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Christopher and His Kind

By Christopher Isherwood

It's 40 years since I first wrote about my time in Berlin.

And the book I'm now writing is perhaps an attempt to set the record straight - well, as straight as it's possible to be. I destroyed my Berlin diaries, you see, so I've had to rely a good deal on memory.

As to why I went in the first place, my friend Wystan Auden was there and encouraged me to join him.

I could also say I went because of what was happening politically.

But in fact, I went because of the boys.

To me... Berlin meant boys.

Danke schn, mein Liebling.

One man has hands that are tender

One man has hands that are strong

If I should choose to surrender

My choices are bound to be wrong

I might find my ideal lover

If I search both far and wide...

My dear, that simply won't do.

You're the very last person

who ought to go there.

Berlin isn't the right place for you at all.

What on earth do you mean?

It's German, darling.

Wystan Auden thinks

it's the most marvellous place.

Auden! Such an untidy boy.

Besides, what about medical school?

But, Mummy, I am not cut out for medical school.

That's exactly what you said about Cambridge.

Christopher, you cannot go through life shirking it. It's time you buckled to.

- I'm a published novelist.

- Of course you are, darling.

But wouldn't it be so much nicer to be a doctor as well?

It isn't a hobby, you know.

Any normal mother would be proud.

And I am proud, my sweetheart.

You know I found your novel most interesting.

I thought it was ingenious the way you used
your antipathy to me to such creative effect.
But you cannot expect life
to be one long holiday.
I'm not going there on holiday.
I'm going there to get away from you.
Couldn't you go somewhere a little closer -
like the Isle of Wight?
I don't know to whom I belong
It would be such a shame
to end up on my own
If I make myself true to one
How another will surely be sad and alone
Of course you must do as you wish.
I fully intend to.
It's only natural that you should want to flee
the nest just as I'm bound to get more lonely.
What I went through to bring you into this world.
Months and months of feeling really quite seedy.
Oh, well.
So be it.
You won't forget, will you, darling...
...that the Germans killed your father?
Take me with you.
You have to stay and look after Mummy.
But for how long?
I'm afraid I can't answer that.
If I make myself true to one
How another will surely be sad and alone
Should such a beauty belong to one person?
No, surely, the sun and the stars
They belong to us all
I don't know to whom I belong
I believe I only belong to myself
Danke. Vielen Dank.
I was wondering...
Do forgive me, dear boy,
I didn't mean to startle you.
- No, no.
- Could I trouble you for a light?
Yes, of course.
I seem to have mislaid my lighter...
Oh, thank you, dear boy.
It may have been... Would you mind if I...

- No, no.

- How kind.

It may have been stolen.

Oh, dear.

One has to be so careful nowadays,
don't you find?

Are you going all the way?

- Excuse me?

- To Berlin.

Oh, yes.

- Holiday?

- I'm hoping for a little more than that.

Ah, yes, well.

Berlin has so much to offer in certain respects.

- Do you live there?

- For now.

One never knows what a new dawn may bring.

I hope you don't think I'm prying, dear boy,
but do you have accommodation in Berlin?

I do, as it happens.

The reason why I venture such impertinence
is that my landlady, dear sweet woman,
is desperate for a reliable lodger.

Her landlords are ruthless,
and if they knew

that she didn't have the full quota,
they'd turf her out in an instant.

I have a feeling - though perhaps
I shouldn't say so myself,

I do have a nose for these things -
you might fit the bill perfectly.

My goodness, yes.

- That's most kind of you but...

- I'll tell her, then, shall I?

Here's my card.

Mr Hamilton.

Oh, Gerald. Please.

And who shall I tell her to expect?

Isherwood.

Christopher Isherwood.

Wystan!

So here I am.

Yes, here you are. Good trip?

Fine, thanks.

Those seats are devilish.

I hardly noticed.

I thought we'd drop your case off,
then I'd show you the sights.

Best start as one means to go on.

I decided the Brandenburg Gate could wait.

Don't worry, they won't bite...

unless you want them to.

They're very accommodating
if you have the cash.

It won't break the bank - the exchange rate
is still very much in our favour.

- Pete.

- Hello.

- Guten Abend.

- Guten Abend.

What are you saying?

What was that?

We've been something of a feature.

Well, maybe more of a B-feature. I have
no illusions of the pitfalls of loving a whore.

Are they all on the game?

Most of them. You can't imagine
what a state the economy's in.

They look very well on it.

They like to keep themselves fit.

It's good for business, of course,
and they're shamelessly vain.

The fact that we find them desirable
only proves how masculine they are.

What do you mean, "we"?

They're nearly all rampant heters
and use our money to pay for cunt.

But don't let that put you off.

They're frightfully good at it.

- What name does he go under?

- Caspar.

It's about the only thing I understood.

Perhaps you'd better help me trot out
the odd German phrase,
else I could get myself into the most frightful fix.

Mm, perhaps I better had.

The question is,

will you understand the answers?

