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Title: Letter from Allen Tanner to Victoria Glendinning

Date: May 26, 1980

Location: MC 2013.3, B1, F43

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May 26, '80

Dear Madam:

I find it most regrettable that you, whilst in America, did not get in touch with me in N.Y.C. when I could have and would have been very glad to clarify any of the misconceptions you seem to have formulated and written in your chapter about the unfortunate "Affair of the Book". You ask me to furnish you with "precisions" ^{about what} that might have been arrived at "Because of your having to "piece together the book, from various sources" I have read your version carefully, and must tell you in all frankness that after weighing the intent of what I must say are certain nuances of apparent tendendancies on your part to portray me as someone light-minded enough to be obsessed by such materialistic ideas as "clothes" and, worst of all: "Money. Also that it could have led me to commit such a horrific ^{such} outrage against a great and deep friendship as I was blessed with in my relations with Edith, is most certainly one of the several "Precisions" that, in the name of sheer Justice and decency, should most certainly cries out for clarification. Your paragraph about "My tiredness of Pavlik, etc etc" could ## only have been the frequent type of reactions many people give into when they live under the same roof with others, members of the family or anybody who is highly energized, because of Race, Type of occupation, or abnormal burdens to bear. Often I received the very same kind of "plaint" from poor Edith, who

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In spite of her unfailing compassionate understanding and loyalty to all those she loved, ^{she} would write to me thusly: "Poor Helen, whose troubles I so well understand, and make so many allowances for, her frustrations over her failure to become a professional pianist (and a good one she most surely is!) has nevertheless been making such scenes and disturbances over people I see and like, not to mention other trivialities, has, I fear, just destroyed what I had begun to feel might have been a really fine poem. I really am at a loss as to how I can somehow correct this unfair situation". Rootham, you surely know, was her childhood Governess, who, after such a position was no longer required, still clung to Edith, who out of compassion went on living with her. My impression of her, after seeing her upon a few occasions was that besides her musical frustrations and the horrible incipient disease that finally killed her, was that, next to all that she was something of a Bossy and quite unpleasant woman. (She must have had "A FieldDay" when the incident of the Book occurred!) The whole truth concerning the book will occasion a certain amount of expati-ation. I am now 81 years old, afflicted with painful gout, must type with post-operative cataract glasses (All of which renders this task very difficult and exhausting) but which I do want and hope to accomplish, in most reverent memory of dear Edith, whom I still love, appreciate and consider it a blessing to have had as perhaps in many ways, the greatest, most loyal and staunchly understanding friend I have ever had. It is

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also, that while in the U.S.A. and most likely N.Y.C.? YOU did not have the opportunity to read the somewhat over forty beautiful letters Edith wrote to me, during all those years of our close and affectionate friendship.

Whenever any of us, Pavlik, his ill sister Shoura, or myself had any kind of troubles, Edith was always there with her most sturdy moral support, and actually we three came to look upon her as an "Ideal Sister". She always wrote to me as frankly and forthrightly as such. She had, early in our correspondence told me about the shock she had had to endure, subsequent to and because of the "scandal" and its disastrous effect upon the beautiful Lady Ida (Her Mother)

She stated quite simply and honestly that it had made, of her poor Mother, "a moderate but continual alcoholic. Later on, as her Mother began to age very much, Edith also would write or say: "My poor Mother interrupts me now much too frequently, whilst I'm in midst of an important poem or book to help her search for her glasses or a fountain-pen!"

Edith's unhappiness, in her small flat shared with Helen in London, followed later by the miserable little walk-up Cold water type flat (4 or 5 floors up, if my memory now serves me correctly) from which Edith had to trudge up and down daily much too often, to do the shopping for foods, or other kinds of dull little errands, when she should have been allowed to work in full and peaceful concentration upon those "Potboilers" which she called them, had caused both Pavlik and me so much ang

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that I began to wonder what I might possibly do to lift her out of such a wretched kind of existence. I had, for many months been simply enthralled by her incomparable readings of excerpts from Shakespeare, the Elizabethans, and her own masterpieces that I suddenly fell upon a plan to "Get her before the public as much and soon as possible. I went to Sylvia Beech (Shakespeare bookshop) and asked her if she would like me to arrange an Evening of Readings. by Edith? Her instant reaction was ecstatic, and she suggested that I please do so as soon as possible. I made all arrangements. Pavlik bought some beautiful red pan-velvet material which he designed into a sketch which Edith took to her own dressmaker and had designed quickly. It was a medieval-style gown in raspberry red, just a simple bodice, with a skirt that billowed out from the hips. and so astounding was her beautiful appearance and performance that my "Idea" of liberation for her now began to grow and expand. I then had what I chose to think of as "The really logical Fantasy". I must work to get her to America, where, with the aid of many powerfully "Social" and wealthy Backers of the New York Symphony Orchestras, all the important Concert Agents I knew so well, etc. I simply HAD to get it done. My idea was to have her appear with the Symphony and recite excerpts from "The Midsummer Night's Dream" with the incidental music of Mendelssohn, with she had often enthralled us with, when she would spend evenings with us, at our apt. in the rue Jacques-Mawas. I knew she would be

