sake - I hope Lester's affairs will be in order in the next few weeks - I do want you to come home - It is where you should be and I miss you very much. I am worried too about Mama.

Mr. Tetzall, a professor in Fresno who was a professor when I went to school there and a friend of Jess's was here for a couple of days - He is such a nice man and he told me all about Mama and etc - he has known us for years - He thinks it would be wonderful for her to come over here but he says she has gailed very much the past two years - And she sent me some snaps the other day and really, "audie, I was shocked she has changed so much - and I can't understand the cane! I don't like to think of you coming over here without her - I want you both so much - You must take care of her for me, Maudie dear, and if she were to make the trip over here with you I know she would be alright - otherwise I would have to go over and get her when the time comes But I think it would be bad for her to have you come without her Oh, dear I just don't know what to do for the best -

I am sorry this is not a cheerful letter, but I just had to tell you all the details that you must know - now put this letter away - but better still burn it up for I think possibly you might find people interested in reading your letters if you leave them about - and letters really aren't much value to keep - only dead things!

Goodnight, dearest Maudie -

Love,

*Elena*

P.S. Don't tell your troubles to anyone - not even your best friend - I've learned that these last few days -

Can't you interest any of your fiends in buying some of Pitter's

lovely things - I think it would be very good if you could! Have you ever spoken to Mr. Garbutt? If not why don't you call him up at home and tell him I said for you to call him up and speak to him before you came home. Remind him that I used to come up on the hill with Mr. Ivers when they were building their new house - ask about the family for me, and then invite them out to tea or etc - He or some of the family might be interested when they see Mrs. Millard's pretty things. Also how about Bob Vignolia? He knows so many people in the film world who have money and he appreciates the things himself. Put on your thinking cap and see if you can't do some business for Mrs. Millard. She would appreciate it.

Heaps of love,

*Kina*