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Gemma Boverly

By Pascal Bonitzer

People watched them
gliding back and forth,
her body immobile, chin lowered,
his posture unwavering, hips arched,
elbows bent, mouth thrust forward.
This one sure could waltz!
They continued a while
and exhausted the others.
We're at the famous Vaubyessard ball.
A crucial episode
in Madame Bovary's life.
The moment at which her dreams,
or so she thinks, come true...
The ball is one of her defining moments.
She spends her life
waiting to be invited back.
Remember all the symbolic characters.
The character of the blind man
who sings about a frivolous love.
That of Justin, the innocent boy
who gives her the arsenic.
We find the same thing
in "Salaambo" with a death
that seems to come out of the blue.
But desire and death
are intertwined.
My name is Joubéri.
Martin Joubéri.
I came back to Normandy 7 years ago
to take over my father's bakery.
After 12 stressful years
at Pelletier Publishers,
annotating university theses
no one would ever read,
I hoped to find here,
like many other Parisians as dumb as me,
a peaceful and balanced life.
A peaceful and balanced life.
Fat chance.
Unbelievable!
Look what you've given me.
It's burnt to a crisp.
Martin!
What's got into you?

He may do something stupid.
- Who'?'
- Charles!
Englishmen don't shoot themselves.
Too polite.
You think so?
Go shave.
Despite what my wife said,
I wasn't reassured.
What are you doing?
I think it's better to burn everything.
Gemma's diaries...
I haven't the strength to read them.
Want a drink?
So Gemma kept a diary...
"Decided to get married!"
with an exclamation mark.
What she liked about Charlie:
the smell of varnish,
the sawdust on his clothes,
his good humour.
Almost everything.
Everything but the voice of his ex-wife
who called at all hours
with tedious problems.
Too many tears.
It's illegible.
In fact, he was the one
who wanted a change.
A radical change, I'd call it.
Somewhere far away from traffic,
some peaceful little town.
A place where the art of living
is taken seriously.
They arrived one Sunday morning,
at 10 o'clock.
You were being a real pain that day.
Gus!
You're English?
Joubert, Martin.
And if you...
If you... help,
me, available.
Thank you very much.

Where is... Gus!
Forgive me.
Good day, good afternoon.
Can't believe
they sold that dump.
Well, it's sold.
To an English couple.
Guess their name.
- Eat, Julien.
- Not hungry.
A growing boy needs to eat well.
- What's their name?
- Guess.
Sherlock Holmes.
James Bond.
McDonalds.
Bow my.
His name is Charles.
Hers is Gemma.
Isn't that wild?
Here in Normandy.
Where Flaubert wrote his masterpiece.
The film sucked.
I prefer The Princess of Cf eves.
Me, Call of Duty.
We're talking literature,
not video games.
Listen to me...
I'd rather you took drugs
than talk crap.
Excuse me, monsieur.
What is this one?
Graines de tournesol.
One of my specialties.
I'll take sunflower.
To urn es of.
What's this?
The croquINETTE.
Multi-grain.
But I'd recommend this.
A milder taste.
It's made with linseed.
I'll take the all.
Ifl may... we say "all of them."

Or "the lot".
4.60 euros, please.
Come, Gus.
How are you?
Fine, thanks.
What a pretty bouquet.
There are lots there. An entire field.
Cosmoses.
The name of those flowers.
It's for my vocabulary.
Can I show you something?
Yes... sure.
Right, follow me.
It's a path...
that Ernest Delahaye,
a friend of Rim bauds...
Rimbaud was a contemporary
of Flaubers...
It's beautiful here.
It's all beautiful.
That big house back there, too.
La Boissi?re.
You should have seen it
in old man Bressignys time.
He threw huge parties.
Now it's a ruin.
I adore ruins.
So you'll love this region.
All the properties here are falling...
Gus! Stop that.
He's cute.
He's a mongrel.
At times a pain in the arse.
I mean neck.
Carrington too, a real pain in the arse.
I'll go on exploring.
In one second,
that meaningless little wave...
signalled the end
of 10 years sexual tranquillity.
- Good evening.
- Sorry, but...
electricity broken.
A power cut.

