

it was awful. After that it was just 'Hit the ball, drag Elmer. Hit the ball, drag Elmer.' Well, my life these days feels exactly the same: "Wake up in the morning, sing for a producer. Wake up in the morning, sing for a producer." And so far, there's been nary a bite.

In other news, I heard that Cynthia Monroe left *Arsenic and Old Lace* last week. It turns out she was - how can I put this delicately? - ripe with child. It sounds to me like she should have been in *Oklahoma!* singing "I'm Just a Girl Who Cain't Say No." The truth is, I wish her well. We had a lot of good times together. There was one time we went to a cocktail party given by a producer and there was a punch bowl and we thought we were drinking fruit punch and it turned out it was filled with gin and we ended up literally removing our...

Any news on your front? Good news, of course. Or anything at all, for that matter. As I think you know, I love hearing from you.

All affection,  
Louise

**JACK.**

Dear Louise,

I'd love to send you some good news for a change, but in fact I have something difficult to relate. I just received my orders to go overseas. I can't say I didn't see it coming, but it's still a shock.

I just wrote and told my mother and dad, and that was the worst part of the whole thing. You know them now, and you know that they won't take it very well.

For what it's worth, some of the other doctors here have received similar orders and a number of us are going over together. We'll be responsible for establishing an evacuation hospital near the line of battle. You would think that they'd send us to the Pacific since we're already here on the West Coast, but the Army, in its wisdom, is sending us in the other direction. There's been talk in the papers lately about opening up a second front in Europe, either in France

## LOUISE - Side 2

or Belgium, and I have a feeling we're going to be part of it.

However, there is a kind of silver lining: they're giving each of us a five-day leave before we ship out. I'll be going to Coatesville, of course, to see Mom and Dad, but then I'd like to come to New York and see you. The day will be Saturday, October 10th. What do you think?

**Start:**

Are you still game?

**LOUISE.** "Am I still game?" Yes, Jack, I'm still game. *Are you crazy?* If I could, I'd be at the airport to meet the plane. But for God's sake! What's the matter with these people? Why can't they all just get along? And why can't the Army just leave you here? Hell's bells! Don't they need doctors here in the states?! S-word, s-word, s-word, a-word, s-word.

**JACK.** Do you always swear when you're angry?

**LOUISE.** Yes. K-word!

**JACK.** K-word?

**LOUISE.** Krap!

**JACK.** You know not everyone gets killed when they go overseas.

**LOUISE.** I didn't say that and I wasn't implying it. Have you always been an idiot, or do you just practice?

**JACK.** I practice. Now what about our date? It better be good. According to you, it could be the last time you'll ever see me.

**LOUISE.** You know that's really, *really* not funny.

**JACK.** Sorry. Around here they call it gallows humor, and there's a lot of it.

**LOUISE.** Well tell them for me they're all idiots.

**JACK.** Will do. So what about our date? Same drill? Dinner, show, and dare I say it, a little dancing?

**LOUISE.** Yes. And you better practice because I plan to dance your feet off. Also, the play I chose is still running, so I sure as heck hope you like it.

**JACK.** Of course I'll like it, I'll be seeing it with you.

**LOUISE.** Well that was slick. Clearly the Army is having a bad influence on you.

**JACK.** So what about show business? Any auditions coming up?

**LOUISE.** Yes, as a matter of fact. A big one. Have you heard of a musical called *Hellsapoppin*? It's been playing on Broadway for years, and now they're sending a road company all over the country. I'm up for one of the best roles, and guess who the producers are? Howard Lindsay and Russell Crouse! They're the ones who liked my audition for *Arsenic and Old Lace* but chose Cynthia "the Ripper" Monroe instead. But the request to audition came straight from them, so I might have an honest-to-God shot this time.

Now the question is, what songs to prepare. Dammit, I wish you were here so I could try out a couple of numbers on you. For the slow number, my short list includes "I'll Never Smile Again," "It Had To Be You" and "White Christmas." For the up number it's between "Chattanooga Choo Choo," "For Me and My Gal" and "Jeepers Creepers." So what do I choose?! Hell's bells! The audition is in two days and I wish you were here. I need a cheering section!

Love,  
Louise

END

**JACK.** ..."Love"?

*(Then we hear the "beep beep beep" of a telegram line.)*

WESTERN UNION TELEGRAM.

DATED AUGUST 15, 1943. DEAR LOUISE SENDING TELEGRAM BECAUSE OTHERWISE ADVICE WOULD ARRIVE TOO LATE STOP I CHOOSE THE FOLLOWING SONGS FOR YOUR AUDITION COLON "IT HAD TO BE YOU" FOR THE SLOW SONG STOP AND "FOR ME AND MY GAL" FOR THE UP SONG STOP THEY ARE MY TWO FAVORITE SONGS STOP I WILL NOW STOP

GIVING YOU ADVICE BECAUSE IT IS COSTING ME A FORTUNE STOP GIVE THEM HELL IF I CAN ACTUALLY USE THAT WORD IN A TELEGRAM EXCLAMATION POINT

*(Hesitates.)*

LOVE JACK

**LOUISE.** WESTERN UNION TELEGRAM DATED AUGUST 16, 1943. THANK YOU FOR SUGGESTIONS STOP USING BOTH OF THEM STOP APPRECIATE YOUR FAITH IN ME SO PLEASE DON'T STOP STOP LOVE LOUISE

**JACK.**

Dear Louise,  
How did it go?

*(Beat.)*

Hello? Are you there?

*(Beat.)*

Hey, I'm the one who's supposed to be hard to reach. What happened?!

**LOUISE.**

Dear Jack,

Oh my God, oh my God, oh my God, *oh my God!* I got the part! I'm in a Broadway musical! Okay, it's the road company of a Broadway musical, but it's a Broadway musical! Thank you so much for the telegram. I used both your suggestions and they worked like a charm and I knocked 'em dead. That's a show biz expression and they're still alive. And it took me three auditions to get the part, which is why I didn't write right away. Meanwhile I have only one thing to say: Oh my God, oh my God, oh my God, OH MY GOD!

**JACK.** Congratulations! I told everybody at my table last night at dinner and we drank a toast to your Broadway debut.