



Le Sursis Tome 2 (The Sojourn Book 2) by Gibrat

<http://comixinflux.com/influx/show/16>

Contributors

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Comix Influx - Spread The Words

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[4:1] It's the first of January. I've spent the night teeth chattering, and I've begun the year like baby Jesus, nestled in the straw, and with a raging fever. // [4:2] Jamilou, you can't sleep there. If Serge ever saw you he'd drag you out by the ears. // [4:3] Julien: I'd like to see that. // Cécile: My God! Julien! // [4:4] Cécile stayed stupefied like that for a good ten seconds, mouth agape, hesitating between fear and astonishment. It was without doubt the first time she'd helped with a resurrection. // [4:5] Cécile: I don't believe it, you... Didn't you... // Julien: No, not yet. // Cécile: But how? It's amazing. Everyone thinks... // [4:6] Cécile: People thought at the cemetery... Excuse me, I've got to sit down. // Julien: Not on my leg, please. // Cécile: But where were you? // [4:7] Julien: It's a long story. // Cécile: How long have you been in the barn? You slept here? // Julien: Slept's not the word. I spent the night catching a cold.

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[6:1] Cécile: Because, would you believe, your Aunt broke her leg. // Julien: I know. // Cécile: Well, He took her to hospital, and on the way back his transmission went somehow. Paul lent him his car. // [6:2] Like I said, he's a good guy. // [6:3] Come and take a look if you don't believe me. // [6:4] The beret pressed down onto the ears, the bull neck. It was definitely Serge. // [6:5] Julien: What's he doing, poor Serge? He looks so bloody stupid, even from behind. // Cécile: Your fever's making you more charitable than usual. You can't stay there. If someone finds you you'll be frozen. It's minus five degrees this morning under the kitchen staircase. // [6:6] Come on, wait until Serge has gone and you can hide in the house. // [6:7] Julien: And your Grandmother? // Cécile: She spent most of the night doing crosswords. She's never up before 10.

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[8:1] Don't move. Rest in the warm. Try to cough under the sheets. // [8:2] Julien, mate, if anyone had told you you'd start the new year in Cécile's bed, you'd never have believed them. // [8:3] The blissful dreaming smile was the result of the encouraging situations that might occur. I easily slipped into a deep and feverish sleep. // [8:4] It was Paul who woke me, or more exactly the studs on his bag. // Paul: So, yesterday it was your Aunt, today it's you. // [8:5] Curiously, he didn't seem surprised to see me again. It was almost hurtful. // Julien: You see Paul, I'm not dead. // [8:6] No, but you're a good way on. Two days more and it would be pneumonia. A little further on and there would be nothing I could do for you. // [8:7] You can thank Cécile, you owe her a fair bit. // [8:8] Okay, stay resting in the warm. Poulitices and linctus, and in a week you'll be on your feet. In an hour I'll stop by the hospital and give your aunt the good news.

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[10:1] January 3rd. The fever couldn't more than three days of Cécile's loving care. // Cécile: I don't know how Paul managed it, but he's found more linctus. He's amazing. // [10:2] Amazing? Why? Because he cares for the sick? For a doctor I'd say that's normal. It's the opposite that would amaze me. // [10:3] Cécile: So, it's true that you're jealous. You're wrong about everything. Instead of taking risks to see to you, he could have turned you in. // [10:4] Julien: So could you. // Cécile: But I hesitate. Imagine, I hesitate. // Julien: You're wrong. If they find me, they'll give a bonus, even... // [10:5] Julien ...frankly, for me. // Cécile: Don't push it. You're tempting me. // [10:6] That's excellent. // [10:7] Cécile: Why? // Julien: Because I tempt you. // [10:8] Pretentious.

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[3:1] Cécile: It can't be. He's slept in the barn again. // 1943 wasn't a good year for anyone, except me perhaps. Doubtless even. I followed the war without taking part. I even helped with my funeral without the pain associated with dying. I should say at this point that I was saved. // [3:2] Cécile: One day he'll come here and start a fire. // 1944 didn't seem to want to renew the favour. // [3:6] Jamilou?

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[5:1] It's true. You're shivering all over, and you're burning up. I'll go and tell Paul. // [5:2] And why not the entire village while you're about it? // [5:3] Julien: Your temperature's at least 40 degrees with fever. You can hardly stand up. // [5:4] You need to see a doctor... // [5:5] Cécile: ...and with Paul, frankly there's no risk. // Julien: If you say so. // Cécile: He's a good guy. You know that. // [5:6] Cécile: Come on, trust me. // Julien: I hope that when totting up the price of his visit, he doesn't count it as business. // [5:7] Cécile: I don't understand. // Julien: Don't tire yourself out. I know you spent the night with him. // [5:8] Cécile: My poor Julien. You're completely delirious. You're fever's worse than I thought if you think that. // Julien: Because outside, that's his car is it not? // [5:9] Ah! It's because of that. It's not at all what you think. It's Serge who pulled up here with a breakdown last night.

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[7:1] Julien: And what if Serge comes back? He could be back without warning. // Cécile: Not in my bedroom... // [7:2] ...even without warning. // [7:3] In any case, it would astonish me if he returned here. // [7:4] He's got a five day pass and is going to visit his mother in Toulouse. He can't miss the 12.15 train. He's only interested in getting to the station. // [7:5] Don't make any noise. My Grandmother's bedroom is next door.

