

CORGI BOOKS



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PJS/MK

1st April 1985

Ken Folliett, Esq.
92 Cheyne Walk
London S.W.10.

Dear Ken,

FIVE FINGERS is a page-turner and, I believe, your most mature work to date. However, I do have a few reservations about the first draft which I outline here for your consideration:

- 1) I am still concerned about the coincidence of Jean-Pierre and Ellis (i.e. KGB/CIA) becoming Jane's lovers in turn. I don't think you have explained this satisfactorily, although I'm not certain how you get around it. Perhaps by giving both men more background? ~~Could one of them~~ — Ellis. ~~have got out to~~ 'ce her with a view to infiltrating ~~it's set~~ and then found himself falling hopelessly in love with her? Certainly she's a strong enough character to make this plausible.
- 2) I'm not happy about Jane's discovery of the truth about Jean-Pierre and Anatoly. Her sudden 'awareness' lacks drama. ~~Would it help if the reader too didn't know about/ Jean Pierre until his meeting with An~~ It should come as a total surprise. After all, it's a crucial turning point in the narrative.
- 3) The torrid coupling between Jane and Ellis is exceedingly powerful - and erotic - but rather at odds with the tenor of the rest of the novel. Should this be cut back a bit?
- 4) Personally, I'm a little uncertain about the overt sympathising with feminist and socialist causes. Not so much from a political standpoint (if you can believe that?!) but because I think it interferes with the thriller elements of the book. If no one else has mentioned this, forget it!
- 5) I think the character of Masud needs much more development. He doesn't feature enough in the foreground of the action in Afghanistan. What is his past and how does he rally the various factions around him? Obviously he is a magnetic personality but I didn't feel the fire of his presence as I read the book. At the same time you might want to consider giving the reader more background to the Afghans struggle against the Russians?

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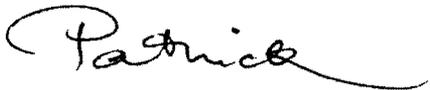
- 6) ~~A map of the Afghanistan terrain~~ would help give the reader a better idea of where the action was taking place. I doubt if many people even know where Afghanistan is!

These few observations apart, I think it's a good story, with a strong sense of place, and, all in all, well up to standard.

Congratulations.

With best wishes,

Yours,



Patrick Janson-Smith

cc David Grossman
Al Zuckerman, Writers House