

The Lost
By Julia Britton

CHARACTERS

CHRISTOPHER ISHERWOOD, British writer

BRITISH WRITER, CHRISTOPHER ISHERWOOD, AGED 35, DRESSED IN GREY FLANNELS, AN OVERCOAT WITH THE COLLAR TURNED UP AND A WOOLLEN SCARF. JANUARY 1939. ON BOARD FRENCH PASSENGER SHIP "CHAMPLAIN, MARSEILLES" SLOWLY APPROACHING NEW YORK DOCKS. LIGHT IS SEEN COMING FROM PORTHOLE, DOOR MARKED "SALOON". IT IS FOGGY. A SECTION OF RAIL - LIFEBELT IN BACKGROUND INSCRIBED WITH SHIP'S NAME.

ISHERWOOD: **(To audience)** The first landfall after a voyage has always a lonely detached feeling about it.
 You've left the known world behind and a strange life awaits you.
 The ship's engines stopped before dawn and the pilot came aboard in a tossing sea and bobbing lights.
 Now she's moving slow, slow, slow ahead towards New York docks.
 Mist and falling snow shroud the dim craft as she threads her way through and I can just make out the Statue of Liberty.
 She's standing like a giantess with a club on high, threatening me.
 No wind and an inky calm sea and snow's falling gently on my face.

FOG HORNS SOUND HOLLOW AND SAD.

It will be an hour at least before we dock. Out on the high- seas time stops.
 I love this word, "high-seas" - where the only bird you see is the albatross.
 A rough, wintry crossing- none of the frantic frolics of the P&O passenger liners - only Auden, Wylan that is, belting out old tunes on the ship's piano!

IN THE BACKGROUND WE HEAR PIANO MUSIC: "ALWAYS." WE HEAR HIM SING, A UNCERTAIN TENOR. ISHERWOOD LISTENS FOR A MOMENT, SMILING.

I've had plenty of time to think – too much.
 A year ago today, January the nineteenth, nineteen thirty- eight,
 Wystan and I saw New York for the first time.
 I'm superstitious I believe in anniversaries so I booked on this
 ship because she left Marseilles exactly a year later.
 It was very different then.
 Looking out of the train at Penn Station at a bevy of pressmen,
 fans, friends - cameras flashing as we stood on the step with
 our baggage.
 Wystan's arm 'round my shoulders.
 I smiled into all the cameras.
 He stared back insolently.
 Then endless parties, receptions, interviews with the "two
 young radical English writers hot from reporting the Sino-
 Japanese war."
 A kind of trance - where I just stopped thinking...
 It was our war.
 No one else was bothering much about it.
 The Spanish Civil War was still "all the thing".
 There were endless questions to answer.
 Questions without answers.
 My life's been a series of self-questioning.
 All my writing's self-exploration.
 I began one of my stories with: "I am a camera, with it's shutter
 open, quite passive, recording, not thinking, recording the man
 shaving at the window opposite and the woman in the kimono,
 washing her hair - someday they will be developed, carefully
 printed, fixed".
 Critics labeled me an impersonal observer I was never that.
 All I meant was that for once, that morning, I was in an unusual
 mood -
 No, I've got to be part of the action.
 If I'm a camera, it's one of these new ones that Stephen
 Spender has, where he sets it up, presses a button, then
 rushes into the picture, grinning...
 And now in the mist, I have this same feeling of being cut off
 from life, approaching an unknown coastline.
 And I look at it dispassionately - no hope, no dreams, for I've
lost Heinz, my lover of five years, *lost* him to the bloody Nazis.
 Of course I have a good excuse for leaving England.
 I've been invited to write scripts for Hollywood - the chance of a
 lifetime - or is it?

Spender says I'm selling out.
 He doesn't understand. I like being vulgar – well sometimes. It
 feels good to plunge my hands into the muck-bucket.
 There are other reasons too.
 I actually am a pacifist!
 Surprising enough since I'm also the son of a long-dead war
 hero.
 I asked myself this question: if I had the choice would I sacrifice
 a million men so Heinz could live?
 The answer is a fast: "Yes!"
 And when it comes down to it, I believe every single man in that
 dead million is a "Heinz" to someone.
 In New York my host asked if there was anything I wanted and I
 said: "One thing - a beautiful blond boy.
 He doesn't have to be intelligent, but he must have long sexy
 legs and a lovely smile!"
 I was half-joking of course, but the vision materialized!
 Resourceful people - these Americans.
 But that won't happen this time.
 We're not popular now.
 The English press has made that crystal clear.
 There are bound to be some awkward questions like: "Are we
 running away from the threat of war?"
 "Is there really going to be a war?"
 Oh well, we'll just try to be honest.
 Wystan and I *both* feel convinced that war is certain to come,
 after Chamberlain's umbrella dance around Adolf Hitler...

(Calls) Wystan!

Wystan!

Where are you?

Come and cheer me up!

(To himself) Are we doing the right thing?

(In WYSTAN'S voice, quietly) Probably not...

(In normal voice) What is the right thing, anyhow?

Don't expect too much Christopher.

(To WYSTAN) I don't.

(In WYSTAN'S voice) Someone said to me: "In New York you'll
 find sympathy in the dictionary and everything else at the
 nearest drug store

(He laughs) God! this ship looks like a wedding cake!
 I'm going back in where it's warm, Christopher...

(To audience) His scruffy overcoat was buttoned to the neck and his face reddened by the cold.

He once said his face was like a wedding cake left out in the rain.

Very good description, actually.

Wedding cakes seem part of his imagery.

And once, of course, he had one!

He married, by default, really.

He married Erika.

The writer Thomas Mann's daughter.

She had a revue going in Berlin which offended the Nazis.

She had to get out fast and she needed a British passport.

She asked me to marry her.

I would have, of course, but there was Heinz to be considered.

Would he understand?

Knowing him, I thought probably not!

I contacted Wylan in England.

He wired back: "Delighted.

Stop.

What are buggers for?

Stop."

Of course I'd known Wylan as a child – went to the same prep school - a fat, podgy boy, frowning with short sight- a thatch of straw hair.

But I'd *lost* track of him till I met him again ten years later- by this time he was at Oxford and I was at Cambridge.

That's when we... we became lovers and we've stayed like that, off and on, ever since.

We're like an old married couple who've grown to tolerate each other's affairs and are so sure of each other that we can spend happy hours discussing and dissecting our intimate details, offering each other advice - and consoling each other for any disappointments!

With Wylan it isn't and never was a passionate affair - but always pleasurable and satisfying.

You see neither of us felt comfortable with lovers of our own class.

For me they had to be sexy and sensuous with beautiful bodies - and that was all - so far - at least.

And working class, or foreign, preferably both.

Intellect was never part of the deal - not even honesty!.

But all this changed when I had Heinz in Berlin.

He's still there.

Still in Germany, in spite of all my efforts to get him out.

I'll probably never see him again... and if in the years to come I do find him again, what would he be like?

Imprisonment by the Nazis and forced service in Hitler's armies would surely make him a different person.
Unrecognisable as the old Heinz!

(Calls) Wystan!
Wystan!
Come back...

Come back, do you hear me?
(To himself) I want to talk to you!

(To audience) He put his head out of the doorway briefly and said...

(In WYSTAN'S voice) It's too bloody cold!
My corns are bloody killing me.
Why don't you come in here where it's warm?
More or less.
Whisky!
Don't you want a whisky?

(To audience) Wystan swung back the heavy polished door of the companionway and... **(looks around)** disappeared!
I looked at the engraved glass panels and the shining brass.
Another door was closing.
It seemed like the door separating my life in Europe from this new life.
I knew there was no going back.
I've always been superstitious.
I went to a fortune-teller before I sailed.
She told me I'd be "going over the water and there I'd meet the one I had awaited all my life."
I'm waiting to see if her prognostications will come true.
In the meantime I intend to write a book, about myself and others who have the same dilemmas as I do...
To tell my own story as honestly and as objectively as I can.
I'll write it in the third person about 'Christopher' - not about 'me'.
And there won't be much about my childhood - even now that's too remote.
It will be about my life and my relationships until this hour, this moment - when I'm standing here, looking though the mist
Perhaps when I've written it, I'll have found the one I hope to dedicate it to...

LIGHT CHANGE.

I learned most of what I know about myself in Germany – Berlin, to be specific.

Wystan had been to Germany and was loud in its praises.

I began to think of Germany as an escape - from Kathleen, my mother, who wanted me to be a university don - Oxford, preferably - but I only lasted a year at Cambridge.

Then came an abortive career in medicine, fuelled by the fire on has when young of service to humanity.

I remember watching a man's leg being amputated.

I wasn't shocked, in a way I was fascinated - it seemed like a fantasy world.

But quite clearly I needed to escape, from any career that Kathleen saw as appropriate to my station in life.

Escape too, from my father, long dead, but still the dominant influence in the family.

Major General Frank Isherwood, DSO, MC, killed on the Somme, leading his men, though wounded.

Missing in action until finally the body was found.

Our home, Wybersleigh Hall, was a shrine to his memory.

He stood and fought.

Strong, my age!

I was running away...

His eyes were always fixed on me – looking steadfastly from the sepia photograph over the fireplace.

I had considered the final escape - suicide.

I even bought a Browning automatic pistol and looked at it uncertainly.

Never one to make up my own mind, I went round to a friend from my Repton days...

(In a FRIEND'S voice) Have you got the weapon, Christopher?

(To the FRIEND) Yes, A Browning .22.

(In a FRIEND'S voice) That should be adequate.

Loaded?

Know how to fire it?

(To the FRIEND) Oh yes, it's just that I don't know which part of my anatomy to point it at.

I don't want to make a mess of it, like the fellow we rescued in Cambridge.

(In a FRIEND'S voice) Yes.

I forget his name.
 Only managed to blow his ear off.
 Blood and bits all over the taxi.
 Amateur, really.

(To the FRIEND, demonstrating) Like this?

(In a FRIEND'S voice) No, no...
 Through the mouth.
 Back of the soft palate, if you can manage it.

(To the FRIEND) Yes, well thanks.

(In a FRIEND'S voice) Care for a drink first?
 Pour a libation, as it were?

(To the FRIEND) No thanks.

(In a FRIEND'S voice) Anything I can do?
 Last letter or anything?

(To the FRIEND) No thank you.
 I'd... er... better get going.

(To audience) Of course I'd *hoped* he'd be *shocked*, plead with me.
 I went home, practised once or twice, then put the gun away.
 Germany seemed a better option.
 There was, of course the problem of how to live there.
 I had a very small allowance from Kathleen.
 And as for writing - I'd had my first book published - the one I wrote at
 Cambridge - but so far it had only sold five, *five* copies.
(Smiles widely) But there was always my old Uncle Henry...
 I was his heir.
 So I thought he might help me.
 I went along to his flat in town...

