

**WHITE BIRD**

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Based on the graphic novel by  
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**A BIRD ON A WIRE**

A pigeon, to be precise. Perched on a telephone wire. Street sounds mingle with the noise of children as we drift down to

**EXT. YATES ACADEMY (RIVERDALE, NY) - DAY**

Through a window we spy a hallway crowded with MIDDLE-SCHOOL STUDENTS all wearing uniforms of navy blue polo shirts.

**INT. YATES ACADEMY - CAFETERIA - DAY**

Kids at lunch. Noisy with bursts of shouting and laughter. Tables all crowded. All except one table toward the back...

It's here we find those few kids who don't fit in. Together but alone, empty spaces between seats, books and phones for company. JULIAN (12) eats his lunch and stares at his phone, but can't help feeling the stares from some of the kids at other tables. A few WHISPER about him. Others SNICKER.

He struggles to ignore them, resumes staring at his phone --

CAROLINE (O.S.)  
Excuse me, hello? Hi?

He glances up to find someone addressing him: CAROLINE (13), bookish and little over-eager, clutching a clipboard.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)  
Hi! I'm Caroline.

JULIAN  
(guarded)  
Julian.

CAROLINE  
You're new here, right?  
(off his wary nod)  
Well we have this club, SSJ -  
Students for Social Justice? -  
anyway, we're trying to organize a  
big rally next week at Bryant Park  
in support of immigrant rights, and  
we're looking for students to  
volunteer. It's gonna be pretty  
amazing, there's a ton of schools  
participating: Dalton, Beecher  
Prep, a bunch of public schools--

JULIAN  
Yeah, I don't think so.

CAROLINE

Really? Are you sure? It's a fun way to meet people -- I mean not that you need to, but, you know.

(smiles)

Honestly, you don't have to do much, just show up really.

Julian shakes his head, returning his attention to his phone.

Caroline regards him a beat, then shrugs and moves on to the next kid at the table. Julian tries to ignore the sound of her sales pitch, returning his focus to --

HIS PHONE. We see he's scrolling through Instagram: lots of posts from the "**Beecher Prep Science Fair!**"

Julian's expression tells us he knows these kids. They all look to be having a great time, laughing and silly-posing for the camera; a Wonder fan will recognize some of the names tagging these photos: "SUMMER" "MAYA" "MILES" "XIMENA"...

Julian swallows hard, trying to ignore whatever emotions the posts elicit as he continues to scroll... when he stops at one image: a boy with a severe facial deformity mugging goofily for the camera with two friends, their arms around each other's shoulders: "AUGGIE" "HENRY" "JACK WILL."

Julian stares hard at the threesome; at Auggie in particular. His expression darkens as he types: "**Losers.**"

He's about to hit "Post" on his comment -- but hesitates. Torn, he finally erases it, swallowing his irritation.

#### **E./I. SCHOOL BUS (HENRY HUDSON PARKWAY) - LATE DAY**

A yellow bus crawls in traffic en route back to Manhattan. Noise of kids letting off steam after the school day.

Again Julian sits alone, staring hard out the window.

#### **EXT. MANHATTAN'S UPPER WEST SIDE - APARTMENT BUILDING - DUSK**

Julian arrives home. The DOORMAN greets him cheerfully. Julian manages to fake a smile in return. The Doorman asks how Julian's day was. Julian returns a brief thumbs up.

#### **INT. ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER**

Riding up alone, Julian angrily rubs away a forming tear.

**INT. ALBANS' APARTMENT - EVENING**

Julian enters, tosses his backpack. The beautiful apartment is extremely quiet.

**INT. KITCHEN - EVENING**

Julian opens the fridge. Tupperware neatly labeled "DINNER" along with reheating instructions and "*Home by 10pm. xo Mom*"

Julian retrieves the tupperware, sets it down on the island --  
-- when he freezes. His eyes dart, ears alert. The CREAK of a floorboard. Then silence.

JULIAN

Hello?

Nothing. Julian pads warily toward the kitchen door, when he hears it again. The creak of the floorboard. And then a faint sound, like someone whistling.

Julian catches his breath, inches a little closer to the door to try to see into the living room...

GRAND-MÈRE

JULIAN (CONT'D)

Boo!

AAAAHH!

His GRAND-MÈRE pokes her head into the kitchen, giggling naughtily. In her 90s, she's remarkably spry even with a cane, and impeccably coiffed and dressed.

JULIAN (CONT'D)

Grand-mère, you scared the crap out of me!

GRAND-MÈRE

*Je suis désolé, mon cher!* I could not help myself!

(holds out her arms)

*Viens ici! Allez, allez!*

He joins her, gives her a hug.

GRAND-MÈRE (CONT'D)

Ach! I fly all the way from Paris and that is the best you can do?

She squeezes him much tighter, kisses both his cheeks.

GRAND-MÈRE (CONT'D)

Don't tell me you did not know I was coming?

JULIAN

I did. I just forgot it was today.

GRAND-MÈRE

I saw your parents a short while ago. They had to attend some fancy *soirée* with your father's colleagues.

JULIAN

Yeah, I know.

GRAND-MÈRE

(smiles)

So it is *un table pour deus, oui?*

# **INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT**

Julian and Grand-Mère having dinner together; it appears Grand-Mère insisted upon using the family's good China and silverware despite a dinner of leftover lasagna and salad.

JULIAN

Dad said they're doing an exhibit of your paintings at the Whitney?

GRAND-MÈRE

A "retrospective," *oui*. It is a polite way of saying "you are old!"

Grand-Mère chuckles as she pours herself a healthy glass of wine. She reaches for Julian's glass to pour him some --

JULIAN

(laughs)

Grand-Mère, I'm a kid!

She grins at him with a little shrug, sets the bottle down.

GRAND-MÈRE

*Alors*. Tell me about you. How do you like this new school of yours?

JULIAN

(hesitates)

It's okay.

GRAND-MÈRE

Just "okay?"

JULIAN

(shrugs, reluctantly)

Remember that kid I told you about,

(MORE)

JULIAN (CONT'D)  
the one they said I was so mean to?  
Auggie Pullman?

Grand-Mère's smile fades.

GRAND-MÈRE  
I remember.

JULIAN  
Yeah, well - so does everyone.  
It's bad enough he ruined my last  
school, now he's ruining this one.  
(under his breath)  
The stupid freak.

GRAND-MÈRE  
Were you?  
(off his confusion)  
Mean to this boy.

JULIAN  
I mean, I guess -- but I wasn't the  
only one.

His words clearly pain her.

JULIAN (CONT'D)  
What?

She leans back. Studies Julian a long, quiet moment.

GRAND-MÈRE  
Your father has told you stories,  
I'm sure. About what happened to  
me, when I was a girl.

JULIAN  
Yeah. I mean, some.

GRAND-MÈRE  
I have been waiting for the right  
time to tell you everything myself.

Grand-Mère again takes a beat, debating, then gently exhales.

GRAND-MÈRE (CONT'D)  
I think maybe... that time is now.

Julian sits up as Grand-Mère takes a sip of wine. Then:

GRAND-MÈRE (CONT'D)  
Do you know the name of the village  
in France where I lived?

JULIAN  
Um, Auberdeen-something-something?

GRAND-MÈRE  
(amused)  
Aubervilliers-aux-Bois...

**EXT. AUBERVILLIERS-AUX-BOIS - AERIAL - DAY**

A quaint French village nestled in a picturesque mountain.

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)  
*It is a village in the Margeride mountains, surrounded by a very, very ancient forest called The Mernuit.*

**EXT. THE MERNUIT - DAY**

Winter mist hovers over frozen ground, shrouding the trunks of bare trees in all directions as far as we can see.

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)  
*The Mernuit was a dark and scary place. People would tell legends about the giant wolves that roamed the woods during the long winters.*

**TIME LAPSE: WINTER TRANSFORMS INTO GREEN, GLORIOUS SPRING**

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)  
*But in the spring, the leaves filled the trees, the birds returned and the forest came alive. And then in early May, the most wondrous thing would happen...*

**TIME LAPSE: THE FOREST FLOOR BURSTS INTO AN ALMOST SURREAL SEA OF BRIGHT BLUE-VIOLET AS IT IS BLANKETED BY BLUEBELLS.**

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)  
*The bluebells would come into bloom! It was magical.*

On the horizon, the silhouettes of a young family of three. The little girl runs ahead, straight toward us, wide-eyed and rambunctious. This is SARA (aka Grand-Mère), age five.

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)  
*To see it was to feel like you had stepped into a fairy tale.*

As they near us, we meet Sara's parents, MAX (gentle, handsome) and ROSE (vibrant, maternal). Sara spins back to her parents, both amused by her irrepressible excitement --

**INT. ALBANS' APARTMENT - DINING ROOM - NIGHT**

Grand-Mère closes her eyes, remembering with a wistful smile.

GRAND-MÈRE

It is perhaps my most beloved  
memory of childhood: picnics with  
my parents among the fairy flowers.

**EXT. THE MERNUIT - DAY**

Back with the young family as we'd just left them:

SARA

Can you make me a bird, Papa?

MAX

(feigns exhaustion, grins)  
Again?

SARA

But faster this time!

Max scoops her up as she giggles with anticipation.

MAX

Now spread your wings wide...  
wider...

Sara's arms are outstretched, beaming as she "flies" over the radiant sea of bluebells rushing beneath her.

Max grins back at Rose, sharing the look young parents share when they realize they are the luckiest people alive.

**EXT. DIRT ROAD BACK TO TOWN - SUNSET**

The family walking home from their picnic. Rose carries a sleepy Sara, Sara's chin resting on her mother's shoulder.

SARA

I want to be a bird when I grow up.

ROSE

You do, do you?



MAX

I thought you were going to be a teacher, like your mother?

SARA

A bird is better.

ROSE

(smiles)

I agree.

They walk a bit in contented quiet, then Rose begins to sing softly in Sara's ear, a poignant Yiddish melody:

ROSE (CONT'D)

"Little bird, little bird,  
How high will you fly?  
As high as the sky,  
As the sky above..."

Max rubs Sara's back, nestling closer as he joins in:

ROSE/ MAX

"Little bird, little bird,  
How fast will you go?  
As fast as a crow,  
As fast as a dove.  
Little bird, little bird,  
How far will you see?  
As far as I wish,  
For now I am free."

#### **INT. BLUM FAMILY FLAT - NIGHT**

Sara's parents tuck her in bed, kiss the top of her sleeping head. Pictures drawn in a child's hand tacked to the walls.

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)

*We lived in a beautiful flat, in a lovely part of town. My father was a doctor - a surgeon - and my mother taught mathematics.*

#### **INT. BLUM FAMILY FLAT - LIVING ROOM - DAY**

SARA (AGE 8) in a pretty dress, playing piano. A menorah on a mantle is all that tells us it's a Jewish home.

GRAND-MÈRE

*We were not rich, but we were certainly not poor.*

**INT. AN UPSCALE BISTRO - NIGHT**

SARA (AGE 11) dines with her parents. Rose laughs as Max tries to convince Sara to try escargot.

GRAND-MÈRE

*I admit, I was a bit spoiled,  
although I did not see it that way.*

**EXT. AUBERVILLIERS-AUX-BOIS - CINEMA MERNUIT - DAY**

SARA (AGE 14) running giddily with her friends, MARIANN and SOPHIE, arriving under the marquee of the local cinema.

GRAND-MÈRE

*When life is as good as mine was,  
there is much you do not see.*

They seem not to notice the Nazi banners and flags adorning the occasional flagpoles in the background.

TITLE: "August, 1942"

CUT TO:

**B/W NEWSREEL FOOTAGE: A PARADE THROUGH THE STREETS OF PARIS**

REGAL TRUMPETS herald a shot of German soldiers marching down the Champs-Élysées. A title soars in: "FRANCE ACTUALITÉS!"

NEWSREEL NARRATOR (V.O.)

It has been two years since Paris  
fell to Germany, and to mark the  
occasion, our beloved city was paid  
a visit by none other than Herr  
Hitler himself...

HITLER meets the saluting troops with steely satisfaction. Beside him is ADOLF EICHMANN. PARISIANS line the streets; some cheer, others look palpably anxious... WIDEN TO --

**INT. CINEMA MERNUIT - THEATER - DAY**

The newsreel continues playing to a packed house, but Sara and her friends pay no attention to it, huddled together WHISPERING and GIGGLING, lit by the glow of the movie screen.

MARIANN

Ok, he just looked at you.

SARA

(giggling)

He did not! Will you ssh?!

Sophie lets out a little shriek as she squeezes Sara's arm, nodding a few rows over to a TRIO OF 15 YEAR OLD BOYS. One of them, VINCENT (tall, handsome), glances back at them.

SOPHIE

Ah! He just did it again!!

Vincent returns a grin, mutters something to his friends, who CHUCKLE... as the newsreel drones on, PHILIPPE PETAIN (head of the Vichy government) shaking hands with Hitler.

TIME CUT:

**HARPO MARX BEING CHASED BY A GORILLA (FROM "AT THE CIRCUS")**

Sara and her friends now rapt, laughing along with the rest of the audience. Cut to a high angle, as if someone is watching above... follow the projector's gauzy beam up into --

**INT. PROJECTIONIST'S BOOTH**

Quieter in here. We find the projectionist propped on a stool by the machine, and discover he's only a BOY himself. He's leaning forward, peering down at the crowd below, particularly at the kids his own age. At Sara.

He seems intrigued by her. When she laughs, a small smile blooms on his own face.

The booth's back door bangs open and the Boy turns to GEORGES (50s, gruff) entering with TWO SERIOUS-LOOKING YOUNG MEN. One has a rifle strapped to his shoulder.

GEORGES

We'll be in the cellar. Anyone asks for me, I went home sick with a cold. Okay?

The boy nods. Georges steals a glance at the projector.

GEORGES (CONT'D)

Sounds better now.

BOY

I replaced the pressure roller.

Georges allows a hint of warmth, impressed. Then he exits. A burst of LAUGHTER from the crowd. The Boy leans forward again to steal another look at the kids below...

As he does, we now notice a pair of polio-era crutches propped against the wall.

**EXT. AUBERVILLIERS-AUX-BOIS - MAIN THOROUGHFARE - MORNING**

Dressed smartly for school, toting a book bag, Sara breezes her scooter through town, greeting familiar neighbors and shopkeepers with cheerful hello's and good mornings.

**EXT. A MOUNTAIN ROAD - MORNING**

Sara pushes her scooter up a mountain road, eyes fixed on what looks like a small castle on a hill. A sign reads "ECOLE LAFAYETTE."

**EXT. ECOLE LAFAYETTE - COURTYARD - DAY**

Crowded with students milling before class. Sara joins Mariann and Sophie.

SARA

Well?

Sara strikes a silly movie star pose, kicking up a heel.

SOPHIE

Oh my God, are those them?! I love them!

She's referring to Sara's new shoes. Patent red leather.

MARIANN

They look so expensive!

SARA

Papa operated on the man who sells them, so he got a good--

A sudden burst of LAUGHTER behind them. They turn to see some boys circled around someone: the Boy with the crutches.

MARIANN

(more resigned than felt)  
Poor Tourteau...

One of the bullies has stolen the Boy's crutches and hobbles around on them, to the amusement of his cruel buddies. The Bully sniffs the air, then hurls a crutch back at the Boy.

BULLY

Uch, even his crutches reek!

SOPHIE

They're so mean. It's not his fault his father gave him polio.

MARIANN

That's not how he got it, dummy.  
It was just bad luck.

SOPHIE

My mother says he got it because  
his father works in the sewers.  
(a tiny smirk)  
It's definitely why he smells so  
bad.

Mariann SNICKERS guiltily.

SARA

How would you know? You never even  
talk to him.

SOPHIE

(defensive)  
Neither do you.

Sara glances back at the Boy they call TOURTEAU struggling to  
pick up his crutches and hobble away.

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)

*She was right. I didn't even know  
his name; we all just called him  
"Tourteau," which means crab,  
because of how he walked.*

# **INT. ECOLE LAFAYETTE - CLASSROOM - DAY**

CLAUDE, a sleepy-eyed boy, recites a Lamartine poem in a  
nasally monotone at the front of the room.

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)

*The truth is I did not think about  
him at all. I cared only about my  
clothes, my social life, and my  
passion secrète... my artwork.*

We find Sara at her desk, stealthily drawing in a small  
sketchbook. Her eyes flit to the window, and we realize  
she's drawing a pigeon resting on the sill.

MARIANN (O.S.)

Psst!

Mariann tosses a folded note on Sara's desk. Sara opens it  
to find "SARA + VINCENT" circled in a heart. Sara blushes,  
scribbles: "He barely knows I exist!" and tosses it back --

-- but it's caught mid-air by MADEMOISELLE PETITJEAN (late

20s, warm). Sara blanches, but Mlle Petitjean returns an amused smile and pockets the note.

MLLE PETITJEAN

Let's try to pay attention, Sara.

SARA

Yes, Mademoiselle Petitjean.

Mlle Petitjean is about to walk on, but can't help notice the sketch of the pigeon Sara was drawing. We see it too now, and are struck by how remarkably well drawn it is.

Further embarrassed, Sara quickly shuts the sketchbook cover. Her eyes meet Mlle Petitjean's, who regards her curiously.

O.S. a BELL CHIMES. The students instantly noisy.

MLLE PETITJEAN

All right, see you all tomorrow.

The students move in a crush for the door. We spot Tourteau among them, maneuvering on his crutches; he steals a brief look at Sara, but she's busy chatting with her friends.

MLLE PETITJEAN (CONT'D)

Sara? Could you stay a moment?

Mariann and Sophie give Sara an "uh oh" look, continue out with the others, leaving Sara alone with Mlle Petitjean.

SARA

I'm sorry about the note--

MLLE PETITJEAN

Your drawing of the bird, may I see it again?

Sara hesitates, then hands her the sketchbook. Mlle Petitjean regards her drawing of the pigeon, impressed.

She flips through the other pages. Many more sketches, all hinting at real talent.

MLLE PETITJEAN (CONT'D)

Have you shown these to anyone?

SARA

Just my parents.

Mlle Petitjean regards a few more, then closes the sketchbook, hands it back, along with the "Vincent" note.

MLLE PETITJEAN

When I was your age, I loved to write. Poems, stories... But I kept them to myself. I thought if my friends knew - or God forbid, boys - they'd tease me. It wasn't what "popular" girls do, you know?

Sara nods sheepishly, struck by how keenly she's been read.

MLLE PETITJEAN (CONT'D)

A gift is to be treasured, Sara.  
Never stop drawing, okay?

SARA

(blushes)  
You sound like my father.

MLLE PETITJEAN

I consider that quite the compliment.  
(smiles warmly)  
See you tomorrow.

