



PLAINFIELD AND NORTH PLAINFIELD CHAPTER

LAURELWOOD, N. J.

March 11, 1967

Dear Margie:

I'm in between minds for the moment but want to write you anyway because of Sfid's condition, etc. He seems such a sweet guy somehow, that oh so rare combination of competence and kindness and manliness. I was quite moved by your remark a while back that he had a JFK quality which means one can add to the rest the matter of style and charm and magnetism. Which could lead me to say: You could certainly pick them; but I think a better comment would be: these gentlemen picked you.

March 13, 1967

Dear Margie:

You are so great. The letters keep coming even though you are in this critical situation. And today I received three glossies from a Jack Jessee with a bill for \$2.50. I don't see how he covers cost on this, really, and it must be you at work somehow, at least indirectly. It is so good to have this kind of link between the two periods. Yes, I would have known that wasnot Ernest, but I would have puzzled more over it and am glad to know about the error.

We are at the get-away stage and yet, surprizingly have just gone through about five days of not doing anything about our momentous move or even thinking about it almost. The North American alpine skiing championships have just been held here - from Fri. through Sunday - and we have been right in the thick of it. Somehow we were selected to house two of the skiers (female) and at the same time two old friends dropped in on our free inn, also for the races, so our place has been in a kind of a happy dither of excitement. Our two girls (Rosie Fortner of Warren, Vt. and Lee Hall of Mammoth Mountain, Calif., each led the American contingent in two of the three races, and we found ourselves filled with happy squadrom loyalty and pride. The cream of the skiing world was here, including and particularly Jean Claude Killy, the sensational Frenchman, who won all three men's events here, and there were also the top skiers from Switzerland, Austria, Italy, Canada and the United States. But the French made a shambles of it, winning all the women's events as well. However we felt rather important with the two American racers in our house and we are rationalists enough to be satisfied with the honor of having the top American female skiers on the premises even if they were usually swept by three French females. Our two girls were not glamorous looking, but were young, attractive and dedicated. Oh so dedicated. They filed their skis each evening, spent hours with fitters getting their plastic \$150 boots fitted, etc. etc. but they were very courteous and well mannered. Meanwhile our two friends, Dr. Kenneth Lane, aged 48 about, a pediatrician from my old phio foundation days, and his friend, Charles Lambur, about 60, a ten handicap golfer, judo nut and good skier, were in their glory having the two fancy girl skiers in their midst. It was

really very funny. The girls truly enjoyed being fussed over so, without the necessity of having to cope with possible physical encounters, and the two gaffers were really a scream tossing off their skiing expertise, showing their Olympic winter badges, and trying to one up each other all over the place. The girls were upstairs, with their own bath; the men I put up on a bed and trundle in the front room. Well you can imagine ~~mmmmmm~~ how our quiet home was transformed. And both of us fell off our diets. What it amounted to was a five-day weekend and Ruth really had a ball. The only trouble is we forgot all about Italy. And now the house is quiet (and somewhat lonely) and we are back to packing and breathing hard again.

I am really impressed, let me say, with your language facility. It is odd that you have the same extra three languages of that man, Spanish, French and now Italian. I think it rather mean of you to demonstrate proficiency in Italian so quickly. I have been listening to records and reading vocabularies, etc. but have not tried writing much yet. My real reliance is that usual fantasy that says, wait until I get there and mingle, I'll learn quickly enough. At least that is Ruth's approach. I remember when we were in Europe in 1958. I got the impression then, after listening to her, that her idea of learning French was to speak English with a French accent. I'm really quite serious about learning Italian and I intend to, but it is not easy for me - as I think it is for you. I've always thought it slightly unfair that my father could handle 19 languages and was acquiring Hebrew at the time of his death in the flu epidemic of 1918 at age 40, and I have no genetic advantage whatsoever. I took a year of Italian at Iowa U. a million years ago and I think I trailed that class of 17 Scandinavians, with a most humble and gratefully received "C". But I am a determined cuss if I really decide to do something seriously. The one great accomplishment in my life, one which at least inspires me with some slight respect for an otherwise flimsy character, is that I gave up smoking cold turkey in 1954 after 18 years. Of course being with the Polio made me more health conscious than the average yokeh. To the derisive remarks of my friends: What do you want to do, live forever? I always answered, no just my allotted span. In any case, being able to give up smoking, has been important to me because of the discipline aspect if nothing else. End of digression - I hope.

Re mixing characters, I wonder if you have read Hotchner's Papa Hemingway. In this work, he actually says that Hadley was as much a part of the Lady Brett character as the actual lady drunk, Duff Twysden. Hadley had taken a shine to the bullfighter, had an ear (ugh) given to her and wrapped it in a handkerchief. Hotchner goes on to list four parts of the contessa in Across the River and Into the Trees. I never had any doubt that Hem drew up composite characters but had not considered the Hadley idea in connection with Marjorie until Bill Smith told me he had counseled Hem against Hadley rather than against you because she was so much older. But his memory is not nearly as vivid as yours, as neither is mine for that matter.

It is not too bad that someone found you, if you'll allow me to sass you wakk. I can see your feeling this way, from one point of view, but from another, it seems a natural denouement, somehow. I'm certainly grateful to Georgie for her plugging on my behalf at the beginning. Her doing this is so exactly opposite to what one would expect