I might have found somewhere to stay.
- I got talking to this man on the train.
- Little slut.
Apparently his landlady's desperate for a lodger,
something about filling her quota.
I thought there'd be no harm in checking it out.
You're very welcome to stay here, you know.
In fact, I'd very much like it if you did.
I need a room of my own, Wys.
If I start giving lessons,
which I'm going to have to to earn a bit of cash,
and subsidise my writing...
Well, you can't write poetry
with me buzzing about.
Yes, you're right.
So I expect you'll be seeing him again,
this Caspar chappie?
Oh, yes. I hope so.
I have missed you.
I love English gentlemen, Herr Isherwood.
Herr Hamilton such a charming man.
And you a writer! What an honour.
You can write many famous novels here.
Oh.
Herr Isherwood, this room was made for you.
It's very nice, Frulein Thurau.
Herr Isherwood, you English are so polite.
Well, you English men.
There is an English woman across the hall.
She treats me like a slave.
"Frulein Ross," I tell her, "I was a lady.
I have not always scrubbed floors. "
Forgive me, Herr Isherwood.
That was the lodger before you.
I don't know what he'd eaten
but it won't come out.
Wie schn Sie wieder zu sehen.
Morning, darling.
I have the most perfectly frightful head.
Who is it?
Isherwood.
Who?
Christopher Isherwood.
It's me, Christopher.

We met on the train.

I've taken the room.

Oh...

Christopher.

Do forgive me, dear boy.

One has to be so careful nowadays.

Since my release from Brixton, I've um...

...I've rather lost touch with the old country.

- You were in prison?

- Yes.

For expressing anti-British sentiments.

Though how, I ask,

could I be regarded as a traitor,

when I have rivers of Irish blood

simply coursing through my veins?

So you're in business here?

One must have fingers in many pies, dear boy.

Such alarming times we live in.

Heinrich.

A young stevedore I encountered in Hamburg.

And what were you doing in Hamburg?

What is one ever doing anywhere?

Passing through, dear boy.

That is our destiny.

Forever passing through.

He does make rather an impression, though.

Well, I um...

I have found, Christopher, down the years,
that I've never been able to relax sexually
with a member of my own class.

That an affair with one's social
and intellectual equal is well-nigh impossible.

Hm?

I suppose.

You're in the right city, dear boy.

Quite the place to let your hair down
with some eager young prole.

Oh, dear.

Is it crooked?

Just a tiny bit, perhaps.

One must take a little care. We're still illegal.

And should the Nazis come to power,
they'll stamp us out altogether.

What's the current Communist line?

As far as I know,
Lenin said nothing about buggery.
Dearest Heinrich.
He smelt exactly like a fox.
Delicious.
Haven't you gone yet, Ludo?
Do put something on.
You'll frighten the horses.
He's Polish.
He noticed I was staring at his wig
and asked if it was crooked.
"Just a little," I said.
And he straightened it.
- You like, ja?
- Ja, spot on.
- Window.
- Good.
Good.
Hm?
And this?
- Fish.
- No.
What is it?
Big fish?
No, no, this. What is this?
Whale?
No, it's a clock.
Clock. Ja.
Yes, good. And that's a dolphin.
- Was?
- Never mind.
That?
Frulein Schmidt?
Well?
What is that?
Oh, Christoph.
This is how I'd like to die!
Guten Morgen, Herr Hamilton.
Oh... good morning, Frulein Mayr.
Good morning.
Danke.
- Guten Morgen, Herr Isherwood.
- Guten Morgen, Frulein Thurau.
How sweet love must be.

Tonight, yes?

Jawohl.

Morning, darling.

I don't know half the people
who pass through this place.

But you've been here generations.

We must say hello.

Would you like coffee or tea?

I don't recommend the tea much.

I don't know what Frulein Thurau
does to it but it tastes like slops.

Tell me, Chris, what do you do?

- People tend not to call me Chris.

- I'm an actress.

Not at the moment. I'm singing in a nightclub.

But you must come and see me.

- What about tonight?

- Tonight's rather difficult.

Was that your boyfriend in the hall or a one-off?

I do find one-offs so much less of a hassle,
don't you, darling?

I've been here for centuries -
getting on three months, now.

I came here with a girlfriend
who assured me we'd get film work.

But then she was whisked away to Paris
by a fat banker, left me utterly stranded.

- How rotten!

- I don't care. I can stand on my own two feet.

But you don't mind being here alone?

One's always alone, ducky!

Surely you know that?

How old are you?

I'm practically antique.

I'm nearly 21.

I'm frightfully bright, you know.

I got myself expelled from school
by saying I was pregnant.

There was a terrible to-do
when they found out I wasn't.

I got myself sent down from Cambridge.

- I say!

- Flunked my tripos.

What a hoot!

