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Mann, Erika

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Erika Mann
Kantonsspital, Zimmer A 75
Zürich

30. Dezember 1962

Mr. George Justin
c/o Ely A. Landau
Time & Life Building
New York 20, N. Y.

Dear Mr. Justin, -

it was on a Saturday early in December that you called me from London to ask whether "Death in Venice" was still available and to assure me of Mr. Landau's continued and urgent interest in the property. When I told you that a deal could be closed, you assumed that Mr. Landau would fly to Rome right away in order to negotiate with the director whom he had in mind for the production. I asked whether you wouldn't be willing to come here for a few hours so that we might discuss the manner in which the story should be treated in the film, you said that you'd like nothing better and that you'd call me back by Monday to make some sort of an appointment.

While I was hospitalized at that time, I was not then acute ill but merely forced to rest on account of some bone trouble. In the meantime I caught myself a beautiful flu which caused me to cut out "business as usual". This is why I failed to proceed with the other parties interested in "Death in Venice". For though I was at a complete loss as to why I hadn't heard from you again I was more or less forced to assume that Mr. Landau had suddenly lost interest.

Should my assumption have been correct I have now a very definite and pressing reason to want to know just what caused Mr. Landau to change his mind within 48 hours or so. Moreover, I feel that I have been dealing very fairly and squarely with Mr. Landau and yourself and that I am hence entitled to an honest explanation.

As I have told you repeatedly I should have liked very much to come to an agreement with you and actually I still desire to do so. Should Mr. Landau simply have come to dislike the idea of the film based on "Death in Venice", I would have to make haste and start negotiating with two (at least two) other interested firms. Should, however, as I suspect, you and Mr. Landau have found fault - not with "Death in Venice" but with circumstances you erroneously believe to exist, there ought to be a rapprochement without further delay.

Looking forward to hearing from you at your very earliest convenience
yours sincerely,