No, the electricity is... fucked.
You want me to come?
Okay.
There we go. Thank you.
The wiring is v?tuste.
Ancient. Old. Kaput.
Have the circuits earthed
or it will keep happening.
Thanks very much.
I have whisky. Want some?
Come with me.
There's the minimarket.
For the last minute.
The supermarket
outside of town is good too.
And there's a hypermarket
five kilometres toward Dieppe.
For really great tomatoes,
coeur-de-boeuf...
Do you know coeur-de-boeuf?
Beefsteak?
Wednesday is market day.
Or Saturday in Rouen.
Martin has a bread stall.
They have everything.
Wine?
I am a gastronomical immigrant.
I'm here mostly for the wine.
Martin...
What about wine?
Wine? I don't know...
It depends what you like.
Gemma prefers white.
But I love red.
So do I.
I'm no wine expert,
but you'll find everything in Rouen.
If you like alcohol,
and I see you enjoy drinking...
In the depths of her soul, however,
she was waiting for something to happen.
Like sailors in distress,
she gazed over the emptiness
of her life with desperate eyes,

searching for some distant white sail
in the mists of the horizon.
They have great cheese.
The best Camembert,
Livarot, Pont-I'Ev?que...
A goat cheese?
No, not goat.
It's cow.
Afield mouse. Harmless.
I hate them.
I must get some poison.
No poison, daft girl.
Definitely no poison!
But traps don't work.
Just forget rat poison.
It's arsenic.
It doesn't just kill field mice.
There are always accidents.
You have a dog. She is cute.
Want to find her all stiff...
Martin, enough of that!
For heaven's sake...
Girls scared of mice really turn you on,
don't they?
Me?
Of course.
I know how you tick.
Typical uptight Englishwoman,
no smiles,
pissed off with life.
She's pretty, but not all that pretty.
Quite boring, in fact!
A boring woman who can't stand
her boring life is not that boring.
Madame Bovary. Here we go again.
She's just boring, period.
No, it's totally different.
This is pain brioch?..
And the baguette over there?
Baguette ?pi.
And this one?
It's made with spelt. Kind of wheat.
It smells very, very good.
You're right.

Nothing smells as good as bread.
A beautiful, golden loaf.
Seeing it rise is magical.
Want to see how it's made?
So follow me.
Mind the step.
Bring your hands together. Gently.
Gentle and slow.
Now you've got it.
Knead the dough well.
It's all yours now.
Very... relaxing.
It's my yoga. Doing it every day...
Magical.
Touching bread is like touching...
the earth.
The original crust
from where life sprang.
Immersing your senses...
There's nothing more natural...
nothing more humble...
than wheat.
It's hot in here.
Yes, very hot.
Guess what he got on his Maths test.
It's enough.
No, it's not enough.
Tell your father what you got.
2, but because...
Because what?
Always "because"!
Want to re-do the year?
At least do the minimum.
He doesn't need advice.
He needs sanctions.
No more video games.
Are you crazy?
Okay, I got a 2, but...
It was an accident.
You've been having lots of accidents.
You're accident-prone.
How are this year's apples?
Not many. But enough...
More than none but less than plenty.

Hello, Madame Bovary.
Gus, stop that.
Stop bothering the little dog.
Have you read it?
It's a masterpiece.
It blew me away when I was 16.
She wants everything from love
and is always disappointed.
A mundane story
told by a genius.
Flaubert invented
a bored woman,
a universal character.
She's almost become an archetype.
This might sound complicated.
But...
It seems... really wacky.
I don't know if it's "really wacky",
but your French is coming along.
Where's Carrington?
Gus, come!
- You hear the rain last night?
- I sure did.
We've got problems.
Holes in the roof.
The toilets are too full.
People think country life is paradise
but you need guts
not to get bogged down.
To counter the cliché',
a lot of people take antidepressants
in the country.
That or calva.
He makes the best in the region.
Want to try?
- Why not?
- Come on.
Calva.
Hello, Mr. Jouberti.
I'd like a Florentine, please.
A Florentin.
The thing with you French people
is you hate money.
You're all socialists.

Not me.
You'd never have married me.
Even conservative French people
are socialists.
Is the word "socialist"
so obscene for you?
You favour taxing
over personal initiative.
So, the apex of civilisation
is an unhindered free market,
the rule of the sterling
and well-kept lawns
at your second homes.
Let's avoid
another 100 Years' War.
I was...
Perhaps
Okay, stop going on, Martin.
We understood.
It's fine now.
Your English is lousy.
She doesn't understand.
My English isn't that bad.
Yes, it is.
There's no use laying it on.
So here's the doorway I mentioned.
So, I'd like you to do...
...and something Japanese,
minimalist, simple.
Like a geisha who spent time in Miami.
This is my favourite room.
The 9Y7-
This machine is amazing.
Everyone in L.A. has one.
It's incredible.
It sends vibrations along your buttocks.
Look.
My ass is like a teen stripper's!
Try it.
It's important to like your body.
It really is.
To eliminate the bad fat.
Especially in Normandy
with all the rich food.

