

manuscript

January 20, 1939

Dear Mrs. Hartman:

I was away when your letter of December 2th enclosing the first chapter and the outline of "The Ambitions of Lisbeth" reached New York. I returned to a very crowded desk and now I am just off again on a business trip.

This is nearer to what I had in mind. Any detailed autobiography as this must be worked out in the writers own way. Be careful not to over-play your discouragements and handicaps - most people have them of one kind or another. It takes a great deal of courage to over-come handicaps, though I fancy it is true that the majority do not realize that only courage and continued effort count. It is what we call getting on in life.

All that I can do for you, dear Mrs. Hartman, is to counsel that you finish up your book and offer it to publishers. I am sorry not to be able to write the introduction for it. I am not very well and over-crowded with work. Moreover, my professional obligations are such that I am obliged to give up all such extras as this which you are asking. If I thought it would make any particular difference in the selling of the manuscript I might stretch a point, though it is quite impossible for me to do it now. But the chances are it would be rather a hindrance than a help. Editors, as I think I have written you before, like to use their own judgment. They do not want to feel that a writer is depending on outside influence to influence their judgment. I think they are right about this. A book stands or falls by what is in it, not by what some outsider who wants to help the author sell the manuscript thinks about it.

All I can do is to urge you to finish up your manuscript and start it on its round of visits to publishers. Do not be discouraged if it is not taken at the start. Some of our best books have gone to fifteen or twenty or more publishers before they found a resting place. There are a great many reasons why it is not possible for a publisher to take a manuscript even

if he likes the work. So good luck to you.

Very sincerely yours

Mrs. Elizabeth T. Hartman
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