



"The testimonies of Bruno, Julie, and Martha braid together to form a satisfying, bittersweet story of life on the home front."

—*The Wall Street Journal*

**IT IS EARLY MORNING** when eleven-year-old Julie Sweet and her six-year-old sister, Martha, find a baby on the steps of the new children's library in Belle Beach, Long Island. When twelve-year-old Bruno, on his way to the train station, sees Julie with a baby in a basket, he has to abandon his important errand and follow her.

But the truth about the baby is more complicated than anything the three children imagine.

Told in three voices, each with a different take on events, this beautifully textured novel by award-winning author Amy Hest captures the emotions and moments of one life-changing summer.

★ "A richly layered, cohesive novel that is by turns heartwarming and heartbreaking." —*Publishers Weekly* (starred review)

★ "Young readers will be drawn in by the mystery, stay for the characters, and sigh contentedly when the story draws to a close."

—*School Library Journal* (starred review)

Cover illustration copyright  
© 2020 by Jamey Christoph  
Age 10 and up



**CANDLEWICK PRESS**  
[www.candlewick.com](http://www.candlewick.com)

**PJ OUR WAY®**

[www.pjourway.org](http://www.pjourway.org)

**THE  
SUMMER  
WE FOUND  
THE BABY**

AMY HEST



CANDLEWICK PRESS

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters,  
places, and incidents are either products of the author's  
imagination or, if real, are used fictitiously.

Copyright © 2020 by Amy Hest  
Chapter opener illustrations copyright  
© 2020 by Jamey Christoph

For Nancy and Erica, forever

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced,  
transmitted, or stored in an information retrieval system  
in any form or by any means, graphic, electronic, or  
mechanical, including photocopying, taping, and recording,  
without prior written permission from the publisher.

First paperback edition 2022  
This edition published specially for PJ Library®/  
The Harold Grinspoon Foundation 2022 by Candlewick Press

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 2020910725  
ISBN 978-0-7636-6007-9 (Candlewick trade hardcover edition)  
ISBN 978-1-5362-2599-0 (Candlewick trade paperback edition)  
ISBN 978-1-5362-2755-0 (PJ Library® edition)

21 TRC 1

Printed in Eagan, MN, U.S.A.

This book was typeset in Vollkorn.

Candlewick Press  
99 Dover Street  
Somerville, Massachusetts 02144

visit us at [www.candlewick.com](http://www.candlewick.com)

1.

# **THE BABY**



# **Julie Sweet**

*age 11*

*I'm the one who found her. A real, live baby girl and I saw her first. I saw the basket. Right over there, on the steps of the new children's library. A tiny little baby! All by herself in that basket! She was so brave, though. She wasn't even crying.*

*I just wanted to hold her awhile. I didn't mean to take the baby.*



## Martha Sweet

*age 6*

You know what I thought? I thought it was a doll! And I don't even like dolls! Then something happened. Which is this. It *moved*. And made a *gurgle-a-gurgle-a* sound. HELP! I screamed. HELP! Then Julie was holding it and their noses were touching and you know what else? There was a little green pig inside the basket. HERE'S YOUR NICE PIG, I said. LOOK AT PIGGY DANCING! The baby only looked at Julie. She didn't love her pig — oh, poor little pig — so I put it in my pocket for a while.



## Bruno Ben-Eli

*age 12*

It was August 31, that's when everything happened. That morning, while they were working, I wrote my parents a goodbye note. It was my first time writing a goodbye note, but I like what I wrote. I like how it shows my thoughtful side. Here are my exact words.

*Dear Mom and Dear Dad,*

*I have to go somewhere immediately  
but not forever. Can't say more, sorry.*

*Your son, Bruno*

*P.S. Don't worry, I'm not running  
away from home. I would never do  
that, don't worry.*

See what I mean? Thoughtful. I left it on my pillow, along with a nice little picture of me for my parents to look at. Then, at exactly 7:45 a.m., I was ready to leave. So I left.

My house is right on the beach, and you can walk on the beach all the way to town if you want. It's a pretty long walk, but I had plenty of time. I knew I had plenty of time because I kept checking my watch. Which is not in actual fact *my* watch, but I wear it every day. Ben said I could. Ben. That's my brother. Private Benjamin Ben-Eli, bravest soldier in the war. BRUNO, CATCH! That's what he called from the train that day—his leaving day—and the train whistle blew and his watch came sailing

out the window, and the train pulled out, and then he was gone. Gone to war.

Before the war, I never wrote a letter to Ben. Now I write one a week. My mother's idea, not mine, but I don't mind. Mostly I think up funny jokes to stick in my letters to Ben. In case he's sad over there. Even brave soldiers are sad sometimes. My father told me that.

You know what's the best day? A day when there's a letter from Ben. And that morning I had one in my pocket, a top-secret letter, just to me, not my parents and me. *I know I can count on you, Bruno.* That's what he wrote, and that's why I was going away. Seventy miles away. To New York City. I had to find someone there—somewhere in the city—and give her a message from Ben. It would be my first time alone on the train. My first time alone in the city. A lot of kids would be scared. Not

me. Ben was counting on me. I couldn't be scared. And I couldn't stop thinking about the secret he told me in that letter. It was huge.

The train station is on Front Street. So is the library. Which is where I saw the basket. High up, near the door. Then I saw Julie Sweet, in all her unfriendly glory, and she was holding this *baby*, of all things, and no one else was around. Not one single person. Unless you count Martha. That's Julie's little sister, and the minute she saw me, she was waving her arms in a way that meant: *Bruno, Bruno! Come on up!* I shook my head: *Not possible, not now, I have to go somewhere.* But Martha kept at it: *Look, Bruno, look! We found this little baby!*

It's a good thing I changed my mind. Because I'm the one who saw the envelope that came in the basket with the baby.

*Please open immediately. Instructions inside.* That's what it said on the envelope. *Open immediately? Instructions inside?* I picked up the envelope. Obviously, my services were needed.