

You loved your last book...but what
are you going to read next?

Using our unique guidance tools, Love**reading** will help you find new
books to keep you inspired and entertained.

Opening Extract from...

Brideshead Revisited

Written by Evelyn Waugh

Published by Penguin Books Ltd

All text is copyright © of the author

This Opening Extract is exclusive to Love**reading**.
Please print off and read at your leisure.

Brideshead Revisited

*The Sacred and Profane Memories
of Captain Charles Ryder*

EVELYN WAUGH



PENGUIN BOOKS

PENGUIN ESSENTIALS

Published by the Penguin Group

Penguin Books Ltd, 80 Strand, London WC2R 0RL, England

Penguin Group (USA) Inc., 375 Hudson Street, New York, New York 10014, USA

Penguin Group (Canada), 90 Eglinton Avenue East, Suite 700, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4P 2Y3
(a division of Pearson Penguin Canada Inc.)

Penguin Ireland, 25 St Stephen's Green, Dublin 2, Ireland (a division of Penguin Books Ltd)

Penguin Group (Australia), 250 Camberwell Road, Camberwell, Victoria 3124, Australia
(a division of Pearson Australia Group Pty Ltd)

Penguin Books India Pvt Ltd, 11 Community Centre, Panchsheel Park,
New Delhi – 110 017, India

Penguin Group (NZ), 67 Apollo Drive, Rosedale, Auckland 0632, New Zealand
(a division of Pearson New Zealand Ltd)

Penguin Books (South Africa) (Pty) Ltd, 24 Sturdee Avenue, Rosebank,
Johannesburg 2196, South Africa

Penguin Books Ltd, Registered Offices: 80 Strand, London WC2R 0RL, England

www.penguin.com

First published by Chapman & Hall 1945

First published in Penguin Books 1951

Revised edition first published by Chapman & Hall 1960

This Penguin Essentials edition published 2011

I

Copyright © Evelyn Waugh, 1945

All rights reserved

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

I am not I: thou art not he or she
they are not they

E. W.

Printed in England by Clays Ltd, St Ives plc

Except in the United States of America, this book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser

ISBN: 978-0-241-95161-3

www.greenpenguin.co.uk



Penguin Books is committed to a sustainable future for our business, our readers and our planet. This book is made from paper certified by the Forest Stewardship Council.

I

'I have been here before,' I said; I had been there before; first with Sebastian more than twenty years ago on a cloudless day in June, when the ditches were creamy with meadowsweet and the air heavy with all the scents of summer; it was a day of peculiar splendour, and though I had been there so often, in so many moods, it was to that first visit that my heart returned on this, my latest.

That day, too, I had come not knowing my destination. It was Eights Week. Oxford – submerged now and obliterated, irrecoverable as Lyonesse, so quickly have the waters come flooding in – Oxford, in those days, was still a city of aquatint. In her spacious and quiet streets men walked and spoke as they had done in Newman's day; her autumnal mists, her grey springtime, and the rare glory of her summer days – such as that day – when the chestnut was in flower and the bells rang out high and clear over her gables and cupolas, exhaled the soft airs of centuries of youth. It was this cloistral hush which gave our laughter its resonance, and carried it still, joyously, over the intervening clamour. Here, discordantly, in Eights Week, came a rabble of womankind, some hundreds strong, twittering and fluttering over the cobbles and up the steps, sight-seeing and pleasure-seeking, drinking claret cup, eating cucumber sandwiches; pushed in punts about the river, herded in droves to the college barges; greeted in the *Isis* and in the Union by a sudden display of peculiar, facetious,

wholly distressing Gilbert-and-Sullivan badinage, and by peculiar choral effects in the College chapels. Echoes of the intruders penetrated every corner, and in my own College was no echo, but an original fount of the grossest disturbance. We were giving a ball. The front quad, where I lived, was floored and tented; palms and azaleas were banked round the porter's lodge; worst of all, the don who lived above me, a mouse of a man connected with the Natural Sciences, had lent his rooms for a Ladies' Cloak-room, and a printed notice proclaiming this outrage hung not six inches from my oak.

No one felt more strongly about it than my scout.

'Gentlemen who haven't got ladies are asked as far as possible to take their meals out in the next few days,' he announced despondently. 'Will you be lunching in?'

'No, Lunt.'

