

1933

AL/2274

Sermione.

Lago DI Garda
Italy

My Dearest " Miss B."

If you cried over my book-- I cried over your letter, and then went out to dinner, and came back and took it to bed with me and read it all over *a*gain, and *c*ried some more, and hoped that my Mother read it over my shoulder-- which I dont doubt that she did. And dont doubt either that she laughed and cried over it too.

how nice, how very very nice that you wrote to me, and how grateful and I want to sit down and send you a whole book all to yourself, all the things which were missed out in *'M'*, because I didn't think that my mother would have liked *them* even *hinting* at.

I can tell you this, my dear, and knowing her you will know the truth of it, whatever anyone might have THOUGHT, ANNIE- my dear old Annie who only survived my Mother by three months- KNEW the truth of it all, and knew what a brute that man was to a gallant, high spirited young woman such as my mother was, and how in a hundred ways he hurt and disgusted her, and finally-- I write this to my mothers friend- through his disgraceful behaviour made her very very ill, so that when she went to Whitby she nearly died and was never really the same entirely strong woman again, though through the cleverness of old Dr. Stonehouse-- who was of course a distant relation- she was *completely* cured.

My mother when she was here used to talk of him sometimes, very much as she might have talked of a bad dream. I had seen him several

times,-- with my mothers permission- and even- also with her knowledge knew the woman he has lived with for twenty five years. She is a nice creature, common but kindly, and as my mother said, " Oh, my dear, certainly see her. After spending twenty five years with that old horror she must need any kindness and brightness she can get, poor soul!" When my mther left here- she was ill and longed to get back to England again-- to my aunt Nellie and Muriel who was in England at the time, she said to me, " Now, Naomi, if anything ever happens to me, I wish you to write AT ONCE to your father and let him know, and tell him that I hope he'll do the decent thing for once in his life and marry this woman who has been a very good friend to him."

I did. I heard one evening that my dear Mother has passed away, and wrote the next morning to him. SHE wrote to me, a kind, sympathetic letter, very simply saying that it was just like my mother to have left such an injunction, and that she would always pray for her and that they'd been married that morning. From him-- not a word, not a line since then. Naturally I have finished! Let people be rude to me if they like-- but to ignore my Mother in that way-- No, and no, and NO! Since then I have had a letter from a Jewish doctor- a friend of his, who I know quite well who lives in Leeds- asking what allowance I prepared to make my father who was growing old and was not so well off as he had been. My reply was that in all my life the only " allowance" my father had ever made me was ten shillings, and I was prepared to send a cheque- which I enclosed - for that amount and not a penny more.

Now you will shake your head and say, " Oh, lifes made her very hard, thats not a nice little girl I remember." I'm not hard, dear Miss B. But my mother suffered enough, and-- oh, well, let it go at that.

She often talked of you, can you bear her " A NICE girl--she was a very good friend to me-very fond of you. Now that young woman put S.J down at his proper value! I wonder where she is now?" At the very last, for for a week before she passed into the care of God and His Saints, she wandered a good deal, and talked always of Ripon and people she had known. She was very happy, had no pain at all, and in the end slept away like a little child. Wasn't the last picture of her like her? That funny little autocratic carriage of her head, that air of intolerance which hid such a kind heart.

They adored her here, with her airs and her ebony walking stick and invariably a packet of sweets for the children and a few carrots for horses or mules.

I've never been wonderful, my dear. Just a plodder. My mother used to say, " Your mind, my dear, is like a " piece bag". Lots of bright bits of silk, wool, and so on-- but not very much of anything. Still, piece bags are quite useful things!"

I was married- for a year. Oh, we're not " lucky in our men" and mine was a PIG. I was fortunate that I could get an annulment, for I am a Catholic and naturally divorce was impossible. How queer that your people came from Middlesborough, and yet when I read that I remembered that my mother once said to me, " You remember Miss Burgess? Oh, of COURSE you do! Her people came from Middlesborough."

