

Colette R. Gerstbauer  
1201 Lincolnway West  
Mishawaka, Indiana

Sunday, Dec. 3rd.

Dearest Frank,

Here it is December again. Where in Heaven's name did 1939 go to? I think this year has passed dreadfully fast so far, but I think it has been a wonderful year. I'd say a very eventful one too, wouldn't you? Who would have thought a year ago today that you would be living in Detroit, or that I would be here at home planning my wedding to the most wonderful man on earth in my estimation. And don't think I wouldn't stand on a stack of Bibles and repeat that.

The paragraph you quoted from the Readers' Digest I think is worth its weight in gold, and I personally pray daily that I may have that understanding so that I may be able to serve your requirements more adequately, and thereby do my share to make our marriage a perfect one. While I do say and I do mean that you are my most wonderful man on earth, still I know that once we are put together for ever and a day there are times when our personalities are bound

to clash and those are things that we have got to expect and do our level best to place at a minimum. Understanding and an A+ in effort are the only things that will make this possible. Surely marriage has its burdens, but that is what makes it worth living for, planning for, and working for. That's what you and I have been doing, and that's what we intend to keep on doing, isn't it?

It sounds preachy, but I get that way, and besides this is Sunday and sermons are in order. Only I'll quit it now because this should be a two way sermon instead of one-way. And besides someday when we both stand in front of a certain party in priestly "uniform" and say "I do", then you can take me to Detroit, and I'll try to "practise what I preach" in understanding and effort. Somehow it doesn't worry me in the least. I'm not the slightest bit afraid of you, nor anything you may say or do. (Nor anyone else for that matter.)

So much for that, we'll go into all that some other time. As for the Reader's Digest, I agree with you there, I like that magazine very, very much. I'd love to have + read each copy, but I never find the least bit of time to do it in. It's agreed though that we both like the magazine and unless we find it.

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impossible, that will be in our home.

"Our home", that sounds strange to me.

The Brides' Book gives a nice budget based on four different yearly incomes: \$1,500, \$2,400, \$3,000, & \$5,000. Their information in laying them out seems to have come from from banks, insurance companies, & home economics books. The book also gives a table of "proportional room percentages" (on the cost of furniture & furnishings) on rooms-homes of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, & 7 rooms. It's really very interesting. One other table is shown on the "Relative value of items" i.e. furniture, floor coverings, draperies, & accessories. All this information I'm sure will prove very helpful in setting up our home.

The details of the wedding are really covered to a T. From what I've said about the book you probably think it's a volume 3 inches thick. It isn't! However, it's only 24 pages, but it's all very clear and straight to the point. No unnecessary explanations or rambling in it. And believe it or not, it's written in story form! You are probably anxious to see it, and if you don't get home before Christmas and would like to see it before then I'd be glad to send it. You might like to compare it with your book you have, and I think I would like to see

your book if it's certain to such things.

So school is almost over for the Christmas vacation. I'd bet you are glad in a way, aren't you? To have that extra time and a little rest from burning the midnight oil? Then too I suppose these last eight school days will be plenty tough and probably chock full of quizzes and such.

Time out; Regina just slapped my face for me. The little vixen has been razzing me ever since I started this letter.

This weekend marks the end of a hectic week. We were so dreadfully busy the first of the week. Then Friday being the first of the month meant getting out all my placement & activity reports for the division, the boss's expense account, etc. I don't do all the computing on this "stuff" but most of it and it always mounts up to almost a full days work and I have to squeeze it in with my regular interviewing and such.

Well, the end of the page is creeping up and I should say so long for now.

lovingly  
Cate

Gary, Ind. 12-5-37  
office of the Ind. State Emp. Serv.

Darling:

Here I am in the Gary office and to all around here I am supposedly taking notes at this district meeting. We had to rush up here at first, and really the meeting so far hasn't been so bad at all. If you weren't on my mind all the time I might be able to pay attention. But I am listening with one ear, and I'll do you a letter tonight, so I'll let this take the place of it.

There certainly are some powerful changes going into effect that are now being made known to us. It'll mean some vital changes in personnel too. Everybody is shaking in his boots, and "everybody" means about 200 (at least) people who are sitting here with me. I don't know yet how it will affect me, but it will affect everybody in some way, shape, or form. I'll tell you about it sometime.

Ben just now I felt like telling you I love you, so I set out to do it. I love you, I love you and ditto 1000 times. The speaker is getting fiery, so

3 better listen a bit more closely. But I still love you.

