

VICKI BAUM

July 9th 1944

Don darling,

What's left of me after working every night until seven in the morning to finish that darn story for Womans Home Companion, is huddled in front of this machine now, trying to write some letters, but it just won't do. I finished it though, it stinks, period. Monday, July 17th I'm off for Mexico, will stay there until August 28th and return by way of Yucatan New Orleans. September 2d or so should find me in New York. Please, keep that luscious tan of yours for me, I like beautiful masculine torsos and will make you many expert compliments. This, being sort of a business letter, I'll tactfully skip the more personal and erotic facets of your life, but wish you the very first Grade A in every respect. My address in Mexico is 176 Avenida Chapultepec and I'd like to hear from you. Anything I shall bring you from there?

Love, as ever

Vicki

Please, receive any eventual payments until my return, will you?

August 8th 1944

Don, my darling, It's too bad your letter reached me just after my return from a few days in Taxco; now I'll never get back there and in this town I can't get the sort of ring you want. No hay. But I'll write to Sprattling and see what gives. Altogether it seems to me that he doesn't make so many of ~~the~~ his good old designs any more but it's all pretty commercialized and dripping with profits. While you get yourself that dazzling torso and everything that goes with it, my puny efforts at similar results in Acapulco gave me nothing but a ~~the~~ sick liver, a sunburn and two fevers at one and the same time. S till and all, this is a darn nice c@untry and I would enjoy it even more if I wouldn't be hit by a chill and a temperature every second day at four o' clock sharp, just like one of those reserved yet picturesque characters your friend Maugham knows so well to depict. Look here, does the ring, if it should ever emanize, arrive there at a certain date or shall I bring it along September 2d and save you the duty on it? I'm too goddam lazy to write more, especially on this crazy and alien typewriter and with the sort of headache I'm having. We'll better sling the bull but real good when I get to town again. I'm glad everything is running well in your life for a change- hold on to those strong hands with the awe^{ful} inspiring circumference if you can

love us ever

✓
Trick

VICKI BAUM

May 11th, 1946

Dear Mrs. Newburger:

Forgive me if I'm not spelling your name correctly, I didn't quite get it over the telephone. Here is a little request: the photostat of that article about the old silver mill didn't arrive yet; could you take the trouble and find out what's the matter with it? I suppose whatever expenses will arise of such photostatic prints, Doubledays can pay for me for the time being and if they want to can deduct it from my account with them.

Thanks a lot, most sincerely yours

Vicki Baum

Mrs. N. —

Probably you'll want
to advise U.B. how photostats
sent + date.

June 3, 1946

Dear Miss Baum:

Your letter to Miss Lubegger referring to the photostat of the article on the old silver mill has been turned over to me.

I hope that by this time you have received it. I sent it out to you by first class mail as soon as I received it, which was about three weeks ago. I am afraid I can't tell you the exact date on which it was mailed because I foolishly did not send a covering letter with it.

If the photostat has arrived, won't you please let me know. If not, I will see that a duplicate is sent out as soon as possible.

Sincerely yours,

Secretary to Mr. Elder

Miss Vicki Baum
2477 Canyon-Oak Drive
Hollywood 28, California

VICKI BAUM

September 4th 1946

Nelson, you dear old charmer,

thanks for your very good letter and for thinking of me in connection with the Plaza's ideas and doubtlessly very juicy and scandalous records. As for doing something with the stuff- well, I remember having danced several hundred years ago to a tune that went: She didn't say yes
She didn't say no-

and that's the condition in which I find myself at the moment. You see, my health has been quite a problem for more than two years and all my valiant efforts at keeping the nose to the grindstone only produced trash; pretty remuneration trash, that's true, but plain trash nevertheless. Now, after endless pilgrimages from doctor to quack and back, the medics seem to come up with a fairly safe diagnosis; seems I injured a little something in my spine or neck a few years ago and the damn thing keeps pressing on a nerve and causing me no end of pain. So, end of this month I'll know, or the doctors will know, if, whether and when they'll operate on me. Then we'll see if I feel like working again and then we can talk the thing over. I take it from your letter that there is no particular hurry about it. Generally speaking, research between other people's bedsheets isn't exactly my line, as I always held the opinion that my fellow citizens' fornication is strictly their own business. And I certainly wouldn't like to write another piece of hotel fiction; if, on the other hand, I could write an amusing, gossipy and sincere story about the Plaza, I wouldn't be averse to it. I must tell you quite frankly, that I'd only do it if I can be sure to make a good piece of money with it, because that's what I'll need in the coming years.

The fact is that we're having a pretty rugged time just now. My boy, Wolfgang, the one you know, has been ailing for more than ten years now and that has always been eating big holes into my financial reserves. Since a few month he and his wife came out to live with us and prepare him for a rather ticklish operation that is going to be performed day after tomorrow. In the best of cases, this will keep him an invalid for at least a year; but if this operation should fail to cure him, he'll be unable to do any regular work for the rest of his life. Well, Nelson, I haven't talked to anyone about this; neither the boy nor my husband know how matters stand, and I wouldn't write you about it, if I didn't always count on your friendship. But it seems to me that I'll have to get busy and provide for a modest amount of security for the boy and his family, as long as my writing still holds any value on the market. Otherwise I shouldn't be so greedy. However, if you should feel like giving me more details on that Plaza stuff, I'll probably have time to think about it while in the hospital.

The movie people don't treat me one way or another, as I broke connections with them many years ago. Recently I did a little job for them, but it didn't amount to much and was sheer agony, as always. That sort of literary streetwalking takes more talents than I possess. My younger boy, a nice six-foot captain, returned from Europe without a scratch, after having served as a counterspy, and having ruled over one third of Germany without swiping a single crown jewel, the dope. He is a very fine horseman and a man's man altogether and I think you'd like him. Now you've all my news and you must forgive me that on the whole they are not as hilarious as I'd like them to be.

I hope that everything goes splendidly with you
affectionately as ever

Vick



Hilton Hotels

C. N. HILTON, PRESIDENT

PROMOTION & PUBLIC RELATIONS DEPARTMENT
THE PLAZA · FIFTH AVENUE AT 59TH STREET
NEW YORK 19, NEW YORK

Serge Obolensky, Director

October 29, 1946

Miss Lillian F. Robins
Secretary to Mr. Doubleday
Doubleday & Company, Inc.
14 West 49th Street, Rockefeller Center
New York 20, New York

Dear Miss Robins:

I have been away and just returned so your letter of October 11th has remained unanswered until now. I was indeed sorry to hear that Mr. Doubleday has been ill and I hope he is completely well again. Please give him my regards.

I wish to inform you that we would be delighted to have Vicki Baum write a novel on The Plaza. She is an excellent writer and we feel that it is to be a great success. Naturally, we would cooperate fully in giving her all the information she would like to have. The members of our staff who have been here for many years, like a couple of the assistant managers, can give her many fascinating stories that would be very interesting for her book. It could be very "amusing, gossipy, and sincere" as you very ably put it, and I think would be a real success.

Naturally, we are anxious to get it started as soon as possible and would appreciate if you would kindly tell Miss Baum how pleased we will be to cooperate in every way.

Yours very sincerely,

Serge Obolensky
Serge Obolensky
Vice President

10/29/46 + SO -
Wm Z
Dugan
write Vicki - notes
program - do you want?
fig. on the notes of
put the diff on the Plaza?

VICKI BAUM

Don, my darling, this is to say welcome home and I would have rolled out the red carpet for you, if not the public display of this illoyal color would make me eligible for deportation. Anyway, you are probably more in the bluish shades just now; that's at least how I always feel when coming back from one of my Gipsy wanderings. Takes me about four weeks of frequent trips to the toilet, which is the only place where one may enjoy a little cry in private. Or maybe I'm all wrong and you're happy as a lark to be back and lording it over all your slaves at the Doubleday offices? Did you write, or at least start to write, or at least plan to write your book? And if so, how did it, or will it, turn out? Are you pleased with yourself? Can you cook the best spaghetti and pasta sciuta in the world by now? Did you change from hard liquor to Chianti and what does it do to your health and character? How did you find Maugham and with whom are you in love at present? I can't recommend you an available barber for the latter purpose, but a very lovable hairdresser from, I think, Toledo. There are a thousand things I want to know from you and about you, and I can assure you that I was missing you like all hell, only I was too tactful to disturb your conscience with my moanings and shed all my tears smilingly and in secret.

Will you, at least be in New York when I get there by the end of ~~XXX~~ April? Oh, and to be very selfish: I am wrangling with the State department about a passport, they took my good, dear old one away during the war. I want to go to Portugal and Spain for a vacation and afterwards see some friends and publishers in various countries overthere. So, I do need a letter from Doubledays, stating that my trip to Europe is highly necessary and worthwhile, that I've got to make studies and collect material for my next book and that I have to renew my contracts and connections which had been interrupted by the war. Also, could either Molly Ryan or Robins(I don't quite remember which of the two always did such things in the most charming manner)

find out for me if the Spanish and Portugal Consulates are amenable and agreeable in the way of giving a dubious character like me some visa? We don't have these consulates out West, and I won't go into palpitations before I may be sure that I'll get those visas.

And as soon as the first rush of emotions is over, will you take the time to drop me a line?

Affectionately

Vicki

September 10, 1946

Dear Vicki:

Just the briefest note to acknowledge with much thanks yours of the fourth to Nelson. It seems odd, but just when it arrived, and I read about your impending operation and your son's, Nelson himself was having an appendix removed! So it will be a couple of weeks perhaps before he will be dictating a reply to you. He is doing splendidly, but needs to be kept down for a bit, and that will really be a tough job.

Meanwhile, your letter is most interesting and I am truly sorry for your troubles. I'm "thinking good" for you.

Ever yours,

Miss Vicki Baum,
464 Bellefontaine Street,
Pasadena, California.

lfr

VICKI BAUM

September 17th 1946

Dear Nelson,

I just heard from Robbie that you had to go and have your appendix out. Now, Old Webster claims that an appendix is 'that which is added as supplemental', so all you did is deduct it again, and I really hope it wasn't too much pain and trouble and you'll be on your toes soon again. We may shake hands, as my boy was operated on last week and I'm going up to San Francisco to have the medics see if they won't operate on me soon, too. I'm practically living at the hospital for the time being and I wish you that the one where you are doesn't smell like the one out here. Out here, we hit on a seven day adventist place which means no smoking, no booze, no meat, no tea, no coffee and none of the things nurses are said to be doing in other hospitals with young internes and the more attractive ones of their patients. Instead of it much praying, singing of hymns and a first class surgeon.

Having developed into a bedpanhandler and brow-cooler of high degrees, I wish I could be there and do one or the other for you or clown the time away for you as I'm doing here for my boy. But I can see you surrounded ~~by~~ by many too many friends already and showered with more flowers than the poor nurses can handle; so, all that's left to me is thinking of you with all good wishes and fullest sympathy

as ever yours

Vicki

~~Miss Doubleday~~

26

Vicki Baum

October 11, 1946

My dear Colonel Obolensky:

Mr. Doubleday's been having rather a bad time of it in hospital for removal of a bad appendix, as you may know, and is still not available for full time attention to business detail. He has asked me to write you about the proposed book on the Plaza Hotel. I think he told you that he hoped to get someone like Vicki Baum, who wrote "Grand Hotel" among many other well known titles. He has asked me to say that we have heard from her, that we think she may be interested eventually, but she hopes there is no great hurry about a decision. At the moment she too has illness in the family, which prevents her more or less from seeing clearly too far ahead on her writing assignments. She indicates that research into other people's lives is not exactly in her line! but she is such an excellent writer that we feel sure she could work out the sort of book that would be required. She suggests that she would not be averse to considering the writing an "amusing, gossipy, sincere story about the Plaza" and I am wondering if you have any definite ideas on the subject, that you could put down in a letter, for me to pass along, something to indicate a little more clearly what you may have in mind for the Plaza story?

