

WG, Doubleday and Ken McCormick

New York-based publishing company Doubleday & McClure was launched in 1897 by Brooklyn-born Frank Nelson Doubleday (1862-1934), who had bought his own printing press at the age of ten and spent the previous eighteen years at Scribner's, and Samuel McClure (1857-1949), founder of the first US newspaper syndicate in 1884 and *McClure's Magazine* in 1893. One of the firm's earliest successes was *The Day's Work*, a short story collection by Rudyard Kipling, who had followed FND from Scribner's. In 1900 Doubleday and McClure dissolved their partnership, upon which FND paired with former *Atlantic Monthly* editor Walter Page to re-launch as Doubleday, Page & Company.¹

The best-selling novels (*The Leopard's Spots*, 1902; *The Clansman*, 1905) of white supremacist Thomas Dixon Jr., who was a North Carolina acquaintance of Page's, "changed a struggling publishing venture into the empire that Doubleday was to become".² Other authors published in the Page era include Booth Tarkington, Joseph Conrad, Jack London, O Henry and Arthur Conan Doyle. In 1910, the firm relocated to Garden City, Long Island, which would remain Doubleday's HQ until 1986. In 1921, the partners bought a controlling interest in UK publisher William Heinemann; back home, in 1922, Page inaugurated the company's juvenile department, the second in the nation, headed by May Masee. Frank Doubleday's son Nelson joined the firm in the same year.

In 1927, Doubleday, Page & Company merged with the George H. Doran Company to create Doubleday, Doran & Co. Although Doran retired in 1935, it was not until 1946 that the company assumed its last, simplest and most familiar corporate title, Doubleday & Company. Douglas Black, president from that year until 1963, attracted numerous public figures to the firm, including Dwight D. Eisenhower, Harry S. Truman, Robert Taft and Douglas MacArthur. He also expanded Doubleday's publishing programme by opening two new printing plants, creating a new line of quality paperbacks under the Anchor Books imprint, attracting new book clubs to its book club division, opening thirty new retail stores in twenty-five cities and opening new editorial offices in San Francisco, London and Paris. By 1947, Doubleday was the largest and most influential publisher in the US, with annual sales of over thirty million books.

Doubleday developed many of the sales strategies which became standard practice in publishing, pioneering concepts such as mass-marketing techniques, mail-order merchandising, subscription book clubs and reprint publication. The effectiveness of its advertising, design, promotion and publicity organisation was well recognised and respected in the trade.

In 1986 the company was sold to German media conglomerate Bertelsmann for a reported \$475 million. In 1988, portions of the firm became part of the Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, which in turn became a division of Random House in 1998. In 2008/9, the Doubleday imprint merged with Knopf Publishing to form the Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, which is now part of Penguin Random House.



Ken McCormick in 1963

Among the many talented individuals who contributed to the growth and success of Doubleday was **Kenneth Dale "Ken" McCormick (1906-1997)** who, in a career spanning more than fifty years, distinguished himself as one of the leading figures in American publishing.

McCormick, son of a Methodist minister, was born in Madison, New Jersey but grew up in Minnesota and Oregon, where he graduated from Salem's Willamette University in 1928. By 1930 he was back on the East Coast, working as a sales clerk in Doubleday's Penn Station, New York bookstore. After joining the company's Editorial department in 1934, within four years he was Chief associate editor, then, from 1942 to 1971, Editor in chief. He served from 1948 to 1971 as company Vice-president and from 1949 to 1971 as a director. From 1971 (when he would have been sixty-five) until 1987, he was the firm's Senior consulting editor.

A sympathetic counsellor and creative critic, McCormick was well endowed with the attributes any successful editor needs. He was described in the *New York Times* as "possibly the dean of American editors"³ and "a titan";⁴ *Publisher's Weekly* called his standing "legendary".⁵ On the day in 1971 he stepped down from his role as Editor in chief, the three best-selling novels in the USA were *QB VII* by Leon Uris, *The Passions of the Mind* by Irving Stone and *The Throne of Saturn* by Allen Drury – all edited by McCormick. John Sargent, Doubleday's president at that time, wrote of him in 1995:

*He was the most talented editor I ever worked with. He had a knack of treating a first novelist with the same attention, care, sympathy, editorial skill and enthusiasm as he would treat an Irving Stone or Robert Graves or an Eisenhower; they became equally his admirers and friends.*⁶

In the period 1950 to 1985, Doubleday published twenty-nine WG titles, including an initial eight in six years – but the man who accepted the first, thereby securing the author's fortune and future as a writer, was McCormick. Here's WG:

In 1949 ... Ken McCormick, chief editor of Doubleday, was in London on one of his scouting trips and my newly acquired agent Audrey Heath gave him Cordelia to read; he bought it for publication in the United States, where it came out in 1950⁷ ... Before the book was published Doubleday sold it to [book club] the Literary Guild, who printed half a million copies in hardback and sold considerably more. The trade edition did well – and it was well reviewed ... From 1950 until

*1970, three-quarters of my affluence came from across the Atlantic.*⁸

WG titles published by Doubleday:

1950: 19 January: *Cordelia*; 24 August: *Night Without Stars*
1951: *The Renegade* (i.e. *Ross Poldark*, revised and retitled)
1953: 19 February: *Demelza* (revised text); 17 September:
Fortune is a Woman
1954: *Venture Once More* (i.e. *Jeremy Poldark* revised and
retitled)
1955: 3 February: *The Last Gamble* (i.e. *Warleggan* retitled);
25 August: *The Little Walls*
1956: *The Sleeping Partner*
1958: 16 January: *Greek Fire*; 3 July: *The Wreck of the Grey
Cat* (i.e. *The Forgotten Story* retitled)
1960: *The Tumbled House*
1961: *Marnie*
1964: *The Grove of Eagles*⁹
1966: *After the Act*
1967: January: *Take My Life*; June: *The Walking Stick*
1968: *Night Journey*
1970: *Angell, Pearl and Little God*
1972: 1 February: *The Japanese Girl*; 27 October: *The Span-
ish Armadas*
1974: *The Black Moon*
1975: *Woman in the Mirror*
1977: *The Four Swans*
1978: *The Angry Tide*
1980: *The Merciless Ladies*
1982: *The Stranger from the Sea*
1983: *The Miller's Dance*
1985: *The Loving Cup*

Due to his fifty-five-year-long association with the company, his interest in detailing its history and surely because he also realised their immense cultural significance, in 1985 McCormick initiated a project to select and preserve Doubleday's records, from the firm's earliest late-nineteenth-

century beginnings to the then present day, with the finished work to be gifted, with the blessing of all directors, to the Library of Congress (LC) and thus posterity.

