



INVASION

Author/Illustrator: Yolanda Chetwynd — Editor: Dave Boyd — Tablet Prep: Nancy Breslin

PREFACE



I have reached the age that my grandmother was when her first grandchild was born. This has made me become even more interested in history. About four years ago, Robert de Bosmelet encouraged me to draw and write my version of this story. Then, a year ago, I had an idea to make an enhanced graphic novel – a novel in which the reader could click on various items and people within panels so that contextual background information would appear. This method of storytelling helps to keep words to a minimum, while allowing for in-depth storytelling if the reader chooses. I have placed the additional information at the end of this comic, so that it can be browsed separately if desired. Look for this symbol to click on within the comic.

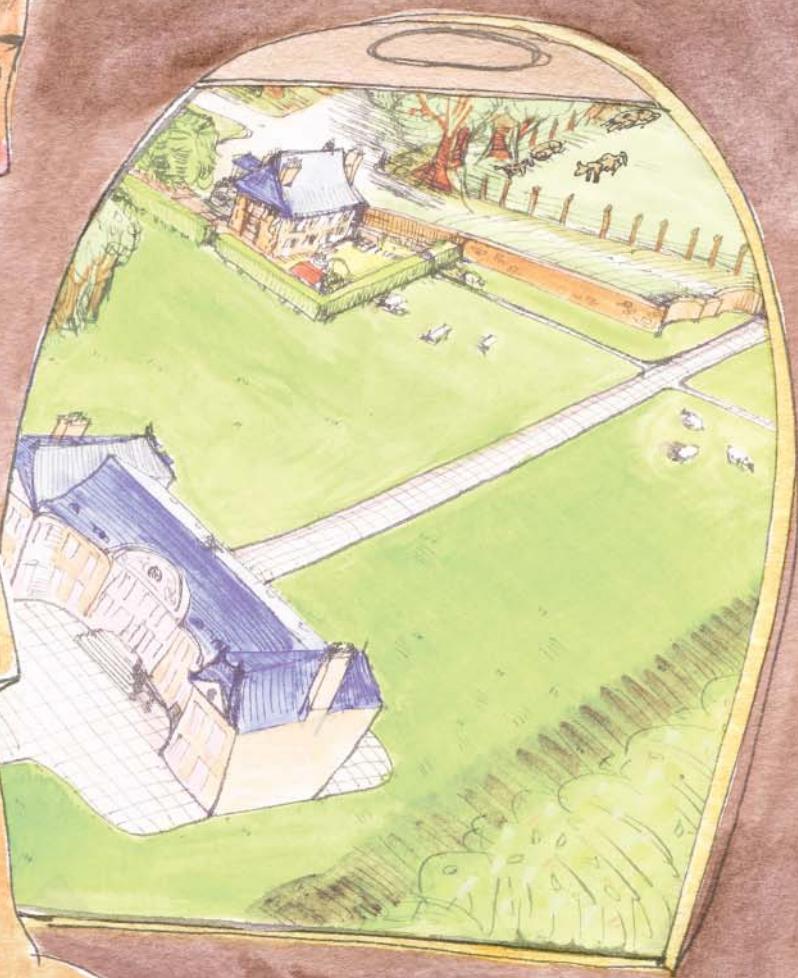


My admiration for my grandmother has grown as I explore her life and work. She could have taken the easy route and lead a pampered life, but instead she used her life force to clean up the mess that the Second World War had left. At the Château de Bosmelet, her home before the war, Allied forces had bombed the structure by accident while trying to rid the area of V1 and V2 bomb launch pads. Bosmelet, as it stands rebuilt today, is a monument to peace and enduring love.

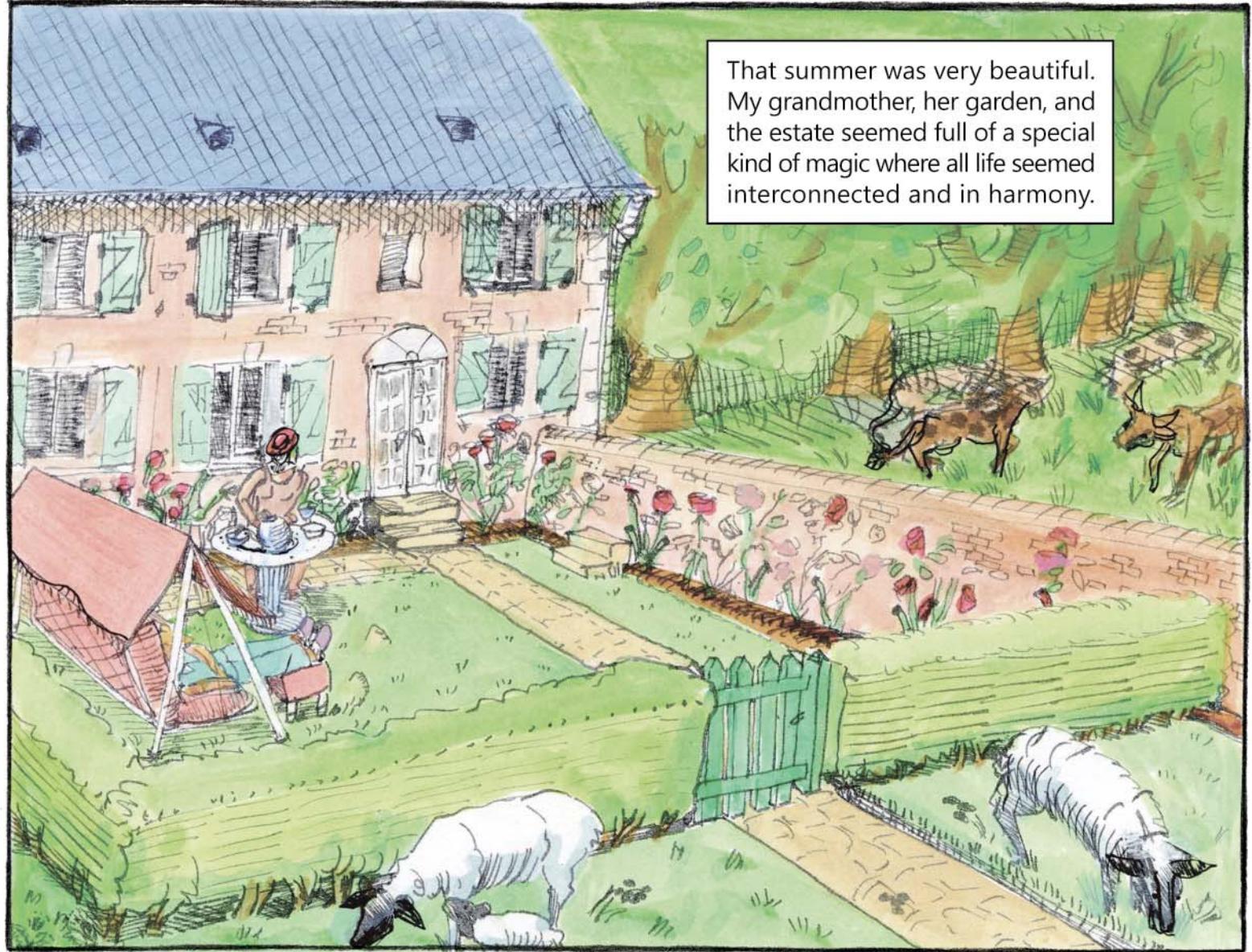
This vision has been made possible by a few special people and organizations: a grant from the Delaware Arts Council, the talents of my dear friend Nancy Breslin, and freshly minted illustrator David Boyd (BFA '12, University of the Arts).



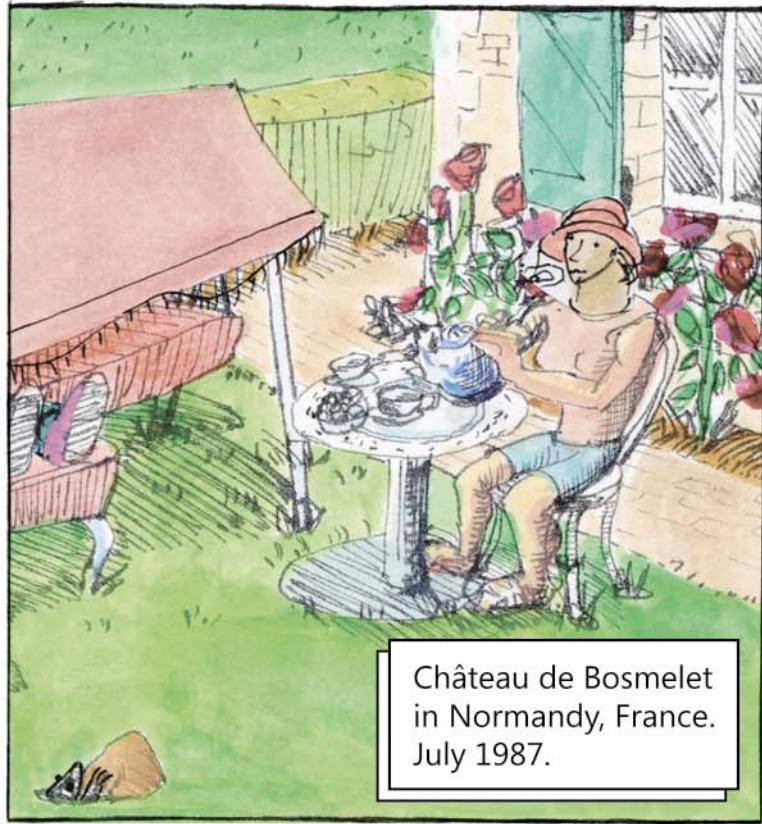
Twenty-five years ago, I was preparing to embark on a new life in America with my fiancé Suresh Advani. It was then that I heard that my grandmother had been diagnosed with lung cancer.



