

# **Sarah's Key Study Guide**

**Sarah's Key by Tatiana de Rosnay**

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# Plot Summary

Sarah's Key by Tatiana de Rosnay is a work of fiction about a young girl, Sarah Starzynski, who was collected in France during the roundup of Jews in July 16, 1942, when the French police arrested thousands of Jews throughout Paris. The girl and her family were sent to an internment camp where people were held before being sent to Auschwitz where they were executed.

The story surrounds two time periods: 1942 and 2002. All of the main story and action takes place in Paris. The two stories alternate throughout the book. By alternating both points of view, de Rosnay allows the reader to learn factual information and also go on an emotional journey. As the book progresses, the stories tie together until they become one.

Julia Jaramond, an American journalist living in Paris, is assigned to cover the sixtieth anniversary of Vel' d'Hiv', a former stadium turned holding facility for Jews being sent to Auschwitz during the Nazi invasion of France. Julia has never heard of the Vélodrome d' Hiver, aka Vel' d'Hiv', which was located on rue Nélaton in the fifteenth arrondissement. Julia is told by her boss to get eyewitness statements and cover the real story of the site, which is an embarrassment to the French people. Unfortunately, Vel' d'Hiv' was torn down in 1959. Julia is told that it may be a tricky assignment as it is a touchy subject with the French. Most people know little, if anything, about the place or what happened on July 16, 1942.

Intertwined with Julia's research and near-obsession with Vel' d'Hiv' and the life of Sarah Starzynski is Sarah Starzynski's account of the events that took place in 1942. Although Sarah's portion of the story is told in third person, it is clear that the confusion, desperation and lack of understanding are seen from a child's point of view. Julia's account, on the other hand, is written in first person to give the reader the full emotional experience of Julia's research and attachment to a little girl who had most likely died sixty years earlier.

Sarah's story is told from the time of the arrest. Sarah's little brother, Michel, is locked in a cupboard to await Sarah's return. Sarah does not return and Michel dies. After being separated from her parents at Beaune-la-Rolande, Sarah manages to escape. She and her fellow escapee, Rachel, end up staying at a farmhouse in Orléans. Rachel is captured but Sarah is adopted by an elderly couple who raise Sarah as a grandchild.

Julia works tirelessly to learn about the people that had been corralled at Vel' d'Hiv. Julia learns that her new apartment was once lived in by the Starzynski family and that there is a terrible secret tied to the roundup known as "Operation Spring Breeze".

Julia learns about Sarah and about the death of Michel. Julia tries to track down Sarah, only to learn that she had died in 1972. Later, Julia would learn that Sarah could no longer bear the burden of her past and committed suicide. Julia tells Sarah's son everything about his mother. The son, William, is shocked because he knew none of it.

During Julia's quest to find Sarah, she realizes that her marriage is falling apart. A pregnancy seals the deal and Bertrand leaves his wife of sixteen years.

Julia and her daughters end up in New York City where Julia desperately tries to start a new life. The book ends with William contacting Julia, and the pair meets once again to talk about Sarah.



# Pages 1-58

## Pages 1-58 Summary

Sarah's Key by Tatiana de Rosnay contains two time periods: 1942 and 2002. All of the main story and action takes place in Paris. The two stories alternate throughout the book, two or more pages at a time.

Paris, July 16, 1942

A ten-year-old girl eavesdrops on her parents. They speak in their native Polish - a language the girl understands, but does not speak as fluently as her parents. The girl hears words she can decipher but does not understand. These words include camp, arrests, and roundup. The girl wants to know what the words mean but cannot ask her parents or they will know she was eavesdropping on the conversation.

It is the first time the girl sees her parents afraid. The girl knows the fear comes from the presence of the Germans but does not truly understand. The girl's father, a factory foreman, lives upstairs during the day but hides in the basement at night in case the police try to find and arrest him.

There is a knock at the door. The mother's face is pale. The girl thinks there is no reason to be afraid because the police at the door are French police, not German. The police order the mother to pack enough clothes for a couple of days for her and her daughter. The mother sobs, but refusing is not an option. The mother tells the girl to fetch her four-year-old brother and pack clothes for both of them. The girl obeys.

The girl goes into the boy's room and finds that he is afraid. The boy says he does not want to go, that the girl and their mother should go without him. There is a secret hiding place - a cubby hole - where the children often play. It is well hidden. There is water in the cubby as well as a flashlight and some toys. The little girl does as her brother asks and locks him in the cubby. The girl promises to be back as soon as possible. The girl pockets the small brass key and assures herself that the boy will be fine until she gets back or their father gets home.

Police search the house for the boy but do not find the secret cubby. The police believe the story that the boy has been sent to the country to stay with family. On the way out of the apartment, the concierge sneers at the mother and daughter. The concierge tells the police where they can find other Jews. The concierge will not meet the eyes of the mother or daughter.

The police push the mother along. A neighbor yells out the window, objecting to the treatment. Everyone loves the woman and her family. The police ignore the objections. Before the mother and daughter can leave the premises, the father emerges from the basement and begs to be taken with his wife and child. The little girl feels better knowing her father is there to protect them.



The girl tells her parents about the little boy. The parents are horrified. The girl says it will be all right because they will only be gone a couple of days. The parents tell the girl they will not be going home again but that she must be brave.

The family is forced to wait until they are finally ushered onto a bus. The bus drives into a strange part of the city the girl has never seen. It is dirty and dusty. The girl asks her father what is happening and wants to know if this predicament has anything to do with the yellow stars sewn on their clothes. The father says it is because of the stars. "A month or so ago, her mother had sewn the stars on all her clothes. On all the family's clothes, except her little brother's. Before that their identity cards had been stamped with the word "Jew" or "Jewess." (p. 25) The bus finally stops at a large building.

The girl thinks about all of the new restrictions. Once the stars were issued, the children were no longer allowed to ride their bicycles or play in the park, the mother had to shop at certain times when the stores were closed to the general public, and so forth.

Days are spent at the location where the people are refused water and food except sporadically. The girl is traumatized and often sits with her eyes closed and her head between her knees. A boy runs away and offers to take the girl with him, but she is afraid. A woman has a stillborn baby and others suffer from heart attacks, anxiety and a plethora of other ailments. The girl thinks about her friends at school and wonders where they might be.

The father grows desperate and approaches a cop to ask to retrieve his son. The cop laughs in his face. A nurse finally arrives with food. The girl thinks about the first day she received a yellow star on her clothes and how people everywhere - even friends at school - began to call her a dirty Jew and to avoid her. The people are pushed onto a train that is no more than a cattle car. No one has any idea where they are being taken, although the adults know the end results.