I'll write you decently tomorrow night. This is being done on my nap in the first row absolutely not over 8 ft. from the principal speaker - the Director himself. So long, darling, I'll get back to my shorthand. Oodles of love

Bob can find an envelope around here I'll mail this from his residence from home.

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MRS. KATE R. SCHWARTZ

of

UNDER THE DIRECTION

ROSE WARRER

by

"LAVENDER AND OLD LACE"

PRESENTED

THE ST. JOSEPH PLAYERS

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HAPPY REHEARSAL.

AND A

GRATEFUL

TO YOU A BLESSING

AND THE BEST

WISHES FROM

YOU FOR

YOUR

STAY

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

MARY AINSLIE.....JANAN STOWELL  
A charming and gracious gentlewoman who reminds one of lavender and old lace.

JANE HATHAWAY.....JANET PARMENTER  
Her next door neighbor.

RUTH THORNE.....ANGELA GERSTBAUER  
Jane's delightful young niece.

BERNICE CARLTON.....ANNETTE BUECHE  
Ruth's friend, on a visit.

CARL WINFIELD.....GERARD CANFIELD  
A young newspaper man.

SOPHROMY TROTTER...FRANCES TRIPPEL  
Who is always on the go.

DR. HOWARD PATTERSON....JEROME NIX  
Dignified but kindly.

HEPSEY.....BERTILLA HORNUNG  
Jane Hathaway's maid.

JOE PENDLETON.....JAMES CRUISE  
Spends five years "gittin acquainted".

JAMES BALL.....WILLIAM MYERS  
Who annexes a ball and chain.

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LAVENDER AND OLD LACE

ACT I  
Scene 1  
Setting -- The sitting room of Mary Ainslie's home in a quaint New England village.  
Time -- The present. Noonday in April.

Scene 2  
Setting -- The same.  
Time -- The following afternoon

ACT II  
Scene 1  
Setting -- Same as previous act.  
Time -- Afternoon three months later.

ACT III  
Scene 1  
Setting -- Same as in Acts I & II  
Time -- A morning in August three weeks later.

Scene 2  
Setting -- As in previous scene.  
Time -- An evening a week later.

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Colette R. Gerstbauer  
1201 Lincolnway West  
Mishawaka, Indiana

Wednesday morning  
12-6-39

St. Nicholas Day.

Darling,

Could you possibly read my "notes" from last night? Judging from that anyone would think I was in love. So what? I am.

Anyhow last night was such a hectic one — rushing up there after 5 o'clock. We stopped at the Roosevelt Hotel and rushed through a steak dinner because all five in our car refused to go to that meeting without eating, then rushed over to the office which is only a block and a half from The Roosevelt, and even though we got there 30 minutes late, the meeting was just getting started. We all got so sleepy sitting there all that time, and I thought it would be a lot more fun scribbling a note to you than taking crazy notes on the changes. Then the final panel after an intermission around 9:30 or 10 o'clock, I believe, it was not mandatory that we stay, only those connected with the clerical work involved in claim-taking had to stay, so we headed for home. Got home about 11:30 dead tired from nothing.

So Joe has moved in across the hall. That will be grand company for you - there at home and also if he is going to ride back and forth from work with you. And who is "Eddy, the young fellow in the family"? Do you mean in Joe's family?

Honey, before I forget to mention it, did you know that "Lavender and Old Love" is scheduled to go on this Sunday, the 10th? Tickets are out again; and by the way, can I still contact those people that you mentioned to me before? It's plenty late but the new tickets only came out this last Sunday; and Monday night I spent from 7 till 10:10 P.M. making the programme (I have one options that I'll enclose. It's not a very good copy, however it gives the "dope") and then last night I got home from work in the middle of the night so I really haven't been able to think much about the play. However, if you think there will be some tickets sales and that these people will still be interested I'd like to call them or contact them about it, if you'll give me the names.

From your letter - about Larry -

"been gal for maid of honor", "honeymoon to California". That surely does sound like Larry. As for the maid of honor, he could guess that. Naturally my sister. However, how does this



sound to you. I'm taking Jim & Johnny for granted, I think that is as it should be, that's agreed upon isn't it? That's as you want and it is certainly to my liking. So since Johnny will be there and Ang, I'd like to have Dorothy be there too. There's no reason why she shouldn't be, is there? What do you think of the idea? And maybe I'm wrong but I think that would fit Larry up beautifully.

Ins. how there will be plenty of other gals, I suppose. As for the bridesmaid - there again is no doubt. I want Tilla. In fact I can't wait to talk to her about it and have her in on my piece of heaven in my heart. Darling, it's so thrilling to think about all these plans, isn't it? No wonder I can't keep my mind "in the meeting" and "on the notes".