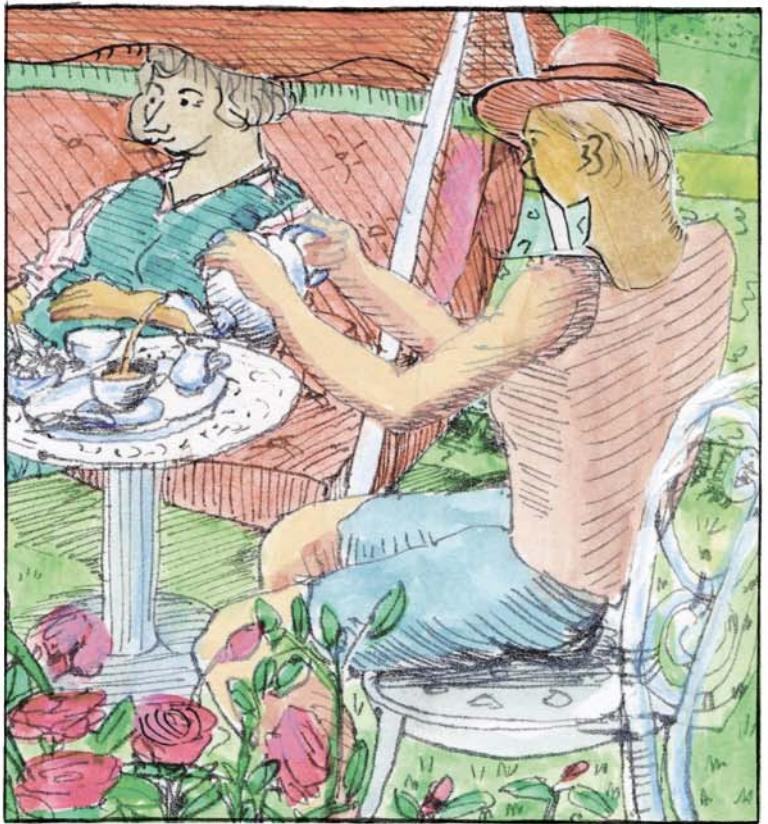
She and I were very close, so I was happy to go out and spend three weeks with her.

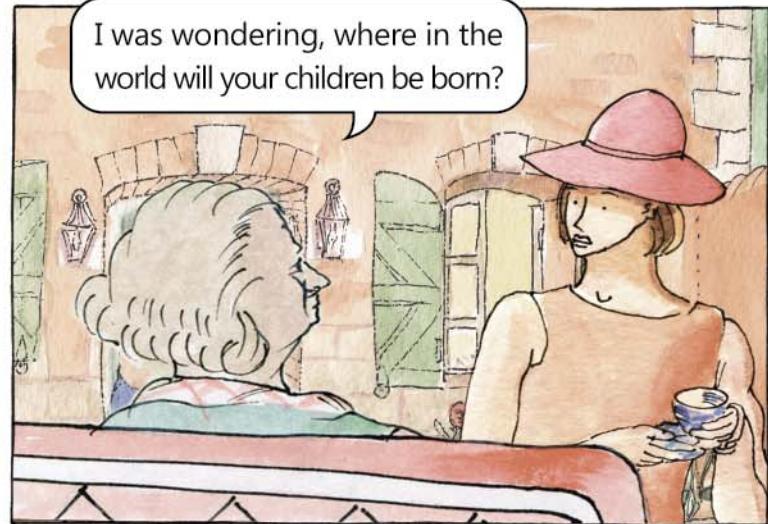
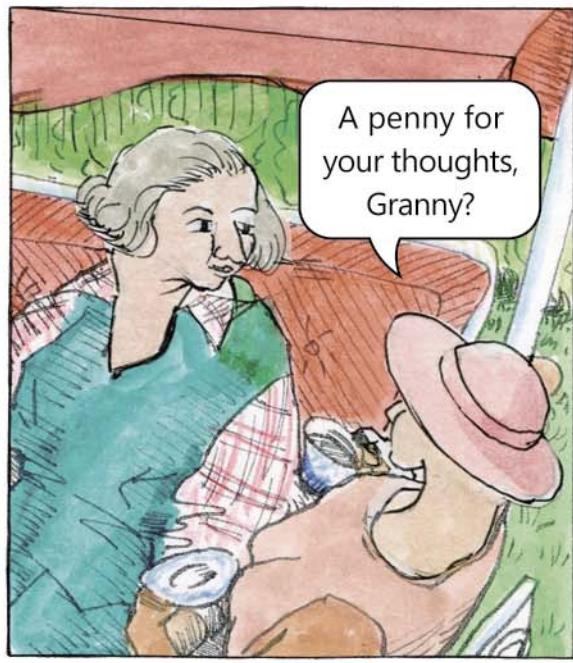


That summer was very beautiful. My grandmother, her garden, and the estate seemed full of a special kind of magic where all life seemed interconnected and in harmony.



Château de Bosmelet
in Normandy, France.
July 1987.

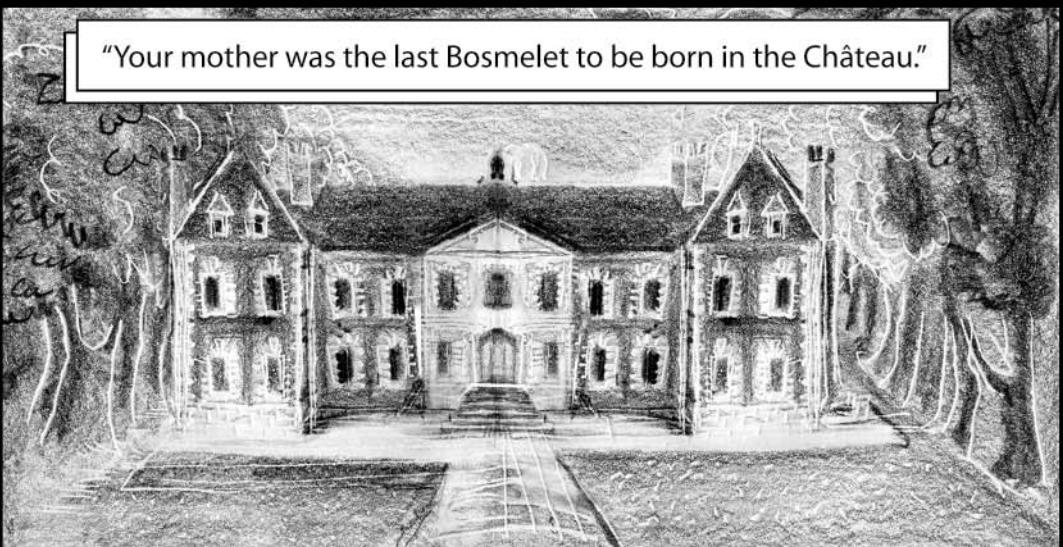




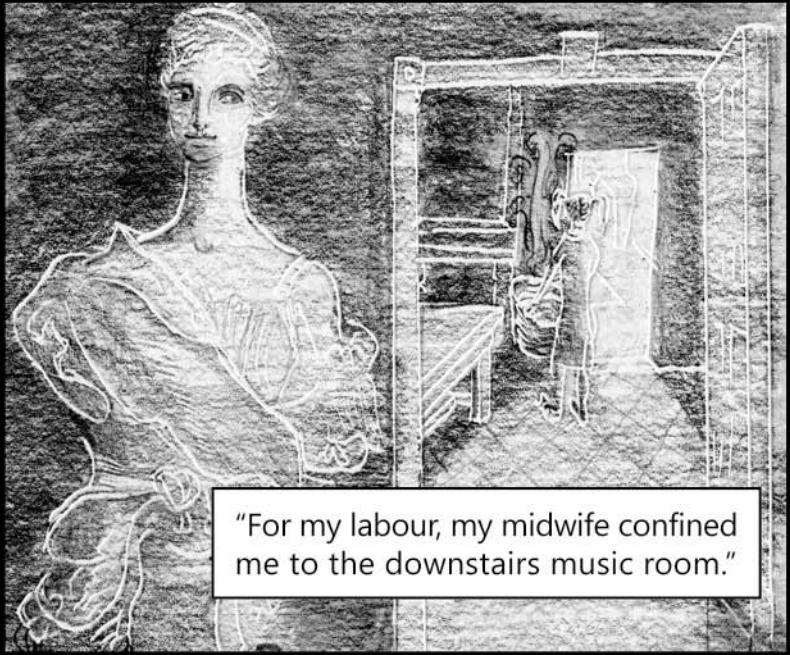
My grandmother began the story of my mother's birth forty-seven years and six months earlier.

It was January 1, 1940, on a cold winter night.

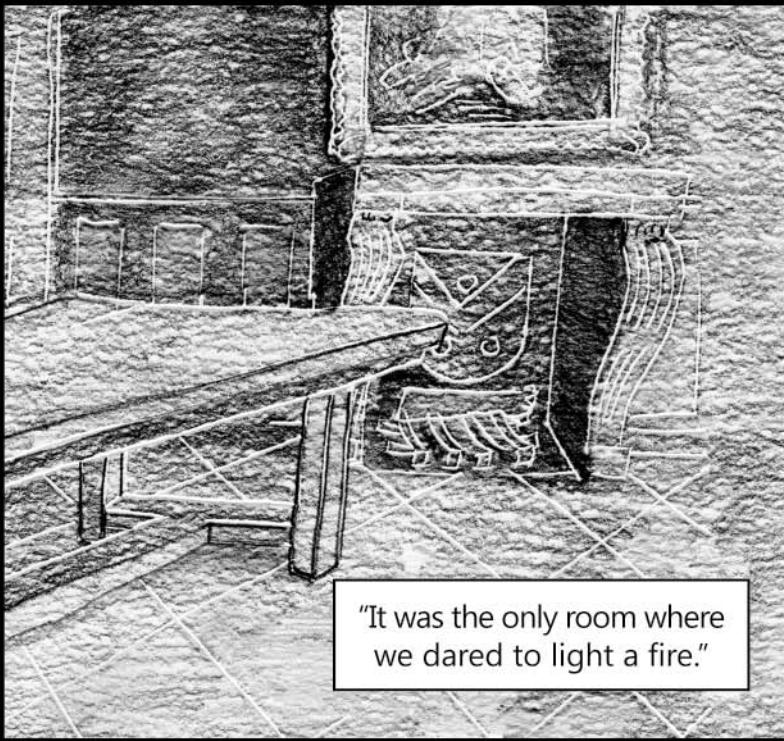
"Your mother was the last Bosmelet to be born in the Château."



"The war was raging. The windows of the Château were blacked out because we were afraid of German air raids."



"For my labour, my midwife confined me to the downstairs music room."



"It was the only room where we dared to light a fire."

