

No Life Without You

REFUGEE LOVE LETTERS FROM THE 1930s

EDITED BY
FRANKLIN
FELSENSTEIN





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Thirty-one: “No Life Without You”

17 May though 27 August 1939

POLITICAL TIMELINE, JUNE–SEPTEMBER 1939

- June 1939: German refugee ship, the St. Louis, turned away from Cuba and the United States.
- 12-21 August 1939: Anglo-French Mission meets with Soviets in Moscow but they fail to reach an accord over the defence of Poland.
- 22 August 1939: Hitler calls for the liquidation of Polish people to make room for Germans (Lebensraum).
- 23 August 1939: German-Soviet non-aggression pact signed in Moscow by Foreign Ministers Joachim von Ribbentrop and Vlacheslav Molotov.
- 25 August 1939: Anglo-Polish Alliance whereby Britain undertakes to come to assistance of Poland in the event of war.
- 1 September 1939: German troops march into Poland.
- 3 September 1939: Britain and France declare war on Germany, marking the beginning of the Second World War.
- 17 September 1939: Russian troops occupy Eastern Poland.

When Mope left for the Soviet Union in the third week of May 1939, he had exceeded almost by a month the terms of his permit to remain in England. His five-day return journey to Leningrad took him by sea from Harwich to Helsingfors, followed by a long train journey into Russia. As a stateless person,

he again had had to obtain valid transit visas through Sweden and Finland as well as an authorized work permit for the Soviet Union.

Once back in the USSR and with Europe in a state of turmoil as a consequence of ongoing German militancy, Mope was conscious more than ever of his vulnerability and loneliness. The operator-dependent telephone connections between Leningrad and London were sporadic and unreliable, and he and Vera were to resort to cable telegrams to supplement their daily correspondence. The wireless that Mope brought over with him provided an additional lifeline to the West, giving him contact with Great Britain through the BBC. On 19 June, he was to “celebrate” his fortieth birthday, on that particular day no less than any other, ruing the physical absence of his wife.

Communication from his boss, Ruwin Schapiro, was also intermittent, and the resultant slackness in Mope’s work schedule made him question again the value of his being so far from home. For all his misgivings, he was to conclude that it was prescient to hold on to his present position as Schapiro’s man in Leningrad at least until the expiration of his contract in April 1940. Given his “stateless” circumstances, there was really no other choice.

Mope was able to use free time to visit grand palaces and stately homes in the vicinity of Leningrad, and his reports give us vivid pictures. Many of Vera’s letters to him express her care for his health—he was troubled with a tenacious bronchial cough—and campaign to reduce his consumption of cigarettes. At home, both she and her parents grappled with health issues. After her miscarriage in the spring, she was fulfilling a promise to disclose to Mope rather than “whitewash” any unanticipated disorders or ailments that might arise.

Just before Mope’s departure from England, his sister, Grete Moschytz, arrived from Switzerland, with her four children, bringing them to Buxton in Derbyshire. To the consternation of the whole family, her husband Norbert concluded that it was not in his best interest to join them. He was to remain in Davos, Switzerland, for the duration of the war in company with his widowed mother who escaped from Germany days before the start of hostilities. Grete and her three younger children were to rejoin him there in 1948. In 1954, despite the unspeakable tragedy wrought by the Hitler years, Norbert was to return to his “native” Germany, setting up a medical practice in Stuttgart. There was no love lost between Mope and Norbert.

News from Germany left the family on tenterhooks. The welcome news from Mope’s sister and brother-in-law in Hamburg, Ketty and David Goldschmidt, was that permission was being granted for her to come to England. And once he had sorted various tax demands, David would be allowed to follow. She was

left with the dilemma of whether to join her children in England immediately or to stay the course with her husband until his papers were in order. Suffering from ill health, he was encouraging her to remain with him. The efforts of Georg Rosenfeld to aid his parents (Mope's cousins), Carl and Lies, to emigrate to Palestine were encumbered by a British White Paper, curbing the number of Jews authorized to settle there. Among those who did receive permission to leave Germany for England were Oma Lenchen's two elderly aunts from Berlin, Helene Simon and Klara Reichmann. Mope's heroic brother-in-law, Fred Rau, was instrumental in bringing this about.

By August, Mope sensed correctly that war was imminent, and began to apply for the necessary visas to return to England via Finland and Sweden, the same "safe" route he had used on the journey out the previous May. Unfortunately, the Finnish and Swedish Consulates in Moscow showed little readiness to re-issue transit visas to a person carrying "stateless" papers. In addition, far from coming to his help, his heartless boss, Schapiro, tried every trick in the book to persuade him to remain in Leningrad. On 25 August, Mope was granted permission to leave Leningrad for Moscow. Two days before that, the widely publicized Soviet-German non-aggression pact had been signed by Molotov and Ribbentrop in Moscow, removing the last hurdle to a Nazi assault on Poland. On the very day of his departure from Leningrad, the Anglo-Polish Alliance, by which Britain undertook to come to Poland's aid should Hitler invade that country, was ratified. In Moscow, despite personal pleas, the Finnish and Swedish Consulates continued to refuse Mope the required transit visas to travel home. Vera's rising fears for her husband are evident in her letters.

MOPE TO VERA

At sea, on board SS Suecia, 17 May 1939

It is shortly after 9 o'clock and two hours have passed already since I was able to wave to my most beloved, sweetest girl for the last time.—My little girl cried some little tears and they burned on my skin, because our good-bye was more difficult than ever before; and we have had to part from each other so many times before! Unfortunately and happily, one just cannot get used to bidding each other farewell; unfortunately because I would so like to alleviate my cute little witch's pain, and happily because the pain is an expression of your great love for me for which I am *unspeakably* grateful to you, and I return it with the fullest heart and *with all my being* in such a way that the knowledge of it should

lessen your pain. We are connected by such a wonderful friendship and harmony that spatial distance permits just as close a togetherness as if we were actually together. However, we do miss and long for the mutual caresses that represent the sugar crust on the torte on which both of us are snacking.

I know there is much more than that missing during the long and difficult periods of separation. Just the awareness that one is able to see the other in just a few hours and exchange the experiences of the day makes for such a happy feeling that helps overcome all the obstacles standing in the way. For this, the two of us have created a real replacement by writing daily letters to each other, because, by writing down our thoughts, we experience an exchange of ideas which aids us in finding a way out of labyrinths. The complete concentration of one on the other lets us observe everything much more clearly and deeply than we would be able to do without the joyous awareness of each other. It is something so great that we have each other; and we feel how empty our existence would be without this community. I think that the mutually bitter and deeply felt longing is not only painful, but also beautifies life, because we feel how fulfilled it is through our love.

Now, I am comfortable in my cabin. There is a porthole with a view of the ocean, which also allows me to get some fresh air, as long as the ocean is quiet. I will go to sleep now in order to be able to go on deck early, if the sun is shining, and so get something positive out of the trip.

I am completely with you, awake and asleep, because I love you *deeply* and most passionately. Good night, my sweetest one! Your Mope

VERA TO MOPE

London, 17 May 1939

It is 10.15 p.m. and I just got home. I really hope that they gave you a nice and comfortable cabin, that you had a good dinner, and that you will sleep deeply and well. My lovelein, I still cannot get used to the fact that you will be away from me again for months on end and that the two of us will have to make do with letter lines. Of course, I know and keep telling myself again and again that we have to be grateful that we, as emigrants, are making a good step forward, or better, an extraordinarily good step, on the way to building a new existence. I hope with all my strength that we will be able to eliminate these miserable periods of

separation in the foreseeable future; and until then, we just have to take it and try to make the best of it. And I think that the two of us do a very good job of that!

My Mopeleichen, do you know that the separation is becoming more difficult for me every time and the pain is greater, but I really did not want to tell you that at all! At most, I wanted to tell you just to show you how much I love you!!! I am completely happy because you married me!!! *Your Little Witch*

P.S. Please don't forget: sweets are very often much better than cigarettes!!!!!!

MOPE TO VERA

At sea, on board SS Suecia, 18 May 1939

Right now, almost thirty hours have gone by since I saw your handkerchief waving brightly in the wind even when I could no longer see anything of my most beloved. Today was a long and lazy day that I spent reading and sleeping, and hardly exchanged so much as one word with anyone. I read the little book "*The ordinary man's answer to Hitler*" by Evan John, which your dear mother gave me yesterday to read during the trip.¹⁷⁸ Besides a comparison of Hitler with Frederick the Great (no women, outrage against poverty, an inclination towards art, a feminine inclination that was forcefully suppressed, a guarantee to Silesia against attacks and the immediately following occupation by him) whose military abilities he seems to be lacking, fortunately, it did not give me anything new. However, it is to be welcomed that such books—cheap enough that everyone can buy them—are being published, because the average Englishman has absolutely no idea what danger threatens his country and himself from these criminals if they are given a free hand much longer.

The sea has been agitated all day and the dining room that was not fully occupied during lunch showed great empty gaps this evening. The food tasted very good with just my own company and I did not feel the slightest desire to seek others. Early tomorrow around 7 o'clock, we will arrive in Göthenborg. While I am writing, I am sitting in the very pretty lounge, which is furnished in early 19th century style, all by

¹⁷⁸ Evan John, *Answer to Hitler; Reflections on Hitler's "Mein Kampf" and on Some Recent Events upon the Continent of Europe* (London: Nicholson & Watson, 1939).

myself, because the few passengers who are not yet in the horizontal are sitting in the smoking salon. I lay on my bed for two hours this afternoon and slept deeply (sitting in the deckchairs was too cold, despite warm blankets), so I am not all that tired right now, not like I felt yesterday when I was writing.

I will probably post this letter as well as yesterday's in Stockholm, since there is a plane connection from there, which I doubt exists in Göthenborg. Now, I will go to sleep and go to my sweetest one in my dreams in order to snuggle very close to you and satisfy you with my caresses. Your Mope

VERA TO MOPE

London, 21 May 1939

I did not write to you yesterday evening. *I was terribly worried* because I still had not received any communication from Leningrad. There was nothing this morning either and just now, at 8.00 a.m., your cable was read over the telephone and I feel more than relieved!!! I cannot understand the delay at all, because in the past the air transport used to work quite regularly during the summer months.

I am happy to know that you arrived there in good health and I hope that you are well and that you are not coughing so much!? I wonder if you could ever decide to do something—which is actually quite contrary to your nature—like writing down at the end of the day how many cigarettes you smoked. I can imagine that that would give you a greater self-control and you would then be able to work on decreasing the number slowly, almost like a sport. Something like that would present a kind of self-satisfaction to me, but I know that my beloved is a little different where things like that are concerned; and looking at the matter from your point of view, I can only say that you would do something really great for me if you tried.

I had called Georg Rosenfeld and invited him to join us for lunch. I promised to meet him at Chiswick Park Station around 11.45 so that we could go on a walk through the beautiful park around Chiswick House. He turned out to be extremely nice and pleasant. I wrote a few lines to his parents in Karlsruhe in your name as well as mine and told them how dear their offspring is.

Now to reporting some very *good* news: Ketty and her husband have received their visa to come here!! And now, your dear mother is trying to find someone who will help them to pay the back taxes there, and then, hopefully, they will come and most likely—which I consider a *very* good idea—stay with your dear mother, and I am sure that she will have quite a bit of help in her household that way. Gertrud spends so much of her time lying in bed and I am sure creates a lot of extra work for Oma Lenchen. She and Gertrud have been invited to Buxton where they intend to spend a week with Grete.¹⁷⁹ Most affectionate and sweetest kisses, *Your Little Witch*

MOPE TO VERA

Leningrad, 22 May 1939

The train trip from Helsingfors to here was very pleasant, because a new train car which is very comfortable has been put into service now. The horrible rainy weather in Helsingfors gave way to the most beautiful sunshine; nevertheless it is still quite cool in the shade and I am happy that I am not wearing my summer underwear yet. Since it was almost 3.30 by the time I moved into my room, I did not work yesterday, but joined my colleagues instead—they wanted to drive to a culture park that is situated rather beautifully on the Bay of Finland. We spent about an hour on a river steamboat going down the Neva, and after we arrived, we went for a walk in the park. By the time we got back to the hotel, it was after 11 o'clock and we were hungry again, so that I did not get back to my room until 1 p.m. and then started to unpack. Before that, a colleague had helped me unpack the radio and we made the pleasant discovery that it works very well and it is playing music the whole time while I am writing. If I understood correctly, the music is coming from Buenos-Aires, however, that seems a little improbable to me because of the distance. A sad piece of news to me was the fact that I can no longer do anything with the money I brought with me—they no longer

179 Fourteen-year-old Gertrud Goldschmidt, who had arrived in England under the *Kindertransport* scheme, was living with her grandmother. Traumatized by being away from her parents and fearing for their safety, her behavior was wild and unruly. In the spring, her aunt, Grete Moschytz with her four children, had left Davos, Switzerland, for England, where they were temporarily housed in Buxton, Derbyshire.

exchange Reichmarks at all. I can get by for the time being, but I do not know what will happen then.¹⁸⁰ It is a good thing that I left some money here so I can use that until more is sent to me. Where business is concerned, I was unable to come to any result today. Schapiro will be beside himself when he does not find a telegram telling him about great business deals, but what can I do about that? Yesterday, I felt quite depressed because of that.

But now, I have to go and climb into my chaste bed. It is terribly late and I am quite tired. I will come to you in my dream in just a little while, my Lilongolein! By the way, you lose all feeling for time here, because it is still very light at 11 o'clock so that you could read the newspaper on the street. Most affectionately and completely, Your Mope

VERA TO MOPE

London, 29 May 1939

I finally wrote a detailed letter to Annelieschen and I will also enclose the one that was sent back as undeliverable in the middle of February and just now, I am sending my congratulations to Grete on her settlement in England in a longer letter. As I heard today, your dear mother will stay there with Gertrud for another week, which I think will be very good for her. I am sure that the peace and quiet and the good air will do her a lot of good. I am not sure if I told you yesterday that Grete gave a letter to you to Hanna to pass along to me and she misplaced it. I mentioned that in my letter to Grete and asked her how pleased you would be about receiving mail, especially from her.

I am waiting most longingly for news from you and I am very curious to hear how business is going and if you really have so many orders in front of you that the early departure is justified. I hope that you are now receiving my mail regularly—I have written to you *every* day!

I talked to Hanna on the telephone yesterday. She with Fred will travel to the countryside to inspect a youth training country home in

¹⁸⁰ It seems that Mope still held a quantity of Reichsmarks. Until May 1939, the Soviet Union had been pursuing an anti-fascist policy, and the refusal to exchange German Reichsmarks may have been part of this.

which boys are trained for Palestine.¹⁸¹ And on Tuesday, she will visit the two little Goldschmidt boys.¹⁸²

I want to close because I need to go to sleep now—I am already in the horizontal.

Most passionately, *Your Little Witch*

Mopeleichen, I am worried about your chest cough—do you have enough throat lozenges there? I wonder if you are still thinking about cigarettes.

MOPE TO VERA

Leningrad, 29 May 1939

Today, I was without a message from my sweet darling once again and I cannot tell you often enough just how difficult the walk to my room is without your letters after they have told me in the lobby that no greeting from you arrived. Just now—it is almost midnight—I asked them again in vain and now, I have to give up hope for today. Tomorrow is Wychodnoi once again and the colleagues are downstairs and want me to come down to the restaurant as well. Last time, I did not go, but this time, I will have to go, although I really do not feel like it. In preparation for that, I slept for an hour earlier today. My little witch will have to work again tomorrow and I am so curious to hear how you spent the days off—hopefully very, very nicely.¹⁸³ I did not do anything today either—besides waiting, and outside, it rained all day long.

Here, it is almost daylight, because the nights are extremely short during this season. At the same time, there is music being broadcast from the BBC and I am surprised that they are still working at such a late hour, while I am usually able to get broadcasts from the fascist or Nazi criminal gang early in the morning, but I am not willing to

181 In 1939, Bnai Akiva, the Orthodox Zionist youth group, began running training centers in England for young Jews who were planning to settle in Palestine.

182 Since reaching England the previous month, Gabriel (aged 11) and Alfred (aged 8) Goldschmidt had been enrolled as boarders, along with several other *Kindertransport* children, at Macaulay House School in Cuckfield, Sussex. It was one of several schools that helped to accommodate the influx of German-Jewish children during 1939.

183 Vera had recently left Marks & Spencer after accepting an offer to head the personnel department at the Odeon organization, an expanding British cinema chain. For reasons of space, I have omitted from this book details of her experience at her new job.

listen to that at all. It really is high time that the democratic countries acquire stronger transmitters as well and broadcast more of their own propaganda.

I am more than happy about the issue of the permits for Ketty and David and I hope that they, as the last ones from our family, will be able to leave that wicked, damned country as quickly as possible and will adjust to life in London. I think it is very reasonable for them to move in with my dear mother, because I hope that it will mean a relief for her. It will also be good for Miss Gertrud, because, contrary to the all too loving grandmother, Ketty will not let her get away with anything. Someone should make Gertrud understand how unbelievable this matter is, since she does not seem to have grasped it on her own, unfortunately.