Paris, May 2002

Boston-bred Julia Jaramond and her eleven-year-old daughter, Zoe, wait for Bertrand, the husband and father. Bertrand is late, as usual. When Bertrand does arrive, he is on the phone, obviously in an argument. Bertrand's associate, Antoine, follows close behind. The group was scheduled to meet at the former apartment of Mame Tézac, Bertrand's grandmother. Mame Tézac has been living in a nursing home for the past nine months and so the apartment is being taken over by Bertrand, Julia and Zoe. The meeting is to view the apartment in its current state and to evaluate what must be done to make it livable. Julia is unsure of the plan and was never consulted by Bertrand, which is typical. Julia does look forward to additional space, however, as it means she will get her own office, something she has been attempting to get for a long time.

Zoe is an intelligent, mature girl with an outspoken and frank nature. Julia, a forty-five-year-old writer, has lived in Paris for twenty-five years.

Antoine meets Julia and Zoe while Bertrand talks on the phone. Antoine says Bertrand is talking to a fellow architect who works in direct competition with Bertrand and



Antoine's firm. Julia is annoyed at this lack of attention and feels Bertrand should have taken care of business without cutting into this important meeting.

Julia, Antoine and Zoe check out the apartment. Julia thinks about the first time she met Mame Tézac. The woman was in her seventies, very French and very blunt. Julia felt incredibly out of place, being the blond-haired blue-eyed American girl who had only been in Paris a few years. Bertrand's family was stunned at his choice for a wife. Throughout the years, Julia adopted Mame as her own grandmother.

As they discuss the immense amount of work it will need, Bertrand arrives. Bertrand is flip, which annoys Julia even more. The meeting is relatively short as Julia has a meeting with her boss, Joshua, at three o'clock that afternoon.

Julia works at "Seine Scenes", a magazine that focuses on local culture, entertainment, and activities. The magazine is geared toward American expatriates, and most Parisiens have never heard of it. Julia has worked there for six years and likes the job, although Joshua can be a tyrant.

Two others, Bamber and Alessandra, attend the meeting. Julia is assigned to cover the sixtieth anniversary of Vel' d'Hiv', a former stadium turned holding facility for Jews being sent to Auschwitz during the Nazi invasion of France. Julia has never heard of the Vélodrome d' Hiver, aka Vel' d'Hiv', which was located on rue Nélaton in the fifteenth arrondissement. Julia is told to get eyewitness statements and cover the real story of the site, which is an embarrassment to the French people. Unfortunately, Vel' d'Hiv' was torn down in 1959. Joshua tells Julia it may be a tricky assignment as it is a touchy subject with the French. Most people know little if anything about the place or what happened on July 16, 1942.

Julia is eager to learn about Vel' d'Hiv' and begins an internet search. Julia learns that four thousand children between the ages of two and twelve years old were taken and none had survived.

Julia thinks about her childhood in Boston. Julia's father, Sean Jaramond, was a mad professor type who worked at MIT. Julia's mother, Heather Carter Jaramond, was a former tennis pro from Miami. There were two daughters in the family, Julia, and her sister Charla. Julia talks about a happy and peaceful childhood. Julia also reminisces about her early days in Paris and meeting Bertrand.

Julia goes to dinner at the apartment of her friends and former roommates, Christophe and Hervé. Julia always has a delightful time with these old friends, who never put heavy expectations or demands on her as many others do on a daily basis. A new friend of "the boys" arrives. His name is Guillaume. Over dinner, Julia and Guillaume discuss Vel' d'Hiv'. Guillaume's grandmother had told many stories about the roundup. Guillaume and Julia agree to talk again.

Julia argues with Bertrand over the roundup. Bertrand seems unconcerned and flip. Julia is becoming obsessed with the events of that day and is angry that so many people could die and no one seemed to care.



## Pages 1-58 Analysis

The story that takes place in Paris in 1942 begins with a nameless girl and her nameless family somewhere in Paris. The story, although it is told in the third person point of view, is relatively based on the girl's perceptions of the events going on at that time. It is a somewhat generic story thus far, meaning that it could be told by any one of the thousands of people taken from their homes and shipped off to Vel' D'Hiv and then Auschwitz.

The lack of names and specifics makes it difficult for the reader to truly connect to the characters. Additionally, the names of the train station, particular parts of Paris and Auschwitz, also give the story a generic quality. Although this method gives a ubiquitous feel to the story, it also takes away what could be a great impact.

The girl is brave - as much as a ten-year-old can be. As the story goes on, the girl becomes hardened and angry at her parents for withholding information. The parents want to protect their children, but by not telling the girl what is happening, they run the risk of jeopardizing her life by taking away any chance of survival the girl might have away from her parents.

The girl is extremely proud of herself for locking her little brother in the cupboard. While this makes perfect sense to a little girl's mind, the parents never question the absence of the boy until the girl tells them what has happened. Even under great distress, the lack of concern for the little boy is unrealistic.

The horrors in the story mount quickly. People are dehydrated and starved; others die. The little girl can make no sense of the situation. The girl's anger grows as she sees her parents fall apart, again not knowing what is going on and what is about to happen.

Paris, May 2002

Julia Jaramond is an American born journalist who has lived in Paris for twenty-five years. Julia is married to Bertrand, an arrogant man who exudes great charm and what Julia refers to as "Frenchiness". Although Julia is clearly a strong, independent woman, she easily falls under Bertrand's charms and is beginning to resent herself for it, even though Bertrand is an excellent father, lover, and provider. Julia also gets upset that even after sixteen years of marriage, Bertrand's family still refers to her as "The American".

Zoe is a bright girl who seems to have a good deal of self confidence as well as the hearts of her parents. Although Zoe is an only child, she does not seem to be spoiled.

Moving to Mame Tézac's old apartment was Bertrand's idea. Making the decision without Julia's consent shows a lack of courtesy and respect that has just begun to disturb Julia.



The meeting with Joshua, Bamber and Alessandra is revealing as to the work environment Julia participates in on a regular basis. The subject of Vel' d'Hiv' intrigues Julia, and almost immediately she becomes angry and somewhat obsessed about the major event in French history that is often swept under the rug. If the anniversary had not been approaching, chances are Julia never would have heard about the roundup and the events surrounding it in 1942.



