



Karabaic Virtual 2.0 Summer Book Club: Sarah's Key: page 30-64

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Page 30: They are now in the Vel' d'Hiv', more and more French Jews are being pushed into this large bike racing arena. There are guards with guns watching the people in the stadium. There were not enough toilets for all these people, and the conditions and the smell was overtaking the people. Fear mixed with lack of bathroom facilities....no water....no food....left them not knowing what would happen.



ON this page they talk a lot about the conditions in this place they've been brought to.

Question: Describe what the setting is like and what the conditions are:

Leon the boy she knows, tells Sarah's he's leaving...escaping...

Leon tells Sarah: "I'm getting out of here," he said in a low voice. "My parents have told me to. Now." "But how?" she said. "The police will never let you

through.” The boy looked at her. He was her age, ten, but he appeared much older. There was no longer anything boyish about him. “I’ll find a way,” he said. “My parents told me to go. They took off the star. It’s the only way. Otherwise, it’s the end. The end for all of us.”

Question: Why doesn’t Sarah go with him? How is it Leon’s parents seem to know what is happening and Sarah’s don’t?

Leon, slips out in the pandemonium.

<http://tinyurl.com/6mvh5ve>

pandemonium: Wild and noisy disorder, confusion.

Page 32: Later into the night...the despair of the people grows:

“A heart-wrenching yell, a flurry of clothes cascading over the balconies, and a thump on the hard floor of the arena. Then a gasp from the crowd. “Papa, what was that?” she asked. Her father tried to turn her face away. “Nothing, darling, nothing. Just some clothes falling from up there.” But she had seen. She knew what it was. A young woman, her mother’s age, and a small child. The woman had jumped, her child held close, from the highest railing. From where the girl sat, she could see the dislocated body of the woman, the bloody skull of the child, sliced open like a ripe tomato. The girl bent her head and cried.”

PAGE 34: JULIA’S STORY: She talks about her life as a child, and how she was pulled to go to France.

tawdry, rough neighborhoods: lower quality neighborhoods

paradoxes: a seemingly absurd or self-contradictory statement

<http://tinyurl.com/cx6h3j5>

irate bus drivers: irate-angry

blasé: not caring (sounds like blahzay)

arrogant: thinking you are better than others

<http://tinyurl.com/bgpzqs>

pompous doctors: acting self-important

Parisians: French citizens who live in Paris, France.

enticingly close:

American **expats**—those who were from America but now lived in France

She talks about her two true friends, two gay men who she shared an apartment with when she first arrived in France. She is still friends with these two guys today. As she dines at the apartment they used to share, they know something is troubling her.

Back to Sarah's story: **Page: 38:**

Sarah thinks about nice things, as a way to cope with the horror going on around her in the Vel' d'Hiv'. She thinks about her friend Armelle and how her family had left with her family.

Question: Why do you think they left?

The "sirens ...howling like the enraged wolves, making everyone jump" were the air raid sirens...the bombing going on ...the Germans...because France being part of Europe, was part of the war.

Sarah thinks of when her family went to sit by a river...she tries to console herself as the madness is going on around her. She thinks of Eva, with 4 children and how one day she arrived at their door crying about something that had happened in Poland, her family was in Poland, and so were the Nazis.

Sarah thinks of how her parents protected her from the truth. Things were happening but they never told her, hushed voices, and partial stories...left her wondering what was happening. Eva's husband disappeared. Eva's family in Poland disappeared. Sarah wonders why they treated her like a child and wondered if they had told her those things..would this moment in the Vel' d'Hiv' roundup make more sense?

Page 40: Back to Julia's story

Her friends had a dinner guest, Guillaume.

Julia talks about the problems with her husband. He doesn't sound like a very nice man, does he? Wonder if this man, Guillaume, will play a role in Julia's life?

On **page 43:** Guillaume asks Julia what she is writing about now? Julia tells him, 'Vel' d'Hiv'. Guillaume's face gets tight, his fork is high in the air as he stops eating at her very words.

Question: Hmmm-I wonder why he has this reaction!

Julia corrects the misinformation-as everyone at the table believes it was the Nazis, but she tells them where it happened, in the middle of Paris, and the fact that it was the French police, not the Nazis who did this.

Her friend, Herve, thought it was the Nazis who did this and Julia, corrected him and said the Nazis, ordered the Jews to be taken, but the French police did the actual actions of gathering them in the 'Vel' d'Hiv' stadium that used to be used for bike races.

