

On June 14, 1940, eight-year-old Jacqueline witnesses the Nazis march into her beloved native Paris. In that grim moment, her cherished childhood is wrenched from her. Now, she's a despised Jew. To avoid Hitler's killing camps, her family opts for the dark pit of subterfuge and fear that follow: life on the run. After two years, there's nowhere left to hide. Desperate decisions are made. Then, a life-defining oath wrenched from her, makes eleven-year-old Jacqueline the surrogate mother of her two younger siblings on their way to a new continent, a new culture, and new conflicts.

## Jacqueline Grossman

Born in Paris of east European Jewish immigrants to France, Jacqueline's early years were blissful ones. In school, artistic and leadership skills showed promise. But, at age eight, her world virtually exploded when Hitler's bombers flew overhead. Learning to survive on the run was painful. Most painful was the life-defining moment when Jacqueline became a surrogate mother to her two younger siblings, and a true survivor.



In seventh grade, she displayed early writing potential with a stirring A+ essay on her wartime escape. But, not until the 1980's--after becoming a prize-winning sculptor in northern California--did she return to writing. She has just finished her second book.

In the intervening years, she married, had two children, earned degrees from U.C. Berkeley and Cal State University, and enjoyed successful careers as a community organizer, college teacher, and corporate CEO. She now lives in southern California with her husband.

Visit her at: [www.jacquelinegrossman.com](http://www.jacquelinegrossman.com)  
or [www.chasedbydemons.com](http://www.chasedbydemons.com)

ISBN 1-59330-599-0  
51495



Aventine Press

CHASED BY DEMONS  
Jacqueline Grossman



# CHASED BY DEMONS

How I  
Survived  
Hitler's  
Madness  
In My  
Native  
France



A Memoir  
by

Jacqueline Grossman

7  
III

as were heard from foreign officials. In response, the Vichy chief was quoted as saying, "I am and nothing can sway me from my determination to the rescue of foreign Jews and send them back where they originated. I will take no lessons in humanitarianism from any country."

Laval was fully aware of the Nazi's master plan when he made this statement. Unsurprisingly, sweeps of Jews to be deported increased.

Although the Nazi decree abolishing the "Free Zone" did not become official until later, in early November 1942 after the Allied Forces landed in North Africa, German soldiers were now seen everywhere.

With Luchon so close to the border, it came as no surprise that German headquarters were established here. Their growing presence was terrifying. As summer wore on, indiscriminate arrests of Jews became more and more frequent. Our family's fate was now very much in question.

The time for desperate measures had arrived.

## CHAPTER X

### Furtively, Three, on a Farm

Josie Cohen (I knew her as Madame Kirsch, a name she used during the occupation, possibly from a former marriage) was an energetic French lady of great courage and selflessness. It is thanks to Josie's humanity, and her outrage at what the Nazis were doing to Jews, that we survived. A gentile woman, probably in her early forties, she operated a beauty salon in town. Josie married a French-born Jew by the name of Simon Cohen, a highly educated practicing lawyer.

I believe this man may have been involved in high-level Jewish intelligence activities and was most likely in contact with the French underground. Undoubtedly, he also worked with C.A.R., Baron de Rothschild's committee for refugees. Through these connections, he and his wife, Josie, became good friends of ours. I recall that Papa thought him to be a brilliant man.

By late summer of 1942, this friendship was put to the test. German advance occupation units had begun house-to-house searches. According to their decree, any Jew found in hiding would immediately be deported or shot in the town square for everyone to see. Any gentiles caught hiding them would suffer a similar fate. Knowing that it was a matter of days before the full occupation of Luchon would cancel any remaining options, Josie, Simon Cohen and my parents made plans.

We shuttered our rented house. Using her beauty salon as a means of spreading the word, Josie let it be known in the village that our family had moved from Luchon permanently. Then, late one moonless night, under cover of darkness and after the town was asleep, we slipped out of our house. In ones and twos, so as not to put the entire family at risk all at once, we quietly and quickly covered the distance to her home. We glanced over

our shoulders at nearly each step to make sure no one followed, and we moved into her basement.

