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1957

Staring at the photograph of my mother and me, standing on the deck of the French Line *pacquet* boat *Le Flandre* about to set sail for Le Havre with me on board, I am struck at how little most children know of their parents' private lives, ignorance that usually lasts their whole lives. My mother stands beside me in the black-and-white photograph, beautiful, elegant, alluring, and just divorced from my father. My grandmother had died three years earlier at fifty-seven, and the moral constraints she exercised upon her son broke down with the closing of her eyes and he left his wife of nineteen years for his long-time mistress. In a time period of twenty months, my mother, Vivian Mae, had lost her mother-in-law, her husband, and now me.

I am standing next to her, a tall, gawky teenager not even twenty-one—the legal adult age at the time—who owed her life to her grandpop who had once saved it and who was still alive and in whose house we lived. At four years old, I had been struck by polio meningitis, equivalent to a death sentence for a young child in the 1940s. My grandfather had run with me in his arms the one or two city blocks it took to arrive at the Philadelphia Children's Hospital, the most famous hospital for children in America, so close to our home that it was faster to run than wait for an ambulance to answer an emergency call. As we arrived at the top of the wide marble steps of the building, a nurse blocked his way, explaining that the hospital had no Colored ward and so could not accept a Colored infant, dying or not, since they had no beds for Negro infants. My grandfather pushed her aside and raced into the emergency room, which was full of young interns.

"She," he protested, "is not a Colored infant. She is Barbara Dewayne Chase, my granddaughter, and she doesn't need a bed, she needs to be placed in an iron lung or she's dead! And if she doesn't get what she needs to stay alive, I will demolish this hospital brick by brick."

Alarmed, a young intern rushed forward and took me in his arms, ignoring the protests of the nurse. The emergency doctors admitted me to the hospital and saved my life. And indeed, I spent the next months of my existence in an iron lung—which is how I learned what the term meant and developed a phobia for tight bedcovers. My grandpop, who was an independent building contractor,

knew a thing or two about demolition and had helped build the Philadelphia suburban housing development of Levittown, which in the 1940s he could neither live in nor buy.

Growing up in the 1940s and 1950s during the Eisenhower years, it never occurred to me that there were "Americans," all White, and then there were "others." It also never occurred to me that my mother was an immigrant—a foreigner and a non-American, being a British Canadian. It was only now that she was divorced that she had requested American citizenship and thus lost her status as an alien in an alien land.

Yet she had generously given permission for me to travel to an "alien" land, Italy, on a John Hay Whitney fellowship for a year at the American Academy in Rome, sacrificing her own need for me just as three years previous I had renounced my scholarship to Wellesley College for Philadelphia's Tyler School of Art at Temple University in order to remain near her.

My parents' marriage had been a shotgun teenage one orchestrated by my grandmother, Elizabeth, the matriarch of our family, between her son and the convent-bred, Catholic "foreigner," my mother. I had been produced when my mother was sixteen and my father seventeen, neither old enough to drink, drive, or vote. All three of us were raised by my grandmother, but especially me, disciplined and polished by dance professors, piano professors, art professors, my mother's girl scouts, Jack and Jill, concerts at the Philadelphia Academy of Music, Saturday art classes at the Philadelphia Museum, swimming lessons at the YWCA, a child prodigy and freak of nature, best-dressed, white-gloved, highly popular Black dream girl. The big issue at the time was the viability of the "race" for "equality" and the key was education. Were we "ready"? Was it "possible"? Did it have to do with morality or politics? "Colored" people were barely acknowledged on the limpid White surface of America. They were called that (the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) and they called themselves that and nobody called them "beautiful."

America was rising as the ultimate world power. Dwight D. Eisenhower had been reelected, James Watson, Francis Crick, Maurice Wilkins, and a woman named Rosalind Franklin had discovered the structure of DNA. Rosa Parks had sat in the front of the bus in Montgomery, Alabama, and refused to move, igniting a bus boycott and Martin Luther King's protest march. I was leaving to explore the world outside just as the United States was looking inward and exploring its own apartheid, which would leave it never the same again. I had no idea at the time that what was named the Civil Rights Movement was heading toward a summit point in the world that would render it unique. And I would experience it from an altogether different vantage point—a Yankee in Western Europe, a "foreigner in a foreign land, and finally an American in Paris." Philadelphia's Grace Kelly married European Prince Rainier, Marilyn Monroe married Jewish intellectual Arthur Miller, Jacqueline Bouvier married John F. Kennedy, James Bald-

win published *The Fire Next Time*, Kenneth Galbraith wrote *The Affluent Society*. In Europe, I would meet them all in time.

From that moment on the *Flandre*, my mother and I began a correspondence that lasted thirty years, through a sojourn abroad, graduate school at Yale University, several wedding engagements, marriage to a Frenchman much older than I, two children, a divorce, a second marriage to another European, fame, success and a million miles of travel from one end of the earth to the other.

While I was climbing the pyramids in Egypt, 1,000 paratroopers and 10,000 National Guards were protecting five Colored students who integrated Little Rock Central High School. The median family income was \$5,087 and a Colored family's average was half that. Alaska and Hawaii became the 49th and 50th states of the Union. It cost 4 cents to send a one-ounce letter and 15 cents to send it to Europe by airmail, which would carry my words, thoughts, and dreams back to Philadelphia on tissue thin pale blue double-folded onion-skin paper framed in red, white, and blue stripes to my mother's eyes. As many pages as there were miles between us from that day.

September 27, 1957 Le Flandre, The French Line

Darling Mother,

I hope you and Grandpop are fine. The ship has photographs taken at the pier as we left and there is one photo in which I can see everyone when you were standing on the steps waving good-bye. I'll send you one. (The food on the ship is really magnificent and we have a very funny steward who pops into our cabin at all kinds of weird times.) Shirley and I get along very well of course and the trip has been very smooth, except for Wednesday night when I felt a little uncomfortable. The people are pleasant but on the whole rather dull. There are about 80 Fulbright students on board ship, most of them all-American kids, you know.

I have met some interesting people...a Haitian gentleman and his daughter. He is going into diplomatic service in the French Islands. I met a French girl, Nicole, who is returning to Paris from a year in the States and she is wonderful. Shirley met her in New York. I also met a very funny French doctor and a very nice, shy nuclear physicist who reminded me of Arnold. So of course I immediately fell in love with HIM.

Last night we stood out on the deck for a while watching the moon and then very romantically, he said well it's my bedtime!

[...] Great! He was talking about how he could go do rocket research if the fact that he wore glasses would not keep him off the first rocket to the moon. He is so sweet. Oh last night also I danced in the lounge with some boy from Ohio. The orchestra is not too good, but they were playing something that could be made

into a Cha cha cha so we danced (he's Colored) all night practically. We ended up putting on a floorshow because no one else dared to dance with us on the floor.

Getting back to the food. I have never gotten up for breakfast, but lunch and dinner consist of about six or seven courses. A typical meal: hors d'oeuvres which today was a cold fish, some kind of salad, and salami, then entrée which was kidney stew and spaghetti, then main course was pork, mashed potatoes, and greens, then cheese (two kinds), then fruit, then dessert which is a pastry at lunch and ice cream at dinner, then coffee or tea. At dinner there's another course too added in and of course soup. So we waddle up from the lunch or dinner table and usually have to take a nap before we can do anything. We usually don't do anything anyway.

All the French waiters think I'm very pretty and that I don't look American at all. They keep spouting this French to me, which I don't understand at all, so I just smile sweetly.

People are swimming in the pool on deck so you can imagine how warm it is. I met this one little girl yesterday who was just the prettiest thing. She was going to England and then to Italy. I guess she was about seven years old. So I drew a picture of her and she drew one of me. But I was sitting with our other cabin mate, who is a theology student. And the little girl wanted to know why I was so tan. So the theology student sitting there with me started with this stuff "God made her that way" etc.... So the little girl said "I know God made her that way but *why* is she so tan?" So she said "well some people are red and some yellow"... So at that moment I stepped in because the little girl was looking at the red deck chairs we were sitting in. So I told her that people were not red or yellow but as she traveled around the world with her mother and father, she would see that people have different complexions, some are tan and some are brown and so on... It was very cute. But I get so tired of this red, yellow, and black stuff. So I told her no one was red, that red was the color of the deck chair and no one had skin that color.

Nothing else very interesting has happened on the ship so far. Everyone is sleeping later and getting drunker earlier because they are bored. Tonight is a gala affair where everyone is supposed to get all dressed up in evening clothes.

Oh yes, you can forward my mail until about Oct. 15 to me c/o Miss Shirley Abbott

> Fondation des Etats-Unis Cité Universitaire 15 Boulevard Jordan Paris, 14e, France

We will dock in Plymouth England Monday morning and no one is quite sure when we get to Le Havre. But it will be around Monday night or Tuesday morning.