(To UNCLE HENRY) I thought perhaps you might think of letting me have a bit of cash - I mean from what I'll inherit later on.
 We do have a few things in common, you know.

(In UNCLE HENRY'S voice) You mean the family?

(To UNCLE HENRY) No.

I mean our tastes... certain aspects of our private lives.

(In UNCLE HENRY'S voice) Cheeky bounder, aren't you?

Never mind my lad, I was much the same at your age.

Always pestering my father, always...

(To UNCLE HENRY) I want to go to Germany.

Wystan tells me things are far freer in Berlin and lots of young blond boys, willing, I mean, just waiting to... to...

(In UNCLE HENRY'S voice) Buggers Happy Hunting Ground!

(To UNCLE HENRY, laughing) Yes.

(In UNCLE HENRY'S voice) I see your point dear boy,

But of course that wouldn't suit me.

Brute strength, that's the ticket.

Guardsmen six-footers - nothing to touch them.

You should see Reginald - he's what I call a tearer, a regular tearin' bugger, don't you know?

The rougher the buggers are the better they are.

I paid Ernie - he's a groom - five quid not to wash for a month.

Smelt like a bloody fox - delicious.

(Laughs) Berlin, is it?

(To UNCLE HENRY) Yes, Uncle Henry...

(In UNCLE HENRY'S voice, waving his hands) A varitable den of vice.

But I much prefer Rome, dear boy - all those parties and orgies and...

And old Mussolini, good fellow, that, keeps the rabble down and make the trains run on time.

Well, dear boy, I think I might be able to rally to the cause.

(To UNCLE HENRY) Thank you Uncle Henry!

You're a damn good sport!

(To audience) He waved his manicured hands and his rings flashed.

I caught a whiff... **(Sniffs)** a whiff of scent.

(In UNCLE HENRY'S voice. Gestures with index finger)

But on one condition!

You must tell me all about your sexual adventures!

Details, boy...

I want to hear all the intimate details!

(To audience) It seemed a *small* price to pay for an allowance that made me independent.

Also I enjoyed the idea of embroidering on the facts to entertain him.

Wystan was in England tutoring a handsome young boy in some ancestral mansion.

I met him when he came to town to see his publishers...

(In WYSTAN'S voice) Of course you must go to Berlin!

Christopher, listen...

There are a hundred and seventy boy-bars in Berlin!

(To WYSTAN) That's enough!

(Eager) When can we leave?

(In WYSTAN'S voice) I tell you, there's no where like it.

This is where all one's fantasies turn to reality.

There's one bar, the "Cosy Corner"

(To WYSTAN) The "Cosy Corner"?

(In WYSTAN'S voice) Yes, it's in the Hellensches Tor, a working class district.

The young men are mostly juvenile delinquents.

They're quite willing to offer their... services for a couple of quid or even a present.

(To WYSTAN) It's sounds wonderful.

(In WYSTAN'S voice) I fucked a delightful a boy there called Pieps - a sort of cross between Josephine Baker and a rugger player.

I mean he's incredibly sensuous, and slim but tough.

Great wrestler.

Usually leaves me black and blue.

You liked boxing and all that at Repton, didn't you?

(To WYSTAN) It all sounds like good material for writing.

(In WYSTAN'S voice) Absolutely right!
 All you have to do is keep a diary.
 But don't just sit there taking notes, Christopher!
 Get into the swing.
 You'll lose all your inhibitions and actually enjoy yourself.
 I can't get there yet.
 I've got to finish revising for my publisher and save some
 money.
 Don't wait for me.
 Go ahead.
 You can stay with Francis!

(To WYSTAN, surprised) Francis?
 Who's Francis?

(In WYSTAN'S voice) Francis Turville-Petre - Oxford, classics,
 you remember...
 Brilliant man - got a first- seemed to have a great future in
 archaeology.
 But that's over.
 He's completely *lost*.
 Drinking himself to death, fucks all the boys - but he'll take you
 around.

(To audience) So in Germany... I found Francis - in his rooms
 at the Hirschfield Institute.
 This was the world centre for the study of sexual perversity, run
 by Dr. Magnus Hirschfield, a Baltic Jew, with a worldwide
 reputation for advanced research into the sexology of
 obsession.
 It seemed a good topic for a letter to old Uncle Henry.

LIGHT CHANGE.

(In a combination of V/O and live reading) "Dear Uncle
 Henry, You'd really enjoy this place.
 It's a mansion which once belonged the famous violinist -
 Joseph Joachim - classic, marble pillars, all that.
 You can almost hear Brahms.
 Actually there is a good musician there now.
 Jewish.

VIOLIN MUSIC: “BEETHOVEN MINUET IN G”.

Concert violinist.

He used to play with the Griller.

The inscription over the door reads: "Sacred to Love and to Sorrow" – which about sums it all up.

The professor took me on a tour of the institute this morning. He's written some books you might find interesting, one on transvestites.

And I saw some noteworthy freaks including one dark young man

I think he might have been an Arab - with perfect female breasts.

Apparently he had developed these in adolescence and was quite proud of them.

He was slim and handsome, with fine black eyes and long lashes

and had sizeable genital development, which he was quite keen to demonstrate.

I was amazed that most of them seemed keen on revealing themselves.

Like the Prussian officer who wears red lace knickers and walks down the street flashing them.

Hirschfield is the greatest expert on homosexuality.

He's the absolute prototype of the German-Jewish professor, ill fitting suit, he peers at you over bifocals and smiles benignly at his patients who obviously love him.

He's playing a little game with the Communists, because they're the only ones who tolerate homosexuals legally - in Germany he's outside the law, but no one seems to mind so far, except the Nazis who are very strong against it.

Hitler says: "Homosexuals must be stamped out!

Germany needs men who are virile if we are to fight for survival!"

Hirschfield's been attacked by these bully boys –once he had skull fractured and the other time was kicked unconscious and left for dead.

One good thing, there's no problem about bringing boys back for the night".

(To audience) I went on to describe a whole freaks' gallery some real, but most invented and felt I'd earned my first month's allowance.

MUSIC ON GRAMOPHONE OF A POPULAR SONG OF THE LATE 20's RENATE MULLER SINGING: “ICH BIN HEUTE SICH WIERCHLICH” (“SUNSHINE SUZI”).

Francis took me on a tour of his favourite boys' bars last night and I'm still reeling with the experience.

But I didn't stay out till morning as he did, because I have to get on with my novel.

That's what I'm here for – mostly.

(Checking his diary pages) Wystan arrives tomorrow... and I'll meet him at the Zoo Station.

I can't wait to see the "Cosy Corner."

Well, I hadn't long to wait.

It was in what had once been a grand old building.

We climbed up a flight of dark stairs to a double swing door with elaborate handles.

Wystan pushed them open and said...

(In WYSTAN'S voice) Ecce Elysium!

(To audience) It was a big space with ornamental plaster cornices and a high decorative ceiling.

A gust of hot stale air met us.

The boys sat around small tables drinking and... and...

Several looked us up and down and then looked away.

We made for the bar and ordered drinks.

The bar was embellished with photographs of boxers and racing cyclists.

A few small silver trophies were on a shelf and some pennants hung from a bracket.

WITH TWO DRINKS.

(To WYSTAN) So what's the first move?

(In WYSTAN'S voice) Don't be in a hurry!

Have your drink and look as though you're not interested.

(To WYSTAN) And if I am?

(In WYSTAN'S voice) Mark your young man and go up to his table and ask him to... to... you know?

Dance...

(To WYSTAN) Just that?

(In WYSTAN'S voice) Just that.

Bow to his partner politely and ask if you may have the pleasure of a...

If he says "yes", then you dance and when it's over return him to his table and bow once more.

(To WYSTAN) You make it sound like a church social in Marple!

(In WYSTAN'S voice) It is.

It's quite formal.

But if you're attracted - you can say so while you're dancing.

You can invite him to the lavatory and have a good inspection of the merchandise; or slip your hand into his trouser pocket - they all have slit pockets for the purpose, so long as you do this under the table.

But whatever you do don't get sentimental.

Never mention the word "love" or they'll get bored.

Remember you're paying for their bodies not their souls.

Most of them have wives or girlfriends they live with anyhow...

(To WYSTAN) That boy over there...

Wystan!

The blond one by the door, combing his hair.

He *looks* a dream!

(In WYSTAN'S voice) Where?!

(To WYSTAN) There!

(In WYSTAN'S voice) Yes and doesn't he know it!

Don't watch him, Christopher.

Wait till he sits down or joins the card players, then make your move.

(To audience) The first few nights I just... danced.

I got the reputation of being hard to get, which did me no harm.

I observed the boys closely and took a few notes for future reference.

The boys all seemed well-built and physically fit, and took great care of themselves.

Berlin, in the halcyon days of the Weimar Republic was a haven of hedonism - the calm before a storm.

The police don't do much except make a few desultory raids.

Of course it's the golden age of German youth.

The cult of the body is at its height.

Money's scarce, so they turn to nature and the sun.

Thousands of people go to the open-air baths, or lie on the banks of lakes and rivers, nude or almost nude, soaking in the sun and baking themselves to a tanned mahogany.

We took trips to the countryside and lay in the meadows, in a sweet dream of caresses.

I watched Wystan's wrestling bouts with a few of his favourites.

Physical force seems to excite young Germans.

They like this aggression and attempt at domination, even when they get the worst of it.

Perhaps it's a sadistic trait - or perhaps just that male aggression has its own attraction.

A friend of Francis, who came with us, took off his leather belt and tried a large lashing which was laughingly received by his beaming young partner.

Hirschfield, who assessed all comers to the Institute, put me down as "infantile" and wanting to return to childhood and adolescent feelings of attraction to school friends, especially sports' heroes.

I think he's right.

This muscular play certainly excited me - in fact it was the best isometric exercise I'd ever had.

Then after my initiation, I met Bubi.

Bubi was blond and had a detached dreamy look in his blue eyes.

He was sun tanned from swimming naked in the rivers and he wanted a friend and protector.

We spent our days touring the city, making love, going to pictures and making love again.

It was my first German Boy.

I was enraptured.

In spite of Wystan's warning I wanted to possess him.

He was beautiful and he was delicious.

If we'd been savages it would have been simple - I'd have eaten him.

One gesture endeared me to Bubi...

I had an acne scar on my right shoulder which sprouted hair.

I was always a bit self-conscious about it.

But Bubi caressed and kissed it.

It was a benediction.

After that I didn't mind taking off my shirt.

Then one day Bubi disappeared.

He was wanted by the police.

He'd escaped over the border to Amsterdam.

Wystan and I went to Holland and found him.

But he was set on leaving Germany - perhaps wisely as it turned out.