# Pages 59-122

## Pages 59-122 Summary

Paris 1942

The girl did not know how long she had been at this place. At times, the girl becomes ill, and her father tries to comfort her as best he could. After a few days, orders are shouted through loudspeakers, ordering people to take their belongings and go to the entrance. The people are weak but manage to do as they are told. The little girl wonders if they are going to be sent home.

The people are ordered to walk down a street where they are stared at like sideshow freaks. A woman gives a roll to the little girl.

The people are transported by bus to a nearby train station. The father says there is nothing they could do about the situation. The girl is sad and angry, wondering if her father does not care about his four-year-old son. The father tries to explain to the daughter what is happening and the girl begins to cry, in deep despair for what she has done to her little brother.

The Jews arrive at a holding camp at Beaune-la-Rolande, a holding camp for Jews who are going to be sent to death camps. The men are separated from the women. The police say that the men and women would be sent to work camps in the east. No one believes it.

There is so little food and water that what exists does not help. People are filthy, sick, dying, and infested with lice. There are rats and inhumane conditions. The girl only sees her father once or twice. The mother has become a shell of her former self, while the girl hardens. One day the police take all valuables from the women and separate them from their children. No amount of fighting can keep the mothers with their children. The girl knows she will never see her parents again.

The girl tries her best to care for the younger children in the barracks by telling them stories and trying to comfort them in any way she can. The girl makes a friend named Rachel. Rachel proposes an escape.

The children have their heads shaved. Once again the girl sees the red-haired policeman who used to be friendly to her and her family. The man is embarrassed.

The plan is to escape during the day. Just as the girls are ready to make it to the other side of the fence, the red-haired policeman grabs Rachel's ankle and pulls her back inside the fence. The girl begs the policeman to let them go and tells him about her little brother. The policeman gives the girl a wad of cash and lets them go. The girls run.



After a long time, the girls find a farmhouse where an older couple takes them in, feeds and clothes them. Rachel becomes very ill with dysentery. The girl, whose name is Sirka, says she must get back to Paris to save her brother, although she knows he is dead.

The couple, Jules and Geneviève, calls for a doctor for Rachel. The doctor is snide and arrogant and knows that Rachel is an escaped Jew. It is clear that the doctor will call the police.

Paris 2002

Julia and Bamber go to the former site of Vel' d'Hiv'. The site is surrounded by large ugly brick buildings. Bamber has uncovered only a couple of existing pictures of the site. Julia searches and finally finds a small plaque commemorating the roundup.

"On July 16 and 17, 1942, 13,152 Jews were arrested in Paris and the suburbs, deported and assassinated at Auschwitz. In the Vélodrome d' Hiver that once stood on this spot, 1,129 men, 2,916 women, and 4,115 children were packed here in inhuman conditions by the government of the Vichy police, by order of the Nazi occupant. May those who tried to save them be thanked. Passerby, never forget!" (p. 60)

Julia explains the facts to Bamber. Being British, Bamber knew as little as Julia about the events at Vel' d'Hiv'. After a discussion at the site, Julia and Bamber go to a café. Julia has an urge to talk to the young waiter about Vel' d'Hiv'. The young man tells the pair about an old woman who lives nearby and knows about the events of that time.

Julia and Bamber visit the old woman. The woman says she is ninety-five years old and was thirty-five at the time of the roundup. The woman remembers the events clearly and gives Julia a great deal of information.

Julia visits Mame Tézac at the nursing home. The woman is having a good day, something that is becoming rarer as the Alzheimer's takes hold of her brain. Julia and Mame talk about the apartment. Julia learns that Mame and her husband moved into the apartment on Marais in July of 1942. Julia instinctively knows that the apartment had belonged to one of the Jewish families. Mame refuses to talk about it.

Julia thinks about the information and becomes increasingly upset. Julia visits the apartment to check in on the workers. Anxious about the information she received from Mame, Julia asks Bertrand what he knows about the apartment. Bertrand does not know about the former occupants and tells Julia to calm down. Julia knows the story is due soon but she vows to find out all she can, especially now since the story has become intimately attached to her life.

Julia learns that she is pregnant. She immediately thinks about her numerous miscarriages and worries. Julia also thinks about how the miscarriages and the inability to produce a second child have made her feel incompetent. Bertrand's family silently expressed that as well as their disdain over her feminist attitudes.



Zoe comes home from school and talks to Julia about her recent sadness. Julia tells Zoe she intends to find out what happened to the family that lived in the apartment.

Julia and Bertrand meet at their favorite restaurant. It is the restaurant where Bertrand proposed, where Julia had given him the news about her pregnancy with Zoe, and where Julia had confronted Bertrand about his long-term affair. When Julia tells Bertrand about the pregnancy, it is clear he does not share her joy. Bertrand says they are too old and too settled in their life to add another child. Julia is devastated.

Julia meets with Franck Lévy, a man in his sixties. Lévy and Julia talk about the Loiret camps and the progression of the deportation of Jews and their children.

## Pages 59-122 Analysis

Paris 1942

The reader begins to learn more about the way the roundup worked with people being sent to holding camps before being sent to concentration camps. Sirka becomes strong during this time and shows her compassion and intelligence. The relationship between Rachel and Sirka proves to be a beneficial one as Sirka would not have tried to escape alone. By going along with the plan, Sirka undoubtedly saved Rachel's life as well as her own.

Jules and Geneviève take an enormous risk by taking the girls into their home. It is imperative to get medicine for Rachel, but contacting the unknown doctor has put all of them at risk.

Sirka finally allows herself to grieve over Michel.

Paris 2002

Julia becomes increasingly distraught about Vel' d'Hiv'. The recognition of Vel' d'Hiv' given by the French is so insignificant that it infuriates Julia. Bamber does not have the same intense feelings about Vel' d'Hiv' but is appalled at what was allowed to happen.

Julia is stunned and then thrilled when she learns she is pregnant. She is also somewhat frightened. Before having Zoe, Julia had several miscarriages and had resigned herself to never having another child. The negative reaction Julia receives from Bertrand is even more shocking than the pregnancy and Julia fears that it may end their marriage.

Julia's emotional state continues to deteriorate. The meeting with Franck Lévy is a blessing and a curse. Julia learns more about the people rounded up and taken to the stadium, yet learning that the Tézac family may have known about it and stood idly by tears at her soul as well as her conscience.



# Pages 123-179

## Pages 123-179 Summary

Paris 1942

The DuFaures are worried that the doctor has called the police. They try to carry Rachel downstairs but the girl is too weak. That night, police come to the door. Sirka is told to hide in a potato sack in the basement.