There, she kept us hidden behind old crates of beauty supplies, trunks and other storage items while further decisions and arrangements were made. Meantime, in the streets above, the Nazis' house-to-house searches began in earnest.

In the days that followed, we waited quietly in our hiding place. We could only whisper so our sounds would not alert neighbors, and the girls were watched constantly to make sure they did not make loud noises.

One day, in early fall, Papa took me aside. Away from the girls, he soberly announced he had some very serious and grown-up things to tell me. My stomach tightened. I knew this could only mean bad news.

"You know, Jacqueline," he began quietly, "these are desperate times; they sometimes require desperate actions of us."

"*Oui*, Papa. I know." I said solemnly, trying to sound as grown-up as I was able. I could tell this was difficult for him. I held my breath, fearful of what was to come next.

"Maman and I may have to leave Luchon without much warning." Groping for the right words, he continued, "We are all going to have to do things we don't want to do."

I sat up straight, my chest puffed out, "I will do whatever you want me to do, Papa."

He smiled sadly, "I know, *Chérie*. That's why I'm telling you what our plans may require of you." After a resigned sigh he continued.

"We may have to leave suddenly. If so, we will have to travel on foot by way of a hazardous and untried escape route. It would be too dangerous for you and the children, and there is no guarantee we would be successful." He paused and I saw tears well up in his eyes. I reached over, wrapped my arms around him and pressed my head against his chest so he couldn't see

my own eyes filling with tears. He took out his handkerchief, wiped his eyes quickly and blew his nose as if to say, "Enough nonsense."

"What I'm trying to tell you is that Maman and I have decided it would be best if you and your sisters went away someplace for now, someplace where you will be safe." I panicked at these words and sat up. I opened my mouth to speak but I could see he had something else on his mind so I held my tongue.

"We will have to count on you to be brave and help watch over your sisters. Josie will be here. If anything happens to your mother and me, Josie has sworn to take care of you as if you were her own. Follow her instructions to the letter."

That was all I could take. Sensing the near hopelessness of our situation, I grabbed my father and cried out my grief into his chest as quietly as I could. No longer able to speak himself, he simply held me close for a long time and stroked my head gently until fatigue allowed me no more tears.

The next day, Papa and Maman told Eveline, Paulette and me, that they were sending the three of us to the country on a short vacation. We should immediately make ready to leave; we were to be on our way the following day. All they would say further was that they would make arrangements for us to join them as soon as they could. Taking me aside, they told me that, in the unthinkable event that they were caught trying to escape, we three would be in good hands. The wrenching truth of what I had just heard struck me like a bolt of lightning. A chill went through my entire body as, in near panic, I thought, *I may never see Maman and Papa again!* I wanted to object, but I didn't know what to say. What was the point? I understood our circumstances. There was no choice; all of our fates, my sisters', my parents' and mine, were now in the hands of others.

The following morning, after tearful goodbyes to Maman and Papa in the basement, my sisters and I made our way upstairs and, with our few belongings and Josie Kirsch's help, we piled



into her car. I had such an empty, achy feeling in my chest as we pulled away from the house. *Is this the last time I'll ever see Maman and Papa?* But I fought back my tears; I couldn't let the girls see me cry.

We set out northward toward Toulouse on one of the back roads out of town in order to avoid running into German patrols--which were more and more frequently seen now. As Josie drove, I looked anxiously back through the rear window at the road, praying with all my heart that we would not be followed by German patrol cars. My prayers must have been heard.

Some seventy miles later, we turned off onto a dirt road and pulled up in front of a small farmhouse. Josie told me this was to be our new hiding place. The farmers believed we were her children. She said she had told them they were hired to take care of us while she was forced to work long hours in her shop back in Luchon. They had no idea that the three little "gentile" girls now in their charge, all wearing silver crosses around their necks, were Jews hiding from Vichy and the Nazis. We said our goodbyes to Josie; she hugged us, and left.

