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A SINGULAR MAN

A one-man play by

JULIA BRITTON

CHARACTERS

CHRISTOPHER ISHERWOOD, British writer

SYNOPSIS

Gay English writer, Christopher Isherwood relives and reviews his life at Cambridge University and in Nazi Germany, where he wrote the famous "Berlin Stories" (from which John Van Druten based his play: "I am a Camera" and subsequently the musical and film "Cabaret"). He is still suffering from the loss of his young German lover, Heinz, whom he failed to rescue from the Nazi authorities.

SHORTEN VERSION OF "THE LOST"

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THE LOST (under the title **A SINGULAR MAN**) was first produced by Performing Arts Productions at the Old Treasury Building, Melbourne, as part of the Melbourne Fringe Festival on 25 September 1996, with Mark R. Allen as Christopher Isherwood, directed by Roberto Chuter. Subsequently, it was re-produced as **THE LOST** at the 1997 Hong Kong Fringe Festival.

"...Like nights of black magic when the buried were resurrected before our very eyes, an act of illusion in itself highly theatrical. The result was powerful entertainment with biographical enlightenment as an additional bonus. Allen's Isherwood came to life powerfully; "A Singular Man" is a well-written, well-crafted play..."

- **Dino Mahoney, Hong Kong Standard**

"Pick of the week..."

- **Jacqui Hammerton, The Age**

"Allen carries off Isherwood a treat... admirable.... ambitious piece..."

- **Michael Veitch, The Australian**

"Allen's depiction of Jean Ross, the original model for "Cabaret" is very effective. He is particularly convincing as the irrepressible, promiscuous Bowles..."

- **Dina Ross, Herald-Sun**

"Every character is differentiated by a different energy level and pace, so it never gets to the point where it's mediocre"

- **Trish Maunder, Brother Sister**

"A fringe festival highlight... fascinating and brilliantly perceptive theatre..."

- **Jeff Jones, Stage Whispers**

CHRISTOPER ISHERWOOD (1904-1986)

Christopher Isherwood was born in Cheshire, England, and educated at Repton and Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. He left Cambridge without graduating, tried briefly to study medicine and in 1928 published his first novel: "All the Conspirators". In 1930, he lived in Berlin for four years, where he taught English, then traveled around Europe writing about his experiences in novels such as "Mr. Norris Changes Trains" and "Goodbye to Berlin".

With W. H. Auden, Isherwood wrote the two plays: "The Dog Beneath the Skin" (1939), "The Ascent of F6" (1937) and a travel book: "Journey to a War" (1939). During the part of the war he worked with the American Friends Service Committee and in 1946 became a naturalized American. He worked in films, reviewed books and lectured at the University of California. He was a member of the Wider Quaker Fellowship and the American Civil Liberties Union.

Among his other most well-known books are "Lions and Shadows" (1938), "Down There on A Visit" (1962), "Kathleen and Frank" (1971), "A Singular Man" and the autobiographical "Christopher and His Kind" (1977). He also translated "Baudelaire's Intimate Journals" (1947). "I am a Camera", a stage adaptation by John Van Druten, of his story "Sally Bowles" had a great success on the stage as the musical and film "Cabaret" (1972).

A SINGULAR MAN

CHRISTOPHER ISHERWOOD DRESSED IN "OXFORD BAGS" AND TWEED JACKET.

