

THE BURNING MAN

by Pam Gems

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A school classroom in late spring. An afternoon lesson, the last of the day. The day is warm, the room sunny, making the students, who are doing A level English, sleepy. The time is the fifties.

ELIZABETH, the English mistress, strolls to a window and looks out briefly. The sound of an aircraft zooming, climbing and diving punctuates the lesson. ELIZABETH is dark, with a vivid, intelligent face and fine eyes. Her clothes are untidy, almost eccentric, but there is a style, she knows what she is doing. Her gaze wanders to the window again.

We follow her gaze, but there is a slight distort so that we are not sure that what she sees is real. Perhaps it is a memory.

Outside the window a group of matelots, Fleet Air Arm fitters, stroll in the sun. A young WREN approaches. They whistle at her cheerfully.

MATELOT Hi, Duchess!

The WREN grins, waves in mock patronage and disappears round the corner of a large hangar.

In the classroom ELIZABETH smiles her herself reminiscently and turns back to her class. CHRISTINA, a dark, heavily built girl in the front row, is waving her arm urgently.

ELIZABETH All right, Christina, I'll come to you. Baker, what about it?

BAKER grimaces and rises obligingly, scraping his chair.

Think .. come on - better still, use your imagination ..

She looks at his bovine cheerful face and sighs .

ELIZABETH .. oh sit down. Waterman, you know all the answers.

An unidentified voice mutters 'Don't be nasty' as WATERMAN, a handsome youth, rises to his feet languidly.

WATERMAN Well - ah - Hamlet feels fed up -

There is a titter from the class.

He's .. ah .. he's just lost his dad and it looks like his Uncle is co-respondent -

ELIZABETH (savage) Don't use 'like' with a clause! And - ?

WATERMAN frowns heavily, gazes round the class displaying his profile. She motions him to sit down.

ELIZABETH Carole?

CAROLE, a very pretty girl who is sitting next to CHRISTINA, jumps to her feet obediently.

CAROLE He has a love-hate relationship with his mother, Mrs. Reinhardt.

ELIZABETH pulls a face and groans aloud.

ELIZABETH You could call it that. You could also shoot yourself.

Laughter. CAROLE is offended. ELIZABETH turns away, picks up a packet from her desk, lights a cigarette. The STUDENTS loll. An unidentified voice mutters 'Give us one'.

ELIZABETH (Murmurs) You'll be lucky.

She moves to the window again. Flies are buzzing against the glass. There noise is echoed and magnified by the plane outside, high in the air, rolling and turning, climbing and diving. behind her the STUDENTS murmur among themselves. A GIRL in the back row knits efficiently, one of the BOYS is doing his pools, WATERMAN flirts with the pretty GIRL next to him, who exchanges a complicit grin with CAROLE. The GIRL in front of the KNITTER turns for a look at the garment. The KNITTER holds it up, it is a matinee jacket, and we see that the girl is very pregnant.

With the slight distort we are in a dappled, pale green wood. The young WREN emerges from the deep wood with her LOVER. He is tall, fair, with a face like the young Duke of Wellington. She is naked above the waist but wears his jacket with the pilot's wings over her shoulders. They embrace.

ELIZABETH'S face, close, tense and still.

The PILOT and the WREN walk away through the beautiful wood to the sound of Elizabeth's voice.

ELIZABETH (V/O) Right, so Hamlet's father is dead, in odd circumstances ... that's enough ..

We are back in the classroom as she reacts to a 'creepy' noise from someone.

His mother had married his uncle, his father's brother. So .. what's it all about?

VOICE He's afraid of losing the throne.

GIRL You nut, he's already lost it ..

CHRISTINA Not the succession -

VOICE He'll still succeed -

CAROLE He's the heir!

VOICE Yeah but he's jealous.

VOICE Of the Uncle. (Voices overlapping)

VOICE It's about power politics!

ELIZABETH (trying to encourage more responses) Ye-es ... yes?

The flurry of interest dies away so she is forced to take over again.

Facts. A murdered king. The queen married to the usurper, his brother .. what does usurper mean, Hanlon, oh never mind, go back to your yoyo .. (laughter, HANLON pulls a goofy face) what is the play about?

Silence.

What is it about?

A puzzled silence. The STUDENTS stir restlessly.

VOICE You just said.

ELIZABETH No. I told you the facts.

Again, almost compulsively she is drawn to the large school window.

ELIZABETH'S face, close, freezes.

Outside the window stands a PILOT, swaddled in flying clothes, with parachute and helmet. He

is gazing at her and makes a small movement towards her.

ELIZABETH No. I won't have that.

She turns back to the class, agitated, and looks about wildly. Their interest alerted, they sit up, looking at her with curiosity.

Please .. someone ... (she looks about and then with relief) .. Christina ...

She darts a look to the window. The PILOT is still there.

Christina!

CHRISTINA, startled, rises clumsily to her feet. She is heavily built, not pretty, but she has an interesting face, intense under heavy brows. She simmers with eagerness to impart, but is hampered by a stammering self-consciousness and the desire to say everything at once. She fixes ELIZABETH with a lowering glance.

CHRISTINA It's about ah ... it's about

(She pauses, licks her lips and looks about, darting her eyes, and then rushes on, her head down) ... I mean, I think it's about being a man .. I mean, he's a student, he's still an apprentice at life.

ELIZABETH Good.

She flicks a glance sideways. The PILOT has disappeared.

Go on.

CHRISTINA Men have to .. do things. (A single yok from someone at the back) I mean, much more so then, and being a Prince I mean, you're expected to perform ...

This creates loud and prolonged laughter.

..I mean .. it showed more ...

The laughter renews and rocks round the room. ELIZABETH shouts, frowning irritably at the loss of concentration in the class.

ELIZABETH Shut up, all of you, shut up! Christina, are you trying to be funny?

CHRISTINA No, Mrs. Reinhardt.

ELIZABETH looks at her levelly, sees that this is indeed so.

ELIZABETH No - all right, go on ... ssh! (To the class)

CHRISTINA What I mean is .. there are machines now, and we ... I mean, we don't literally feed the poor with bread out of baskets, we just flick a switch, if we want light .. or send a cheque to Oxfam for the ... we don't kill our enemies - (A hohoho from someone) ... not hand to hand .. that is, it may be going out of fashion, perhaps after the DP camps there's a ... after all, perhaps now we just sit on a committee, or sit down, or refuse to second an amendment by way of action?

She trails off and gazes at ELIZABETH in agonised enquiry. ELIZABETH returns her gaze with a kindly face.

ELIZABETH Interesting, go on.

CHRISTINA Well (she pauses and thinks, becoming unself-conscious) he was confronted by

CHRISTINA having to do something .. not like when you're small, when everything's done for you .. at you ... he had to become a man. Women .. then ... women just had babies ...

Noises from the class.

.... but a man must achieve something otherwise there's no point to him, I mean then, when women weren't even able to try. So you see .. there's a risk that perhaps .. perhaps he can't .. that he can't make it?

More suggestive noises from the class.

ELIZABETH Oh do shut up, perhaps he just doesn't know what to do?

CHRISTINA (Blunt) Oh he knows that all right, he has to kill.

The class goes silent.

But does killing make you a person? I mean, as distinct from an animal .. no, that's wrong, that's anthropomorphic in reverse. How do you become someone as distinct from just something? Fortinbras is someone ... though of course he may be an animal, using that meaning of the word, as well.

One of the BOYS does a very good animal noise.

ELIZABETH Shut up.

CHRISTINA He has to act .. or ... (she tires, losing her concentration, becomes confused and discouraged) or he'll be consumed.

ELIZABETH What?

CHRISTINA Consumed.

ELIZABETH, frightened, looks towards the window. The PILOT moves out of the shadow and comes towards her, an arm out in supplication. She backs away. He pulls at his jacket. Smoke coils from his chest. She throws down her book with a violent noise on the desk.

ELIZABETH That's enough!

The CLASS jolts. Glances are exchanged. There is a murmur of sound and then absolute silence. They respect her, like her, revere her eccentricities and fear her rages.

ELIZABETH sits heavily behind the desk. After a moment she opens the book slowly, turns the pages. The CLASS waits. She looks up. Once, almost, she looks towards the window. But she doesn't.

ELIZABETH Hamlet is a play ... Hamlet is a play about a man ... a young man. A young man in the .. in the fulness of his youth, his energy, his life. Anything is possible. He is ... he's alive .. as yet - unharmed ... so what can he not do, not achieve? There is just the matter of choice. Of choosing. Macbeth is not about a young man, but a man, a mature man, he makes his choices all right, since life is a tale told by an idiot .. meaningless .. then do whatever you want, whatever you can get away with. He thinks. Lear is about an old man, who has made all his choices and now has to live by them. But with Hamlet ... everything ... anything is possible. Youth, vigour, intelligence, energy, a favoured position in the lottery of birth so now to choose. And to act.

So why does he -

The school bell rings, very loud and shrilly dissonant. ELIZABETH slumps in her chair as in mid-sentenc

all the desk tops fly up and the STUDENTS clear away books and writing equipment in one convulsive mass movement. Then they sit, crouched, for the off. At this familiar insulting scene ELIZABETH presides with a chewed, resigned smile. She waits for total silence.

ELIZABETH All right. Dismiss.

There is a surge for the door.

ELIZABETH (With an ear-splitting yell) Quietly!

CHRISTINA (As she rises, to CAROLE who sits next to her)
Oh-h. Just when it was beginning to get interesting.

CAROLE What?

CAROLE leaves another girl, also pretty. They are followed by BILL WATERMAN and another BOY. CHRISTINA grabs her books and make to join them. They turn to her at the door. ELIZABETH, at her desk, rises wearily.