Throughout its existence, Doubleday's publishing list included best-selling popular authors such as Arnold Bennett, Noel Coward, Daphne du Maurier, Arthur Hailey, W. Somerset Maugham and P. G. Wodehouse, as well as specialised books in the arts, natural history and the sciences, politics, sociology and religion. Doubleday was the publisher of such significant political titles as Dwight D. Eisenhower's *Crusade in Europe* and Harry S. Truman's two-volume memoir, best-selling novels such as Herman Wouk's *The Caine Mutiny* and Irving Stone's *The Agony and the Ecstasy* and Bruce Catton's prize-winning books about the Civil War. All these writers are represented in McCormick's files, which document not only the symbiotic relationship of author and editor but also the various editorial and production stages through which a book must pass before its final publication. Other files worthy of note include those of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Paul Gallico, Alex Haley, O. Henry, Robert F. Kennedy, Rudyard Kipling, T. E. Lawrence, Leon Trotsky, Leon Uris, Hugh Walpole, H. G. Wells and many more – including Winston Graham.

McCormick's own contribution to the collection consists of cover sheets which he wrote as accompanying notes to many of the files he selected for preservation. As a keen observer of the personalities and publishing trends of his day, McCormick provides background information and insightful sketches that explain and expand the contents of the files. His notes also relate the personal foibles and professional idiosyncrasies of authors and editors alike and elucidate the peculiar publishing history of specific books and manuscripts. Written between 1985 and 1992 the notes function as McCormick's personal narrative, enriching the cultural documentation implicit in the files themselves.

The Library of Congress McCormick / Doubleday archive is huge – 60,000 items in 171 containers occupying 68 linear feet of shelf-space – and split between boxes 41 and 42, the Finding Aid records eight folders pertaining to Winston Graham: four dealing with *Angell, Pearl and Little God*, two with *The Spanish Armadas*, one with *The Dark Moon (sic)* and one with general correspondence.

In *Memoirs*, 2.9, WG described McCormick as "the most distinguished editor Doubleday have ever had" – and the editor's reciprocal view was equally respectful. Writing to WG's American literary agent Carol Brandt in 1961, McCormick said of her client:

*I don't think there is an author on [our] list to whom we feel more friendliness or more respect than Winston Graham. He works hard; he writes wonderful books for us that sell well and do brilliantly in book club and reprint. He's a model author.*¹⁰

The extent to which McCormick's editing skills were called upon varied from client to client. In 1975 he commented: "I was Maugham's editor after World War II, although it's ridiculous to say 'edit' because [his] stuff was so impeccable. Daphne du Maurier – never had any problem with her, either. Such a professional!" But when, whilst working with Richard Nixon on *Six Crises*, the ex-President suggested he was not much of a writer, McCormick responded drily "I know."¹¹ As for WG, since most of his books had already been edited and prepared for publishing in the UK before Doubleday first saw them, you would think that little or no further work would be needed prior to republication – and such seems usually to have been the case. The two glaring exceptions to this generality are *Ross Poldark / The Renegade* and *Demelza*, which both appeared in the US with their original Ward, Lock texts very substantially revised.

About this, sadly, the LC Doubleday archive has nothing to say. Though its collection of Graham papers is extensive (circa 450 documents), these date almost exclusively from the period 1970-74 and cover the publication of four titles – *Angell Pearl and Little God*, *The Japanese Girl*, *The Spanish Armadas* and *The Black Moon* – only.

WG was never regarded by Doubleday as a best-seller; the first (trade) editions of his books tended to sell in modest numbers – *Marnie*: 9,547, *The Grove of Eagles*: 12,922, *The Walking Stick*: 12,595, *Night Journey*: 9,664¹² – but strong secondary book club and paperback sales meant that he always more than earned his keep. By the end of the 1960s, he could look back on a decade of consolidation in which publisher and author prospered mutually, each happy to provide what the other required. In

McCormick WG had an enthusiastic, hard-working editor of scrupulous integrity, who considered his forthcoming novel, *Angell, Pearl and Little God*, "wonderful".¹³ Reprint rights were sold for \$75,000 prior to publication¹⁴ with a lucrative Hollywood deal confidently expected to follow; in London, *Daily Telegraph* reviewer Robert Baldick compared WG to "Maupassant at his best"¹⁵ – surely, then, all seemed set fair. In fact, the story told by the LC archive is characterised principally by querulousness on WG's side and disappointment, frustration and forbearance on the publisher's; letters and memoos recall a *sulky*¹⁶, *testy*¹⁷, *unhappy*¹⁸, *peevish*¹⁹, *grousing*²⁰, *crotchety*²¹, *irritated*²², *really thorny author*²³. Reading between the lines, it was surely only WG's close personal friendship with the genial McCormick that kept him in the fold.