ISHERWOOD: **(To audience)** Let me introduce myself.
 My parents christened me Christopher William Bradshaw Isherwood.
 I'm the elder son of Kathleen and Lieut. Col. Frank Isherwood - war hero, who died at Ypres in 1915.
 This is my childhood home, Wyberslegh Hall, Cheshire.
 That's my identity - that's on my passport.
 But who am I?
 That's another question.
 Who are you, for that matter?
 Have you any idea?
 I've spent years exploring myself and exploiting my own personality and that of all my friends in writing.
 But I still don't know.
 All I've discovered so far are some of the things I'm not.
 Like most boys of my class and age I started with a tutor whom I shared with my younger brother.
 Then to prep school where I met a fat boy called Wystan Auden.
 And then to Clifton.
 I went from Clifton to Cambridge to read History.
 I didn't like the Cambridge view of history so I gave that up.
 My mother worried.
 The expense of keeping me at Cambridge on a small exhibition was a not inconsiderable one.
 I switched to English.
 I liked the Cambridge view of literature even less.
 So I gave that up.
 My mother wept.
 She had set her heart on academic honours.
 One thing was clear - I was not an academic.
 I decided to study medicine and be of service to the community.
 And so to St. Thomas's Hospital.
 I watched an amputation.

I didn't faint and I didn't feel sick.
 The blood and the dismembered leg seemed to belong to a
 dream world in which I had no part.
 After a year I realised I was not a doctor and I had no desire
 to serve mankind.
 My mother wept *again*.
 I bought a Browning automatic pistol and decided to kill
 myself.
 I put the gun in my mouth, as advised by a friend, and tried
 to pull the trigger.
 I couldn't do it!
 I was not a suicide.
 Perhaps if I left home I might find out who I am.
 So... now I live in a room in a run down pension in Berlin.
 My mother is past weeping and accepts this mutely.
 I wrote *endlessly* about my experiences, always putting
 myself into the world I created.
 I gave myself fictitious names, William Bradshaw, Clifford
 Bradshaw and so on....
 But I was no nearer my goal.
 One day I may find out.
 How do I appear to my friends?
 Auden tells me I look a bit like a drill sergeant or a strict
 landlady.
 He says I've got a will like a fire hose before which everyone
 has to retreat.
 That I'm deceitful.
 I pretend to be nobody in particular when all the time I have
 the arrogance of Lawrence of Arabia.
 Oh yes, and I'm *utterly* ruthless and *completely* cynical, but
 at least I make them laugh.
(Arms akimbo) So, I'm back on a visit.
 I have to see my publisher.
 He accepted my first novel: "All the Conspirators" and I fully
 expected he'd take my next one.
 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 of submitting it to
 another publisher.
 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.

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

More resentment and tears.

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

Of course she isn't, but there is enough truth in it to hurt.

But 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 was 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....

(Talks to Kathleen) Look mother, I'm going off to Harwich in a hour's time to meet Heinz off the boat.

And I *do* hope you'll make him feel more welcome this time.

Last time he was here I felt you treated him like a servant - polite but condescending.

How can you be such a snob?

And you put him in a room as far away from mine as you possibly could - on the floor below!

(In Kathleen's voice) But Christopher, my dear, I just do not 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 understand Heinz is... is my *lover*.

Oh, I know it's a bit of a shock, but surely you must have realised this.

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

I'm queer, *queer*.

Don't you understand?

(In Kathleen's voice, sadly) Oh, my darling, darling boy...

(To Kathleen) There's no use trying to get me to go to the Hunt Ball and come back with a pretty young debutante.

Heinz is my lover - and nothing will change that.

(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 realise 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!
 Can't you see what this did to me - *and* Richard?
 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, mother.
 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 restaurant, German, a
hateful German.
 And Germans killed my father!

(In Kathleen's voice) Christopher, if only you'd stay here
 at home for a little while. I could look after you properly.

(Looking about) 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.
 Quiet!
 That's the last thing I want!
 What would I find to write about in a Cheshire manor house?
 I need to be in Berlin among the degenerates, the so-called
 dregs of society.
 Dregs are a *potent* drink if you can stomach them.

(To audience) To live with her - the family, old friends - I
 knew was her dream.
 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 Wistan to come 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 cash, 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.

I daren't give him a hug 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 of Heinz.

A customs man approached us.

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

(In Customs Man's voice) Mr. Isherwood?

(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...