'So as to give the servants a chance, they say. What a chance! I've got to buy a *pin-cushion* for the Ladies' Cloak-room. What do they want with dancing? I don't see the reason in it. There never was dancing before in Eights Week. Commem. now is another matter being in the vacation, but not in Eights Week, as if teas and the river wasn't enough. If you ask me, sir, it's all on account of the war. It couldn't have happened but for that.' For this was 1923 and for Lunt, as for thousands of others, things could never be the same as they had been in 1914. 'Now wine in the evening,' he continued, as was his habit half in and half out of the door, 'or one or two gentlemen to luncheon, there's reason in. But not dancing. It all came in with the men back from the war. They were too old

and they didn't know and they wouldn't learn. That's the truth. And there's some even goes dancing with the town at the Masonic – but the proctors will get *them*, you see. . . . Well, here's Lord Sebastian. I mustn't stand here talking when there's pin-cushions to get.'

Sebastian entered – dove-grey flannel, white *crêpe de Chine*, a Charvet tie, my tie as it happened, a pattern of postage stamps – 'Charles – what in the world's happening at your college? Is there a circus? I've seen everything except elephants. I must say the whole of Oxford has become *most* peculiar suddenly. Last night it was pullulating with women. You're to come away at once, out of danger. I've got a motor-car and a basket of strawberries and a bottle of Château Peyraguey – which isn't a wine you've ever tasted, so don't pretend. It's heaven with strawberries.'

'Where are we going?'

'To see a friend.'

'Who?'

'Name of Hawkins. Bring some money in case we see anything we want to buy. The motor-car is the property of a man called Hardcastle. Return the bits to him if I kill myself; I'm not very good at driving.'

Beyond the gate, beyond the winter garden that was once the lodge, stood an open, two-seater Morris-Cowley. Sebastian's teddy-bear sat at the wheel. We put him between us – 'Take care he's not sick' – and drove off. The bells of St Mary's were chiming nine; we escaped collision with a clergyman, black-straw-hatted, white-bearded, pedalling quietly down the wrong side of the

High Street, crossed Carfax, passed the station, and were soon in open country on the Botley Road; open country was easily reached in those days.

'Isn't it early?' said Sebastian. 'The women are still doing whatever women do to themselves before they come downstairs. Sloth has undone them. We're away. God bless Hardcastle.'

'Whoever he may be.'

'He thought he was coming with us. Sloth undid him too. Well, I did tell him *ten*. He's a very gloomy man in my college. He leads a double life. At least I assume he does. He couldn't go on being Hardcastle, day and night, always, could he? – or he'd die of it. He says he knows my father, which is impossible.'

'Why?'

'No one knows papa. He's a social leper. Hadn't you heard?'

'It's a pity neither of us can sing,' I said.

At Swindon we turned off the main road and, as the sun mounted high, we were among dry-stone walls and ashlar houses. It was about eleven when Sebastian, without warning, turned the car into a cart track and stopped. It was hot enough now to make us seek the shade. On a sheep-cropped knoll under a clump of elms we ate the strawberries and drank the wine – as Sebastian promised, they were delicious together – and we lit fat, Turkish cigarettes and lay on our backs, Sebastian's eyes on the leaves above him, mine on his profile, while the blue-grey smoke rose, untroubled by any wind, to the blue-green shadows of foliage, and the sweet scent of the tobacco merged with

the sweet summer scents around us and the fumes of the sweet, golden wine seemed to lift us a finger's breadth above the turf and hold us suspended.

'Just the place to bury a crock of gold,' said Sebastian. 'I should like to bury something precious in every place where I've been happy and then, when I was old and ugly and miserable, I could come back and dig it up and remember.'

This was my third term since matriculation, but I date my Oxford life from my first meeting with Sebastian, which had happened, by chance, in the middle of the term before. We were in different colleges and came from different schools; I might well have spent my three or four years in the University and never have met him, but for the chance of his getting drunk one evening in my college and of my having ground-floor rooms in the front quadrangle.

I had been warned against the dangers of these rooms by my cousin Jasper, who alone, when I first came up, thought me a suitable subject for detailed guidance. My father offered me none. Then, as always, he eschewed serious conversation with me. It was not until I was within a fortnight of going up that he mentioned the subject at all; then he said, shyly and rather slyly: 'I've been talking about you. I met your future Warden at the Athenaeum. I wanted to talk about Etruscan notions of immortality; he wanted to talk about extension lectures for the working-class; so we compromised and talked about you. I asked him what your allowance should be. He said, "Three hundred a year; on no account give him more; that's all

most men have.” I thought that a deplorable answer. *I* had more than most men when *I* was up, and my recollection is that nowhere else in the world and at no other time, do a few hundred pounds, one way or the other, make so much difference to one’s importance and popularity. I toyed with the idea of giving you six hundred,’ said my father, snuffling a little, as he did when he was amused, ‘but I reflected that, should the Warden come to hear of it, it might sound deliberately impolite. So I shall give you five hundred and fifty.’

