

24 September 1980

Dear Harold and Lil:

Many thanks to Lil for her Sept. 18 early report on how the operation went. Perhaps by now Harold already is back at home. I hope to call tomorrow night for an update. It's already too late tonight, and I nearly always don't remember the time differential until too late.

Things are rather ganging upon me during these last weeks before leaving. In addition to the usual patient care volunteer work for Hospice of Marin, there's a mailing to be got out tomorrow and the usual chores around the office, plus a round of social events that I would not like to miss. And of course there are a number of things to do here at the house before taking such a long trip involving three weeks away.

Among the easiest is to arrange to have our one remaining cat, Sootyfoot, boarded while I'm gone. This already has been done. Mrs. M. Cherie Weiss, a large, emotional and very buxom lady with a passion for cats, has agreed to keep him. In fact he stands so high in her esteem that she advised she would have been insulted if I had sought quarters elsewhere. She gave him to us more than 13 years ago when he was a tiny kitten as a replacement for our Greatest of All Cats, one Tiger Doodle, who had just died of kidney failure at the age of 18. She was convinced that Sootyfoot was Tigie reincarnated and had crawled into her sleeping bag on the lawn that hot summer night when she had just dreamed Tigie had come to her. Turned out to have been the very day Tigie had been put to sleep by the vet after listening to Mozart's 39th symphony, his favorite, after we had given him a sedative here.

"I already knew," she said when I called to tell her about Tigie. "And I have his replacement for you." Sooty has spent several of our vacations with her since then, always sleeps with her, and gets along fine with her own cat population, which varies from one to two dozen in addition to (usually) a couple of monkeys, assorted dogs, a deodorized skunk and incidental raccoons, goats and rabbits. Anyway, as you can see, Sooty is all set, and will NOT be too pleased to come home. Meow Meadows (the official name of Mme. Weiss's resort) is about 25 miles out in the country. I'm looking forward to delivering Sooty to such a splendid alternative environment, which promises to be even more interesting than usual due to the recent acquisition of a large and very garrulous parrot, I'm told.

Harold, I feel quite useless when it comes to having any ideas about how your new book on the King case might be organized. I've been so out of touch with the whole field that I have no basis for any real judgment. All I could venture would be a guess that if it's to be for popular consumption you'll have to make some very difficult choices, and let a lot slide in order to concentrate on a few of the most telling lines of argument. Hit these hard, and perhaps others can be dealt with in subsequent volumes.

Anyway, don't worry about it. I feel sure that as you get your teeth into it the proper, natural way to handle it will become clear to you, and that no one else could do what you will be able to do.

Take it easy, take your time, and let the story tell itself through you. You are the unparalleled medium.

Best to you both,


jdw