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 believe so.
He showed me a letter from you enclosing the sum of twenty pounds - I quote: "...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." This is your handwriting, isn't it sir?

(Hesitating) Well... I...

(In Customs Man's voice) And this letter sounds a bit strange: "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) 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 steaming tea and 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 Auden'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*.
He's one of *us!*

(To Auden) You're right!

MOVES FROM CUSTOMS AREA TO TABLE, TAKES OFF HAT AND MUFFLER SITS BEFORE PAPERS.

(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'm writing a book about those days - in Berlin, not just about Jean, but Germany.

I've called it: "The Lost".

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

It has a dark, rolling sound like a bell tolling doom - "The Lost"?

And that's what it's about.

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 - the innocent people who were already marked down as Hitler's victims: the Jews, the communists, *the homosexuals*.

In fact anyone not willing to support the Nazis either actively or condoning what they suspected was going on - the arrests and disappearance of political prisoners, the vicious attacks on the Jews.

I'd seen a lot of this for myself.

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 and attacked him.

They knocked him into the gutter and lunged at him with their spiked banners.

One *stabbed* him in the eye.

He fell down streaming with blood.

I doubt if he'd ever see through that eye again.

Half a dozen policemen stood on the street corner watching.

These Nazis are everywhere.

They came into a cafe where I often sit and write, rattling collection boxes under people's noses.

Everyone gave in meekly and made a contribution.

The winter here is grim.

There are five million unemployed, everyday there are new emergency decrees, Hindenberg has cut wages, prices still soar and taxation's increasing more and more people are going over to the Nazis.

They're nearly doubled their numbers.

The *whole* country's at it's last gasp.

It's like living in a communist state without any of the benefits of communism.

People are just hanging on with their eyelids - police at every corner, beggars everywhere, everyone talking about Hitler.

Everyday there are violent clashes between police and communists.
 And its obvious things are only going to get worse.
 This is what I wrote in my diary.
 And it was to be the substance of my book.
 There's so much I could use, but I realise now it's too monumental a task.
 So, I'm trying to extract from it various episodes and turn them into short stories.
 I've finished the first one and sent it to John Lehman for his new magazine...

THE TELEPHONE RINGS.

Hello?
 Of course I'm glad to hear your voice.
 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, no I'm not!
 I'm not being snobbish.
 Jean, I've never done anything of the kind.... writing for films is a *specialised* thing....
 Yes, darling, 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.
 Meantime, why not send this director something I've written?
 Yes, that's fine.... but I gave you a copy....
 All right, I'll post you off another copy.
 Quite unsuitable for a film, but ...
 Fine, I'll hope to see you soon.
 Wiederseh'n!
(Hangs up telephone) My God!
 That's a bolt out of the blue.
 I haven't seen Jean for years.

Berlin 1931.

It will be like turning back the clock.

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?

(To himself) Is the world we create closer to the truth than the one we live in?

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.

(Pause) It was Wystan Auden who first tempted me to visit Berlin....

Auden and I were working on a new play together.

(In Auden's voice) Berlin's a paradise for the hedonist, the decadent, for our sort.

Do you know there's a hundred and seventy boy-bars in Berlin?

(To audience) That was enough.

I couldn't wait to book my passage on the Channel steamer. He went on.....

(In Auden's voice) There's a place called: "The Cosy Corner".

(To Auden) "The Cosy Corner"?

(In Auden's voice) It's in the Hellensches Tor, a working class district, and there are young men just waiting to sell sex for a little cash or a present.

I've found a delightful boy called Pieps, a cross between a rucker forward and Josephine Baker!

We wrestle and box and....

It's great fun and there are lots like him - blonde, beautiful *and willing*.

(To audience) Auden met me at the Zoo station and took me to his rooms, conveniently located near... "The Cosy Corner"!

We lost no time in making our way there.

It was up a dark flight of stairs in what had once been rather a grand old building.

The decor was tatty, a few photographs of boxers and cyclists pinned over the bar, and an old stove smoldering in the corner.

