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West Wing,

June 23rd, 1936.

Darling Maudie -

Well, I have had an anxious few days trying to get news of you - and I feel quite exhausted. This evening I had Carol's cable and it is some reassuring - but I can't imagine you having gallstones - you never have had. I hope I have got the truth of it all and that everyone isn't trying to save me worry for I would much rather know the exact situation - I would worry less then. Anyhow, dearest, I am so sorry that you have been ill - and I can tell you I felt far away when I thought of you as ill - even cables seem to take such an interminable time - I only got the answer to mine sent yesterday this evening. I am so glad Carol is there - I was afraid he had left and gone home by now - but I did not know who else to wire to for Mama is in Fresno as you know - Anyhow with Carol there I know you will be well looked after - it is a blessing he is there - next to myself I would rather he would be with you than anyone else - for I know he would look after you. Dear Etienne would too, but he is so young and it would be more difficult for him. Anyhow, Maudie dear, I didn't really know how much I love you until I heard that you were critically ill - Now take care of yourself and don't do any thing startling - go easy - It seemed as if the bottom had dropped out of my world when I heard the rumour on Saturday that you were ill and as I could not run it to earth I finally decided to cable Carol for I knew he would not let me go without news of you if I asked him. Give him a big kiss and a hug for me - I already feel easier about you now I know he is there.

We are having delightfully warm weather - all the Londoners are wilting but we are loving it - The garden is so lovely now - Mrs. La Motte had an extra gardner in last week to get it all tidy for she is expecting friends this next few weeks - and the daughter has made the sweetest flower baskets and hung them all over the garden under the trees - and also had two beautiful fern baskets made for the conservatory. We recovered the old swing and have it under the lime tree on the stage - it is a lovely spot now that we have the new terrace in and the shrubs cut us off from the park.

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Nella was out the supper last Sunday and we discussed you - and she said to tell you that she says on no condition are you to leave Hollywood - You must stay there - conditions are more favourable to you there than here according to her stars - and then quite apart from that she says, remembering Marie Dressler's experience - You have only laid the pipe now or rather threaded the needle, and if you come off now it will all go for nothing - You can't expect the chance you want would be waiting there for you when you arrived - but now people know you and think of you when the chance comes for you if they have to send over to London that is a different matter - ten days delay at the least - and your best bet is to stay put!

Of course I do not know about the house and what it costs you or etc - I wish I did for then I could think more intelligently - But I understand that Etienne is leaving on July 3rd for home and I hope that you are not coming with him. Don't think I wouldn't like to see you alright, but I am trying to think of what is best. I think the La Motte's will stay next quarter but I haven't been told so definitely - If they do that takes care of the rent for the next quarter - and beyond that I am not going to think. There will be some money from Mr. Nathan as I wrote to you and I am wondering if it would be possible for you to stay on just as you are in the house etc. If you talk it over with Carol he might see his way to help you with it partly for awhile - for I think you will pull off something - You must not be disappointed if it doesn't come the first few months - that is hardly reasonable. I think Etienne has done remarkably well - especially to get the Redlands Bowl concert - I hope his family will feel satisfied - but whether they do or not he must make up his mind for himself in all things or wash out his career -

Now about difficulties here - I have plenty - believe me - and your being here would only make matters worse for some would think your return heralded their chance.

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Now what I want you to do at once, without the slight delay, is to make out a lease of this house, furnished, to me for a period of nine or ten years at an annual rental of 670 pounds - (That covers rates which are paid in a furnished house). Do not date it - for there may be a time limit on when it must have a stamp on it - but make it out pretty much in blank but sign it before a witness (Carol if possible for he could have signed it in New York) If not then anyone you wish out there. I will have it filled in properly and stamped - and then if they make any trouble they can whistle - You see under your lease with the Crown you have the right to let the house furnished. Then if there is any question of furniture - it will be very little and very meager that belongs to you. I won't do anything with it unless necessary - and you have this letter from me as your safeguard. Do put this letter away carefully - seal it up in another envelope and leave it at the bank or somewhere unless you burn it for it would make pleasant reading for anyone who got hold of it.

Now I think that is about all - I hope all this won't worry you while you are convalescent - but dearest, I want to save you as much as I can - and I feel that things are coming alright but it takes a little time -

I have postponed my play until autumn - it was cutting the time too short - Uriel Wee has said she would produce it for us here in the studio if we can get it in between her productions in the autumn - she likes it tremendously -

The Fay Compton School are giving a play which they have already here in the garden theatre and Fay Compton is making a speech on behalf of the fund for the blind. On July 10th. instead of my play - I was glad to have it to substitute. We are not charging admission but are taking up a silver collection. I call it the Maud Allan Garden Theatre.

I went to John Goss's concert tonight - nearly passed out I think he is dull to look at and a dull singer - but Frida had asked so for me to go that I had to - afterwards Blackie and Alfred and I walked home partly and Alfred said he was going to show us what areal gentlemen was and took us in and filled us up with strawberries and icecream.

I was on an orange juice diet for ten days and doing fine when I got your worrying rumour and then I was quite ill for a few hours from shock - so I went off it for a few days, but am eating very lightly - I lost nine pounds, but gained back two when I began to eat, but I am starting again next week and hope to take off ten more - It is so nice to see the tire around my waist disappesa and my tummy go down - I found it quite easy and everyone quite falls in with it - when I had to go out to meals - everyone laughed and gave me an orange to munch on while the others ate - I really feel better for it too - it clears one out so well - and I really was never hungry unless I went over two hours without my orange juice. And it is so nice to go down -

Well, goodnight dearest, it is now half past one - but I want this to reach you by the Normandie which sails tomorrow morning - at noon -

Give Etienne a kiss for me and tell him I can hardly wait for him to come and give me the news - if he stays away with his various families for more than twelve hours after he arrives I'll never forgive him. Between the sister and the new baby and Robin I'm afraid I'll get little chance at him - and I do want to hear everything - it will be good to see him again.

I kiss you goodnight, darling, and do take care of yourself - you are very precious to me and I can't think of a world without you so do be careful of yourself for my sake.
love,

Frieda

Etienne married Robin Rake eldest daughter of the late Kathlan Rake of Milton Court, Dorking on August 9, 1939.

FRIEDA references are to Frieda, wife of N B Bernard Van Dieren 1884-1936 Down

Study of Jacob
Epstein (1935)
Poss ref to Mandel
et al.

Amongst The Dead Men

(1935)
FRIEDA REGISTERED AT HOCHSCHULE
1945 to Oct 1948