INT. ROHAN HOUSE - CHILDREN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sirens are sounding, one after the other, some distant, some close, then the one at the end of the street, like dogs howling in the night waking other dogs. Three German bombers, a Heinkel, a Dornier and a Stuka, fly in formation across the black sky. GRACE appears behind the model planes, which hang on threads from the ceiling, wakes BILL and SUE and they stumble out of bed.

INT. ROHAN'S HOUSE - STAIRS - NIGHT

GRACE leads BILL and SUE down the stairs. They sleep on their feet in this familiar routine. DAWN is still dressed below, playing dance records on the gramophone and finishing homework.

GRACE
We better go to the shelter.

INT. ROHAN HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

They open the French windows and fierce wind cuts into the room.

DAWN
It's freezing out.

GRACE hesitates, then closes the windows.

INT. ROHAN HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

They squeeze themselves into the tiny space under the stairs, close the door and light a candle. BILL and SUE complain irritably as they try to arrange their limbs. The shoving and pushing wakes them up.

GRACE gives each of them a biscuit from a tin.
DAWN
What would we do if a German came into the house?

GRACE
Don't be silly, Dawn.

DAWN
Well, why do you always bring the carving knife in here?

DAWN picks up the knife, pretending to hear someone outside the cupboard door. She presses her ear to the thin wooden partition. BILL'S eyes bulge. He is half convinced. Even GRACE looks uneasy. SUE, reacting automatically to crisis, pulls on her red and white 'Mickey Mouse' gasmask. Suddenly DAWN thrusts the knife through a crack in the boards. She makes a blood curdling cry.

GRACE slaps her, amused, despite herself. BILL seizes DAWN from behind and pulls her back on top of him. They writhe and giggle. BILL cocks an ear.

BILL
Flak!

They are stock-still, straining to hear. He is right. The anti-aircraft guns have started up. Their crisp 'crump' sound gets closer and more frequent. Another separate sound intrudes - falling bombs. The explosions are at regular intervals, each one louder than the last.

BILL
Basket bombing
Counts between the bombs
Two and three and four and five
and six and..

The next bomb falls closer.

GRACE
Why didn't I take you to the shelter?

Her hands tough and caress the children, as though weaving a protective charm over them.

BILL
...four and five and six and...

Another, louder still. They sit tense and straining every muscle, willing the bombs away.

GRACE
If only I'd let you go to Australia.
BILL
...and five and six and...

It is deafening, shaking the house.

DAWN
The next one is ours. Either it
hits us or it goes past us.

BILL
...and four and five...

DAWN
Please God. Not on us. Drop it on
Mrs. Evans. She's a cow.

BILL
...and six...

It drops, some way past them. They slump exhausted against
each other. A fire-engine bell approaches. The flask goes
on. DAWN gets up, untangles herself from the others.

DAWN
I'm not going to die like a rat
in a trap. Let me out of here.

Staggers out of the cupboard.

DAWN
I'm going outside.

BILL scrambles after her.

GRACE
Wait. Don't.

EXT. ROHAN HOUSE - NIGHT

DAWN runs out. Searchlights criss-cross the sky. Anti
aircraft shells make little white puffs in the black sky,
the sound coming much later. Up the road, a house is
blazing. A fire engine swings by. ARP MEN run in the
street. DAWN dances in the tiny front garden.

DAWN
Quick, quick.. slow, quick, slow.

BILL hesitates in the porch.

DAWN
It's lovely. Lovely. Does little
Billy want to see the fireworks?
BILL runs out, sees something by the kerb and picks it up.

BILL
Shrapnel! And it's still hot.

He tosses it from hand to hand. At the far end of the street, the skyline of central London is silhouetted against a burning sky. GRACE suddenly laughs at the sight of the burning house down the street. She is shocked at her own reaction.

GRACE
Come in at once, or I wash my hands of you.

A shell bursts right overhead and they duck into the open doorway. The four of them are framed there, looking up at the savage sky where the Battle of Britain rages. BILL watches enraptured.