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Sylvia:

I was so glad to get your letter. I have been so desperate and depressed lately. Did you go through a period like this after your husband died? What did you do to combat it? Are you ever lonely now? What do you do even now when everything seems ~~xxx~~ horrible? The good reviews on your book are giving you such a lift ~~xxxx~~ that I hate to burden you with my weeping and wailing. It is ~~dis~~picable to be as much of a coward as I am. Other people have so many problems; I keep telling myself that I am better off than many, but there is such a sick feeling in my chest. I really wish I'd get over it.

The most disgusting thing is being so close to tears all the time. They are there ready to break out at any second. Life seems so absolutely pointless, and I really don't think I'll ever feel any differently about it. Everything is so boring. The mornings are worse than the nights and the nights worse than the mornings. I get up and move around, then I go to bed and fail to sleep. All the little things I have to do (for the children) drive me to frenzy. All I want to do is sit and stare.

Life is a pit we've fallen into. Frank Sinatra said he was for anything that gets you past two am, and I see what he means.

I am really shocked about Mark Lane. My God, life is too short and ugly for people to cut each other up so. What possible reason can he have? But I have learned that chivalry is quite dead, and perhaps women have asked for it. I don't happen to think you have, nor have I -- and I wish here and there that men would forget that we are so damn equal and treat us with gentleness. I am so tired of honesty that kills, bluntness and cruelty.

What I say about your book is practically worthless -- not in your opinion, but in the minds of those others who want to criticize. What appealed to me so much (because I was expecting the accuracy) was the chatty Somerset Maugham style which makes the book so readable. Since Maugham is a favorite author of mine this comes from me as a compliment. I hope you don't hate him! Much as I enjoyed Lane's book, I found yours more readable, and since I am anything but a literary critic, this may be useless comment. Again, I will likely be accused of defending my sex, but that is O.K. too. Perhaps all this lousy tension and bickering and name-calling going on has to boil down to another of those tiresome battles of the sexes. Certainly I am disenchanted at the moment, since my divorce went through day before yesterday with very stringent terms for the kids and myself, while m'lord continues to live in the style to which he is accustomed.

All this adds to the depression. If I had the money the Kennedys have, I would be off to the Bahamas for the sun. And then would I heal? Probably not completely, but it would be a hell of a lot easier. Oh, Sylvia, I am so bitter and weak today, I shouldn't have written. But I need your sympathy and love and so like a nasty child I am calling attention to myself in order to get it. Write soon, S.