GRAHAM GREENE

Ways of Escape

THE BODLEY HEAD
LONDON SYDNEY
TORONTO

WAYS OF ESCAPE

OTHER BOOKS BY

GRAHAM GREENE

NOVELS

The Man Within · Stamboul Train
It's a Battlefield · England Made Me · A Gun for Sale
Brighton Rock · The Confidential Agent
The Power and the Glory · The Ministry of Fear
The Heart of the Matter · The Third Man
The End of the Affair · Loser Takes All
The Quiet American · Our Man in Havana
A Burnt-Out Case · The Comedians · Travels with my Aunt
The Honorary Consul · The Human Factor
Dr Fischer of Geneva or The Bomb Party

SHORT STORIES

Collected Stories
(including *Twenty-one Stories*, *A Sense of Reality* and *May We Borrow Your Husband?*)

TRAVEL

Journey Without Maps
The Lawless Roads
In Search of a Character

ESSAYS

Collected Essays
The Pleasure Dome
British Dramatists

PLAYS

The Living Room
The Potting Shed
The Complaisant Lover
Carving a Statue
The Return of A. J. Raffles

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

A Sort of Life

BIOGRAPHY

Lord Rochester's Monkey

GRAHAM GREENE

Ways of Escape

THE BODLEY HEAD
LONDON SYDNEY
TORONTO

British Library Cataloguing
In Publication Data
Greene, Graham
Ways of escape.
1. Greene, Graham—Biography
2. Authors, English—20th century—Biography
I. Title
823'.9'12 PR6013.R44Z/

ISBN 0-370-30356-3

© Graham Greene 1980
Printed in Great Britain for
The Bodley Head Ltd
9 Bow Street, London WC2E 7AL
set in Monophoto Ehrhardt
by Thomson Litho Ltd, East Kilbride,
Scotland
First published 1980

试读结束：需要全本请在线购买： www.ertongbo

Rather less than half of this book has appeared, though revised, cut and sometimes enlarged, in the introductions to the Collected Edition of my books published by The Bodley Head and William Heinemann and to *The Pleasure Dome* published by Secker and Warburg. Other portions have appeared in the *Sunday Times*, *The Times*, the *Sunday Telegraph*, the *Spectator*, the *Month*, the *London Magazine*, and *Life*. I must apologise to readers of *A Sort of Life* for a little overlapping between the end of that book and the beginning of this.

As my body continues on its journey,
my thoughts keep turning back and bury
themselves in days past.

GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
to his mother,
November 23, 1849

Preface

When I wrote a fragment of autobiography under the title *A Sort of Life* I closed the record at the age of about twenty-seven. I felt then that the future years belonged as much to others as to myself. I couldn't infringe *their* copyright.... They had a right to privacy, and it was impossible to deal with my private life without involving theirs. All the same I had tasted the pleasure – often enough a sad pleasure – of remembering and so I began a series of introductions to the Collected Edition of my books, looking back on the circumstances in which the books were conceived and written. They too were after all 'a sort of life'.

I have added essays which I have written occasionally on episodes in my life and on some of the troubled places in the world where I have found myself involved for no good reason, though I can see now that my travels, as much as the act of writing, were ways of escape. As I have written elsewhere in this book, 'Writing is a form of therapy; sometimes I wonder how all those who do not write, compose or paint can manage to escape the madness, the melancholia, the panic fear which is inherent in the human situation.' Auden noted: 'Man needs escape as he needs food and deep sleep.'

More rarely than might be supposed the places I visited proved sources for my novels. I wasn't seeking sources, I stumbled on them, though perhaps a writer's instinct may have been at work when I bought my return ticket to Saigon or Port-au-Prince or Asunción. So here is what

I wrote of Haiti before I thought of *The Comedians*, of Paraguay which was to form a chapter in *Travels with my Aunt*. Yet the Emergency in Malaya produced no novel, nor did the Mau Mau rebellion in Kenya. Not even a short story emerged from the occasion when I was deported by the American authorities from Puerto Rico or from my experience of the Communist takeover in Prague in 1948. Poland in the Stalinist 1950s left the novelist's imagination untouched, and yet and yet... Politics since 1933 have taken an increasing place in my novels, and perhaps the Mau Mau prepared me for the more sinister Tontons Macoute and my apprehensions of ambush in Malaya lent an extra dimension to the fears which I sometimes experienced in Vietnam. I have included little from the articles I wrote on the French war there, for the American war made the earlier struggle seem a century away, and no one now can feel interest in such vanished characters as the Emperor Boa-Dai and Prince Buu-Loc.

