

4 July 1969

Dear Ruth,

Your express letter was placed under my door this morning. As you requested, I have prepared an innocuous letter (purposely dated 3 July so as to appear to cross with rather than reply to your letter) which I will mail to the Kiron address. You will see from that letter that I am about to leave for Boston, for a month, and I have a mountain of chores to accomplish before I take the plane Sunday morning---preparing my clothes, etc., packing my things and the cat's things (I am taking her with me), and the all-too-familiar small nuisance jobs that must be done before a trip. Of course I should not complain at all in the face of what you had to go through before your departure, and since, in plain household chores.

Still, time is short, so you will understand if my reaction to your letter is not as adequate as it should be. On the first quick reading, my thought was, no need to panic--he has been threatening to return since he first arrived in Israel, and he even returned without remaining, and he will change his mind 63 times before the end of the month. After re-reading the letter a few hours later, that is still my reaction.

Of course, this may just be the time that he fools us all and really does go through with it. We will have to cross that bridge if and when it becomes necessary. Meanwhile, I ask myself: how can he contemplate such a step after the monumental labor you have performed (as I hear from Pearl) in readying your Kiron apartment? How can he uproot Varda still again? Has he broken with the Madame? How does he expect to start TMO going again without paying the stupendous amount of back taxes he owes? How does he have the shamelessness to make appeals for more thousands of dollars when he has bank accounts stuffed with money, that I know about, and that I have proof of in black and white? Does he think I was so stupid as not to keep evidence? Or does he think that I will simply permit him to swindle still more people and remain silent?

I ask myself also: Why are you living in such a state of terror that you cannot write a letter except when he is absent for half an hour? Are you so bull-dozed that you do not insist on the privacy to be alone in your own home? Do you submit to censorship of your mail? What hold has he got over you anyhow? Surely not the business of Seth, which is hardly any secret. But you have a hold over him, do you not? You have Varda, whose loyalty and devotion will stay with you. You have proof of infidelity. And you have, or by now should have, proof of financial chicanery. It is not you but Arnoni whose entire body should be trembling. You know, Ruth, that no one can help you if you do not choose to help yourself. No one can stop you if you insist upon being a supine victim, a masochist, a woman who perversely determines to be drowned in a foot of water instead of rising to her full height, shaking off the water vigorously, and asserting her personal dignity and pride.

Perhaps you delude yourself into thinking that you love this demented arch-phoney. It is absolutely certain that you do not and can not, by reason of the anguish and humiliation you have suffered. It infuriates me to think how much power you have but never use, and how much plain shit you continue to take from this putz. Surely you have seen already how far you got by patience, loyalty, devotion, and all the wife-ly virtues. The irony is, he must despise you for it, and punish you all the more, for letting him walk all over you with nailed boots.

What else can I say? I don't even know from your letter whether you want to come back or want to remain there. But either way, try using the weapons you have so as to have some voice in determining your future, and Varda's, unless you want to be completely destroyed. I don't have time to get involved with Max Geismar on this, but I did tell him the score some time back, so far as my relationship with Arnoni was concerned. Even so, I suspect that Max will welcome him with open arms--he is very muddleheaded. Ruth, dear, forgive my bluntness, and please keep me informed of further developments. In friendship,