What can I tell my beloved about my former and already forgotten cough? If I tell the truth, that it is gone, you do not believe me, and if I say that I am still coughing, I am lying, so what should I report??? My breathing is quiet and my nostrils are unbothered, a fact I have just ascertained in the mirror! I smoke less and, following your orders, have some candy instead, although a cigarette would taste good with it, but I try to control myself. Today, I only smoked fifteen cigarettes and will only have one more.

Now, I want to go to bed. My most beloved, I take you into my arms most longingly and kiss you long and most passionately everywhere to give you joy and to make you recall the real caresses through these written ones. Completely and utterly, *Your Mope*

VERA TO MOPE

London, 1 June 1939

I would like to tell you again how happy I am if your cough was really measured by my standard (that is, especially in the morning and also at night) and is really better?!!!!!! I am so very happy about it if this is actually the case. You have, as I believe, a very bad wife who torments and badgers you and doubts your dear reports, but I actually believe seven-eighth of it!!! Especially since my beloved writes—something rather unexpected and therefore all the more pleasing—that he controls his daily consumption of cigarettes!

I learned of some very sad news from Annelie in New York: her sister, Gerda's youngest—he was three years old—died very suddenly of

an infected appendix that was recognized too late; and on the day of the funeral, her elder child, Helga, became ill with appendicitis and had to undergo surgery immediately. It is a terrible beginning in a new country. On top of that, in Leipzig, Dr. Freimann has been in the hospital for the last few weeks. Annelie wrote and asked for Ray Braham's address; she wants to use her as a guarantor (as a nominal one since the brother-in-law who is an American put up the bond) and the guarantor has to be British. In my letter last Monday, I asked Annelie if I could do anything in the matter and I will write to her again now. I really do feel sorry for her. I know how attached she was to the little one. I do not know if the senior Freimanns in Leipzig have been informed of the terrible event and because of that, I will not send them my condolences.¹⁸⁴

It is late and I will close. *I love you, my sweetheart* and I miss you terribly, more than ever!!! Completely and utterly, *Your Little Witch*

So, in your last letter, you write to me about 16 cigarettes. How many is it now? Maybe fourteen and a quarter???! But you do *not* have to write to me about that!!!

MOPE TO VERA

Leningrad, 3 June 1939

I had a lazy day today, because I could not go to the warehouse before 2 o'clock, for which, since a few days ago, we are required to obtain special permission. Tomorrow, I have an appointment at 10 o'clock and with a different department at 2 o'clock, so that I will be rather busy. This new method seems better to me, because until now, we had to sit around and wait until our turn came up without being able to do anything profitable. Most of my colleagues played billiards and I also tried this art several times, but I am glad that I do not have to kill time with that any longer, because I prefer reading a book, but I could not do so in the warehouse without being disturbed.

184 Gerda was Annelie's half-sister. Dr. Joseph Freimann and his wife, Rosalie (d. 1951) did eventually succeed in escaping from Germany, but only after the start of the war. They were among the approximately one thousand Jewish refugees crammed aboard the S.S. *Navemar*, a barely seaworthy Spanish freighter equipped to carry twenty-eight passengers, which reached New York from Seville in September 1941. Sadly, Dr. Freimann died not long after their arrival.

I think I have finally become used to the fact that this profession provides a lot of work at times so that I do not know where to steal another half hour in order to get it all done, and at other times, there is no work at all. I do believe that my average daily work hours are around eight, because there is a lot of written work that needs to be taken care when I get back to the hotel around 5 or 6 o'clock. Until now, I made the mistake of not going out into the fresh air at all, with the exception of the first day here, but I have decided to change that, because a daily walk would certainly be very good for me. I was replacing that walk with a plate of plum compote which I usually devoured before breakfast. But enough now about my conduct which is so far removed from the rest of the world, because the constant babbling of my colleagues is beginning to bore me and I feel most comfortable in my own company so that I am taking my meals in my room as well.

It has become much cooler here and I am content that I did not let the warmer days seduce me into changing my underwear—I mean from winter to summer underwear. It is also raining quite a lot, but my non-coughing condition seems to persist—knock on wood. If I had my golden girl here with me, I would feel completely happy, but this is no life without you. This year, Rosh Hashanah is on September 14 and I would be *very* saddened to not be with you at that time, as I have been every year up to now.

I would like to give you the most passionate, gentlest kisses, but also rousing ones, and I want to do all those things that give you joy and desire, and with that, give them to me as well. Completely, *Your Mope*

VERA TO MOPE

London, 6 June 1939

Yesterday evening, I went to Oma Lenchen's for dinner. She told me about Grete. Apparently, Norbert will come to Buxton in just a few short weeks. Oma Lenchen claimed that she had had a very relaxing time there. I found her looking well. She was as charming and dear as ever and I like her more every time I see her. I was *very, very* happy to have Oma Lenchen all to myself. She told me again that she had been so very pleased with my lines and Grete had commented very positively on the manner in which they were composed. Actually, I simply wrote what I was and am feeling for her.

MOPE TO VERA

Leningrad, 6 June 1939

When I woke up around 10 o'clock this morning, the sky was so gray that I thought the planned excursion to Pavlovsk (that is the summer palace of Paul I., the father of Alexander I. who fought against Napoleon) would be softened by rain, before we could even get on our way. Instead, it brightened up and we left around noon. The drive leads through Pushkin, the former Zarkoje Selo where the last czar lived and where I was last in March of this year. Back then, we waded through deep snow and this time, spring showed itself with the prettiest tones of fresh green in the trees and the bushes and a blue sky, decorated with heavy gray and white clouds. Right now, it is a short time before the blooming of the lilacs here whose deep blue buds are shining from many bushes. First of all, we drove through the area that houses the Sojuzpushnina house that connects to the newly projected center of Leningrad which lies even further outside of the city proper. It is just unimaginable what huge housing complexes are being built there—there was no trace of them back in March, but the new city promises to be very beautiful and will group around the huge Soviet House that has progressed tremendously since March and seems to be very monumental. The palace in Pavlovsk is built very generously and contains a few wonderful tapestries from the late eighteenth century. The park that belongs to the palace is absolutely wonderful, and if you consider that this parcel of land which would have been so beneficial to the health of the people was closed to humanity for the last one hundred years and was not opened until after the revolution, one can only be glad that the monstrous former methods were thrown by the wayside.

In the park, there is a building called the "Pavilion of Roses", and connected to that is a great hall. The others went rowing, but I preferred to pay a visit to the children's theater taking place in that hall. There were hundreds of children, some of whom were sitting, some standing, because there were not as many seats as there were visitors. The ages of the children was anywhere between two and around fifteen and one could see ten-year-olds watching while holding their younger siblings. One could have heard a needle fall—without the voices of the actors—that is how quiet the guests of the performance were and such suspense suffused the little faces that it was a pleasure to watch them. And

what was shown??? Children performed the fairy tale “Little Muck” by Hauff—as far as I know.¹⁸⁵ The stage was completely primitive and aside from a bench and a carpet in front of it, there was no background. The costumes were rather pretty and were complemented by grotesque masks. It was difficult for me to separate myself from the view of the audience and actors, after the car had been driven up to pick us up—that’s how charming the whole thing was. I am writing this to you in such detail, since I was shown, quite unprepared, the confirmation of the impact of fairy tales on children. One can see that children can be captivated by the most primitive means and actors from their own ranks at the age of around twelve. How much more can one offer in a film???

What made me very sad was what you wrote to me about Annelie’s little nephew. That really is a bad beginning in a new country and I hope they will be spared any further worries which affect their lives and well-being so deeply. I hardly think that I will write to Annelie from here, but I suppose that my girl will write in my name as well. Actually, the fact that her father is in the hospital does not say that he has to be ill. I have heard repeatedly that people, I mean Jews who felt they were in danger, went to hospitals which until then had protected people from unnecessary direct interventions. The two Bambergers are like that and they are waiting longingly for permission to be allowed to immigrate to a foreign country.¹⁸⁶

Now, I want to climb into my chaste bed, but not before I tell my darling about my unspeakably great love which has made me a happier person because of and through you. Despite the horrible separation which goes so *entre coeur*, I constantly feel so very close to you and I am always connected to you ever so intimately in my thoughts that nothing but space could come between us. Most passionately, completely and utterly—Your Mope

185 The children’s play of “Little Muck” was based on a fairy tale by the German writer, Wilhelm Hauff (1802-1827), in which a dwarf obtains magical powers that lead to many adventures.

186 Gustav Bamberger (born Worms, 1880) was one of Mope’s Leipzig friends. He and his brother, Ludwig (born 1882), had been co-owners of Bamberger und Hertz, the leading department store in Leipzig specializing in men’s clothing. The store was destroyed by fire during Kristallnacht, and the Bamberger brothers were arrested and falsely charged with committing arson in order to collect insurance on the building. Neither brother succeeded in escaping from the clutches of the Nazis. Gustav is believed to have perished in the Stutthof Concentration Camp in Poland in 1942. He was unmarried. His sibling, Ludwig, died in Theresienstadt in 1942.

VERA TO MOPE

London, 7 June 1939

The summer weather is blistering here, just the way the two of us love it, and I wish for nothing more than if you could enjoy it with me—I never feel better, just like you, than I do in temperatures like this. Yesterday evening, when I came home from my writing place in the park, I had a great fright and much excitement: Muttilein was lying on the chaise longue—something that she *never* does normally; ever since Monday, she had been telling me that her calves were hurting a little and yesterday afternoon, they started swelling up all of a sudden and she was hardly able to walk. Whenever something like that happens, Pepper is indescribably impossible and egotistical and moans and blusters and acts like a small child and that makes *everything* much worse; and it actually forces Muttilein to say not a word no matter how bad she happens to feel. After she had lain down for a while and I had rubbed her legs with *pond extract*, it was almost over this morning, fortunately, but nevertheless, I had Dr. Rothschild come over, because swollen legs are often a sign of something serious. I feel more than relieved after I heard that he said it was based on overexertion coupled with the great heat—which Muttilein always has a hard time dealing with, and he prescribed two special elastic leg wraps with which she is supposed to bind her legs.

This evening, I called Oma Lenchen who told me that she has been wearing elastic wraps just about every day for the last 20 years now, because otherwise, both of her legs would swell! I feel a lot calmer now, but yesterday evening, I was completely beside myself and terribly worried. Completely and utterly and most passionately, *Your Little Witch*

MOPE TO VERA

Leningrad, 8 June 1939

Because of yesterday's strong storm, which still has not calmed down today, it became rather cool again here, although it was not all that warm before. Unfortunately, nothing was done for my psychological warming either, that is, I remained without news from my sweet darling so that I am behind by almost a week once again. Where is the postal logic in that?

What do you hear about Ketty and the date of her emigration? Hopefully, this will not drag out for too long, because you never know what the Hitler gangster rabble are up to next. As far as foreign policy is concerned, they seem unable to achieve anything—apart from those few ridiculous non-aggression pacts which are meant to pull the wool over the people's eyes! But it also increases the fear that they will have to do something inside the country in order to divert the people's attention, and who makes a better victim that is completely at their mercy than the Jews, again and again? This is why I am really worried, if the departure is delayed much longer!

I wonder if you have already talked to our Helenchen since her return from Buxton. I would so like to know if Grete has settled in well. It seems that her husband intends to keep nursing his health in Davos. Ladies and Gentlemen, will that man ever be healthy!!!!

VERA TO MOPE

London, 10 June 1939

I feel that being without you daily is becoming more unbearable all the time; after all, we only live once and it often seems to me that the two of us are cheating ourselves out of the most beautiful years of our togetherness!!! My beloved writes to me that Rosh Hashanah will be on September 14 and he does not have any idea if he will be back here by that date??!!

I am sure you know just how happy I would be if I could come to you. How do you feel about that? I think my "passport" expires on August 1, so I have to have it renewed in time. My love, please write to me and tell me about your thoughts concerning your return home, a vacation, my coming there, etc. *I am waiting for your comments, Sir!!!*

I called Mr. Cooper at the Home Office this morning and asked about my naturalization. He replied that that is *completely* out of the question at present, but he was very *nice* and told me that they had not *cancelled the conditions* for you yet, and he would make sure to take care of that with the next application—at the end of the year. I was quite astonished at so much kindness and he said that I should call him again soon and not wait until the end of the year when your papers have to be renewed. I was completely *happy* with this! On top of that, Mr. Cooper told me something else; but it was expressly unofficial: he said that if you apply

for naturalization five years from August 1937, under the condition that you spent the last year in England, something might have been done by then, but as I said, this was completely non-committal and no "official notification." For me, he said the only thing that could be done right now would be "*if you want to divorce your husband,*" and I told him that was *completely* out of the question, and he invited me to tell you about my decision concerning the choice between being married to you and British nationality, and he thought that you would probably be pleased with it!!

Hopefully, your cough is behaving and you are feeling well—please write to me about that! *Do you still think of the cigarettes, my lovielein?* I really do hope so!!! Your Little Witch

MOPE TO VERA

Leningrad, 11 June 1939

When I set off for the post office around 11 o'clock [p.m.] today, I discovered, to my complete elation, your letter in my box at the front desk. On the way to the post office and back, which would be between 11 and 11.45, I read my mail on the street which should give you some idea of the daylight during the night here. Of course, no streetlights are turned on which might seem downright odd. Today is Pod Vychodnoi once again and around 1 o'clock, after I listen to the news, I will go to the restaurant. Today, we finally had a warm day again and tomorrow, if the weather holds, I will go on another outing.

In the meantime, I went downstairs and now, I am enjoying the somewhat fresh air by the open window while I continue these lines to my darling. Just so I do not forget, I have to ask my most beloved for a couple of things:

1. My supply of candy, which served me very well, has dwindled. I assume that one can have such things sent here by Lyons through customs, just like the cigarettes. Please only do so if it can be done without too much trouble.

2. Please call Abdulla, or even better, confirm the conversation in writing that they should, like before, send me 1,000 cigarettes as quickly as possible, and keep sending the same number on a monthly basis until the order is revoked. I found out that the transport takes about two weeks which is why the matter needs to be expedited, although I am

adequately supplied at the moment. I know only too well that my little girl will not like fulfilling my request for cigarettes, but I do smoke less than before and give away *a lot* which should be of some comfort to you.

So it seems after all that Norbert is finding his way to Buxton and therefore, he must have received his permit. I wonder what he is going to do to keep busy all that time. I suppose that his own family will not provide him with any means and I am sure that Fred will not give him any money so he can sit around in Davos some more.

Most affectionately and passionately, my golden girl—*Your Mope*

VERA

Journal entry, 11 June 1939

I am fed up with having to spend my life separated from my husband and I do not want to do it anymore!!! This is going to be his last longer stay in the USSR, unless I go with him on his next trip. I am becoming rather single-minded—I spend all my time writing letters (I am sooo tired and will continue writing this another day).

MOPE TO VERA

Leningrad, 13 June 1939

Today, I received my darling's letter from the 7th. I really regret hearing about your mother's being unwell due to swollen legs and I hope that she is back to complete health now. I am sure that the cool down will be pleasant to her and so, all disadvantages always have certain advantages. I know that Helenchen has had bandaged legs for many years, because she and some of the sisters have a tendency to develop varicose veins. My little witch, why are you surprised that Pepper is beside himself when there is something wrong with Muttilein? You find it egotistical, but *just like him*, I am completely beside myself, too, when there is something wrong with you, and I hope that you find that completely understandable when it concerns me! Why so little understanding for the good old man? A husband who shows himself indifferent when his wife is suffering should be judged much more harshly than one who demonstrates a little too wildly that he is not indifferent to it.

But now, I have to close once again! The sun seems to almost stop in its tracks here, just as it did back in the Bible, because some king—no, actually, it was Joshua, I think—wanted to bring a battle to a successful end, but the mean clock keeps on going and that is the decisive factor for the division between day and night.¹⁸⁷

Sleep sweetly, my love, and feel the constant nearness of your Mope who loves you sooo completely!!!

VERA TO MOPE

London, 13 June 1939

I hope that these lines will come into your possession on the 19th,¹⁸⁸ they are meant to bring you all the love and good things in the world I can think of. I will try to describe to you just exactly *what* they are supposed to wish for you. First of all, *health*, probably the most important condition for *everything* positive in life; next, *inner peace and happiness*, the pre-conditions for being able to get real enjoyment out of life; furthermore, the preservation of your fortunate ability to "land on your feet" in order to meet the outside "*ups and downs*" of fate head on and well prepared. And *last not least*, *happiness*, my love, and in such an abundant measure as I can imagine. Those are my wishes for you.

