

341 Westgate
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7-6-78

Dear Pa,

I'm sorry that Mother felt it necessary to dilate at such length to Nancy about the family unpleasantness, and sorry, too, that Nancy told anyone else. I cannot see that it serves any useful purpose to spread this sort of thing around. It is a disgrace and a dishonor and there is nothing anyone outside of those immediately involved can do -- or are likely to try to do -- to mitigate its effect.

But mother is probably a bit lonely and she always has found talk something of a release, I imagine. One difficulty arises from the fact that she is not always scrupulously accurate -- nor does she ~~x~~ always make herself understood.

It is true that Mother and Kent are rather at swords points, but that's to be expected, isn't it? They never have been the best of friends (Mother at one time or another has alienated every one of her children's spouses) and neither is given to cool objectivity under fire, nor fair mindedness. Both are upset and with good reason.

The fact is -- or was when I was last in ~~Boston~~ Boston two weeks ago -- that Kent and Tony are still living under the same roof and quite happily so. They are selling the house on the 14th inst. and moving to an apartment in Woburn -- together. Several months ago Kent threatened to leave Tony and the children and flee south but that threat was addressed, as I understand it, more to Tony's family than to Tony himself. Kent has been making many irresponsible threats lately, some of them far more serious than leaving Tony. They are none of them especially agreeable to listen to but I really don't think they need to be taken seriously; they are part of her I'll-run-away-to-sea-and-be-drowned-and-then-you'll-be-sorry schtick she developed as a pampered only child and seems never to have outgrown.

The fact is that Kent is very energetic, intelligent and industrious and quite remarkably devoted to Tony, as he is to her, and although I don't believe either has contributed much to the maturity of the other, they afford one another a degree of comfort and reassurance that one cannot help admire. It would be, in my opinion, inappropriate and perhaps a bit rude to ask Tony to the Island without Kent.

Tony seemed about as composed and cheerful as it would be possible to be under the circumstances. He has a couple of part-time jobs and Kent is preparing to return to work. He realizes that eventually he must face criminal prosecution and perhaps ~~incarceration~~ incarceration, but that is an eventuality that he tries to keep from Kent. He does not seem yet prepared even to consider any other ~~any~~ option, such as simply leaving the country.

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In this regard, I rather suspect that Tony is trying to preserve what He believes is Kent's comfortable belief that if everyone just stops talking about it the listing vessel will right herself and they can return to their comfortable, somewhat profligate, suburban life. That life is patently very important to Kent; she is not the least bit shy about saying so. The prospect of, say, sheep farming in Argentina would throw her into a frenzy of despa ir. ~~That some action by Mother, or Tony's siblings,~~ such as initiating litigation against banks and ~~brokerages~~ brokerages whose negligence Tony used to his advantage, will eventually result in Tony's prosecution is infuriating to Kent. She considers us all avaricious and vindictive and is not shy about saying that, either. She appears sincerely to ~~believe~~ believe that if Mother were a decant, forgiving person, she would forget the entire thing. There is, of course, a tiny spark of truth in what she says.

Tony's attitude (well secreted from Kent) is quite different. He is is anxious to do whatever he can to help repair the havoc he has wreaked upon Mother's assets and he was waiting, ratherpathetically, I thought, only to be asked. This is why he readily agreed to dictate and sign that statement of facts and circumstances which Mother referred to, not quite accurately, as a confession.

Tony was not, however, yet prepared to give a detailed account of his own adventures with the sharks. Shame or fear or perhaps a vestigial involvement -- I could not tell which -- leaves that story still to be told.

I write the foregoing, Pa, for your information only and I would be grateful if it remained yours alone. I really don't think it's anyone else's business, do you?

Love,
B.

pps -- I made an unsuccessful attempt to call on Kathy in
Belfast -- actually, its Lincolnville. ~~xxFriendx~~ A friend
of hers who works in the Belfast Free Public Library gave
me an address -- a sort of address -- in Boston:

c/o Joel Janowitz
84 Sumner Street

The friend said Kathy intends to rent the farmhouse in
Lincolnville and to return to Waldo County only now and then.
Perhaps you know all this.

porter

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