I don't know how anybody can go on a sea voyage to think. I've been in a stupor for five days now. You do nothing but sleep and eat; the ship is like an incubator. It keeps you warm, feeds you, and rocks you to sleep at night. It's terrible. You end up not even having energy enough to read. I have been writing Harold the Christmas letter since Tuesday. I'll finish it Sunday night so it can be posted in England along with yours. Please tell Bernice that this letter is for her too. If I have to write four or five of these letters all saying the same thing I'll go out of my mind.

I will write as soon as I get to Paris. I love you and I miss you terribly. And how old is Mr. Gary Cooper the second?

Love, Barbara

P.S.—Please send me the letter I received from the American Academy in Rome as soon as possible...I have to write them from Paris. If it isn't too much money send the booklet also—

October 4, 1957

Darling Mother,

I hope you are well and don't miss me too much. How is Grandpop? It seems months and months since I've seen you both. That boat ride seemed to last forever. Did you get my first letter? I haven't had a letter from a soul yet so tell everyone to start writing. You might as well send them on to Rome c/o American Academy Via Angelo Masuria # 5, Rome 28, Italy, or c/o American Express, Rome.

Mother, will you please call Harold's mother and find out what's wrong with him or if he is in the city? I am really frantic: I've wired him <u>3</u> times and gotten no answer. If he won't answer me will you please wire me or get Harold's mother to wire me c/o American Express Rome (send a night letter, it's cheaper). I just can't spend any more money wiring him. It's just impossible.

Paris is just magnificent. I've never seen anything like it. If Rome or Florence are more beautiful I can't imagine how. The weather thank goodness is good. Cold but sunny. Of course no French establishment of any kind turns the heat on before October 15, so it's usually warmer outside than in. Just my luck to come at the worst time in the world to get hotel rooms. There's an automobile show, a motorcycle convention, and a hairdressers' convention all in town this week. I couldn't stay at the Cité because of the Fulbright so I had to come back in town. Right now I'm at a very nice hotel on the Rue Tronchet, right in the center of town near all the museums and monuments. But I only have it until Sunday unless someone moves out or cancels, so I have several people I contacted in

Paris looking around for me. Yesterday I looked up one friend of Paul Keene's who was very nice. I'm to spend this Sunday with them. She is married and has a little boy. I'm having dinner tonight with another friend of Paul Keene's, Joyce La Page, so I'll have one French meal before I leave. I am leaving Paris Friday the 11th either by train or by plane, I haven't decided. Paris is very expensive so I just can't stay any longer. I hope I can get to see all I want to by then. If I fly—and I will if I can ship my luggage cheaply—I will be in Rome Friday evening. Oh yes, next Wednesday I'm going to the Ballet de Paris and day before yesterday evening I went to the Paris Opera House, which is just down the street from my hotel, to see the Royal Opera Ballet Company. It was very exciting. One thing they did was really great. The Opera House itself is unbelievable. It's very old and ornate with huge marble stairways and chandeliers and red velvet seats, and big, big high-ceiling rooms with heavy brocaded drapes. It's about 14 times as elegant as the Academy of Music and three times as large. There's a great dome in the middle and all kinds of murals painted on the ceiling and walls. The guards wear these ornate ribbed and decorated uniforms in blue and scarlet with their rouge and white gloves and epaulets on their shoulders. Paris is just so marvelous. I can't begin to tell you about the narrow winding streets that suddenly open out into a magnificent square or plaza where there are four or five great monuments and the tops of several ancient, historical buildings looming in the distance or seen at the end of a Boulevard or Avenue. But the traffic is just unbelievable. You must just close your eyes and walk across the street. There are no lights, no stop signs, no go signs, no traffic lights, no nothing but a charming traffic police man who in the most haphazard way "directs" the traffic by his own particular rules. Most of the intersections are circles as in Washington with 3, 4, or 5 streets all converging and these little toy cars, scooting this way and that, not to mention the scooters, buses, and bicycles. I have seen Notre Dame Cathedral, the Arch of Triumph, and walked by many of the famous Palaces. Today Shirley and I are going to the Louvre, where the largest collection of European masterpieces is. I've also been to UNESCO to look up the friend of Paul Keene's. I have seen very few Africans—some of the men are so handsome, but many of them do not speak English. There are loads of them at the Cité Univérsitaire. But the Cité is so far out and is so much like a college dormitory that I'm glad I didn't stay there. Shirley hates it.

Oh yes, I have to tell you about the rest of the voyage. Mostly it was dull, but there was a Gala Captain's Party the Saturday night before we docked in Le Havre. It was great! Lasted practically all night. Everyone was so depressed being cooped up on that boat so long they were absolutely mad—you know with paper hats etc., etc. Remember the handsome married man I told you about? Well, I finally danced with and talked to him. He works for Life Magazine and has a six month leave of absence to write in Europe. His wife is a would-be painter. He was about as tall as Harold, blond, blue eyes, and very athletic looking. He had

asked me to dance and then we got caught up in this silly dancing game they were playing called statues. You know when the music stops the dancers have to stop dead still—if you move you're eliminated from the dance floor. We almost won! Finally I started talking to this boy from Morgan State. By this time we were both wondering what in the world we were doing on this boat. So he bought me about 4 scotches (I had been drinking champagne and we both got crocked). I was speaking perfect French by the end of the evening, and he was speaking perfect Italian.

The ride from Le Havre to Paris was great. It had rained in the morning, but had cleared up and the sun was shining. We went through all this lovely green countryside with its quaint houses, patches of planted field and gardens, flower gardens. At one point it was just too much. A big rainbow broke across this perfectly lovely post-Courbet landscape with the cows, fields, etc., etc.

If you don't write every day, it's so hard to remember everything you want to say. Well, I'll write again day after tomorrow, by then I can remember the rest. No interesting men yet. I'm not homesick, but Harold is driving me out of my mind. Of course I miss you terribly and wish you were here. Also the language difficulty is terrible, but other than that everything is fine. I'll be glad to get to Rome, though, and get settled. Last night both Shirley and I were really blue. She like an idiot had left this guy Ken—30 years old, a vice-president, rich, apartment on Central Park West, wants to marry her and I assume fairly good-looking. So we were both contemplating buying plane tickets on the next plane back to New York. But we figured we'd never live it down so we gave up the plan (smile).

Good-bye, I must get out of this room; it's such a lovely day—Love to all.

Your daughter, Barbara

P.S.—Write on airmail paper like this and send all letters airmail or they'll never get here.

October 8, 1957

Darling Mother:

Received your letter yesterday. I hope you and Grandpop are well. I'm glad you don't miss me so much. I suppose <u>someone else</u> is taking up all your time. I'm now at the Cité—living here that is. I'll be here until Friday when I'll fly to Rome 10:00. It takes about three hours. I'm going Air France. Will be in Rome in the early afternoon. It takes about 24 hours by train and I just didn't want to go through that. It's quite expensive to fly, however. Everything is about twice what I expected it to be. The cost of living in Paris is unbelievable. It's only 3% below the cost of living in New York and the salaries aren't half as much. Had

wonderful times Saturday and Sunday. Had dinner with a French family Saturday, the family of a friend of Shirley's. Sunday I spent the day with some friends of Paul Keene's. They have the most fabulous studio—not modern or anything but so Greenwich Village—like, old and sort of medieval and romantic. With tall windows. Like many of the places in Paris there is nothing but an old, narrow alleyway with shabby doorways, then when you walk through the doorway you're in a courtyard with perhaps eight ateliers all facing onto it. This is how their house was.

I also met some of their neighbors. There's a French sculptor, an Italian sculptor, a Swiss painter, and a very famous French photographer for *Life Magazine*, Pierre Boulat (see if you can find the issue of *Life* in which there is a photographic essay called "A Frenchman Looks at American Women").

Tomorrow I'm going to the Ballet de Paris with Shirley. I'm also going to get my hair done tomorrow. Oh, about flying to Rome—it's costing me \$60.00. Thursday I hope to have a rip-roaring time with this guy I met on the boat—fancy restaurant and café later since it will be my last night.

I met two medical students a couple of days ago (both Colored) who have been fixing everyone up (all the sick Americans, that is) with medicine. They were telling me that of all the Americans that have enrolled at the University of Paris in the last 10 years only three have graduated, and those three were Colored. There are now two guys going into their 5th year, a girl intern, one of the boys I met who is a sophomore and the other just starting, all Colored. They had me dying laughing about the African boys. There are a great many at the University and some of them are so damned good-looking your eyes pop out. Many of them don't speak English and most of them come from Morocco.

Anyway, they usually date French girls but they make it a point of honor to date and if possible "make" every blond, southern, American girl that walks into the University. Their motto is "Send six home pregnant by Christmas"!

Other than having a cold I'm alright, but I think the Italians eat a lot better than the French. Oh, I have a long list of things to send me when you send over the shirts. First of all, try and keep the clothes from looking new in case they open the package for duty. Sometimes they do and sometimes they don't. If you send records put them in old jackets as well as their own jackets, etc.