Yeah, I haven't even seen Tilla since Thanksgiving Day. I haven't even made choir practice these last three Tuesday nights. Then too, she is probably plenty busy with the play and wouldn't appreciate being bothered by me either. I'll see her Sunday in the play. I wish you were seeing it with me.

Back to the wedding, I wish I could get Mildred to sing for us. I haven't said anything yet. I'm not even sure she'll be able to be here, but I'll be dreadfully disappointed if she isn't at least here. As for singing, I don't

know how she would feel about that. I can almost hear her answer now - - - - "But, gee, Collie, I haven't sung in church since before I was married". But we'll see.

Honey, one of the girls at the office has promised to drive me up to Detroit sometime near Spring. I'm keeping my fingers crossed. Mildred has my name on the Xmas drawing for Feb. Aug. Jim. Mid. and I, so I told her to send me a red Buick coupe to drive back & forth to Detroit in. I'll bet two bits she'll send me one of these little dime store toy cars about 3 inches long. But I'll try anything once.

My pen has been acting up lately. I think it needs a good healthy cleaning. I tried changing pens, but even that didn't help much, so you'll just have to put up with my be-handicapped scribbling, and excuse it, won't you? I'd be a smart girl<sup>too</sup> if I'd start writing on a desk or table instead of in my lap as I'm forever doing.

Well, I'm getting sorta sleepy, and again the end of the page is creeping upon me, so bye, bye, adios

With all my love  
Colette

Colette R. Gerstbauer  
1201 Lincolnway West  
Mishawaka, Indiana

12-9-39

Dearest Frank,

Just got finished washing my hair and while it dries I think it would be very fitting for me to write you a letter. I shopped half the afternoon away, so I'm somewhat tired. The town was packed. In fact it fitted a new expression I heard today: instead of saying "avoid the Christmas rush", this party said "avoid the Christmas crush". Everybody who tried shopping today in South Bend, will probably feel it for awhile, because there were many elbows used to battle through the stores today.

I did one thing that is very unusual today: had my picture taken!! I have always hated that as much as you do. But about the middle of the morning one of the girls at the office came to me with a 50¢ coupon which she said was being wasted and would I not like to have it, free. It entitled the bearer to a large tinted photo, choice of 4 sittings, if presented with an additional 50¢. It's validity expired today and she thought I might like to have it. Of course I couldn't say no fast enough to suit me, but then I thought that since

Mom has been wanting a new & more recent picture of me for a long time; and since Eleanor has wanted a picture for a long time and is begging for one now since we will be lucky to see each other even once a year from now on; and since this girl and a number of the others had raved about the good work this photographer (remeth) does, not to mention the fact the Helen Ryan had an appointment to have hers taken there today too, I stopped and thought it over.

Of course I wasn't dressed for a picture, and my "hairstyle" was a week old, but that's usually when you take the best picture - when you rush into it unprepared, so I said ok. and not an hour later I was there and it was all over with. Now I'm dying to see the proofs. They are usually a circus full of lumps. I take a dreadful picture. But if they are any good, by chance, I might give you one.

I did something else crazy today. After we left the photographer's and before we went on to our shopping, we stopped at Hook's for a sandwich, and there on a display table were a bunch of these little hand organs like Pouch's mother has. The sign said 98¢, and you know how I fell for Schmitts, and that's just

how I fell for these. Remember I said then & that I was going to have one this Xmas if possible, so here beside me is a little red hand organ. My toy.

When I finally got home and told Mother that I had spent the afternoon shopping, she wasn't surprised; but when I said I had also had my picture taken for 50¢ and bought myself a plaything, she about passed out. As you used to say: "Just like a little ba--by!"

Today was just like spring. The sun was shining all day, and it was warm and beautiful the whole day through. Nothing like December! More like June. Probably next June or July we'll have our December weather. I'm keeping my fingers crossed.

At bulletin last night Father heard a good one on the radio which he had to tell Lena & I. I'm glad I have never put X's at the ending of my letters to you, because the gag on the radio was that one man asked the other man what the 2 X's on the bottom of his girl friend's letter meant, and the second man answered that they meant she was double-crossing him. Silly eh what. I think I'll continue putting no X's on the endings of my letters; I'll just put the postage stamps

on upside down. I've heard that to be another way of sending a kiss. In fact maybe I'll even start using one cent stamps instead of three's.

