

8/28/70

Dear Mary,

Gary is lost in the north woods, near a Canadian merchant known as Jallicoe's Country Store. Your letter of the 26th couldn't have come at a better time, for I was about to burst from the pedantry with which the editing of COUP is being done. Best intentions and all that, but starve! There's not much I can do about it, and I don't want to offend the very niche scholar who apparently regards all writing as on physics or math. Thank God, I'm almost through it.

I knew Bud's boys were en route. Nice ones.

The problems of parenthood are ours only vicariously. We just had to take four rascals to their parents, having caught them disassembling a bridge across a stream on our place.

Because I would not give you false comfort, I encourage you to undertake whatever you can to alert the service to Jimmy's problem so that, if anyone has the disposition (and they can't be baby-sitters), he may be alert. Sometimes there are such people in the services. And, while your reaction, particularly Buck's, is understandable, do not be too harsh on Jimmy. What decent boy today would want to be part of what we are doing in SE Asia? Incidentally, I think you should try and take steps to see to it that he does not get sent there, for what he wants least is there most accessible. Although it is now in the media, that is merely from suppression. I've known about it for years, from correspondents who are friends.

Right now it looks as though you've picked the best time to come, with one possible exception I'll explain. And, unless you insist upon Braniff (Dulles is at least as good for me as Friendship, maybe a bit better), there are other non-steps, including either American or Eastern, so don't limit yourself when there may be better flights. It is a holiday weekend and I suggest you make reservations immediately, both ways. You can always change or cancel, without cost. The one possibility (and I think it will not come on a holiday) is that the editor, whose vacation is now ending, was supposed to come here after a week in New York. That seems to me to be after you'd be here. Also, I think he'll want to go over all I've done with his editing first, which may delay him further. So, please plan on coming when you say, but let's make a last-minute check to be certain. If I get a specific date, which is not possible before next week, I'll let you know.

I welcome the report on Shirley, and you do not exaggerate Sylvia's intelligence.... On Tom, did you get the notebook? You'll understand the importance more when you are here. I'm about to file a suit on Ferris documents, for example. Penn, alas, does not surprise me. I wish I could explain to myself his not paying the money he owes me. I has already cost me almost a third of the amount in charges he has it, and we need it so urgently. Right now I need paper for the copying machine and can't get it. When I get the advance, it is going to the bank, on our debt, not even on things you'll see the House really needs.

Remember, have some informal clothes. Tell Buck I usually wear only shorts and zoris here. Bring your bathing suit, in case the water is not too cold by then. The pool is 15-20 feet from the back door... We do look forward to your coming. I think it will also be good for us. Until then,

Wednesday
August 25, 1970

Dear Harold and Gary:

Today is my first day back at work... and I really shouldn't be here today. I've been "baby-sitting" with Jimmy Lee and I was about to go out of my mind. His trial was last Wednesday and they made us "sweat" right up to the last minute. It was "settled" in the judge's chambers just before the trial. He is out of it if he will go into the service. Now, we have an additional problem. He was about to be drafted in May and had to go down to take his physical. We knew he took it and the army said he passed but that was all we knew. What we didn't know was that he hadn't wanted to go and had checked every possible thing listed on the forms as having been wrong with him... literally everything from athlete's feet to venereal diseases. Poor Buck saw it for the first time at the Air Force Recruiting Station last week and I thought we were going to have to bury him on the spot. Buck almost screamed, "Son, when did you have a venereal disease?" Jimmy said, "I really didn't. I just thought I had." He had also checked that he had a hard time getting along with others in school. Now, we've had to get an affidavit from his family doctor and the headmaster of the college prep school where he went, assuring the air force that he is sound in mind and body (which I really doubt), but I don't think the Air Force wants him now... We have until the first of September to get him into something. (I'm about ready to turn him over to the Russian army, but I'd bet they wouldn't have him either.)

Harold, if we do succeed in getting him "placed" somewhere by the 1st, would it be convenient for you and Lil if I flew up there the 4th of September (Friday afternoon) and stayed until Monday, the 7th? We are off from the office for Labor Day and I think I can get away from here but if you have other plans, I can come later. I would definitely be flying into Dulles. That's the only place in D. C. that Braniff lands.

I really enjoyed Sylvia Meagher. She is delightful and so very intelligent. I also enjoyed Shirley's visit. She is quite well now and I think she and I did each other a lot of good. Tom Bethell came and stayed a week. He came Monday, the 17th, and left day before yesterday, Monday the 24th. I understand Mae Brussels came to visit Penn Jones Wednesday the 20th but I haven't heard from either of them so I don't guess I'll meet her. Penn came up to my house the 17th and visited with Sylvia but things got pretty tense with Penn and Sylvia and also with Penn and Tom...

Arch said that Bud called him yesterday and said two of his young researchers will be here tomorrow for some work in Dallas. I think Arch met them both in D.C. but I don't know them.

I want to take this opportunity to again thank you both for your letters of encouragement during the past six or seven months. I don't think I could have lived through these trying times without them. Please believe me, I am very sincere about this. Harold, your letters have been especially helpful to me. It seems you have said just the right thing at the right time...
Love, *Mary*