

My dear Don,

May 6/80

It is probably hard for you to imagine how a friendship could grow to be meaningful without getting into the realms of romance. You couldn't understand because you didn't grow up in the world we grew up in.

The word sex was never spoken by a nice girl - even to her mother. It was never spoken by a nice boy to a nice girl and probably not to his father or his mother. When a baby was on the way, even to a respectable married couple, it wasn't mentioned.

Until it was born it belonged in the unmentionable category of sex. I remember once when Ernest came to Petrie for shopping and I met him down town - I asked him if Catherine Delworth's baby had been born. He looked surprised and said "I didn't

think that was a subject that could be mentioned. " Yes, Ernest knew the rules and he lived up to them. I am sure that was why he told my mother that he cared about me, before he told me. When she told him I was too young for serious things, he believed her. It may have been the reason for that letter. She never told me what he said until years later, after we were both married.

We had tossed the word love around but never in a serious way. Neither of us grew up in a touching family - and kissing would have embarrassed us both.

Some of those early writings of Ernest must have seemed daring to him. They must have been written under the influence of alcohol. The things he wrote about me were much worse to the people in my world than they would seem to people today.

When I think back about the person I used to be, I know that

Ernest and I would have had no possible
adjustments. Just one of those off-color
stories would have made me suffer -

Just one in fidelity would have
destroyed me. Without those things
Ernest probably wouldn't have become famous.

Thank God our futures never
closely touched and I can keep him
in a cherished memory.

x x x

The above is one of those things that
just come. And these days I
will hit the buttons to make you
understand -

Love

M -

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