

二つの手紙

芥川龍之介

Two Letters

Akutagawa Ryūnosuke

Yoru no Yume

Two Letters

Futatsu no Tegami

Akutagawa Ryūnosuke

English translation

Free sample

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Source Credits

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Two Letters

On one occasion I came into possession of the two letters reproduced below. They had been sent, postage prepaid, to the Chief of Police, one in the middle of February this year, the other early in March. The letters themselves will explain why I reproduce them here.

The First Letter

— Your Excellency, Chief of Police:

First, before all else, I beg Your Excellency to believe that I am sane. I swear by all that is sacred that this is so. I therefore beg you to believe that there is nothing amiss with my mind.

Otherwise, I fear that my sending Your Excellency this letter may serve no purpose whatsoever. If that were to be the case, why should I put myself to the trouble of writing so long a letter?

Your Excellency, I hesitated a great deal before writing this. The reason is that, once I undertook to write, I should also have to lay bare my household's secrets before you. This would, of course, do considerable injury to my honour. Yet my circumstances have become so pressing that, unless I write, every further moment of existence will be a torment. I have therefore resolved at last to take decisive action.

Having been driven to write by such necessity, how could I submit in silence to being treated as a madman? Allow me to make my plea once more. Your Excellency, I beg you to believe that I am sane. And then, troublesome though it may be, I beg you to read this letter through. For I have written it with my own honour and my wife's at stake.

To dwell at such length upon this plea may seem all too inconsiderate of the demands upon Your Excellency, burdened as you are with the duties of your office. Yet the nature of the facts I am about to relate makes it absolutely necessary that you believe

me to be sane. Otherwise, how could you acknowledge these supernatural facts? How could you admit the possibility of this strange operation of creative energy? Such is the mystery surrounding the facts to which I wish to draw Your Excellency's attention. That is why I have ventured to make the foregoing plea. What follows may likewise lay me open to the charge of prolixity. I believe, however, that it serves some necessary purpose, both in demonstrating that there is nothing amiss with my mind and in bringing to your notice that such occurrences have by no means been unknown in ages past.

End of Sample

This is the end of the free sample of Two Letters. The complete translation is available from Yoru no Yume at <https://yorunoyume.com/books/two-letters/>.