

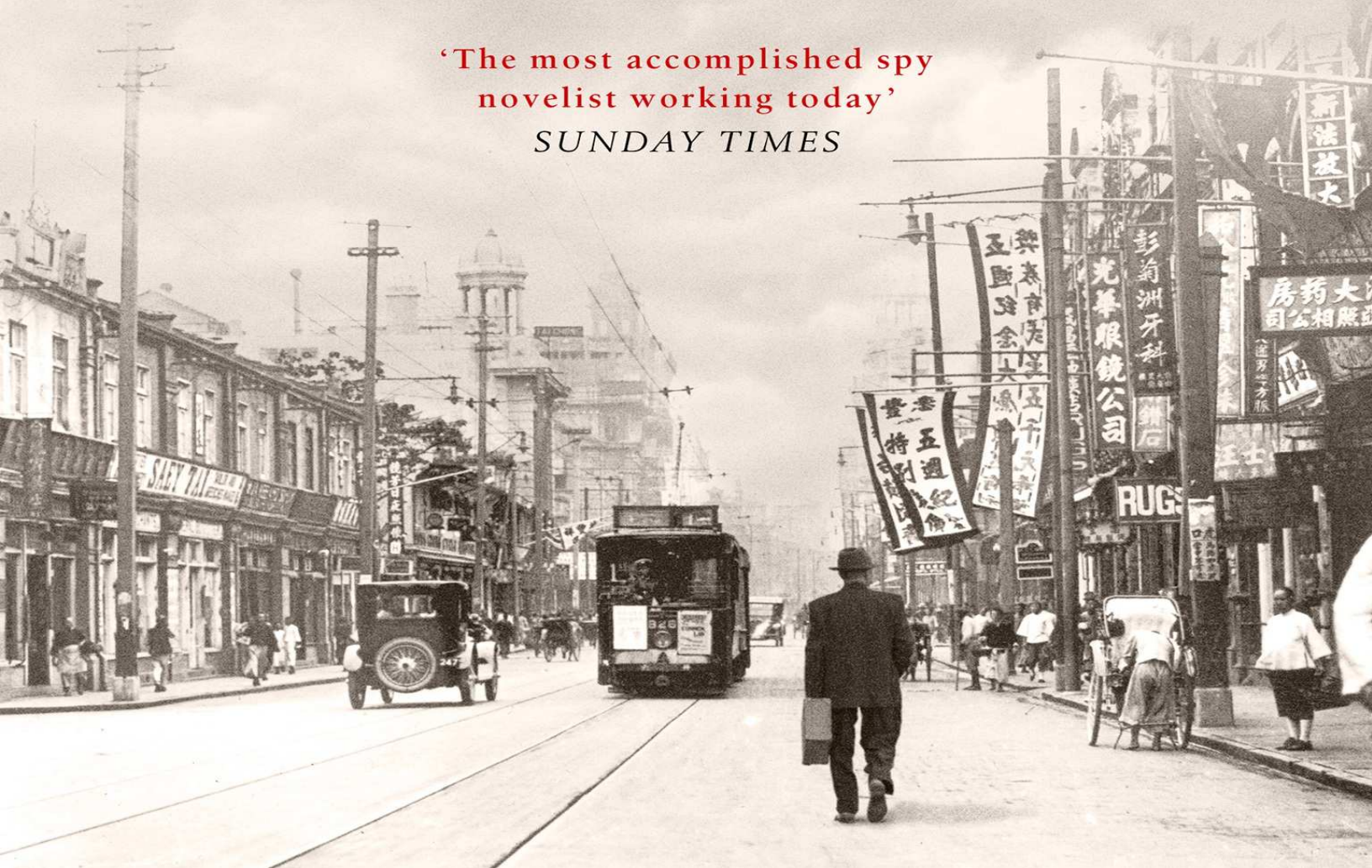
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JOSEPH KANON

SHANGHAI

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For Juliette and Lily

CHAPTER 1

Trieste 1939

He was only a few blocks from the hotel when he realized he was being followed. The sudden rain had emptied the big square, so there were only a few scattered umbrellas, no crowd to melt into. Footsteps you could hear, keeping a steady pace with his. When he stopped by one of the streetlamps, haloed in the misty drizzle, the footsteps stopped too. Not professional, then. In Berlin they'd be almost on top of you before you knew, your skin tingling with it, the fear. But maybe the Italians weren't as well trained. Or maybe he was imagining it, so close now, escape just hours away, alert to any sound, ears turned up like a dog's.

