

Stéphane MARSIL
presents

KRISTIN SCOTT THOMAS

SARAH'S KEY

A film by
GILLES PAQUET-BRENNER

With
MÉLUSINE MAYANCE, NIELS ARESTRUP,
FRÉDÉRIC PIERROT, MICHEL DUCHAUSSOY, DOMINIQUE FROT, NATASHA MASHKEVICH

With special appearances by GISEÈLE CASADESUS and by AIDAN QUINN as William Rainsferd

Screenplay by SERGE JONCOUR & GILLES PAQUET-BRENNER
based on the novel by TATIANA DE ROSNAY published by Editions Héloïse d'Ormesson

Production Companies: Hugo Productions/Studio 37/TF1 Droits Audiovisuels/France 2 Cinéma

FRENCH THEATRICAL RELEASE: OCTOBER 13, 2010

Runtime: 111'

Photos and press pack can be downloaded at www.ugcdistribution.fr

Introduction/short synopsis:

Based on Tatiana de Rosnay's best-selling novel, SARAH'S KEY tells the story of an American journalist on the brink of making big life decisions regarding her marriage and her unborn child. What starts off as research for an article about the Vel'd'Hiv Roundup in 1942 in France ends up as a journey towards self-discovery as she stumbles upon a terrible secret and discovers the heartbreaking story of a Jewish family forced out of their home, a home that is now her own. As she starts to see, live, and breathe through Sarah, the eldest daughter, her world is turned upside down. Can one put aside shadows from the past ?

SYNOPSIS:

Paris, July 1942: Sarah, a ten-year old girl, is taken with her parents by the French police as they go door-to-door arresting Jewish families in the middle of the night. Desperate to protect her younger brother, Sarah locks him in a bedroom cupboard – their secret hiding place – and promises to come back for him as soon as they are released. Sixty seven years later: Sarah's story intertwines with that of Julia Jarmond, an American journalist investigating the roundup. In her research, Julia stumbles onto a trail of secrets that link her to Sarah, and to questions about her own romantic future.

Interview with director Gilles Paquet-Brenner

What made you want to adapt Tatiana de Rosnay's novel, Sarah's Key, for the screen?

The idea came to me three months before the release of *UV*, which I was very apprehensive about. I wanted to go back to dealing with more serious issues and that's when I came across Tatiana de Rosnay's book. I was dazzled by its captivating plot, which tells the story of the roundup of Jews in Nazi-occupied Paris and the internment camps in France from a contemporary angle. After stumbling across a family secret, an American journalist living in France takes a fresh look at the history of her adopted country until an event that initially doesn't even concern her turns her life totally on its head. The story also explores the gray areas that few films deal with, such as the attitude of regular people during the roundup, not framing it in terms of collaborators and resistance fighters. The silent majority averted their eyes and tried to save their skins, just like the Tezacs, who ultimately didn't do anything wrong and don't feel at all guilty. Or the Dufaures, who become heroes almost against their will. We're not in a good-versus-evil scenario—we have the facts, but also the consequences on future generations and we're miles away from the usual shortcuts and simplifications. Also, it resonated with my own family history.

In what way?

I'm of Jewish origin and the men in my family were victims of that period. My grandfather, a German Jewish musician who had settled in France, was denounced by some French people and died shortly after being sent to the camps. I pay tribute to him in the film through the character of the violinist who has a ring containing poison so he alone can decide when he dies. My mother told me that story for the first time while I was in pre-production for the film. Certain things resurfaced. Obviously, I wasn't around when my grandfather was deported, but I saw how it had affected my grandmother and my mother and her sisters. The book brought that back to me—the living who have to learn to live with the dead.

Was it easy to secure Tatiana de Rosnay's agreement to give you the film rights?

Before I even finished the novel, I wanted to make the movie. Asking around, I realized that Tatiana and Serge Joncour, my co-writer on *UV*, knew and liked each other. Serge mentioned to her that I wanted to adapt her novel and we contacted her publishers. We were the first people to get in touch because I was lucky enough to have read the book only a few days after it was released. Its success meant that Tatiana was soon flooded with offers, especially from the United States, but Tatiana's word is her bond and she kept faith with us.