ELIZABETH Last one out close the door, please.

Behind her, as she crosses slowly to the window, an old, navy blue man's cardigan over her shoulders, the noises recede. She leans against the end desk, closing her eyes and enjoying the sun on her face. She murmurs, forgiving her pupils.

We-ell, it's the spring spring

We follow her gaze out of the window and up into the air.

And down, and across an expanse of windy asphalt and in through the window of a Nissen hut. Inside the room area number of WRENS. The room is long, with a sink and Ascot, and several long tables

with sixteen millimetre cine projectors at one end, and papers and drawing board equipment. There are stools, and boards on the walls covered with charts, graphs, orders, and squadron and pinup photographs.

This is the cine gun section at dispersed Headquarters on a Fleet Air Arm station, Wartime, 1944. The WRENS are sitting about, reading and smoking. No-one is working. PADDY, an older girl, not at all good-looking, is making coffee from a Camp coffee bottle. JILL, a pretty, fair girl, yawns and throws down her magazine after a moment.

JILL

Arrrh!

She stretches, rubs her eyes and yawns again. And prods about on the table for her cigarettes.

Anybody seen my Woodies?

No-one takes any notice.

(in accusation) Finchie?

BETTY

(The young ELIZABETH) You finished them.

JILL

(She has a West country accent) No I never.

BETTY

Yes you did. Do you want one of mine?

A dark, good-looking GIRL who has been leaning by the window cranes to look out as several sub-lieutenants come into view in a ragged group. She flicks a glance at BARBARA, a sumptuous dark girl who joins her.

BARBARA

(Softly) Hey

Several other GIRLS join her at the window as more pilots walk by. PADDY looks up briefly and then down, filling mugs of coffee with hot water.

MAC (Scottish, looks up from her novel) What?

BARBARA (Across to her) New squadron.

MAC rises without hurry, as EILEEN, Cockney, runs to the window.

EILEEN Here we go again.

JILL Nah, none of them can dance like the Yanks.

MAC, a tall, lean handsome redhead, leans over OLIVE'S shoulder. OLIVE, the Leading WREN, is the most beautiful of the girls in the room.

MAC Which one, Olive? (She laughs quietly, showing teeth with a gap in the front)

OLIVE shrugs. She is smooth-faced, with arched, narrowly-plucked eyebrows and a small mouth.

EILEEN She's not saying!

MAC They all look a bit syphilitic to me.

EILEEN There'll be one for Finchie then!

She gives BETTY a thump, making her reel. The others laugh. BETTY exaggerates the reel and staggers theatrically.

BETTY I'm not kissing anybody with spots, not after last time.

MAC You'll be lucky.

EILEEN She couldn't do worse than old Wheaty-bottom.

She imitates BETTY'S last boyfriend, waddling to and

fro with her bottom stuck out.

JILL No he never, it was like this.

She does a funny walk. BETTY laughs, pushes her aside, does a very funny walk. They all laugh. BARBARA and OLIVE remain at the window, watching the men, who stand about outside the adjacent briefing room.

BARBARA The tall one .. by the truck?

OLIVE looks out with a characteristic look of impassive coldness. BETTY moves to the window to join them.

OLIVE The fair one.

The others crane, huddling close to her to assess her choice. EILEEN pulls a face.

EILEEN Over there? By himself?

MAC Jimmy the One, ye mean? The lieutenant?

OLIVE shrugs, then permits herself a cool smile. BETTY watches her in humble admiration.

BETTY Yes.

OLIVE What?

BETTY shrugs, embarrassed. OLIVE looks at her and turns away, deliberately snubbing BETTY. BETTY, feeling humiliated, is left alone by the window as the others discreetly move away and across to the coffee which PADDY now brandishes. BETTY, hurt,

stays, gazing out of the window. A LIEUTENANT - COMMANDER hurtles up in a tilly, gets out and the pilots begin to follow him into the briefing room. The fair LIEUTENANT, apart, pauses to light a cigarette. He catches BETTY'S eye, stares at her without expression and then follows the others. BETTY, out of face, turns away quickly from the window. And then cranes after him for a last glimpse as he disappears through the door. He looks back briefly.

EILEEN (Out of view) Look at Finch!

MAC In love awready?

GENERAL CRY Finchie's in love .. Finchie's in love

JILL (Sings) I'll cry for you

We stay with BETTY by the window. There is a sound.

We turn, and we are in the classroom once more.

CHRISTINA, her desk lid up, is making muffled sounds.

ELIZABETH Oh it's you.

She crosses to CHRISTINA and stands over her.

What's the matter?

CHRISTINA shakes her head apologetically, but her face contorts.

Look if you're going to cry, cry - get it over.

But CHRISTINA, with one last heave, stops. She wipes her face with a large man's handkerchief, and blows her nose.

ELIZABETH Come on. I'll run you home.

CHRISTINA picks up her things as ELIZABETH moves to the door.

CHRISTINA It's all right, Mrs. Reinhardt.

ELIZABETH, holding the door open for her, raises an eyebrow.

My mother's not expecting me for supper, I said I'd be out.

Together they walk along the corridors, and out of the building. At the end of the corridor, with a glance at CHRISTINA, who is sniffing, ELIZABETH PAUSES.

ELIZABETH Look, you've got to toughen up. It's a cruel world.

CHRISTINA I know that.

They descend a few steps.

ELIZABETH Well don't play the victim.

CHRISTINA I don't.

ELIZABETH Grow a shell.

CHRISTINA (As they cross the main entrance hall, she scurries to keep up) That's just what I don't want to do.

ELIZABETH (As they wait for other people to go through the door) It's self-protection.

CHRISTINA (Aghast) But I want to write!

ELIZABETH (Mutters) Yes, well you'll have to survive first.

Again she holds open the door for CHRISTINA who barges through clumsily and follows ELIZABETH down a flight of steps into the sunlight.

CHRISTINA You're a writer. You manage.

ELIZABETH I shouldn't be too sure of that.

CHRISTINA smiles, transforming her face entirely to her own beauty.

CHRISTINA At least I have the self-pity for it.

ELIZABETH pauses at the corner.

ELIZABETH (Drily) Thanks. (Looking at her watch) I must go. Ian's lecturing on thermo-dynamics. (She starts to move off, catches CHRISTINA's loneliness) Do you want to come?

Her voice is almost drowned by the drone of a swooping aircraft. They both look up. ELIZABETH struggles into her duffle coat.

CHRISTINA Aren't they beautiful? What are they?

ELIZABETH Heaven knows. American. (They resume walking) It was one of my jobs, in the Wrens. We could identify any plane in production, even enemy ones, from a photographic blur.

CHRISTINA Wow.

ELIZABETH Not that hard. In those days just a matter of observation. Are you coming? To the lecture?

CHRISTINA smiles apologetically, shakes her head.

CHRISTINA I wouldn't understand a word of it.

ELIZABETH Neither will anyone else. He's lecturing to the arts faculty.

She looks quickly at her watch, sees that they are early so holds open the door of a cafe for CHRISTINA to enter. They go in, leaving their coats in the outer hall, which is full of coats and university scarves.

It's the vice-chancellor's idea, he thinks the poets should share the responsibility.

CHRISTINA Responsibility?

ELIZABETH For the bomb. It's been firewater to the Indians in the philosophy school. (V/O as they cross the cafe-restaurant and find a table.) Will you mind being frightened?

CHRISTINA (V/O) Frightened?

They reach a table by the wall, she prepares to pull out a chair.

I daresay, but better than closed doors.

ELIZABETH Suppose there are no doors at all ...

She grins, about to sit, and then her expression changes.

Move Christina, move!

CHRISTINA, alarmed, looks round. There is smoke.

The smoke. It is steam coming from the door as PADDY, in dressing gown and turban leaves the bathroom in the commandeered hotel in Cornwall that houses the Wrens and goes into a bedroom furnished with four two-tiered bunks. The room is empty but for BETTY, sprawled on a top bunk reading Hardy. PADDY sits opposite, crouched on a lower bunk, and cuts her toenails. BETTY turns a page.

PADDY (V/O) Ginger biscuit?

Galvanised by this offer of such rarity BETTY springs down.

BETTY Wow, thanks!

PADDY I thought you were going to Newquay.

BETTY Wasn't asked. Thanks! (As PADDY offers her a second biscuit. She eats, closing her eyes in bliss)

PADDY I shouldn't let it worry you.

BETTY I don't. (She sits up) I read books. They think there's something wrong with me. (She grins and leaps back onto her top bunk, picks up her book.)

PADDY Are you going to the dance?

BETTY You bet. Why don't you come?

PADDY Who me? (She pulls a face)

BETTY Never know, you might meet somebody interesting -

PADDY Thanks, I don't care for punishment.

She stands before a mirror, brushing her short hair savagely, to dry it.

BETTY I can just see you after the war, married to some erudite Professor, researching away like mad.

PADDY What a kind heart you have, Finch. (She cleans her brush, removing the stray hairs obsessively.)

BETTY What?

I'm not trying to patronise you.

PADDY No, just scratching my back around the knife.

BETTY reads. PADDY files and buffs her finger nails.

PADDY You heard about Betteridge?

BETTY I was down at the squadron.

PADDY What happened?

BETTY What do you think? (TOGETHER) Pilot Error!

PADDY Dear Mrs. Betteridge, We are deeply sorry to have to inform you -

BETTY Showing the greatest bravery in the line of duty -

PADDY For King and Country -

BETTY Sorry, forgot. King and Country. (She turns another page) The tail fell off when he was doing his approach.

PADDY (Voice over as the scene changes back to the cafe) Not the first time.

