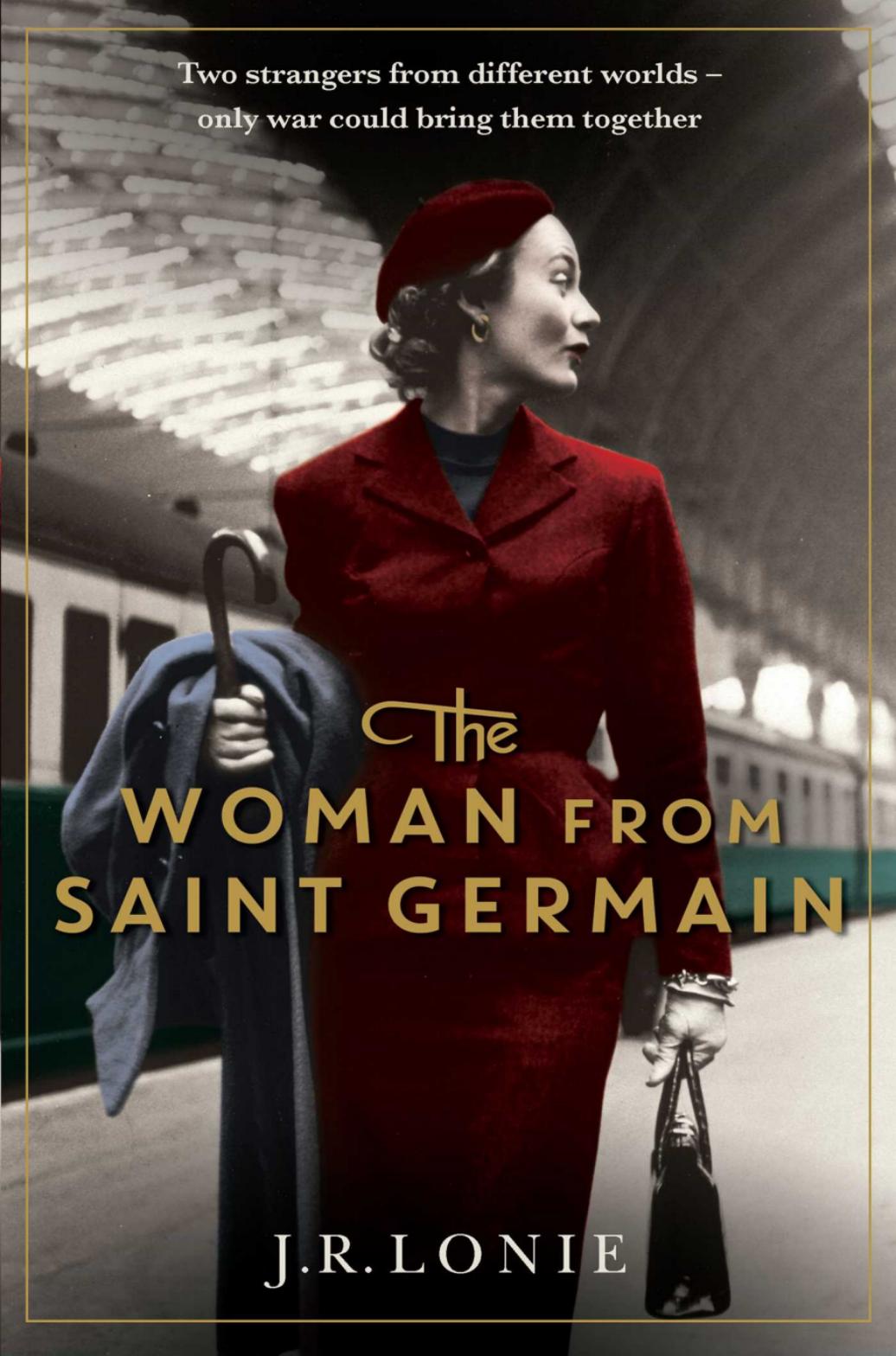


Two strangers from different worlds –  
only war could bring them together

A black and white photograph of a woman in profile, looking to the right. She is wearing a vibrant red beret, a matching red double-breasted coat over a dark turtleneck, and a long red skirt. She holds a dark blue coat draped over her left arm and a black handbag in her right hand. The background shows a train platform with a train and a large, arched glass and steel structure, likely a train station.

