

of God. Surely then the Good God who has
guided us both in the past will complete
His grand work and bring us together
safely soon. All my love my own darling
Frank. It has always been yours. I could
never change. God bless you now & always
your loving
Eileen.

My own darling Frank,

I often wonder are you receiving these letters at
all. Everything seems so upset now in the Far East. To think darling
that I do not even know where you are or how you are and yet I
am placidly writing to you as if you were only a few miles off and
in no danger at all. It is a wonderful grace I have got. I prayed so
hard that I might be strong and brave for your own dear sake, so
that I could pray harder for you, so that I would not communicate
my worries to those at home. I have succeeded to a certain
extent. I am anything but indifferent to your danger my own
dear Frank. You mean more than life itself to me. Day and night
you are in my thoughts. The very thought of losing you is so
terrible that I cannot bear to let my mind dwell on it for a
single second. I love you, Frank. I have always loved you and no
matter what happens I shall always love you.

Yesterday morning, January 5th I received your cable from
Kuantan — so famous now over Radio and in the press. The
cable people — I should say my good friend Mr Jones — sent
the message to me over the phone. They knew how anxious I was
for word so they promised to ring me. We tried to discern when
it was sent. The cable folk think December 14th. Now my
worry is what has happened to you during the past 3 weeks?
Are you annoyed with me for being so anxious?
I spent yesterday afternoon with us here so now both
she and your father have received the good news. You were a

Spring Villa,

195 Springfield Road,

Belfast.

Tuesday Jan 6th 1942

Feast of Epiphany.

darling to send back a long cable with so much love in it and you, in the very thick of the fray, probably tired, weary and worried. God bless you darling. May He spare you to me. May you soon return. This morning, I finished a 9 day novena of masses and Holy Communion to the Redemptorists Saint Gerard Magella for your safety. May St. Gerard watch over you this day and every day until you return to me. I do love you so much that praying for you is such a pleasure. On all Sunday and holidays I hear 2 masses. You shall always have your mass darling, no matter what effort I have to make to be present. I had another mass said for your safety yesterday. Surely Our Lady and Her little Son cannot refuse to hear our joint prayers, darling?

Thursday, January 8th

When Anne arrived back at Buckwood on Monday it was to hear the good news that your father had received a cable also. They were so happy and relieved to have news of you. Do not worry darling, we are all praying, praying and still praying for you. We shall not cease until you are in our midst once again.

Now I have good news for you but you asked to have all news in detail so I am going to give you all the details of my first meeting with your best friend, Gerry McGuinness. I was to have met him during my last week-end at home (8th Dec) but the Christian Brothers were having a play in St. Mary's Hall. Gerry was an usher so just had to attend. Fr Joe was very anxious to take me to see the play. Knowing that Gerry was there I spent quite an amount of my interval time in trying to place him. Frank Martin was very much to the fore and was very decent in giving up his seat to me. (we had not booked unfortunately) Well, on Tuesday last I was invited to tea at the home of 2 of our Omagh boarders who live in Belfast. Josephine was with them. After tea two of the big brothers asked us to come to a hop in St. Mary's Hall given by the Christian Brothers Past Pupils.

2. Knowing that Josephine was keen on dancing, though I did not really
feel like going, we set off. About an hour after the dance commenced
over came this gentleman asked to dance with Miss O'Kane and offered
his apologies to my partner - Mr McEvoy. I felt in my bones it was
Jerry and before he spoke, I quickly asked was he Jerry McFunnery.
Well Frank, dance, partner all were forgotten. We fell to and talked
down the orchestra until we had a pair of very sore throats. There was
so much we had to talk about - so much I wanted to hear about
you from his own lips. I believe we had a few dances together
but I scarcely remember them. Yes, he asked did I do the latest
Belfast dance - The Moonlight Samster (a very beautiful dance). I could
do it so we danced it together. I am afraid I was a very rude girl
that night. I completely forgot about our partners but when I explained
to them afterwards who Jerry was and his connection with you,
darling, they understood perfectly. We must have talked for about
2 hours and still we were not satisfied - At least that is how I felt &
I believe Jerry felt likewise. He wants to take me out to night &
is calling for me at 7 p.m. I enjoyed meeting him so much
simply & solely because he was & still is your best friend. I congratulate
Frank on having such a friend. I like him very very much. How
happy I felt talking to him about you. What on earth shall I feel
like when I speak to your own dear Self. Jerry felt most
confident about your coming home safely, to put it in his own words
"that fellow could come through anything" jokingly I teased him
about saying I was "a very ordinary looking person" He was very
serious & explained carefully what circumstances had led up to his
making such a remark. The more I spoke to him, the more my
old worries returned to me - how I must have made you suffer in
the past. You are a very wonderful man ever to have forgiven me.
Why, oh why was I so blind, stupid and silly in the past? I never
realized that you were suffering on my account. If only I had been
able to talk to you, to explain to you how I felt - you would have
understood darling and my mind should also have been at rest. I do
remember our cotiche at Ranelagh, when you came up to ask me
to dance. I remember feeling very pleased that so still and

