

Dear Meredith,

This will be a very brief letter as I am simply writing to say that Hugh has asked me to cease any further contact with you. He said anybody who begrudges her oldest dearest friend a taste of happiness must be a very mean, bitter person and I'm afraid I am inclined to agree. I was so terribly upset by the content of your last letter. I can not imagine what I said that angered you so. One day, if you are fortunate enough to meet someone, you will realise that there can simply be no possibility of keeping secrets from your future husband. You says that perhaps your reaction to my news may have contained a "modicum of jealousy" – I say it was well beyond a modicum, Let's face it, Meredith, you have always thought yourself the prettier of the two of us (though I have recently had my hair shingled and I think you would be surprised how many heads I turn these days) and it has put your nose out of joint that I have found glorious happiness and you are stuck somewhere in the Bass Straight with old Grumpy. And that is all your own doing. When I think of how I supported you through that ridiculous affair with your boss, how many evenings I had to endure your tears over endless cups of cocoa when in truth I was disgusted by your cavalier disregard for the sanctity of his marriage (a marriage which has gone on to bear more fruit, as she is expecting again), and then how I nursed you through your troubles, often spending what spare pennies I had to buy you tonics and nerve pills and magazines to cheer you up, And this is the thanks I get.

Wedding plans are progressing very well. My dress is turning out very nicely – I have almost finished it.

And then I will turn my attention to Beth. In the end, I decided not to go for lilac but found a lovely soft rose georgette which she looks a dream in. Mrs Gibson and her sisters are all doing the cooking for the wedding feast (which we are holding in the School of Arts) – we are having a selection of cold meats and salads, and the most wonderful puddings, including Mrs G's (that's what I call her – I can't call her "Mum" yet) famous trifle. She pours about a gallon of sherry into it, and then custard and sponge and tinned peaches and jelly, with chopped banana and desiccated coconut on top – DIVINE!!

As for the matter of Pusspuss, I'm afraid I have chosen to ignore you on this matter. It may gall you to hear this since you've always had a set against Laura, but Pusspuss ADORES her. It is all Pusspuss' choice. As for why I didn't advice you of his abscess, what was the point when clearly it takes 3 months for you to get a letter. I would have thought you'd be grateful that I had nursed him back to full health, and taken the trouble to ensure he would be well-looked-after. But no, all I get is abuse.

I did see Mrs Harris' and the girls the other day at the Mories – we chatted about you briefly but they did not mention receiving any letter from you. As for why they did not write, I could not say but I get the impression (mind you, a strong impression and Hugh had a similar impression and he has only just met them) as Mrs H. would never say a bad word about anyone, not matter how poorly she had conducted herself.

Well, now I must bid you adieu. I am sorry to have to cease communications, but Hugh will simply not allow me any further distress. I'm afraid he has formed a very poor view of you. Please do not trouble yourself with the bedsocks. I am returning your wool by separate cover.

Yours sincerely,

Myra Melville.