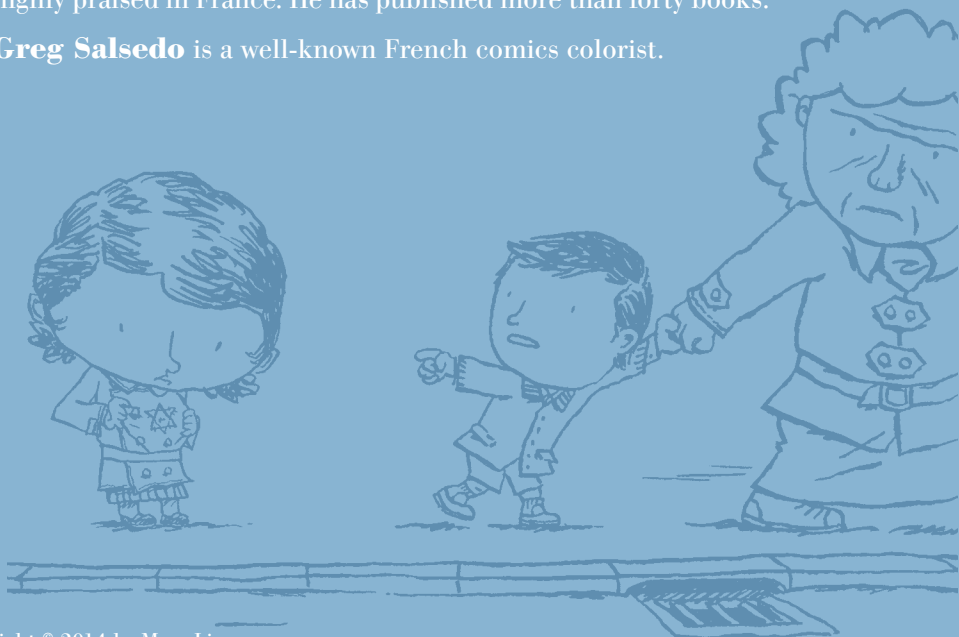


Like every grandmother, Dounia was once a little girl herself. Tonight, she's finally ready to tell her granddaughter a secret about her childhood—something she never even told her son. Tonight, Dounia is ready to share her memories of Paris in 1942. Memories of wearing a Star of David, of living in fear, of the kindness of strangers. Memories of being hidden.

**Loïc Dauvillier** is a widely published French comics writer whose credits include children's books as well as adaptations of literary classics.

**Marc Lizano's** work illustrating children's comics has been highly praised in France. He has published more than forty books.

**Greg Salsedo** is a well-known French comics colorist.



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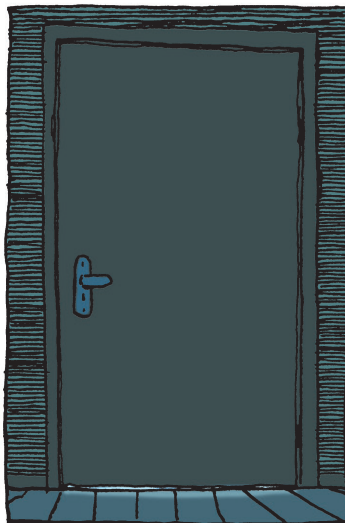
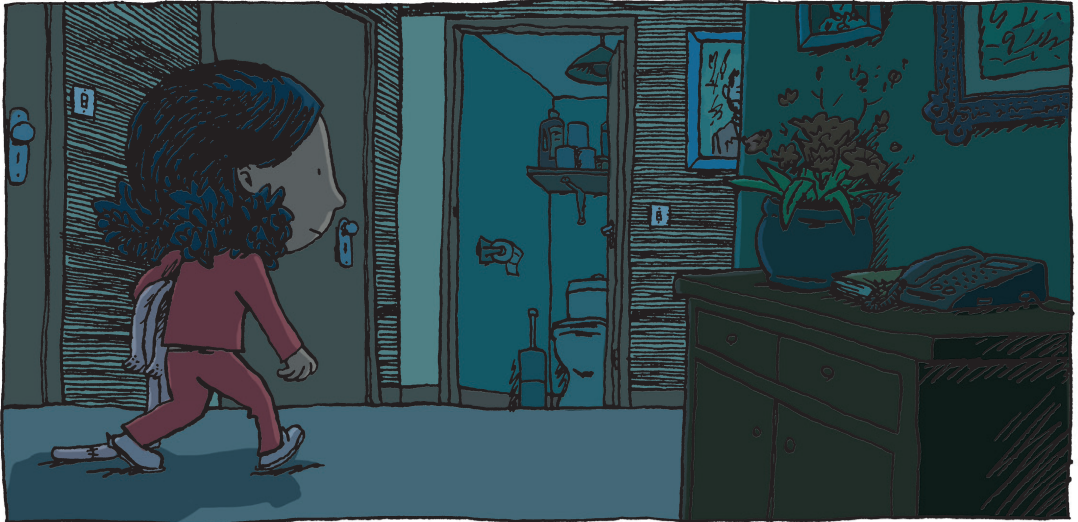
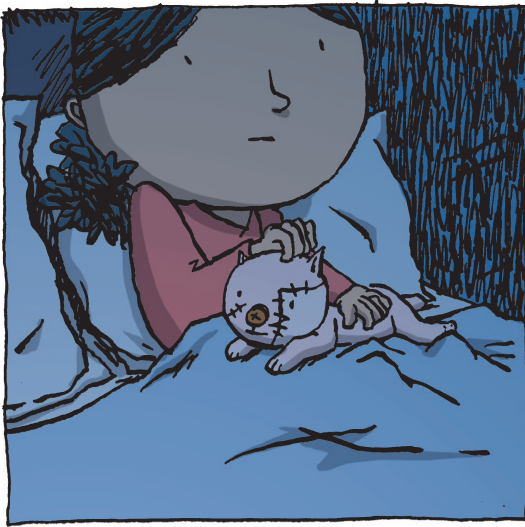


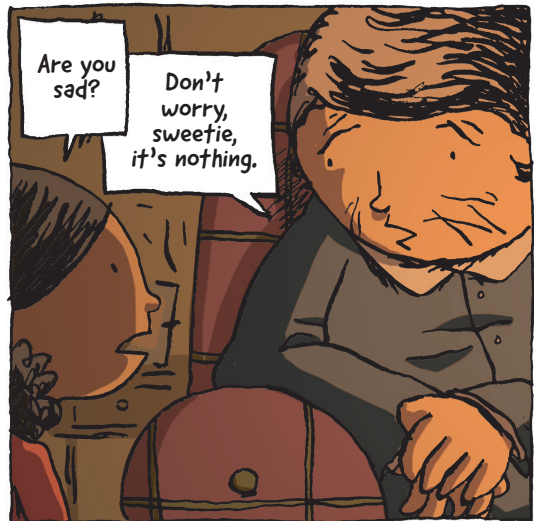
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And you're sad?

A bit.

That nightmare must've been really scary.



You know, when I have a nightmare, I tell Mommy about it and that makes me feel better.

You want to tell me?



You're a sweetheart, pumpkin, but...

Come on!

Tell me!

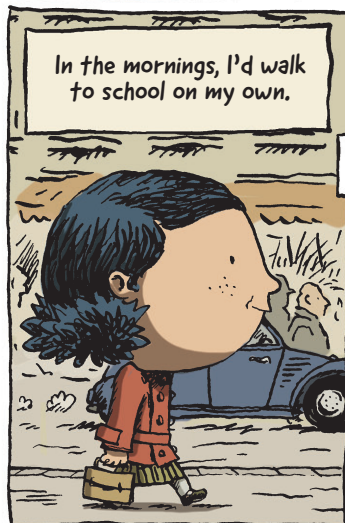


It was a long time ago. Grandma was still a little girl. I must have been around your age.

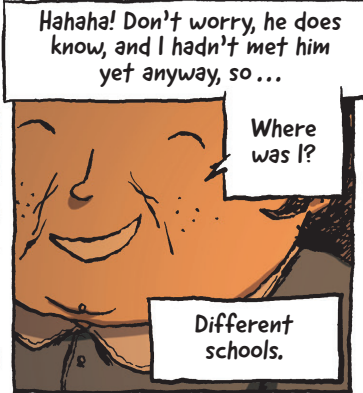
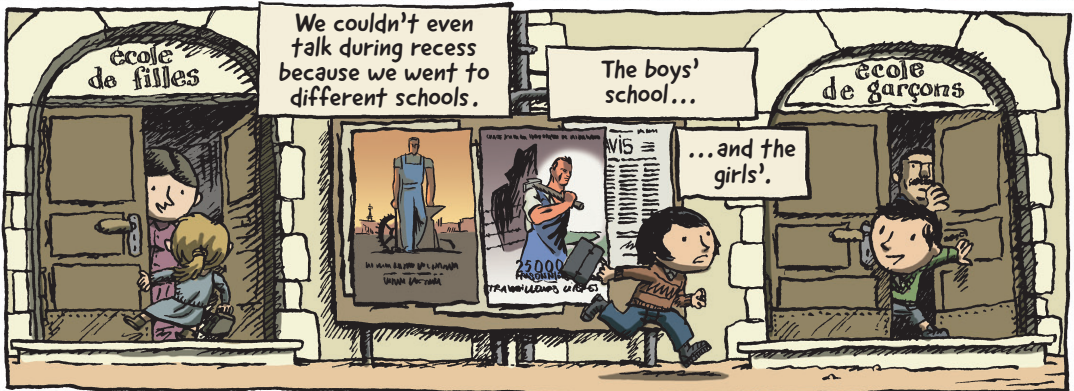
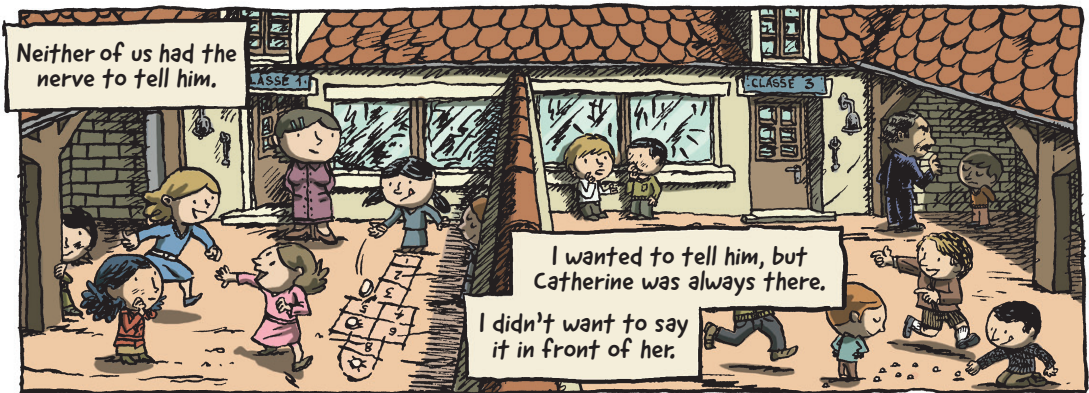
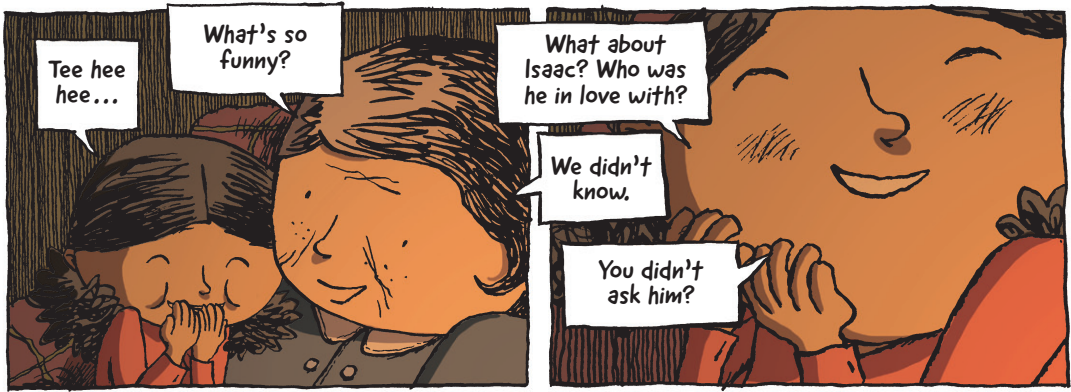
So you wanted pink shoes, too?

Not really, sweetie.





