

October 13th, 1945

My dear Billie,

I am so ashamed I did not write you for so long a time! And I had to thank you for your two letters and for the pictures I received at last 3 months after you sent them to me—oh! yes, indeed, you live in a very lovely city. The sun, the sea, so many cottages with their gardens, their flowers... exactly like in Nice in summer time. Do you know you make me to have a great mind to go there? I think I wish to go to Oakland as much as you wish to come to Paris. Am I right? Oakland for the holidays and Paris for the rest of the year... Why have I been so long to answer you? Well, I have been very busy and however it seems I do nothing... First, I had to clean our home. Can you imagine what it is after having been away for five years? Everything was thick with dust and everything was upside down because some “refugees” lived at home when we were in Toulouse in 1940-41.⁵⁹ Then, my cousin Robert (I told you about him, he has been with General Leclerc in Africa, in England, in Normandy etc...) came at home with his young wife and his baby, two months old, they spent here about a fortnight⁶⁰ and his little girl is so lovely that we could not do anything but look at her, gaze on her...⁶¹ And, at last, during the last fortnight, as I was alone at home, my friends phoned me so often to invite me here and there that the days flew very swiftly. I think your sister should have been very pleased to be with me and my girls friend because we have been several times to the latest Paris fashion shows.⁶² Do you know that in Paris the greatest dressmakers, like Jeanne Lanvin, Lucile Manguin, Maggy Rouff, Lucien Lelong, etc... exhibit their collection in their saloons in September and at the

⁵⁹Once the Germans launched their offensive strike in Western Europe, there was a mass exodus which resulted in many displaced refugees who were seeking asylum in Paris or Belgium.

Toulouse is a city in France located on the banks of the Garonne River. During the war, Toulouse was in the unoccupied Vichy part of France but it suffered from food shortages for much of the war. In 1942, Toulouse was occupied by the Nazis.

⁶⁰*two weeks*

⁶¹General Leclerc was a French general and is most famously known as the hero that liberated Paris. In 1939, he was captured by the Germans but managed to escape. He joined de Gaulle as part of the Free French Forces in London. He served in Chad, Tripoli and Libya until he was made major general in 1943. In 1944, Leclerc took part in the Normandy Invasion of 1944 and in 1945, he was named commander of the French expeditionary force.

⁶²After the war, France was broke and ashamed. In an effort to raise funds for war survivors and to most importantly revive the French and France's fashion industry, the Théâtre de la Mode was curated. This miniature fashion show, using mannequins 1/3 the size of the human body was proposed by designer Robert Ricci. Since materials were in short supply following the war, different designers pooled their leftover materials and fabric to curate this show. The designs of Balenciaga, Lanvin, Balmain, Hermès and Lelong alike were featured in these shows. The show included, like Suzanne writes, various clothing accessories, new hairstyles and sparkling jewelry.

beginning of every season? We could get, happily, some invitations and we have been so please to see again all these beautiful coats, dresses and even, for the first time since the war, some evening dresses. Some are really wonderful. If you have been in Paris I should have been able to take you there and, so, you could describe the latest novelties in the Paris fashion to your sister. As for me, my english is too poor and I am afraid to spoil so many lovely things. My brother Jacques is with us now because he is a student and has to go to the “National School of the fine arts.”⁶³ And, can you guess what is doing the future architect, just now while I write you? yess? no? Well, he is making a cake! His first cake at home! If it is good, I’ll tell him to make one when you are here, right? And, by the way, do you know when you will be able to come to Paris? Could you not come with your brother? Remember you, Billie, I am waiting for you. My Paris has so many beautiful monuments and so many lovely parts I wish to show you!... Before closing I have something to ask you: please, in your next letter will you give me the address of your sister. Do not forget because I should be very please to send her something from Paris. So I hope [for] your next letter very soon. And tell me many things about your life in army, and about your friends(those I know)For all my best regards. Kind regards from my mother and brother.

Always sincerely yours

Suzanne

⁶³The National School of Fine Arts or the Beau-Arts de Paris is public university located in the 6th arrondissement of Paris. The School’s mission is “to provide high-level arts education and training.”