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Mann, Erika

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Erika Mann
Kantonsspital, Zimmer A 75
Zürich

December 25, 1962

Miss Kay Brown
Ashley-Steiner Inc.
555 Madison Avenue
New York 22, N. Y.

Dear Kay:

Let me start by wishing you an extremely pleasant and fruitful New Year.

As for your note of December 5 the answer is no. There has never been a dramatization of "The Holy Sinner" either in German or for any foreign market.

The draft of the contract you kindly sent me on December 17 certainly looks like a very well considered document. There are just a few points I'd like to take up with you before submitting the draft to my mother for her final okay:

1. While the percentage planned for OWNER seems very fair indeed, we have never accepted an advance payment as low as Dollars 200. Not even in Europe and in that continent's poorest times should we have considered that sum adequate as an advance payment for the rights in any work of T. M. As it goes, those Dollars 200 would in our case be meant to cover not only the option for the play but also an option for a "World wide English language motion picture"; let alone the "subsidiary and additional rights" that would go with the deal.

I can only assume that the Vaughans themselves don't have any money at all, that Mr. Vaughan is to direct rather than to produce the play and that he is looking for a producer solvent enough to pay his salary as well as to finance the whole production. Should I be right, it might perhaps be wiser to grant the Vaughans permission - for a certain length of time - to look for that kindly producer and to sign actual contracts only if and when the man has been found. If, on the other hand, you are convinced that the deal as proposed now could not under any circumstances be improved upon, please let me know. Frankly, however, I find it somewhat difficult to visualize anyone who'd be ready to produce a play "between December of this year and January 1964" but who'd be unwilling to spend more than 200 Dollars on the right to do so.

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2. I notice that ADAPTER may not be willing for the title of the novel to be used for the play. Perhaps he is right, though I don't know, and there might be a better title. But even if such a title has been found and agreed upon, the story's original English title ought to be used for the credit. Were the credit to read: Based upon the novel "Der ERWAEHLTE" by THOMAS MANN, nobody in God's Own Country would be able to guess just what novel the credit was talking about. As a title "THE HOLY SINNER" is quite well known both in America and England, and I do feel that it should be contained in the credit.

For the rest and as stated above, I deem the draft quite satisfactory and feel certain that my mother would be willing to sign a contract similar to it.

XXI/23

Kindest regards.

As ever yours cordially,

ERIKA MANN

PS. Perhaps I'd better add that merely as a matter of prestige those 200 Dollars will hardly do. Such things will get around, and we simply couldn't afford to have anyone know about any such deal.

