

A correspondence

by mazaher and athens7

January 17, 2014

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Patrick by athens7 (font: *Signerica Signerica*)

Jack and Dr. JW Halliwell, MRVS, by mazaher (font: *Chemist* and *Meddon*)

Dear Patrick

My Patrick,

you' ve been gone for so long already that I feel a little ache in my left knee and my mind wanders. Obviously, in your direction... Yesterday I tried to auscultate Mrs. Keebler' s heart with my pocket watch. Caught myself just in time.

This is all going to say that --selfish as it sounds, for I know how you love your music being loved-- I don' t really like your concert tours, not when they take you away for a whole week. I bless the Royal Mail and their multiple daily deliveries that allow me to keep in contact with you, or at least with the paper your hands touched when you scrawled your hasty reply.

(You should really try and improve your everyday hand, you know. You can trace such flowing characters when you set yourself to some work of calligraphy.)

Of course, I also bless you, taking time for whatever scribble you send my way. I can picture you writing in crowded hotel halls, or on the very tail of your piano just before the curtain rises, or in bed at night, before turning off the light and falling asleep. You do sleep, don' t you? I hope you do.

Well, here everything trudges on much as usual, but my tea is tasteless and I yearn for a cup of yours. The early freesias have appeared on the stalls of Covent Garden-- I have bought a bunch of white ones, with their fresh sugary scent you so love. Come home soon to smell them.

Yours, always

Jack



Dear Sir,

I have been requested by a good acquaintance of mine to deliver the attached letter to its intended recipient, given that I happen to have the convenience to do so sooner than by the regular mail service.

I should add that the sender appeared more impatient to receive an answer than he cared to let me know.

But I won't bother you further with details which, I'm sure, will be self-evident to you.

Believe me to be,

Sincerely yours

J.W. Halliwell, M.P.C.V.S.



Excerpt from the unwritten diary of one Dr. Jacob Waszowski

Eight days, and no answer yet.

Writing to him (again!) was a mistake. I knew, but I couldn't resist... I went for the lightest tone, and failed. I'll never learn.

He's surrounded by too many people, i.e. the wrong sort of busy. He won't realise how much he's emotionally tired until it's too late, and then he'll be rude with the nearest admirer and disappear. I hope it will be in his hotel room and not freezing along a quay at three in the morning...

On top of all this, he'll know that I miss him, and instead of allowing himself some respite during his time alone, he'll wind up even more. He won't sleep well, or at all. He will skip meals, and then gorge himself on oyster croquettes. All my fault. I should be his peace, not one more chore.

If I had sent you only a few words-- "Starlings on the roof this morning", or "New batch of Russian Caravan", he'd have sent something equally curt, and gone on to take the day in his stride. If he keeps his silence, it means he's overwhelmed. He'll want to send a perfect answer, written in a perfect moment, and he'll not answer at all.

I must find a way to make him laugh.

Perhaps I could send him a telegram with a bait...

"What did the groom at the renting stable say to the gentleman who wanted a hunter for the season?"

If he bites, and takes the time to reply, he gets his answer.

"Not the red roan mare, sir. Nice hack, but as a hunter, she's a hop-less case."

What one Dr Jacob Waszowski found in his mail on December 23 1899 (the letter was neatly folded inside a cheap tin cigarette holder with the words "Saluti da Firenze" engraved on it)

Dear heart,

for you make me feel so many things with such intensity that at times I do fear that I have become all heart (so that I can love you even more and more efficiently) ---

for all that I am is yours to have and do with as you please ---

for all those reasons and many, many more ---
yes, you are my dear heart.

I am writing this in the lobby of the hotel. Shabby, seedy thing. My post box in the morning, I think, but sleep seems unable to find me, so here I am instead. 'Scrambling' would be a more accurate term, perhaps, but be sure you'll excuse my antics right now.

I couldn't find the words. I couldn't find the words in my head, so I tried to find them in the music instead, last night, and how ironic that the answer was so well received by everyone except its only intended recipient.