Sincerely yours,

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Secretary to Mr. Doubleday

Colonel Serge Obolensky, ←

Plaza Hotel,
57th and Fifth Avenue,
New York, N. Y.
lfr

Xmas in Gal. Pen

File

October 11, 1946.

Dear Vicki:

Just a brief note to say that it isn't the rocking chair's got him, but hospitals! It was a blasted bad appendix and he's getting on, but slowly, and there seems need for care and close observation etc. etc. and things. Your letter hasn't been answered because I went off for a vacation myself, the first in several years, so everything was held over. On Wednesday, I went over things briefly with Nelson and he was delighted with your letter, but most regretful that your son, and perhaps you too by this time, have to go through some of that bedpanitis, especially awful where there's no smoking, booze or whatnot. next time you and Nelson meet, what yarns you can swap.

Meanwhile, we'll see what further ideas develop on the plan for the Plaza book.

Ever yours,

Wrote Col. Stansbury re.

Miss Vicki Baum,
464 Bellefontaine Street,
Pasadena, California.

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

lfr.

November 6, 1946

Dear Colonel Obolensky:

Mr. Doubleday is still ill and at home, I am sorry to say, and I think it may be several weeks before he is up and about again.

I showed him your letter of October 29th about the possibility of Vicki Baum doing the Plaza book, and he asked me, in his absence, to turn over the entire matter to Mr. Gibson. I am doing that immediately, and Mr. Gibson will then follow through with Miss Baum and yourself.

Sincerely yours,

Colonel Serge Obolensky,
Fifth Avenue at 59th Street,
New York 19, N.Y.

lfr

VICKI BAUM

January 26th 1947

Dear Don, how are you, how was the trip, how's everything at good old Doubledays etcetera? Let me have a little word, will you? It's done me ^a world of good to see you, and the rub-down you gave me has had its devilish effect. I drammed a considerable amount of research into the last weeks, and tonight I'll squat down with trepidation and start on the first chapter of that mastefful, vibrant, tenderly ironic, shivveringly exciting novel: "Headless Angel!"

Now I do want three things from you, my pet: namely, the money that should have amassed in the Doubleday till for me during 1946. Secondly, a copy of "Lidya Bailey", which should help me with the general atmosphere of the selfsame period in which my A/angel loses her head. And third some idea about what with the Plaza people? I want to come to New York around March 20th and if I don't stay at the Plaza under the pretext of collecting material, I'll have to wheedle the St Moritz manager into letting me have some crib in the old bordello. Also, I'd like to know whether Rosie would be in New York and available for shop talk at the time I 'm planing to get there, as no one can midwife my ideas as well as she does; pretty egotistical, ain't I- but she knows that I'll gladly do the same for her.

Well, here goes- Now I'll take my quilt to hand and begin sweating it out. So long and all my love

as ever

Vicki

Recd
1-27-47 →

January 27, 1947

Dear Vicki,

I have arrived back in New York safely, and am hard at work leading a sober and industrious life, which has its compensations but is apt to be a little boring.

I have had another sparing match with the people at the Plaza, and while they have not definitely committed themselves, they seem to be willing to entertain the idea of the book you want to write, rather than the novel which they had in mind. I also told them that it would cost them about \$25,000.00. They didn't even blink at this, but they did want to know if they could share in the revenue of the book in order to pay off that investment.

It now comes to a matter of working out the details. I think they would probably like to have a share of the book royalties, and the motion picture and other subsidiary rights, with a view to getting back some of their money eventually. I can understand their point, and I should think that a fifty-fifty split would probably suit them.

I also asked them a little bit more about the nature of the material they could provide, and since they seemed a little vague about this, I suspect there would be considerable research involved for you, and that the material would probably not be laid before you ready to use. Since your research time while you are here will be limited, I thought I should warn you about this. These people really do not seem to have any ideas on how books are written and how much time research takes.

If you still feel like going ahead, won't you let me know how you feel about dividing the revenue, or make any counter proposal that seems reasonable to you. I will tell them just what you want me to, since my only aim is to get you as much money as possible.

I have discussed the matter in Book Meeting, and we are quite willing to do the book as we know you will do a good one.

I am in extremely good health. In fact, I feel much better than I have in a year, and the rest I had in California really did me a lot of good. I hope you are feeling better, and that everything is going well with Wolfgang. It was lovely to see you, and thanks a lot for entertaining me. With love to you and all the family.

As ever,

DBE:ham

Donald B. Elder

VICKI BAUM

Hollywood , February 2d , 1947

Dear D on,

I'm just taking off enough time from this confounded goddam~~ed~~ job of creative writing to drop you a line. I'm glad you are doing so well and thanks for peddling my business with the Plaza people. . If we get to make a contract at all I think a fair suggestion would be that they get a fifty percent share in my royalties and picture rights until their payment to me is paid off , but not more than paid off. I don't know whether I make myself clear, but what I mean to say is that I don't want to be the Plaza people's dear little dark horse on which they might probably even make a profit . Of course, my fear that half of my royalties could amount to more than twentyfive thousand Dollars will seem to you rather exaggerated; probably your book meeting decided to go ahead on the damn thing on the off-chance of possibly selling ten thousand copies. However, if a book like that is ^{publ}IALIZED enough - a thing the Plaza people would have to do in their own ^{int}erest as well as in mine - some movie producer might get a notion to buy it for hundredthousand dollars, and , naturally, then I want most of the gravy after doing all the work. .

In the meantime I wrote to the St, Moritz for a reservation for around March 20th ; when I am in New York it's still time for me to see whether there is any material about the Plaza which I could use.

So I got Clarinda sitting at her grave and remembering the time she met José María e Felipe Contreras Gonde de las Fuentes. And isn't she a naughty naughty girl! My neck hurts like seven hells when I'm writing and I wonder whether it is the same class of pains gentlemen in their seventies complain of when trying to have a last affair with a lively chorus girl.

All my love

as ever

Vicki

February 11, 1947

Dear Colonel Obelensky:

I have had a letter from Vicki Baum, in which she agrees in principle to your having a 50% share in royalties and motion picture rights until your payment to her is paid off, at which time all revenue reverts to her. She would ask \$25,000.00 for writing the book.

Miss Baum is coming to New York around March 20th, and at that time she would be willing to examine the material to see if she feels there is a good book in it. I am sure you will agree that it is best for her to look over the possibilities of the material before anyone makes a definite decision.

Sincerely yours,

Donald B. Eldier

DBE:ham

Colonel Serge Obelensky
Plaza Hotel
5th Avenue and 59th Street
New York, N. Y.

February 13, 1947

Dear Vicki:

I have written to the Plaza stating the proposition, and I will let you know when I hear from them.

Meanwhile, I enclose a statement and a check, ^{\$5,613.66} covering royalties to November 1, 1946.

I hope you are feeling better, and that the typewriter doesn't give you pains in the neck. My love to all.

Yours,

Donald B. Elder

DBE:ham

Miss Vicki Baum
2477 Canyon Oak Drive
Los Angeles 28, California



Hilton Hotels

C. N. HILTON, PRESIDENT

PROMOTION & PUBLIC RELATIONS DEPARTMENT
THE PLAZA · FIFTH AVENUE AT 59TH STREET
NEW YORK 19, NEW YORK

Serge Obolensky, Director

February 14, 1947

Mr. Donald B. Elder
Doubleday & Company, Inc.
14 West 49th Street
Rockefeller Center
New York 20, New York

Dear Mr. Elder:

Many thanks for your favor of February 11th in which you state that Vicki Baum agrees to our having a 50 per cent share in royalties and motion picture rights.

I would be delighted to talk things over with Miss Baum when she arrives in New York about March 20th, and I would appreciate very much if you would let me know at that time when I will be able to see her.

With best regards and many thanks, I am

Yours sincerely,

Serge Obolensky
Vice President

Addressing to Don
Carlyle - write
Apr 28
VICKI BAUM
New York
to N.Y. April 27th

Dear Don,

I'll arrive by March 21th and hope you'll call me at the old St Moritz Brdello. In the meantime I have to ask Doubleday's to do me a great favor. I want to be back in Hollywood on or around May 1st and I understand reservations out of New York are hard to get. Could someone start now to get me that reservation? Preferably on the Chief or the super chief, a roomette. If that can't be done, a roomette on the Southern Pacific. Only as a last resort would I have a compartment- if no roomette available- on one of those through trains, which consist of the obsolete cars of the old Pennsylvania Railroad and are just godawful. Please, yes, and thanks!

I've been a good girl and about one third of my novel is written and fairly rewritten, too. It's dripping sex in the most tasteless way, but maybe its going to get better by and by.

Love, so long

Vicki

VICKI BAUM

Hollywood, March 12th 1947

Dear Miss Mignot,

Many thanks for your letter- I have a round trip ticket with the UNION PACIFIC and am arriving at Grand Central Station. I hope I'm not troubling you too much.

Yours sincerely

Vicki Baum

August 6, 1947

Dear Vicki:

I wonder if you have received my long handwritten scrawl telling you of my plans to go to Europe. I am anxious to hear from you since I would like to get some work done on the book before I leave. I have to write some copy and while I know the story as you have told it to me, I don't know the characters' names nor any changes which you might have made in it while writing it.

I wonder if you could let me have a page synopsis which gives the characters' names and covers any changes you have not already told me about.

I'll write you more later. It seems now that I am sailing September 11th.

With love,

Donald B. Eider

DBE:GG

Miss Vicki Baum
Calle Manuel Doblado
#53
Guanaajuato, G. G. O.
Mexico

February 17, 1947

Dear Vicki:

The Plaza people tell me that they will be delighted to talk things over with you when you arrive in New York, but they haven't made any outright offer. I have a hunch that if you find the material interesting enough, there won't be much difficulty about the deal.

I hope everything is going well.

With love,

Donald B. Elder

DBE:ham

Miss Vicki Baum
2477 Canyon Oak Drive
Los Angeles 28, California

August 21, 1947

Dear Vicki:

I received your long synopsis, and thank you very much. I am sorry I had to ask you for it, and I really didn't need such a long one. I shall return it to you after I have finished with it.

I am suffering from every kind of anxiety in the world because I am involved in all kinds of preparations for going away. But I suppose I shall calm down some after I get on the boat. I shall let you know how everything is.

With love,

Donald B. Elder

ham

Miss Vicki Baum
Calle Manuel Doblado
#52
Guanajuato, G. G. O.
MEXICO

P. S. I don't want to limit you too much on length, but it would be nice if you could keep it within 1230,000 words.

Vickie Baum

Please send one copy each of HEADLESS ANGEL to:

Miss Hede M. Hirschbach
119 West 87th Street
New York 24, N.Y.

Mme. Elsie Jellinek
152 West 57th Street
New York 19, N.Y.

Mrs. Johanna Moeller
252 Jericho Turnpike
Floral Park, L.I., N.Y.