An ideal place for upper-middle-class Britishers intent on... slumming.

The boys sat around small tables drinking and...

Well, if you wanted to *inspect* the merchandise you could take your chosen one into the lavatory.

Or, you could discreetly slip your hand into a trouser pocket, slit for the purpose, so long as you did this *under* the table.

The boys weren't all homosexual - most had girlfriends - they were mostly prostitutes, so it was an accepted business proposition.

They were well built and physically fit and took great care of themselves.

In some way it was the golden age of German youth - when the culture of the body was at its height.

Money was scarce, so they turned to nature and the sun.

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

I soon found Bubi - blonde and dreamy.

We... *toured* ... the city together and made love at *every* opportunity.

But one day he disappeared.

He was wanted by the police for robbery and had slipped over the border into Holland.

Before I could contact him, he boarded a ship for South America.

Then I found Otto, and we spent a few weeks with Auden and his friend in the Harz mountains, but he again was on the wanted list - he'd escaped from a reformatory.

There were others - I'm all in favour of one night stands.

They gave me my greatest sexual experiences.

And finally I found Heinz.

Heinz....

He was *all* I had longed for and I made up my mind not to let him slip away....

Auden was back in London now, tutoring the scion of some noble house to make a bit of money, but he gave me a contact at the Hirschfield Institute where I found a room.

The Hirschfield Institute, a centre for the study of sexual perversity, run by Dr. Magnus Hirschfield, a Baltic Jew, with a world-wide reputation for advanced research into the sexology of obsession!

He took me on a tour of the place and I saw some noteworthy freaks including one with perfect female breasts. I used to sit in the lounge and talk to the residents and share their dining room.

One advantage was that there was no problem here of bringing boys back home for sex.

Then I moved to the rooms where I lived for six years.

There was plenty of material in Fraulein Thurau's house - a pimp upstairs and an old actress who walked the streets at night.

I watched the Berlin scene and wrote my stories.

And it was here that I met Jean.

Jean Ross 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, and 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) 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.

She was always frantically and headlong in love with these lovers.

They 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 memories of extravagant dinners at the Adlon Hotel followed by passionate sessions in Jean's gloomy room.

Her landlady was fat and untidy, like a large toad, with sagging jowls and a perpetual cold.

I soon persuaded her to move into Fraulein's Thurau's place in the Nollendofestrasse where I lived.

Well, it was cheaper and a good deal cleaner.
 Jean provided me with endless entertainment and the best story of my book - "Goodbye to Berlin".
 But there was only one consistent thing about Sally - 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 "lieblich" or "du Schwein".

Jean always addressed people with the familiar "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 mouth-piece 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 warde blieben 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... **(pause)** business..."

(Speaking back into the telephone receiver)

Wierkliche, lieblich.

Ya, ya fablehaft.

Wiederschn, sweet...

SHE HANGS UP THE RECEIVER PLEASED WITH HERSELF.

(To audience) They were all like that - at first anyhow.
 Jean picked up most of her lovers at a bar called: "The Lady Windermere", just off the Tauentzeinstrasse, a sleazy area, a kind of imitation Montparnasse.

She pressed me to come that evening 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 blonde young man playing nostalgic songs on a grand piano. She stood relaxed with her hands hanging limp singing in a husky expressionless voice.

She sang in her own mixture of German and English.

(She sings a German Cabaret song) The drinkers applauded and followed her as she drifted towards the bar. She embraced us both quickly and went off with a huge elderly gentleman and sat drinking champagne against the background of a huge illuminated fan which was the trademark of the place.

Jean was no singer but her casual air and nonchalant stance made her performances effective.

Jean and I saw a lot of each other.

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

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

Fraulein Thurau loved her.

She'd never seen anyone like Jean before.

The first time I took her round Fraulein Thurau 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) 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) She took my fountain pen and swirled it 'round.