No matter what the DuFaures say or do, there is no way to deter the police from taking Rachel. The officers begin to search the basement but are distracted when Mrs. DuFaure offers them wine and pate. The DuFaures protest that they were not hiding Rachel. The police take Rachel but leave the DuFaures alone.

Sirka declares that she wants to be called Sarah.

The next morning Sarah tells the DuFaures she is going to Paris. They try to dissuade her. Eventually, the older couple decides to take Sarah to Paris. There are some close calls along the way, but they make it to the apartment. Sarah finds Michel's body in the cupboard.

Paris 2002

Julia asks Franck Lévy about the family that lived at 26 rue de Saintonge during July of 1942 shortly before the Tézac family moved into the apartment. Franck Lévy is reluctant to give the information to Julia but relents after making her promise that the information is not for publication. Julia explains her reason for wanting to know. Julia learns that the Starzynski family lived in the apartment until they were arrested and taken to Vel' d'Hiv'. Julia also sees a picture of Sarah, which hits even closer to home since she was near Zoe's age. Julia asks Lévy if he thinks Sarah could have survived. Lévy says there is no information stating that Sarah had been sent to Auschwitz. Some children did manage to escape, but it was highly unlikely.

Julia meets with Guillaume and relays the information she received from Franck Lévy.

Guillaume and Julia make a trip to Drancy. The atmosphere is depressing, although it had been turned into low income housing. Julia is appalled that people could live in a former internment camp. The curator of the Drancy Memorial Museum tells Julia that most people have no idea what had happened at Drancy and others did not care.

Bamber notices that something is wrong with Julia. Bamber offers a shoulder to cry on but Julia refuses, although with gratitude. The next stop Julia and Bamber make is the train station at Beaune-la-Rolande.



Julia continues to be dismayed that so few people know about Beaune-la-Rolande or the roundup. Many that know about it refuse to talk.

Julia is feeling run down and exhausted. In addition to the story about Vel' d'Hiv', Julia is deeply troubled about the pregnancy. Friends give her advice and comfort.

Eduard shows up at the nursing home on the day Julia is scheduled to visit. Julia knows this is not a good sign. As Eduard and Julia talk in the parking lot, Julia learns that Eduard met Sarah when he was a young boy. Sarah returned to Paris and the apartment at 26 rue de Saintonge. Sarah found Michel's body. Mame does not know about the incident.

Eduard sends a file to Julia regarding Sarah. It had been locked in his father's safe. The file showed that Eduard's father had sent generous sums of money to the DuFaures for Sarah for ten years. The DuFaures sent letters and pictures of Sarah until the time she was approximately eighteen. There was no more information about Sarah. Julia is more determined than ever to find Sarah.

Julia consents to having an abortion.

## Pages 123-179 Analysis

The DuFaures take good care of Sirka. Sirka's name change shows that the girl is reinventing herself. No longer is she the happy child she was in Paris. Sirka wants to be called Sarah to begin life anew.

The DuFaures are devastated over the loss of Rachel but know that they are lucky to have been released by the Germans. They are determined to protect Sarah the best they can. Taking Sarah to Paris involves great risk. The couple also knows that Sarah will go without them.

Finding Michel's body at the apartment is a devastating moment for Sarah. Her worst nightmare has come true. Arthur Tézac feels horrible, although he was not to blame.

Julia continues to be torn between the two biggest issues in her life: Vel' d'Hiv' and the baby. Pregnancy hormones make Julia even more sensitive to Sarah's plight. Julia continues to be angry that no one wants to talk about the roundup.

Julia has never been overly fond of Eduard. Still, she cannot understand why the man is making such a fuss about discussing Vel' d'Hiv' with Mame. Eduard finally unburdens himself after sixty years of keeping a devastating secret. There is a new bond forming between father and daughter-in-law.

Julia is happy that Eduard kept his promise to send any information he could find about Sarah. Zoe is concerned about Julia and knows that something major is happening in her mother's life.

Julia takes every bit of advice into account and decides to have an abortion, albeit against her own judgment.



# Pages 180-240

## Pages 180-240 Summary

Paris 2002

Nathalie DuFaure calls Julia and says her grandfather is eager to meet and discuss Sarah.

Julia decides not to have the abortion. She leaves the clinic and goes to the rue Nélaton where thousands of people had gathered - friends, family, rabbis, and survivors.

Julia tells Charla that she is going to have the baby. The sisters wonder how Bertrand will react.

Julia goes to Orléans to meet with Gaspard DuFaure, the grandson of Jules and Geneviève. Gaspard tells Julia that Sarah was not a happy person; she grew into a melancholy young woman. No one in the family knew that Sarah was a Jewish refugee. Gaspard found out forty years after the fact. Sarah left France in 1952 to become a nanny in the United States. She kept in touch until 1955 and then disappeared. Sarah never spoke to the DuFaures again. Jules and Geneviève were heartbroken. Gaspard wants to know why Julia needs to find Sarah. Julia explains but Gaspard does not understand.

Gaspard gives a letter to Julia. It was written by Geneviève to her son Alain. In the letter Geneviève thanks Alain for his help with Sarah. The letter turns melancholy and talks about Sarah's deep heartache. "Nothing will ever be the same. Peace has a bitter taste. And the future is foreboding." (p. 197)

Later that day, Nathalie calls Julia to say she found Sarah's wedding announcement. On the announcement was the name of Sarah's betrothed, Richard J. Rainsferd. Julia calls Charla to find out how she can find Sarah.

Bertrand comes home from Brussels. The doctor had phoned Bertrand when Julia decided against the abortion. Bertrand tells Julia that he meant he could not handle having a child. Bertrand is going through a mid-life crisis. Bertrand tells Julia that she and Zoe can move into the apartment and he will find a place nearby. If he cannot come to terms with the pregnancy, their marriage is over.

Julia cannot wait to leave Paris.

Julia arrives in Manhattan. Julia is thrilled to see Charla and Zoe. Julia tells Charla the whole story about Vel' d'Hiv' and what she has learned about Sarah. In a flash, Charla locates Mr. and Mrs. R.J. Rainsferd in Roxbury. Julia makes the 100 mile trip.





Julia goes to the Rainsferd house and is approached by the couple's daughter who lives next door. The daughter and Julia talk for a while. Mara Rainsferd comes into the house. Julia immediately notes that the woman is Italian. Julia apologizes and says she was looking for Sarah Rainsferd. Mara says Sarah was her husband's first wife. Julia is severely disappointed to learn that Sarah died in a car accident in 1972. Mara, Richard's second wife, gives Julia the name and number of Sarah's son, William, who lives in Italy. Julia makes immediate plans to take Zoe and fly to Tuscany.