4 Handsome a boy had asked me to dance. So you remember in the midst of a 16 hand reel I asked you some trivial question about where some one lived. You excused yourself, went off & asked some boy friend of your own & returned to give me my answer. I thought to myself. Don't be very good to go to such trouble to answer my question"! Then, do you remember being absent from the next celebration. I was looking forward so much to seeing you again & so when the dance commenced you had not come. I felt terribly disappointed. - the fun seemed all to have gone from that dance. Actually you were ill, but I felt you just couldn't be bothered coming. Then came the day when our crowd left Crolley station. I was so pleased that you had come. I thought you had come to say good-bye to me, though you never came near me. You just stood back and smiled as the train puffed out. These were my first impressions of the first boy I ever had and the only man I shall ever love. I thought you were perfect. There were no bad impressions in my first meeting with you. I never thought differently of you. When I changed, it was fear & fear alone which made me act as I did. When we get talking about the past, darling, you will understand how I felt. What annoys me is that, then, I did not consider how I was hurting you.

7. Gerry spoke a lot about the future, about the happy times which were in store for us all. He is anxious for me to meet Nan. In Gerry's eyes that was the greatest compliment you could have paid me to tell him I was like Nan. Won't we, four have the grand times in the days that are to come? How I long for you to return. I was to make you the happiest man in all the world. Your friends will always be my friends. I shall love them & welcome them to our home always. You have very loyal & sincere friends, Frank - qualities which I myself love & look for in my own girl friends. Roland came up to see me on Sunday night last. He is as happy as a king. The future was something wonderful for him. Hance will be in Mt Charles for a few days. This

5. week. I am to go over to Monnow and I believe I shall be allowed into the Secret as to when the wedding will be. They were overjoyed with our wedding & they thanked us both very much. I had him relate in detail every minute of his meeting with you, Frank. He thought you such a nice boy that he was worried lest you would snatch his Frances from him. I had a nice letter from Frances at Christmas. She was thrilled to get your Christmas greetings cable. I hear her bottom drawer has grown to great dimensions.

To-day I met Anne in town by appointment. She asked me to accompany her to select a dining room table for Beachwood. It is your father's wish to have a new table for the dining room so now he has got a very nice mahogany table. Instead of a leaf coming out to reduce the size, a side table can be formed from the centre. It is very highly polished. Having finished our shopping we adjourned to the Royal Ardenal Hotel for a rest & a little chat. While we sat in the lounge, we walked a Fr. Collins, curate from somewhere near Magherafelt - the home of Alan Murray. Anne knew him & introduced me. He knew lots of my friends in Omagh & has promised to come over some time for a game of golf. He made Anne promise to bring me to visit him, so at Easter, if all is well we shall both go by bus to Magherafelt & cycle out to his place.

It is now 5 p.m. & I intend to have a nice bath before tea. I shall tell you to-morrow about my outing to-night. Oh, that it was you, Frank dear who was taking me out to-night. How excited and happy I should be. I can talk about you to Jerry, so I am looking forward to to-night. I am still at daily mass & Holy Communion. I shall never willingly miss daily mass. I feel I am doing something worthwhile, when I am at mass. Good night, darling. God and his Blessed Mother watch over you and protect you. I am now in the midst of a novena to the Holy Family - the Feast of the Holy Family is on Sunday. There is no need to tell you what is my intention. It is you darling and your safety, our love and our marriage.