How indescribably happy I would be if I could be with you on your birthday, my *sweetheart*, and most especially on this one which will lead you into a new decade of your life. I think that the forties are the most perfect years for a man: he is in full possession of his bodily strength, he has the experience of a grown-up of decades and the strength that comes with it, the inner equilibrium, and has found *the* outward attitude towards life that makes it possible for him to enjoy it to its very depths. And if he then also has the advantage of looking like a man in his thirties, which most certainly is the case with you, there cannot be any doubt whatsoever that the forties has to be a more than positive decade.

As far as the coughing and the smoking are concerned, there are actually no demands for you to report to me, as I already told you repeatedly, and your conscience—if there was a reason—would be what makes you feel concerned. It is no secret that I wish nothing more than

¹⁸⁷ See Joshua, 10.12-14.

¹⁸⁸ Vera writes in anticipation of Mope's fortieth birthday on 19 June 1939.

for my love to reduce the number of cigarettes—but I leave—it entirely to you—and I trust you.

A little while ago, I had a long telephone conversation with your dear mother. Among other things, Oma Lenchen told me that Fred went to see Ketty during his last business trip and also the old aunts in Berlin who also have their permit for here now.¹⁸⁹ He found Ketty in good condition, and as soon as everything is settled—which could take from a few days to a few weeks or months—Ketty and husband will come here, as Oma Lenchen told me.

Norbert is supposed to come here too, or rather to Buxton, shortly. Mutti called Oma Lenchen yesterday and asked if Grete needed bed things, like pillows for instance and feather beds and your dear mother seemed to be very happy about that and will ask Grete right away, and as soon as we hear from her, we will send her everything she would like to have. Apparently, she feels cold a lot and the feather beds will be more than welcome, and I am glad if we can do something for her. I will enclose a toy monkey for each one of her kids. On top of that, I found a black, rather worn looking dog that used to sit in the sun on the window sill by my desk and was supposed to keep me company while I was preparing for my prelims—it was given to me by Heising and is too worn to send it to Grete and the kids, while I am sure that the different monkeys will give them a lot of pleasure. Just *a few* years ago, I would have *never* given them away under any circumstances!

My love, I am so unbelievably happy and it really gives me energy when you write to me that my little bit of work is helpful in our building of a new existence and that you regard that as competent. I consider myself so absolutely *average* and sometimes even less, and when you write to me in such an appreciative manner, I feel a renewed energy to work and a greater trust in myself, although “competent” seems to spring from a non-objective and skewed attitude towards me. I was lucky enough to have had good training, and under those conditions, everyone else could probably achieve the same or even more. That is my opinion in the matter!

My little birthday child, I kiss you with all the intensity at my disposal and for such a long time and so filled with tenderness that you

189 Oma Lenchen's aunts, Dr. Helene Simon (1862-1947), the well-known sociologist, and her sister, Klara Simon Reichmann (1867-1952), were still living in Berlin.

will feel it all the way over there, in Leningrad, you, my beloved. *Your Little Witch*

P.S. Muttilein's legs which she now bandages regularly have fortunately been much better since then.

MOPE TO VERA

Leningrad, 17 June 1939

I am feeling *terribly* good today! As a matter of fact, I received my little witch's letter from 10 June which I had been waiting for with much longing, like all of your beloved letters. Apart from that, they also brought me Mr. Cooper's birthday present and I am completely enthused by his message. It is the one thing I had been hoping for in my wildest dreams, but I did not believe that it would ever come true. You cannot imagine how happy you made me with that, because I belong to those people who feel infinitely better when they know that they have a home. And his prediction concerning further facilitations for the year 1942 also rings beautifully in my ears.

Do I have to be jealous of Mr. Cooper, since he was so nice to you and asked you to call him again soon? Fortunately, you said no to his question if you would get a divorce so you could become naturalized, which I think is *very* sweet of you, because you have to give up something very pleasing to you. However, I would not have let you run away anyway, because I love you way, way, way too much, and I am a great egotist who is only too happy to be able to add to the many hours we want to spend united in the most passionate love!

Completely, and utterly only your Mope

VERA TO MOPE

London, 19 June 1939

Today is my beloved's birthday and my thoughts are *constantly* with you; I called Oma Lenchen a little while ago and congratulated her on the birth of her son. Oma Lenchen told me how well she remembers the day forty years ago and how the doctor had asked her in surprise how she came by such a *light blonde baby*!!!!!! By the way, I have always

thought that my lovielein is a cuckoo's egg anyway and has nothing in common with the Felsensteins (at least those I know).

Many especially extra-sweet birthday kisses, my *sweetheart*!!! I feel such an *indescribable* longing for you—more, *much* more than I could possibly describe.

Your Little Witch

Don't forget that cigarettes are very bad for you and your throat, you!!!

MOPE TO VERA

Leningrad, 19 June 1939

My sweet little witch was very artful and managed to send off her so beloved letter with the many good wishes for the beginning of my fourth decade in such a way that it reached me at the right time and really put me in an elevated mood, the kind of mood children are usually in on their birthdays. As far as I can judge up to now—it's been an hour—forty is a very agreeable age! I do feel much too young to take this number any more seriously than the one that informed me ten years ago of turning thirty, at least according to my papers. Today, I had begun by imagining that I am not really even thirty yet, but only twenty, because the development that the body goes through until the age of twenty is comparable to the intellectual-spiritual development from the twentieth to the fortieth year. You write something very similar about two decades of being an adult which made me especially happy in connection with that, just like your declaration that I look like a man in his thirties, which I hope was not only made to make me feel good. Two years ago today, I came to this country for the first time and I look back, with a certain satisfaction, on this time that let me become used to a completely different milieu and it has not been without success. In this, my little girl helped me in a way that can never be sufficiently appreciated with her love which makes me happy and her trust which makes me proud.

Your philosophy concerning my right to the great satisfaction and joy in your great and energetic collaboration in our build up lacks any basis. You personally participate in our work in a manner far above average and with your love and friendship and even just your being, you give me such initiative that I will be forever grateful to you for everything. You say that you were lucky, but good luck wants to be earned, unless it

just happens to be in the lottery, and with you, it is effort and your effort gives me an incentive just so I do not fall behind.

* * *

And now, I have to tell you that your lazy *husband* took a lazy Monday today. My various offers were insufficient or remained unanswered. In the warehouse I would just have had to sit around there for nothing. I agreed to join a few colleagues to visit Peterhof. The weather is as beautiful today as it was yesterday and we left to make the beautiful drive around 1 o'clock in an open car, and—as usual—I had the pleasure of sitting in the seat next to the chauffeur—because of my long legs. At Peterhof, we—that is, only two of us, me among them—went swimming. The castle is situated near the Gulf of Finland and the water was wonderfully warm and I really enjoyed the *swim* as well as the extended sunbathing afterwards. We did not get back to the hotel until around 6 p.m. and brought a tremendous hunger back with us.

When I returned to my room, I found out, much to my disappointment, that the radio which was performing perfectly this morning did not work anymore. The only determination I and a knowledgeable colleague have been able to make so far is that the so-called "*miracle eye*," a lamp (*valve*) that usually lights green when the radio is working, refuses to function properly. It is unknown if there is another reason and could only be determined by testing the *valves* of which there are ten. I do not know if they can do the testing here. In any case, it would be very, very sweet of you if you could give one of the people traveling here two replacement "*miracle eyes*," but please wait a day or two because I need to get some more information first.

Later on, at the hotel, I stretched out lazily after I had prepared hot chocolate for myself and dreamed of you so intensely, until I had to go to join colleagues at the Europeysky. There, we sat over three hours under a pale sky that was lit up by fireworks which looked rather strange against the light-colored background (the fireworks took place in the culture park). On top of that, the setting sun spread the most beautiful, constantly varying colors across the entire horizon—what we could see of it—and the splendid buildings of Leningrad gradually changed to silhouettes that looked magnificent against the evening sky. It was an incomparable natural spectacle and I only wished—as always—to sit beside my darling instead of these others who mean so very little to me. Most of us did not drink any alcohol, and I certainly did not. When I just

came back to the Astoria, I received my sweet little girl's telegram with all your loving wishes.

My most heartfelt thanks—my birthday began and ended with mail from my little witch! How happy that makes me!!! Your Mope

VERA TO MOPE

London, 20 June 1939

My *lovielein*, I do realize that the two of us have to be patient a little while longer, and *I am sorry* if I was a little unrestrained the week before last. Mr. Cooper's dictum might turn out to be very helpful to us, or rather, the taking effect of what he said. I do understand that we have to be patient, but I really do not like it at all! I hope with all my heart that it will not have to be for several more "years."

Yesterday evening, I received a long letter from Annelie; she writes very sweetly and asks me to get in contact with her parents' lawyer here so that the matter of their emigration will go forward a little more quickly. Coincidentally, I had talked to the lawyer in the evening, before I received her letter, and asked him to contact Lady Rochdale¹⁹⁰—without referring to anyone specific—since I found out from the lawyer that the children in the U.S.A. will guarantee for their parents, but that some nominal person has to post a guarantee here—maybe the lawyer can get a little ahead with Lady Rochdale's help (among other things, he contacted Ray at Annelie's request, but she herself was not able to do anything in the matter). Annelie has opened a polyphoto shop; she reported that she had learned to handle the cameras before they left Germany, and I find that very capable, especially since she writes that it was doing rather well. She remains silent concerning her husband's occupation, but aside from that, she writes nothing but positive things about him. The loss of the baby and the illness of the older child must have been a terrible blow for the whole family which is more than understandable. Annelie is a really brave person.

190 Lady Beatrice Rochdale (1871-1966), the wife of the Liberal politician, George Kemp, first Baron Rochdale, seems to have been recommended as a guarantor by Ray Braham, of whom she appears to have been a friend. Earlier in life, she had been active as a suffragette, marching nearly three hundred miles from her home in Keswick to London in 1913 in support of women's right to the vote.

Yesterday evening, Abdullah's confirmed the cigarette order and right now, I have to make a bit of a confession to you: instead of every *four* weeks, I asked them to send another shipment every *five* weeks. Is that right with you or should I, or better, do I have to change it to every *four* weeks??? I am so very happy to hear that your cough has "retired;" I really hope that the retirement will last without limitation!!!! And maybe a partial retirement for the smoking as well?!!

What do you think of the momentary situation in Europe? I am afraid but that is not very helpful and I am trying not to think about it.¹⁹¹

The sweetest, most loving kisses here and there and everywhere, you—*Your Little Witch*

MOPE TO VERA

Leningrad, 21 June 1939

I just got back to the hotel from a walk along the Neva and I am—although this path is the same one I always use—completely thrilled with its beauty. I can stand there on the bank for a long time and look across the river with the Peter and Paul fortress—Peter the Great had it built as the first beginning of Petersburg and it also houses—besides the burial chapel of the czars—the terrible prison of the time of the czars, and even the bare mention of its name instilled fear in all who heard it. It was mainly a political prison and many idealists had to leave their lives there. Even the famous Duke Kropotkin whose work "*Mutual Aid in the Animal World*" you might have read once starved there.¹⁹² Before that, you pass the Winter Palace of the czars which was built in a mix of baroque and renaissance styles and many other palaces, always along the water, and the evening sun plunges everything into pink and sky blue.

Today, a colleague tried out my "miracle eye" with his radio and behold—it glowed. So the fault must be somewhere else. I would

191 Vera is probably alluding to the situation in general but may have had in mind an incident three days earlier, on 17 June, when a small bomb had been detonated inside a Jewish café, the Riva Restaurant, in Prague, injuring thirty-nine people. The news also contained disturbing reports of German troop movements on the border between Nazi-occupied Slovakia and Poland.

192 Peter Kropotkin (1842-1921), the so-called "anarchist prince," was the author of *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution* (1902), which proposed alternatives to Social Darwinism. Because of his revolutionary activities, he was imprisoned in the Peter and Paul fortress in 1874, but escaped from there to Switzerland in 1876.

like you to write a letter to Selfridge's radio department concerning warrantee #3902399 and tell them that my radio "Ferguson 503 receiver" functioned perfectly for a full month until the 19th and that I was able to receive London and all other stations very well and that people admired the apparatus in general, but all of a sudden, it refused to work when I attempted to turn it on, that is, there was no sound whatsoever coming from its throat. Should it not be possible to repair it here, I want to at least be able to make use of the warrantee when I come back. Please excuse my causing effort for you once again. I really do hate doing that!!!

How awful that we still do not have any idea how long it will take with Kitty's emigration, because, apart from everything else, every single day that postpones the re-establishment of a new existence represents a great loss of strength.

This letter is supposed to get into the mail today so that my girl will not have to wait in vain for news from me. You, most beloved, most longed for one, Your Mope

MOPE TO VERA

Leningrad, 23 June 1939

I am sitting at my desk and beginning to write to you and while I am doing that, I am listening to an interlude from the opera "Tiefland" by Eugen D'Albert—on the radio.¹⁹³ Yes, ever since this evening, the damage is repaired, after Intourist sent a radio mechanic at my request, and he looked around for a little while and then determined that something had come loose between the speaker and other parts—at least from what I was able to understand. Something like that should not happen, of course, but the main thing is that I can listen again and no longer have just a mute witness of earlier and ear pleasing noises standing in front of me. The fun actually cost forty Rubels—that is approximately thirty-two shillings—and so, even Mr. Schapiro had to contribute something in the matter, after he refused to compensate me for the purchase earlier.

193 Eugen d'Albert (1864-1932) was a German composer, born in Scotland. He studied under Franz Liszt in Weimar. *Das Tiefland* ("The Lowlands"), first performed in 1903, is his most popular opera. During the Second World War, it was adapted for film by Leni Riefensthal, using slave labor (mainly gypsies) for extras. Post-production, many of these extras were deported to Auschwitz. The film was only released in 1954.

Today, it is Pod Wychodnoi once again and we went to the restaurant after the technician left around noon today. So this time, it was not work that made me write so late, but the repair to the radio.

Today, I was able to take something on contract again, but things are very slow, although I am really trying very hard. On top of that, I received my passport today with a visa extension until Sept. 20, but if my little sweetheart cannot make up her mind to come here, I do not feel like staying here that long. If you apply for a visa for here, you have to tell them that there is one here, but that it has probably expired in the meantime. It is possible that it will only have to be extended. On top of that—but that is really self-evident—you will have to inform me immediately on *what day* you turned in your application. You will remember from the last time that the visa is valid for three months, as long as it has not been entered in the passport. From the day it is entered, you have fourteen days to arrive here at the latest. Please apply for a one-month visa, because you might encounter problems with leaving if the visa was too short, that is, you might need an exit visa. You need a so-called consulate visa and will have to make the application in person at the consulate, where you will have to fill out three forms, and they will need three passport photos.

And now, it is terribly late once again, but I can sleep in in the morning so it's not all that bad. I kiss you most tenderly and longingly on all of your sweet half orbs and on everything that lies between them and above and below them and I caress you in my thoughts until our blood begins to boil and we can go to sleep sweetly and most satisfied. *Completely, Your Mope*

VERA TO MOPE

London, 26 June 1939

It is very late and I am writing to you from the horizontal position. This morning, the mail brought me *two* most beloved letters. The moon is clearly visible in the sky in its $\frac{3}{4}$ full glory and the air that is streaming in through the window is so clean and refreshing that one would like to actually drink it in with the deepest breaths. I am wondering if you are also looking at the moon right now and tell it something for me, just as I am doing for you.

I especially liked the description of your walk along the Neva, because I think that I could picture everything quite vividly thanks to your good description. I wonder if it will come to the two of us enjoying that moment together in the foreseeable future.

Yesterday, Oma Lenchen came by with Gertrud and she was ever so charming. I have to repeat again and again what an especially intelligent, *progressive*, and charming human being Oma Lenchen is!!! She spoiled us—something she should not have done because it cannot be easy for her—and brought along a very good cake and a box of Lindt chocolates. Gertrud behaved as usual; when Ketty can finally come is not sure yet since they still have to pay the taxes.

I received a very nice letter from Grete and her children this morning in which they express their joy in the feather beds and the monkeys. This week, Grete received the first part of her boxes of furniture. Completely and utterly and totally, *Your Little Witch*

How is your cough??? And the cigarettes! Think of me with each one!

MOPE TO VERA

Leningrad, 29 June 1939

As of yesterday, it has been six weeks, forty-two days, since I bid farewell to my sweetest darling. The time seems infinitely long and short at the same time because I am always with you in my thoughts and not gone from you at all. Even the minutes of our goodbye are so present to me as if they just happened a few days ago, because I let them pass before my mind's eye so many times and try to reconstruct the beloved face of my little witch in all its minute details and tones, just as the camera of the eye recorded it.

This morning, my *wireless* lost its voice again all of a sudden, after it was working just fine last night. I had the man come over and this time, he brought along a voltmeter which he did not have with him last week. He determined that a condenser was causing a short circuit. He took it out completely and now, the good thing is working again and just let me listen to the very interesting report on the speech of Lord Halifax from London this evening.¹⁹⁴ Finally, those boys are starting to show a

194 In his speech of 29 June, Lord Halifax, the Foreign Secretary, had iterated that Great Britain stood by a policy of resisting aggression while also endeavoring to

little more decisiveness and no longer take all those criminal ventures of the aggressors in complete silence. I hope that they will be successful in cowing that rabble, if that will even serve a purpose now that these criminals have gone so far that putting the brakes on might lead to their carts being overturned. I am sure that nothing will happen before the auction. That we know from previous experience. First, one pays high prices and then, there is something that shatters the value of the world market in such a way that the customers no longer know how they will receive some of their money back in a sale.