Miss Louise Long
9421 Wilshire Boulevard
Beverly Hills, California

*Chg. authors account
order put through
to Mrs. Bayer
4/5/48
Jett*

VICKI BAUM

September 21

Dear Ken,

I just came back from a beautiful and most necessary two weeks' vacation in Guatemala and found your letter which exploded with a hollow bang under my work-worn behind. Frankly, I don't think I will be able to let you have the manuscript on the exact date of October 16th, although it will be in your hands not much later. I might say that the book is finished; however I have to bring a little ~~business~~ distance and perspective between me and my opus before I can do the necessary cutting, shaving off, cleaning up and general editing. I am at it right now, but the mere question of getting it copied will delay the delivery. Uncle Don gave me quite a shock when he tried to limit me to 120,000 words, just after I had written some 400,000 of them, every single one a jewel of prose and penetrating historical insight. While you may remember that I like to cut my stories and am not a bit soft with myself, I don't believe I can bring it down to 120,000 words without damaging whatever quality this stuff might have. I have an idea that even with the most rigorous cutting it will be somewhere between 150- and 200,000 words, and you better be prepared for that. Don't you think you can put it on your list even though you won't get it by the middle of October? After all, the thing is written and by doing all the editing myself I'm saving your people a lot of time and effort. The title, as you know, should be "Headless Angel"; it's a most appealing mixture of sizzling romance ^{and} ~~with~~ very exact and authentic historical facts, and if you can't squeeze it into one of the book clubs you just ain't the man I believe you to be.

We are anticipating as all hell and I think Ruthie will give Tibby a personal and detailed report as soon as we know more about the contents of the bulge. In the meantime, give little Dale a nice hug from me and let me know what's what. As ever,

Yours, affectionately,

Vicki

Dearest Ken, -

you should receive the last batch of part II either Monday or Tuesday as it has been in the mail since Saturday. However, I just discovered that through some oversight of my copyist, these pages haven't been sent along. As they are the most boring part of the novel, please, don't read them separately but put them in where they belong and then read the whole thing in succession. I daresay that it might be possible to cut this chapter a little; however, I found it very necessary to give all the Latin doings a somewhat deeper perspective by describing a little of the ~~North~~ contemporary North American scene too, also to round out Robert Quaille's character. I have a faint idea that you expected an amusing and light-hearted novel, but things just didn't happen that way, and all of this later part is, word by word and action by action, taken from authentic historical reports of eyewitnesses.

I would like to get a final script ready for you for the printer but I am expecting for that your "carping points" and whatever suggestions about further cuts you might have. As you know, most of the stuff I sent you I had no time to look through for typing mistakes and misunderstandings and I'll have to get another copy ready for you. I'd suggest that you send me one of the copies you have there, with some of your ideas and ~~remarks~~ remarks, and let me go over it once more, dammit.

Thanks and much love and, of course, I'm very anxious to get your final reactions on the whole thing.

Yours, always

Vicki

September 26th, 1947

Dear Vicki:

Thank you for your wonderful letter, and I certainly can understand that you wouldn't care to cut many of those jewel-like words filled with penetrating historical insight. Let's agree that the manuscript will be between 150,000 and 200,000 words. But let's hold it to that because we are fighting to keep book prices at a reasonable level.

Believe me, I shall work like a fiend to get your book into a book club. It certainly belongs there. Now to expedite that little matter, do you suppose you can send me an original and a carbon so that we can put one through for copy editing while Mr. Beecroft is considering the other.

We love the title, HEADLESS ANGEL, and we have a stunning jacket.

Very, very best wishes to you,

Yours,

Ken McCormick

KMcC:DS

Miss Vicki Baum
2477 Canyon Oak Drive
Hollywood, California

Doubleday & Co., Inc. 14 W 49th St., NYC

x

October 6, 1947

Miss Vicki Baum
2477 Canyon Oak Drive
Los Angeles, California

DEAR VICKI. JOHN BEECROFT EDITOR OF LITERARY GUILD IS BADLY IN NEED OF MARCH SELECTION. HE WILL HAVE TO CHOOSE IT IN THE NEXT WEEK OR TEN DAYS. HAVE YOU ANY SORT OF MANUSCRIPT WHICH WOULD GIVE HIM A NOTION OF WHAT THE STORY WILL BE WHEN FINALLY CUT? PLEASE CALL ME TUESDAY COLLECT SO THAT I CAN MORE FULLY EXPLAIN THE PROBLEM AND DISCUSS WHAT WOULD HELP HIM MAKE A DECISION NOW. LOVE AND KISSES.

F SERVICE

This is a full-rate Telegram or Cablegram unless its deferred character is indicated by a suitable symbol above or preceding the address.

WESTERN UNION

1220

SY?

DL=Dy

NL=Night Letter

LC=Deferred Cable

NLT=Cable Night Letter

Ship Radiogram

JOSEPH L. EGAN
PRESIDENT

The filing time shown in the date line on telegrams and day letters is STANDARD TIME at point of origin. Time of receipt is STANDARD TIME at point of destination

ISC18 NL PD=TDS HOLLYWOOD CALIF 6

1947 OCT 7 AM 3 40

KENNEDY MCCORMICH=CARE DOUBLEDAY

14 WEST 49 ST NYK=

AM SENDING YOU AIR MAIL REVISED AND CUT MANUSCRIPT
CONTAINING COMPLETE FIRST PART PLUS MORE THAN HALF OF
SECOND PART PLUS COMPLETE THIRD PART. REST OF SECOND
PART DEALING WITH INSURRECTION AND VERY GOOD CLIMAX
FOLLOWS IN EASY STAGES DURING NEXT TWO WEEKS. IF BEETROST
DOES NOT ACCEPT IT ON STRENGTH OF STORY SO FAR HE NEVER
WILL. IF YOU WANT TO CALL ME GLADSTONE 2601 I AM AT HOME
WORKING EVERY EVENING ALSO EVERY MORNING UNTIL NOON
HOLLYWOOD TIME LOVE AND THANKS=

VICKI.

INSURRECTION 2601.

Charge to the account of

CLASS OF SERVICE DESIRED	
DOMESTIC	CABLE
TELEGRAM	ORDINARY
DAY LETTER	URGENT RATE
SERIAL	DEFERRED
NIGHT LETTER	NIGHT LETTER

Patrons should check class of service desired; otherwise the message will be transmitted as a telegram or ordinary cablegram.

WESTERN UNION

1206

CHECK
ACCOUNTING INFORMATION
TIME FILED

JOSEPH L. EGAN
PRESIDENT

Send the following telegram, subject to the terms on back hereof, which are hereby agreed to

DAY LETTER

October 9th, 1947

Miss Vicki Baum
 2477 Canyon Oak Drive
 Hollywood 28, California

DEAR VICKI: HEADLESS ANGEL IN TWO PARTS ARRIVED SAFELY TODAY. DELIGHTED TO HAVE IT. THANKS FOR YOUR SPEED. LOOK FORWARD TO EPILOGUE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AND MISSING MEXICAN CHAPTERS WITHIN TWO WEEKS ACCORDING TO YOUR SCHEDULE. LOOK FORWARD TO READING AND THANKS A MILLION FOR YOUR WONDERFUL COOPERATION. ~~EX~~ YOU SENT ME 277 PAGES IN THIS BATCH. CAN YOU TELL ME ROUGHLY THE NUMBER OF PAGES YET TO COME SO THAT WE CAN GET A TENTATIVE ESTIMATE OF THE LENGTH?

KEN MCCORMICK

Charge to the account of

FOURLEADY & COMPANY, INC.

\$

CLASS OF SERVICE DESIRED	
DOMESTIC	CABLE
TELEGRAM	ORDINARY
DAY LETTER	URGENT RATE
SERIAL	DEFERRED
NIGHT LETTER	NIGHT LETTER

Patrons should check class of service desired; otherwise the message will be transmitted as a telegram or ordinary cablegram.

WESTERN UNION

1206

JOSEPH L. EGAN
PRESIDENT

CHECK
ACCOUNTING INFORMATION
TIME FILED

Send the following telegram, subject to the terms on back hereof, which are hereby agreed to

OCTOBER 7th, 1947

Miss Vicki Baum
 2477 Canyon Oak Drive
 Hollywood 28, California

THANKS FOR YOUR TELEGRAM. YOU'RE AIR MAILING ME EXACTLY WHAT I
 NEED. LOVE,

KEN MCCORMICK

KMCC: DS

Mr. Lee Barker

10/9/47

Mr. Ken McCormick

In answer to Johnnie's and your plea for an early look at the Vicki Baum HEADLESS ANGEL manuscript herewith the prologue in Weimar and a good part of the story in Mexico. The epilogue which returns the story to Weimar will come in a day or two. The balance of the middle Mexican part is written but is in the form of final revision. The part not here consists of the preparation for the Mexican insurrection and the climaxing chapter with the massacre in Granaditas. This, in Vicki's considered judgment, is the best piece of writing in the book. She says that if what you have here pleases Johnnie, she can guarantee that the rest won't be a letdown. I will pass on the epilogue the minute I get it. The missing Mexican chapters should be here in two weeks according to Vicki.

KMcC:DS

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WESTERN UNION

1201

SYMBOLS
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Ship Radiogram

JOSEPH L. EGAN
PRESIDENT

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OCT 8 AM 12 24

SE389 NL PD=TDS HOLLYWOOD CALIF 7
KENNETH MCCORMICK, CARE DOUBLE DAY CORP=
14 WEST 49 ST NYK=

FIRST PART AND MORE THAN HALF OF SECOND PART EN ROUTE
EPILOGUE FOLLOWS TOMORROW REST OF SECOND PART WITHIN NEXT
WEEK LOVE=

VICKI..

THE COMPANY WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING ITS SERVICE

VICKI BAUM

dearest Ken, your wire threw me in quite a turmoil, but I'll do my best to please the customer. Now, look here: I've been working like hell all the time and my seating capacity is strained to the breaking point. I have no ~~MAN~~ copy of my first manuscript, and the original is cut into little bits, and so messy anyway, that its own mother has trouble reading it. Now then, to clarify what I was wiring you just now: the stuff consists of three parts; ~~MAN~~ Prologue in Weimar. Second part (actually the real story) in Mexico. Epilogue, return to Weimar. So far I have the prologue and a good part of the Mexican story rewritten, cut and copied. This I am sending you in two copies, airmail. However, I won't take the time just now to delouse it of typing mistakes and such, and must ask Mr Beecroft to be lenient if something should appear obscured by such mistakes. I will also send you the epilogue as soon as I get it back from the girl who does the copy work; it won't take her more than two or three days, I guess. I figure that it is better to show Mr Beecroft the goody-goody ending to make up for all the wenching and fornicating that goes on before, than to rush the rewriting and cutting of the remaining pages of part two. In other words, what I have ready in a final version goes up to the point where my lovers part. Still missing is the ~~REVISION PART~~ preparation for the Mexican insurrection and the climaxing chapter with the massacre in Granaditas. That one, I think, turned out very well and is probably the best piece of writing in the whole book. I mean, if what I am sending should please you and Mr Beecroft, I can promise you that the rest won't be a let-down. The purely historical things which I am trying to smuggle in here and there are a bit boring as such stuff always is. On the other hand, a bit of information won't do the readers any harm. And you people can still cut what appears longwinded. So far I have already flushed a years research down the toilet.

As my typist has just started on a grippe and I can't be absolutely sure that she will keep up her speed, I am sketching for you a rough outline of the

chapters you are to get, because it is possible that I shall have to send them in successive parcels.

