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FELICIA ETH  
AMY BERKOWER  
MERRILEE HEIFETZ  
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March 20, 1987

Mr. Ken Follett  
92 Cheyne Walk  
London SW10 ODQ

Dear Ken,

Eileen spent all day yesterday reading your screenplay, thinking about it, and making a few small changes in the dialogue. As she got deeper into it, she began to feel more and more that the problem was probably a bit larger than just reworking Jane's dialogue -- as she makes clear in her own letter which I attach.

Her sense in the end was that you are so close to these characters that you, as it were, read into their screenplay personae qualities which you gave them in the novel, but for which you did not fully find equivalencies in the screen treatment -- probably not realizing that these were necessary.

If you agree with this, we have several choices. One is that you could present to Reeve a plan for reworking the script along these lines. The second might be to agree that he hire someone else to do this. The third possibility might be that Eileen would be willing if that were agreeable to him and to you.

I do not think it would be wise for you personally to do any more work on this screenplay without the active collaboration of a director who already is under contract to actually film the story. My fear is that you could write something that would satisfy Reeve, but then not satisfy MGM or Fox or Paramount or God knows who; and you might lose a lot of time in what could be an endless morass -- and for very little money, all the while taking valuable time away from your novel. So, I think maybe it would be wise for someone else to step in; and then hopefully, you could reserve the right to review whatever they do before the picture begins shooting. At that point, I think it would make a great deal of sense for you to give the script a final polish; and you would then hopefully feel good about what would be said and done before the cameras.

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Personally, I am down in the dumps. Eileen and I this morning had a meeting with some officials of the City of New York; and they still are not giving an inch. So it appears that we will have to go to court. When next you pray, pray for us.

I had a nice chat with Jan yesterday; and we are looking forward to having her here. I have encouraged her to perfect her typing; and if she does, she will be a lot more useful to us than if she cannot type. I was happy to learn from her that she appears to have a friend with whom she's going to be staying, so there won't be the usual hassle of looking for a place to live.

Walter Fritzsche and his wife Serena are here in New York now, staying at Writers House; and we're throwing a party for them Monday which should be nice. And my other main activity is trying to find Hillel Black a job -- which is turning out to be not easy. What I am trying to accomplish is to get him installed as the hardcover publisher at NAL. At the moment, Elaine pretty much is doing that; but she really knows next to nothing about publishing hardcover books; and my experience over there has been that this area is a disaster. So I think it would be a good spot for him and for them; but she is not a person, as you know, who relinquishes power easily -- if at all.

I was just interrupted by a phone call from Marvin Brown, who promises me your acceptance of the outline cheque next Tuesday; so we should get that money off to you next week.

Love,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'AL', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Al

AZ:sm  
encl.