

Laura Wilck,
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Dear Miss Wilck:

By separate mail I am sending the manuscript in preparation about which I have corresponded. I know this is "unethical" but there are several valid reasons why this should be done now and for your advantage as well as ours.

My collaborator and I have had nothing but complications since I corresponded with you: My father's illness and death in California, broken fingers, etc. etc. although much time has been spent on the writing. It is far enough along now, and "unfinished" chapters are well on the road.

I am sending thirteen chapters, running to about 57,000 words.

If you have the opportunity to give a scanning and pass along commentaries, I am sure it will shorten the ultimate completion. It will give you an idea of whether it is something in which you would be interested, permit us to rearrange it for the best possible outlet, etc.

In process of "revision" are approximately 30,000 words. Your advice as to ultimate length for this type of material would be one of the things advantageous to all. But by knowing generally the type of material, you have the advantage of a "background" in connection with contacts. Importantly at this time, there is the possibility you have some connection with Warner Bros and might know Lew Leary, production manager, who is now in the Yakima Valley in connection with filming of The Hanging Tree.

In event you do, an "alert " would give him or others an opportunity to see potentialities.

I am still concerned the material covered and situations may be "too rugged." These could be softened in the final revision, word check, rearrangement etc. The writing is no attempt to deal with such situations. If they are offensive to decency, it is not the intention. The plot is weak but strengthening.

The presentation may be a little different: Noting the introductory Chapter, 1854--1959, and the following Chapters by time, 1959--7 P.M., 1959--8 P.M. etc. (throughout ONE EVENING.

Note too the thought expression, single space, indented, a medium of effect. This will be worked on until the expression is crystal clear or thought provoking. I believe this has powerful possibilities.

Off hand, and while I do not profess to have an all-comprehensive background of material in print, I believe subjects covered are not only timely but predominate among many people, and not too much is in modern print along these lines and in this manner.

The stories are not separates as first believed, but are carried out through separate characters and involve frustrations, mental problems, people trying to find escape, each to his own; education and what is going on in colleges where there is now such a preponderance of men over women students, all clinging to the present, still children; marital relations. They are not stories of drunkards or weaklings. And I am pretty sure that material of the nature found in Chapters VI and XII, Joe Leather; and Chapter VIII, Hound Dog Hoke is NOT common. The rest will speak for themselves. They are not stories of drunkards or weaklings.

And I direct your attention to the "tender scenes," Chapters III and XIII, which may be overwritten like some of the description in Chapter I.

However it is not a serious matter for someone concerned with editing material, as myself, to rectify easily. But contrary to belief of some schools of thought, I find a natural liking for "the romantic" although not always acknowledged.

It is possible there will be injection of a Bell as one of the characters, running through the entire plot; a bell whose "life" of travel ending in the town is the medium of expression of situations befalling individual characters, the past and the present. It could speak in a voice the characters could not, and set thoughts into motion.

Final chapters, subject to rearrangement, will include the transformation of Teri Ann because of too many activities, friends etc. at college, finding herself; stories of some of the college characters who find their own level like water; Teri Ann's return to town; Bruce and Teri Ann, five additional chapters in all.

After mailing the manuscript, Monday, and finding the cost, I will send you a postal note covering its return. I do not intend to "chisel" free advice, but sincerely believe this is far enough along, and that your comments on points mentioned and additional observations will be mutually advantageous to all concerned. The collaborator and I are not "confused" or lost, but believe in putting out as good a job as possible, realize it will take a lot of hard work, and are willing to devote the time and efforts to a good production, even if it means cleaning the whole thing up.

If you think it falls short, is overwritten etc., say so. If you think it needs rearrangement through chapter sequence, etc. say so. The hour by hour presentation will be better organized.

I do not of course expect a "reading" nor commitment. But as previously noted, my word is good and I prefer to submit it to one person only instead of "shopping around."

Our summer schedule will permit much more time to be spent on it. My feeling is it has good possibilities, from the manner of presentation, the medium of expression through thought expressions, subjects covered etc. And it is not a shallow manuscript.

If you do not care to look the material over in its present form, please let me know. Or if there is a fee involved, please advise me and perhaps I can work out something, tight as things are for me because of some of the previously mentioned complications. However I am hopeful you will see your way clear to scan it knowing that you will benefit if it has possibilities. And remember you are not dealing with someone whose feelings can be hurt in passing judgment on literary merits. I've been in newspaper work too long. But I think it is shaping up, and work directed along proper lines you might have in mind will produce something worthwhile.

Others involved in The Hanging Tree are B.P. Meyer, location auditor; Daniel Cathcard, art director; Joseph J. Barry, locations; Delmar Daves, director; and Dick Shepherd, producer. (Gary Cooper and Marie Schell). Filming starts next week. Some of those involved I was told said they doubted if there were any long braid Indians in the country. But some of my sources I have long worked with, were called to go down into Oregon for a Custer production, a Disney Studio deal, and marshalled up some 150 such Indians here with horses etc. These people don't make themselves obvious around town and my sources are even more reserved, and keep themselves isolated. They just don't live white men's lives.

The towns in the Valley, the orchards, general atmosphere etc., including the taverns where the "apple knockers" hang out ~~all~~ although the season is just starting, directed to attention of anyone you may have contact with now connected with Warners Bros. I should think,

would plant a seed in the proper place and at the right time. I do not believe it proper for me to approach them, even though they are here.

They are probably tied up too much on The Hanging Tree and with the usual seige of curious inquiries etc. They have several suites engaged at Hotel Chinook in Yakima.

I have been told on good authority the desire is to carry out other productions in the Northwest if a vehicle is available. Audie Murphy's To Hell and Back was filmed at the Yakima Firing Center.

Thank you for your patience. The manuscript should reach you within a few days. It will speak for itself.

Sincerely

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