Now began the greatest and most dangerous masquerade of our lives. Of the three of us, I alone understood. No parents, no family and no friends were here to guide us. We were on our own in a world that wanted us dead.

Thus came about our second wrenching family separation.

#

We lived on the farm from September to mid-December 1942. I went to school every day, to church on Sundays, and to Confession when I could not talk my way out of it. By this time, I knew how to play the game. Josie had coached me well. Despite the constant fear that gnawed at my belly, I was able to keep my farm hosts, my teachers, and the clergy in the dark. I had learned my lesson well at the convent in Luchon. I knew what to do, and not do, in order to avoid suspicion from church, school, and farm. I sought no friendships. I did not allow

myself to get too close in my relationships with anyone. I held myself at a distance in school, discouraged my classmates from engaging me in idle chat, and kept my thoughts to myself. I became a loner who trusted no one.

My four- and five-year-old sisters were too young to grasp the circumstances, too young to understand what it meant to be a Jew in a world that sought the annihilation of their entire ethnic group. They were, therefore, too young to betray us unwittingly. They knew nothing. My parents and I had made sure of that. We had never discussed our plight, the War, or family plans in front of them.

#

As brief and impersonal as our stay was with our farm hosts, and as desperate as were the circumstances and the times, it was nevertheless a memorable adventure for me. I'd never had the opportunity to get close to farm animals before. After a short time, I developed a deep affection for them. There were several horses, a herd of cows, hogs, goats, geese, chickens, rabbits, cats and dogs. Each one had its own personality and many of them became special to me. I soon found myself thinking of some of them as my best friends. I knew these friends would not, could not betray me.

Our Sunday trips to church were among the most stressful events of my stay. That's when I felt most vulnerable; I was convinced everyone's eyes were on me. Memories of my ouster from Luchon's convent school were still fresh. I did not want to be pelted again, or be banished from the farm and placed under arrest.

Fortunately this experience was a totally different one. My farm family was discreet and thoughtful. Other than taking me to Mass with them on Sunday mornings, they let me make my own church-related decisions. One time, they asked me if I thought I was ready for Communion. Taken by surprise, I mumbled something unintelligible and demurred. But my hosts

Josie had told me to avoid. But I ached to tell Roussette about the nasty things I heard classmates say in school.

I also occasionally had complaints about some of the jobs I was given to do at the farm. "Why do I have to be the one to jam corn down the geese's throats? I don't like hurting them," I told Roussette. And, there were the trips to church every Sunday. I admitted I felt like I was betraying my family and my heritage. "Do you think I am sinning in the eyes of my Jewish God when I attend a Catholic mass? Do you think I'll be punished?" I asked my friend. She'd look at me with loving eyes and low softly; I took that to be a "No." I knew she understood.

I spent many hours with her, often tearfully, sometimes spewing angry torrents against an unjust world, other times pretending Papa and Maman were coming to get me. She was such a great listener; I always felt better after our long talks. Roussette was never judgmental and she always agreed with me. These visits were vital to me because she was the only one I could really trust.

Of all my animal friends on the farm, I loved her best. Not only was she loyal and trustworthy, she was comforting, ... and so discreet.

## CHAPTER XI

### The Dark Journey Begins

The Christmas holiday break from school had just begun when the call came from Josie Kirsch. We were to pack our things and go home for Christmas, but we would be back after vacation, she said. I took her at her word and didn't pack everything; I left some light summer-weight items behind. In any event, we did not have much with us at the farm. Most of our belongings had been left at Josie's.

I sensed something important was in the air. When she came for us, we bid our goodbyes to our hosts and said we would be back in a few weeks.

Josie and I whispered all the way back to Luchon in the car she had hired. I was full of questions. "Where are Maman and Papa?" was the first query out of my mouth. She told me that they had left her home in early November under cover of darkness. When I asked what they had done with our family's things, she put her finger to her lips and whispered that they had buried their most precious documents, family pictures, and jewelry in her backyard. They carried everything else on their backs and left on foot.

