

June 10, 1967

Dear Marge:

We are off to Venice for what will amount to a week so I will get off this little letter to keep in touch. We will leave Danny behind at his friend, the Scottish vet's kennels since tiring seems to travel him excessively. It will be a wrench for us but he will be in familiar surroundings at least and Dr. Bowler can keep his eye on Danny's condition. Lately he just hasn't had the zip of old although the aftermath of the operation itself seems normal, the healing good and firm, the pelt growing back. Our friend with the Italian husband will call the kennel from time to time to check on things.

I received a very nice and very long letter from the manager of Ernest's old favorite Venice haunt, The Gritti Palace hotel, and he is reserving a nice room for us although not, at my request, Ernest's old suite. I wouldn't have minded, I am just that corny, but the master's suite which he occupied, that is the suite of the master, costs \$80 a day not including 23 per cent tax and food. So you see every body has his price and I will be satisfied to see where he stayed and how his view jibes with his descriptions in ACROSS THE RIVER AND INTO THE TREES, which, I guess, I am one of the very few to have liked. The test is that it is readable now which many of the more favorably reviewed books of the same issuance are not. The manager has pledged me his assistance in checking on Hemingway lore and talking to Hemingway people, although I think I will skip that countess of whom he was supposedly writing in the above book. (She is supposed to have designed the dust jacket of same) We will also go to Torcello which was a favorite duck hunting place of the master's, and of course to Harry's Bar run by "Harry" Cipriano, a particularly good friend of Ernest's. But may I make the point that in all of this I am not really doing research. There are two me's (really more as you know), the research me and the simple Hemingway nut. In Venice I am simply being a Hemnut, having fun, not working. Ruth, who has been to Venice before, too briefly, is really looking forward to our trip on an overall basis, and has charted and planned to the nines; I hope I can stand the sked. Like Robert Frost I like to see beauty out of the corner of my eye without having it pointed out but this is a dream not to be enjoyed by the happy society of married men. And one does need planning of course.

It is now getting hot, too hot, I'm afraid. It gets so hot all the Italians clip their dogs, I mean all of them including shepherds. It is odd to see these little lions flitting around. And it is so hot that is why nobody stirs between 12.30 and about 4.30. Instead they all come back and work until 8:30. And it is so hot you can only walk your dog in the a.m. And it is so hot you keep your apartment shuttered tightly on the sun side and loosely on the shady side and kind of follow the sun around. But I make it sound horrid; it is not that bad. However, we have been invited to spend a couple of hot summer months in a castle in the abruzzi, run by a 77-year-old gal who once published Ernest (Caresse Crosby) She now runs World Man, a pacifist organization on Cypress. The real connection is that Caresse may let Ruth and her friend, Marianna Paladino, have the castle as the site of a fresco uncovering project hopefully to be undertaken by Franconia College (possibly in collaboration with other small colleges) The frescos were laid down on wet plaster 500 years ago by master pupils of Michel

Angelo. So. so.

I hope I will write you from Venice. We will see how that

I must mention the war. The war has, in effect, deprived me of a solid week of Rome, since I could have been in an attic anywhere keeping tabs of developments. I must say I don't understand my intense interest in that struggle, but I couldn't get enough of it. I struggled through the florid Italian pieces, the skimpy Rome Daily American pieces and listened as if my life depended on it to the Italian radio and tv and the barely decipherable voice of America on the short wave. Of course I am intensely pro Israel in all this and I had visions of this little country being smeared, or of a world war starting because we would not of course have permitted the elimination of Israel that Nasser demanded. Then, when the Israelis ran roughshod over the Arabs it was too thrilling because of the David and Goliath aspects and since these same two adversaries had been having at each other ON THE SAME GROUND since the Pharaohs and Hittites of the old testament. And the Arabs have the nerve to call the Jews preempters. The funny thing is that I can be as anti semitic as the next fellow on a joking or impetuous basis but it was entirely different when their existence was threatened. After all what would we do without the Jews to despise and make fun of and discriminate against and supply us with scientific knowledge? Now that the back bone of every Jew in the world has been straightened out they may lose some of their obnoxious traits and we will be forced to find new patsies. Which won't be easy. The Negroes and Italians and Pollocks are too numerous to serve comfortably in that role. But man will struggle out of this lack in some way I have no doubt.....Italy was very neutral officially during all the war. You know they recently changed to a position of criticizing our Viet Nam stance. But the people of ~~Romana~~ Rome and the newspapers were unmistakably in sympathy with the Jews. The tv's top announcer happens to be named Arrego Levi and he could hardly keep from busting his buttons as the Israelian hordes swept down like a wolf upon the Assyrians. I only hope now the fat nations don't try and take all that captured land away from the Jews. Imagine, Nasser threatened extermination of the Jews and loftily barred the bay of Aqaba, and now there is talk of Israel being too tough and of withdrawing back behind the old lines. Well, this thing may not have touched you and you may find me overinterested in this business. Perhaps I felt closer to the affair, but I doubt it. In any case, I report with shame that I was more entertained by the struggle than ~~my~~ I should have been.