Still, he'd be better off in the lighted street across the square. In the empty piazza he'd be easier to grab, hustled off before a solitary walker could lift his umbrella to see what was going on. Unless it was all nerves. His last night, the boat already at the pier, waiting for morning and the desperate passengers. A new life, any life. The piazza was like a stage set of Europe, everything he was leaving behind, the old shipping offices and insurance companies as weighty as imperial ministries. At the far end, open to the Adriatic, cafés once filled with passengers having the last *mocha* before boarding, official cargo boxes stamped K u K, Kaiser und Koenig, the port of an empire that would last forever, already gone.

The steps again, keeping up. An amateur. But hadn't he been too? All of them, everybody in the group? Wanting to do something, to stop what was coming. Enemies of the Reich. Remember two things, Franz had said. You have to survive, or the rest of it won't matter. So don't take chances. Two, someone will betray you. So don't give him anything to betray. Your real name. Who you are. You're just someone in the group. Party discipline. It had worked for Franz, still alive, so they listened, became careful, because just being in the group now was a death

warrant. And when Willy was caught, the training held. There was nobody to betray, not even when they tortured him. False names, nothing more to give, until he was dead and they were safe.

The only weak link, ironically, was Franz himself. He had recruited the group, knew who they really were. So when they arrested Franz—Who had given him away? Someone in the Party?—Daniel felt the air go out of his chest, a vise squeezing his ribs. One night, then two, imagining the basement in Prinz-Albrecht-Strasse, the screams, the blood on the floor. Then they came for Josef. Because Franz had been broken, given them someone? Another night sweating, staring at the ceiling. He'd be next. But they didn't come. And then Franz was dead, his body pulp, and Daniel knew he'd been saved. For what? To finally join the Party—did he owe Franz that? In the end, he did nothing, ignored the faint signals Joachim sent, fell out of the group. First you had to survive. And by that time Kristallnacht had happened, fires leaping out of the smashed windows, and his father beaten and thrown into a truck collecting Jews for Sachsenhausen, and he knew he had to get out of Germany.

Now everyone knew it. The lines at the consular offices, the waiting lists that stretched years into the future. No Jews, not even for money. You could buy a visa to the Dominican Republic and then you couldn't. Uncle Nathan finally arranged it, the impossible tickets, the exit visas. Blood was blood. Was it Nathan's fault his brother, Eli, was the way he was? Save your skin. China's still open. You don't have to stay in Germany. All this through emissaries from the real underground in Berlin, not the Communists, the criminal world Nathan knew and Daniel's father, Eli, despised. But then it didn't matter what his father thought, his body just ashes somewhere in the camp. Sudden illness, the official notice said. So Daniel would make the trip alone. If he got out. What had happened to Eli's ticket? Resold probably, pocketed by Uncle Nathan's fixer. Worth a fortune now. He glanced toward the pier where the SS *Raffaello* was being loaded. The vise pressed his ribs in again, the moist air caught in his throat. Only a few more hours. And someone following.

He passed the big fountain and left the square by the old stock exchange, another imperial flourish, drawn by the lights of the cafés that lined the canal farther along. A thief would prefer shadows. But what was there to steal? If the

Germans let you go now, they took everything, bank accounts, property, passport. Ten Reichsmarks and a suitcase, the clothes on your back. And your life, a fair trade. No papers. A meaningless Nansen passport for an ID. A citizen of the Lloyd Triestino line until you reached Shanghai, where you wouldn't even be that. So what was there to steal? But a thief wouldn't know that. Daniel started walking faster, toward the safety of the lights. Another Canal Grande, but not like the real one, broad and dazzling. Here it was a narrow inlet of nearly stagnant water, just enough movement to rock the boats that tied up along its edges. Melancholy, like the rest of the city, even the lights reflecting on the water slightly dim. At the door he looked over his shoulder. Which one? Nondescript wool jackets and cloth hats, nobody meeting his eye. Maybe gone, already looking for another victim.