I thanked him.

‘Yes, it’s indulgent of me, but it all comes out of capital, you know. . . . I suppose this is the time I should give you advice. I never had any myself except once from your cousin Alfred. Do you know, in the summer before I was going up, your cousin Alfred rode over to Boughton especially to give me a piece of advice? And do you know what that advice was? “Ned,” he said, “there’s one thing I must beg of you. *Always* wear a tall hat on Sundays during term. It is by that, more than anything, that a man is judged.” And do you know,’ continued my father, snuffling deeply, ‘I *always did*? Some men did, some didn’t. I never saw any difference between them or heard it commented on, but I *always wore mine*. It only shows what effect judicious advice can have, properly delivered at the right moment. I wish I had some for you, but I haven’t.’

My cousin Jasper made good the loss; he was the son of my father’s elder brother, to whom he referred more than once, only half facetiously, as ‘the Head of the Family’; he

was in his fourth year and, the term before, had come within appreciable distance of getting his rowing blue; he was secretary of the Canning and president of the J.C.R.; a considerable person in college. He called on me formally during my first week and stayed to tea; he ate a very heavy meal of honey-buns, anchovy toast, and Fuller's walnut cake, then he lit his pipe and, lying back in the basket-chair, laid down the rules of conduct which I should follow; he covered most subjects; even today I could repeat much of what he said, word for word. ' . . . You're reading History? A perfectly respectable school. The very worst is English literature and the next worst is Modern Greats. You want either a first or a fourth. There is no value in anything between. Time spent on a good second is time thrown away. You should go to the best lectures – Arkwright on Demosthenes for instance – irrespective of whether they are in your school or not. . . . Clothes. Dress as you do in a country house. Never wear a tweed coat and flannel trousers – always a suit. And go to a London tailor; you get better cut and longer credit. . . . Clubs. Join the Carlton now and the Grid at the beginning of your second year. If you want to run for the Union – and it's not a bad thing to do – make your reputation *outside* first, at the Canning or the Chatham, and begin by speaking on the paper. . . . Keep clear of Boar's Hill. . . .' The sky over the opposing gables glowed and then darkened; I put more coal on the fire and turned on the light, revealing in their respectability his London-made plus-fours and his Leander tie. . . . 'Don't treat dons like schoolmasters; treat them as you would the vicar at home. . . . You'll find you spend

half your second year shaking off the undesirable friends you made in your first. . . . Beware of the Anglo-Catholics – they're all sodomites with unpleasant accents. In fact, steer clear of all the religious groups; they do nothing but harm. . . .'

Finally, just as he was going, he said, 'One last point. Change your rooms.' – They were large, with deeply recessed windows and painted, eighteenth-century paneling; I was lucky as a freshman to get them. 'I've seen many a man ruined through having ground-floor rooms in the front quad,' said my cousin with deep gravity. 'People start dropping in. They leave their gowns here and come and collect them before hall; you start giving them sherry. Before you know where you are, you've opened a free bar for all the undesirables of the college.'

I do not know that I ever, consciously, followed any of this advice. I certainly never changed my rooms; there were gillyflowers growing below the windows which on summer evenings filled them with fragrance.

It is easy, retrospectively, to endow one's youth with a false precocity or a false innocence; to tamper with the dates marking one's stature on the edge of the door. I should like to think – indeed I sometimes do think – that I decorated those rooms with Morris stuffs and Arundel prints and that my shelves were filled with seventeenth-century folios and French novels of the second empire in Russia-leather and watered silk. But this was not the truth. On my first afternoon I proudly hung a reproduction of Van Gogh's *Sunflowers* over the fire and set up a screen, painted by Roger Fry with a Provençal landscape, which

I had bought inexpensively when the Omega workshops were sold up. I displayed also a poster by McKnight Kauffer and Rhyme Sheets from the Poetry Bookshop, and, most painful to recall, a porcelain figure of Polly Peachum which stood between black tapers on the chimney-piece. My books were meagre and commonplace – Roger Fry’s *Vision and Design*, the Medici Press edition of *A Shropshire Lad*, *Eminent Victorians*, some volumes of *Georgian Poetry*, *Sinister Street* and *South Wind* – and my earliest friends fitted well into this background; they were Collins, a Wykehamist, an embryo don, a man of solid reading and childlike humour, and a small circle of college intellectuals, who maintained a middle course of culture between the flamboyant ‘aesthetes’ and the proletarian scholars who scrambled fiercely for facts in the lodging houses of the Iffley Road and Wellington Square. It was by this circle that I found myself adopted during my first term; they provided the kind of company I had enjoyed in the sixth form at school, for which the sixth form had prepared me; but even in the earliest days, when the whole business of living at Oxford, with rooms of my own and my own cheque book, was a source of excitement, I felt at heart that this was not all which Oxford had to offer.