I'm meeting a man in the Adlon for lunch.
He'll have to wait.
He has the most revolting underpants.
They're like camelhair, or something.
It's the sort of thing John the Baptist might wear.
Oh, Mummy would nearly die
if she knew what an old whore I am.
But one has to keep that horrid wolf
from the door, doesn't one?
Guten Tag.
Really!
How do you manage, darling?
I've started giving English lessons.
But actually, I'm a novelist.
A novelist? How perfectly marvellous.
- Are you published?
- My first novel, yes.
I haven't yet found a publisher for the second.
Has it sold simply thousands?
About 300, actually.
The one you write about me
shall sell by the million.
About you?
Of course, darling. Jean Ross.
Woman of mystery.
I'm not sure you're that mysterious.
Do you know,
I think we're going to get along famously.
You will write about me, won't you, darling?
Maybe.
One can't afford to wait, sweetie.
This whole thing is about to collapse
around our ears.
Carpe diem, darling.
Oh, damn. I suppose I better go
and meet the old goat.
He's promised to introduce me
to Max Reinhardt.
I don't believe him for a second.
Why are men always such beasts, darling?
Chris, could you be an angel
and lend me ten marks?
I... I haven't got a bean for the taxi.
She said his underpants were like camel hair.

The sort of thing John the Baptist might wear.
You're very quiet.
Touch of sunstroke.
You know, coming to Berlin
is the first honest thing I've done in my life.
And it's all thanks to you.
I doubt your mother sees it quite like that.
He's rather lovely, don't you think?
Caspar.
So, tell me, have you come to Berlin
to sample the culture?
I wouldn't quite say that.
In fact, I'm rather anti-culture.
- Like the Nazis?
- Oh, no.
Not in that way. It's just I'm rather put off
by culture worshippers.
I find them somewhat precious
and prone to gushing.
Do you find me somewhat precious
and prone to gushing?
No, I'm sure you're not.
But the danger is that one can use
culture worship as a substitute
for engaging with the messy business of living.
See, I find all this so very interesting.
You are a writer, but do not like culture.
It is my belief that culture raises us
from the beasts.
I wonder, Herr Landauer,
why you've employed me to teach you English.
You seem to speak it perfectly well.
One has to - how do you say? - Keep in practice.
Good.
What exactly is it that you do?
I am a shopkeeper.
A shopkeeper?
That is precisely what I am.
As in Landauer's Department Store?
Yes.
That's where I buy my socks.
Do you engage in politics, Herr Isherwood?
Actually, no. I'm not really much of a joiner.
I seem to be constitutionally incapable

of bringing myself to the required er...
...pitch of enthusiasm.
I have my sympathies, of course.
We can no longer afford the luxury of sympathy.
I rather suspect
I'm best equipped to observe and record.
That will not be an option.
When the Nazis come to power
we must take to the streets.
Not only Jews like myself,
but all of us, Herr Isherwood.
We must take to the streets and stay there,
even when the storm troopers start firing.
I'm not sure I'd hack it as a street fighter.
Forgive me, but are you not then as guilty
as your detested culture worshippers
for refusing to engage
with the whole messy business?
I think maybe...
we should all play to our strengths.
Perhaps we will practise the irregular verbs.
Hm?
You like that, huh?
It's like silk.
If you go to gymnasium, Christoph,
you'll be like me and Johnny Weissmuller.
I'm not so sure about that.
And then you'd do this, ja?
No. No!
Caspar!
Stop. Stop. Stop.
- You like, ja?
- Nein.
- Ja?
- Nein!
Ja. Ja.
- Christoph?
- Yes?
You got ten marks?
- Yes.
- I'll pay you tonight, ja?
Of course you will.
Oh, dear.
Let us thank God, Christoph,

that we are both normal.
Aren't boys marvellous?
Their shape and their voices.
Their smell, the way they move.
And they can be so... romantic, whereas girls...
No, I'm glad I'm like I am.
Thank God for public school.
He's not coming, is he?
As I've told you, my dear,
intimacy's just business to them.
So you think if I stopped giving him money?
No, no.
Caspar and I, it's more than just... business.
They're desperate for cash.
They'll do anything for it.
- But what he says to me...
- He'll tell you anything you want to hear.
Still, what do I know about romance?
I'm a poet, not a fucking journalist.
- I've booked my ticket back to England.
- Already?
Father's allowance has dried up.
And I really must get this fissure in my rectum
seen to.
I hope that wasn't me.
I'm touched by your concern, but really,
Christopher, you mustn't flatter yourself.
Piano intro
Can't imagine why I chose to leave him
How could I have been so cruel?
After all, he loved me without question
Still I left him like a fool
If I woke him late at night complaining
I'm on my last cigarette
He'd say, I'll be over in a minute
Darling, please don't get upset
Peter
Peter
- Gute Nacht.
- Gute Nacht.
Ha!
That's not what I was expecting at all.
I suspect that's a compliment, so, thank you.
I'm so thrilled you're here. Bobby, sweetie.

Good job.

I'm in heaven.

Chris, darling, this is Bobby Gilbert.

He does something important
for something or other.

- I'm in steel.

- This is Chris Isherwood.