You know, I think a lot about us and about a man living with a woman in general. It really is an astonishing, but probably also good aspect that most women, when they love a man, nestle close to him with their souls as much as they do with their bodies. They also adjust to him intellectually and are irrevocably convinced of his abilities—at least for as long as the love lasts. At the same time, most men experience the desire and the need to make her into his creature. My girl now exhibits a more independent attitude in which the most important thing is to make her own decisions. I am happiest about the fact that you love me so much that you nestle close to me and are completely devoted to me. And because of that, I am trying very hard to foster your individual attributes and to cultivate them and to free you from anything that might inhibit something inside you. I try to advise you, to make your path free of most obstacles, if possible move problems out of the way, but still, I want you to take your own path in complete independence and I can do that because I trust you implicitly. All of these considerations result from the fact that I have seen women stand there all alone and helpless, because all of a sudden, they lost the love of the men who ruled them completely. Just because I hope to be your life partner for an infinite time and I am sure that I do not even have to think about a cooling of our love for each other, I only wish that I will let your own being come to its ultimate realization and uninhibited development, which will let you grow into a strong human being by my side and will let us be two strong human beings who work and build together in the greatest of trusts.

I do not know why I am writing all this to you—it is probably because it has been occupying my mind lately, born of the wish to make your

settle differences by negotiation. However, he also spelled out that his country would not stand idly by if the independence of Poland became seriously threatened by German aggression.

life happy and to prevent anything that might affect this happiness. I am certain that two people who harmonize as much in all the most important facets of life as we do are much more capable to develop and much more encouraging towards each other and bring ourselves close to a certain perfection than two people who become "one with a shadow," because the second person is forced to follow the first one due to some inner imperfection, and if the sun is not shining for once, that other person seems to disappear. All of those considerations seem to me—though quite underdeveloped at this time—to show the right way and I would love to know what my darling thinks about all of this and if you agree with me.

Sleep well and sweetly and restfully and feel how intensely and filled with the most tremendous love and longing I am! Completely and *utterly*, Your Mope

VERA TO MOPE

London, 2 July 1939

Today was more April than July; the sun came through quite often, but in between, it rained and it was not warm at all—except when the sun came out. It is shortly before 6 p.m. and, before Hanna and Fred arrive, it is now my love's turn. First of all, I have to tell you that I have a very guilty conscience, my love, and that I almost penned another letter to you last night, but unfortunately, it got to be very, very late, since I also had to take care of some correspondence for Pepper. My guilty conscience comes from the fact that I am accusing myself of having let myself go much too often lately in my letters to you and that I was very unrestrained. My love, if I think about it reasonably, I do realize that the two of us just *have to* accept the long periods of separation for the moment, and I am afraid that I only made things more difficult for you with my letters in which I complained about the separation and talked about putting an end to them, and they are difficult for both of us. I know very well that my love will not impose these separations on us any longer than absolutely necessary, and if I really think about it, I realize, again and again, that the two of us have it so *very, very* good despite the fact that we long for each other's company: we are glad and happy in the awareness of each other; we do not have any material worries at this time; we are healthy; so we have to be very, very ashamed if any

complaint is made and if we dare to utter even one word besides that we are happy and overjoyed, especially when we consider that many people lack one of the things mentioned above or even several. And I would like to tell you once again: I am very cheerful and happy because of you, my love; I have a professional job that will allow me to achieve something, I hope, and I am looking forward to the day when you will return, so: *please forget all about what I said in my previous letters!* And again: I am ashamed of that!

I have to close now—the Raus have just arrived. If possible, I will write more later.

* * *

My *sweetheart*, it is midnight now and I am writing to you from the horizontal after I had to interrupt my partial letter to you so abruptly. The evening with Hanna and Fred was extremely pleasant. Fred told me—and assured me that you knew all about it—that the lawsuit had been won, that is, with the condition that a notarized statement, or better, a confirmation could be presented that the merchandise belonged to him. He said that he had been unable to devote himself to the matter due to lack of time, but that he thought that, with the help of Julius Rosenfeld's attorney, the necessary letter could be secured. The whole thing sounds rather hopeful.

Among other things, Fred told me the following: Norbert wrote that, for the time being, he preferred not to come to Buxton, because applying for an immigration visa to the U.S.A. would probably be a complete waste of time, since it could take up to ten years, before a new existence as a medical doctor could be established, and since he would be going back to his home country anyway within the next two years, he thought it best to stay in Middle Europe for now. Grete is supposed to be terribly depressed over the news and Fred said that he had written a letter to him which would most likely make him change his mind, that is, decide to join his family in England. What do you say to something like that? That man is either not normal or completely and incomprehensibly bad, but I consider that almost impossible, that someone can be so irresponsible and unconscionable, and I really think that all of the events have taken hold somewhere in his head and that the man cannot be taken seriously—both things are equally terrible!

My *lovielein*, I can understand that you smoked more during those exciting days of buying and I hope that your breathing is really free.

How often do you cough in the morning when you brush your teeth?
And do you cough a lot in the evening? If it is possible, my *sweetheart*,
please try to reduce the cigarettes again, because every one you smoke
pains me.

I kiss you full of the most passionate love—Completely and utterly,
Your little Lilongo-witch

MOPE TO VERA

Leningrad, 2 July 1939

This afternoon, ten of us went to Peterhof, but only two of us, I and another guy, went swimming. It was a wonderfully relaxing experience and my skin has turned red-brown. Should they see me, my clients will think that I am here for relaxation, because I tan so quickly! If I can arrange it, barring lack of time, I will repeat the outing, which took four hours including the swimming, before the auction begins. While there, we laid ourselves down in the sun and we chatted. During that conversation, I found out from a colleague that he thinks of me as an ice-cold human being who can probably also be quite brutal. I was quite charmed by that, because I do not think that people need to be able to read me all that easily and determine right away what kind of a person I am. This only as an aside!

When I got back to the hotel, I found a *sweeet* letter from Schapiro. I will answer him right away in which I will tell him pretty much the same thing I told you. He will burst at the seams, and he is supposed to, although he claims to have deposited £284.19 at the bank in New York. Sometimes, I wonder if the man expresses himself so badly in the German language that his letters cause such displeasure, or if he is really that stupid to think that he can make me feel small with such methods.¹⁹⁵

It was only right of Grete to write a nice letter since you spoiled her so sweetly. It is good that she seems to be getting her things from that land of criminals now. I do not need to hope for mine, although there are quite a few things I would *really* love to have. It would be soooo good

¹⁹⁵ Mope was all too often kept waiting by Schapiro who was perpetually tardy in settling his salary, expenses, and commissions, a proportion of which were to be paid into a New York bank account.

if Ketty could come soon and take her children back into stricter hands and alleviate some of the work Helenchen has now.

Just now, I am hearing that Chamberlain held a speech, which supported Halifax's, as the volunteers were marching past the King in Hyde Park. How much I hope that that will intimidate those criminals who completely disregard human rights, just like the appeal of the general assembly of the English workers which seems quite reasonable and impressive to me.¹⁹⁶

I wonder if this will be the last letter to my sweet one for the next few days. In the morning, all the hoopla will begin. It will be a bustle beyond comparison. The quantities of merchandise for pre-auction inspection have never been this big and I am by myself, while others—as I have told you already—are working in threes and even fours. Unfortunately, during the next few days, the mail man will start to think that I have become unfaithful to you and will have *no idea* how much more wonderful it would be for me if I could write to my darling instead of doing without chatting with you.

But for now, I want to get these lines to the post office and then go to bed. I am with you *all the time* and wish for nothing more intensely and longingly than to really be with you and no longer have to enjoy our union through letters alone. Completely and most passionately, *Your Mope*

VERA TO MOPE

London, 5 July 1939

It is 9.30 in the evening and I have so much to tell you that I do *not* know where to begin. I spent a large part of my evening on the telephone, until just a little while ago, and talked to Georg Rosenfeld; he wrote to me at the office and asked me if I could please call him soon. He told me that his parents are hoping to be allowed to go to Palestine in the next six months, but that nothing had been decided black on white yet concerning the matter, and Mr. Weißmann,¹⁹⁷ Carlchen's friend, will

196 Neville Chamberlain's radio speech of 2 July (which Mope was able to hear in Leningrad) warned that Britain would stand up to any further aggression by Germany. The speech was given shortly after 20,000 National Service volunteers had marched past King George VI and Queen Elizabeth in Hyde Park. Their march was intended to demonstrate Britain's solidarity in the event of war.

197 Unidentified.

not give an unlimited guarantee, but only one for six months, in other words, for both of them: £100-0-0, but Woburn House or rather, the Home Office, will not accept something like that and will only issue a visa if an unlimited guarantee is presented. Georg asked me if I knew of any English guarantors and I gave him Lady Rochdale's name, but I still have the feeling that I did not do enough to help.

Georg is hoping to receive the final confirmation from the Palestine office within the next two weeks, allowing his parents to immigrate in the course of the next six months; once that is on hand, I also think that the six-month long guarantee of Mr. Weißmann will be enough or at least, I hope it is. In this one, good advice is hard to come by—what can be done? Should I—just in case the Palestine office does not want to get involved or rather, is not willing to confirm anything in writing and Lady Rochdale cannot do anything—contact one of the directors at M&S in writing? Or what else can I do? A guy like Norbert has the permit which means he has a guarantor and makes no use of it—and such delightful people as Carlchen and his wife, who have every right to it, do not have one and have to suffer because of it. I invited Georg for Saturday evening and he will come over by bicycle. He really is a *very* nice young man and among other things, he told me that his parents would be able to survive here for six months very easily on £100, or maybe even longer, and that he was putting back a little every week which was meant for them and would also help out a little. He earns thirty shillings a week and, as far as I know, he does not qualify for a weekly bonus from his employer yet. The difference between Georg and the Goldschmidt children is obvious to the naked eye. And it is incomprehensible to me that those children are so completely untouched by the momentousness of the events and they think that they have to have everything there is to be had.

I just called Oma Lenchen who asked about you ever so lovingly. Among other things, I told her about the Rosenfelds, and she said that Fred was very involved in matters of that sort. Supporting the family Moschytz costs him *much* more than he had estimated, since Switzerland is very expensive and they (I assume *Norbert*) had to buy so many new things there. I have to admit that I do not understand Fred in this regard and I think the only right thing to do would be to not give this conceited parasite—and I do *not* find that expression too harsh for him—another penny. I feel very sorry for Grete and I hope that she does not suffer too much because of all of this. Completely and utterly, *Your* little Lilongo-witch

VERA TO MOPE

London, 10 July 1939

My love, I will finally respond to your thoughts that you talk to me about in your letter from the 29th of last month concerning the relationship between men and women and the danger that a woman who loves her man might adjust blindly to him under certain circumstances and sometimes even submit to him intellectually and spiritually and the connected possibility that the man turns the woman into a complete slave and she becomes his creature in such a way that she loses every initiative and self-reliance.

I believe that it is in a woman's nature to surrender herself and to want to nestle close—physically as well as in intellectual and spiritual matters, in a greater or lesser manner, and if she cannot do so, she is not a real woman.

How far she surrenders herself to becoming dependent by doing the latter and in what measure she succeeds in finding the right balance depends on three points: 1) the intelligence of the woman, 2) the intelligence and niveau of the man, and 3) and maybe most importantly, how far and to what degree both partners harmonize and are able to lead a satisfactory life together. And if that is the case, they will become dependent on each other, or better, will be so tuned in to each other that they will feel free at the same time and be and remain uninhibited in their personality.

To come back to point 1): if the degree of intelligence of the woman is not all that high, she will never have thought or acted all that independently—even before she falls in love with a man—and of course, as soon as she surrenders to a man completely, she becomes his creature and will follow him blindly and adore him without judgment, without the ability to judge him.

If the condition of number 2 fits the situation and the degree of intelligence in the man is below average or is lower than that of the woman, a woman, out of the disappointment and realization that she cannot nestle and will not find the necessary resonance, will fall into the extreme that goes contrary to her very nature and become the enslaver and through that, will lose a lot of her natural charm and her natural equilibrium.

I am so inexpressibly grateful to you for being able to nestle close to you, completely and totally and in every sense of the word and that you make it possible for me to retain my independence. I believe that I told you and wrote at the very beginning of our love that the most pleasing part of our relationship, and completely new to me, was the wonderful harmony and balance that rang through it and that there was nothing inhibited, unnatural, or even untrue about this relationship.

I did not go into your lines from the 29th in more detail before today—they have occupied my mind quite deeply—because I wanted to spend some time thinking about them, to feel them and carry them around with me until my thoughts had ripened enough for me to put them down on paper or even into words.

I shall be writing to Hilde Lewy who sent me her long-awaited news today from Atlanta. Walter still has not found anything and for the time being, they have rented a two-room furnished apartment, until they can have the part of the furniture they did not sell. She writes about her little child in such a delighted manner and says that now that she is a year old she has become such a charming little person that she already outshines most people, or so she writes with great delight.

Oma Lenchen told me that the aunts arrived from Berlin yesterday. She will visit them tomorrow and I hope that I will get to meet them soon. Ketty might come over in the next two weeks. Oma Lenchen was able to transfer a little money to her account there, which will help her to get away. It will be very good to have Ketty here, because Gertrud really needs a strong hand, and Oma Lenchen with her kindness and leniency is *no* match for her. Completely and utterly, *Your* little Lilongo-witch

MOPE TO VERA

Leningrad, 11 July 1939

Yesterday evening, for the first time since the beginning of the inspections, I went to bed before 1 a.m., while it was usually between 4.00 and 5.00 in the morning every day or better, every night. Actually, I had intended to write to you last night, but that just did not work. I was so completely exhausted and tired. Most of all, I want to send you my most heartfelt gratitude for all your beloved and loving letters that reach me here daily.

Although Schapiro is downright bombarding me with telegrams concerning this or that article, I am now sitting around without a single order and the only reason I am grateful to him is the fact that I can take

the time to draw on this piece of paper. With all the work that needs to be done right now, I feel that the most difficult thing is that I have to interrupt those letter chats with my darling for days on end, though my heart is full of love and longing. In the meantime, it is 2.15 a.m. and I was interrupted and did not find the time to continue until now. I am so tired that I keep thinking I will fall asleep on the spot. Tomorrow morning, at 9.15, it will be time to go back to work, and I have come to the point now where I can stop working with a clear conscience. I hope that I will get up on time in the morning so I can continue this letter, because right now, I would not be doing you much of a loving service if I continued writing and do without that little bit of sleep.

Good night, my golden, most beloved little Lilongo-witch, sleep well and in your dreams, feel those innumerable kisses and gentlest caresses that I would like to give to you in unimaginable numbers.

VERA TO MOPE

London, 11 July 1939

I just had a long conversation with Oma Lenchen—it took place as a replacement for a visit; she is so very sweet and it is a pleasure to have her within the reach of the telephone, at least. Ketty now has permission to start packing and might get here next week.

I received a confirmation from Selfridges concerning your *wireless set* and they want to *overhaul* it after you get back. They want to know if the *faulty valve* can be sent back to them since they only guarantee the *valves* for three months. Maybe you can have someone bring it to me.

I am sorry but the ink ran out on me and I have landed in the horizontal in the meantime. I will close now, because my eye lids are closing on me.

I love you and I kiss you with the most passionate and tender love,
Your Little Witch

MOPE TO VERA

Leningrad, 13 July 1939

I did not get around to continuing these lines until now, although I carried this sheet of paper around with me in my pocket, so I would be able to use any opportunity to finish this letter. However, I also

need some inner calm in order to be able to have a conversation with my darling and I only have that when I know that I am not neglecting any of my duties while I concentrate on you. Tomorrow evening, the auction will be over. Up to now, everything has worked out somewhat well—knock on wood—although I am extremely annoyed with Schapiro, as you know.

Under the given conditions, I no longer feel able to continue working with Schapiro. I told him that constantly feeling out of tune was anything but beneficial for my work. My reasons have nothing to do with financial concerns, although I do not like to have to beg for every single penny owed to me, but rather that I feel constantly attacked by him in my self-confidence as he uses every opportunity to say things to me that are supposed to be statements made by clients in order to subdue me. In any case, I do have to really think about all of this before I come to the end with or without a decision. This parasite Schapiro who always has his wife with him and also takes her with him on his travels, most of the time, does not show even the slightest understanding, but does everything in his power to make it even more difficult because he does not seem to feel all that secure up there on his throne.—

Wait, wait—what kind of garbage am I writing to my adorable, sweetest Lilongolein? You are not supposed to get a letter of complaint from me after such a long break in my letters!!! Since I began writing this, I have been interrupted and called away uncountable times and I also have not responded to your beloved letters in any way. What you write about Carl and Lies Rosenfeld is really depressing to me and I almost feel like terrible ingratitude to a much more favorable fate to grumble the way I have in this letter. I do not know if the refusal you should really expect to get from the people at M&S is worth risking. It might be better to go via Fred and talk to him about the matter.