BETTY leans over, hanging her head down to eye contact PADDY.

BETTY Nor the second!

PADDY (Eating an apple laconically over her book) It's because they bloody dive-bomb them every day.

We are now fully in the cafe. It is cavernous, furnished in black and red with red and orange lighting. In the background a young CHEF moves, cooking to order. Occasionally light rises from the charcoal grill. The cafe is full of students from the university.

ELIZABETH Why were you crying?

CHRISTINA Nothing. It was my own fault. Carole and Susan were going on a coffee crawl.. (The WAITRESS brings two cups of cappucino coffee) I thought I was included.

ELIZABETH They're not your sort.

CHRISTINA (miserable) No.

She looks round. The cafe seems to be full of pretty girls being chatted up. She turns back, stirs her coffee.

What did you say your job was during the war?

ELIZABETH Fleet Air Arm. Flying Training. I was a cine gun assessor. (CHRISTINA looks blank) The camera is synchronised with the guns on the aircraft, you get a photographic record of hit and miss. In training you leave out the bullets, work out from the pictures what sort of error the pilot's making.

CHRISTINA What was it like, the war?

ELIZABETH Oh, everything on the move. Exciting in a way.

CHRISTINA (envious) It must have been.

ELIZABETH Christina, you might start by combing your hair and turning your skirts up, haven't you noticed about clothes? Anyway, prettiness isn't your style .. wait till you get to university, you'll come into your own.

She turns, gestures round the room.

ELIZABETH This lot, all they ever think about is what to do with their eyes, their nails, their hair -

CHRISTINA But I hate all that, I want to be liked for who I am!

ELIZABETH And who's that? (CHRISTINA looks at her, baffled) You haven't begun to be anybody yet. You may make it, if you're lucky, by the time you're fifty. Most people don't.

CHRISTINA (Aghast) Fifty?

The WAITRESS brings the food. ELIZABETH, hungry, starts to eat. She looks up from her plate malevolently.

ELIZABETH My dear Christina, there must be some consolation for physical decay otherwise we should all put our heads in the gas oven at the age of thirty. (She hands CHRISTINA the grated cheese for her spaghetti)

CHRISTINA So long? But .. I mean ... what happens till then?

ELIZABETH (Shrugs) Eat .. sleep .. kill ... reproduce ...
most of the time do what you don't want.

The last of her sentence is lost on CHRISTINA.
CAROLE and SUSAN, BILL WATERMAN and another BOY,
JOHN, enter the cafe. They wave a greeting to
ELIZABETH who nods as they find a table nearby.
CHRISTINA ducks her head. And then cannot resist
a glance at BILL WATERMAN'S profile and fair head.

A row of WRENS, standing at ease. A young THIRD
OFFICER stands in front of them in rigidly
correct stance.

EILEEN (at the end of a row, in a whisper) Third Officer
Ransome's got a love-bite on her neck .. pass it on...

The whisper goes along the line. The THIRD OFFICER
turns.

OFFICER Silence in the ranks.

They gaze at her mellifluously. Slightly disturbed
she turns back.

A row of MATELOTS is marched on by a KILLICK, who
ranges them adjacent to the WRENS. The DUTY
LIEUTENANT, the pilot seen by BETTY from the window,
walks on and inspects the MATELOTS perfunctorily.
He walks along the row of WRENS, catches BETTY'S
eye and stares at her coldly. He takes his position
before the ranks.

MAC (Whispers) Another mad Jimmy.

JILL Had his ass shot off once too often.

OFFICER Quiet in the ranks .. quiet! Parade ... parade, shun.

The WRENS leap to attention.

KILLICK Parade .. parade, shun.

The MATELOTS jump to attention.

A reverberant bang of sound in the CAFE. At the back there is a space and several people are dancing, close to ELIZABETH and CHRISTINA, to the juke-box. WATERMAN jigs by to the music.

WATERMAN (easily) Hi, Chris.

CHRISTINA, overwhelmed by this greeting, smiles her sweet smile of happiness. Unseen by her WATERMAN makes a face at CAROLE and SUSAN. ELIZABETH sees this.

CHRISTINA Do you mind if I join in?

ELIZABETH Go ahead.

CHRISTINA gets up and joins the dancing group. The music changes tune and tempo, becomes 'In the Mood', behind the close sounds of a noisy party. It is blotted out by the sound of young men's voices, singing rapidly. We are outside the dance hall, where BETTY and PETER, the lieutenant, are lying on a rough bank under trees, smoking.

MEN'S VOICES They say in the RAF that the landing's OK,
If the pilot gets out and can still walk away,
But in the Fleet Air Arm the outlook is grim,
When the aircraft's pp, and the pilot can't swim.
Cracking show .. I'm alive!
But I still have to render my A 25.

PETER How old are you?

BETTY Guess.

PETER Eighteen?

Her look betrays that this is true. He smiles briefly.

Put it out, I'm going to kiss you.

He kisses her. She breaks away with a gasp.

BETTY No, please ..

PETER What's the matter?

He tries to grasp her.

BETTY No.

He mutters something, and kisses her. There is a tussle. She breaks free and rolls away from him.

PETER What's the matter, don't you want to?

BETTY No.

PETER Don't tell me you're a virgin. Oh God.

He blows, filling his cheeks, and letting the air out slowly.

Never mind. Here.

He offers his cigarettes. She takes one.

BETTY Thank you.

PETER Are you afraid of having a baby?

She looks at him, embarrassed, and away.

PETER You wouldn't have to worry.

BETTY Please. It's not that I don't -

PETER Yes, yes.

BETTY It's just -

PETER You don't want to be thought cheap. I might not respect you .. after isn't that what Star Weekly tells you?

BETTY Shut up. I don't read stuff like that.

She looks at him as he lies against the bank smoking.

I suppose you've known a lot of girls.

PETER Yes.

Well, force on .. (He rises, bows ironically and holds out his hand to her) Have no fear, Sir Roger is here.

He helps her to her feet. They brush off their uniforms automatically and punctiliously. He gives her a handkerchief and she soberly wipes the lipstick from his mouth.

They walk off together, back to the hut and the sound of the band.

BETTY What made you dance with me?

PETER I thought you wanted to. (V/O)

Close, his face gazing down at her is cold.

PETER Come on, change your mind.

She pulls away, runs ahead. He catches up with her.

You might as well.

She looks up at him, her face very young. Out of her depth, she does not know what to say.

What's the difference? Take it from me, it doesn't matter, any of it. It's not important.

His face is bleak in the light as someone comes out, leaking light from the dance hut. She looks up at him.

BETTY (Softly) Yes it is.

PETER Give me one reason.

A DRUNK blunders out, almost knocks them over, forcing them apart before being noisily sick in the background.

BETTY I don't know.

PETER You'll learn.

He looks up at the stars in the glorious night sky and throws up his arms suddenly, his face in a rictus of a smile, mirthless and hateful.

I'm Alive!

In the cafe, ELIZABETH drinks her coffee. The barbecue grill nearby casts lurid, leaping shadows. BILL WATERMAN approaches CHRISTINA on the little

dance floor and prances round her. CHRISTINA, her eyes showing her bliss, dances awkwardly, throwing out her arms. As she nears the table where ELIZABETH sits she throws her a mildly triumphant smile, and dances away again. WATERMAN leans towards her, whispers something. CHRISTINA giggles and they both look briefly at ELIZABETH. They talk as they circle. CHRISTINA gestures towards ELIZABETH, explaining that she is going to a lecture with her. WATERMAN nods. He circles round SUSAN and back to CHRISTINA, who laughs noisily. She stomps, and as she turns away WATERMAN does the same, in imitation. CAROLE, sitting, smiles.

Suddenly the CHEF tips over a pan of fat. There is a flare of light and the loud crackle of burning fat. People jump up to see what is happening. The noise in the cafe increases.

ELIZABETH rises, her face showing alarm. She cranes, looking for CHRISTINA, but is trapped at her table by people pressing in front of her.

VLICE Has he burnt himself?

VOICE Is he hurt?

VOICE Whaddya think?

A GIRL gives a short scream.

GIRL He's on fire!

The noise of burning increases. Staff bang at the flames. ELIZABETH, showing panic, tries to push her way through the people.

ELIZABETH Christina .. Christina!

She breaks through the knot of people onto the

dance floor. The group melt away, exposing the the PILOT. He is burning and moves towards her, his hand out to her for help. She sways and pitches forward. JOHN and then WATERMAN catch her and support her. As people surround her the PILOT is lost in the crowd. CHRISTINA pushes forward to ELIZABETH'S side.

CHRISTINA Mrs. Reinhardt, are you all right?

ELIZABETH points to where the PILOT has been standing.

CHRISTINA What?

SUSAN It's only the smoke ..

CAROLE It's just the fat from the steak -

ELIZABETH He -

CAROLE He's OK, it'll all burn away in a minute.

ELIZABETH straightens up. She peers about her, looking for the PILOT.

CHRISTINA Are you all right?

ELIZABETH (Mutters) Run!

CHRISTINA Would you like me to see you home?

SUSAN It's too hot in here ..

WATERMAN Yeah.

JOHN She all right?

ELIZABETH I'm all right - where's the bill?

CHRISTINA I'll pay it.

But ELIZABETH leans over the table, picks up the bill, her manner still slightly feverish.

CHRISTINA They want to come to the lecture - Bill wants to come.

ELIZABETH gapes at her. Then shakes her head.

No?

ELIZABETH What does it matter?

CHRISTINA Can they come?

ELIZABETH Go on, get on with it!

CHRISTINA So long as it's all right -

ELIZABETH Go ON, Christina!