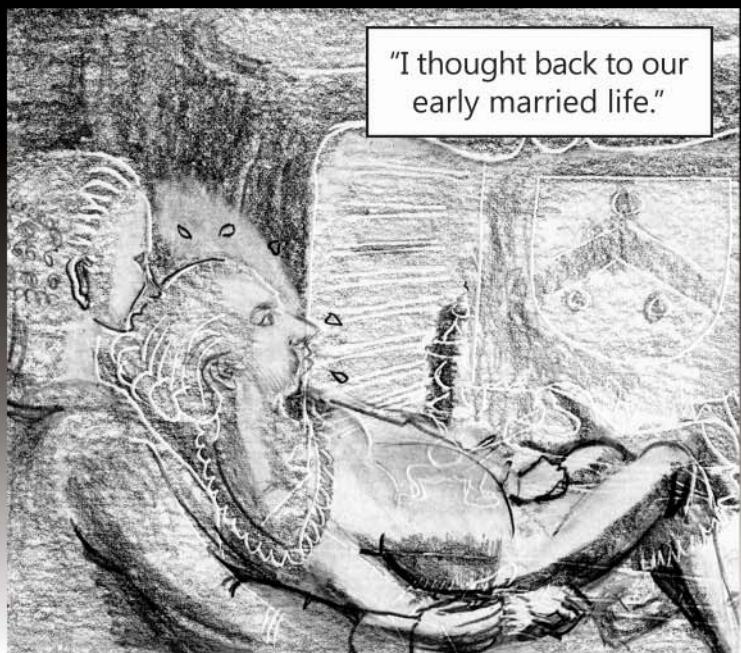




"There were no men around, as *they* had all gone to war."



"My handsome husband Pierre Soyer de Bosmelet was gone like the others."



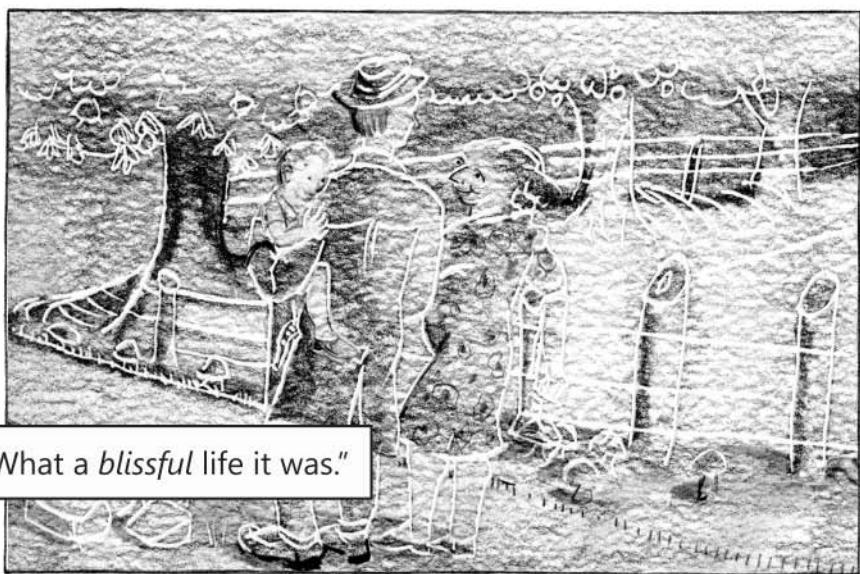
"I thought back to our early married life."

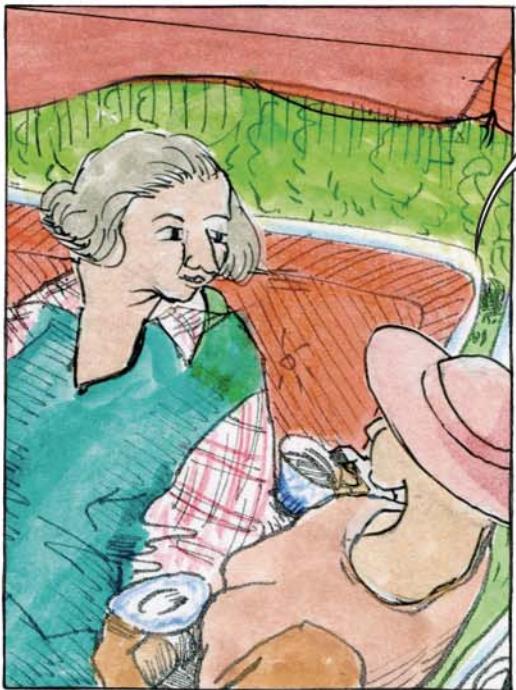


"Our perfect son, Gentien, was two years old."



"What a *blissful* life it was."



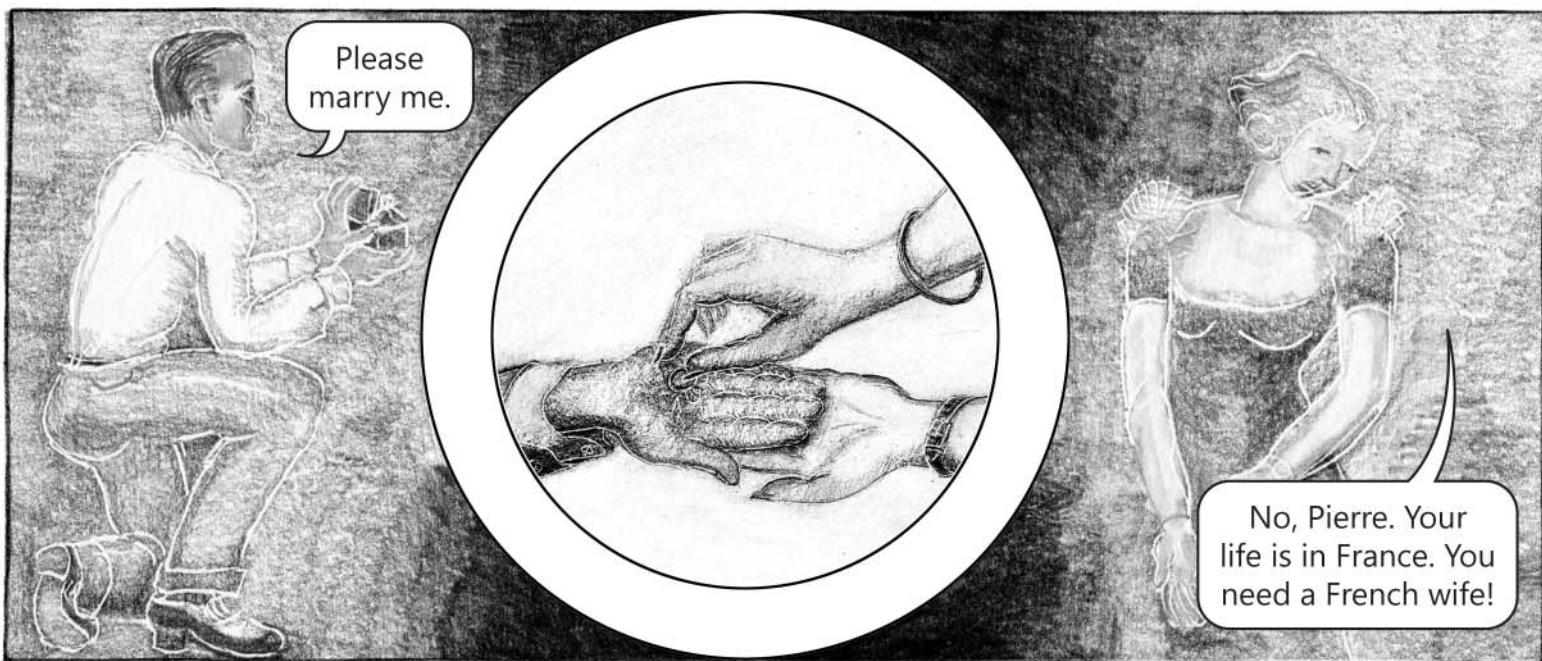


How did you know that Pierre was the one?

I knew I wanted his children.

But we had a stormy courtship.

And marriage and separation.



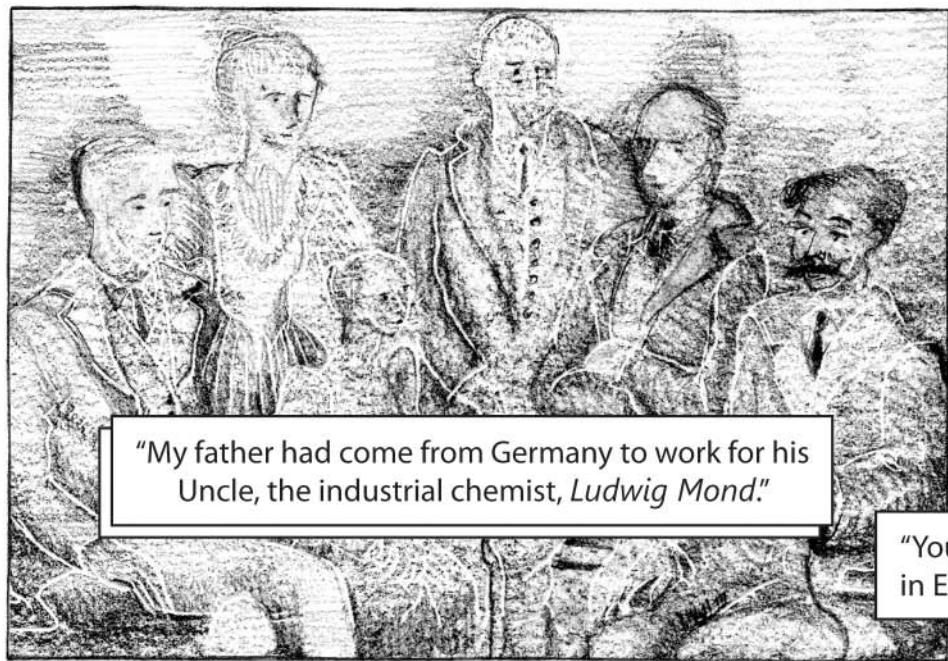
"I thought that the hedonistic Pierre was only marrying me for my money."

"Our family was rich, so rich that my grandfather had his whole family painted by John Singer Sargent. He had posthumously bequeathed nine of the twelve paintings to the British Nation."

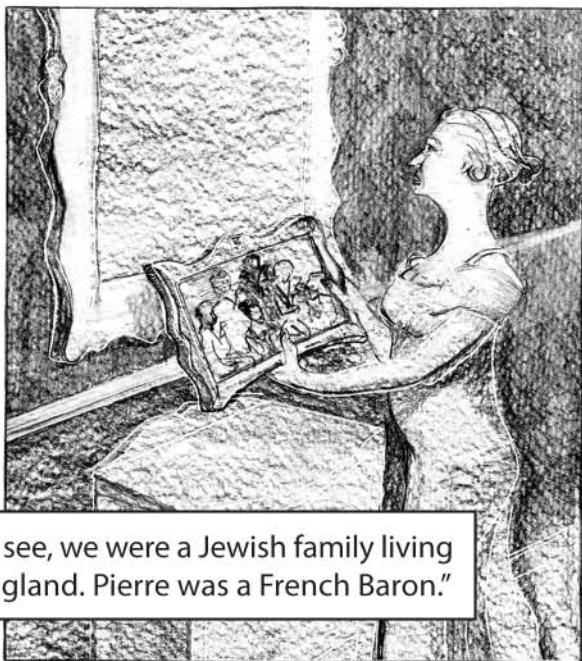




"My mother was painted by Sargent a number of times."