Julia calls her parents to say that she and Zoe are going to Tuscany. Her mother is upset but Julia does not feel like she can explain. Julia has yet to tell Zoe about the baby.

Julia feels increasingly worse as she and Zoe fly to Italy. Zoe is excited about visiting Lucca, but Julia is preoccupied. Julia rests for a while but it seems to help little. Julia finally contacts William Rainsferd and arranges a meeting for the next day.

The meeting with William does not go well. William knows nothing about his heritage or his mother's past. Julia tries to tell him, but William recoils and leaves the café.

Julia all but flees the restaurant. Zoe follows and calls out with a sense of panic in her voice. Julia looks down and sees a lot of blood. Julia faints.

## Pages 180-240 Analysis

The efforts of Julia's search begin to bear fruit. Finding Nathalie DuFaure is a big break. Julia is thrilled that Gaspard is willing to meet with her in Orléans. Gaspard is very forthcoming with information about Sarah's life in Orléans. No one aside from Jules, Geneviève, Alain and Henriette knew about Sarah's background. Alain finally told Gaspard many years later. Gaspard is suspicious about Julia's motives but gives her as much information as possible. Gaspard is also careful to protect Nathalie from the worst of the details.

The situation with Bertrand is escalating quickly. Julia is so exhausted that she is resigned to a divorce. Getting out of Paris seems to be the perfect antidote.

Julia's worst fears are realized when she learns that Sarah is dead. Julia cannot let it go, however, and is determined to meet William. Zoe knows about Sarah's death and William. Zoe is eager to go to Lucca. When Julia becomes overly exhausted and sick, the mother-daughter role reverses. Even in the café with William, it is Zoe who moves forward and shows William the picture of his mother as a young girl.

Julia still cannot let go and feels the need to tell William the whole story. William is horrified and does not want to know. William leaves abruptly. At this point, Julia seems to break. Rushing away from the café, she begins to bleed and collapses on the sidewalk, alarming Zoe.



# Pages 241-293

## Pages 241-293 Summary

Julia wakes to find Zoe at her side. Julia is in an Italian hospital. Julia's placenta had ruptured. The baby is fine. Zoe says she called Bertrand and he would be arriving in a few hours. Julia is despondent. Zoe knows that the discord between her parents is due to the unborn child.

Bertrand arrives and is caring and tender toward Julia. He never asks about Sarah or the baby.

Julia must remain in Italy until she is stable enough to fly home to Paris. Weeks go by before Julia can go home. The doctor orders Julia to bed rest, at least until her fifth month.

Julia returns to Paris and stays in bed. She works from home and receives visits from friends and family on a regular basis. Eduard visits every Friday, carrying a bouquet of pink roses. Each week they talk about William. Eduard is sad that neither thought of the possibility that William did not know about his mother's past.

Julia asks the doctor if she is well enough to host a party from the living room sofa. The doctor permits it as long as Julia remains horizontal and does not lift anything. Julia invites Gaspard, Nicolas and Nathalie DuFaure, Eduard and Guillaume to the apartment. Bertrand slides into his old personality, the suave Frenchman and perfect host. Everyone tells stories, reads letters and looks at photographs.

Summer ends, and with it, Julia's bed rest. Julia is finally able to resume her life. Everyone but Bertrand is happy and excited about the baby. Even the stern and curmudgeonly Joshua is happy, although he tries to hide it.

Julia thinks of William Rainsferd every day. She wonders if the news about his mother haunts him and if he confided in anyone about the crazy American woman with her stories about the war and Vel' d'Hiv'.

Julia gets a phone call from the nursing home. Mame has had a stroke. The nurse says she has phoned Eduard but cannot reach Bertrand. Julia has no luck calling Bertrand, so she leaves a message with Antoine. Julia also calls Bertrand's sisters. One says Bertrand is picking her up. Julia becomes angry and asks if Bertrand has been with Amélie. The sister makes an excuse to hang up. Just as Julia prepares to leave, William Rainsferd arrives at the apartment. Julia is shocked to see William. William says he must know everything about his mother. William went back to Roxbury and visited his father. Richard can no longer speak, but William did go through the house, where he located a picture of Michel and a brass key. Julia says she must go to Mame and she plans to take William with her.



Julia and William arrive at the nursing home to find the rest of the Tézac family present. Mame looks like she is sleeping, but her grip on Julia's wrist lets Julia know she is aware. The doctor says Mame has stabilized but they should still be prepared for the worst. After a long period of time, Julia introduces Eduard to William. No one in the family except for Bertrand knows about Sarah or any of the history behind the apartment on rue de Saintonge. Eduard is pleased to meet William and is deeply moved by the meeting. Cecile and Laure barrage Eduard with questions. Eduard tells William that Julia will explain and soon William will know everything including Sarah's impact on their lives.

Julia and William go for coffee. William sits and listens to the entire story. His face and lips are pale. William asks many questions and Julia gives all the information she has about Vel' d'Hiv', Sarah, the cupboard, Michel, Beaune-la-Rolande, and Auschwitz. As much as Julia wants to protect William, she knows she cannot. William came for the truth and it is Julia's duty to honor Sarah's memory and tell him everything.

At the end of the conversation William hands a notebook to Julia. It is written in Sarah's handwriting. Julia reads Sarah's prose and translates the words into English.

It begins:

"Where are you, my little Michel? My beautiful Michel.

Where are you now?

Would you remember me?

Michel.

Me, Sarah, your sister.

The one who never came back. The one who left you in the cupboard. The one who thought you'd be safe."

The prose goes on to say that Sarah will never forget a single second of what she experienced from that awful day in 1942 including the camp, their parents, and the horrors of the roundup and what followed. Every day Sarah thought about Michel, the camp, the trains, Jules and Genéviève, Nicolas and Gaspard, Alain and Henriette. No matter what changes Sarah has tried to make in her life, nothing can take away the pain and sorrow of losing Michel and her parents. Sarah cannot escape the horror of the war and the execution of the Jews. Sarah says she has told no one about her past. Not her husband or son. Sarah tries to reinvent herself but she cannot. The burden she bears cannot be erased or soothed by anything. Sarah's grief is too great. Sarah says she hopes that her son will be able to forgive her.

William listens to Julia read the notebook. William looks at Julia and says it is clear that Sarah's death was not an accident. Sarah committed suicide. William leaves.



