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January 13, 1992

Mr. Ken Follett
By fax: 011-44-71-352-5168

Dear Ken,

The pool has been closed at my gym for the last few weeks while they have been re-tiling and repainting, so that I've been working out on a rowing machine and a bicycle; and yesterday I found myself thinking about your book, the new outline, and I have what might be an epiphany of sorts.

It occurred to me that the whole drama between Hugh and Augusta might be more powerful, and could even be poignant in spots, if there was also some love between them. Augusta must of course favor her own son, must want him to succeed, flourish, reach the top; but I think she would be a lot more interesting if at the same time she had warm feelings and possibly guilty feelings towards Hugh. Perhaps in his infancy his mother was deathly ill, there was no one to look after the little boy, and Augusta took him in, fell in love with him, and thinks of him to some extent as a second son--even though of course once Edward was born he took precedence. Or of course there could be any one of a number of other scenarios which might link the two of them. Another possibility might be that Hugh's father when he was a boy of twelve or fourteen, ran up a terrible debt, and Augusta arranged for the debt to be paid, so that Hugh feels an obligation to her for saving his family. In fact, in those days, mightn't Hugh's father have gone to jail?

What brought all this to mind was my restudying your outlines for **THE MAN FROM ST. PETERSBURG**. You may not recall this, but initially in your earliest version Feliks was an out-and-out sonofabitch, a mercenary, a man with two wives who also seduced Charlotte. He couldn't have been worse. But by the time we finished up with him, we made him into a much much more interesting villain. I would love to see some of the same process operative here with Augusta.

On another subject, I am rather amazed that MacMillan-Pan has paid you on the new deal even before we have a signed contract, and they called here the other day to ask for our bank information to

accomplish the same. This is a first for me in the publishing business. I gather from whoever it was that I spoke with there that **NIGHT OVER WATER** is selling wonderfully well for them, and here of course too it continues to have really good results, although of course sales are now lower than they were before Christmas. When next I write you, I will have checked in with Larry Norton and I should have some hard information.

Love,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the initials 'AL' followed by a long, sweeping horizontal stroke that ends in a small hook.

Al