(In Jean Ross's voice) Try it.

Isn't it wonderful?

(To audience) She swallowed hers so fast.

(In Jean Ross's voice) That'll get me through until I go to "The Windermere".

(To audience) Then Jean found Clive.

Dear Clive...

He was American and lived at the Adlow.

(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.

(To audience) Clive wined and dined us and.... **(Winks)** well you know what I mean...

(He changes the 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.

There was a small white envelope for her...

(In Clive's American accent) "For you *and* Chris, with love - Clive...."

(To audience) Just that.

Inside was five hundred marks.

(In Jean Ross's voice) A pair of gold-diggers aren't we?

(To audience) Jean took her two hundred and fifty marks and bought some new clothes.

The other two hundred and fifty came in handy.

We blew fifty on a *special* dinner.

Then went on to "the Troika".

But we didn't enjoy it much.

(Pause) Now 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) Jean sat on the end of my bed and crossed her slim legs.

It was ten o'clock and I was hardly awake.

(In Jean Ross's voice) Listen Chris - this is the *absolutely* the real thing.
I'm most *terribly* in love.

(To Jean) Who is it this time?

(To audience) I asked...

(In Jean Ross's voice) I thought you *realised*.
It's Klaus.
You know Klaus... with those *adorable* big thighs...
He's *so* sweet, *so* sensitive.
And those hands... they've been places that...
He *absolutely* adores me...

CHRISTOPHER LAUGHS.

(In Jean Ross's voice) What are you laughing at Chris?
This is serious.
Oh, I know Klaus will make it.
He's a *brilliant* musician.
I mean, he's only waiting to be discovered and he'll be all the rage in Paris and London.
Can't you see, we'll be a *marvellous* pair?
Don't go to sleep again, Chris, darling...
Listen...
I'm in love, *truly* and forever.
It's a most, the most... *incredible* feeling.
Chris!
It's happened!

(To Jean) A cup of coffee, *please*... and 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.

(To audience and he holds up a cigarette lighter) She lit my cigarette with a little gilt lighter.

(In Jean Ross's voice) Isn't it the *sweetest* thing?

HE MOVES AWAY.

(To audience) And now this blond genius was in London.
He'd had an offer from a film company to synchronise music for a film set in Germany - they were popular at the time - "The Student Prince" and all that romantic stuff.

Fraulein Thurau, who took a great interest in the affair brought up his first letter with triumph.
 Klaus didn't like England much and missed Jean.
 He'd work hard and save money.
 Meantime Jean made use of her talent and... furthered her career as a singer!
 He still adored her and she was always in his thoughts, of course.
 There was quite a gap until the second letter arrived.
 Jean stormed in *waving* **(He waves madly)** it madly.
 I knew it was a flag of distress.

(In Jean Ross's voice) Do you know what this swine's gone and done?

(To Jean) What swine?

(In Jean Ross's voice) Klaus, idiot!

Listen!

"Meine liebste, armes Kind,

I know this will upset you but I've decided we must part..."

There's a lot more about work and so on...

Then the stab in the back!

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 he had a mind!

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 *dreadfully* 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.

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

What a *terrible* farce!

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

He's not worth it.

Let's go to the pictures.

There's a new Leni Riefenstahl on at the Kino, "Der Heilige Berg" - full of snow and skiing.

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

Drink up!

And tomorrow we will see another picture - there's one I keep meaning to go to "Die Traumende Mund".

It's supposed to be fantastic.

Elizabeth Bergner.

You'd like her, Jean.

I've got some money – why don't we have an orgy?

(In Jean Ross's voice) You're *so marvellous* to me, Chris. I could easily fall in love with you.

(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 a part in a crowd scene for Ufa Films but came back one day 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.

But that's another story...

She had *infinite* charm.

I could almost see myself falling in love with her in our Berlin days.

And I remember one day when it was raining hard, she said....