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that way, and my greatest sadness is that I never got to acquaint her with the true details behind that unhappy incident simply because Edith knew in her heart of hearts that I could never have committed a "Fraudulent" act and ^{to have} been outrageously or basely treacherous enough to ~~be~~ have used her or abused her in any ^{such or} vile ~~or~~ evil way. You are in error when you say that she merely resumed her relations with me, "because she feared 'She would lose Pavlik'"... We three had always been like two brothers with an ideal Sister. If she had broken with me, Pavlik would have done so very definitely and with absolute finality! The Paris of those times was as a Jungle full of a mass of very bellicose competitive "arrivistes" and one was caught up in states of tensions, keeping us in a ^{constant} high gear. Consequently we did and said many things rather thoughtlessly, flipantly, frivolously, merely to relieve the tensions, I am sure. We worked at our Arts, and earning one's living was not easy. Pavlik battled in midst of all this, for success as a Painter. He had, as well, to support his two aged Parents in the U.S.S.R. His sister, Shoura, was tubercular and had to be sent from Doctor to Surgeon, from Sanatorium to Sanatorium, and it was because of her knowledge and perception of all this, that Edith loved and admired him, as well as his beautiful works. I do not agree with anyone who writes, or says that "She was 'In love' with him". Between "Loving" and "Being in Love" there is a subtle difference. She was no "fluttery Old Maid" with misplaced Romantic-Erotic inclinations towards anybody. She had had an unhappy lonely life, and came to feel that

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She the wealthy Heiress of the Drexel Banking "Mainline" Philadelphia family. The Mark had fallen, in Germany, to almost nothing as had the franc, many musicians had gone to Berlin sending back glowing reports of the quality of musical conditions and opportunities there because of the little one had to spend in dollars. I left N.Y.C. with a wardrobe that was more than adequate. However Mr. Henry, did lend me, once in a while a suit of elegant clothes he had tired of, but which fitted me and were becoming, all this simply to be additionally helpful. Your quote: "His friend stopped sending them because of gossip" is so absurdly untrue that I cannot imagine how pr why I could have come to say-or write it! Re. Stella Bowen: Her comments and opinions should not have ^{been} taken with so much weightiness. She came from Australia, became the Common-law wife of Ford M. Ford. She was a kindly disposed ^{woman} but socially rather tactless, bordering on the impolite. She definitely had "A Crush on Pavlik, but kept it to herself as much as possible. She was not too fond of me, I felt, and of certain of his other friends. So I do not agree that her judgements are as valuable as you indicate! I also feel that such statements: "Edith paid ^{for} this, or ^{that}" are very helpful towards the "precision" you request from myself. I must ^{also} inform you that Pavlik was in no way involved with the "Book Incident". I never once told him, kept him purposely uninformed so that if it sold, # it would be as ^{happy} a surprise as it would have been to Edith. I am not at all pleased by some of your allegations and "excerpt" because ^{they} do not sound (to me) as chronologically exact or properly read.

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Frankly they appear too much to be like the "MYstery writers' device of casting an aura over some subsidiary member of the tale, ^{suggestive} of a "guilty involvement probability," because of "appearances?" And I simply cannot keep myself from saying to you that the assertion "Love's Spies...they needed each other" is simply too meaningless to be taken seriously by the lowest minded kind of reader. We three were deeply united by a common love, a very deep concern for each other's welfare and well-being. I am sending you the catalogue of a Show I had in Brentano's new Gallery. Perhaps it will indicate to you the quality of our common bonds, what we "were after," and how; and the genuine altruism of it all! I feel that it also defines ^{therein} Edith's role and position, and the purity of intent she gave, - the dedication, simply because she admired the genius, the heroism and the worthiness of another artist!

Shortly before Osbert's untimely death, I sent it to ~~him~~ ^{Him}, who replied with a very warm note, praising ^{my} "Your glowing tribute to Edith".

All this is to say that I am very seriously displeased by the way you have dealt with issues as, for instance, clarification and vindication - ^{ob} truth and fact, that ^{simply had to} become "hidden under strange appearances." "Truth may be stranger than Fiction"...but I would slightly paraphrase it thusly: "TRUTH MAY BE STRANGER THAN APPEARANCES."