They go. She thrusts down a note at the cashdesk, waits for her change and goes out into the outer hall as the others disappear outside. She turns to get her coat. And pauses, unwilling to turn round. When she does, and lifts her head, the PILOT is there. She starts to shake, and stands, trembling. Then the trembling goes and she nods. She steps forward, but does not know what to do. She tries to lift him, but cannot. The smoke rises around them. In desperation she she hoists him on her back piggy fashion.

ELIZABETH It's no good, I can't -

CHRISTINA looks in the door.

CHRISTINA (Politely) Are you coming, Mrs. Reinhardt?

We see ELIZABETH, from CHRISTINA'S point of view,

standing alone.

ELIZABETH I .. I seem to

She stands, the weight of the PILOT making her bend.

I

CHRISTINA smiles encouragingly and takes her by the arm. The two of them are alone. ELIZABETH goes through the door first, lurching under the burden. She looks back to CHRISTINA who follows, holding open the door.

CHRISTINA (Voice over) The fresh air will do you good.

ELIZABETH (Now alone, she pulls on her gloves briskly) Ready?

CHRISTINA Is it all right?

We are in the woods near the air station. Open Cornish woodland, very beautiful, late spring. PETER and BETTY are together, under a tree in a post-coital embrace. She wears nothing above the waist, has his jacket round her shoulders. As they pull apart she dusts the talc from her body from his shirt. Silence.

PETER Do you mind?

BETTY No. (But her face is sad)

PETER (Brisk) Good. (He kisses her briefly) I'll see you this evening.

BETTY What time?

PETER About eight?

BETTY Whenever you say.

PETER Good.

They get up and she puts on her shirt and tie. he helps her on with her jacket and kisses her gently, and caresses her face. She smiles up at him, her expression full of love. He breaks away, a strategic withdrawal.

Arrh, comforts for the troops .. (looks at his watch) ... whoops - come on.

BETTY Don't.

She bends down, picks up her shoulder bag.

PETER Watch it.

BETTY I wasn't.

PETER Yes you were. (He tweaks her nose, quite painfully)
So much for promises.

BETTY What about yours!

PETER Yes, sorry about that. I got carried away.

He looks around as she puts on her shoes and ties the laces.

Pretty place.

BETTY straightens up and looks round.

BETTY Yes, incongruous.

PETER Why?

BETTY It should have been up against a wall.

Silence. He picks up his hat, looks at her, and has a twinge of conscience. He turns her towards him, looks at her.

PETER Are you feeling all right?

BETTY Yes. Oh yes.

PETER And it is pretty?

She turns, surveys the wood and the blur of bluebells.

(Nods) Yes.

PETER (Takes her hand as they begin to walk, shakes it to and fro) Don't keep thinking.

She looks at him, and is overcome with love for him.

BETTY (Despite herself, low) I love you.

And gets a cold look. As they walk away we follow them, close behind the back of their heads.

Students, seen from behind, crowding into the Lecture Theatre at the University.

A view from within the Lecture room as the students and staff spill in and take their seats. The seats are tiered up and around the long dais. On the dais is a table, with blackboard behind. Adjacent is a screen on a stand for demonstration film. On the table is a Bunsen burner, several beakers of colourless and dark liquids, a speaker's carafe and drinking glass, a cloth for cleaning.

The audience pour in, and squash up to make room.

In the end people range round the sides, and sit on the steps, and then crowd at the top at the back. A loud hubbub of talk and laughter which diminishes sharply as the LECTURER enters swiftly and bounds onto the dais.

He is a big, handsome man with an intense and lively gaze. His hair is shaggy, you would, for the times, take him for a musician, a millionaire, even a murderer. Not an academician. He is, in fact, a theoretical physicist, winner of the Nobel Prize. He is Canadian, and famous for his platform manner .. the audience sits up in excited expectation. He ranges about the dais, inspecting the table, in no hurry, looking at a book, checking that the screen is set up.

CHRISTINA and ELIZABETH enter. They make their way down, and are about to sit on the steps when two young male students grin and get up, offer their seats. ELIZABETH smiles, mutters something to them, making them laugh, she and CHRISTINA sit, the latter slightly out of face as the two huge young men brush past her to sit down. The seats are at the end of the front row and the LECTURER, at the screen close by, mutters to ELIZABETH.

LECTURER Am I hungry!

ELIZABETH Didn't you have lunch?

LECTURER I don't know.

ELIZABETH (Mutters, irritable) The rest of us manage.
(She sits, putting her bag under her feet, scowls at his back. He watches her with a brooding stare for an instant, and then bounds onto the dais and stands motionless until he has the complete attention of his audience. Then he picks up the carafe on the table and tips out the water. It runs across the top of the table and drips onto the floor.)

A STUDENT guffaws uneasily. Silence. The LECTURER gazes at the mess reflectively. He looks up and at a STUDENT sitting in the front row.)

LECTURER Hey, uh .. would you put it back for me please?

STUDENT I beg your pardon, sir?

LECTURER Would you put the water back in the bottle please?

A murmur of laughter from the audience.

STUDENT I can't.

LECTURER (To another STUDENT) Would you?

STUDENT No, sir.

LECTURER Why not?

STUDENT Can't be done.

The LECTURER smiles happily.

LECTURER Right. Correct. It can't be done. It can not be effected. The water is soaking into the table, it is dripping and soaking into the floorboards. It can not be replaced in the flask! (Almost shouting, a platform habit of the LECTURER) Like chastity .. irreversible.

Laughter. The LECTURER picks up the cloth and mops up clumsily.

(Mutters) Just the same we do what we can .. we do what we can ...

Laughter from the audience. The LECTURER looks up, throws away the cloth and begins to speak, very fast.

LECTURER

There's been a lot of stuff written about thermo-dynamics, particularly about the second law, the second law of thermo-dynamics. I'm here to tell you, I'm here to state that the second law of thermo-dynamics stands, in the world of science, where Shakespeare or .. uh .. where Beethoven stands in the world of the arts. It is that important. It is like a mountain - a Mountain in the world of ideas. However, whilst most people are familiar with the names of Shakespeare, of Beethoven .. while most of us .. even bum scientists .. (laughter) .. have some acquaintance with their work - we've been influenced by them ... how many of us can say we've been enlarged .. redirected ... even disturbed ... by the implications of the second law of thermo-dynamics? (He pauses briefly) How many of us know what the hell it means .. tell the truth I'm not so sure myself some of the time. We can hardly claim .. we can hardly claim that this law has any sort of place in the minds of people, in the culture of the world ... leave alone any degree of eminence. (Pause) This is a pity. (He pauses, looks about vaguely, his face changing) It is an idea of great beauty.

This makes a stir in the audience. CHRISTINA leans forward.

PETER lets BETTY through the gate of a cottage, across the road, through a hole in the fence and onto the airfield. They begin to walk. He holds her back, kisses her. The sound of an aircraft doing training exercises above them. They both look up.

BETTY

I'd love to fly.

PETER

Safer on the ground.

We are back in the Lecture Room.

LECTURER (speaking very quickly) now a quantity which is more often used as a measure of the randomness of molecular motion is called entropy. It is given the symbol S and is related to the probability P by Boltzmann's equation:

$$\text{Entropy} = S = k \log P$$

He turns and scribbles this formula on the blackboard to a rising tide of dismay and incomprehension from his audience.

BILL WATERMAN, his friend JOHN, CAROLE and SUSAN enter, push down and sit on the steps, the only room left vacant, near CHRISTINA and ELIZABETH. They grimace at the board and to one another in mock agony.

CHRISTINA (to ELIZABETH in a loud whisper) What?!

ELIZABETH grins and shakes her head. The LECTURER, who has been admiring his work on the board, turns on his audience, smiling blandly.

LECTURER ... where k is a constant having the dimensions of energy. Of course.

Laughter.

Now you didn't understand one word of that. Did you?

Laughter and shouts of 'No'.

Nope. Not a word. Of course I cheated on you, I spoke pretty quickly not that it would have made any difference. It sounded pretty dreary, huh? Pretty dreary stuff. Not too interesting. Science. Dry. Impenetrable. Boring. Incomprehensible. Like if I threw you a copy of War and Peace and said try this, it's pretty good .. OK, OK. But when you look at it,

LECTURER when you open the book, take a look at page one,
 (shouting) it's in the original - it's in Russian!
 A lot of funny-looking pothooks all over the page.
 Meaningless! No good!

OK, so you did not understand what I said to you
 just now. You did not understand because I was
 speaking in a language of which you arts and
 language students are ignorant. (He pauses, and
 softens his manner dramatically)

You know, language isn't simply the rote learning
 of vast numbers of meanings matching up like on a
 colour card. Different codes of communication don't
 coincide. There are similarities, and that can be
 reassuring. But similarity is not identity. A Frenchman
 is not the same as an Englishman. He does not think
 in English which has been translated into French ..
 he thinks in French! Not the same thing. Though,
 like I say, similar.

He takes a drink from the carafe, and pulls a face
 and mutters to himself.

H²O. (The STUDENTS laugh. He puts down the glass.)

In the world of science .. in the world of science
 we have, apart from many other facets and qualities,
 a whole code of communication .. complex ...
 beautiful .. as complex and beautiful as music or
 painting ... we have a language, a key to an
 incredible, a mysterious and terrifying world.
 A frightening world. Though, as I say, beautiful.
 You can get lost. Some people get totally lost,
 they're way out in space you never see them - maybe
 once in a while at the dentist.