*The*  
**WOMAN FROM  
SAINT GERMAIN**

J.R. LONIE

The  
WOMAN FROM  
SAINT GERMAIN

J. R. LONIE



SIMON &  
SCHUSTER

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A CBS COMPANY

RUE DE MONTFAUCON,  
SAINT GERMAIN DES PRÉS, PARIS VI

*Morning, Friday, 5th December 1941*

‘Well that’s dead on arrival,’ Eleanor growled after reading the sentence her frozen fingers had just typed out. The almost empty page winding through the spool of her typewriter, it wasn’t a page at all but a naked pink tongue poking out at her, mocking and spiteful. She could have railed against the cold too, but what was the point when coal for heating wasn’t to be had, even on the black market. Everyone was in the same boat and everyone said the same thing. On her feet, she wore two pairs of ugly woollen socks, although not everyone was also sheltering in a mink coat. ‘A vulgar thing,’ her mother had written to dissuade her from buying it. Eleanor had refused to be intimidated by such stiff New England morality. It was her money, after all, and the times had been good. Now, during the second terrible winter in a row, she was glad of it. She caught a glimpse of herself in the mirror. The contrast with the Delaunay portrait of her on the wall, painted only four years earlier, was mortifying. The tall, statuesque auburn-haired beauty in the painting gazed loftily down from that happier time to her present self, a cross between Minnie Mouse and a grizzly bear. She certainly felt as vexed as a grizzly.

She reached for a cigarette but resisted. She’d already had her morning ration of nicotine with her morning ration of coffee. She could have another before bed. Two cigarettes a day wasn’t proving as difficult as she’d feared. When she’d imported them, the French customs duty had been eye-watering, but how glad she was now, because the Germans had struck only days later. Her stash would see her through this dreadful winter at least, and with luck, into the summer. After that, she’d have to smoke straw like everyone else, but

that day that problem. She rubbed a smudge off the shiny red skin of the little Olivetti that Claude had bought her before the war. It was yet to produce a novel or, the way she was going, any semblance of one.

On the shelves behind her, mocking her present incoherence, were her published works in their original editions with their French, Spanish, Italian, and even Polish and Czech translations. *Walevska and Napoleon*, her first to achieve success, followed by *The Italian Serenade of Emma Michaelis*, then *The Lovers of the Île-de-France*, *Love in the Afternoon* and *The American Woman*. Quite a haul, if she said so herself, especially once she had begun to sell back home in America. No one could say she had been after Claude's money. She had plenty, and all her own work. Her physician father and mother had given their children as fine an education as was to be had in their neck of the woods, which was very fine indeed. But apart from a loving if narrow home life, that was it, because after raising six children even a Providence physician could afford little else.

For the first time, a man was her central character. But the real Claude, the self-made businessman, the man of action, infantry colonel and military innovator at a time of stagnation, one of de Gaulle's pals, who, had he survived, would have gone over to London too, this real Claude crowded out Eleanor's imagination. Everywhere she looked in her apartment, there he was: his tall spare frame along the sofa, his pipe still on the stand, his night-shirts in the closet with the clothes he kept for the mornings after, his hairbrush, his razor in the other bathroom, his laughter. Even the Delaunay painting, which he had commissioned, the dress she'd worn and the way she had her hair done for the sitting. They'd had such fun; their senses of humour were in harmony as much as their bodies. Best was how he had loved her. The worst, now, was the bedroom, where her ache for his touch was a torture.