- Christopher.

- Hey, Chris.

Any day now, Bobby's going to whisk me off
to Hollywood, aren't you?

- You bet.

- And I've told him all about you.

Oh.

Chris is absolutely my best friend.

He's the writer.

Oh! Yeah. Right.

Er... Would I have read anything of yours,
Chris?

Oh, no, but I've told him if he really sticks at it
he could write something really great,
like Nol Coward or something.

Couldn't you, darling?

What's the matter, Christoph?

You don't like me tonight?

Hey, Christoph. What's the matter?

I don't like being taken for an idiot.

You say you'll meet me then you don't turn up.

You take money off me

and say you'll pay me back, but never do.

It's getting to the point

where I can't believe anything you tell me.

Yes, I understand.

I understand.

Some of the girls I see, they're like that.

They say things and then let me down.

It makes me mad.

And when I see them, I always pay them,

I never hit them, and still they let me down.

But you know, Christoph,

some of them... they are so beautiful and...

...they make me so happy

and I just forget how mad I am.

You bastard!

Your eyes, Christoph.
They shine so bright when you're hot for me.
Oh, Caspar. He gave me a cheap,
gold-plated bracelet -
probably an unwanted gift from some admirer-
and fastened it around my wrist.
A love token, I fondly thought.
But then he disappeared.
I asked around, but no-one knew where he was.
I should have listened to Wystan.
Perhaps it was just a business transaction
after all.
Zwei Minuten, meine Liebe.
- Must be simply marvellous to be a novelist.
- Why's that?
Because when people are utterly foul to you,
you can sit down and write about them
and tell the whole world
how perfectly vile they are,
and make simply pots of money out of it.
It hasn't quite worked out like that yet.
Darling, will you be an angel
and light my ciggie?
Actually, I've been offered the chance
to earn a bit extra.
Take it.
Writing letters from Berlin
and doing the odd book review.
Darling, that's marvellous!
Let's have champagne.
It's for a magazine called Action.
- Oswald Mosley's rag.
- Oh, you know it, then?
Of course I know it. I may wear green
nail varnish, I'm not completely vacuous.
I meant to ask,
why do you wear green nail varnish?
- Have you said yes?
- Not yet.
- Don't.
- It wouldn't be political.
Writing anything for that lot
would be a statement of sorts
- even if it was for the cookery column.

- The money would come in handy.
- Christopher, you can't.
- But, Jean...
I wouldn't talk to you again
and that's an end to it!
I was just testing the water.
I wasn't really going to write anything for them.
Honestly, I wasn't.
I'm one to talk. Gosh, you know the things
I've done for money.
But people here are so strange.
They have simply no idea.
And the Nazis are getting more and more
of a foothold and they just seem to accept it.
I've even heard some people talk
of a brighter future,
as if all this ghastliness
were a price worth paying.
They're going to get an awful shock
unless they make a stand -
which you and I must do.
We must not throw in the towel.
- Why are you looking at me like that?
- I don't really know.
Aaargh!
- My god!
- Aaargh!
Morning, darlings.
- Aargh!
- God in heaven!
Oh!
Aaargh!
Oh, dear, I hope he won't do himself a mischief.
He ought to be more careful at his time of life.
Aaargh!
Ooh!
Oh, Bobby, darling.
You do that so well.
You must teach me one day
how to catch it in my mouth.
You bet, honey.
Thank you.
- To The Memorial.
- The Memorial.

Ja.

So do you think I'd enjoy your book, Chris?

Well, I'm not sure what sort of books you like, Bobby?

- What do you think, hon?

- I haven't a clue, darling.

But I expect it's astoundingly brilliant.

And the point is it's published.

His second novel in print.

And he's even had a letter of congratulation from E M Forrester.

- Forster.

- Wow!

It won't be long now

till our Chris is just as famous.

So, who's that guy in the wig?

Gerald.

Well, I could swear that Gerald was peeking through the keyhole while I was in the john. When I came out he didn't know where to look. I expect he knew exactly where to look.

Yeah. Right.

Bobby.

Darling, I adore champagne.

We'll have it every day, won't we, once you whisk me off to Hollywood?

Sure thing.

Bobby!

Naughty Bobby!

Deutschland erwache!

Excuse me.

Entschuldigung, bitte.

I was in the caf and you were...

Do you remember?

No. Well, why should you?

My name is Christopher.

Perhaps you'd like to go for ein Bier.

No. OK.

I'm sorry.

His name was Heinz.

He was innocent, vulnerable and uncritical.

A boy I could protect and cherish

as my very own.

Jean thought it was all frightfully jolly

and decided I was at last doing my bit
for the class struggle.

And as Heinz and I drew ever closer,
I had no hesitation in falling in love.

She needs to be in hospital,
but there is no beds.

Mutti.

Gerald! Come on out!

- I know you're in there.

- He's not here.

Where is he, then?

- Hamburg.

- Hamburg!

When he is back, tell him if I don't get
what I want, he knows what to expect.

