



Between Sky and Sea (Text Classics)

Herz Bergner

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A group of Jewish refugees are thrown together on board a dilapidated freighter charting a course for Australia. Fleeing terrible scenes of destruction in Europe, they are bound by a deep sense of loss and the uncertainty of their fate.

As the ship lists, inner conflicts burst to the surface and romance, revenge, guilt and desperation fill the craft. There's poignancy, drama and an abiding strength of humanity as the passengers' lives play out in this unbearable hinterland between sky and sea.

Now, more than sixty years since its publication in 1946, *Between Sky & Sea* has been resurrected to take its place among Australia's major works of diaspora fiction.

Arnold Zable's introduction highlights the chilling parallels between Bergner's tale and the sinking of the SIEV X off the Australian coast, giving the reader pause to reflect on the unchanging plight of asylum seekers throughout history and across the globe.

Herz Bergner was born in Poland in 1907 and migrated to Australia with his wife in 1938. His first book, *The New House*, published in 1941, was a collection of short stories about immigrants adapting to life in a new land. Herz Bergner died in 1970.

'This novel, resurrected from its foreign country of the past, might stand as an epitaph for the 353 men, women and children drowned in 2001 when the SIEV X sank while trying to reach Australia. At the very least, *Between Sky & Sea* should be required reading for refugee policymakers today.' *Canberra Times*

'Beautifully written with extraordinary insight into the frailties of humanity, Bergner's tale is as much a version of the past as it is a vision of our present... We can only hope that publishers such as Text continue to salvage the treasury of migrant literature that is no longer in print.' *Australian*

'Bergner's astute observation of life shows in his sharp psychological dissection of this human cargo and his unflinching assessment of people's flaws... Bergner writes with such compassion that a reader becomes infected by his characters' yearnings.' *Herald Sun*

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