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[9:1] The fever exhausted me, and I slipped in and out of consciousness for a couple of days, punctuated by an apparition of Cécile's soft and concerned face. // Cécile: How are you doing Julien? // Julien: If you could fluff up the pillows... // [9:2] Cécile: Okay. Is it better like this? // Julien: Yes. // Cécile: You're sure? // Julien: Yes, but I've got a sore throat. // [9:3] Cécile: Would you like a little sugar water? // Julien: I'd prefer something hot. // Cécile: I'll make some tea. // [9:4] Julien: Good, tea, lemon if that's okay. // Cécile: Okay. // Julien: I'd rather have verviene, or camomile if you've got it. // Cécile: Whichever you prefer. // [9:5] Julien: With honey // Cécile: Pffh. // [9:6] Cécile: Here you are. // Julien: I've finally pulled up the pillow. I think it's better than before. // [9:7] So now what? // [9:8] It couldn't get any better. My heart heated up in Cécile's presence, and there was the small joy of the poultices, which smelled of mustard and Vosges pine. // Julien: And where are they in Russia? Do you have any news? // Cécile: No, but I suppose right now they're having tea, perhaps with a little bit of honey.

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[11:1] Cécile: Paul said you should rest. // Julien: Paul... Paul's not a doctor. // [11:2] Cécile: That's news, that is. // Julien: Okay, he's a doctor, but I'm not ill any more. // [11:3] Cécile: Stop Julien. Not here. My Grandmother's next door. And not like this. // Julien: Good. How, then? // Cécile: Stop Julien. You're going to spoil it. // [11:4] Julien: You do my head in. // Cécile: No. // Julien: You want me, then? // [11:5] No, I don't want you, not any more, but give me time Julien. // [11:6] Cécile: Manou's going to Villefranche on Saturday. It'll be quieter. Just be a little patient. // Nothing to it. The elastic barrier she placed between us enforced the respect of a gentleman I wasn't. // [11:7] Nevertheless, I insisted on sleeping on the mattress installed after I arrived, and restored Cécile to the comfort of her bed. It was an elegant start. // Julien: Boy, can Manou snore. // Cécile: Ah? I don't hear it. // Julien: No, not now, but last night she didn't stop.

[12:1] Cécillette, Cécillette! Are you sleeping? // [12:2] Cécile: Not now. What is it Manou? // Grandmother: Cécillette, listen, the Russians have entered Poland. They've just announced it on the radio from London. // Cécile: Oh, good. // [12:3] Grandmother: By the spring we'll be rid of the Germans. // Cécile: Listen Manou, I'm getting up very early. We'll talk about it tomorrow if you want. // [12:4] Grandmother: Of course Cécillette. Go back to sleep. I'm not ready to close my eyes. I'm confident... // [12:5] Starlin's ready to boot their arses. // [12:6] Her grandmother sang so much, I think I preferred her snoring. // [12:7] Julien: Good night Cécillette. // Cécile: You're not going to start that as well. // Julien: That's cute Cécillette. She calls you that because she adores you. // Cécile: Maybe, but it's irritating. // Caption: So Cécile and I developed a bold thesis on the ridicule of diminutives more often than not proportional to the affection of those that gave birth to you. // [12:8] Julien: It's ridiculous that she equates herself to Starlin. // Cécile: Starlinette has entered Poland. // [12:9] The laughter was stifled under the covers. But the whispers reached a crescendo of mad smiling after. // Cécile: Quiet Julien. She'll hear us. // But the calm was never restored among exhausting all the Hitlerettes, the Dalardiettes, and others. Mussoliniette.

[14:1] Cécile: We could take a detour. // Paul: Too late. You can be sure they've already seen us. // [14:2] Cécile: Do something Paul, I beg you. // [14:3] Why have those pigs there stopped? They've obviously not got a clear conscience. // [14:4] Quick, to the cars before they take a detour.

[16:2] Julien: Paul, can one ask why you like playing with fire? // Cécile: It's not a good idea to insult Serge. It's what I was afraid of. // Paul: Me as well. // [16:3] Paul: Don't hang about Julien, Angèle's leaving hospital. // Julien: Already? // Paul: They wanted to keep her another two or three days, but you know your aunt. // [16:4] Julien: Do you ant to visit my little hideout? // Paul: It's already two o'clock. // Cécile: It's true Julien. Paul's right, it's late. Tomorrow at Fernand's we can celebrate again. // [16:5] Cécile: You'll be there tomorrow? // Julien: Do you want me to? // [16:6] Julien: At best it'll be a boules party in the square, or a little belote with Paul is likely. // Cécile: I'll come after dinner when Manou's in bed. I'll pinch Serge's bicycle. Sleep well, my Julien. // [16:8] So I returned to Bercail without fanfare and through the service entrance. I knew someone would be surprised to see me. // [16:9] So, my little Father Maginot, you seem in good form. That's nice. You've grown a little, no?

[18:1] She stayed sobbing in my arms for a long time. I couldn't find the words to comfort her. I just hugged her a little more tightly. // [18:2] Then, bit by bit, her upset passed, to be replaced by fond memories of her childhood. // Cécile: As soon as I arrived in the attic I took everything out of the trunks... // [18:3] ...and Manille's parties, the April showers, because she was a poor player, and not only at cards, also at small horses. // [18:4] Cécile: Do you remember when you let her bicycle tyres down? // Julien: No. // Cécile: It was while she was at confession. // Julien: Oh, yes. // Cécile: She was convinced it was my grandfather and his friends. They were quietly drinking their aperitifs... The fuss she caused at Fernand's. // [18:5] Cécile: She was great with us, and with Gilbert... // Julien: He was better keeping a low profile. // After Manou, we started on Grandfather. // [18:6] Cécile: He had to smoke in secret. He was also a fine one. // I don't know how long we stayed there, but the little light that passed through the blinds made it to the armchair. // [18:7] Cécile: Poor Manou. She wanted to see the red flag flying in Cambeyrac. // Julien: Perhaps Starlin will show up at her funeral. // Cécile: You're horrible.

