

*[Letter from Arno Knight to Olive Drinkwater; Arno is back in Lincolnville]*

Home

March 17. 1882

Ollie:

I hope you will excuse me for writing a few things I wished to say to you, but had no chance, and may never have again to say to you. You will doubtless think me weak, but I cannot help it. My courage, pride, and heart, are alike, nearly broken, and it matters little, what any one thinks of me.

I do not expect to change your feelings towards myself, but in relinquishing all claims to you, - (and God and myself along knows the misery it gives me) I wish to grant me a few concessions and minor promises, which I hope you will not consider unreasonable when you consider I am giving up the only hope, that has sustained me, mid scenes of hardship, and misfortunes, for the last Six Years, and through the awful calamity, which befell me last June.

The strong love of a man, (such as I gave to you) strengthened by six years of devotion and trust, is not a thing that can be crushed without a better struggle, and an anguish of soul, known only to him who has loved with all the strength and fervor of an honorable man, endowed with strong passions instead of boyish impulse.

Oh, Ollie! If you only could return that love with equal fervor, and could continue to love me, in spite of my disfigured face, and humble circumstances, we might still be happy and live in comfort, even if we never were blest with sufficient means, to live in a luxurious style, and make a proud display of wealth.

I never fully realized how strong had been the hope that you might still cling to me, till you expressed your wish to be free that night. Of course I could not help acceding to your wishes and I cannot censure you for it. But forgive me for saying – “I think True Love, should, and would, prove stronger in the hour of adversity, instead of deserting when she is needed most.”

I must endure my unhappy life as best I may, but I hope it maybe brief, for I am tired of an existence which brings me nothing but misery.

You asked to be released for two years, and I grant it though I have little doubt it will be forever but I wish to keep your letters till you are engaged to another As a reminder of what you have been to me, grant me this, will you?

For the sake of “olden times” and my love for you, promise me this, - “That you will not marry, or engage yourself to any one, unless he can give you a better

position in life than I could do unless you have really ceased to love me – Will you promise me that?

With your help I still believe I could win a greater fortune than the average in Maine – but with the wealth of Vanderbilt I would not want you to marry me unless you loved me better than any one else.

You told me once you loved me better than any one else, and I believed you. Tell me now, and truly, is my disfigured face something that will prevent you from loving me?

Please give me a written answer to this. I ask it as a duty you owe to me. I suppose you dislike to do it, but it is not so hard, as what I have done for you. With wishes for your happiness I can still your lover

Arno