Black cloudy hang heavy over the sky, tonight,
hiding the stars,
hiding you.

I can't see the stars - therefore I can't see "you".

I swear this is the last time that --- I need a Doctor,
pure and simple.

I'll have to have words with my agent, as soon as I'll be walking on English soil once again.

I miss you.

...

Damn it all, but you *are* coming with me next time.

...

What I mean to say is ---

How can a man be expected to walk with a hole in his chest and no muscle to pump his blood all through his miserable, weakened body?

Well, guess what, he just can't. It's impossible.

And yet again...

You'd only have to ask and I'd perform one thousand and one impossible tasks right in time for breakfast.

I wanted to send you a photograph of me all exquisite and refined in my latest concert attire but alas, even in this I failed. I look gorgeous in that black, shiny thing, do you know that? Everyone says so, both with words and with lingering looks.

Pity I do not give a single ethereal fuck about what everyone says.

Agh, people. We need a new plague.

And on that note (ha! Pure most assuredly intended), I am going to bed. I cannot say if that will entail sleeping as well, but I do think I better stop here, if I wish to avoid ridiculing myself any further.

Good night, dear heart. Dream of a calm sea and contented cats.



Transcript:

Dear heart,

for you make me feel so many things with such intensity that at times I do fear that I have become all heart (so that I can love you even more and more efficiently) --
for all that I am is yours to have and do with as you please --
for all those reasons and many, many more --
yes, you are my dear heart.

I am writing this in the lobby of the hotel. Shabby, seedy thing. It's past two in the morning, I think, but sleep seems unable to find me, so here I am instead. "Scribbling" would be a more accurate term, mayhaps, but I'm sure you'll excuse my antics right now.

I couldn't find the words. I couldn't find the words in my head, so I tried to find them in the music instead, last night, and how ironic that the answer was so well received by everyone except its only intended recipient.

Black clouds hang heavy over the sky, tonight,
hiding the stars,
hiding you.

I can't see the stars - therefore I can't see *you* .

I swear this is the last time that -- I need a Doctor, pure and simple.
I'll have to have words with my agent, as soon as I'll be walking on English soil once again.
I miss you.

...

Damn it all, but you *are* coming with me next time.

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Pity I do not give a single ethereal fuck about what everyone says.

Ugh, people. We need a new plague.

And on that note (ha! Pun most assuredly intended), I am going to bed. I cannot say if that will entail sleeping as well, but I do think I better stop here, if I wish to avoid ridiculing myself any further.

Good night, dear heart. Dream of a calm sea and contented cats.

This letter was sent from London, Holborn Post Office, on December 23rd, 1899, to Mr. Patrick Moriarty c/o Albergo Minerva, Piazza Santa Maria Novella, Florence. It was then redirected to Hotel Teatro Pace, piazza Navona, Rome, where it was delivered in the early evening of the 25th.

Patrick mine,

Christmas has come two days early this year. I woke up this morning, I shaved, I dressed, and when I sat for breakfast your longhand (I mean your scrawt...) greeted me from the envelope of your letter.

The kippers were too salted, the tea too cold, but I swear to you by the camel of the Three Kings that I never tasted any better.

I'm happy and selfishly proud of your success. How handsome you must have been, shining black as your piano, both glittering with notes-- Was it Schubert? Liszt? or Chopin, the study op. 10 no. 12, " ' Le révolutionnaire' ", which you played for me the morning you left? It must have been Chopin. It takes courage, his and yours, to open one's heart like that, for anyone to view.

(Yes, you have a heart there with you, you know. It's mine.)

But... Doing with you as I please? I would have kept you here, greedy as I am. Performing one thousand and one impossible tasks right in time for breakfast? I need one only: that you come home. Yet I'm not asking you to. I want your tour to be a triumph, and nobody to have any reason to say "I doubt he's so good after all, I haven't had a chance to see him."

So, Patrick, go to sleep, eat heartily, then play, and play well for me. We'll soon be together again, and as we greet the new century together, this gray London of ours will burst in reds and greens and gold for us.

