

Villa La Costa
Firenze, Italia

March 1, 1950

Dear Ida:

Now that I have your itinerary I can see perfectly what is best for you to do. Alec and I shall then be in North Italy, and we'll pick you up by car (I have a fine Studebaker Champion now) at Como on July 25 or 26; you can have about 6 day with us, cruising thru the Alps, and we'll put you on a train to rejoin your party at Montreux or Geneva (not far apart) on Aug. 2. Expect for perhaps that one train fare, it will not cost you anything extra at all, and may not cost you that; perhaps you can get a ticket out of Mrs. Talbot, and a reduction; note that circular says "refund will be made to passengers if any saving effected; no refund for voluntary absence of less than 5 days" – but this will be more than 5.

Alec & I will have another villa late next fall, but all summer we shall be wandering freely, with my book all done, so we can, to above extent, fit your plan. This will be much better (and enormously cheaper) than trying to come before or stay after the tour-party, before they come, I shall be busy with my book (which is so vast a change in and improvement of Lucy Jade that you will not recognize it; even a different title). And after your party leaves, we shall be wandering wide and not want any other person with us, not even you, Mrs. Powers, or Harry Saint Vincent Truman.

Only necessary will be for us to have just where you will be in Como and Just when you'll arrive there – for sometimes tours can't retain planned schedule exactly. And you will have to have an exact address, for that time, for us.... These we shall arrange later: we'll probably communicate by telegraph & expresso fast letters after you reach Italy. That much later.

Yes, you are to fall in love with Alec but only for those 4-5-6-7 days, whatever term may work itself out. He is already married, with a wife in England, and while I have a hunch that he may be divorced some day, such females are often a nuisance..... and in a couple years, I hope he and I will be off to Parts Unknown, with no women along. So enjoy what ought to be idyllic – Italy, Alps, lakes, mountains, summer and don't try to make it that dreadful thing, a Solidly Established Life.

What you will see in Italy will more than make up for what you will miss in Switzerland – a glorious mountain country with rather dull people and villages; and if your fellow (i.e. rival) members of the tour boast of seeing what you have missed, you can boast of seeing what they have missed. The Italian Alps; the villages and lakes more charming.

I not wryly what you say about learning color photography. To me the damned nuisance in travelling is stopping to take photographs or waiting while other people take them – and always, you can buy professional photographic post cards much are much better than anything you can take ... oh well, all Americans do it, I note, and you are probably not to be dissuaded .. It's Alec Manson, not Mason.... I'm glad of your religious revival in Wmstown; it's a damn dull village

and needs some pleasant hysterical diversion – conversions or dope or assassinations, since no one there would ever be satisfied with quiet scholarship, learning, mature-mindedness.

We'll have a grand jaunt.

Ever
Red