Before the novel was published, WG was carping about the jacket blurb, which, despite "repeated requests",²⁴ he was not shown. He considered it over-written and over-revelatory: "There must be something in the New York atmosphere that makes copywriters want to tell all."²⁵ A savage review in the *New York Times* then dealt a body-blow:

*... a ponderous amalgam of cut-rate psychology, caricature, and professional slicknes [in] nearly five hundred pages of plodding prose ...*²⁶

from which the book never recovered. Poor returns, indicating a sale of around eleven thousand copies,²⁷ led to concerns at Doubleday that they might "lose this author".²⁸ WG then recalled that, when buying the book, Doubleday had promised (with confirmation in writing) a minimum promotional spend of \$15,000 – yet enquiries revealed an actual outlay of only \$8,000.²⁹ This put McCormick in a bind, for he was adamant that the company must keep its word whilst agreeing with his advertising director that further expenditure on a dead property would be "an exercise in futility".³⁰ After wrangling back and forth through the summer of 1970, some extra cash was eventually pledged to helping promote Bantam's paperback edition of the novel after which, to make good the shortfall, and in the face of some resistance from within the firm,³¹ McCormick personally ensured that WG receive an *ex gratia* payment of \$2,500. In May 1971, at the author's behest, this was sent to his California-based daughter Rosamund to help fund the purchase of a house.³²

After he'd read a proof copy, Larry Ashmead advised McCormick that he considered *Angell, Pearl and Little God* "the best psychological novel I've read in many years ... an important book in every sense of the word"³³ and urged his Doubleday colleague, when bidding for the publishing rights, "to be extravagant"³⁴ – but, Ashmead went on:

I agree the title is difficult and should be changed. Some phrases caught in my head as I read the MS:

*A PERSONAL POSSESSION (page 287-8)
AREN'T WE ALL VICIOUS (page 595)*

*But I think simply PEARL is the best choice.*³⁵

WG, however, would have none of it:

I have heard rumours that the title of "Angell" is being blamed for the indifferent sale. While it is natural to look for some reason, this reason is nonsense, and I hope you will sit on it whenever you hear it. You may remember another book I wrote to which I gave the title of MARGARET ELMER. Doubleday's and Reader's Digest put pressure on me – rightly that time – to change it to MARNIE. This I did. Yet Doubleday's, even with the help of Hitchcock and Grace Kelly, only sold about 7,000 copies of the hard-back.

*So let's not have futile little explanations. The truth is deeper and not easy to root out. Karen Rye once said to me that I would never be a best-seller because I wrote too well. This is a flattering over-simplification. It may be that I write too well to appeal to the mass of people who want pulp, and I'm not sufficiently fashionable to appeal to the intellectuals. Who knows? Collins have doubled my Hodder sale, but they have not yet got me 'over the top'. I'd be happy if Doubleday had doubled my sale!*³⁶

The narrative regarding WG's next book with Doubleday unfolded similarly. After reading *The Japanese Girl*, McCormick declared the fourteen short stories "a wonderful volume ... a delightful and entertaining collection"³⁷

and, even though he believed privately it would make no money,³⁸ plans to publish were laid accordingly. But it wasn't long before WG was annoyed once more, returning a typescript with these words:

Your copy editor made a useful criticism when he brought up the Japanese pronunciation of R's and L's; but I am not sure what God-given right he thinks he has to monkey about with my syntax and punctuation. Is he just out of school? When I had my first novel published by Doubledays exactly twenty-one years ago, no one presumed this much. He also appears to have a rooted objection to the use of 'which'. In some cases I have altered back, but in others I have left it, just in case 'which' is a five-letter word in America not used in polite company.³⁹

When he discovered that the book's publication date was set for 1 February 1972 he became even more aggrieved, believing that the chance of vital pre-Christmas sales was being thrown needlessly away. After all, Collins had agreed to his request to publish in the UK on 1 November, so why not Doubleday in the US?⁴⁰ WG made his displeasure known to his UK agent Mark Hamilton and Ian Chapman at Collins, who both fed his concerns back, either directly or via WG's American agent, Carol Brandt, to long-suffering Ken McCormick. On 6 October he replied to Brandt:

It's hard for me to be entirely patient with Winston and this business of the pub date of his short stories. I've explained to him, I've explained to Ian Chapman to whom he complained and now I will put it on the record to you. We shifted from the fall to the winter when we discovered the absolute snowstorm of books on our list and everybody else's list this fall. If we really wanted to do Winston a disservice we would insist on publishing this book in October. It is purely fantasy on his part that this collection is a Christmas item. He simply doesn't know American bookshop or American activities. If we publish in October or early November we'll absolutely guarantee no reviews. In the winter we will have the opportunity to reviews that are pretty well denied in the avalanche of fall books. Also, the

*bookseller will have time for consideration of the book and hopefully a real interest in it. Surely he must know that it isn't that easy to sell collections of short stories. I don't mean to sound impatient, but please get him away from the notion that he's being mishandled in this instance, He isn't.*⁴¹

But WG would not be placated:

I was unhappy on two counts; and still am. This year seems to have brought an all-time low in my relations with Doubledays, and I don't know how this has occurred. It would be more understandable if your firm had not seemed so keen – so flatteringly keen – to keep me as a writer when I was unsettled in 1969. Is this a new policy which has been adopted since then, or do I imagine it all?

*[As for] the postponement of THE JAPANESE GIRL ... even if Doubledays had felt their ... lists were too full in November and December, what was wrong with October or September or August?*⁴²

The book was published according to Doubleday's schedule and, as McCormick foresaw, did sluggish trade, with just 5,250 copies sold in three months.⁴³ Maybe WG felt a twinge of guilt, or that an olive branch was overdue, for on 1 March he wrote in positive vein:

*I have had occasion to bellyache at Doubledays rather a lot recently, so it is the more pleasant to be able to say how delighted I am with the jacket of THE JAPANESE GIRL. It's one of the handsomest and most elegant jackets I've ever had; and I can't help but feel that, whatever the resistance to the short story medium, this must sell a number of extra copies. Congratulations to the artist, whoever he or she may be.*⁴⁴

McCormick sent galley proofs of *The Japanese Girl* to Paramount Pictures' East Coast Director of Creative Affairs, Ron Bernstein, who had optioned *Angell, Pearl and Little God*. Bernstein returned them with a note saying he "hadn't seen anything that was right for us".⁴⁵ But this initiative reveals

another side of McCormick: he was always pitching; thinking outside the box; looking for ways to make things happen. In September 1970, in cahoots with Jack Beaudouin of Reader's Digest, he tried to interest WG in setting a suspense novel in Valmont, an upmarket health spa near Montreux, Switzerland:

