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DELL FAX

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To: Mr. Ken Follett, Peninsula Hotel

From: Jackie Farber, Delacorte Press (212) 492-8627

Re: ALL THE PROUD AND MIGHTY

Number of Pages 9

To: Ken Follett

From: Jackie Farber

Date: 10/26/92

Re: ALL THE PROUD AND MIGHTY

This is a wonderful first draft, which holds up on a second reading, no mean feat. Story, characters, landscape strong; all might benefit from fine tuning. I'm writing this in haste, since Al Zuckerman said you'd like something on paper before tomorrow's meeting. Please forgive the disorganization of the memo but perhaps you'll be able to dig out some nuggets. First we'll cover general problems. Then if time allows character and plot though much of plot will come under general problems

The Banking Houses.

ALL THE PROUD AND MIGHTY, a story about a great banking house, or perhaps 2 (The Pilasters and the Greenbournes), doesn't have nearly enough material on the banks. This is important for male readers. Otherwise the book will be a family saga, albeit a good one. But we're losing an opportunity here. Need much more physical description of the great bank.. Where is it? What does the building housing it look like? Are there other merchant banks on either side? Is it in The City, or wasn't there such in 1862? Must see all the rooms, the liveried workers, the hustle and bustle of the bank-- the clerks and the officers. We should see this throughout this novel and feel the Pilaster banks power.

We should see the Greenbourne bank as well. Since it's a Jewish, conservative operation, show it too, and the way it contrast with Pilasters. Show both banks in action. Did Greenbourne start his bank or is he 3rd, 2nd generation banker? Let's see Solly in the bank; Solly and Ben as they interact; Greenbournes and Pilasters as they interact. Are they fungible or is there a great difference between the two operations.

Reader should be grounded physically in these banks throughout the manuscript, without pedantic narration-- try to show these banks in action. Make these Banks characters in this well-peopled novel along with the member of these great banking families.

Christian and Jew

I was startled that Solly Greenbourne attended the same public school as the Pilasters. I know Disraeli is prime minister throughout but there is the distinct feeling that everyone gets along well until Augusta brings up the ugly specter of Anti Semitism. You might explain some of this-- and show the similarities and the differences between Pilaster's and Greenbournes without falling into stereotypes. You show the unsuitability of Hugh's marriage to Nora; show up Greenbourne pere's response to Maisie.

The Killing of Peter Middleton

This is a serious plot glitch that requires consideration here: that is, providing Micky's motivation for killing Peter Middleton. The whole story revolves around this incident and you never know why this happens. Surely Micky as a schoolboy could not have come up with such a scheme on his own, one that would have repercussions across years and continents. This needs some heavy thinking.

1) If death is deliberate, murder needs real motivation. The drowning would have to have been set up, maybe on directions from Micky's father. Maybe the intended victim was Tonio but something went awry? This seems a likely scenario-- in fact very likely. Of course you can't explain it until later-- and then how? But I like this, Tonio was the intended victim; Peter got it by mistake.

On the murder subject, isn't page 342 a little too early to let Hugh in on the truth and not have him act upon it? Why would he keep it to himself? And, when did he tell Edward who much later says he knows he wasn't responsible for Peter's death?

The characters of Micky and Augusta.

They are both too evil and because of this not credible. They need to be far more rounded and I'll go into this specifically when we discuss characters.

Certain other characters need work, both descriptive and in action, show, rather than tell. These are Nora, Rachel, Emily, Tonio, Daniel, Solly. Too, relationships need development especially Solly and Maisie, Hugh and Nora, Rachel and Micky (more about that) and Emily and Edward, though this last is not so vital.

Time

Because of the juxtaposition of scenes, reader has some problems with immediate time and begins to wonder is this same moment? Same day? Next day? Next week? Now on to character.

Granada

I think it's very confusing to name a country Granada when Grenada is a real island somewhere in the Caribbean. Although you state it's a made up place, don't you think it ought to have a name that wouldn't confuse it with the real place?

Characters

Micky

Micky is one dimensional. Need to see him develop to see him turn from an attractive boy into a (perhaps irresistible) man. Like to see scenes between him and his father. Having his father explain what their modus operandi is. Otherwise his killings are gratuitous and he's a

cardboard figure. Micky's need to kill must be developed. More should be made of the first on stage murder-- Old Joe. That should set the scene for the subsequent murders. Perhaps Tonio should live-- although Micky shouldn't know that. That would be the ultimate irony if indeed you decide to make the first murder meant to be of Tonio not Peter and the subsequent fact that he never could kill Tonio though he's tried throughout his life.

Micky should this be incredibly seductive person and work his charms on Augusta from the start; playing up, not only to her needs as a society matron, but to her frustrated marital situation. I don't believe they should have an affair; the titillation should be purely emotional. And it would be all Augusta's part.

Rachel and Micky's marriage just seems strange to me. Why in the world would Rachel marry Micky? (Could Rachel marry Maisie's brother Dan? They'd be a splendid match-- more about that later.) You'd have to make Micky a lot more attractive to convince me Rachel would marry him.

Augusta

Again, she is too evil-- a joke character who each time she's on stage makes the reader think along with Reagen "there you go again." Good opportunity to make her better rounded; show her unhappiness in her marriage (many spots in manuscript where you can show this pp. 102, 113, 167, 314 pop up quickly.)-- maybe she was jealous of Hugh's mother and father for having guts; maybe unhappy as a child and pushed into a loveless marriage-- or unsexy marriage-- with a weak and wimpy guy-- Joseph-- not unlike her son, Edward.