"My father had come from Germany to work for his Uncle, the industrial chemist, Ludwig Mond."

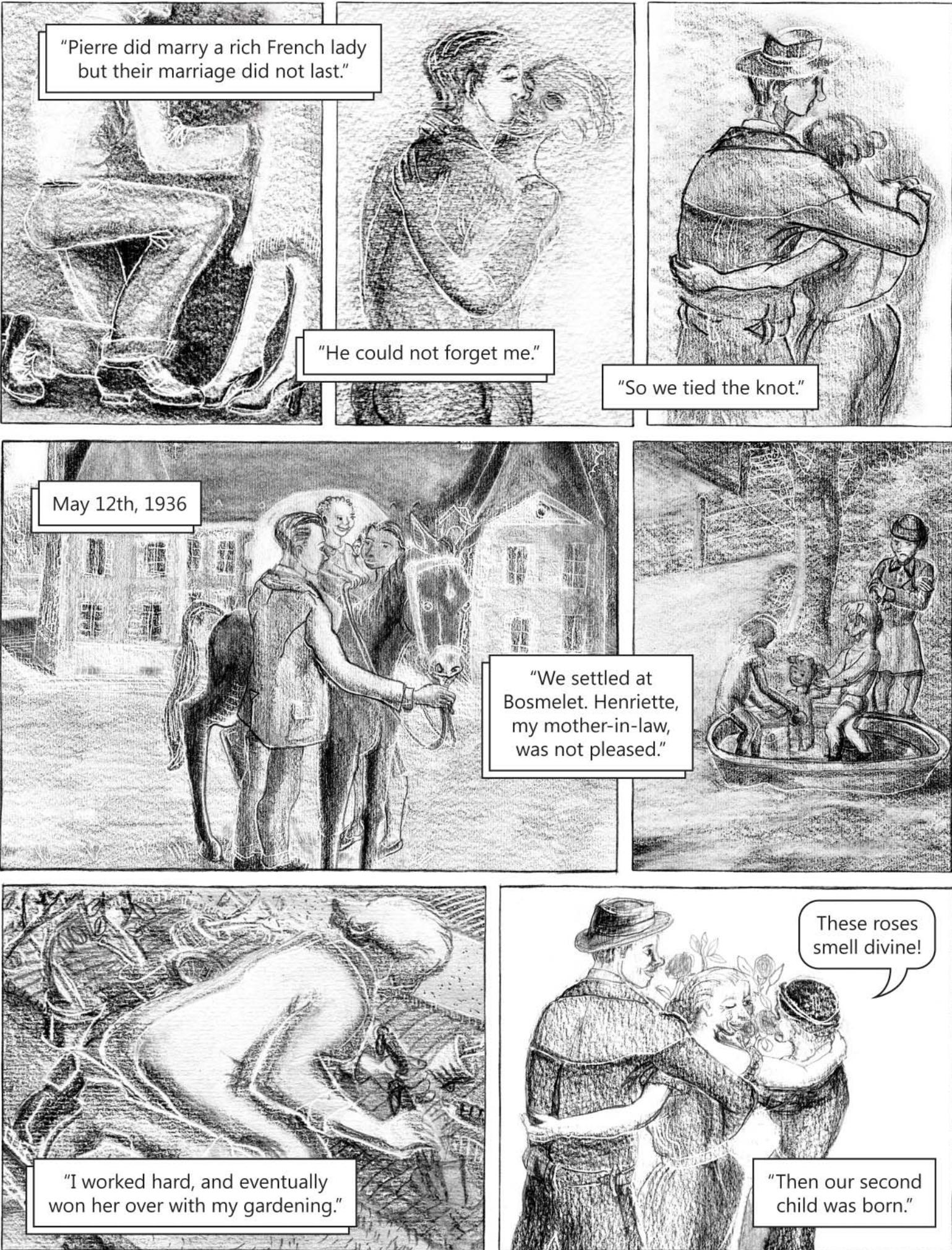


"You see, we were a Jewish family living in England. Pierre was a French Baron."



"I refused his proposal. I could not see how our families would blend."





"Pierre did marry a rich French lady
but their marriage did not last."

"He could not forget me."

"So we tied the knot."

May 12th, 1936

"We settled at
Bosmelet. Henriette,
my mother-in-law,
was not pleased."

These roses
smell divine!

"I worked hard, and eventually
won her over with my gardening."

"Then our second
child was born."



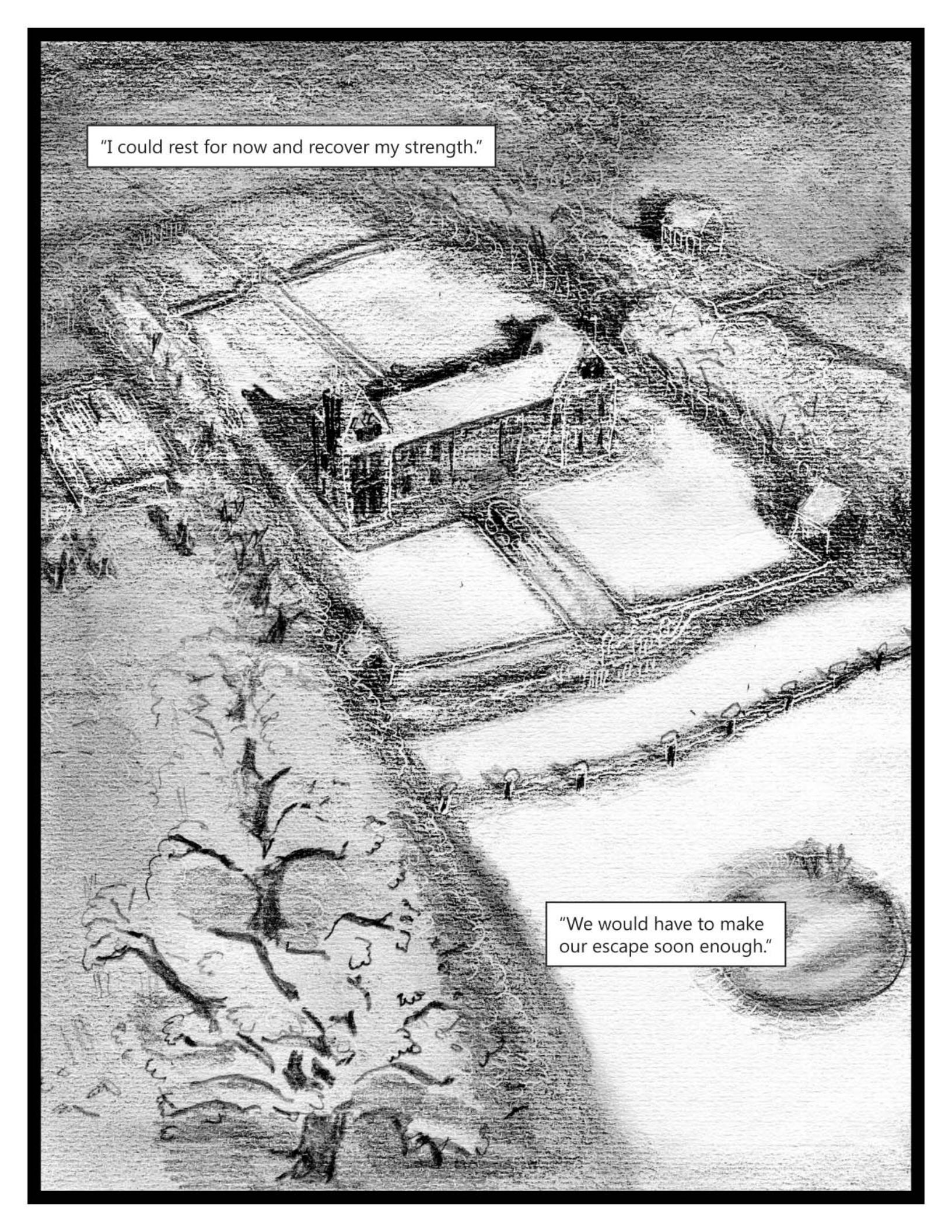
It's a girl! A beautiful girl.

She is blue!
Do something!

I will warm her near the fire.

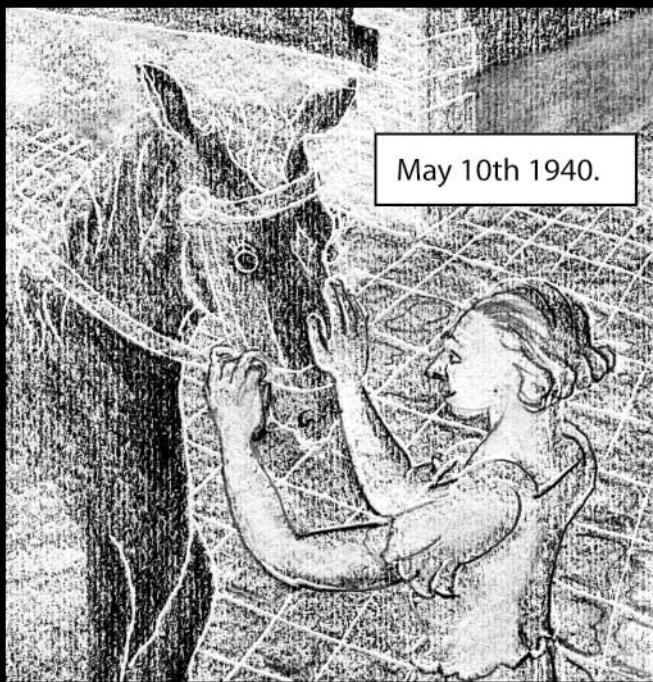
She's as black as
the ace of spades!

The night had slipped
into the next day.