[20:1] Angèle: Julien, it's 6.30. You're getting up earlier and earlier. // Julien: I've not been to bed. Sorry, did I wake you? // Angèle: I was getting up anyway. // [20:2] You've not had breakfast I suppose. // [20:3] Angèle: I'm pleased to see you. How's it going? // Julien: I should be asking you that. // [20:4] I'm not as nimble as before. I've been like this for five weeks. If Pépère hadn't made me fall.. He celebrated when I came back. // [20:5] Angèle: You can see he's lost weight. // Julien: Cécile fed him every day. // [20:6] She was a dear, but he didn't touch his food, poor thing. // [20:7] I understand she wasn't only looking after the dog.

[22:1] Basile: The ways of the Lord are impenetrable, but his political ideology is beginning to become apparent. // Angèle: Are the Russians already at the Vatican, father? // Serge: Which bastard hung up that dishcloth? // Manou's final wish was carried out. Serge pretended to enjoy the pleasantries with a minimum of good humour. It was a point of honour to him to expunge the Bolshevik insult personally. // [22:3] Woman: My God, he's going to fall. // Basile: If there is a God he certainly will. // [22:4] Julien: It's true he could fall on his face. Maginot, if you want to see a militiaman die with the red flag in his hand you'd better hurry. // I'd had my little triumph. It had the effect of seeing Pius XII levitate on the cathedral balcony. Despite that, in the twinkling of an eye, Manou's funeral remained a funeral with a lot of sobbing and emotional memories. // [22:5] The solemn funeral procession that left the church, wasn't happier than any other. I thought about Cécile. // [22:6] I didn't cry at her fragile shape, and I knew that behind the bumpy hearse, her childhood was also leaving as she made her way to the cemetery.

[13:1] Saturday's delights were postponed to a later date. Serge had returned to Cambeyrac on Friday. His anticipated return precipitated my departure. I'd happily have seen out the rest of the war at My Trinity, pampered by Cécile and playing hide and seek with her grandmother. Playing the same game with Serge lacked the charm because I was afraid I'd finish up in the militia's premises. // [18:2] Don't let it fall. It my father's birthday present. // [18:3] Are you annoyed with him? // [18:4] Paul: Shit! // Cécile: What is it? // [18:5] Paul: Down by the bridge below there are at least two cars. // Julien: Do you think it's a checkpoint? // [18:6] It looks that way. It's certainly police or militia.

[15:1] Serge: It's Paul. // Paul: Oh, hi Serge. // Serge: What are you doing there? // [15:2] You can see for yourself, I'm repairing it. // [15:3] Okay boys, don't stand around doing nothing. Help the doctor change his wheel. // [15:4] Serge: Are you visiting someone here? // Paul: Yes, in Brignoles. // Serge: Who's ill in Brignoles? // Paul: Father Madouasse. // [15:5] Serge: And that? What's that? // Paul: You can see it's a clock, so I don't miss the airdrop. // [15:6] Paul: While you're here, why don't you have a quick check of the boot, or the glove box in case I'm hiding two or three rebels there? // [15:8] Serge: You're hilarious. Really funny. But watch you don't go too far.

[17:2] Julien? // [17:3] Julien, are you there? // [17:4] German police. Papers please. // [17:5] But, my word, you're crying. Oh, Cécile I'm so sorry. I didn't mean to frighten you that much. // [17:6] I didn't mean to scare you. You know, it was Maginot's idea. // [17:7] She continued to sob hot tears, but it wasn't for Maginot and I. // Cécile: Julien. It's Manou. She's dead. // Julien: Oh no. // [17:8] Julien: and me such an idiot. How did it happen? // Cécile: This morning, I heard a crash in the kitchen. Her heart gave out. By the time I got to Paul it was too late.

[19:1] Cécile: I'm going back Julien. // Julien: Yes, but now you need to try and get some sleep or you'll catch a cold. // [19:2] Cécile: That's not what I was going to say. I'm going back to Paris. // Julien: Oh. // [19:3] I've received a telegram from my mother. If she could, she'd already be on the night train to come and look for me. She doesn't want me to stay alone here with Serge. // [19:4] Julien: When are you going? // Cécile: Just after the funeral, but I promise you I'll come back down as soon as it's possible. // [19:6] What great news today. There are some days when it's really not worth getting up. Going back to bed just meant avoiding dwelling on the problem.

[21:1] Angèle: She put you up at her grandmother's. // Julien: You've not heard, then. She died this morning. // [21:2] Angèle: My God, what are you saying. That's not possible. // Julien: Yes, her heart gave out. // [21:3] At her age. Lord, that's insulting. She wasn't even 20. // [21:4] Julien: Angèle, I wasn't telling you about Cécile, I was talking about her grandmother. // Angèle: Ah good. It's better that way. // [21:5] Angèle: It's bad all the same. And Cécile, poor thing, she must be a right state. // Julien: She's going back to Paris. // [21:6] Angèle: Ah, that's it. // Julien: What? // Angèle: Why you've got such a face. // [21:7] Don't be like that my little Julien. Me, I'd come back. Yes, I know it's not fair. // [21:8] No, it's not at all fair. // [21:9] Manou's funeral is scheduled for 10am tomorrow. The Red Army won't be there to provide a final homage, but regarding her wish to see th red flag flying over Cambeyrac, perhaps not all is lost.

[24:1] Serge: What is this nonsense? // Angèle: My comment is that he couldn't have got here alone. // [24:2] What's he waiting for? It would be daft if they missed their train. // [24:7] My poor Maginot I'm inconsolable. Can you get up? I know it's all my fault, but you know Serge. He can't do anything nicely. // [24:8] Maginot didn't bear a grudge, and he let me have my coat back without grumbling. // Julien: You were perfect. If it's any consolation, I thought you really made him mad. // [24:9] I didn't see Cécile, but good enough to imagine the discreet chuckles around the banquet afterwards. On the other hand just fifteen minutes outside in my shirt meant I had to see Paul again. // Paul: This time we're just running at 40 degrees. That's certainly progress. // Angèle: When will you stop playing the soldier my poor Julien?

