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M. Rowdon, Esq.,  
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Dear Maurice,

Thank you very much for your letter. WAITING FOR MELLI sounds very interesting. I don't know of course how far you have got with it and simply on a few lines of description I might have got the whole thing wrong. I think I should, though, raise one faint warning noise. Whether we like it or not, the book trade is pretty conservative and is occasionally a bit reluctant to abandon its long held classifications. Novels are novels, autobiographies are autobiographies and travel books are travel books. A combination of these is apt to throw it into a state of jitters and dismay, from which the easiest way out is not to buy it. Of course any rule can be broken triumphantly if the book itself is outstanding enough, and I most certainly don't want to discourage you from breaking new ground and doing something original. I am just making warning noises in case we have to talk in much the same way when the manuscript arrives. If in fact the book is a personal record, might it not be simpler to make it just that and drop the fictional approach altogether? You may of course have perfectly valid reasons but what you have to say may well be of sufficient interest to stand on its own feet without being supported by a fictional prop.

The third volume of the Italian trilogy also sounds interesting, particularly in view of the reviews of the first two volumes. But the Gollancz angle raises a question in my mind. Are you allowed to offer it to us? The other point is a little delicate but I feel I know you well enough to be frank: has it in fact already been offered to Gollancz?

I am very glad about your two forthcoming books from Collins and Weidenfeld and I hope they are very successful. I do hope this letter does not sound over-cautious and discouraging - that is the last impression I want to make and I am keenly looking forward to the next manuscript from you. Any time you feel like a drink, do give me a ring.

Yours,

*Richard*

Richard Wadleigh

RW/ak  
cc: LAU  
CCML