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Erika Mann
Kantonsspital, Zimmer A 75
Zürich

February 7, 1963

Dear Kay, -

the contracts just arrived and I'd have my mother sign them immediately, were it not for one point that worries me. It would, of course, be point 13 (page 5). Evidently, the existing English translation is not going to be used and "ADAPTER" even shirks from employing the English title of the book, which is "THE HOLY SINNER" and by no means "THE CHOSEN ONE" which would be a literal translation but by no means a good title.

Now the play I've read and of which The Estate approved was based on the existing translation which happens to be excellent although this particular novel is extremely difficult to translate. Were a new translation to be made, - or, rather, were the play to be entirely rewritten I couldn't possibly say whether or not it would be still acceptable. Too much - in this case - depends on the style of the whole thing, on whether or not the humour and witticism, the lyrical and tragic aspects of the story, as transparent in its language, will be preserved or lost - if only partially.

I suppose I am not mistaken in assuming that Helen Vaughan or her agent got in touch with Knopf and that Knopf's terms proved to be too tough. Kindly advise immediately whether I am right and if so just what it was that Knopf wanted. As soon as I know, my mother would be in a position to approach Knopf personally and to see what might be done.

As mentioned before, "THE HOLY SINNER" was not only quite a success but also a Book-of-the-Month-Club choice and Knopf made a neat bit of money out of it. It should be possible, therefore, to make him see the light. Probably Secker and Warburg, London, were certain to have helped pay for the translation are also involved. But in their case, too, a solution should be capable of being found.

I am very sorry that point 13 should keep me from returning the signed contracts rightaway. On the other hand, I am convinced that you'll see what I mean.

With kindest regards,
yours as ever cordially,