I really have no idea what to think of Norbert's behavior, but it would make no sense to force that idiot to join his wife whom he would just torment if that was done. I really do hope that Fred does not support him financially. There is absolutely no reason for him to do so and he also does not have that justification when so many other people who are much closer to him are forced to call on him. I find it completely insane to speculate on a possible return to Germany in two years instead of dealing with reality and establishing a new existence, even if it takes a long time. I really hope that Fred puts his foot down most energetically

and decisively refuses to provide for his upkeep in any way if he does not want to listen.

It will be 2 a.m. soon and I still have to go to the post office to send a few telegrams and I also want to send this letter on its way to my most beloved little witch.

Completely and utterly, *Your Mope*

VERA TO MOPE

London, 15 July 1939

My *sweetheart*, it makes no sense to always be so annoyed with Mr. Schapiro. I hope that I am not giving you bad advice, but I have come to the conclusion, more and more, that these difficult separations, and added to that the sweetness of a Mr. Schapiro, are only acceptable for as long as you are *forced* to put up with them. There is no advantage in making personal attacks on such people—who are not fine characters, after all. I have to remind you of your own “wise” method of sleeping on such things for *one* night. Sleep makes it possible to see things more coolly and to be more impersonal in one’s decision making the following morning. I am only telling you this, because I know that you—as every sensible person would—might tend to take his remonstrances just a little too personally, but it does demand prudence when one is dealing with someone like a Mr. Schapiro.

My *sweetheart*, you are still in the middle of the auction now and I hope that you are *not* too overworked and that going to bed at 3.20 in the morning was just a *one-time* occurrence. Completely and utterly, *Your Little Witch*

MOPE TO VERA

Leningrad, 15 July 1939

The auction has been over since yesterday evening, but there was still a lot of work that needed to be done and my sweet one is the one who has to suffer because I was forced to neglect you so badly all that time, at least where writing letters was concerned. In my thoughts—but I do not really think that I need to make special mention of it because my girl already knows—I was constantly with you, as always, and it is just

as difficult for me not to write to you as it is for you not to receive any letters.

I had really thought about the entire matter during the last few days and that I have come to the decision to allow the contractual arrangements with Schapiro to proceed as before. I am hoping that his letters with the stupidest accusations which upset me so much will come to an end. I would really prefer not to stay here that long and that I would consider it more advantageous for business if I came back here towards the end of September. However, it will not be possible to make any decision about that right now. We shall have to watch the business developments in the next few weeks. The auction was quite weak for most people working on commission. Many orders from smaller customers were canceled at the last minute due to the unstable political situation in Europe. America also reacted similarly. Contrary to that, the larger dealers were the largest buyers so that, against all expectations, the prices remained relatively stable. It seems to me that Sojuspushnina can be well satisfied once again with the results that were achieved. My purchases will not get much above £10,000. If I did that on my own expenses, independent of my salary from Schapiro, I would have had around £75 in expenses and £150 in commissions, so that would not be sufficient to let the issue be profitable.

I am extremely interested in hearing about the final result of the court case and I also hope that Fred will not put the matter off for much longer now. I find it less than pleasing that we still have not found out about the effect of the court case and what really annoys me is the fact that time goes on and the expenses just keep growing, and we are not even sure if we will ever get any of that money back.

Sleep is now overwhelming me quite strongly so I *must* close these lines, although I would just love continuing to chat with you. I have ordered a wake-up call for 9 o'clock in the morning while I was rung out of my chaste bed at 7.00 a.m. for the last week.

Most passionately and completely without reservation, Your Mope

VERA TO MOPE

London, 16 July 1939

I talked to Oma Lenchen on the telephone last night as well as this morning. She is very sad because Ketty and her husband are not able

to come over this week, as anticipated. The entire matter was delayed again! I do not know if you have read about the new law that forbids all immigration to Palestine for the next six months (that has nothing to do with Ketty), since the number of illegal ones has been so high in the last few months.¹⁹⁸ That poor Carlchen Rosenfeld and his wife! If they do not find anyone who gives them an unlimited guarantee here things will become very difficult for them as well. I think I already wrote to you that their acquaintance is prepared to post a £200-0-0 guarantee, but that does not seem to be enough. Completely and utterly, *Your Little Witch*

MOPE TO VERA

Leningrad, 17 July 1939

The day before yesterday, I wrote just a few lines to my beloved girl with the hope that they would reach you early Monday morning through a man who is flying directly to London, but to me he is most inappropriate as a *postillon d'amour*. The man is Mitja Simonoff and you do not need any further explanation!¹⁹⁹ That man turned a few waitresses' heads and they were fighting over his photograph today. It seems to me that his method of making an impression on women is so cheap that I just cannot understand that they even react to it in the first place. His way of strutting around like a rooster and wiggling his hips seems almost whore-like, but maybe, my most beloved one thinks that I am prejudiced against him. I was indifferently friendly towards him since I do not estimate him highly enough to have any kind of feelings of hate for him, and after all, seen with clear eyes, all of that was only a mistake, albeit a grave one, and it is almost silly of me to come back to that, and I do not think that I would do it if it did not present such a psychological problem and riddle that I have not been able to solve to this very day.

I wonder if my sweet one has applied for the visa by now. With the tension that exists between Schapiro and me, it is questionable whether he will be willing to carry the traveling expenses, but if I have to stay

198 As the Mandatory power over Palestine, the British government published a White Paper in May 1939, effectually limiting Jewish immigration to 75,000 over the following five-year period (10,000 per year plus 25,000 refugees). Its subsequent enforcement was tantamount to a death sentence for countless European Jews.

199 This is the same Mitja with whom Vera had lost her innocence, and Mope has not forgiven him.

until September, I do not want to wait that long for my little witch and as matter of fact, if I stay another month, I will earn so much more because of being here for that month than the traveling expenses could possibly amount to, so the matter is not quite as extravagant as it seems to you.

I am very happy to hear that the aunts are there now, too, and I really hope that you will get to meet them soon. Both of them are half deaf and you have to speak very loudly and clearly. You will find a very understanding soul in Aunt Helene Simon, because she was one of the best known social workers and publicists in Germany and was given an honorary doctorate from the University of Heidelberg. Sadly, she is very old now and very hard of hearing and I do not know how her sensitive soul dealt with the recent difficult events. However, you should try to get to know her. As far as I am aware, both of the Aunts are very fond of me, and I am sure they would be very pleased to meet my sweet one whom they only know from a photograph. I would also be very happy if you visited them soon.²⁰⁰

Georg Rosenfeld seems to have felt quite comfortable there with you—please give him my thanks for his note and give him my best regards. I really like the idea that he visits you quite often because he is a nice and pleasant young man and on top of that, his parents are very close friends of mine. I really hope that they will have the opportunity now to emigrate as quickly as possible.

It is Pod Wychodnoi today and now, I have to go to the restaurant and join my colleagues for a little while before I go to bed. I kiss you filled with the most passionate love and most affectionate tenderness on all of your x—that means innumerable—sweet spots (do you know which ones I mean?) and I caress you in my thoughts with all my ability to make you content and happy—if only I could really do that again finally, then I, your Mope, would be completely happy, too.

VERA TO MOPE

London, 17 July 1939

200 Helene Simon (1862-1947) was a pioneer in the theory and practice of social welfare in Germany, and was deeply influenced by the work of Beatrice and Sidney Webb, the leaders of the Fabian Society in England. After fleeing Germany, she and her sister Klara found basic accommodation in a boarding house in London's East End.

Today, I am beginning my letter with very sad news: Pepper is *not* feeling well at all. Last Wednesday evening, after he had spent the day in the city, he started shivering and went to bed around 8 o'clock and then, felt better again afterwards, that is, he has been very tired and exhausted every day ever since then, and Mutti is not at all happy with the way he looks. Yesterday around lunch time, he told us how much more well he was feeling, and this morning, as usual, he wanted to go into the city, but while he was shaving, he started shivering again all of a sudden, and we called Dr. Rothschild. A little while ago, Mutti told me on the telephone that Dr. Rothschild had been there for about an hour and that he diagnosed pneumonia which really frightened me. On top of that, Pepper complained or rather did not complain but just mentioned it as an aside that he was feeling a burning sensation in his urinary tract, and Dr. Rothschild said that that was probably due to prostate hardening which is rather common in older men—it can be treated, but it has nothing to do with the other matter.

Now, I am home again and Pepper is doing *much* better. Dr. Rothschild gave him some medicine that brought the fever which was above 39° this morning down to 38.8° centigrade, which is relatively good for the evening. Mutti told me that Pepper slept for just about the entire afternoon. She is feeling very depressed and worried. Dr. Rothschild will come over again very early tomorrow morning. There is a new medication for pneumonia that he prescribed to Pepper and it is supposed to be especially good and effective.

My love, I wish I could give you much nicer news and I only hope that, by the time this letter reaches you, Pepper will be much, much better and allowed to get up again. By the way, his breathing is not heavy and Dr. Rothschild said that it was a very mild form of pneumonia. Nevertheless, at his age, that is not a good thing. He is such a touching patient who does *not* complain and all the while, he kept saying that it was nothing and he was just a little tired and yesterday, around midday, after he had slept, he said that he was feeling very well again. He maintained that he did not have a fever and did not want to have his temperature taken.

I have to close now so that this letter will get into the mail this evening. I hope that I can give you better news tomorrow. Completely and utterly, *Your Little Witch*

MOPE TO VERA

Leningrad, 18 July 1939

I feel more longing than ever before to come to my most beloved girl and it is completely unimaginable to me that I might have to be without you until September. If Schapiro is not willing to pay for your traveling expenses, I am sure that I will come back earlier and I regard *that* as the solution to the problem. You might write to him that you have applied for the visa or that you intend to and ask him if he will now pay for the trip he still owes you from last year. You can do that in my name and at my request. From what I have heard, it is almost out of the question to get a Swedish or Finnish visa on a passport that is only valid for another six months. For this reason, I do not have any other choice but to fly back, and I will have to go to Moscow for that. Nevertheless, I am going to try to get the Finnish visa and for that reason, I will travel to Moscow in the next few days. The visa will be valid for three months.

I love you so tremendously, my sweet Lilongolein—*Completely, Your Mope*

VERA TO MOPE

London, 18 July 1939

Please excuse the pencil, but I am writing from the horizontal, because it is very late already. Fortunately, Pepper is doing much better today; that is, he was feeling very weak, which is a result of the medication or rather the pills, but his temperature was 37° this morning and 38° rectally this evening. Dr. Rothschild came by this morning around 8 a.m. and was very satisfied with him. In the last ten months, the formerly so very dangerous disease, pneumonia, has become an illness that is now being treated extremely successfully, thanks to an invention of pills that make the pathogen that causes pneumonia innocuous—and it really works wonders! The difficult thing is—and Dr. Rothschild is great in that regard—to recognize a case of pneumonia immediately. The pills make the patient feel very weak, but Dr. Rothschild says that that usually disappears within three days and that Pepper will be back to his old self in no time at all. He will come back again tomorrow at 8 a.m. The poor Pepper is really unfortunate and as I already said yesterday, he is an extremely brave and good patient. Dr. Rothschild explained to me

that these pills are also useful for the prostate enlargement since they disinfect all inner organs. It is really fantastic how well these pills work, because yesterday, Pepper really looked wretched, but today, he looks quite well. Dr. Rothschild told us that he should be completely well again within a week, thanks to this new invention!²⁰¹

I am so late today because I wrote a detailed letter to Annelie this evening. I wrote to her because I received a downright frantic letter from her this morning. Her parents still have not been able to make any progress and I went to see their local attorney. It seems to me that the various sons-in-law mismanaged the matter somewhat, and Annelieschen's husband does not seem to be the brightest light, at least not according to the letter he wrote to the local attorney, even if he seems to mean well. The newest project is that Dr. Friedman and the grandmother might possibly immigrate to Chile, but that is not possible before April of 1940. And if there are no flawless documents on hand for that, the desired stop over here will not be granted. According to all appearances, it was strongly suggested to them to leave Leipzig as soon as humanly possible, but there has not been a chance up to now. In my letter, I tried to explain all the different possibilities mentioned by the attorney and maybe, the matter can be taken care of after all.²⁰² Sweetest, most loving kisses and filled with the greatest longing, *Your Little Witch*

MOPE TO VERA

Leningrad, 19 July 1939

I hope to be able to transport these lines quickly as well so that they will reach you on Saturday. I have not received an answer yet from Schapiro, but I will probably not have to wait for too long. Should it come to a break with him, I will just have to see how I will get ahead without him. According to my calculations, we have a little over \$2,400 in the New York bank and the London account is not much smaller. I hope that another £100 will be left over from the court case and

201 The first antibiotic medication, a sulfa drug, was made available in 1936, preceding the use of penicillin on patients by about six years. It was prescribed as a cure for bacterial pneumonia. The same drug was successfully used to treat Winston Churchill's pneumonia in 1943. During Vera's student days at medical school, antibiotics had not yet become available.

202 In fact, several of Annelie's relatives did find refuge in Chile.

Schapiro owes me more than £200 in commissions. I am supposed to receive another £130 for July and August and I am quite sure that more commission will be added to that. On this trip, I have earned around £76 in commissions so far, maybe a little more, and I really hope that this calculation, representing the result of two years of work, will please my darling just a little and will make the suffering caused by the seemingly intolerable separation a little easier to bear. In any case, the time was not completely wasted which fills me with a certain satisfaction, even if it is not a significant amount.

But now, I want to climb into my chaste bed and in my thoughts, I want to kiss my most beloved girl all over and especially on those delightful thighs and between them most passionately and longingly and caress you ever so gently. You just simply cannot fathom what a burning longing I feel for you, my golden little angel, and how unspeakably happy I would be to have you with me and to take joy in your beloved sight and all the other things. Most passionately, Your Mope

VERA TO MOPE

London, 19 July 1939

When I came home, Pepper was feeling better. He does not have an elevated temperature today, which is completely great with pneumonia, and not until the invention of the pills I mentioned to you yesterday has that become possible. As a candidate in medicine, I saw cases of pneumonia at the hospital and I know only too well what a terrible and disconsolate picture they presented. Of course, Pepper still feels terribly weak and miserable, but Dr. Rothschild assured us that now that the fever has gone down so abruptly he will get better every day. Poor Muttilein was *terribly* worried all those days! It is really bad: I think that she looks much worse than Pepper! I will take Saturday off and insist on her resting. Dr. Rothschild will come back tomorrow morning at 8 am.

Just like you, I am very sad about Lies and Carl Rosenfeld, especially after the new law was passed which prohibits any further immigration to Palestine until next March. Fred is out of town, and he is already doing sooooo unbelievably much for all the siblings that there is no way anyone should bother him while he is away on a family vacation in Cornwall.

I have to close now and get to sleep. *I love you, my sweetheart, with all my soul and heart* and completely and utterly, *Your Little Witch*

MOPE TO VERA

Leningrad, 22 July 1939

Tomorrow, it will be two years from the day I left here to come to our wedding, and my longing for you overwhelms me in such a way that I am completely *fed up* and only want to go home. I feel like a small boy who is away from home for the first time and does not know what to do in all his homesickness. Sometimes, it is not nice at all to have to be an adult who is not allowed to let himself go, because he has to make allowances for "being an adult." And I have to say that I never suffered from homesickness as a boy, at least I do not remember ever feeling the kinds of emotions that consume me now.

It is really a fact that our most beautiful years of youth go by and we only get to see each other on rare occasions and can only enjoy our mutual caresses so rarely that this state has to be ended as soon as possible. Unless it comes to a break before that, I will have to fulfill my duties until the end of the contract and I assume that I will have to travel a lot, but absences as long as this one will not happen again. I am firmly convinced that I will be able to make a living for us with a commission business in Russian merchandise and trips here during the auction and a few weeks before and after, and I really do not want more than that. I am sure that there are not too many people with as much merchandise experience as I have gained here, and I am sure that I would easily find another position.

I am deeply saddened by the further delay in Ketty's emigration and I would be much happier to have her safely in London, because otherwise, you can never be sure that she will really come. I am aware of the six-month immigration ban for Palestine and I have already thought of Carlchen and Lies, but I hope that they will be the first to leave just as soon as the six months are over. However, I feel that this law only encourages illegal immigration and then, there is the worry that the six months will be extended by a further time period. The strongest immigration there—as you might already know—is the inner *immigration*, and every woman who can manage has taken on the obligation, for that very reason, to have another child.

