

WATKINSON  
Glas

2948 University Terrace, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20016

Dear Mrs. Marlin,

I have thought of you so often and must not delay longer in wishing you a good holiday season with your children and grandchildren.

Every once in a while somebody in the class gives news of you to the rest of us. Now we hear that the German story is soon to be published and I am looking forward eagerly to reading it.

When we first came together this year, I said, "Oh, where is Mrs. Marlin?" and Edith Towles raised both hands and said, "Don't talk about it". But we are working away.

Betty Waters is going on with her novel along the lines planned before you left. Mr. Redmond is polishing up his manuscript and Helen Jacobs is working on a new long story about a Quaker settlement in Civil War time.

Now let me tell you about my novel, not yet sent to any publisher. The first agent to whom I gave it wrote it did not "grab" her. The second agent replied that she enjoyed reading the novel and found the characters "fascinating" but that she felt the story to be "too mild". I'll now copy for you the letter from the third agent.

"Thanks much for letting me read your novel THE GIRL AT THE WINDOW. It is with great reluctance that I must decline the chance to handle it. It is beautifully written and I liked the characters. But the problem

to me is that I don't think very much happens in 193pp and with this terrible fiction market, editors are going to want more than this, I fear. It is very possible that I am absolutely wrong and I hope you will show it to other agents. I am being very picky about fiction at this time due in large part to the illness of my partner, which has kept him from the office since Labor Day. If I felt I had more time, I think I would have agreed to represent your really excellent book."

I'm non too happy about the letters, not that I think them altogether sensible, for if the novel makes good reading with interesting characters thrown in, what else is needed. Still these agents must be in touch with the market and know what publishers are looking for, and if they demand something dynamic I'm afraid I'm out of luck. Then too, fiction nowadays-I mean adult fiction-seems to be in the doldrums. Sales are discouragingly poor. I don't know whether we are living in an age too practical to make fiction popular or what the answer may be. At any rate I may try one more agent, or else I may submit the manuscript to publishers - I havn't decided yet. Do you still think publishers may be better? I know you have a wealth of experience but times seem to be changing. I thank you most heartily for your valuble help on the work. It was fine to

be working with you and I treasure the memory.

I am wondering how you like England. Europe in a way  
must be a home to you. But we do miss you.

Faithfully,

*Sally Owen*

P.S. If you are kind enough to let me hear from you  
please be good and type the letter.