Those parts of a life most beloved of columnists remain outside the scope of this book. The 'copyright' of others' lives I hope I have continued to observe.

试读结束：需要全本请在线购买： www.ertongbo

Chapter One

I

What a long road it has been. Half a century has passed since I wrote *The Man Within*, my first novel to find a publisher. I was twenty-two years old when I began it and I was on sick leave from *The Times* after an operation for appendicitis. In the drawing-room of my parents' home at Berkhamsted there stood – or rather wobbled – one of those small writing bureaux with pigeonholes and little drawers which used to be thought suitable for women; the flap was just wide enough for my sheet of single-lined foolscap. Breakfast was over, and my mother was busy discussing a domestic problem with the parlourmaid. How 'period' such a title sounds today, and all those other household ranks – kitchenmaid, pantrymaid, nursemaid; I see myself now as a character in an historical novel writing the first words of an historical novel. If I am removed from him by fifty years, he was only removed by twice that time from his story of smugglers in the first decades of the nineteenth century.

Why has the opening line of that story stuck in my head when I have forgotten all the others I have written since? It is not a good line, for it has the ring of verse rather than prose; I have thought of changing it, but it would seem like a betrayal of my young self. 'He came over the top of the down as the last light failed and could almost have cried with relief at sight of the wood below.' I can hear my mother at that moment saying, 'If Miss Norah has the best spare room, we will have to put Mr. . .'

Perhaps the reason I remember the scene so clearly is that for me it was the last throw of the dice in a game I had

practically lost. Two novels had been refused by every publisher I tried. If this book failed too I was determined to abandon the stupid ambition of becoming a writer. I would settle down to the safe and regular life of a sub-editor in Room 2 of *The Times* – in a year my probation would be over, I would rise to the minimum salary of nine guineas a week, and then I could just afford to marry. It was a career as settled as the Civil Service – no one was ever sacked from *The Times*, and in the end there would be a pension and I would receive a clock with a plaque carrying my name. As it happened I didn't have to wait so long for the clock – I got it a year later when I married, and for a long while after I had left *The Times* I felt a sense of guilt in front of the bold typeface on the mantelpiece which reminded me of the clock hanging over the main entrance in Queen Victoria Street. It always seemed to indicate that four in the afternoon was approaching and I ought to be on my way to join my companions in Room 2.

I hesitated some days before writing that opening sentence – it was a commitment. Hadn't I embarked twice before on what for months had seemed an interminable toil? It would be so much easier to resign myself, to give up all idea of escape. Why escape in those days? From what? I was happy on *The Times*.

I had finished my first novel when I was still at Oxford, after the unwise publication of a volume of verse, which is now an expensive curiosity for collectors. The subject, like so many first novels, was childhood and unhappiness. The first chapter described the hero's birth in an old country house. It seemed to me at the time a piece of rich evocative writing, and so it tried to be, but of the Jacobean rhythms of Walter de la Mare's prose rather than of personal experience. By a mistaken application of the Mendelian

theory I told the story of a black child born of white parents – a throwback to some remote ancestor. (I hadn't then learned of my great-uncle Charles and the thirteen children he was said to have left behind him in St Kitts when he died of yellow fever at nineteen.) There followed in my novel a hushed-up childhood and a lonely colour-barred life at school, but to me even then the end seemed badly botched, and I can see that it was strangely optimistic for one of my temperament. I made the young man find a kind of content by joining a ship at Cardiff as a Negro deckhand, so escaping from the middle class and his sense of being an outsider. Escape again. I suspect that the word will chime from the title page on throughout this book.

A.D. Peters, a literary agent then new to the game, encouraged me to believe that the book was publishable. The months passed, the tone of his letters changed from enthusiasm to cold second thoughts, finally hope died, but by that time a second novel was under way.