*Valmont exists, has nothing to do with the old age business, but does have to do with the international set ... I think what is visualised is a sort of Grand Hotel on top of an up-to-date clinic. As I understand it you can live there without becoming a medical patient, and that the drawing together of the kind of people there would intrigue you.*⁴⁶

Doubleday actually funded a short visit to Valmont by WG and Jean,⁴⁷ but no business resulted. Another Reader's Digest proposal which McCormick pitched to WG was for a historical novel about Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain.⁴⁸ McCormick advised Beaudouin that WG was "a slow take, but once he gets started he is terrific"⁴⁹ and the author did consider the idea for eight months before finally declining.⁵⁰

In January 1971 McCormick wrote to WG about the Wildensteins, a New York family of art dealers who in November 1970 had paid a record £2.3 million for a Velasquez portrait:

*Two or three of us have been thinking very much of you recently (we always think of you) and about a novel that might grow out of the Wildenstein family chronicle. As you may know they are great American gallery people – their activities are not confined to New York, but also Paris, London and the Argentine ... I see a book that would have some of the qualities of BROOME STAGES by Clemence Dane.*⁵¹

Nothing more was heard of this. In July 1971 McCormick noted:

*Historically ... I have never been very successful in planting an idea in Winston's mind. He mostly has them himself. The classic exception was THE GROVE OF EAGLES ...*⁵²

Whilst this comment is intriguing, it does not accord with WG's more persuasive account of how that book came about. The likelihood is that the original idea (based on something he'd read) was his, after which his editor gave him regular encouragement until, by the time the lengthy incubation period finally gave way to some writing, McCormick had come to regard the prime mover as himself. In October 1972 he told Carol Brandt:

*Lee [Barker] and I worked on him for years to write it and one day he finally gave in*⁵³

which sounds much nearer the mark.

The exchange of ideas worked two ways: whilst on a midnight stroll through London with McCormick in 1969, WG sounded his editor out about the possibility of writing "the lives of the train robbers seen through the eyes of one of the wives". McCormick was "particularly taken" with the idea and "look[ed] forward to hearing more"⁵⁴ – it proved, though, sadly, another barren seed.

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Preparations to publish *The Japanese Girl* in February 1972 ran conjointly with plans to launch a second Graham title later the same year: in following his first volume of short stories with his first non-fiction work, WG would break more new ground – but *The Spanish Armadas* was a new venture in other ways too. Lavishly illustrated with 32 colour plates and 120 black and white images, the book was to be produced by London-based book design and production company George Rainbird Limited for sale by Collins in the UK and Doubleday in America. Once again, McCormick was bowled over by the manuscript, declaring it "endlessly engrossing"⁵⁵ and enthusing to WG: "I'm lost in admiration of the extraordinary job you've done."⁵⁶ Later, when he saw the text augmented by all the artwork, he pronounced the book "handsome as hell ... absolutely stunning".⁵⁷ WG quoted Michael Hyde, over at Collins, who said: "if Collins can't sell this book they'd better take up farming"⁵⁸ – yet once more the path to publication was not smooth. WG was disenchanted to learn that Doubleday's initial order was for a meagre 5,000 copies, which he believed betrayed a lamentable lack of confidence in their author:

*It's not so much a matter of how much money I make out of the book ... as that I want it to be a success because it is a new venture for me, and in a way my prestige as a writer is involved. When my regular U.S. publisher over more than twenty years appears to order an absolute minimum of copies in advance – however many he may hope to sell later – it reflects on me, or seems to.*⁵⁹

Doubleday's order was raised to 7,500, then 12,500, then, after two book clubs had taken the title, to 17,500 (5,000 for the book trade and 12,500 for book club sale).⁶⁰ Yet, once again, the company's caution was justified by results, for by April 1973, sales in all formats totalled only 7,205,⁶¹ suggesting that fully half their final order would be remaindered.

As to why it failed, McCormick had expressed pre-publication fears that *The Spanish Armadas'* strong visual appeal would prove less help than hindrance because reviewers, booksellers and potential buyers would be likely to dismiss it on sight as a coffee table book – i.e. as more decorous than instructive – a format, he knew, "done to death in the last eighteen months."⁶² He tried to mitigate this effect by enclosing a letter with each review copy stressing the importance of WG's text:

*It is not a coffee table book nor was it ever designed to be. It was ... designed to recreate a period in words augmented by pictures.*⁶³

All in vain.

