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Mr. Alan Paton
c/o Charles Scribner's Sons
Publishers
597 Fifth Avenue
New York, N. Y. 10017

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Dear Mr. Paton,

I just came back from a revival of a Musical I had missed a few years ago, with great regrets-- LOST IN THE STARS. After a reading experience such as I had never had before (I am an avid reader)- you may know it was CRY THE BELOVED COUNTRY - I was wondering how this book could be turned into a Musical without spoiling its main magic - the way it was written. I could imagine a spoken play using your own words, but a Musical....? Well, I had this experience just now and what an experience it was... I almost broke down right then and there. Nothing I can remember has touched me, has reached my innermost emotions and feelings - whatever you may call it, soul, heart- it is but words - as this sung version of your most wonderful book. A testimonial to the belief in the fundamental goodness of MAN - isn't it? A belief I did not share, or at best, doubt.

May I tell you also that I just finished reading another book of yours - it is very difficult for me to say anything about it because I am still too deeply involved, too deeply moved by its sadness and beauty. By now you may be able to guess what book it is - I don't have to mention its title. What a wonderful man you are, how blessed you are- having the capacity to feel so deeply, having so much warmth, so much love to give. And that not only to the one closest to you, but to many others who were in need - in need of such understanding, sympathy and personal love.

I am, I believe, of the same age as was your wife. I was born in 1897. How different my background, how different my life... But, of course, how else could it be? No two lives can be alike or even similar. I was born in Vienna, the daughter of a physician who lost everything in World War I. And since he was what Hitler called "non-Aryan", I was among those who either had to flee (if they had the chance) or die- and in what ways..! As I am still alive, I was among the first - able to escape. England, first, and then the U.S. helped me and took me in. All this really does not belong here - or does it? It is written to a man who understand and has sympathy for almost all suffering mankind, THE man who wrote CRY THE BELOVED COUNTRY, TOO LATE THE PHALAROPE and - TO YOU DEPARTED.

May I thank you, Sir, for touching everything that is still sensitive in me, still able to respond to other people's unhappiness and suffering. And also for making me weep.

Thank you.

Gertrude Kummer
(Mrs.) Gertrude Kummer

Please forgive me for typing- I feel it is more considerate to the person who has to read my letter.