I had been reading Carlyle's *Life of John Sterling*, the only work of that great Scottish bore I have ever enjoyed. Carlyle provided the setting – Leicester Square in Victorian London, the haunt of Spanish refugees from the Carlist wars. Another young Englishman, anxious, like the black boy, to escape from his class, becomes involved in plots against the Spanish Government. Walter de la Mare (under the influence of Henry James) gave place to the later Conrad of *The Arrow of Gold* when he was writing under the same influence. Revolution and a Spanish setting – as a schoolboy I had envied the fate of Wilfred Ewart who had been shot accidentally during the Pancho Villa rising in Mexico. It had seemed to me a glamorous end in a glamorous country. Indeed my love affair with Spanish

America and violent death only faded a little when I saw the *pistoleros* for myself years later during the voyage in Mexico which I described in *The Lawless Roads.*

I can't remember now what kind of fate overtook my hero who divided his time between the solid Belgravia house of his parents and the refugee dives of Soho. I know there was a love affair which depended heavily on that unbearable woman, Conrad's Doña Rita. I don't think he ever went nearer to Spain than Leicester Square, for I was paying a great deal of attention to unity and 'the point of view' after studying Percy Lubbock's admirable primer, *The Craft of Fiction.* I called the novel rather drably *The Episode* and that was all it proved to be. It never found a publisher – A.D. Peters even refused to handle it – and how grateful I was to him later.

So it was I began to plan the third novel, which I expected to be my last.

Lying in a general ward of Westminster Hospital, before returning to my parents' home to convalesce after the operation, I made a small jump back in time from the days of the Carlist refugees to the days of smugglers in Sussex. Now, if I ask myself why, I have no answer. Was it that I was half consciously aware I knew too little of the contemporary world to treat it? That the past was more accessible because it was contained in books, such as the history of smuggling which I read in my hospital bed?

The Man Within had the temporary success that a first novel sometimes has through the charity of reviewers, and twenty years later a certain Mr Sidney Box made a highly coloured film of it. I had not sold him the rights – I had given them for a token payment to a documentary film director with whom I had once worked on a propaganda film for what was then called Imperial Airways. He told me

that with this book he had the chance of making his first feature film. Well, at least he made a profit from the resale to Mr Box, and Mr Box made his film with an extraordinary script which showed torture with branding irons as part of the nineteenth-century legal system. The film unlike the book did not suffer from youth or naïveté, and I received a letter from Istanbul written by a Turk who praised the picture for its daring homosexuality. Had I, he asked, devoted any other novels to this interesting subject? After the experience I added a clause to every film contract forbidding a resale to Mr Box. In a way I was hurt by this treachery to my first-born more than by the later treachery of Mr Joseph Mankiewicz when he made a film of *The Quiet American*. I was confident that the later book would survive the film, but *The Man Within* was a more feeble growth. If I had been a publisher's reader, which I became many years afterwards, I would have turned it down unhesitatingly. Yet a mystery remains. How could Aldous Huxley write of it so kindly in a letter to a friend, absurdly preferring it to Virginia Woolf's latest novel? Why did it bring me rather frightening friendships with two formidable characters, Lady Ottoline Morrell and Mrs Belloc Lowndes, and why did Jacques Maritain choose to publish it in France in a series which included Julien Green? I agreed at Maritain's request to delete a few lines from a sexual scene. To be censored by the French seemed to me then like an accolade.

I have another reason for remembering *L'Homme et Lui-Même*, as the novel was called in French. Writing a novel is a little like putting a message into a bottle and flinging it into the sea – unexpected friends or enemies retrieve it. My French translator, Denyse Clairouin, became both my friend and agent. In the days of the Stavisky riots we drove

around Paris together looking for trouble, but when the great trouble came and France fell, communication was impossible. It was only when the war was over I learned how she had worked in occupied France for the British Secret Service. In 1942 in Freetown, where I was working for the same service, I received news from London that a suspected spy, a Swiss businessman, was travelling to Lisbon in a Portuguese liner. While he queued up at the purser's for passport control, I sat in my one-man office typing out, as quickly as I could with one finger, the addresses in the notebook which he had been unwise enough to leave in his cabin. Suddenly, among all the names that meant nothing to me, I saw the name and address of Denyse. From that moment I feared for her safety, but it was not until the war was over that I learned she had died after torture in a German concentration camp. My mother's desk, a young man's sentimental story, a tin roof in Freetown and a German concentration camp... stages of a road which has proved very long.

2

My second and third novels, *The Name of Action* and *Rumour at Nightfall*, published in 1930 and 1931, can now be found, I am glad to think, only in secondhand bookshops at an exaggerated price, since some years after their publication I suppressed them. Both books are of a badness beyond the power of criticism properly to evoke – the prose flat and stilted and in the case of *Rumour at Nightfall* pretentious (the young writer had obviously been reading again and alas! admiring Conrad's worst

试读结束：需要全本请在线购买： www.ertongbo