

February 11, 1944

Dear Summer:

Let us cut out the cliches and all the folderol and come down to brass tacks. What has happened to you anyway? Are you letting me down or have you lost all your sense of mental direction? Eight bucks! Ye Gods and little fishes! To lose that much money in poker is to violate every tradition in the Bernstein clan. To play poker properly requires finesse, a straight face, facial reading, psychological analysis, the gentle art of distracting conversation, nerve, patience, subtly, and an occasional good hand. If you have not got these essential qualities, play camelot. The mere liking of a game of cards is not sufficient license for indulgence. My son, my son, don't let me down.

Your capabilities in other directions exceed by far those at the round table. Evidently you now shake a mean foot and you are able to maintain a steady pace at diversion into the wee hours of the morning. The army is certainly giving you excellent training along those lines, but whether they have as much value as those acquired at Harvard is less than a moot question. Here again I offer parental advice: Diversify your play.

The hospitality you so nicely describe appeals to me. I would like that type of hospitality to prevail in our own home. That is one idea upon which I never could get Mother to see eye to eye with me. Every time we invite somebody to the house all the rooms have to be dusted, the gold service has to be brought out and all the assiduous attention of a banquet spread must be given to the meal. Friendship, hospitality and pot luck should go hand in hand with ease and relaxation. That is not, however, the New England way. This particular letter of yours I shall read and reread to Mother in the hopes that I will be able to break down her New England characteristics and before I get through with her, you can bet your bottom dollar that she will convince me that her method is the right and proper one. Oh shucks!! When you get home let you and I start a revolution by not wearing our coats at the dinner table, and eating without cutlery. Hours for meals will then be any time from four in the morning until one A. M. Together we will show Mother who is boss.

For the present she is.

Affectionately,