When Julia returns to the apartment, the entire family is waiting for her. They have split into two camps. Eduard, Cecile and Zoe are on one side, Colette and Laure on the other. There are arguments about Julia's interference. Zoe tells them that Mame knows about Sarah and Michel. Mame knows everything. Zoe says Mame was never able to talk about it with Arthur or Eduard and that it has been a burden all these years. Mame thinks Julia did the right thing. Bertrand never says a word. That night, Zoe crawls into bed with Julia. Julia knows Bertrand is with Amélie.

New York City, 2005

Julia, Zoe and baby Sarah move to New York. Although Julia is back in the U.S., she still feels displaced. Despite having a boyfriend, she feels lonely. Zoe has grown into a tall, slim teenager who dotes on her baby sister. Joshua got Julia a job and Charla helped her to find an apartment. Something still was not right.

Bertrand had not put up much of a fight when Julia announced she wanted to move to New York for a couple of years. Bertrand had already been living with Amélie.

One day the phone rings. It is William Rainsferd. William is also divorced and living in New York. The couple meets at a café to discuss everything that has happened since the last meeting in Paris. They talk and cry together.

## Pages 241-293 Analysis

Things happen very quickly at this point in the book. For all intents and purposes, Julia's marriage to Bertrand is over. Bertrand seems to move on with his life, and it can be assumed that Bertrand had decided long ago to leave Julia for Amélie and simply used the baby as an excuse.

The family is split over Julia's actions. Julia thinks that no one other than Eduard and Zoe can truly understand what Sarah means to Julia. Zoe's tale about Mame's confession and approval also mean a great deal to Julia. When Mame finally dies, Julia is devastated and feels like she has lost her own grandmother.

The meeting with William Rainsferd is the most important event in Julia's life at this time, even more important than the end of her marriage. It is a shock to William to learn that his mother committed suicide. Julia feels such deep sympathy for the woman that she is not nearly as surprised.

Julia's move to New York makes perfect sense. Julia wants to give Zoe the opportunity to learn about America and to spend more time with the Jaramonds. Zoe will spend her vacations in France. While Julia misses her friends, she does not miss Paris or the apartment.

William's arrival in New York is the perfect denouement for the story. It seems that William is as affected by Julia as Julia was affected by William. The reader can only wonder where this meeting will take them.



# Characters

## Sirka Starzynski/Sarah Dufaure Rainsferd

Sirka Starzynski is referred to as "the girl" in the first part of the book. It is near the middle of the book that the reader learns the girl's name, although the use of the name is fleeting and not often used.

Sirka is the ten-year-old daughter of Polish immigrants Wladyslaw and Rywka Starzynski, and older sister to four-year-old Michel. Sirka is a lovely child with honey blond hair and turquoise eyes. The girl is bright for her age and curious. The nature of the Nazi Occupation in France during the Second World War was somewhat of a mystery to many Parisiens, and what was known was kept from the children. This makes Sirka angry and she feels that if she had known, Michel never would have been locked in the cupboard.

It does not take long for the influence of the Nazis to dampen Sirka's spirit. Sirka experiences negative incidents at school as well as the new restrictions placed on all Jews. The reality of the situation hits Sirka when the family is taken to Vel' d'Hiv'. After arriving at Beaune-la-Rolande, Sirka quickly becomes hardened and wise, taking only calculated risks and trying to care for others. Escaping with Rachel shows Sirka's bravery and desperate devotion to Michel.

Sirka eventually becomes known as Sarah Dufaure, the adopted daughter of French farmers. It is discovered many years later that Sarah left France for New York, married, and never told anyone about her experiences with the Nazis.

## Julia Jaramond

Julia Jaramond, forty-five years old, is an American born journalist who has lived in Paris for twenty-five years. Julia is married to Bertrand. Together they have an eleven-year-old daughter, Zoe. Although Julia is clearly a strong, independent woman, she falls under Bertrand's charms easily and is beginning to resent herself for it even though Bertrand is an excellent father, lover, and provider. Julia also gets upset that even after sixteen years of marriage, Bertrand's family still refers to her as "The American".

Before meeting Bertrand, Julia was working in Paris and living with two gay men, Christophe and Hervé. The men continue to be good friends and often serve as a sounding board for Julia.

The story on Vel' d'Hiv' comes at a time in Julia's life when she is at a crossroads. Bertrand has committed the family into moving into his grandmother's apartment. For the first time, Julia has grown tired of Bertrand's antics and lack of concern about things Julia finds to be serious. This escalates as Julia becomes increasingly concerned about the Tézac family's role in the roundup and the fact that the Starzynski family used to live



in Mame Tézac's apartment. When Julia becomes pregnant, she realizes that her marriage may be over, but that no matter what the outcome, she must finish her journey while being true to her heart.

## **Bertrand Tézac**

Bertrand Tézac is the architect husband of Julia Jaramond. Bertrand is one hundred percent French, from his charm through to his arrogance. Bertrand and Julia have been married for sixteen years.

## **Zoe Tézac**

Zoe Tézac is the eleven-year-old daughter of Julia Jaramond and Bertrand Tézac. Zoe is bright, confident, and worldly for a girl her age.

## **Madame Marcelle Tézac**

Madame Marcelle Tézac is Bertrand's grandmother and former resident of the apartment at rue de Saintonge. Madame Tézac is a feisty woman in her late eighties, currently suffering from Alzheimer's and living in a nursing home.

## **Guillaume**

Guillaume is a friend to Christophe and Hervé. Julia meets Guillaume at a dinner party and they become friends. Guillaume helps Julia with the Vel' d'Hiv' story.

## **Rywka Starzynski**

Rywka Starzynski is the mother to Sirka/Sarah and Michel. The woman used to be confident and happy until the family was arrested by the French gendarmes. Rywka quickly seemed to fall away and age drastically, turning into a former shell of her former being.

## **Wladyslaw Starzynski**

Wladyslaw Starzynski is the father to Sirka/Sarah and Michel, husband to Rywka. Wladyslaw worked as a foreman at a leather factory before being arrested. Wladyslaw was once a strong man who was beaten down by the arrest and quickly taken away from everything that mattered to him.

## **Michel Starzynski**

Michel Starzynski is the four-year-old brother to Sirka/Sarah. Michel is the child locked in the closet.

## **Jules and Geneviève Dufaure**

Jules and Geneviève Dufaure are the farmers that took in Rachel and Sirka/Sarah after they ran away from Beaune-la-Rolande. The Dufaures adopted and raised Sarah.