Thruuthfully, (and I hope you will not feel ^{I do so} "DEFensiv-ly" - I must say that I do not approve of the way you have handled ^{Role} { my presence in this "Tale of the ambiguous-look-^{ing} sale" o

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New York Symphony reciting "A Midsummer night's Dream" to the incidental Music of Mendelssohn, which I could easily arrange, knowing most of its wealthy backers so well. Then a tour of course at a big fee, wo orchestras all over the U.S. I had shortly had before this a confirmation of what it could be by arranging with Sylvia Beach an evening of Edith's recitations, which dressed in a pomegranate red velvet dress in a medieval style, bodice and flowing skirt, which Pavlik designed for her, she appeared before an assemblage of many celebrities, and was a sensation! This only created a more burning desire to do this for Edith. I saw her out of that miserable flat in Paris, where she had been so ill, had lost many best poems she had begun chiefly due to the tantrums and scenes of Rootham, and all the many other wretchednesses she had to cope with. What a vitory and a vindication! So to this end, telling nobody, I asked Stephen Tennant, wealthy young nephew of Mrs.Asquish and son of Lady de Gray, to buy outright a gouche picture Pavlik had given me oneXmas. which he most graciously did. So, when Mr.Semenoff held out the prospect of the Book, I knew I was well on my way. He had said this book is something of a white elephant now since sooner or later I shall have to return home via Japan, and am sure I should have nothing but trouble getting it through Customs everywhere, maybe even confiscated. Louis begged me not to sell it in France, but suggested I might do so in ~~the~~ most surely in N.Y. at Parke Benet's. I'd sell it @

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Pavlik (And I...!) had recuperated from his initial shocked rage and indignation over my 'unpardonable stupidity...' You americans are so childish, always expecting miracles and you reek with impracticable altruism" etc etc....he thoughtfully turned very tenderly understanding..."I know, Allousha You only did it for Edith"...and from then on was as morally supportive as any friend can be. A great consolation as well as Edith's immediate response of confidence.

From then on, we were restored to our former state: The Triumvirate of Deeply. mutually beloved friends. This continued until we left for N.Y. in '34 and she wrote to me her usual affectionate letters to Chicago, to which I was unable to reply promptly since I had to give Music Lessons whilst caring for my 90 year old Mother, who had broken her hip and was bedridden. Edith eventually went to Hollywood, but did not come to Chicago. So ended our long and wonderful friendship.

I cannot conceive how you got the erroneous idea that "We made a second trip to London. This is not true. Pavlik spent the summer of '34 as guest of Edward James' in his house: West Dean, Chichester. Edith and I lunched (Her invitation) at restaurants in the Bois de Boulogne. At first I tried to recount to her the whole story of "The Book". But she replied: My dearest Allen: Do set your mind at rest. Sotheby's

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Understood perfectly that I had only obliged a friend unable to be in London himself to present the item in person. I myself never for one minute, never doubt your absolute sincerity, integrity and good faith in pursuit of some worthy goal. We have been beloved friends now for so long and do know each others' nature too very well. It surely was a tragedy that you had to lose the generous funds the book suprised us with (Little did she know!) the loss!! Or why..... She concluded by adding: "Now let's 'Take care of this' and do as I hhave done: Throw it all into an old Storage room, throwaway the key to the door, and never even think of it again".

Naturally I was overjoyed and relieved by that and concurred eagerly. However "MY great Edith project was gone, with a terrible pang of regret. But there was a rather "Mystic" surprise yet to come. One day about two or three weeks after the event, there came for me a letter containing naught but a checque signed "L. de Lasteyrie". Naturally I the "American 'PeterPan" still thought of going to seehim, thank him, and tell him questingly about how I got the book. Pavlik exploded at the idea. "There you are again, you with your handicapped ideas of Human integrity".... Send that check back at once...no telling what that "....." may have "cooked up". I did just that. I still feel that Mr.Semenc was not fraudulent in that matter. I suspect that when De Lasteyrie got wind of the sale and the very large sum

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account is right. I have to tell you that the quotes you attribute to me, sound so unbelievably silly and irrelevant, chronologically and out of proper context appearing as if you had read them in haste, not copied, or Zerozed them, had not copied them or remembered them verbatim enough.