[26:1] At the end of the day, you've not got it bad here. // [26:2] Julien: I'm not complaining. // Paul: I could be wrong: View the war from your nice little pigeon coop, participation at minimum risk. // Julien: What do you want me to do? // [26:3] Julien: Attack the Rodez barracks with Maginot or relieve the Russian front? // Paul: I'm not asking you to do anything. // Julien: What a shame. // Paul: You've never thought of making yourself useful? // [26:4] When I was small, I laid the table, and sometimes helped Angèle shell the peas. // Paul: You can't stop the flippancy for five minutes? // Julien: Okay, where do you want to go with this? // [26:5] Paul: Right, I've a few odds and ends stored in my father's cellar. // Julien: Because Fernand is... // Paul: No. Over time Serge has become more and more suspicious. He's not far from raiding the café. You can figure the rest out. I don't want him finding the stores. // [26:7] Julien: You're worried your father will tell you off? // Paul: It's serious Julien. I'm worried about him. About me, as well. // Julien: And you want me to store all your gear? // Paul: That's it. // [26:8] Julien: If it's okay with him, it's okay with me. // Paul: Who's 'him'? // [26:9] Maginot of course. I've got to talk it over with him. // There was no way I could refuse. Now I had to find the courage to accept the risks of my new role as receiver. It wasn't going to be easy!

[28:1] Paul: For Starlingrad you need more patience. Check and mate. // Partly because of his habit of inflicting stinging defeats at chess, I had to admit Cécile was right: Paul was a good type, and after each of his visits I came to appreciate that more and more. // [28:2] Unfortunately the Allies progressed faster than I did at chess. Today Paul announced the liberation of Leningrad. I needed to check the atlas. For good medicine Paul diagnosed a unlucky end to the winter for the Germans, and, despite his realistic character, he predicted the last sighs of the Third Reich for springtime. // [28:3] I'm impressed by that Paul. // [28:4] During the day he helps the sick, and at night he's all over the place collecting his packages from London. He even finds time to help his father at the café. He's not wasting his time. He's the better of the two of us. // [28:5] Cécile writes to me several times a week. Reading her letters is the best part of the day. // Cécile: Dear Uncle, the winter seems as if it'll never end, and February seems as empty in Cambeyrac as it is in Paris. I hope you're keeping well, even if I'm not there to provide tea with honey. // [28:6] What touched me the most were the words she used in all the letters. // Cécile: My dear Uncle, I miss you so much. // [28:7] Anyhow, the good uncle fell asleep thinking of his good family.

[30:1] My dear Uncle, we're finally going to see each other again. // [30:2] Cécile: I'm getting the fast train to Toulouse this Wednesday evening. // Julien: Paul, what are you doing? Are you going? // Paul: Julien, it's 3.30 in the morning. I don't want to upset you, but if I don't go now, you'll read it to me a fifth time. I've got to get up early tomorrow. I'll leave the bottle. // [30:3] Okay. Paul gets up at daybreak, and I could understand how at that time he wasn't receptive to Cécile's subtle prose, but Angèle had no excuse. She didn't work on Mondays. // [30:4] I'm getting the fast train to Toulouse this Wednesday evening, and I already know that the trip will have the same thrill as leaving on my childhood holidays. When we arrived on the night train to Cambeyrac, I'd fall asleep on my grandparents knees... // [30:5] Cécile: ...to wake me the next day. The chaotic parade of small, low stone walls joyously announced the holiday. // Angèle: ZZZZZ // Julien: I see how much it interests you. // Poor Angèle. The chaotic parade of small, low stone walls and my one note voice weren't reason enough for her indulgent attention. // [30:6] I didn't dare interrupt her sleep a second time to let know the Russian troops had reached Dniepr. The tedious thing is that I've not got anyone else to wake up.

[32:1] Jamilou: So Julien was dancing a jig with a bottle on his head like I'm showing you. // Priest: Julien? Which Julien? // [32:2] Julien Sarlat. // [32:3] You've let him drink again. It's not right. // [32:4] Jamilou: You don't believe me either? // Priest: Yes, of course I believe you Jamilou. // [32:5] Why was Julien dancing on the cabin? He's dead. // [32:6] Priest: Listen to me Jamilou, you know how the good Lord sees everything... // Jamilou: Yes, yes. // Priest: All the little glasses you drink. // Jamilou: But he doesn't count them.

[25:1] Luckily he brought our mail. Envelopes were regularly opened. I discovered, for security reasons that Uncle Marius had a tender affection for his little niece Cécile. Angèle was our letter box, a role she played with a sometimes debatable sense of humour. // [25:2] Angèle: I've a little note from Cécile. // Julien: Ah! // [25:3] Julien: There's nothing for me? // Angèle: For you? Oh no. // [25:4] Angèle: On the other hand if you see Uncle Marius, give him this letter. // Julien: You know, you're quite tiresome. // Maginot's reserved and introverted character didn't brighten the atmosphere. Radio London and its surrealistic messages gave a touch of life and colour to the long winter nights. They were devoted to writing letters destined for my dear and tender niece. // [25:6] The house of Saint Vincent has a pretty name. At Pamiers the cassock is in the wheelbarrow. // [25:7] The Irish are at the Sèvres pavilions. The gentleman of Paris is running around the Grand Canal. // [25:8] Instead of running around the Grand Canal like a gherkin, he'd do better telling me if there's one p or two in 'apostolic'. It's avoided my searches of the dictionary. // [25:9] That morning between Mrs Gacougnole's gripe and little Marty's measles, Paul dropped by.