With the help of a local shepherd guide, they took the shortest route to safety in Bossost. This Spanish border village, though barely ten kilometers from their Luchon hiding place, was reached via a steep, arduous climb at night over obscure paths.

We finished the couple of hours drive to Josie's home. Just before we arrived, she leaned toward my ear and whispered, "You will soon see your Maman and Papa. But do not to say a word to your sisters. Now, I cannot tell you anything else. So, no more questions." I was so excited that I could hardly sit still.

*Maman and Papa are alive. I am going to see them again!* I shouted silently to myself.

By the time we arrived, it was dark and too cold for anyone to be out. A light snow had fallen. Looking furtively down the street to make sure no one was there, she quickly ushered us down to her basement, our brief home of three months earlier. There, she fed us and put us to bed. She said we should get lots of rest as we were going to need our strength. Of course, we did as she asked. But it was hard for me to fall asleep; there were too many questions running through my head, and I couldn't stop thinking about seeing Maman and Papa soon.

Josie must have repacked our things while we slept. When she awakened us, our three suitcases were shut and strapped. Our warmest clothes and heaviest shoes were laid out for us.

I quickly put on my belted wool-jersey maroon dress and tucked it into my ski pants. Over my dress, I slipped on the wool sweater that Maman had knitted. Next, I put on a scarf, four pairs of socks--most of which I had darned myself--and my ski boots. My heavy navy winter coat, knitted hood, woolen gloves and waterproof mittens were among the last items I put on.

Eveline had similar clothing, some of which Maman had also knitted before her departure. As for Paulette, her outfit consisted of several layers of jersey flannel underclothing, thick knitted leggings with matching sweater, a hooded cap and mittens. Since she had no other winter shoes, heavy wooden clogs were slipped on over several pairs of thick socks.

We were given some bread and hot milk; then, we were quietly taken to an old car waiting outside. Someone I didn't know was at the wheel. The motor was running but the lights were off, and for much of the drive, they remained that way. Darkness was total; it must have been around midnight. Our three small bags had already been loaded in the back.

Josie accompanied us. She made us as comfortable as she could; and after covering us with an old blanket, we were on our way. The girls were soon asleep again.

No one had seen us arrive. No one saw us leave.

Josie told me that we would be making a long and difficult journey. Therefore, it was important for me to have as much sleep as I could get.

I knew intuitively that the coming nights would be trying ones, otherwise, why all the heavy clothing and the sneaking out in the middle of the night? I was filled with anxiety. But, despite the dread of what lay ahead, there was an undeniable element of anticipation and excitement. I was going to see Maman and Papa again!

I don't know exactly how long we drove that night, but I do know we were headed east in the direction of the Mediterranean, on a road I had traveled with my parents. The motion of the car was soothing and despite my anxiety, after a time I, too, fell asleep.

It was three nights before Christmas.

As the night wore on, I lost track of time and place. In part, this was due to my frequent naps. It was also because of the circuitous route our driver took. Josie said he chose this route to make it more difficult for us to be followed. Such precautions gave me a deepening awareness of the grave danger we all faced.

Josie had told me about the current state of the occupation. I knew the Nazis and Vichy were now hunting every Jew in France--in the south as well as the north--whether foreign-born or not. Furthermore, "*les Boches*" were now also hunting those non-Jews who hid them or helped them escape. The lives of these good people were as much in jeopardy as ours. Josie told me the Gestapo had decreed that anyone found helping Jews would immediately be executed in the town square. Now, I feared for Josie too.

Eventually, we reached what must have been the little town of Tarascon-sur-Ariège. The rail line that services the lower Pyrenees, between Foix to the north and Ax to the south, passes through this town. Our interim destination was the railway



station. With headlights off, our car stopped nearby on a dark little road where it would not be noticed, and we got out. Then, with our bags, we headed off on foot.