All the people with an eye for reality are leaving old corrupt Europe so that their children, at least, will no longer be affected physically by the powder keg the old world has turned into. A number of my colleagues are in process of leaving and moving with their families to New York, where they seem to be able to settle in quite well. Of course, that is speculation with a view into the distant future which could be completely off the mark, because the U.S.A. can experience changes as well and rapidly developing technology could draw the now still far away continent into the focal point of events here. The only country in which one can pursue one's occupation calmly and undisturbed is the U.S.S.R. where no one has to feel disquiet because of incidents in other parts of the world, since the people feel such an enormous trust in the great homeland and they can make themselves independent of the outside world without suffering the least deprivation.²⁰³ But if the most beloved people—as is the case for me—live so far away, that same calm cannot be felt and the worst thing of all is the terrible longing that consumes me above all possible measure. *Completely, Your Mope*

VERA

Journal entry, 22 July 1939

My lovielein is still so very far away from me and I have had enough of this constant separation. I miss my husband's impact, and I think I have *much* too little initiative. Pepper has been sick since the 17th of this month, Muttilein is heart-warming and good as an angel and I do not help her enough and complain too much about being separated from my husband. I will have to try to get my husband to stay with me for good.

MOPE TO VERA

Leningrad, 24-25 July 1939

Outside, it is pouring in buckets and ever since yesterday, the sun gave up insisting on being seen by the people of Leningrad, although yesterday was Wychodnoi after all and we thought that we had a right to its rays.

²⁰³ Mope's opinion here appears to have been written more to appease any possible Soviet censor reading the letter than necessarily reflecting his own views.

Around noon yesterday, we drove out to Pavlovsk again, but, because of the weather, we could not stay out in the park, so we visited the castle instead, which I did not mind doing again, because there are quite a number of very beautiful pieces of art. Among other things, there are several wonderful Brussels tapestries and their colors just about outdo the French ones. I did not get to my room until 8 o'clock where I had to take care of quite a bit of business correspondence.

Around 10 p.m., my darling's letter from the 19th arrived and I am deeply pleased to read that Pepper is doing better and that Rothschild's treatment seems to show some success. Then, I felt so tired all of a sudden that I preferred going to bed and to write these lines this morning. For this reason, I got up a little earlier this morning and I hope that, by the time I have to go to the warehouse, this awful weather will have improved. I was very interested in your description of the effect of the pills that change pneumonia into a much less harmful illness, since that was not possible until just recently. I had not known that pneumonia is so difficult to diagnose and actually, I am wondering about that, since listening to the lungs and back is easier than the examination of most internal organs and their illnesses can be determined as well. In any case, Pepper is a *clever boy* for waiting with his pneumonia until after this new invention and not only spared us a lot of worry, but also saved himself from a long illness. My sweet one has every reason to acknowledge his competence more than ever and I am very happy to hear that he is a pleasant patient and does not absorb too much of the strength of his fellow men, which is also worth a certain acknowledgment.

I am really very sorry to hear about Annelie's parents, but those people simply refused to listen and always thought that that gang of criminals would invent an extra special treatment just for them and then, their decision of leaving the grandmother there all alone did not show much heart. How many discussions have I had with Dr. Friemann to make it clear to him that there is only one decision and that would be to emigrate as quickly as possible, but he did not even want to consider that for himself.

I am wondering what has been going on with Ketty in the meantime. What a relief it would be to know that she finally got out! I am also concerned about the fate of Carlchen and Lies and I really wish to get better news about them soon. It is a depressing awareness that we cannot help or even advise them and I find it a crying shame that Carl's friend does not stick up for those two more than he does. I wonder if it

would help for my darling to talk to this man. Maybe you should ask Georg what he thinks. Maybe the intervention of a woman might work better in such matters, especially when it comes from such a sweet girl like you, and I would be very, very grateful to you and I do not believe that paying a visit to this old guy would be a greater sacrifice than the awareness of having done everything possible justifies.

But now, I have to hurry up and get to work! Most passionately, you most beloved one, you! *Completely* and *altogether*, Your Mope

VERA TO MOPE

London, 25 July 1939

I am lying in the most beautiful sunshine and there is *absolutely* nothing wrong with me at all; this morning, my temperature was 36.9° centigrade rectally and I am really ashamed of lying around the house being lazy and to have caused such an upset in the first place. The entire thing was more than silly: on Sunday afternoon, I felt completely well and then, around 9.30, I felt a little bad all of a sudden, went to bed, and got the shivers and a temperature and gave poor Muttilein a bad scare. She called Dr. Rothschild late that night and he arrived after 1 a.m., and stayed for about an hour and thoroughly examined me, and my temperature was above 40°, and since I felt pain on the right side of my body, I was afraid that it might be appendicitis, but he said he was certain that was not the case and gave me the same pills Pepper had.

I wanted to send you a telegram that same night—since I had made a promise to you—and explained to Dr. Rothschild that, if I did not do so, I would break my promise. He said I should wait until morning and I asked him if he would be responsible for maybe ruining our marriage, and he answered: “Yes!” In the morning, the temperature was at 37.8° and in the afternoon 38.5° and Dr. Rothschild came back and said that he had examined my urine and he was *sure* that it was *not* appendicitis and prescribed several most intensive enemas, and today, I feel as well as anyone can and I am ashamed of having been such a burden on the poor doctor and such a worry to Muttilein.

I was convinced that it was my appendix and I started being afraid, because my love was so far away and it would have been terrible to me to have to worry you like that. Now, I remember that, after my first tennis game this year last Saturday, I drank a vast amount of tea, since

I apparently felt the need and it was teatime just then. Last time, it was around lunch and so, I will have to accept Dr. Rothschild's explanation that my silly temperature can be traced back to dehydration and constipation that led to a quasi-poisoning. Silly, silly to be that stupid!!!

Strangely enough, Dr. Rothschild told us that he had an identical case in his office yesterday and also following a game of tennis, or rather physical activity, that causes an excessive loss of H₂O. I would have gone to the office today, because I feel completely well and an elevated temperature does not say much in my case, since I always run a very high fever that goes as quickly as it comes, but because I am not completely at my best today, though without any pain or other complaints, I am using the day to be lazy and lie in the sun and I am enjoying it.

My love, I would not have told you this really rather boring story in so much detail, but actually, I am pretty *sure*, that you will believe me 100% after this detailed report which even included the exact temperature. Dr. Rothschild called this morning and he agreed that I can go back to the office tomorrow. I hope that you will not worry at all, and that you are not upset with me!!!!!!!!!! Can you tell how afraid I am of my *husband*!!!!

Pepper got up for the first time today and is sitting in our room on a comfortable chair. Really, I feel sorry for poor Muttilein, with such "patients," that is, Pepper was really not well, but with me, it was just a stupid and unnecessary thing—then again, being ill is always unnecessary, but with me, it was actually self-induced—however unintentional it may have been. As a "reward," we have the most beautiful sunshine for the first time in days and I feel like I am in a health resort. *Your* little Lilongo-witch

P.S. *Do you ever think of the cigarettes?????*

VERA TO MOPE

London, 26 July 1939 [Postcard]

Dr. Rothschild was here just a little while ago and now, I am on my way to the office, since I have neither a temperature nor anything else—and Dr. Rothschild agrees. He has encountered three very similar cases in his practice since Sunday and because that has never been reported medically, he will publish it in a medical journal. In one of those cases, he was not consulted until later, after they had already removed the appendix and had to determine that that had not been the cause of the

illness. I am convinced that 99% of all medical doctors would have had them remove my appendix as well and I am more than grateful to Dr. Rothschild. Had I been the doctor, I would have also made the diagnosis of appendicitis. I am feeling as well as ever. Dr. Rothschild really is an excellent doctor! Most affectionately, *Your Little Witch*

MOPE TO VERA

Leningrad, 30 July 1939

Tomorrow is the anniversary of our civil marriage ceremony. Last night, two colleagues kept me company while I was waiting for a telephone call with you which, as usual, did not connect, and we opened several cans of sardines, salmon, Prague smoked ham, and compote that I had collected over time—I do not like opening them when I am by myself, because food is not all that important to me—and drank wonderful Cadbury chocolate with it. The radio took care of the dinner music. At 2 o'clock, we went for a walk that was extended quite pleasantly when a bridge across the Neva that we had just crossed was raised to let a bigger barge through, and we had to march to the next bridge to get back to the hotel side of the river. Then, we drank tea and by the time I turned off the lights, it was 4 o'clock. By the way, we were very lucky where the weather was concerned, because right now, it is pouring down from a lead grey sky. Just now, I realized that the streetlights in Leningrad have been turned on for the first time. The white nights are over and it will not take much longer for it to start turning autumnal.

The floor servant woke me up at 8 o'clock with my darling's longed-for telegram. After receiving that, I spent the entire Sunday morning in bed and rested very well and then wasted the afternoon reading, writing, and talking, and after that, I went on a drive to Lyssi-Nos ("Fish-Nose"), a town on the Finnish Bay, across from Peterhof. The air was great and the two-hour drive with a twenty-minute stay there was a real pleasure. After returning to the hotel, I had dinner and drank an excellent coffee a colleague had donated to me yesterday. That stuff is called Nescafé and is a product of Nestle, and you put one heaping coffee spoon in a cup or glass and pour hot water over it and then, you have an excellent, aromatic coffee with no grounds. Until now, I had only known one product like that from the U.S.A. that does not taste as good.

I wonder if my dear Helenlein visited you today and convinced herself of your and Pepper's recuperation. I did not hear anything on the radio about the weather there today. Fortunately, the other news did not bring anything out of the ordinary and will spare humanity from those things that spring from such insane criminal minds as those of the fascist rabble.

It has become terribly late and now, I have to climb into that chaste bed again. But before I do and afterwards as well, I want to send you my most loving, gentlest, and sweetest kisses, my most adorable, most beloved little angel, and tell you that I love you most extraordinarily and tremendously and feel the most horrible longing for you. *Your Mope*

VERA TO MOPE

London, 31 July 1939

These lines are meant to tell you that I am completely happy because of you as we enter the third year of our marriage. My *sweetheart*, sometimes, I can still hardly believe that it has only been three and a half years since a very kind fate led you to cross my path. I wonder if you feel how intensely and completely my thoughts are with you and surround you and envelop you in my love. I think that it is a wonderful feeling to look back on these first years of our marriage with the knowledge that our friendship and love and our mutual understanding has deepened with *every* single day. I am soooo completely happy that you married me, so completely happy from the inside out in my awareness of you.

Before I started writing to my beloved again, I made a telephone call to Georg Rosenfeld who told me that his parents received a notice from Woburn House informing them that their case is nearing the *final decision*. He is hoping for a positive answer and I would really be very happy if everything worked out well. Should the matter not move forward from there, he thinks the only remaining way possible would be through his father's friend here and he welcomed your suggestion that I would then try to talk to him most enthusiastically. Georg will keep me informed on how things stand and just as soon as he or his parents hear anything further from Woburn House, he will let me know.

I hope that in the meantime your Swedish visa will have been entered in your passport. Please let me know about that *right away* when you get it. When will you go to Moscow for the Finnish one? I hope that you will

receive both of them, that way you can prove that you have your *home* here.

Pepper is doing much better. He still feels weak, but that is understandable. Of course, his wish to go into the city for an entire day twice a week makes no sense, but I am sure you do not think that Pepper would let one of us stop him? For the time being, he can't go, but as soon as he can, he will not be able to help himself! He is being extremely difficult, impatient, and pedantic and is giving Mutti a very hard time—she is much too self-sacrificing and lets herself be ordered around without pause, and I am worried about her.

It is *terribly* late; I have not answered your beloved letters yet and will probably do so tomorrow. Many most passionate kisses everywhere,
Your Little Witch

MOPE TO VERA

Leningrad, 2 August 1939

Today, I had a very happy day, because of your sweet and most beloved letters, which reached me after I came back to the hotel from the warehouse. Before that, I had felt tired and exhausted, but then, the sky became my private sky—blue again although it was raining outside and my sun was shining for me. Both of us found ourselves in the grip of the most heartfelt desire yesterday to at least spend this ever so important anniversary together, since our most dearly held wish to spend our lives together cannot be fulfilled at this time, alas. But even that remained impossible, at least not physically! But on the inside, both of us were so intensely close that both of us could feel it, and no distance, no matter how great, had the power to separate us. If you had seen me when I was reading your dear lines and perceived how my face brightened up and could have watched the joy I felt when I read your words telling me that you are happy to have married me, you would have been happy with me.

Of course, I believe my little witch when she tells me that you are completely well again. Just as soon as I see that you inform me about everything, subject to change, of course, there can be *no* doubts, and as you could see in my last few letters, I was not worried at all, which should prove to you that I put complete trust in your reports. It is such a calming feeling for me to be able to believe and not to become distrusting

due to false considerations. I feel easier when I know for certain that you are not trying to whitewash anything and I can rely on your reports and get a good picture of what had been wrong with you.

In the next few days, my passport will be taken to Moscow for the Finnish visa and I really hope that I will not have to make that trip myself. I will know by the middle of next week at the latest and should that not work itself out, I will have to take the train after all. I am sure that you have read my letter, or rather, the copy to Schapiro concerning my travel objectives, and at this time, I am not able to say anything else about any specifics. In any case, I will not let him intimidate me any more than he did before when it came to traveling home.

Completely and utterly, Your Mope

MOPE TO VERA

Leningrad, 3 August 1939

Today, I had a rather idle day. There is hardly any merchandise that might be of interest for me. I have not heard anything further from Schapiro and I am completely convinced of his anger over our wish to have a life together. Parasites always lack any kind of understanding for the fact that others will not work for them continually like machines and wish to run away when it gets to be too much. I have come to the *firm* decision not to sign a new contract with that guy, or rather, not to renew it. I am sure it will not be easy for him to find a new "Man in Leningrad" but that is his problem and I cannot recommend becoming my successor to anyone.

However, it is *much* more interesting for us to find out what else I can start doing and I really hope that something can be prepared during my next stay there so that not too much time will pass when I am not earning any money while I am trying to establish myself. At the moment, that is a little difficult for me to prepare for, especially since I hardly know the London market which is overfilled with refugees, and my trust in other people is a much reduced one, because all of them, especially with such an oversupply of people who are not earning any money, try to fleece the others.

I am following the news from around the world with great eagerness and I hope with all my heart that reason will prevail and that peace will be preserved. It has been twenty-five years since the insanity began in

1914 and we should hope with all our strength that those people who had to be part of it back then have enough influence on the young (and their lust for adventure) who think that war is an enjoyable departure from the constraints of the mundane.

My passport traveled to Moscow last night and I hope to be in possession of the Finnish visa on the day after tomorrow. This visa represents the first step towards returning home which is something I long for so very much in order to be able to take my Lilongolein into my arms and press your ever so ravishingly beautiful breasts against mine. I feel downright hot when I think about that and I am more than happy that I am finally allowed to think about that again, little by little.

Today, the cigarettes arrived and I gave part of them to some colleagues—since I still had two hundred—because they were starving for them and kept mooching. All of them are waiting, but Abdulla seems to deliver most promptly, much to my satisfaction.

Now, I have to climb into the horizontal, because the clock demands it, and I will dream myself to my most beloved, sweetest, and so indescribably beloved little witch.

Completely and utterly, Your Mope

VERA TO MOPE

London, 5 August 1939

It is late afternoon, and after it had been raining without pause since last night, the sun came out for just a little. Today, in the morning, it was pouring so hard that it even woke *me*—and that will tell you a lot!!! The rain was slapping down as if someone was continually pouring out buckets of water and I closed the windows right away in order to protect our drapes.

Dr. Rothschild came over yesterday morning. Pepper does not have a temperature any longer, but he is not supposed to get up yet, because the ear is now showing a pussy flow, which is a *good* sign, because everything that is supposed to come out will come out with it. Pepper says he is feeling better. He shows a good appetite, but is still feeling very weak, is in a *bad* mood, and every little noise irritates him.

Just a little while ago, Georg Rosenfeld called me and gave me some very pleasing news. His aunt went to the Woburn House today and found out that it had turned over his parents' case to the Home Office

and that it would take approximately 4-6 weeks until the decision would come in. I was recently told that, if Woburn House turns a case over, the Home Office hardly *ever* makes things difficult. I am really very happy about that and I am sure that you are too. I thought it was very nice of Georg to let me know right away. I intend to invite him here for tomorrow—his factory closes next week (bank holiday week), and he is staying at home, because he wants to save all of his money for his parents, as he told me. He really is a nice young man.

You ask how high the household expenses are. Until now, I have given Mutti £5—every week. Of course, because of Pepper, who needed various medicines, ear syringe, disinfecting material, etc., her expenses were much higher in the last few weeks. On top of that, she bought quite a few canned goods and other groceries, because all the newspapers say that people should do that, but I hope that it will be an unnecessary precautionary measure. How strange—you mentioned Nescafé and I had never heard of it and when I asked Mutti about it, she said that she had bought some that very afternoon because they had really recommended that drink to her, and we tried it and found it to be excellent.