- 1. The shirts
- 2. Jacket to crepe dress
- 3. Helena Rubinstein skin dew lotion
- 4. Pressed face powder # 8
- 5. My L.P. Records (I think Pat has my "My Fair Lady" album)
- 6. If you can, some new ones. Ask Harold to get some for me I'd like—"Concorde" by Modern Jazz Quartet, Prestige Label "Latin Escapade"—George Shearing, Capital Label
- 7. My flat blue shoes (I've worn out practically every pair of shoes I brought)

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- 8. Transformer for American electrical appliances called a "Voltage Adapter"—tell them it's for Italian voltage. They are made by the "United Transformer Corp." New York City, NY, U.S.A.

Send it to American Academy, I'll be there at least until the 21st of October. It seems just ages since I left home or even since I've been on the *Flandre*. Sometimes I feel like time is going quite quickly and other times it seems like months and months instead of days. Did you know there is 5 hours difference in our time? It's now about 11:00 here but in Philadelphia it is just 6 pm—dinner time. I'll let you know how my hair turns out and how much it cost me. I got the name and address of this hairdresser from a girl I came over with on the *Flandre*.

The French women certainly haven't impressed me as far as dressing is concerned. Most of them look like peasants or south-Philly sisters that buy their dresses at Robinson's and Lerner's. Yet one can see the quality or cut of a coat or suit but when they put it on—something happens. They either have on the wrong shoes, or color, or scarf, or bag or something. Speaking of bags, I could just go out of my mind the French handbags are so beautiful. They use suede a lot in their handbags—and what shapes—those soft folded clutches—just beautiful.

Most of them are very expensive—not in comparison with what you'd pay in the States for a good bag, but in comparison with European prices.

What about this Russian satellite? I didn't know anything about it until it had circled the globe for about three days. America must be hysterical. You can't tell much from the European editions of the *Herald Tribune* (which is the only U.S. paper we can get over here). Most of the French seem rather pleased. They really believe in this balance of power idea and they are just as afraid of the U.S. as they are of Russia.

Mother please tell my Aunt Bernice and my Aunt Helen that these letters are for them too. It's so hard to write three or four newsy letters. Oh yes, I was approached verbally by my first Frenchman a couple of days ago. Very interesting. French men aren't moving me at all—but those Moroccan men! Wow!

Love, Goodnight, and Kisses, Barbara

P.S.—Mother please start writing on airmail paper like this—and using airmail envelopes. You'll spend a fortune in stamps. Tell everyone to write to me.

P.P.S.—Please add to list—aspirin which you can't get here without a prescription.

Just got out of the hairdresser's. You should see my hair. It looks like something out of *Vogue*—all black and shiny. They were very nice, but very expensive. I got there at 10:00. It is now 12:30. I think he must have combed it for a half hour anyway—it looks so professional I'm afraid to touch it!

October 15, 1957

To my utterly sweet Mother:

Finally in Rome. Of course I have just received your two letters. They were wonderful. I laughed and laughed about those lines "Darling I'm not scolding, but don't get in the habit of drinking too much..." I had a rip-roaring time that night. Jack, the boy from Morgan, is very sweet and if you think that is terrible wait until I tell you about my last day in Paris (smile). Really mother I am not going anywhere near the dogs, let alone to them. I also have no intention of coming home. I am lonely at times but not in the least depressed. I have received one wire and one letter from Harold. He felt, as I do now, all my hysteria was just breaking ties from home, being in a strange country and being lonely. So much happens in such a short space of time, I can never remember where or what day I left off in my last letter and writing everything in quadruple for you, Paula, Shirley, and Harold, not to mention Paris, Pat, Eleanor, and Izzy, is giving me corns on my fingers! Let's see, I must have written you the Tuesday before I flew to Rome. Well, that Wednesday Shirley and I went to the Ballet de Paris, which was slightly disappointing after seeing them in the States with Roland Petit (remember "Carmen"). The dancers however were wonderful so it sort of balanced out. Before the Ballet the Ambassador had a party for the Fulbrights which I crashed. It was great! Champagne flowed like water and all kinds of goodies (I don't think anyone had eaten dinner). There was also an exhibition of I think a Fulbright's paintings which were so bad it was pathetic. The party was held in a very ritzy hotel, beautiful ballroom with crystal chandeliers, etc. I must have drunk about five glasses of champagne. (Mother, please don't faint!) I was happy, happy, happy—surrounded by hundreds of people! Thursday night I went out with this boy from Morgan. Pat Moore and her husband had given Shirley and me the name and address of a great restaurant and of another café, so we went there. The restaurant was called in English the "Peacock Queen" and it was rather expensive, 400 francs for the both of us. But the food was heavenly. I have never, ever eaten a meal to compare with it. It is served in about 7 courses and (please, Mother, control yourself) a different wine is served with each course and an aperitif before dinner! So you have about eight glasses each on your table before the meal. One waiter serves the food, and another serves the wine. Then a brandy, a red wine with the hors d'oeuvres, a white wine with the fish, a dry red with the meat, a white dry wine with the salad, then I lost count. Everyone in the restaurant starts out very dignified, the conversation is low. By dessert, which they serve with champagne of course, the men are laughing a little louder, everyone is flushed and red (except us), the girls' eyes are a little brighter.

They could probably charge you 400,000 francs by that time, you're having such a good time, it doesn't matter—then we went to a café called l'Abbaye. It is

run and owned by a White guy and a Colored guy (is he ever beautiful) who sing folk songs. They are just great. Both are quite handsome. The White fellow is very tall and thin with a sort of line-v face, the Negro is quite tall but real muscular, looks a little like Henry! The place is quite small and dark, lit only by candles. You couldn't squeeze more than thirty people in it. They sing classic folk songs, spirituals, French love songs, etc., in a very vibrant dynamic way. Especially the Colored fellow. He makes most American songs look like pale choir hymns. He used very dramatic gestures à la Belafonte and he is as good, I think. Both wear tight black pants with white shirts open at the neck. At the end of the evening they take requests from the audience and as they sing them they put out a candle until there's just one more song and the room is completely dark except for one candle. Then they sing a calypso song called "Time Man to Go Home" and they roll down their sleeves, button their collars, put on their ties and jackets and put out the last candle. Great, huh? They are very popular in Europe, they make records, and play in the movies. If they expanded they could make a fortune, but it's so nice the way it is.

Friday at 10:15 I flew to Rome. It only took three hours and was wonderful. They served lunch on the plane, the day was clear and sunny except for big fluffy white clouds. You could see the change as one left France and entered Italy. We flew down the coastline so that you could see all the microscopic-looking coastal and fishing towns with little boats. When we landed in Rome, the effect was startling. Everything in Paris is this sort of filtered gray light. In Rome everything is golden. It is still so warm here women are wearing summer sleeveless dresses. Everything is still lush and green. The Italian men are as I expected—verbal but harmless enough. This friend of Paul Keene's I looked up really had some funny stories to tell about Italian men and his wife while they were in Italy. Well, they do stare (it isn't considered rude as it is in the States) and whistle and call and follow you down the streets and honk their horns, but they rarely really frighten or annoy you. They act as if they have X-ray eyes or something, walk around like Marcello Mastroianni with their dark glasses and cigarette holders. I really think the older men are much more fascinating than the young ones. I've been in Rome and in downtown Rome for 4 days and I have yet to see another Negro African or otherwise, so you can imagine the effect. Let's put it this way: I'm never alone. I always have 10,000 eyes to keep me company and when I sit down always about 3 or 4 Italian men surround me. Once in a park, they even started serenading me! But all in all they are quite helpful. Sometimes I have to resist the urge to make horrible faces. The problem now is to get a studio. I won't have to worry about it for a few days yet, because I'm going to Florence to visit Natalie. I eat at the Academy, although they had gotten me a place in a pension not too far away until the 18th when I'll be living there. The Academy itself is unbelievable. It's just outside of Rome, in a very quiet residential section of huge villas and gardens. First there's a big iron gate with a gatekeeper and a small court or