I

Prologue: Clarinda reminiscing at her own grave.
She meets Felipe Contreras in Goethe's house
She runs away with him
She travels with him, learns that she is believed to be dead, decides to leave it at that, departs for Mexico.

Second Part Arrival in Vera Cruz, First impressions of Mexico
Love scene on a hacienda near Xalapa

Life in Guanajuato, the people, the atmosphere, the mines, the house.

Introduction of Robert Quaille, the American, development of the relation

Clarinda's pregnancy, sickness, miscarriage, beginning of Felipe's decline

Flood in Guanajuato, the mine caves in, Felipe is ruined

Felipe's decline, involvement in a scandal, growing friendship between Quaille and Clarinda

The downfall of Spain, the downfall of Felipe.

Felipe loses Clarinda in a crazy game of billard with Quaille.

This is as far as I have rewritten it, and you get these chapters as they come out of the oven. Missing here are the following chapters:

Clarinda becomes Quaille's housekeeper, gets interested in the independence movement, prepares to get married to Quaille

Quaille is arrested, Clarinda is threatened by the insurgents, is saved by Felipe who takes her into the stronghold of Granaditas.

The last stand of the Spaniards in Granaditas, beginning of the insurrection of the Mexicans, massacre, and death of both the men.

As you see, ~~these~~ ^{remains} are only three chapters, but the last of them a rather long one.

Epilogue (you get it within two or three days)
Clarinda returns to Weimar. Is forced back into society, tells Goethe about Hidalgo and the reasons why he lost his fight for independence and his head

Is called to the side of her sick husband and remains with him

Another conversation with Goethe which leads directly into the end of her afternoon at her own grave.

VICKI BAUM

Now, Ken, if you can find your way through this mess you are a genius. Of course, to me it's all familiar to the vomiting point, but I'm afraid you won't know what I'm talking about most of the time. Anyway, please keep that little list on hand so that you can always check what chapters have arrived and which ones are still in the mail or resting at my typist's bosom. God Almighty, will I be glad when I'm through with this ratrace of work! If you'll call me, it will be awfully nice and easier to get me than to get you from here. But I'm not good at long distance calls or telephones in general and I could never explain all this to you into a phone. Please, let me know how the stuff appears to you when you get around to reading it, and I hope you still remember that I am covered with elephant skin and can take any amount of criticism almost without wincing.

It's late, I'm dogtired, good night, I love you

Vicki

CLASS OF SERVICE

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WESTERN UNION

1201

SYMBOLS

- DL = Day Letter
- NL = Night Letter
- LC = Deferred Cable
- NLT = Cable Night Letter
- Ship Radiogram

JOSEPH L. EGAN
PRESIDENT

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SE6 NL PD=LOSANGELES CALIF 9

1947 OCT 10 AM 4 27

KENNETH MCCORMICK=

CARE DOUBLEDAY 14 WEST 49TH ST NYK=

EPILOGUE ENROUTE I AM WORKING FURIOUSLY STOP I FIGURE ON
ROUGHLY SIXTY THOUSAND MORE WORDS TO COME LOVE=

VICKI••

THE COMPANY WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING ITS SERVICE

October 10th, 1947

Dear darling Vicki:

You are really our dream girl to get those first 277 pages in and to have the epilogue in the mail according to your telegram of October tenth. Thanks for telling me how many more words there will be, and I assume that the sixty thousand is over and above the epilogue which you are sending me. If not, you might correct me on that point, but I hesitate to keep you busy reading and writing letters when you are trying to finish your book.

I agree with you that Johnnie should certainly be able to know the kind of book from what you have submitted. He being a thorough little guy, never makes a decision until he has seen the complete book, but this would be enough to make him hold off deciding for any other book until he had seen the balance if this much excites him.

I am going to read the manuscript this weekend, and I'll write you my reactions. The wonderful outline you sent excited me no end.

Love to you,

Ken McCormick

KMCC:DS

Miss Vicki Baum
2477 Canyon Oak Drive
Hollywood 28, California

CLASS OF SERVICE

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WESTERN UNION (05)

JOSEPH L. EGAN
PRESIDENT

1201

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- Ship Radiogram

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SA616 PD=LOSANGELES CALIF 13 302P

KENNETH MCCORMICK, DOUBLEDAY AND CO=

1947 OCT 13 PM 6 06

14 WEST 49 ST NYK=

THANKS FOR WIRE GLAD YOU LIKE IT STOP TWO CHAPTERS ENROUTE

LAST BATCH WILL FOLLOW ON SCHEDULE LOVE=

VICKI.

THE COMPANY WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING ITS SERVICE

October 21st, 1947

Vicki dear:

More copy is here and very exciting too. I am so happy about the book and the speed you have shown in making your deadline. We'll have to ask you for one more burst of speed when the galleys go to you. If you can plan to read them in four or five days, that will make everything fine.

I am sorry to say that Mr. Beecroft has decided that your book is not for the Literary Guild, but don't be depressed by that. He had the honor of turning down THE MONEYMAN which the Book-of-the-Month Club took and which, as you know, has been a best seller for three months. We are hard at work showing it elsewhere.

Love,

Ken McCormick

KMcC:DS

Miss Vicki Baum
2477 Canyon Oak Drive
Hollywood 28, California

Doubleday & Co., 11 W. 49th St., NYC

Day Letter

October 13, 1947

VICKI BAUM
2477 CANYON OAK DRIVE
HOLLYWOOD 28, CALIFORNIA

DEAR VICKI: THE BOOK IS WONDERFUL AND I HAVE HAD AN EXCITING WEEKEND WITH IT. I THINK THE OPENING IN WEIMER IS EXTREMELY WELL HANDLED AND THAT THE INTRODUCTION TO MEXICO IS REALLY THRILLING. I HAVE A COUPLE OF CARPING POINTS I WILL MAKE IN A LETTER BUT THE BOOK IS SO FULL OF COLOR AND EXCITEMENT SPICED WITH YOUR SHREWD WIT AND OBSERVATION THAT I DON'T SEE HOW IT CAN FAIL. KEEP THE CHAPTERS COMING. LOVE,

KEN

VICKI BAUM

October 27th 1947

Dearest Ken, you gave me quite a shock with your letter which seemed to imply that your people are going ahead with the galleys. If you'd look in your files you'll find that I begged you not to print from the script I shot off to you without ever having ^{had the} time to correct it or ^{to} even look into it when it came from the copist. Accordingly there are stupid mistakes in it, wrong punctuations, and misunderstandings galore. I did some corrections on another copy here, but this one is so blurred and miserable that it wouldn't be of any use to you. On the other hand, having new copies made or mimeographed would take too long. Therefore I'd ask you to, please, please, send me my manuscript back and let me put on more spit and polish, I'll do it quick like. Also, I'd wish you'd tell me what objections, if any, you have, and where you think the stuff could be improved without too much effort or change. I promise I'll do all this with all possible speed, and it's better to get fairly clean galleys, than to change afterwards. I'd also like to see the galleys after your people have proofread them once, so that I have only to mark what concerns me directly and not have to fiddle around with little printing mistakes.

Now then, I wanted to ask you whether you think it better to call this fellow Quaile, Bert' instead of, Bob' the few times he's called by his first name. It seems somehow nicer to me, but I haven't been an American mother in 1770 and don't know. However, his mother, being a Pennsylvania Dutch, would probably have felt as I do and have called him Bert. Another thing (please, note for the printers) I used in all Mexican names the old spelling, namely with an X where they are using a J today. As: Guanaxuato- Guanaxato. Xalapa- Jalapa. It seems more attractive to me and, in fact, in Mexico, too, you'll find many names where they have kept the X even today, like in Taxco, Xochimilco and such. Cadix, too, was in those times written with an X instead of

memo to:
Ethel Ryan

Cadiz. But I'd leave it to you to decide this; I have an idea that the average reader will be troubled anyhow by all the foreign names and words. Another thing: in the script you have there, all accents on the Spanish words are missing and I'll have to put them in. However, it would console me very much to know that someone would go carefully over all the Spanish spelling and grammar. But it had to be someone who knows Spanish better than I do, and I know it fairly well. It always strikes me as something terribly illiterate to see how foreign languages are handled in American print, including such high hat publications as the New Yorker. I never found a single German word in your books correctly used, and a lot of nonsense in French; I would feel very unhappy if similar things should happen to the Spanish. Now, another little matter: I loathe italics and would ask you to keep them out as much as possible, or the book will look as though it had the measles. However, I'll make a sign in the corrections where I do want italics ^{in order} to indicate a little preciousness of speech and expression. As you know, in that period people interspersed a lot of Frenchy and Latin words in their speech as a matter of fact and without italics whatsoever.

Just now I'm going through my copy here with a Thesaurus in one hand and a Webster in the other, and making sure ^{of} the last little details from my research notes; I never do such things during the writing, or it would take the wind out of my sails and stop me too often. So, what you've got there is just the sort of English a girl from Vienna bats out without help from the authorities, see?

It's a shame you couldn't talk Mr Deecroft into buying the stuff; but I trust you'll give the book a billig powerful promotion, because I really feel it could be boasted into becoming a best seller. I put a lot of hard honest work into it, not to mention that a mint of money went into the trips and travels and rare books and things which went into the research. So, dear Ken, please, be a pal and help us to put the book through in a big way, will you?

And love Vicki

Other
Ryan

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WESTERN UNION

JOSEPH L. EGAN
PRESIDENT

1201

SYMBOLS

DL=Day Letter

-Night Letter

(26) Ad Cable.

NLT / Night Letter

Ship Radiogram

1947 OCT 27 PM 1 35

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N53 PD=TDS HOLLYWOOD CALIF 27 1005A

KEN MCCORMICK, CARE DOUBLE DAY=

:14 WEST 49 ST=

DEAR KEN PLEASE HOLD IT DONT PRINT FROM UNCORRECTED
 MANUSCRIPT WOULD PREFER BY FAR TO GET MANUSCRIPT BACK
 WITH YOUR EDITORIAL REMARKS AND READY IT FOR PRINTING
 PROMISE SPEEDY WORK BUT HAVE A FEW MORE CHANGES TO MAKE
 LETTER IN ROUTE LOVE=

VICKI=

THE COMPANY WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING ITS SERVICE

DOUBLEDAY & CO., INC. 14 W 49 St., NYK

x

October 22, 1947

Miss Vicki Baum
2477 Canyon Oak Drive
Los Angeles, California

WAS NOT GOING TO PUT IT THROUGH UNCORRECTED. HAVE MANY SUGGESTIONS TO MAKE.
I AM PUTTING MARKED COPY OF MANUSCRIPT WITH MEMORANDUM IN AIRMAIL TO YOU TOMORROW.
TO MAKE PUBLICATION DATE WE WOULD NEED IT BACK MONDAY NOVEMBER THIRD. LOVE.

Ken

October 27, 1947

Dear Vicki:

In order to save time, I am having a transcript made of rough notes. I hope you realize they are all suggestions which you can accept or decline as you wish. They represent the composite reaction to the script of one of my editorial assistants, Judith Bailey, and myself. We have both gone through it pretty carefully and feel it would be considerably strengthened by these cuts. By and large the book is wonderful, and the only place it bogs down is where you are tempted to let the characters talk on. I presume, therefore, to indicate some cuts, a few of which are rather generous.

If you could go through and do some of the things I suggest and get the manuscript into the airmail Saturday night, or Sunday at the latest, you would save the mark.

We will still find a book club for your story.

Love,

Ken McCormick

KMcC:hm

Miss Vicki Baum
2477 Canyon Oak Drive
Los Angeles 28, Cal.