**EXT. AUBERVILLIERS-AUX-BOIS - STREET - DAY**

Sara walking home from school, smiling to herself in the wake of Mlle Petitjean's praise. She stops into a BAKERY.

**INT. BOULANGERIE BALLOU - LATE DAY**

Sara knows the owner, MADAME BALLOU.

SARA

Hi, Madame Ballou! Hello, Pierre!

Sara bends to stroke the bakery's resident cat, Pierre.

SARA (CONT'D)

One *pain au chocolat*, please, extra gooey.

But Madame Ballou just stares at her, unsure.

Sara hesitates, confused; Madame Ballou seems torn, then quickly turns and retrieves a freshly-baked *pain au chocolat*.

MADAME BALLOU

Here.

SARA

Thank you.

Sara reaches into her purse to pay for it --

MADAME BALLOU  
Just take it and go.

Sara is even more confused, but shrugs it off, taking a big bite of the pastry as she steps back outside --

-- and suddenly halts in her tracks. Pan with Sara's look to the store window, where we now notice the sign posted there:

JEWS NOT PERMITTED

Shaken, Sara peers past the sign and inside the bakery, where Madame Ballou avoids her stare.

**INT. BLUM FAMILY FLAT - NIGHT**

Sara at the dinner table with her parents. Tension abounds.

SARA  
What? When??

ROSE  
Today. This morning.  
(a forced smile)  
Don't worry, I'll find another job.  
I was getting a little bored of the  
University anyway.

SARA  
But how can they do that? You're  
the best math professor they have!

ROSE  
It's complicated, Sara.

MAX  
(gravely)  
Not really.

ROSE  
Max. Don't.

SARA  
What?

Rose shoots Max a look, and now it dawns on Sara:

SARA (CONT'D)  
There was a sign in the window of  
the bakery today, it said No Jews -



MAX

There's probably going to be more signs like that.

SARA

But you said we were lucky? That we live in the unoccupied zone. The free zone.

MAX

I'm afraid it's becoming less free.

ROSE

It's like a bad storm, Sara, that's all. We just have to weather it, and eventually it'll pass.

Sara looks to her father; he doesn't look as certain.

MAX

Last month in Paris, the police arrested almost 13,000 Jews, many of them children. Rounded them up in the Velodrome and shipped them to Drancy, to a labor camp --

ROSE

Max, enough -

SARA

The French police?

MAX

There is no France. Vichy takes its orders from Germany now.

ROSE

You're scaring her! Of course there's a France. We're French citizens with papers to prove it.

MAX

I'm sorry but she needs to know what's happening. In Lyon, Jews are being made to wear yellow stars like they do in the Occupied Zone.

ROSE

Only foreign-born Jews, religious Jews -

MAX

Rose, listen to yourself! You think these bastards care where we  
(MORE)

MAX (CONT'D)  
 were born? Or whether we go to  
 synagogue or not?! In their eyes,  
 we aren't French, we're vermin, a  
 disease to be wiped ou--

ROSE  
Enough!

Terrifying silence. Rose stifling the urge to cry.

SARA  
 Maman?

Rose shakes her head, forcing a smile again.

ROSE  
 It'll be okay, Sara. This is our  
 country and it always will be.  
 (to Max, insistent)  
 Tell her. Tell her it's going to  
 be okay.

Max stares at his wife a hesitant beat, then quietly nods.

MAX  
 It's going to be okay.

CUT TO:

**A SIGN AFFIXED TO A PARK'S IRON GATE: "FORBIDDEN TO JEWS."**

Title: "**March, 1943**"

**EXT. AUBERVILLIERS-AUX-BOIS - PUBLIC GARDENS - DAY**

Through the gate slats we can make out a group of YOUNG CHILDREN watching a MARIONETTE SHOW. One of the puppets is dressed as a grotesque rabbi, with a huge nose and evil brow, chased and beaten by a bully stick as the children laugh.

REVERSE ON SARA (it was her POV), watching with a knot in her stomach. She backs away from the gate, quickly hurries on.

**EXT. AUBERVILLIERS-AUX-BOIS - STREETS - DAY**

That sign in the window of Boulangerie Ballou still hangs... as do similar signs in at least a dozen more windows now, all variations of "NO JEWS ALLOWED" "JEWS NOT WELCOME" etc.

Sara clutches her book sack tight, now avoiding eye contact with her fellow villagers as she hurries through town.

**EXT. ECOLE LAFAYETTE - ENTRANCE - DAY**

A sense of relief in Sara's eyes as she arrives at this seeming haven. She passes under the archway to find the school's gentle headmaster PASTOR LUC crossing her path.

PASTOR LUC  
Morning, Miss Blum!

SARA  
Good morning, Pastor Luc.

As Sara continues past, we linger with Pastor Luc as he watches after her, his smile fading to a look of sympathy.

**EXT. ECOLE LAFAYETTE - THE COURTYARD**

Crowded as usual before class. Spotting Mariann and Sophie excitedly waving her over, Sara brightens and joins them.

SOPHIE  
What're you doing after school?

MARIANN  
You have to come ice-skating with us!

SOPHIE  
We think Vincent's gonna be there.

SARA  
Okay sure, I --

Sara abruptly trails off, realizing something... and a moment later, the same realization occurs to Mariann as well:

MARIANN  
Sara, I'm so sorry. I forgot.

SOPHIE  
Forgot what?

Mariann shoots Sophie a hard "think about it" look.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)  
Ohhh. I'm so sick of these stupid rules.

MARIANN  
It's just until the war's over.

SARA  
Right.

**INT. ECOLE LAFAYETTE - CLASSROOM - DAY**

Mlle Petitjean is delivering a lesson, but Sara's mind is elsewhere, visibly troubled. Mlle Petitjean notices Sara's distraction, perhaps intuiting its cause -- when the bell's CHIMES signal dismissal. Sara rises in a fog.

Barely listening to the chatter from Mariann and Sophie flanking her, Sara fakes an attentive smile as the trio exit.

**INT. ECOLE LAFAYETTE - CORRIDOR - DAY**

The girls heading for their next class when --

BOY'S VOICE (O.S.)

Sara? Um, excuse me? Sara?

Sara glances back, surprised to find Tourteau making his way toward them on his crutches.

SOPHIE

(whispers)

Oh, my God, what is he doing?

MARIANN

Is he coming over here?

Sara ignores them, uneasy but trying to appear polite.

TOURTEAU

I saw this under your desk. I  
figured you must have dropped it.

She's confused to see he's holding out her sketchbook. Feeling exposed, she takes it quickly.

SARA

Thanks.

Tourteau bows his head slightly, proffers a slight smile.

TOURTEAU

You're welcome.

Sara manages an awkward half-smile back. He turns and goes. The moment his back is turned, Sophie pinches her nose and fake gags. Mariann feigns disapproval but grins nonetheless.

MARIANN

Somebody has a crush...

Sara shakes her head, grinning a little too in spite of herself.

VINCENT (O.S.)  
Friend of yours?

Sara spins, stunned to find Vincent and his buddy (JEROME) approaching. Sophie subtly squeezes Sara's forearm.

SARA  
What? Oh - no, he just... I left something in class.

VINCENT  
What was it?

SARA  
Nothing, just...

She glances down at her sketchbook. Vincent appears curious, smiles warmly at Sara, disarming her.

VINCENT  
May I?

Sara hesitates, but he reaches out with an "it's okay" smile.

JEROME  
Don't, man! Tourteau touched it with his crab claws.

MARIANN  
(giggles)  
Jerome, you're terrible!

Vincent just ignores him, flashing another gentle smile at Sara as she hands him the sketchbook, Sophie beaming for her.

Her heart aflutter, Sara watches as Vincent opens her sketchbook and carefully flips through the pages.

VINCENT  
Wow... You drew all of these?

SARA  
Just when I'm bored. It's mostly stupid stuff.

VINCENT  
You shouldn't say that.

He then pauses on a sketch: it's a portrait of Vincent. Sara instantly blanches - she'd forgotten it was in there! Vincent glances up, looking surprised and flattered.

VINCENT (CONT'D)  
Is this me?

SARA  
 (at a loss)  
 I, um --

VINCENT  
 I like it.

She glances up at his handsome, smiling face and blushes.

VINCENT (CONT'D)  
 You shouldn't be shy about your  
 talent. These are really good...  
 (smile becomes a smirk)  
 For a Jew.

Sara is momentarily shell-shocked, as if unable to fathom the jarring disconnect... when Jerome laughs cruelly. Vincent laughs too, then tosses the sketchbook at her feet.

Sophie titters uncomfortably, Mariann looks ashamed as the boys walk off, cracking jokes that spur more laughter. Trembling a little, Sara bends and picks up her sketchbook.

MARIANN  
 Sara -

But Sara quickly hurries off, fighting back tears...

RADIO PUNDIT (PRE-LAP)  
*For too long have we allowed these  
 Israelites to debase our nation!*

#### **EXT. AUBERVILLIERS-AUX-BOIS - MAIN THOROUGHFARE - NIGHT**

A SQUAD OF UNIFORMED MILICE OFFICERS stop a YOUNG COUPLE on the sidewalk, bluntly demanding to see their papers. The frightened couple comply. On the man's papers we see they're stamped "JEWISH." The Officers exchange a cryptic look.

RADIO PUNDIT (PRE-LAP)  
*France must be purged of every Jew,  
 every communist, every Gaullist who  
 would seek to corrupt us!*

#### **INT. BLUM FAMILY FLAT - KITCHEN - NIGHT**

Rose is doing dinner dishes as she listens to the radio:

RADIO PUNDIT (V.O.)  
*It's time we rebuild our country,  
 so that we too may know the pride  
 they feel in Berlin, in Munich, in--*

The radio is abruptly snapped off by Max, who's just entered. He hands Rose a weathered-looking envelope.

MAX

It's from Marseilles. Aaron and Lucie were arrested.

ROSE

What? But that's the free zone -

MAX

There was a round-up. Apparently they were taken to a camp up north near Compiègne, then relocated twice more, no one knows where.

Rose sets the letter down, wipes a tear with a quivering hand. Returns to the glass she was washing.

MAX (CONT'D)

Pétain is putting Darnand in charge of the national police. A fascist in league with Hitler's SS, in charge of the police--

The glass slips from Rose's hand and SHATTERS in the sink. Rose starts to silently cry. Max exhales.

MAX (CONT'D)

It's time, Rose.

**INTERCUT: INT. SARA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)**

Sara lying on her bed, looks like she's been crying for hours. She stares up at the ceiling, listening:

MAX (O.S.)

We need to get out while we can, like Rabbi Bernstein and his wife -

ROSE (O.S.)

So what, we just abandon our house, our furniture, everything we own? Everything we've worked for?

**BACK TO: ROSE AND MAX IN THE KITCHEN**

MAX

Our furniture? Rose --

ROSE

I know.  
(a painful nod, torn)  
I know.

Max takes her hands in his, their love profound and palpable.

ROSE (CONT'D)

I just want to give it a little  
more time. Get our things in  
order, say our goodbyes.

MAX

There can be no goodbyes, you know  
that. No one must know.

**INT. BLUM FAMILY FLAT - SARA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

A faint KNOCK on the door. Max pokes his head in, finds Sara  
as we left her. He smiles gently at her. She stays quiet.

Max notices her sketchbook on the desk. Picks it up, flips  
through. Happens on the drawing she'd made of the pigeon.

MAX

This one's beautiful, Sara. It  
reminds me of that song we used to  
sing when you were little, you  
remember?

(sits down; sings softly)

"Little bird, little bird,  
How high will you fly?  
As high as the sky,  
As the sky above.  
Little bird, little bird,  
How fast will you--"

SARA

I don't want to leave.

Max stares back at her, realizing she overheard it all.

SARA (CONT'D)

This is my home.

MAX

And it always will be. But it's  
time to say goodbye, at least for  
now.

Sara shuts her eyes, a hitch in her voice:



SARA

Why do people hate us so much?

Max is moved by the pain and fear he hears in her.

MAX

Not all people. You need to remember that.

SARA

But some do.

MAX

Some, yes. But what I think... what I believe, is that all people have a light inside of them. It's what lets them see into other people's hearts...

A faint noise behind him. Max turns to find Rose standing in the open doorway, smiling sadly at Sara.

MAX (CONT'D)

But in some people, for whatever reason, that light's gone out. They hate us because they can not see us.

Rose enters the room, joins Max beside Sara on her bed.

ROSE

We're sorry, Sara. We know this is going to be very hard for you.

SARA

How soon do we need to leave?

MAX

Soon. By next week, the latest.

ROSE

It won't be forever.

SARA

You promise?

Rose glances at Max. He meets Sara's worried gaze, assuring:

MAX

We promise.

They rise, kiss her goodnight -- when Max notices Sara's red shoes laid out beside tomorrow's outfit. A thought, then:

MAX (CONT'D)

Now I need a promise from you.  
I want you to keep wearing your  
winter boots to school.

SARA

What? But it's almost April! I'll  
look ridiculous!

MAX

Please, little bird.

SARA

But why?

MAX

I just want you to, okay?

SARA

(huffs)

Fine.

MAX

Promise?

SARA

Yes.

MAX

Thank you.

ROSE

Good night, Sara. We love you.

SARA

(quietly)

I love you too.

**EXT. BLUM FAMILY FLAT/ STREET - MORNING**

Sara exits her building, carrying her book sack, her clumsy brown winter boots doing her outfit no favors. She continues down the block, around the corner --

-- then slows to a stop, brow furrowed as if debating something. She finally sighs, quickly takes her bag from her shoulder... and removes her patent leather red shoes.

**EXT. ECOLE LAFAYETTE - ENTRANCE - MORNING**

Sara arrives at school in her red shoes, continues into

**THE COURTYARD**

Searching for Mariann and Sophie -- she spots Vincent, Jerome, and their gang laughing rowdily at something. Sara quickly walks the other way before they can notice her.

**INT. ECOLE LAFAYETTE - CLASSROOM - DAY**

Sara is discreetly doodling in her sketchbook as Mlle Petitjean is explaining the Pythagorean Theorem.

MLLE PETITJEAN (O.S.)  
So then A-squared plus B-squared--

She's interrupted by the door opening. Sara glances up to find Pastor Luc in the door frame, looking anxious.

PASTOR LUC  
Mlle Petitjean, may I have a word?

MLLE PETITJEAN  
Of course.

They step aside, speaking in low tones. The kids exchange curious glances.

Pastor Luc finally steps out as Mlle Petitjean turns to them:

MLLE PETITJEAN (CONT'D)  
Children, I have to leave for a few minutes. I want you all to behave until I'm back, okay? Sara, Ruth, I need you to come with me. Quickly please. Bring your coats.

SARA  
(thrown)  
What? Why?

MLLE PETITJEAN  
I'll explain everything outside.  
The rest of you stay in your seats.

Sara and RUTH rise and follow Mlle Petitjean out to --

**INT. ECOLE LAFAYETTE - HALLWAY - DAY**

Mlle Petitjean walking quickly, speaking urgently:

MLLE PETITJEAN  
There's been a roundup of the Jews in Aubervilliers-aux-Bois. We  
(MORE)

MLLE PETITJEAN (CONT'D)  
believe German officers are on  
their way here now.

SARA  
(scared)  
Here?

MLLE PETITJEAN  
A *maquisard* is going to take you  
and the other Jewish children to  
hide in the woods.  
(worried)  
Sara, where's your coat?

SARA  
(on the verge of tears)  
I - I left it in the art room.

Mlle Petitjean takes off her scarf, wraps it around Sara

MLLE PETITJEAN  
Take this.

SARA  
I'm scared.

RUTH  
Me too.

MLLE PETITJEAN  
I know you are, but it's going to  
be all right.

#### **EXT. ECOLE LAFAYETTE - DAY**

Snow flurries are falling as Mlle Petitjean hurries Sara and  
Ruth across the courtyard, ducking under --

#### **AN ARCHWAY**

-- where Pastor Luc is waiting with a young MAQUISARD  
(resistance fighter) and a dozen other CHILDREN (6 - 15).

PASTOR LUC  
Children, this is Antoine. He will  
keep you safe, but you must all do  
exactly as he says, understand?

The frightened children all nod. Sara is already shivering.  
In the distance, a faint sound of ENGINES approaching.

ANTOINE

I need you all to stay very quiet  
and run very fast. Can you do that?

Some mutter "yes" and "okay," most are mute with fear. Sara looks around - most of the kids are wearing boots.

ANTOINE (CONT'D)

Ready?... Now!

They take off sprinting in a pack behind the Maquisard, hurrying out of the school grounds and toward

### **THE MOUNTAINOUS WOODS**

Trees dotting the perimeter.

### **TIGHT ON SARA**

Running as hard as she can, but already falling behind as her red shoes slip and stick in the snow. Behind her she hears engines roaring to a halt, then loud GERMAN VOICES.

She steals a look back: two MILITARY TRUCKS are idling in the courtyard, GERMAN SOLDIERS barking orders at the faculty...

### **EXT. COURTYARD (CONTINUOUS)**

Pastor Luc reviewing a list of names he's been handed by a stern-faced GERMAN COMMANDER. A pair of uniformed FRENCH GENDARMES stand nearby, equally intimidating.

PASTOR LUC

I'm sorry, none of these children  
came to school today. They must  
have been tipped off beforehand --

He's interrupted by the sound of a CLASSROOM WINDOW abruptly opening above. Vincent leans out, shouts down to the Germans:

VINCENT

They ran to the woods!

Pastor Luc blanches as soldiers quickly react, the Commander swiftly ordering a cadre to search the woods --

### **EXT. WOODS (OUTSKIRTS) - CONTINUOUS**

Hearing the distant sound of soldiers nearing, Sara runs even harder -- when her shoe slips and she goes down. She starts to pick herself up, but at ground level she's now aware of the many footprints the Jewish children left in their wake.

She peers back toward the sounds of those German voices growing louder... closer...

Sara scrambles to her feet, eyes darting -- she can just make out the last of the group up ahead. Breathless, her gaze lands on a small woodshed some 30 feet away...

#### **CUT TO THE FOUR GERMAN OFFICERS**

All steel helmets and rifles as they race up the snowy slope, following the foot tracks, shouting to each other in German.

The soldiers fan out as they enter the woods. One runs right past the little woodshed --

#### **INSIDE THE WOODSHED**

We find Sara crouched in terror, shivering violently and holding her breath --

-- when a distant GUNSHOT rings out. All heads turn --

#### **INT. CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Kids' faces pressed to the window panes, watching, stunned...

...as the small group of escapees emerge from the surrounding woods, flanked by the four rifle-wielding Nazi soldiers.

The kids exchange terrified glances, scared speechless.

#### **INT. SMALL WOODSHED/ EXT. WOODS (OUTSKIRTS) - CONTINUOUS**

Sara still hiding, watching in horror as the other German soldiers roll up in the two trucks to meet the group in the open field between the woods and the school.