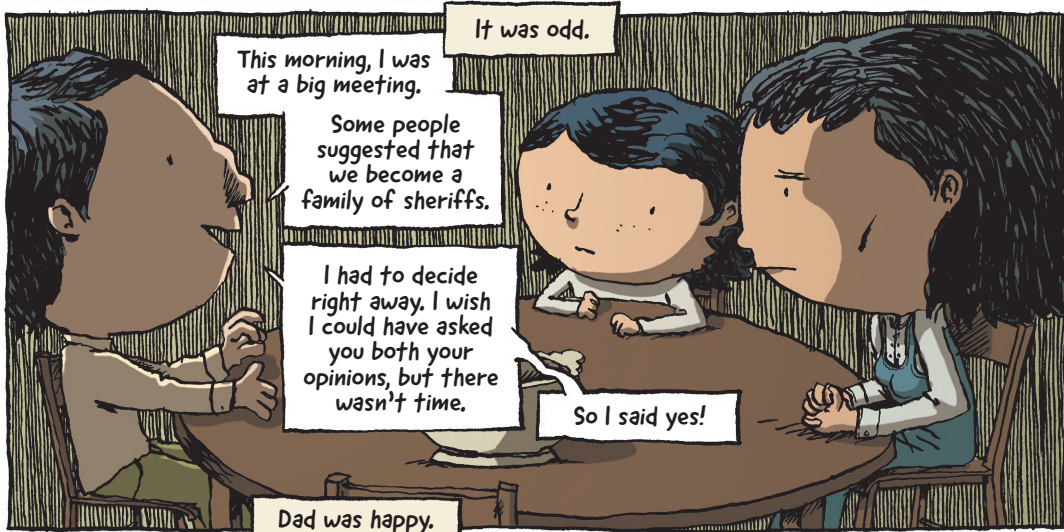






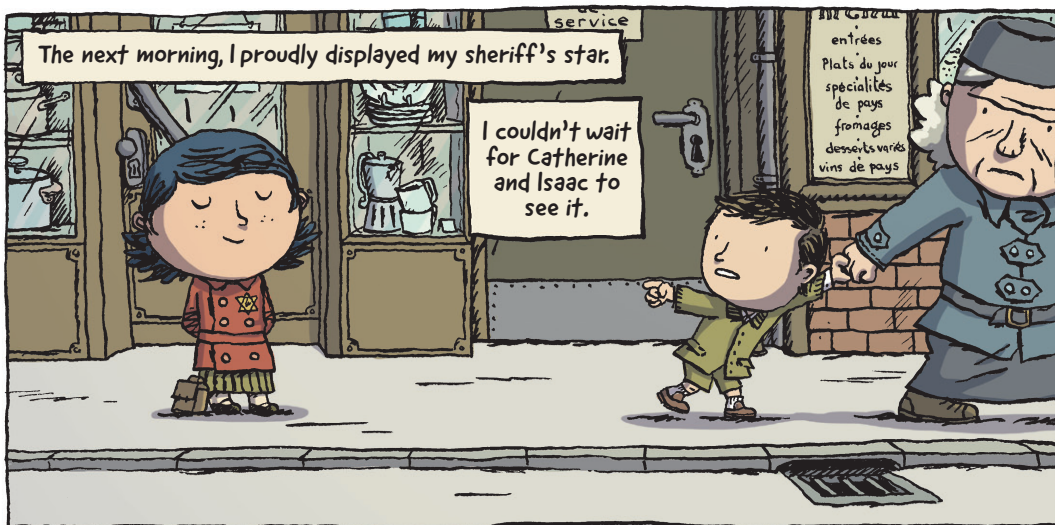




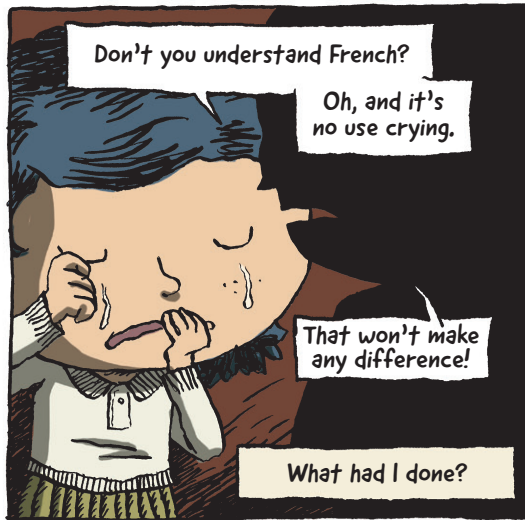
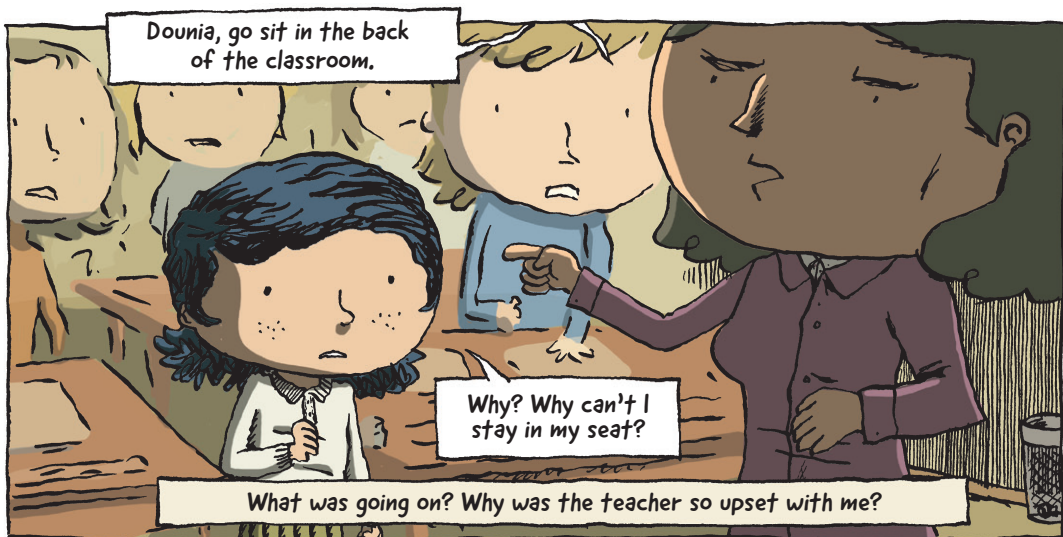










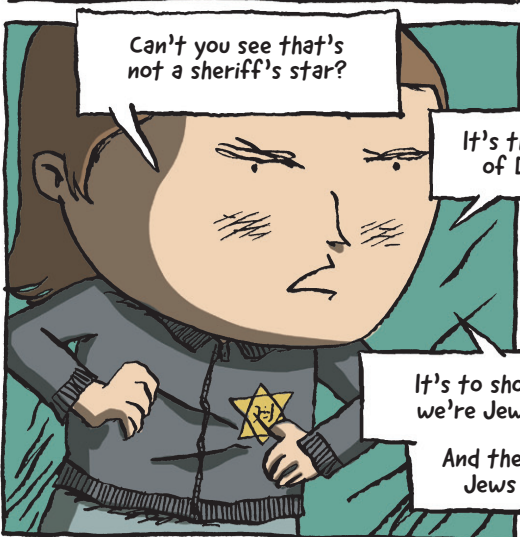






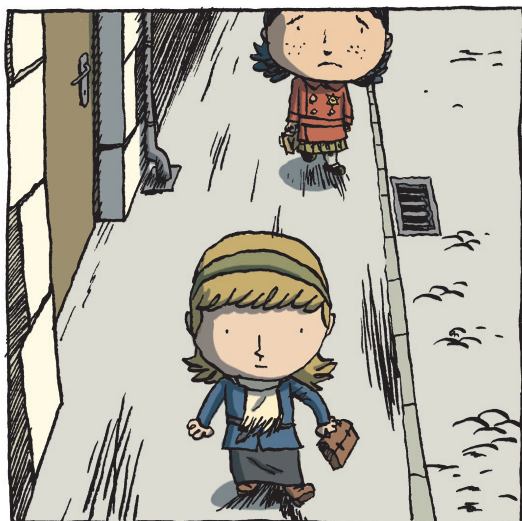




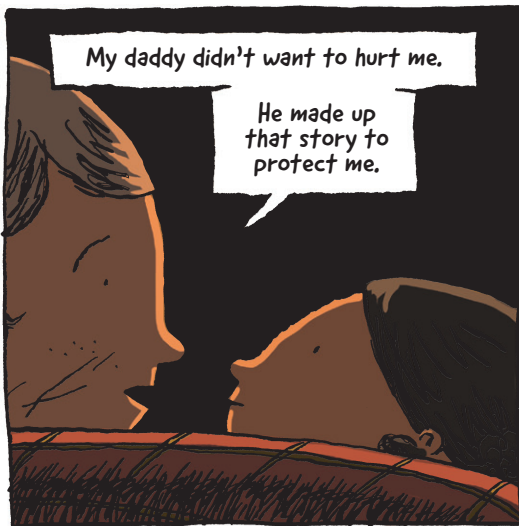




...why had Dad made up that story about sheriffs?

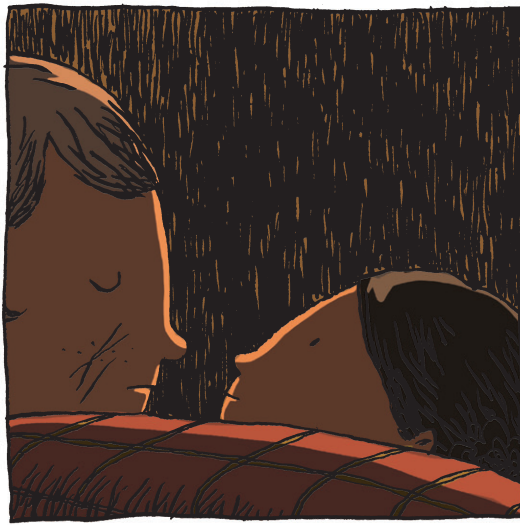








And the teacher?  
She was a  
grown-up!



Sometimes we do things without  
thinking, too.



Well, she was wrong.

Yes, I think  
you're right.



What  
about  
Isaac?



His parents had some money. They left their apartment very quickly and took a boat for the United States.

Why are you doing this? We've done nothing.

Shut up!

Don't tempt me!

I never saw Isaac again.

You remember how the last time I saw him he was sulking.

Let's cross the street, little one. With those people there's no telling what can happen.

Well, I finally found out why Isaac was so upset. Friends of my parents told us.

Come on!

Now!

Isaac's teacher had made him climb up on his desk and pulled his pants down.

And you better not wipe it off.

He had explained to the class that Jews had a piece of wee-wee missing.

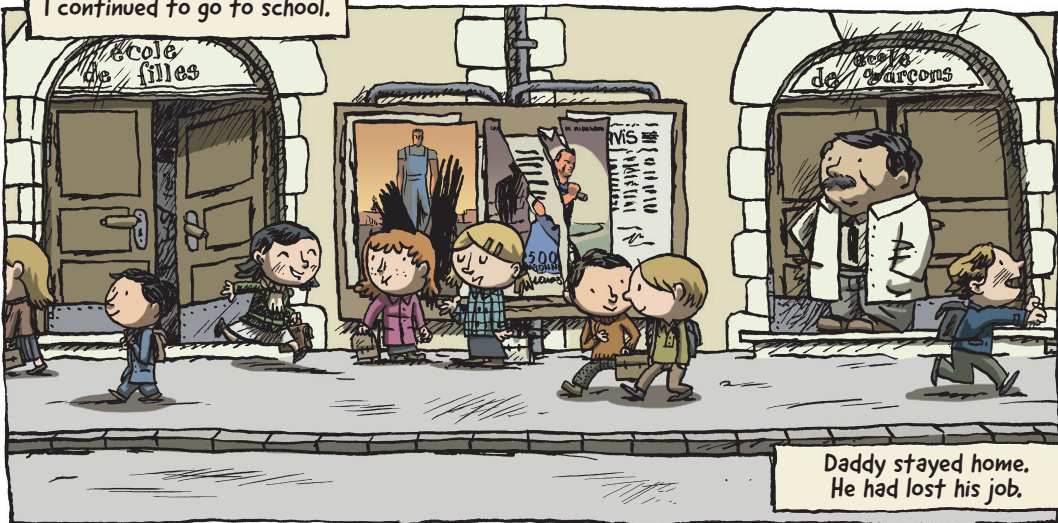
All the students in his  
class had laughed.



He had cried.