My lovelein, I was *very* happy that you gave away to your colleagues so much of the last cigarette shipment! And I am downright *grateful* to you for that, as I am grateful for every single cigarette you do not smoke! And I hope *so very much* that your cough is better????

Completely and utterly, Your Little Witch

MOPE TO VERA

Leningrad, 5 August 1939

On my radio just a little while ago, they played a German lullaby "Good Evening, good night, presented with roses, slip under the blanket," and then, the chimes of Big Ben followed and told me that it is midnight.²⁰⁴ Today is Pod Wychodnoi and I had just arrived back to my room after a short walk after all of us colleagues had dinner in the restaurant when that ever so familiar melody was played. I had already been on another walk earlier and listened to the sounds of the quietly moving water on

204 *Guten Abend, Gute Nacht, / Mit Rosen gedacht, / ... Schlüpf unter die Deck* is a traditional German lullaby for children. On his radio, Mope will have heard a German transmission while tuning for "the chimes of Big Ben" and the BBC.

the banks of the Neva and enjoyed the view of the river lying in the light of dusk. The moon was still sitting very low and glowed like a split orange, reddish yellow, in the sky.²⁰⁵ I gave it my most, most loving wishes for my little witch and now, it has reached the middle of the horizon. Its color has now changed to white blond and that heightens the strength of its light which is supposed to call your attention to it and my greetings of love before you fell asleep. It and I now guard your dreams so that they are happy and joyful and are not disturbed by any demons while they move through your sleep, which is supposed to stretch late into the morning until the sun—I hope, after those first few rainy August days—and the singing of the birds wake you.

Yesterday, they let me know by telephone from Moscow that the Finns are causing problems with the visa approval and because of that, I will either fly back or maybe take the Russian ship from Leningrad to London, that will take five days, which will unfortunately cut into our time together. As I heard today, the next auction will definitely take place towards the end of October. I doubt that much business can be done before then, because they will start collecting merchandise for the auction and will withdraw it from open sale.

I made some inquiries today as to when the next boat leaves for London from Leningrad and to my horror, I was told that there will not be another one between tomorrow and the 29th. And the day of departure is never completely reliable and can even be delayed for a few days. Should I encounter the same problems with the Swedish visa that I had with the Finnish one, I will not have any other choice but to fly to London, while I would only fly to Stockholm otherwise. It is completely incomprehensible to me why they are making things difficult as there is no reason.

I have not heard anything from Schapiro concerning my projected return trip. He seems to watch himself quite closely now in his letters, because apparently, he really does not want to lose me. I will have to wait and see if he can make up his mind.

I kiss you most tenderly with the sweetest kisses on all your sweetest places who long for my kisses just as much as I long for you, you most adorable little angel, you—

Completely and utterly, Your Mope

²⁰⁵ During the “white nights” of summer, the moon had not been visible in Leningrad.

VERA TO MOPE

London, 8 August 1939

Today, such an agitation gripped me all of a sudden.²⁰⁶ I have been feeling like that ever since yesterday evening—worrying about you. I do not like the newspaper reports at all, and every morning after I have read the newspaper on the bus, I feel quite depressed and *downhearted*, because the reports sound so grim and dark. If only humanity could learn how futile all that strife is and everyone would try a little harder to regard a fellow man as a companion and not as a rival. Last night or rather yesterday at night, I dreamt that you had come to me and I was completely happy about it and then felt very sad when I woke up and realized that it was only a dream. *When* will you finally be able to give me the exact date of your arrival, my beloved?!

I talked to Oma Lenchen on the telephone and she promised to come visit us next Sunday afternoon. Your dear mother still does not have any more positive news from Ketty. They *hope* to be able to get out soon and that is all there is at the moment. Georg Rosenfeld came over around noon today and after lunch, he and I went for a long walk from three to shortly after six o'clock. Georg hopes—as he said—that his parents will be able to come here in about four weeks.

This evening, I received a letter from Mr. Fuchs (Hilde Lewy's friend) who has been here for the last few days and he asks if he can get room and board with us. I called him, and told him that I will invite him for a visit just as soon as Pepper is completely well again, but that we could not take him as a boarder. I also told him that it might be possible for him to rent a room from your dear mother. I called her right away and she will get in contact with Mr. Fuchs by telephone. The extra income would be more than welcome to her.

I really do hope that you have received the Swedish visa in the meantime and even more that I will find out the date of your arrival very soon. Georg will take this letter to the mailbox for quicker posting.

206 Vera's agitation was brought about by news reports of a massive German troop mobilization that was being countered by parallel military measures by the western European powers and by smaller states in the region. The so-called "white war" (the flurry of diplomatic activity and flaunting of military power) in August 1939 came to be seen as a dress rehearsal for an inevitable global confrontation.

I really enjoyed the three days off ²⁰⁷ and I feel extremely well-rested and recuperated. Pepper too is doing remarkably better. He took care of some business letters a little while ago and smoked a cigar that tasted *very* good to him.

Sleep well, my *lovielein*, and I am looking forward to you more than I can say. Most passionately and completely and *utterly*, Your Little Witch

MOPE TO VERA

Leningrad, 10 August 1939

I have not heard anything further from Schapiro and I am beginning to speculate that he is looking for a new man who is more easily intimidated than me and that he does not want me to irritate him any longer. As long as he has not found that man, he will let me wait for an answer and he thinks that he can then present me with a *fait accompli*. Of course, that is only speculation that lacks any kind of confirmation and then, there will be problems with getting my money from him, of course, and apparently, he has not even paid my July salary yet. That swine has never given me anything in writing concerning our agreement, but always left it to me to confirm everything we agreed.

I am wondering if Ketty was able to leave that damned country in the last few days or is still facing difficulties. Those poor people must be losing their nerve completely and are being made more unable to rebuild with all that waiting and uncertainty. I assume too that Carlchen and Lies have not moved ahead any further and I often have to think of all these people who are so dearly beloved to me, and I am depressed because I cannot help them. I still do not have an answer to my question if my most beloved can make up her mind and go to Mr. Weißmann, or whatever his name is, who calls himself "Carlchen's friend." I think you should do it, because nothing should be left untried. I am very happy that you asked Georg to come over once again.

I assume that Fred has returned from his vacation by now and I would be *very* grateful to you if you asked him about the situation concerning the lawsuit. It is horrible how long that affair is dragging

²⁰⁷ The August Bank Holiday in England.

out, and, without seeing a practical result, messages telling me that the affair was decided positively cannot satisfy me.²⁰⁸

So Pepper smoked a cigar already and even enjoyed it. That is the best proof that he is feeling better, because otherwise, smoking does not taste good at all. I find it less necessary that he has taken up his business correspondence again, but it probably gives him a certain satisfaction and there is nothing that can be done about it.²⁰⁹ I am happy to hear that your dear mother looks a little better once again, after Pepper has smoked his first cigar, and I really hope that her worries have been calmed and her well-being has been restored completely.

Today, the English-French military mission arrived here and continued on to Moscow this evening. I regard that as a great step forward and admire the intelligence of the Russian government people who made this wonderful suggestion. I did not get to see much of those people, because I was busy and I am not a friend of rubbernecking anyway.²¹⁰

Since I have not received an answer from Schapiro, I intend to apply for my exit visa on the 15th and travel to Moscow around the 20th, where I will try to get my Swedish visa so I can take the boat from Stockholm. We will talk in detail about your plan to accompany me on the next trip when I am home. I cannot tell you often enough just *how* happy I will be to have you with me, but there are so many "buts." First of all, my adorable girl wants to have a baby. Do you think it would be right to spend those difficult months here in the horrible cold of winter, if we succeed in laying the foundation for that? And then, you might have to make the trip back in your fifth or sixth month by sea which is very stormy at that time of the year!!! The second thing is that I would have loved to have you here in the summer, while it is especially beautiful and one can enjoy the fresh air by the sea or take a boat down the Neva while the famous white nights glow all around you. You can even play

208 War was to prevent any settlement from being fulfilled.

209 Mope is being ironic since Pepper's business ventures were invariably unsuccessful.

210 The much-publicized negotiations of the Anglo-French military delegation with the Soviet authorities turned out to be futile. Many historians now believe that Stalin and Molotov (the newly appointed People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs) deliberately intended to wrong-foot the delegation as a prelude to the non-aggression pact with Hitler, that was signed on 23 August. Before that date, Chamberlain and his cabinet as well as the public at large were unaware of the secret mediations between the Soviets and the Nazis.

tennis and I watched today and decided that there are some rather good players among the Pushniki. So there would be some diversion for you, while the winter does not offer anything besides the theater which you cannot visit every day either—and the language is completely unfamiliar anyway—and there would be nothing but the warehouse or the hotel room. But the “buts” seem stronger to me, and I did not even talk about the fact that your own earnings are of great importance to us, for as long as you can continue working and could help bridge any period of time during which I might be unemployed.

Now, I want to crawl into my chaste bed and dream of my most beloved, sweetest little witch and kiss you many, many times in your sleep, but unfortunately only in theory. Your Mope who longs for you most irreconcilably.

VERA TO MOPE

London, 10 August 1939

Tonight, all the lights have to be turned off in London from midnight to 4 a.m., because of the aerial defense maneuvers, so I have to hurry. The peace and quiet that we enjoy at home stand in stark contrast to all those disquieting newspaper reports.²¹¹ My love, I am filled with worry and I only hope that I see things too bleakly.

Today, I received a very dear and detailed letter from Hilde Lewy from the U.S.A. It does not appear to be all that easy for newcomers to make a somewhat adequate living. Among other things, she also congratulates us on our *wedding anniversary* and wishes that all of us can live in one place at some point in the future.

My *lovielein*, I also believe that, if you can come to an amicable agreement with Schapiro, you should not break off the contract a year early, and since I now firmly intend to apply for the visa together with you, it will not mean another separation for us, I hope.

Most passionately and completely and utterly, *Your Little Witch*
Please think of the cigarettes!! I love you!!! I love you!!

211 Hitler had just threatened to wipe Poland from the map if it did not concede the disputed city of Danzig to the German Reich. The threat of war became more imminent by the day during August 1939.

MOPE TO VERA

Leningrad, 14 August 1939

You know, the tension inside me has grown to such immense proportions that I feel like someone who has ignored his hunger for such a long time that he can no longer imagine what eating food is like. My nerves are so hyper-stimulated because of it and this terrible waiting for news from my adorable little witch contributes to that in a rather acute manner—of course, my sweetest one is not to blame for that, but the damnable transportation.

I cannot do anything on the business side either and my work is mainly limited to begging for contract merchandise on a daily basis, since I would like to move ahead as much as possible, naturally, before I leave, so I will not have to tell myself that I neglected my duties because I left too early. But all my questions and pleas fail, because there is no merchandise and all of us who do not get any purchase orders are terribly dissatisfied and lose a lot of time that could be ever so precious if it were spent in a different way.

I still cannot give you an exact date for my return, since my traveling route depends on whether I will get a Swedish visa and how long I have to wait for it to be issued. Also, it takes about four to five days until I get my exit visa. I hope that I will be able to at least purchase some of the merchandise that has to be taken on right away during that time. I am quite sure that I will be able to stick to the 20th as the date of my departure from here and then, I have to spend two days in Moscow, so that I will fly from there to Stockholm on the morning of August 23. Should I get the Swedish visa, and I am quite sure that I will, I will travel by boat from Göteborg to London in order to avoid having to fly over that land of criminals. I wish the sea was already rocking me back and forth!

I see that Georg Rosenfeld felt quite at home again with you and I would welcome it if he could repeat his visit soon. So, I can already look forward to seeing his parents in London and I really wish that his optimism concerning four weeks will not meet with disappointment.

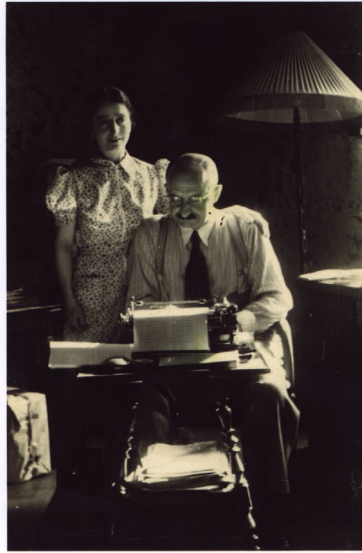


Fig. 83 KADDISH (IN MEMORIAM): Photograph of Lies and Carl Rosenfeld typing letters to aid their escape, Karlsruhe, July 1939 (courtesy of their daughter-in-law Audrey Rosney).

Alas, Mope's wish was never fulfilled as Carl and Lies Rosenfeld were unable to get out of Germany. In August 1942, they were sent under arrest on a transport to Theresienstadt Concentration Camp, where they survived for a further two years. In October 1944, they were placed on separate transports to Auschwitz, where they were each liquidated upon their arrival. Their son, Georg (who anglicized his name to George Rosney), served in the British armed forces, and, at the cessation of hostilities in 1945, was given permission to search for them, only to discover the terrible truth.²¹²

MOPE TO VERA

Leningrad, 15 August 1939

This morning, I received your most beloved message from 10th of the month and when I opened it, I ripped a small hole in the envelope from

²¹² For information on this, see Helen Fry in *The King's Most Loyal Enemy Aliens: Germans Who Fought for Britain in the Second World War* (Sutton Publications, 2007), 208-209. During my own post-war childhood, George was the closest thing to an elder brother to me.

which the words *I love you* shone into my eyes—you had written them on a corner of the sheet. That gave me such a joyful and warm feeling and made me happy that my sweetest one had created a little window for herself in order to speak those lovely sounding words to me.

Today, I applied for my exit visa and I have to say that this simple formal act improved my disposition many degrees, because I had been afraid for the last few days that there would be objections from Mr. Schapiro. The fact that there was no objection from him lets me believe more and more that the end of our relationship is near. That idiot is unable, like other people, unfortunately, to use information concerning the current business situation, but keeps looking for mistakes on my part. One cannot even really be mad at him because he cannot help it. He received my telegrams and on top of that, the copies of those telegrams are forwarded to him, but nevertheless, he forgets what is in them. If he could call by telephone, the situation would be simpler for him and the letters less abusive and stupid, because his memory would function better. If no interesting merchandise comes in, I will probably leave for Moscow on 20th August, and I have already let you know about the rest of my schedule—at least as far as it could be made, anyway.

The political tension is quite high at the moment, but I do not believe that it will come to an explosion before September and that should bring the end of the most disgusting criminal of all times, Hitler the damned. I wish we were past that already. I can hardly imagine that it will come to war and I am not looking towards the future all that pessimistically, since the strong democratic countries U.S.S.R., England, and France are banding together now.²¹³

So my little angel really wants to travel with me—in the event I have to leave for here again? I wonder what you will have made of my conveyed misgivings. The auction inspections begin on October 22 and the auction itself on October 25 which means that I will have to be back here again on the 15th at the latest. And how will that be compatible with our plans of having a baby?

Please excuse my scribbled handwriting, but I am terribly tired and still have some work to do. *Your Mope*

213 By this time, Mope was increasingly aware of the imminence of war, and his remarks appear to be intended to assuage Vera's justifiable worries and fears.

VERA TO MOPE

London, 16 August 1939

Earlier today, I received your beloved lines from the 10th of the month. I am really hoping that these lines will not reach you in Leningrad, because you will already be on your way home when they arrive there. My *lovielein*, actually, I do not get the feeling that Schapiro is looking around for someone else; though if that is the case, it's just as well, or even, so much the better!!!! So my *sweetheart* does not want to take me along in the winter!!!! Well, we shall see and hear what Dr. Rothschild has to say to that, just in case we need his advice, which I hope we do.

I do not know if I have told you that I asked Hanna, when I called her, where things are standing with the court case and she said that Fred still had not heard anything. It seems to me that he really is not attending to the matter and he probably has way too much to do anyway which is something I completely understand, and I think that we have to take the matter into our hands as soon as you are back.

I hope that my beloved has been receiving mail regularly. I do not think that I will write to you again on this trip but my greatest and best wishes accompany you constantly and without pause. *Completely your*
Little Witch

MOPE TO VERA

Leningrad, 17 August 1939

I heard just a little while ago that my exit visa has already been approved and I will receive the passport on the 19th. Right after that, a telegram from Schapiro arrived asking me not to leave Leningrad before having fulfilled a new order for best quality Persian lamb skins. I replied that my exit visa had already been issued, and that I have to leave in the next few days because of it. I firmly intend not to extend my stay here and I am curious to see what I will hear in answer to my cable. About four days before I applied for the exit visa, I had telegraphed him one more time, just to be sure, that I would file the application on August 15 and did not receive an answer at all. And now, he wants to tell me anyway that I did not fulfill my duty because I left! I fail to see why I should stay here any longer since I am quite sure that it will come to a break between Schapiro and me anyway, and it is not my responsibility to retrieve the

hot potatoes from the fire for him under these conditions. In any case, I will probably travel to Moscow on the 20th and, should I receive the Finnish visa, I will come back here for another day or two and try to get something done before I depart. If I do not get the visa, I will leave Moscow and fly to Stockholm, as I already told you, and I hope to reach the boat from Göteborg on the 23rd, which will arrive at Tilbury on the 25th around 10.30 in the morning. Despite all of it, it is more than unpleasant to me to leave with a request unfulfilled, because it is very important to me to try to maintain a good relationship with my clients.