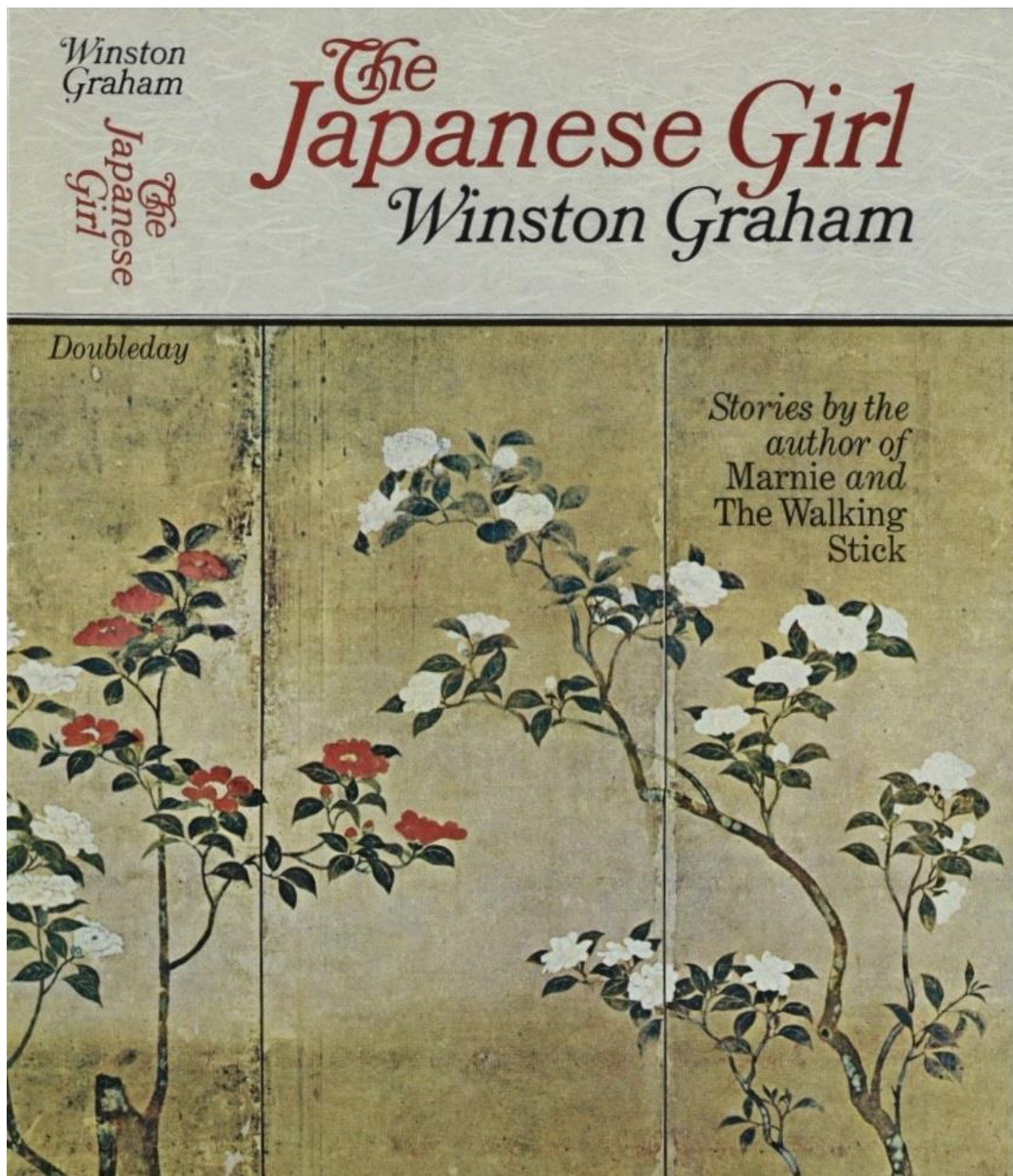
Another issue vexing WG during this period was the dearth of paperback editions of his work for sale in the US, for which he blamed Doubleday for not pushing the reprint houses hard enough to take them. When Bantam bought the reprint rights of *The Walking Stick* for \$100,000 in 1967,⁶⁴ they accepted and published three other titles (*Greek Fire*, *Night Journey* and *Take My Life*) at the same time⁶⁵ and optioned another five (*Fortune is a Woman*, *The Little Walls*, *The Sleeping Partner*, *The Tumbled House* and one other)⁶⁶ which, probably due to disappointing sales of the first four, they declined to follow up on. After suggesting to McCormick that Doubleday should "put some pressure on them",⁶⁷ WG made his view plain:

As you know, I feel strongly about this. Since Fontana took me over in England my situation here has radically altered, and I do not see why the same should not happen in the States. There is hardly a bookstall in England now where you don't see one of my paperbacks, and they are in hotel lobbies and department stores as well. I have written a lot of books now and they are all saleable, and while I continue to publish new novels in hard back this is a cumulative process. But not if each book is allowed to die and is buried two years after it comes out. As you also know I have pressed Doubledays to do something in the hard back field but they have failed to do anything. Then I think something should be done in the paperback field. Don't you agree?⁶⁸

Whether as a result of this or by coincidence, within a month McCormick was able to inform WG that Doubleday had placed the first four Poldark novels with Berkley for \$3,500 per title.⁶⁹ Though naturally pleased, WG raised a concern about this transaction too:

I had official word from Carol [Brandt] the other day about the four Poldarks; and it was not until she named them individually that I realised that they were still being called by the awful titles which were chosen for them in the U.S. I do hope that Berkley will reissue under the English titles of ROSS POLDARK, DEMELZA, JEREMY POLDARK and WARLEGGAN. I cannot imagine anybody buying a book called VENTURE ONCE MORE. Apart from which, these books are circulating all over Canada and other parts of the world with the English titles, from Fontana, and I think the different titles would lead to confusion. If there is a problem with the Library of Congress, could not an insertion be put on the paperbacks: 'originally published under the title of :'?⁷⁰

Four months later, McCormick confirmed that WG's suggestion had been accepted⁷¹ – in this instance, however, his assurance counted for little because Berkley chose to publish the books (presumably after telling him otherwise) as ROSS POLDARK, DEMELZA, JEREMY POLDARK and *THE LAST GAMBLE*. WG's response, perhaps thankfully, is unrecorded.



The jacket considered by WG one of his "handsomest and most elegant"

On 24 April 1972, McCormick learned from Carol Brandt that WG had "started a new novel but does not want it mentioned."⁷² The editor knew his author well enough by now to leave well alone, aware that he would get to know more only when WG was ready to disclose it. But Ted Macri, in charge of selling subsidiary (including paperback) rights pointed out that his job was made much easier when a new novel could be promised to potential buyers – so McCormick spoke to Brandt and reported back:

Carol is writing one of her careful letters to her client to get him to break the habits of a lifetime and give us some notion of what the book is about.⁷³

Eleven months later McCormack learned that Collins were in receipt of a new Graham Poldark novel called THE DARK MOON (*sic*) and expressed the hope that he might be able to see it soon.⁷⁴ Early in May 1973 it arrived on his desk and by the middle of the month he'd read it. "An overwhelming ... wonderful ... brilliantly handled ... extraordinary novel"⁷⁵ he enthused to WG – but only to Carol Brandt did he also note its "slow start".⁷⁶ He tried to interest Reader's Digest in the book:

I think that with the kind of expert cutting you are noted for that leapfrogging the early pages into the real drama of this book might produce an extraordinary candidate for your attention.⁷⁷

He received from WG an unusually heartfelt letter:

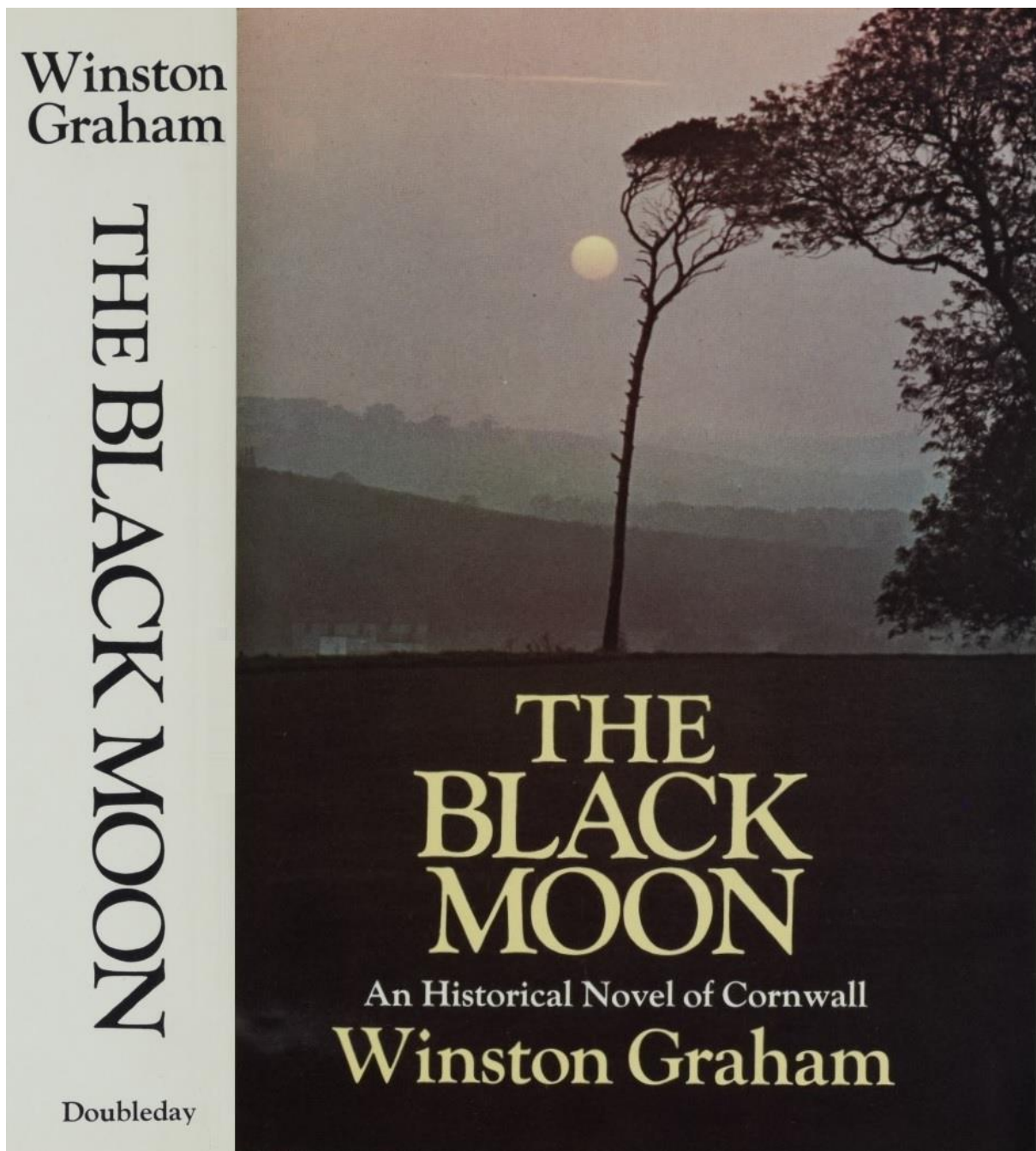
I was so very pleased ... to know that you liked THE BLACK MOON. I have always tried to write what I wanted to write, without regard to future reactions; but in a sense this gives me all the greater delight when my publishers react so handsomely! After a lapse of so many years, I began a fifth Poldark book with a sense of adventure but in some trepidation; but after a few chapters the thing caught fire; and, whatever the ultimate reception from the press or the public, the book gave me such pleasure to write that I count the last few months of last year as among the happiest of my life.⁷⁸

and then this revealing request:

Please don't set from the typescript you received. The bound book should be ready by September and contains a number of alterations I have made in the light of one more reading. I have also made a number of cuts in the beginning; small in substance, perhaps 1,000 words or so, but I think it may help

*to tighten up the opening ... I also commend for your consideration ... the jacket that Collins have designed.*⁷⁹

McCormick asked Ian Chapman at Collins to send over their jacket art with a promise that Doubleday would, if it was used, share the expense.⁸⁰ It was not only used (see below) but, in WG's eyes, improved upon: "I think the colder colouring suits the subject better than the rather pink colouring of the Collins jacket. Also the blurb is very well done; whoever has written this is to be congratulated."⁸¹



But still the publication process produced its share of problems, the first of which, for WG, was Doubleday's advance payment of \$10,000:

As you will know, I was very disappointed at the smallness of the advance Doubledays were prepared to offer. In my young and innocent days I used to think the size of an advance did not matter: one should get paid by results. Now however in my disillusioned age I know that the size of the advance indicates the amount of enthusiasm a publisher is going to put behind a book when it comes out. Or am I too disillusioned?

I don't, of course, doubt for one moment your personal commitment to me, or your personal liking for this book. And I know something of the difficulty of the U.S. scene. But I wish sometimes the accountancy boys would remember what a lot of money Doubledays have made out of me in the last twenty years and be prepared to risk a little more accordingly.⁸²

McCormick's reservations about the book's "slow start" were shared by Carol Brandt, who wrote to Mark Hamilton:

Both [Ken and I] feel that [the book] would do better ... if it were considerably cut.⁸³

Maybe WG himself, who seemed perennially uncertain about so much of his work, came to feel the same way, for, even after making the last-minute cuts described above to the novel's UK edition, on 6 January 1974 he offered to go further still:

... it has occurred to me this week-end that it might be perfectly possible to do some cutting in the early stages of the book to remove certain references to the older books and so make it easier to get into.