He'd got himself on to a boat going to the Argentine, working as a steward.

I held him close and felt the old surge of warmth.

But he seemed away in another world.
 He gave me this bracelet, not valuable but I'll wear it.
 So back we went to the city, to Berlin...
 Wystan had numerous relationships happening, none of them
 permanent, of course.
 So all in all, I've plenty of material for old Uncle Henry.
 - and for my book...

RETURNS TO THE BOAT RAIL.

(To WYSTAN) Stop pacing up and down.
 You make me feel nervous - in and out of the mist.

(In WYSTAN'S voice) I'm not pacing!
 I just came up to see what's going on.
 The bloody ship's nearly stopped.

(To WYSTAN) I was just thinking about the old Hirschfield and
 his inmates.

(In WYSTAN'S voice) For God's sake - *why?*

(To WYSTAN) Just wondering what happened to them all.

(In WYSTAN'S voice) You should know.
 You were there.
 I was in Iceland with Louis McNiece.

(To WYSTAN) All I knew was that the Nazis sacked the place.
 Smashed and tore everything down – burned his library, an
 absolutely priceless collection - all his research.
 I suppose they dragged the patients off to a concentration camp.
 I never heard of any of them again.
 Luckily Hirschfield was in Switzerland.
 Still is - as far as I know...

(In WYSTAN'S voice) Well, Christopher, I'll leave you to your
 reflections...

LIGHT CHANGE. CHRISTOPHER USES A TYPEWRITER.

(To audience) I'm writing a bit now about the Berlin bars –
 unique in their time!
 One month when Uncle Henry didn't send my allowance, I wrote
 him a graphic account to revive his interest.

(Reads) “Of course, there are better known bars where tourists congregate. These put up a great show of vice for heterosexuals - the bands are better and the decor more outrageous. The boys dress up in drag, made up with plenty of lipstick and rouge - and wigs sometimes. And the girls prance around in dinner jackets with monocles on black velvet ribbons. Of course they *all* have the fashionable Eton Crops. Most of this is a charade of degeneracy which tourists love to watch and photograph. You see, Paris has all the great cabaret singers at the “Moulin Rouge” and Les Girls at the “Follies Bergeres” - so Berlin has to offer some competition. Last week Francis and I went to a costume ball for men. You’d have enjoyed this. It’s a big annual affair held in a famous ballroom. I went as a sailor boy and Francis got himself up in a ball gown, very slinky, blood red satin and rather tight. What with his long legs and high-heeled shoes he looked quite striking - and attracted a lot of attention, some unwelcome. You’ve seen the film star, Conrad Veidt? He’s been in several pictures about queers – well, he was there – very elegant in tails and monocle, with that severe, sensual mouth of his. He didn’t dance, but sat aloof with friends - waving his long ebony cigarette holder languidly... Well, Uncle Henry... That’s enough for tonight, I think.”

(To audience) There’s a lot more I could say about politics and the Nazis - but I know that Uncle isn’t interested in any of that!

SWITCHES OFF THE READING LAMP.

But disrupting the idyllic picture of the Berlin days was the shadow of Hitler and his Nazis, who are steadily gaining votes. There were clashes in the streets - and violent ones between the police and the Communists, and between the Brown Shirts and the Communists. I keep away meetings and rallies but last week in this very street I saw some shocking brutality. I was walking along the Nollendorfstrasse and met a band of Nazis coming back from a political rally. They still had the banners they’d been waving, rolled up with spikes on the end. They suddenly turned on a man who was staring at them.

"That's him!" one shouted.
 And they attacked him.
 They knocked him into the gutter and lunged at him with their
 spiked banners.
 One stabbed him in the eye.
 I doubt if he'd ever see through that eye again.
 A small, curious group gathered to watch - and on the corner
 three policemen stood, fully armed, watching idly.
 I made a note of that in my diary.
 One day there will be a big flare up here, that is certain.
 After Bubi things were different.
 I began to realize how precious and transient things are...
 It was a sobering thought.
 But then there was Otto.
 Otto began as a diversion but became a delight.
 I still have his photograph somewhere.
 He's sixteen: he's incapable of affection or loyalty, though in a
 superficial way he needs me and knows it.
 He and his current "friend" joined some of us on a visit to
 Ruegen Island.
 He loved the naked swimming and football, but tired of fucking
 his friend.
 He left him sitting up at night while he went off to join a group of
 girls at the local dance hall.
 He is quite arrogant and exploitive, of course – a skilled fuck.
 But he has charm and the bloom of youth.
 I made my usual notes: **(Reads)** "Otto has a face like a very
 ripe peach.
 His hair is thick, like his penis and he has small sparkling eyes
 and a disarming grin - much too innocent to be true.
 He moves fluidly, effortlessly with the unconscious grace of a
 cruel, elegant animal..."
(To audience) I suppose his main attraction is his... well...
 energy - his immense zest for life - for eating, for fucking,
 anything that doesn't entail work.
 He loves watching movies - me too!
 Once, watching a picture about a psychotic killer he said...

(In OTTO'S voice with German accent) Thank God,
 Christoph, that we're both normal!

(To audience) Back in Berlin, Otto asked me to live with him.
 His mother has tuberculosis and needs the money.

(In OTTO'S voice, cheekily) It would be *fun* to be together,
 Christoph.

ISHERWOOD PICKS UP A SMALL SUITCASE AND MOVES TO ANOTHER AREA.

(Looking up) I stood in the street looking up at a tenement building.

Otto's family lived on the fifth floor in the attics.

I climbed up and...

(He knocks) Otto's mother opened the door and as I pushed it open to get my case inside I nearly knocked a frying pan off the stove.

The kitchen was so small it seemed crowded with just the two of us.

No where to relax.

Just room for beds.

If I want to relieve myself before sleeping, I have to grope my way through the dark living-room, trying not to jolt the Nowaks' bed, or knock into the furniture.

Or wake Grete and Lothar, his brother and sister who share a bed.

Then I have to creep through the kitchen and down a flight of stairs to the lavatory used by four flats.

The first night I wakened Frau Nowak who whispered...

(In FRAU NOWAK'S voice in German accent) Herr Christoph!

There's a bucket by the stove.

Use that!

Lothar does!

(To audience) Lothar's in the Hitlerjugend.

That's no surprise, for it's mainly from the down and out that Hitler and his gang draw their supporters.

He thinks I'm a degenerate foreigner, which I suppose I am.

I gave Frau Nowak some money and she bought a huge amount of potatoes and a pig's head and heaped my plate.

I don't suppose you've heard of this delicacy - it's sheep's or is it cow's lungs?

(Taking books under his arm) I'm going to start my English lessons soon.

I've three pupils lined up, and fortunately I'll be going to their houses for the lessons.

LIGHT CHANGE.

I suppose I'm weak, but a month at the Nowaks was as much as I could take.

I began looking for another room and found a good one on the Nollendorfstrasse.

Then one day, unexpectedly, Otto came to see me.

I knew something was wrong.

He smiled and hesitated, then said...

(In OTTO's voice) Christoph, I have met a very nice girl. She's in the B'madchen.

(To OTTO) I suppose you're in love with her?

(In OTTO's voice) Yes, Christoph.

I am sorry.

(To audience) What I could say?

It had to happen one day.

(To OTTO. He takes off his wristwatch) Here!

A present to remember me by...

(To audience) He kissed me so gently, so tenderly...

I felt a sudden wave of despair... blank despair.

The warmth of his body, the smell of his hair.

But I smiled a Repton smile – a defeated cricket captain smile and watched him walk jauntily down the street.

Was she waiting around the corner?

(He turns to look) I almost felt she was.

(He turns back) So I turned back to my novel - that was the only thing I could do.

As soon as I moved to Fraulein Thurau's I felt an instant rapport with the place.

This place is all I imagined of Berlin - heavy oak furniture, and tall tiled stove in the corner, the wash stand's like a Gothic shrine.

Then there's a huge cupboard with stained glass windows.

On one there's the King of Prussia and the other Bismark.

And there, look on the mantelpiece - a little silverplate dolphin supporting a gilt clock on its flicked up tail.

There's Bobby, the barman upstairs and Ingrid, an old made-up actress who walks the streets at night.

Then in the room at the top is Fraulein Kost with frizzy blonde hair and usually seen in a scarlet Chinese dressing gown.

She entertains a few men discreetly at night, and Fraulein Thureau turns a blind eye.

Characters!

Characters!

Enough to fill a novel, or half a dozen stories!

Of course, I have to live, and as usual old Uncle Henry's cheque is late.

But there's enough to pay Fraulein Thureau.

I've already documented her in my notes.

She spells "Berlin" for me - and I don't want to lose any nuance.

(Reads) "All day long she goes padding about the large dingy flat.

Shapeless but alert, she waddles from room to room, in carpet slippers and a flowered dressing-gown, pinned ingeniously together, so that not an inch of petticoat or bodice is to be seen, flicking with her duster, peeping, spying, poking her short pointed nose into the cupboards and luggage of her lodgers. She has dark, bright, inquisitive eyes and pretty waved brown hair, of which she is proud.

She must be about... fifty.

She had once owned the whole flat - but inflation and rising prices had eaten up her small resources and now every room was let - even her own bed-sitting room.

She now sleeps in the living room at night, on an old brocade sofa.

This makes it difficult for her tenants to use the lavatory at night, as they have to go through her room.

Already I've started teaching my students.

Fortunately it's fashionable to learn English here.

Some students want to read things like Huxley in the original - one's learning for business purposes, and Hippi Bernstein, who's due to come now, just fancies the idea of learning English and enjoys talking to me.

So long as she pays me, I don't complain.

But I always feel as though I'm cheating her.

Hippi is plump, with a mass of curly chestnut hair and a well-formed bust.

Her family lives in the Grunewald, a millionaire's district, in a house protected by security fences and savage dogs.

It's an architect's dream - a cubist steel and glass box - full of expensive decor and minimalist sculpture.

Sometimes. I give lessons there and lunch with the family.

Hippi usually brings me food - fruit or chocolate.

My first lesson with Hippi went something like this...

(In HIPPI'S voice, with a German accent) Why you come to Germany, Herr Christoph?

(To HIPPI) It's a very interesting country - politics, the economy and so on...

(In HIPPI'S voice) You know some nice girls?

(To HIPPI) Yes, well, there's one who lives **(points upwards)** upstairs.

(In HIPPI'S voice) I don't see her when I come.

(To HIPPI) She's usually asleep, Hippi.

(In HIPPI'S voice) Do you not know no nice students?

(To HIPPI) *Some* students... and say "*Don't*" in conversation.

(In HIPPI'S voice) *Don't* **(pause)** Yes?
Don't you think some English girls more nice than German girls?

(To HIPPI) *Nicer than ...*

(In HIPPI'S voice) Don't you not eat some fruit and some chocolate?

