

4 September 1967

Dear Maggie,

I am sorry that I seemed distant when you called on Saturday. Actually, I had been thinking the same of you---for asking, the last time I called you, "what's on your mind?" and because I had heard nothing from you between my August 18th letter and your call the other day. I scolded myself for hypersensitivity and for imagining coldness or rebuff where they did not exist. These anxieties would not exist were it not for our fundamental disagreement on Garrison---I know that we have both been determined not to let that affect our personal relationship, which from the very first and until the opening of the Garrison phase had been exceptionally close, sympathetic, and unmarred. I know that we have both made a genuine effort to succeed; in spite of that, we have become increasingly cautious, inhibited, and insecure, when we speak or write, and perhaps that was inevitable, good intentions and good faith notwithstanding.

I can estimate how much this grieves you by measuring my own pain at this estrangement---and at the estrangement from Vince, and from other "muskateers." (Happily, in spite of everything, I felt the same warmth and affection for Ray and Letha when I saw them last weekend.) What can we do to arrest and reverse this? If self-censorship and silence on the issue of Garrison have not prevented an erosion, perhaps we should try to thrash out the issue instead of avoiding it. What good is mutual protectiveness if it leads to misunderstanding and affront?

For example, I think that when you called Saturday you were protective in that you were reluctant to indicate what Lane felt about my letter, or what you yourself felt, or both. You did not want to hurt me or to precipitate a dispute about the merit [or rather, the lack of merit] of my position vis-a-vis Lane's letter to me. So I was left with the impression that you felt that he was right and I was wrong, or that we were both wrong, but without any indication of your reasons. I have to say that no one, including Ray and Letha, who has seen the exchange of letters felt that Lane had a grain of justification for his criticism; nor that any part of my reply was unwarranted. And I think that none of them would agree with me to my face when their inner views were contrary. I would like to know what in my letter Lane specifically rejects; but it is his responsibility, not yours, to let me know (which he has not yet done and which I doubt he will still do). But if you also find fault with my reply to him, I think you should tell me why. Let's not add that to the other "un-speakables" which have already done considerable damage instead of preventing it.

It is easy enough to maintain a friendship when the parties are in total agreement on everything; I think that our relationship could have survived dispute, and perhaps we were both wrong in fearing to test it. There is little I would not give to roll the months back beyond the first small schism, when the devotion and loyalty among a group of us were as precious as air and water. I don't enjoy the alienation or the isolation (Penn warned me that this would be the result of my position on Garrison, as if the personal cost in terms of this isolation could possibly alter principle or conviction strongly held). Maybe the gap is unbridgable---but maybe none of us have really tried to bridge it. I don't know---. But let me close on a happier note: Susan seems to be in love and on the brink of marriage. It all started only two weeks ago, so I am not entirely certain of where it will end. He is a chemist or scientist, 38, sounds intelligent and likeable, and he has not left her side for a minute, seeming to be head over heels in love. She has the symptoms too. She took him to meet her sister (the one with the four children) this morning; but I have not yet met him. Still, it's a joy to hear Susan sound so happy and so alive!

As ever,

*Sydney*

You were good enough to call me after your weekend with Lane at his place to indicate his favorable reaction to the galleys. Did you know then that he had such strong feelings about the non-mention of The National Guardian? I think not, or you would have told me, and I would have added something about the Guardian.

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