(In Jean Ross's voice) What a pity we can't make love, darling, there's nothing else to do!

HE GOES BACK TO THE EDITING OF "THE LOST".

(To audience) Separating the episodes of "The Lost" is like dissecting a corpse.

I was quite skilled at that during my medical studies.

In fact unlike a lot of the students, I almost enjoyed it.

I realise now the major work I'd planned will never take shape.

Anyhow, I need the money so I've sent off the first amputation to John Lehman, for his new magazine "New Writing".

PICKS UP TELEPHONE AND ASKS FOR TELEPHONE NUMBER.

Hello!
 Primrose Hill 762, please?
 Thank you.
(Laughs and waits) Is that you John?
 Christopher.
 No, no, I won't waste your time in idle chatter....when's the next issue due out?
 Yes, I can imagine.
 I just want to ask you if you're including "Sally Bowles"?
 But why?
 If you like it, and you think it's well-written - why not?
 I find this *amazing*...
 I mean surely "New Writing" is meant to take a few risks, it's supposed to be the avant-garde of English youth.
 You mean to tell me that you quail before publishing an abortion scene?
 Why, for God's sake?
 You want me to take it out and try for the next issue?
(Annoyed) 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 I've given her another name! Isn't that enough?
 No - of course Jean won't sue you!!
 Look, I'll ask her.
 Get permission.
 Is that enough?
 Very well then I'll withdraw it... well, I might, but I think you're being *ridiculously* prudish.
 Don't you want to raise a few hackles... 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 it.

HE HANGS UP THE TELEPHONE.

(To audience) Well, "Sally Bowles" is out for the moment. There's Heinz on the island. But if John Lehman doesn't fancy abortion, how will he react to a group of queers?

Perhaps the Hogarth Press.
 I think it's worth working on...
 The most *bizarre* experience of my life - so far, anyhow.
 Heinz and Geoffrey and Francis and the boys in an
 anarchist's Utopia on a tiny Greek island.
 Heinz was now in Berlin again and I feared for his life.
 He was known as an anti-Nazi, he was of military age and he
 was homosexual.
 Any one of which could have sent him to a concentration
 camp.
 Somehow I had to get him out of Germany.
 Belgium was the obvious place.
 Some of those targeted 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 met Francis...
 Francis Turville-Petre was an anarchist *and* an eccentric.
 He'd apparently 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
 light-hearted mood.
 Francis met us off the boat at Athens.
 Now I saw him again I was sure I'd seen him long ago at
 Cambridge...

(To Francis) I'm *sure* I know you.
 When we were up at Cambridge - at a lecture at King's...

(In Francis' voice) Trinity.
 A lecture on Macho Picchu ruins.
 I lent you that book on Inca costumes.

(To Francis) I hope I returned it.

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

I wasn't sure you'd want to be reminded of it.

(In Francis' voice) What nonsense!
 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 with Cambridge and I'm sick of Berlin.
I'm dead and you aren't.
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

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 'round the corner.
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.

Is it far to the island?

(In Francis' voice) The place is about twelve miles up the coast, the roads a bit *rough*, I'm afraid.
I'll signal to the boys on the island and they'll bring the boat over.
All right?
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 damn 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) 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 really blue, it's lovely...

(To Heinz) You don't have a bathing suit!

(In Heinz's voice) I don't care!
I'm going in anyway!
Come on Aleko, I'll race you.
Swim!

What's that in Greek?

(Chris doesn't have time to answer) "Thalassa" - that's
it isn't it?

(To audience) He stripped off naked and *plunged* in like a
puppy...
His body looked so smooth like marblecut from an ancient
Greek temple.
Francis and I waved desperately to the island.
There was no response.
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 large rock drinking from a bottle.
We waved.
Of course, there was no response from the island!

(In Francis' voice) I can't think why they don't come.
They must be asleep.

(To audience) Geoffrey stood up...

(In Francis' voice) Geoffrey!
What the *hell* are you doing?
Grab it off him Chris!