Many of the children are crying as Antoine is yanked forward by a TALL SOLDIER, then thrust to his knees in the snow.

One of the Soldiers says something in German that makes the Tall Soldier snicker; he then swings his rifle around and presses it to the back of Antoine's head.

ANTOINE  
*Vive l'humanité!!*

BANG! The gunshot kills the young man instantly, his body slumping into the snow as the children SCREAM and SHRIEK.

**ON SARA, HIDING**

Eyes wide in horror, clutching her mouth to keep from screaming. And then she sees TWO FIGURES hurrying across the field toward the children: Pastor Luc and Mlle Petitjean...

The Nazi Soldiers are meanwhile herding the panicked children toward the truck beds --

GERMAN COMMANDER

It's okay, we're taking you to your parents. Everybody in.

PASTOR LUC (O.S.)

Wait! Wait!

The Commander spins on Pastor Luc, draws his pistol.

PASTOR LUC (CONT'D)

For the love of God, let them go.  
I beg you.

GERMAN COMMANDER

Lying scum. I should shoot you right now.

MLLE PETITJEAN

Don't! Please -- don't do this.  
They're only children.

GERMAN COMMANDER

They're Jews. We have our orders.

Beside the Commander, a FRENCH GENDARME is reviewing the list of names. He glances up at the children being hoisted into the truck, then frowns at his list. Math not adding up...

**TIGHTER ON SARA IN THE WOODSHED**

Watching this. Realizing. Her eyes dart, sees her only chance at escape is a desperate dash down a far slope, toward the back side of the school, where the bell tower hovers.

GERMAN COMMANDER (CONT'D)

If you have any brains, you'll go back inside and mind your own business.

MLLE PETITJEAN

These children are our business.

Pastor Luc takes her arm, scared for her --

MLLE PETITJEAN (CONT'D)

No!

She tugs her arm free of his grasp, marches to the truck.

MLLE PETITJEAN (CONT'D)

These are my students. I'm staying  
with them.

PASTOR LUC

Marie...

But she ignores him, pushing past the Tall Soldier and  
climbing into the truck bed, to the surprise of the officers.

All except the Soldier who was reviewing his list. He says  
something to his Commander, who then spins on Pastor Luc:

COMMANDER

There are 14 names on our list, but  
only 13 children accounted for.

#### **TIGHTER ON SARA**

Knows it's now or never. Staying low, she suddenly ducks out  
of the shed and takes off in a crouch down the far slope --

-- seconds before she would have been found by the Soldiers,  
who now start to approach the little shed. The Commander  
orders some underlings back to the woods to keep searching...

#### **IN THE TRUCK**

Mlle Petitjean wraps her arms around the smallest children,  
all crying and trembling despite her comforting whispers.

#### **EXT. ECOLE LAFAYETTE - BASE OF THE BELL TOWER - DAY**

Sara comes stumbling into view, racing to a door at the base  
of the tower. She steals a last look back, then ducks in.

#### **INT. BELL TOWER - STAIRWELL - DAY**

Sara climbs the five stories of steps in a mad sprint,  
gasping for breath, her red shoes slipping on the stone...

#### **INT. BELL TOWER - TOP - DAY**

Sara enters, shuts the door behind her. She finally allows  
herself a moment to suck in some air, her gaze taking in the



huge old bell surrounded by four exposed walls, snow gusting in through the openings. She goes to one, peers out to see --

BELOW: THE GROUNDS AND THE WOODS BEYOND. The children and Mlle Petitjean as we left them, waiting in the truck in the falling snow as the Officers search the woods for Sara.

Stricken, tears well in Sara's eyes as her frozen fingers absently grip Mlle Petitjean's scarf.

TIGHTER ON SARA'S POV OF Mlle PETITJEAN, comforting the children in the truck as best she can.

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)  
*I only found out what happened to  
them years later...*

#### INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Students' faces still pressed to the windows, staring at their beloved teacher refusing to show her captors any fear.

#### EXT. RURAL COUNTRYSIDE (OCCUPIED FRANCE) - DAY

NAZI OFFICERS in warm coats and combat boots march a group of underdressed CHILDREN AND ADULTS across harsh, snowy terrain.

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)  
*The camp they were taken to was too  
crowded. So the Germans ordered  
them to march to Pithiviers.*

The group starts to splinter, the younger ones unable to keep up as a blizzard rages harder. Mlle Petitjean looks gaunt, frozen, but determined to stay with her youngest students.

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)  
*Some of the younger children fell  
behind. But Mlle Petitjean refused  
to leave them.*

Their small figures become smaller and smaller in the harsh white landscape as we drift further and further away...

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)  
*No one knows what happened to them.  
Perhaps they lost their way when  
night fell. Or perhaps the Nazis  
saw to it there were no stragglers.*

Mlle Petitjean and the children finally vanish altogether.

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)  
*Either way, they never arrived in  
 Pithiviers. No one ever saw Mlle  
 Petitjean again.*

**INT. ECOLE LAFAYETTE - BELL TOWER - DAY**

Sara as we'd left her, staring out in terror at Mlle Petitjean and the children huddled in the idling truck bed --

-- when she freezes, suddenly hearing something: the thump of FOOTSTEPS ascending the staircase. Terrified, Sara quickly looks around: there's only one way out of the tower, and that's by the same staircase. She's trapped.

She hurries back to the window, peers down. Far too high to attempt a jump. And yet as those ominous footsteps get closer and closer, she's deciding to do just that...

She grips the edge of the stones, peering down once more at the vertiginous five-story plummet...

She starts to climb onto the icy ledge, glancing over her shoulder at the door. She hears the footsteps arriving on the other side, a sound of the door being pushed open... She peers back out at the drop, just about to jump -- when --

BOY'S VOICE

Sara!

Stunned, she glances back to find the figure in the doorframe is not a Nazi, but... Tourteau?? Sara stares back in shock --

TOURTEAU

I saw you running this way. The soldiers are still searching for you. You need to come with me, right now.

SARA

But --

TOURTEAU

It's okay - I know a way out.

**INT. BELL TOWER - STAIRCASE - DAY**

Tourteau maneuvers back down the stone steps with his crutches, Sara right behind him. O.S. they can hear the shouts of Soldiers and Gendarmes in the school building.

They arrive back at the base of the tower. Tourteau nudges

open an old door with his crutch, revealing A DANK HALLWAY.

TOURTEAU

Follow me.

**INT. ECOLE LAFAYETTE - SUBTERRANEAN LEVEL - DAY**

Tourteau leads Sara through a dark, cavernous space. Her voice echoes off the moist walls:

SARA

Where are we?

TOURTEAU

We need to keep moving. Down these stairs.

SARA

What stairs?

Sure enough, they've reached another staircase - this one descending to darker depths. No sooner does Sara start to follow Tourteau down than she's met by a powerful stench.

SARA (CONT'D)

W-where are we?

TOURTEAU

Sorry, it's the safest way.

Confused, Sara's about to reply -- when she hears LAPPING WATER. A few more steps, and she sees that the floor below sits beneath two feet of putrid liquid.

TOURTEAU (CONT'D)

My father showed me this once.  
He's worked in these sewers for  
years. It's okay, it's only about  
as deep as your knees.

(beat)

I think.

He steps into the murk first. She hesitates, then follows.

**INT. SEWER ROUTE - MOMENTS LATER**

Tourteau leading the way, sloshing forward on his crutches.

TOURTEAU

There should be a tunnel up there  
that leads to the storm drains. We  
can take that out to Dannevilliers.

Glancing back, he sees how hard Sara is shivering. He stops, quickly removes his coat.

TOURTEAU (CONT'D)

Here.

SARA

I'm f-f-fine...

TOURTEAU

You're freezing, and it's another  
12 kilometers to Dannevilliers.

He hands her his coat, and she puts it on.

SARA

What's in Dannevilliers?

TOURTEAU

My home.

**EXT. DANNEVILLIERS OUTSKIRTS - DUSK**

Rural and rugged. Barren trees loom ominously in twilight... as Tourteau and Sara emerge from the subterranean steps.

**EXT. DANNEVILLIERS - WOODS - DUSK**

Tourteau leads Sara along the rocky banks of a wooded brook.

TOURTEAU

Careful, it's slippery.

Sara's fancy red shoes look wrecked now, their slippery soles sliding from stone to stone. Tourteau's crutches navigate the wet rocks deftly; he's clearly cold but not letting on.

TOURTEAU (CONT'D)

Not much farther now, but we should  
stay off the main roads. You okay?

Sara manages to nod, fighting the urge to cry.

**EXT. DANNEVILLIERS - COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT**

A few small houses line a street in a poor neighborhood.

SARA

I've never been out this way.  
Dannevilliers, I mean.

TOURTEAU  
Not quite as nice as Aubervilliers.

Sara glances back at him, surprised he knows where she lives.

TOURTEAU (CONT'D)  
I have a job at the Cinema Mernuit,  
running the projector on Saturdays.  
I've seen you there.

SARA  
Oh.

His friendly smile falters awkwardly as he realizes that  
sounded a little stalker-ish --

-- when the headlamp of a loud motorcycle comes speeding  
toward them. Tourteau quickly hurries Sara alongside the  
nearest house, the pair crouching low as the motorcycle ROARS  
past. They wait until the street is dark and still again.

TOURTEAU  
See that house, end of the street?  
(off her nod)  
That's ours. Only I'm thinking it  
might not be safe for you to stay  
there. There's a nosy old couple  
who live right above us. My father  
thinks they're Nazi informants.

He looks back at her, trying to sound assuring.

TOURTEAU (CONT'D)  
There's an old barn just across the  
field. You'll be safer there.

He leans out from where they're concealed, checks both ways  
to make sure no one is watching.

TOURTEAU (CONT'D)  
Ready?

Sara nods, and follows him across the street... toward a  
dilapidated stone barn just visible across a dark field.

#### **INT. BARN - NIGHT**

A wooden door creaks open and Tourteau leads Sara inside.  
She peers around at the equally decrepit interior, strafed by  
shadows and moonglow. Cobwebs cling to rusty tools and an  
old car. A mouse scurries over Sara's foot; she GASPS!

Alarmed, Tourteau spins to her --

SARA  
Sorry. Mouse.

Tourteau nods, apologetic:

TOURTEAU  
If it was safe to stay at my house -

SARA  
I'm fine, really. This is... nice.  
(ears suddenly perk up)  
What was that?  
(off his look)  
That. That sound.

TOURTEAU  
Oh, um - that would be the bats.  
They nest in the rafters sometimes.  
They're harmless though, I swear.

Sara exhales anxiously, a knot tightening in her gut.

TOURTEAU (CONT'D)  
There's the hayloft. I was thinking  
that's where you could hide.  
(realizing)  
...Only there's no ladder. Right.  
(quickly)  
Not a problem, you can just...

He gets down on all fours, making a step stool of his back.

TOURTEAU (CONT'D)  
It's fine, really.  
(grins)  
I'm stronger than I look.

Sara gingerly approaches, steps up on his back and pulls herself up into the loft. Tourteau stands, peers up at her.

TOURTEAU (CONT'D)  
We'll stack some hay bales along  
the edge and you'll be hidden  
completely.  
(turns to go)  
All right, I'll be right back.

SARA  
Wait you're leaving??

TOURTEAU  
Just to tell my parents what's  
going on. I'll come back with some  
food and blankets.

SARA  
Okay.  
(then)  
Tourteau?

He peers back up at Sara in the hayloft, musters a smile.

SARA (CONT'D)  
I just want to, you know, thank  
you. If you hadn't...

She trails off, emotional. It's all still sinking in.

TOURTEAU  
It's okay. You're safe now.

He retrieves his crutches -- then stops, glances back at her:

TOURTEAU (CONT'D)  
There is one thing though...

SARA  
Yes?

TOURTEAU  
Maybe call me by my real name,  
instead of Tourteau?

SARA  
Oh -- of course. I just, um --  
well I know your last name is  
Beaumier because they always sit us  
next to each other, but I, um...

TOURTEAU  
(a gentle smile)  
It's Julien.

SARA  
Sorry. Thank you... Julien.

Julien doffs his cap with a little bow, then heads off...

**INT. ALBANS' APARTMENT - DINING ROOM - NIGHT**

Julian stares back at Grand-Mère, surprised.

JULIAN  
Julien?

GRAND-MÈRE  
(nods, smiles)  
Your father knew how special that  
name was to me.

Her smile fades slightly, tinged by sadness.

JULIAN  
So what happened next?

For a moment, she seems lost in her memory of that night.

GRAND-MÈRE  
Next I met his parents, Vivienne  
and Jean-Paul...

**INT. BARN - NIGHT**

Sara hugs a wool blanket tight around her as VIVIENNE hands  
Sara a bowl of soup and JEAN-PAUL sweeps out cobwebs.

VIVIENNE  
We're going to do everything we can  
to find your parents, we promise.  
Until then you'll stay here with  
us.

Vivienne meets Sara's scared look with an assuring smile.

JEAN-PAUL  
It's not the Ritz, but we can spiff  
it up a little, can't we Julien?

SARA  
(almost a whisper)  
Thank you.

VIVIENNE  
Try to eat something while I fix a  
bed, all right?

Vivienne takes more blankets and climbs up to the hayloft  
using a big barrel Jean-Paul has positioned underneath it.

Sara looks at the bread and cheese Vivienne set out for her --

**FLASH ON: MAX AND ROSE AND SARA AT DINNER, EATING AND  
LAUGHING TOGETHER IN THE WARM LIGHT OF THEIR HOME.**

**FLASH ON: MAX CARRYING FIVE-YEAR-OLD SARA LIKE A "BIRD" OVER  
THE BLUEBELLS, SARA GLANCING BACK AT ROSE WAVING TO HER.**



**FLASH ON: ROSE AND MAX SITTING ON THE EDGE OF SARA'S BED,  
ASSURING HER THEY'LL RETURN TO THEIR HOME AFTER THE WAR --**

**TIGHT ON SARA'S FACE**

AS SHE BOLTS AWAKE, disoriented, then realizes where she is --

**INT. BARN - HAYLOFT - MIDDLE OF NIGHT**

--in blankets atop a pile of hay. Sara can't hold it in any longer; tears start to well in her eyes. Desperately scared.

SARA  
(barely a whisper)  
Maman... Papa... where are you?

A HOWLING WIND is the only reply, rattling the rafters. Sara hugs herself, peering around the darkness.

She wipes at her tears as she positions herself against a window and stares out at the dark sky...

...when, just outside the window, a WHITE BIRD perches on a branch. It holds her gaze for a fraction of an instant, then flies away. Sara watches it go, vanishing into the night.

**EXT. NIGHT SKY - NIGHT**

The white bird soars through the dark sky... flying over

**A TRAIN STATION (DRANCY)**

Dreary and ominous, dark platforms overcrowded with JEWISH PRISONERS - WOMEN, MEN, CHILDREN - being roughly ordered onto trains by grim-faced FRENCH AND GERMAN SOLDIERS.

We recognizes Rose Blum within the crush of people boarding the train, an unspeakable sorrow in her eyes.

PANNING UP to the TRAIN'S WINDOW, we find Rose peering out, as if searching for Sara.

In a moment, the train wheels begin to grind ominously as it rolls out of the station, Rose receding from view...

**INT. BARN - HAYLOFT - EARLY MORNING**

CLOSE ON SARA sleeping fitfully, her expression suggesting she's in the grip of a haunting dream.

A WOMAN'S HAND enters frame, gently touches her shoulder. Sara immediately GRABS for it, squeezing tight as she stirs, blinking up in the hopes that this was all just a bad dream --

SARA

Maman?

-- only to find Vivienne crouched beside her. Sara quickly lets her hand go, embarrassed. Vivienne smiles gently.

VIVIENNE

Sorry to wake you, *cherie*, but I have to leave now. Jean-Paul and Julien are already gone. I'll be back tomorrow with more food and water. Will you be all right here?

SARA

I think so.

VIVIENNE

Sara, I know it's a lot to ask, but it's very important that you not come down from the loft for any reason. Julien explained to you about our neighbors, the Lafleurs; they're older and almost never come out to the barn, but still.

SARA

I understand. I won't go down.

VIVIENNE

Good girl.

Vivienne hugs her, about to go -- when Sara clutches her and starts to cry. Like a small dam has burst.

VIVIENNE (CONT'D)

Ohhh... *cherie*, I know you're very afraid, but you'll be back with your family soon, okay? And until then we're going to keep you safe, I promise.

But Sara can't stop crying. Vivienne rubs her back, heart breaking for her. Lets her cry as long as she needs to.

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)

*She thought it was my fear that made me cry. But it wasn't. It was a feeling that I would never feel my own mother's arms around me again.*

**EXT. BARN - DAY**

Through a small space between the barn's uppermost slats, we can make out Sara's eyes peering out from within.

BELOW she can see Julien returning from school, crutches clacking along the dirt road between the houses and the barn.

He steals a look up at the barn, then quickly averts his eyes when he notices an ELDERLY COUPLE (the LAFLEURS) watching him suspiciously from their window. Julien waves hello to them, but they only acknowledge him with a frown.

**EXT. BARN - NIGHT**

Only now, when the neighborhood is pitch dark and quiet, does Julien silently hobble across the road to the barn.

**INT. BARN - NIGHT**

Julien quietly crawls through a discreet hole along the base of the wall, pushing his crutches through first. Once through, he slides a piece of wood to re-conceal the hole, then finds a nearby hurricane lamp and lights it.

JULIEN

Sara?

He peers up to the loft, unable to see past the bales lining its ledge. Sara rises, casting her shadow against the wall.

**INT. BARN - HAYLOFT - NIGHT**

Julien has set the lamp down, now unpacking his book bag. Sara sits across from him, watching him.

SARA

What time is it?

JULIEN

A little after nine, I think.

Beat.

SARA

How many days has it been? Six?

JULIEN

Today's the 14th, so... seven.

Sara barely nods. Then softly, to herself:

SARA  
The bluebells.

JULIEN  
Hm?

SARA  
Nothing -- I was thinking about the  
bluebells, in the Mernuit. This is  
when they start to bloom. My  
parents and I, we'd always...

She stops herself from crying. Julien doesn't know how to respond.

JULIEN  
I, um - brought you something.

He reaches into his book bag, and pulls out a small collection of colored pencils and some sheets of paper.

JULIEN (CONT'D)  
I remember how you like to draw.

Surprised, Sara smiles just a little, the first time in days.

SARA  
Thanks, Tour-... Julien.

JULIEN  
I also brought some books, and your  
school work so you don't fall  
behind.  
(glances up)  
I could... teach you today's  
lessons? If you want?

Her smile has faded to a look akin to guilt.

JULIEN (CONT'D)  
Or not.

SARA  
You're being so nice to me...  
I was never very nice to you. My  
friends certainly weren't.

JULIEN  
I guess I always felt you were, I  
don't know - different.