She considered making more coffee – it would warm her up and might stimulate her brain – but she remained firm. The alternative was chicory and roast grain of uncertain provenance, but while she had the cash, was frugal and the black market was still providing, if at great cost, this was another problem for that day of reckoning. Work was the only way out of this slough, and she was a Rhode Islander who had the ethic in spades. So she persevered and began again, but halfway across the page she noticed that while her fingers were working the keys, no words appeared on the page. She inspected the ribbon, which disintegrated between her fingers.

‘That’s just dandy!’ she exploded. She’d known it was on its last legs; she had been typing in hope. Like paper, typewriter ribbons were in short supply. But she was enjoying being annoyed. It provided an outlet for her many discontents and frustrations. She pushed back her chair, grabbed a fresh pack of Chesterfields, replaced the ugly socks with boots that needed repair and pulled on the fur hat that went with her coat. Then she stopped. It was one thing to wear a fur inside her apartment to keep warm, but going out in one, a mink of all things, on a mean day like today? You just didn’t do that, not unless you wanted to attract envious glances and resentment – or worse, for people to suspect you might be slinging yourself around one of those blond Fritzes who had even taken over the Café de Flore and the Deux Magots. While drawing a line at the mink, she refused to go out looking like a tramp, Germans or no Germans, so put on her cashmere coat and a matching toque hat. After a quick dusting of her face in the mirror and a spray of Schiaparelli, she set out.

Eleanor lived across from the local market, on the top floor of a building at the corner of Rue de Montfaucon. Facing south on one side, its high ceiling and large windows let in the light and she never tired of its joys, even now when the light was pale and unfriendly,

the sun far away and her discontents many. She owned the lease on the place, having bought it after her second success. With rugs from Constantinople, paintings from New York, sculptures and glassware from the racier galleries in London, the apartment was a log of Claude's business trips. His own home was much less exotic, he told her. His wife's taste was for the French, and high bourgeois at that.

The cold outside was all the worse for being damp. The sky was grey and low but thin, so she doubted it would snow. She hiked along Rue du Four to the shop she figured might be her best bet. The woman was, rumour had it, pally with the Germans, so it would either overflow with typewriter ribbons or be empty because they'd taken the lot.

She entered and found the place unusually gloomy and thought the woman must be saving on electricity. All the lights were off except one over the counter. Maybe the Germans weren't so pally after all. As Eleanor found out later, it turned out to be quite the opposite, which was why it was taking an age for the electrician to turn up to fix a faulty connection. Serve the treasonous bitch right.

The woman knew who Eleanor was but insisted on behaving as if they had never met.

'Typewriter ribbons? Not for love or money, madame.'

'Don't give me that,' Eleanor replied. Her French was Paris-pure, unless she was worked up, like now. At such times, she sounded a bit like the pre-war racy set of American literary tourists who if they spoke French at all, it was the French of Paris, Texas. She thrust her hand into her bag and drew out the pack of Chesterfields, which she plonked onto the counter.

'That should be worth at least ten typewriter ribbons,' she said, and damn it all, she was right.

'Alas, the Germans,' the woman said, which was the excuse for everything these days, and while it was usually accurate, Eleanor's

center

dander was up. This woman was a liar, even when she said ‘and’ and ‘the’.

‘If you don’t believe me,’ her tormentor sniffed, ‘you’re at liberty to go to the *Kommandantur*.’

Eleanor scooped back the proffered pack of cigarettes. ‘I might just do that,’ she said. ‘And whom should I ask for?’

The woman was furious. ‘Go back to America before you run into real trouble,’ she spat as Eleanor stalked out. It was ages since anyone in Paris had said that to her and never, ever anyone French – always American or English, and always male.