(In Geoffrey's voice) This'll wake the bastards!
Get back everyone!

TWO GUN SHOTS ARE HEARD.

(In Francis' voice) Christ!
 You nearly hit young Aleko.
 Look, Geoffrey, we'll just have to wait.
 The 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, the others drank and the boys made a show of cooking but spent most of their time swimming naked and rushing around, yelling.

CHRIS PICKS UP A BOTTLE AND TAKES A SWIG.

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

(In Francis' voice) No.
 I wanted to and I'm still in discussions...
 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.
 Now they want me to build a bridge to the mainland.

(Concerned) 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) 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 heterosexual 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 off 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) 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.
Isn't it Geoffrey?

(In Geoffrey's voice) Buggers' paradise!

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

(In Geoffrey's voice) 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.
(Pointing) 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.
And peacocks, I thought I'd have peacocks and a camel perhaps.
What do you think Geoffrey?

(In Geoffrey's voice) A bloody bolshevik, that's what you are.
Why don't you start singing "The Internationale" and get out your hammer and sickle.

(In Francis' voice) All Russian bolsheviks have been liquidated years ago.

(In Geoffrey's voice) Tripe!

(In Francis' voice) Look what's happening in Germany!
They're massacring the communists and..

(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 argued and I listened.
We drank wine and looked at the halcyon sea.
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?

Nothing!

(To Geoffrey) Then why do you stay?

(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.

(In Geoffrey's voice) Christ, you're ignorant.

There isn't any other place.

(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.

Did you meet Francis here?

(In Geoffrey's voice) Meet?

No.

He picked me up off the 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 were strangers.

I'd met him once before.

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

(In Geoffrey's voice) 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 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 and 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: **(Shouts)** "Get out of the way!"
The builders were blasting rocks.
They did this periodically and usually demolished 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 Geoffrey) I told him about Heinz and Germany.

(In Geoffrey's voice) Bloody awful mess...

(To audience) He muttered.

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?

But these reflections were cut short by a sudden shout from Francis who rushed past us to the beach, yelling...

(In Francis' voice - yelling) Get away!

Go!

Aleko!

Heinz!

Grab that boat.

Push it out again!

No!

No!

You can't land.

Go back at once!

At once!

(To audience) In a small boat, was a rather voluptuous blonde woman, fighting to get ashore.

She saw Geoffrey and yelled...

(In Maria's French voice - yelling) Geoffrey!

Darling!

Come and help me!

(To Geoffrey) Who is she?

(In Geoffrey's voice) Don't you know Maria?

She's been everywhere, Paris, Berlin, Budapest.....

(Yells) Don't let her land, Francis!

Once she's set foot on shore we're all done for.

Where's my damn pistol?

(To audience) But Maria landed.

And she brought with her a gramophone.

She danced and danced with Heinz and Aleko.
 She waltzed with the builders; the fishermen competed with
 their ritual dances that got wilder than ever, they all joined
 the drinking parties.
 She sang to us, she made the boys cook *decent* meals.
 She tidied the campsite and made the boys keep the kitchen
 area clean.
 I once heard her say in tones of outrage...

(In Maria's French voice) Where's the duck I'm cooking
 for dinner?
 You did *what?*
 Mon Dieu!
 Disgusting animals!
 Chamoux!
 Sales betes!
 Give me the poor thing.
 Now get off the feathers!

(To audience) At dinner Heinz said...

(In Heinz's voice) This duck you're eating, Christoph, it's
 the one Aleko *screwed!*

(To audience) As I turned away nauseated, he added...

(In Heinz's voice) Don't worry, Christoph, Maria washed it
 and see!
 It's been really well cooked.

(To audience) The coming of Maria changed everything.
 The sound of her gramophone clouded the place with
 sentimental German songs.
 We heard them all.
 Willi Fritsz, Renate Muller, Luise Rainer - all the stars from
 musicals and of course, Richard Tauber.