The café was a postcard of old Vienna—bentwood chairs and newspaper rods and the hiss of steam from the coffee maker. Daniel took a seat, watching the door. No one. A waiter in a long apron took his order. Why not a last seed cake? Who knew what the ship food would be like? Probably rich and heavy. First class, the only tickets left. Another debt to Nathan. Daniel sat back, his eye still on the door, feeling calmer. How could it be the Gestapo? There was no one left to give him away. Just footsteps in the dark. Imagining things. And then there he was, coming through the door, shaking the rain off his hat, a quick glance around the room, then looking straight at Daniel, almost a smile. He made a *you don't mind?* gesture at the other chair and sat down.

“Herr Lohr,” he said, not waiting for an answer. “You like to walk in the rain? I thought, maybe he’s meeting somebody.” Another glance around the room. “But no, just a walk. So it’s better here. I didn’t want to talk at the hotel. Maybe somebody sees.”

“Somebody who?”

“The police.”

Daniel looked up. “Who are you? What do you want?”

The man patted the air with his hand, calming it. “Nothing, nothing. It’s just a job. Make sure everything’s all right. If you need anything.”

“What would I need?”

The man shrugged. “People need things. Somebody wants to make sure—”

“Who?” But who else could it be? Another emissary.

“I don’t know. It’s better. A man who works with me says do me a favor. Make sure he gets on the boat. That’s all.”

Daniel tried to place the accent, as mongrel as Trieste—German and Italian and something flinty, like the karst that overlooked the city.

“I can get on the boat myself.”

“So get on yourself. But meanwhile, a little advice? You’re a Jew, I assume?”

“Half,” Daniel said, a reflex. What did it matter? There were no *mischlings* to the Nazis, one drop of blood enough. His father had been a veteran, with medals, and still ended up in Sachsenhausen, his eyes already dead the one time Daniel had been allowed to see him. Get out, he’d said. Don’t wait for me. There’s no time. They’re going to kill you. Even with a gentile mother, just a memory now. What did it matter?

“Half, then. You want to be careful tomorrow. Going through customs. One suitcase. Just clothes. Nothing in the lining. No valuables sewn in the hem. They know all the tricks. You get on the boat, you’re picked clean, understand?”

Daniel nodded. “They already went through everything, leaving Germany.”

“And now here, just in case. People think they’re in the clear, they get careless.”

“All right,” Daniel said.

“You want to get out. You don’t want anything to go wrong.” He stopped as the waiter brought Daniel’s coffee, shaking his head no to another cup. “So no funny business.”

“He asked you to say that?”

“It’s not like that. I’m saying it. I’m just supposed to get you on the boat. Clean.”

“What else?”

“Get there early. You have a single cabin but sometimes they double up. What it’s like now, everybody trying to get out. You know, a bribe maybe, and they find a berth. So you get there first.”

Daniel looked at him, waiting.

“First class, they have these silent butlers. You know, a compartment, the other side opens in the hall so they can take your laundry, shine your shoes while you’re sleeping. Like royalty, first class. So you get there early, there’s a package in there.

Put it somewhere safe. Nobody's looking hard—you just got through customs so you're clean. Just somewhere safe. They'll be waiting for it at the other end, whoever you're meeting."

"What's in it?" Daniel said quietly, dismayed. Not even on the boat and already compromised, involved in something. Stay away from Nathan, his father would say. He's a crook. Everything he touches—I know, you think it's all smiles. But it's rotten underneath. You touch something rotten, the stink gets on your hands. And it'll suck you in. One day, you're in it. Stay away from him.

"I don't know. Neither do you. And don't look. You just keep it safe and hand it over."

"How'd you get it through customs, if you don't mind my asking?"

"I didn't get it through anything. I'm just a messenger here." He paused. "But you know the service crew, people come on board before the passengers, bring the food, clean out the ashtrays, they don't go through customs, they're not going anywhere. Maybe somebody like that puts it in the silent butler. Maybe. Look," he said, glancing away. "It's nothing illegal. I don't get involved in anything illegal. I'm an expediter, you know what that means?"

"You move things along," Daniel said, leading him.

"That's right, I move things along. I don't have to know what they are. That way, nobody gets hurt. So get on the ship all right. And I'm done." He looked up at the waiter, who'd been hovering nearby, still hoping for an order. "Maybe a brandy. You?"

Daniel shook his head.

"Your last night. On me."

"I can pay," Daniel said.