"Where k is a constant having the dimensions of
 energy." Remember that? I said it just now.
 Using the word 'constant' .. you will have noticed,

LECTURER

as a noun. Not as an adjective. The meaning in science has to do with the concept of constancy .. as in a constant man, a constant woman ... a woman who is likely to stay around .. (murmur of laughter) ... (his shout) Constant! With a T is something that you hope is going to stay roughly the same, be the same kind of commodity. Unlike a woman, who changes. (He frowns at ELIZABETH, who stares at him levelly)

In science you look for constants .. c-o-n-s-t-a-n-t-s .. things that stay regular, that stay the same. So that you can measure the oddballs against them. Actually there aren't too many constants, usually you have to invent them.

He moves to the screen.

So. You have a substance .. any kind of substance .. metal, stone, a gas ... which is made of molecules, little bits that make it into a big bit, as a house is built of bricks, .. now these molecules ... and this is not available to the naked eye, this all micro stuff we're talking about here .. these molecules move. They move - all the time.

With a galvanic movement he switches on the picture. It is a close-up of molecule models in motion. The effect is of a screen full of tennis balls knocking against each other in a random fashion.

Now I have to tell you this. When you heat a substance the motion of the molecules of which it is composed become more violent.

He turns a switch and the motion of the molecules on the screen becomes agitated.

It becomes chaotic. And this word entropy ...

He turns, picks up the chalk and underlines the word on the board.

LECTURER .. is just a fancy ... a scientific word for chaos.

He switches off the machine and pauses, leaning over the table.

Scientists, like poets, are interested in words. Now a poet, I guess he's involved in states of mind, new apperceptions, old and new ways of seeing, of feeling, of perceiving .. in visions and he bends and renews his language to absorb these new experiences, he expands awareness by manipulating language, we express a lot of our thought and feeling through this complicated code language .. we also use maths, painting, music, stuff like that.

The scientist ... (He moves round from behind the table) the scientist .. as distinct from the poet .. more often has to create new words altogether. The existing language is just simply inadequate to express what he needs to convey .. so, anyway .. we use the word entropy to mean chaos, disorder .. in the specific circumstances we wish to describe. And as you see, when you apply heat, you get more disorder, more chaos .. the entropy increases. It is a fact that increase of chaos is related to the amount of heat applied, absorbed, present.

Again he looks at ELIZABETH. They lock glances until he turns on his heel.

(soft) .. the more heat ...

He switches on the projector and the molecules dance.

.. the more violence.

He turns the switch and the motion increases violently.

The molecules blur and the screen becomes a cine screen in the cine assessors' room. PETER and BETTY are lying on their coats on the long table making love. They gasp in the darkness and he sits up. He looks down at her.

PETER Now that's a funny thing.

BETTY Mmm?

She lifts a hand but he does not take it.

What?

PETER Nothing.

BETTY Phew!

PETER Hmm?

BETTY Just for a minute there I thought you were going to say something.

PETER I was.

BETTY Lucky old me. (Pause)

He does not reply. She rises, supports herself on her elbow, her young body lovely in the half light.

Well, you don't have to say anything.

She swings her legs down, fishes for her stockings.

If you didn't like me, you couldn't do it with me.

She walks over to the sink and has a discreet wash in the darkness. He lights a cigarette.

No answer came the swift reply. You needn't worry. You've made it very plain that
(She bends, putting on her drawers, comes back, takes the cigarette from him and draws deeply.)

What I don't understand is ..
why me? (He does not answer) I was talking to a girl who knew you in Arbroath when you came off ops. She said you were a snob, very picky, and changed women once a week. (He does not reply) Is it my undemanding modesty? (She glances at his profile, turns away quickly as he moves.)

He looks at her. Despite herself, she grins.

'Shut up, shut up' came the scream from within him.

She hands back his cigarette. They get their coats, preparing to leave. He pauses suddenly.

PETER It's an odd thing. I've never before wanted to get a woman with child.

They look at each other in alarm. And then move to the door at the end, open it to light and the sound of people.

In the Lecture Room.

LECTURER (in full flow) ... in the old days scientists were interested in matter and its properties. They wanted to know what things were made of, they named things, they classified. The approach was more .. inert. Now it's kind of more exciting. We think

LECTURER about .. we don't think about Things so much ...
we think about energy. We think about occurrences,
we think about happenings we think about
(shouts) relationships! Everything moves! Everything
shifts! Everything alters! I move my hand
I move my hand and air is displaced around the whole
world!

He walks about, excited.

Ok so let's talk about happenings, let's talk about
it. But I'll tell you something. When something
happens - that's it! That Is It! When it is done you
can not undo it. When something happens, when an
occurrence takes place, that is unique. New
relationships are formed - I'll come to that. What
I want to say first of all is that happenings are
unique. A thing happens, that's it. You can make
something similar happen, but you cannot recreate That
happening. It's a one-off situation. An occurrence
is unique. It is irrevocable. Let me show you
something.

He turns to the projector. WATERMAN flicks a note
into CHRISTINA'S lap. Her mouth opens in surprise.
The note lies on her lap. She is too enchanted
to touch it.

BETTY, dancing with PETER to the music of 'It Could
Happen to You'. She is blissfully happy, and leans
against him. He murmurs into her ear. She doesn't
hear what he says and pulls back, her face
enquiring. He repeats his request.

PETER I said tell me about Olive.

BETTY Olive?

They twist and dance away in the slow foxtrot.

BETTY (V/O) Why?

They are sitting together in a quiet corner of the dance hall, with drinks.

She's the Leading Wren. She's all right - a bit, you know. (He seems to want more so she goes on) Her father's a millionaire ... in biscuits .. food. She's been spoilt, that's why her neck's dirty.

PETER I hadn't noticed. (She nuzzles his neck)

BETTY And you better not!

PETER Are you going to tell me? Why your Leading Wren has a dirty neck?

BETTY Her friend Barbara told me .. they met at Mill Hill, initial training. She said Macandrew .. Olive .. would sit in the bath with her loofah waiting for somebody to come and bath her. She was used to her nanny doing it.

PETER (V/O) Who did you say her father was?

The scene dissolves to a pretty little girl swinging back and forth on a swing.

LECTURER Ok. So here you have something happening. Actually what we have is a photographic record of an occurrence. Now watch.

The LITTLE GIRL swings. Suddenly a Teddy bear flies up into her lap. The LECTURER switches off the film.

So what do we perceive?

VOICES It was backwards ..

The film was running backwards!

LECTURER Yup. Yah. You knew - you saw .. when you saw the bear go up to the child's lap, you knew this couldn't happen! Time is one way! Occurrences happen one way! At first we did not realise that the film was reversed because the motion of the swing was reciprocal ... we didn't get enough information to tell us which way I was running the film. But when we saw the bear we knew the film was reversed because time does not run backwards .. at least ... we're working on that .. it could be - there's a phenomenon called Faustian time poking in ... it's kinda post-graduate, I don't want to confuse you

The audience IS confused. A murmur of thrill and puzzlement ripples through them. We close on CHRISTINA. Her eyes, too, are excited, both by what the LECTURER is saying, and by the note which she flicks between her fingers. ELIZABETH glances at her, and at the note with a neutral glance.

LECTURER There's a pattern to the natural order of things. There is a pattern to the chemistry of this world. If I knock over this pile of bricks ...

He knocks over the pile of coloured bricks on his table.

.. they cannot, in the nature of things, build themselves up again. I can do so.

He builds up the bricks.

I can rebuild the bricks. But this is another, a Subsequent structure. Left to themselves, after being

LECTURER knocked down, the bricks can only remain dispersed, scattered.

Casually he knocks the bricks down again.

Occurrences are unique. They go in one direction. And the predicate of that we see that what in fact this means is ... that there is a tendency, for inanimate objects, to collapse.

He topples down the last two bricks.

What the second law of thermo-dynamics has to tell us is simply and precisely that. That things .. left to themselves .. take in an order of maximum probability.

Towards the end of the above we are back on the airfield. Quick shots of the hangar, with fitters working on aircraft, sailors marching, a tilly goes past the admin block. A background sound of aircraft.

In the Cine Gun Section the WRENS are all at work. Their windows are blacked out, two of the long tables are in use. Sequences of flying aircraft, in negative, are being assessed, the WRENS working on charts, plotting the success or failure of the pilots combat exercises, using small torch lights.

The loud and urgent sound of a Klaxon. The WRENS stop work at once, throw back the blackout curtains. Outside men run past the window. Some of the girls go outside.

BETTY, craning at the window behind EILEEN, sees PETER emerge from the main office, adjacent. She hurries to the door, pushes past the others and waylays him, running along beside him.

BETTY Which one, who is it?

PETER Denman.

BETTY Are you sure?

He looks at her, his pale blue eyes frightening.

BETTY But he never trusts a fitter .. he does his own Daily Inspections! He does his own DIS!

PETER (Hurrying away) A wing cracked.

BETTY I'll see you this evening?

She watches him go, her face wide-eyed with concern .. and love.

In the Lecture Room the Lecturer is doing a small illustrative demonstration. He lights a piece of paper, holds it up until it is consumed to a black fragment, lets it fall. CHRISTINA uses the lull in the lecture itself to bend to her note from WATERMAN. Slowly and shyly she begins to unfold the piece of paper. The others watch gleefully. ELIZABETH, noticing their movements, looks from the WATERMAN group to CHRISTINA, smelling that a tease is in progress. WATERMAN grins to his friend. CAROLE and SUSAN lean against each other, stifling laughter, their heads together.

In the Wrens' cabin, BETTY, MAC, BARBARA, JILL and EILEEN are preparing for a dance. PADDY, apart, is darning stockings.

MAC Where's Olive?

EILEEN Pinching the officers' bathroom.

MAC Aw! .. who's she after?

