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Mann, Klaus

Rom, 1945-09-06

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From, K. us Mann (32697270),
The Stars & Stripes, Unit 1,
APO 512, c/o PM, New York

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To,
Mrs. THOMAS MANN,
1550 San Remo Drive,
PACIFIC PALISADES,
CALIF.

Rome, September 6

Little pretty one,

Your pleasant letter of August 27 found me still in Rome, still with The Stars and Stripes, still a corporal. I had to give up the trip to Germany as the official purpose of this mission would have been to cover the Nürnberg trials, which -- as you know -- are endlessly delayed. So I didn't want to wait any longer and turned in my application for discharge overseas. The discharge may come through any day now -- I suppose about September 10.

Then I shall be in a kind of vacuum -- temporarily at least. I have reason to hope that I may manage to get myself accredited as a war correspondent (the magazine TOWN & COUNTRY, for which I have occasionally written, seems to be willing to make a request for me); but it will take some time. But even if I have to live as a plain civilian for a w few weeks, it won't be too bad; for, first of all, I think that I could stay as a guest with The Stars and Stripes as long as I want to -- and besides, life in Rome is not too difficult and by no means unpleasant, provided that one has sufficient "TIME" to pay the exorbitant prices. Thanks to my movie job, I am comparatively well-off. But, of course, the war-correspondent status remains of essential importance --

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especially considering my ^{travel} plans for the later part of the coming fall and winter. For it will be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to travel in Europe at all, unless one has Army facilities at one's disposal.

Watch and cigarettes have not yet caught up with me, but I suppose they will before long. I feel kind of guilty and embarrassed when remembering the lengthy "Wunschzettel" I submitted to you in my last letter. A nuisance of such staggering dimensions may drive you to insanity or suicide -- which ~~not~~ would put me into an awkward situation. Not to mention the rapid decrease of the family's financial funds. If you had known that I would ask for so many things -- you might have insisted on my coming home, instead of lingering in messy old Europe.

Yes, Werfel's death must have been another nasty shock to both of you; I, too, took it rather badly. A very nice, musical man he was -- and has written some unforgettable poems. His best verse had always to do with death. By now he should have found out whether his conception of that fascinating phenomenon was as accurate as it sounded to us ignorant living folks. -- I may write a line to poor Alma, one of these days.

Which reminds me of Golo. I can imagine how angry and embittered he was because of that

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dirty trick they played on him. Corporal, indeed!.... But according to new regulations, he, too, will be a civilian soon. I wonder what he may intend to do. I suppose the radio station should be glad to keep him in his new, more adequate status. I have not heard from him since our very friendly and successful meeting in Luxemburg.

Nor ~~have~~ ^{did} I ~~have~~ ^{have} word from Erika for a number of weeks. I have no idea where she is. To tell the truth, I ~~have~~ am rather worried about her. First I was just annoyed and a bit insulted, but now I am quite upset. What's the matter with her? The friends in New York are also without news. Let me know, please, as soon as you hear from her.

Vicko is a disgrace. I am sure he is guilty, otherwise our authorities wouldn't have arrested a brother of Th.M. Didn't he try to cheat the family in connection with an ugly little farm, or whatever it was? Why then shouldn't he have embezzled the packages of helpless prisoners? I take a rather dark view on the whole affair.

An earnest young German female who keeps bothering me will send you a play, "Das Familienfest" -- the only legacy of her Gestapo-murdered parents. It's amateurish but not without moving moments. She deserves a nice letter.

I'll keep The St&St as my address, for the time being. Which means that I'll have to be addressed as a corporal, even when I have no right anymore to use this proud title.

Completely over-aged,
frank K.