Then Guillaume tells the dinner group that his grandmother was the only one spared because she was older. They were only taking parents and children between 2-12 years of age.

Question: If Guillaume's grandmother had been taken, would he be alive today?

Page 45: Sarah's story:

Sarah sees the woman who was pregnant give birth to a stillborn, dead baby. Her father takes the secret key to a guard and asks to get his son who was in hiding in the apartment, and the policeman does not believe him. Her father cries.

A nurse wakes Sarah who was dreaming of a wonderful place..in her dreams..at home...her father talking...the piano playing...her brother playing with a truck...all great things, and then the nurse awakens giving her a cup of water...she asks the nurse when they will leave, the nurse tells Sarah to be brave.

Page 47: Sarah remembers the day she had to wear the star on her clothes, and the other girls who had to wear the star. She recalls how the other kids pointed at them and no longer played with them.

the other kids, "...stared at them with disdain"

<http://tinyurl.com/7rwloa5>

disdain: with a feeling of strong dislike or disapproval

The kids yelled at them that their parents were "dirty Jews" and they were "dirty Jews"

Sarah thinks of her brother in the deep in the cupboard, their hiding place and swears she will find a way to save him....

Julia's story : **page 49**

Guillaume tells Julia that his grandmother is still alive, but does not talk about it. He tells her how his grandmother would go to the Hotel Lutertia, where family members were supposed to go to find out about their loved ones, but there were no survivors.

He tells her about the code name for the rounding up of Jews, "Operation Spring Breeze"
Such a nice phrase for such an awful reality, isn't it?

The Gestapo, the German Police told the French to deliver a certain number of Jews between the ages of 16 and 50 years of age. However, the French police decided to "ameliorate" the orders, meaning they changed it -and made it more inclusive to include even more Jews-taking the opportunity to get rid of the Jews, and they arrested even the younger Jewish children, the ones born in France, the French Jewish children. They were french citizens, but it didn't matter.

<http://tinyurl.com/86pchj7>

ameliorate: to make (something, such as a problem) better

Guillaume tells the dinner group that the french sent "...nearly eighty thousand Jews to the death camps. Only a couple of thousand made it back, And hardly any of the children did."

hmmm, this makes me wonder, was Sarah one who someone survived the death camps and made it back?

page 50- Julia returns home to her french husband that she sees lying on the couch, she asks him if he learned about the Vel' d'Hiv' in school. He seems disconnected. He told her no one cares about this event. It's long ago, and she needs to tell her publisher that they should not write about it.

Julia recounts her husbands annoying ways, but then goes on to think of all the things she loves about him.

I don't think he sounds like a very nice man, personally speaking.

She recalls when she first met her husband. He had asked her to dance even though she was with another man. She refers to him as "audacious".

<http://tinyurl.com/7xq84po>

audacious: very confident

Julia talks about meeting his family and how she fell in love with him right away. They planned to have more children but she had many miscarriages and complications. Then she mentioned-"Amelie". Who is that, I wonder?

Page 55:

We return to Sarah's story:

Sarah doesn't even know how long they've been there. She has seen people die in there. Some were taken out screaming on stretchers. Her mother was clearly suffering and "had become a meek animal. She hardly spoke. She cried silently, She prayed."

Then one morning voices on the loudspeakers told them to get their things and move toward the doors. They walked down the streets, and saw people hanging out of their windows as they moved. They watched "from balconies, windows, and sidewalks.." "They looked on, not saying a word."

Page 56: As they are moving down the street, a man with a child laughed at them. She wondered why and how could they laugh. Then a middle aged woman crosses the street...she does something-

Question: What does the woman do and how can you connect this to The Book Thief?

Page 57: Her father tells her why he can't take the key and run back to their brother. Sarah cries and tells her father that she didn't know they wouldn't be coming back and why didn't they tell her?

She cries and yells at her father that her brother will die. Her father tells her that they are all in danger of dying. Her brother would be in their prayers.



The Vel De Hiv roundup-the train...an actual picture of the train...

At the train station, as they wait to board the 'cattle car' train without seats, across on the other train platform there was a family waiting all dressed up, perhaps waiting to go on vacation. There was a little girl all dressed up, and even though Sarah's face and clothes were horribly dirty, she did not look down, instead she maintained eye contact with that little girl...even after Sarah boarded the train...she kept eye contact with the well dressed little girl.

Question: Why do you think she did that?

Page 59: Back to Julia's story



The Fifteenth Arrondissement-area in France
Built with modern day buildings, which did not reflect the rest of Paris, having old and historical architecture.