Friday January 9th

Do you remember, Frank this day, 2 years ago? It was the day you sailed away from us all. What a tremendous lot has happened in those

two years! What is still to happen in the years that are to come? Shall I give one guess, just one! You shall be home again, the war will be over and peace will be restored to our demented world. We shall be married and living happily together. No pair shall ever be as happy as we shall be. We have known suffering, misunderstandings and partings, during which time our love grew strong and true. To-day, there is no love quite like ours. We love each other now and I know that in reality we shall only begin to love one another when our great day dawns. I too, shall never grow tired of waiting for you. No one else matters to me now but you, Frank. You are me now. I feel too, that I could not face life without you. More and more I realize how much I need you. I know you are going to make me happier than I have ever been in my life before. It will be so easy darling. I do not want anything but you and your love. With those I shall have wealth untold, without those I shall die. Realizing how I feel darling can you appreciate my anxiety for your safety. I have tried to make many acts - some of which I felt some months ago would be humanely impossible. To-day I can make them daily but unfortunately they are not hard - they are a pleasure, and that is the truth. What can I do which will cost me some effort? Do not worry, I am not curtailing my diet in any way. This would be very foolish. When you return, I must be strong and fit for all the walking, cycling, golfing etc that we are going to do when you come back. You will be pleased to hear how well everyone thinks I am looking. People who have not seen me for some months remark how well I look. My weight has gone up to 9 stone 4 lbs, so now, my good man am I telling the truth or am I? You must be dying to hear about my date with Gerry and here I am rambling away about myself. He had a slight skid with the car & so arrived up about 15 minutes late. Poor Gerry, it was good of him to come at all, under the circumstances. He came in for a moment & I introduced him to Mammi. There was no one else at home just then. After admiring our Anderson Shells (perhaps

it is a Morrison. We went off to see Lady Hamilton (Lawrence Olivier & as Nelson & Vivien Leigh as Lady Hamilton) in the Imperial. It is the picture of the town this week & there were 2 terrific queues waiting to get in. However, our good friend had the foresight to book earlier in the day. So we were escorted past the lines of waiting people to our seats. After the picture nothing would do Gerry that I should have supper with him. This was 10 p.m., mark you. So off we went to the Whitehall in Anne Street & lowered two well laden plates. It was then, I showed Gerry my gifts from you, darling, which Fr Ashness selected and sent to me. They reached me a few days ago and how thrilled I was to receive them. It was like a little breath from Malaya. Before looking at a thing I searched thoroughly for some little note from you, darling. Had it not been there, my parcel would not have been the same. It is now over 3 weeks since I have ^{had} word from you. So your little card was so welcome. I read it & re read it, then slipped it into my notebook, ⁱⁿ which I keep your snaps, so that they shall always be with me. The paper knife is perfect. I have never, in my life before, seen anything so uncommon. The more I show it around the more I love it. Have you seen it Frank? The carving on the silver is magnificent. In the centre, where one would expect to find a monogram, there is a peculiar letter. I wondered was it Malayan, Chinese, Japanese or what language. Perhaps you can help me? It looks rather like this: -  The rosary beads are a work of art. I have used them every morning at mass since they arrived and I have prayed very hard for Fr Ashness for your friends in Ipoh. From now on I shall remember them all in my prayers. My heart bleeds for them and for you. It is your turn now to suffer those nerve-wrecking air raids. I wonder how Mrs Valda Roberts of Kampar has fared. I do not know her personally. Have you heard of a certain John Kenaghian who holds some large post in Singapore. What has become of Martin McCall? John B. O'Neill was to have joined his friend in Kuala Lumpur but under the circumstances decided not to emigrate. McCall had some post for him out there. How is Humphrey Thompson? I have not seen his father since but I feel sure he is very worried. Such a digression I have taken while speaking about my supper with Gerry. Now I return to take up the thread again. I want to tell you that I am wearing my Malayan brooch every day and it

