

September 20, 1943

Dearest Father,

It's been six months since you left us to help defend our country in the Merchant Marine. I still can't believe how brave you are. Just the other day, I heard President Roosevelt speaking on the radio, saying, "The men of our American Merchant Marine have pushed through despite the perils of the submarine, the dive bomber, and the surface raider. In their hands, our vital supply lines are expanding. Their skill and determination will keep open the highway to victory and unconditional surrender." Even General MacArthur said, "I hold no branch in higher esteem than the Merchant Marine."

You must be glad to be out of the orphanage and on the open seas. Do you ever get scared? Has your boat ever been attacked? It doesn't seem fair that your boats are so poorly armed. I read that the Merchant Marine has the second highest casualty rate in the war because of having so little weaponry on their ships. They should at least have a Navy vessel escort you in dangerous waters. I'm really worried. When are you coming home?

It's crazy here at home without your presence. Ralph thinks he is in charge of everyone. He orders me, Greg, and Todd around like we are his servants. He doesn't listen to Mom at all. In fact, the other night, he locked her in the pantry in her wheelchair. He casted leg was straight out against the door so she couldn't reach to open it. He just thinks he can weight lift, eat fried boloney sandwiches, and not have to help out at all. Also, something weird is going on in his room- he is growing some strange plants in an old aquarium in his closet.

I worry about Greg though. He has had about all of Ralph he can take. I looked in his room the other day and saw some maps of Africa and math books in French on his desk. I think is planning on running away. Todd is completely out of control. The other night he crashed the carriage in a ditch by the side of the road. I think he is too young to be driving a carriage with that many horses pulling it. Mom is holding it together as best she can. She saw a doctor the other day to help her "nerves",

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Jan-25-2022

and ever since then there seems to be a lot of empty wine bottles around the house. As for me, I guess my dreams of playing soccer in Germany are over ever since Hitler took over.

I am sorry to complain so much when you are away. I know you have more important things on which to concentrate. I hope the food isn't too bad. Do they serve liver like you have at home? How is your boxing going? I bet your shipmates get really upset when they have a skinny guy like you knock them out. But I bet they like to hear you play harmonica. What do you think you will do when you come back from the war? Maybe go to college? You seem like you would be a really good engineer or house builder or both.

We all miss you so much and are so proud of you. You made the world a safer and better place for my future and my future children's future. Please stay safe and we will all come to see you soon.

With much love,

Scott