The man raised his head. "You have cash? Besides the ten marks? You can't take it, so you might as well spend it. Enjoy yourself. I can get you a nice girl if you're interested. Slovene. Young."

Daniel looked over at him. Nobody gets hurt. "I don't have that much."

"Suit yourself," the man said, hearing the edge in Daniel's voice. "*Salud.*" He tossed back the brandy. "Where are you going anyway? He never said. Lloyd's goes everywhere. I figured—you know, Jews—maybe South America—"

"China."

“China. Christ.” He finished off his glass. “Why China?”

Daniel looked around the room, everything familiar, what he knew.

“It’s not here.”

When Daniel got there, hours early, the pier was already swarming with people pushing against the closed doors of the customs shed as if they were afraid there wouldn’t be enough time later. When the Vienna train pulled into the station just down the *riva*, walking distance, a noise went through the crowd, an anxious moan. There were so many now, hundreds more. How could they all get on? The train passengers, seeing people already on the pier, surged forward, calling for porters, hurrying. In the hotel there had been pictures of the Franz Josef days, women in day gowns and big hats, parasols, followed by maids. Husbands in bowlers looking at vest pocket watches. People with all the time in the world, lucky to be on the big white liners with their welcoming stewards and champagne at dinner. Not this, the crush at the gates.

“Taxi!”

A young woman a few heads away, waving a hand toward the street. Young, but not a girl, someone used to hailing cabs. A long black coat, too heavy for the spring weather, bulky, an extra layer of clothes underneath. Whatever they could carry. Lugging two suitcases, barely off the ground, an older woman behind her, clutching a purse, looking bewildered. “Taxi!” Exasperated now, turning to check on the older woman and catching Daniel’s eye instead, a flicker, just a second, but aware, returning his look. “Mother, keep up. Don’t get separated.”

“How can we just leave?” the woman said.

“Don’t start,” the younger woman said, still struggling with the bags.

Daniel pushed past two people. “Can I help? There aren’t any taxis. It’s not far.”

“We can manage,” the young woman said, a whiplash answer, her voice stretched taut, about to snap.

“It’s no trouble,” Daniel said, reaching for the suitcases.

“A gentleman,” the mother said, coming to life.

The woman shot her a glance. "I can manage," she said again, stopping him, then hearing herself, dropped her hand. "I'm sorry. It's just the train was late and —" The words rushed out, then faded, tripping over themselves. Curly brown hair jammed under a cloche hat, off her face, which seemed to be without makeup, the cheeks flushed just from the morning damp. A tiny dimple in her chin, as if a fairy had put a finger there, the story she was probably told as a child.

"Leah thinks she can do anything," the mother said. "She was always like that."

"There's plenty of time," he said, bending over the suitcase, then let out an involuntary "unhh" as he tried to lift it.

Leah looked over at him, surprised, covering a smile with her hand.

"There's a strap," she said. "I should have—"

"It's the gloves," the mother said.

"The gloves?" Daniel said.

"Never mind," Leah said. "You're sure it's not too much? Just to the pier, then. There must be porters there."

"Of course there are porters," her mother said. "A Lloyd ship? Of course." She looked around. "So many. They're leaving? Like us? But maybe a holiday."

Leah didn't answer.

"And you. You're on the ship too?" the mother said to Daniel as they started. "Everybody leaving," she said vaguely. "Why should we go? Just leave everything? The flat. Am Modenapark," she said to Daniel, placing it. "How can we leave that?"

"It's not ours now. You know that." An exaggerated patience, talking to a child. "Herr Blauner owns it."

"And the factory."

"Yes, and the factory," she said, a glance toward Daniel, cheeks red, embarrassed.

"Your father would never have sold it."

Leah said nothing, not wanting to rise to this, an old argument. "Look, they're opening."

A loud clanging, the metal doors sliding across the entrance, the high vaulted shed behind filled with orderly rows of uniformed customs inspectors standing beside their tables. Daniel clutched the suitcases more tightly, expecting another

surge, a fight for a place in line, but the doors opening had the opposite, calming effect. Lloyd Triestino was right on time, as it always was, the uniforms reassuring signs of order. They were boarding, safe.

“You sold it and we still have nothing,” the mother said.

“We had to sell,” Leah said, her voice low. “You know that. And now we have tickets for this boat.”