Eleanor strode up to the boulevard but headed towards the Odéon rather than the Saint Germain des Prés metro, not for the exercise but as a test to see if her anger would last long enough for her to go through with this escapade. And it did, lasting even as the train failed to stop at Sébastapol to allow passengers to change to the other line. No explanation, but no explanation was needed. The Boches did this all the time, suddenly closing this metro station or that. On she rode. The carriages were dimly lit and full. No one spoke, but people seemed cheerful, mostly because packed in together they were at least warm. Because the Boches travelled free and always crowded out the first-class car in the middle, they at least had a break from the occupier.

Eleanor’s defiance, not so much against the Germans as against the woman at the stationery shop on the Rue du Four, began to run out of puff at Place de l’Opéra. But now she was here, she was determined to go through with it, although what she was exactly planning to go through with wasn’t clear, least of all to her. Fury and resentment were enough to propel her forward. At the top of the steps out of the metro, the cold embraced her like death, and there in front of her at number 2 was Death Central itself, the *Kommandantur*, the German commandant’s office. This was where all Parisians had

to go for any permit or allowance, even to breathe. Hanging limp on this mean day under a mean sky, the red-and-black swastika flags in their ordered ranks looked especially sinister and intimidating. At the entrance were the occupiers in their grey steel helmets, their shiny boots and their rifles, like turds on a gold plate to Eleanor's eyes.

They were just the sight to boost her courage, or her foolishness. She seemed not at all mindful of the possible consequences of her haughty demand to see General von Stülpnagel himself. To her astonishment, this got her inside.

SHAKESPEARE AND COMPANY,  
12 RUE DE L'ODÉON, PARIS VI

*Afternoon, Friday, 5th December 1941*

'Some major agreed to see me,' Eleanor said as she parcelled up *The Grapes of Wrath* for a Shakespeare and Company subscriber. Steinbeck was allowed by the Germans but not Hemingway, although only in English. 'I demanded he give me a permit to buy typewriter ribbons so that I could continue my work as a writer, whereupon he took out a large book, opened it presumably at the page for T or whatever the German is for typewriter ribbons and said, "No, not permitted," whereupon – ' Eleanor stopped. 'You sure you want to hear this?' she asked.

'Are you kidding?' Sylvia said.

'Whereupon,' Eleanor continued, 'I told him they were all thieves, they'd stolen not only the food from our mouths but every typewriter ribbon this side of the Rhine. He had me physically thrown out and threatened to arrest me if I ever came back, American passport or no.'

'You can be very you sometimes,' her friend Sylvia said, laughing.

'A fool?' Eleanor replied.

'No, you goose, pig-headed.'

'I've forgotten how to be me,' Eleanor muttered. 'Does anyone still borrow my books?' she asked.

'Stop being pathetic.'

These days, Sylvia's hair was streaked with grey and she admitted exhaustion from the strain of keeping the bookshop going, especially since the war began, but her face was still like a pretty bird's and her eyes remained bright and intensely curious. Eleanor kicked herself now and then for having let her fears get the better of her.

Sylvia wasn't at all intimidating. Her girlfriend was – Adrienne, whose dress and plumpness made her look like a stern abbess.

Since late '39, just after the war began, Eleanor had been coming in a couple of afternoons a week to help. The English and the Canadians were all gone, and most of the Americans. Many of the French subscribers had dropped away, although some were now returning, a token act of resistance against the invader. Germans came in, always in pairs or threes, never alone. They were like schoolboys doing something illicit, as if the shop sold dirty postcards. Few purchased anything, and they always asked if Sylvia or anyone minding the shop was a Jew. The Gestapo came regularly with the same question. Until the invasion, Sylvia had employed a Jewish girl, a Canadian, which was a black mark against her. 'We'll come for you one day,' said the Gestapo. This obsession with Jews went beyond the prejudice most French imbibed with their mother's Catholic milk. Everyone knew it was the Germans who'd set off bombs in all those synagogues two months before. The Fritzes thought the Parisians would cheer, when all it did was gain the Jews sympathy, including Eleanor's.

