

Birdpur, 23/11 31.

Nesta darling [[Nesta Marion HILL](#)]

I had to motor into Gorakhpur to see the Collector yesterday on business & came back this morning to find a topping long letter from you awaiting me. It was strange that you should have written as you did about feeling shy with me to start with after we meet after a long time because I feel that the barriers are down between us & that I could talk to you about everything and anything. Lilo [[Lionel Hill PEPPE](#)] & Vivienne [[Winifred Vivienne PARRY](#)] went off to Doolha just after tea & I am alone having just finished a lonely but good dinner.

Estate matters are infernally complicated at the moment both out here and at home with Dad's [[William Claxton PEPPE](#)] collapse & various other intricacies which I have to deal with out here.

Also another thing that has happened which is disturbing me more than anything else is that I have had two affairs (damnable word) with married women. I must let off some hot air & have no other person to tell but you. I know Evadne [[Evadne Hill PEPPE](#)] would not understand & you may not either, but whatever your opinion of me be after reading this can't be helped – it will help me any way to unburden my mind.

The first occurrence was up in Naini Tal when I found myself in the next room in the Hotel to a very old friend of mine, who had always attracted me to a certain extent but I never realized she cared anything for me & was merely very pleased to find someone in the Hotel that I knew. She first appealed to me because of her likeness to you in some ways. (this isn't blarney!! But truth).

I know & like her husband awfully which does not help matters. Well I felt very comfortable and happy with her though she did nothing in the way of sport & is considerably older than I am & has a boy at Christowe now of 16 & a girl at home of 13 and a little lad up there of 4. After about a week of quite normal relationships I suppose we both lost control a bit & had she been a wrong-un we should certainly have gone wrong but she wasn't & played square by her husband & her children. However that was not my doing. She was furious with me for not asking them all, herself husband & child here for Christmas, but I knew I should be miserable & she would have been frightfully jealous of my speaking or being pleasant to anybody even with her husband there. Lilo & Vivienne really brought it to a head by asking another couple when they were up in Naini with whom this lady is very friendly though we don't know them very well. She knew about Yolande & was staying in the House in Gorakhpur when I was trying to persuade Yolande to marry me.

Another strange move by Providence or whoever arranges coincidences & events was that I had decided not to go to Mussoorie as Yolande was there & last year when I was there I found that I still cared for her & could not trust myself with her.

After I had been in Naini two days, in August, I got a P.C. posted on by Lilo from Bill Gough, saying that Yolande had undergone an operation for appendicitis two days before & had asked him to write & tell me & ask me to write. The P.C. must have arrived at Birdpur the evening of my departure for Naini & if I had received it I should most certainly have gone to Mussoorie instead & probably have given myself & my feelings away to Yolande.

Somehow my experience with the lady in Naini gave me a considerable amount of pleasure in spite of feeling rather a stinker – also gave my self-confidence a considerable flip – which it requires badly – but not my self-respect.

However, we have had one or two scraps by letter since out [of] sheer deliberate misunderstanding on her part and now correspond quite casually.

Yolande by the way has quite recovered & I should only have made a blamed fool of myself if I had gone to Mussoorie.

The next affair was only last week during the Nov. meet. I don't know whether Lilo or Vivienne realize that it occurred but I think the latter did, though they have not said a word.

Again another very strange coincidence. I met this girl or rather was introduced to her down in Behar when I went for a wedding last March. I was certainly very attracted from a distance then &

when I found that she was the younger sister of the man who was up in Mussoorie with me last year I wanted to meet her. He & I had been to shows with Yolande up there.

Well I accosted her & she remembered having met me in Behar & also said that her brother had talked about me. Well it was a case of mutual attraction & we fell for each other at the first dance. The next evening was the Polo and she being a very keen horsewoman & her brother a polo player of some repute was very scathing about the Gorakhpur Polo. The first chukkers that she saw were really awfully bad – then one match came on & we did very well shooting fine goals in two chukkers winning easily – it was a real fast chukker & I suppose I shone amongst very very mediocre players which rather surprised her.

That night was the club dance. She was departing by train about half way through or rather had sent her kit and bearer to the station and I think it rested with me as to whether she went or not. Well, when it came to the crucial point my head was wiser than my heart, which I think peaked her. I took her down to the station in my car and put her in the train and saw her off and was back in time to dance with my next partner – which was the only other dance I had booked, as I knew I was entangled. I think that she was out to go the whole hog – to put it bluntly and I fear I was a very willing victim but if she had not gone, I don't know what would have happened. We should certainly have made more people than just our two selves unhappy. Well she went off by train and everything went on normally. Not a soul made a murmur to me. But I yet feel that if I saw much of her I should again be a very willing victim to her charms & yet be infernally unhappy with her. She is married to a very nice policeman who is somewhat quiet and dull I believe. I met him when I was introduced to her in Behar. What her relationship is with him I don't know. She did not mention him.

The beastly part is that I feel that I may have been absolutely mistaken and taken an exaggerated view of the whole thing. I am certainly convinced that living alone as I do one gets an abnormal perspective of such matters – and it's bad for one I know but I am damned if I could go out and search for a wife as Lilo did – but he was lucky.

My experience of women is very limited and this is the first time I have had any affair of this sort with a married woman – and I have never appealed to them in this way before.

The comic part is that they may both come to the next meet in Feb. and then G.O.K. [God Only Knows] what will happen. However I am not going to worry about that & neither of them may care a rap by then.

I may sound awfully callous and dishonest, Nesta dear, but as I told number two it was merely a case of "Ships that pass..." & that I was still in hopes of finding happiness with one person.

I sometimes feel that having been out here so long alone that I am becoming abnormal – but that's only when I feel particularly depressed. You must not let this letter worry [you] and remember it is only for yourself really making you my safety valve as you have once or twice to me.

Attraction is a strange phenomenon, neither of these women would fit into my life in the very slightest or I into theirs – and a caress from you would mean fifty times anything they could say or do – & yet though you have attracted me and appealed to me very strongly I have always felt happy and at ease with you. I wish you were here to talk to me and let me tell you all my worries instead of writing like this. One fact which I think is true is that we go into Gorakhpur so seldom & always with the intention of enjoying ourselves that we appear different from the other people in there who see each other every day and get thoroughly fed up with their neighbours. I know of several whom I like very much indeed & get on extremely well with but if I was with them for a week I should hate the sight of them and they loathe me.

I am so glad you are doing more in the way of dancing lessons. I am sorry to hear you have stopped the Book Society. I will certainly [be] sending you the Book Society news. I presume you have got the ones previous to last month or rather the month "Closing time" was in. I told you in my last letter my opinion of closing time. You are quite right I think in saying it is too good to be true. I have got a new book to choose from the Book Society. Have you any suggestions to make[?] They

were very good. Lilo sent them a cheque & we do it jointly. One month he gets the book one month I do. They wrote to say that they considered this an introduction & would send me a free book on receipt of my choice. If you will choose one you particularly want to read I will tell them to send it to you and you can send it on to me after reading it yourself.

I don't know whether to send you this letter or not. Must sleep on it. Goodnight Nesta darling.

25/11/31

I am sending this letter Nesta and I hope my next will be in a happier strain. I am also sending two photos that were taken sometime ago. I enlarged them from half V.P.K. size but unfortunately with the one of myself and the other lad I turned the negative round the wrong way to have my belt over the wrong shoulder.

Remember about the book and I will write to the Book Society at once.

Lots of letters to finish off.

With my love Nesta dear,

Your loving cousin

Humphs [[John Humphrey Hill PEPPE](#)]