“For all that. The furniture, the carpets—”

“It’s not allowed to take anything.” The voice taut again. “You remember at the station? How they took my earrings?”

Without thinking, Daniel glanced at her ear. Pierced, now just a faint pinprick in the lobe, bare, unexpectedly intimate. He imagined her taking the rings out at night, putting them on the dresser, a ritual.

She turned to Daniel. “My mother’s not herself today. I’m sorry for this. Pay no attention.” A private conversation, as if her mother weren’t standing there.

“It’s hard to leave,” he said.

“She wanted to bring her dishes. The dinner set. She wanted to bring dishes,” Leah said, almost to herself, a verbal shaking of the head.

“What does Herr Blauner want with them?” her mother said. “A man like that. The good dishes. How would he know? An—accountant. An employee.”

“Herr Blauner knows the value of everything,” Leah said. “Everything.”

“Bah. He—”

“Enough. We’ll talk later.”

“When it’s too late to go back.”

She looked at her mother, eyes softer. “It’s too late now.” She took out a handkerchief. “Here, you’re smudged.” She dabbed the handkerchief at the corner of her mother’s mouth. “You want to look your best. It’s first class.”

“First class. Such an extravagance.”

“Yes, it is,” Leah said, smiling a little. “You’ll enjoy it.”

They showed their tickets and the exit visas and were waved over to the inspecting tables near the wall. Daniel heaved the suitcases up.

“Open, please.”

The inspector started pawing through the clothes, not a cursory check, thorough, just as the man in the café had predicted—feeling seams and hemlines,

running fingers along the suitcase lining, tapping for false bottoms.

“If you have anything to declare— You know it is an offense to—”

“There’s nothing,” Leah said.

“No furs?” the inspector said, nodding to her coat. “Maybe lined?”

Leah shook her head. “Wool. No furs, no jewels. Nothing.”

“Why so many gloves?”

“My hands. They get chapped.”

“Delicate,” the inspector said.

Leah shrugged, not answering.

The inspector ran through the clothes again, fingering one of her slips.

“Silk?” he said, a leer, still holding it.

“Yes.”

“Good silk,” he said, rubbing it again, as if there were skin underneath.

For a second Daniel thought the inspector might take it out of the bag, his commission, but he dropped it and closed the lid, marking the suitcase with chalk. “Welcome to the *Raffaello*, Madame. The bags will be sent to your cabin. Bon voyage.” Even a stage nod, like tipping a hat. Leah stood there, slightly stunned, all the months of worry over with a simple nod. Madame. A passenger of the Lloyd line.

“Open, please,” the inspector said to Daniel.

“Thank you so much,” the mother said, suddenly grand, a *gnädige Frau*, extending her hand to Daniel.

Daniel took it and dipped his head, what was expected.

“Herr—?”

“Lohr.”

“Ah. We are Auerbach.”

“Yes, thank you,” Leah said, watching this, a slight frown at the exchange.

“Look at them,” the mother said, turning to face the crowd behind them. “If your father could see this. How it would all end.”

“Nothing’s ending,” Leah said, curt. “Come. We’re holding up the line.” She touched her mother’s arm. “Just look ahead, remember? Something new. Maybe you’ll like it.”

“They bind little girls’ feet. What kind of people would do that to a child?”

“Thank you again,” Leah said to Daniel, moving her mother away.

“Maybe I’ll see you on the boat.”

She turned. “No. It’s not that kind of trip.”

He raised his eyebrows.

“You know, moonlight on the water. Like in a film. But it’s not a film.”

She looked past him toward the city, then straightened and turned away, a full turn, her coat moving with her, closing a door.

His cabin was made up for one, no last-minute roommate, with a plate of fruit on the desk and a welcoming note from Lloyd’s. A button by the lamp could summon a steward. Tea was served in the lounge at four. On deck, blankets would be neatly folded on reclining chairs. Best clothes for dinner. An orchestra afterward for those in the mood, or the dark smoky bar, gleaming ice shakers and bartenders in bow ties. Three weeks of this, not looking over his shoulder, not wondering if Franz had broken. Now there was laundry pickup at the touch of a button. But not for free. Somebody had paid for it all. Get the package.