Don't you, Gerald?

Some people seem to be utterly lacking
in consideration.

Tell me what it's about, Gerald.

It's a business transaction, that's all,
that went slightly awry.

What sort of business?

Do you know, Christopher, you're looking
as joyous as the first day of spring.

Gerald!

I was offered a small fee to help someone
get his hands on a police dossier.

Yes?

Actually, it was a positively glacial sum
that would have paid off my debts at a stroke.

And do you know what?

The wretched man simply vanished.

Disparu. Without paying me a single pfennig.

So who was that at the door?

A philistine, my dear.

Claiming interest on a little loan.

A loan for what?

Do keep up, dear boy.

For the money I needed to bribe the police
to get the dossier.

What are on earth were you thinking of?

The trouble is everyone's so greedy nowadays.

And dishonest.

Simply can't trust a soul.

Gerald?

Yes?

Your wig's slipped.

Oh.

No!

My dear Christopher,

I've had to leave Berlin at very short notice, which made it impossible for me to communicate with you.

Our friend at the door finally lost patience and matters got a little out of hand.

Try not to think too hardly of me, dear boy.

That would be more than I could bear.

As always, your affectionate...

Gerald.

- They give her bed at last.

- Ah, that's very good news, Frau Neddermayer.

She make dress to look nice in sanatorium.

Oh, I see. Well, it would be...

To see his Nazi friends.

The last Kaiser always mistrusted Berlin.

He saw it as a centre of- how do you say? -
dissidence.

Yes. Good.

What with the leftist working class
and the intellectual avant-garde...

I'm wondering if the working class
is as leftist as one imagines.

It was not that long ago that we came close
to a communist revolution.

But... they elected a strong leader.

This is where Adolf Hitler has been
so very clever and exploited the situation.

Ever since the Treaty of Versailles and
the Depression brought the country to its knees,
with banks failing and savings disappearing,
the poor and the unemployed
see him as their saviour.

The Nazis organise everywhere.

In bars, in clubs, in schools, like a virus.

- I see.

- Ja. Like a virus.

But... all of this I am sure that you know.

Or do you spend too much time at play?

Ha! Berlin can be very distracting.
We must all stand by our own kind, Christopher.
Whatever the cost.
Piano intro
I can't give you anything but love
Baby
That's the only thing I've plenty of
Baby
Dream a while, scheme a while
We're sure to find
Happiness
And I guess
All those things you've always pined for
I can't give you anything but love!
- Bravo!
- Did your mother teach you how to cook?
- Ja.
- She's not well. She's at the sanatorium.
- I did say.
- Oh, yes. Of course.
So tell me, what exactly is this?
Er... pig.
Oh, pork. How lovely.
It is a...
Pork rib. Delicious.
- No, no, I think he means lung.
- Ja! Schweinlunge.
- Schweinlunge.
- Oh. Golly.
And then before my very eyes
I saw him turn from prince to frog.
And I thought,
"Did I really let that make love to me?"
Gerhardt.
This is my brother Gerhardt.
Gerhardt, it's a pleasure to meet you.
Won't you join us?
We're having the most perfect evening.
I think your brother is simply divine.
And he has cooked us a marvellous meal.
You are no longer welcome here,
Herr Isherwood.
He doesn't mean it.
May I ask why?

Before our father went to the Western Front
he said to me,
"Gerhardt, look out
after your mother and your brother. "
I've tried to honour his memory,
but with no work and no money it's been difficult.
- I'm sure it has.
- Yes.
But now there is hope, Herr Isherwood.
- And Herr Hitler is the reason.
- Oh, for goodness' sake.
He understands men like me.
He wants to make us proud again,
hold our heads up high again.
The communists had their chance.
The Nazis are the people's party.
This is your friends at night school talking.
Did he just call me a tart?
We do not want you here, Herr Isherwood.
- You and your kind.
- Oh, how frightfully rude.
Ja?
So take your pick, Heinz.
Make your father proud.
Or shame us all.
But, Gerhardt...
Honestly,
how could we leave Heinz with that monster?
I'm sure he can stand up for himself.
We'll probably find him hacked into pieces
at the bottom of a canal.
You didn't help, addressing Gerhardt
like you were Queen Mary at an investiture.
And after the trouble he went to
with the pig lung hash.
You bastards! You bastards!
You brutes! You filthy rotten brutes!
For God's sake!
Oh, you're just as bad, every one of you!
Poor darling, it's over now.
Can we get a taxi?
Can somebody please get a taxi?
Krankenhaus, ja?
Eine Bahre.

