

[Letter from Arno Knight to Olive Drinkwater]

Rosita July 24th 1879

Dearest Ollie:

I received your cool little "Friendship Note to day and this evening will endeavor to answer it. You say that you write as you mean and as you feel and that you feel only as a friend and will endeavor to make your letters in future as Friendly as possible and that I may think strange of your writing thus

Well I do think you wrote in a strangely indifferent way but my dear girl if that is really the way you feel towards me I am sadly disappointed in you and regret the confidence thus misplaced Friendship as it is seen in daily life is nothing but a cool and selfish indifference masked by a false regard But you know my sentiments to well in regard to that and if that is the only sentiment you feel for me please to understand I do not care for even that. Now Ollie please listen to or read what I want to say to you because you say you do not understand me sometimes. You think me distant even as a friend but let me tell you that is not the sentiment I feel for you at all You are dearer to me than a friend in the truest sense of the word I love you with a pure and ardent passion as strong and deep as the noblest impulse that can move the heart of man and love is the purest and noblest of all

I have answered every letter received from you and this is the third letter I have written to which I have received no reply And even my folks seem to have forgotten my existence for I have not heard from them for a long time You wish to know what I am doing I am mining and prospecting and striving for success in an honorable manner I may never meet with the success that I desire and sometimes I get discouraged that I almost wish my existence might be terminated But God grant whatever my fate may be that my life may be some benefit to others and that some lives may be made better and happier for my existence Happiness has been but an ethereal dream of the future with me and yet it matters but little if through our own sufferings and trials we can best fulfill the mission of the Creator of all

God grant me the courage and fortitude to endure whatever the future may bring unto me of adversity or disappointments and may I ever be able to feel that I am still a man with some purpose in life, and when there is nothing but my own selfish desires to live for I do not care to live I am often weary and despondent and often feel my life is a curse to myself and hardly a means of blessings to others Yet the time may come when I shall think differently

Ollie I am busy but not in writing to the girls and I hardly think Nettie is waiting for my return I have labored and planned incessantly and I have made something but it is slow and up hill work with none to aid or take any interest in your welfare and may you my darling know naught of that rougher lot which often falls to the friendless wanderers

I could have made from \$300 to \$400 in one little transaction with a perfect legal right but I thought it unjust and I want money honorably as not at all I am going to work for wages now at \$2.50 per day

Now Ollie my darling please step down from your friendship dignity unless you really do not care for me I am so sorry you feel blue after your joyous fourth Well I suppose I was mean one year ago last Fourth and you were right enough to pay me this year Joy and happiness be thing forever

Please to answer at once. Arno