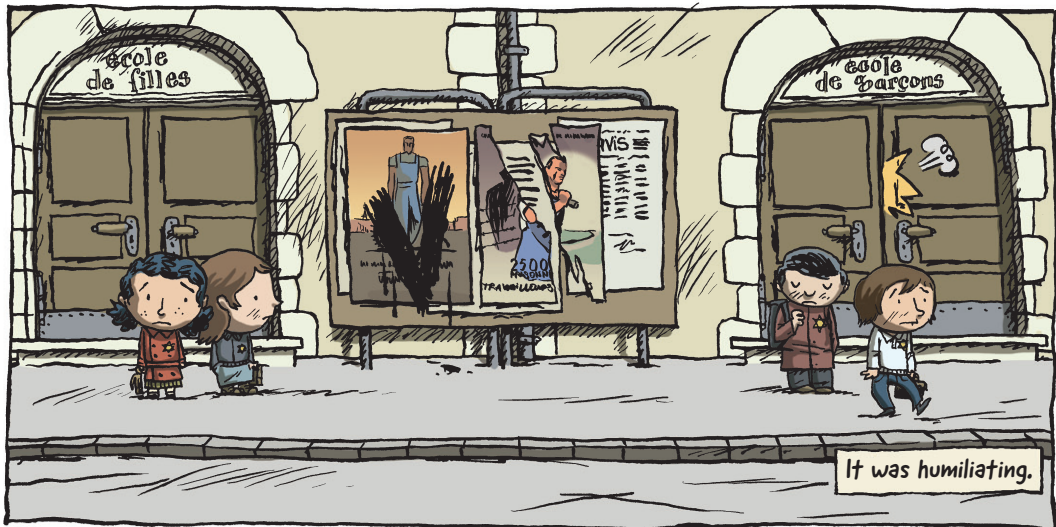


I continued to go to school.



Daddy stayed home.  
He had lost his job.

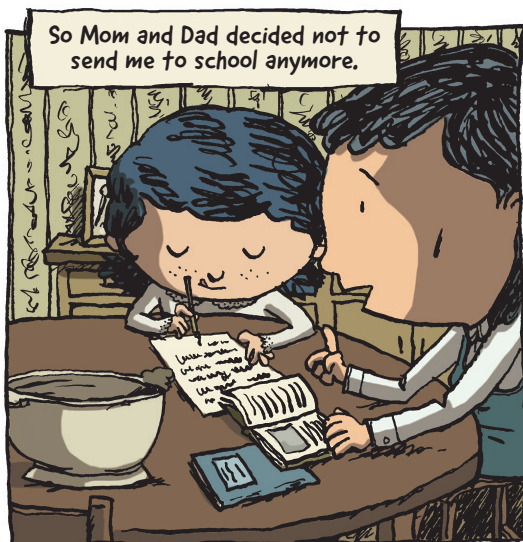
At school, they did everything  
they could to set us apart  
from our classmates.



It was humiliating.







So Mom and Dad decided not to send me to school anymore.



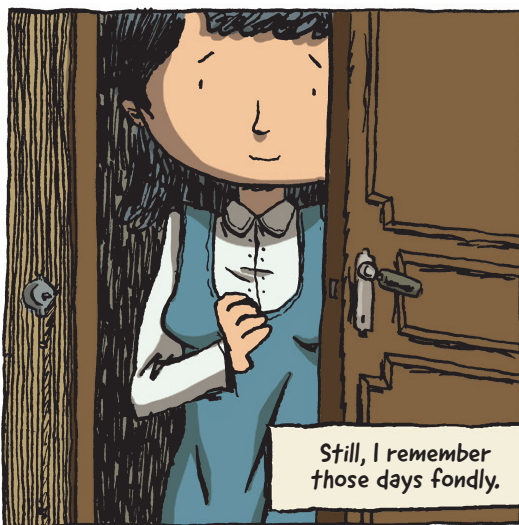
Mom taught me French.



Dad taught math and geography.



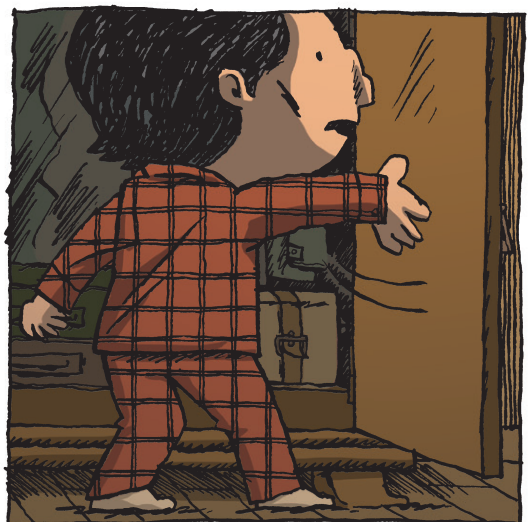
We didn't go out much.

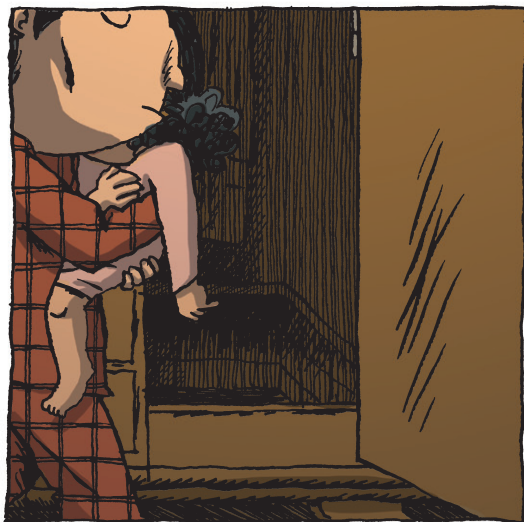
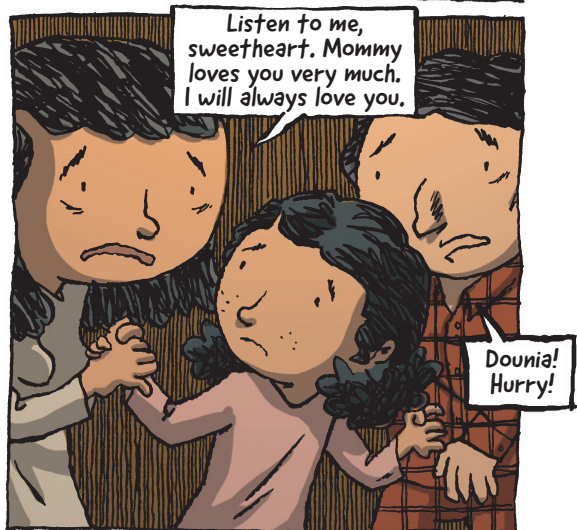


Still, I remember those days fondly.










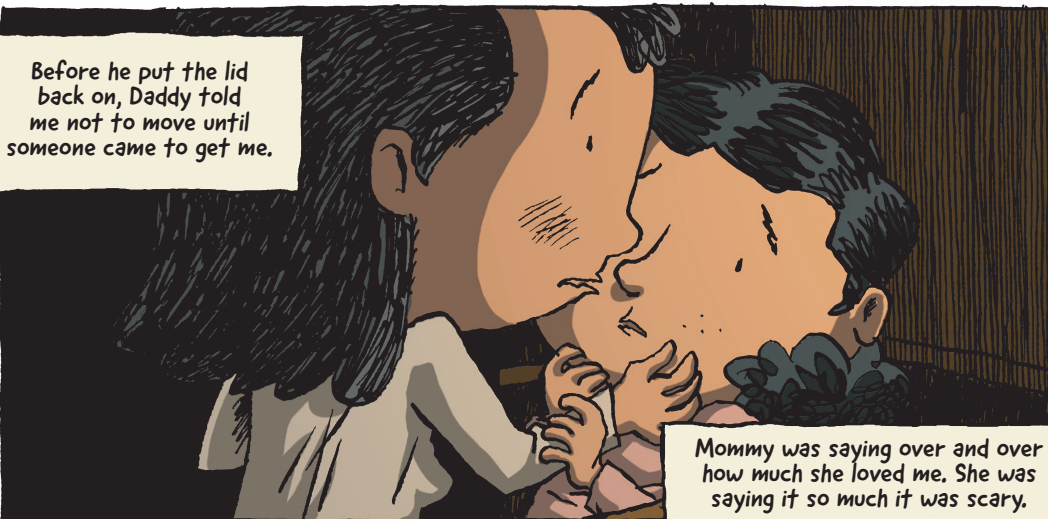




Lie down, and I'll  
put the bottom  
panel over you.


Daddy told  
Mommy they  
had to hurry.  
I remember  
nodding my head.

You can't make a sound,  
you hear me? Not a  
sound, understood?

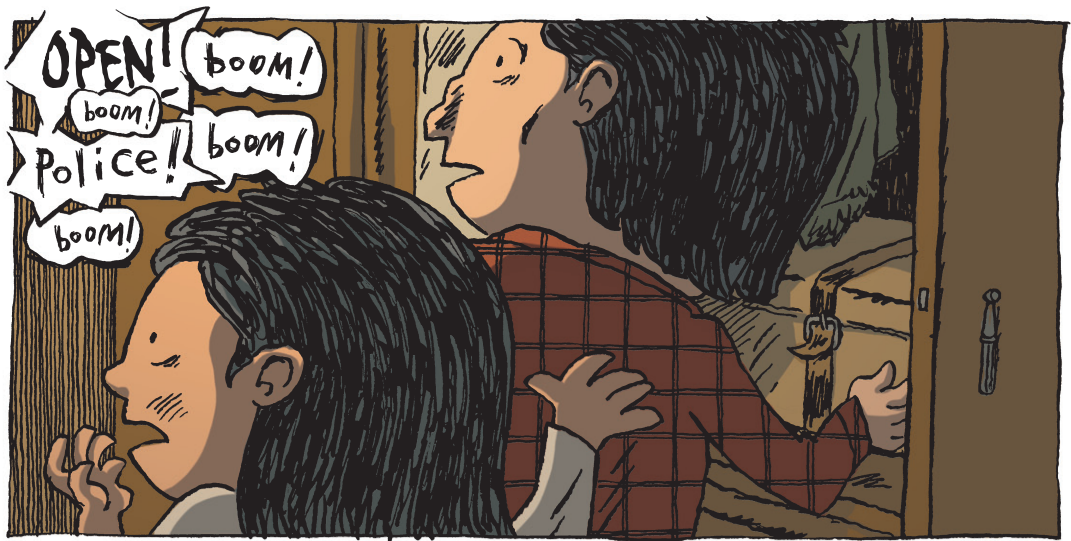


Before he put the lid  
back on, Daddy told  
me not to move until  
someone came to get me.


Mommy was saying over and over  
how much she loved me. She was  
saying it so much it was scary.



Daddy said that he loved  
me too, and that I was  
his little darling girl.







I heard the policemen shouting. They were asking my parents where I was.

My father told them that I had gone to Marseille to stay with relatives.

It was the second time I'd ever heard my father lie.

I heard my mother crying.

I put my hands over my ears to shut everything out.

It didn't work. There was still a lot of noise.



As if they were breaking everything in the house.



I even felt the wardrobe move at one point, but I did as Daddy had asked and I didn't budge.



I held my breath to make sure I didn't make a sound.



Then I tried to get out, but there was something heavy on top of the wood panel. I panicked and it's only then that I started crying.

Afterwards, I heard nothing. Just silence. I couldn't remember if I was allowed to go out. I waited until I needed to pee.











Mrs. Péricard  
took me to  
her home.

Wait here!

I'll see if the  
way is clear.

She helped  
me get  
cleaned up...

Come!

...and she  
warmed up a bit  
of soup for me.

I was so tired that I  
didn't finish eating it.

