Dear Mrs Rubinstein,

I returned only a few days ago from the United States and Canada, so please excuse my delay in writing to thank you for letting me see you when I was in Paris three weeks ago.

Meeting you -- followed by my meeting with Alina in New York a few days later -- made me more interested than ever in writing a biography of your husband. Through my work over the last dozen years, I have had occasion to meet the spouses and descendants of many celebrated people, and, honestly, I have found most of them to have incredibly shallow concepts of human existence in general and of themselves in particular. Working with them is often like trying to coax an infant or a cat to behave rationally. With you and Alina, I felt exactly the opposite: pride in and love for a great artist has expanded rather than narrowed your perspective of the world. I have the very strong feeling that working on this project would be not only a fascinating labor and a professional coup for me, but also -- for once! -- a personal pleasure. I realize that this is a selfish reason for wanting to undertake such a serious enterprise, but it's the truth. I can't imagine that anyone would prefer an unpleasant project to a pleasant one.

I do understand your misgivings about this project, but I can't help hoping that you will overcome them. One way or the other, please accept my warmest regards and best wishes.

Sincerely yours,

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