BETTY (To EILEEN) Can I have some of your scent?

EILEEN Help your, kiddo.

BARBARA (making up her face) Some say, good old Finch.
(A catchphrase)

BETTY (Merrily) Say what you like!

She is bubbling over with anticipation of the dance and meeting PETER. PADDY gives her a warning look.

EILEEN Now, now, you know she's in love.

JILL blows a raspberry. EILEEN laughs.

MAC (As silence falls) I've heard he's engaged.

BETTY mouth opens at this blow to the heart. She catches PADDY's cold glance and rallies.

BETTY You've heard wrong then.

MAC, with a last look and tweak at herself in the long wall mirror, leaves without answering. BARBARA, her elaborate preparations finished, in heavy panstick makeup and perfectly applied eyebrows and lipstick, wanders over to BETTY.

BARBARA Look, honey, I shouldn't get too stuck on Peter Bennett if I were you.

BETTY Why not?

BARBARA shrugs.

BARBARA He's been around, that's all.

BETTY So what?

BARBARA I heard he'd asked somebody else for a date.

A hush.

BETTY That's a lie.

BARBARA Well, it's none of my business.

BETTY If he did he won't keep it. He wants me to have his baby!

A big hush. EILEEN makes a noise of being sick as JILL looks at BETTY in comic despair. PADDY turns away. BARBARA regards BETTY with brief pity then makes to go.

BARBARA (At the door) You know, somebody ought to tell you.

She goes. BETTY restrains tears of fury, comprssing her mouth.

BETTY Bloody Barbara Bailey!

EILEEN Take no notice. She and Olive think they know everything.

JILL Come on, kid. Force on regardless. You ready?

BETTY No. You go on. Here.

JILL What?

BETTY Fags.

She hands JILL a packet of Players. JILL'S face lights up at this precious and unexpected largesse.

JILL Ooh! Thanks, codge!

JILL and EILEEN go. A pause. BETTY goes to the mirror and messes with her hair. PADDY remakes her bunk with obsessive neatness.

PADDY You should learn to keep your mouth shut.

BETTY They don't know anything about it!

PADDY Look -

But she sees BETTY'S innocent face in the glass, watches her joy rise as she powders her face and looks at herself in the mirror, tightening her belt to make a small waist. She decides against saying anything and turns back to her tidying jobs. BETTY licks her finger and wipes her eyebrows to remove the powder, puts on lipstick and blots it off with a piece of shiny lav paper. She surveys herself and, pleased at the sight, turns to PADDY.

PADDY I don't want to hear about it!

BETTY, surprised, flinches at PADDY'S violence.

Neither now, nor later.

She picks up a bath towel and her sponge bath and leaves the room. BETTY, angry, stares after her. But then her anger dissolves.

BETTY Poor old Paddy.

She makes a kiss at herself in the glass and picks up her shoulder bag, ready to leave. JILL enters and slumps down heavily on PADDY'S bunk.

BETTY Hey, she's just made it .. you know what she's like.

JILL looks up at her without understanding.

You're on her bunk .. Paddy's!

JILL (Flat) Oh.

But she does not move. She sits, her head lowered. BETTY frowns and approaches, seeing that something is wrong. JILL looks up sourly.

You ready?

BETTY Sure, I was just coming, what's the matter? (She peers at her friend more closely) Jill, what's the matter?

JILL Nothing.

She gets up, picks up her bag.

Robb's been killed - the mail's in, by the way.

BETTY Oh Jill, no!

JILL Oh Jill, yes. Just my luck.

Silence.

I quite liked him.

BETTY I know you did.

JILL (In a puzzled voice) I can't believe it - he was so good-looking!

BETTY Do you want an aspirin?

JILL What?

EILEEN appears at the run with a slopping cup of tea.

EILEEN Here you are.

JILL takes the cup of tea.

I'm ever so sorry, kid.

JILL Thanks.

EILEEN (To BETTY) Has she got some aspirin?

BETTY gets some from her drawer gives JILL two, then a third as an afterthought. JILL swallows them. EILEEN nods and goes.

BETTY What happened to him?

JILL Went in the sea doing addles off Eglinton.

BETTY Well, I expect it was quick.

JILL All the same if it wasn't.

She sits in the one elbow chair sipping her tea.

Here, fetch me the little box in my drawer - it's in the top left hand corner.

She sips, her knees hunched as BETTY fusses clumsily, finding the box at last.

She comes across the room, reading the label.

BETTY 'Widow Wainman's Ladies' Pills'. What are these for?

JILL Bring me on, what do you think! (She snatches the pills, swallows a handful) No point meeting his parents now, I shan't bother. (She swills down the pills from her mug of tea.)

BETTY Do they work?

JILL They'd better.

BETTY However many did you take?

She looks at the box doubtfully.

JILL Anyway .. he was a rotten pilot.

BETTY Jill, don't say that! His averages weren't bad ..

JILL They weren't good though, were they? Anyway, he couldn't have been in the top league, I mean, not what you'd call first-class .. I mean, not being able to find the deck of the carrier, bloody big enough ...

BETTY giggles, putting her hand over her mouth.

BETTY Ooh, I didn't mean to laugh, honest. Think of his poor mother.

JILL looks up at her. And they both begin to laugh helplessly.

JILL Stop it!

BETTY I don't know why it always makes me laugh!

JILL I know!

BETTY Remember when you were out with the bomb range markers and you looked up and said 'Oh, there goes Wanky Lowe' and he dived straight in the sea?

They squeal with laughter.

JILL And he was in a Barracuda! (They shriek) The CO was barking!

BETTY THREE letters to write!

JILL Pilot, gunner and navigator, I mean, a joke's a joke - (stuffs her hankie into her mouth)

BETTY No, listen .. it's not funny. I mean, it's not, is it? Getting killed. (They try not to laugh) I don't know why it makes me laugh, there's nothing to laugh about.

JILL Oh no? What about that bloody seagull sitting out there?

BETTY Where?

JILL Have a look.

BETTY In the rain, you mean?

JILL snickers behind BETTY who looks through the window. The seagull, sitting on the balcony rail, has only one leg.

BETTY Oh my God!

They both become completely hysterical with laughter. They roll about on the floor, kicking out at each other, screaming and shrieking and laughing wildly.

In the Lecture Room the WATERMAN group cannot contain their laughter as CHRISTINA unfolds the note. They bend forward helplessly. CHRISTINA, her face betraying her warm pleasure, looks down at the piece of paper, watched by ELIZABETH, whose expression is sombre.

We see the note. It is a drawing, a cruel and accurate caricature of CHRISTINA.

In the Naffi hut a naval rhythm trio is playing 'It Had to be You'. Several couples are dancing, including Wrens dancing together. Matelots and sub-lieutenants stand about in separate groups .. the dance has only just begun. BETTY and JILL come in. JILL touches her hair, and both girls look round the room.

JILL Where's yours?

BETTY Not here yet.

They dance together, BETTY leading. JILL starts to sing the words of the song, and BETTY, happy, joins in.

JILL There he is.

BETTY What?

JILL Over there.

PETER, another LIEUTENANT, OLIVE and BARBARA are standing together, chatting and laughing. BETTY wheels JILL round in the dance to take a look.

BETTY Urrgh, he's been nabbed by the dreaded Olive.

Who is smiling up at PETER. The music stops. JILL walks off to join the other Wrens.

BETTY, smiling, comes towards PETER. He turns and sees her, waves briefly, and turns his back on her. She checks, falters, and then approaches the group and touches him shyly on the arm.

BETTY (Softly) Hullo.

He turns and regards her amiably.

PETER Ah ... little Betty.

OLIVE and BARBARA smile sweetly.

BARBARA Hullo, Finchie.

OLIVE What can we do for you?

BETTY stands, unable to move away. She knows that she is an embarrassing spectacle, but she cannot move. She shakes her head. The others smile at her, OLIVE nods formally, and she and BARBARA, PETER and the other lieutenant move away as by a natural social consensus to the bar.

BETTY running.

BETTY hurtles into the cabin, throws herself down onto a lower bunk. PADDY, reading in the next bunk, looks at her, then turns away, turns a page.

CHRISTINA sits, frozen. Her face, in her misery, is ugly and dangerous.

LECTURER (V/O) ... insofar as the universe is a closed system, and according to Einstein it is ...
(Despite herself, this catches CHRISTINA's attention and she looks up)

On the platform the LECTURER comes forward.

LECTURER

.. that is to say, if we had a perfect telescope which could see to infinity, what we should see would be our own eye ..

This produces a rustling reaction in the audience.

We would see ourselves.

A slight pause then he continues more briskly.

If, as I say, the universe is indeed a closed system, then total chaos must follow ... although ...

A hush. The audience waits for a reprieve.

I agree, it's a long step ... I mean, you can hardly deduce the chaos of the cosmos from the disorder of molecules .. although again .. it is generally agreed that our sun must eventually burn out ...

Both ELIZABETH and CHRISTINA gaze at him with tense faces. ELIZABETH's eyes are wide. The sound of an aircraft, getting louder.

LECTURER

(V/O) .. chemically speaking ...this inevitable, this irreversible increase in entropy, this irrevocable tendency for order to become disorder implies .. in the universe .. an irreversible trend towards total chaos, towards total destruction and dissolution ... towards .. towards a heat death of timeless equilibrium

The noise of the aircraft becomes deafening. It smashes into our faces and the air is full of smoke and debris. Klaxons and whistles sound. From the cine gun assessors block the WRENS run out into the twilight. Everyone is running.

BETTY running.

BETTY against a wall of the hangar. She is shaking and sobbing and moaning. She doubles up as with cramps.