[27:1] The pigeon coop quickly became Ali Baba's cave. Sticks of dynamite stolen from the builders yard, blue overalls filched from a shop for maquis use, food tickets robbed from the prefecture... // Paul: I reckon Serge will be raging at the café. // [27:2] Paul: He's going to receive a small coffin with his name on it. // Julien: You could have had him to come here for a slap. That would change his ideas. // Paul: Actions, instead of talking about his stupidity. // After this delivery the pigeon coop was well stocked. The temperature since the start of the year has been terrible. // [27:3] Nevertheless, over the following days a little extra light nibbled into the night, and the Germans lost territory with the same regularity. January's character is severe, but fair. Paul came to visit when he could, and rarely with empty hands. // [27:4] Paul: Where should I put this? // Julien: I don't know. Perhaps there's a little gap by the stove. // Paul: I don't think so. These are incendiary grenades. Have you got another suggestion? // [27:5] Julien: It's alright for you, you've always got good ideas for presents. // It was never a tie in poor taste, or a silver-plated cigarette case, but incendiary grenades. It wasn't fair. How would I enjoy them? // [27:6] Paul: Tried to introduce me to his passion for chess. It always ended the same way. // Paul: Check and mate! I don't want to twist the knife in the wound, but that's your eighth defeat on the trot. // Julien: Listen mate, consider the Russian front. To start with the Germans followed victory with victory, so don't be so smart. The next party will be in Starlingrad. // [27:7] He also tried to arouse my political conscience, and we had endless discussions. He was a communist, and I simply didn't care. // Paul: But it's normal to take power by force. // Julien: Like Franco? // Paul: I'd be better off having discussions with Maginot. // [27:8] So, we resumed our chess games. // Julien: This time it's the snow and frozen feet Herr Von Paulus. Check on the king. Ha, ha! The hour of vengeance has arrived.

[29:1] Since Cécile returned to Paris eight weeks ago, the letters she's sent don't fit under my pillow any more. Her attachment to Cambeyrac was proved by the questions she asked about people in the village, and how life was getting on without her. How high were the vines now? // Did the Russians stay in their beds during February's strong rains? She longs for the thousand petty iniquities enforced on Cambeyrac, and I like it more. // [29:2] Time passed with a calm insolence. I longed to shake the hourglass. // Angèle didn't need crutches any more, and that was the major event in the village during the winter. // [29:3] Today, March 23rd, Paul brought me a nice bottle from his father's stock. The Russians had reached Dniepr. It was something to drink to. The day the Red Army reaches Berlin, Fernand had better lock his cellar well! // [29:4] Paul: You want me to pass on the news? This is a bottle of walnut wine from the year I was born. // Julien: And it's not gone bad? // [29:5] Paul: In Italy they're dragging their heels a little, but in Russia they're turning towards Berezina. // Julien: That's brilliant! // [29:6] Paul: Hang on, the war's not finished just yet. // Julien: No, it's great that Cécile's coming back.

[31:1] Jamilou: Like I told you, I saw him like I see you now. // Serge: Don't get on my nerves, Jamilou. We believe you. // [31:2] Serge: Tell us one more time. // Jamilou: No. // Serge: One last time, how Julien was dancing with a bottle. // [31:3] Fernand: Leave him alone. Jamilou, don't waste their time, go on. // [31:4] Give me your glass. // [31:5] And afterwards, will you say nothing to me? // [31:6] No. // [31:7] Fernand: Here comes the priest. You'll do it again for the priest? Come on Jamilou. // Jamilou: If it's for the priest.

[33:1] Yes, even if you drink in secret. Perhaps yesterday the good Lord said "Oh, it's Jamilou, he's cheating, he told me he drink any more. As a punishment I'll give him a little fright." // [33:2] Priest: You see Jamilou, in the evening after supper I have a drink at the Lindens, and the good Lord never gives me nasty turns. Do you understand? // Jamilou: I understood. // [33:3] Jamilou: I really understood, but why was Julien dancing there at night? Because he was dancing a jig, Julien, at night. // Priest: Yes Jamilou, head off and think about it more. // [33:4] Fernand: It's my round, your worship. What can I get you? // Priest: It's perhaps a little early. // [33:5] Except for our friend Jamilou. // [33:6] Now it's you who's not being kind your worship.

[34:1] Three days later the metal chairs and tables we reinstated on Fernand's terrace. The fountain started to bubble again. The clear sound of petanque bowls blended with the songs of the starlings in the lindens. Since yesterday when Cécile returned to Cambeyrac, there's no doubt it's spring. // [34:2] Cécile had the same curiosity as me when she came to the pigeon coop: what could be seen from the little window above the desk. // Cécile: You can see My Trinity from here. // Julien: Oh? I didn't know. // [34:3] Cécile: You little liar. I'm sure you've tried to peek into my bedroom with your telescope. // Julien: What do you take me for? // [34:4] In your place I'd have peeked. // [34:5] To be completely honest, there was one night, and only one, when I didn't take a look. // [35:6] So, I don't need to ask if you watched me serving outside the café. In that case I'll take back my apron tomorrow morning. // [35:7] You're going to serve your cousin and his gang? They're permanently stuck there. Take a look. // Cécile and I shared the same contempt for Serge and his gang of thugs.

[36:2] It's...it's Fernand who's screaming like that.. I recognise his voice. He.. he must be injured. Oh my God. My God. // [36:3] Calm down. Fernand's okay. He's come back outside, look. // [36:4] Fernand: Oh my, my clock. They've mutilated it. // Serge: Never mind your shit clock. Get here and help me. // [36:5] Fernand's a one. The bullets peppered his shutters, two militiamen pissed blood, and he's grumbling about his broken clock as if a vandal knocked down a pile of plates. I pretend to ignore the war, but this astounded me. // Julien: Your cousin's escaped pretty lightly with a bullet scrape.