Though it was well into the night when we reached the station, the train platform was teeming with humanity. There was trash everywhere. Many people were lying down on the ground, leaning against walls or posts, or sitting on makeshift parcels trying to catch a few moments of sleep. Apparently, they had been waiting a long time for the train that, as it turned out, was not expected for several hours. Josie said train schedules no longer meant anything since the German occupation of the southern zone began in November. It was not unusual to wait several days for a train, and no one wanted to miss this one. The scene was stark and too familiar. It reminded me of another, more chaotic but equally fateful departure two years earlier from Paris, except this time we were outside in the bitter cold of winter, and Maman was not with us.

We found some free space at the far end of the platform and made ourselves as comfortable as the cold night permitted. I looked around and realized how lucky we were. Many had light clothing on; ours was warm and protected us from the cold biting wind. Others lay exhausted on the ground trying to sleep, newspapers spread over them for warmth, while we were well rested, having slept all day. Nevertheless, I did doze off after a while, my cold nose covered by my woolen scarf, and my gloved hands tucked inside my coat sleeves.

Our southbound train arrived in the morning. It was a crowded, third class train. Still, everyone was able to board it, and we were finally on our way again. The trip was short. When we got off, we were met by one of the guides Josie had told me about. I had never seen this man before. Josie told me to follow his instructions exactly from this point on. Her dark eyes gave me a long, lingering look; then, she hugged and kissed us goodbye. After some brief instructions to the man in whose

hands our fate now lay, she was quickly gone. I knew from the mixture of compassion and anxiety I saw on her face when she left that she was asking herself, as I was, if we would ever see each other again.

From this point forward, Eveline, Paulette and I were in the hands of strangers. We were taken in an old car up a long winding road. It seemed an endless ride, but eventually we reached a stone hut, our first mountain relay point. The road apparently ended here. It was now late afternoon and darkness was nearly upon us. We were fed, and put down on cots to sleep. When we were awakened, it was pitch black outside and time to be on our way again.

The next leg of our trip, farther up the mountains, was by mule cart. The three of us were told to lie down in the back alongside our bags and in the middle of boxes of provisions stacked on each side of the cart. To hide us from view, several layers of sheepskins were put over us.

"Make no sounds." We were told firmly.

"*Oui, monsieur.*" I said quietly from beneath the sheepskins. But to myself I began to worry about what I could do to keep my sisters quiet if they became restless. However, the pitch and sway of the cart rolling along over the mountain trails was soothing. Soon, they were asleep again and never made a sound.

Hours went by. Sometimes, the cart stopped and, through the layers under which I lay out of sight, sounds of brief, muffled conversations reached my ears. At such times, fear gripped my insides. I was sure that any moment someone in a uniform would yank back the skins that hid us. Occasionally, the guide would come back to check his "cargo," or make a short inquiry. Then, we would be on our way again. We drank no water, ate no food, nor were we offered the opportunity to relieve ourselves.

The cart now jostled and lurched frequently as it made its way over the rocky trail. The mule, steadfast and surefooted, plodded unerringly ever upward. In our hiding place, I imagined

## TEMOIGNAGE DE JACQUELINE GROSSMAN-MASSING

AUTEUR DU LIVRE « CHASED BY DEMONS »

« HOW I SURVIVED HITLER'S MADNESS IN MY NATIVE France »

Extraits du livre mémoire « CHASED BY DEMONS » qui parlent de ma grand-mère Josine COHEN,

Née Rios, décédée le ---, enterrée à Bagnères de Luchon, avec son mari Simon COHEN.

### CHAPITRE X

#### PAGE 113

« Josie COHEN, (que je connaissais comme « Madame KIRSCH », un nom qu'elle utilisa pendant l'occupation, certainement de son précédent mariage), était une française énergique d'un grand courage et d'un grand altruisme. C'est grâce à l'humanité de Josie et à son indignation face à ce que les nazis faisaient aux juifs que nous avons survécu. Une gentille femme certainement dans la petite quarantaine. Elle tenait un salon de beauté en ville. Josie était mariée à un natif français juif du nom de Simon COHEN qui était un avocat expérimenté.

