

December 20th. 1950.

ROSE LAWN,
KINGSGATE-ON-SEA,
BROADSTAIRS,
KENT.

Dear Derek Smith,

I was very pleased, and I confess flattered, to read your letter of the 11th. You seem to have a very wide acquaintance with all my writings, and it is very kind of you to say that you like them all. And especially I was pleased by your comments on 'Jack of All Trades' for he is my favourite character; and I shall take your remarks as good omens for the series.

I am very glad to hear about Joe. I am sure he is a delightful cat; but all cats and dogs are lovable. Sammy really is a duck. He can mew quite as peremptorily as Joe. Some time ago, after a desperate affray with a rival, he came in with two bandy legs, both on the starboard side, so it was quite awkward for him, and I had to carry him about for several weeks while he was undergoing repairs. And if I overlooked him when I went up to my study, he would sit at the foot of the stairs and yell, till I came down and carried

him up. Which was rather a labour of love, for stairs are steeper to me now than the Alps used to be. I don't know how Sammy would fit into a story, but he receives honourable mention in the last chapter of my autobiography, which I have just been revising for publication next year.

Judging by the cheery tone of your letter, being a little sub-standard does not affect your spirits. Book-collecting is a very pleasant hobby. It has its snags, though. All my life I was gathering books, to fill the leisure hours of old age, and now old age has come, I find that I cannot read small print--and more than half of them are in small print! But what's the odds so long as you're 'appy?

I hope, my dear boy, that you will have a pleasant Christmas, and that the New Year will see you well on the way to complete recovery.

With kindest regards,
Very sincerely,

Frank Richards