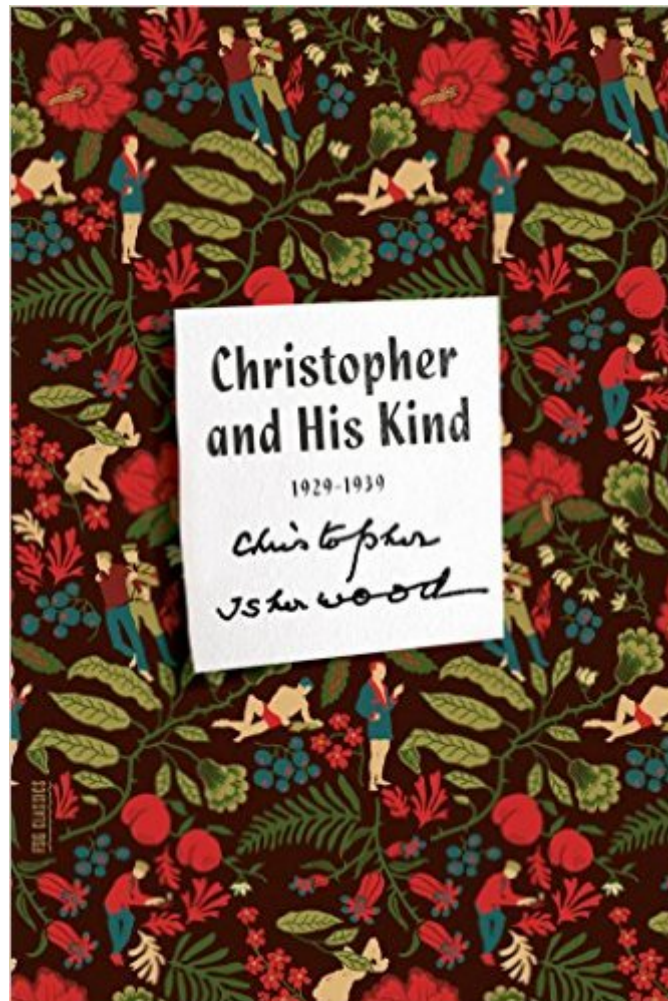


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Christopher And His Kind: A Memoir, 1929-1939 (FSG Classics)



Synopsis

An indispensable memoir by one of the most prominent writers of his generation Originally published in 1976, "Christopher and His Kind" covers the most memorable ten years in the writer's life from 1928, when Christopher Isherwood left England to spend a week in Berlin and decided to stay there indefinitely, to 1939, when he arrived in America. His friends and colleagues during this time included W. H. Auden, Stephen Spender, and E. M. Forster, as well as colorful figures he met in Germany and later fictionalized in his two Berlin novels and who appeared again, fictionalized to an even greater degree, in "I Am a Camera" and "Cabaret." What most impressed the first readers of this memoir, however, was the candor with which he describes his life in gay Berlin of the 1930s and his struggles to save his companion, a German man named Heinz, from the Nazis. An engrossing and dramatic story and a fascinating glimpse into a little-known world, "Christopher and His Kind" remains one of Isherwood's greatest achievements."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

My interest in this book was aroused after viewing a 2011 BBC production bearing the same title. Of course, reading the book version of a work is always more satisfying, though I do believe good films can spark interest in doing further research. The text is an appealing one for several reasons. An older Christopher Isherwood (seventy-two) writes about these ten years in the third person, as if this "Christopher Isherwood" is one of his fictional characters. At the same time, any passage in which he's unsure about a fact or date or is definitely speaking retrospectively he employs the

first person. I suppose the practice helps Isherwood to separate himself from the past, from the time when he may have acted as a callow yet, at times, callous fellow.â œChristopherâ™s first visit to Berlin [1928] was shortâ ”a week or ten daysâ ”but that was sufficient; I now recognize it was one of the decisive events of my life. I can still make myself faintly feel the delicious nausea of initiation terror which Christopher felt as Wystan [W. H. Auden] pushed back the heavy leather door curtain of a boy bar called the Cosy Corner and led the way insideâ • (3). This is the callow part. It is indeed a lovely way of using the third person: â œChristopherâ • is Isherwoodâ™s manifestation as a young man. He will never again be quite like he is in 1928, age twenty-four, away from his home in England for the very first time, frozen in history, just like a fictional character. But Isherwood makes some startling admissions, one in particular concerning his feelings toward Heinz, a young man with whom he shares a life for five years, mostly in Berlin.

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