Sylvia wanted to put up a sign, NO GERMANS ALLOWED, but with the company she kept, she was already on thin ice, and Adrienne, with her outspoken views on the Nazis and what they were doing to the Jews, even more so.

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When Shakespeare and Company, Sylvia's English-language bookshop on the Rue de l'Odéon, opened after the first war, Eleanor had been a shy, gawping American girl with ambitions but no achievements apart from driving an ambulance for the American forces during the last year of the war. This had been her excuse to get to France. Patriotism was permitted; wanting to be a writer was not, not when you were only eighteen.

After war's end, she'd gone home to Bryn Mawr. The moment she graduated, she married a young American who also had literary dreams of Paris, and back they came on the SS *George Washington* to the City of Light, where they mixed in those heady circles that became famous. While he broadcast his dreams to whomever he met, she kept hers to herself and suffered the patronising smiles of Miss Gertrude Stein and her arty pals in silence. Eleanor had been too intimidated by them to admit her aspirations. Their haughty disdain would have driven her back to the States, and that was the last thing she wanted.

With its higgledy-piggledy shelves stashed with books, photographs of authors squashed in where there was space on the walls, chairs and large pillows, and a stove to keep the place warm in winter, Shakespeare and Company was both shrine and refuge for Eleanor, whose visits were always shy and solitary. Meantime, she wrote in secret while her lovely husband talked but never wrote a word, until she was published and he, unsurprisingly, wasn't. That was that. She'd betrayed him, so he claimed. She wouldn't go that far but still, when push had come to shove, in a choice between being married to Fred or writing, writing had won. No contest.

How she'd hurt him, he complained, how she'd broken his heart. He really had loved her. Yet, as Eleanor had countered, his love hadn't stretched to allowing her to be a writer when he had failed. Young as she was, she'd recognised that as ego. At least she got a book out of it, eventually, her most recent, *The American Woman*, and her best. It was also her most successful, helped by its brush with the Lord Chamberlain in Britain and being banned in every state south of the Mason-Dixon Line and then some, as well as causing a United States senator to call for her passport to be taken away. Even her mother had defended her against that outrage; she'd first taken the precaution of having the book explained

to her by Eleanor's sister Muriel, rather than having to read it herself.

The novel's main character, Selina, had been inspired by the young American woman in Mary Cassatt's painting 'Woman with a Pearl Necklace in a Loge', which Eleanor had seen many times in a collection of one of Claude's friends. Selina is a talented artist who moves to Paris with her young artist husband, inspired by Fred, and their young child. Like Cassatt, she ignores the prejudices against women and is taken up by Degas and his circle. While her husband fails, she succeeds. Given his ultimatum, she chooses art, so he throws her out. Worse, she then scandalises Degas and his weekend bohemians by her passionate love for a young artist from Brittany, whose miraculous talent is divided in equal parts between sculpture and trouble. She finds him in La Santé prison, where he has briefly landed himself after killing a rival in love. That's the last she sees of her child.

What a dream it had been to write, in great contrast to her present creative stew. But that was before the invasion, before Claude's death.

\*

Eleanor had contributed anonymously to the Friends of Shakespeare and Company, which was set up to keep the shop open during the tough times after the Depression. She'd taken another couple of years to own up to her contributions. She knew what jolly old Gertrude and Miss Toklas, with her moustache and pickled mouth, said about her books, although they'd never read them, and of the opinions of the other literary and artistic Americans who moved excitedly around the Left Bank like raptors from the future. They dismissed her as a mere woman's writer, which meant not a real writer at all.

When *The American Woman* was published, oh how they and their critic pals had erupted. 'Karenina gets away with it,' bellowed

literary headlines filled with the rage of these standard-bearers for the rights of women. 'Karenina lives happily ever after!' How dare Selina choose artistic calling over husband and child; how dare she run off with a killer? How dare they love and live and make beautiful art? Just as infuriating, how dare Eleanor make so much money out of it? They, her critics, refused even to grace her with her name. She was just 'that woman from Saint Germain', with all its inferences, cheap and trashy being among them.

