



PENGUIN PUTNAM INC.

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Ken Follett
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Via facsimile: 44-1438-810-444

Dear Ken:

Herewith, Neil and my comments on the outline for JACKDAWS. I obviously misheard him about the opening sequence and thought he wanted Flick to actually enter the exchange. What he is saying is better, of course, and I agree that by choosing an altogether different location for the opening makes the main mission less of a repeat.

I hear from your office that all of those tip sheets are on the way back to us. I really appreciate you signing so many and in the end I think you will be glad you did.

We can't wait to see you at lunch next week!

With all best wishes,

Phyllis Grann

PEG/hnb

[Attachment]



To: Phyllis

From: Neil

Re: Ken Follett, JACKDAWS

This is nice, a very promising outline! Just a few ideas:

The opening sequence. It does a good job of providing us with an action opening, plus character and relationship introductions. But I think it should not be a first attempt at the chateau telephone exchange. Otherwise, the main mission seems like a little bit of a repeat, even though it's a different plan. Part of the suspense of the book's main mission is the newness of it, for us and for them: What's the place like? How impossible are the logistics? Can they get inside? Can they bring it off? If we're already acquainted with some of that from the beginning, it's less suspenseful.

I think the opening sequence should be another operation, a curtain-raiser. It can have most of the same components, and the same result – failure – it's just not the same mission. Then later we can all hear of the next mission and watch it getting set up from absolute scratch.

Another consideration here: because this mission does fail, does Flick need the next mission to succeed for self-validation, or validation with her superiors? Might there be reluctance on their part to put her in charge of it because of the last failure? Does she have any self-doubts? This all might give her more at stake here than just the success or failure of this particular mission

For that matter – and I leave it as an open question – what if each member of the team she recruits needs this operation to succeed in order to achieve a validation of some kind, a personal redemption that varies with the individual? Just a thought.

The ending: somehow it feels just a little too easy, their getting on the plane and escaping. We could probably use a final twist here. Plenty to choose from: The plane doesn't come. The plane comes, but they have to fight through a sudden German ambush to get on. They get on the plane, but there's a surprise German on board. The Germans almost shoot the plane down (either before it lands to pick them up or while they're on board). A German plane pursues them while they're in the air. And so on.

One character note: we've got two villains, Baecker of the Gestapo and Dieter Franck of the Abwehr. That's fine, but of the two, can we make sure that Dieter is the one built up, made the scariest, the main villain? Baecker is a standard brute – it's the fact that Dieter is the more smarter, more complex person that would make him a more effective, scarier villain.

Another character note: make sure that Greta, and Flick's recruitment of her/him, is credible under the circumstances (so we don't end up thinking it's just a plot gimmick): why Flick *has* to use Greta.

Title: "Jackdaws" is an intriguing word, but obscure in the U.S. I think it's fine if the word is in the title, but probably shouldn't be the title all by itself. You don't want *Night of the Jackdaws* or *The Jackdaw Solution*...but you get the idea.

Otherwise, I think this all sounds very fine – can't wait to read it!