Why?

(To audience) I was beginning to understand a little about Germany.

I watched the Berlin scene and wrote my stories.

And here... at Fraulein Thureau's I met *Jean...*

Jean Ross!

She was nineteen then, but I thought she was twenty-five at least.

She was slim and moved with an easy grace.

She had a long oval face, very pale and powdered white.

Dark waved hair, a shade darker than her eyes, which were very large and brown, under pencilled eyebrows.

Very sophisticated looking - at first glance anyway.

Under all this Jean was fairly naive.

She had on a slinky black silk frock with a tiny cape and one of those jaunty little pill-box hats a bit to one side.

(He holds up his hands) She had beautiful hands, **(looks at his finger nails)** with bright emerald green fingernails, rather

long and predatory and smoked thin black cigarettes with silver tips incessantly.

(He reclines on a sofa) Her favourite pose was to lie stretched out on a sofa, anybody's sofa would do, or to curl up in an easy chair with a fair show of silk stockinged legs, **(kicks off shoes)** kicking off her small, high-heeled shoes.

Jean's aim was to be as seductive as possible to as many men as possible, and by and large she succeeded.

Most of her conquests seemed to slip away into the shadows.

Her lovers were either *fabulously* rich or about to become famous film directors - they were all, it seemed, bent on launching Jean in the movies.

But at the crucial moment they had the habit of folding their tents like Arabs and stealing *noiselessly* away leaving fading bouquets and half-eaten boxes of chocolates.

And of course, memories of *extravagant* dinners at the Adlon Hotel, followed by passionate sessions in Jean's gloomy room.

Jean provided me with *endless* entertainment and the best story of my book - "Goodbye to Berlin".

But there was only one consistent thing about Jean and that was her unpredictability.

Her first words to me were...

(In JEAN ROSS'S voice) Can I use your telephone sweet?

(To audience) And she then proceeded to have an intimate conversation with some man, interspersing her dialogue with "liebling" or "du Schwein".

Jean always addressed people as "Du" - she seemed incapable of learning the second person plural.

I made as if to retreat to the kitchen but she said....

(In JEAN ROSS'S voice) Don't leave me alone with Kaspar - he's so passionate, he'd seduce me over the telephone!

(To audience) So I watched her pursing up her brilliant cherry lips and practically kissing the mouthpiece and cooing...

(In JEAN ROSS'S voice, speaking into telephone) "Hilloo!

Was wollen wir machen Morgen Abend?

Oh wie wunderbar, libeling...

Nein, nein, Kaspar ich werde bleiben zu Hause Heute Abend.

(She puts her hand over the receiver and whispers to CHRISTOPHER) That's the man I slept with last night.

He's *absolutely* gorgeous.

He makes love *marvellously*, *fabulously* rich.

A whiz at business, too."

(Speaking back into the telephone receiver) Wierkliche, lieblich ...
Ya, ya fabelhaft.
Wiederseh'n, sweet..."

HANGS UP THE RECEIVER PLEASED.

(To audience) They were all like that - at first anyhow.

Jean picked most of her lovers up at the 'Lady Windermere' just off the Tauentzeinstrasse, a sleazy area, a sort of imitation Montparnasse.

She pressed me to come and see her and I went with Spender who was in Berlin at the time.

We wandered into the 'Windermere' about midnight and there was Jean standing on a platform with a beautiful blond young man playing nostalgic songs on a grand piano. Overhead was a huge illuminated fan which was the trademark of the place.

She stood relaxed with her hands hanging limp singing in a husky expressionless voice.

She sang in English, which was popular, but sometimes... in French and very poor German.

LIGHTS DIM. CABERET EFFECTS.THE FAN LIGHTS ON AND OFF. JEAN SINGS: "BODY AND SOUL". WE HEAR LIMP APPLAUSE AND A FEW CALLS OF 'ENCORE'.

She swept to our table, embraced us both quickly and went off with an elderly gentleman and sat drinking champagne.

Jean was no singer, but her casual air and nonchalant stance gave her performances a *certain* style.

We saw a lot of each other.

She knew about my boys and I consoled her when her lovers left her.

She told me she'd come to Berlin to get work with Ufa Film Productions but she never managed to do it so far.

Fraulein Thureau loved her.

She'd never seen anyone like Jean before.

When I took her around, Fraulein Thureau brought out her best china and served us a dainty tea with little coconut cakes and paper serviettes with perforated edges like lace.

I asked Fraulein once how she liked Jean...

(In FRAULEIN THURAU'S voice, with German accent) Oh, Herr Issyvoo she is a real lady.

So elegant - real English society.

I never thought you'd have a lady-friend like that, Herr Issyvoo. Never.

(To audience) Jean's *favourite* drink was the Prairie Oyster which she prepared herself and pressed on me whenever I felt the need for comfort, or nourishment.

(In JEAN ROSS'S voice) It's so simple.
You just take an egg and break it into a glass, like this - look.
Then you add Worcester sauce, not too much, and pepper and salt and stir it.

(To audience, as he does it) She took my fountain pen and swirled it 'round.

(In JEAN ROSS'S voice) Try it, darling...
Isn't it wonderful?

(She swallowed hers fast) That'll get me through till I go to "The Windermere".

(To audience) Then Jean found Clive.
He was American and lived at the Adlon Hotel.

(In JEAN ROSS'S voice) Darling, you *simply* must meet him.
He's *divine* and *madly* rich.
He's crazy about me and I *absolutely* dote on him.
Clive wined and dined us *and...* **(Winks)** well... you know what I mean...

(Changes subject) He sent his Mercedes around for us every day.

He was planning to take us on a world cruise to Egypt, China, South American, the West Indies - everywhere.

But one day this rich and passionate American... disappeared.
Jean went to the Adlon to lunch only to find his room empty.

(Opening the envelope) He left a small white envelope for her...

(In CLIVE'S voice with American accent) For Chris *and* you, with love – Clive...

(To audience) Just that.
Enclosed inside was five hundred marks!

(In JEAN ROSS'S voice) A pair of gold-diggers aren't we?

(Nods, then to audience) Jean took her two hundred to buy some clothes.

The other two hundred and fifty came in handy later.
We blew fifty on a dinner.

Then went on to... **(a la Russian voice)** "The Troika".
But we didn't enjoy it much.

(Pause) Next it was Klaus, the blond pianist with the wavy hair
and beautiful hands, who played for her at the bar...

(In JEAN ROSS'S voice) Have you got a cigarette, Chris,
darling?

(To audience, sitting on the bed) Jean sat on the end of my
bed and crossed her slim legs.
It was... **(Checks clock)** ... ten o'clock and I was hardly awake.

(In JEAN ROSS'S voice) Listen, Chris - this is *absolutely* the
real thing.
I'm most *terribly* in love.

(To JEAN, yawning widely) Who is it this time?

(To audience) I asked...

(In JEAN ROSS'S voice, puzzled) I thought you realised.
It's Klaus.
You know Klaus?
With those *adorable* strong thighs...

(To JEAN) Oh, him!

(In JEAN ROSS'S voice) He's so sweet, so sensitive.
And those hands... they've been places that...
He absolutely adores me!

(CHRISTOPHER laughs) What are you laughing at Chris,
darling?

This is serious.

Oh, I know Klaus will make it.

He's a *divinely* brilliant musician!

I mean, he's only waiting to be discovered and he'll be all the
rage in Paris and London and...

Can't you see, we'll be a *marvellous* pair?

He's simply *breathtaking* in bed...

(To JEAN, going back to sleep) Really?

(In JEAN ROSS'S voice) Don't go to sleep again, Chris, darling...
 Listen...
 I'm in love, truly and forever.
 It's the most... the most... *incredible* feeling.
 Chris!
 It's happened!

(To JEAN sitting up) Get me a cup of coffee, Jean, please...
 And *then* you can tell me all about it.

(To audience) I sat up and fumbled for a cigarette

(In JEAN ROSS'S voice) Look darling, he gave me this beautiful lighter.

(Holds up a silver cigarette lighter) Isn't it the *sweetest* thing?
 And engraved solid silver...

(To audience) And now blond genius was in London.
 He'd had an offer from a film company to synchronise music for a picture set in Germany...

"The Student Prince" and all that romantic stuff – popular at the time.

Well, anyway, Fraulein Thurau, took a great interest in the whole affair, brought up his **(holding up the letter in the air)** first letter with triumph.

Klaus didn't like England much and missed Jean.

He told Jean she must work hard and save money in the meantime.

So, Jean made use of her talent... and furthered her career - as a singer.

Of course, he said, he still *adored* her and she was always in his thoughts.

There was quite a gap until the second letter arrived.

(Waving the letter madly) Jean stormed in...

(In JEAN ROSS'S voice) Do you know what this swine's gone and done?

(Quick aside to audience) I knew it was a flag of distress.

(To JEAN) What swine?

(In JEAN ROSS'S voice) Klaus, idiot!
 Listen!

(Reads) Meine liebes, armes kind, I know this will upset you but I've decided we must part..."

(To CHRISTOPHER) There's a lot more about work and so on.

(To audience) Then the stab in the back...

(In JEAN ROSS'S voice) He's met an English girl at Lady Somebody's party and she's related to a lord and he's never met anyone who understands his mind like she does.

Christ!

I never knew had a mind!

(Upset) Of course she's filthy rich – no, he doesn't say so, but she must be.

(To JEAN) Sit down...

I'll make you a Prairie Oyster!

(In JEAN ROSS'S voice) Actually, I'm sorry for him.

His work's bound to suffer.

He'll just fritter his talents away with her.

A taste of society's gone to the poor boy's head.

Miss Eckersley-Gore, indeed.

(Crying) I can see her - presented at court, riding to hounds.

What a farce!

(To JEAN) Don't cry, Jean, don't cry...

(In JEAN ROSS'S voice) But those thighs, those...

(To JEAN) He's not worth it.

(An idea) Let's go to the pictures?

There's a new Leni Riefenstahl on at the Kino, "Der Heilige Berg"...

Come on, get dressed up, we'll go to a matinee.

Drink up.

That's better.

And tomorrow we can see another picture and another...

There's one I keep meaning to go to: "Die Traumende Mund".

It's supposed to be simply wonderful.

Elizabeth Bergner.

You'd like her.

I've got some money - we'll have a sort of orgy!

(In JEAN ROSS'S voice) You're so *marvellous* to me, Chris.
 I could easily fall in love with you.
 What a pity we can't even make love, darling, there's nothing
 else to do till the rain stops.