At Sebastian’s approach these grey figures seemed quietly to fade into the landscape and vanish, like highland sheep in the misty heather. Collins had exposed the fallacy of modern aesthetics to me: ‘. . . the whole argument from Significant Form stands or falls by *volume*. If you allow Cézanne to represent a third dimension on his two-dimensional canvas, then you must allow Landseer his

gleam of loyalty in the spaniel's eye' . . . but it was not until Sebastian, idly turning the page of Clive Bell's *Art*, read: "Does anyone feel the same kind of emotion for a butterfly or a flower that he feels for a cathedral or a picture?" Yes. *I do,*' that my eyes were opened.

I knew Sebastian by sight long before I met him. That was unavoidable for, from his first week, he was the most conspicuous man of his year by reason of his beauty, which was arresting, and his eccentricities of behaviour, which seemed to know no bounds. My first sight of him was in the door of Germer's, and, on that occasion, I was struck less by his looks than by the fact that he was carrying a large teddy-bear.

'That,' said the barber, as I took his chair, 'was Lord Sebastian Flyte. A *most* amusing young gentleman.'

'Apparently,' I said coldly.

'The Marquis of Marchmain's second boy. His brother, the Earl of Brideshead, went down last term. Now he was *very* different, a very quiet gentleman, quite like an old man. What do you suppose Lord Sebastian wanted? A hair brush for his teddy-bear; it had to have very stiff bristles, *not*, Lord Sebastian said, to brush him with, but to threaten him with a spanking when he was sulky. He bought a very nice one with an ivory back and he's having "Aloysius" engraved on it – that's the bear's name.' The man, who, in his time, had had ample chance to tire of undergraduate fantasy, was plainly captivated. I, however, remained censorious, and subsequent glimpses of him, driving in a hansom cab and dining at the George in false whiskers, did not soften me, although Collins, who was

reading Freud, had a number of technical terms to cover everything.

Nor, when at last we met, were the circumstances propitious. It was shortly before midnight in early March; I had been entertaining the college intellectuals to mulled claret; the fire was roaring, the air of my room heavy with smoke and spice, and my mind weary with metaphysics. I threw open my windows and from the quad outside came the not uncommon sounds of bibulous laughter and unsteady steps. A voice said: 'Hold up'; another, 'Come on'; another, 'Plenty of time . . . House . . . till Tom stops ringing'; and another, clearer than the rest, 'D'you know I feel most unaccountably unwell. I must leave you a minute,' and there appeared at my window the face I knew to be Sebastian's, but not, as I had formerly seen it, alive and alight with gaiety; he looked at me for a moment with unfocused eyes and then, leaning forward well into the room, he was sick.

It was not unusual for dinner parties to end in that way; there was in fact a recognized tariff for the scout on such occasions; we were all learning, by trial and error, to carry our wine. There was also a kind of insane and endearing orderliness about Sebastian's choice, in his extremity, of an open window. But, when all is said, it remained an unpropitious meeting.

His friends bore him to the gate and, in a few minutes, his host, an amiable Etonian of my year, returned to apologize. He, too, was tipsy and his explanations were repetitive and, towards the end, tearful. 'The wines were too various,' he said: 'it was neither the quality nor the

quantity that was at fault. It was the mixture. Grasp that and you have the root of the matter. To understand all is to forgive all.'

'Yes,' I said, but it was with a sense of grievance that I faced Lunt's reproaches next morning.

'A couple of jugs of mulled claret between the five of you,' Lunt said, 'and *this* had to happen. Couldn't even get to the window. Those that can't keep it down are better without it.'

'It wasn't one of my party. It was someone from out of college.'

'Well, it's just as nasty clearing it up, whoever it was.'

'There's five shillings on the sideboard.'

'So I saw and thank you, but I'd rather not have the money and not have the mess, *any* morning.'

I took my gown and left him to his task. I still frequented the lecture-room in those days, and it was after eleven when I returned to college. I found my room full of flowers; what looked like, and, in fact, was, the entire day's stock of a market-stall stood in every conceivable vessel in every part of the room. Lunt was secreting the last of them in brown paper preparatory to taking them home.