garden in front. Then there are big marble steps leading through the façade of the building which is a series of big arched windows into the most beautiful inside court with big poplar trees, gardens and a romantic-looking fountain in the middle. We usually eat lunch on the sort of porch-like extension from the building which surrounds the courtyard. Most of the rooms look out onto the courtyard and the studios are great—so big. I wish I could stay here and then I don't. It would be great for work but it's so isolated and so American. I met a very nice sculptor-painter named Jack Zajac who is fairly well known the first night purely by chance. Later I discovered Lionni had written and told him to look me up. He (Lionni) had bought some drawings from Jack and it's sort of tentative that he do a Fortune assignment. Jack is married; his wife is going to have a baby. I like his work very much. It is very exciting. There is another sculptor here whom I admire very much. These people are no hacks. Most of us are serious professionals who are good and who have already made a mark in the art world. Yesterday I stayed downtown all day, indulged myself in a real American lunch at a restaurant that caters to Americans—cheeseburger, ice tea (with ice! First ice I've had in 3 weeks) and ice cream and cake. It was great. I must do it again sometime and it was cheaper than all the Italian lunches I've had except at the Academy. I haven't found anything in Rome or Paris that is really cheap yet. The shoes are beautiful and believe me you'll get a handbag for Christmas... but they are not cheap. Of course you'd pay much more for them in the States, but they average around 10 or 11 dollars. Housing here as in Paris is ridiculously high. I don't see how the average Roman lives in Rome. Yesterday I went to a gallery in town and met the sculptor who was having the show there (Puccinelli), a fairly well-known West Coast artist, and he said Florence, he found, is not cheaper. The one studio he knew about was the one Natalie had rented about a month ago. So he showed me the artist section of Rome, where all the studios are, and helped me find a place called the Artist Center. They couldn't help me either as far as a studio is concerned but I did find Katherine Dunham's school. I think I'll go over there tomorrow morning and see if I can find a Philadelphia-dancer from Marion's who is supposed to be there. I really want to take some pictures, but I haven't bought a camera yet. Words won't describe most of the places I've seen like the Colosseum at dusk so I won't even try. I hope to buy one in Florence while I'm there. Today I'm going to try to get in touch with a Fulbright sculptor here who has a studio in town. Also trying to get in touch with several of Paul Keene's friends, one of whom writes for Italian movies I haven't been able to contact at all. The other lives out of Rome so I'm going to write him today. I haven't had any time to start studying my Italian. The weather has been so wonderful I've been trying to see as much of the city as I can. My Italian is not bad, but pretty primary. I can ask for things and usually get them. But when I say something and I get back this flow of Italian, I can't understand it of course. The pension where I'll be staying until the 17th when I leave for Florence is very

nice—big room with breakfast in my room and flowers, etc. But it's also very expensive—2,000 lire per night. I'm doing fairly well though. I'm sure I won't spend any more than \$100.00 this month which means I'll have \$300.00 to spend next month. I still haven't made up my mind about the Vespa. Gee, I'm so behind on my letter writing it's not even funny. It doesn't seem possible that in a few days I will have been away for a month. Yet the boat ride seems years and years ago. Even Paris is beginning to seem like it happened a long time ago. I received a letter from Natalie while I was in Paris. She is much happier now, doesn't want to come home in the least. I haven't written Paula or Pat about Paris yet. I think I will today if my hand holds out. I'm going to start writing carbon copies or writing one letter and telling the person to forward it to the next person. But send me Frances's address, also, Helen's, Bernice's, Jerry's and whomever else you can think of so I can at least send them postcards. I'm sending one to Frances c/o cousin Elizabeth because I can't remember her address. Oh yes, I did have a cold in Paris, but so did every other American. It's practically gone now and it was just an ordinary old cold. I didn't even do anything for it—just let it run its course. But the day I received your first letter which stated among other things "take care of yourself, don't catch cold and don't let yourself get stopped up," I was hacking away constipated as a jailbird.

You take care of yourself and don't work too hard. Don't get spoiled by these novels you're getting as letters. They'll probably get shorter (smile). I'll write Daddy soon. In the meantime you'll just have to read him my letters or forward them or something. The people at the Academy have been very kind, and as soon as I can make some contact with someone with means of transportation I'll be in business. It's very difficult for a girl to go out after dusk in Rome by herself. Italian women just don't go out. The further south you get, the earlier they get inside for the night.

Last night I went to see a Jeff Chandler movie in Italian. If you think that isn't funny. The dubbing was very good, though; it sounded just like Jeff Chandler only speaking Italian. The movie was a western and lousy and made things even worse. The Italians loved it. I haven't been to St. Peter's yet. I might go tomorrow since I'll be in town or wait until I get back from Florence. By November it should begin to rain so I'd like to get settled by then. It's so hard to plan a day here. You end up doing about half of what you plan to. The stores are closed from 1 to 4 in the afternoon and that's that. Sometimes it's more like 2 to 5. For me, the whole day is shot. The Italians eat and sleep from 1 to 4 and then the shops open up again until about 9 o'clock at night. Last night I ate in a very nice little Italian restaurant. I ate early around 7:30 so the place was practically empty. I had a nice long talk with the owner about this and that. He wanted to know all about me etc. Rome is really beautiful. I don't know which I really like best, Rome or Paris, although Paris has the edge now. I like the pace in Paris, it's very much like N.Y. but it would be impossible for me to live there.

Shirley has already started her campaign to be transferred from Grenoble to Paris. Grenoble is a university town equivalent to living at Penn State in Pennsylvania rather than Philadelphia.

Well, I haven't run out, but my hand has. I'll write again in a few days. Miss you and love you. Wished Sunday night I was sitting home looking at Steve Allen rather than what I was doing, whatever it was. But I'm awfully glad I came. Just these 3 weeks were worth all the trouble and to think it's almost free. It's really wonderful. Looking forward to seeing Natalie but I'm sure I'm having much less trouble than she. She was really miserable.

Love, Barbara

P.S.—"Bella" which means beautiful one is what I hear all day and I can't say it isn't swell.

P.P.S.—You can fly, Mother. It's not dangerous and you might get sick on the boat—the sea is very rough in winter.

October 20, 1957

Darling Mother:

Here with Natalie in Florence. Very well. We were so happy to see each other. You'll probably get this letter before the one I wrote previous to this since I don't think I had enough postage on it. It was all in answer to your two letters I got when I arrived at the Academy. Florence is very beautiful. I might live here most of the year. I found a wonderful apartment—studio not to be occupied until December. It has two large rooms, bath (no bathtub yet), kitchen, terrace, fireplace, and very interesting furniture. It has great possibilities. I had already pictured it next spring when you and my new daddy (smile) come over. Natalie's place is very nice too. Also very convenient. It's owned by a handsome Italian count and his mother with whom Natalie promptly fell in love (the guy, not his mother). I have just finished writing Paris and Paula. I asked Paris how his car was and what bitch he had riding around in it. Opened Paula's letter with "Dear Paula: As I sit here admiring my Lucrezia Borgia arsenic-filled ring, having just finished my hare soup, I had just mentioned to Natalie as she prepared to serve the roasted sparrows that Italy hasn't changed us a bit." The hare soup is a long joke, too complicated to explain. The Lucrezia Borgia ring is something I bought on a shopping spree here along with gloves and cotton stockings. It's this crazy, big chunky ring with a pink stone in it. The stone part opens and there's a little compartment. It's called a Borgia ring because it's the kind they used to carry around poison in. The story of the roasted sparrows is this: some friends of Joan

and Dick's that we looked up took Natalie and me to this little restaurant way out in the country. And the Italian guy that was with us ordered among other things roasted sparrows. I couldn't eat them, they looked like grasshoppers to me.

Please don't worry about me, I'm fine. And please don't worry about me "worrying about Harold." I don't. As a matter of fact, all I've been thinking about is Paris since I got to Florence. Oh yes, go to the Pyramid opening and tell me all about it. Send me a catalogue too. I hope to do some work when I get back to the Academy even though I don't think I'll have a studio there. I'll stay there until the other studio here can be moved into.

I'm getting tired of Italian men. All this staring and shouting and following you down the street can get wearying after a while. Don't worry though they're perfectly harmless. Once in a park they even started to serenade me. I think I've made a big hit in Italy. The policemen stop traffic for me. I haven't seen another Negro woman since I got here! I still have a few friends of Paul Keene's to look up when I get back to Rome. I'll also write White—that's a good idea about the records. I'm going to write Pat tonight also and Daddy if my hand holds out. Have met some very good, kind people here. Like the guy that told me about this studio in Florence. Rome I think is impossible. It's too expensive and studios are very hard to find. Natalie is turning into a very good cook and she swears so will I. Well I came up with something today. Tuna fish and tomato sauce for spaghetti. You'll have to be sending me cookbooks after a while. Oh yes, I forgot to tell you, the studio is on the seventh floor. Oh well, I always wanted a walk-up penthouse.

I'll write soon. Give my love to Grandpop and tell him I miss him. Tell him, also, to be good and not to shake up the ladies too much. Wish I could see the new front all painted—anything with the hole in the ceiling?

My love to Helen and Bernice. If I ever get organized, I'll write them. Be good.