BETTY No ... (She starts running)

We now see the burning aircraft in the middle distance. A heavily swaddled figure climbs from the cockpit, horrible slowly. He falls to the ground, lies for a second, then rises. and begins to lurch and stagger towards us. The sound of burning, loud. A low boom, and the plane ignites with a roar. The meat wagon and the fire engines hurtle towards the aircraft.

The pilot comes forward, burning.

BETTY comes forward.

PETTY OFFICER Get her out of the way.

BETTY is swept aside. She tries to follow.

THREE BADGE KILLICK (An older man) Come on, love.

BETTY No - !

TBK He'll be OK.

BETTY leans against the wall outside the assessors hut. PADDY comes up.

PADDY Come on.

But BETTY stays still.

BETTY Who was it?

PADDY I don't know. (She makes to go in) It wasn't your man, he flies a Corsair.

She goes into the hut. BETTY follows her, grateful for the news.

BETTY Paddy - Paddy I heard about your brother. I'm ever so sorry, I meant to say something before but -

PADDY Well don't.

She picks up her things and leaves. BETTY breathes deep.

OLIVE, assisted by BARBARA, comes in. She sits. BARBARA gets a glass of water.

BETTY It wasn't -

But their faces stop her.

BARBARA (Quietly) He was with one of the subbies, in the Anson. Dead, I think.

BETTY stares at them. She starts to laugh weakly. And then shakes her head, frowning.

BETTY No

CHRISTINA lurches to her feet, shaking her head.

CHRISTINA No.

The LECTURER looks at her with interest .. lifts his hand for her to continue.

I don't agree.

ELIZABETH sits, seemingly frozen in memory.

It isn't chaotic. Life isn't.

CHRISTINA It's orderly.

A hush from the audience at this lese majeste. The LECTURER peers at CHRISTINA with interest. She shows nervousness as he inspects her keenly, but remains on her feet. He flicks a glance at ELIZABETH. Who looks back at him with a still face.

LECTURER (At last) That's good.

He looks at CHRISTINA with approval, nodding his head vigorously. He waves a hand for her to sit, and she sits slowly, still intense, ready to argue.

Siddown yuh ah now .. ah

He walks about, seeming to forget his audience. During his next speech he waves his hand from time to time at CHRISTINA as if addressing her alone.

Ok - so, Ok let's move away from thermal reactions .. from mixing, from things bumping against each other and creating heat .. from situations where a molecule will acquire energy by colliding with another molecule as we see it's a very random kind of behaviour .. happens by accident, chance now what you're talking about is something else entirely.

CHRISTINA leans forward. Without thinking, she screws up the note and throws it down dismissively. The WATERMAN group leave without her noticing.

You're talking about light.

Reactions which occur under the influence of light are very different, not at all the same as reactions to heat. You have a different sort of situation altogether.

He walks up and down, as if in the grip of a new energy. And then stops, behind the table, and leans forward, his hands on the table.

LECTURER

When a molecule absorbs light, I'm not talking about heat now, I'm talking about light, it's a real love affair. It is all, or nothing. Light comes in packets - that's the best way to describe it .. in science we have our own word again - quantum.

He turns and writes it in capital letters on the board, underlining it.

Quanta in the plural.

These quanta, these packets of light .. well, when a molecule meets a packet of light ... wham! It absorbs it ... all of it or it doesn't touch it, it leaves it alone, it don't want to know. It says bye-bye, nice ta see yah or it absorbs it all, all it can get .. the whole enchilada ... the whole quantum. (Gestures at the word on the board)

Both ELIZABETH and CHRISTINA are absorbed by this statement. He continues in a softer voice.

And once a molecule has absorbed a quantum of light it is so profoundly changed that we must think of it as a new molecule entirely. The changed distribution of electrons in the molecule gives it an entirely new shape, new chemical properties ... new dimensions and attributes (very soft) ... and .. of course ... it now has enough energy to break it up

He and ELIZABETH lock stares. He breaks away.

(Gently) Light is not some sort of fancy Bunsen burner .. turn it on, turn it off, some kind of generalised phenomenon, commodity. Light -

LECTURER selects. Light attracts just a few molecules. The rest are not affected.

He turns away, fills the drinking glass from the carafe and takes a leisurely drink. We focus on ELIZABETH, who gazes towards him vaguely, her thoughts elsewhere.

ELIZABETH (V/O) I could have gone mad, like Paddy, mad with rage. I could have given up like Jill, who never stopped laughing and married the next man who came along and disappeared into nappies and queues. I could have become a greedy mollusc, like Olive, dry martinis, enamelled toilet sets and no fixed address, or like Barbara, the entrepreneur, two changes of husband and Saint George's Hill, Weybridge, the provincial's dream of the good life. Or Mac, the professional Scot ... or good old Eileen, hot pie and mash and plenty to spare for old mates - who hasn't got plenty to spare when you're settled .. settled ... settled. I've settled on nothing .. no, not even you (Her eyes focus on the LECTURER as he puts down the glass)

LECTURER So. To sum up. If we take a look at chemistry, at what we know of it since the whole thing started, what do we see? We see what the second law of thermo-dynamics predicts ... a world of increasing disorder, a world with a tendency to encroaching chaos, in which the nature of things is to subside, to slide into a state of entropy, confusion, collapse.

However. From another point of view ... from another point of view we see an entirely different trend .. a trend which .. (He gestures to CHRISTINA) .. what's your name, may I know your name?

CHRISTINA (Rises obediently) Christina Jones. (She sits)

LECTURER

.... as Miss Jones here has pointed out .. rightly .. diametrically opposes everything I've said ... (Yells of laughter from the audience)

I speak, of course, of the creation and evolution of life. Now as you probably know we now have an idea of how it started .. life, that is .. (The audience murmur dissension, shake their heads) You didn't read about it? It was in the popular press actually it was pretty irritating, to scientists, I mean. Every now and then a guy'll dream up an experiment that's so simple that you could have thought of it yourself only it's too easy, you weren't that dumb .. anyway, somebody thought, why don't we put steam, methane, ammonia .. these are the gases we think were around before the sun acted to give us the atmosphere we breathe today ... why not put them into a chamber, pass electrical charges through .. imitate rain and lightning, some kind of weather. So they did, and they got .. you won't believe this when I tell you - they got amino acids!

His story falls flat on its face. There is absolutely no response from the audience. They gaze at him, attentive, earnest, and non-comprehending. He realises that no-one in this arts audience has got the point.

They got Life ... they got Life!! They got proteins! Amino acids are some of the most important components of living matter!

The audience stirs as the implication is perceived.

So .. to get back to our subject. On the one hand you have a bunch of chemicals lookit, you don't have to be too concerned with the second law of thermo-dynamics - it only determines that that the total chaos of the universe will increase -

This gets a big laugh. He smiles genially.

- however however we, in this little neck of the cosmos ... we have the sun. The sun's driving force enables that part of the universe called life to increase its order without hassling, without disobeying the second law.

He speaks more gently, winding up his lecture.

They get along. Pretty well. From the void of the very first day it looks as though the story of creation has been one of increasing order .. never mind if we take a reference from the Book of Genesis, or from Darwin's Origin of Species. You have the disorder, the tendency to chaos of the chemical world ... and you have the increasing structure and cohesion of life itself.

A murmur from the audience.

We exist not simply through chemistry, but through light. We inhabit not a world of chemistry, but a world of photo-chemistry. Maybe ... after all ... Genesis has the last word. Let There be Light.

A gasp from the audience, laughter, and then enthusiastic applause. The students rise. Some of them approach the Lecturer. ELIZABETH rises, puts on her gloves. When she looks for CHRISTINA, she sees that CHRISTINA is already in the aisle, listening with her characteristic stance, her head lowered, to two earnest men STUDENTS and a YOUNG MAN in a dog collar. ELIZABETH grins, and makes her way to the dais and the LECTURER.

He moves towards her, throwing a last answer over his shoulder to one of the STUDENTS. Other STUDENTS still crowd round him, impeding his progress.

LECTURER No, not at all ... Einstein, the general theory ... I'm sorry?

He bends to a young Man who repeats his question.

STUDENT Do you find many scientists who are interested in the arts?

The LECTURER throws a brief tired glance at ELIZABETH, then gives the questioner his attention.

LECTURER Sure, why not? You get scientists who are obsessive, same as in anything else, you need some of that, but you know, the real oddball is rarely your first rate man or woman these people are too unbalanced, too rigid, analistic .. not so intelligent. Scientists come in all varieties, Mozart nuts, deep sea divers, brass rubbers ... a good scientist has to be creative, we have machines to take care of a lot of the collating, analysis ... you have to respect your dreams.

GIRL Why is there a gulf? Between the arts and the sciences?

LECTURER Because of specialisation. It's a splintering process. We're at that stage of knowledge. Some of us hope that the next stage, the stage of synthesis, will bring things together again. It's beginning to happen.

ELIZABETH It needs to happen. (They turn to her) Unhappy the country where the poets are silenced.

BOY How do you mean, Mrs. Reinhardt?

She looks to the LECTURER to answer.

LECTURER She means that the voice of the poet is stifled because the poet no longer speaks the language. He can't celebrate the state of human consciousness because he is out of touch with it. He can't draw conclusions about the human situation, make decisions.

STUDENT Klaus Fuchs did.

VOICE And Nunn May!

VOICE And Pontecorvo!

VOICE Yeah, traitors!

VOICE They were scientists!

VOICE Yes, what about that!

VOICE That's his point!

VOICE That's what the Professor is saying!

LECTURER Some of them were scientists, some civil servants .. I doubt if any of them were illiterate humanists trying to play God, Fuchs was a Communist from way back in the thirties. You can get traitorous poets too, you know.