October 27th, 1947

Dear Vicki:

I am sorry that our legal department is very punctilious about signatures. Would you be a pal and have somebody witness your signature?

I should have told you that one of these copies is yours so will you kindly return the original and keep the carbon for your records.

Love,

Ken McCormick

KMcC:DS

Miss Vicki Baum
2477 Canyon Oak Drive
Los Angeles, 26, California

Charge to the account of

DOUBLEDAY & COMPANY, INC.

\$

CLASS OF SERVICE DESIRED	
DOMESTIC	CABLE
TELEGRAM	ORDINARY
DAY LETTER	URGENT RATE
SERIAL	DEFERRED
NIGHT LETTER	NIGHT LETTER

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WESTERN UNION

1206

JOSEPH L. EGAN
PRESIDENT

CHECK
ACCOUNTING INFORMATION
TIME FILED

Send the following telegram, subject to the terms on back hereof, which are hereby agreed to

October 28th, 1947

DAY LETTER

Miss Vicki Baum
2477 Canyon Oak Drive
Hollywood 28, California

MANUSCRIPT ON THE WAY AIR MAIL. PLEASE MAKE YOUR CHANGES WHICH WE WILL TRANSFER TO ORIGINAL HERE.

KEN

KMCC:DS

Doubleday & Company, Inc., 14 W 49 St., New York, N.Y.

October 30, 1947

Miss Vicki Baum
2477 Canyon Oak Drive
Los Angeles, California

PLEASE DON'T WORRY. MANUSCRIPT NOT GOING THROUGH UNTIL REVISIONS COME FROM
YOU. AIRMAILED TO YOU WITH SUGGESTIONS MONDAY NIGHT. LOVE.

Ken McCormick

Telegram.

October 31st, 1947

Vicki dear:

Thank you so much for your letter of October twenty-seventh, and I am miserable to think that I gave you some bad moments by saying something that confused you. By now you, of course, have the manuscript, and there should be no more worry.

Now about the questions that you raise in your letter. I shall instruct the chief copy editor, Ethel Ryan, to follow very closely your point about Spanish spelling and the use of italics.

We have in our employ a fellow named Walter Bradbury who spent years in South America and knows Spanish very well, since he did business in that language. If he feels that he isn't competent to judge on certain points, we will pass the manuscript on to an expert.

I am excerpting that part of your letter which concerns movies for Lee Barker. He is in charge of movie sales, and I know that he will be very careful not to overstep himself in any of the matters that you suggest.

Meanwhile, I hope that you will speed the manuscript back to me so that we can get it on the keys.

Love,

Ken McCormick

KMcC: DS

Miss Vicki Baum
2477 Canyon Oak Drive
Hollywood 28, California

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Ship Radiogram

JOSEPH L. EGAN
PRESIDENT

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SA738 NL PD=LOS ANGELES CALIF 1

PM 10 37

KENNETH MC CORMICK, CARE DOUBLEDAY AND CO

=14 WEST 49 ST NYK=

REVISED COPY ENROUTE AIR MAIL SPECIAL DELIVERY=

=VICKI=

THE COMPANY WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING ITS SERVICE

Mr. Lee Barker

11/3/67

Mr. Ken McCormick

The following is a paragraph from Vicki Baum's last letter to me. Are you interested in playing along on this basis?

"You told me once that your movie department might want to try and sell the stuff for a lot of dough. I have given up eating tomato soup to keep my name free from any red tinge and wear my red slippers only when I go to the bathroom where no one might see them. Please, let me know what and how and with whom your movie department might try to hobnob, but don't let them do anything without consulting me first, will you?"

KMcC:DS

Miss Ethel Ryan

11/3/47

Mr. Ken McCormick

KFCO:BP

The following are excerpted sentences from Vicki Baum's letter of October twenty-seventh about her new book HEADLESS ANGELS:

"I used in all Mexican names the old spelling, namely with an X where they are using a J today. As: Guanajuato - Guanajuato, Xalapa-Jalapa. It seems more attractive to me and, in fact, in Mexico, too, you'll find many names where they have kept the X even today, like in Taxco, Kochimilco and such. Cadix, too, was in those times written with an X instead of Cadiz. But I'd leave it to you to decide this; I have an idea that the average reader will be troubled anyhow by all the foreign names and words. Another thing: in the script you have there, all accents on the Spanish words are missing and I'll have to put them in. However, it would console me very much to know that someone would go carefully over all the Spanish spelling and grammar. But it had to be someone who knows Spanish better than I do, and I know it fairly well. It always strikes me as something terribly illiterate to see how foreign languages are handled in American print, including such high hat publications as the New Yorker. I never found a single

German word in your books correctly used, and a lot of nonsense
in French; I would feel very unhappy if similar things should
happen to the Spanish. Now, another little matter: I loathe
italics and would ask you to keep them out as much as possible,
or the book will look as though it had the measles. However, I'll
make a sign in the corrections where I don't want italics in order to
indicate a little preciousness of speech and expression. As
you know, in that period people interspersed a lot of French and
Latin words in their speech as a matter of fact and without
italics whatsoever."

KMcC:DS

1914 FEB 10 11 00 AM '14

1914 FEB 10 11 00 AM '14

1914 FEB 10

MEMORANDUM

11/3/47

K.

Does Vicki Baum
want us to try to sell
first serial on a 90/10
basis - Polly would
like to try

Ken

from KEN McCORMICK

VICKI BAUM

*Ms. Thers with
attached notes
11/2/47*

November 1st 1947

E.R.

Dear Ken, I really should get an extra bonus for all the rush work you make me do, but I was a good girl once more and did it. I'm putting the cut and revised manuscript in the mail today. The trouble is, of course, that it doesn't look as clean and virginal as it should, but let the printer worry about that. I went over it with a fine tooth comb once more and think to have it fairly correct by now. Two tiny things I'd like to find out: Is there another word for bastard? I'm sure there must be, but I can't read the whole Shakespeare now and I can't find anything in either Webster or Thesaurus. If you know such a word, a bit lower than bastard, more vernacular, please have them insert it on Page 103, First Part. Also, I'm writing once of the hub on which the teakettle hangs in ^{the Quaille log cabin} ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~, I seem to remember to have read such a thing. But if it's wrong, get me, please, the better word out of some pionier book, will you. After all, I didn't come on the Mayflower but on the Bremen.

Now I want to thank you very much for all the attention and editing you did; you will find that I accepted the greater part of your ~~suggestion~~ suggestions and found them very helpful. In some instances I did not do such wholesale cutting, but played with the cuts more in detail, leaving a phrase here and there and writing little transitions to cover the scars. In other places I cut considerably more than you suggested. Altogether I cut more than another 15,000 words, which, according to my calculations, brings the book down to the minimum of *the* 150,000 of which I wrote you first.

Of course, a few times I got spitting mad, and you will find little love letters scattered all through the manuscript, as answers to some of your objections. I am sure you'll see my point and let me have things my own way, because, after all, if I make faults, I have to bear the consequences, but if you make them, I get it in the neck all the same. As I told you, critic I don't mind, and rather invite. But editing and ~~changing~~ changing I'd rather do myself, probably because I have been and still am as much an editor as you. You have many more books on your mind, meetings, worries, and three telephones. I have only this story just now and therefore I have more time and am not as impatient as you sometimes seem to be.

So, there are a few ^{spots} ~~spots~~ where I must insist on my original; that's Rosaura's telling about her past, and the gambling scene. If for no other reason (And I do believe that these things are well written) then for the purely commercial value of the scenes for a possible sale to the movies. Anyway, I did not submit the story to the magazines and must try to earn money with it somehow.

Also, I can't possibly cut out everything about Spain and the historical background, because the deterioration of Spain and of the man Felipe belong together, and that crazy proclamation of a king who sold out his country is a necessary part of the whole Twilight of the Gods.

You'll find that I put back a considerably shortened and condensed version of Quaille's background and the Whiskey rebellion. It seems to me definitely necessary to have that in. Clarinda is living for two years with him, and if you cut out that stuff, all he says during the two years is: Will you marry me. Also, what happened in the United States is a counterpoint to the rest, and, to my mind, fairly interesting, especially in view of many things which repeat themselves over and over in this country.

Nov. 10

VICKI BAUM

\$91.44 for 12 gal. gals; \$190.50 for 20 sets
if the runs provided 384 pp

P S

read

How much would Doubledays charge me for a set of galleys? If I could afford it, I'd prefer to have galleys for my various foreign language versions and to show to the movies. Please, let me know when I could have such galleys and for how much? By the way, the agent Swanson will ask you for galleys, but I ~~have~~ haven't authorized him yet to handle the book; I still might do so, but for the time being I want to be free and so, please, don't give him the galleys. You told me once that your movie department might want to try and asell the stuff for a lot of dough. I have given up eating tomato soup to keep my name free from any red tinge and wear my red slippers only when I go to the bathroom where no one might see them. Please, let me know what and how and with whom your movie department might try to hobnob, but don't let them do anything without consulting me first, will you?

read

And do answer me right away, please,
yours, ever, and impatiently

Vicki

read

P S II Another question: would it be better to call the Mexican Indians, Indian throughout? It would lead the reader's imagination away from the very different North American Indians.

November 5th, 1947

Vicki dear:

You are really the little wonder. I feel so guilty about having heaped so much work on you in that last week. You must almost be blind. But the manuscript arrived safely and was put through immediately with the notes you had attached.

If there is another word for bastard, we shall hunt it down and use it on page 103. The teakettle in a log cabin hung on a crane which was a metal piece that jugged out from the brick work inside the fireplace and could be swung away from the flames to simmer at the side or out directly over the flames. Isn't that what you mean?

I regretted writing you so hurriedly in returning the manuscript because many of our editorial suggestions must have seemed very arbitrary. I could have cushioned them a little bit in a letter in which I gave reasons, but we got so short of time that it seemed to me the most important thing was to get the manuscript into the mail. The further complication that week was that I was in court in connection with an Ilka Chase libel suit and simply couldn't find the time to get off a long considered letter.

I am sorry if you found me impatient and as you say, letters are poor communication at best. There were so many subtleties that I know I could have gotten over in conversation. Thank you for your indulgence and for letting us try to help. I am sure you are wise to use your superior creative talents and refuse many of our suggestions. On the other hands, I am glad that you cut it back to 150,000 words. That's important if for no other reason than for consideration by a book club.

Believe me, no one has ever been more aware of your sense of form and pleased with it than I. I feel it in all of your books, and if some of the suggestions that Miss Bailey and I made ran counter to your sense of form, I am glad you refused them.

I understand about the movie business and will not open the subject with Lee Barker. We should have galleyed about five weeks from now. One set would cost you somewhere between \$7.50 and \$10 depending how long the book runs (probably it would be about \$8.50). Do you want them bound -- it's fifty cents more that way?

Miss Vicki Baum

- 2 -

November 5th, 1947

We too wish that you could be sitting on our sofa so that we could talk to you. I think you would enjoy Dale who can stand and jabber away in her own special tongue. Since we have felt that there is no possibility of not spoiling her having been married ten years without a child, we are having another baby in March so Dale won't be an only child. We wait with bated breath for news of Wolfgang and Ruthie's child.