(To audience) She had infinite charm.
 I could almost see myself falling in love with her.
 Last year when I was tutoring in England during the vacation, I
 was in the same situation.
 There was an attractive, sexy woman, appalling weather and a
 lot to drink.
 She was the divorced mother of my student.
 We played cards, we drank, we talked and finally I kissed her,
 without thinking, really.
 When she responded, I thought how easy it was - the same
 holds, the same movements - and a novel sensation... like
 playing a new game.
 I was excited by myself getting aroused in this way.
 After the orgasm I wanted to go on and on...
 To take our clothes off and spend the night together.
 But she wouldn't.
 Jean said:

(In JEAN ROSS'S voice) I can see you've had a lot of
 experience, Chris.

(To audience and himself) I asked myself: do I want more of
 this?
 Why do I like boys better?
 Of course, I like their shape and smell and in a way they're
 more romantic.
 Romantic?
 Yes, they are.
 Girls are beautiful but never romantic.

They're practical, sensible.
 They have after thoughts.

(Starts to pace up and down) I can't invent my myth about
 girls.
 True.
 But if could get to like them, my life would be so much easier.
 Kathleen's willing me to do this... get married, breed... get in
 step.
 The whole establishment demands it - the church, the medical
 profession the law!
 Well, damn the law!

Damn society!
 Damn girls!
 Damn nearly everybody.
 All I know is, if boys didn't exist, I'd have to invent them!

(IN JEAN ROSS'S voice) Chris!
 What are you doing?
 Put that glass down - or fill it up!
 Stop pacing about!
 Why don't you make some coffee?
 Come on.
 Put a record on the gramophone and we'll dance!

MUSIC IS HEARD FROM EITHER THE GRAMPHONE OR SHIP SALOON.

(Calls) Wystan!
 Wystan!
 Come and look at this!

HE WAITS FOR A REPLY THEN HIS THOUGHTS DRIFT OFF AGAIN.

(To audience) Mourning for Klaus lasted about a... week!
 Then Jean made a few futile efforts to get film work, and did a few unsuccessful auditions for musicals.
 We used to walk to the Wittenbergplatz and sit on a bench in the winter sun and watch the people go by.
(He sits and watches people pass) She was wrapped up in a rather mangy fur coat with her bright yellow beret on the side of her head and people stared at her.
 She was really very lovely.
 So... we sat and Jean dreamed of record-breaking sales for me and a *dazzling* career for herself in London, supper parties at the Ritz, fan-mail, contracts and her photograph in "The Daily Mail".
 But none of this happened quite like Jean imagined.
 She did in fact get one or two parts in a crowd scenes for Ufa Films - in one, she told me she was in a gondola in Venice and supposed to be making passionate love.
 She came back laughing...

(In JEAN ROSS'S voice, laughing) Chris, darling!
 We actually did it!
 The whole thing!
 For real!
 Just wait till you see it!

(To audience) But in the finished film her shot was cut out. Then one day she came back after an early shoot looking very tired and pale. When I offered her a Prairie Oyster she made a dash for the bathroom and vomited. It was, of course, the disaster she'd hoped wouldn't happen.

(To JEAN) Listen Jean. You must write to Klaus, it is his, isn't it?

(In JEAN ROSS'S voice) Yes, of course it is, darling...

(To audience) But nothing would make her do this. Fraulein Thureau had a little chat with Fraulein Kost, of the Chinese kimono, and together they found the right man. It would cost two fifty marks! So that was the end of Clive's guilt money!

(In JEAN ROSS'S voice) Darling, you will say it's yours, won't you?

(To JEAN) Of course, Jean, darling.

(In JEAN ROSS'S voice) I mean you don't have to say we're married.

(To audience) When it was all over, Jean came back looking off colour and very ill. Fraulein Thureau made onion soup with chunks of wurst and Fraulein Kost brought flowers. When she recovered, Jean said she was going back to England.

LIGHT CHANGE.

(Calls) Wystan!
Come and look at this!
I can just see New York.

(In WYSTAN'S voice) Where!?

(To WYSTAN, squinting) Look there!
It's the skyline.
The old Indian city - Manhattan

(In WYSTAN'S voice) I can't see a bloody thing!

(To WYSTAN) That's because you're short sighted.
I can see it quite plainly
I think I can pick out the Singer Building.

(In WYSTAN'S voice) You're imagining it.
It's just the mist.

(To WYSTAN) Anyhow, why don't we go and get a drink now?

(In WYSTAN'S voice) Because the bar's been closed for hours.
Otherwise I'd be sitting there now.
I need a bit more brandy to rub on my chilblains.
They're still giving me hell!

(To audience) He went off below again.
And still I couldn't leave Berlin.
The future wasn't real yet.
Only the past.
So... life in Berlin went on...
All the time Hitler was growing in power, and more people felt
threatened.
Now he's been voted in with a sizeable number of seats and
Hindenberg has appointed him his "Chancellor."
Now it's Charlie Chaplin and Father Christmas in power.
Meanwhile, I met Heinz.
Heinz had tight curly hair, a thick mouth and a flattened nose -
he had it broken long ago.
But I felt a strong and fierce attraction to him.
Unlike Otto and Bubi he responded to my feelings and he
became my friend, lover and companion for several years.
We travelled together sometimes for pleasure, sometimes to
escape surveillance at home.
For by now the Nazis were actively tracking down homosexuals
and sending them to concentration camps.
The streets were full of SS men striding about in their uniforms
and pushing others off the pavements.
And Heinz was not only queer, but a communist – with a police
record.
Somehow I had to get him out of Germany.
Belgium was the obvious place.
Some of those targetted by the Nazis had slipped over the
border.
Then perhaps he could apply for a change of nationality and
get a new passport.

It was then I ran into Francis again.
 He'd been abroad for ages.
 He told me he'd bought a Greek island.
 He invited Heinz and myself to join him there.
 Surely the long arm of the Gestapo wouldn't reach over the
 Adriatic?
 Heinz was wildly excited by the idea and we set off in a
 lighthearted mood.
 Francis met us off the boat at Athens.
 I asked him if he was working on any archeological projects...

(To FRANCIS) I seem to remember seeing you at a lecture long
 ago at Cambridge.
 King's, wasn't it?

(In FRANCIS' voice) Trinity.
 A lecture on the Machu Picchu ruins.
 I lent you a book on Aztec costumes.

(To FRANCIS) I hope I returned it.

(In FRANCIS' voice) No, you didn't!
 Don't worry.
 It couldn't matter less.
 Why didn't you say so before?

(To FRANCIS) I wasn't sure you'd want to be reminded of it.

(In FRANCIS' voice) What nonsense!
(Offering his a cigarette) Have a fag.

(To audience as he lights cigarette) His hand shook as he
 fumbled over the matches...

(In FRANCIS' voice) Anyhow it doesn't matter.
 I've finished classical digs and I'm sick of Berlin.
 I'm dead for all practical purposes.
 You aren't, I can see that.
 Now, I'll get you some blankets at the Thieves Market - we're
 camping out, you know.
 I suppose you ought to see the Acropolis.

I always think it's a good thing to get that over as soon as
 possible!

(To FRANCIS) Don't you like it?

(In FRANCIS' voice) I'm afraid it's much too late for me.
I can't really get up any enthusiasm for anything after the Minoans and the Eighteenth Dynasty - we'll get your stuff and load up the motorcar, it's around the corner.

(Afterthought) Oh, we'd better get some cases of wine.
It tastes like turpentine, but you'd better get used to it, because it's all you'll get Chris.

(To FRANCIS) Is it far to the island?

(In FRANCIS' voice) The place is about twelve miles up the coast, the roads terribly *rough*, I'm afraid.

I'll signal to the boys on the island and they'll bring the boat over.

I'm picking up Geoffrey on the way.

He's *another* Cambridge type.

(To audience) *Rough* was the word!

The motorcar was a savage monster it landed in every hole with a sickening crash, grating teeth and spine.

After each crash came a landslide of luggage which drove the hand of a spade or the rim of a bucket into your vitals.

Francis was drunk and hurled us along at seventy miles an hour.

Before we left he'd insisted on our having a substantial breakfast...

By which he meant a lot of bottles of that resinous poison.

Now he skidded along precipices while we clung to each other stunned.

Finally, we halted.

Heinz jumped out...

(In HEINZ'S voice in German accent) We're in Greece!

In Greece!

There's the island.

It's not far.

I can swim to it...

(In FRANCIS' voice) No, you can't!

You've got to help with the luggage.

(In HEINZ'S voice) Well, I'm going to have a swim first.

Look at the sea!

It's blue, really blue... lovely!

(Calling to HEINZ) You don't have a bathing suit!

(In HEINZ'S voice, calling back) I don't care!

I'm going in anyway!

Come on Aleko, I'll race you.

Swim!

What's that in Greek?

"Thalassa" - that's it isn't it?

(To audience) He stripped off naked and *plunged* in like a puppy...

His body looked smooth - like marble cut from an ancient Greek temple.

I looked at Geoffrey properly for the first time.

He was dressed in the most *improbable* British fashion.

He wore a blazer, a club silk scarf knotted into his open necked shirt and Savile Row slacks.

He sat on a huge rock drinking from a bottle.

We waved.

There was no response from the island!

Suddenly, Geoffrey stood up...

He'd got a gun in his hand...

(Shouting at GEOFFREY) Geoffrey!

What the hell are you doing?

(To FRANCIS) Grab it off him...

Help me Francis!

(In GEOFFREY'S voice) This'll wake the bastards!

Get back everyone!

TWO LOUD GUN SHOTS ARE HEARD.

(To GEOFFREY) Christ!

You nearly hit Aleko!

(Sighs) Look, Geoffrey, we'll just have to wait.

Francis is doing his best.

His boys are probably over the other side fishing.

(In GEOFFREY'S voice) They ought to be hung up by their thumbs and thrashed.

Have another drink!

(To audience) Finally we got a fishing boat to take us over.
Life on the island settled down to a routine.

I wrote, sitting in the relentless sun, made love again and again
and the others drank.

The boys made a show of cooking but spent most of their time
swimming naked and rushing around, yelling and laughing.

I can still remember the sensation of Heinz's moist lips around
my dick, sucking...

PICKS UP A BOTTLE AND DRINKS.

(To FRANCIS) Did you really buy the island, Francis?

(In FRANCIS' voice, flatly) No.

I wanted to and I'm still negotiating.

There are three hundred and nineteen part-owners and they all
have to agree.

And, of course, not to agree is their whole philosophy of life.

Looks as though they may take a hundred and fifty years.

Every week the price goes up.

(Points to the mainland) Now they want me to build a bridge to
the mainland.

(Looking at the mainland being pointed) But that's miles off!

(In FRANCIS' voice) A feat of engineering surpassing the
Golden Gate.

And so it goes on...

(To FRANCIS) What made you come here in the first place?

(In FRANCIS' voice) To be free, to live as I please, to have no
responsibilities.

I want to live in a world free from taboos...

Perhaps to find a group of anarchists who want to live like this.