Julien looks self-conscious, as if he just admitted a crush.

SARA  
Maybe you're wrong?

JULIEN  
I doubt it... I'm really smart.

Julien grins. A surprised laugh escapes Sara.

SARA  
Is that so?

JULIEN  
(shrugs, fake-cocky)  
I mean I don't like to brag, but...

SARA  
No, of course not!

**EXT. BARN - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)**

The sound of their LAUGHTER just barely audible out here, like a ray of warmth in the cold, dark night.

**INT. BARN - HAYLOFT - DAY**

Sara is drawing with the paper and pencils Julien brought. We see she's been sketching images of Rose and Max.

On Sara's face, the unbearable pain of missing them. The pencil trembles in her grasp as she draws Max's smile.

A tear drop lands on the paper, blurring a spot.

**EXT. BLUM FAMILY FLAT - DAY**

Vivienne stands on the steps of the building, "casually" inquiring about the Doctor who lives upstairs.

VIVIENNE  
I clean houses and heard the doctor  
was looking for a new maid?

A cagey NEIGHBOR just shakes her head, answering tersely.

CAGEY NEIGHBOR  
I wouldn't know.

**INT. AUBERVILLIERS HOSPITAL - DAY**

Jean-Paul holds his cap between his hands, humbly inquiring with a guarded RECEPTIONIST.

RECEPTIONIST  
He's no longer with this hospital.

JEAN-PAUL  
Oh? Has he moved?

RECEPTIONIST  
(colder)  
I couldn't say. Would you like see another doctor?

Jean-Paul smiles politely and thanks her anyway, then hurries off... the Receptionist eyeing him uncertainly as he exits.

**TIME CUT: INT. BARN - WIDE ON THE HAYLOFT AS SEEN FROM BELOW**

By the amber glow of the hurricane lamp we see Sara and Julien's shadows against the wall, Julien teaching the day's geometry lesson to Sara.

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)  
*As the days became weeks, there was still no word of my parents. I could feel myself losing track of time, every day the same as the last. There was only one thing I could look forward to: my lessons with Julien.*

We're not near enough to hear the lesson dialogue, just the sound of animated talking and the occasional laugh.

**INT. BARN - HAYLOFT - NIGHT**

Julien is explaining a complicated theorem to Sara.

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)  
*I soon realized he was not exaggerating when he said he was smart. He had the mind of an engineer. He could look at something mechanical and in minutes figure out just how it operated.*

**EXT. CINEMA MERNUIT - DAY**

A rowdy group of teenage MILICE (militia) patrol the street outside the theater; we recognize Vincent and Jerome among their newest recruits, swastika bands around their biceps.

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)

*That is how he wound up working at the Cinema Mernuit.*

**INT. CINEMA MERNUIT - PROJECTIONIST BOOTH - DAY**

Julien maneuvering with one crutch as he changes reels.

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)

*The owner Georges had heard about this crippled boy who could fix almost anything, and one of the projectors kept breaking down. Georges was so impressed with the repair, he offered Julien a job.*

Georges pokes his head in to the booth like last time, with him the same two Resistance fighters.

GEORGES

If anyone asks for me...

Julien NODS dutifully, knows the drill. Georges exits.

Alone again in the booth, we see a thought occurring to Julien as he stares hard at the spot Georges just vacated.

**INT. CINEMA MERNUIT - CELLAR STAIRCASE - DAY**

Julien descends a narrow staircase on his crutches. We can hear the MUFFLED VOICES of men and women below.

Julien carefully presses open a heavy door a crack to see --

**INT. CINEMA MERNUIT - CELLAR - DAY**

-- A DOZEN RESISTANCE FIGHTERS gathered in a clandestine meeting. Men and women, most younger than Georges, their faces grim and determined.

RESISTANCE FIGHTER

*...but in the countryside we have the advantage. We know the terrain, the best roads to ambush.*

GEORGES

My contact in Toulouse says they're  
shipping us more ammunition...

Georges spots Julien behind the cracked door; their eyes meet. Georges returns a hard, curious look, then shakes his head as if to say "you shouldn't be here."

Julien nods, quietly shuts the door before others notice him.

**INT. CINEMA MERNUIT - PROJECTIONIST BOOTH - DAY**

Julien is loading film reels into the heavy cans, when --

GEORGES (O.S.)

The answer is no.

Julien turns to find Georges entering, looking grave.

GEORGES (CONT'D)

The underground is only for those  
willing to die for freedom. Maybe  
you are. But I'm not willing to  
let you.

JULIEN

Okay.

GEORGES

(frowns)

Okay?

JULIEN

That's not why I needed to see you.

GEORGES

What then?

Julien hesitates, then steels himself:

JULIEN

I need your help.

**INT. BARN - DAY**

We see a wicker bag, then a jug of water nudged through the barn's entry hole. A beat, then Vivienne crawls in after.

VIVIENNE

Mademoiselle, time for your beauty  
appointment!



Sara's face brightens some as she peers down from the loft.

**INT. BARN - HAYLOFT - DAY**

Vivienne is washing Sara's hair over a ceramic bowl.

VIVIENNE  
I wanted to come by earlier, but I  
have to be careful.

SARA  
The Lafleurs?

VIVIENNE  
I swear they never leave that  
window of theirs!

She lathers Sara's hair, motherly.

VIVIENNE (CONT'D)  
You wouldn't believe how lovely  
they once were to us. Especially  
when Julien became sick.

**INSERT (FLASHBACK): MME LAFLEUR HANDS VIVIENNE AND A FRAIL 6-YR-OLD JULIEN A BASKET OF BRIOCHE ROLLS.**

VIVIENNE (V.O.)  
Madame Lafleur would make us these  
wonderful breads and cakes, and I'd  
bring her milk from the market.

**INSERT: THE LAFLEURS PEER OUT THEIR WINDOW, GRIM AND GUARDED.**

VIVIENNE (V.O.)  
But since the Occupation, they've  
become very secretive. They never  
go out or speak to anyone, ever.  
Except perhaps the Nazis.

**BACK TO: SARA AND VIVIENNE**

SARA  
But Julien says you still bring  
them milk from the market?

VIVIENNE  
Every day I leave it by their door.  
(a wry chuckle)  
Little kindnesses wear people down,  
you know?

Sara chuckles too. Vivienne starts to rinse her hair. Sara cranes her neck more, when her face suddenly brightens --

SARA  
It's back!

Vivienne is confused, follows Sara's gaze up to a little dormer window high above.

SARA (CONT'D)  
My bird.

Sure enough, a small white bird is perched there.

SARA (CONT'D)  
It comes to visit me every day.

VIVIENNE  
It's beautiful. Like you, now that  
you're all clean!

Vivienne starts to rub Sara's hair dry -- when she notices Sara's smile fading, a tear forming in the corner of her eye.

VIVIENNE (CONT'D)  
Sara?

SARA  
(forcing a smile)  
Sorry, it's just -- my mother used  
to wash my hair sometimes.

Vivienne smiles sadly, feeling for her.

VIVIENNE  
I promise we haven't stopped trying-

She's interrupted by a sudden THUD below. Sara quickly looks to Vivienne, who presses a ssh finger to her lips.

Holding their breath, they strain to listen: someone is definitely just outside. They hear footsteps in the grass, then the sound of the barn door opening...

They retreat to the corner of the hayloft, scared, when --

JULIEN (O.S.)  
Hello?

They both exhale relief. Step out to find Julien below.

VIVIENNE  
Julien, you know you're not to come  
that way! What if someone saw you?

JULIEN  
Sorry - I was so excited, I forgot.

SARA  
Excited about what?

**TIME CUT: INT. BARN (EVENING)**

Julien now sitting across from Sara and Vivienne.

VIVIENNE  
You're sure you can trust him?

JULIEN  
Positive. He said it'll take a few weeks for the woman he knows to forge the identity papers. Once we have those, Georges will arrange to take you to an abbey in Le Chambon. The nuns there have been organizing crossings into Switzerland.

SARA  
...Switzerland?

JULIEN  
It's five days on foot through the Pyrenees. But they've gotten a lot of Jews out that way. You wouldn't be alone.

Sara nervously turns to Vivienne. Vivienne nods.

SARA  
Honestly, I feel safer here...

VIVIENNE  
Oh *cherie*, I wish you were.

Sara takes a tense breath, considers this.

**INT. ECOLE LAFAYETTE - CLASSROOM - DAY**

Mariann and Sophie are passing notes like they used to... oblivious to Julien two seats away, crutches propped against his desk, listening to PASTOR ROBERT's history lesson:

PASTOR ROBERT  
...After her victory in Orleans, Joan was able to convince Charles VII to let her join the army, led --

**INT. BARN - HAYLOFT - NIGHT**

Julien re-teaching the same day's lesson to Sara:

JULIEN  
-- by the Duke of Alencon, with the  
aim of recapturing the bridges  
along the Loire. Joan then--

SARA  
Have you ever been there?

JULIEN  
The Loire?

SARA  
Switzerland.

Now Julien realizes where her mind is at.

JULIEN  
(a small smile)  
I've never even been to Paris.

Sara stays quiet. Julien studies her a beat.

JULIEN (CONT'D)  
You know I'd go with you if I  
thought I wouldn't slow you down.

SARA  
I'll be okay. You said it'll take  
Georges a few weeks to get the fake  
papers?

JULIEN  
First week of June, the latest.  
(a breath)  
I um... I'm going to miss -- you  
know. This.

Julien allows a self-conscious smile. Sara smiles back.

SARA  
Me too.

Julien holds her gaze just a beat -- then awkwardly retrieves  
his notebook, about to resume the lesson, when --

SARA (CONT'D)  
You've really never been to Paris?

JULIEN  
 Never even left Dannevilliers  
 except to go to school.

Sara considers him a moment, her mind working... She grins.

JULIEN (CONT'D)  
 What?

CUT TO:

**EXT. AVENUE DES CHAMPS-ÉLYSÉES (PARIS) - DAY**

AS SEEN THROUGH A CAR WINDSHIELD: Whizzing past Parisians and well-heeled tourists crowding the sidewalks of the iconic thoroughfare, past cafes and hotels, bakeries and clothiers.

SARA (O.S.)  
 Well? How do you like Paris so far?

**REVERSE ON SARA AND JULIEN**

Sitting in the front seat of the Beaumier's rusty old car...

JULIEN  
 (chuckles, self-conscious)  
 It's, um, great.

**INT. BARN - NIGHT**

... in the corner of the barn amid the hay and old tools. Sara is behind the wheel, grinning out the dusty windshield. Julien in the passenger seat, a lot more self-conscious.

SARA  
 Up ahead is the Place de l'Etoile.  
 Do you see the Arc de Triomphe ?

JULIEN  
 (embarrassed/unconvincing)  
 Yyyyes...?

SARA  
 C'mon, use your imagination! Just picture in your mind's eye, we're entering this big roundabout, with twelve smaller avenues radiating out from it, like a star...

**JULIEN'S POV THROUGH WINDSHIELD**

Shapes struggling to emerge in the dusty dark of the barn... a wide, circular drive... suggestions of smaller avenues...

SARA (CONT'D)  
Those tall, black street lamps  
there, do you see them?

JULIEN  
You really want me to say yes,  
don't you.

SARA  
("scolding")  
Julien! It's only fun if you try!

Julien glances over at her, moved by how sincerely she's into this. He forces his imagination to engage... as through the windshield his MIND'S EYE starts to fill in more and more brightness and detail...

SARA (CONT'D)  
Now look there, in the middle of  
the plaza, the Arc de Triomphe -

JULIEN  
Wait, I kind of see it now...!

SARA  
You do? Really?

JULIEN  
Really!

And for a moment it is as if they are actually in a car on the Place de l'Etoile, the two of them all grins, peering up giddily at the magnificent Arc de Triomphe.

SARA  
Can I admit something embarrassing?  
I do this at least three times a  
week.

They both laugh at this admission.

SARA (CONT'D)  
What, you spend every single day  
alone in a barn!

JULIEN  
Watch out for that lady!

Sara gasps, instinctively twists the wheel -- then instantly catches herself and cracks up more. Julien laughing.

SARA  
Alright, just for that we're  
skipping the Eiffel Tower.

ON SARA as she "turns" the wheel, grinning straight ahead.

ON JULIEN as he steals a look at her, clearly smitten... and now realizing how much he's going to miss her.

**INT. BARN - HAYLOFT - DAY**

Propped against a bale, Sara draws an image of her parents reuniting with her on a mountainside. Her pencil work has grown more detailed and refined during this forced isolation.

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)  
*The next three weeks passed very  
 strangely. Time seemed to crawl...*

**INT. BARN - DAY**

Jean-Paul gives Sara a suitcase for her impending journey while Vivienne measures a warm sweater against Sara's torso. Sara steals a glance at Julien across the loft.

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)  
*And yet it also seemed to move  
 very, very fast.*

**INT. BARN - NIGHT**

Sara and Julien on another "drive," this time Julien at the wheel, pointing out the sights to Sara --

Sara beams excitedly out the windshield... at AN AFRICAN VELDT populated by lions and zebras.

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)  
*Almost too fast.*

**INT. BARN - LATE NIGHT**

About to leave, Julien pauses to rub a finger along the rim of the lamp. Sara grins curiously, wondering what he's up to -- when Julien turns to reveal he's grease-blackened his eyebrows and smudged on a Charlie Chaplin mustache.

Then, with the practiced moves of someone who's watched Chaplin films countless times, Julien does a pitch-perfect imitation of "The Tramp" saying goodbye, tipping his hat (beret) with his "cane" (crutch), then leaning on the "cane" with both hands and batting his lashes.

Sara cracks up, surprised and delighted.

**EXT./INT. CINEMA MERNUIT - ENTRANCE/ LOBBY - MORNING**

Julien passes under the marquee and enters the empty lobby, past a poster for Chaplin's "City Lights" half-concealed by a poster for "The Rothschilds," its artwork an anti-Semitic caricature of Mayer Rothschild, grinning greedily.

**INT. CINEMA MERNUIT - PROJECTIONIST BOOTH - MORNING**

Julien opens the door, eager to find Georges... but it's empty. Assumes George is in the WC at the edge of the room.

JULIEN

Georges? It's me, I'm here for the papers. Sara's ready to --

Julien notices a film reel unspooled from a projector in an unruly pile. He frowns, confused -- when he hears the faintest sound of VOICES below...

**INT. CINEMA MERNUIT - STAIRWELL - MORNING**

Julien arriving at the last of the stairs, making as little noise as possible with his crutches, the voices growing louder now. He hugs a wall, careful to stay out of sight...

**JULIEN'S POV: THE CELLAR**

A squad of MILICE are ransacking the cellar. Film cans have been pried open, revealing they are filled with smuggled bullets and guns.

JULIEN

watches breathlessly, and then his eyes go wide in horror --

**JULIEN'S POV: THE CELLAR**

Georges's body lies face down in the corner, blood soaking through the back of his shirt.

The MILICE COMMANDER turns to the youngest in the squad.

MILICE COMMANDER

You boys go up and have some fun.  
We're gonna send a message: this is  
what happens to traitors.

The three youngest turn and we recognize Vincent among them.



**INT. CINEMA MERNUIT - THEATER - DAY**

Julien fleeing fast as he can, but his crutches can only move so quickly and he must negotiate the sloped aisle...

Suddenly he hears the boys' ROWDY VOICES about to enter! Julien manages to scramble to the floor, hiding between two seat rows just as Vincent and two other MILICE TEENS enter.

One of them fires his pistol at the movie screen. The other thinks this looks fun, unloads on it too... as Vincent walks the rows, slashing open seat backs with a combat knife.

TIGHT ON JULIEN HIDING, desperate to stay silent. He can see their feet and legs moving past, hear their aggressive laughter, their violence nearing him...

He starts to crawl away on his chest, quiet as he can -- and then he freezes on seeing --

A FIGURE crouched at the far end of the row, unseen by the Milice: it's one of Georges' young Resistance fighters. The man is clutching his rifle, lining up a clean shot --

-- at Vincent, whose back is to him...

Julien is gripped by panic, torn but unable to just watch Vincent be executed this way... His mind racing, Julien abruptly grabs his crutch --

-- and SMACKS it loudly against the seat back! Both the Resistance Fighter and Vincent spin to the noise --

-- and in doing so Vincent sees the Resistance Fighter about to shoot him -- Vincent dives just as the bullet misses him!

The other two Milice fire back at the Resistance Fighter, who takes cover, returning more fire as he's joined by another Resistance Fighter --

Julien seizes his chance and clambers across the floor unseen, finally making it to the opposite aisle, slipping out the nearest door as gunfire rattles the theater behind him.

**EXT. AUBERVILLIERS-AUX-BOIS - SIDE STREET - DAY**

Julien's crutches clack noisily against the cobblestone as he moves as fast as he can, expression still etched in fear.

SARA (PRE-LAP)  
I'm so sorry...

**INT. BARN - HAYLOFT - NIGHT**

Julien stares off, still very shaken, and now despondent.

SARA

I know he was your friend.

JULIEN

He was also your one chance to get away.

SARA

We'll figure something else out.

Julien meets her eyes, and nods firmly.

They sit in silence a moment, listening to the RAIN tapping on the roof. Then, hoping to lift his spirits:

SARA (CONT'D)

My bird was back again today.

Julien glances over at her.

SARA (CONT'D)

I um... drew a picture of him. So you could meet him.

She reaches for the paper he'd brought her, and we see that almost every square inch has been covered in drawings. She points to one of a few drawings she'd made of the white bird. The detail is pretty astounding.

Julien regards the drawing, forcing himself to smile -- but Sara can see he's too overwhelmed to be distracted by this.

SARA (CONT'D)

I'm really so sorry about Georges... I can't imagine what it must've been like for you.

Julien barely nods. She can see his hand is shaking... She reaches out and gently retrieves her drawing.

JULIEN

What was that song you once told me about? The one your parents used to sing? "Little bird, little bird"...

She's a bit embarrassed. A beat, then softly:

SARA  
 "Little bird, little bird,  
 How high will you fly?  
 As high as the sky,  
 As the sky above..."

**FLASH ON YOUNG SARA, MAX AND ROSE PICNICING IN THE BLUEBELLS -**

A perceptible sadness enters Sara's voice as she continues:

SARA (CONT'D)  
 "Little bird, little bird,  
 How fast will you go?  
 As fast as a crow,  
 As fast as a dove.  
 Little bird, little bird,  
 How far will you see?  
     (her voice catches)  
 As far as I wish,  
 For now I am free."

The melody's last few words are hardly audible. Sara glances up at him with an effortful smile. Julien is visibly moved.

JULIEN  
 We're going to find another way to  
 get you out. I promise.

**EXT. AUBERVILLIERS-AUX-BOIS - MAIN THOROUGHFARE - DAY**

SS troops arriving, swastikas painted on their vehicles.