I am glad that you were happy, and that the daughter is nice and good and loves her mother--- Perhaps I might know her one day.

My Aunt Nellie and Uncle Jim are still alive, and before she died my mother saw a lot of her, and we spent one lovely week end together at my flat in London, when I took them to theatres and out to supper and my aunt who is much more ^{un}sophisticated than my mother was, as you may remember, thought that she was SEEING LIFE! She is a dear nice woman, and writes to me very often. She was devoted to my mother.

Your letter didn't weary me at all. It made me very happy and content. I am very well-- the T.B is gone. Of course it runs in my mothers family you know. Her mother and brother both died of it. I am cured, but I have to take care and daren't risk living in England again. Next year I have to have an operation. I had one last year, and they made rather a mess of me, but now I have a good friend a German doctor who lives just over the border in Tyrol who will put it right for me. Its not anything very dreadful, just a very bad hernia, and masses of adhesions. I was in hospital last year for two months, and but for another grand friend of mine- a specialist from Milano, called Schneider who came over specially to see me at an hours notice, I should not be writing this to you now. Italians are charming, but their hospitals are horrible and their surgeons- except the very best- are brutes.

However, there again I was lucky, for I had two very devoted English friends staying here with me, who came and stayed in the hospital with me all the time, and took turn and turn about with my nurse. I had a grand nurse, a special who spoke English and was brought over from Milan. But, oh, what it all did to my savings!

I didn't mention Muriel, Miss B, because I didn't want my

father to start asking questions about her. She has not seen him for years, not since she was eight years old, and there is no point in allowing him to bother her. She married a grand fellow, a Naval man, and has three lovely children, one of whom stayed with me here this year. She is abroad a great deal, at the moment she is off to Trinidad for a couple of years at least. I hope that the eldest girl may come to me. She's a beauty! So sweet, so clever and with enough charm for twenty girls. All the young Itaina s fell head over heels in love with her.

Shall I send you a photograph of me for Christmas? Its taken out here and is very good I think, only not if it will bore you. I hate to send photographs and then realize that people dont like photographs at all. Lots of people dont, you know.

I do send you a tiny snap, only you mustn't be shocked, dear Miss B, because I am wearing trousers, I always do here except when I go to Church. Lots of people out here wear them so dont think that I am a terrible oddity, will you. The little fair girl on my left in Muriel's child. If you have a magnifying glass you can see how pretty she is. Your "child" ME, looks horrible, but it will show you how well I am anyway.

" When IS this terrible child going to stop?" You're saying. Now, this minute, just as soon as I've sent you my dear love and my tha ks for remembering me, and perhaps still loving me a little, and loving my Dear Mother and being good to her those years ago. Cant you come out for a holiday and let me show you how grateful I am? I have such a dear little house and garden with palm trees in it, and a nice servant and an old man who " potters" and a little

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car and a Peke and some cats, and two other English friends live in the village-- one with me, the other in the hotel near, and both this friend and I cook really rather well, and we'd give you lots of fun, and you'd go home and tell your nice, clever daughter that you'd discovered that you had another daughter, not so clever or so nice- but just the same as she was when you knew her years ago-- a "tough" little creature with a bad temper and very curly hair.

God Bless you, and keep you,
ever your loving,

Nasmi.

My best wishes to your Bodues friend. This is
true. The Midship maid was produced
at the Shaftesbury. The greatest Successes
ever produced at that theatre were the
Comedies produced by Robert Coutridge.
(The Acadians, the Dairy Maids etc.)

By the same post that brought you
news came one from my dear
old friend & true time employed,
Robert Coutridge. He is
coming and will see me in the Spring.
72 and still producing powerful
this Christmas!

WTH
AL/2274

Mrs. Whiteman.

Copperkins.

Chessham Bois.

BUCKS.

England.



Answered
Nov 20/33
JW