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## On Love

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*On Love*

Theodore Roosevelt's son Kermit fell in love with a girl named Belle, blond-haired and doe-eyed, the kind of girl you might see tied to a railroad track in a silent film. He wrote to her from Brazil, where he worked for the railroad, a letter fraught with so's and please's and the radical disbelief that she could ever return his love. She could. This she told him a short time later in a letter fraught with very's and em dashes and the radical disbelief that he could have chosen her out of all the girls in the world. Thus impassioned, Kermit counted down the days until he should return to the States for the marriage. Before he could depart, his mother notified him of his recently defeated father's impending trip into uncharted Amazonia (such were the grand gestures of the Bull Moose ego when wounded) and of her desire for Kermit, her favorite son, to keep watch over him. Kermit, who would fight in both World Wars, who would die in Alaska a suicide, whose death would be reported to his mother as heart failure, obliged. He wrote to Belle immediately. "If I weren't going I should always feel that when my chance had come to help, I had proved wanting, and all my life," he said, "I would feel it."