



Synopsis

In the darkness, silence. A drum roll builds steadily like a wave, and crashes with a cymbal's sharp reverberation. From the orchestra, a steady vamp begins. As the pulse grows stronger a spotlight on the stage grows brighter. Then, into the spotlight he steps. Chalk white face, crimson lips, he is as menacing as he is fascinating, he is the Emcee. He invites us and we follow-into the decadent provocative world of the cabaret.

Sally Bowles, a little middle-class lass from Chelsea, London, is working as a singer at Berlin's Kit-Kat Club and doing her not very good best to live the thrillingly decadent life which the city is supposed to offer. Into her orbit comes Cliff Bradshaw, a young American writer, and Sally soon moves determinedly in to join him in his room in the boarding house run by Fraulein Schneider. Their fellow lodgers include the cheerful whore, Fraulein Kost, and the gentle, graying fruiterer Herr Schultz. As the clouds gather, Sally, now pregnant by Cliff, is still determined to show the world what a good time she is having and she will not or cannot hear the noises of Nazism around her. But the others can.

Schultz courts Fraulein Schneider with old-world courtesy and they become engaged, but the fruiterer is Jewish and, when some Nazi sympathizers break up their engagement party, the old maid is obliged to let her dream of a marriage go. Cliff finds he has been almost unwittingly couriering Nazi funds for one of his language pupils and he is beaten up when he refuses to continue to do so. It is time to leave Berlin. But poor, self-deluded Sally cannot let the party end. She has her child aborted and, all responsibility gone, she watches Cliff take the train for Paris alone. Back in the cabaret, the Emcee introduces the same show as before, but it is harsher, and soon it will be dark.