I would have liked.
You would have liked.
He would have liked.
We would have liked.
They have would Wed.
No. They would have liked.
Hello, Gemma.
How are you?
You haven't been to the bakery
for a while.
I'm trying to diet.
You've lost weight.
A little.
It suits you.
I also do low-cal bread.
Okay... goodbye.
- What is it?
- My back! Help me!
- What is it?
- A wasp's got inside.
- A wasp?
- I have to...
There it is!
Can you open...
Open it?
Okay, I'm opening it.
I'll try to... Does it hurt?
It's dead. It's a bee.
It hurts. Bloody hurts!
The stinger is still in.
Do it!
Yes, but to remove the venom...
- Does it hurt?
- A lot!
To remove the venom I have to...
Have to what?
I have to suck it out. Suck the wound.
Go on, quick. Suck. Suck me.
- Really?
- Yes, really.
I'm going to suck...
Careful, don't move...
Excuse me, but...
What's going on?

Mrs. Boverly has been stung by a bee.
This is Gemma Boverly.
Herve' de Bressigny.
What's going on?
This is terrible.
Good thing I arrived last week.
Holiday?
Revising for law exams.
Can't do it in Paris.
I couldn't care less if I fail them.
But my mother will freak out.
Is she breathing?
Thank God.
You got stung twice.
By a bee and by my needle.
You went into anaphylactic shock.
You gave you an antihistamine.
You'll be fine.
Excuse me...
Nothing serious.
A tiny allergic reaction.
You can leave when you want.
Thanks for everything you've done.
I didn't know I was allergic.
It's normal. We all have allergies.
Are you okay?
You were so wonderful, Martin.
It's only normal.
I would have liked.
You would have liked.
He would have liked.
And I would have liked...
everything she would have liked.
I love it.
Authentic and simple.
It has a lot of charm.
You were right
to leave this as it is.
So often, people tend to overdo it.
This is very minimalist.
That's what's chic.
This fireplace is incredible!
The proportions are gorgeous.
It's so Middle Ages.

And back there?
Our bedroom.
This old pink...
By the way, I brought a magazine.
To show you a colour.
They're friends...
Pandora and Patrick Large.
I wanted to show you this
for the peacock blue.
Mixing it with turquoise
could be marvellous.
It was the first time
I saw her legs.
She looked a! soap,
candles, sponges.
Junk for tourists.
Disgusting scented room sprays.
That's when I saw Hervé de Bressigny.
Then something very strange happened.
The second I laid eyes on him...
I felt like a director,
a director
who had just shouted "Action!"
"Feeling better now?"
"I'm doing fine, thanks. And you?"
Feeling better... now?
I'm doing fine, thanks.
How are you doing?
"Great!"
Great, thanks.
I remember feeling
a strange kind of jubilation.
I could see them naked,
in each other's arms,
Madame Bovary crossed paths
with the country squire, Rodolphe,
just as Gemma crossed paths with Herve'.
To tell you the truth,
I'm not great.
I'm extremely depressed.
I don't want to make you cry.
Smell this.
What do they call it?
Nice going with the deodorant.

Go on.

"Jasmine, lilac, lavender,
petanque player, Camembert."

It's not bouse de vache?

Cow pat.

It's really d?gheu.

What's that in English?

Puke-making.

Gross.

See you soon.

Good bye.

Time for a cigarette.

Yep.

Love h u rts.

Who are you talking to?

No one.

I've been calling you.

While I work,

you stare at young Bressigny.

You like boys now?

I suggest this one.

A bit pricier but much better.

I think that'll be fine.

I wouldn't mind advising you
about mineral water, but...

I've work to do.

I have to go.

Since we're neighbours,

come by the chateau some day.

It's 13th century, 14th...

and some 19th.

How are you, Remi?

- Fine, thanks.

- Take care.

Look who it is.

I see.

When I saw the chateau,

I thought of Herve

not as he was in real life."

dull, conventional,

revising his law exams

in that chilly old pile,

bu! as a shadowy seducer

admiring himself in the mirror

as he awaited his prey.
Bet you a bone
she turns right.
Deal?
She fucking did it.
It's me.
For your advice.
Is this a bad time?
Not at all.
Come in.
It's really beautiful.
It's wonderful.
The English would have buggered it up
with tons of paint,
and horrible fabrics.
You can't reproduce this kind of effect.
This was my father's desk.
It's very old.
This is where I study.
I can't believe it!
She should be at home
cooking our dinner.
What the hell is she up to?
This is monstrous.
Shut the fuck up!
Maybe I'm just imagining things.
They could just be having a drink.
I hate shopping here.
So much I can't find.
Much easier.
Maybe not easier, but better.
I can see exactly
where the products come from.
I'm very particular with food.
I don't eat much.
I eat a lot of almonds,
nuts and seeds.
It's a very good antioxidant.
I'm like a little rodent.
I counted 78 minutes
from when she turned into La Boissière
until I saw her drive past
on her way home.
78 minutes.