So, you think our love is getting dilapidated? Frankly, darling, I practically died laughing when I read that "Lavender and Dilapidated Love". But I do think that by the time you get this letter, that play will be a thing of the past. It's scheduled for tomorrow, which is very close to now as it is now 12:15. I hope it goes alright. Mrs. Schwarz turned out to be a flop too. She's capable enough but too independent and too active socially. The cast has been practising at least three nights each week for over a month, and every night this week. This last week I believe she was there one night & last night she came about 10. She is getting the credit for the direction but it was all done by Jim Cruise & Bill Myers. She left for a weekend in Chicago this morning & isn't ever going to be there for the matinee tomorrow, and told the cast she would probably be able to be there around 8:30 tomorrow night. (The show starts at 8! She hasn't said a word ~~about~~ about makeup, stage setting, etc. The kids have taken care of it all themselves. I guess Adelaide is going to handle the makeup.

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I promised to help her with it. But I also promised to help Margaret K. with tickets, program, etc. and to prompt, so I can't be of much help. However, here's hoping all goes well.

This's another reason why I wanted to write you tonight because I'll be up there tomorrow afternoon and night.

Then too, I hope that by getting this in the postoffice on my way to Mass I might be able to get it into Detroit for you Monday mail.

Your trip to Buffalo through Canada and Niagara Falls sounds just perfect. Have a real good time and be careful. I didn't have to add ————— I know, but I did, cause I do want you back.

Speaking of trips reminds me that I forgot to answer you on that California business for a honeymoon. I'm thrilled to hear you say that you hope to show me the west coast some day, but surely that will have to wait for some other vacation because it would cost too much just then with everything else. Then too, we would only have 2 weeks which would hardly be adequate time. It's a wonderful thought and perhaps some day it will become a reality, I hope; but it would be too much to make the trip

at that time. I'll try to give you some  
other ideas along those lines, but right  
now, honey, I'm about to fall asleep. Mom  
wants me to take her to six o'clock Mass  
and it is 20 of one. So I'm going to  
say goodnight for now, and if I can  
I'll write again tomorrow and then cover  
your letter of the 7th that I got this  
morning.

Love and kisses from  
"Me."



Colette R. Gerstbauer  
1201 Lincolnway West  
Mishawaka, Indiana

11:30 P.M. Sunday.

Darling:

just had to send you the score.

"<sup>2</sup> Wanderer and Old Love" went over beautifully tonight!!! I just couldn't even wait till tomorrow night to write and tell you the results. There were between 200 and 250 people there. I think 225 would be a very close estimate. About 110 children this afternoon. We had a director for the first half of the matinee and no director at all tonight. He had to go to a party tonight. The cast did wonderfully well. Very few cues were missed, and believe it or not, every word could be heard even at the doors in the back of the hall. all in all it was a big success, and the people

really seemed to enjoy it. So now everybody is very happy about the whole thing.

Did you have a nice weekend, dear? All the gang asked about you tonight. They were all there. Even Ray. Mary, Dorothy, Kay, Velma, Fab, Lois, John, Virginia, Clem, Johnny, Chuck, oh just everybody. Also the Hornungs were well represented: Pop (May 23), Pete, Martha + Helores, the Seymours and Clara.

Tell now what's next on the docket? I'm afraid of another good week of night work, and I haven't been able to make choir practise for so long that I'm going to try hard to squeeze that in this week. The same with sodality meeting and I suppose Player's Club will meet this Thursday too. So while you are in school these nights I'll either be working or attending meetings. Hope you'll get this Tuesday because I want to write you again for Wednesday.  
Rise now Darling

Colette R. Gerstbauer  
1201 Lincolnway West  
Mishawaka, Indiana

Monday night

Dearest Frank,

What do they say about wise minds running in the same channel? That disclosure about you having your picture taken last Saturday afternoon at precisely the same time that I was having mine taken, is positively too true to that old saying.

Our letters undoubtedly crossed in the mail. That certainly was a coincidence, and I was so surprised when I read that letter.