In the adaptation that you co-wrote with Serge Joncour, did you make any major changes to the story?

No, we stayed pretty faithful to it, except for one essential aspect. In the book, Sarah's little brother spontaneously goes to hide in the closet when the police arrive to arrest them. In the movie, Sarah tells him to hide in there, which alters her character and her sense of guilt. The other major change consisted in remedying something that frustrated many readers, myself included, who regretted that the book kind of drops Sarah after her brother is found. For the screen, Serge and I developed the character of Sarah as an adult. The adaptation wasn't very difficult because the book is so superbly structured. The only real problems were the transitions from one period to another—1942 and the present day—and keeping it under two hours. Serge sent me a first draft that was 250 pages long! But we immediately got positive reactions from the first people to read the final draft.

Even so, it was tricky to find funding...

Of course, with my erratic filmography. To be honest, I think some people felt betrayed after *Pretty Things*. Just for fun, I followed up with *Payoff*, which was a hit, but blurred people's judgments of me. The release of *UV* brought me down to earth with a bump. It's a strange feeling to make a movie you're proud of, that everyone else hates. Anyway. A lot of people liked the script of *Sarah*, but not the fact that I was directing! Stéphane Marsil, my producer, showed great tenacity and loyalty—rare qualities in this business. He put his credibility on the line. Stéphane, and people's memories of *Pretty Things*, saved the movie. Frédérique Dumas of Studio 37 gave us her support because she liked my first feature. That was decisive, but it didn't stop us enduring some humiliating moments, and it's no understatement to say that we had a lot of people trying to trip us up behind the scenes. But Stéphane never gave up. On this project, a dozen times, we thought it was all over. And a dozen times, the situation was turned around in the most unlikely ways.

Why did you choose Kristin Scott Thomas to play the journalist whose article on the 1942 roundup of the Jews in Paris leads her to investigate what became of Sarah?

In real life, Kristin is uncannily similar to the character of Julia Jarmond. It actually scared her a little bit because she'd never played someone that is so much like her. Stéphane Marsil knew Kristin well because he produced *Arsène Lupin*, and *I've Loved You So Long* was released just as we were putting the finishing touches to our script. That movie created a strong, durable bond between Kristin and French audiences. We sent her the script, but we didn't get an answer right away because she was in a play on Broadway. The US presidential elections were approaching, and I wanted to be there. I met Kristin on the day of Obama's election victory. Carried along by her desire to tell this story, and maybe by the euphoria that swept the city, she said yes. Kristin's commitment was fundamental. In financing terms, of course, but also in terms of all that she brought to this movie. In *Sarah's Key*, we see her as she is in real life—charismatic, modern, a woman of her time. Her restrained performance and natural class steer the film clear of the trap of sentimentality. As she says herself, in this movie, she's the audience's conscience. Committed, but with a crucial sense of propriety.

How did you cast the other roles?

We wanted to avoid the roll call of stars. We looked for the best actor or actress for each part, not necessarily for the biggest names, so we have a blend of established and new talents. We found foreign actors and others who speak Yiddish. Everything had to be real, authentic—it had to overcome the artificiality of cinema.

Why did you want Niels Arestrup to play the farmer who takes in little Sarah after she escapes from the camp?

Niels has the gruffness, physically and personality-wise, of a man of the soil. His apparent coldness is a useful counterpoint to the courage and kindness of his character. He read the script in two days, agreed to meet me for coffee and said yes. Just like Kristin, Niels is essential to the balance of the movie. His understated performance in what could easily have become a feel-good role is crucial. Sometimes, it almost felt like he wasn't giving enough on set. That's when you realize you have to have faith in people who know more than you. Working with world-class talents like Niels and Kristin teaches you the virtue of humility.

How did you find Mélusine Mayance to play Sarah as a little girl?

I firmly believed that children become more resilient and grow up faster in wartime, so I guess I was looking for the future adult as much as the child, and when I saw *Ricky* I wanted to work with Mélusine. She was one of three young girls we selected for a few rehearsals and screen tests. The aim was to get to know them better, gauge their maturity and see how they reacted to the tough subject matter. We narrowed it down to two—a more instinctive young girl and Mélusine, who was more professional and, as such, the obvious choice. She was made for this movie. She amazed everybody. She knows exactly what she's trying to convey, has a kind of sixth sense of where the camera is and always hits her mark without the slightest hesitation. As François Ozon remarked, "Mélusine isn't a little girl, she's an actress." For such a tricky role at such a young age, we were incredibly fortunate to have her.

