**CHAPTER 8, PAGES 53-54**

We woke to the sound of sirens.

I gasped as I bolted upright in bed. “Esther!” I cried, reaching for the empty space beside me. It took only a moment to remember that Esther wasn’t there. I felt the familiar punch to the gut. Would I ever get used to the realization that Esther was gone?

I ran from my bed into the main room, my heart racing. Occasionally, the ground beneath my feet quaked, and I heard a distant boom like thunder. “Mama! Papa! What’s happening?” I cried anxiously. The twins were curled up between my parents, the blankets pulled up so only their startled eyes peered out at us. I fell into their bed as well and buried my head against my mother’s shoulder as another crash sounded, reverberating off the walls. The door to my brothers’ room opened and Sam and Isaac rushed to join us, their faces pale in the darkness. For a moment, all other sound was drowned out by a steady rumbling from overhead that caused the bed to vibrate.

“Those are planes,” Sam whispered, going to the window and parting the curtain to look out at the darkened street.

“Samuel, come away from the window!” my father hissed, but he stood up and rushed to my brother’s side, gazing out as well. There was an explosion somewhere closer now, and the whole room shook, the glass of the window rattling against the pane. I jumped and buried my head under the blankets.

“Are we at war?” I whispered, terrified. My voice caught in my throat. “Are those bombs?”

My mother wrapped her arm around me tightly, clutching me closer. “Oh, Jacob,” I heard her breathe into my hair. “My Jacob, please come home.”