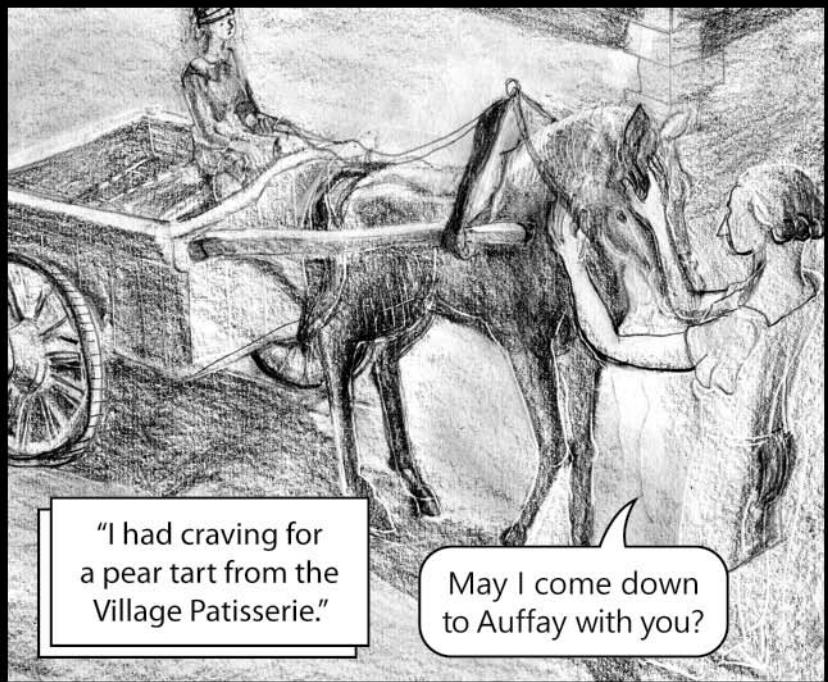


"I could rest for now and recover my strength."

"We would have to make our escape soon enough."



May 10th 1940.

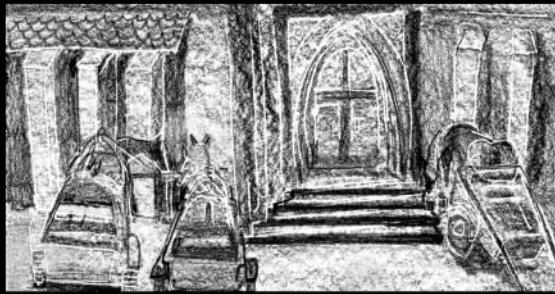


"I had craving for
a pear tart from the
Village Patisserie."

May I come down
to Auffay with you?

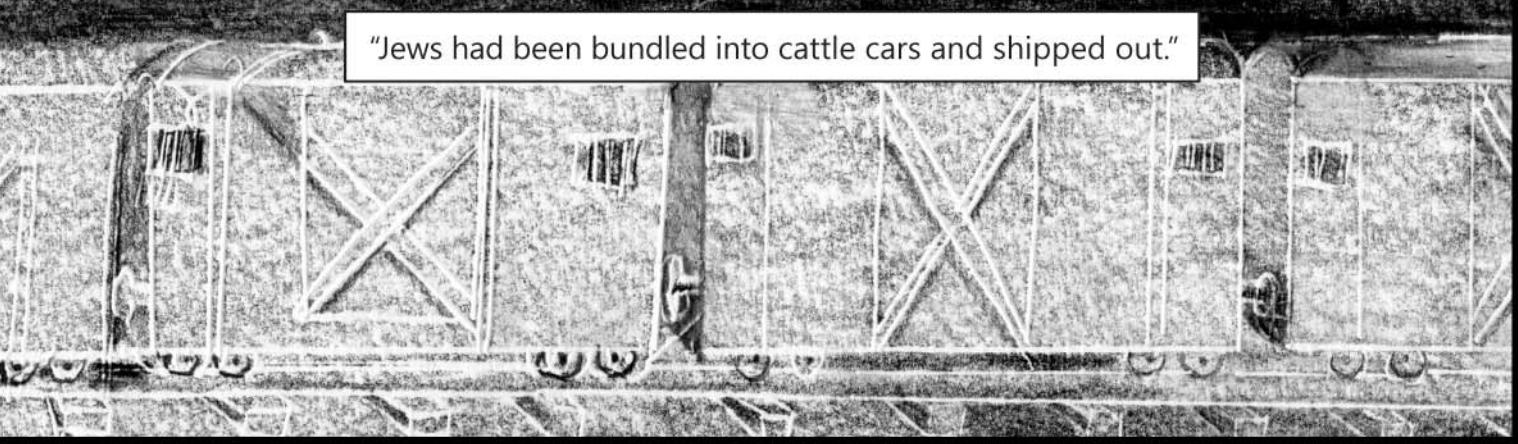
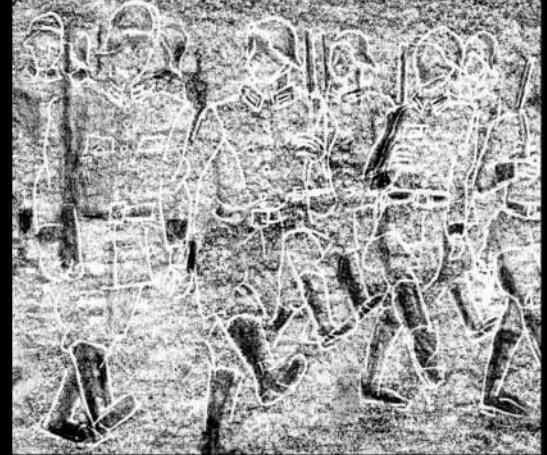


"We used the pony and cart to
save petrol for our escape."

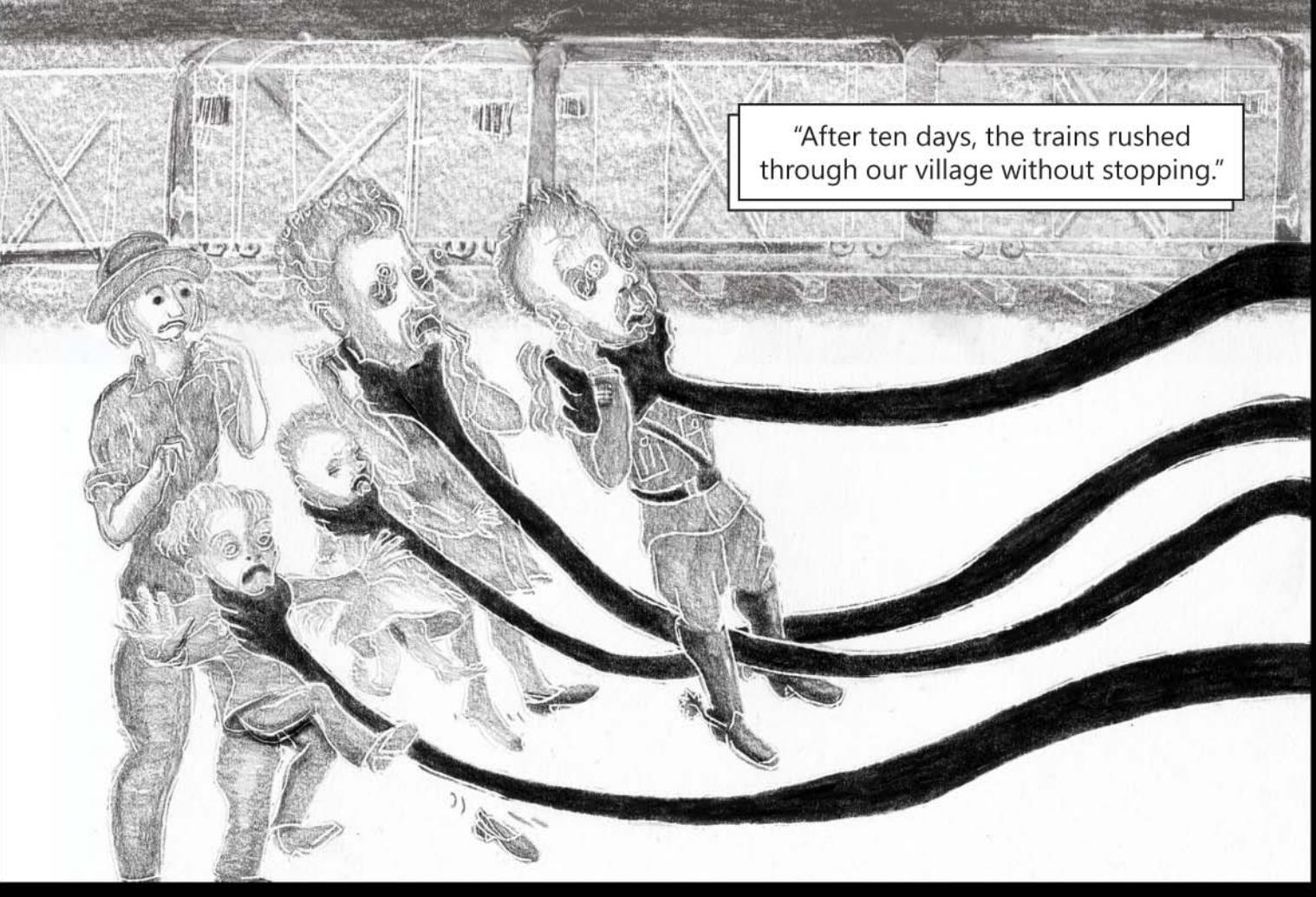




"The Germans had swept around Europe."



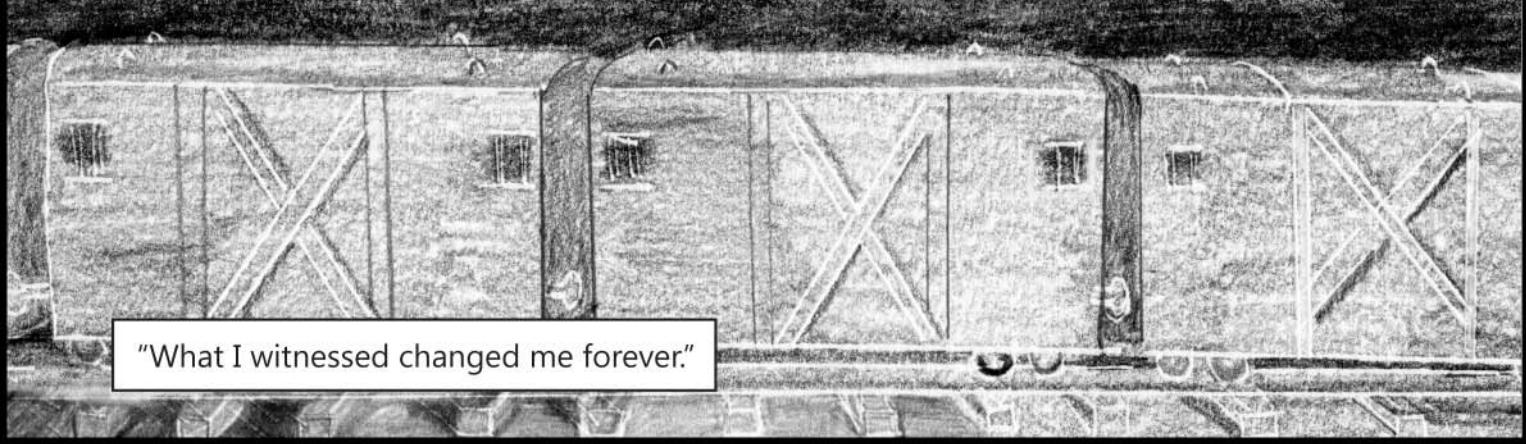
"Jews had been bundled into cattle cars and shipped out."



