

Fugitive Colors
Historical Fiction Book-to-Movie Screenplay Treatment (spec)
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Logline: Art is the expression of humanity. Can it survive the most inhumane war in history?

Summary:

Driven by his love for art, young Yakov changes his name to Julian and travels to Paris to pursue his dream. As soon as he gets there, he meets a trio of friends who seem like the best of friends. It quickly becomes clear he's stepped into the middle of years-old resentments. The handsome and talented Rene has everything handed to him, including Adrienne. Felix is jealous of Rene's attention from Adrienne and his artistic talent.

As the Third Reich gains power in Germany, Felix returns to Germany where he finally finds the respect and recognition he feels he deserves. He uses his newfound power in the Nazi government to exact revenge on his old friends who never appreciated him and to capture the girl of his dreams. He steals Rene's paintings and flees to America where he reinvents himself as the preeminent expressionist.

Julian sticks by Rene's side as they are tortured in Dachau. After Rene's death, Julian spends the rest of his life gathering evidence of Nazi crimes against art.

Characters:

Julian: Age 20 -- Born as an Orthodox Jew in 1910s Chicago, he changes his name to Julian and moves to Paris to follow his passion for art. He is honest and trusting, often to his detriment.

Rene: -- A secular French Jew for whom everything comes easy. He's handsome, talented, and charismatic.

Adrienne: -- A secular French Jew. She's beautiful and talented.

Felix: -- a German-born citizen who is the son of a German baron. He's temperamental and deeply jealous. He's prone to heavy drinking.

Baron von Bredow: -- He's German old money. He's serious and uncompromising.

Jacob: Rene's father. A world-renowned art collector

Act I:

1960 - Chicago

48 year old Julian is at the Chicago Institute of Art. We see several of Rene's paintings being displayed. Julian approaches Charlotte. She is confused but he invites her back to his hotel.

Charlotte comes to Julian's hotel. He says he and her father were good friends. She wants to know everything.

1926 - Chicago

Julian is 12. He's at the Chicago Public Library. He steals a Gustav Klimt book and runs off.

He gets to his school. Someone trips him and his book goes flying. The rabbi is angry. The rabbi raps his knuckles. He shows the rabbi the painting of him. The rabbi thinks it's good but says nothing.

1930 -- Chicago

Julian is selling socks in a Jewish part of town. He sees a woman selling potatoes. He is fascinated with her. Unable to control himself, he draws her in his prayer book. The Jews become enraged. His parents kick him out of the house. He takes

the money his mom has been saving, leaves a drawing he drew of her, and leaves.

1932 -- Paris

Julian arrives in Paris. He meets Rene, Adrienne, and Felix at a cafe. Rene and Adrienne are dating. He goes back to Felix's apartment and paints with them. They convince him not to go to the school.

He joins them at DuBois' studio. At Leon Dubois' studio in the Latin Quarter. Rene is his favorite. Then Adrienne. He's harsh to Felix. The nude model is very pretty. Rene eyes her. Adrienne gets jealous. She's sleeping with Leon Dubois. Julian paints Adrienne instead.

Julian and Adrienne go for coffee. He tries to reassure her Rene isn't going to sleep with the model. Felix expresses that he'll have slept with the model within a week. Julian is only thinking of Adrienne.

They all go to Le Deux Magots for wine. Adrienne and Felix go shopping. Rene admits to Julian he is sleeping with Charlotte, the model. Rene asks Julian to lie for him long enough to figure out what he wants.

Julian and Adrienne go to Rene's opening. Rene's father is there. He owns a gallery but he and Rene are not speaking. Rene is too cozy with Charlotte. Julian overhears Charlotte talking to Rene's father. She was sleeping with him and is now sleeping with Rene as some kind of revenge for not leaving his wife.

after a day at the studio, Julian eavesdrops on Felix arguing with his rich father in German. Felix's father demands he return to Berlin. His brother is sick. If he doesn't come back, he's cut off.

Felix confesses he's not a very good artist. Julian recalls being 15. His father finding his paintings and art books. His father slapping his mother. Julian tackles him. His father burns his drawings one by one.

Julian, Rene, and Felix go to Dubois' studio to paint. They discuss women they've slept with. While analyzing Rene's painting, Felix realizes he's sleeping with Charlotte.

Felix blows up at them both for deceiving him. Reveals that Rene moved on Adrienne knowing Felix had a crush on her. He disinvites them from Berlin and storms out.