It's also a nice surprise to see Aidan Quinn, Brad Pitt's co-star in Legends of the Fall, playing Sarah's son, whose existence is revealed by Julia's investigation. How did you come up with his name?

Tatiana sometimes sums up her novel as the story of a man who finally discovers who his mother was. For the part of William, I was looking for an idea, a presence, charisma... He is crucial to the story because he gives meaning to Julia's quest. We looked long and hard for the right actor, but even though Kristin's name opened doors to us, American agents politely ignored us when we explained we only had three days to shoot the scenes and no money. Some actors said yes, but at a price we couldn't afford. Then, one day, our American casting director called and said she was waiting on an answer from Aidan Quinn. I was surprised, but it was a dream come true—an actor whose face movie fans will recognize but who allows the character to exist. On top of that, Aidan is a wonderful person and a very generous, slightly off-the-wall actor who totally immerses himself in his character. He gives a very powerful performance.

After assembling all this talent, what was your aim when you started shooting?

To make a great Saturday night movie, accessible and mainstream, but also thought-provoking. I wanted to go back to basics, to a certain classical form. I wanted to prove to myself that I could do it.

To achieve that aim, what was your aesthetic approach?

Initially, my principal concerns were how to distinguish between the two periods, and how to achieve and maintain the necessary restraint for this story without losing creativity. Also, I wanted to show the completely

different worlds in which Sarah and Julia exist—the chaos of wartime and the Occupation contrasting with the relative comfort of Julia's lifestyle. I chose to film all the 1942 action with a handheld camera and short lenses so we're always with the characters, close to the action, and then intercut with more lyrical scenes, such as the escape from Beaune-la-Rollande, to let the film breathe. For the present-day action, I opted for a very classical approach, paring down the scenes so that every close-up and every movement would have meaning. My aim was for the audience to be able to follow the story without being distracted for a moment by the directorial style I'd chosen, even though it's there, obviously. The story had to come first.

How did you approach and resolve the issue of recreating the Winter Velodrome, the stadium where the Jews were held after the roundup?

I met with survivors whose recollection were always of the constant stifling heat, noise, smell and teeming crowds. Their accounts nudged me even further towards an immersive approach, capturing those aspects in an almost impressionistic manner, rather than trying to rebuild the stadium on set. Then I saw *Monsieur Klein* for the first time and I noticed that Losey shot part of the film at the Jacques Anquetil velodrome in Vincennes, near Paris, which has preserved the same Eiffel-inspired steel structure as the Winter Velodrome had. So we could envision shooting there, especially when the digital effects people told me that it was possible to put a roof on the open-air velodrome. So we shot the scenes there and the guys at MacGuff did an extraordinary job. In the end, there are only four shots with special effects in the whole sequence. For the rest, I broke down the scenes so that we'd get that crowded feeling without having 500 extras constantly in the frame. I wanted audiences to get a sense of the vastness of the velodrome, without being demonstrative because I was wary of digital effects that let you do whatever you want, sometimes at the expense of realism. I also banished the idea of any establishing shot, which could only have been from an external viewpoint, whereas I wanted to immerse the audience. Every shot in the velodrome is from Sarah's point of view.

Do you feel a sense of responsibility towards history at times like that?

It terrified me. Writing the script, I didn't really think about it because I take problems one at a time, but it brutally resurfaced when I read Annette Müller's *La petite fille du Vel d'Hiv*, about her escape from the velodrome as a girl just a bit younger than Sarah. That's when it really hit home that I was going to immortalize these events. I got even more worried when I watched *Schindler's List* again. I wondered what I was getting myself into at the age of 35!

Was there a scene that you were particularly apprehensive about?

The scene where the children are separated from their mothers. Even more so, when I started shooting it with Annette Müller beside me.

You asked her to be there?

No, she asked to be there. She came with her brother, Michel, who experienced it for real with her in 1942.