Very much love to you,

Ken McCormick

KMcC:DS

Miss Vicki Baum
2477 Canyon Oak Drive
Hollywood 28, California

Miss Ethel Ryan

11/5/47

Mr. Ken McCormick

The following is an excerpt from Vicki Baum's letter to me:

"Two tiny things I'd like to find out: Is there another word for bastard? I'm sure there must be, but I can't read the whole Shakespeare now and I can't find anything in either Webster or Thesaurus. If you know such a word, a bit lower than bastard, more vernacular, please have them insert it on Page 103, First Part. Also, I'm writing once of the hub on which the teakettle hangs in the Quail log cabin. I seem to remember to have read such a thing. But if it's wrong, get me, please, the better word out of some pioneer book, will you. After all, I didn't come on the Mayflower but on the Bremen."

KMc:DS

VICKI BAUM

November 11th 1947

Dearest Ken,

thanks a lot for your good letter and wire and the patting, and let's hope everything will turn out all right. I worked so darn hard on this book that I really wish it would sell or do something for me, besides putting me in the rogue's gallery of sexy historical novel writers. In re: The teakettle on the hub- I know what I mean and you know what it is, and I am almost- but not quite-sure that I encountered the expression in one of the many Pennsylvania biographies and letters and memoirs of the period which I have been reading to no good purpose, as I had to cut out again everything about it. Now then, will you let me have fifteen galley sets, bound, no doubt in pink perfumed satin? And will you let me have them as soon as they are available. If the binding of same should mean a delay, please, let me have 'em unbound. Here are a few movie producers absolutely panting to see the stuff and I won't show it to them in manuscript but only in galleys. There was also a request by Collier's to have a look-see- I don't think that there is the least bit of chance that it might suit into their scheme of things, but could you do me the favor and let them read one of the two manuscripts you have there? I suppose Ann Watkins has approached you about it or will do so very soon.

Now, to forget all these boring business matters: We all were very excited, thrilled and pleased about your great news, and the two young Buns are sending all their love and good wishes and are watching the further proceedings with a sort of professional interest. We are here on tenterhooks

(whatever tenterhooks may be) because since yesterday we are called upon to be on the alert. Ruthie gave out with one false alarm so far, and, anyway, the baby is due any minute now. Otherwise, and thanks to Tibby's very good and wise ministrations, she behaved very sensibly and is doing very well and perfectly normal up to this point. Wolfgang, the poor guy, has very great trouble with his health but never let's on to it and acts as though he were happy and healthy. He has been editing a ski magazine for the last few months and there is a possibility that he'll buy it. - It would be the sort of work he likes, keep him in contact with his own crowd, and make him independent; that is, if his health shouldn't permit him to work at one time or another, I can always pitch in for him, and Ruthie, too, can do some of his work. Financially, of course, it's still a big question mark, but at least he would have the feeling of holding his place among the healthy people. Well, Ken, forgive me for monologuing about this kid of mine, but he is my permanent problem, especially as I think that we are heading for a third operation, and, this time, for a pretty grave one. Well, let's forget these personal things.

I had a letter from Don yesterday, and the boy seems to be in good shape, and, as he puts it, having shed all his ~~neuroses~~ neuroses. He certainly sounds happy, or, as we historical novel writers use to put it: deliriously happy.

I am at present struggling with Sartre and at times I feel like cursing every morbidly self-analyzing son-of-a-bitch from Pere Rousseau over Proust and Joyce to this newest outcrop of the school of being too important to oneself. I still hold it with St Augustin, if it comes to confessions. Well, what am I taking your time up with? But it just feels like having a little chat with you, Ken. Give little Dale a great big hug from me, and another, more cautious one, to Tibby,

with all my love

Vicki

LERT
4447 $\frac{1}{2}$ FINLEY AVENUE
LOS ANGELES 27, CALIFORNIA

January 11, 1948

Mr. Kenneth McCormick
Doubleday & Co.
14 West 49th Street
New York, N.Y.

Dear Ken,

front matter
sent to Sally Baker

While burrowing through the piles of old ski magazines, unanswered letters, ditto bills, dog-eared photographs, and incomprehensible lists trying to help you to figure out how many characters of 10 pt. Bodoni Book fit into 18 $\frac{1}{2}$ em lines, on my desk, I came upon the enclosed bit of debris left over from the proof-reading of the galleys of "Headless Angel." Guess these pages must have slipped from a grasp enfeebled by the lifting of the many heavy multi-lingual dictionaries. I hope that this lapse has not endangered the delicate timing of the entire Doubkday printing program.

OK

Endless baby descriptions, including pictures, will go off to Tibby soon. In the meantime, loads of love from both of us to your entire family.

Sincerely,

Wolfgang

X

Doubleday & Co., Inc. 14 W 49 St., NYC

1-12-48

Miss Vicki Baum
2477 Canyon Oak Drive
Los Angeles, California

THE GALLEYS ARE ON THE PRESSES BUT WE HAVE NOT RECEIVED PROOFS OF THE FRONT
MATTER BACK FROM YOU. THESE INCLUDE PROOFS OF TITLE PAGE, COPYRIGHT PAGE,
LISTING OF PREVIOUS BOOKS AND SO ON. PLEASE SEND ON AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
LOVE.

Ken McCormick

KM:hm

Doubleday & Co., Inc., 14 W 49th Street, NYC

11-17-47

Miss Vicki Baum
2477 Canyon Oak Drive
Los Angeles, California

PAGE MISSING BETWEEN PAGE ENDING "DOWN AT THE WAYSIDE" AND PAGE BEGINNING "FINGERS
IN EVERY FREEMAN'S LIVELIHOOD". TYPED NUMBER PAGE 258 IN FINAL COPY, AND PAGE
258 BUT REVISED FROM EARLIER COPY. COULD YOU AIRMAIL TO US AT ONCE SO THAT IT
CAN BE PLACED WITH MANUSCRIPT IN FOUNDRY? LOVE.

Ken McCormick

VICKI BAUM

January 23d 1948

in demand

Dear Ken, may I trouble you with a few small matters to shove ~~on~~
on to whoever takes care of such things at Doubledays. First: Could you have the
fivethousand bucks advance on "headless Angel" paid to my bank in New York? It's
the Manufacturers Trust, corner 57th and Fifth Ave. And could you send two corrected
galleys- or, if this isn't faisible, two copies of the book, at the first possible
moment, to F. H. Landshoff, Querido Verlag
62 Singel, Amsterdam, Holland
and another one to Mr Alfred Romney,
277 Park Avenue, N Y.

*sent
already
a week
ago*

I think I asked before to send some copies to Michael Joseph, and one to Pearn
Pollinger & Higham, in London. If I didn't, I suppose they will ask for it, and I
suppose they should be charged for it, not me. However, I prefer to send all that
stuff by airmail, or it might take weeks to Europe, and I'm willing to carry the
costs, which I will, no doubt, pay out of the enormous sales of the book, or won't
I ?

W

How are things going with you, with the wimin in your family, with Doubledays,
and with the booktrade in general? Hollywood has hit some frantic doldrums, if
such a thing exists. Besides, we have sunspots, heatwaves, a very unpleasant drought
which makes the skin crackle and the waterbills soar to stratospheric hights and
we have taken to wearing Venetian masks or some Westmore make-up when we go visitin'
in the dark of the night with those of our friends who are whispered to be pinkos.
On the spur of the moment I decided to become as witty as Dorothy Parker and this
is what just comes to my mind:

Girls with warts and callouses
Have a poor effect on phalluses. (Dry weather department.)

With this thought for today I leave you

affectionately

your Vicki

Frances Quise

January 30th, 1948

Dear Vicki:

Thanks a lot for your letter. The following things have been done. \$5000 in the coin of the realm have been credited to your account in the Manufacturers Trust Company; copies of the book as soon as they are available will go to Alfred Romney and F.H. Landshoff; the galleys to Michael Joseph and Fearn Pollinger & Higham went a week ago by the fastest means -- air mail.

Now for the important matters. Tibby is expecting Junior on my birthday, February twenty-fifth. A very nice piece of timing. Dale was one year old January seventeenth and celebrated her birth with a party to which two other children of her age came -- Zorina's baby Peter and Jeffery Parson's daughter Daisy. The kids sat on the floor and absolutely ignored each other and the adults sat on the floor drinking champagne and falling into each others arms. It was a very nice party.

With the book trade and Doubleday business is a little better. The fantastic doldrums that we went into last summer have been somewhat erased and although there are still marks of suffering on the faces of many publishers and agents, things are a little better right now. Two or three publishing houses are in a shaky state and more than one agent is thinking of shifting into some other business.

I am interested to have you confirm some fantastic rumors I have had about the state of life in Hollywood.

I am having your Dorothy Parker couplet run around the New York Times Building in lights. I think that sandwiched in between some item about Stassen and Dewey that it would liven up the Times considerably. Sorry, not being a poet that I can't reply in kind.

Uncle Don will arrive in Hoboken February fifth. He sailed yesterday from Genoa on a Greek steamer for which he arrived in Genoa two days early. He had come away from Mr. Laugham's Villa Mauresque two days early to be sure to catch the boat and was in the lowest state of mind I have ever recorded him when he wrote me from Genoa. He ~~didn't~~ felt as though he was on the station platform waiting for the train to come in to take him back to school.

Love to you,

Ken McCormick

KMCC:DS

Miss Vicki Baum
2477 Canyon Oak Drive
Hollywood 28, California

Baum

March 9, 1948

Dear Vicki:

HEADLESS ANGEL is published this week and I think that it is going to do very well. The advance as of last Friday was something over 16,000 copies and the first printing was 37,500. Moreover, I have just read the book all the way through for the first time and I think you have done a superb job. Rosie is very enthusiastic about it too and has probably written you. I also sent a copy to Curt before he left for Europe.

I have not made any official inquiries at the Spanish Consulate regarding visas for notorious Reds, but I have heard from several people that they are extremely hard to get unless you have almost all of Standard Oil behind you. I think the fastest way to do it would be to apply directly when you come here. We will help you in any way we can. Do you need any letters for visas before you get here? If so, I will send them at once. I should not think there would be any difficulty at all about Portugal. I was allowed to get off the boat and wander around all day on what looked like a movie theatre ticket and I suppose I could have simply stayed on indefinitely if I had not had to get back on the boat to come home.

I am looking forward to your visit in April and hope to have many long sessions with you.

Much love,

Donald B. Elder

Miss Vicki Baum
2477 Canyon Oak Drive
Los Angeles 28, Calif.

AIR MAIL

DBE:jsh

VICKI BAUM

March 15th 1948

Don, my darling, thanks a lot for your nice letter, in return of which you're getting a rather messy one. It's not entirely my fault, though, but that of the male of the species to which I've been married more than thirty years. For once I wanted to be a dutiful wife and make my plans and trips dependent on my husband's summer vacation, and the result is confusion all around. Instead of getting me a passport, we were changing and procrastinating all the time, and only now I have decided to do things my own sweet way, which means first of all to try and get a passport. For this I need your, respectively Doubleday's, support. Now listen: I, personally, have a strong urge to go to Europe while the going is still good; the husband is against it, probably because the boys at the University Club (after all, Mr Millikan is only a kid of eighty) told him that we must have and shall have a war this summer. So, I should in the first line try to get me a passport for Europe; if, however, this shouldn't click, for one reason or another (Wolfgang may be up for another operation, I mightn't get reservations, I mightn't get visas, Husband might kick up too much of a row) so then I would have a look-see in South America. Now then, this means, that Doubleday 's must furnish me post haste with a letter stating that I need a passport, because I have to pick up my commercial and spiritual contacts with my publishers abroad. Make new contracts and discuss plans for future books and/ or re-editions with them. Collect new impressions and material, for articles, books and lectures. Spread unbelievable amounts of Good Will, explain the natives to the foreigners and vice versa. I suppose the letter should state, that I want to do so first of all in Europe, but also in Central and South America, in case unexpected difficulties make my trip to Europe inadvisable. Damn the officer who pulled in my nice

passport with visas to all continents and every country on the map. Anyway, please, let me have that letter as quickly as possible so I can get things rolling, will you?