The silent butler door was just outside the bathroom. Daniel slid back his side, half hoping it would be empty, a slipup for which he couldn’t be blamed. One of the cabin boys or porters darting all over the deck, somebody who’d seen an opportunity and taken it. But it was there, a thick envelope, sealed, about the weight of some folded legal document—or a block of opium. How much did that weigh? But why bring opium to China, coals to Newcastle? He picked up the envelope, feeling it. Never mind, just expedite. Nobody gets hurt. He looked around the room. There were no niches on a ship, every inch put to use. Anyone looking would find it. If anyone looked. He’d already been picked clean. But an easy trap to spring at the last minute. Come with us, please. The trick was to distance himself from it—no jacket pockets or shaving kits, anywhere personal. He opened the desk drawer. A room service menu, a leather folder with stationery.

A rap on the door, making him jump a little, the envelope still in his hand. He slid it under the stationery, shoving the drawer closed just as the cabin door opened.

“Sorry, sir. I didn’t think you were—”

A porter with the suitcase, barely out of his teens, glided smoothly around the room, setting up the luggage rack, opening the porthole. “Laundry through here,” he said, tapping the silent butler. “Shoes overnight.” He turned to face Daniel. “Is there anything I can do for you?” Expecting a tip.

Daniel took out some coins. How long would ten marks last at this rate? The boy pocketed the money without looking. “Just ring if you need anything. Dinner’s at eight. ‘A’ deck. The maître d’ has the seating plan. Have a pleasant trip.” What he always said, all of it now surreal. Dressing for dinner.

When the boy had gone, Daniel looked around the room again. They’d check the stationery folder every day to make sure it was full. The extra blanket in the bureau may or may not be needed. The back of the hat shelf. Not a hiding place, somewhere in plain sight. What would a Lloyd passenger do, one who had dinner on A deck? Daniel checked the ship plan, then headed down the corridor, the envelope in his breast pocket. The purser’s office was on the other side of the dining room.

“I wondered if I might put something in your safe. You have—?”

“Yes, of course. I should warn you, we can’t take responsibility for any valuables once they’re taken out. Some of our lady passengers like to wear their jewels and then forget to—”

“It’s only valuable to me,” Daniel said, taking out the envelope.

“I see,” the purser said, looking at Daniel, wanting more.

“Takes weeks to replace, if the lawyers had to draw— Anyway, better safe than sorry. Could I leave it with you, then?”

“Of course.” The purser filled out a receipt and handed it to him.

Daniel smiled. “I’m always losing things, so that’s a relief.”

The purser took the envelope, attaching a duplicate ticket stub. “If you’d just sign here?”

On the promenade deck people were milling near the rail, some waving down to the pier. The air was fresh and clear, washed clean by last night’s rain, and Daniel took in a gulp of it, feeling pleased with himself, as if he had gotten away with something. He checked his watch. Not long now. He imagined them tearing his room apart, looking for the planted envelope, their excuse to haul him off the boat, while it lay out of reach in Lloyd’s safe. Whatever it was.

He looked at the people still coming up the gangplank, like animals into the ark, in pairs, hoping to outrun the flood. Who were they all? Couples holding each other, leaving their best dishes behind. Did they all have an Uncle Nathan, someone to pull strings? The bad boy, while the older brother made his parents proud. A judge. When Daniel thought of his father, he saw the starched collar, formal, even at home, even after he was dismissed and sat in the front room reading the newspaper, still in his collar, waiting to be called back, when the world returned to its senses. “You think they don’t know who you are? A Jew in the Kammergericht?” Nathan had said. “They don’t see under the robes?” “And what are you?” his father said, one of their arguments. “A disgrace.” “To who? Your friends in the club who won’t talk to you now?” “A disgrace to the family. A real crook. Not like before, a kid with the gangs. Something you grow out of. But you didn’t. You got worse.”

And then Nathan crossed a line. Years of running errands, collecting debts, working at the Black Cat in Nollendorfplatz, maybe selling drugs, elbowing his way higher in the rackets, as wild as Berlin itself in those years, the glint in his eye when he winked at Daniel, their joke, Eli as a starched collar, and then a man was dead and Nathan had to leave. Did it matter if it was murder or some grotesque misfire? A man was dead and he had to go. To America—that was the plan. “A good place for him, a gangster country,” Eli said, but it was he who gave him the money, slipped it to him when nobody was looking, and only Daniel, in the next room, saw the good-bye, a hug so tight you couldn’t tell the one from the other. And after all that, a few postcards, New York and then California, where the movie stars were, and then nothing. Until Kristallnacht, when the starched collar was clubbed by Nazis and hauled away and the bad boy, now in Shanghai, tried to save what he could. The last of the family.