I don't know if you are already on with your type setting, in which case it might be too late. Make no mistake; I don't want the labour of this; but I'm perfectly willing to have a shot if you thought it a good idea.⁸⁴

"Unhappily", the editor replied, it was too late,⁸⁵ and so the book went to press, set from the UK edition, minus its Author's Note.⁸⁶

WG queried whether reviews made much difference to the sale of a book⁸⁷ and, concerning their propensity to nettle an undeserving author, repeated to McCormick advice he had received as a younger man:

*Many years ago Maugham advised me not to read press cuttings, and for nearly ten years I took this advice. Then in 1964 I took up a press-cutting agency again, but have often felt the result was not worth the reading. Now, at the end of last year, my agency folded up, so this has given me the necessary excuse, and I have only read such English reviews of "Angell" as I have seen in the papers I normally buy. It's a moot point, I know ... but in all my life I can only think of about three reviews which have been helpful to me. Fundamentally one writes for oneself and one shouldn't care a damn. Therefore probably the best way is not to bother to read the reviews, as Maugham advised.*⁸⁸

McCormick concurred, observing that "picking quarrels with critics is a losing game. They always have the last word and even when they are wrong they manage to make themselves look right."⁸⁹

The advent of *Poldark* onto television screens in 1975 would change everything for WG both at home and abroad – yet he remained with Doubleday until they were taken over and continued, it would seem, to keep them on their toes, as perhaps, since his living depended on the good offices of them and their kind, is no more than one would expect. In 1986 McCormick described him as "a quiet, determined and very successful author who never had a real best seller in America"⁹⁰ and, nine months later, added: "We never could sell [the Poldark novels] in quantities that satisfied him."⁹¹ One can sense behind those words the steady stream of spiky letters – but, in a March 1970 in-house memo, McCormick also conceded: "we're making a potful of money [from Graham] in reprint and book club"⁹² – and who bites the hand that feeds them? The company – and Ken McCormick in particular – did well by WG, but that Doubleday also profited handsomely from the thirty-seven-year symbiosis is certain.

Winston Graham

A POLDARK NOVEL

THE **ANGRY
TIDE**



Doubleday, 1978

NOTES AND SOURCES

¹ Company historical data from wikipedia pages

² *Southern Horizons: the autobiography of Thomas Dixon*, IWW Publishing, 1984

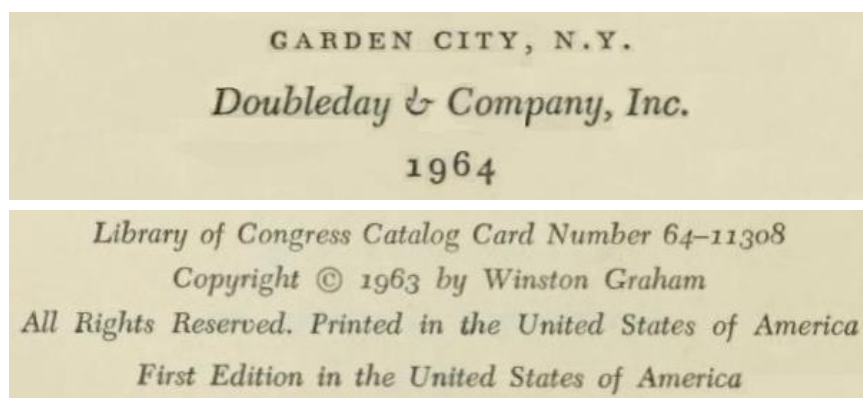
^{3, 11} *New York Times*, 16 October 1975

⁴⁻⁶ *New York Times*, 29 June 1997

⁷ US editions of *Cordelia* state "COPYRIGHT, MCMXLIX, BY WINSTON GRAHAM" but nothing else, which prompts booksellers everywhere to record the year of publication as 1949. The statement probably anticipates Doubleday's *intention* to register copyright in that year – but, although UK copyright was registered in 1949, *Cordelia's* American copyright was not registered by the Library of Congress until 19 January 1950 (see *The Library of Congress Copyright Office's Catalog of Copyright Entries, Third Series, Volume 4, Part 1A, Number 1, Books, January-June 1950*) which, as company records confirm, is also the date of publication of *Cordelia* in the USA.

⁸ *Memoirs of a Private Man*, Book One, Chapters Six and Eight (Macmillan, 2003)

⁹ As with *Cordelia* – see note seven – so too with *The Grove of Eagles*: though copyright was registered on 2 December 1963, the book was not published by Doubleday until the first week of January 1964. Genuine American first editions include this information on either side of the title page:



Reprint and book club editions from the period 1964/5 show the copyright year only, prompting many booksellers

to claim wrongly that the book was *published* in America in 1963 when it was not.

¹⁰ Letter, 11 May 1961, held in the Hitchcock archive of the Margaret Herrick Library, the Fairbanks Center for Motion Picture Study, Beverly Hills, California

In the notes below, KM = Ken McCormick, CB = Carol Brandt and LC = Box 41 or 42 of the Library of Congress Doubleday and Company records, 1882-1992

^{12, 64} REQUEST AUTHORIZATION TO OFFER CONTRACT doc. (re *The Spanish Armadas*), 10 February 1971 (LC)

¹³ Letter, KM to WG, 6 January 1970 (LC)

¹⁴ Letter, KM to WG, 9 February 1970 (LC)

¹⁵ *Daily Telegraph*, 5 February 1970. In a letter to KM dated 12 February, WG wrote: "I wouldn't mind having [the Mau-passant quote] put on my tombstone." (LC)

¹⁶ Memo, Ted Macri to KM, 17 February 1970 (LC)

¹⁷ Memo, KM to Larry Ashmead, 30 September 1971 (LC)

¹⁸ Memo, Dave Cathers to KM, 17 February 1970 (LC)

^{19, 41} Letter KM to CB, 6 October 1971 (LC)

²⁰ Memo, KM to Sam Vaughan, 3 August 1972 (LC)