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)  
*Julien was determined. But so too  
 were the German army...*

**EXT. DANNEVILLIERS - STREETS - DAY**

A NAZI FLAG is draped from the balcony of the village's only hotel, German soldiers and French police gathered out front.

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)  
*After killing Georges and many  
 others in the local Resistance, the  
 Germans cracked down on the region,  
 setting up new headquarters right  
 there in Dannevilliers.*

**EXT. BEAUMIER'S MULTI-FAMILY HOME - DAY**

The elderly Lafleurs grimly peer out a window --

-- as below Vivienne bids Jean-Paul goodbye as he heads off to "work."

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)  
*Now we had far more to worry about  
 than just the nosy Lafleurs.*

**EXT. DANNEVILLIERS OUTSKIRTS - DAY**

We recognize the area as where Julien and Sara emerged after escaping through the Ecole's sewers. A CHECKPOINT has now been set up on the road, manned by heavily-armed SOLDIERS.

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)  
*Nazis were everywhere, on every  
 road in and out of the village...  
 There was no way I could be  
 smuggled out now.*

**INT. BARN - DAY**

Jean-Paul finishes building for Sara a clever, easy-to-conceal writing desk that hinges to the floor of the hayloft.

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)  
*The Beaumiers tried to make my life  
 as bearable as possible.*

**INT. BARN - HAYLOFT - DAY**

Vivienne chats with Sara while Sara eats hungrily.

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)  
*Vivienne continued to keep me fed.  
 She'd wash my hair, bring clean  
 clothes, empty the bucket I used  
 for a toilet. And of course keep  
 me company for an hour or two.*

**INT. BARN - NIGHT**

A crutch slides through the hole by the floor... then a second crutch... then a pack of playing cards...

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)  
*But as summer came and went, it was  
 Julien's nightly visits that  
 sustained me.*

**INT. BARN - HAYLOFT - NIGHT**

Sara and Julien animatedly playing Belote (a card game) by candlelight, gossiping about other kids from school.

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)  
*The barn had become my whole world,  
 and Julien its center.*

They both reach for a card at the same time -- and their hands touch. Both instantly glance up, meeting each other's eyes, the mutual attraction like a current in the air --

-- then just as quickly drop their eyes, feigning an intense interest in their respective cards.

**INT. BARN - HAYLOFT - NIGHT**

Sara and Julien still talking, the candle melted to a nub.

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)  
*We had in common one crucial  
 thing...*

**EXT. AUBERVILLIERS-AUX-BOIS - STREET - DAY**

Julien hobbles along the cobblestone street, regarded with pity by those who notice him.

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)  
*...we were different from other  
 children.*

He pauses before the Cinema Mernuit; its marquee is blank, its doors spray-painted "JEW LOVER." Windows smashed.

**INT. CINEMA MERNUIT - PROJECTIONIST BOOTH - DAY**

The booth has been equally vandalized. Film dumped everywhere. A projector toppled on the floor.

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)  
*We knew the hatred that people were  
 capable of.*

**INT. BARN - HAYLOFT - NIGHT**

Sara and Julien sit in opposite corners, Julien reading a biography of Edison, Sara sketching in a novel's margins.

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)  
*And this cemented our relationship.  
 It gave it depth.*

Julien steals a look at Sara, smitten... then quickly drops his eyes back to the page. A beat later, Sara glances up from her sketch to steal a look at Julien.

**INT. BARN - HAYLOFT - NIGHT**

Sara and Julien peering out the small window at the stars above, talking in intimate, hushed voices.

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)  
*I began to see him as more than my  
 rescuer, or even my friend.*

**TIME CUT:**

SARA'S POV OUT THE SAME WINDOW: watching Julien hobble away.

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)  
*He was my everything. My hope...  
 My light.*

**INT. BARN - NIGHT**

Julien "gallantly" opens the car door for Sara.

JULIEN  
 Special trip tonight, Mademoiselle  
 Blum.

SARA  
 (fake fancy)  
 How wonderful! Where to this time?

JULIEN  
 You'll see.

He closes the car door for her.

**INSIDE THE CAR**

Sara sits, waiting for Julien, when she hears a dull THUMP on the car roof over her head. She's startled --

SARA  
 Julien--?

JULIEN (O.S.)  
It's fine, I swear. Just close  
your eyes, okay?

Sara grins, intrigued.

JULIEN (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Are they closed?

Sara obeys and closes her eyes.

SARA  
Yes!

She waits like this a moment, then hears the sound of the  
ENGINE SPARK, the car sputtering to life.

SARA (CONT'D)  
Are you crazy? We can't go driving!

JULIEN  
I know, just keep your eyes closed!

Sara reluctantly shuts her eyes again. She can hear the  
sound of the driver's door open, and Julien climbing in.

SARA  
Can I look now?

JULIEN  
How'd you like to visit New York  
tonight?

SARA  
What? Sure!

JULIEN  
Okay then... Open your eyes.

Sara waits a moment, then peeks an eye open -- and suddenly  
opens both eyes wide...

... as through the windshield, it looks like they are  
literally driving down a neon-lit Broadway -- a black-and-  
white Broadway as seen in the 1930s musical film...

**CUT OUTSIDE THE CAR (REVEAL)**

...that is being projected from atop the car roof by the  
projector Julien has recovered from the Cinema Mernuit and  
now powered by rigging it to the car's battery.

Sara stares in total awe, floored by Julien's ingenuity and  
by the sheer beauty of the moment - like a sort of homemade,

hybrid drive-in movie/V.R. ride circa 1943... It's magical.

SARA  
(breathless)  
Oh Julien...

Julien beams, lost in the moment as well. And so are we.

We stay with them like this, as enraptured as they are, until the BLACK AND WHITE of celluloid Broadway projected on the old barn wall finally DISSOLVES TO --

**EXT. ECOLE LAFAYETTE - ENTRANCE - DAY**

THE FIRST YELLOWS AND REDS of autumn now dappling the woods.

Children with book sacks walking, scootering and biking up the road to school. We find Mariann and Sophie among them.

**EXT. ECOLE LAFAYETTE - COURTYARD - DAY**

Pastor Luc stands by the gate, welcoming the students back. Julien keeps a low profile as he moves past Vincent and his gang -- but to no avail:

VINCENT  
Man, Tourteau, don't you ever  
bathe? I thought crabs liked water!

Others laugh at Julien, who refuses to make eye contact.

Jerome nudges Vincent, and they start after Julien to torment him more -- when Pastor Luc arrives and stops Julien first.

PASTOR LUC  
Monsieur Beaumier, may I have a  
word in my office?

**INT. ECOLE LAFAYETTE - PASTOR LUC'S OFFICE - DAY**

Julien takes a seat across from Pastor Luc's desk.

JULIEN  
Sir?

Pastor Luc smiles warmly, but there is a weariness in it.

PASTOR LUC  
The teachers and I have been  
talking, and we've decided to place  
you in advanced mathematics this  
(MORE)



PASTOR LUC (CONT'D)  
 year. You'll be with the older students, but I suspect they'll be the ones trying to keep up.

JULIEN  
 (smiles proudly)  
 Thank you, sir.

PASTOR LUC  
 Thank you, Julien. There isn't much that brings me joy these days.

He rises, and Julien follows suit, but as Pastor Luc reaches over to shake his hand, Julien notices something on a shelf --

Sara's sketchbook! Carefully stored up here along with some other items the Jewish children were forced to leave behind.

He drops his eyes before Pastor Luc realizes he's seen it.

**EXT. ECOLE LAFAYETTE - LATE DAY**

The bustle of kids filing out at the end of the day.

**INT. ECOLE LAFAYETTE - LATE DAY**

POV THROUGH AN UPSTAIRS WINDOW: we see Pastor Luc heading home as well, climbing onto his bicycle.

REVERSE ON JULIEN at the window. WIDEN to

**THE HALLWAY**

As Julien quickly hurries down the empty corridor...

**INT. PASTOR LUC'S OFFICE - LATE DAY**

The door creaks open and Julien enters. He hesitates just a moment -- then takes Sara's sketchbook off the shelf.

**INT. ECOLE LAFAYETTE - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER**

ANONYMOUS POV FROM DOWN THE HALL: Julien slips out, eyes peeled to check if anyone's watching, then hurries off.

**INT. BARN - HAYLOFT - DUSK**

We hear the sound of a BIG BAND playing swing as we SLOW PAN over to... Sara dancing by herself, lost in her imagination

(as evidenced by a wider shot to remind us there's no actual music playing). She's letting loose, savoring a tiny taste of freedom, at least in her mind --

-- when she abruptly stops, hearing a familiar sound that brings a bigger grin to her face...

# **INT. BARN - MOMENTS LATER**

Sara hurries to the hole through which Julien always sneaks in: he's already slid one crutch through, the second crutch follows, then his book bag... then finally Julien himself.

SARA  
You're here so early. Is everything okay?

JULIEN  
This couldn't wait.

Getting to his feet, he pauses, noticing how she's a little out of breath, her hair still a bit wild from the dancing.

SARA  
(grins, embarrassed)  
I was...dancing. What couldn't wait?

Julien reaches into his book bag; it takes Sara less than a second to recognize her sketchbook as he takes it out.

SARA (CONT'D)  
My sketchbook!! How did you...?

JULIEN  
I was in Pastor Luc's and I saw it on the--

She cuts him off with an impulsive hug around his neck.

SARA  
Thank you!

The impulsive physical contact reverberates through them a beat -- then, chuckling nervously, Sara returns to her cherished book, flipping through page by page.

Julien peers over her shoulder at the myriad drawings of birds, animals, random objects -- and then, that sketch she had drawn of Vincent. Sara quickly glances up at Julien to find he's staring at it too; he's clearly stung, but tries not show it. Sara, however, is abashed.

SARA (CONT'D)  
I was so dumb--

A SUDDEN SOUND from outside the barn stops them both. They hold their breath, listening to FOOTSTEPS approaching fast. Julien instantly extinguishes the hurricane lamp. Darkness.

SARA (CONT'D)  
What is it?!

JULIEN  
Ssh! Go back up and hide - and don't come out, no matter what.

Terrified, Sara scrambles up to --

### THE HAYLOFT

Hiding in a corner beneath the rafters, she conceals herself in the hay; she can hear the rustle of bats above her, stirred -- then the barn door suddenly BANG open below.

TEEN BOY'S VOICE (O.S.)  
...telling you, I bet he's in here.  
Tourteau! Hey, Tourteau!

### DOWN BELOW

We see three young men shining a flashlight as they enter. As our eyes adjust to the glare, we recognize Vincent, Jerome, and another teen (HENRI).

JULIEN (O.S.)  
Hello?

Vincent swings his flashlight... to find Julien bent over the open hood of the car, illuminated by his hurricane lamp - as if they just interrupted him trying to repair the engine.

VINCENT  
What's going on, Tourteau?

JULIEN  
What are you doing here? I'm working on my father's car--

JEROME  
We saw you sneaking out of Pastor Luc's office with something.

JULIEN  
What?

They're moving in closer, leering menacingly.

VINCENT  
Don't play dumb with us, cripple.

JULIEN  
I left my book there. So what?

VINCENT  
Bullshit.

JULIEN  
I swear. It's in my house, I can  
show you right now--

HENRI  
Vincent, look.

He nudges Vincent, who follows his flashlight beam to a far corner, where we see Julien has left the projector.

JEROME  
See? Told you he was a thief!

JULIEN  
Georges gave it to me to fix for hi-

SMACK! Vincent backhands Julien with his flashlight and Julien drops to the floor.

VINCENT  
You're a bad liar, Tourteau.

Henri KICKS Julien in the ribs. Julien HOWLS in pain.

**INSERT: SARA HIDING IN THE LOFT**

Listening in horror...

JEROME (O.S.)  
What'd you steal from Pastor Luc?

JULIEN (O.S.)  
Nothing! I just left my-- AH!

The sound of two more kicks.

**BACK TO JULIEN AND THE TEENS**

Vincent pulls Julien up by his collar.

VINCENT  
You think you're smarter than  
everyone, don't you?

JULIEN

N-no...

VINCENT

You're pathetic, you know that?  
Weak. Deformed. Useless.

Julien glares back at him, fear mingling with rage and pain.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

Know what the Nazis do with freaks  
like you? Do you? They  
exterminate them. Like Jews.

He punches Julien across the face, hurls him to the ground.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

I should do the human race a favor  
and put you out of your misery  
right now.

#### **TIGHT ON SARA IN THE HAYLOFT**

Hears this, terrified for Julien. She can't stop herself  
from crawling to the edge of the loft to see --

#### **BELOW**

Vincent has dropped his flashlight and is crouched over  
Julien now. He lifts him just enough to PUNCH him again -  
then again - each one harder. Jerome and Henri get nervous.

JEROME

He learned his lesson, Vincent.

VINCENT

Not yet he hasn't.

CRACK of Vincent's fist across Julien's face again. Again.

Julien spits blood, staring up helplessly... when he sees --

**(JULIEN'S POV) SARA PEERING DOWN IN HORROR FROM THE LOFT**

Julien tries to shake his head, urging her to stay hidden --

**(JULIEN'S POV) BUT SARA SEEMS DESPERATE TO SAVE HIM SOMEHOW --**

VINCENT (CONT'D)

The hell are you looking at, freak?

Vincent starts to turn his head, when --

JULIEN  
V-vive l'humanite...

Vincent immediately glowers back down at Julien.

VINCENT  
What'd you say?

JULIEN  
Vive..... l'humanite.

Vincent flashes anger, cocking his fist to pummel him again --

When Julien quickly grabs for VINCENT'S FLASHLIGHT and swings the beam up, aiming directly into

### **THE RAFTERS**

Illuminating the small army of bats nesting there! They start to react to the light, stirring restlessly...

JEROME  
What the...?!

Even Vincent looks creeped out -- Julien still shining the beam's bright light directly at the bats, their agitated noises growing louder... louder... LOUDER --

HENRI  
Let's get out of--

AND SUDDENLY THE BATS SWARM DOWN EN MASSE FROM THE RAFTERS! Vincent dives as bats swoosh right over him, his pals already bolting out the door screaming, Vincent darting close behind as the bats burst out the barn door with him...

### **ON SARA**

Amazed, she hurries to the slat in the wall, peers out... to see the three teens running down the road, disappearing into the darkness.

### **BELOW - MOMENTS LATER**

Julien tries to sit up, blood caked around his nose and mouth. Staining his shirt.

SARA (O.S.)  
Julien!

Sara arrives below, rushing to his side as he fumbles for his crutches.

SARA (CONT'D)  
Julien, are you--

JULIEN  
(mutters)  
Go back to the loft... they could  
come back...

SARA  
I saw them go, it's--

JULIEN  
I said GO TO THE LOFT!  
(off Sara's shock)  
What are you, stupid?! Go!

Tears sting Julien's eyes as he glares at a stunned Sara.

SARA  
I just wanted to--

JULIEN  
I don't care what you want! It's  
not always about you!

Sara takes a step back, on the verge of tears herself.

JULIEN (CONT'D)  
You know what happens if they find  
you?! They'll arrest my parents!  
They'll execute them, understand?!

SARA  
I -- you're right, I didn't think -

JULIEN  
Of course you didn't! All you  
think about is yourself! You're  
still the same spoiled brat who sat  
next to me for five years and  
didn't even know my name!

He turns from her so she can't see his furious tears.

SARA  
Julien, please... I'm so sorry.

A painful silence. Then:

JULIEN  
Just go back to the loft, Sara.

He grabs his other crutch and hobbles to the door.

Sara retreats to the loft as she hears him leaving, shutting the door behind him... and then allows her own tears to flow.

**INT. BEAUMIER'S HOME - NIGHT**

Jean-Paul fights back tears of his own as he sits by his son's bed, watching Vivienne apply an ice pack to his face.

**INT. BARN - HAYLOFT - NIGHT**

Sara peers down sadly at her old sketchbook, flipping slowly, page after page.

She arrives at her sketch of Vincent. Stares at it a beat -- then tears the page out, crumples it and adds it to the flame burning in her hurricane lamp.

**INT. PASTOR LUC'S OFFICE - DAY**

Vivienne and Jean-Paul meeting with Pastor Luc.

PASTOR LUC

We need to report this to the police.

JEAN-PAUL

No. We just want you to speak to the boy. Threaten to expel him if he goes near Julien again.

Pastor Luc nods, allows a painful sigh.

PASTOR LUC

What's happened to our world? Every day I pray, but God stays silent.

VIVIENNE

With all due respect, Father, it's not up to God. Only good people can end this.

**INT. BARN - HAYLOFT - DAY**

Vivienne is washing Sara's hair.

SARA

It's been days since he's come by.

VIVIENNE

Let's give him time.



SARA  
(peers up at her)  
Vivienne... I'm sorry.

Vivienne glances down at her, confused.

SARA (CONT'D)  
I never realized how much danger I  
put your family in by being here.

VIVIENNE  
Oh *cherie*, you mustn't worry about  
us. We'll be fine. Just like you  
will be too.

SARA  
(beat)  
What about Julien?

VIVIENNE  
He needs time to heal, that's all.

SARA  
He got so mad at me.

VIVIENNE  
He was just as mad at himself for  
leading Vincent to the barn. The  
truth is he should never have taken  
your sketchbook. It was much too  
risky, for all of us.

SARA  
He did it for me.

Vivienne nods gently.

VIVIENNE  
It was an act of kindness. In  
times like these, it's those small  
things that remind us of our  
humanity.

Sara peers up at her.

SARA  
Vive l'humanite.

VIVIENNE  
(an emotional smile)  
Vive l'humanite.

**EXT. BARN - DUSK**

The last leaves of autumn flutter from the trees that line the field, night falling on the stone barn.

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)  
*Another week passed. Then another.  
 It was almost winter now. And  
 still Julien stayed away.*

**INT. BARN - HAYLOFT - DAY**

The white bird is resting. Sara reaches out very carefully, and it allows her to stroke its feathers. She smiles sadly.

She hears the familiar sound of crutches on a dirt road. She peers out the slat to see Julien returning home from school.

He does not look up at the barn.

**INT. BARN - NIGHT**

Sara is lying back, trying to force herself to sleep -- when she hears another familiar sound: a crutch sliding in through the hole in the barn's siding.

Sara quickly sits up, scurrying to the edge of the loft -- to see the second crutch slide in. She holds her breath, peering down... as a deck of cards then slides through.

A hopeful smile spreads across her face.

**INT. BARN - HAYLOFT - NIGHT**

Sara and Julien playing Belote, but neither one is talking. It's as awkward as we've ever seen them.

JULIEN  
 (quietly)  
 You.

Sara flips a card.

SARA  
 Can we talk about--

JULIEN  
 I'd rather not.

SARA  
 Oh. Okay.

They keep playing in uncomfortable silence.