Amongst the many ~~###~~ virtues of the British nature and character, is their honesty and their passion for Justice. I, AS AN AMERICAN OF ENGLISH DESCENT, HAVE ALWAYS STRIVEN TO FOLLOW THOSE VIRTUES , AS WELL AS POSSIBLE. Therefore I cannot tell you that "Your account" (esp. of the 'Book Incident' which you founded upon appearances instead of Facts, all that I would have been glad to help you with. had you have looked me up, or even written me before launching yourself into this most delicate category of a recounting of the lives, words, actions (Deeds ^{especially} ~~####~~) and friendships of people important or even otherwise. So, Madam: Were I to enjoy the pleasure of close friendship with you, I would most certainly advise you to think over this mass of information# I have gone to great lengths to furnish you with, so that you can set things right and in their proper perspective a character in the "Drama. AND I MUST REPEAT: IF YOU AND KNOFF PUBLISH THE CHAPTER AS YOU HAVE SENT IT AFTER MUCH TOO LONG A DELAY, I shall consider this as a deliberate and illegal act of suggestive Aspersion and deal with it in the legally proper fashion.

Music and the Ballet worlds. I had never told Pavlik about my newly conceived project to lift Edith out of the marasmic walk-up ^{apt. in the Champ de Mars} (for 5 flights I seem to recall) where she dwelt with Helen Rootham, her ex-Governess and a frustrated pianist, who had a much too assertive and quarrelsome personality, with a haughtiness the basis of which I could never fathom. Poor Edith, ill and so fragile, had to climb and descent those flights many times daily. Helen was "too ill or tired" so Edith always the generous and compassionate one, did most of the marketing, whilst being obliged to run all over Paris to obtain data ~~for~~ for what she called "Potboilers" (But which really turned out to be far more than that, in Literary value!) When Pavlik was informed by me, about ~~his~~ the tragic outcome I had had, and why and how it had happened he went into a shock that lasted for days, angrily upbraiding me for "inexcusable and naive 'stupidity' ...and I should have rememberes what little I had always known about business or legal technicalities...that he did'nt care so much about Lasteyrie BUT EDITH!!! that was just too awfully much. If she is harmed in the least way You and I will part company forever". Here is some precision for your allegation "Loves' Spies, they need each other" (Forgive my bluntness, but that is so meaningless, since we three were but a trio of deeply devoted friends who were fighting for the welfare of each other. It was not by any means, a Hollywood

Gossip-Columnists' situation. Edith loved Pavlik for his Genius, courage, nobility (family geneology back to the original Nobles (Bojars) who ruled Russia after it had been consolidated into a one-Nation Country, and because he had to support his aged parents in the U.S.S.R. plus his ailing Sister Shoura who was tubercular. and who had to be sent from Doctor to Surgeon to Sanatorium to Sanatorium, Switzerland Pyrenees ~~Pyrenees~~ and Alsace.

We did NOT make a second trip to London. The only one we did make was to combine a visit to Edith the month of June, combined with attendance to the Ballets Russes at Cov.Garden to see our favorite Ballerina Olga Spessiva, really Spessiff-tzeva, shortened for public pronunciation) I cannot remember but do not believe that we could have allowed Edith to "pay" for our trip. We had only the reasonable channel trip as expense and Edith had kindly and thoughtfully arranged beforehand for us to be the guests of Geoffrey Gorer and his Mother. No Hotel expenses. I cannot agree with those who write or say "She was in Love with Him" ...I was always there whenever we spent evenings together at our apt. or dined out in a restaurant. I never once saw the faintest indication that she had the slightest Romantic, or above all Erotic delusions about Tchelitschew. Au contraire she had something of a fondly grim ~~the same~~ humorous attitude, which as always she showed with tenderness as she did towards Shoura and me. If I had seen you in N.Y.C. I could have related to you many stories of her brilliant ways of putting people in their places "Taking care of them"

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I am aware of the prolixity of this letter. If you had looked me up personally I should not have had to write it. And I could have told you so much more simply the real truth behind the "Book episode". I must type with post-operative cataract glasses and it is quite exhausting. However I am determined to do what I can, since I do have my good name to uphold, as well as Thelitchew's...and as for my friendship and reverence for Edith I am sure all that will emerge, from what I had to say about her in my Exhibition Catalogue.

In order to reveal the true facts now, I must be as succinct and brief as possible. Please excuse this and understand. The source of the book was Count Louis de Lasteyrie. Descendant at the time, who occupied the Chateau (Rather one might say 'Camped out in it' during the summers. He was of that old strata of the "great families of France, who in a rather Proustian-like way lived in haughty seclusion, having suffered the loss of their former financial resources. De Lasteyrie was financially impoverished, but managed very frugally to entertain the many young upcoming artists, writers, on weekends. He was an aged gentleman, with very formal manners of the #Old School# Many used to titter and call him Louis XV...intimates called him "Lolotte". He was actually quite an old "Playboy". Amongst his friends was a Russian a Mr.Semenoff, whom many Russian refugees always spoke of as a fine gentleman, from a well-known upper-class pre-revolutionary family. One day whilst sitting at a table in the Cafe du Dome