So what was it like recreating such an appalling scene?

I was in a bubble. I didn't want to let the emotion on set influence me in any way. I started by setting up the camera some distance away to see how the extras would move. They were simply exceptional. What they gave me was priceless. Some even fainted. Gradually, I moved the camera closer. In the morning, I couldn't capture the essence of what I was witnessing—the unbearably barbarity—and I started to get worried. Then I asked the cameraman to go in among the crowd using the 14 mm lens, even if it meant they bumped into him or jostled him. He took some knocks, but in five takes, he captured the chaos as you see it on screen.

With Sarah's Key, you became the first feature film director to shoot at the Holocaust Memorial in Paris.

Yes, the Memorial had never figured in a feature film before. The scene where Kirstin's character goes there is high-risk because we could so easily get drawn into something political. The man she meets there sums up his mission as, "getting away from figures and statistics to give a face and reality to each of these lives." Those words define my underlying aims with this movie. Until now, films about the holocaust have stuck close to History with a capital H—understandably and indispensably. I didn't feel comfortable with that. It's been done so many times and, to my eyes, *Schindler's List* just can't be bettered. So I wondered how I could make my modest contribution, and what I hit upon was trying to make people feel the tragedy by forgetting the fancy words and making it palpable on a human level, so that audiences would feel in contact with the events irrespective of their opinions or origins. Kristin's character is American and non-Jewish, so Sarah's story and the holocaust is not her story, but indirectly it touches her. It could happen to anybody.

In that light, what's your vision of the movie?

Sarah's Key is a work of fiction, but the novel I've adapted is extremely well documented and respects historical fact down to the tiniest detail. By filming the story of Sarah, Julia, William and the others, I hope I've made a film that everybody can identify with, a film that makes history accessible and inclusive without dumbing-down or moralizing.

DIRECTOR GILLES PAQUET-BRENNER BIOGRAPHY

Gilles Paquet-Brenner is a french director and screenwriter. He was born in Paris in 1974. His first feature, **Les jolies choses** (*Pretty things*), was released in november 2001, immediatly noticed by both the critics and the public.

Adapted from the book by sulfurous french novelist Virginie Despentes (*Baise-moi, Teen Spirit*), the movie won several awards, among them the MPAA best young french screenwriter award Gilles got from the hands of Jack Valenti at the Deauville Film Festival.

Studio Magazine pointed « the birth of an author», **Le Figaro** « a modern poetry, a delicate mix of vulgarity with preciosity » and **Premiere** enjoyed « a complex screenplay about the search for identity, based on a really inventive visual treatment», not to mention that 7 years prior to her Oscar for *La vie en rose*, **Variety** noticed « a bang-up perf by Marion Cotillard » that will lead her to her second Cesar nomination as most promising actress. *Les jolies choses* is now considered the movie that revealed Marion's exceptional gift as a character actress.

Two years later, with **Gomez & Tavares** (*Payoff*), Gilles made an attempt to entertain the audience with a crowd-pleaser. Tribute to the movies and TV shows he liked as a teenager, this action comedy was a hit, followed five years later by a sequel. For **Le Parisien**, « humor, action and beautiful women : the cocktail is devilishly efficient » and **Variety** enjoyed « a well-cast actioner with a who-can-you-trust scenario that has its fair share of surprises, some good fights and very good stunt work ».

For his third feature, **UV**, the young director was one more time on unexpected ground. A psychological thriller with a suffocating atmosphere, influenced by Moravia and the french or italian cinema from the early sixties, the movie stages a cynical and noiseless confrontation between the legendary Jacques Dutronc and the raising star Nicolas Cazalé. If the audience seemed a bit lost, **L'Express** thought it was « wonderfully crafted», **Elle** loved « this unusual hoodoo calm that leaves enough time to observe some dazzy characters and a wonderful cast» and **aVoir-aLire** saw in it « the most ferocious social satire».

At the moment, Gilles Paquet-Brenner is working on the adaptation of the universally acclaimed best-seller by Tatiana de Rosnay, **Elle s'appelait Sarah** (*Sarah's Key*), translated in more than fifteen languages all around the world. The main character (*Julia*) is going to be played by Kristin Scott Thomas. The shooting is to be scheduled next autumn.