You know, you get used to it, that's the danger.
The uniforms and the raids.
The street fights.
Beatings.
We can't just stand by, can we?
No.
We can't, you know. We really can't.
Heil Hitler.
Von Erde bist du genommen,
zu Erde sollst du wieder werden.
Rhe in Frieden, Lili Neddermayer.
In Namen des Vaters des Sohnes
und des Heiligen Geistes.
Amen.
Gerhardt.
Such a pity.
Isn't it?
That we don't make love.
After all, there's nothing else to do.
You Made Me Love You
We could go to the movies.
I haven't got two pfennigs to rub together.
Jean.
Jean, what is it?
Hollywood's off.
Jean, I'm so sorry.
"Dear Jean, I have to go back to the States.
Some emergency at HQ.
It was fun, wasn't it?
Bobby. "
What a complete bastard.
Typical bloody American. Flaky as hell.
- You fancied him rotten.
- That's beside the point. Come here.
And he was the most marvellous lover.
He was the best.
Jean, poor darling.
He did leave me a little something.
So he bloody should.
But I shan't be keeping it.
OK.
Ssh, come on.
Piano intro
Men say that they can be faithful

Simply I smile to myself
New love is always so novel
Faithfulness is but pretence
Now it is all but forgotten
What yesterday I still possessed
Love affords time that is blissful
Loyalty still makes no sense
I don't know to whom I belong
It would be such a shame
to end up on my own
If I make myself true to one
How another will surely be sad and alone
Should such a beauty belong to one person?
No, surely the sun and the stars
They belong to us all
I don't know to whom I belong
I believe I only belong to myself
They come, they go.
And so it will always be.
Good morning, Herr Isherwood.
Guten Morgen, Frulein Thurau.
What a beautiful morning.
Even the sun seems to
have come out for Herr Hitler.
Oh, Isherwood,
the police have been round.
- The police?
- They were asking about my lodgers.
What did they want to know?
Routine, they said.
Vor uns liegt Deutschland,
in uns marschirt Deutschland
und hinter uns kommt Deutschland!
Halt. Ein moment.
Caspar.
I would remind you, sir,
that this is a Jewish store
and that there is now
an official anti-Jewish boycott.
I've been looking everywhere for you.
You disappeared. I didn't know what happened.
Caspar.
I need to buy a pair of socks.
Mehr Bche! Brennt alle Bche!

Shame.

Shame.

Beruf.

Street sweeper. No, maybe...

Domestic servant or...

Yes. Why not?

Domestic servant.

Heinz.

I cannot come, Christopher.

But of course you can.

No. It is too dangerous.

- For you, for me.

- It's even more dangerous if you stay.

- For Gerhardt.

- Gerhardt? He's one of them.

- For God's sake!

- He's my brother.

We're brothers too, Heinz,

and more, much more besides.

- This is my country.

- Not at the moment it isn't.

It will be again one day. I've no doubt.

But in the meantime...

You do not miss home.

I have no home. This is home. Wherever I am.

We should be where we belong.

We are where we belong.

Together we must stand.

Together we're responsible for each other
as individuals.

Don't you see?

You have to come with me. I want you to.

Now you do. But in a week, a month...

I'll still want you, Heinz.

Heinz...

Of course I would.

I'm sure I do not know, Herr Isherwood.

What makes you want to leave Berlin?

How can I best put this, Frulein?

Adolf Hitler.

Ach, the Fhrer.

One day it's Brning, then von Papen.

Next von Schleicher.

Then it's Hitler.

We must all make the best of it,
Herr Isherwood.
I am staying.
Most Germans are staying.
And besides, where else would we go?
Well, this is your homeland, Frulein.
I understand that.
But... Heinz and I, we want to get out.
We want to...
travel.
But why? To go here, to go there.
What is the point?
Soon no-one will be left.
Herr Hamilton has gone. Frulein Ross.
Now you.
You get used to it.
You get used to anything.
Is your room satisfactory?
Mummy, he's not retarded.
Where you sleep.
Is good? Yes?
Yes, I sleep good.
Yes.
- Good.
- Thank you.
How long have you known Christopher?
- Mummy...
- Shush.
I know Christopher one year and one half.
Oh, that long?
And he's hardly mentioned you. If at all.
- And how long are you staying in our country?
- Two weeks.
I'm sure Heinz can answer for himself.
Can't you, Heinz?
- Two weeks.
- You see.
What a shame it's not longer.
Two weeks is as long as his permit allows.
Then maybe another time.
What is that?
- Oh, now...
- Christopher...
That, Heinz, is Wyberslegh Hall.

Part of the family estate.

It's in Cheshire,

in the North of England.

I painted it as a matter of fact.

- You paint it?

- Yes.

- It's very good.

- Thank you, Heinz.

That is the house

where I gave birth to Christopher.

- Yes?

- And very difficult it was too.

I was in labour for 18 hours.

Mummy, please.

Oh, dear, that was rather modern of me,
wasn't it?

But it was worth it.

He was the most delightful baby.

Yes, I'm sure Heinz isn't remotely interested.

He had the loveliest skin

and long slitty eyes, just like a Jap.

You see? Of course he's interested.

You live in the past, Mummy.

Perhaps I do, Christopher.

Because it's always there
and it never lets me down.

Do you have a mummy, Heinz?

She's dead.

Oh.

Oh, I am sorry.