When Micky and Augusta meet there is instant recognition: each knows what the other is. Augusta should be sexually attracted to Micky-- (as above, play on it) Micky should know it-- it should never be told but only seen by her actions. Micky sees it-- maybe he's flattered-- in the back of his head, he'll use it some day. And, he does, at the end...

— No. It
dev. l. ps

If there were a way for the reader to feel even a frisson of sympathy for Augusta-- it might be good.

Physical description of Augusta-- she should be a beautiful woman. In reader's eye, she's now a dowager like a Wagnerian soprano-- Picture reader has of her only adds to her one-dimensional image of a witch who is incapable of doing anything but evil. How about making her a stunning woman, hostess ball giver.

Maisie

Maisie is a wonderful character. She needs to be far more on stage with scenes that are here missing: What exactly is Maisie when we meet her in London? She tells Hugh "She's never done it before," yet reader wonders how she's managed not to in her job, whatever that is-- we'll need some explanation.

Maisie and Hugh-- must see real love develop early for reader to believe she's loved Hugh over all these years and vice versa-- and both carrying torches. You tell us this but you've got to show it. More has to be made of their very early connection.

Maisie and Solly. Could you show us scenes of their marriage-- it is a very good marriage based on trust and friendship and all those lovely verities that George Bush talks about and the love that grow with that. All that's missing is true love-- the sweep you off your feet kind-- that Maisie and Hugh feel for each other.

Solly

Would like more of him-- which you can do if you show more domestic scenes and scenes with his father, for example, when Solly tells him he's marrying Maisie. Also at the bank. In

some of these domestic scenes you might show Jewishness, although don't overwork. It's just interesting, this separate but equal idea in the second half of the 19th century in England.

Hugh

He's well realized except for marriage with Nora. As with Micky and Rachel, what in the world makes Hugh marry Nora. Must convince the reader it has to be more than sexual attraction. Maybe she should remind him of Maisie and as the years pass you can show how different she is in contrast to the other marriage. Maisie makes everything work. Nora's a disaster and totally stupefied.

Nora

Nothing about her prepares us for the change that comes over her. Unless we know from the start that she's a gold digger only her subsequent actions come as a shock.

Perhaps she should try hard to please, at first, but feels something missing-- this would be in contrast to Solly and Maisie. They make their second best marriage work. Nora and Hugh's doesn't. But we've got to see it. Maisie might see through Nora right away i.e. after Solly volunteers her for shopping.

Rachel

She's an interesting human being. I can't imagine how she could marry Micky. You must convince us of the reason.

Let's say Micky is really sexually irresistible-- he'd have to be gloriously handsome, exuding sex and lust and physical power. That's why Augusta falls for him and it's the only explanation for Rachel. Surely her parents would object. — No! They are desperate to find her a husband.

You might show Rachel as an independent female, going against the wishes of her father-- though as she's drawn now that wouldn't happen.

The logical person for Rachel to marry (and I wish you could find a way to do this) is Daniel, Maisie's brother. That would set up an interesting situation: the upper middle class English girl marrying a Jewish man from the Glasgow slums.

Emily

We don't see very much of her but she seems to be a woman of quiet strength. Maybe see a little more.

Edward

He is what he is-- you've attempted to show some growth for him toward independence and away from his mother-- all to the good-- though he is forever under Micky's thumb.

To Plot

I think I've covered the major problem with the discussion of the Peter Middleton murder. Since everything flows from this, you must take care in releasing the story. Let's recapitulate. Incident occurs 1866. Next mention part I, 1873. Then part II, 1878-1879. Then part III, 1890.

Part I. page 85-- Hugh speaks to Turpin's father and says he'd like to know about drowning of Middleton. Is this out of the blue?

page 107-- Hugh gets letter from Turpin telling him part of story.

page 114-- Samuel says to Augusta that David Middleton believes Edward killed Peter. Is it too much of a coincidence that Middleton's brother arrives so soon after Turpin's letter?

Part II. Chapter 3. Micky's reason for beating Tonio. Could it be both because of the papers Tonio has plus the fact that he knows what Micky intended back at the quarry. (That would come out ultimately).

page 342-- Tonio tells Hugh what happened at quarry. Isn't this too early in the novel? And if you take the suggestion that Tonio was the intended victim would the story have to change? Why wouldn't Hugh tell this to everyone right away? (Here's an example of the time confusion I've mentioned before). How soon after Tonio tells Hugh does Hugh tell Edward and Edward say he knows what happened and thus so does everyone else? Remember Tonio tells Hugh in 1878-1879. Edward doesn't say that he knows about Micky until 1890.

Part III. page 401 Edward says he knows Micky killed Middleton because Hugh told him. You have to explain the secrecy all this while-- why Hugh didn't say anything, nor Edward, later. Perhaps Tonio shouldn't say anything to Hugh until much closer to the end. Earlier on, when Tonio tells Hugh murder comes to Micky naturally, he can stress this as a compatriot, knowing how murderous the Miranda family is.

As for the other plot questions I have, they are small and probably will disappear when you write the 2nd draft. Just beware of coincidences that aren't prepared for such as Rebecca's popping up in Maisie's hospital.

I hope you'll find this hastily composed memo of some help. Remember the bank, the Jews, Micky and Augusta and of course the murder are our real problems. After that it's a cinch. ALL THE PROUD AND THE MIGHTY is going to be one enormous success.