Adrienne and Julian hang out. Adrienne says she's done with Rene and no longer wants to paint with instructors. Julian says they're still going to Berlin to meet Felix.

Adrienne reveals she knows Julian was painting her. Julian tells her his life story. They have sex.

Act II:

Rene and Julian get a driver to take them to Felix's house. He's dressed like his father. He says he forgives them and Charlotte is free to visit too.

Rene and Julian are in the woods with Ernst Engel. They're painting Charlotte. Felix doesn't paint anymore. He just watches them paint and then leaves. Max Kruger and Ernst Engel tell Julian Hitler is going to force Jews to sell their art and ban the new kinds of art. Felix's dad is in on it. They think Felix has been recruited by the Nazis. Kruger and Engel ask him to spy on Felix and his dad. Julian doesn't commit to it but does agree to listen to a Nazi scholar Friedrich Fricke give a speech on "Art and Race".

At Berlin's Academy of Fine Arts, Fricke gives a speech comparing expressionist abstract art to deformed people, Jews, Bolsheviks, etc. Julian follows Fricke and sees him meeting and hugging Felix. Julian hides in a shed.

They have a picnic in the forest. Felix gets drunk. He says his brother is dying, his dad is proud of him now. He seems

reluctant about Nazism. He called Charlotte a prostitute and demands she get naked so he can paint with Rene one last time. Rene says Charlotte is more beautiful than Felix will ever know. Felix says he will know but refuses to explain what that means. Rene's painting is a lot better than Felix's. So Felix takes a stylus and rips Rene's painting apart. He leaves.

Rene and Charlotte have a fight. She's jealous of Adrienne but mostly his art. Felix calls. His brother died. He wants Charlotte and Julian at the funeral but not Rene.

They're at the funeral. There are prominent Nazis everywhere. They want to leave after a few *Heil Hitler* salutes, but decide to stick it out.

Back in Potsdam, Rene suggests putting some of Julian's work in the art show. Julian tries to convince Rene to leave. Engel convinces him to stay through the exhibition.

At the gallery, the Gestapo takes Engel and Rene. Felix says Julian has to go convince Jacob to sign over all of his possessions.

Julian rides with Felix to the prison. They go into the cell. Rene has painted the wall. He reveals that Felix forces him to paint for him day and night. Jacob mocks Felix. Says not to be afraid of Rene's talent. Felix shoots him.

Act III:

Julian is transferred to Dachau. Months pass. Julian has to paint planes black. Rene must paint a canvas a week according to Felix's instructions.

Each week, Rene makes a sketch of the painting from the past week and hides it. Rene says he has a plan to escape Dachau.

Peter the Comedian sells them out for bread. Julian is beaten up. Felix comes to visit Julian and Rene.

Rene says he'll stop painting unless Julian is freed. Felix says he'll kill Rene unless Julian smashes his fingers with a hammer. He smashes them. Flashback to the rabbi rapping Julian's knuckles

They escape through a hole Rene dug where he hid his notebook. Hermann helps because he felt guilty.

They sprinkle tobacco around the hole to throw off the dogs. Rene pressures Julian to sneak into his father's gallery. They find out Rene's paintings are in Zurich. Charlotte is in Paris too.

Rene meets Charlotte. They sleep together. Charlotte has married Felix. She agrees to help Rene trap him.

Charlotte lures Felix to the gallery. Julian and Rene surprise him. Dubois is there. Charlotte takes his gun and gives it to Felix. Felix shoots Rene after Rene compares their paintings of Charlotte. Charlottes tries to stop him. He shoots Julian.

Julian has a vision of Adrienne giving him the fiery painter painting. He can't tell if it's real. It looks like she finished it.

Coda:

Chicago -- 1960

Julian spent years in a mental institution. He traveled around Europe getting evidence against charlotte and Felix. Francoise disappeared. Adrienne, the boy, and the businessman died in Auschwitz. Julian gives the notebook to Olivia.

Felix unveils his newest painting that he's donating to MoMA. It's Julian's painting of the fiery painter from Engel's studio.

Olivia jumps up and exposes Felix. Olivia reveals everything to journalists. He confronts Felix outside. He decides not to kill him with the palette knife from Dachau. He throws it away.

Julian gives Olivia the address of Rene's grave and his mental institution. She finds dozens of Julian's paintings there. He painted the woman with the potatoes. Julian gives her all of the paintings including one he painted of her and Rene.