"After ten days, the trains rushed through our village without stopping."

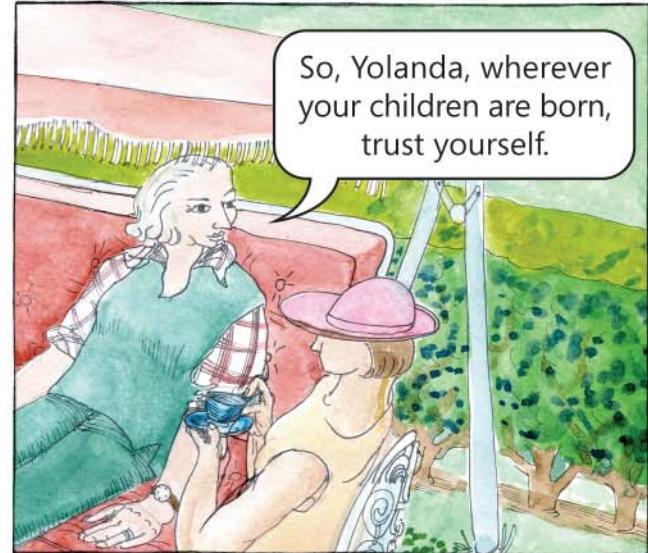
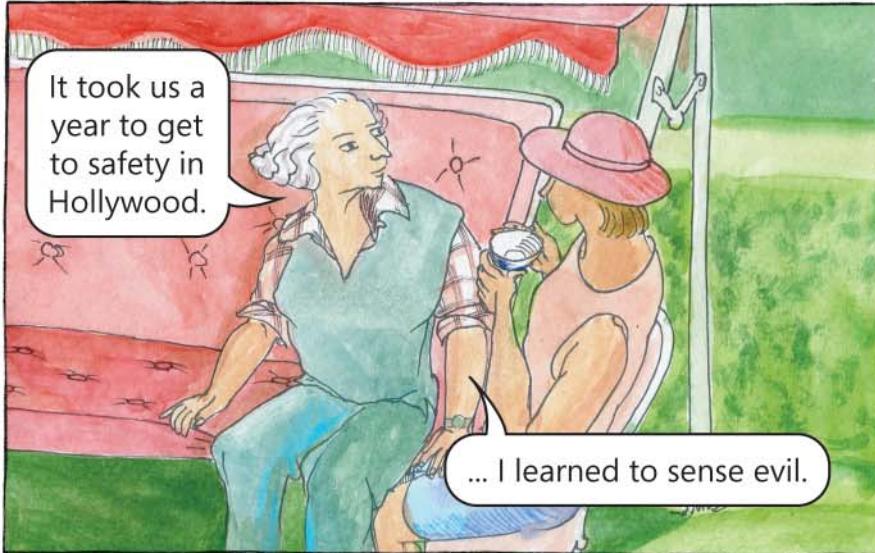
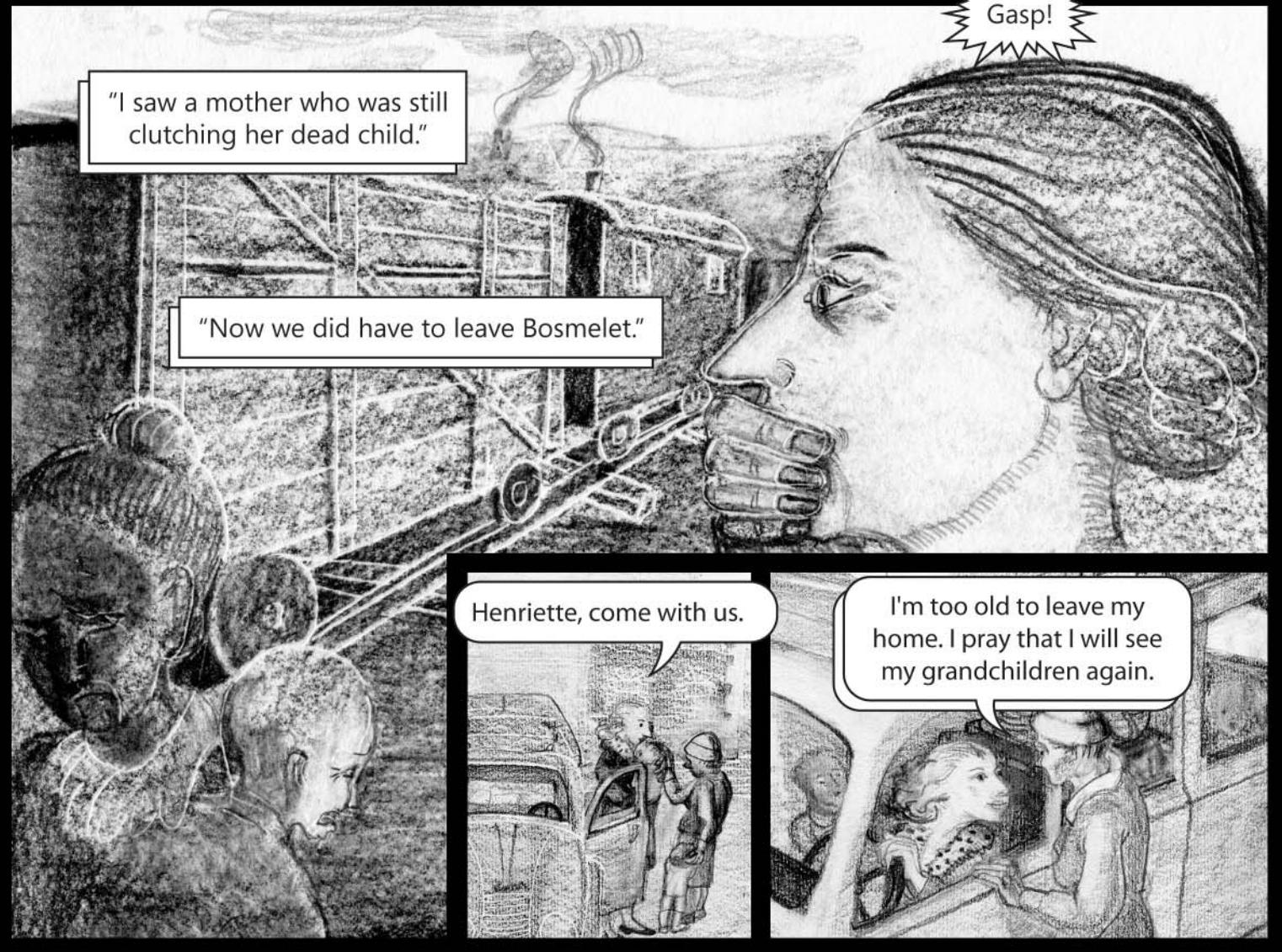
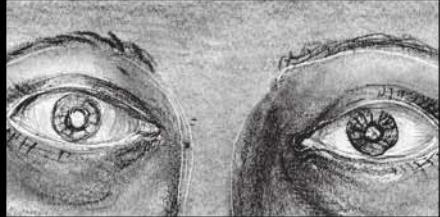


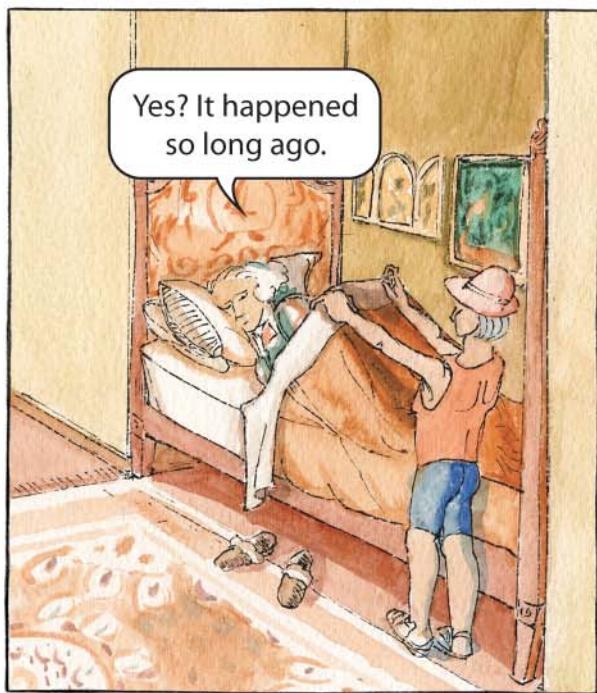
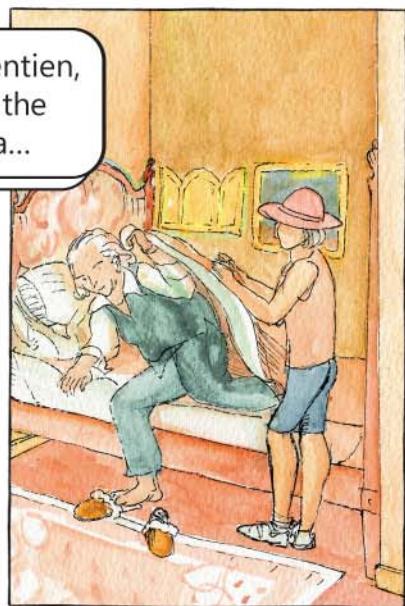
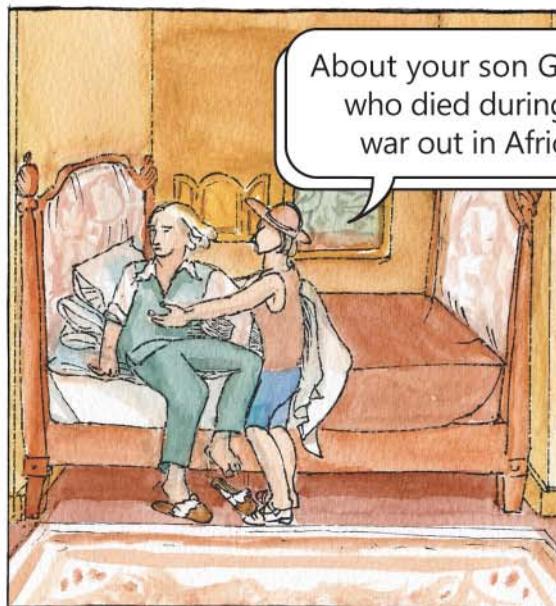
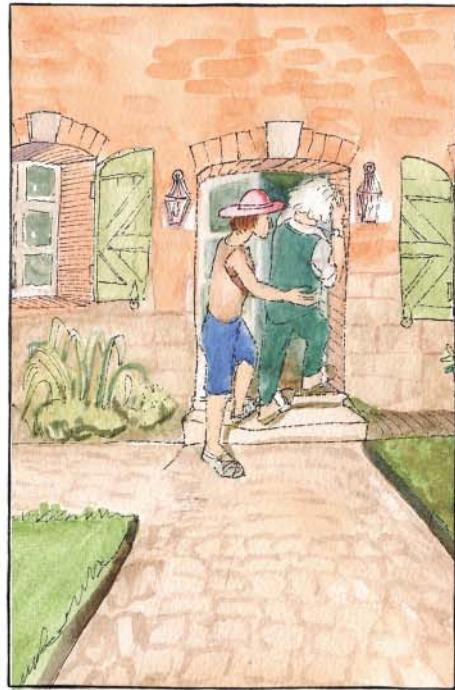
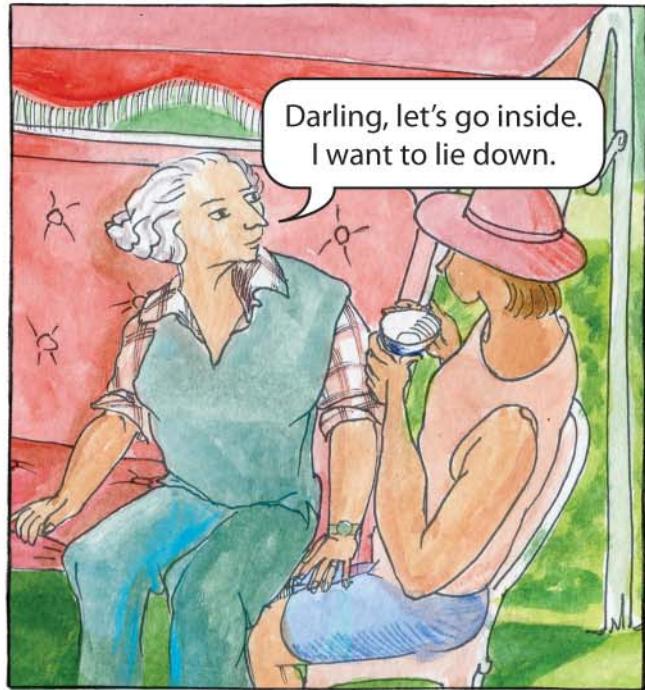
"The Nazis invaded Holland and Belgium, and forced the Jews out."