Doing what?
Martin, give me your plate.
Of course.
I live here.
And Rankin adores France,
especially French food.
I've been hearing that
for years and years...
You love France and French food.
I love French cheese, French wine...
Is that wrong?
It's like with Morocco.
Long live couscous
but let's forget the Moroccans.
Reducing France to wine and Camembert
is pathetic.
Rankin's wife is French.
Exception to the rule.
You're wonderful, Jouberti.
You know your own mind.
As for me, I like the French.
So it's done. They fucked.
At least that's clear.
All because of me.
The husband doesn't see a thing.
You don't care.
You're totally detached.
Yes, Daphne.
I can't concentrate at the moment.
It's hard for me as well.
I miss you too.
I'll be thinking of you, honey.
Dustbin day.
You got it.
Are you okay?
Fine, and you?
- Studying going well?
- Hard to concentrate.
Maybe ask your girlfriend to join you?
She'd help you concentrate.
- Think so?
- Yes, I do.
You may be right.
Have a good day.

Wait.
Hello, Mum.
I'm not out of breath.
Don't be silly.
No, I wasn't jogging.
I was working. What do you think?
I know, she told me. I called her.
Okay, take care, Mum.
Stay with me.
I can't.
I wanted to tell her:
You can still get out of this.
You can put an end to it.
You're plunging headlong
into something with no future.
He will destroy you,
as Rodolphe destroyed Bovary.
This will end in death, Gemma.
This will end in death.
Good morning. Are you well?
An ?pi and two croissants, please.
How's your husband?
- He's in London.
- For work?
And your son'?
As dumb as always.
3.60 euros.
She forgot her croissants.
What's that?
What?
What are you afraid of?
I heard footsteps.
Hold on...
It's fine.
No one.
Don't worry. He's not back till Sunday.
I don't want to talk about it.
Why do you stay with him?
I know you'll never leave him.
It's me you'll leave.
Why spoil everything
by talking about the future?
This can't last forever.
It's why it's so good.

How can you be so cold?
Listen...
I'm happy with you.
But I love you.
You understand?
I love you.
You love me?
What are you doing?
I'm thinking.
N 2 am' ?
Not my choice.
Gemma's croissants?
I can't believe you ate them.
Not at all.
I'll leave you to it.
- Can I have 20 euros?
- What for?
To buy a book.
You, a book?
Yeah, for school.
What book?
First Love by Turgenev.
Dad?
The 20 euros?
Fuck, me Sevres!
What?
Our one valuable object.
I'm dead.
Don't worry
My husband can fix it.
- Are you sure?
- It's his job.
Are you sure you can't stay?
Will you come to London with me?
To London and to the end of the world.
How to kill someone else's affair
when it gives you grief?
A! firs! I tried ESP.
Leave him, Gemma. Leave him.
Leave the little prick.
I'd like two croissants
and a baguette "tradition"
and some madeleines de Commercy.
How many madeleines do you want?

Four, please.
How is your husband?
Very good.
You'll see him soon.
Me, I'm going to London.
You're going there?
For work?
For a while?
Not long, unfortunately.
Why unfortunately?
Sick of our country?
Martin, butt out!
No, but a change of scenery
will do me good.
5.60 euros.
See how happy she looks?
Poor Charles... so kind,
so trusting.
I wish I could say
I committed that vile act
out of masculine solidarity
with Charlie.
Bu! I know it's no! true.
I was just beside myself.
I! was then that I remembered
Rodolphe's letter in Madame Bovary.
"I will be far away
when you read these sad lines.
"I wanted to flee
as quickly as possible
"to avoid the temptation
of seeing you again.
"Emma, forget me.
"Why did I have to meet you?
"Why were you so beautiful?
"Farewell."
Farewell.
Why did I have to meet you?
Why were you so beautiful?
Farewell!
Who is it?
No one. Just a neighbour.
Remember you're here
to revise your exams.