Love and Kisses, Barbara

October 28, 1957

Darling Mother,

Back at the Academy. It is still warm and sunny here, although the days are shorter. Left Natalie's Wednesday morning by train and got into Rome Wednesday afternoon. The train ride was fun. You know, 8 people to a compartment. They were all Italian of course (I was traveling 2nd class) and when I said I was an "artista" the connotation was not artist but actress, and they thought I was a movie star. That was fun. They were arguing about whether I was African or not. They couldn't get over my hair (which is holding up beautifully and which I wear in sort of casual ringlets around ears, etc., and two big dips in the front, casually swirled

around in the back with little curls falling down my neck etc.). Very effective, it really looks great and that Helena Rubinstein stuff makes it so soft! I was a real sensation at the Academy too. The new fellows (meaning holders of fellowships, not guys) returned to the Academy from a trip just as I was getting back. Some pretty cute guys, but nothing to the one I've got lined up. He's fantastic! I just finished writing Natalie about it. Do I have a crush? He actually has given me a weak bladder. His name is Erik and he's an architect from Cornell on the second year of his prix de Rome prize. As his name implies, he's Swedish, his parents came over in the 20s. Well, if you can imagine a blond, blue-eyed Harold, he's it. He's really a giant, about 6'4", very blond wavy hair, blond eyebrows, eyelashes, fair skin but sort of outdoorsy looking, crinkly eyes, wonderful smile. His eyes turn sort of blue violet at night. He is really unbelievably handsome, sort of Greek type features, or rather, typically Nordic. Well, it all started the night I shared my "dolce" (means dessert) with him at dinner. Eva and I (Eva is the Italian wife of one of the painters) were talking about material and dresses, etc. You would really go wild here in Rome. The fabric shops are fabulous. Huge stores with nothing but bolts and bolts of cloth. That's what you can send me for a Christmas present, because I have a lead on a dressmaker here in Rome. Anyway, Erik offered to drive me in town one day, if I wanted to pick up some material. He likes to shop for material and things because his mother sews. So, we got to talking and I mentioned I really needed a means of transportation and was thinking about a used car—had given up the idea of a scooter. He said he'd look out for me. Next day at lunch he mentioned the deal of a Volkswagen for \$100. We talked and finally he asked me to go for a drive with him. Of course I did. He has a beautiful new Volkswagen with the top that rolls back and it was a beautiful day. So we drove around Rome and finally out into the country to this villa called Villa d'Este which is famous for its beautiful fountains and gardens. Of course, the walks were very slippery, so I held on tight. Can you imagine the contrast between him and me! Then he asked me to dinner, so we went back to the Academy to change. Well, he had taken care of his needs very gracefully (as European men have a way of doing) at the Villa (it's a pleasure spot and they have the usual men's urinals). I didn't have to go then but when we got to the Academy I was dying and we stopped first for coffee. I just did make it. Today I had my picture taken by some Italian photographer, a friend of Eve's, and Erik treated me so coolly at lunch just as if we hadn't spent the whole day together. Oh ves, we went to a wonderful restaurant in Rome last night, drove around to all the fountains that are lighted at night—How romantic can you be?

So tonight at dinner we finally got together again. We played billiards, had coffee at a little coffee shop nearby and I finally got him up to the graphics studio where I'm working on some etchings (ha ha). But you know, after the cold shoulder this afternoon, I really decided to launch a campaign. Give him the old Barbara one-two. He's really very sweet, though, and I'm sure quite unconscious of all the uproar he's stirring up. But it would make a great *Love Is a Many*

Splendored Thing-like story huh Mom? Don't worry, I'm just fooling. But he is really something. When we walk down the street together—wow!

Oh yes, forget about the thing for the recording machine, I'll get it here. Tell me more about this call you got from the United News Service and tell me also about the Pyramid Club show. I haven't gotten Helen's letter yet. I'm slowly getting out the cards to various people. The Academy had a trip down to the South of Italy—Naples, Salerno, etc. on which I wish I had gone, but then I might not have met Erik. I'm taking Italian lessons from this Eva girl who is Florentine. She's very good. There's also another Negro sculptor here named John Rodin, whom I met. Still very friendly with this friend of Leo Lionni. I wrote Whitney about records and a camera so I expect to hear from him in a few weeks. Still looking forward to my boxes. Hope my letters are amusing. It's really amazing I'm not at all homesick. I wish you were here instead of wishing I were home. Did Natalie's mother call you? Have you heard anything from the Galleries? I haven't sold anything, have I? I'm sorry about work, but we'll find a way. (I just read over this letter and that etching bit is very funny.)

Well, I guess that's all for tonight. So many things happen in a day. It's hard to remember anything. It seems like a week's events are crammed into one day here. I'm really getting spoiled at the Academy, all this service, meals served old-style by servants, finger foods, the works—I intend to look up a couple of Paul Keene's friends too, which might be interesting. Well, I have to go to the bathroom again it's the 6th time today. Oh, that Erik—

Love and kisses, sleep well, Your devoted daughter

Kiss Grandpop for me—more of the saga of Erik and Barbara to follow—I might just end up in India someplace.

November 5, 1957

Darling Mother,

Your letter sounded as if you haven't been getting mine. I'm going to start numbering them. I wrote Paris while I was in Florence, also Pat and Daddy and I haven't heard from any of them (Natalie said she would mail the letters as I boarded the train for Rome... I wonder). It's very strange, especially Pat and Paris. Call Pat and see if she got my letter, also Daddy. I'm quite fine and regular (smile). I had trouble with my foot (really from too much walking) and finally went to the doctors, who said I had an irritated tendon. He gave me two X-ray treatments and it's much better, although it's costing me a fortune. The hospital I went to was Salvador Mundi, an international hospital where all the rich Americans go. As for the box, I hope you sent it airmail or else I won't get it for two months.

Well, you alien you, when are you being deported? (smile) I really don't think it's anything to worry about. But you know how excited this stupid government can get over unimportant things. Eisenhower and this satellite thing really look flat-footed and stupid in the European papers. It's really pathetic. Also, you did not tell me about Patsy and John whatever it is. I won't be near to Natalie in my studio, but Florence is a very small city, so I won't be far away either. My rent is 25,000 lire or about 40 dollars a month (I told you all this). The studio is very nicely furnished with linen supplied. I did find out that there's really no Dunham School in Rome. I'm working on a series of etchings now which I will have printed up in a few days. Night before last had dinner with a friend of Paul Keene's (it turned out that he didn't remember him at all) but anyway he was charming and quite nice. He lives with a girl (Italian) who translates from Italian to English for Random House Publishing Co. in New York. He's very, very smart and very well known in Italy. As a matter of fact, he is the best known translator in Italy and does all the major works. He also does scripts for the movies. So all in all it was a pleasant day. I met an Englishman who's married to a Jamaican, who are friends of theirs, and also a Guggenheim (not a fellow, a member of the family) named Barbara who sounds like a real character. The girl also works for a magazine and thinks I might be able to illustrate a story for them. I told them I wanted to do some advertising design. Of course they said stay in Rome, but I don't know. As I said, rents are high and one doesn't get much for the price. But he's really in the "in" group and by the end of the month I might not want to leave. He and the girl were supposed to have dinner here at the Academy with me Saturday, but Ben has to return immediately to the States (he's been here 9 years) because of an illness of his mother. So Diana and I will have dinner and then we're invited to some friend's house that I don't know. Ben, by the way, is from Boston, his father's a lawyer. He (Ben) went to Fisk University. I just missed having my picture in an Italian magazine. Ben had taken this photographer for some magazine doing an article on foreign artists living in Rome around to all the artists he knows at the Academy about 10 days ago when I was in Florence. But he says they're already doing things like that, especially on Negroes, so I'll probably have my face plastered in a few magazines tomorrow. The director of the Academy is giving a reception for someone or other so all the Academy is invited. My darling architect took off right after my last letter for northern Italy and Switzerland and hasn't returned as of yet. So my romance is on ice for the present. I've decided Ben can surely get me a nice rich Italian anyway although I sort of like Americans. I'm going to wash my hair today at long last. It was rainy for a few days but it has cleared up in the last couple and is sunny again. I saw the *Prince and the Showgirl* at the English-speaking movies in town and ran into Ralph Ellison (the Negro writer I told you about at the Academy). He was leaving for the States in a few days, had lectured in the Far East, India, and Japan. Later, from Ben I found out how famous he is. He wrote *The Invisible Man*, a very

literate, very good bestseller a couple of years ago. Ben knows all kinds of famous writers like William Gardner Smith (The Last of the Congress) and Richard Wright. He worked on a Paris newspaper for a while and lived in Paris for quite a spell. I wrote a letter to Daddy (I always called him Whitey) before I received the one you got, so I'm expecting to hear from him soon also. Got a letter from Izzy, who will be in Europe in April or May. He's now in Fort Benning, Georgia. How's that for fate? Haven't heard from Harold lately but have gotten all of 2 letters from him. While in Florence Natalie and I decided it was all over with Harold and me, but I don't know. Certainly, he can't give me many of the things I think I want out of life, most of them bordering on the materialistic and social, but one can't live by love alone. I miss the movies and my nightly ice cream (I eat pastry here instead) but don't miss the vision at all. Glad to hear about the stockings, I can use them. I'm finally going to get my trunk today or tomorrow. I don't know what's happening to my mail. I still haven't gotten Helen's letters yet. Oh yes, also call Paula and see if she got my letters. She should have gotten two which had the right postage on them. Give my love to everyone and kiss Grandpop for me. I'll let you know when I crash the movies—

> Love you always (even if you're not a citizen yet) Barbara

P.S.—I always say, you let those foreigners in, they take all the good jobs, their daughters win all the scholarships and fellowships—disgraceful.

