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Mann, Erika

o.O., 1959-11-19

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November 19, 1959

Miss Helen Macy
Director
Helen Macy, 595 Madison Avenue
New York 22
N.Y.

Dear Mrs. Macy, -

thank you ever so much for your kind letter of November 13th. Of course, I knew of your LIMITED EDITIONS and HERITAGE CLUBS, though I had no idea that you were preparing a special edition of "The Magic Mountain". I am extremely pleased at the prospect and rest convinced that your book will turn out to be a very beautiful one.

Most unfortunately, however, I am not at this time capable of accepting your flattering invitation. A Preface of the kind you rightly visualize means a piece of work which demands a certain period of time otherwise not preoccupied. And said period is - alas - not available.

I've only just finished my work on a BUDDENBROOKS-film in two parts which has been quite a success but which I am now doomed to make into one normal moving-picture. Whilst the original version was not by any means easy to device, the "digest" is bound to prove rather an ordeal.

Besides, - even before the BUDDENBROOKS-task presented itself, I had signed a contract with S. Fischer for a biography of Thomas Mann. I am extremely eager to continue the work which I had only just started prior to the BUDDENBROOKS-movie.

Considering all this, you will easily understand, that I can't possibly write the Preface to The Magic Mountain.

On the other hand, I should wish to make at least one suggestion: while in Princeton, my father gave a lecture on The Magic Mountain entitled "Einführung in den Zauberberg". The lecture was, of course, delivered in English but I doubt that the translation was really adequate; nor do I know whether the essay has ever been printed in English.

On second thought, I deem it quite possible that Knopf has included the essay in one of his volumes in which case one needn't worry too much about the translation. Knopf might even have used the lecture as an introduction to one of his later editions of *The Magic Mountain*. If so, you will probably feel disinclined to use it on your part, as it would then not represent a novelty.

Should Knopf not have embodied the piece, I should think it would make an admirable preface to your volume. It is contained in both the GBF and the latest S. Fischer editions of the book.

Let me repeat that I am truly sorry about being unable to do anything in this context at this time. I am, however, looking forward to your publication with the keenest interest and beg to remain, dear Mrs. Macy,

yoursmost sincerely:



1910/11