Interview with Kristin Scott Thomas

Had you read Tatiana de Rosnay's book before Gilles Paquet-Brenner offered you a part in his adaptation?
Not at all. But my daughter had read it and was very enthusiastic.

What made you want to take part in this adventure?

I met Gilles in New York, where I was in a play, on the night Obama won the election. I'd read the script and found it extremely interesting because it tackles head-on the complex issue of how to live with the past and keep moving forward as an aware, responsible human being confronted with upsetting stories that provoke feelings of guilt or shame. These questions are the lot of many people who have been carrying them inside for many years. I also liked the fact that *Sarah's Key* dealt with the 1942 roundup of the Jews in Paris, which is kind of taboo, from a different angle—by discussing how aware we are today of a tragedy that we tend to brush under the rug. At the time, France was divided between heroes and collaborators, on the one hand, and the vast majority who simply wanted to save their skins, on the other. I think it's good, and liberating, to raise these issues.

How did you and Gilles Paquet-Brenner prepare for the movie?

We didn't see much of each other because I was very busy on other shoots, so I didn't really have chance to meet up with him. Before we started shooting, however, Gilles showed me the 1942 scenes that he had just shot, and that was very helpful to me. On set, what I really liked about him was his strength in adversity. The tougher it got, the clearer and more precise Gilles became in his choices. That's wonderfully reassuring.

Was it a complicated road to reach your character—an American journalist married to a Frenchman, covering the commemoration of the roundup?

Not really, because the character is very close to me socially. Many of my friends are journalists, like Julia. She could easily be me, so it was easy for me to identify with her. I also read Tatiana de Rosnay's book before the shoot, which helped me pin down the character. But it's important to keep in mind that a writer's approach to a character is not the same as an actor's.

Did you do any research into this troubled period of French history?

No, because I chose to confront those events at the same time as my character does. Obviously, I knew something about that period because I feel that what happened to the Jews in the Second World War concerns me, too, but I'd never visited the Holocaust Memorial, for example, and I decided not to go there before the shoot so that I would experience that situation as Julia. I didn't want to impose my preconceptions on the character, but build from nothing to some extent. I wanted to share the journey of this woman who is swept away by her emotions when she realizes that events in the past are influencing her private life and the very personal decisions she must take. Of course, the desire to experience all that during the shoot also encouraged me to accept this project.

What memory do you have of that scene at the Holocaust Memorial?

I'm not unfamiliar with these issues because my mother-in-law actively participated in ensuring that this tragedy is not forgotten. She was part of the committee that organized for plaques to be put up outside schools with the names of deported Jewish children. When you see those, or when you enter the Holocaust Memorial and are directly confronted with all those faces, you immediately get a different sense of things. As my character says in the film, when you delve into it, you can really imagine what it's like to have your children deported and to feel powerless to protect them. So my reaction in the Holocaust Memorial was that of a mother. It was very intense.

That scene—and your whole performance—is marked by great restraint. Was steering the movie away from sentimentality your biggest challenge?

It was the trap we had to avoid, at least—the bleeding hearts syndrome. Don't forget what the film really shows—that life goes on, that human beings have this kind of resilience, so that even in the face of the worst tragedies we keep going. Even after everything she's been through, Sarah leaves children behind her. It was important not to be drawn into futile emotion, even if, personally, I was deeply moved by many of the things we shot. My character has to overcome those emotions. Remember that Julia is an investigative journalist and considers events from a professional point of view. Only when she starts looking for Sarah does she gradually

begin to feel deeply affected and helpless. Especially as she finds out, after giving up all hope, that she's pregnant. But her husband wants her to have an abortion. All these elements undermine her and leave her vulnerable to those emotions, but I had to be careful not to overplay that because the 1942 part of the movie is sufficiently overwhelming that it's counter-productive to emphasize the emotion in the modern-day action. Actually, comparing the periods shows that while human beings were able to withstand the horrors of World War Two, Julia feels almost like it's the end of the world confronting situations that are much easier to deal with.

Were you more apprehensive about shooting some scenes than others?