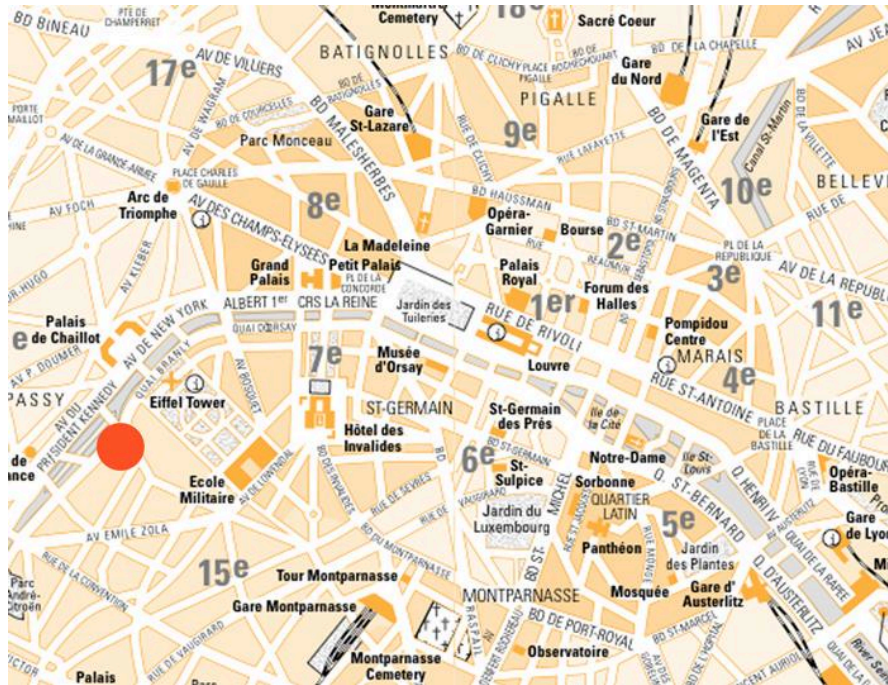
"Rue Nelaton that the Velodrome D'Hiver stood. So basically, the past and Jewish history of the area has been erased and life goes on. If you look for it, you will see the memorial. Otherwise, it's like these horrific events never took place.

All of this was very close to the Eiffel Tower. So many tourists go and see the Eiffel Tower

and talk about fashion, not realizing that hundreds of thousands of people were yanked out of their homes and sent to concentration camps, and their homes ransacked. All pretty much in front of that Eiffel Tower.”

(see source for this information below:

<http://frauleinsenorita.blogspot.com/2009/10/sarahs-key-part-deux-if-walls-could.html>)



You can see where the Vel D'hiv used to be and how close it was to the Eiffel Tower, a tourist destination.

So, the Vel D'hiv was knocked down, and this is the marker that is the only indication of what happened.



I have to think back to my french but I believe it references

4115 Children, 2916 Women, 1129 Men

In this map you can see where the Jews were taken from each country and where the path of their journeys led to:



See the marker point in Paris, France...notice where it leads. You can make the map bigger for yourself to see it clearer, by clicking on it to resize it, then resize it back.

Page 60: They read the plaque and you get to see what it says. Julia's photographer wonders what I wondered, why so few men?

We find out this was planned for months, they gathered lists of all the Jews. Then he tells her the story of where they went after being housed in Vel D'hiv for several days-camps, concentration camps in France. One was called "Drancy"

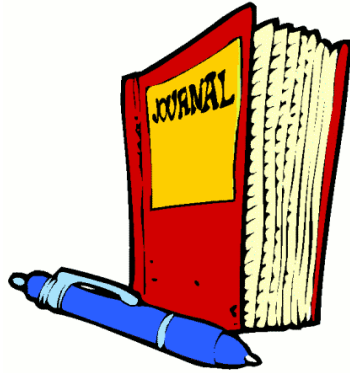


Here is Drancy-the tower is for the guards.

Page 62/63: They stop for coffee and talk to the waiter. He thinks they are tourists but

they tell him why they are there. They ask him if he knows anyone who might have witnessed it, and even though the waiter is young, he points them to a newspaper store with an older woman who saw it all happen.

Journal response: your turn...



So, imagine you are Sarah. You have seen your friend Leon escape. You are angry at your father and mother for not telling you what was happening, causing her to let her brother stay hidden. You see your mother curled up almost lifeless. What is going on in your mind? Speak in first person, meaning speak as if you are Sarah.

Wow, pretty interesting stuff.....isn't it?