BACKGROUND MUSIC: "YOU ARE MY HEARTS DELIGHT", "DONNA CLARA", ETC.

(To audience) I asked Francis who Maria was.
 He said....

(In Francis' voice) She's Geoffrey's... friend - really.
 They have repeatedly committed *a certain act* too revolting
 to mention.
 Now she's pursued him here, driven by her nameless lust....

(To audience) I asked Maria about Geoffrey....

(In Maria's French voice) *Poor* Geoffrey.

He had everything, money, family.

Lost, now.

He's destroying himself.

There must be some secret.

I don't know...

I don't know...

(To audience) Then one day I woke to in a daze to see Maria was leaving us.

And Geoffrey, too.

We'd all drunk ourselves into a coma

Maria had brought a case of whisky with her.

Geoffrey was slumped over the table, Francis prone at his feet, the boys dead to the world.

Only Maria was alert.

The fishermen were loading her luggage on to the boat, Geoffrey's inert frame too.

She made them pick him up and carry him aboard, arms hanging loose, mouth open, lifeless as a sack.

Francis opened his eyes and murmured to me....

(In Francis' voice) 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?

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 Vanessa Bell's design on her book jacket on to my mantelpiece.

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

Then one night a few thugs from a rugger team broke in and wrecked 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.
 '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!

(Becomes serious) 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?

Did you ever find out?

(In Francis' voice, emotionally) What does it matter?

(To audience) I thought of Germany, the prosecutions, the
 torture chambers, the senseless brutality of the Gestapo
 thugs, the cold, methodical massacre of the jews.

I knew I was on Francis' side.

On the side of *the lost*.

(Pause) I wrote in my diary in the blazing sun.

Heinz and Aleko swam, fished and chased each other.

But this was no solution.

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

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 scrutinized Heinz' papers carefully and handed them back.

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.

I daren't touch him, or take his hand.
 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.
 The money was gone.
 I returned... to London.

**CHRISTOPHER MOVES TO THE DESK AND SITS WRITING. HE MOVES
 TOWARDS THE AUDIENCE.**

One day I called up Jean and she came over.
 If I closed my eyes I could imagine I was back at Fraulein
 Thureau's.
 In spite of the hefty boots, the baggy jumper and the bitten
 nails, it was the old irrepressible Jean.

(In Jean's voice) He's the most *marvellous* man, Chris,
 darling.
Absolutely brilliant.
 You'll *adore* him!

(To Jean) Would I?

(In Jean'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, darling...

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

(In Jean'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 great, like Mr. Noel
 Coward.

(To Jean) I'm in the middle of my novel.
 I'm busy, Jean.

(In Jean'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.

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

You should have seen their faces when he wrote the address

Miss Garbo, Santa Monica, California.

They thought it was a joke.

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

(In Jean's voice) Listen Chris, darling...

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

And I sent him your book and he simply loves it!

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

You'll be *filthy* rich in no time.

He might take you back to Hollywood.

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

(In Jean's voice) Darling, he's going to call you.

Just say: 'Yes'

You'll be made for life.

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

Do this for me.

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

Is it a deal?

(To audience) I had to say yes.

The director telephoned.

He was Berthold Viertel, married to Garbo's script writer.

Jean was right.

I *did* go to Hollywood and *everything* changed.

I *even* played tennis with Greta Garbo.

At last I heard news of Heinz.

He was tried for draft dodging and being homosexual.

The lawyer told him to blame me - to say I made him have oral sex.

He was given six months in prison, a year's enforced labour and three years' military service.

It could have been much worse.

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

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

I still hadn't answered the question I asked myself on the island.

What did I care about?

Auden and Spender said I didn't care about writing or I
wouldn't sell myself to Hollywood.
My political friends said I didn'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.

THE END

Performance rights must be secured before production. For contact information, please see [the A Singular Man information page](#).