Their sneers hurt, as sneers always do.

But hang it all, she was, along with the great Gide, a supporter of Shakespeare and Company, and, like Gide, with money she'd earned herself, not from some trust fund. Eventually, she owned up to her contributions, only to discover that Sylvia had known but respected her evident desire for anonymity. She also discovered that Sylvia was blessing her endeavours by stocking and lending her books. 'You're popular,' she explained. This wasn't meant in a back-handed way. 'My customers are intelligent, they know good writing. And darling,' she added, 'I make money out of you.'

\*

'I'd write in blood on the walls if I had anything to say,' Eleanor groaned that afternoon.

'Now you really are being pathetic,' Sylvia scolded.

'Maybe it's time I went back to the States.'

'Scandalous-writer-turns-prodigal-spinster,' said Sylvia. 'I can see the gloating headlines in Providence now.'

'Come now,' Eleanor laughed. 'Wayward, perhaps.'

'You were a married man's mistress,' Sylvia reminded her. 'Twice divorced before that.'

'Once, strictly speaking,' Eleanor corrected. One divorce was enough of a scandal in her family's circle back home, even though

she hadn't asked for it nor done anything to deserve it, other than put her head above the literary ramparts. Becoming a married man's mistress, common enough in Paris, only confirmed her status as the Gorton black sheep.

'You should have an affair,' Sylvia enthused. 'Twelve months of mourning is too long. Eighteen months is egotistical. Affairs revive the creative juices.'

'I've thought of that,' Eleanor drawled, 'but the current opportunities are all dishonourable. It's the only way I really would become a black sheep.'

The bell tinkled as the door opened. Sylvia and Eleanor, who had gone to the tiny kitchen to make tea, were startled because they had been their own company since the shop opened at two.

'Oh no,' Sylvia muttered as she looked at the mirror placed strategically to show the door.

A mangy ankle-length fur had entered, out of which poked a face that looked like a malevolent pear with two bulbous studs for eyes and wearing a toque hat. This was Hester Rosen, a cast-iron leftist of indeterminate age, originally from New York, who, with a family fortune behind her, bought rather than borrowed books from Shakespeare and Company. For her causes, she bought big. She didn't believe in make-up and it wasn't so much that she disbelieved in manners as had no patience for them. She banged the bell on the side shelf imperiously.

Eleanor still had just enough of her dander up to spare Sylvia the encounter. She pasted on a smile and emerged from the tiny kitchen.

'Why, Miss Rosen, what a pleasant surprise,' she said with gay insincerity.

'Where's Miss Beach?' Hester Rosen demanded.

'She's busy at the moment. May I help you?'

‘I want Miss Beach to order in ten copies of *Native Son*.’

Eleanor could scarcely believe it. Talk of being in denial about what was going on around her. Was it senility? ‘Shakespeare and Company hasn’t been able to get American books in since the German occupation, Miss Rosen,’ she replied.

‘Well, where am I to get them?’ Miss Rosen snorted. ‘This is very annoying.’

‘Maybe the library at the Russian embassy has had better luck with our occupiers,’ Eleanor said with sweet venom, and she imagined she could feel the draught from Sylvia’s gasp of breath behind the kitchen curtain.

‘If you mean the Soviet embassy,’ Hester Rosen replied haughtily, ‘the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics has broken off relations with the collaborator regime in Vichy, unlike the government of the United States.’

‘Oh, that’s right,’ said Eleanor. ‘And the Soviets used to be such pals with the Nazis until the recent unpleasantness.’

Miss Rosen looked Eleanor up and down, as if preparing her for the firing squad. ‘You’re still working here, Miss Clarke,’ she said, momentarily disarming Eleanor by remembering she had a name, even if it was only the latter half. Eleanor replied that she liked to help Miss Beach now things were so precarious, which they were.