On this movie, I think I took it one step at a time, without anticipating future difficulties. But we were very lucky because we shot in chronological order, finishing with the final scene, which necessarily helps you build your character.

You have a very moving encounter with Aidan Quinn. What do you like about him as an actor?

His simplicity. As a moviegoer, I've been a fan of Aidan's for a long time, so it was no surprise to see how totally professional he is, never acting the big Hollywood star. Working with him was a sheer delight because everything just comes naturally.

Did you enjoy being reunited with Frédéric Pierrot, your co-star in I've Loved You So Long, who here plays Julia's husband?

Again, that was absolutely delightful. Actually, I was the one who suggested him for the part. Frédéric is so gifted. It's fascinating to watch how he easily slips into such a multi-faceted, complex character—family man, son tangled up in murky affairs from the past, husband and businessman.

Is it hard to step out of character when the film's over?

No. The shoot was tricky because, as we said earlier, I had to play what this woman was going through while keeping it all inside. Julia wants to unravel events in the past while carrying new life within her. It's a contradiction that's very complex to portray and requires a lot of concentration.

The first time you saw the movie, how did it feel?

I was blown away! Making it, I don't think I ever got a sense of the full force of the film. What you couldn't see reading the script, and what Gilles brilliantly achieves, is the editing, switching smoothly back and forth between 1942 and the present day. Gilles establishes a clear, strong bond between the two periods, which means that in the end, we're as tied up in Julia's investigation as in Sarah's escape. That was a real challenge.

Interview with Mélusine Mayance

What made you want to be in movies?

Thanks to my parents, I get to see all kinds of movies. We have a library packed with DVDs. I watched *Jurassic Park* with them when I was 3 and loved it! Even though they work in the movie industry, they never pushed me to act. That happened by chance when I was spotted outside my school and invited to audition for François Ozon's *Ricky*. I went along and they picked me.

How did Sarah's Key happen?

I was called in for an audition that was in three separate stages doing different scenes. The first time, it was just me, and then I was with the girl who plays the girl who escapes with Sarah.

What did you feel when you read the script?

Actually, I tried to read the script before the audition and I loved it! Everything about it, the story, my character... I didn't know much about World War Two and I learned a lot when I was preparing for the film.

How did you prepare for it?

Part of my dad's job is working with actors on shoots, so he's also my coach! I worked on the role with him, the lines and feelings. After that, nothing seemed particularly complicated to do. Then, with my mom, I read Tatiana de Rosnay's novel, and I asked her lots of questions and we looked a lot of stuff up on internet to find out more about the period. I also read *La petite fille du Vel d'Hiv* by Annette Müller. Actually, when I finished her book, I tried to find out if she was still alive. I wanted to meet her, not to ask her lots of questions but just to give her a hug because her story had made me cry so much. It turned out that, the same day, Gilles had organized for me to meet her just before we shot the scene where the mothers are separated from their children before being taken to the camps. Afterward, my mom asked me what I'd said to her. I said, "Nothing. I hugged her and I cried."

How did the more violent scenes in the movie, like that separation scene, affect you?

It was like when we were shooting *Ricky*. I was just little Sarah being separated from her mother. I felt like I was going through what she went through. But I don't confuse fiction and reality. After every scene, I became myself again without any worries. I wasn't traumatized!

What was it like on set with Gilles Paquet-Brenner?

He was great. He always found a way to get across what he wanted from me. It was really cool to work with him. And he also fought for me to get the part and I was very happy he showed such faith in me.

Do you want to keep acting?

Yes, definitely, in all kinds of films! I dream of acting lots of different things—comedy, working with Jean-Pierre Jeunet, Tim Burton... It's an extraordinary job. I'm always a little bit sad, in fact, when a shoot ends, and when a lot of time passes by between two shoots, I really begin to miss it. Every time, I can't wait to start over.

A WORD FROM TATIANA DE ROSNAY

It's tricky for a writer to accept a director's vision of her book, but I had decided to put my trust in Gilles Paquet-Brenner from the start. When he explained "his" vision of "my" Sarah, it was so thrilling and he was so clearly excited at the prospect. And then there was Serge Joncour, a loyal friend and talented novelist, and I knew that a new Sarah would be reborn through his vision.