(To FRANCIS) You're like a Shakespearean king in exile.
You're exiled, but not without hope, ideals...

(In FRANCIS' voice) Oh no, lovey, not like that.

Anarchists are never leaders.

But when we get into power...

(To FRANCIS, surprised) Into power!
You really believe that?

(In FRANCIS' voice) Oh, yes!
And of course we'll be very tolerant.
I'm afraid we'll have to clamp down on heterosexuals, legally
anyhow.
But we'll let them practise it - if it's in private, and between two
consenting adults.
We may allow a few hetero bars - if they're clearly marked and
foreigners are properly warned against them.

(To FRANCIS) And if they wander in by mistake?

(In FRANCIS' voice) Oh, we'll have a psychiatrist on hand if
they get upset.
I mean, he'll explain that there are people like this, and it's not
their fault - and that we must try to understand.

(To FRANCIS) And women - what about them?

(In FRANCIS' voice) They'll be better of really.
They'll be beautifully looked after on breeding farms.
Women aren't interested in men really.
I'm sure they'd all much prefer artificial insemination.

(To FRANCIS, then an aside look to audience) Do you really
believe this?

(In FRANCIS' voice) Of course!
Women don't appreciate men.
They don't know the attractive ones from the rest.
They're all lesbians really - they love all that petting and
messaging about.

(To FRANCIS) You're only talking like this to annoy Geoffrey,
aren't you?

(In FRANCIS' voice) Think what you like - that's what anarchy's
about.

(To GEOFFREY) Isn't it Geoffrey?

(To audience) Geoffrey took another *leisurely* drink and
muttered...

(In GEOFFREY'S voice, muttering) Fuckers' Never-Never Land!

(In FRANCIS' voice) You'd be happy enough let loose in a breeding farm, Geoffrey!

(To audience) Geoffrey finished the bottle before muttering again...

(In GEOFFREY'S voice, muttering again) Rubbish.
I hate the lot of the bitches.
One thing - we'll never let one set foot on this island.

(In FRANCIS' voice) Don't believe him Chris.
He'll be off to the mainland when he sobers up.
(Pause) The first thing I have to do is build a house.
See that heap of stones and those ditches over there?
That's the site.
I've got a gang of builders - rogues and cretins, most of them, but give them time.
It will happen.
And peacocks, I thought I'd have peacocks and...

(To FRANCIS) A camel perhaps?

PAUSE.

(In FRANCIS' voice) What do you think Geoffrey?

(To FRANCIS, looking at GEOFFREY) Well...

(To audience) Geoffrey gazed out to sea, his eyes screwed against the sun.
He turned his glazed eyes on Francis, called him a bloody Bolshevik and began to sing...

(In GEOFFREY'S voice he sings the "Internationale")

(To audience) They then started an argument...

(In FRANCIS' voice) All Russian bolsheviks have been liquidated years ago!

(To audience) ...which I felt they'd had many times before.

(In GEOFFREY'S voice) Tripe!

(In FRANCIS' voice) Look, what's happening in Germany. They're massacring the fucking communists!

(In GEOFFREY'S voice) All right - take Germany, take Hitler! I suppose a bloody bogus bolshevik like you thinks he's evil. Don't you?

Come on, of course you do.

I think he's a bloody good man.

At least he's cleared out all those bloody bolsheviks - hasn't he Chris?

(To audience) They talked like this for hours and hours.

I tried to write it down in my diary quickly.

I knew I could use it for a story.

They argued and I listened.

We drank wine, Heinz and I fucked continually and looked at the halcyon sea.

I felt somehow complete - with Heinz moving deep inside me.

Sometimes, Geoffrey fascinated me - why was he here?

He was clever, he'd been an athlete, I could see that, but now never sober - totally *lost*.

Why?

I watched him one day, drinking of course, gazing at the horizon.

Francis was busy with the workmen.

(To GEOFFREY) Do you like this place, Geoffrey?

(In GEOFFREY'S voice) What is there to like about it? Fucking nothing!

(To GEOFFREY) Then why do you stay?

(Calling to HEINZ) Heinz, do you want some to drink?

(In GEOFFREY'S voice) There's nowhere else, that's why!

(To GEOFFREY) I would have thought there are lots of places.

(In GEOFFREY'S voice) You would have thought!

You'd include England and France and Germany and Russia and the United States?

(To GEOFFREY) I might.

(Calling) Heinz!
Aleko!

(In GEOFFREY'S voice) Christ, you're ignorant!
There isn't any other place.
Not or me.

(To GEOFFREY) But you told me to get out.

(In GEOFFREY'S voice) You're not me.
Or are you?

(To GEOFFREY) I don't think so.

(In HEINZ'S voice, in German accent) Thank you, Christoph...

(To GEOFFREY, handing bottle to HEINZ) Did you meet Francis here?

(In GEOFFREY'S voice) Meet?
No.

He picked me up off he floor in some ghastly bar where I'd passed out.

(To GEOFFREY) Does he ask strangers to come and live here?

(In GEOFFREY'S voice) Who said we where strangers.
I'd met him once before.

(To GEOFFREY) That's funny,
I met him once too - at Cambridge.

(In GEOFFREY'S voice) Cambridge?
What college?

(To GEOFFREY) King's.

(In GEOFFREY'S voice) You remember Halloween 1923 when someone put a chamber pot on the pinnacle of your chapel?

(To GEOFFREY) Why, yes, I do.

(In GEOFFREY'S voice) It's like climbing the back of the Matterhorn.

No way up, they said.

(To GEOFFREY) Then how do you suppose the man did it?

(In GEOFFREY'S voice) Suppose?

I damn well know.

I did it, jumped from the library roof, seven bloody feet.

Nearly broke my damn neck!

(To GEOFFREY) Why did you do it?

(In GEOFFREY'S voice) It annoyed me.

And a damned arrogant lot from Trinity - rucker players most of them, went round wrecking people rooms.

Anyone they didn't like, no reason - bloody swine!

One said he was a mountaineer, climbed in the Himalayas, he said *your* pinnacle was unclimbable!

(To GEOFFREY) He must have been impressed.

(In GEOFFREY'S voice) I never told him.

I never told anyone.

(To GEOFFREY) You must have felt wonderful.

(In GEOFFREY'S voice) You're bloody well wrong.

I didn't care a rap!

(To audience) Then Francis shouted...

(In FRANCIS' voice, shouting) Get out of the way!!!

(To audience) The builders were blasting rocks.

They did this periodically and generally managed to demolish most of the walls at the same time.

There was more to Geoffrey's story, I knew, but I doubted if he'd tell me.

When the rain of stones and dust subsided - Geoffrey opened *another* bottle...

(In GEOFFREY'S voice) And what are you doing here?

(To audience) I told him about Heinz and Germany.

(In GEOFFREY'S voice, muttering) Bloody awful mess...

(To audience) He went on muttering.

But I knew I hadn't answered the question.

What was I doing on this island with Heinz, a crazy anarchist who numbered himself among the dead, and Geoffrey, drink sodden, who rejected everything in his life that had once mattered, who dressed as though he'd just walked out of the Army and Navy Club and sat here *cursing* his heritage?

(In FRANCIS' voice, murmurs) It's anarchy.

Everyone must do as they please.

He'll come back.

They all do....

(To audience) I asked the question I'd been longing to ever since I saw the island....

(To FRANCIS) Why did you come here, Francis?

(To audience) He took a *long* drink from the last bottle of whisky.

(In FRANCIS' voice) Cambridge, really.

I had such beautiful rooms, all green - Venetian glass.

A lot belonged to my grandmother.

I adored her - old tapestry, a painting by that Cookham man.

I got someone to copy Duncan Grant's book jacket design on my mantelpiece...

I had a *marvellous* carpet from the Turkish embassy in Paris.

Then one night... **(starts to choke with emotion)** a few thugs from a rigger team broke in and... wrecked it.

Utterly destroyed it.

No reason.

I didn't know them.

One of them came back next morning with a cheque book.

He said he was sorry.

He'd pay for it.

Any amount...

I tore his cheque in pieces.

(Cries) You're scum!

You think money can buy you out!

But you're scum and one day you'll realise - you'll be scum until your dying day!

Get out!

(Still in FRANCIS' voice but to the audience for a moment) It taught me that no one, nothing is worth caring about. I'd come up to Cambridge on a good scholarship, my tutor said I was the most promising classics man of the year. I wanted to stay here and be a don. But what did it amount to? Nothing! A fool's paradise... The world's full of scum, obscene, useless scum!

(To FRANCIS) Who was the man, Francis?
(Pause) Did you ever find out?

(In FRANCIS' voice) What does it matter?

(To audience) I thought of Germany, the prosecutions, the torture chambers, the senseless brutality of the Gestapo. I knew I was on Francis' side. On the side of the *lost*.

(Pause) "The *Lost*".

It's all in the book.

I like the German title better: "Die Verlorenen".

It has a dark, rolling sound like a bell tolling doom.

And that's what's it's about.

It's got a whole lot of meanings: in the general sense it's about the mass of ordinary Germans who have lost their way, folk who are being herded and goaded into the future by evil Nazi shepherds.

Then there's the innocent people who were already marked down as Hitler's victims: the Jews, the communists, the homosexuals I'd seen a lot of this for myself.

And so many of the Germans I knew seemed to me to have been driven into an exile of the spirit.

And then there are the boys at the bars - Otto, Bubi, Heinz and their friends.

Now Hitler has swept their haunts away, what will they turn to?

Harmless people like Fraulein Thureau - pathetic, poor and all her lodgers and the Nowaks.

Victims of the propaganda of the Social Democrats.

And then, in an ironic sense, it's Jean Ross, the '*lost*' girl, Francis, on his island...

Anyone whom society calls 'moral outcasts'.

I've worked out a framework for all these characters, who stand around like immigrants waiting to be told what to do - but somehow it doesn't work.

It's a huge topic and perhaps a magnum opus like this is beyond my range.
 But I go on adding and adding to it.
 One day it may all coalesce.
 I kept writing in my diary in the blazing sun.
 I kept tasting the salty semen on my tongue and lips.
 Heinz and Aleko swam, fished and chased each other.
 But this was no solution.
 My next plan was to try to get Heinz into England.
 Finally, I left him in Berlin... and made plans to go.
 There had been no cheque at all from old Uncle Henry, so that was another reason for going.
 I'll have to see if I can't come to a better arrangement with him.
 There's a lot more things I have to sort out as well.
 I want to see John Lehmann about publishing something for me.
 I need to have something in print
 And I need the money.
 I've decided to split up the sections of "The *Lost*" - as a start, anyhow - and sell the episodes as individual stories.
 It's like dissecting a corpse.
 I was quite skilled at that during my medical studies.
 This isn't so easy.
 But I realise now the major work I'd planned may never take shape.
 So I've sent off the first amputation to John Lehmann, for his magazine: "New Writing".