## **Franck Lévy**

Franck Lévy is a well known person in France that has worked for many years to unravel the mysteries of the Nazi occupation in France and what happened to the people from Vel' d'Hiv'. Lévy gives Julia the information on the Starzynski family.

## **Joshua**

Joshua is Julia's boss at "Seine Scenes". Julia likes working for Joshua even though he can be a tyrant. Joshua is the one that assigned Julia to the Vel' d'Hiv' story.

## **Bamber**

Bamber is a British photographer that works at "Seine Scenes" with Julia. Bamber is also assigned to the Vel' d'Hiv' story.



# Objects/Places

## Paris

Paris is often referred to as the "City of Lights" and is considered to be one of the most fashionable and romantic cities in the world. Paris and its surrounding areas are the main settings used in the story. In 1942, the Starzynski family lived at 26 rue de Saintonge, which would eventually belong to the Tézac family. The Jaramond/ Tézac family resides on the boulevard du Montparnasse. Also mentioned in the story are the offices on "Seine Scenes" located on the rue Marbeuf, Champs-Élysée, Eiffel Tower, Place de l'Étoile, Haussmannian, and various suburbs.

The author shows Paris from several points of view, through the eyes of ten-year-old Sirka and eleven-year-old Zoe, through the eyes of the Parisiens and Jews in the 1940s up through the present when the city is discussed through the eyes of the French, as well as through the eyes of Julia Jaramond, the American expatriate.

## Vel' d'Hiv'

Julia, a writer for "Seine Scenes," is assigned to cover the sixtieth anniversary of the Vélodrome d' Hiver, aka Vel' d'Hiv'. The Vel' d'Hiv was a former stadium located corner of the rue Nélaton and the boulevard de Grenelle in the city's fifteenth arrondissement. The stadium was designed as a bicycle racetrack but was also used as an indoor facility for other sports such as ice hockey and wrestling. During the Nazi Occupation of Paris, the Germans turned the Vel' d'Hiv' into holding facility for Jews being sent to temporary internment camps before being sent to their deaths in Auschwitz. The operation was referred to by the Germans as "Operation Spring Breeze".

The author includes the information written on the plaque on the stadium's former site: "On July 16 and 17, 1942, 13, 152 Jews were arrested in Paris and the suburbs, deported and assassinated at Auschwitz. In the Vélodrome d' Hiver that once stood on this spot, 1,129 men, 2, 916 women, and 4,115 children were packed here in inhuman conditions by the government of the Vichy police, by order of the Nazi occupant. May those who tried to save them be thanked. Passerby, never forget!" (p. 60)

The Vel' d'Hiv' was torn down in 1959.

## Nazi Occupation

Adolph Hitler had a plan to promote white supremacy throughout the world to create what he referred to as the perfect race. The Jews did not fit into Hitler's plan as they were seen as less than desirable, less than human. Hitler required all Jews to be rounded up and killed so that the master race could thrive. The Nazi party followed Hitler's instructions and began to occupy a great deal of Europe, including France.





## **The Cupboard**

The cupboard is the place often used by Sirka and Michel as their secret room. The room, located in the family's apartment, was long and narrow. The room was more of a cubby hole than an actual room and was well hidden. The cupboard is where Michel was put for safekeeping when the family was arrested.

## **World War II**

One of the two main stories takes place during World War II. The allies had not yet begun to save Jews from the Nazi regime and therefore millions of Jews were slaughtered by the Germans and their counterparts.

## **New York City**

New York City is the city Sarah Dufaure fled to after leaving France. Julia tracks Sarah to the city to learn more about the events of July 1942.

## **Orléans**

Orléans is the location of Jules and Geneviève Dufaure's farm. It is the place Sirka/Sarah and Rachel escaped to after leaving Beaune-la-Rolande.

## **Madame Tézac's Apartment**

Madame Tézac's apartment is located at 26 rue de Saintonge. The apartment is the same that had been occupied by the Starzynski family at the time of the roundup in July 1942. It is also the apartment that is being renovated by Bertrand and Julia.

## **Drancy, Pithiviers, and Beaune-la-Rolande**

Drancy, Pithiviers, and Beaune-la-Rolande were the holding camps where many thousands of Jews were held before being sent from France to Auschwitz. Sirka/Sarah and Rachel escaped from Beaune-la-Rolande.

## **Auschwitz**

Auschwitz is one of the major concentration camps used by the Nazis during World War II. Everyone from Beaune-la-Rolande was taken to Auschwitz where each was gassed and buried in a mass grave.

# Themes

One of the main themes used in *Sarah's Key* by Tatiana de Rosnay is Anti-Semitism. Anti-Semitism is a hatred of Jews regardless of place of birth, residence or contribution to society. In the story anti-Semitism is first made clear when the Jews in Paris are forced to sew yellow stars on their clothes and carry identity cards identifying them as "Jew" or "Jewess". Sirka and her friends are immediately treated differently by friends at school and heavy restrictions are placed on every day activities from shopping to play time.

Anti-Semitism reached a new height during World War II. German dictator Adolph Hitler had a plan to rid the world of Jews so that he could promote white supremacy throughout the world to create what he referred to as the perfect race. The Jews did not fit into Hitler's plan as they were seen as less than desirable, less than human. Hitler required all Jews to be rounded up and killed so that the master race could thrive.

Hitler's campaign caused six million Jews to be arrested, deported to concentration camps and murdered simply because of their heritage. It is unknown how many people managed to escape.



# Style

## Point of View

The point of view used in *Sarah's Key* by Tatiana de Rosnay switches from third person omniscient to first person.

While the story surrounds the activities of Sirka Starzynski/Sarah DuFaure, the author made the smart choice to avoid using the first person. The story itself is rather complex and only third person omniscient would allow the reader to follow and understand the activities of all of the characters as well as the dangerous and deadly events of Operation Spring Breeze, World War II, and the events that took place at the internment and concentration camps. It also allows for the reader to follow and understand actions and thoughts of other characters in the book as well as those events of which Sirka/Sarah has no knowledge.

While the 1942 story is written in third person omniscient, the author writes the story as it might have been seen through a child's eyes. Many of the things that would have been understood by adults are questioned by Sirka/Sarah.

In Julia Jaramond's story, the point of view is first person. In Julia's case, it is much less important for the reader to know and understand every angle of the story. Julia, as the main character, is the most important in this section of the book. Using a first person point of view allows the reader to experience the intense emotions that go along with Julia's search and ever deepening desire to learn what happened to the people that were arrested and sent to Vel' d'Hiv' on July 16 and 17, 1942. The emotional connection is particularly strong when it comes to Sarah.