In the meantime, I went on a long walk with a colleague, and that walk really felt good. As usual, we walked along the Newa, in which the streetlights were mirrored brightly, under the black sky with just a few stars, that has a calming effect on me. Tomorrow is Wychodnoi and all of us will go, or rather almost all of us, will watch an air show that is being held tomorrow around 3 p.m. I hope that the weather will be nice so that we can enjoy the sun. In the afternoon, I intend to start packing, because, as usual, there will be more work in the last two days than in the preceding two weeks.

Good night, my most beloved, sweetest girl. You have been asleep for quite a while already now and I wish you a good, peaceful, and recuperative sleep filled with beautiful dreams.

I am *most lovingly, completely, and utterly my* little Lilongo's Mope

VERA TO MOPE

London, 18 August 1939

I am afraid that I have treated you badly during the last few days, that is, the day before yesterday, I sent a letter to you airmail express to Leningrad and afterwards, after I received your telegram, I sent a postcard to Moscow, and since I hope that you will leave on the 20th, I only sent another card. Just a little while ago, my *sweetheart*, because I fear that you are pretty much without news from me there, I also sent you a telegram so you will not feel completely forgotten and alone. I can simply hardly wait until you are finally here with me safe and sound. Your Little Witch

MOPE TO VERA

Leningrad, 18 August 1939

When I got back to the hotel around 6 o'clock, much later than anticipated, from the air show, which took place in the most beautiful sunshine, I received a telegram from Schapiro, ordering me not to leave Leningrad before acceptance of the Persian lamb deal. I do not have any other choice but to extend my stay a few days and be terribly sad about that, because I was looking forward to our reunion ever so indescribably, a reunion that has now been postponed several days, and just how many is still not evident. I sent a telegram to my darling today to let her know and my heart ached and still aches, because I had to disappoint you. I do not dare to believe that I will receive the merchandise in the next few days and even if I do, it has to be good merchandise, which will have to be seen first. In any case, I intend to go to Moscow for the visa on the 20th so that I could travel via Finland, if necessary! Oh, it is just awful!

The flight performances at the air show were quite remarkable and I was greatly impressed when six big airplanes arrived all of a sudden and people actually rained down from them. At least 150 people jumped out of those airplanes within one minute, and their parachutes opened above them immediately. That was a unique and awesome spectacle. I hope that humanity will be spared and not be forced to get to know this same practice in war. As a sport however, it is beautiful to watch. I do not fancy trying it out myself, though!

My sweet one writes that she hopes her letter will not reach me here, but the transportation was so exceptionally speedy that it still would have reached me here even under altered circumstances. And now, you will have no idea where to send your beloved messages to me, and I am sure that I have confused you completely, but even I do not really know what will happen so that I cannot tell you anything more concrete. It seems to be nothing more than a dirty trick by Schapiro in order to keep me here longer. He is surely to blame for his stubborn refusal to accept any of my earlier offers. In all of his stupidity, that man wants to believe that he is smarter than anyone else. *Most lovingly and totally, Your lover and Mope*

VERA

Journal entry, 19 August 1939

This morning, I received a telegram from my beloved telling me that he will not be able to come back now, as planned, but he hopes that he will be back around the end of the month. I am disappointed and sad and I have had enough of this miserable separation! The next time, I will either travel with him or Mopelein will have to try to find something else. First of all, I will go to the *Home Office* with him in order to get *all visiting conditions cancelled*. And then, even if it means a smaller income, we will look around here for something. This is *no* life! I want to experience my life together with my husband and this time, an end has to be put to these endlessly long times of separation!!!

MOPE TO VERA

Leningrad, 19 August 1939

Today was another day without results and I fear that it will not be any better tomorrow. Nevertheless, I sent a telegram to Schapiro today to let him know that I will go to Moscow on the 20th and then, probably on the 23rd, I will come back here for two days in order to fulfill his wish, if at all possible. If everything goes according to my wishes—which have to undergo some alteration now—I will leave here via Helsingfors—no flying—on the 24th and if I am very lucky, I will catch the *Suecia* ²¹⁴ in Göteborg on the 26th—I will arrive at Harwich at 10.30 on the 29th and at 1.04 p.m. at Liverpool Station. I hope that that is the last possible target date and of course, I will keep you informed as to when I will arrive. My desire to work has been reduced to a minimum, and understandably so, and all my thinking and being is concentrated 100% on my return home and the reunion with my little witch. After all, it is not all that important to me now what Schapiro thinks.

On 28th July, I had written to Schapiro that "I will travel home on August 10 at the latest, because I have only been at home for six weeks this year and under no circumstances can I let my wife wait any longer. I will also see if she can accompany me on the next trip, because this cannot be called living." On 11th August, I telegraphed that I would

214 This was the same ship that Mope had taken on his outward journey.

be applying on the 15th for my exit visa. And neither the letter nor the telegram were answered, which I can only interpret as consent. As you can see, I was *very* fair and have already postponed my departure date a full two weeks, but more is out of the question!!! On top of that, those people in Paris do not recognize good will in any way and it is really out of place here anyway after the disgusting treatment on the part of Schapiro. There was a telegram from him today, "Stay requested otherwise great unpleasantness." My answer: "Greatest unpleasantness begging in vain for hard-earned money expenses," but after I calmed down a bit, I did not send it, because I am too good for that. However, he really deserves that answer and if he makes another sound, he will get it anyway.

My little witch will have a few days without letters and I hope will not be sad, because they are the days before my homecoming. Tomorrow is Sunday there and I hope with all my heart that it will offer you calmness and recuperation from the work week. I wish I had already left here, with a clear conscience knowing that I had fulfilled my duty. If it comes to the altercation with Schapiro, and I expect that to happen, I would rather not be forced to listen to unjustified accusations as far as that is possible. I am sure that you can understand that.

I cannot even write about my longing and my feeling of homesickness any longer, because these feelings overwhelm me and you keep me prisoner completely and with everything I am, my sweet little angel. *Completely and utterly, Your Mope*

MOPE TO VERA

Leningrad, 20 August 1939

And now, I did not leave here after all and the only good thing is that I am able to write to my most adorable darling this evening and thank you for your beloved telegram that was read to me on the telephone this morning. The reason for my not traveling is that my papers are not in order yet and it looks like that might take a few days. I am deeply depressed over this delay and I would like nothing more than to follow your telegraphed wish for a swift departure. Had I left for Moscow today, I would have tried to reach you tomorrow and I was already looking forward to that. Now, that has also been delayed for several days because of the Persian pelts, and I can only hope that I will not have to

wait too long before I get everything done here so I can finally leave and come home to you, my most beloved.

A little while ago, I saw a red crescent moon of enormous size ascend the sky, so another new moon whose beginning we cannot experience together, but at least, we are counting on being able to spend its middle and descent together, and I cannot tell you *how* infinitely I long for that time!!! While I am writing this, I am hearing an opera unknown to me from somewhere, since the noise of the music takes away a little of the feeling of being alone, but while I am writing to my little witch, I really do not feel it at all because of our conversation, but other than that, I feel it quite strongly. I do not have a single human being here I can confide in and the letters take so infinitely much time before they are answered and the answer gets to me.

I kiss you, my sweetest, most beloved, most adorable Veralilongolein, overfilled with burning, loving longing that is ever so *painful* and *bitter* and I embrace you with infinite tenderness again and again. *Completely* and *totally* and *utterly*, Your Mope

MOPE TO VERA

Leningrad, 21 August 1939

Unfortunately, I expected things to work out differently where my departure is concerned, differently than it turned out to be due to the Persian lamb purchase, and asked you to send your mail to Moscow; and now, I am hoping to get there very soon, because your beloved letters will be waiting there for me. As I told you in my telegram earlier, I do not consider the situation quite as dangerous as it appears to you. Humanity will not be that insane and let itself be driven into a war in which not only the states will lose their wealth, but people will have to sacrifice their health and their lives. Everyone is aware of the fact that a new war would far surpass the previous imperialistic one in cruelty and would also put women's and children's lives in extreme danger.²¹⁵ Nevertheless, I am making every effort to leave here as soon as possible and come to my little witch after this interminable time of separation. Do I have to assure you of that?

215 Again here, Mope's remarks are intended to assuage Vera's worst fears, while he was doing everything in his limited power to quit the Soviet Union.

It seems that most of the colleagues are harboring thoughts of leaving, because there is not enough merchandise to make a stay worthwhile. After all, the expenses have to be met. After much effort, I was able to finalize a deal today that will give us about £1 after all is said and done, while another deal I had been counting on failed, because they want to reserve the merchandise for the auction. This auction is making business extremely difficult, because they are collecting all the merchandise instead of offering it on the open market.

In planning my departure, I will probably fly from Moscow to Stockholm, so I won't lose any more time on my way home, and then continue my travel by boat so that it should not take more than three days, while it would take at least five days from Moscow via Helsingfors. However, I cannot give you anything definite.

I am wondering if Ketty and David have finally arrived in London. You do not write anything about that in the last few letters, although you told me earlier that they were definitely expected last week.



Fig. 84 KADDISH (IN MEMORIAM): Card sized photograph of Ketty and David Goldschmidt.

Mope's urgent appeal was left unanswered. Ketty and David Goldschmidt did not get to England. In the weeks before the war, their brother-in-law, Fred Rau, had twice traveled to Hamburg with the express purpose of persuading them to

leave Germany at once, but was apprised by David that first he needed to "take care of something of great importance" and only then would he be ready to leave. Though Ketty had received the requisite travel documents for herself, David was jailed just before her intended departure on charges of currency irregularities and attempting to conceal the family silver. In deciding how she should act, Ketty will have been torn between love for her four children in England and loyalty to her husband in Hamburg. Buckled by ill health and psychological stress, David is believed to have threatened to end his own life should she leave him, and so she opted to stay on. By the time he was released, hostilities had already commenced, and, when a transit visa through Norway was refused, the door out was permanently shut. The couple remained in Hamburg until June 1943 when they were deported to the Theresienstadt Concentration Camp. The following year, in September 1944, they were transported to Auschwitz and murdered in the gas chambers on 1 October. For all his herculean efforts, when recounting their tragic story, Fred commented with deep sorrow that "you see how essential it is to get one's priorities right!"²¹⁶ In his own desperation to return to England, Mope will have understood that only too well.

MOPE TO VERA

Leningrad, 25 August 1939 [Postcard]

I am leaving today!!! Today, I will begin drawing nearer to my sweetest, most adorable darling and turn into reality that which is continually on my mind: I am coming to you!!!! My heart is feeling lighter, my heart that longs for you ever so eagerly. I am beginning to feel happy again, because I will be with you soon.

How was it possible to bear this longing? I can see how much it depressed me by the way that feeling now gives way to the joy of looking forward to our reunion. I feel so much lighter every single minute that I am drawing nearer to you in time. I have started to feel happiness again. You, most beloved!! I am coming to you!! Your Mope

216 Fred Rau's lamentations are recorded by his children in a privately printed *Family Story: Fred and Hanna Rau and Their Forebears* (Jerusalem, 2019), 76. Through the most terrible tribulations both before and during the war, it is known that Ketty and David retained their profound religious faith until the end. For their children, that was their sole consolation.

MOPE TO VERA

Moscow, 26 August 1939

Just a little while ago, I talked to my most beloved, ever so beloved, sweetest girl. If you could feel *how* happy I am to have listened to your beloved voice!! Actually, I think I am farther away from you spatially here in Moscow than I was in Leningrad, but because of the opportunity to make that phone call, I am one thousand miles closer to you.

In just a few days, I will be with my most adorable little witch and I am happy. Oh, how I am looking forward to you!

Most passionately, most lovingly, *Completely* and *totally* and *utterly*,
Your Mope

MOPE TO VERA

Moscow, 27 August 1939

I am leaving tomorrow morning!

There are no words for my joy in being able to take my adorable, sweetest, little witch into my arms again in just a few days and to find compensation for the difficult, unbearable time of separation in our caresses.

There are very few things I know for sure, but I am *absolutely* certain of one thing: I love you with all my ability to love, with all my heart, with my entire soul, with every drop of blood I have in me and I am my Lilongolein's Mope.



Fig. 85 Mope's final letter from Moscow, 27 August 1939. Pepper, an enthusiastic stamp collector, tore away a corner from the sheet while removing the stamp from the envelope.

The single egress for Mope that now remained open was by air and, providentially, an exit visa to leave the Soviet Union was issued to him. That in itself was insufficient. A seat still had to be found on an airplane traveling west when every flight was overbooked with frightened passengers endeavoring to escape Russia in advance of the now inevitable war. After waiting for at least a further day and failing to secure a direct connection, the flight that Mope boarded was from Moscow to Brussels, crossing over Germany. His itinerary would allow him to change planes in Brussels and then fly on to Croydon. Vera's reiterated fears about flying over Germany turned out to be far from illusory. Shortly after entering German air space, the pilot received a radio warning that, due to thunderstorms and poor visibility, he might not be able to bring the plane into land at Brussels. He announced to his passengers that he would be forced to take temporary shelter by landing in Berlin, which was directly below their flight path. Had they stopped in Berlin, it is certain that Mope, against whom there was a longstanding arrest warrant, would have been taken off the plane and never seen again. Fortunately, the pilot received a further radio signal that it was safe to continue with the flight, and he was able to touch down in Brussels according to schedule.

However, despite his relief of getting out of the Soviet Union and successfully flying over Nazi Germany, Mope was not fully in the clear. He learned at Brussels Airport that, because of the international situation, flights were cancelled, including his connection to Croydon. At least from Brussels, he could now be in telephone contact with Vera, though it remained indeterminate when and how he would be able to return to England. Following another day of uncertainty, he found himself free to travel to the coast and take the sea voyage across the English Channel to Dover, arriving close to midnight on Thursday, 31 August. After his documents were scrutinized by a single on-duty immigration officer, provisional entry was granted, and he was able to fall into the arms of his very relieved wife, who had traveled to the port in order to welcome him home. Both of them surmised that his arrival late at night had worked in his favor as his papers were subject to less scrutiny than would have been the case during the working day. The following morning, the Germans marched into Poland, and the Second World War began shortly after. Within days, cross-Channel ferry services were suspended indefinitely.

An entry in Vera's personal journal, written a few months after, revisits the events of August 1939 and lends a summation to those final days of extreme fear and uncertainty before Mope returned to her. It ends with some self-reflection and doubts about her own ability.

VERA

Journal entry, 28 December 1939

Strange that I take this book in hand on Dec. 28!!! After not having touched it for such a long time. For the last four months, the country has been at war. It brought my husband back to me, and now, while most families have been torn apart through the war, we can finally live our lives together.

The last days of August, until he returned, were very difficult, filled with fear and uncertainty. Many a times, I intended to take up this book during those days to put down exactly what I felt: to know that war would come, must come, and the man so far away, without even knowing if the authorities of this country would allow him to re-enter this country. The war did break out; what it meant, one was not quite able to realize at the time nor is one or am I really able to now.

Like all selfish people, I can only or I am in the first place concerned with what this war has brought for us (quite apart from thinking what horrors and what hardships, suffering hardships and pains, it is daily bringing to an unknown but surely large number of human beings, with whom one naturally and deeply empathizes).

What the war has brought us:

- 1) Mope back home and for the first time the possibility of living some continuous time together;
- 2) The chance for me to be at home and to get some practical experience in running a home, cooking, catering, etc.
- 3) The necessity of putting all our energy and strength into something new again, to adapt ourselves to new circumstances.
- 4) Mope has lost his position and a lot of trouble is connected with the way he was more or less pushed out of his employment.²¹⁷
- 5) Difficulties at the Tribunal for Mope which have not yet been overcome.²¹⁸

²¹⁷ Schapiro showed no sympathy with Mope for leaving the Soviet Union.

²¹⁸ Mope faced major problems with the British immigration authorities during the first two years of the war. These are summed up in his curriculum vitae where he writes: "Fortunately, I succeeded in getting an exit visa from the Russians three days before the German invasion into Poland, something I had applied for many weeks before, and I arrived in England during the night of the invasion. When the war broke out, I was ordered to appear before the police and was taken before a tribunal. My long stay in Russia and my return to England so immediately

The sad and weak part of *my* character is that, although I can see my flaws and realize I have them, I do not do anything to make things better, to solve the problem!!!!!!–

I think it is pathetic that I, at almost thirty years old, with a rather normal brain and a good variety of training (university studies, business, welfare work, etc.) and a rather decent face still have not amounted to anything!!! It is high time to do something about that!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

before the outbreak of the war really spoke against me, and for a long time, I was threatened with being sent overseas before I was interned."