P.P.S.—God, I could stay in Europe for years if I wanted to: people at the Academy seem to think I might have a chance for an American Academy fellowship. It's possible to get the Whitney renewed, there's the Fulbright and if I meet the right people, the possibility of earning a living in advertising art. It seems once you win a fellowship, this sort of thing can go on perpetually. Don't worry yet though. I'm not even remotely thinking of staying more than a year.

Saturday, November 17th, 1957

Darling Mother,

I delayed writing you because I wanted to do something that I wanted to tell you about, but I've forgotten what it was. Anyway, I did it and it was great. Then I forget where I left off in my last letter so I don't know how far back to start. Today, Sunday, I went to what is called the flea market (they also have one in Paris) where you can buy anything from an 18th century candlestick holder to a jigsaw. It's sort of like 8th Street only more varied and exciting. Colored beach umbrellas, bolts of cloth, antique furniture, clothes, jewelry, weird things, sculpture, Etruscan pots, coins, some things really collectors' items. It's really one big game because you have to bargain down the price of everything, for instance I bought

a jade ceramic necklace and the man wanted 2,000 lire. I offered him 1,000. Then he started telling me about his sick wife and 14 children, so I start to walk away. He calls me back, asks me what I'll give him and I say 1,000—1,500 he says. I walk away again—1,200 he says. I look at the brooch again, 1,000 I say. He snatches the necklace back, gives me a dirty look, and finally as I'm turning to leave he sells me the necklace. Great, but exhausting. Think of doing your Christmas shopping like that. I went with Erik, around 9:00. It opens at about 5:30 in the morning and the bargain hunters get there at that time. This afternoon I phoned Diana and found out I had missed a great party by going with Erik Thursday. So I'm going with her to see a friend this evening.

Yesterday, I went to a place called Bomarzo with Erik and a friend of his. It's a little medieval town about 30 miles outside of Rome where there's a villa with crazy sculpture carved right out of the rock foundation. It was fun, but not worth missing a phone call I received from some Italian man—I don't know who, he didn't leave his name, but I suspect it was this director of a Roman magazine called Roto whom I met a few days ago at Diana's. Anyway the telephone operator thought I had gone out of town for the weekend, so he won't call again until Monday I guess. I'm really getting travel fever. If Erik and Alan don't stop talking about Egypt and Erik says once more "Why don't you come along" or "Come with me to the Kasbah and we'll sail up the Nile together," I'll be off. I just finished talking to another guy, a mural painter who has also been in Egypt, and it really sounds fabulous. Early this afternoon I had a coffee at a bar near here (bars here are more like coffee or snack bars, although they serve liquor also) with Eva, the Italian girl. Well it was a pleasant way to kill a few hours because two Italian boys (as usual) tried to pick us up (not in the same connotation it would be in the U.S., it's more of a national pastime). They were quite good-looking, dark glasses, slick red convertible. First, they decided who was to have which: the blond or the brown one. Then they followed us first to the dressmakers, then to the wine shop, then to another bar, then we took a walk through the park. All the time Eva was really enjoying herself (so was I), we would talk to them now and then, they invited us out, etc., etc., finally we all said goodbye very amicably.

Let's see, where was I? Oh yes, last night went to an American movie with Erik and Alan. Eva told me today everyone thinks we (Erik and I) make a very handsome couple, but she thinks his head is too small. I think his head is perfect but I am getting a little bored with the whole thing and unless something happens fast...like us going to Egypt together—(don't worry Mom, he's perfectly harmless). Anyway, as usual we kicked up quite a stir in aristocratic Rome. Friday, I worked on some waxes for bronze I'm trying to get done to cast. Thursday, I went for a drive in the afternoon with Erik stopping to take photographs for slides. He'll be an instructor at Cornell next year, so he's doing a lot of photography. The weather here is really wonderful, bright, sunny, and one can wear a heavy dress or wool suit without a coat. I also wrote Natalie about

the apartment in Florence (I don't know what's up with it) and as I was waiting (I told her this in the letter) I was being serenaded by mandolin music floating across the courtyard from Erik's room. Romantic, huh. I also told her about the housewarming party I went to last Saturday. I had Diana, her mother, and an architect friend of hers over for dinner and I had asked Erik and this Negro couple here on a fellowship from Chicago Institute to have a drink in this mural painter's studio before dinner and then afterwards we went to this housewarming party which was nothing great but I felt like Marjorie Morningstar with this architect friend of Diana's. He's successful, but cynical, unmarried, around 40, you know, feeling defeated about his life, etc., and here I am, embarking on my great European adventure, young, etc. So, we have this little scene as he is taking me home about his life and what I want out of being here and out of life in general and the fact that he's grown up hoping for these things but when one sees something fresh, young, and beautiful (that's me) it's only human to grab it. The dialogue was fantastic, straight out of Love in the Afternoon or something. I got my etchings back from the printers Monday and they are going to be in a show at the Academy this Tuesday. I don't know how I managed that but I did as usual. Just when I think I'm really getting bored with Erik, he ignores me for a couple of days and renews my interest. He's been busy getting ready for this trip through Egypt, the Near East, India, China, and Japan and finally the States and home via San Francisco, so he's been running around getting visas and stuff. I also did these illustrations for this magazine in the beginning of the week. The thing still isn't settled yet, but I think they will be used finally. I finally got a letter from Paris, his first letter had gotten lost or something. He's still on the hook. I got a letter from Paula saying she's glad I didn't marry Harold yet, to be selective and not to leave Izzy out of the sweepstakes. I also got a letter (2nd) from Izzy. He'll definitely be here in the spring and intends to buy a Jaguar. I also got a very sweet letter from Daddy and he promised to write again soon. Wanted to know what I wanted for Christmas and said there is a business recession and a few other things. I wrote the Whitney Foundation about the articles; also intend to tell Daddy I want money for Christmas. My foot is fine and I can't buy shoes here. I have to have them made, so if you want to send a pair—if they are closed-toed get a 9 ½ AAA. Did you ever get the dress out of Snellenburg's? It was such a nice dress...I guess you never did. I have been meeting the best-looking men over here. Met an English writer (married) who was a cross between William Holden and Judd. Wow! I have a chance to sublet his apartment for 2 months if I don't go to Egypt or to Florence (smile). Still haven't heard from El or Pat. I have to write Shirley too since she's supposed to spend Christmas vacation with me. I'm glad everything is straightened out with your status with the U.S. government, you alien you. That's great! Haven't heard from Harold in 2 weeks. I wish I could afford to buy the baby presents. They have the most exquisite baby clothes here, but very expensive.

Friday night I somehow got involved with babysitting for a very nice couple who are at the Academy. I did quite well too. They had me dying laughing about the time they were flat broke and Irma, the wife, sold a painting to Rod Steiger, not knowing who he was (you know the torn-shirt actor) and thinking the check would bounce and then by accident going to see *On the Waterfront*. They also decided to find a boyfriend for me (they don't know I like Erik who is a very good friend of theirs). I think I'll let it slip that I do and see what happens. Erik's the kind you have to sort of hit over the head. It's terrible. Still haven't gotten the package yet, but still hoping. You and Pat coming over together sounds wonderful. Spring isn't very far off you know. Pat might be able to leave school a little bit early.

It is now Monday morning. I intend to take it easy today and write some letters. Last night Diana and I visited a wonderful old professor friend of hers, along with another poet and her sister. He was great, about 67 or 8, very dynamic, completely deaf but read lips beautifully. We talked about everything from Shelly to Michelangelo. Tonight I'm going to the Fulbright Reception for the American Fellows in Rome. The drinks should be good as they were in Paris and I can meet tons of Americans who are in Rome. If you and Pat can really arrange to come, I'll save all of my traveling in Italy and Greece until you get here. We could rent an automobile along with Natalie if she's still here or if I can save enough money buy one (or have Paris send his Cadillac over) (smile).

