THE OLD VICARAGE,
WHITSTABLE,
KENT.
TELEPHONE 2618.

"Mon cher Maître",

Please forgive my being such a bother and disturbing you with a letter — and I would only do so with a rather unusual purpose — which it seems I have!

May I first thank you, your wife and Nina for giving several hours of a tiring day to the Moreaus. I needn't say how grateful and thrilled they were — and how devoted they are to the

great artist which they have now seen as a person with his family willing to share these hours with them.

My unusual problem concerns them. I have told you and your wife how close I have been to them, they are just as much my family as my own, I love them so dearly. For two years I have suffered deeply watching this infinitely good and unsuspecting family lose $21,000 in a transaction involving a very valuable violin, said of course to be a Stradivarius. Dr. Moreau paid this entire sum to the violin teacher

of his son, Stev PrjNAT, who is now coowner, and swears on his life (and no papers) that this is the King of all Stradivariuses. Dr. Moreau, not having the faintest idea of music or violins, believed him, bought it, and of course hoped to resell it for $21,000. But M. Prjnat has told him never to go to a violin dealer - "they are all crooks", especially someone like Hills in London. So they have never had it appraised. Now the family acutely feels the loss of the money, and our family, plus this dear one here (of which the English girl you met is a daughter) have convinced them to bring it to Hills for an

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appraisal. Mme. Moreau plans to come with the violin on Tuesday, & we planned to go together, as I will make the trip to London by train. I am frankly scared to death of (Hills) their taking one look at me and thinking I am some childish schoolgirl, and not paying much more attention to her; my mother is quite sure it is an unusual instrument, and I am wondering to whom to go, at Hills ~~How they could~~, how to go about such a thing, I feel it must be done right. I do not think violin dealers are crooks, but I do feel they are incredibly "sharp operators," and surely the two of us are no match for whomever we meet

at Hills.

If this seems to be much too involved and personal a story, and neither you nor your wife feel in the least interested or inclined even to advise, I can understand only too well, having just met them once and not knowing all the details of the story which are much too numerous to put down here.

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But it is a very serious case of crooked dealings to the most angelic of people, and after two long years, they finally went to take the only right step, and I am mildly anxious that it be done in the best possible way, with the utmost

chance for honesty and success.

I do hope mostly that you are well, and that London may not be quite as cold and rainy as it is here.

I beg you not even to bother about all of this wild tale if you feel it is too personal, and in this case I shall hope to see you in December — when our prayers for a happy recital may be over and answered —

With always my most grateful and heartfilled thoughts to you and your wife, and Nina if she is there,

Sam