A blast from the ship’s funnel, a gush of steam, then the pling of a xylophone, a steward with the all ashore signal. Visitors scurried to the gangway. They were really going. Daniel looked down at the people on the pier, hats moving like a restless swarm of insects, handkerchiefs waving, then a sudden still point, the man from the café, eyes fixed on the gangway. Nathan making sure he got off safely. No, making sure the package got off.

Daniel felt a shuddering beneath his feet as the ship started to pull away. He was getting out. He looked at the busy street, trams threading into the city, the opera set square with its cafés, and he felt suddenly like one of the thick ropes being slipped off its mooring. He had never known anything else, unless you counted the year in London, and now he felt he would never see it again, Europe taken from him, someone else's property, like Leah's mother's flat. For a second he felt a stab of panic, no country, no money, but then as the boat began to slide away relief swept through him. Europe was going to destroy itself and he'd escaped. There was the rest of the world. He had English, what you needed in Shanghai to find a job. Everyone had said so. There must be money to make, if Nathan was there. Daniel thought of the package in the safe. No landing card needed in Shanghai, but smuggling put you at risk anywhere. Still, that was the price of the ticket and now he could be whoever he wanted. He looked at the receding pier, the crowd beginning to drift away. No one here knew him, even knew his name. He could arrive in Shanghai as anybody. Not part of Franz's group, not Eli's son, not anybody he'd ever been, someone new. Just part of the flotsam and jetsam that washed up in a place like Shanghai.

Daniel stayed on deck for hours, just drifting, until there was no more land. The water was oddly flat, as if they weren't on a sea at all but a toy boat in some god's bathtub, waiting for a hand to splash them and make waves. It must be rough sometimes—there were violent storms in Homer—but today it stretched to the horizon like glass. When the air turned cooler, he retreated to one of the deck chairs and sat, sheltered, watching the people. How many were Jews, feeling saved? Was there a look, some permanent wariness in the eyes? The *Raffaello* wasn't a refugee ship—the people at the rail might be traveling for reasons of their own. A job in Ceylon. A brother in Singapore. A business in Manila. None of them looked as if they were escaping anything. Down below, on the crowded decks, you might see worn, apprehensive faces but up here, in the first class air, it was just another Lloyd's sailing.

He saw her before she saw him. Away from the rail, near one of the storage bins, not actually pacing but restless, waiting for someone. Her heavy coat was

open to the mild air and as she turned her legs came into view, the first time he had taken them in, long and slender, a dancer's legs. He stared at them for a second, imagining her sitting in a café a few tables away, crossing her legs, unaware that he was looking. Then lying next to him, stretched out, his hand running over her hip, turning her toward him. Nathan's voice at the Black Cat: It's all about the legs, when you're hiring for the line. You can work around everything else—push up the tits, lose a nose with some makeup. You know. But you can't do anything about legs, not if you're putting them in the line. Auditions. Looking at legs. Maybe not just looking.

She turned again, the same abrupt, tense movement he remembered from the pier, a motor idling. It's not that kind of trip. Now a woman was joining her, dressed for a bon voyage party, a smart suit and hat. Someone she knew, but not a friend, an odd formality. Then, to his surprise, Leah took off her coat and held it while the other woman slipped into it. He sat up, following the scene like a silent movie, everything perfectly clear without sound, the words acted out. Leah buttoned the front, then brushed the woman's shoulders, emphasizing the good fit. The woman walked a few steps, the coat flaring out, and nodded, then checked the seams. She looked up. How much? A price named, but dismissed. Now real bargaining, a pantomime of gestures. A counteroffer. No, Leah couldn't possibly let it go for— In this condition? The lining needed work. And anyway they weren't in a shop on the Graben. The situation was— You know what the coat's worth. I'm prepared to take a loss on it, but I'm not going to give it away. Feel the wool, it's best quality. Actually feeling it for her, rubbing the sleeve, and it was just then, looking up, that she saw him. A quick start, flustered, so that when the woman named another price, she seemed distracted, nodding just to be at an end with it. The woman opened her purse and took out some money.