Oh yes, the king of Sweden is at the Academy. Last night I raced down the steps right by him and didn't even give him a good look! I was wondering why everyone turned around and looked at me. Oh well it's been so many years since we played tennis together I had forgotten what he looked like. I hope to get my student card soon; it will save me a lot of money in museum fees. Give my love to Bernice and Helen and kiss Grandpop for me. I'm going to write to him today, so you'll probably get letters at the same time. I eat so much! It must be the change in climate or something. Yesterday I ate a breakfast of 2 eggs, 4 slices of toast, 2 cups of coffee, fruit, then around 11 went out with Eva, had another cup of coffee and a coffee cake on our way back from the dressmaker. We had a brandy at a bar in which I bought 4 little cakes and some chocolates. We got back to the Academy in time for lunch which was pasta (huge bowls of spaghetti or some kind of stuffed noodles), steak, French fried potatoes, spinach, and ice cream. Around 4 o'clock I ate 3 of the 4 cakes and all of the chocolates. At 5 I went downstairs and had tea, at 7 I had a martini with Diana and the professor, and at 10 we ate a dinner (I was starved by that time) of spaghetti cooked with egg and bacon, veal cooked with slices of ham, lots of bread (the brown bread is very good here), beer and fruit. And I haven't gained a pound. Really amazing. I think I'll be elegant tonight. I bought a three-quarter length sleeve low neck jersey top in the shopping near here and I'll wear my black brocade shirt and coat with the collar. I burned a hole with a cigarette in my coat at the movies Sunday,

but it's very near the seam and right at the bottom of the coat so (don't faint) it can be easily repaired and doesn't really show. I'm really getting more and more excited about this Egypt thing, I just might go. Of course my funds are limited 200 dollars a month, really isn't very much in a place like Rome or for traveling so I would have to budget rather strictly. It sounds fascinating doesn't it? Will write soon, sorry for the slight delay,

Your loving daughter, Barbara

P.S.—See you in the spring! Izzy can take us around in his Jaguar by that time! Oh yes, found out who the phone call was from. An Italian architect I met, Florentine, fantastically charming. He's looking for an apartment for me in Rome.

November 21, 1957

Darling Grandpop:

Just a note to let you know I'm fine and very happy in Europe. My foot is fine, but I can't buy shoes here—my feet are too long and too narrow, so I'll have to have them made. How are the puzzles coming along? Remember you have to win enough money to come over here next spring. I have a whole line of countesses, Borghese princesses (they're all over 50) all lined up for you. Rome is really beautiful and it sort of grows on you. The days are getting shorter, but it's still not cold enough on most days for a winter coat.

I got a letter from Daddy which really surprised me, and I hear we have nice new shiny storm windows now. How are all your girlfriends? Is Sarah speaking yet? I sent her a card. I hope she got it alright. Why don't you ask her? I suppose mother has told you all about Erik and his trip and Egypt. I just might be sailing up the Nile, who knows? I'm looking around in Rome for a place to work since I'm having difficulty with my studio in Florence. But it's worth waiting for, so I'll have to be patient. I'll have turkey for Thanksgiving Thursday. The American Academy gives a big cocktail party and turkey dinner which sounds wonderful. I just got a letter from my friend Shirley in France, who has slight troubles: she thinks she's fallen in love with a Muslim Pakistani physicist named Shameem. There should be some kind of vaccination against falling in love with handsome strangers for all American girls leaving for Europe. Natalie's in love with her landlord! Oh well it's great fun anyway. Take care of yourself and keep me posted on Edge of Night. I can barely sleep at night wondering what happened. I told Mom, I really miss my ice cream every night, also I can't seem to go to sleep at night right away without the late, late show blaring in my ears (smile). I've really been meeting some fabulous people lately, the author of *Lust for Life*, the King of Sweden (he was here at the Academy for a few days and for one of them, I, being

in a great hurry, raced right by him and a bunch of startled people without giving him even as much as a second glance) so I really didn't meet him until dinner.

Well, write soon, even if you have to do it on one of your 2-cent postcards. All my love and prayers.

Your loving granddaughter

November 25, 1957

Darling Mother,

This is going to be one of those two-day letters. I hope it is good since Shirley is coming here for the Christmas holidays and I won't be able to move to Florence until the end of January. The girl in the studio in Florence was working on a large group of sculptures which has since fallen over and broken into a million pieces...so she's staying until she repairs it. The gods just want me to remain in Rome, that's all, because these things just don't happen: Not that I mind at all. Rome is wonderful and I'm having a very good time—not much work but wow! Thanksgiving there's another cocktail party given by the Academy. I think I'll wear my black sheath (the black and red one) since I've never worn it in Rome. Among other crazy things, I got a call from an Italian photographer who had through an agency gotten the assignment from *Ebony* to take photos of me... in black-and-white and color no less. So, yesterday and the day before I spent posing in front of "Forum de Roma" and another modern building which I don't know the name of. It was great fun. Day before yesterday was cloudy and a little cool, but yesterday and today (if you can imagine it) I played tennis! It is still too warm during the day for anything except a fairly heavy suit. I'm really going in for this tennis bit. The Academy has a court and I really like the game very much. Oh yes, enclosed are three negatives we didn't send. These are the worst so you can imagine how good the photos we sent were. This photographer is very good...he's done covers for *Life*, *Time*, *Look*, etc. Well, I hope he can add *Ebony* to his list. The material is good, it just depends on what they do with it. I also had lunch with him and his wife yesterday, very nice. Anyway I wish you would get some prints made and send me a copy of each. Go to some place good like Berry + Hower on North 7th Street (the address is in one of the small drawers in the white chest) and it shouldn't cost too much. Be sure to show them to Harold and so on. I'm going to write to him tonight and tell him about it. You really can't see my hair style in these photos, but you can get the general idea, very casual (it only takes me 15 minutes to comb it) with curls trailing down my neck. Did I tell you (I always forget where I left off) I went to a cocktail party last Monday for the Fulbright and 1. Met an architect that makes Erik look like a washed-out calf but I've only seen him twice, 2. Met a weird 12-tone composer (very left wing) who fell madly in love with me and started writing microscopic love letters to me (he's

extremely near sighted, and 3. Met an Italian painter named Mimmo Rotella who is a very nice man. He's looking around for a studio for me and I met him in town last week and we ended up at his apartment madly playing bongo drums. He has quite a collection from all over the world. He has a great record collection too and is supposed to get my transformer for me.

Every time I think I'm getting over Erik, he does something sweet like giving me a flower in the midst of a lecture on Roman history at the Forum. Egypt still looks mighty good (smile). As I said, Shirley is coming here for the Christmas holidays. If you think I'm bad with Erik, you should read her letters. It seems she's fallen in love with a Moslem nuclear physicist named Shameem who's from Pakistan of all places! Can't you just picture it? Shirley and her Moslem boyfriend and me and my Swedish. Unfortunately she's bored to death in Grenoble and I think this is one escape. I also intend to take some bronzes to the foundry to be cast next week. So at least I'll have that much work accomplished. I've forgotten if I told you about the housewarming party I went to where I felt like "Marjorie Morningstar." If I did, it's too long to repeat and if I didn't, I'll tell you in my next letter. I got a letter from Joan a few days ago. She seems to be worried about Paula. Man trouble as usual. I wish she were here, this place is crawling with good-looking American architects with futures. I'm really afraid I'm being very much spoiled as far as men are concerned. I'm being thrown in with the cream of the crop and my standards are unfortunately getting higher and higher.

Also keep sending candy—I like to get it, and it's very expensive here. Give my love as always to Grandpop. I still haven't heard anything from Pat. Did I say I wasn't gaining weight? All my shirts I can just barely fasten and my belts! It's a real struggle to get them even in the first hole. It's time for a diet.

Sunday December 8, 1957

Darling Mother:

Things here are hectic but exciting as usual. I spent most of the week apartment hunting in Rome. I've forgotten where my last letter left off but anyway, I have to move out of the Academy because they need the rooms for other commitments and the girl in Florence with the studio I wanted had an accident with her sculpture and has to repair it so she doesn't know when she'll be leaving. Anyway, night before last when I was so depressed by apartment hunting and being so disorganized and was ready to take off for Munich the next morning with Erik and Alan, first the apartment came through (I still haven't signed the lease) and second the photographer called and said *Ebony* wanted a photo for the cover. Isn't that fantastic! So for the last couple of days we've been shooting. Last night I was quite discouraged because we hadn't gotten what we wanted. Something was wrong with every photo. It seems I have to look pretty, arty, colorful, and feminine all in the

same photo. So the photographer was trying to cheer me up by saying he always had trouble photographing women, the only woman he didn't have trouble with was Sophia Loren! Well that did it. Today we went out again and I really think we took some good shots. Drawing crowds as usual. I'm hoping this apartment will get settled tomorrow and I can move in. It's in a modern building, ground floor, 2 rooms, kitchen and bath and garden. The rent is fairly cheap (for Rome) about 48.00 dollars a month but everything is extra: heat, electricity, gas, telephone. So it is going to run me about 65.00 dollars a month. But it's the best I can do, the rents here are out of this world and I'm tired of looking. Also if I can swing a deal to continue to eat here, food will cost me only about 30.00 dollars a month. I have to wait until the director comes back from Spain because the secretary has taken a dislike to me so I can steer clear of her. She could have helped me a lot this last week. Fortunately I had others to do it for me. I wrote Daddy for money because the deposit I spent on this apartment is taking all my allowance for this month, so I'm sure he'll send it "subito" (that means fast).