8. has received great admiration. Thank you darling for sending me
such a beautiful box of presents. With the gifts was a nice card
from Fr Ashners telling me of the "wonderful fellow" you were.
(Just imagine Fr Ashners thinking I did not know this!) By a
separate post came a letter from him enclosing a little map of
Malaya. He quoted a letter written to him about you, Frank
from the military chaplain. Here it is "I have heard of and
known the M.O. but have not had the pleasure of meeting
him. It is grand to meet such people, they are the salt of
the earth." I let Gerry read this letter & he was as pleased
as I was at the high praise you received. Now the next missed
parcel, after displaying my presents to Gerry I showed him
the 3 maps which I possess of you namely the one taken in
N.W. India, the one on the Kabul banks, the second taken at
10,000 feet above S.C., the third I sealed about the wheel of your
Austrian and the last taken complete with topes. He thought
the large hat made you look much thinner. I have promised to
send him a copy of No 3 when I return to Baghdad. I want to
give him a few copies to your friends & add mine. He has asked
me to send him word when I receive news of you, and always to
let him know when I am in town. We talked so long that the
last train had gone. He suggested a taxi but it was a nice starry
night (10.00) we walked home. I enjoyed my night very much. It was
as near as I could get to speaking to you, darling. He is interested in
golf so we have arranged to have a game when the weather gets fine.
There has been no sign of either our ring or the
candle sticks. I am so worried about them both. I wonder which firm
London has your order. You once mentioned Mappin & Webb, so last
Saturday I wrote to them enquiring. I do not want to cable you
that thing has not arrived - it may worry you. By the
time this letter reaches you surely it will have arrived. Wasn't
it strange how Fr Ashners' parcel has arrived and yet your
present sent some weeks earlier has not. Are you able to write
at all now darling? I have made up my mind that henceforth
letters from you will be rare. It will be a big sacrifice not
to have just news about my darling but I will try to

Did I tell you, Frank that Gerry's engagement to Nan has been
announced. If I have already told you, forgive me. I am
On Monday next January 12th I return to Omagh. The M^r & Mrs
O'Leary are being motor'd back by their brother & have asked me to
accompany them. It will be so much more comfortable than going by the
daily, overcrowded trains - a train run to schedule now is something
unheard of. Sometimes the 8.40 p.m. leaving Belfast reaches Omagh at 11 A.M.
I am not sorry going back to work dealing. Work keeps me from
thinking too much. While in Omagh I can write more often to you &
play harder because there are fewer attractions. During holidays
everybody seems to be perpetually on the go, old friends are
ringing up asking you to visit them -

Saturday, January 10th
To-day, darling, I have got a few more things for our bottom drawer. It was in the china line. China, glass and delft of all descriptions are becoming very difficult to get so I got a beautiful tea set (41 pieces) 12 cups, saucers, plates, sugar bowl, cream jug, stop bowl & 2 bread plates. It is in cream & gold and I am very much in love with it. Mamma & Josephine helped me select it and this morning Buddha called for it in the car. I am

¹⁰ going to check everything this afternoon & next Wednesday Felix has promised to take it to Ballynahinch for me. I also got 2 doz glasses & jug to match (cut glass) and some pyrex ware for cooking. Do not be annoyed with me, my dear Frank, because I am buying all these things with my own money. I never consider anything I have now as my own but as ours. I never want to have anything of my own. I take an unbelievable pleasure in spending the residue of my monthly cheque on articles for our home. When you return darling everything will be scarce - it will be years before production will get into its stride again. Meanwhile we shall, please God, have enough to do. Do not think that you are taking no part in building our home - you have all the big items to consider - God help you darling, it is a monstrous task, but it will be all so exciting. We shall have to creep before we walk and plan everything before we plunge. Won't it be very interesting darling? How happy we shall be in our struggle! How I shall try to help you in every way!

Your father seems to have taken a new interest in Beechwood. He has delegated Anne to make many purchases for it. It seems that houses in blitzed areas are being "dove up" free. Wright & Anne & I have had their home renovated from top to bottom & Anne & I are going to coat your father when I go over to say good-bye to him on to-morrow. Anne is very keen & it would be of wonderful interest to her.

I have your mother's memorial card which Anne gave me. I say the prayer every day. I have also one for you darling which I shall send with my next letter. I was over in de Neulemeersch last night. Frances was there. The professor was very interested in my presents from Kuala Lumpur. We talked quite a lot about my Frank. All these are praying for you. I had a terrible fit of loneliness last night. Sleep just would not come. To-day's news is not good. Kuala Lumpur is in danger of falling. No matter what happens, you & my dearest one must be spared. & Joe has given me encouragement by saying that nothing in the world happens by accident. Everything happens according to plan in the mind of