[38:3] If you find the head, I guarantee I can stick it back on. // [38:4] Fernand: That's enough about him. Your worship, did you hear? // Priest: About what Fernand? // Fernand: Sadly the good Lord sees everything, but our priest hears nothing. // [38:5] Cécile: Talking of seeing everything, next time you tell Maginot to leave. It's very embarrassing. // Julien: Hang on, while he's standing there... // [38:6] ...he's about to put on the radio. It's time for the bulletin. // [38:7] On the Italian front, the Germans defences at Monte Casino are crumbling into despair. The last obstacle to opening the doors to Rome is at the point of surrender. // [38:8] And now some personal messages. // [38:9] Cécile: In a month the war will be over. // Julien: You think so? // If the paths of war are converging on an early spring finish, the Americans are taking their time visiting Italy. Because I can do nothing to move things on, now I have the nerve to enjoy myself here. It lacks a little style. // [38:10] I'm afraid that my happiness has definitely overtaken the interests of the majority of the nation.

[40:1] Our little nocturnal walks were varied, and sometimes unusual. // Julien: Did you know Basile's son well? // Cécile: I hardly saw him. He was five years older. When I found out he'd died in Spain I was 14. // [40:2] Cécile: I didn't cry, but when that night my grandmother left a photo of him at Cambeyrac fair where one could see him healthy, enjoying himself among friends, I dissolved into tears. // Julien: Is it because of that you always leave a small bouquet of flowers? // Cécile: It's especially for Basile. // [40:3] Poor Cécile. There were tears in her eyes again. I tried to lighten the atmosphere by making for my grave. // Julien: I'm going to pull Angèle's leg. My grave's more and more flowery. // [40:4] Cécile: I always have a little shiver, thinking if you'd not jumped from that train it would be you here instead of that poor boy. // Julien: You know I almost didn't? Just around Gramat. I jumped just before Martel, and the train was bombed leaving Brive less than hour later. // [40:5] Life holds on to a few things, that's for sure. // [40:6] Julien: Basile, what are you doing here? // Basile: I should really be asking you that question. // [40:7] It'll soon be a month since I started trying to figure out who has the kindness to put flowers on my son's grave. Now I know. Thank you Cécile, and for you Julien, a little advice. // [40:8] When you smoke your American cigarettes, avoid chucking the stubs out by the shutters, because there's the risk that one day Serge will pick them up. You'll know then that smoking is dangerous for you. Alternatively start smoking a pipe like me.

[42:1] Today, May 26th, the squeal of tyres and the slamming of doors made me jump up to the blinds. Serge was making a raid. He'd waited a long time. // [42:3] Fernand: What's happening Serge? // Serge: Shut up Fernand! // [42:4] Get in there and search the cellar with a fine tooth comb, and find me that shit Paul. // [42:5] Militiaman: He'd jumped out of the kitchen window into the garden. // Serge: Load up that bastard. // Fernand: Serge will you explain what's going on? // [42:6] I told you to shut up Fernand, unless you have something to tell us. // [42:7] Cécile: Where are you taking him? // Serge: None of your business.

[35:1] Cécile: They're already odious on an empty stomach, but when they're drunk... // Julien: Amazing. You should ask Paul if there's not something one can add to pastis, something untraceable that provokes the eradication of black berets. // [35:2] Serge: Hey, Fernand, you're paying for this round. // Fernand: In whose honour? // Thug: I don't know. Your flies are undone. Ha, ha, ha. // The humour of the militia's military humour lacking the subtlety. // [35:4] Watch out.

The militia don't monopolise terror. Better weapons, more determination than ever, emboldened by the success of the allies, the resistance is making raid after raid. Serge and his little buddies just make expenses. // [37:1] Fernand: Basile, look what's happened. They've shot me. // The chances of a second raid increasing, didn't take five minutes to load up his wounded. // [37:2] And don't count on Basile to offer the least sympathy. // Basile: It's a shame anyway. // Fernand: That's for sure. It'll be a punishment trying to put it back together. // Basile: I wasn't talking about your clock. I was talking about Serge. // Fernand: You're not feeling sorry for him? // Basile: No, it's a shame they missed him. // [37:4] Basile: I don't know how they did it. The poor boy, he must be suffering. // Fernand: So what. // Basile: To sit there without moving watching time pass, with a pretty shepherd girl under his nose. // [37:5] Julien: Cécile, I... // Cécile: Quiet. // [37:6] Basile: Me, at his age, I wouldn't have been able to stop myself touching her there. // Fernand: Who are you talking about? // Basile: The little couple there, around your clock.

[39:1] After that day I spent every night with Cécile and all day thinking about her. Sometimes we sat for hours at the edge of the cliff to listen to the dogs howling in the farms, transmitting personal messages like the radio from London, or to watch the little lights go out one by one all over the valley. The game consisted of staying there until the last one went out. // [39:2] Julien: Come on, let's go. // Cécile: There's still one on. // [39:3] Where? Oh yes! // [39:4] Julien: That's it this time. Shall we go? // Cécile: No, there's one that's come back again. // [39:5] But the last light out was never in the valley. // [39:6] I said to myself, they never go to bed without coming to say good night. All the same...