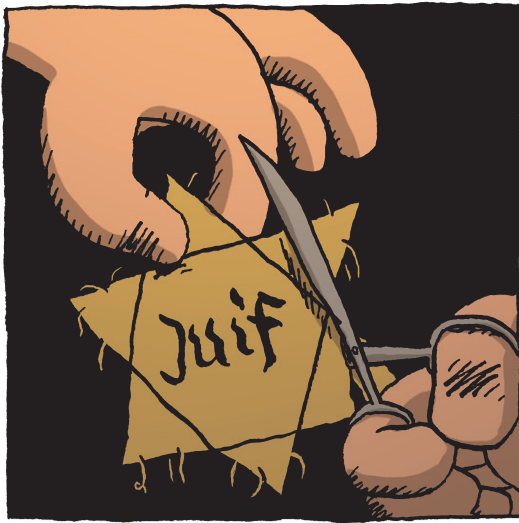
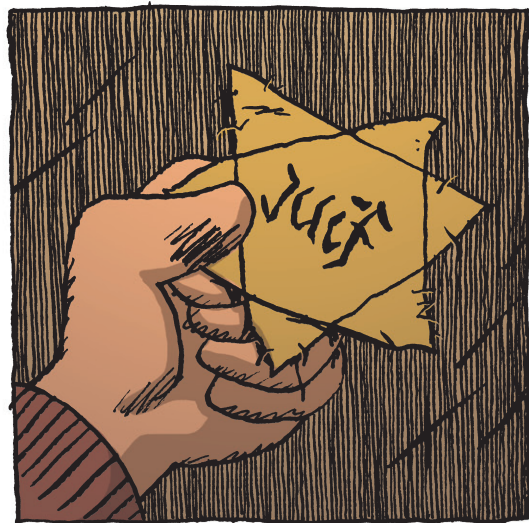
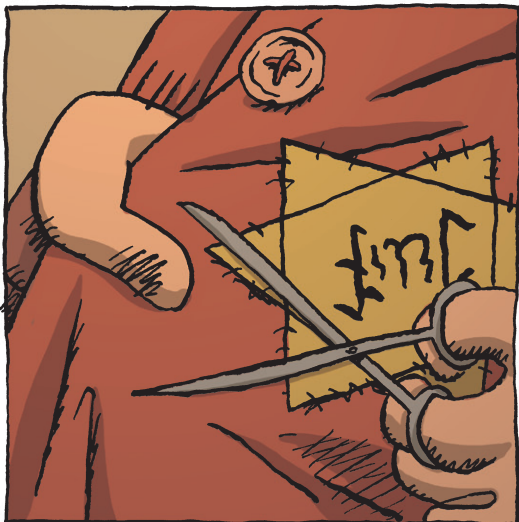
Mr. Péricard went up  
to our apartment.

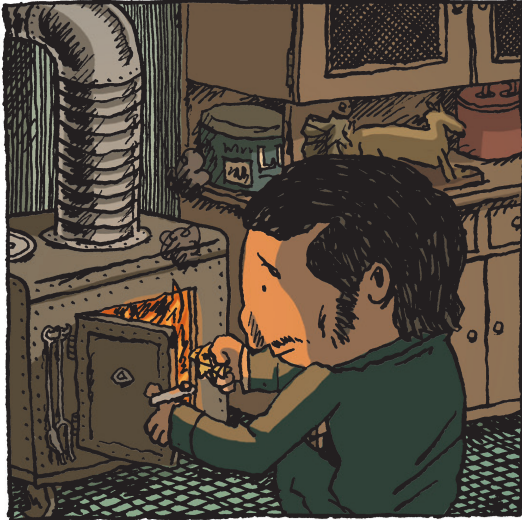
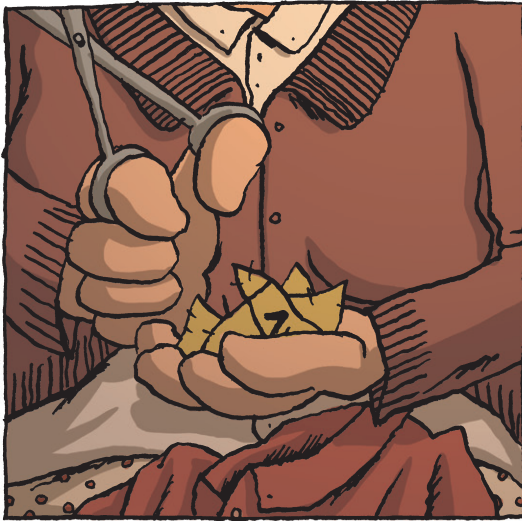


He packed a suitcase  
with my things.









We'll take care of her.

And Mom and Dad? Where were they?



I don't remember how long I stayed with the Péricards.



All I really remember is crying.



Mrs. Péricard did everything she could to cheer me up, but it didn't work.



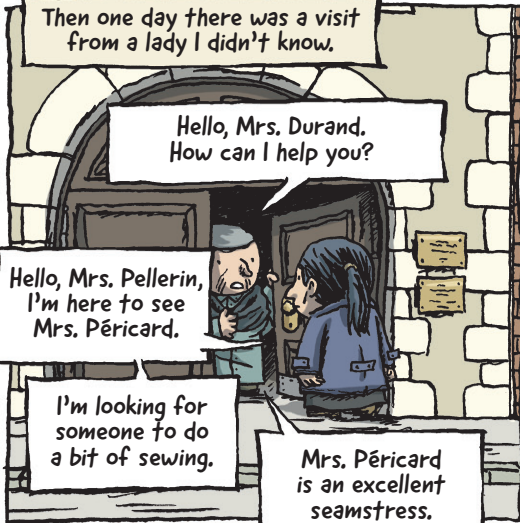
I was very sad. The only thing I wanted was to see my parents.



Then one day there was a visit from a lady I didn't know.



Hello, Mrs. Durand. How can I help you?



Hello, Mrs. Pellerin, I'm here to see Mrs. Péricard.

I'm looking for someone to do a bit of sewing.

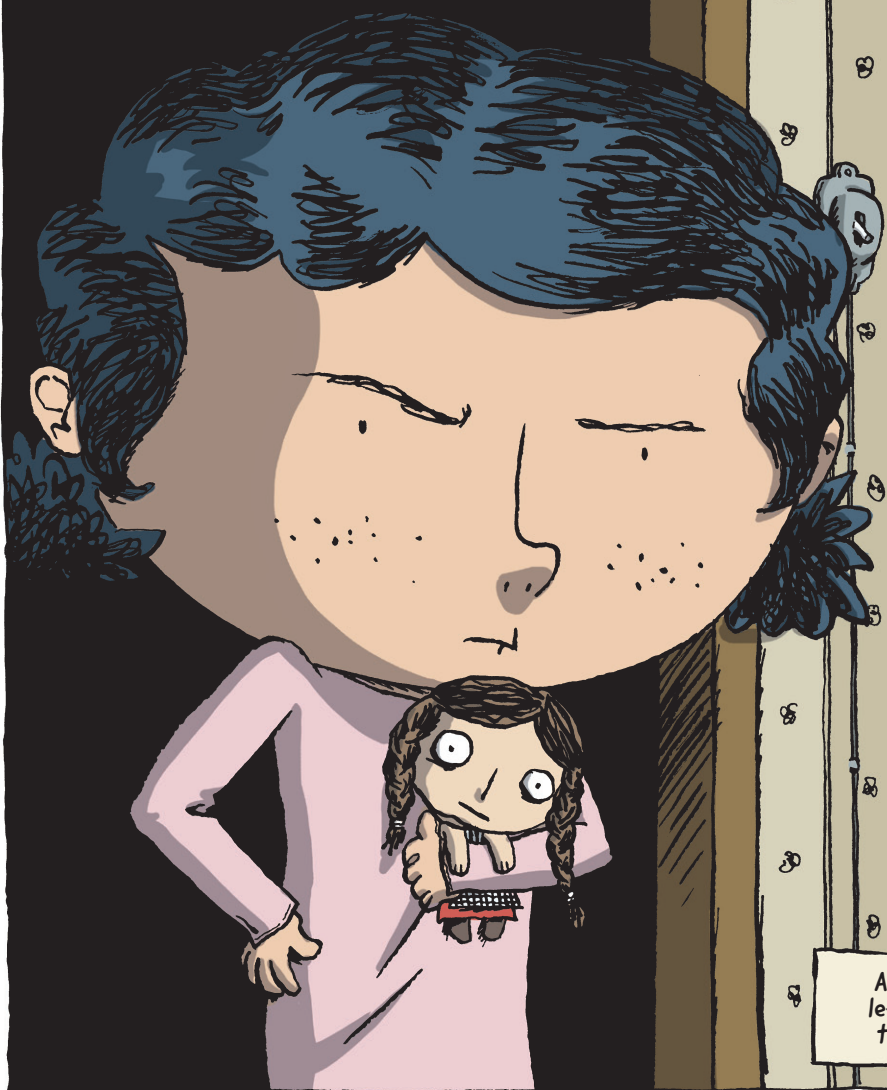
Mrs. Péricard is an excellent seamstress.



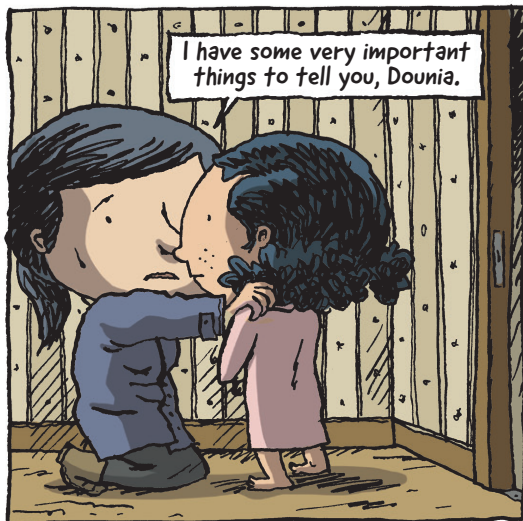


I wouldn't consider leaving the building.

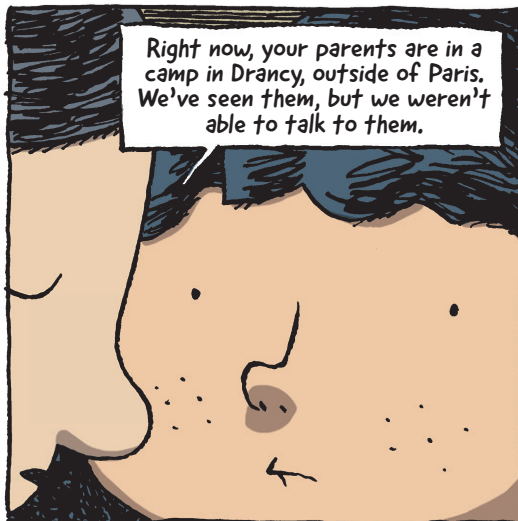
I thought the only way I could find my parents was by staying there, in that building.



After all...if I left, how would they find me?



I have some very important things to tell you, Dounia.



Right now, your parents are in a camp in Drancy, outside of Paris. We've seen them, but we weren't able to talk to them.



I didn't know what the camp was. The only thing that sunk in...

We think they'll be sent to Germany soon to work there.

...was that they were alive.



I wasn't happy...

We don't know exactly when. But you can't stay here, it's too dangerous.

What if they come back and I'm not here?



Don't worry, we aren't planning to move. If your parents come home, we'll tell them where you are.

...but I understood.



The lady explained that I had to change my name.



She said Dounia Cohen sounded too Jewish!



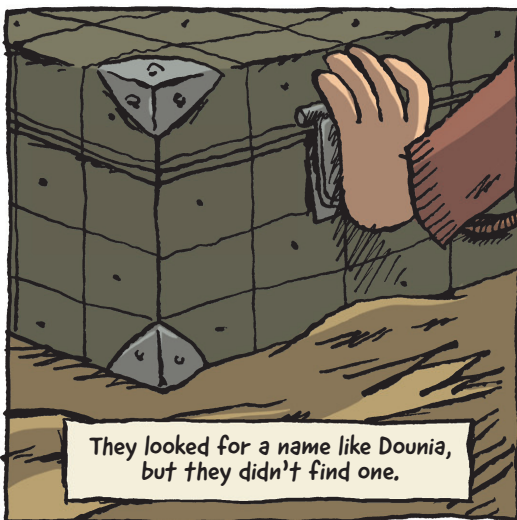
She also said that some people didn't like Jews.



But I'd already figured out that part.



So I agreed to change it.



They looked for a name like Dounia, but they didn't find one.

So, the lady said that from then on I'd be called Simone.