SARA (CONT'D) JULIEN  
It just seems weird to not - Can we just let it go?

More silence. Julien staring hard at his cards -- and then abruptly sets them down.

JULIEN (CONT'D)  
I hate --

He stops himself. Struggling for the words.

JULIEN (CONT'D)  
I hate that you saw me like that.

SARA  
(confused)  
Like what?

JULIEN  
Like some weakling. A helpless,  
pathetic--

SARA  
(feeling for him)  
Julien, no -

JULIEN  
I know it's hard to believe, but I  
used to run fast. Before I got  
polio, I was the fastest kid in my  
whole class. I still remember what  
that felt like, to run like that.  
To be strong.

SARA  
You are strong.

He scoffs.

SARA (CONT'D)  
You are. And brave. You're the  
bravest person I ever met.

JULIEN  
(humiliated)  
Why, because I walk with crutches?  
Crutches don't make me brave. They  
make me walk.

SARA  
That's - not what I meant.

Julien just picks up his cards, stares at them.

JULIEN

Can we just stop talking please?  
The worst thing is feeling you pity  
me. Poor Julien. Poor Torteau.

SARA

That's not how I feel.  
(off his look)  
What I feel is just... dumb. I  
thought about what you said, how  
I'm selfish -

JULIEN

I was just upset, I didn't mean it.

SARA

But it's true. When I think about  
how I was before, how kids would  
call you names, and I just... stood  
there. I didn't care. Not really.  
(getting emotional)  
The truth is, if you were the one  
who needed saving, I probably  
wouldn't have done it.

JULIEN

You don't know that.

SARA

No, I do. And I'm sorry.

He looks up at her, smiles a little. Touched.

JULIEN

You did try to save me though.  
That night with Vincent, I saw you  
about to come down from the loft.  
You were going to risk your life --

SARA

I would've gotten us both killed.

JULIEN

Probably.

They share a wry gallows smile.

JULIEN (CONT'D)

Still, it was brave of you.

Sara shrugs, at once embarrassed and grateful.

JULIEN (CONT'D)  
Take a compliment!

SARA  
(blushes)  
Fine. Thank you.

A beat, both smiling, relieved to be patching things up.

JULIEN  
Should we get back to the game now?

SARA  
Okay. Can I just say one last thing?

JULIEN  
What?

SARA  
Belote!

She tosses her winning hand down in front of him.

JULIEN  
Look who finally won a hand.  
(grins)  
I wouldn't get too used to it.

SARA  
(laughs)  
Oh no?

Julien scoops up the cards and deals a new hand. Sara smiles, beyond relieved to have him back with her again.

**EXT. DANNEVILLIERS - AERIAL - DAY**

Snow falls on the village.

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)  
*Winter came, and with it many changes.*

**EXT. AUBERVILLES AUX BOIS - STREETS - DAY**

German military trucks squeeze through snowy streets.

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)  
*More and more soldiers arrived.  
The rations were brutal.*

**INT. BOULANGERIE BALLOU - DAY**

Madame Ballou's bakery is a shell of itself, now reduced to a few hard loaves handed out to rowdy Nazi troops.

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)  
*Everyone knew hunger.*

**EXT. DANNEVILLIERS - OCCUPYING HEADQUARTERS - DAY**

Vincent and other young men in black Milice uniforms are issued automatic rifles by their Nazi handlers.

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)  
*Vincent quit school to serve the  
 Milice full-time.*

Vincent returns a Seig Heil salute and a "Heil Hitler!"

**EXT. DANNEVILLIERS - STREET - DAY**

TWO OLD MEN shiver in the snow as Vincent and another Milice roughly demand to see their papers.

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)  
*The streets became more dangerous.*

**EXT. DANNEVILLIERS OUTSKIRTS - DAY**

Julien struggles to maneuver crutches through knee-deep snow.

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)  
*And Julien often took the long way  
 to school.*

**INT. ECOLE LAFAYETTE - HALLWAY/ CLASSROOM - DAY**

Sweaty and half-frozen, Julien hobbles past Pastor Luc's office, but a NEW PASTOR is there now.

GRAND-MÈRE  
*In January, Pastor Luc disappeared.  
 There were whispers... Rumors that  
 he'd joined the Resistance.*

**INT. BARN - HAYLOFT - DAY**

Sara marks her height against a post. She steps back, sees she's grown at least two inches since she came here.

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)  
*There were other changes too.*

She regards her body, her figure less girlish, more mature.  
 She runs a hand through her hair, longer than before.

**TIME CUT**

Sara drawing in her sketchbook... a portrait of Julien. She smiles to herself as she fills in details of his face.

**INT. BARN - HAYLOFT - NIGHT**

Sara is working on the day's math assignment while Julien frowns over a small piece of wood he's whittling.

Julien sets his knife down, shows the results to Sara.

JULIEN  
 Well?

SARA  
 (over-enthusiastic)  
 What a pretty... sheeeep?

JULIEN  
 Cat.

SARA  
 Cat, right! Of course.

Julien grins, fully aware of his artistic limitations.

TIGHT ON SARA watching Julien as he laughs. We can see something has stirred in her... a feeling that has blossomed beyond mere friendship.

**EXT. FIELD/ BARN - DAWN**

TIME LAPSE: THE SNOW THAT BLANKETS THE FIELD AND BARN GIVES WAY TO THE FIRST GREENS OF SPRING...

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)  
*Before I knew it, it was spring again. Impossible as it seemed, I'd been in hiding for over a year.*

**INT. BARN - HAYLOFT - NIGHT**

Sara hears the familiar sound of Julien arriving at the hole in the barn. Sara hurries down from the loft...

... to find a small package on the floor? Like a little present, wrapped in newspaper. She picks it up, unwraps it --  
 -- and discovers a little wooden bird, hand-whittled by Julien. Sara beams, when --

VIVIENNE/JEAN PAUL/JULIEN (O.S.)  
 Happy Birthday to you...

Sara looks surprised, turns to see the barn door open and the Beaumier family enter, Vivienne carrying a chocolate cake with a candle in it. Jean-Paul is toting a small radio.

VIVIENNE/JEAN PAUL/JULIEN (CONT'D)  
 Happy Birthday to you, Happy  
 Birthday dear Sara, Happy Birthday  
 to you!

SARA  
 I don't -- I didn't even realize it  
 was today --

VIVIENNE  
 Happy birthday, *cherie*.

Vivienne sets the cake down on the small table.

SARA  
 Is it really chocolate?

JEAN-PAUL  
 Vivienne has been saving ration  
 cards for months.

JULIEN  
 Make a wish, Blum.

She meets Julien's eyes just a moment, then blows out her candle. Vivienne and Jean-Paul clap, hug her lovingly.

#### TIME CUT

The family and Sara hungrily eating the delicious cake.

SARA  
 (between mouthfuls)  
 But how'd you get past the  
 Lafleurs?

VIVIENNE  
 (smiles)  
 We did something naughty, God  
 forgive us.



JEAN-PAUL

Last week I had a tooth pulled, and the doctor gave me sleeping powder for the pain. I had a little extra -

JULIEN

So Maman put it in the Lafleurs' milk this afternoon. We could hear them snoring through the walls!

They all laugh. Vivienne turns to her husband.

VIVIENNE

Now then, I was promised there'd be dancing.

JEAN-PAUL

But of course!

Jean-Paul turns on the little radio, careful to keep the volume low. We hear the sound of a big band playing the Duke Ellington ballad "In a Sentimental Mood."

JEAN-PAUL (CONT'D)

(taking Vivienne's hand)

Madame?

Vivienne happily accepts and starts to dance with Jean-Paul. She steals a quick look over her shoulder at Julien, nodding toward Sara ala "go on," but he looks uncertain.

SARA (O.S.)

Monsieur?

Julien turns to find Sara before him, holding out a hand, smiling but a little nervous herself.

Julien hesitates - then sets his crutches aside, allows her to help him to his feet... and they dance, he with crutches.

Sara can feel Julien's body trembling with the effort required to dance without crutches, and does her best to keep him supported without making him self-conscious.

Their faces are quite close, Julien holding his breath, taking in her smell, her proximity. She leans in to him.

SARA (CONT'D)

Thank you for my present.

JULIEN

It's a bird.

SARA  
I could see that.

JULIEN  
It only took me seven tries.  
The first five looked more like  
dinosaurs.

Sara chuckles. He smiles. They dance. And then --

RADIO ANNOUNCER (ON RADIO)  
*Radio London interrupts this  
broadcast to bring you developing  
news: Monte Cassino has been  
liberated by the Allies.*

The Beaumiers, Julien and Sara go still, listening intently:

RADIO ANNOUNCER (ON RADIO) (CONT'D)  
*The First German Parachute Division  
has been destroyed, clearing the  
path to Rome for the Allies...*

JEAN-PAUL  
France will be next!

RADIO ANNOUNCER (ON RADIO)  
*...to the west, the French  
Expeditionary Corps have taken  
Esperia...*

VIVIENNE  
I can't believe it! The war --  
it's going to be over soon!

Vivienne and Jean-Paul embrace each other, then the kids.  
Everyone hugging, flush with hope, tears of joy flowing.

We hold on them like this, hugging each other. Celebrating.

**EXT. BARN - HAYLOFT - LATE NIGHT**

Sara fast asleep on her hay bed, a faint smile still  
lingering on her face.

Sara stirs at a sound from below, looking alarmed.

JULIEN (O.S)  
Sara.

She breathes relief, crawls sleepily to the edge of the loft.

SARA

What are you doing here? It must be after midnight!

JULIEN

Put a sweater on, and your shoes.

SARA

What?

JULIEN

Just trust me. I've got one more present for you.

**BELOW - MOMENTS LATER**

In her sweater and shoes, Sara joins Julien by the door.

SARA

A walk - are you crazy? What about the Lafleurs?

JULIEN

That sleeping powder knocked them out. I could still hear them snoring through the walls.

(smiles)

It's safe, I promise. This may be our only chance. And I want you to see something.

**EXT. THE BARN - NIGHT**

Sara steps out of the barn, taking a moment to embrace this small sense of freedom. She blinks back a tear.

JULIEN

You okay?

SARA

Yeah, I just... I haven't been outside in...

She trails off, overcome by the thought. He smiles at her.

JULIEN

Come on.

He starts off on his crutches. She follows, greedily inhaling the cool night air.

**EXT. WOODS - NIGHT**

Julien leading Sara through a dense maze of trees.

JULIEN

Do you recognize it? You probably  
never came this way.

SARA

(smiles)

The Mernuit?

Julien nods, keeps leading the way.

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)

*I'd never been there at night  
before. All the stories about giant  
wolves would have scared me away.*

Julien continues to lead them up an incline.

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)

*But that night I felt no fear.*

They're almost at the peak. Julien pauses, turns to Sara.

JULIEN

All right, we're here.

Sara looks around at the dark trees, confused.

SARA

We are?

Julien nods for her to follow him just a few more steps.  
Sara does... and suddenly her eyes go wide in amazement.

She turns to him, beaming. He smiles back at her.

JULIEN

Happy birthday.

Sara gazes out ahead of her as we come around to see...

**THE FOREST FLOOR BEFORE THEM IS A SEA OF BLUEBELLS, LITERALLY  
SPARKLING IN THE MOONLIGHT.**

Sara is overwhelmed by its beauty and the intense nostalgia  
it evokes. She and Julien start forward into the clearing  
together, as if in a shared dream.

For a moment, neither dares break the spell. Finally:

JULIEN (CONT'D)

There's something I want to say,  
and I feel like if I don't do it  
now, then I'll never, um...

He exhales, nervous. She turns to him, searching his face.

JULIEN (CONT'D)

Here's the thing... if the war is  
really going to end soon, well -  
when it does, I want you to know  
that in the future I see for  
myself, I, um - well you're a part  
of it, and I'm wondering if--

SARA

Yes.

JULIEN

I haven't even asked the question  
yet.

SARA

But I know the answer. Yes.

Sara leans in and KISSES him. It's a bit awkward at first,  
clearly a first kiss for both...

...but in moments they're swept up in it, the kiss more  
passionate, the pair holding each other tight in the glowing  
sea of bluebells.

#### **EXT. WOODS - LATE NIGHT**

Sara and Julien returning as they came, but now her hand is  
holding his where it meets his crutch, the two walking side  
by side as she leans her head on his shoulder.

#### **INT. BARN - LATE NIGHT**

Sara and Julien inside again.

SARA

You should go. The sun'll be up  
soon.

JULIEN

Yeah.

But neither one wants to move. They chuckle.

He finally kisses her one last time.

JULIEN (CONT'D)  
See you tomorrow.

SARA  
You know where to find me.  
(then, a thought)  
Wait. I want to give you something  
too.

Sara climbs up into the hayloft, returns a moment later with her sketchbook. He's at once surprised and moved.

JULIEN  
Really?

She nods, smiling as she hands it to him.

SARA  
See you tomorrow.

Julien starts for the door, floating on a cloud, his heart brimming. He turns back to Sara as she's climbing back up to the loft, and waves his cap high above his head:

JULIEN  
Vive l'humanite!

Sara beams back, her heart just as full as Julien finalizes his departure with a Chaplin-esque "hat" and "cane" goodbye.

#### **INT. BEAUMIER'S HOME - JULIEN'S ROOM - LATE NIGHT**

Our first time here, the room is small but entirely Julien, books stacked everywhere, walls decorated with old lobby cards for films by Chaplin, Keaton and the Marx Brothers.

Julien lies in bed, staring at a page in Sara's sketchbook... it's the portrait she's drawn of him. We can feel her love for him in every detail, every carefully etched line.

On the opposite page, we see a poem she's written, that begins: "*I used to be afraid of the night...*"

SARA'S VOICE (V.O.)  
"I used to be afraid of the night.  
But now I see it as my time for  
listening to the soul of the world  
telling me its secrets, over and  
over, like a song: 'You love  
Julien.' Yes, I answer, I know.  
I love Julien."

Julien stares at the words, the drawing. His head swimming.

No chance of him ever falling asleep tonight.

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)  
*I did. I loved him. I wasn't brave  
 enough to say it that night, but I  
 decided the next night I would.*

**INT. BARN - HAYLOFT - LATE NIGHT**

Sara lies in bed, smiling at the little wooden bird Julien worked so hard to carve for her.

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)  
*And maybe he would say he loved me  
 too.*

Sara leans back, blissful --

**FLASHBACK TO HOURS EARLIER: JULIEN SMILING BACK AT SARA AS HE WAVES HIS CAP OVER HIS HEAD.**

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)  
*I didn't know that I would never  
 see his face again.*

**INT. BEAUMIER'S HOME - JULIEN'S ROOM - DAWN**

Julien getting dressed for school, still re-reading the poem beside Sara's portrait of him.

VIVIENNE (O.S.)  
 Julien? You'll be late for school!

Julien quickly stuffs the sketchbook into his book bag a second before Vivienne opens the door.

JULIEN  
*Bonjour, Maman!*

He bounds up on his crutches, kissing her on the cheek as he hurries past, unable to conceal his buoyant spirit.

VIVIENNE  
 Someone's in a good mood.

JULIEN  
 Why not? The sun is shining,  
 bluebells are blooming...

VIVIENNE  
Bluebells?

Julien just grins and hurries down the stairs.

JULIEN  
*À bientôt, Maman! Arrivederci!*

Vivienne chuckles, intuiting the reason for his good mood.

**EXT. DANNEVILLIERS - STREETS - EARLY MORNING**

Julien is hurrying along the street, book bag strapped across his chest, a far away smile lingering on his face.

Julien fails to notice a group of GERMAN SOLDIERS gathered by a pair of military vehicles, chatting with some Milice.

We recognize Vincent among them; a bit in awe of the soldiers, listening eagerly to their conversation, laughing hard at their jokes... when Vincent's focus falls on the familiar figure hobbling up the street.

Vincent smirks, happy for this stroke of luck. He taps one of the German officers, gestures toward Julien, approaching.

**ON JULIEN**

Still unaware of them -- until he is. He slows, realizing his grave mistake... he turns to avoid their notice, when --

GERMAN SOLDIER  
 You there! Cripple!

Julien halts, debating whether to flee or not. It's too late, the Soldier and a second Soldier are marching over.

GERMAN SOLDIER 2  
 Papers.

Julien reaches into his bag, nervously finds his papers.

JULIEN  
 I'm just on my way to school, the  
 Ecole Lafayette -

GERMAN SOLDIER  
 We can take you.

Julien is about to protest, but they each seize an arm, yanking him forward, knocking his bag to the ground.

JULIEN  
 Wait -- my bag!

They shove him into the open door of a jeep, slam it shut.



One of them barks something in German to the driver -- and before Julien can get another word out the jeep ROARS away.

Among the witnesses is a MAN in a sewer worker's uniform.

#### **ON VINCENT**

Proud of his handiwork, he crosses to the spot where Julien was just taken. Julien's ragged book bag, his cap, and one of his crutches lay strewn on the street.

Vincent kicks the crutch aside, then bends and rifles through Julien's bag to see if there's anything worth seizing. Just some books, a pencil... wait - what's this?

A sketchbook. Curious, Vincent picks it up, and as he starts to flip through pages, we see on his face: he recognizes it.

A dark, puzzled look as he lifts his eyes, working over why Sara Blum's sketchbook would somehow be in Tourteau's bag... And all it once, it hits him.

VINCENT  
(darkly, to himself)  
The barn.

#### **INT. BARN - HAYLOFT - MORNING**

Sara stirs to the sound of the fluttering of wings. She sits up, finds her white bird has returned to its little perch.

Sara smiles at it, still buzzing from last night -- when something startles the white bird, and it takes flight.

Sara's puzzled -- when she hears a faint sound outside: a motorized whining, coming nearer...? Worried, Sara moves to the slats the bird just vacated, peers out...

SARA'S POV: A young man in a Milice uniform comes roaring down the road on a motorbike. Sara looks concerned --

-- then instantly alarmed when the rider looks up: Vincent.

#### **INT. LOCAL EGOUTIER'S ADMINISTRATION - LOCKERS - DAY**

Jean-Paul is changing into his sewer worker's uniform --

SEWER WORKER (O.S.)  
Jean-Paul!

He looks up to find the Sewer Worker who witnessed Julien's arrest hurrying over, lowering his voice:

SEWER WORKER (CONT'D)  
It's your son, Julien.

Jean-Paul immediately goes ashen --

**EXT. BARN - DAY**

Vincent has left his motorbike in the tall grass, marches quietly to the barn door -- then KICKS it in with his boot.

**INT. BARN - CONTINUOUS**

Vincent enters, stalking through the barn, automatic rifle in hand, a predatory grin on his handsome face.

**IN THE HAYLOFT**

Hiding in the bales, Sara holds her breath, terrified, listening to his boots clomping through the barn below.

