From the Hillside



Story by Kathryn Sutherland
Illustrated by Lisa Simmons

PM LIBRARY

For teachers' inspection ONLY

Contents

Chapter 1	Anna	4
Chapter 2	The Thinking Tree	7
Chapter 3	Smells	13
Chapter 4	Commotion	14
Chapter 5	Remembering and Forgetting	17
Chapter 6	The War Closes In	23
Chapter 7	One Last Look	30





For teachers' inspection ONLY

Chapter 1

Anna

Mum watched Anna wander to the back corner of the yard, sketchbook in hand, and was saddened by how much older her daughter had seemed lately. Not that Anna looked older than her eleven years, but the war had aged her. She seemed more inward now, and spent most of her time alone and quiet. Mum shook her head. Anna had seen things kids shouldn't have to see, and learned things kids shouldn't need to know.

For teachers' inspection ONLY

But when Anna reached the tree, Mum saw the old Anna for a moment — the active, long-limbed kid who was up that enormous tree in a matter of seconds, as agile as a monkey. Anna knew that tree so well — she'd learned to climb it almost as soon as she could walk. Mum watched her duck and weave to avoid catching her thin blonde hair on overhanging branches.

Ouch! She'd grown — and so had a pesky little branch above her, now caught in her hair. Anna didn't look towards Mum, but knew she'd be at the window, cursing her hair.



For teachers' inspection ONLY

Mum was always at her about her hair — brush it, tie it back, cut it. Anna had given up on her hair long ago. It was thin hair and nothing could make it any other way. To try was a waste of time, and Anna had more important things to do. Anyway, she freed herself from the clutches of this branch without much trouble. But she kept the twig she extracted from her hair, and continued her familiar climb to her thinking branch.



For teachers' inspection ONLY

Chapter 2

The Thinking Tree



From her thinking branch, Anna could see right over the valley, across the city below.

She could see across the valley from her bedroom upstairs, too, as they had no immediate neighbours on the remote hillside. But Anna didn't stay inside much. It was always noisy in the house. Dad's rock'n'roll blasting on the stereo competed with Grandpa's radio on maximum volume. Anna understood that people had different ways of trying to deal with the war. The men in her house chose the 'drown-it-out' method. Meanwhile, the rest of the family was probably going deaf.

For teachers' inspection ONLY

No, inside was not a thinking kind of place, and Anna was a thinker. The sprawling tree way down the back had always been her special place — her thinking tree. As a small child, she'd sat on the thinking branch and planned adventures over the mountains to exotic lands. At other times, she had imagined herself talking face-to-face with giants standing far below in the valley, and enlisting their help in times of trouble. Her valley could do with their help now.

These days, when Anna sat on her thinking branch, she mostly thought about the city below. She thought about how it was changing and she tried to remember how the buildings had looked before the war. She often wondered what else might change, so she sketched her favourite places and jotted down memories in the fancy hardcover sketchbook given to her by Uncle Malek and Aunty Jana. Her thinking tree wasn't such a happy place these days, but it was a peaceful place and, to Anna, it seemed a safe place.