The months of April and May were mild, and sweetened by no reminders of the civil war, which remained dormant in the region. Serge observed his boundary, and so did Paul, even in the same area. On the Eastern front Starlin's organs sounded the German retreat. // [41:1] Julien: Is that Paul's car? // Cécile: I think so. // Julien: I wouldn't be surprised if he's off to collect a cargo drop. // [41:2] There, just as I said. // [41:3] These days there's one almost every week. // [41:4] It's another sign. I'm curious to know where they drop their goods. Perhaps on the Toirac plateau. // [41:5] I don't know where it's dropped, but I know where it's put away. They'll be cluttering up my pigeon coop. // [41:6] Cécile: If Serge should catch you! He takes risks, my Julien, he's a little hero, my Julien. You drive me mad. Promise me that you'll not take any other risk than sleeping in that powder keg. With everything that's piled up there, the detonators, the sticks of dynamite, the cases aren't filled with biscuits. // [41:7] Every time there's a thunderstorm, I think I'm mad to sleep in the pigeon coop. Can you imagine the fireworks? Your Julien would be picked up on the great bear. // [41:8] Cécile: Which one is it that I should look at after the next storm? // Julien: There. // [41:9] Cécile: Are you sure? // Julien: No.

[43:3] I'm not ready to forget his glance. // [43:4] A few minutes later, Cécile erupted into the pigeon coop, completely shocked. // Cécile: Julien! Julien! Serge raided the café and... // Julien: I know, I saw it. // Cécile: You can't stay here Julien. // [43:5] Cécile: They've taken him to Rodez for interrogation. // That evoked the worst sort of haunting images. Paul told me the exact procedure of the militia interrogation. // [43:6] I never told Cécile, but from the silence that enveloped us, she could imagine. // [43:8] I thought of Paul, who was paying the price on his own. I didn't close my eyes that night. // [43:9] The next day I tried to reassure Cécile. // Cécile: They can't prove anything. // Julien: Perhaps they'll release him. // Cécile: It's possible.

[44:1] The next day, by Cécile's slow pace and overwhelmed posture, I knew it wasn't good news. // [44:2] In her shaking hand she held a leaflet announcing the terrorists shot at L'Aube on May 28th 1944. // [44:4] I didn't need to read it to know Paul was among them. // [44:5] I'm not afraid any more Julien. I think nothing of the idea of revenge on Serge. I can't support it. // [44:6] I'm going to stay here another four or five days so Fernand's not alone, then I'm going back to Paris. This time you should join me. // [44:7] A week after Paul's arrest, and the militia hadn't visited Maginot. Paul had died without saying anything. In his memory I promised to look after his stocks. After spending seven nights on the plateau, I returned to the pigeon coop, and Cécile to the capital.

[46:1] I made up my mind. Before I joined Cécile in Paris, I could make myself useful. Just as long as they didn't think I could compensate for Paul. I was a little bitter. // [46:3] If I wanted to complain about the Maquis' frosty attitude I picked the wrong door. Basile provided a caustic appraisal of my glorious contribution to the national liberation effort to date. // Basile: What are you waiting for? They should palm you off with a medal, is that it? // [46:4] You should be awarded the Order of the Marmot for sleeping a whole year in your pigeon coop. // [46:5] If you really want to help with something, for my part I'd go and see Mr Martínez. He's an old Spanish republican. // [46:6] He'll hide you, and there'll be no risk of you sitting out the war with your arms crossed. He lives at 32 Lecourbe Road. But to get to Paris you'll need a plan. For the time being I don't have one, but I'll come up with something. // [46:7] I believe I've got the solution. Get up to Paris in a cassock, by bicycle. Angèle's bike will do the job, and as for the cassock, the priest stores his in the heart of the presbytery. There'll be no-one watching during the next wash.

[48:1] I had a hunch I should watch Basile. // [48:2] So, you little bastard, how long have you been hiding? // [48:3] You can tell me everything, little smoker. I've got you now. Walk ahead of me. // [48:4] I had to improvise. I summed up the general story, avoiding any mention of my small role as receiver of imported goods. // [48:5] You're not going to make me believe you cooked this up with those Maquis pigs. Have you seen what they've done to me. // [48:6] Two bullets in the arm, the swine, but for the rest of the body they'll have to try a little harder. // [48:7] They waited for us at the Madeleine bridge, and shot us for fun, the sons of whores. // [48:8] I lost three friends. Ah, my God, there's a chance I'll need you Julien.

[50:1] Serge's gloom turned into exhaustion and he spent two hours swearing and muttering his hatred. Until one sparkle set off a frightening hope. // Serge: At least... But. Yes Julien, there is a solution. // [50:2] Imagine the maquis turn up here. At the bottom of the cellar stairs they'll find the corpse of a militiaman. It'll be hideously mutilated due to being shot at close range from a double-barrelled shotgun. Are you with me? In the pockets there'll be my papers. // [50:3] I can hear them now, the vultures "that bastard Serge. He's been shot. We've been deprived of the pleasure of doing it ourselves." // [50:4] What do you think of that? now we only need to find someone to play the role of corpse. Do you think you have the time? // [50:5] Come on Julien, you're going to do me a little favour. You're already dead. You can't die a second time. And you see it'll be unfair on you, but you'll die for something. // [50:6] Don't worry. I'm sure you won't feel a thing.

[52:1] It's probably the last time I'll look at Cambeyrac from behind these shutters. One day I hope to be able to explain to Mr Thomassin why his parquet's worn down, particularly under the window. // [52:2] Will Mr Thomassin even return to Cambeyrac? I left him a letter to thank him for his hospitality. // [52:3] Maginot said his goodbyes in true military fashion. Without his saying a word there was a lump in my throat. I suppose it was the emotion. // [52:4] Basile: Here are your papers. At the Vierzon checkpoint make sure they see your militia card. It'll ease the way. I had to pepper Serge's uniform. // [52:5] To end up like him, it couldn't have gone better. It's funny this habit you have of disguising yourself. With all the maquis in the countryside a militiaman on a bicycle is perfect. // [52:6] Be careful Julien. Leave my bicycle for collection. Fernand will go to collect it. And then... // [52:7] Angèle: ...I'm not asking for a long letter, just a few words to reassure me. // Julien: I promise. // Angèle: And don't forget your lunch in your bag. // [52:8] Basile: Come on son, your trains leaves in less than an hour. // Julien: On the other side of Loupiac I'm not sure I shouldn't finish on foot. // [52:9] And to think he wanted to ride all the way to Paris.

