

15 March 1910

Ms. Lively,

Beware the Ides of March! Or so Sister Agnes would have us say in English Literature, would she not? I hope no Brutus has found you in your work at University. It seems the realm of technological invention is just as cutthroat as any Roman Senate!

Things are the same as they ever were here. I don't think I'm fit for a governess, I'm thinking of trying my hand at being a personal maid to some wealthy someone or other who likes to travel. How I wish I had your mind for tinkering and invention, but alas. Escape from a life of drudgery for me will only come in the form of my imagination.

God Bless You,

Selda Zaim

22 August 1911

Sam,

You didn't seem in spirits in your last letter. I hope things will improve soon; it does sound as if that professor was being unfair. Perhaps you can hide a dead mouse in his desk as revenge? While perhaps such a tactic should be left to our boarding school days, Sister Mary certainly jumped impressively when she found our surprise for her!

There, memories of school girl antics should pep you right up. Speaking of pepped up, while being a governess to children of the elite continues to be a test of both my patience and sanity, it does have some advantages: Mr. P, feeling guilty after being caught in an "indiscretion" with his secretary, has purchased a Victrola for Mrs. P! Nothing too special to an American like you, but here in Constantinople it's still a novelty. I have been told that I may listen to it when no one else has use of it and my duties are done, so please send me all of your most scandalous American records so that I may liven this dusty old house up a bit!

Sincerely,

Selda

3 February 1912

Dear Sam,

The latest record you sent had me dancing through the drawing room-I quite like Billy Murray! And I certainly need to practice dancing: Mr. P's valet (I told you about him in my last letter, Esref) has asked me dancing. Though he was very sly about it. His sister is married to a cornet player (by night. He's a factory worker by day. Just so you know I'm mingling with a respectable set, ha!) who's performing at a local bar, and Esref suggested that his sister and I would be fast friends. Very clever, but I saw right through him. Now to pray he isn't cursed with two left feet!

Please tell me more about this radio transmission coil you're working on. Some of it will go over my head, but I can feel brilliant by proxy through you, and puzzling through it might sharpen my ever-dulling mind. I've enclosed a lock of my hair (as you've asked for so many times) as bribery for such a boon! Now you cannot say no.

Sincerely,

Selda

28 December 1913

Dear Sam,

Happy New Year! Well, almost new year. It will certainly be 1914 by the time this reaches you. It's funny, English to me feels like the language of boundless opportunity, as I only ever use it when corresponding with you, and your world is so large compared to mine. But even a governess may feel a sense of opportunity at New Year, regardless of language!

For you see, I have word of a new employment opportunity. How about them apples? (Did I use the phrase correctly? I heard it in one of the records you sent and it sounds appropriately cheeky) Mrs. P has grown suspicious of a dalliance between Mr. P and myself. A laughable idea, of course, but it might yield good fortune for me. Mrs. P's sister, Esra Hoca, is in search of a personal maid and Mrs. P has asked if I would like to apply for the position. I don't know much about the opportunity except that Mrs. Hoca is a luxury cashmere sweater merchant and is planning to travel Europe in the year to come! I can hardly write from excitement.

As to seeing each other in the coming year when you come to Europe, please don't put yourself out to do it! We get along quite well by letter, wouldn't you say? And who knows, perhaps while you're in boring old Constantinople, I will be fulfilling my new post somewhere exciting, like Paris or Rome!

Wishing you safe travels,

Selda