By using and alternating both points of view, de Rosnay allows the reader to learn factual information and also go on an emotional journey.

## Setting

Paris is often referred to as the "City of Lights" and is considered to be one of the most fashionable and romantic cities in the world. Paris and its surrounding areas are the main settings used in the story. In 1942, the Starzynski family lived at 26 rue de Saintonge, which would eventually belong to the Tézac family. The Jaramond/ Tézac family resides on the boulevard du Montparnasse. Also mentioned in the story are the offices on "Seine Scenes" located on the rue Marbeuf, Champs-Élysée, Eiffel Tower, Place de l'Étoile, Haussmannian, and various suburbs.

The author shows Paris from several points of view, through the eyes of ten-year-old Sirka and eleven-year-old Zoe, through the eyes of the Parisiens and Jews in the 1940s up through the present when the city is discussed through the eyes of the French, as well as through the eyes of Julia Jaramond, the American expatriate. As an American,



Julia originally found Paris to be beautiful and exciting, filled with brash and flirtatious men and a great deal of rude and snobbish people, particularly service oriented people. According to the author, the only people who like Paris are Parisiens. They are often referred to as "dog faces" by everyone outside the city.

## Language and Meaning

Paris is considered to be one of the world capitals and therefore is an integrated city that is visited by many tourists. The majority of the people in the book speak English. The author makes it a point of saying that she is well versed in French, although some people respond to her in English. There is also the presence of people from other countries such as Poland, America and Britain. There are some cases during the telling of Sirka/Sarah's story that certain Polish phrases are used. While they are not explained, the context is easy to decipher.

It is clear that the author has lived in Paris for some many years by the way she uses familiar words and phrases unknown to those versed only in French. To maintain authenticity, de Rosnay uses French phrases for certain items and places, such as "rue," "boulevard," and "arrondissement." Although it is never explained, the reader can easily deduce that "rue" and "boulevard" are equivalent to street, avenue and boulevard, while "arrondissement" means district.

The French language is beautiful, and since it is a romance language that is Latin based, it is often easy to understand for those who do not speak the language. It is fortunate, however, that the author inserts some of the language, not only for authenticity but for flavor and beauty.

## Structure

The structure of Sarah's Key by Tatiana de Rosnay is fairly straightforward. There are 293 pages. There are no chapters, per se, only untitled, unnumbered section breaks. The shortest section break chapter is two pages; the longest chapter is five pages. The average chapter length is three pages.

The book features two main stories. The first takes place in Paris in 1942 during "Operation Spring Breeze", when more than 13,000 Jews were arrested and taken to Vel' d'Hiv'. From there the people were taken to one of three main internment camps before being sent to one of the German concentration camps. The main camp mentioned is Auschwitz.

The second story takes place in Paris in 2002. This story details the life of Julia Jaramond, an American journalist living in Paris. Julia is assigned to write about the upcoming sixtieth anniversary of Vel' d'Hiv' which leads her to do extensive research and try to decipher what happened to the people that were arrested during July 1942.

The two stories alternate, both moving forward in chronological order. Each alternating section is two to five pages in length.



## Quotes

"You didn't shake a Parisian woman's hand, even if you were meeting her for the first time. You kissed her once on each cheek."

p. 11

"A month or so ago, her mother had sewn the stars on all her clothes. On all the family's clothes, except her little brother's. Before that their identity cards had been stamped with the word "Jew" or "Jewess."

p. 25

"The girl had watched the bodies being carried out. She had never seen such horror."

p. 55

"On July 16 and 17, 1942, 13, 152 Jews were arrested in Paris and the suburbs, deported and assassinated at Auschwitz. In the Vélodrome d' Hiver that once stood on this spot, 1,129 men, 2,916 women, and 4,115 children were packed here in inhuman conditions by the government of the Vichy police, by order of the Nazi occupant. May those who tried to save them be thanked. Passerby, never forget!"

p. 60

"Over there, she thought, in those nearby houses, people had beds, sheets, blankets, food, and water. They were clean. They had clean clothes. Nobody screamed at them. Nobody treated them like cattle."

p. 65

"The girl felt like her mother was already dead."

p. 66

"Some children had already left the camp, surrounded by policemen. She had watched them leave, frail, thin creatures with their shorn heads and ragged clothes."

p. 87

"Convoy number 15 of August 5, 1942, had carried Sarah Starzynski's parents straight to their deaths."

p. 138

"'I can still hear her scream,' he whispered. 'I cannot forget it. Ever.'"

Eduard Tézac, p. 160



"Fleetingly, I recalled the old lady from the rue Nélaton. What was is she had said?  
'Nobody remembers. Why should they? Those were the darkest days of our country.'"  
p. 184

"Nothing will ever be the same. Peace has a bitter taste. And the future is foreboding."  
p. 197

"I wanted to cry but the tears would not come."  
p. 205

## Topics for Discussion

Julia often compares Sarah to Zoe since they are approximately the same age. The book shows that the two girls actually have some things in common. Compare and contrast Sarah and Zoe. What are the biggest similarities? In what ways are the girls different?

What do you know about the Nazi Occupation in France? What do you know about the Nazis and their role in World War II? How did the Holocaust begin? What caused it? Who was targeted? How many people died? How did it end?

Discuss Julia's pregnancy. Do you think Bertrand has the right to insist on an abortion? What are Bertrand's reasons? Are they valid reasons? What is Julia's decision? Who has the most say in this case? Do you agree or disagree with Julia? Explain.

Discuss Julia's obsession with Vel' d'Hiv'. Why does Julia feel responsible for bring the entire story to light? Why does Julia pursue the story even after it is finished? Would you have taken the same steps as Julia? Explain.

Examine Julia's quest to find first Sarah and then William. Why is it so important for Julia to find them? What does she hope to prove? What happens when Julia gets information about William? Do you think it is good or bad that Julia tries to give William information? What would you do in that situation?

Examine why Vel' d'Hiv' and the events that took place at various places in France during the Nazi Occupation were kept secret. Why did Arthur and Eduard try to keep secrets from Mame? How did Mame find out what had happened at the apartment? Do you think such secrets should be exposed or are better left hidden? Explain.

The end of the book finds William and Julia meeting at a café to discuss their lives since their last meeting. Do you think Julia is obsessed with William or simply cannot let go of the story? Why does William want to see Julia? What is the purpose? What do you think will happen in the future?