**BELOW**

Vincent takes his time, savoring the hunt. He raises his gun and UNLEASHES A THUNDEROUS ROUND OF GUNFIRE into the old car, shattering the windows and punching holes in its rusty sides.

**IN THE HAYLOFT**

Sara shudders at the concussive noise, clutching herself tighter, when:

VINCENT (O.S.)  
(calling out, below)  
It's Sara, right? The little  
missing Jewess.

Sara's terror spiking, eyes gripped in fear...

**BELOW**

Vincent prowls, scanning the barn.

VINCENT (CONT'D)  
I know you're in here. Come out  
now and I won't hurt you, I swear.

Vincent's eyes land on the loft. Whatever's up there is concealed by the stacks of hay bales. Vincent smirks...

Then whips his gun up and fires a spray of automatic rounds up at the loft, the majority of them punching holes in the barn's ceiling. Dozens of light beams spill in from above.

**ON SARA**

Petrified. Beams strafe the shadows in which she's hidden. She peers up through the hay bales, listening in horror...

... to the sound of Vincent starting to climb up on the barrel that allows access to the loft...

**ON VINCENT**

Rifle strapped across his back, he reaches for the hayloft ledge to pull himself up --

-- when Sara's foot comes down hard on his knuckles!

VINCENT (CONT'D)

AH!

Vincent falls back down to the barn floor. Above him he can hear Sara scrambling --

**IN THE HAYLOFT**

Sara frantically climbs up a post and punches at the holes in the roof, creating a hole large enough to crawl up through...

She reaches up and does just that -- as around her more gunshots shred the hayloft and the roof!

**EXT. BARN - CONTINUOUS**

Sara bolts along the rooftop to the edge -- and JUMPS --

-- landing with a hard THUD on the muddy ground below. She leaps to her feet and takes off in a sprint when --

BANG! The barn door slams open behind her, then the sound of MORE GUNSHOTS! Sara refuses to glance back, sprinting with all her might toward the treeline beyond!

**EXT. WOODS (THE MERNUIT) - DAY**

Sara bolting through the maze of trees, nearly tumbling over roots, branches ripping at her arms.

Running... Running... Running... she gasps for breath, desperately searching for the best path to escape...

She clambers down an incline --

-- and abruptly freezes. Follow her gaze up ahead to find...

A LARGE WOLF. The ferocious-looking creature is rooting through something in the wet leaves, temporarily distracted.

Sara holds her breath, backing away as noiselessly as she can...

Then breaks into a run again, searching for another direction to flee... when she hears the sound of rapid boot-fall coming closer!

She looks around, terrified of being spotted --

-- she does the only thing she can: ducks behind the biggest tree she can find, her back pressed against its large trunk.

#### VINCENT

Jogs into view, automatic rifle raised. He scans the trees around him, knows she couldn't have gotten far.

VINCENT

You shouldn't have run, Jew girl!

He OPENS FIRE into the trees, shredding trunks, the gunshots echoing eerily throughout the Mernuit.

#### SARA

Shuts her eyes, knows it's only a matter of time before he finds her - and if she runs, he'll shoot her for sure...

#### VINCENT

Still firing with abandon, until the CLIK-CLIK-CLIK sound tells him his magazine is spent.

He ejects it, hunting in his belt for a fresh one --

-- when Sara bolts from behind the tree and makes a run for it! Vincent laughs cruelly and sprints after her, hot on her tail...

Sara running as hard as she can, stealing just a glance back - when her foot snags a root and she goes flying, hitting the ground hard! She frantically starts to pick herself up --

VINCENT (CONT'D)

Don't.

Sara freezes, peers up to find Vincent is only some 20 yards away. She's trapped. He stalks toward her, taking his time freeing his magazine from his belt, loading it into his weapon with an ominous CH-CHHUNK.

VINCENT (CONT'D)  
So. That's where you were all this  
time. Hiding in Tourteau's barn.  
(sneers)  
He'll have to answer for that.

Sara peers up at him, and somehow through her terror and  
despair, her anger fights through and she finds her voice:

SARA  
His name is Julien... And he saved  
your life.

Vincent frowns, what the hell's she talking about?

SARA (CONT'D)  
That day... at the cinema... you  
would have been shot dead if it  
wasn't for him.

Vincent scoffs - he doesn't believe her, nor does he care.

VINCENT  
(grimly)  
Get up.

Sara hesitates --

VINCENT (CONT'D)  
NOW!

She gets to her feet, glaring, scared but defiant.

VINCENT (CONT'D)  
Hands behind your head. Do it.

Sara raises her hands, puts them behind her head.

VINCENT (CONT'D)  
Turn around.  
(beat)  
I said TURN AROUND!

Sara stares back at him, realizes he's going to shoot her.

SARA  
Coward.

She turns her back to him, and takes a steadying breath,  
realizing she's about to die.

She hears Vincent's shallow breathing... the rustle of his  
gun against his shirt... a short inhalation as he raises its  
stock to shoot -- then another noise -- like a SNARL?

VINCENT HEARS IT TOO. Surprised, his eyes dart to the sound --

-- glimpsing for only a split second the huge wolf to his left! Vincent whips his gun toward the animal --

-- as the WOLF LUNGES, Vincent's gunfire too wild and too late as the wolf lands on him and sends him tumbling under its weight, its ferocious jaws gnashing at him --

SARA BOLTS FOR COVER behind the nearest tree, unable to watch as she hears the wolf mauling Vincent. Another quick burst of gunfire, an injured HOWL from the animal... and then she hears it limping away.

The Mernuit goes eerily still. Sara stays frozen a moment, then braves a look. She can just make out Vincent's body lying in the wet leaves.

Sara pads closer, can now see Vincent has been fatally mauled, gasping his dying breaths, eyes wide and unblinking.

Horrificed, Sara is about to flee -- when she sees something in the leaves where Vincent had first been knocked down: Julien's book bag?

Alarmed, she rushes to pick it up, finds her sketchbook inside. All at once, she puts it together and knows the worst has happened...

SARA (CONT'D)

Julien!

#### **EXT. FIELD - DAY**

The world is almost eerily tranquil, grass rustling in the breeze, the old stone barn visible in the distance... when Sara comes racing into view, running as hard as she can.

She blows right past the barn, not thinking of her own safety, not thinking of anything but Julien's welfare --

#### **EXT. STREET/ BEAUMIER'S MULTI-FAMILY HOME - DAY**

Sara races along the same street she's been observing for a year now, the one Julien takes home from school each day...

Up ahead is the Beaumier's home. Sara rushes across the street --

-- a CAR HORN BLARES as she's nearly hit by a farm truck hauling potatoes! Sara gasps, the DRIVER staring back at her suspiciously through his windshield.

Sara acts like she lives here, continues to the Beaumier's.

She tries the door. Locked. She BANGS twice. No answer.

She looks around -- spies a trellis along the side of the building, and a window open just a crack on the second floor.

She makes for it, careful to act casual as she steals a look back at the farmer's truck, now idling down the street.

#### **EXT. BEAUMIER'S MULTI-FAMILY HOME - SIDE OF THE BUILDING**

Sara scales up the trellis, nearly losing her footing. She makes it to the window, forces it open --

#### **INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS**

-- and slips inside. Silence. She peers around; she's never been in here before. Feeling something wet underfoot, she realizes her cut-up bare feet are leaving bloody footprints.

SARA  
Vivienne? Jean-Paul?

#### **INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER**

Sara searching. The house appears empty.

#### **INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER**

Still no sign of the Beaumiers. Sara tries another door -- it's locked. She tugs on it harder, but it won't give.

She turns away, and then notices something on the wall: a faded wedding photograph of a young couple we do not recognize - definitely not Vivienne and Jean-Paul...?

OLD MAN (O.S.)  
Stay where you are.

Sara freezes, turning her head to see MONSIEUR LAFLEUR a few feet away, an old shotgun in his frail hands trained on her.

#### **INT. MILICE HEADQUARTERS - DAY**

A frantic-looking Jean-Paul and Vivienne stand breathless before an impatient and evasive MILICE OFFICER.

VIVIENNE

Please -- we're begging you --

MILICE OFFICER

I just told you, there have been no arrests today.

JEAN-PAUL

You're lying!

The Officer glowers, starts to rise --

VIVIENNE

(scared)

Please -- we're just upset...

Vivienne tugs Jean-Paul away. She peers around, helpless and terrified, unsure where to turn --

YOUNG MAN (O.S.)

(under his breath)

Madame...

She glances up to find a young Officer staring furtively at her: it's Jerome, Vincent's pal, his expression tinged with guilt. He discreetly signals for them to follow him out --

#### **BY THE ENTRANCE**

Vivienne and Jean-Paul wait anxiously as Jerome joins them, his voice hushed and weighted by conscience.

JEROME

I know your son. He was taken this morning. I heard they put him on a transport truck to Aubervilliers along with some patients from the hospital...

Jean-Paul reaches for Vivienne as she chokes back a cry.

JEROME (CONT'D)

You can still save him. I know the men who took him. For the right money, they can be bribed.

#### **INT. BEAUMIER'S MULTI-FAMILY HOME - HALLWAY - DAY**

Sara and Monsieur Lafleur as we left them, the old man training his shotgun on a terrified Sara --

LAFLEUR

Not another step or I'll shoot.



SARA

Please...

-- when an old woman (MADAME LAFLEUR) steps into the hallway behind her husband, looking almost as fearful as Sara.

M. LAFLEUR

What are you doing here?

SARA

I'm -- I'm a friend of Julien Beaumier.

MME. LAFLEUR

What do you want with us?

SARA

Nothing, I -- I need to find Vivienne.

Sara takes a step closer and Lafleur waves his gun.

MME. LAFLEUR

Stay there!

SARA

Please!

M. LAFLEUR

Don't make me shoot you!

ANOTHER VOICE (O.S.)

Sara?

They all turn to find another OLD MAN (bearded, frailer) emerging from the locked door, another OLD WOMAN behind him. They're dressed in overcoats. The woman carries a valise.

Sara looks shell-shocked, and then she recognizes him:

SARA

...Rabbi Bernstein?

M. LAFLEUR

Bernstein, you know this girl?

MME. BERNSTEIN

This is Sara Blum. Her family lived down the street from us. Her father's a surgeon --

SARA

I - I don't understand --

RABBI BERNSTEIN

Lafleur, please - put the gun away.

Lafleur lowers his gun, exchanging a wary look with his wife.

M. LAFLEUR

We don't have time for this. He's waiting downstairs.

(to Bernsteins)

If you don't leave now we may not get another chance.

RABBI BERNSTEIN

Just a moment. Sara, what are you doing here?

SARA

The Beaumiers have been hiding me in their barn.

(to Lafleurs)

They thought you were informants for the Nazis.

M. LAFLEUR

Informants? We were afraid they might be.

RABBI BERNSTEIN

Sara, the Lafleurs have been hiding us in their attic for almost two years now. Today we're being smuggled out by the Armee Juive.

It starts to make sense to Sara; she's reeling when Mme. Bernstein approaches and wraps an arm around her.

MME. BERNSTEIN

You should come with us.

SARA

I can't. I have to find Vivienne. Julien's been arrested.

MME. LAFLEUR

What? That poor boy!

M. LAFLEUR

That must be why she left in such a hurry this morning.

SARA

What do you mean?

M. LAFLEUR

Jean-Paul picked her up in a car and they sped away.

Sara looks distraught.

M. LAFLEUR (CONT'D)  
Bernstein, if you have any hope of  
escaping, you need to go now.

MME. LAFLEUR  
We'll look after the girl until the  
Beaumiers return.

RABBI BERNSTEIN  
Sara? Are you sure you won't come?

She shakes her head no. The Bernsteins accept her choice.

M. LAFLEUR  
Good luck, old friend.

Bernstein turns to Lafleur and embraces him tightly. The Old  
Women do the same.

MME. LAFLEUR  
You'll write us when you get to  
Jerusalem.

RABBI BERNSTEIN  
God will remember your kindness.

M. LAFLEUR  
Vive l'humanite.

#### **INT. LAFLEUR HOME - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER**

The Lafleurs stand at the same window from which we'd seen  
them peering out before... watching as the Bernsteins are  
helped into the back of the same farmer's truck that nearly  
ran Sara down. The Driver conceals them in potato sacks.

In a moment, the Driver is back in the cab and driving away.

M. LAFLEUR  
Bernstein and I served in the  
infantry together in the Great War.

The couple turn to Sara, now seated at their table, no less  
distraught but helpless to do more than wait, busying herself  
by washing the blood from her feet in a small basin.

M. LAFLEUR (CONT'D)  
He's been like a brother to me.

MME. LAFLEUR  
Sara, those gunshots we heard  
earlier...

SARA  
It was a Milice. The same one who  
had Julien arrested.  
(quieter)  
But he's gone now.

Mme. Lafleur senses Sara's trauma, about to ask her more --

M. LAURENT  
(peering out again)  
It's Vivienne!

Sara leaps to her feet, races to the window...

ACROSS THE STREET she can see Vivienne running for the barn.  
Sara tugs open the window --

SARA  
Vivienne!

Vivienne halts, takes her a second to realize where Sara's  
shouting from. She's stunned to find Sara standing in the  
Lafleur's window, the old couple on either side of her.

CUT TO:

**INT. LAFLEUR HOME - KITCHEN - DAY**

Vivienne looks utterly devastated as we finishes explaining  
to Sara and the Lafleurs:

VIVIENNE  
Jean-Paul went to ask his foreman  
to loan him the money for a bribe.  
I ran back here to check on Sara.  
(squeezes Sara's hand)  
Thank God you're safe.

The old couple share a quick look.

M. LAFLEUR  
How much money do you need?

VIVIENNE  
Much more than we have.

Mme. Lafleur springs to her feet.

MME. LAFLEUR  
With this we can help.

She reaches into a cupboard, takes down a tin box. She opens the lid, revealing a wad of bills.

Vivienne's eyes well, overwhelmed with gratitude.

M. LAFLEUR  
We'll take my car.

**EXT. STREET - DAY**

Vivienne hurries into the passenger seat of Lafleur's old Citroën as he starts it. In a moment they're speeding away...

**INT. LAFLEUR HOME - ATTIC - DAY**

Sara stands at a window, anxiously watching the old Citroën disappear from view. The street is unsettlingly quiet again.

The only sound is Sara's breathing as she stares out, stricken. We see Mme Lafleur outside picking up the motorcycle and rolling in into the barn.

Sara finally steps away from the window. Peers around this small space where the Bernsteins were hiding for two years.

**EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - DAY**

A military truck climbs a steep and snaking road.

**UP AHEAD**

we see a MILITARY BLOCKADE coming into view.

As the truck nears, the Nazi soldiers stationed there step forward with weapons ready, halting the truck.

The MILICE DRIVER rolls his window down.

BLOCKADE COMMANDER  
Road's closed by order of the SS.

MILICE DRIVER  
Our orders are to transport these men to Aubervilliers.

The Blockade Commander eyes the driver irritably.

BLOCKADE COMMANDER  
What idiot ordered that? The prison in Aubervilliers is too crowded as it is!

MILICE DRIVER

Sir, they were taken from the hospital in Dannevilliers.

(confides)

Most are from the loony bin.

BLOCKADE COMMANDER

The hospital?

MILICE DRIVER

To make room for wounded Germans.

The Blockade Commander frowns.

BLOCKADE COMMANDER

Wait here.

Through the windshield the Driver observes the Commander march back to his men, orders one to hand him a radio...

**INT. MILITARY TRUCK - CARGO HOLD - CONTINUOUS**

We find a collection of HOSPITAL PATIENTS, almost twenty in all, crammed in here. Some appear mentally ill; others are visibly infirm. Among them we find Julien, looking scared.

NERVOUS PATIENT

I don't like this. Why are we stopping?

OLDER PATIENT

You there. Boy.

Julien glances up.

OLDER PATIENT (CONT'D)

You all right?

Julien hesitates, then shakes his head no. The Older Patient regards him kindly, about to say something of comfort --

-- when the panel doors are pulled open, and harsh daylight spills in. The German Commander is standing there, two of his TROOPS beside him, as well as the truck's Driver.

GERMAN COMMANDER

Okay, everybody out.

OLDER PATIENT

What's going on?

BANDAGED PATIENT  
We were told we were being  
transferred to Aubervilliers.

GERMAN COMMANDER  
You are, but this road is closed,  
so you're being diverted. Best to  
take a bathroom break now.

Julien tenses as he sees their Milice Driver drop his eyes  
guiltily. He realizes they're being lied to --

GERMAN TROOP  
Let's go. Out! Move it!

Julien looks to the Older Patient, who appears gravely  
worried as well.

The first of the prisoners nevertheless begin to climb out.  
Julien has no choice but to follow, using only his one  
remaining crutch to walk.

#### **INT. LAFLEUR HOME - ATTIC - DAY**

Sara as we left her; terrified for Julien... when she sees  
something at the little window that surprises her...

THE WHITE BIRD. It's flying over her barn, just visible in  
the distance. The sight of it brings a worried, sad smile to  
her face. As if its mere presence gives her some hope...

Staring out at the bird soaring farther away, she's moved to  
quietly sing, her voice trembling, almost like a prayer:

SARA  
Little bird, little bird,  
How high will you fly?  
As high as the sky,  
As the sky above...

#### **EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - CONTINUOUS**

The Guards wait for the last of the Prisoners to dismount.  
Julien can see the other German Guards by the blockade eyeing  
them disdainfully; one of them smirks.

Julien glances back at their Milice Driver, who still refuses  
to look at them...?

OLDER PATIENT (O.S.)  
(a harrowed whisper)  
They're going to shoot us.

Julien turns to him, alarmed.

GERMAN COMMANDER  
To the woods! All of you!

The group begins to pace fearfully toward the woods ahead.

**EXT. WOODS - MOMENTS LATER**

The Prisoners now marching between the trees, trailed by the Commander and his two Troops.

A few of the prisoners are starting to cry, aware of their fates. Others steal terrified glances back at the officers.

A BEARDED PATIENT looks determined, however; he sneaks a low whisper to the Patient beside him:

BEARDED PATIENT  
There's nineteen of us and three of them. If we all run at once, some of us would have a chance.

The other PATIENT considers this, then nods grimly.

BEARDED PATIENT (CONT'D)  
Tell the others. On my say.

The Patient inconspicuously slows a beat, then whispers inaudibly to the man beside him.

BLOCKADE GUARD  
No talking!

But as the group continues deeper into the woods, we see that word is slowly managing to spread among the prisoners.

Word reaches the Older Patient, who glances uneasily at Julien hobbling on one crutch. A beat, then he whispers:

OLDER PATIENT  
How fast can you run like that?

Julien peers back at him...

**EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - DAY**

The Lafleurs' car comes racing up the winding road. The remaining Guards at the roadblock hurry out to stop them.

The passenger door opens and Vivienne leaps out.