HORN BLASTS LOUDLY. STANDS BY THE BOAT RAIL.

I went down below to stir up Wystan but found him asleep on his bunk.
 He's still got his hat on, pulled down over his eyes.
 I wanted to talk to him about how we met Heinz off the Channel Steamer at Southampton but he was snoring away...

LIGHT CHANGE.

Back with Mother and Richard at Wybersleigh all the old tensions have started again.
 There are arguments and tears.
 But there are also friends too...
(Picks up telephone and requests a telephone number)
 John Lehmann... "New Writing".
 Yes, that's right. ""
 Can you find that for me?

Thank you....

Is that you John?

Christopher Isherwood.

(Laughs and waits) Yes, I'm back.

No, no, I won't waste your time in idle chatter.

When's the next issue due out?

I just want to ask you if you're putting "Sally Bowles" in?

Why?

If you like it and you think it's well-written, then why not?

I find this...

I mean, surely "New Writing" is meant to take a few risks.

It's supposed to be the avant garde of English youth.

You quail about publishing an abortion scene?

For God's sake!

You want me to take it out and try for the next issue?

When were you so timid?

Well... if you're going to retreat behind the walls of respectability there's no hope for it...

No, I haven't asked her permission, but dammit, I've given her another name - isn't that enough? ...

I'll get permission from Jean.

Surely that should fix it.

Very well then I'll withdraw it...

I think you're being ridiculously prudish.

Give you all the publicity in the world if the Archbishop of Canterbury wrote to "The Times".

Christ!

It's the sort of thing editors pray for...

All right, no offence I know you're frantically busy.

I'll *think* about a rewrite.

(He hangs up the telephone, to audience) Well, Sally's story's out for the moment.

I should try the Hogarth Press.

After all, Spender works there and has the sympathetic ear of Virginia Woolf or maybe it's Leonard's?

"All the Conspirators" had been accepted and published and I fully expected my next one would find a publisher.

But it had been rejected.

Admittedly the first only sold three hundred copies.

But it was reviewed as "promising" and E. M. Foster actually wrote saying he liked it.

That was more to me than any reviewer!

And now I have the manuscript back on my hands and I have to go through the tedious business again.

Wystan thinks I should try his man and I think I might.

The book's about a mother who tried to control the lives of her nineteen year old son and seventeen year old daughter with disastrous consequences.

It was based on Kathleen and myself and my brother Richard, transformed into a sister - which in some ways he resembles.

Now there's more resentment and tears.

Kathleen read it and saw herself depicted as a domineering woman lacking in sensitivity.

Of course she isn't, well, not entirely.

It's more emotional blackmail with her, but there is enough truth in it to hurt.

I can only write about myself and the *real* people around me.

And now there's another thing I have tell Kathleen which will be equally painful.

It's going to be rather an ordeal, but I suppose, cynical as I am, I expect I'll be able to use it quite effectively in a book one day...

LIGHT CHANGE.

(To KATHLEEN) Mother, I'm going off to Harwich in an hour's time to meet Heinz - off the boat.

And I do hope you'll make him feel welcome.

Please don't treat him like a servant - be polite and not condescending.

How can you be such a snob?

(In KATHLEEN'S voice) But Christopher, my dear boy, I just don't understand how you can take pleasure in the company of a young man who's your social inferior.

He's nothing in common with you, as far as I can see...

If he was a writer, or an intellectual...

(To KATHLEEN) Mother, I want to be honest with you.

I want you to try and understand...

Heinz is... Heinz is my lover!

(Pause) I know it's a shock, but surely you must have known this.

It's just that you won't admit it.

Don't you understand?

There's no *use* trying to get me to go to the Hunt Ball and return with some pretty young debutante.

Heinz is my lover and nothing will *ever* change that, mother.

(In KATHLEEN'S voice) Is this why you left home?

(To KATHLEEN) That and to write.
 And in some ways it was inevitable.
 Don't you realize what it was like for me growing up under the
 shadow of a war hero I scarcely knew?
 Living in a house which was a living shrine to a man as unlike
 me as possible.
 Mother, can't you see what this did to Richard and I?
 We grew up crippled, impotent, not in the physical sense but
 our personalities...

(In KATHLEEN'S voice) Are you saying I'm to blame for this?
 Are you?

(To KATHLEEN) It's not a question of blame, I know I'm to
 blame too.
 I told you Heinz came from Paris and you expected some
 sophisticated son of a count.
 And now he's just a boy from a bar room, German, a hateful
 German!

(Bluntly) And Germans killed my father!

(In KATHLEEN'S voice, a little shaken) Christopher, my dear
 boy, if only you'd stay here at home for a little while.
 I could look after you properly, you could write here.
 Richard would be your secretary and helper.
 You'd be well cared for.
 I'm sure you'd get over all this - you'd be your old self.
 It's peaceful and quiet!

(To audience) Quiet!
 That's the *last* thing I want.
 What would I find to write about in a country manor house?
 I needed to be in Berlin among the degenerates, the so-called
 dregs of society.
 Dregs are a potent drink if you can stomach them.
 To live with her, the family, old friends and *grandchildren*.
 She wanted grandchildren.
 My God.
 What a horrendous thought!
 I knew this was her dream.

A CLOCK CHIMES.

And that of course I knew was impossible.
Now it's time to set off for Harwich...

(He takes a hat and muffler (or overcoat) from hallstand and moves to different space) I'd asked Wystan to come along with me.

To meet Heinz when he arrived.

He'd had no trouble getting out of Germany and I had sent him a letter from my mother issuing him a formal invitation to stay with us.

I'd also sent him some money, so he'd not arrive penniless.

Heinz had asked me what to put down as his profession.

I wanted to divert any suspicion of his being homosexual - the English are always on the lookout, so I said: "Put domestic servant".

That seemed safe enough.

So... Wystan and I met him - off the boat.

His face was radiant, beautiful and when he saw me, his smile...

I daren't kiss him in case any police spies were watching.

We took him off to the customs and passport control and waited for him to emerge.

Most of the foreigners came out smiling, but there was no sign, no sign of Heinz at all.

A customs man approached us.

My heart sank but I tried to look nonchalant...

(In CUSTOMS MAN'S voice) Mr. Isherwood?

(In reply to CUSTOMS MAN) Yes?

(In CUSTOMS MAN'S voice) Come this way, sir.

(To audience) Wystan and I followed him...

Heinz was sitting, looking sulky and anxious.

On the large table lay my mother's letter and Heinz's passport with the fatal word: "Hausediener" - domestic servant.

(In CUSTOMS MAN'S voice) Mr. Isherwood, I understand, sir, your mother has invited this young man to stay at her home as a guest - is that correct?

(To CUSTOMS MAN) Quite right.

(In CUSTOMS MAN'S voice) May I ask you why a lady of her position should invite a working class foreigner to stay?

Would she perhaps be thinking of engaging him as a servant?
 It's well known that many people do this.
 It's a cheap source of labour which is frowned upon in this country.
 Servants must have a work permit and must be paid standard wages.

(To CUSTOMS MAN) No, of course not.
 He's just a guest, a friend... a friend of mine and Mr. Auden here.
 We're both writers - Mr. Auden's a poet and writes for "The Times".
 Besides Herr Neddermayer has money of his own.

(In CUSTOMS MAN'S voice) Yes, I do believe so.
 He showed me a letter from you enclosing the sum of twenty pounds.
 I quote: **(Reads)** "...if they ask how you received the money, say your grandmother gave it to you.
 That sounds better and they can't prove she didn't."
(Showing the letter) This is your handwriting, isn't it sir?

(Hesitating) Well... I...

(In CUSTOMS MAN'S voice) And this letter sounds a bit strange: **(Reads)** "I've been counting the days before you arrive, I'm so lonely.... "

(To CUSTOMS MAN) I don't find that strange!
 He's a friend and...

(In CUSTOMS MAN'S voice) And...?
 More like a letter to a sweetheart isn't it, sir?

(To audience) He smiled.
 We knew we had lost the battle.

(In CUSTOMS MAN'S voice) I'm afraid your friend will have to leave on the next boat back to Germany.

(To audience) Wystan and I sat in the dockside café over hot tea and some fruit buns.
 I don't get angry easily, but I was furious with the English and their narrow, rigid morality.
 I'd like to get out of this place for good.

Wystan said...

(In WYSTAN'S voice) That customs officer - as soon as I saw that little rat looking at Heinz with his bright eyes, I knew. He was jealous.

(To WYSTAN, surprised) What?

(In WYSTAN'S voice) He's one of *us!*

(To WYSTAN) My God, you're right!

LIGHT CHANGE.

(To audience) Well Kathleen at least will be pleased. I'd intended staying here with Heinz until he could get some kind of papers to get him out of Germany and to sort out the book of course. So now she won't be subjected to the embarrassment of having to explain away the presence of a working-class German to her friends. I'll have to shelve Heinz' problem for the time being and sort out my affairs.

TELEPHONE RINGS.

(Into the receiver) Hello?
Of course I'm glad to hear your voice.
I've been trying to get in touch with you.
Where are you?
What are you doing?
I don't believe it.
Working for the communists!
You're as crazy as ever...
Yes, I'm sure you do.
But you must admit it's a slight surprise.
Well, thank you, but I... I really do not think I'd be any good at that sort of thing.
No, I'm not.
I'm not being snobbish.
Jean, I've never done anything of the kind... writing for the movies is a *specialised* thing...
Yes, of course I'd like to make a lot of money but...
Look, it's good of you to take this trouble, but at the moment I'm not at all sure how long I'll be here.

I may have to go back to Berlin for a while... a week or two, perhaps.

I want to get all my things out of the place finally and there's someone I have to see.

No, you don't know him.

As soon as I get back I'll let you know.

Why not send this director something I've written?

Yes, that's fine... but I gave you a copy.

All right, I'll send you off another copy in the post.

Quite unsuitable for a film, but...

Yes, I'll hope to see you soon.

Wiedersehen!

(Hangs up telephone, then back to audience) My God!

That's a bolt out of the blue.

I haven't seen Jean for ages.

I suppose it's not so long ago in terms of a lifetime, but it was a different world.

A world I'd hoped I'd capture in "The *Lost*".

And now I'm re-writing her story.

I begin to confuse the two women - the Sally Bowles of my book and Jean - the real woman who's living in Bayswater and married to an old friend.

Perhaps she's not one of the *lost* after all.

But who knows?

Sally Bowles is more *real* to me than Jean Ross.

Perhaps I shouldn't see her again.

One thing is certain - Sally Bowles and her world will live and find new friends *long* after Jean Ross has left us.

LIGHT CHANGE.

