

June 12, 1944

Mother and Father,

I've had a lot of time to think over the past several months. Lots of time. Too much time. More time than a man should be allowed. During this time, I've been thinking really about one thing. I need to grow up. I need to get out of the house. I need to become my own person. This letter is my way to motivate myself to follow through on becoming a man.

First, I'm going to quit my job. I'm sorry Father. I know that the May Company has been wonderful to you. They have given you a wonderful job that has provided for our well being through the best and worst of times. They even offered me a job over so many applicants because of your history. I don't mind the job. The people are swell as well as the clientele, usually. Father, the problem is that it is just a job. Some were born to be satisfied with the goal of helping a man pick out a suit that makes him feel and be successful. I'm not one of those people. You excel in helping families find the right appliance to make their lives more comfortable. It's a unique position because there seems to be so many advances in what people will want and need. Take for instance the refrigerator. Every year, something new comes out that drives people crazy. You actually make people's lives better. Suits don't change much. Single or double breasted? One, two, or three buttons? Wool or something lighter? Would you like a new tie and pocket square? How do those answers make a life fulfilling?

Second, I'm going to move out. You've both provided for me my entire life without ever asking me to leave. If I am going to make it out on my own, I have to be on my own. I hate to say this, but I plan on finding something away from Los Angeles. There are several guys in my platoon who live in the country and it sounds so compelling. I'm certain that I would like it. A few of the camps where we drilled were in the countryside and it was glorious. Lights out meant almost darkness.

Third, I'm going to give up smoking. I know how much you hate it, Mother. I'm going to do it for you and me. I can't seem to not have one in my hand. The more I smoke, the more I need it. Luckily, some of the fellas in my platoon don't smoke and give me their rations. Maybe I should say that it is unlucky to have this. I never want for a cigarette. This will probably be the hardest thing to do.

Last, I'll need some time alone. Time to think about everything I've gone through and what is yet to come. I don't know how I will be able to come home after all of this mess and not be affected somehow. I wish to be away from both of you and Sam. It's not because I don't love you or miss you, but I'm afraid of what I am to become once I get into combat situations. We drilled and drilled so many different ways to kill another man. God have mercy on me if I have to use it. The time alone will provide me a chance to clear everything from my mind, reset, and live on.



*This is my future. I've lived a good life, but one that is not my own. The service has shown me that I have no control over anything. I long to get that control.*

*My deepest love,*

*Roland*