

They were still calling his name but it was not Baronne who returned to the platform but Ragga. She said nothing, but held up one of the small blue ribbons, turning around to show it to all corners of the square. Most people around Docha followed suit, quietly holding up the ribbon, some attaching it to the brown rags they were wearing. Docha watched, entranced. The contrast between the blue and brown was shocking to her but the audacity and bravery was inspiring. She felt like crying, overwhelmed by pride in their courage.

‘That’s it, come on Docha we have to go, right away!’ said Rubi, now looking more concerned than ever. There was another, bigger wave of people moving on the far side of the platform. She could see the crowd in the distance parting as a platoon of blues forced their way through, batons waving in the air, lashing out at anyone too slow to move aside. Docha and Rubi moved up the street a little more, torn between fear and fascination. When they looked back again they could see that the blues had formed a ring around the platform. There were scuffles close to it. Docha hoped Baronne was safe. A figure climbed up onto the platform and stood in front of Ragga. Docha was shocked to see that it was Ferdinand and he was holding a blue’s baton. What was he thinking? Arming yourself with a baton was a serious offence. How on earth had he got hold of it? He held it out and Ragga fell backwards, afraid that he was about to assassinate her. But it was not Ragga he was aiming at. A blue pulse of light shot from the baton into the ring of blues. Ferdinand threw away the baton, jumped down and ran from the platform, disappearing from Docha’s view. The shocked crowd around her was suddenly silent and still. But then more batons were fired, blue flashes lighting up the area around the platform. The platoons around the edges of the crowd opened fire too. Almost simultaneously there was a deafening explosion close to where the second group of blues had appeared. They stood, horrified as they saw bodies and clothing flying through the air, a cloud of dust rising. People started to run in all directions, screaming. Docha and Rubi turned on their heels and ran up the street, away from the square. They could hear the screams behind them but did not turn around again. Rubi was much faster than Docha and was soon out of sight. Docha ran and ran. Others were now running alongside her, panicked and terrified. A young man just in

front of her suddenly fell to the ground as a blue flash hit his back, burning a black hole into his layers of rags. She kept running and didn't stop until she could hear the screams no longer and the blue pulses of light ceased...