More silent film. Not quite enough, she'd have to give her the rest later. Leah hesitated, her eyes glancing toward Daniel, then darting away. If you want cash. Yes, I want cash. Well, then. Shall I bring the coat to dinner? No, I'll wear it now. Daring her to object, imply that she was dishonest. All right, giving in, the rest later. It's a good price. Rallying, saving face, head erect. It's a fair price, the woman said. I'm surprised you got it out— They only look for fur, Leah said, staring at her. Well, then it's lucky for me, the woman said. A good Persian wool, that's not

so easy to come by. Yes, Leah said, lucky. The woman looked at her, not quite sure how to take this, then let it go. What about the gloves? she said, touching one of her own, sign language. Another time, Leah said, a side glance toward Daniel. I have to sort them. Auerbach gloves, the woman said. Another piece of luck for me. To find them here, like this. Yes, Leah said, but so vaguely that nothing registered in her face.

After the woman left, Leah walked over to the rail, turning her back to Daniel, shoulders straight, a child's defiance, not looking when he joined her. For a minute they stared together at the water.

"It gets cold in Shanghai," he said finally. "It's not the tropics."

"I wondered what you would say. So I'll get another coat, a cheaper one." She turned to him. "She has marks. Not like us. Ten marks, then nothing. How are we going to live, on nothing?"

"So you sell your clothes?"

"What else do I have to sell? It's a good coat. My father bought it. He cared about things like that, how we would look. So, the best. And what do I do with a good coat in China? Who am I going to impress? While we starve. So sell it and get a cheap one and with the difference—" She stopped. "Anyway, it was something I could get out. The Nazis, I thought, they won't know what it's worth. Fur, yes, but a good Persian? So I'll sell it and we'll eat. You have to start thinking about that—how we're going to eat."

Daniel said nothing for a minute, letting things settle. "And the gloves?"

"My father made them. You don't know Auerbach gloves? No, why should you? Ladies' gloves. People in Vienna know. They kept the name on the factory—it sounded Aryan enough and people knew it."

"After it was sold."

"Well, sold. To the manager. All these years, my father thought—and in the end, what did it matter? So now it's his. Another fair price. They were going to take the factory anyway. So at least we got something." She looked down. "Herr Blauner."

Another awkward moment, staring out.

"Cigarette?" Daniel said, taking out a pack.

“I gave them up. They’re expensive in China, someone told me.” She looked at him. “Yes, all right.” She leaned down toward his cupped hands while he lighted it for her. “Thank you,” she said, a theatrical exhaling. “So first the suitcase, now this. But you should know— Nothing’s going to happen. Between us. So you know.”

“It’s just a cigarette.”

“Oh, yes? Maybe. But I can’t afford it. I can’t afford you, either. A Jew with ten marks.” She looked away. “It’s nothing personal. I have to think about—other things.”

“What other things?”

“How we’re going to live, my mother and me.”

“You made it this far. You’re here.”

“And you think that’s the end of it? You’re like all the others. Get on the ship, we’re saved. But now what? You know what I was thinking before? See the water—how flat? Like in those old maps, when the world was flat. Angels in the corners, blowing wind. And the ship goes right to the edge—and falls off. That’s the ship we’re on. And everybody’s happy to be here.”

“You think you’re going to fall off the map?”

“No, I’m going to survive. I just don’t know how yet.” She flicked the end of the cigarette over the rail. “I can do office work,” she said, as if it were surprising. “I helped my father, in the factory. The books. I could do that. There are German firms there. Except they would be Nazis, wouldn’t they? So maybe a shop. Sell other people’s coats.” She shrugged. “A *vendeuse*. Imagine, a shopgirl.”

“What were you in Vienna?”

“A daughter. The eligible one. My sister was already married. So, my turn.”

“She’s still there?”

“Holland. If you think that’s safe. I don’t think anywhere’s safe. Not now. So, Shanghai. The end of the world. You know what they do there? Somebody told me. The Jewish charities meet you and take you to a *heim*. A dormitory. Otherwise you’d be on the street. Until you get on your feet and find a place somewhere. If you do. Can you imagine my mother in a dormitory? So I have a little money from the coat,” she said, patting her pocket. “I can take her