Meanwhile, I draw an excellent cigarette from your rather horrid holder, and enjoy the soft sting of Latakia on my tongue. I won't write here what it reminds me of.

Oh, one last thing. Don't wish for a plague. L'enfer, c'est les autres, but I'd never have a moment to be with you.

Very much yours,

Jack



to Mr. Patrick Moriarty, Hôtel Potocki, avenue de Friedland, 8^e Arr., Paris

Dec. 27th, 1899

So, Patrick, how did you like La Grande Soirée?

Was Mme Bernhardt up to your expectations?

(I'm sure she was. How could she ever not?)

Did you have the chance to deliver the little memento you showed me, or did the tide rush over you so fast that it swept you away too soon?

I'm not jealous, you know. One cannot be jealous of such personality and talent, much the less so when it is fashioned into a gift to many, instead of being hidden as a secret treasure.

~~I wish I had been there with you.~~ Or rather not: my presence would have distracted you from complete concentration.

(Don't worry: I had a nice Christmas in the company of a bottle of gosse, appropriated by filled with gooseberries and roasted with potatoes and Brussels sprouts.) I am quite content to imagine you there, raptured by the drama unfolding in front of you and by that plaited hair, alive as a shadow, giving a second voice to the character. I drink to you, my Patrick, with a glass of Calvados, and anticipate the pleasure of your return, of your tales of wonder. There is always such wonder under your blasé attitude.

That's enough French for one message. Take care and travel safe.

Yours always

Jack



I'm scribbling this quick note just before leaving my hotel room once again (therefore you shall forgive me if my handwriting is even messier than usual).

The performance was everything I could've hoped for, and much, much more.

My choice of seats turned out to be very wise indeed, and I was also blessed with the completely unexpected presence of one Madame C. Vate in the audience.

I'm sure you remember how legendary the friendship between those two remarkable artists is.

Alas, I did not have such luck at the stage door. The sea of people waiting there was quite daunting indeed, and my prey escaped before I could make any requests. Therefore, I'm going back there tonight, well before I estimate the show to end, with the hope of having more success against the more - shall we say - enthusiastic admirers of Mme.

Wish me luck, it's not long before we'll meet again.

Ever yours

P



Transcript:

I'm scribbling this quick note just before leaving my hotel rooms once again (therefore you shall forgive me if my handwriting is even messier than usual).

The performance was everything I could've hoped for, and much, much more. My choice of seats turned out to be very wise indeed, and I was also blessed with the completely unexpected presence of one Madame C. Tate in the audience. I'm sure you remember how legendary the friendship between those two remarkable artists is.

Alas, I did not have such luck at the stage door. The sea of people waiting there was quite daunting indeed, and my prey escaped before I could make any requests. Therefore, I'm going back there tonight, well before I estimate the show to end, with the hope of having more success against the more -shall we say enthusiastic- admirers of M.me.

Wish me luck, it's not long before we'll meet again.

Ever yours
P



Letter delivered by private service

*Mrs. Tate! My wishes worked... But only halfway, and I promise to call
Hermes, the clever god of actors and communication, in your aid tonight.
How? you will be sure to ask.*

*Don' t worry. We doctors have him caught in our thermometers, to abide by
our every command.*

*Let me know what happened as soon as you can. We' re going to have much to
talk about.*



My Patrick,

your last, hasty message from Bruges on the 29th has thrown a shadow on my hopes for celebrating with you the new century which will blossom at midnight...

So be it. I'd rather have you crossing home safer than faster. After all, if not for the Kaiser's hurry to enforce his Burgerliches Gesetzbuch, the whole Continent would have waited 365 days longer.

But old Wilhelm doesn't rule on us. We'll have a celebration for two all of our own next year.

Meanwhile, my Patrick, believe me to be forev~

*The street door slams open. Hasty steps up the stairs. The maid's voice "Sir, your coat! Your hat!"
A gust of cool air, briny from the sea, smutty with coal soot.
A chair upturned as Jack stands abruptly.
The letter, unfinished.*