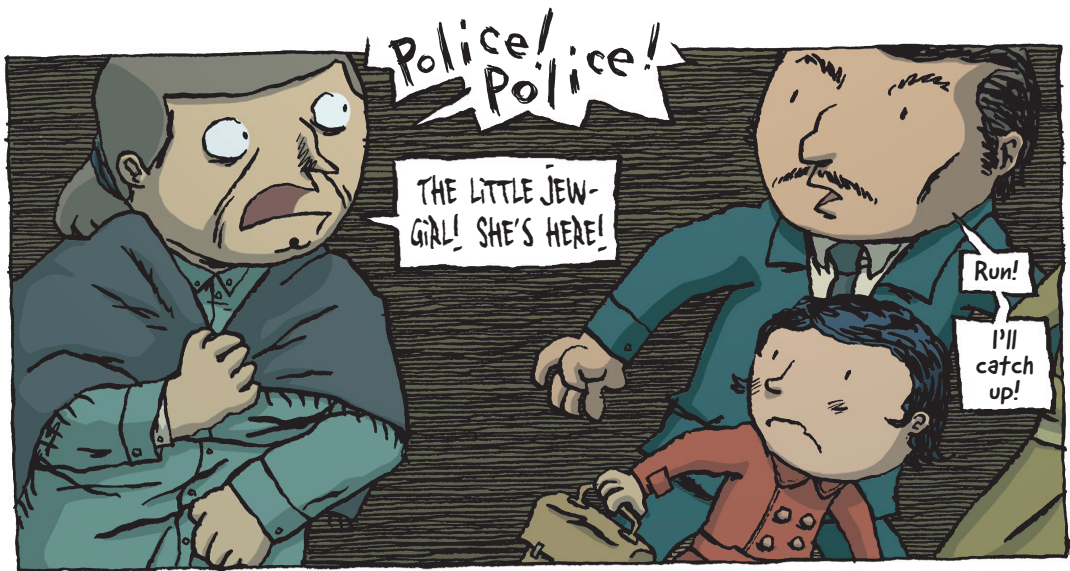


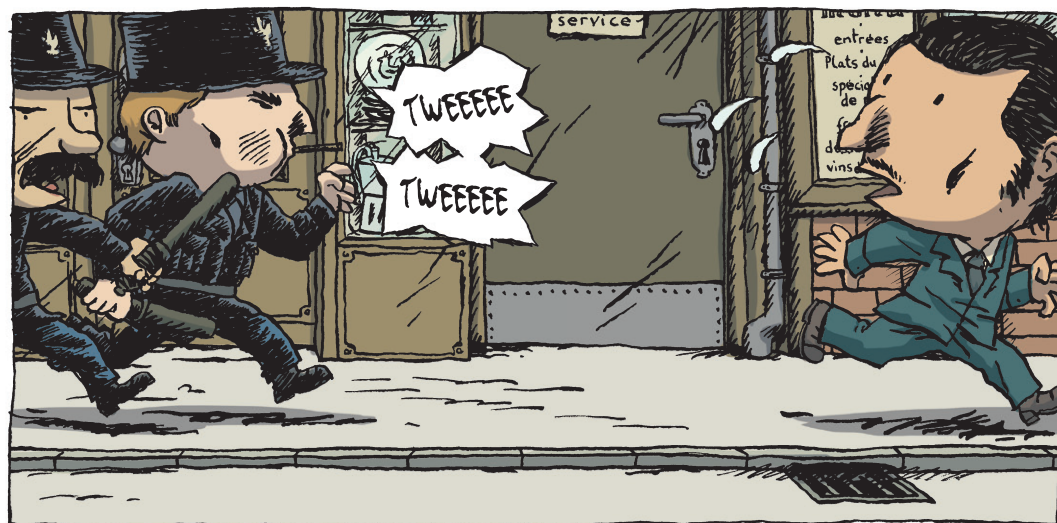
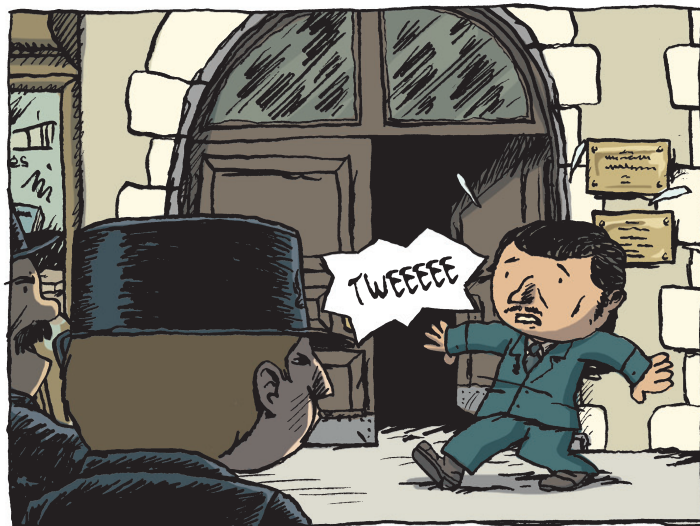
Simone Pierret.

And I was Catholic.

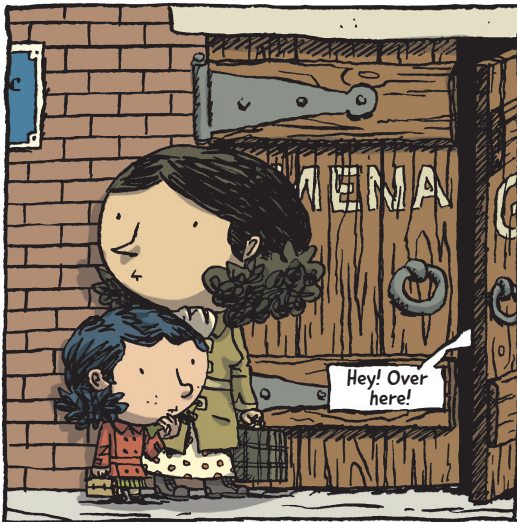
















I don't remember exactly what was going through my head.

We were leaving the building when the janitor saw the little one.



What I'm sure of is that Mr. Péricard's disappearance made me understand that I wasn't the only one to have lost someone close to me.


She started screaming, so the police came. My husband held them up so we could get away...



He fought with the policemen.


Did you see the police capture him?

No, but...



I think it's from that moment on that I no longer wanted to cry.


Okay, he may have gotten away. But we can't stay here. If he was caught and gave them the address, we're in trouble.



I was still sad, of course, but I was determined not to show it.

We have to leave.

But...my husband?! You won't just leave him like this?




Don't worry, we'll take care of him.


Dounia! Can you please come with me?








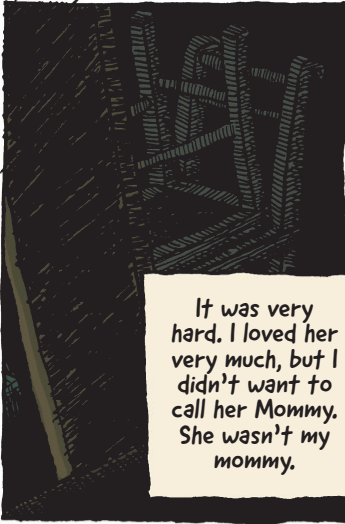
We climbed into  
a big cabinet, and  
my family name  
was changed once  
again.





I would now be  
Simone Péricard.



I had to act as  
if Mrs. Péricard  
were my mother.

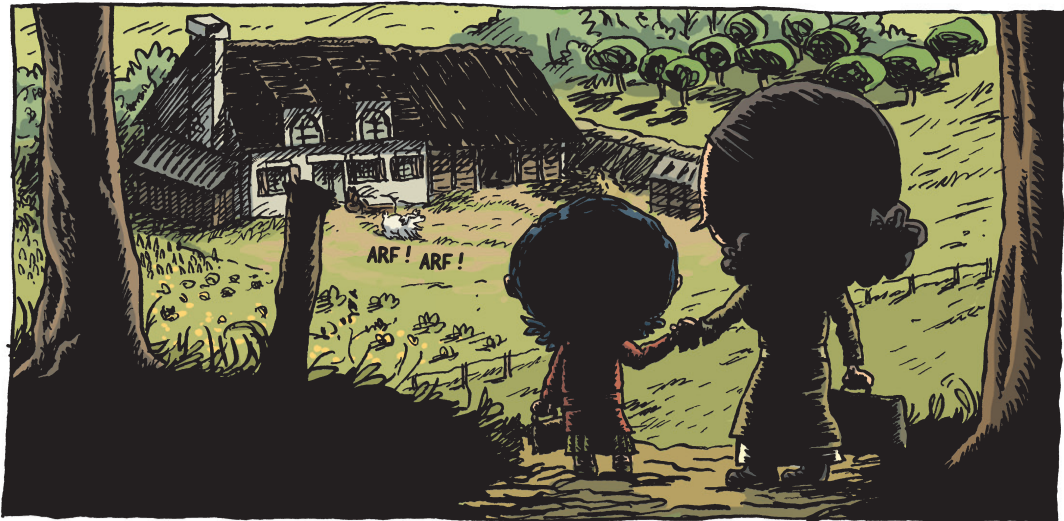


It was very  
hard. I loved her  
very much, but I  
didn't want to  
call her Mommy.  
She wasn't my  
mommy.



But I did it. I understood that it  
was to protect me.





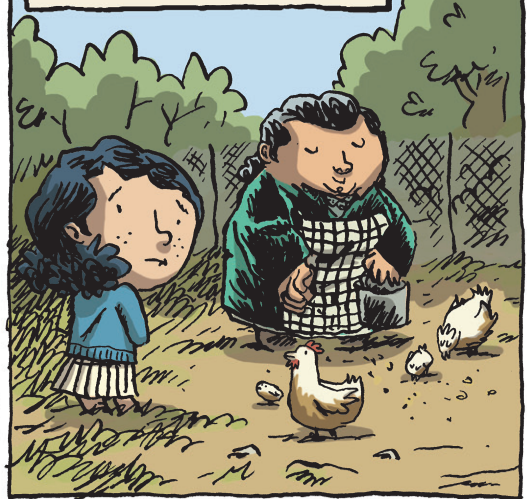




For a few days, I didn't say a word.



It wasn't that I didn't want to.

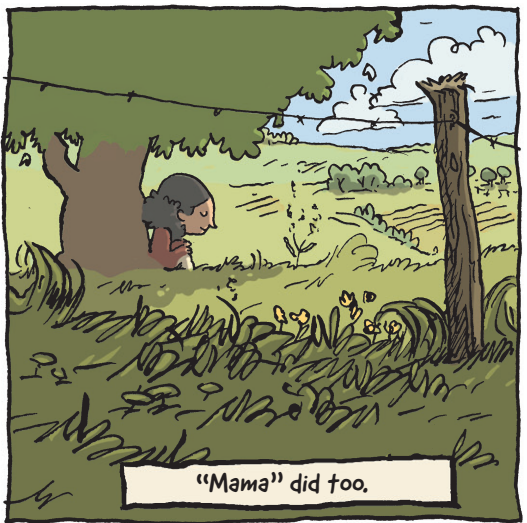


I just couldn't.



It was as if I had lost the words.

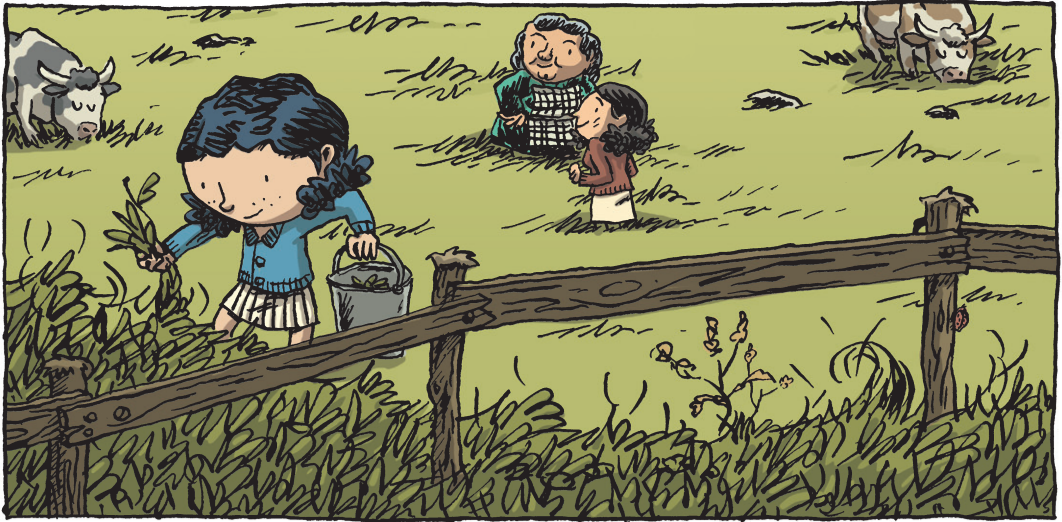
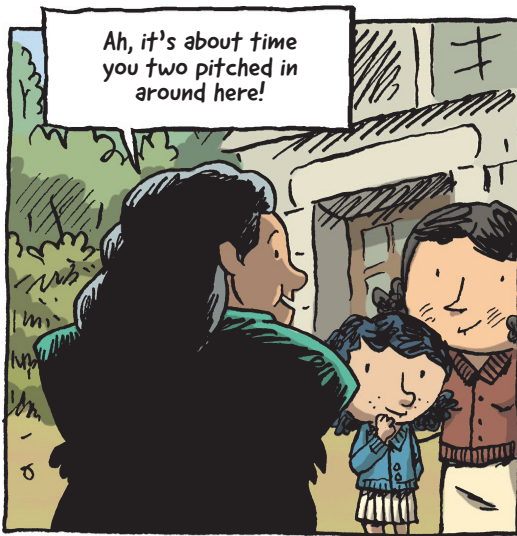
I needed to  
be alone.