Now comes part two of this epistle, and as you had nothing to do with the publishing and promoting of my new book, I won't hurt any finer and personal feelings if, for once, I'll speak up quite frankly and seriously. It has nothing to do with you or me or any of our friendship, but I have to get it off my chest for once. I think that jacket sets a new record for bad taste, looking as it does, like last Friday's left-over slab of salmon which cook forgot to take out of the refrigerator when she defrosted it. No one is going to tell me that such horrors help to sell a book, especially not if they are coupled with the flatest low-pressure blurb imaginable. Anyone in his senses, after reading that pre-school synopsis called a blurb, must say: Thank you, now I don't need/^{to}read~~ING~~ the book. My God, don't Doubleday's like to sell books? I wish I could let you listen in on my telephone which transmits constant cries of anguish by people who either saw the book, or, more frequent, those who were unable to locate it in any bookstore. By and by I am used to the invisible and inaudible sort of promotion Doubleday pleases to bestow on most of my output; but I have a dim feeling that I'm at the end of my patience. Sometimes I wonder if all this is probably the approach polite to letting me know that they don't care to have me on their list of authors. If so, it would be more inexpensive to all concerned to come out with it directly.

Now, Don, you or Ken or somebody might tell me that my books are lousy and don't deserve a better treatment. I am the first one not to overrate my writings, I think you will concede me that much. But, as we all know, books are not always sold by their merits and I doubt if the gemlike flame of, let's say, Ilka Chase's prose would sell without the high pressure salesmanship that's put behind her output.

VICKI BAUM

Look here, in every other country do my books sell incomparably better, steadier, and does my name and my writing command more respect than in the U S A. The reason for this is obvious; Doubledays have been trying consistently to palm my books off to the wrong set of readers and have presented me as something I definitely am not. If you want to sell dill pickles, it won't do any good to disguise and advertise them as chocolate éclair. The people who want chocolate éclair won't like the taste, and the people who'd like dill pickles will never get around to buying them. I am not a writer of sweet romance, but a sourpuss who more often than not takes a fairly grim and unflinching view at things as they really are. And my fanmail comes not from the woman'a clubs ladies, but usually from serious men, from scientists, from students, sometimes from a woman doctor or psychiatrist and they all tell me that they discovered my books by a sheer incident; and how is it possible, they ask me, that one doesn't hear more about the sort of books I write. Well, in other countries one does hear it and one does sell my books and it all boils down to very poor salesman-ship, as far as Doubleday's are concerned. There is a fond belief in this country in the infalibility of the salesman, the super salesman, and the super-super salesman; if my books would sell by being promoted under a wrong angle, I wouldn't cry about my lost dignity. But, hell, they just don't sell that way, and they do sell if they are handled with more taste and sincerety.

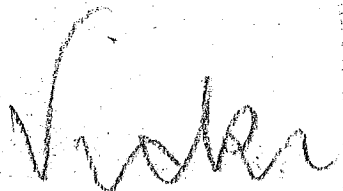
Look, Don: Time and again I have been approached by the go-betweens of other publishing houses, many of whom would have garantly~~eed~~ me a very high sales figure from the outset. Being as loyal as the seven years itch, I never even tought about such offers. Moreover, I am not sure, that I'll ever feel like writing a decent book again. But I wonder if perchance Double^lday's are as sick and tired of me as I'm beginning to get of them? And if so, whether they wouldn't let me have ~~it~~ straight?

This is, I hope you understand that, a completely impersonal letter, Don.

You do with it what you think right. I'm only sorry I didn't take my book and walked off with it the moment Ken made me slash it to pieces ; I didn't know then that Doubleday's were trying to make my story fit in with the god-damned conception of it which made them create that jacket and line of promotion.

Well, so long, Don; I thought I'd feel better by speaking up about the things which have irked me for years; but I don't. Please, let me have my passport letter right away, will you?

All my love, as ever

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Vladimir". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned centrally below the typed text.

Orig. & cc to Miss Baum

March 23, 1948

State Department
Passport Division
Washington, D. C.

Gentlemen:

Miss Vicki Baum, whose books we publish, is anxious to have a passport in order to go to Europe and Central and South America. It is extremely important for her to re-establish contacts with her foreign publishers, which were interrupted by the war, to make new contracts with them, and to discuss plans for future books and re-issues of her previous work. It is also necessary for her to collect new material for books, articles, and lectures. She wishes first to go to Europe, but in case unexpected difficulties should make a trip to Europe inadvisable, she wants in any event to go to Central and South America.

We believe that Miss Baum's work as an author of international reputation is of extreme importance and we will greatly appreciate anything that can be done to facilitate her obtaining a passport.

Sincerely yours,

Donald B. Elder
Chief Associate Editor

DBE: jsh

March 23rd, 1948

Dear Vicki:

I am awfully unhappy that you are disturbed by the publication of HEADLESS ANGEL. I must say that I acceded to pressure from the Sales Department to change the jacket and if it has upset you, I was wrong. Feeling in the sales conference was that we were going to have to have a jacket that would suggest more romance and picturesque adventure than the very dignified one we had planned. I think you are right that in its bland colors the present jacket contradicts itself.

If you feel that cuts I suggested were slashes and not intelligent recommendations for cutting them, I am sorry. I did try.

But what you must know is that there is no sabotage going on and that we want more than anything to go on publishing Vicki Baum. I am devoted to you personally which is one thing, but as a publisher I am completely sold on you. If we have made an error in our presentation of this book, it was not that we were trying to throw you away. We are devoted to you as publishers and unhappy that we have unconsciously done something to disturb you.

Please don't leave. We want you.

Sincerely,

Ken McCormick

KMCC:DS

Miss Vicki Baum
2477 Canyon Oak Drive
Hollywood 28, California

Bauman

March 23, 1948

Dear Vicki:

I was terribly sorry to know that you are so upset about the way HEADLESS ANGEL is being handled. Let me say that I am the first to agree with you on the jacket, which was a great disappointment to me. However, if it was an error on our part, it was certainly a costly one because that is the second jacket which we made for the book. Before I went away we had a very handsome and distinguished jacket and I left feeling quite happy about it. However, at the time of the sales conference, the salesmen felt that it was all wrong for the book and insisted on having a new one, which is the present one. I agree with you that it lacks everything, including visibility. In this case we yielded to what we thought was the superior judgment of the sales department and I deeply regret it.

We also wage a continual battle against trying to sell books to the wrong reader. Since selling books here is a matter of coordinating many departments, we often fall short of the goal which the editorial department has in mind. However, we are all trying to sell your book and the fact is from the advance sale, HEADLESS ANGEL seems bound to do quite well.

It is really not quite fair to say that our promotion is invisible and inaudible because this book has a very heavy advertising schedule all over the country, which you are probably not aware of if you see only the local papers. I agree with you only too well on the question of taste in the jacket and some of the advertising and I certainly deplore the kind of advertising that directs a book to an indiscriminate mass of readers, but anyway we are all trying to sell the book and please don't get the idea that anyone here is less interested in you as an author than ever.

I am sorry that your traveling plans are not clicking, but I hope you will get them all straightened out. I don't think it should be too hard for you to get a passport and I am enclosing a letter which I hope will help. I am holding my breath about what is going to happen in Italy, but even if the State Department's worst nightmares come true, it would not necessarily mean that travelers could not go to Europe. I understand that you can still get a passport to Czechoslovakia.

Again I am sorry about the jacket and I think that the editorial department should have taken a much

stronger stand on changing it. As for the sales, let's wait and see. You still may be very pleased with them.

With love as ever,

Donald B. Elder

Miss Vicki Baum
2477 Canyon Oak Drive
Los Angeles 28, Calif.

AIR MAIL

DBE:jsh

x

DOUBLEDAY & CO., INC., 14 W 49 St., NYC

2-27-48

Miss Vicki Baum
2477 Canyon Oak Drive
Los Angeles, California

PLEASE RETURN SIGNED CONTRACT WHICH WE HAD RETURNED TO YOU FOR WITNESSING. NEED
IT TO COMPLETE SALES ARRANGEMENTS. BEST WISHES.

Hilda Mignot
Doubleday & Company

VICKI BAUM

April 1, 1948

Dear Don,

I am still snowed under with that godawful mail from Germany and so you must forgive me if I only toss off a very dry little note. Thanks a lot for the letter to the State Department, on Monday I'll toddle downtown and apply for a passport and if any of you guys have some pull with Miss Shipley in Washington who handles that sort of thing, I'm sure it would help if you'd speak up for me. My summer plans are still very muddled up, less on account of the world situation than for various personal reasons, matters of health, time and the necessary moolah. Or, as we Mexicans say, lana or mosca. I also recommend the enclosed cry of the Parisian library to your kind attention. I would also ask you to have a few copies of my book sent out to some friends of mine. I shall enclose names and addresses on a separate sheet.

I was highly amused by your fine diplomatic way of expressing things, especially when you spoke about the superior judgment of the sales department. I can pretty well imagine what's going on in the meetings of the various departments. Now, darling, it's all nice and good to look down your nose on what you call the local papers; but after all, Los Angeles is the third largest city of the U.S. and while the Times and the Examiner stink to high heaven, they still are not exactly as unimportant as they RED GUECH MORNING BUGLE (pop. 604), and an occasional ad out here wouldn't do any harm. As it is, only Brentano's have taken notice of my new book and arranged for an autographing party, and they did this only on account of the enormous bills I, one of their best customers, run up there. Shame on Doubleday! Also, wouldn't it be nice if one or the other of your telephone operators would have read the book so as to be able to inform the publicity department - or whoever handles the ads - that the heroine is not a duchess Dreisen, but a countess Driesen? I really think it does not make a good impression if your own ads show that nobody took the trouble of reading the darned stuff. You may notice when you look at my quivering lower lip that I am still sore as hell and broke as never before. I hope to God that hundred thousand of the analphabets at whom your superior sales department aimed those pretty little pictures in the ads will buy the book, and thereby vindicate the taste of your salesmen.

Listen, Don, there is one more thing on which I'd like to have your opinion, and that's the new ruling of the Authors' Guild, as far as member dues go. 1) Is it obligatory to be a member? 2) How will other authors handle that question of deducting expenses from the gross earnings? I think they have quite a nerve in demanding one per cent of all royalties, without putting any limit on it. In the Screen Writers' Guild, the yearly limit in membership dues is \$ 300.00, and mind you, these are people earning two and three thousand dollars a week, year after year. While writing a book may take anywhere from one to fifteen years, the moment the royalties start piddling in you have to pay one per cent to the Guild who, in turn, does not a thing for the writer. Please let me know what you think of this and if there is a possibility of slipping out of that Guild with good graces, as long as I am a member of the Screen Writers' Guild in any case.

I'm fizzling out, tired,
head ache, sore eyes, and
full of sleepy insomnia if you
know what I mean.

