

**IRMA.** No one's buying pianos, Lucien. We're on rations, no one's buying pianos, what's the rush?

**ADOLPHE.** It'll come back, it came back in '18, after '29...

~~**LUCIEN.** He's gonna run the store eventually -~~

**ADOLPHE.** It's all circles.

**LUCIEN.** Might as well learn now, and I need the help so it's as good a time as any for him to start and -

**YOUNG PIERRE.** What if I don't want to sell pianos?

*(Beat.)*

~~**LUCIEN.** *(Cautly.)* Then you won't~~

START

*(Beat. LUCIEN is surprised, and defeated.)*

**ADOLPHE.** Of course, you will do whatever you think is best, and you can do anything, you are more than capable. But it's nice to be at the store, just to be there, because that's the place, you know. It's our place. And it's a nice way to make a living. Work is always hard it always is, but some people work their whole lives, it doesn't mean much to them, and isn't much appreciated by anyone else. Our work brings joy. In homes all across France, children learn to play on pianos from our stores. That's what we do. And it put food on our table.

How lucky are we?

STOP

~~*(PATRICK emerges.)*~~

**PATRICK.** A few weeks go by. Macron defeats Le Pen. Just like I told everyone he would. I hear nothing from my sister. We aren't speaking. I know - you're shocked.

I think about calling...

*(He looks at his phone.)*

~~Fuck her. She can call me.~~

*(His phone rings. He considers.)*

Fuck her. I don't want talk to her.

*(He sends the call to voicemail.)*

**YOUNG PIERRE.** Talk to your sister.

~~**PATRICK.** This is an obsession of my father's - talking to my sister.~~

**YOUNG PIERRE.** What else is there, once your parents are gone?

~~**PATRICK.** All my life, whenever Marcelle and I fought, he'd say:~~

**YOUNG PIERRE.** She's your baby sister.

**PATRICK.** So?

~~**YOUNG PIERRE.** You know how rare that is, in this family, to still have your sibling?~~

**IRMA.** When my sister died, we were separated by an ocean.

**LUCIEN.** My brother was killed in another country.

**YOUNG PIERRE.** My sisters were killed meters from where I stood.

**IRMA.** I learned she died in a letter. I never said goodbye. I didn't attend her funeral.

**LUCIEN.** What funeral?

**YOUNG PIERRE.** I was their kid brother.

~~**IRMA.** I have no one left, to talk about my childhood, remember my parents with.~~

**LUCIEN.** No one to work beside. Argue with. Rage against.

**YOUNG PIERRE.** There's no one left to protect me now.

**IRMA.** I hope it won't always be like this, for our family.

**LUCIEN.** I hope so, too.

Of course, I survived, and why? Papa. Right from the start, I was 154982, he was 154983, and that's how it was the whole time, always he was right behind me. I wouldn't have made it otherwise, because Papa was an optimist. He was a natural born salesman. Not like me. I'm a pessimist. But Papa always stayed hopeful.

## START

That first winter, he said, "don't worry, we'll be home for Christmas." But December came and went, we were still in Poland, that year *and* the next. Then spring came, 1945, we were liberated, by Christmas we *were* back in Paris – and my father turned to me with a big grin and said, "See. I told you we'd be home."

Then Papa wanted me to come work with him. He didn't understand my resistance. I couldn't tell him, each night before bed, I heard my mother's voice, calling out from wherever people go when they're gone: "Forget the pianos. Learn something you can do anywhere. Study, Pierre. Study engineering. That's right."

I didn't know what to do. But in the end, I went with Papa. There's no good reason. I just wanted to be near him. Because once Grandfather Adolphe died, I was all he had and he was all I had. ~~And we were together like that until the day I married your grandmother. I went from one optimistic home to another, and that was good for me. I needed that.~~

## STOP

Because after '45, no one wanted to hear about the war. But at the store, I could keep them all alive. I could hang a picture of Colette, presenting flowers to the President of France, Albert Lebrun. And you know something? No one has ever looked at the photo and asked, "where's your sister?"

~~Papa has been dead more than fifty years. I have kept the store going all this time, longer than anyone who came before me. And once again, Papa has saved my~~

~~life, because if I had become an engineer, at some office, I would have felt very alone. Instead, I go to work each day, I see the pianos, the old advertisements, I see our name on the door, and I know they are with me. And I go on.~~

Stay together. Stay with your parents. You have to. In the end, it saved my life.

*(Beat.)*

**MARCELLE.** Papa.

**PIERRE.** It's alright, sweetheart.

~~**MARCELLE.** I just... I wish I knew, I know for sure what the right thing to do was, I... Do you think we – am I a coward?~~

**PIERRE.** No. No.

You have to trust your instincts, that's all you have. If your instincts tell you time to go, it's time to go.

~~You must go with your parents, yes?~~

**DANIEL.** Yes.

*(PIERRE touches DANIEL. He takes a long moment to think. Then he looks up at him.)*

**PIERRE.** Daniel. You're a thinking person: why do they hate us?

**DANIEL.** I don't know, Grandpa.

*(There's a long beat, as they all sit there, letting the question linger.)*

Cause we're different?  
We're not like them?

And we don't want to be like them...  
And they don't understand why...