‘Isn’t that just peachy of you?’ Miss Rosen began her retaliation, her eyes bulging with malice and mischief. ‘I suppose you have nothing better to do. How long is it since you had a book out?’

It was early 1939 but Eleanor kept quiet so as not to give Hettie any ammunition.

‘Oh well,’ continued Miss Rosen, undeterred, ‘you shouldn’t be surprised. Art does imitate life, and the well of bourgeois fantasy you rely on has long dried up. Still, I can’t think the masses or American literature will be the poorer. Such a pity all those

marriages of yours didn't work out. There was a child, wasn't there?'

'Miscarriage, and only one marriage,' Eleanor growled, hoping common decency might shut Miss Rosen up.

It didn't. 'What a pity,' she continued. 'You would have had lots of children to look after by now instead of sitting around watching history pass you by. A good day to you.'

Sylvia appeared as the bell tinkled and Miss Rosen's mothly fur exited the front door.

'How about that,' Eleanor said, tears welling. 'I thought I wasn't able to write because of the German occupation, but now I realise Hettie Rosen and her coven of reds have put a curse on me.'

She felt something in her hand. Looking down, she saw a fresh typewriter ribbon that Sylvia had curled her fingers around.

'On one condition,' Sylvia said and made a typing motion with both hands. 'I don't believe in writer's block or covens or curses or having babies.'

Eleanor did weep, but briefly; this wasn't the sort of place a writer should cry, even in these bad times. She dabbed her eyes and kissed Sylvia on the cheek and again regretted those years before she'd been brave enough to open her mouth.

'Blow the tea,' she said, 'we need a whisky.' She fossicked in her bag for the small flask she carried to ward off the cold. 'Just a swig. My supply has to outlast the Nazis.'

Neither really believed it would, but you said this sort of thing because you wanted to believe it. They looked at each other with an empty-handed gesture bordering on despair.

Before Eleanor could retrieve her flask, the bell announced another arrival. A sleek middle-aged German officer in grey uniform nodded, smiled and wished them a good afternoon. He removed his cap, which he tucked under his arm, and announced himself with

a slight, debonair bow as ‘Gunther Krolow at your service’ – not Herr Major Krolow and none of the heel-clicking they usually went in for. He clasped his hands and looked around the bookshelves with a sense of pleasure such that out of the uniform of the conqueror, he might have been one of those fresh-faced, blue-eyed Americans stepping for the first time into their longed-for literary Mecca. But each of the women saw only that uniform, you could hardly ignore it, and wondered if this wasn’t the promised visit to take Sylvia away, with a postscript for Eleanor that her morning’s foolishness at the *Kommandantur* might have landed her in hot water.

‘You have a copy of *Finnegans Wake* in your window, madame,’ he said in excellent French. ‘I wish to buy it.’

‘I’m afraid not,’ Sylvia replied briskly. ‘It’s not for sale.’

‘May I ask why not?’ he said politely, although you could tell he was not only surprised but hurt.

‘It’s my only copy,’ Sylvia explained.

‘But you have it in your window,’ Krolow said, toning back his sense of pained entitlement.

‘Yes, as a sign of what we stand for,’ she said. ‘In any case, I doubt you would understand it.’

‘But we admire James Joyce very much in Germany,’ said Krolow, ignoring the provocation and adding a pleasant we’re-all-literary-people-here smile. He was going to argue his case. From his leather satchel, he produced a copy of *Ulysses*.

Sylvia and Eleanor could see it was a first edition.

‘Published by you, madame,’ he said proudly, offering his treasure as his credentials. Sylvia didn’t even look as if she would take it, so he handed it to Eleanor. ‘I like to think of myself as quite an expert on your Mr Joyce. I have collected first editions of all his books except *Finnegans Wake*. I would be willing to pay any amount.’

‘It’s not for sale,’ Sylvia persisted, unmoved.

