[Fala]
1946-52

Dear Fala:

We have started a club, Fidos for France, and would like you to join if you can. The president is Duke, one of the members. We help the french people. We meet at 30, rue des fontenelles, Versailles, Seine-et-Oise, France. If you will write to us, we will answer your letters.

From,

Mongrel
Duke

OUR BADGE

Fala

Foley -

I will be delighted to have you do a book about Fala but one was done by Miss Margaret Suckley which you should read first —

Fala

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

ADDRESS REPLY TO
1564 Unionport Road
Bronx, 62, New York
Tel. Underhill 3-3776

May 3, 1946

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt
34 Washington Square, South
New York, New York

My dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

I would appreciate the honor of an appointment with you to have a few words about Fala.

Now that I am discharged from the Coast Guard, I intend to continue the series of famous dog books I started while in service. The first of these, "Sinbad of the Coast Guard," was published by Dodd Mead this year. The book, a biography of the Coast Guard's globe trotting mascot, was reviewed in LIFE magazine and has been rather well received, I am happy to say. Mary Margaret McBride, who interviewed me on her program, even claimed that it might become a classic, although I am sure her kind remarks were prompted by my appearance in uniform. George Gray did the illustrations.

Dodd Mead and I are now planning the whole series and hope to do the next book on Fala. While I appreciate that there are many authors far more qualified to do such a book, none would be more sympathetic or enthusiastic. We had Paul Brown in mind to do the illustrations.

There are more weighty questions for you to consider, I know. There are also some many more persons of importance who wish to see you and cannot due to your already overcrowded schedule. There will probably be objections to my even considering such a book. Yet it would be a great priviledge and a tremendous encouragement to a young author starting out on a serious writing career to have just a few minutes to speak to you about it.

Most respectfully,

George F. Foley, Jr.
GEORGE F. FOLEY, Jr.

ORIGINAL RETIRED FOR PRESERVATION

Elizabeth W. Robinson
3039 Albemarle Street, N.W.,
Washington 8, D.C.

1,109 words.

A POST CARD FOR MATKA

By Elizabeth W. Robinson

The soldier selected the bench under the giant beech tree near the statue of Kosciuszko. The name of the Polish general warmed the cold hollow under his chest where the homesickness converged into an aching ball.

He pushed his cap back over his tawny hair and dug his fingers into a bag of peanuts. The fat pigeons of Lafayette Square descended around him like paratroopers, making soft effortless landings on the walk at his feet.

He looked across the avenue where the White House loomed startlingly naked behind tall black elms stripped of their autumn leaves. It reminded him of a picture in his schoolbook back home. While he tossed a peanut to a pigeon that hovered on the outskirts of the flock, he tried to recall how the picture had looked.

Mama had been bustling about getting the supper, but when he came to her with the picture of the White House in the Fifth Reader she had put down the plate of babka that was to be his special treat and wiped her hands on her apron so that she could take the book in her hands. Her calloused finger rested for a moment beneath the picture while she studied it.

"What does it say, son?" she asked.

(more)

When he read the words, she smiled.

"By Joe, it be very fine, son," she said. "Some day maybe you see it yourself." She drew her short, stocky figure up to its full height. "And you remember, boy. In this America son of miner be somebody good, be anything he like, talk anybody he like. I want for you should see the President some day. He be just another American like you, son."

Mama would like a post card from Washington. While the pigeons protested, he crumpled the top of the peanut bag and reached into his pocket for the scenic cards he'd bought. There was one of the Tidal Basin with the cherry blossoms all around it, but he discarded it in favor of the one of the Executive Mansion shining like Mama's freshly-hung wash against a blazing sunrise.

He chewed the end of his pencil. The message must be impressive because his matka would want to brag and nod her head and say, "You see!", when Mrs. Kowalski came over to read it for her. But he could think of nothing but the uneventful glass of beer he had had with Pete Petrilli in celebration of this, his first week-end pass. He wrote Mama's address on the reverse side of the card and put it back in his pocket.

Presently a little black dog with stumpy legs and wistful eyes came along and nudged him on the knee. The soldier scratched him behind the ears and fed him a peanut which he rolled experimentally over his tongue and then dropped on the ground. He looked up brightly to show that he wasn't hopelessly disappointed, but was just looking for a better offer.

"So you don't like it, little fella?" the soldier asked.

(more)

And the dog lifted a soft fringed paw and scratched him on the leg.

The soldier rattled the bag teasingly and grinned. The dog barked and was about to force his muzzle into the opening when a squirrel attracted his attention. He charged after it with much show of teeth and growling disapproval. The squirrel gained the safety of a tree and the dog disappeared.

Just across the street on Madison Place a sign advertised the Stage Door Canteen. The soldier emptied the remains of his bag on the pathway and rose. He crossed over and followed two sailors in between the marble pillars that flanked the doorway.