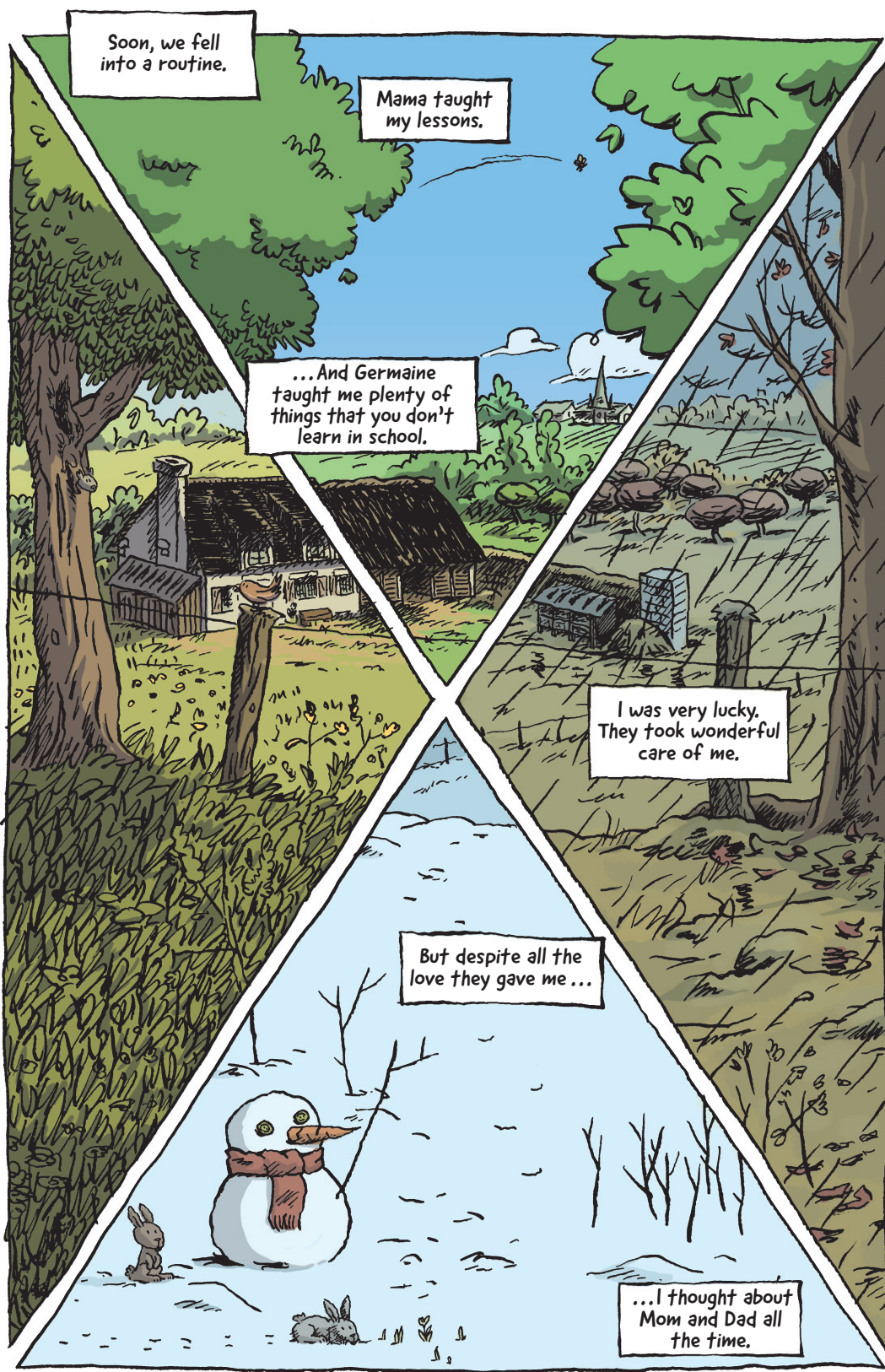


"Mama" did too.









Soon, we fell  
into a routine.

Mama taught  
my lessons.

... And Germaine  
taught me plenty of  
things that you don't  
learn in school.

I was very lucky.  
They took wonderful  
care of me.

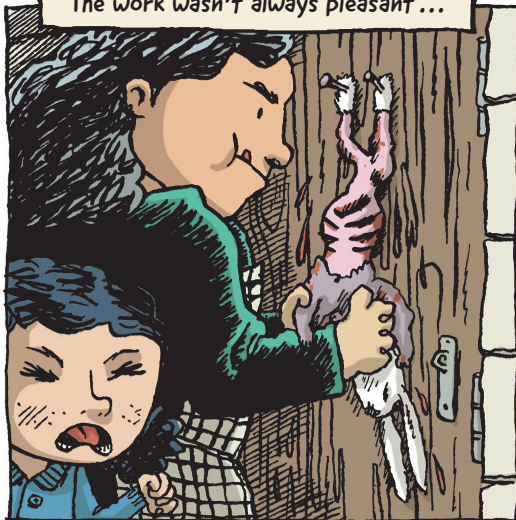
But despite all the  
love they gave me...

...I thought about  
Mom and Dad all  
the time.





The work wasn't always pleasant ...

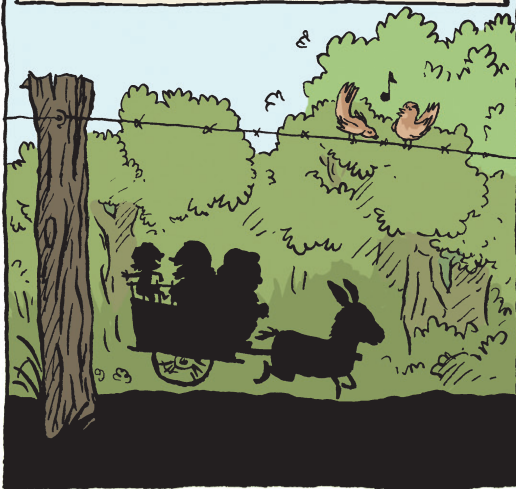


...but we had no choice.



Without food from the farm, life would have been much harder.

On religious holidays, when it was nice out...



...we went to the village.

Before then, I'd never attended Mass.



I thought the songs were pretty, but I had no idea what they were about.

The most important part was getting to see people.



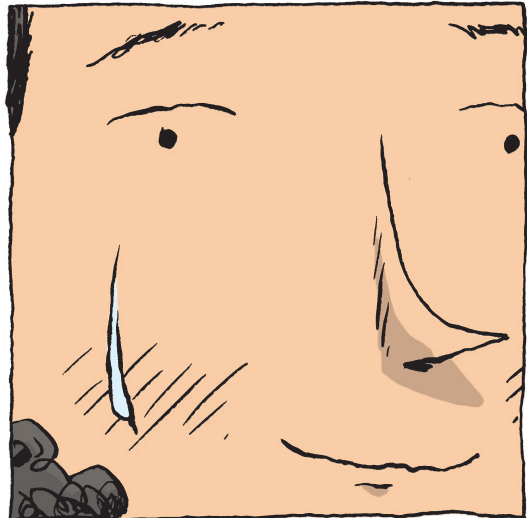
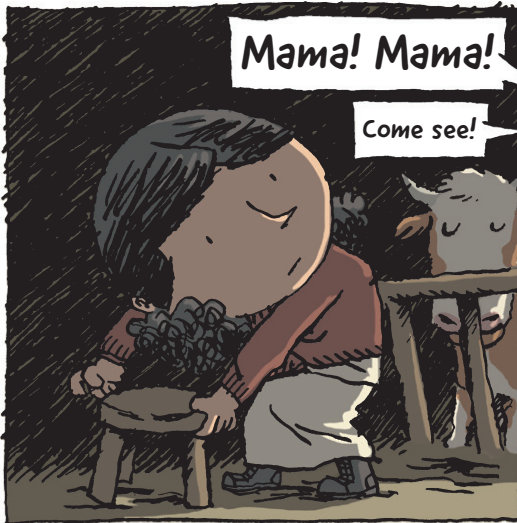
I've never heard you sing like that.



I know! It's easier now that I know the words.







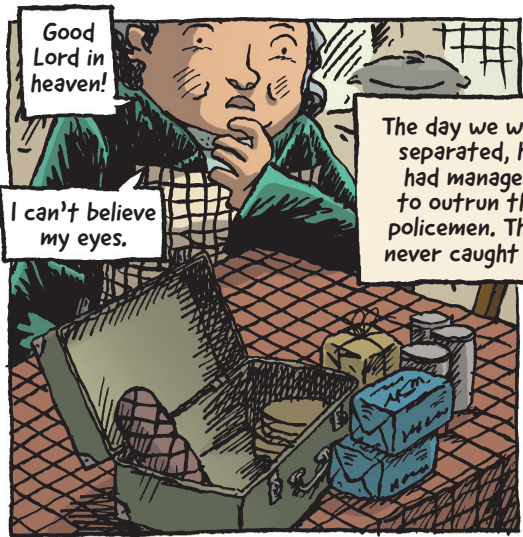






He explained everything.

My, how you've grown!



Good Lord in heaven!

I can't believe my eyes.

The day we were separated, he had managed to outrun the policemen. They never caught up.



He went to the address where the truck had been, but we were long gone.

Here!

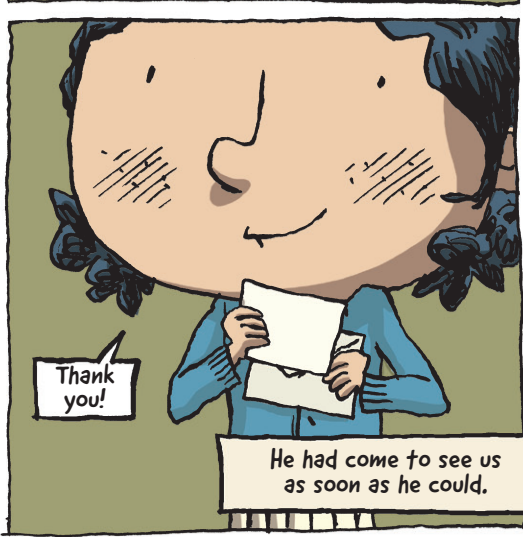
This is yours!



Then he went to see the lady who had asked me to change my name.



She helped him, and he joined the Resistance.



Thank you!

He had come to see us as soon as he could.



For the first time, I didn't sleep with Mama.



The next day, we went for a walk.



I didn't ask him if he had any news about my parents.



I was afraid of the answer.

LOOK!

LOOK!

If Mama had gotten her husband back...

Emile! Why did you let go?

I didn't...It slipped out of my hands.

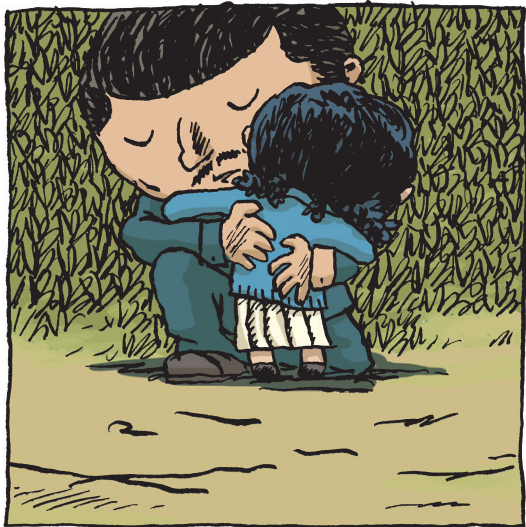
...I was convinced that I would get my parents back too.



Thank you!

I can never thank you enough for looking after my wife and the little one.

Bah! We gotta help each other out.



Listen to me, big girl!

Soon, I'll come get both of you and bring you back to Paris.

I swear we'll do all we can to find your parents.