Oh, dear.

Christopher's daddy's dead.

He was killed in the war.

He was my daddy too.

Yes, dear, but you hardly knew him.

He was killed by the Germans
on the Western Front.

What are you thinking of, hm?

I'm not blaming Heinz, darling.

I'm simply filling him in.

Mm. And for your information,
Heinz's daddy was also killed
on the Western Front.

Well, there you are, you see.

That's what wars do.
Kill people.
Toast?
He's a nice boy.
Well-mannered.
A street cleaner, you say?
There's no reason a street cleaner
can't be well-mannered.
No, dear. No reason at all.
How lovely to have a job like ordinary people.
But who'd have you, my darling?
You seem to be inept at pretty much everything.
Don't speak to him like that.
It's entirely your fault he is like he is.
- Like what?
- Richard, dear, we're talking.
It's terrible he has to go back.
And now Germany's withdrawn
from the League of Nations.
Yes. That is rather troubling.
I must think of a way of getting him out for good.
But why should that be your responsibility?
Surely he knows people who can help.
Well, he has absolutely no-one, Mummy,
except for a brother who's disowned him.
And, besides, I want it to be my responsibility.
So what will you do?
Get him another permit?
Or even another nationality.
Of course, you could always adopt him.
Darling, I don't think so.
Are you sure
he wouldn't be happier in Germany?
It is his home, after all.
It's where he belongs.
And he isn't a Jew or anything.
You have no idea.
It's Nazi Germany we're talking about.
It's not just the Jews who are being victimised.
I do read the papers, darling.
I'm fully aware
that the Nazis have done some bad things.
Although one hears that Herr Hitler's
done some good things too.

Oh, dear God!

If it weren't for that wretched boy Auden
dragging you off there.

I assure you, he didn't need to drag me.

But you must do as you wish, Christopher,
as you always do.

So long as you realise
what you might be taking on.

Right.

We're going to mail money to him in Berlin.

- We?

- So he can get on until he comes back here.

- And if you write a letter inviting him to stay...

- Christopher.

...then I'm sure they'll give him
a much longer permit.

Maybe even for keeps.

- You can't do that!

- I think you'll find that I can.

But you haven't proved your case.

Mr Isherwood, your mother invites
a foreign servant to her home
without the requisite permit.

You then send the boy money
telling him to claim it was a bequest,
which can be construed as an attempt
to deceive His Majesty's Immigration Service.

But then we have the letter that you wrote.

May I?

"I am counting the days until your arrival.

I've been so lonely without you. "

It's a bit curious, don't you think?

The way it's written. It's a bit...

What's the word?

- Queer.

- Thank you, Mr Auden.

What a boon to have a poet on hand.

- You can't send him back!

- Christopher.

No, no, God knows what they might do to him.

- Not my responsibility.

- An alien has no rights whatsoever
in this democracy we're all so proud of
that men have laid down their lives for.

And I hope, should the moment come, sir,
you too will be willing to make the sacrifice.

I shall appeal.

You can write to the Home Secretary
for all the good it'll do.

Come on.

As soon as I saw that rat,
I knew we were done for.

- They're all the bloody same.

- No, my dear. He's one of us. Stands out a mile.

I'm sorry.

You seem out of sorts.

Do I?

It's Heinz, isn't it?

Goodbyes are always sad.

As sad as dying.

I'll be seeing him soon enough.

- That's right.

- Yeah.

No need to be sad.

I suppose, being a writer,
you want to tidy everything up
and make it make sense.

But things never do quite make sense, do they?

Not really.

No.

This Sally Bowles character,
is she based on anyone?

Yes, in a manner of speaking.

What about Mr Norris?

Yes, I suppose he is too.

I thought we might first meet him on a train.

Oh, yes.

Trains are always good.

You can't go wrong with a train.

Where were we?

Full stop. Close quotation marks.

Good.

It must be very polarising, this Nazi business.

- Hard to sit on the fence, I'd imagine.

- Yes, it is.

Berlin's fairly seething, what with all the poverty
and wounded pride.

I'd say Communism

was the best hope for peace.
Then why not stay here and join the Party?
I can't do that. I have Heinz to consider.
Yes, Heinz.
Of course.
So where will you go?
Amsterdam, probably, for the time being.
That's all one can say, isn't it?
"For the time being. "
It always breaks my heart a little
to see you leave.
You should be used to it by now.
Oh, no.
I'll never get used to it.
And how awful if I did.
I'll be back.
I always am.
And so once again I cast off from England
and threw in my lot with Heinz.
Two lost souls wandering around Europe
on the brink.
I have to admit, I felt a little guilty flitting
from country to country to save a single man,
whilst others were preparing to save the world.
But then our luck ran out
and Heinz was arrested by the Gestapo.
And that... was that.
Daily Worker, ladies.
No appeasement.
Fight the Fascists.
- Excuse me, miss.
- I'm exercising my democratic right.
Only you would choose to sell the Daily Worker
in Knightsbridge.
I have no say in the matter.
I go where the Party tells me.
You are looking impossibly young.
- Aren't you ever going to age?
- I do hope not.
My God, the varnish!
I somehow felt that red
was more appropriate.
I must confess, I carry it with me everywhere.
Isn't it funny, darling?

