

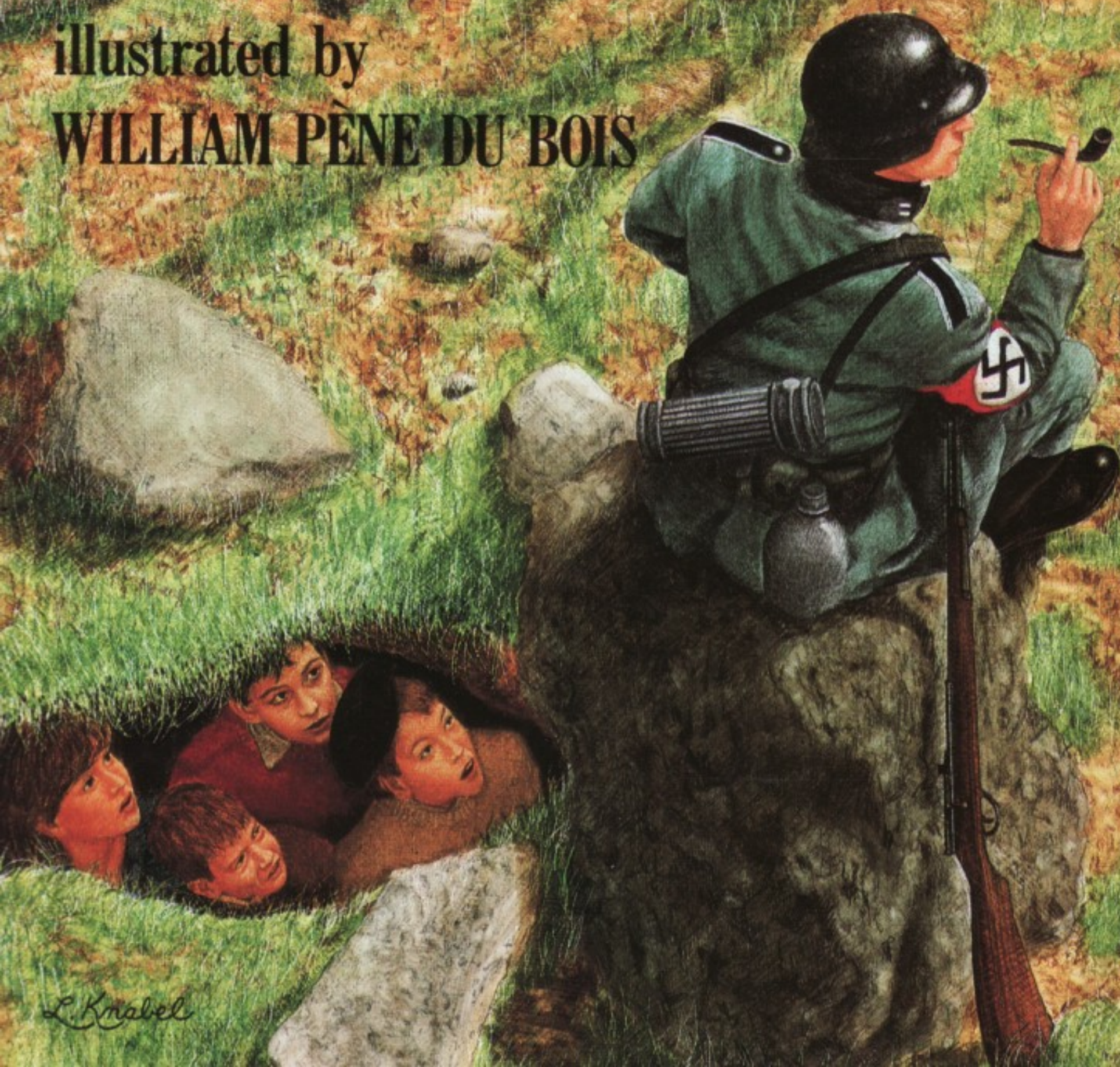
A PUFFIN BOOK



CLAIRE HUCHET BISHOP

Twenty and Ten

illustrated by
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L. Knobel

1. Make-Believe

It all started when we were playing at The Flight into Egypt. Make-believe. It was in the schoolyard, at recess time, right after the Christmas vacation, beginning of the year 1944.

I have to write all about it now, lest I forget later on, the way most grownups do forget the very important things, such as not talking about a treasure or not asking what one is thinking about. If I write now all I remember about "it," perhaps when I am old, let us say twenty, somebody may find these pages and make a book. But that is a very long way off: I am only thirteen, and I was eleven when "it" happened.

My name is Janet. There were also George and Philip and Henry and Denise and Louis and many others. Twenty in all. And we were all fifth-graders except Louis, who was only four years old but was allowed to be with us because he was Denise's little brother. And this was permitted because the war was on and France was occupied, and the children were herded all together where it was safest for them to be. In our town the boys' school and the girls' school were combined and each grade was sent somewhere in the country.

We, the fifth-graders, boys and girls, were given that lovely old house on the top of a mountain. It was called Beauvallon, Beautiful Valley, because we could see the valley for miles and miles from up there, and it was very beautiful.

Anyway, we were all up there, the fifth-graders and Louis, and Sister Gabriel was with us, and we were very happy because we just loved her. She was young and gay and quick. She never walked, she flew.

Now, as I was saying at the very beginning, we were playing at The Flight into Egypt. I was Mary, and George was Joseph, and Louis was the little one.

The other boys and girls asked, "And who are *we* going to be?"

I said, "The Egyptians, of course. Can't you see? The three of us, Joseph, the little one, and myself, we are DPs, refugees, Jewish refugees. We have fled into Egypt."

"Why?" asked Denise.

"Because King Herod wanted to kill the little one. Don't you remember? Sister Gabriel told us all about it," I said proudly.

"What do we Egyptians do?" asked Philip.

Then it was that Henry said flatly, "We sell."

"Sell?" I cried.

"Well, what do you think?" went on Henry. "Jewish refugees have got to eat, just like the others, don't they?"

I didn't know what to say because I didn't want to make

Henry angry. He is so very good at make-believe games. Also, it was really because of him that I was Mary. Joseph, I mean George, said he did not want a fair Mary. He said it was all wrong, since Mary was dark. And I was furious, because I knew all the time he said that because he prefers Denise, who is dark. So I said Mary *was* a blond, and the proof was that I had seen a picture of her made by a man called Memling, and she did have blond hair in that picture.

Then Henry stepped in and said, "George is right, and Janet is right too, because sometimes Mary is dark and sometimes she is fair. Mary can be French, Spanish, Russian, Negro, Indian, Chinese, anything, anything at all."

Denise said, "How do you know?"

And Henry said, "I know." And that was that, because Henry is very, very clever. Then he added that since we had had a dark Mary for the Nativity (Denise), we could have a fair one for The Flight into Egypt, and I could be Mary. (Henry does like me.)

"Don't you think it is only just?" asked Henry grandly.

George nodded; he could hardly do anything else.

So I was Mary, and I didn't want to make Henry mad. When he suggested that the Egyptians had to sell to the Holy Family because refugees have got to eat, I had to think very fast for an answer.

"Henry is right," I said cautiously. "All refugees have got to eat. My idea was that we—the little one, Joseph, and



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“If we take these children, we can never betray them, no matter what the Nazis do.”

During the German occupation of France, twenty French children were brought to a refuge in the mountains. One day a young man came to their school with a request: Could they take in, and hide, ten Jewish refugee children?

Sister Gabriel spoke up. “The Nazis are looking for those children. If we take them we must never let on that they are here. Do you understand?”

Of course the children understood—but how would they hide them if the Nazis came?

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