"What I witnessed changed me forever."

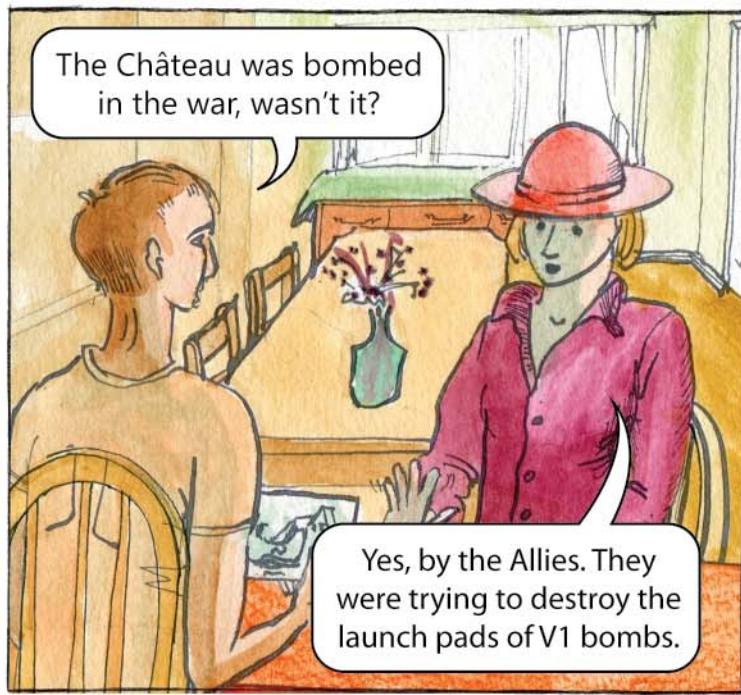
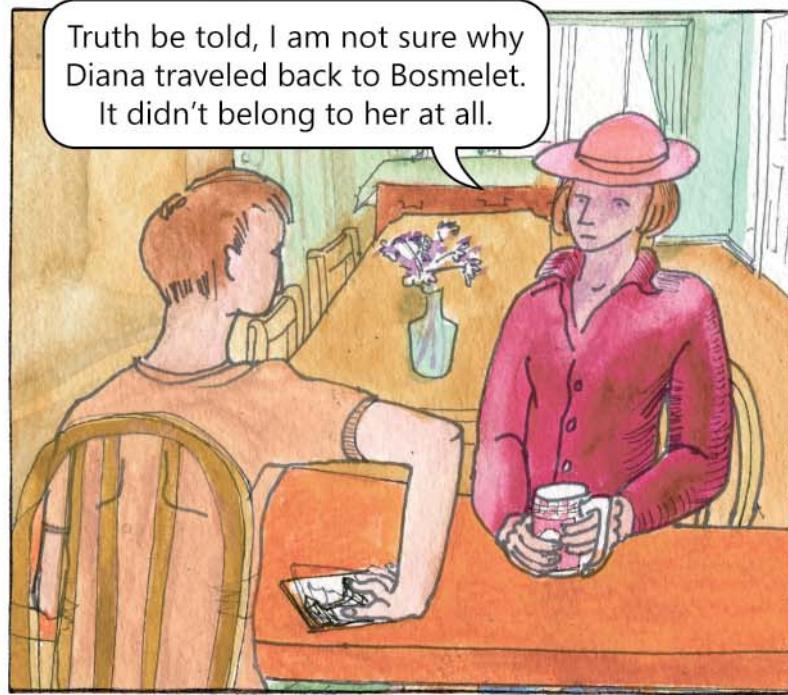
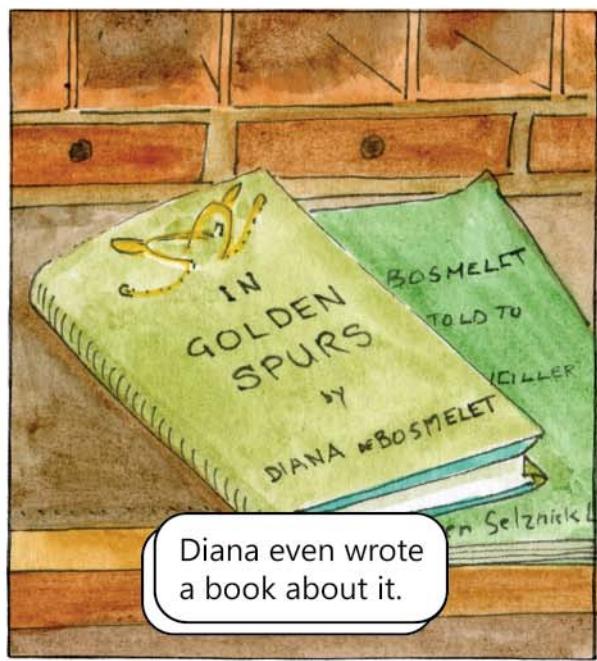
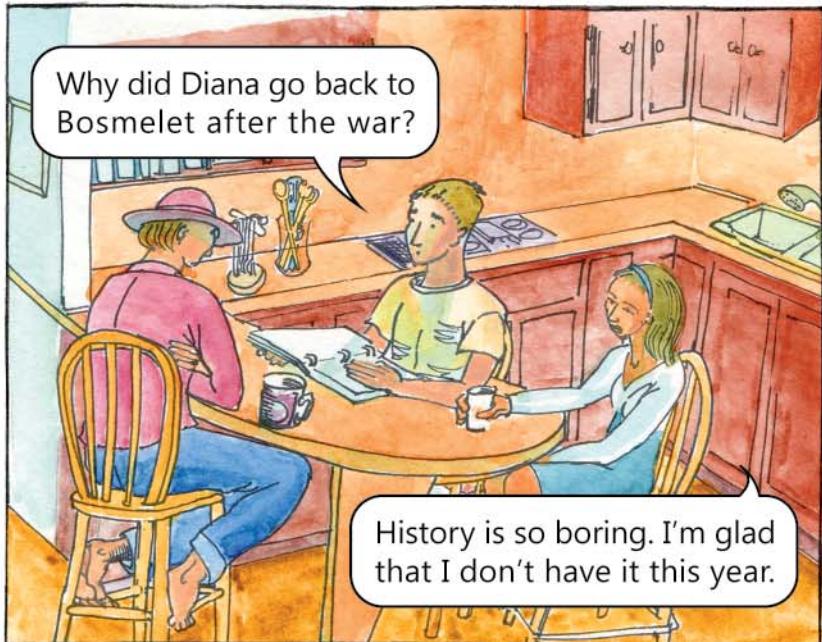