Also getting over my crush on Erik, I think. But anyway, remember the architect I told you I met at the Fulbright party that made Erik look like a washed-out calf? Well, I've been dating him. Wow! What a sweet guy. Tall (not quite as tall as Erik) with brown curly hair and blue eyes. A real doll! We've been out several times and like each other a lot. You know stopping in the apartment for a brandy after spending the evening listening to jazz, dancing out on the terrace to radio music—all very innocent, mother. Just romantic as heck, that's all. I haven't heard from Harold in a month. I get letters regularly from Izzy and Paris. Also haven't heard from Pat, but sent off her Christmas present anyway. If anyone wants to know what I want for Christmas—sweaters, pants (slacks), stockings (although they are cheap here), towels, sheets, pillowcases, oil paints, and brushes—they're very expensive here, perfume, woolen gloves, etc., etc. Money is what I could use most right now. The rent is easy. Shirley is still coming to Rome for Christmas. I hope I have a place for her to stay. How're Bernice and Helen? I hope they get their Christmas presents in time. I haven't written anyone in a week or so. It's so different when you're in a state of confusion. This is really one 2-month period in my life I'll never forget. It seems I've crammed 5 years of living into it and although time seems to be going quite quickly, I'm amazed that it's only December and not April. As soon as I get settled I'm going to write the Whitney Foundation and find out what my chances are of getting more money really. I have three small things at the foundry now which are going to cost me 150.00 dollars. But I might as well live it up. This only happens once in a lifetime, although this perpetual fellowship thing can go on for years and years. The more you have the more you get or something. I haven't heard from Natalie lately, but I suppose she's making out all right. I'm getting very confused letters from Shirley. It seems she's fallen in love or did I tell you? Some Moslem at the University—talk about me! I read the New York Times (about 3 weeks late) sometimes and it looks

like there're some good motion pictures in the States. That's one thing I miss or do I? Went to see *Around the World in 80 Days* with Jordan (the new architect crush) in Italian, but I still enjoyed it (maybe it was the company). I wrote Daddy about all my adventures and mentioned that you really don't expect these fantastic romantic things that you joke about happening in Europe to really happen—and they are! It's fantastic—tall handsome young men chasing after you, sleek sports cars, photos on covers of magazines, elegant cocktail parties, etc., etc. Boy, am I having the time of my life. Even this utter confusion has its charm. The prospects of fixing up the apartment, even if I don't have much money, are great. It's a charming place and I had to get a place with you in mind for this spring, etc. So I think I'm going to be happy with it. The landlord has a daughter the same age as me who has improved my Italian immensely. I'll write again in a few days. Kiss Grandpop for me.

Barbara

December 20, 1957

Darling Mother:

Just received your letter dated December 15. I'm so sorry I didn't write sooner. I always forget the last time I write and what I wrote. What a memory! Did I really sound that worried about money? Anyway, everything is fine now. It must have been one of those days. I did write Daddy for money, which I received last night—75.00 dollars. Wasn't that sweet! And I did need it, but there was really nothing to worry about, it was just the initial expense of the apartment, which if I haven't already written, I do have, and it's lovely. I even have some furniture a wardrobe, chair, stove, marble top from my landlady, a bed from Ben and Bernarda, records and a painting from an Italian painter-friend of mine, 2 chairs which I paid 2.00 dollars apiece for, an architectural drawing table which I paid 3.00 dollars for, 2 antique candlestick holders (very fashionable) which I paid 1.50 dollars for, a poster which I got free, and pillows, bed cover for the bed, etc., etc., which cost the most. I'll send you a photo as soon as I can. Believe it or not, it's really elegant. Right now I'm trying to find another bed for poor Shirley to sleep in when she comes. We just might take a short trip to Florence to see Natalie and maybe Switzerland. I met a wonderful Swiss girl-photographer a few days ago who invited me to visit her. Shirley should arrive Saturday or Sunday. This week has just been one long party. Everyone at the Academy gives Christmas cocktail parties the week before Christmas and it's mad! Mad! Let's see, Monday it was Bob Buchanan, an architect, Wednesday, it was George and Pat Conley (he's also an architect), yesterday I had dinner with this Italian painter whose picture I have at a wonderful restaurant complete with candlelight and mandolin players. I also met a very glamorous Polish fashion designer there. I had

a wonderful time—this guy is going to Sicily for the Christmas holidays, but he'll be back for New Year's. He's great to know because he knows every other artist in Rome practically, including the movie directors, I didn't tell you I was going to crack the movies? Tonight another cocktail party—Jim Gerret—a real doll of an architect and afterwards dinner with Ben and Bernarda and this smooth Italian guy (also an architect—Daddy wanted to know where I picked them all up from). Saturday there's a party at someone's studio in the Greenwich Village of Rome which is called Via Margutta.

Oh yes, I didn't tell you about this other Italian architect I met. Wow! What a layout he has—fabulous apartment in Via Margutta—real weird color combinations so tasteful it hurts. He invited me and this Swiss photographer to have lunch with him, he cooks divinely. Speaking of cooking, I can't get into any of my clothes. You know the jacket to the new black dress? Well, I can't get it buttoned around my waist, all my straight skirts are too tight in the hips, all my long-sleeve dresses are too tight in the sleeves—even my bosom is getting bigger! I don't know what I'm going to do. It's terrible! My appetite is so big, I just can't stop eating. Coffee and cake at 6 o'clock and a huge dinner complete with lasagna at 8! Sunday Shirley will be here and we'll go to Rosati's, this professor friend of Ben and Bernarda's, Sunday evening. Monday I invited Erik and Alan here for cocktails. Tuesday and Wednesday have no plans, but I'm sure something will come up. Thursday I'm having my housewarming party from 6 to 8:30 so the people won't drink so much and Friday Shirley and I will probably take off. Oh yes, Wednesday there's the big dance at the Academy and a party for the children of the servants.

Also my illustration will be published in Rotosei next week and I'll be paid the week after so if I'm a little short the end of the month, Shirley can loan me some money. But I must have written you about the cover. I am supposed to be on the cover of *Ebony*, you know. Haven't heard when, but this Italian guy took millions of pictures of which he rejected about 25-those I have. Jordan took off for Sicily a few days ago—darn it! I wanted to show him off to Shirley. He loaned me his transformer (don't laugh), it's for the phonograph machine and I borrowed some jazz records from Mimmo (Italian artist) so I'm all set for my party. I still haven't made the invitations yet. I still don't understand why you have to be naturalized. You married an American citizen—that automatically makes you a citizen whether you're divorced or not. But really don't worry about sending me any money. I'm fine and if I really need money you know Daddy will give it to me and there are tons of people here that I can borrow money from if I run short at the end of the month. You have enough to do without worrying about me. If you could see this apartment—you'd die laughing at the starving young sculptor bit. It looks more like a well-heeled Madison Avenue fashion designer. You know how I can stretch money when I have to. I haven't as yet received any Christmas boxes. I hope they get here before Christmas, I could use the shoes

terribly. I've eaten through all of mine. Have you and Grandpop received your Christmas presents yet? I also sent Bernice, Helen, Pat, and Paula. I forgot Jerry so would you buy her something imported from Italy and tell her it's from me and was in your box? I also sent Harold's and his mother and father's, but I don't think they'll get them in time for Christmas. I hope he at least sends me a card. Of course I sent Daddy's present so I'm all squared away here. It's still so mild here it's rather hard to get into the Christmas spirit except that downtown Rome is worse than New York City at Christmas with the crowds, the things here are so beautiful—the clothes, shoes, gloves—so damn elegant and expensive. Really the Italian women in downtown Rome make one feel like a bum! Oh yes, I promise not to forget your birthday. I wish I could send you a count or something, but he might get squashed in shipping. Anyway as Erik keeps telling me, Venice is the place for princes, etc. So I'm off this spring—Shirley and I, prince hunting. Oh yes, Erik and Alan were very sweet about helping me move. Alan went to the flea market with me Sunday to help me get my furniture home and all three of us finally went out to dinner. I still haven't heard from Pat! What's with her? And Paris! He sent me of all things for Christmas a photograph of himself! Well, that's the end of Paris. I at least expected a nice cashmere sweater! Why should I look at Paris all year when I can look at Erik, Alan, Jim, Bob, Sandro, Mimmo, Mario, Silvo, and Jordan. Oh as soon as you can, get those photos taken for me please. I really have a number of contacts through Mimmo for shows, one woman in Paris and several galleries in Rome. The only thing that worries me is I can't seem to get out of the Volkswagen class into the Rolls Royce, Jaguar, Mercedes-Benz class. All the American boys have Volkswagens and all the Italians have these rickety old cars that I don't even want to be seen in. Well, give me another month and we'll see what happens.

Merry Christmas, darling. How I wish I could fly home just for the day! Or better still you could come here. Welcome the New Year in with a bang.

Love, Barbara

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