You're the one that became famous.
And you know, I must say, I'm rather enjoying it.
And meanwhile, poor Heinz...
Well, I...
I dread to think what he's being subjected to.
A year labouring for the state
followed by two years in the army.
It's frightfully harsh.
It could have been worse. He might have got
carted off to a concentration camp.
You did all you could.
I wonder if I did.
I wonder if I did really.
And what's worse, I even feel relieved.
Hm.
Do you ever miss Berlin?
Oh, no.
I never miss anything.
Sometimes I wonder
if I shouldn't have had that kid.
I think I'd just about have cut the mustard
as a mother.
I'd tuck him in and I'd sing to him.
And then I'd go out and fuck filthy old men
to pay for the brat.
Then why not marry and have another?
Because I've lost my faith in men.
Well, that's a shame.
I've simply no use for them any more.
Not even you, darling.
Oh, well.
Back to the Revolution.
Might we see each other again?
Goodbye, Chris.
Goodbye.
Seems like
everyone's caught Communism like flu.
It's fair to say that the closest we've come to
solidarity with the workers is sleeping with them.
Well, that's a cause of sorts.
The only cause you really care about,
Christopher, is yourself.
Isn't that rather unkind?
Mm.

But you've turned it into an art form.
Rather successfully as it happens.
I used to be a little in love with you.
You knew that, didn't you?
Yes, I thought you did.
You're lucky.
You're not burdened by the concept of sin.
And it is a sin, Christopher.
Although I fully intend to carry on sinning.
Look, please, don't start on about God.
You're going to have such a conversion
one of these days, my dear.
I do loathe the sea.
It's so wet.
And sloppy.
I don't belong here.
I'm not sure I belong anywhere.
I rather like being a foreigner.
I wonder where we might end up.
Wystan was right.
I've never known about anybody except me.
You see, I was never able to commit.
I only ever sort of added to the chorus.
And now, of course,
politics are more and more about the individual.
The gay liberation movement
seems to have taken me to its heart.
It's very nice of them, really.
A cause at last.
But then I think it always was my cause.
And somehow,
you know,
it makes sense of what
I was trying to do for Heinz.
All those years ago.
Christoph.
You write again about Berlin?
Yes.
For a British newspaper.
A lot has changed, ja?
What's left of it.
Ja, when the city was cut in pieces
and we end up in the Russian sector.
Rotten luck, eh?

We all hate the Russians, Christoph.
We would much rather be here in the Western...
Maybe one day.
My friend, Christoph, the famous writer.
I suppose you could say that.
Tell me, there are skyscrapers in America?
Oh, yes.
And you see Hollywood?
I live near there, actually.
And the Grand Canyon, you see that?
Yes.
It's um... very big.
And cowboys?
No, I haven't seen too many of them.
I feel guilty, Heinz.
All that I made you suffer.
I should never have taken you out of Germany.
But, Christoph, you changed my life.
What we had,
what we did,
I would not miss for the world.
Look, Christoph,
my wife Hilda.
Well, she looks...
...very nice.
Yeah, she's a good girl.
And she doesn't ask questions.
That's all right, then.
And this is my son...
...Christoph.
Christoph?
Ja.
Well, well.
You know, Christoph,
you're not getting younger.
That's the way it tends to go.
You live alone, yes?
At the moment.
See, that is not good, to live alone.
You need a family around you
to keep you company,
to look after you when you are sick.
Heinz, I'm not decrepit.
But, listen, Christoph, we could be your family.

What?
Hilda, Christoph and... I.
Out there in California.
Ah.
Well, I'm not so sure about that.
You see, the life I lead...
...my... my plans are so uncertain.
Um... I'd have to think it over.
Look, we'll see how it goes.
And I'll write to you. We'll keep in touch.
You do understand, don't you, Heinz?
You do, don't you?
Yes, I...
I understand.
Frulein!
Oh!
When the city was divided,
we got the Americans.
Oh, I'm so happy.
We're all so happy.
I thank God the Russians didn't get us.
Communism...
Oh, Isherwood.
You look like a child.
It's lovely to see you, Frulein.
Isherwood, Isherwood...
The last years of war here, Isherwood...
- Yes.
- Terrible.
We were in the cellar nearly all the time.
Holding each other.
We prayed so much, we got quite religious.
Ah.
Is the yodeller still there?
No, thank God.
The Nazis shot her.
It's the one good thing they did.
Another survivor, eh, Frulein?
Another survivor.
It was damaged a little.
But I mended it.
For you.
No. I couldn't.
Take it, please.

And when you look at it, you will think of Berlin.

And Frulein Thurau.

And smile.

Thank you.

bSubtitle Rip; TheHeLL/b