I read the script. I liked it. It has to be said that we writers always find a script a bit dry, lacking in descriptions and nuances. You have to factor in the actors' performances. I hadn't learned to do that, but I saw that Serge and Gilles had respected my book. They hadn't radically changed anything.

Then the adventure of the shoot began. The unforgettable encounter with Mélusine Mayance, who plays Sarah. I can still see her coming towards me with her yellow star on her chest, her pert little face and big bright eyes. My Sarah! An intense and almost unreal moment. And then later, Kristin Scott Thomas as Julia Jarmond. I'm an extra in a scene with her—that was another magical memory that will be engraved in my mind forever. Then the day I saw the movie for the first time, with Serge. I'm apprehensive, scared I'll be disappointed. Scared I won't recognize "my" Sarah. The first ten minutes are a blur, I can't break out of my novel. I force myself and suddenly I'm immersed in the movie. I fall in love with the film. And at the end, watching the final scene, an incredible wave of emotion overwhelms me, and I start crying. Yes, I cried.

The film is restrained, like my book. There's no pathos, no mawkishness. Kristin Scott Thomas gives a wonderful performance as the American journalist who wants to know the truth at all costs. Michel Duchaussoy is spot-on and amazingly moving as Edouard Tézac.

Gisèle Casadesus as Mamé enchants me. Niels Arestrup as Jules Dufaure charms me with his gruff affection. Aidan Quinn and his intense gaze just overwhelm me. All the actors have their place in the movie—Frédéric Pierrot, Dominique Frot, Natasha Mashkevich—and in the heart of this novelist because they have become my characters on screen.

Gilles Paquet-Brenner has captured the emotion I wanted to share with my readers when I wrote the book. The portrait of a woman who opens Pandora's box. The heartrending image of a little girl whose life is shattered. A man who knew nothing of his mother. The taboo, sixty years on, surrounding one of the darkest moments in our history. Thank you, Gilles.

Tatiana de Rosnay

While Le Voisin (Editions Héloïse d'Ormesson) and Boomerang (Le Livre de Poche) have just been released in France, Tatiana de Rosnay's novels are also major international hits. According to Bookseller magazine, in 2009, Tatiana de Rosnay was the best-selling French author in Europe.

She is also the most widely read French novelist in the United States with sales of over a million copies of Sarah's Key and 64 weeks on the New York Times bestseller list.

Shortly before the film's release, the detailed sales figures for Sarah's Key were as follows:

French sales: over 400,000 copies, all editions combined.

International sales: about 2.2 million copies.

CAST

Kristin **SCOTT THOMAS** Julia Jarmond
Mélusine **MAYANCE** Sarah
Niels **ARESTRUP** Jules Dufaure
Frédéric **PIERROT** Bertrand Tezac
Michel **DUCHAUSSOY** Edouard Tezac
Dominique **FROT** Geneviève Dufaure
Gisèle **CASADESUS** Mamé
Aidan **QUINN** William Rainsferd
Natasha **MASHKEVICH** Mrs. Starzynski
Arben **BAJRAKTARAJ** Mr. Starzynski
Sarah **BER** Rachel
Karina **HIN** Zoe Tezac
George **BIRT** Richard Rainsferd
Charlotte **POUTREL** Sarah as a young woman

CREW

Directed by Gilles **PAQUET-BRENNER**
Screenplay by Serge **JONCOUR** & Gilles **PAQUET-BRENNER**
Based on the novel by Tatiana **DE ROSNAY**
published by Editions Héloïse d'Ormesson
Produced by Stéphane **MARSIL** / **HUGO PRODUCTIONS**
Production Manager Clément **SENTILHES**
Director of Photography Pascal **RIDAO**
Film Editor Hervé **SCHNEID** (ACE)
Original Score Max **RICHTER**
Casting Director Gwendale **SCHMITZ**
1st Assistant Director Olivier **COUTARD**
Sound Didier **CODOUL**, Bruno **SEZNEC**
Alexandre **FLEURANT** & Fabien **DEVILLERS**
Production Designer Françoise **DUPERTUIS** (ADC)
Costume Designer Eric **PERRON**
Stills Photographer Julien **BONET**
Script Supervisor Josiane **MORAND**
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