Much love

as ever

Vicker

~~to AA editor~~

VICKI BAUM

April 2d 1948

2. Dear Ken,

I was very touched by your disarming letter, and I don't need telling you that my complaint had nothing to do with you personally; I always think of you as one of my dearest friends and one of the sweetest guys I ever met. I also can very well picture the battles you are waging- and sometimes losing- against old debil commercialism in the Doubleday etsablishment. I am not the dreamy kind and I like my books to sell, naturally. However, I feel that Doubledays have chosen the wrong promotion line ever since I came to them; and the proof is that my~~x~~ books sell considerably better in all the other countries, where they are handled with a bit more respect for me as a writer and with a better understanding and some discrimination of my literary qualities- if you want to concede me such. But I don't want to talk about myself, I only have to get a few principal things off my chest.

Look here, Ken: The average salesman is by nature and inclination a jerk; so is the average buyer. The writer, usually, is not a jerk and neither is the editor. There exists even a not too small community of readers who are no jerks, and to whom books really mean something. That's why I always thought / that writer, editor and good reader belong on the same side of the fence. In my editorial times I never dreamed a writer and his writing could be pushed around the way they are generally pushed around now and here. And the result was that my books and the books for which I was responsible as an editor sold in the hundred thousands. The American salesman has an awfully low opinion of the buyer's intelligence and is always trying to cater to the broadest and lowest level of taste and discrimination. But there comes a point when this salesmanship defeats itself. It's happening in the movies just now, and if I can read the signs, it's bound to happen on the book market, too.

The whole fabric of American life is corroded by this infernal overrating of salesmanship. We are a nation of reckless sellers and pampered buyers, and we have come to think of other people and nations in the same terms; what ~~are~~ they trying to sell us? And what could we possibly sell them? The result is that we have not a single friend in the world, a fact of which you become sorely aware the moment you cross the border and prick your ears. The high pressure selling starts the moment a baby is born- whom am I telling this?- and goes on all through life. It makes mince-meat of your mother on mothersday, it turns Xmas and Easter into minor hells, it keeps women dissatisfied and always asking for more, and men galloping around, with their tongues hanging out and their stomachs wallpapered with ulcers, ^{trying to} satisfy all the demands the super-salesman has visiciously created in the minds of their families. In the schools and universities the teachers are trying to sell themselves to the students, not by the profundity of their knowledge, but by sugaring up whatever it is they teach ; everywhere people who should lead and guide others are instead running after them in that constant effort of selling themselves and their goods. The result is a progressive lowering of the spiritual standards of the country which sometimes really scares hell out of me. And when it comes to a great crisis, all we have are little politicians, who forever were chasing votes, instead of men with integrity and ideas. I think the real tragedy of these days lies in the fact, that a country of 140 millions is unable to produce the handful of great men who might steer and govern it.

Well, Ken, I'm afraid I ^{am} writing you an embittered editorial, but these things are very much on my mind, and go far beyond anything concerning my own tiny and insignificant ego. All I want to say is that I don't believe in creating cheap appetites in the public and sell it a lot of sweetened pre-digested hash. You can stuff a lot of candy down a child's throat, but in the end such a child that never had time to get hungry, will not ask for more but throw up and be a very sick child. During this year I read a great deal of

VICKI BAUM

early American writings, letters, autobiographies, political writing, speeches. And all the time I could only think: My God, how we have come down in the world; how long can we go on lowering our mental and ethical standards before we'll be hitting the bottom?

What has all this to do with a book promotion aimed at people who can't read without moving their lips, ^{with} and a few misguided and tasteless ads? Oh yes, Ken, believe me, it's all of one piece, and it makes for a world in which neither you nor I are at home. That's why I think we do more good by speaking up and holding our own than by giving in.

Sorry if I bored and bothered you; I promise to be more amusing when I'll see you again, either by the end of April or in September. It all depends on Wolfgang's health, as the poor boy seems to be heading for another very serious operation. But don't mention anything either to him or anybody else. Love for you and your rapidly growing family

as ever

Vicki

*Sam
Headline Angel*

April 7, 1948

Dear Vicki:

I have taken care of the books which you wished to have sent out and have also supplied a copy to the American Library in Paris.

I shall not try to be diplomatic any more. I am sorry about the one ad in which the heroine was called a duchess. The mistake was caught and it only appeared the one time. There was one ad which was suppressed in which she was called both a duchess and a countess for good measure and I am glad that one never got out. I didn't mean to be condescending about Los Angeles, but I just wanted to point out that there were other large cities in which we were advertising the book and the expenditure for advertising has been very heavy. Alas, I have to listen to many complaints from other authors who think that we are doing too much for you and not enough for them. Anyway, you know how I feel about selling books and I hope you understand that my job is like that of the man who is condemned for life to push a large stone up hill. The stone keeps rolling to the bottom all the time. However, I will keep trying especially for you.

About the Authors' Guild, it is certainly not obligatory to be a member. I don't know how other authors are reacting to the question of deducting expenses from gross earnings, but I am sure that a great many will kick about their demanding 1% of all royalties without any limitation on it. As a matter of fact, since you belong to the Screen Writers' Guild anyhow, I don't think it is necessary for you to belong to the Authors' Guild too. I should think that one membership would fulfill your responsibilities to your fellow writers. I should think you could get out of the Authors' Guild by pointing out that you are already a member of the Screen Writers' Guild and that you can't belong to everything.

In closing I want you to know that I have received a doctor's degree and a patent of nobility and a large diploma from a dubious and probably non-existent Italian university. By some obscure process they discovered that my intellectual attainments were absolutely

Vicki Baum - 2

April 7, 1948

staggering, that my contribution to the cause of world peace was remarkably successful, and that I am of noble birth. All this was accompanied by the most beautifully misspelled letter demanding only 30,000 lira to rebuild their library. I have not sent the money, but in any case I feel that I should be called by all my titles.

With love,

Dr. Donald B. Elder
Most Illustrious Cavalier

Miss Vicki Baum
2477 Canyon Oak Drive
Los Angeles 28, Calif.

DBE:jsh

Air Mail

April 16th, 1948

Vicki dear:

Thanks a lot for your letter of April second which I have read and reread because I know you meant it very seriously. You can't blame it all on the system, of course. Us humans that try to run Doubleday are perhaps the real ones at fault. The only thing I can say ~~that~~ in a very bad publishing season **HEADLESS ANGEL** which started with an advance of 17,000 has now sold 22,500 copies. This is the case with very few books on any publishers list right now.

Love,

Ken McCormick

KMCC:DE

Miss Vicki Baum
2477 Canyon Oak Drive
Hollywood, California

2477 Canyon-Oak Drive
Hollywood, 28, Calif.

July 13th 1948

Dear Don, I let myself run out of stationary and this looks a bit puny, but never mind. I just returned from the Islands where I had a splendid three weeks, basking, bathing and doing some preliminary work. I'm now- as always when I get near sun and surf- a strawberry blonde, if that should be of any concern to you. I was not brooding over the egg the headless angel laid, because you should know that I'm not the brooding type. I was just mad, and still am, about the bad taste in which the book was published and promoted and which was sure to ruin whatever could be ruined. In general you know that I'm easy to handle and not worried about the preservation of my dignity, but what's too much is too much. I wonder what Kenneth Roberts- or is it Robert Kenneths, I always get him wrong side up- would say if you would launch his books on the low-cut idea. Well, that's all past and Doubledays neatly killed my baby and it still hurts a bit, and, I think, it wouldn't have happened had you been around instead of receiving serenades by the barber's Union of Capri at the time. So now I'm off on another enterprise, this time writing my story with an eye on the serialisation, because if I have to be prostituted, why not do it right? I had this- a fairly small and concise story- on my mind for many years and might even have mentioned it to you. It has to do with a man's chase after just one microscopic fly which was destined to save all the sugar industry of the Hawaiian Islands, in other words, the fate of an entire population whose lives are completely based on sugar. There was a moment in this authentic story, when it all depended on keeping the last, only, weak little fly alive- through the efforts of a man who at that moment was equally doomed and

dying. Quite dramatic, and, incidentally, I know most of the places where this man(his model was a certain Dr Muir) went for his hunt; knowing the places, the jungles and the fevers personally, I think I'll be able to tell my story well. Of course, I'll have to mush it up with a Romance fit to be depicted on a Doubleday Dust Jacket. Tonight I'm going to start writing and I wish I could do it in a hurry. Don't feel like spending much time and sweat this time.

Look, my pet, I need five or six copies of " The Weeping Wood", to send to some of my scientist friends in Hawaii, they want it and I can't get it here. Also- even if my Angel didn't sell, I have a dim idea there should be a half-year statement and probably even a faint trickle of doubloons my way? Or do such things happen only once a year? Or not at all?

Haven't heard from Rosie, had a quite nice letter from Curt who, for once, didn't bewail his fate. He seems to fit much better into the European scene, in fact, I could see him as a background figure in a book by Sartre decaying before our very eyes. On the terrace outside my grandson is cooing which makes a hopeful accompaniment to my clatter.

So long, Don, let's have a good long letter from you, will you? By the way, Mr Wright turned out a rolly-polly, very friendly little man with pseudo- Bohemian leanings, not quite succesful as an intellectual, I think, but a good Middle-Western salesman.

Maybe I'll get to New York this Fall, let's hope. Depends on the work and the sinking level of the cash in the till.

Yous, as ever

Traki

only 1 copy at Philad.

due in a week or two from 7/26/48

June 22, 1948

Dear Vicki:

You have probably received my cable regarding our representative, Mr. Norman Wright, who wishes to see you regarding a book project. This request came to me through our Foreign Department, and as I supposed you must be doing some research for the Hawaiian book about which you once talked to me, I thought it might be useful to you to see him.

As a matter of fact, I haven't heard from you for so long, I didn't even know you were in Hawaii. I hope your being there means that the family is all well and that Wolfgang is thriving.

I have had a feeling you must be brooding a bit over HEADLESS ANGEL and I don't blame you a bit, although it sold much better than most of our other books during the same period, it has been caught like the rest of them in the general slump, and sales have been very slow. It is a very curious thing that some books which have sold about 5,000 copies can get on the best-seller list these days. In any case, our high-powered sales methods availed us nothing in this particular instance, but it is impossible to tell why as nothing sells anyway.

I have had a letter from Rosie in London, and she said she had a very good time there. I think she is now in Paris, trying to get into Germany. Ken is in England, and Tibbie is flying over tomorrow to join him.

I hope you are having a wonderful time and would love to hear from you -- if only a postcard with palm trees on it.

S With love,

hm

Donald B. Elder

Miss Vicki Baum
Royal Hawaiian Hotel
Honolulu, HAWAII

June 1, 1949

Dear Vicki:

I am going to be in Paris the second week of July and I do hope there will be a chance to see you for a minute at least. You are probably so busy with your old friends that you don't have much time but maybe we can look in the Seine together or something. I hope that there are lots of exciting new ideas revolving in your beautiful head because it is no fun to plan for the Doubleday list unless we are looking forward to a new Vicki Baum. Please tell Don and me that you are hard at work on a new book.

Kevin is getting four molars at once, so we are getting very little sleep. Otherwise things are fine.

Love,

Ken McCormick

Miss Vicki Baum
Guide Commerciales
33 rue de Monceau
Paris VIII

8
airmail

~~Baum~~
x
Headless Angel

6-22-48

W.U.Cables

~~Vicki Baum~~
Royal Hawaiian Hotel
Honolulu, Hawaii

OUR REPRESENTATIVE NORMAN WRIGHT WISHES TO SEE YOU. WILL YOU PLEASE SEE HIM. LOVE.

Don Elder

hm