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Mr Alan Paton,
23 Lynton Road,
KLOOF,
Natal.

JAN HOFMEYR

Dear Alan,

Thanks for your letter of 16 February and for agreeing to my suggestions.

I am very sorry indeed to hear that you are feeling depressed about things and think I understand only too well what the situation is. It will impinge on you more than it does on me, but I do know something of the constant fight to maintain a balance between the work you want to do and the insistent demands of South African life, not to mention family and social obligations. Apart from getting an infectious disease and being compulsorily isolated (something I have often longed for) there is only one solution: make it firmly known to all whom it may concern that as from 15 March (or whatever date you fix on) you will not be available for any engagement, even if justice is not done and the heavens fall NEVER answer the phone and ask Dorrie or the servant simply to say you cannot come to the phone. It is astonishing how, within a week or so, people accept the situation.

A variant is to go away, as you suggest, but I really don't see why one should allow the world to hound one out of house and home.

To come to the other points in your letter: I shall certainly consider all the questions you raise when the MS arrives, including that of possible re-writing. And DON'T worry about not finishing in May. It is no earthly use trying to rush something like this - that only results in bad work.

I am not quite sure what you mean by my being your editor. As your publisher I shall most certainly draw your attention to various points, though the final decision will

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yours. I suppose that is editing. Anyway, don't worry about that.

Love from us both,

Yours,

Lu