Speaking of letters, honey, don't you think it would be better for me to write you at home (16213) instead of at the office? Not that it makes a bit of difference to me, in fact I'd prefer writing to the office as there are two (at least) deliveries instead of one, but, perhaps you would rather not have that personal mail coming in there. Especially since Mr. Ballard seems so much stricter than Mr. McConkey. So please tell me frankly what you wish on this subject. I'll understand perfectly, since I think I've dealt with plenty of employers in all lines of work, and really know how some of them

feel about such things. I'm sorry that I didn't think about this before. Don't take me wrong now; I'm not trying to give you a subtle hint on my own side; because that doesn't apply to me in the least. When and if I should ever feel that it isn't wise for me to receive personal mail at the office, I shall say so. But as it stands it's perfectly O.K. on this end of the line. In fact Mr. Trace and the very few other people who do see my mail before I do (unopened of course) get a big kick out of it and razz the daylight<sup>out</sup> of me for being in love as they put it. Mr. Trace is really a peach. He's one of those men who although he has been married around 6 or 7 years, he is still very, very, much in love with his wife and 3 children. Today I asked him if he was going to let me do my Christmas shopping on office time, since we just can't get anything done during lunch hours, and on the few evenings that we are free to shop or don't have to work we are just too tired to shop through the milling crowds. Anyhow, the manager starts on her vacation this Friday and she wouldn't care anyhow. So he agreed to give Neomi, Helen and I (his immediate department employees) each

one day <sup>next week</sup> from noon on to shop. Not bad, eh.

Thank you for the compliment, honey, but don't be too sure of my "hash stinging" capabilities because I don't want you to be too disappointed, and I have a long ways to go before I'll make a cook, and Bertilla and Pop have set an awfully good precedent for me. In fact I'll have to learn a lot about cooking before I can come up to theirs.

So you came out ahead at the party. Good for you. It sounds like a good time was had by all, and I'm glad you went. You need the diversion. Even if you hadn't come out ahead you still would have had the good time out of it. What's more I highly approve of being present at social affairs of the office force. We don't have many parties at our office or given by any of the office people but when we do, I make it a point to be there and already I have seen things happen in my favor that might not have been if not for showing such an interest in social as well as business acquaintances. Naomi can back me up on that and Helen is regretting that she couldn't see it that way with Naomi and I as far back as a year ago and more. In fact on the way home from work today, Naomi, Mr. Heckman, and I were talking

along those same lines. The past six months have proved this to me, and the next four months will tell a whole lot more. I'll explain what I have in mind when I tell you about that Gary meeting and the weight of it.

On the subject of parties, next Wednesday night we're giving our annual Christmas dinner party. We're planning on having it at the Palom's Steak House. In fact we're going to reserve the whole place for the evening. There will be about 35 of us there. Last year we had a jolly of fun. I hope this one will be as successful.

And now down to "PLANS."

Capitalized, underscored, and quotatined, plans. You said it - it certainly is thrilling to plan.

And you ought to see the lists I'm making. About Dorothy, yes of course I meant the reception, and at the wedding yes, but not in the wedding party. The wedding party will be as you gave it in your last letter.

At least that looks good to me: Larry, Ang, Pat, Tilla, John + Jim. Not?

Then the list on the wedding breakfast, I believe it's agreed, is it not, for the immediate families only. I already have a list of 29 for the breakfast then, and

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that doesn't count no. I may have missed some that you will think of, and too if there are any other guests from out of town they of course will be included. They are to be thought up by you. Put on your thinking cap. That's all right I know: You wear it all the time. Haha. Anyhow here is the list as I have it so far, with plenty of blank space for additions: Starting with your family: "Pop", Tilla, Isabelle, Jim, Clara, Herb, "Pete", Martha, Bill? Mary? and the 2 children? Then there is my Pop, Mom, Grandpa, Mildred, Jimmy, Hal, Ang, James, Joe, Dick, Regina + Albert; (I don't know of any grandparents on your side, dear, are there any?) Then there is Larry, Johnny, Jimmy, and the fathers Lauer + Klein.

As for the reception list it's too long to start on now, but you work on one and I'll work on one, then we'll put them together and cross out the duplications

About the furniture, yes, I doubt if we will be able to do anything about buying right at first, and besides I'm afraid that seven months is just a little bit too far in advance to be able to decide anything like that, don't you think? That will depend a whole lot on the renting situation, what the place itself will cost us. I first thought of this too — if we decide to go out and rent in July we will be lucky because rents usually go down then for the summer months. I suppose you thought

of that before. This budget in the book will help us figure that out too.

You said you wanted to ask me something when you got home. I can't imagine what you would want to ask me that you wouldn't put in a letter. Just want to keep me in suspense, I know. But I'll wait and I'll remind you don't worry about that.

Well, only one and a half weeks now till the 22nd. Being busy and having so much shopping and all to do helps a lot to make the time fly, doesn't it. Thanksgiving seems years back already. A lot of words have passed between us since you left here too haven't there!

So long, darling, I didn't realize how long this was getting.

Most lovingly  
Colette.

P.S. In case this arrives on Wednesday

Happy Birthday

till later.