After Paul's death, Fernand sat broken on his terrace for hours. Basile kept him company without saying a word. Each of them knew the sorrow, and they shared the silence. // [45:1] Fernand: If Serge shows his face I'll kill him. // Priest: You shouldn't say that Fernand. // [45:2] Why not? It's for the best. I don't think he'll content himself with just saying it. // [45:3] Priest: I understand how you feel. I'm praying for you Fernand. // Basile: It's not Fernand you should be praying for your worship. // [45:4] Rather for Serge, and not for saving his soul, but for saving his skin. He'll need them. // [45:5] Two nights later I received visitors. // Resistance fighter: Are you Julien? // Julien: Uh, yes. // Resistance fighter: We've come to collect the stock. Don't disturb us. // I truly thought they'd come to arrest me. It was the Maquis. The hideout was considered compromised after Paul's arrest. // [45:6] Julien: Do you want a hand? // Resistance fighter: Don't bother. We're used to it. // From their sharp tone I understood that they had a limited trust, and didn't want to say anything incriminating in my presence. The transfer was carried out in an almost hostile atmosphere. // [45:6] Nevertheless, they suggested I accompany them. I wondered whether to accept. The smell of the pigeon coop clung to me.

[47:1] It was the type of plan that promised many worried nights for Angèle. // Julien: Yes, that's right, by bicycle. // Angèle: And as a priest. You've lost your marbles my poor Julien. // [47:2] An hour later with Basile I hoped for more enthusiastic support. // Basile: You've eaten? Well have a drink. Sit down. Well son, have you thought about things? // [47:3] As a priest! Why not a rabbi while you're at it. You couldn't come up with anything better? // [47:4] Forget the idea of cycling, believe me. You'll be pinched before you get out of the district. Let me have your photo, and in a week I'll have some false papers. With them you'll be able to take the train. It's less romantic, but much safer and less tiring. // [47:5] Apart from that, how's your Aunt? She hasn't broken another leg recently? // [47:6] Another eight days to kill. That being the case, particularly for this type of test... // [47:7] I should make the ultimate sacrifice and do nothing. That's going to be hard.

[49:1] You don't know we're going shopping, us two. We're going to see a Maquis, it's not important which. You're going to explain that I've been helping you hide, and I've given you a pipeline for the resistance. // [49:2] You're going to tell them the militia snatched you from your pigeon coop, and thanks to me you escaped. // [49:3] That's not going to stand up my poor Serge. I'm telling you again that I don't know anyone in the resistance. They dealt with Paul, and it's a little late for him don't you think? // [49:4] He only stayed long enough to die, but you'll die before me. // [49:5] I got the impression that the odds on my convincing him were slim. I didn't think I could do any better. I knew he was capable of putting a bullet through my head in a second. // [49:6] Crap: Everything's mad, a barrel of shit. Everything's mad. You know what consoles me Julien? I'm going to be shot, but I know things. You'll shout for nothing, but I prefer to be in my position.

[51:1] Are you okay Julien? // [51:2] Oo! Are you alright? Say something by God. // [51:4] Julien: Ba..Basile. You saved me? // Basile: When needs must. // Julien: But where did you come from? // Basile: I'll explain, but you can't stay there. // [51:5] Basile: You're not hurt? // Julien: I don't think so. // [51:6] Basile: I was afraid I'd get you, but I didn't miss him. His number's up. // Julien: What are you doing? // Basile: I'm taking his papers. I might need them for you soon. // [51:7] After you left, I went outside to smoke a pipe and saw someone following you. I trailed them at a distance. // [51:8] When I saw you leaving with Serge at gunpoint I realised it was truly the end for you. The most difficult thing was to get here on foot with my dodgy leg. // [51:9] Basile: He'd have turned the world to shit in the end, that bastard Serge. // Julien: You arrived at the right moment. I don't know how to thank you Basile. // Basile: Don't thank me. In any case, there'll come a time when I have an itch. // [51:10] Now, with these papers, you can leave tomorrow if you want. Go to sleep, and I'll glue on the photo. Militia papers. You won't find better.

[53:5] It's June 5th. The clicking of the points and the breathless rhythm of the engine took me back to all those months ago. // [53:5] I tried to identify the spot where I jumped from the train almost a year ago. Sadly it wasn't going at the same speed. I'd have broken my neck. // [53:6] We passed Brive. Around 7pm we arrive at Austerlitz station. Each telegraph pole is measurement marking a little closer to Cécile. // [53:7] I drowsed off thinking of her small figure at the end of the platform.

[54:1] What would she be wearing? Her little flowery dress? No, perhaps the red one. The small white spots merged on strong crimson. I slept.

[55:3] I'll never know what Cécile's wearing. History caught up with me. This time, that's great. I was bleeding everywhere, but didn't feel a thing. That's frightening. Ah, poor Paul. This time I paid the price. It's taken a year. I just won that. // In the end that's all the difference between us. You, you fought to try and win the war, me to win time. This has less prestige, but we paid the same price. I'm cold. I'm very cold. Cécile, give me a tea, please. With honey. Again, with plenty of honey.

[56:1] What am doing back in the pigeon coop? The shutters are permanently closed., and no light filters through the blinds. And under the small skylight the lights go out one by one. He doesn't stop at the great bear.