

Park Hotel  
Oberlin, Ohio  
Oberlin College Owners  
P. E. Nielsen, Mgr.

Saturday evening, 11:15 p.m.  
[June 13, 1925]

Dear Harry:

When I have sense enough to think anything, I wonder who it is walking around here in Oberlin. I'll never forget this Commencement, that's sure.

But, Harry, you break my heart. I feel as if everything I had tried to be and do was tumbling down around me. I can't understand what has happened. And I feel to blame because I can't change my feeling but it would be even worse if I could. I am sure no one can imagine how inseparable the relation is now between Orv and me. It would have almost killed me if he had, in these latter years, wanted someone else more than me. I can't desert him now even if I could adjust myself to a change of feeling between us. I have taken care of him so much. I have lived in his life so long. I have felt so responsible about steering things here and there to smooth this way and that for him. I love him so, Harry, and we are so happy together. Since Will and Father have been gone we have been everything to each other. And he is so good to me. You would be good, I know that. I wouldn't be afraid for myself. That isn't it. But I haven't changed my feeling about you. It is all a dream to me that you have such feelings about me. I can't realize it.

I'm not much good—you would be really disappointed and disillusioned if you saw too much of me—but I don't see how Orv could get along without me. And it would break my heart not to stay by him after all he has been to me. It would. No one else knows all there is between us. If I start on that, I'll cry and I won't do it.

It has been many years since I have thought of the possibility of marrying any one. All my plans, all my interests have gathered around the kind of a life I have been living—with Orv my central interest and you and a very few others very dear and a necessary part of my existence. These last few years since[,] living has been such an anxious and almost overwhelming thing to you I have been transferring more and more of my interest to you.

I don't know how to tell you what a shock it has been to me this last week. I didn't understand at all at first what you were hinting at. I guess you've got it through my head at least and I'm as nearly stricken dumb as I'll ever be. I can't tell you anything of what is inside me but I try to because I feel it is so awful of me to let you think anything different from what I really feel. Please forgive me Harry, dear. I ought not to be so affectionate with you, maybe, but for a long time I have wanted to give you all I could. I knew you needed the comfort that affection and sympathy give. It has been natural for me to treat you with affection. Now I wonder if I should not have been more restrained.

Maybe when we were young, we could have had a wonderful thing. Truly, Harry, I never dreamed of your thinking the things you did about me years ago. I always thought I was so lucky because you would be friends with me. It is true that you have always been a special person with me but as an especially interesting friend. I cannot be quite sure just what I thought and felt when you were still in Oberlin. But whatever it was, I had no idea that you had any thought about me, more than just for the moment. And I have been so sure you could keep what I took to be the same feeling for me that I had for you that I have not thought of anything but the very dear friendship even in these very last years. I have wondered and wondered how I could help you get settled again and I tried to hope you would find some real companionship—though I was worried when it came over me that maybe I was wanting you to keep free from entangling alliances, at least partly, because I foresaw an end to the kind of a relation we have been growing into these last two years. I didn't want to be guilty of such selfishness as that. And it was pure selfishness if I wanted to act like a dog in the manger!

It is all so confusing now that I can't write a decent letter. Back of everything is the feeling that I can't fail you now, though I can't see very far ahead, and I can't go back on Orv. There must be some way for me to make a way out. I can't see it and I can't say that I would dare the "great adventure" anyway! It scares me so.

I had your three letters today, all you spoke of in the telegram that came yesterday. Imagine reading that telegram yesterday, with Kate Leonard sitting in my room! And this afternoon I had the telegram saying you hoped to spend Wednesday evening and Thursday of next week with me. I hate to do anything like that without telling Orv frankly. But it wouldn't do and I wasn't sure how you were feeling about wanting to talk. Maybe it would be better for us both if you came—maybe it will not. I am so anxious about it, for you, if you care so much. If Orv shouldn't go on to Washington, I'll have to telegraph you. He is surely going to Philadelphia on Tuesday for Wednesday, the day the medal is to be given, and expected, when I left, to go on to Washington for Thursday and be home on Friday morning. If you could come Tuesday evening and stay until Wednesday evening that would be absolutely sure but I think the other is all right. I'll know as soon as I get home Monday night. It isn't like me to keep things from Orv but I'll have to this time. I wouldn't for anything worry him so just now. You see, Harry, I must never leave him. I can't think of it without wanting to scream! I am a bit upset myself, I fear.

Now it's nearly one and I have to do what I can to get some sleep before going to McLennan's for breakfast at nine tomorrow morning. I do wonder who is walking around here in my shoes!

As always

Katharine

Sunday morning—such a poor letter when I want it to be such a good one!