

Haifa, 13.3.1940

Dear Frau Riggi,

We have been living here in safety with our children for almost three months now, and you will surely be thinking that I am ungrateful, dear Frau Riggi, as I haven't written a word to you. And especially as I owe you so many thanks for your dear letters and all the joy and comfort they gave me in such miserable times. Oh, dear Frau Riggi, what a bleak life that was. It was probably the unhappiest time of our lives. And we had already endured a World War with three sons in the field.

I try not to think of that time any more, but I cannot erase it from my memory. But you can imagine how happy we are here now. My husband says he almost feels he is in heaven. Käthe lives with us, Erich and Annie come every Saturday, and Annie also comes over once a week in the evening and stays overnight with us so she can get to work punctually in the morning.

The Lols spend the whole day with us every Saturday, and in the week their daughter-in-law brings their grandchild for lunch and stays until the evening. And the grandchild is delightful. What a big strong girl little Pinkl is, with a head of black hair and large, dark fairy-tale eyes, full of temperament and self-will – and a sweet little chatterbox too. On Gisa's birthday we celebrated Ada's third birthday, and I thought of my dear little Gisa, who was so happy that our grandchild came into the world on her birthday.

But I've strayed from the point – I wanted to apologise for my long silence. I think of you often, with pleasure and in heartfelt friendship, but until now I truly haven't had time for writing letters. We arrived over here on our Käthe's birthday, lived for just a little while in a good boarding house, and moved into our new home on New Year's Day. It is a charming three-room apartment consisting of two bedrooms, living room and dining room together, with bathroom, toilet and a miniature kitchen, with central heating and hot water supply, and a large terrace with a wonderful view of the open sea. There are no side rooms. At first, the memory of our beautiful, large house was still lively, and I badly missed the breadth and size of our house. But now I am very glad that everything is so small – the rooms are very nice – I am my own maid, and even this small apartment is quite enough work. Käthe is really not just very energetic, but especially efficient and skilful as well. She cleans the apartment before she goes to her office, except for our bedroom and the kitchen. This is my work; and of course I do the cooking on my own. I am very happy that I manage this very well. Husband and children heap high praise on the mother who cooks so well.

This is a great delight to me. On Saturdays we are a minimum of eight people, and a maximum of twelve. We have no room for more. There is always much merriment. In the afternoon there are always many visitors. The family is really very numerous here.

Lene und Otto arrived here on the same ship as we did. They too already have an apartment on Mount Carmel. Unfortunately they live a long way from us, and we cannot see one another every day, as we used to. Nor can we telephone, as it costs too much to have a telephone. We must live very thriftily and modestly, and avoid every bit of expense that isn't strictly necessary, and that includes having our own telephone. Until Käthe's business contributes something again, or contributes a lot more than now, she is the one who needs a telephone. We hope it will be soon.

Our immediate neighbours are Frida and Sandor. This is very nice and pleasing. We call their apartment Falkestrasse, and visit Falkestrasse often. Fraulein Grünhut has been here since the summer. She is a very talented and ambitious cook, and very efficient. Unfortunately, Frida finds the climate difficult and suffers badly from headaches. There is a wind called the Khamsin, blowing from the desert, usually warm and dry, though sometimes cold, but always very dry, and many people find it hard to bear. Sadly Frida is one of them. So far we haven't felt the effects. To comfort us, they say that at first one doesn't feel the wind, but after being in the country longer, one usually finds it really unpleasant. I place my trust in the fact that the Föhn never affected me, so perhaps I'll be able to ignore the Khamsin too.

Haifa is magnificent, especially its situation. I was quite surprised, and very pleasantly surprised, at how many trees there are here. Our apartment is indeed in a small pine forest. At first I felt as if I were in the Thousand and One Nights. It is the first oriental city that I have met. The street life is very colourful and noisy. The Arabs in their picturesque costumes greatly enliven the scene. The sunset is superb, different every day, but always gorgeous; and even now, after three months, this pageant has lost none of its magic for me. Then there is the night sky, which completely enchants me. There are our familiar constellations, but so clear and bright as I have never seen them before.

That the Brauns are also here you perhaps know, both Fritz, Luise with Suserl, and also Kurt with his wife and son. Their daughter is in London being trained as a nurse. She writes very contented letters. Things have turned out less well for Lori and Heidi, they are doing housework and are not happy. Poor young people who have to work in a foreign land, while their parents pine grievously for them.

Terribly sad is the fate of Hans and Lilly W. We were together with them in Prague. From there they arrived in Budapest. They were expelled because their residence permit was not be extended, and were required to leave the city and the country within 24 hours. They had no entry visa for anywhere. Lily took this much to heart and tried to poison herself with veronal. She was brought back to life. We don't know what is happening to them now. Sandor is making the very greatest efforts to help them. I hope this succeeds. There are many such Jewish tragedies. This one upsets me dreadfully.

Now I have told you a lot about us, and I want something in return. Do you have news of the Schönfelds? Are they happy and do they have job opportunities? We are concerned about Teddi, there is no security there. He is a clever man, hopefully he knows what he needs to do. Rosa writes to say how lovingly he and Gritl treat them as relatives, and how charming little Paul is.

Write and tell me how things are with you, and that you aren't cross with me on account of my long silence.

*With many heartfelt greetings,*

*Adele B.*

*Best wishes from my husband, who is incredibly strong – to look at him nobody would think he will soon be eighty-three.*