The pretty girl looked up at his face with a smile and down at his feet with a frown.

"I'm sorry, soldier, but you can't bring your dog in here. He's not wearing a muzzle."

The soldier turned around and saw the little black dog again.

"So you're not a deserter after all!" he said. The dog thumped his tail on the floor. The boy snapped his fingers and the dog sat up on his haunches and lifted his front paws into the air.

The girl laughed and the boy smiled back as he started for the street.

Outside he hesitated and the dog sat down and looked up at him.

Reluctantly the soldier said, "Look, you'd better go home now."

He turned his back on the dog and headed up the stre-t

(more)

toward the right. The dog trotted by his side.

"You'll get lost," the soldier warned. "Go home! Go on home!" and he thumped his foot by way of emphasis. The dog stopped, regarded him with hurt eyes and turned away. The soldier went on. Before he reached the corner he heard the gentle panting of the dog beside him again.

All of a sudden the soldier felt warm and good all over. He no longer tried to shake his companion, but with a "Come on, then!" invited him to quicken his pace. They rounded the corner together.

The church was regal and golden and splendid.

"You gotta center for servicemen?" he inquired at the entrance.

The man smiled and pointed up the street at a red brick building. He leaned over and gave the dog a pat. "Nice dog," he said. And then, "Happy to have met you, soldier."

The motherly woman at the door was friendly but sorry.

"It's just too bad, but there's been a rabies scare, you know. If you had a leash, you could tie him outside."

They tried the art gallery, too, but the guard said, "No."

"I know what we'll do," the soldier said to the dog. He rattled a handful of change in his pocket. "We'll eat. And we'll find a place where they'll let you in or I'll know why."

They found it in a hole-in-the-wall on 17th Street. There were booths and a bar and a proprietor who didn't mind dogs.

The soldier had scrambled eggs and bacon and the dog had a hamburger. The soldier fed it to him in small lumps which he gulped down quickly and finished off with a pleased passage

(more)

of curling tongue over moist black nose.

When they came out they looked aimlessly up and down the street. The boy put his hands in his pockets. The dog pattered impatiently at his feet, anxious to be on the way.

"All right, little fella," the soldier said. "I'm tired of deciding. After all, it's your town. S'pose you show me around for a while."

As if he understood, the dog started off, heading back toward Lafayette Square. When they reached the gateway to the White House the dog ran in. "Hey!" the soldier called and started after him.

A guard stepped forward and barred the way. "Sorry, Bud. You can't come in here," the guard said.

The dog glanced toward them, hesitated, and trailed back to the soldier's feet.

"Come on, fella," the soldier said.

The guard looked down at the dog and his face beamed.

"You've found the rascal!" he exclaimed. "He's been missing three hours!" He seized the soldier by the arm. "Come on," he said, turning him toward the great house. "They'll certainly be glad."

They walked up the driveway, the dog scampering between them. When they reached the portico, the dog bounced up the steps. The soldier slowly walked toward the opening door.

* * * * *

The late afternoon sun threw striped shadows on the pavement in front of the White House when the soldier returned to

(more)

the bench in Lafayette Square. He took out the card he'd selected for his matka and studied the picture on the front. Then he turned it over and wrote:

Dear Mama:

Am in Washington, D.C. I done just what you told me and went and had a little talk with the President. He was real glad to see me and asked me to stay to tea. It was very nice, but the cake wasn't near so good as your babka.

--Your loving son.

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3039 Albemarle Street, N.W.,
Washington 8, D.C.
April 21, 1946

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt
Hyde Park, New York

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

The other day I attended a movie where the short subject was a charming little color film depicting the day-by-day life of Falla at Hyde Park and the White House. I learned from the movie that hundreds of people have sent Falla presents which are kept in a special room for him.

I thought maybe Falla would like to see how I once attempted to immortalize him, too. The enclosed story was never published, for soon after I wrote it our President died and editors told me the story was no longer "timely."

It seemed to me that such a story as this could quite possibly have happened. I've often wondered if it ever did.

Sincerely,

(Miss) Elizabeth W. Robinson

Elizabeth W. Robinson

Very nice. It never quite happened but it might.

Mr James Freeman
United Feature Syndicate
220 E 42 nyc

Mrs R is quite
willing to have a
photographer come
out to the cottage
to take a picture
of Tamas & Tala.
It probably would be

simpler if the
photographer were
to call me. You
will have to give
him the number
as our phone is
unlisted

Fala

The United Feature syndicate has a request from the Boston Globe for a picture of Tamas. They take your column and like especially the ones about Tamas and Fala. If you are agreeable, the acme photographer will come out from Poughkeepsie at your convenience to take a photo of Tamas and Fala and you if you wish.

Jim Freeman
United Feature syndicate

FDR