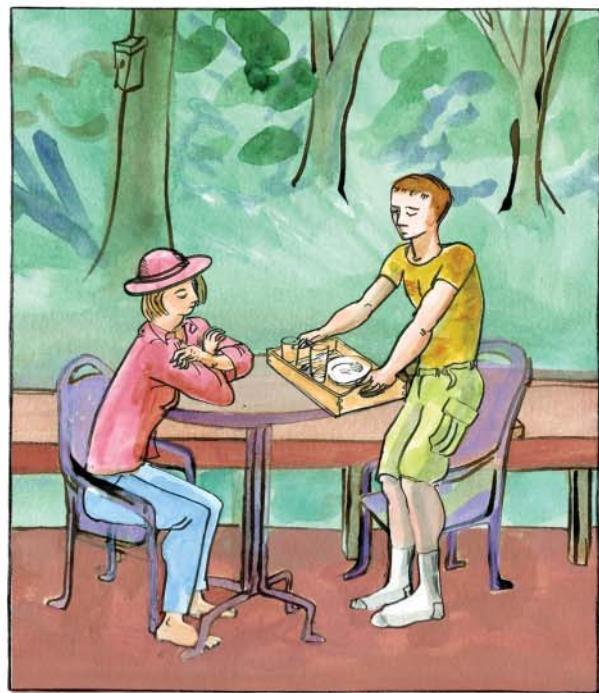
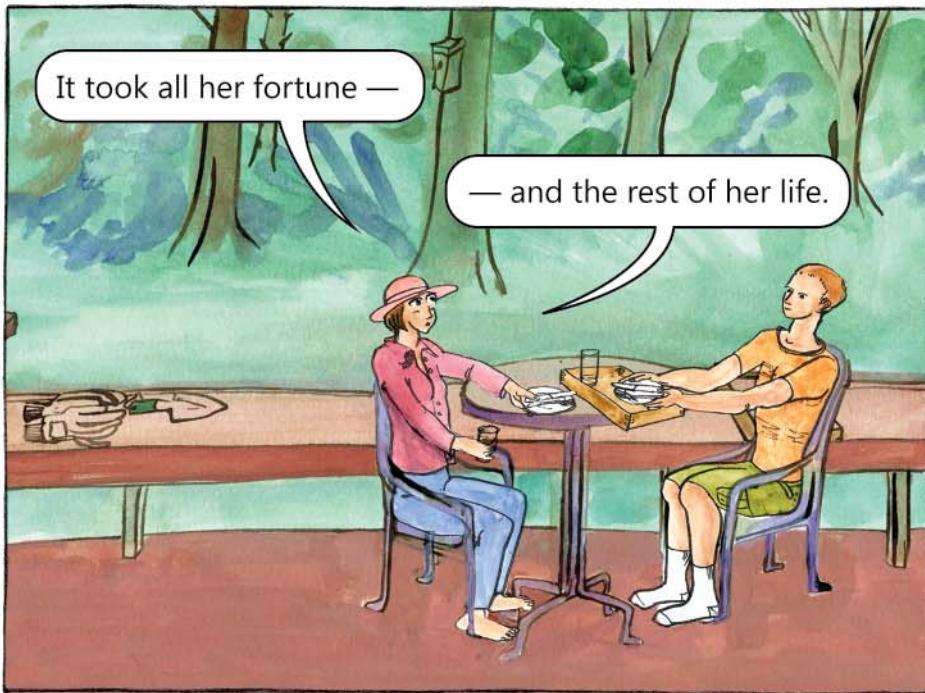
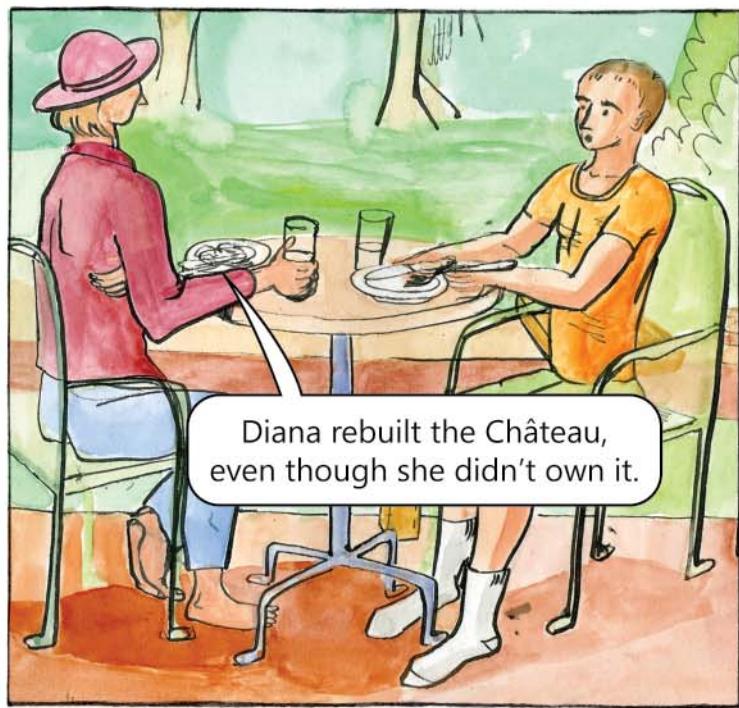
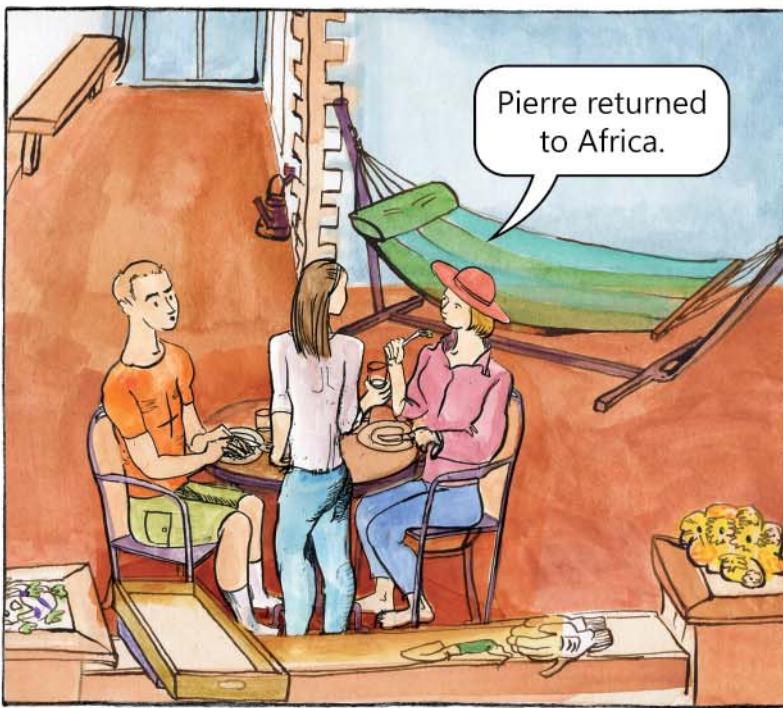
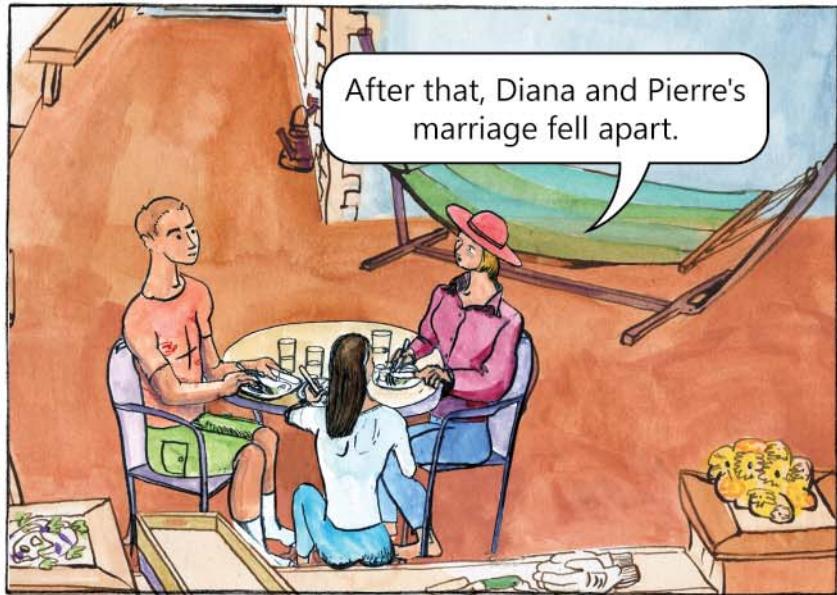
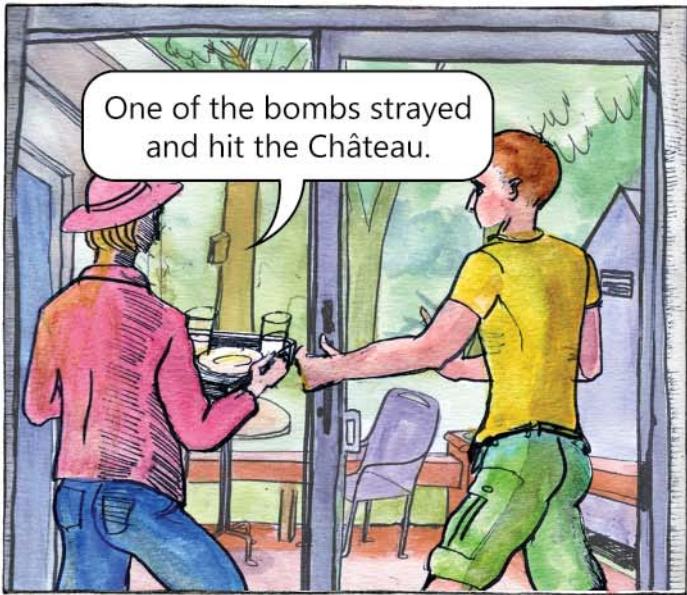




September 2012

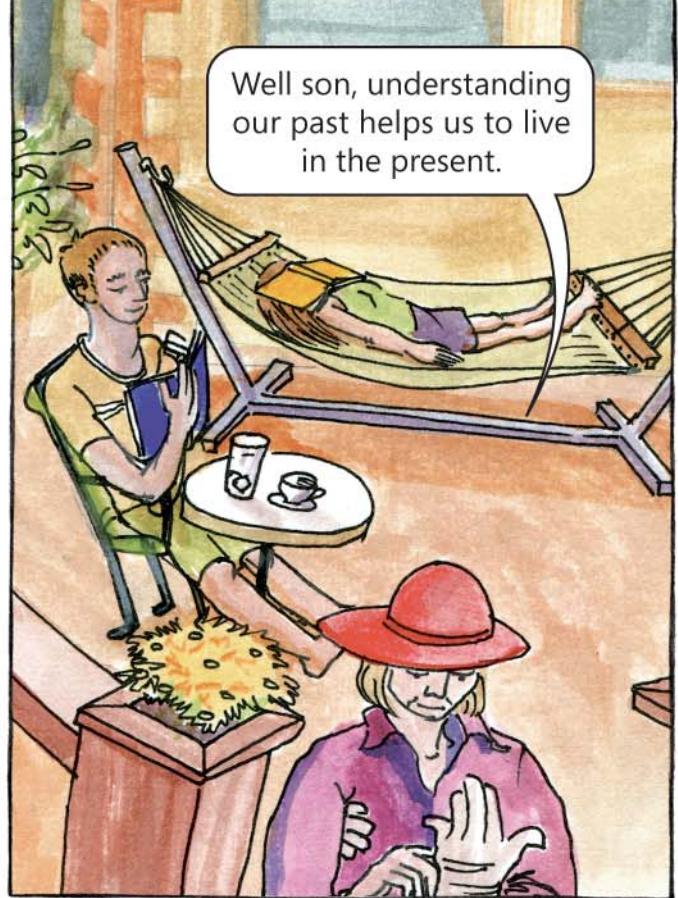
Sitting around the kitchen table, I show the story to my children. Madhu is on a rare visit home from graduate school in California, and Diana has just begun her senior year of high school.







Wow Mom, I had no idea that you knew so much about our history.



Well son, understanding our past helps us to live in the present.