'Lunt, *what* is all this?'

'The gentleman from last night, sir, he left a note for you.'

The note was written in *conté* crayon on a whole sheet of my choice Whatman H.P. drawing paper: *I am very contrite. Aloysius won't speak to me until he sees I am forgiven,*

so please come to luncheon today. Sebastian Flyte. It was typical of him, I reflected, to assume I knew where he lived; but, then, I *did* know.

‘A most amusing gentleman, I’m sure it’s quite a pleasure to clean up after him. I take it you’re lunching out, sir. I told Mr Collins and Mr Partridge so – they wanted to have their commons in here with you.’

‘Yes, Lunt, lunching out.’

That luncheon party – for party it proved to be – was the beginning of a new epoch in my life.

I went there uncertainly, for it was foreign ground and there was a tiny, priggish, warning voice in my ear which in the tones of Collins told me it was seemly to hold back. But I was in search of love in those days, and I went full of curiosity and the faint, unrecognized apprehension that here, at last, I should find that low door in the wall, which others, I knew, had found before me, which opened on an enclosed and enchanted garden, which was somewhere, not overlooked by any window, in the heart of that grey city.

Sebastian lived at Christ Church, high in Meadow Buildings. He was alone when I came, peeling a plover’s egg taken from the large nest of moss in the centre of his table.

‘I’ve just counted them,’ he said. ‘There were five each and two over, so I’m having the two. I’m unaccountably hungry today. I put myself unreservedly in the hands of Dolbear and Goodall, and feel so drugged that I’ve begun to believe that the whole of yesterday evening was a dream. Please don’t wake me up.’

He was entrancing, with that epicene beauty which in

extreme youth sings aloud for love and withers at the first cold wind.

His room was filled with a strange jumble of objects – a harmonium in a gothic case, an elephant's-foot waste-paper basket, a dome of wax fruit, two disproportionately large Sèvres vases, framed drawings by Daumier – made all the more incongruous by the austere college furniture and the large luncheon table. His chimney-piece was covered in cards of invitation from London hostesses.

‘That beast Hobson has put Aloysius next door,’ he said. ‘Perhaps it’s as well, as there wouldn’t have been any plovers’ eggs for him. D’you know, Hobson hates Aloysius. I wish I had a scout like yours. He was sweet to me this morning where some people might have been quite strict.’

The party assembled. There were three Etonian freshmen, mild, elegant, detached young men who had all been to a dance in London the night before, and spoke of it as though it had been the funeral of a near but unloved kinsman. Each as he came into the room made first for the plovers’ eggs, then noticed Sebastian and then myself with a polite lack of curiosity which seemed to say: ‘We should not dream of being so offensive as to suggest that you never met us before.’

‘The first this year,’ they said. ‘Where do you get them?’

‘Mummy sends them from Brideshead. They always lay early for her.’

When the eggs were gone and we were eating the lobster Newburg, the last guest arrived.

‘My dear,’ he said, ‘I couldn’t get away before. I was lurching with my p-p-preposterous tutor. He thought it

very odd my leaving when I did. I told him I had to change for *F-f-footer*.'

He was tall, slim, rather swarthy, with large saucy eyes. The rest of us wore rough tweeds and brogues. He had on a smooth chocolate-brown suit with loud white stripes, suède shoes, a large bow-tie and he drew off yellow, wash-leather gloves as he came into the room; part Gallic, part Yankee, part, perhaps, Jew; wholly exotic.

This, I did not need telling, was Anthony Blanche, the 'aesthete' *par excellence*, a byword of iniquity from Cherwell Edge to Somerville. He had been pointed out to me often in the streets, as he pranced along with his high peacock tread; I had heard his voice in the George challenging the conventions; and now meeting him, under the spell of Sebastian, I found myself enjoying him voraciously.

After luncheon he stood on the balcony with a megaphone which had appeared surprisingly among the bric-à-brac of Sebastian's room, and in languishing tones recited passages from *The Waste Land* to the sweated and muffled throng that was on its way to the river.

'*I, Tiresias, have foresuffered all,*' he sobbed to them from the Venetian arches;

*'Enacted on this same d-divan or b-bed,
I who have sat by Thebes below the wall
And walked among the l-l-lowest of the dead . . .'*

And then, stepping lightly into the room, 'How I have surprised them! All b-boatmen are Grace Darlings to me.'

We sat on sipping Cointreau while the mildest and