²¹ Memo, KM to Art Stiles *et al*, 4 November 1971 (LC)

²² Letter, KM to Heather Jeeves, 1 December 1971 (LC)

²³ Memo, KM to Bill Ewald, 5 November 1971 (LC)

^{24, 25} Letter, WG to KM, 12 December 1969 (LC)

²⁶ James R. Frakes in the *New York Times*, 15 February 1970

²⁷ Letter, KM to WG, 15 April 1970 (LC)

²⁸ Memo, John Taylor to KM, 12 March 1970 (LC)

²⁹ Letter, WG to KM, 31 March 1970 (LC)

³⁰ Memo, Richard O'Connor to KM, 20 April 1970 (LC)

³¹ Memo, Richard O'Connor to KM, 20 May 1971 (LC)

³² Letter, KM to Rosamund Barteau, 25 May 1971 (LC)

³³⁻³⁵ Memo, Larry Ashmead to KM, undated (LC)

^{36, 70} Letter, WG to KM, 6 April 1970 (LC)

³⁷ Letter, KM to WG, 22 October 1971 (LC)

³⁸ A REQUEST AUTHORIZATION TO OFFER CONTRACT document, dated 12 October 1970 and, although unsigned,

almost certainly written by KM, baldly states the company view:

THE JAPANESE GIRL is a collection of short stories which Winston Graham would very much like to see published in this country ... We are presently negotiating with Graham on a project [Ferdinand and Isabella] suggested by the Reader's Digest Book Club, and that makes it all the more important to give [him] a contract on this book ... It is true that WG's trade sales in this country have never been anything to conjure with; but his book club record is really extraordinary, and his reprint record is quite good. He's had two Reader's Digest Condensed Book Club selections ... two Literary Guild selections, a number of Dollar Book Club and Guild alternatives, and so forth.

Graham's last two book reprints were bought for \$100,000 and \$75,000, respectively, and his new novel, ANGELL, PEARL AND LITTLE GOD, is a selection of the Literary Guild. I mention all this because, although his trade sales range from 9,000 to roughly 15,000, he has been over the years a very profitable author with Doubleday, and I think we should keep him happy by publishing this book ... even though we'll probably only break even on [it].

³⁹ Letter, WG to Joan Ward, 17 June 1971 (LC)

⁴⁰ Letter, Ian Chapman to KM, 24 September 1971 (LC)

⁴² Letter, WG to KM, 10 October 1971 (LC)

⁴³ Letter, KM to WG, 9 May 1972 (LC)

⁴⁴ Letter, WG to KM, 1 March 1972 (LC)

⁴⁵ Letter, Ron Bernstein to KM, 29 December 1971 (LC)

⁴⁶ Letter, KM to WG, 25 September 1970 (LC)

^{47, 52} Memo, KM to Sam Vaughan, 1 July 1971 (LC)

⁴⁸ Letter, KM to WG, 16 March 1971 (LC)

⁴⁹ Letter, KM to Jack Beaudouin, 7 July 1971 (LC)

^{50, 59, 87} Letter, WG to KM, 3 November 1971 (LC); McCormick concurred more with Maugham than WG, to whom on 18 November 1971 he wrote, in respect of short stories, that "reviews can make an extraordinary difference." (LC)

- ⁵¹ Letter, KM to WG, 6 January 1971 (LC)
- ⁵³ Letter, KM to CB, 3 October 1972 (LC)
- ⁵⁴ Letter, KM to WG, 16 April 1969 (LC)
- ⁵⁵ Letter, KM to Gordon Weel, 27 March 1972 (LC)
- ⁵⁶ Letter, KM to WG, 22 December 1971 (LC)
- ⁵⁷ (i) Memo, KM to Art Stiles *et al* (ii) letter, KM to Patricia Kenyon (of Rainbird), both 22 June 1972 (LC)
- ⁵⁸ Letter, WG to KM, 30 May 1972 (LC)
- ⁶⁰ Memo, KM to Sam Vaughan, 17 October 1971 (LC)
- ^{61, 62} Letter, KM to Mark Hamilton, 11 April 1973 (LC)
- ⁶³ Draft letter, unsigned, 21 June 1972 (LC)
- ⁶⁵ Memo, Barbara Krause to Joan Ward, 14 January 1974 (LC)
- ⁶⁶ Letter, Mark Hamilton to CB, 17 July 1972 (LC)
- ^{67, 68} Letter, WG to KM, 12 February 1970 (LC)
- ⁶⁹ Letter, KM to WG, 5 March 1970 (LC)
- ⁷¹ Letter, KM to WG, 21 July 1970 (LC)
- ⁷² Letter, CB to KM, 24 April 1972 (LC)
- ⁷³ Memo, KM to Ted Macri, 28 September 1972 (LC)
- ⁷⁴ Letter, KM to CB, 23 March 1973 (LC)
- ⁷⁵ Letter, KM to WG, 16 May 1973 (LC)
- ⁷⁶ Letter, KM to CB, 16 May 1973 (LC)
- ⁷⁷ Letter, KM to Jack Beaudouin, 23 May 1973 (LC)
- ^{78, 79} Letter, WG to KM, 8 June 1973 (LC)
- ⁸⁰ Letter, KM to Ian Chapman, 12 July 1973 (LC)
- ⁸¹ Letter, WG to KM, 22 February 1974 (LC)
- ⁸² Letter, WG to KM, 11 September 1973 (LC)
- ⁸³ Letter, CB to Mark Hamilton, 16 July 1973 (LC)
- ⁸⁴ Letter, WG to KM, 6 January 1974 (LC)
- ^{85, 86} Letter, KM to WG, 16 January 1974 (LC)
- ⁸⁸ Letter, WG to KM, 19 March 1970 (LC)
- ⁸⁹ Letter, KM to WG, 2 April 1970 (LC)
- ⁹⁰ *The Dark Moon (sic)* file cover note, 29 October 1986 (LC)
- ⁹¹ *The Japanese Girl* file cover note, 17 July 1987 (LC)
- ⁹² Memo, KM to Dave Cathers, 6 March 1970 (LC)

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