

The 3am Project is inspired by this 1939 letter from Frank Baker to his love Isabel.

Full transcript below.

More love now cost to Sutton Please, Isabel,

31 Beech Grove,
Mitcham.

3.0 a.m. 14th July 1939.

Dearest Isabel,

You will see from the date I have
given above that I have not been able to get to sleep,
hardly because it is hot, hardly because the events
of this evening left me feeling rather excited, but
chiefly because of you. mi querida.

I am rather slow in understanding,
evidently. We said "good-night" quite pleasantly
to each other when I left you, but I could
not help feeling something was wrong with
me after I had gone. It struck me what it
was when I reached my digs. — You were
quite pleasant Isabel but in the same way as
if a clay model might be — I realized there
was something wrong then. I realized you did not
even ask me what Stralwick said. You showed
no interest in me at all, but most in telling
that you would be out on Saturday & that you
were not keen about going to Godstone on Sunday.
I racked my brains to discover why you were
like that. I thought of my remarks about Gantroy &
Kay & fancied you were annoyed because I
had seemed anxious to see them. I wondered then
if you were angry because I phoned for so long,
or because of something I had said to him, or
because I did not tell you straight away
what he did say. — Last of all I thought
about to-morrow (or rather to-night).

My first idea was to take no
notice & let you do what you like, but I feel
I can't do that. Then I made up my mind to write
& tell you that if you cannot act like a grown-

up person, you had better say so, that I might
know the worst. — I cannot do that either
Dear.

Don't you see Isabel, I always
try to be frank & straight with you. If you
do not like something I do, don't you see it
would be much better for you to say so, instead
of leading me to think you do not care, & then
being annoyed when I take you at your word.
After thinking things over I have come to the conclusion
it is because I shall not be going on the outing
to-night that you are acting as you are. Now
Isabel I have told you I am willing to give up
all my politics for you if necessary. If you had
asked me to refrain from attending the Labour
Party meeting I would have done so.

Now I am sorry but after all
that thought I cannot help feeling (I hope I am
wrong, but do not think so) that the Saturday
outing & the lack of enthusiasm for Sunday are
your idea for paying me out. That will be just
hurting both of us more still. I did offer to go
down to meet you, to leave the meeting early,
but to all my proposals you said "do it will be
quite all right" or words to that effect, as if
trying to reassure me that you did not mind me
going to the Labour Party meeting.

I hate writing to you like this
even Isabel. You know I love you, but even
if I did not I should hate more than anything
to be unfriendly. I do hate being unfriendly
with anyone, but after the times we have had
together, I should hate being unfriendly with
you more than anything I can imagine.

You will be returning to you

house for tea I presume, and will find this letter then. I will try either to call & see you or phone before you go off to Sutton. Please, Isabel, whatever happens be natural. I don't mind so much if you grumble or tell me off - but speaking and feeling differently I cannot understand in you. That is not clear I am afraid, - I mean I cannot understand why you should say one thing when you feel quite another if you are speaking to me.

Isabel my dear I have put my feelings as clearly as I can. I hope I do not appear to be hard on you - I have tried not to be - Make allowances for me will you?

Now I wanted to finish up without any grumbling, for I am sure you will understand me, & we will be happy & contented again. I will say then, au revoir chérie.

With my love,

Frank.

P.S. I have your photograph smiling at me upon the mantle-piece. Look like you do in that next time I see you. It is too late now for me to go to-morrow isn't it?

31 Beech Grove

Mitcham

3.0a.m 14- July 1939.

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This letter was discovered nestled amongst a disordered collection of Franks' papers unearthed by Mrs Warrilow some time later. Mrs Warrilow found the papers in her house in Tollgate Road, Dorking, formerly the residence of Frank Baker. Frank was a teacher who became a peace activist after serving in WW2. An extensive collection of letters and papers revealing fragments of Frank & Isabel's lives from 1930's -1980's is stored at Surrey History Centre in Woking. Anyone can visit the History Centre and request to see original documents from their archives. This letter is File No: 7934/1

