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Mann, Klaus

New York, 1939-05-03

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The Bedford
118 EAST 40TH STREET
NEW YORK

Princeton N.J.
65, Stockton Street

May 3 , 39

Dear Mr. Greenslet,

I am thnakful for your having given me so prompt an answer, concerning "Der Vulkan". On the other hand, I am somewhat disappointed, of course. Moreover, I am estonished about certain statements which your letter includes. I really don't think it is the proper thing to say that "Der Vulkan" is "a novelized version of 'Escape to Life'". The resemblance between the two books is superficial. "Escape to Life" is dealing with more or less famous "cases", in an almost journalistic way; while all of the characters in "Der Vulkan" are invented. None of the cha= racters appearing within the novel has anything to do with anybody we mention in "Escape". The two books are written with entirely different intention, in an entirely different spirit, with entirely different artistic means. As a matter of fact, in my opinion "Der Vulkan" is definite= ly more important than "Escape to Life". Just because it is "fiction", it contains more actual truth, it is more cruel, more realistic and more complex than the other book. And, above all, I have to protest against the suppo= sition that I did use in the novel "many passages in almost the identical words of the narrative in 'Escape to Life'".

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This is not accurate by any means, and, besides, it is hurting my sense of honour as an author. Of course, it is quite impossible for me to discuss the matter whether or not the various characters I present in "Der Vulkan" are "always readily distinguishable". I hoped they were, but I may be mistaken. I cannot admit, either, that the novel is "practically without plot other than that supplied by the facts of recent history". I felt pretty many things are happening, on those 700 pages, and the "facts of recent history" are just the background, not "the plot". However, this question, too, is embarrassing to discuss for the author. The only point I really have to insist about is a sort of a broad and dull repetition of "Escape to Life". I am really not in the habit to repeat myself - and how would I have dared to offer to you a piece of work which doesn't contain anything but the old stuff you knew already and you had published before?

I had to say and to emphasize this - and I am afraid there is not very much to say besides. Since you feel "it would be an extremely difficult book to sell in this country", there is not very much hope to persuade you and to change your mind.

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Yet, there is another complication. The same morning I received your letter I had another one from Mr. Barthold Fles who used to be active as my literary agent for a while. The book of mine he is handling is "Pathetic Symphony". He even has paid me something in advance when I gave him the rights for that novel, some time ago. Today he says me that he "finally has found a publisher for 'Pathetic Symphony'". The conditions thias "finally-found publisher" is offering are fairly good. He intends to publish the book next October. I didn't sign yet the contract.

I don't want to sign it before I know your opinion. Of course, I still remember your clear statement that you were not really interested in the Tschaikowsky novel.

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