VOICE Good old Ezra!

LECTURER OK, let's be kind - mad. Sure as hell no scientist.
(Laughter)

GIRL Will you come and have coffee, sir?
(A murmur of encouragement at this idea)

LECTURER Thank you, I don't believe I will - thanks just the same.

VOICES Thank you, Professor ... marvellous lecture, sir ...
 thanks .. thank you, Professor Reinhardt ...

LECTURER Good-night good-night.

The AUDIENCE makes their farewells and go. ELIZABETH
and the LECTURER wait for the room to empty. She picks
up his old brown leather jacket.

LECTURER How about it?

She nods briefly and starts up the steps to the
door at the back of the room. He looms beside her
and she gives him his jacket.

Pretty enchanting, huh?

He preens, joking. But he wants her opinion.

ELIZABETH Yes, I think it probably aroused interest.

He looks at her briefly, lets it go.

LECTURER Yeah. Not bad on an empty stomach.

Slightly ahead, she turns on him at the top of
the steps, her eyes blazing.

ELIZABETH I am not your mother!

In the corridor she walks swiftly, he follows, his
jacket over his shoulder.

LECTURER What's the matter with you, I do this out of my
great big heart ... (they turn a corner away from us)

BETTY You love it. (She marches ahead. He catches up
once more)

LECTURER What do you mean, I've been in meetings all morning
 .. five hours in the laboratory -

ELIZABETH (Looks up at him as he opens a wide glass door for her)
 You've got it to spare.

LECTURER No I don't. I don't.

ELIZABETH But with you it's just tiredness.

 She pauses, looks him in the face.

 I'm sorry. My head's full of maggots.

LECTURER Bad huh?

ELIZABETH Yes I'm thinking of asking the National Health
 for a transplant.

 They move across the hall to the main door.

LECTURER (As they go through the revolving door) I've told
 you. Quit teaching.

 She walks away across the concourse. Car keys in hand,
 he gestures towards their old Austin brake, but she
 veers off towards the college gardens. He follows,
 grabs her by the arm, unhampered by the students
 who, passing, watch eagerly.

 Sitting by the water, she is calmer. She
 throws a stone in the water.

ELIZABETH You manage. I doubt if you could survive

ELIZABETH without your harem of worshippers.

LECTURER Sure, it's great.

They are strolling through the gardens. The conversation has moved on. Once or twice he flicks a look at her, notes that she is calmer. Her despair seems to be subsiding.

ELIZABETH ... I'm telling you, they're Draculas, the lot of them! Bloody Christina draping her entrails over me, every bloody year another fourth form thinking they've invented sex ...

LECTURER Hey, come on ..

ELIZABETH I daresay I'm jealous. (She stops, faces him)
No I'm not. I've had my share .. the orchid left on my doorstep - rape in the back of the truck.

LECTURER The war's over.

ELIZABETH Is it?

They are driving home. Silence for a while, he drives swiftly and skilfully.

I'm so frightened of going mad.

They are in the porch of their house. He picks out the key from his key-ring, looks down at her soberly.

LECTURER Let go.

She looks up at him, the rain from the rose-tree dripping onto her head.

ELIZABETH It seems wrong.

Inside, he helps her off with her coat. She stands, her hair wet, looking young and vulnerable, like her younger self.

LECTURER A lot of people are dead. We're alive. It isn't our fault. We didn't kick them back in the water, grab the last life-belt. You're not to blame.

ELIZABETH They used to dive those aircraft - second line aircraft, not good enough for combat - every day. Every six weeks we had a new squadron for training. Air to air combat, bombing practice. (Slight pause) We were good.

LECTURER Sure.

ELIZABETH (Shakes her head) I mean we got good at knowing. We would stand by the window, watch the squadrons march in - and pick out the ones who'd be dead by the end of the course. We used to laugh.

LECTURER Shock reaction. Look, kid, you're tired. We have children, you've written two books. I know how tough it is - each time it gets harder. It's not that you have to win, to prove it .. OK, folks, this time we're really dazzling ... that's for shitty face-treaders. No .. you have to amaze yourself. (She gives him a brief, dazzling smile) We both know that. Takes energy. You're a breeding woman. It uses up the oestrogen.

ELIZABETH You were in it. You killed people.

He nods.

You never say anything.

He pulls a face.

ELIZABETH Do you think about it?

LECTURER I have dreams, yes.

ELIZABETH You never say.

LECTURER Betty, I had enough of that. I was young. I did what they told me. Maybe I was wrong. They get us when we're young, when we're foolish. What do we know? (Slight pause) I don't blame myself.

ELIZABETH I bet you didn't laugh when people burned up and smelt like roast dinners.

LECTURER Pissed myself.

A pause. She gets up from the sofa, her legs wobbly.

ELIZABETH I don't know. (She shakes her head) I don't know
..... (She starts to tremble)

LECTURER Don't. You're safe. I'm here to look after you - you're safe.

ELIZABETH You'd never send me away?

He shakes his head.

Even if I was really mad?

He crosses his heart.

Ah but suppose I became violent, a danger to the children?

LECTURER I'd get a male nurse, we'd beat you up.

ELIZABETH (Doubtful) Promise?

He nods, takes her by the shoulder, sits her down, sits beside her.

ELIZABETH I keep seeing him .. the smokeI turn round and
.....

I see him ... I actually see him. He comes towards me I try and lift him
(she starts to cry)

He lets her cry.

I don't know what to do (a wail) what am I supposed to do .. I think he's screaming inside the helmet but I'm not sure

I should see a doctor.

LECTURER Most of us have.

ELIZABETH When?

LECTURER Before we met. (She starts to ask) I couldn't sleep and I got diarrhoea all the time. Sore ass.

Despite herself she smiles.

ELIZABETH Did he .. was it any good?

LECTURER Nah. He liked me though. (He gives her a saucy leer. She laughs)

He leans over and kisses her. The embrace becomes purposeful.

Later. He is lying on the floor before the fire. ELIZABETH, in her slip, brings two whiskies. They sit by the fire, drinking.

ELIZABETH I didn't have my cap in.

LECTURER Great. A fourth Nobel Prize winner.

ELIZABETH (Pulls a face at him) Thanks.

LECTURER Listen we need IQs in the one-eighties for astro-physics. (And gets a dry look)

He lies back, enjoying the whisky. They both look into the fire. ELIZABETH plays with the poker.

Tell me. Was he killed? The pilot who got out of the aircraft? The guy you thought was maybe someone you knew ... the one who came across the tarmac? I've always presumed

Did he die?

ELIZABETH rises, looks into the fire.

ELIZABETH We were drafted the next morning. Six of us, to Eglinton. In Northern Ireland. The weather was so bad if we got the aircraft up we never saw them again. Five pilots took off one day, went straight into a hill. (She smiles evilly) I was engaged to two of them.

A long pause. She twirls her glass, looking into the fire, and then speaks dreamily.

Yes, he died. Pilot error. (Pause) It wasn't Peter Jones, the man I thought it was. He married a Leading Wren called Olive Macandrew. I believe they were divorced soon after. (The fire leaps) He was very young. The pilot. George Andrews. Aged nineteen. Only son. Very handsome. Bright. Talented. I hardly knew him.

LECTURER (Voice over) That so?

Leaning with his back against the easy chair, the firelight on his face, he looks faintly devilish.

ELIZABETH (Voice over) We used to sing a squadron song ...

(Sings) Cracking show, I'm alive

A CHORUS OF MALE VOICES sings the next line.

CHORUS But I still have to render my A 25!

Close to, her face is still. But not tense. Her expression softens and she gazes, her thoughts in the past.

On the airfield an aircraft bangs down and slews sideways. A young pilot jumps down and walks away to the distant hangar, his flying cap in his hand. The sound of the men singing faintly.

AEROPLANES

You hope they'll pick someone from the edge of the ehrd.

Pyrotechnics in slow motion.

The girl in the tower ...

Petrol flares...

Big tallow oil cans .. smoke came up but it cut the fog.

Moment of stillness before you hit the runway.

The germans had night fighters. One night over Nurnberg 108 bombers were shot down.

Radar .. searchligths, flares, anit-aircraft guns meants no protection.

Yanks went in for precision bombing. Their commander was Curtis Lmay.

Pilots, bombadiers, navigators, gunners, all green, had never flown formation before .. result a complate debacle.

B17, Flying Fortess .. half the bombs of the lanacasters but heavily armed, 11 machine guns, DC3 engine, 4 of them, you had to cut a fine line, take a direct hit to be knocked out, slightly underpowered .. thick wing, easy to fly, a forgiving airoplane, took a lot of bullets and shrapnel and survived ... we took sharapnel through no, 2 fuel tank but we got back, on fire. Still not enough guns, the front was open, no mobility of gun direction.

Berlin, hamburg, Munich, .. grand crew, we said a prayer.

Curtis Lemay introduced combat box covering another.

Fighters flew up your trails ... 1000 plane raids, wave after wave after wave, the sky was black with birds.

Radio operator .. ack-ack outside your window, you don't see people .. cripples were fair game ... B 17 next to us got a shell .. it spun off to the left and parachutes came out, one, two, three .. you try to count up to nine.

Combat crew as close as husband and wife.

55,000 men, 1 in 7 of all dwaths in action.

94,000 Germans, 100s of thousands dead. City was devastated, no streets.

B29, Superfortress .. 5 gun turrets, range of 3000 miles.

B36 .. 6 piston and four jet engines... inside, comfort and space undreamed of.

B52. Operational for 30 years, looks almost too big to fly .. in Vietnam vulnerable against missiles.