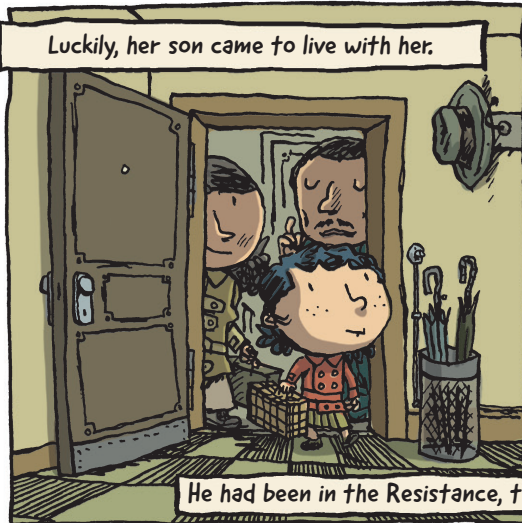


A few months later, he did come to get us.



We were very sad to leave Germaine alone.

Luckily, her son came to live with her.

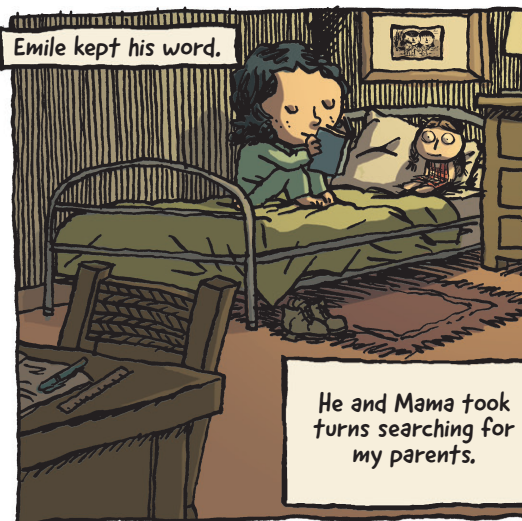


He had been in the Resistance, too.

And he didn't come home alone!



Emile kept his word.

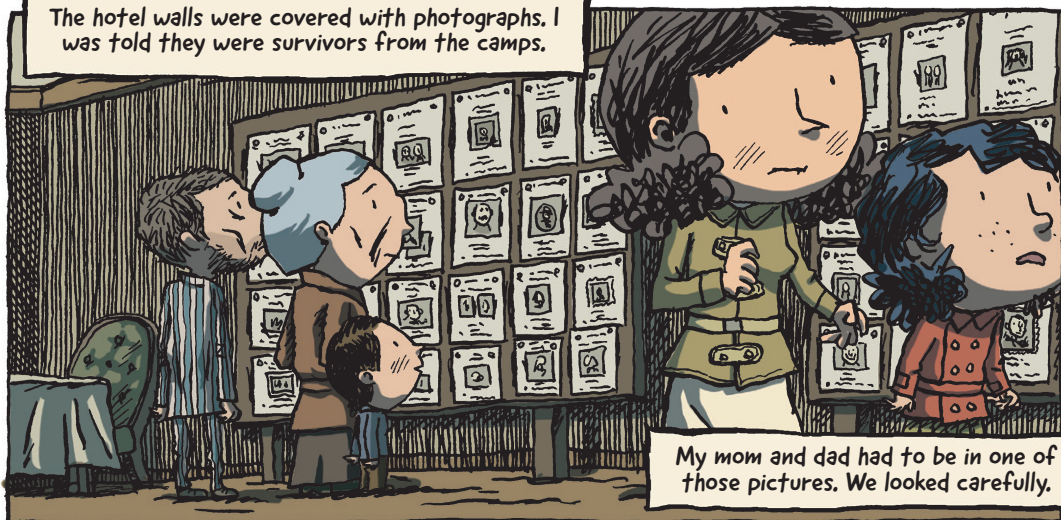


He and Mama took turns searching for my parents.

Once, they let me come along.



The hotel walls were covered with photographs. I was told they were survivors from the camps.



My mom and dad had to be in one of those pictures. We looked carefully.

I didn't know what a camp was...



Come!

Let's look over there.



At the new postings.

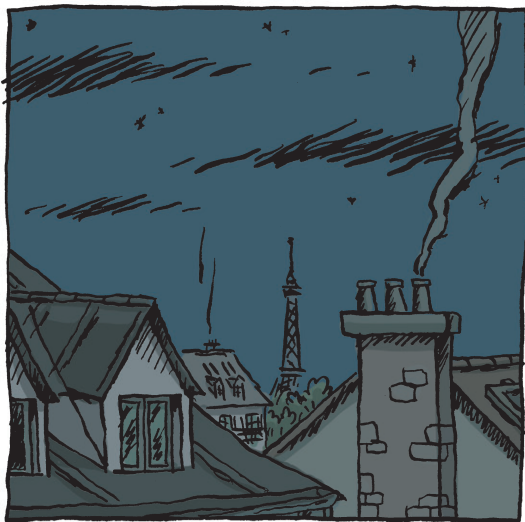
...and no one would explain it to me.

They weren't being mean. They wanted to protect me.



With my little girl's eyes, I could see it was something unbelievably cruel.





We made a mistake taking her there. We shouldn't have.



I don't think so. She had to see it. It's hard, but it will help her understand. Give her some time.



What will we tell her if we never find her parents?

We're not there yet. I'll go back every day if I have to.



Tomorrow, we'll have to sign her up for school. Can you take care of it?

Sure. You're right.

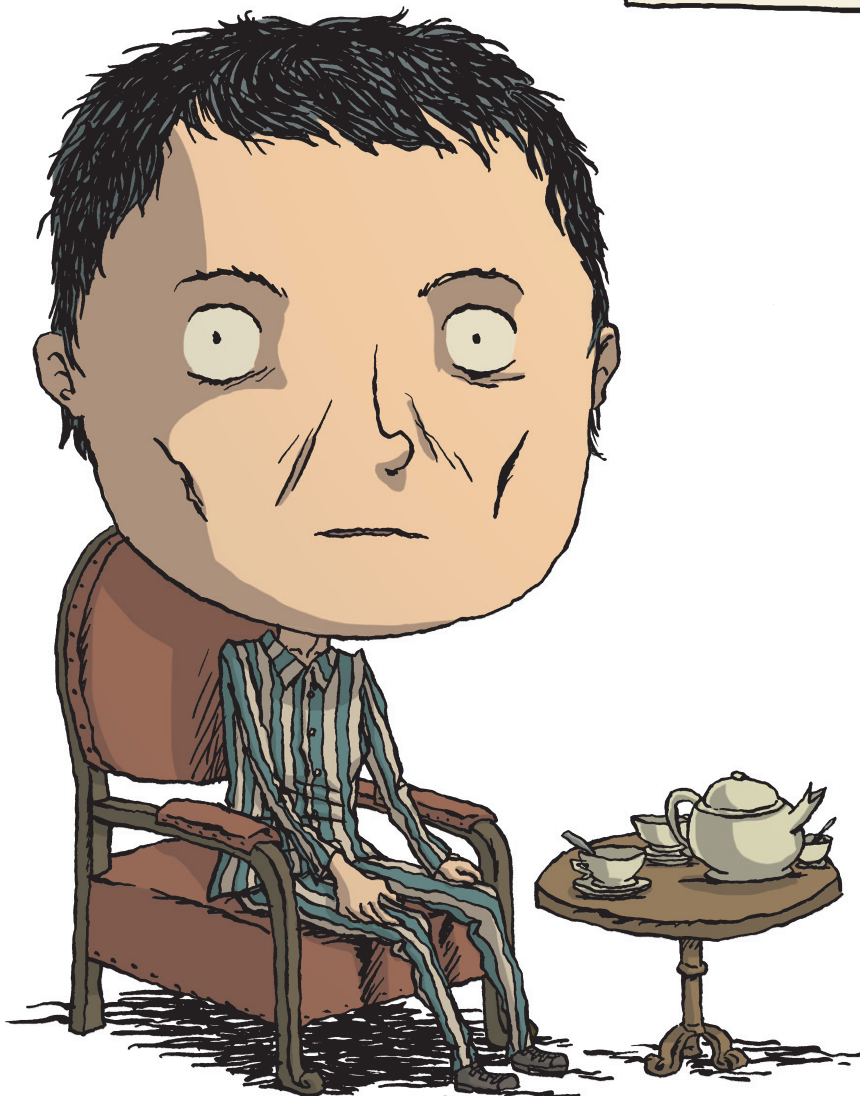






I didn't know what to do. I was horrified.

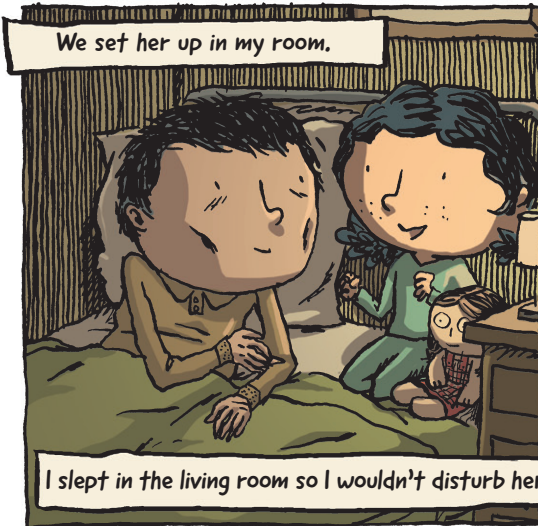
At first, I didn't recognize her.



It took me a moment to be sure she really was my mommy.



I had gotten my mommy back.



We set her up in my room.

I slept in the living room so I wouldn't disturb her.



"Mama" took care of her just like she had looked after me.



Thanks to her good cooking, Mommy gained back some weight...

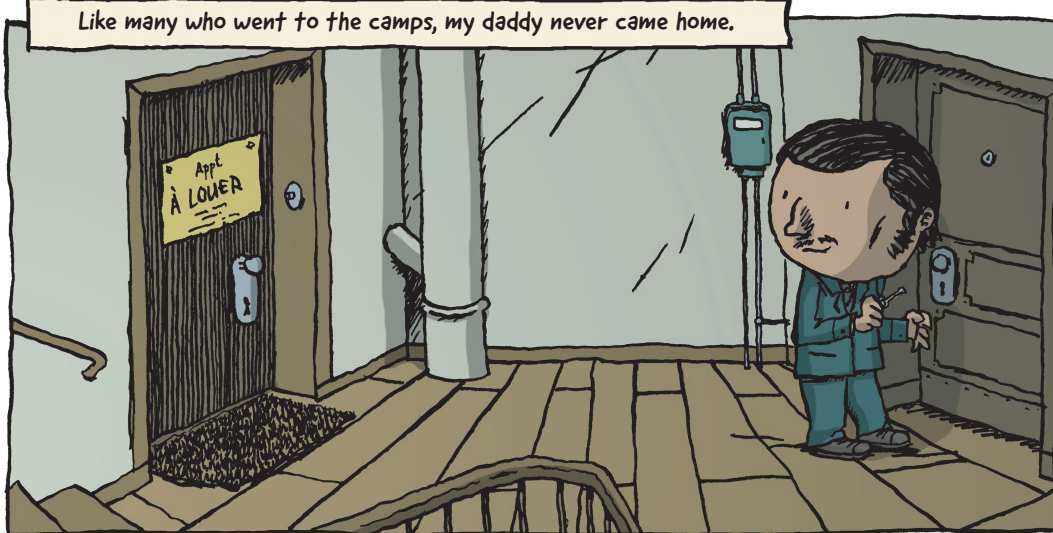
...but she was still very weak.



Emile kept looking for my father.



Like many who went to the camps, my daddy never came home.



They told me that I would never see him again...

Welcome to  
your new  
home.



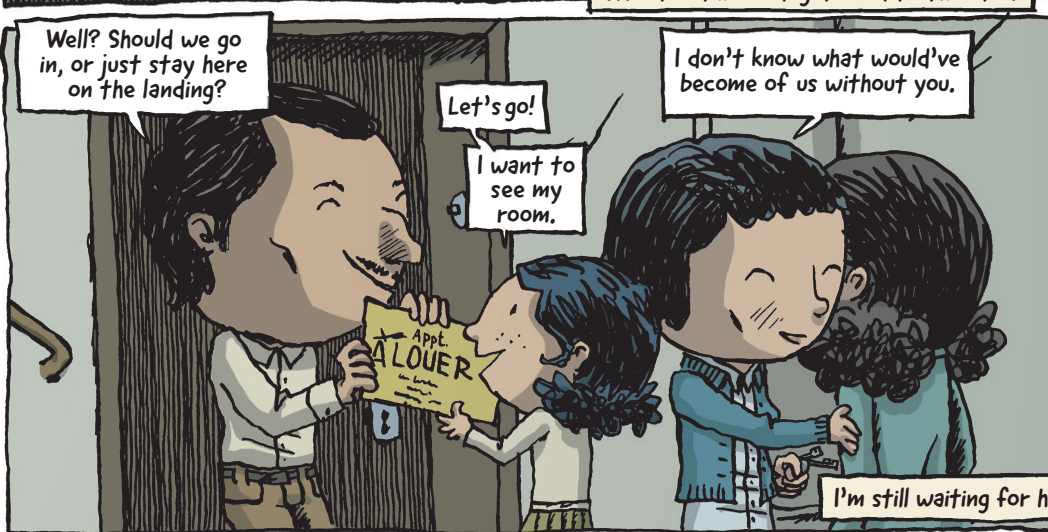
...but I still can't get used to the idea.

