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January 16, 1996

Mr. Ken Follett  
London ENGLAND  
BY FAX: 352-5168

Dear Ken,

On reflection, it might be possible to make something like your existing plot work, but only if we do more with Berisford's secret. As I see it, his having created some clones, two of whom turn out to be psychopaths, seems kind of small potatoes, not the world's most awful secret. Just another military experiment gone awry. If you accept this premise, then Jeannie's discovery also becomes no big deal. My sense is that unless Berisford, or one of the people who originally endorsed or financed these experiments, had some purpose for these clones, something potentially terrible which they wish to do with them in the present, we don't have all that much of a secret.

On the other hand, if Berisford has succeeded in creating some extraordinary creatures, possibly ones that are larger than life both in terms of good and evil, then it's conceivable that he's done something too hot to handle; and his secret would be invaluable to all kinds of people--both good and bad.

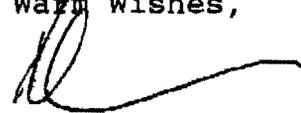
As I see it, he's done this extraordinary thing; and either Barck or Proust decide that they want to capitalize on it, or as I said, it could be the Government or whoever financed the original experiments, or possibly some new entity who through some fluke has found out about it.

My preference is not to see Berisford as the villain. As a scientist primarily responsible for creating these creatures and possibly for studying their development, training them to do more and more difficult things, continuing to do research on their extraordinary capacities, he would want to shield and protect them from outside forces. My sense is that he would even put himself at physical risk to do this. After all, these creatures have been his life's work, his greatest achievement, etc.

Those are the main thoughts I want to leave you with, except for one; and that has to do with your concern about plausibility. My feeling is that you should not be afraid to go for what at first blush would seem to be an outrageous premise. Shakespeare is full of them, as is Sophocles, Stephen King, and most recently, Crichton with Jurassic Park. You are a considerable literary artist; and you will make your readers believe almost anything that you want them to believe; and that's because you write so well. Stephen King does it all the time. If you take what you consider to be these implausible actions and dress them up with the verisimilitude of everyday life, believe me, they're going to work.

So, let me know what you think.

Warm Wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the name 'Al', written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Al