VIVIENNE  
Please! My son is in that truck!

BORDER GUARD  
Not anymore. They continued on  
foot.

Vivienne sees the Driver eyeing her as he smokes, and  
instantly she knows what this means. Gripped by terror:

VIVIENNE  
No, no please -- I have money --

She desperately waves a fistful of bills at the Guards.

VIVIENNE (CONT'D)  
Money for his release! Please!

The Guards exchange wary glances. One of them nods to  
another, who reaches out and takes her money.

GUARD  
Follow me.

She gasps relief, quickly follows the Guard toward the trees.

#### **EXT. WOODS - CONTINUOUS**

The Prisoners even deeper in the woods now. The Guards  
exchanging looks, their hands tighter on their gun stocks.

GERMAN COMMANDER  
Walk to that thicket up ahead. You  
can do your business there.

#### **ON JULIEN**

His gaze shifting from his captors to his fellow prisoners,  
all of whom are staring dead ahead now, feigning obedience.

Julien looks breathless, struggling on his crutch as he sees  
the Bearded Prisoner steal a furtive look to the others.

It's nearly time. Julien cranes his neck as if to take one  
last look at the trees and the clear blue sky... when the  
most unexpected thing happens. He cracks a small smile.  
Follow his gaze up to see --

A WHITE BIRD flying overhead.

**INT. LAFLUER HOME - ATTIC - CONTINUOUS**

Sara as she was, singing very quietly to herself:

SARA  
Little bird, little bird...

SARA/JULIEN (V.O.)  
How fast will you go?

**EXT. WOODS - CONTINUOUS**

Watching the white bird soar over, Julien is somehow moved to quietly sing under his breath a snippet of the song as well.

JULIEN/ SARA (V.O.)  
As fast as a crow,  
As fast as a dove...

The air is charged as the group enters the thicket; we can feel the prisoners about to make their run for it --

OLDER PATIENT  
(whispers)  
Good luck, boy.

**EXT. WOODS (FARTHER BACK) - CONTINUOUS**

Vivienne running, desperate to catch them in time, the Border Guard annoyed at having to keep up with her...

**EXT. WOODS - THICKET - CONTINUOUS**

The Prisoners in the midst of the thicket, Julien seems mysteriously calmer now, as if the presence of the white bird above has reminded him of Sara...

BEARDED PRISONER  
NOW!

The Germans look shocked as the Prisoners suddenly make a run for it en masse, bolting into the trees in all directions!

The Commander barks an order and the Guards open fire on the escapees in a punishing barrage of AUTOMATIC GUNFIRE --

**EXT. WOODS (FARTHER BACK) - CONTINUOUS**

Jolted by the sudden GUNSHOTS echoing from up ahead, Vivienne goes white as a sheet, eyes wide in terror --

VIVIENNE  
NOOOOOOO!!!

**INT. LAFLUER HOME - ATTIC - CONTINUOUS**

As if reacting subconsciously, tears begin to flow down Sara's cheeks as she keeps softly singing through her fear:

SARA  
Little bird, little bird...

**EXT. WOODS - THICKET - CONTINUOUS**

Julien running as fast as his legs allow, forcing himself to fight through their limitations as GUNFIRE RAGES around him.

The Older Patient falls dead up ahead.

**PUSHING TIGHTER ON JULIEN'S FACE**

He's willing himself to run harder... to flee... and now the GUNFIRE FADES TO SILENCE in his ears, until the only sound we hear is his labored breathing -- and:

SARA (V.O.)  
(singing softly)  
How far will you see?

Bullets shred a tree trunk to his right, but he ignores it, just keeps running as hard as he possibly can...

SARA (V.O.)  
As far as I wish...

A glimmer of hope in Julien's eyes, almost as if he can hear her singing. Transcendence seems just within reach...

SARA (V.O.)  
For now I am fr--

BANG! A sudden, single GUNSHOT RINGS OUT.

Julien falls out of frame as the world goes totally SILENT.

**INT. WOODS (FARTHER BACK) - CONTINUOUS**

TOTAL AND UTTER SILENCE as we see Vivienne collapsing to the forest floor, screaming noiselessly...

**INT. LAFLUER HOME - ATTIC - CONTINUOUS**

TOTAL AND UTTER SILENCE as Sara slumps against a wall, sits and hugs her knees to her chest, nothing more to do but wait.

She stays like this. Waiting... Waiting... Waiting...

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)

*They never found Julien's body.*

**EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - LATE DAY**

Monsieur Lafleur looks stricken as he struggles to help a hysterical Vivienne back into his car, the Nazis shouting angrily at her, their guns waving.

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)

*The Nazis did not let Vivienne get any closer. In fact, they quickly denied a shooting had even taken place.*

**EXT. BEAUMIER'S MULTI-FAMILY HOME - TWILIGHT**

Lafluer's car rumbles into view. Slows to a halt.

**INT. LAFLEUR HOME - ATTIC - NIGHT**

The sound of a door being unlocked, then opened... to reveal Sara pacing in the center of the room. She looks up. The moment she sees Vivienne and Jean-Paul's devastated expressions in the doorway, she goes stock still.

The Beaumiers slowly approach Sara, Vivienne cradling her in her arms as Sara begins to sob uncontrollably.

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)

*The Beaumiers held on to the hope that perhaps somehow Julien had escaped, but they knew better.*

**INT. BEAUMIER'S HOME - JULIEN'S ROOM - DAY**

Sara moves through Julien's room, cherishing every object he left behind. His whittling knife, his Edison biography. But it's the Charlie Chaplin lobby card that brings her to tears.

GRAND-MÈRE

*Somehow they put aside their immeasurable sorrow to take care of*  
(MORE)

GRAND-MÈRE (CONT'D)  
*me. I stayed with them through the  
end of the war. Hidden, of course.*

**INT. BEAUMIER'S HOME - KITCHEN - DAY**

Vivienne, Jean-Paul and Sara listen intently to the radio.

RADIO ANNOUNCER  
Allied troops have gathered at the  
Arc de Triomphe, to the cheers of a  
grateful Paris. General De Gaulle  
announced that he will move his  
headquarters into the War Ministry,  
and has requested the assistance of  
the American infantry in  
maintaining order in the city...

Jean-Paul wraps an arm around Vivienne. Sara can see that  
even in their joy there is immeasurable sadness.

**EXT. AUBERVILLIERS AUX BOIS - STREETS - LATE DAY**

Celebrations in the crowded streets. From the oldest to the  
youngest, people hug each other, laugh and cry.

For the first time in almost two years, Sara walks among  
them, the Beaumiers behind her; she no longer needs to hide,  
yet there's a timidity in her movements, a lingering distrust  
and a deep loneliness even amongst the revelers.

She spies familiar faces like Madame Ballou's. Sara looks  
conflicted, but has been through too much to begrudge anyone.  
And then she sees something up ahead, and slows.

VIVIENNE  
Sara?

SARA  
I'll be right back.

**EXT. BLUM FAMILY FLAT - LATE DAY**

Sara arrives at the steps of her old building. Peers up.

**INT. BLUM FAMILY FLAT - LIVING ROOM - LATE DAY**

Sara enters her family's home... to find it was ransacked  
long ago. Nothing of monetary value remains; the windows are  
cracked, and a layer of dust coats every surface.

Sara looks sorrowful but unsurprised. She moves through the rooms, taking it all in -- then pauses, a flicker of relief to find an old photo album tossed in a corner.

She carefully picks it up, flips through the pages of photos. Tears flood her eyes as she stares at herself at age thirteen, beaming between her two loving parents.

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)  
*When the war was finally over, it  
 was expected that life would return  
 to normal. And I suppose for some,  
 it may have.*

**EXT. BEAUMIER'S MULTI-FAMILY HOME - MORNING**

Vivienne hugs Sara goodbye as she departs with her book bag.

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)  
*I continued to live with the  
 Beaumiers, who'd become like  
 family.*

**EXT. ECOLE LAFAYETTE - COURTYARD - DAY**

Sara approaches uncertainly, feeling exposed. It all feels a little unreal.

She's spotted by Mariann and Sophie, who seem equally uncertain how to act. They smile nervously, slowly approach her. Sara manages to smile back as they arrive before her.

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)  
*I was glad to be back at school,  
 but everything felt different now.*

**INT. ECOLE LAFAYETTE - CLASSROOM - DAY**

At least 1/4 of the desks are empty. Sara looks distracted as Pastor Robert teaches his class.

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)  
*The weeks passed in a fog. Try as  
 I might, I couldn't stop thinking  
 about all that had happened to me.  
 And to Julien.*

Her gaze lingers on the empty desk in the spot where Julien always used to sit.

GRAND-MÈRE  
*Then one day, in early November...*

**EXT. ECOLE LAFAYETTE - COURTYARD - DAY**

Kids filing out of school, bundled in coats. Sara chatting with Mariann and Sophie, feigning a good mood as she listens to Sophie gossip about some boy she likes -- when Sara stops dead in her tracks, staring ahead in utter amazement...

**REVERSE ON THE FRONT GATE**

There, standing before her, is her father. Max's hair is grayer now, he looks thinner, but the smile on his face tells us whatever he's suffered has been worth it to find her.

Sara rushes to him, overcome with joy, leaping into his arms as they embrace tightly, both of them tearful.

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)  
*It was Papa. He was back!*

**EXT. ECOLE LAFAYETTE - SCHOOL GROUNDS - DAY**

Sara and Max sit on a bench, Max filling her in, unable to stop himself from hugging her every other minute.

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)  
*He said that he was still looking for Maman, that he and another doctor had evaded the round up by hiding in the morgue.*

MAX  
 ...I finally made it to the Mernuit and joined the Maquis for a time. They smuggled me across the border into Switzerland...

**INT. BEAUMIER'S HOME - KITCHEN - EVENING**

Sara and Max talking with Vivienne and Jean-Paul, Max thanking them profusely.

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)  
*I introduced him to the Beaumiers, who he could not stop thanking.*

As Vivienne speaks, Sara can't help but notice a look on her father's face, an effort to conceal a profound sadness.

**INT. BEAUMIER'S HOME - BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Max sits on the edge of Sara's bed, gripped by emotion as he lowers his head and starts to explain something:

GRAND-MERE (V.O.)  
*That night, Papa took me aside.*

MAX  
 Sara... there's something I need to tell you...

GRAND-MERE (V.O.)  
*Somehow I knew it was about Maman.  
 He had tried to keep the truth from me, but realized that he could not.*

**EXT. AUBERVILLIERS-AUX-BOIS - OUTDOOR MARKET - DAY**

Rose is buying some vegetables from a stall, when she notices TWO GENDARMES checking a list. She swallows, terrified...

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)  
*He explained that on the day of the round up, Maman had been arrested.*

One of the Gendarmes looks up and his eyes meet Rose's -- Rose suddenly drops her groceries and makes a run for it, the Gendarmes chasing after, shoving people out of their way.

**EXT. AUSCHWITZ CAMP - ARRIVAL PLATFORM - DAY**

A *Reichsbahn* consisting of freight and cattle cars grinds to a halt. HUNDREDS OF JEWISH MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN are herded off the train, yellow stars sewn to their clothes.

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)  
*She was put on a train to Drancy,  
 and from there sent to the  
 concentration camp in Auschwitz.*

**EXT. AUSCHWITZ CAMP - DAY**

The prisoners look around fearfully, clocking the sinister barbed wire, the forbidding rows of barracks. Among these faces, we find Rose, peering around her, utterly forlorn.

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)  
*He didn't know how long she was kept a prisoner there.*



**TIGHT ON ROSE'S FACE**

as she takes a last glance behind her, toward us --

GRAND-MÈRE

*Only that that is where she died.*

**EXT. BEAUMIER'S HOME - BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Sara visible in the window, weeping in her father's arms.

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)

*I cried all that night, and for many days that followed.*

**EXT. DANNEVILLIERS - TRAIN STATION - DAY**

The Beaumiers hug Sara tightly, Max standing beside them, gripping two suitcases.

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)

*Papa and I stayed with the Beaumiers for a short while, until he found work at a hospital in Paris, the city that would become my new home.*

Vivienne fights back tears as she kisses Sara's cheeks.

SARA

I'm going to miss you.

VIVIENNE

You will always have a mother in me, *cherie*. I love you.

**EXT. TRAIN PLATFORM - DAY**

Vivienne and Jean-Paul wave to Sara and Max as they depart.

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)

*I came back to visit the Beaumiers often, even as a grown woman.*

**INT. PARISIAN SYNAGOGUE - DAY**

A beautiful SARA (AGE 25) stands with Max on her right, and Vivienne and Jean-Paul on her left, as the three of them walk her down the aisle.

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)  
*And when I married your  
 grandfather, they, along with my  
 Papa, walked me down the aisle.*

**INT. DANNEVILLIERS OUTSKIRTS - DAY**

SARA (AGE 40) walks along the same road she once walked with Julien, only beside her now is her 14 year old DAUGHTER and 9 year old SON.

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)  
*You forget many things in life, but  
 you never forget kindness.*

**EXT. DANNEVILLIERS - CEMETERY - DAY**

Sara lays flowers beside a grave that reads: "ICI REPOSENT VIVIENNE BEAUMIER ET JEAN-PAUL BEAUMIER, MERE ET PERE DE JULIEN AUGUSTE BEAUMIER."

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)  
*Like love, it stays with you  
 forever.*

Sara smiles poignantly, taking each of her children's hands.

GRAND-MÈRE (V.O.)  
*And I suppose that, mon cher...*

**INT. ALBANS' APARTMENT - DINING ROOM - NIGHT**

Grand-Mère's smile identical at age 95.

GRAND-MÈRE  
 ...is the end of my story.

Julian peers back at her, in awe of all she's been through. Moved in a way that is likely quite unusual for him.

GRAND-MÈRE (CONT'D)  
 Did I upset you?

JULIAN  
 Yes, but - in a good way.

GRAND-MÈRE  
 And do you understand why I needed  
 to tell you now? Julian?

Julian nods, gripped by a flood of conflicted emotions.  
Grand-Mère rises, crosses to him -- and he hugs her tight.

She pats his back, proud of his response. O.S. we can hear the sound of the front door opening.

GRAND-MÈRE (CONT'D)  
Ah! Your parents are home.

She rises, starts to clear the dishes.

JULIAN  
It's okay, I've got them.

GRAND-MÈRE  
*Merci, mon cher.*

She squeezes his hand, then exits the dining room; in a moment we hear her entering the foyer, greeting her son and daughter-in-law, asking how their "soiree" was.

Julian picks up the dishes, about to carry them into the kitchen, when his eye lands on something...

ONE OF A FEW OLD FRAMED PHOTOGRAPHS on the far wall. He sets the dishes back down and approaches... There, in faded black and white, is that photo of 13-year-old Sara with her smiling parents that we'd seen in the album she recovered from her family's ransacked home.

Julian stares, moved by the girl his age smiling back at him in the photo, unaware of all that life has in store for her.

#### **EXT. YATES ACADEMY - MORNING**

Students filing in to school...

#### **INT. YATES ACADEMY - HALLWAY - DAY**

We find Julien in his uniform, walking past the lockers, ignored by some, snickered at by others. But he seems less bothered by the stares now; instead searching the crowded hall -- until he sees who he's looking for...

CAROLINE, the girl we met at the start of our film. She's standing at a folding table with two other kids, a hand-drawn **"RALLY FOR IMMIGRANT RIGHTS IN BRYANT PARK THIS SATURDAY!"** poster taped between the table legs.

JULIAN (O.S.)  
Hey.

Caroline glances up, surprised to see Julian here.

JULIAN (CONT'D)  
I don't know if it's too late to  
sign up or--

CAROLINE  
Yes! I mean, no -- it's not too  
late! Definitely not. Here!

She hands him a sign-up sheet. Only a handful of names.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)  
This is Sean and Jessie.

JULIAN  
Julian.

SEAN and JESSIE return muted but welcoming hellos. Julian glances down at the rally flyers, and a phrase catches his eye: "**SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKERS!**" Caroline notices, cringes:

CAROLINE  
Yeah, that's - something we're  
still working on.

Julien considers this a beat, then has an inspired idea:

JULIAN  
Maybe I can help with that.

The three kids look back at him, puzzled...

CAROLINE (PRE-LAP)  
*You know her for her incredibly  
influential body of work...*

#### **EXT. BRYANT PARK - EVENT/ STAGE/ PODIUM - DAY**

THOUSANDS OF ATTENDEES, mostly TEENS, fill the great lawn, many holding signs that read "NO WALLS, NO BANS!" "KEEP FAMILIES TOGETHER," etc.

CAROLINE (OVER P.A.)  
...which can be found in museums  
from here to the Louvre...

#### **AT THE PODIUM**

We find Caroline addressing the huge crowd.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

But today, she's here to speak about her experience as a Holocaust survivor, and tell us about the pain and hope that has shaped her life. Please join me in welcoming, the one and only... Sara Blum!

The crowd erupts in cheers and applause as Grand-Mère makes her way to the podium. She quietly thanks Caroline, then continues to the microphone as the crowd's cheering swells.

#### AT THE SIDE OF THE STAGE

We find Julian in an event t-shirt, beaming proudly up at her, surrounded by some potential new friends.

#### BACK TO GRAND-MÈRE

As she continues for the podium, we now see she is squeezing something in her hand, like a talisman: it's the small carved bird that Julien made for her birthday all those years ago.

She glances down at it, then sets it down on the podium and peers out at the sea of young faces before her.

GRAND-MÈRE

*Bonjour, mes amis jeunes.*

A renewed burst of applause and cheers. Grand-Mère looks momentarily overcome. She stares out across their hopeful faces, waving at her, cheering up at her...

...when she catches her breath.

There, in their midst, is Julien Beaumier, age 15, looking just as he did the last night Sara saw him. He smiles back at her. Proud of her.

Fortified, Grand-Mère returns an emotional smile, and begins:

GRAND-MÈRE (CONT'D)

I want to thank my grandson for inviting me today... and to thank you all for speaking out. Because when we see inhumanity, we must speak out. It is the only way to be sure that what happened to me, and millions like me, will never happen again... Let me hear you say it: Never again!

CROWD

Never again!

GRAND-MÈRE  
Louder, so the whole world can hear  
us... Never again!

CROWD  
NEVER AGAIN!

GRAND-MÈRE  
Never again!

CROWD  
NEVER AGAIN!!

The crowd erupts as we soar up and over this inspiring sea of young people... to whom Grand-Mère now begins to tell her story, the sound fading as we soar higher...

Higher over the park... higher... until we're looking at the city's skyline, the sun shining brightly, the sky a glorious blue... when A WHITE BIRD enters frame.

We follow it on its journey toward the horizon, the city receding in the distance, the Statue of Liberty like a beacon far below. The white bird spreads its wings, and soars higher... higher... higher...

FADE OUT.

The End