Je pense que cet homme était impliqué dans des activités de renseignement juives de haut niveau et qu'il était certainement en contact avec la résistance. Il a sans doute travaillé pour le comité pour les réfugiés du Baron de Rothschild. C'est grâce à ces connexions que lui-même et sa femme devinrent des amis proches de mes parents. Je me souviens que mon père disait qu'il était un homme brillant.

A la fin de l'été 42, cette amitié fut mis à l'épreuve en raison de l'avancée allemande et des fouilles maison par maison. Tout juif trouvé caché serait immédiatement déporté ou fusillé en place publique. Tous ceux qui les aideraient connaîtraient le même sort.

Sachant cela, il était clair qu'il ne faudrait que quelques jours pour que l'occupation de Luchon annule toute chance de survie. Josie, Simon COHEN et mes parents élaborèrent un plan. Nous avons quitté notre maison de location. Utilisant son salon de beauté comme moyen de communication, Josie fit savoir que nous avions quitté Luchon de façon permanente.

#### PAGE 114

Une nuit, nous sommes partis de notre maison, par petit groupes afin de ne pas mettre toute la famille en danger en seule fois, et nous avons rejoint sa maison, où nous nous sommes cachés dans les pièces situées au sous-sol. Elle nous a gardés ainsi gardés, cachés derrière des cartons, en l'attente d'une meilleure solution. Pendant ce temps-là, les nazis fouillaient les maisons. Dans les jours qui suivirent, nous avons attendu dans notre cachette.

#### PAGE 115

Mon père me dit « nous comptons sur toi pour être courageuse et veiller sur tes sœurs. Josie sera là. Si quelque chose arrivait à ta mère et à moi, Josie a juré de prendre soin de vous comme si vous étiez ses filles. Suis ses instructions à la lettre »

Le matin suivant, après des adieux déchirants à mes parents dans le sous-sol de la maison, mes sœurs et moi sommes remontés avec nos affaires et l'aide de Josie pour partir en voiture. ...



Josie me dit qu'elle avait choisi cette route afin de limiter les risques que nous soyons suivies. De telles précautions me fit prendre conscience que nous courrions un grand danger. ...

Josie me dit que la gestapo avait décrété que quiconque aiderait les juifs serait immédiatement exécuté en place publique. Maintenant, j'avais peur pour elle aussi.

#### **PAGE 128**

Nous nous trouvions à la gare de Tarascon sur Ariège. Celle-ci était bondée. Des gens étaient couchés par terre et contre les murs en attendant le train. Nous avons trouvé un peu de place à la fin du quai et nous nous installâmes du mieux que l'on put malgré le froid de la nuit. Je regardais autour de moi et je réalisais que nous avions de la chance car beaucoup de gens étaient peu vêtus. Nos vêtements étaient chauds et nous protégeaient contre le vent glacial. ...

#### **PAGE 129**

Quand nous descendîmes du train, nous trouvâmes l'un des passeurs dont Josie m'avait parlé. Je n'avais jamais vu cet homme avant. Josie me dit de suivre ses instructions à la lettre à partir de maintenant. Ses yeux sombres me regardèrent longuement. Puis, elle haussa les épaules et nous embrassa pour nous dire au revoir. Après quelques brèves instructions à l'homme qui détenait notre destin entre ses mains, elle partit rapidement. Je su par le mélange de compassion et d'anxiété que j'avais vu dans son regard quand elle partit qu'elle se demandait, tout comme moi, si nous nous reverrions un jour.

Note bas de page 144 à propos de Monsieur Jean, le passeur: « nous ne sommes jamais dit au revoir et je ne l'ai jamais revu. Je sais que lui et d'autres étaient bien payés pour faire passer les juifs par la frontière, néanmoins, pour beaucoup d'hommes comme lui, c'était bien plus qu'un arrangement commercial. Lui et son réseau de montagne ont encouru un grand danger chaque fois qu'ils prenaient le chemin de la liberté. Il détestait les allemands et tout ce qu'ils représentaient. Ses passages étaient leur façon de combattre l'ennemi. Je regretterais toujours de ne jamais avoir eu la chance de le remercier pour avoir risqué sa vie pour sauver la mienne ».