One day I called up Jean and she came over.

If I closed my eyes I could imagine I was back at Fraulein Thurau's.

In spite of the hefty boots, the baggy jumper and the bitten nails, it was the old *irrepressible* Jean...

(In JEAN ROSS'S voice) He's the most *marvellous* man, Chris, darling.

Absolutely brilliant.

You'll simply adore him!

(To JEAN, interested) Would I?

(In JEAN ROSS'S voice) No, you swine!

His *mind*!

He's sixty if he's a day.

Idiot!

Austrian.

They've brought him from Hollywood to direct a movie.

A *fabulous* director, Chris.

(To JEAN, adamant) I'm sure he is, Jean, but I don't write screenplays.

(In JEAN ROSS'S voice) I know, darling, I know...

I told him, but it doesn't matter.

It's your big chance.

You could write something really *marvellous*, like... like Noel Coward!

(To JEAN, unimpressed) I'm in the middle of my novel.
I'm busy!

(In JEAN ROSS'S voice) I know, darling, but think of the money, the excitement.

You could meet the stars.

He lives in Hollywood, he knows Greta Garbo, yes darling, Greta Garbo!

He took me to Harrod's to choose her a birthday present.

You should have seen their faces when he wrote the address:

(He writes) Miss Garbo, Santa Monica, California.

They thought it was a joke.

(To JEAN) No, Jean, I really can't.

(In JEAN ROSS'S voice) Listen Chris...

I told him you were a genius - a bit *unrecognised* as yet but...

And I sent him your book and he loves, it, darling.

I mean you can just dash this off, I know you can.

You'll be *wonderously* wealthy in no time!

He might even take you back to Hollywood, Chris!

(To JEAN) But I don't want to go to Hollywood.

(In JEAN ROSS'S voice) Darling, he's going to call you.

Just say: "Yes".

You'll be made for life.

Listen, darling, he wants you to go over for an interview.

Do this for *me*, darling... *please*.

If you get the job, give me two weeks' salary.

Is it a deal?

(To audience) I had to say: "Yes".

He was Berthold Viertel, now married to Garbo's scriptwriter.

Jean was right, I was tempted.

The picture was called: "Little Friend".

I got the job, mainly because Viertel was unhappy at Shepperton Studios where it was being shot.

No one spoke German - and I at least, was someone he could talk to.

Was it the thought of playing tennis with Greta Garbo, one day, that tempted me?

Viertel was going back to the States after the picture.

At last I heard news of Heinz.

He was scared and had gone into hiding.

I must make my plans quickly.

I must get him out of Berlin.

Heinz was of military age.

He must get a new citizenship - Mexican, South American, maybe.

Back in Berlin at Fraulien Thureau's I looked for a good lawyer.

He not only needed to be good, he needed to be able to do under the counter deals with embassy officials and consulates.

I took advice from a shady friend - but one who always somehow remained on the right side of the law.

Someone who knew his way around the devious deals that were going on in Berlin at the time.

There were many like Heinz who needed to get out fast.

He found me the man.

I didn't entirely trust him, but it was the best I could do.

He told me there would be no difficulty if I followed the plan and produced the cash.

The lawyer advised me to go back to Brussels.

He needed a thousand pounds.

Kathleen sent it, reluctantly.

Heinz's visitor's permit had expired.

We were to go back over the border, get an extension and return.

There would be no risk.

We set off confidently enough and crossed the border without trouble.

On the return journey the Nazi official stamped my British passport quickly.

He *scrutinised* Heinz's papers carefully and handed them back.

SHIPS HORN BLASTS LOUDLY.

The train whistle blew and I got back on board.
 Heinz followed, but with one foot on the step a Gestapo man moved forward and laid a hand on his shoulder.
 "I have an order for your arrest as a draft- evader," he said.
 There were other charges too - theft at the Brussels hotel, indecent assault of a chamber maid.
 I watched in horror as the Gestapo man led him to the other side of the barrier.
 He stood there a lonely figure as the train shunted out of the station.
 There was nothing to do but go back to Brussels alone.
 The lawyer told me not to interfere.
 I would only make things worse for Heinz.
 I went back to Fraulein Thureau and my old room at the Nollendorfstrasse to collect my things.

(In FRAULEIN THURAU'S voice) I am so sorry to see you go, Herr Issyvoo.
 There'll never be another gentleman like you.
 You were never any trouble.
 Never.
 And the rent!
 Always on time.
 Can't you stay a little longer?

(To FRAULEIN THURAU) I'm afraid not Fraulein Thureau.
 It's impossible now.

(In FRAULEIN THURAU'S voice) It isn't so bad here.
 Der Fuehrer has got things under control - no more fights in the streets and everything under control.
 Don't you believe all the tales you hear, Herr Issyvoo.

(To audience) But I knew the tales were true.
 And Fraulein told me that the police had been round inquiring for me.
 Too many people had vanished.
 The communists had gone underground.
 Loud speakers at the corner of the street belted out Goebbel's propaganda of hate.
(With regret) In a moment of panic I burned *all* my papers and diaries in the stove.
 I thought the Gestapo might search me as I left.
 There wasn't really much to pack up.
 As I left Fraulein Thureau kissed me - and I saw tears in her eyes.

(In FRAULEIN THURAU'S voice) Take this little clock with you – it will remind you of me, and Berlin...

(To audience) She gave me the little dolphin with the gilt clock balanced on its tail.
It's here now, holding down my papers.
It never went!

LIGHT CHANGE.

Before I left England I had a call from E. M. Forster.
He sounded distressed - wanted to see me urgently - adding in his usual polite way...

(In E. M. FORSTER'S voice) That is, Christopher if you have a few minutes to spare...

(To audience) Of course I wanted to see him.
He came along to tea.
Kathleen, as always, welcomed him.
He had a bundle of manuscript under his arm.

(In E. M. FORSTER'S voice) There's something I want to show you, Christopher.
I haven't let anyone else see it...
And when you read it - you'll see why it's impossible to publish it.

(To E. M. FORSTER) When did you write it?

(In E. M. FORSTER'S voice) Long ago, Christopher.
It's about Oxford days and...

(To E. M. FORSTER) Morgan?
Hasn't your publisher seen it?

(In E. M. FORSTER'S voice) Nobody.
I wanted you to read it before you go.
I won't take your time up.

(He puts it forward) Take it.
If you don't want to talk about it, that's all right.
I won't be upset.

(To audience) I read it quickly and met him in town at a small restaurant in Soho.

It was a novel entitled: "Maurice" and about a tragic homosexual love affair.

It was *brilliantly* written - but he was right.

To publish it would mean the end of his reputation - that is, if a publisher could be found, which was almost impossible to hope for, at least in England.

Morgan sat quietly waiting to hear my views almost as if for a death sentence.

I wanted to reassure him at once...

(To E. M. FORSTER) Morgan, it is far the most moving, the most exciting work you have ever written.

It has such beauty and strength, such sensitivity, a...

I wasn't able to finish the sentence.

He leant forward and put his hand over mine.

(In E. M. FORSTER'S voice) I feel its inferior artistically to the rest of my work but it's written by a very young man and I hadn't learnt...

(To E. M. FORSTER) It's up with the best, Morgan - I mean it.

I'm *honoured* to have been allowed to read it.

All your work is near perfection but this has a passion - a headlong emotional tide which carries it into another world.

(In E. M. FORSTER'S voice) It isn't finished - I don't know whether I can...

(To E. M. FORSTER) You have to, Morgan, you must...

One day it will be acclaimed.

(To audience) And it was – many, many years later.

We sat in a dark corner and at this time there were hardly any other diners.

The waiter took our order - he was extremely good-looking.

We watched him walk away and then Morgan put his hand on my shoulder.

There were tears in his eyes.

He kissed me briefly on the cheek.

That was the last time I ever saw him.

Here was another of the "Lost"...

LIGHT CHANGE.

As I sailed from Southampton the nightmare of war hung over England.

Chamberlain waved his umbrella again, but no one had much faith.

I still hadn't answered the question I asked myself on the island. What do I care about?

Wystan and Spender say I don't care about writing or I wouldn't sell myself to Hollywood.

My political friends say I don't care about serious issues; or, I'd stay and fight against the Nazis.

I don't know.

I don't want to think about all that.

I'm sick and tired of feeling guilty.

Who tells me I'm responsible for Germany?

I'm the one who ought to decide that.

I've got to stop thinking about what I ought to feel and try to find a real basis for feeling.

What *do* I care about?

I suppose, at this very moment, if I love anything - it's Heinz.

Heinz as he is - selfish, open, no conscience, free and vulnerable.

I love him like you love an animal.

I don't ask for anything in return, just that he stays young, fearless **(Pause)** ...and silly!

In fact I want the impossible.

Or is it impossible??

If I write about him, he'll always stay the same.

LIGHT CHANGE. GOES BACK TO THE RAIL AND LIFE BELT.

(Looking up towards the "Statue of Liberty") Now I can see the giantess more clearly.

Yes, it's a torch, not a club.

Her serene, stern features, stone-cut like the Sphinx - are reassuring.

I'm glad she's not smiling.

(Looking back to the audience) I'm still ridden with unspoken guilt.

Should I have stayed to fight?

I've lived in Germany.

I know there will be no reconciliation.

Appeasement only puts off the day, and the day is near.
 Should I have confronted Heinz's accusers?
 Stood in the dock as his witness?
 The Lawyer said I'd only make things worse for him.
 Was he trying to shield me?
 Or did I know the affair was really over - that Heinz was *lost* to
 me - doomed to join the Nazis?
 His Nazi captors saw him as good material for the Storm
 Troopers.
 The mist's clearing...
 I can see the tender coming out to meet us.
 I can feel a sudden upsurge of hope.
 I went to a fortune-teller before I left.
 She said: "There will be a voyage for you and your lucky letter
 will be 'H'".
 Well, there's Hollywood and Huxley's there.
 He's a pacifist and perhaps he'll help me to a logical
 understanding of my confused impulses.
 Then she said: "Mr. Auden will find the one he's been looking
 for - but you, *you* will have to wait, Mr. Isherwood.
 The one you seek is living in the city where you'll make your
 home.
 But if you met him, you wouldn't recognise him.
 You see, he's only four years old!"

FOG HORN BLASTS LOUDLY.

A new land, new adventures...

(He sees something then calls) Wystan!

Look!

Look there!

(In WYSTAN'S voice, grumpily) What?

Where?

(To WYSTAN) Isn't that Erika...?

On the tender waving?

And Klaus is with her?

(In WYSTAN'S voice) Where?

I can't see anyone!

(To WYSTAN) Put on your glasses, you bat-eyed badger.

It is!

It's Erika!

(He waves madly, shouting loudly) Erika!

Erika!

We've made it!

We've *made* it!!

THE END

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