Well? Should we go  
in, or just stay here  
on the landing?

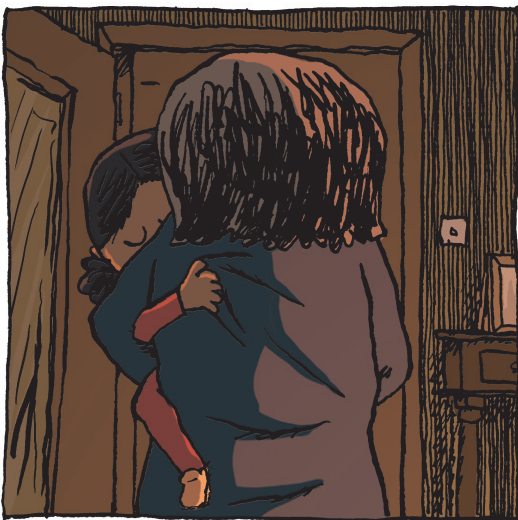
Let's go!

I want to  
see my  
room.

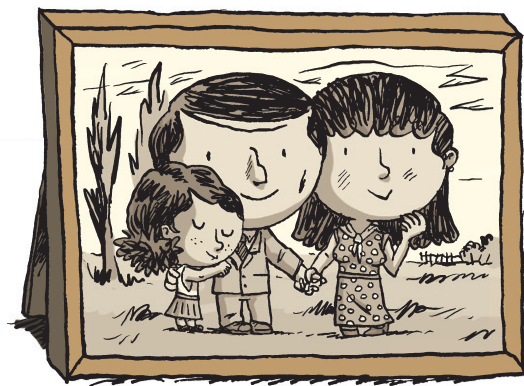
I don't know what would've  
become of us without you.



I'm still waiting for him.

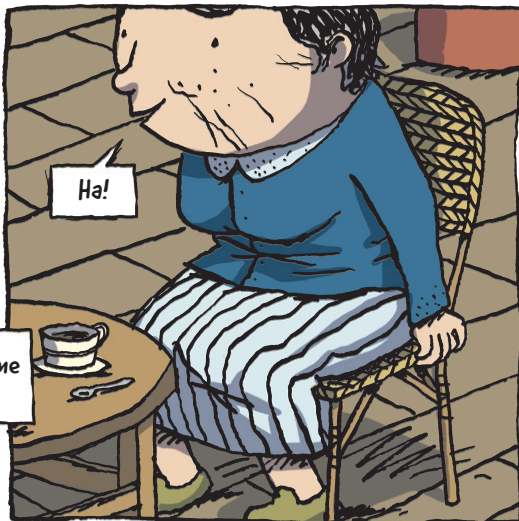


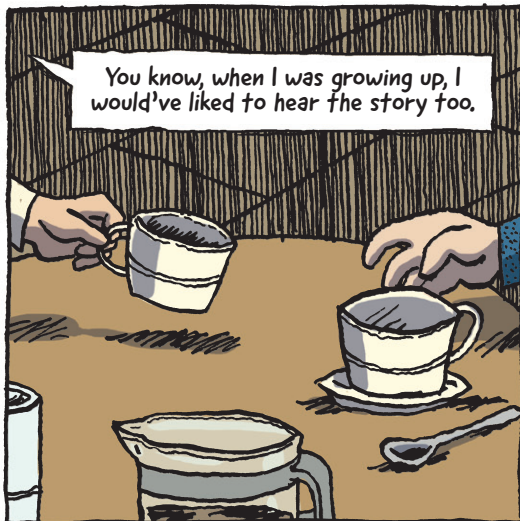
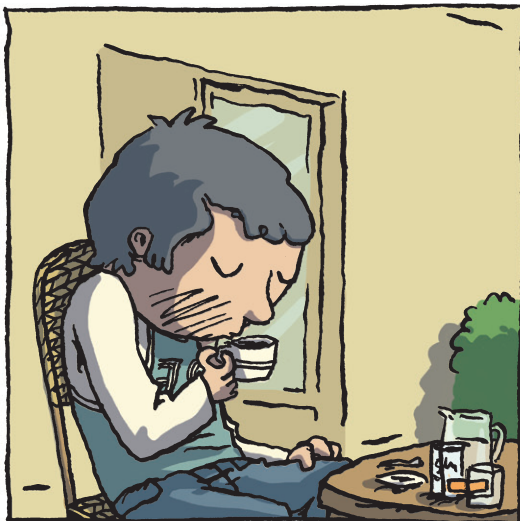




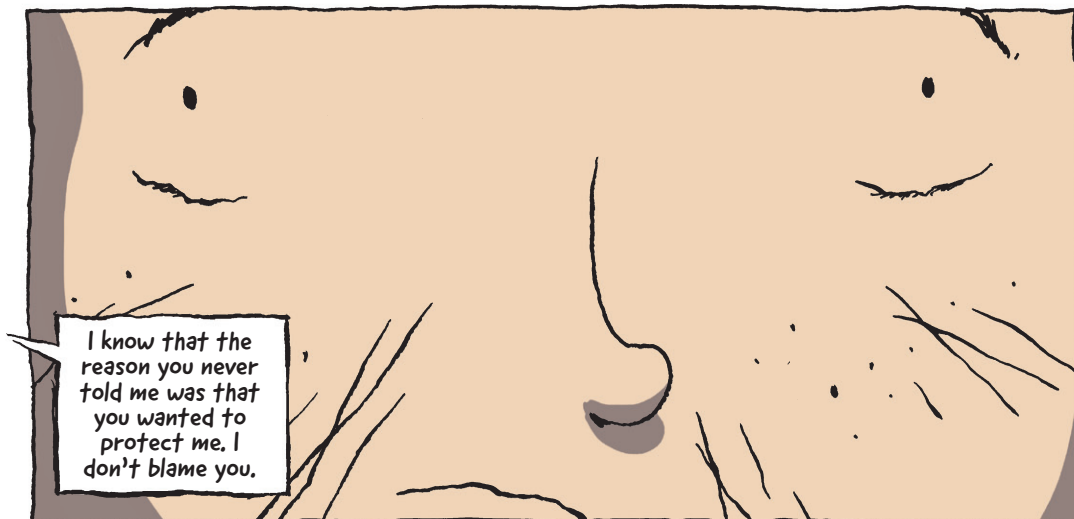






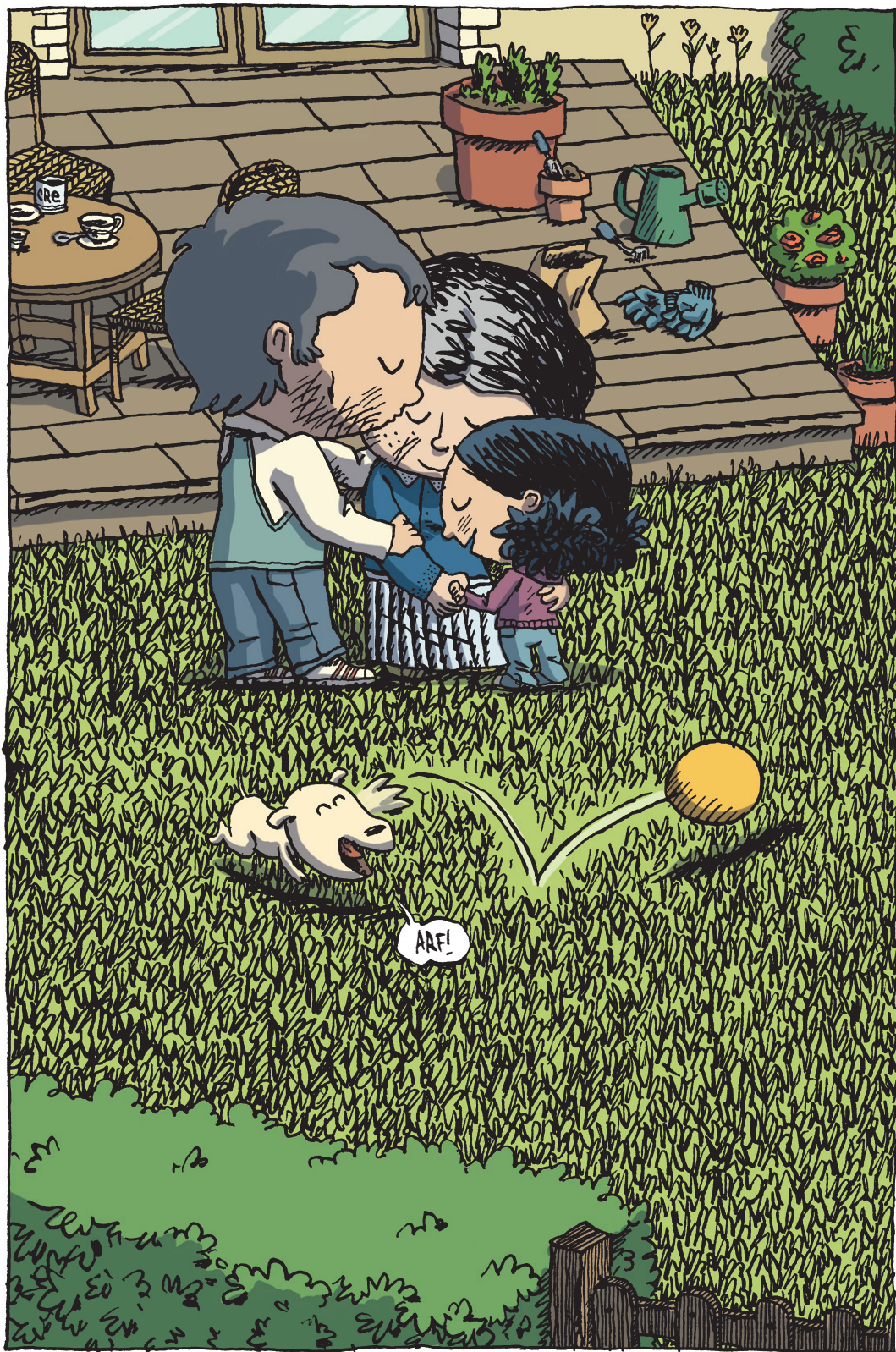
















# Afterword

In June 1940, France's army was utterly defeated by Adolf Hitler's German forces. A new French government, based in the city of Vichy near Switzerland, maintained a policy of collaboration with the Nazi occupiers. It also began to persecute France's Jews, excluding them from public life and from almost every profession.

Jewish children and their parents could no longer go to public parks, swimming pools, museums, or movie theaters, and they were no longer allowed to have a dog, a cat, or even a pet bird in a cage.

In the summer of 1942, rumors swelled that many Jews were going to be arrested in Paris and its suburbs. A broad movement of civil resistance and solidarity was born among the French people.

That wave of arrests spared neither the elderly, nor women, nor children . . . nor Dounia's parents. But thanks to the support and commitment of some very brave French people, ten to twelve thousand Jews were able to evade arrest by the police.

Dounia Cohen, the young Jewish girl in our tale, wears the yellow Star of David that the Vichy French Government forced all Jews older than six years old to display. Despite many humiliating experiences, she continues to live the life of a little girl who is loved, protected, and cherished by her parents, up to the time of their arrest. Dounia then becomes «Simone,» and is hidden away. Taking on a new identity, she moves to another town, thanks to those who rise up to save her.

Like Dounia, eighty-four percent of the Jewish children living in France before the Holocaust were saved. They owe their survival to their loved ones and friends, to Jewish organizations, to the Resistance networks, and to all those who rejected racism and hatred of those who are different.

We hope that Dounia's story will inspire young people to fight against injustice and abuse of power and keep alive a spirit of resistance, so that our world will never again see a holocaust like the one that led to the murder of 11,400 French children during the Second World War.

## Hellen Kaufmann

President, AJPN

*(Anonymes, Justes et Persécutés durant la période Nazie dans les communes de France. AJPN is an organization devoted to collecting stories of rescue and solidarity during World War II.)*