‘I am so very disappointed,’ he said. ‘Are you quite sure?’

‘I am,’ said Sylvia obdurately and he sighed. He took back his copy of *Ulysses* from Eleanor and said, switching into perfect English, ‘Is this not Miss Gorton Clarke?’

Eleanor was mute with astonishment.

‘My wife is a great admirer of your work,’ he said. ‘She of course must read you in English or French. Your work is still a little risqué to appear in German.’

‘What on earth would your Doctor Goebbels make of *Finnegans Wake*, then?’ Sylvia blurted out. It was the obvious question. Eleanor held her breath.

‘He personally would approve,’ said Krolow, continuing in quite mellifluous English, ‘but for the larger good at the moment, he cannot make exceptions until we bring this dreadful war to a conclusion.’

He saw the look of incredulity on Sylvia’s face. ‘You misunderstand him, madame,’ he said, reverting to French. ‘Like me, he is an educated man. He understands Joyce’s literary quest, which of course is metaphysical. And after all, the character Bloom is the quintessential Jew, at the end of his line of evolution, is he not? Replaced by Boylan, the lusty, stronger Aryan?’

He was giving what he thought was his best shot. Sylvia, used to bizarre commentaries about *Ulysses* – though, as she would say later, this was possibly the most bizarre – wished him a curt good afternoon and even held the door open for him to leave, which he did and without any of the courtesies he’d used on arrival.

Once he was gone, Eleanor quickly poured a generous drop of whisky into each of their cups. They deserved it. They deserved a cigarette too, and to hell with her self-imposed rationing.

‘His copy of *Ulysses* is freshly procured,’ Eleanor said. She’d noticed the Rothschild ex libris on the inside cover. It was probably from the library of Baron Maurice, who had racier tastes than

his cousin, Baron Édouard, and whose collections had been found recently, hidden near Lourdes. They'd been immediately purloined by Vichy only to be plundered by the Nazis.

'No wonder he wants your copy of that book,' she said.

'I guess I should be relieved he asked and took no for an answer,' Sylvia said.

'You're lucky I saw he'd filched his *Ulysses*,' said Eleanor. 'If I'd been here by myself, I would have sold your precious last copy of *Finnegans Wake* for a sou, even to a Nazi.'

Sylvia laughed and made a long sound that began with *baba* and was followed by an unbroken disjunction of consonants. On the page, the word, allegedly the longest in English – if it was English, which Eleanor disputed – was *bababadalgharaghtakamminarronnkonnbronntonner-ronntuonnthunntrovarrhounawnskawntooohooordenenthurnuk!*

'That's what God said when he discovered Adam and Eve had eaten the apple. Page one,' Sylvia had told Eleanor in one of her attempts to persuade her to read *Finnegans Wake*. 'You go to church every Sunday, that should appeal to you.'

'I'm an Episcopalian, darling. Going to church every Sunday is a civic duty,' Eleanor countered, flippantly disguising her stubborn adherence to her childhood faith. James Joyce was a rebellious Irish Catholic as far as she was concerned, which accounted for everything – his creativity, which she acknowledged, although on advice, and his crackpottery.

Since the war began, saying the word was now Sylvia's little joke with Eleanor when things were going wrong, a way to lighten prospects that seemed forever dim. She was the only person in the entire world who knew how to pronounce it and, Eleanor was sure, the only one who commonly did.

'How does he know who we are?' Sylvia asked.

'He's a major in the security service,' replied Eleanor, for whom this was obvious. She wasn't a writer for nothing. She'd noticed the

*Sicherheitsdienst* SD diamond patch on the sleeve of his well-tailored grey uniform, and through the window, she'd seen his car parked out front, stolen from its French owner, probably a Jew. She thought everyone in Paris knew those markers by now.

'Actually, dear,' she said, 'I doubt he will take no for an answer.' She had seen the anger in Krolow's eyes as he'd left, his jaw like concrete.