#### **CHAPITRE XVII**

#### **PAGE 191**

Quand la guerre fut finit en Europe, mes parents revinrent immédiatement en France depuis Barcelone, où ils avaient attendu la fin de la guerre en toute sécurité. Leur premier arrêt fut Luchon afin de récupérer leur trésor de famille et leurs biens enfouis, retrouvés intacts, dans le jardin de la maison de Josie KIRSCH-COHEN »

**Témoignage de Jacqueline GROSSMAN-MASSING, demeurant à**

**Paseo del Lago, LAGUNA WOODS, CALIFORNIE, USA**

#### PAGE 116

Nous avons pris la direction du nord vers Toulouse sur des routes secondaires afin d'éviter les contrôles qui étaient devenus de plus en plus fréquents. Pendant que Josie conduisait, je regardais par la lunette arrière en priant que nous n'ayons pas été suivies par une patrouille allemande. Mes prières ont dû être entendues. ...

Nous avons vécu dans une ferme de septembre à mi-décembre 42. J'allais à l'école tous les jours, à la messe le dimanche et à confesse, quand je ne pouvais pas l'éviter. A ce rythme-là, j'ai rapidement su jouer mon rôle. Josie m'avait bien « coachée ».

#### CHAPITRE XI

#### PAGE 125

Les vacances de Noël avaient juste commencées lorsque nous avons reçu un appel de Josie KIRSCH. Nous devions faire nos bagages et rentrer pour Noël. Nous serions de retour après les vacances, a-t-elle dit. ... J'ai senti que quelque chose d'important se passait. Quand elle vint nous chercher, nous avons dit au revoir à nos hôtes.

Elle leur a précisé que nous serions de retour dans quelques semaines. Josie et moi avons, nous avons murmuré pendant notre retour vers Luchon dans la voiture qu'elle avait loué. J'étais pleine de questions. « Où sont Papa et Maman ? » était la première de toutes.

Elle me dit qu'ils avaient quittés sa maison début Novembre, à la faveur de la nuit. Quand j'ai demandé ce qu'ils avaient fait de nos affaires de famille, elle a mis un doigt sur ses lèvres et murmura qu'ils avaient enterré leurs plus précieux documents, photos de famille et bijoux dans son jardin. ...

Nous sommes arrivées à la maison de Josie. Juste avant notre arrivée, elle s'est penchée vers moi et a murmuré : « tu vas bientôt voir ton Papa et ta Maman, mais ne dis rien à tes sœurs. A cette heure, je ne peux te dire rien de plus, donc plus de questions ».

#### PAGE 126

Regardant furtivement dans la rue afin de vérifier que personne nous verrait, elle nous a rapidement fait rentrer dans la maison, puis au sous-sol, notre brève demeure d'il y a trois mois. Là, elle nous donna à manger et nous mises au lit. Elle a dit que nous devions prendre du repos car nous aurions besoin de toutes nos forces. ...

Josie avait dû refaire nos valises pendant que nous dormions. Quand elle nous réveilla nos trois valises étaient fermées, prêtes à partir. Nos vêtements les plus chauds et nos plus grosses chaussures nous attendaient à côté. ... Nous avons eu du pain et du lait chaud, puis nous avons été conduites vers une vieille voiture qui attendait dehors. Je ne connaissais la personne qui était au volant, le moteur tournait mais les phares étaient éteints et le restèrent durant la majeure partie du trajet. Il faisait très noir, il devait être autour de minuit. Nos trois valises furent chargées dans le coffre.

Josie nous accompagna et fit en sorte que nous soyons installées le plus confortablement possible. Elle nous a couvertes d'une vieille couverture et nous sommes endormies.

#### PAGE 127

Personne ne nous a vues arriver et personne ne nous a vues partir. Josie me dit que nous allions avoir un long et difficile voyage et qu'il était important pour moi que je puisse dormir autant que je le pourrais. ...

Commenté [NDP1]: s