You are working, aren't you?
I hate it when you talk to me
like a 10 year old.
Where is the Cupid?
I've looked everywhere.
The Cupid'?
One of the few things
I care about
in this bloody house.
It's nothing.
It was a tiny scratch.
Excuse me?
It's nothing.
I gave it to a skilled restorer,
an Englishman here.
An Englishman?
He's very professional.
Spare me this nonsense.
How can an Englishman
repair a Sevres statuette
that survived 3 revolutions
and 2 world wars without a scratch?
I don't even want to know
how something of this sort happened.
Who is this woman?
I'm sorry.
I cannot come to London.
I must go to Paris.
I'll write you.
Florence de Bressigny, hello.
I think you have
a small Sevres of mine.
A Sevres?
A Sevres porcelain figurine.
You do restore antiques, don't you?
Yes, but...
A Sevres porcelain figurine.
My son said
he gave it to you to repair.
I don't know your son.
I don't get it.
He clearly told me
he gave that valuable piece
to an Englishman at this address.

It must be you.
This is news to me.
I have no S?vres.
No porcelain.
This is really very tiresome.
I suppose I must believe you.
I'm heading back to Paris.
Here's my card.
I am very attached to that piece.
Good day, sir.
I had pulled I! off.
I admit that today I'd like to erase
that horrific moment of pleasure.
What are you doing here?
Did you get lost?
Come on, baby.
Take it easy, Gus.
- How are you?
- Fine.
Not a sign of you all week.
It's nothing.
I needed time to myself.
And you're well?
Do you have a minute?
Of course.
Stay here, Gus.
You want some tea?
Sure.
You've started it?
Madame Bovary.
Barely. I found it in Rouen.
Maybe because of the name.
I wanted to see what it was about.
You like it'?
Nothing happens
but at the same time...
it's interesting.
That's exactly right.
I received this.
It's a letter
from Madame de Bressigny's lawyer.
She's asking you
to return a figurine...
I didn't steal it.

I know it's here but I can't find it.
What can I do?
If you could help me answer it,
it would be good.
My French isn't good enough.
I can try.
"Dear Counsellor...
"In response to your letter...
"we are writing you today.
"We do not understand...
"We do not understand...
"your-'i
"We do not understand...
"We do not understand
your obstinacy...
"Our position
"is the following...
What is it?
This year is incredible!
Unbelievable! Take this, little fucker!
It's the year of the field mouse!
You killed it'?'
Of course. Wasn't I supposed to?
No... yes, but I wasn't expecting it.
Dustbin in the kitchen.
Pain in the arse this year!
What is this?
It's for the mice.
What did I say?
Don't use this stuff!
Never, Gemma. Never!
But it's the chemist in Rouen...
The chemist is an idiot!
It's nasty stuff!
I can't stand them anymore!
What it does is awful!
It's arsenic!
Didn't you read the description
in Madame Bovary?
Please...
My letter.
Can you help?
Sorry, I can't.
Give me a day or two.

Okay.
Gemma asked me
to accompany her to Rouen
to see Madame de Bressignys lawyer.
She asked me
to meet her at the cathedral.
I was surprised.
I was astonished
Gemma wanted to meet there.
Did she do I! on purpose?
In Madame Bovary,
Emma also meets someone
at the cathedral in Rouen.
Just before that carriage ride,
which becomes
one of the most erotic scenes
in 19th-century literature.
A woman who gets screwed in a carriage.
And I! was a very, very long ride!
I don't believe it.
Fucking hell!
Have you chosen yet?
For the lady,
the mosaic of monkfish.
As for me,
the filet de boeuf, rare.
Wine steward, please.
I'll send him over.
Hello, Martin.
I wanted to apologise for Rouen.
I didn't come.
So I noticed.
Please forgive me.
Something...
Something came up.
That's the expression.
Don't be angry.
Come in for a drink.
You've removed everything?
I want to get my life in order.
Pay my debts, clear my head.
Finish all this.
Finish what? I don't understand.
I don't know what you have in mind,

but don't do something you'll regret.
Regret what?
I don't regret anything.
I thought
that since Rodolphe left you...
Rodolphe?
You sent that letter.
It's you.
You did it, didn't you?
Why'?'
I was afraid for you, that's why.
Whatever happens to Madame Bovary
happens to you.
Your name!
Your debts!
Your lovers!
At the end, she commits suicide.
I know it seems stupid.
But believe me, Gemma,
there's a moment when life imitates art.
You're totally out of your mind.
If you think I'd kill myself
over a few debts,
you don't know me.
I am not that woman.
More than you think.
I am not Madame Bovary.
Get it out of your head.
I'm me.
I'm free.
I'm capable of being happy.
I'd like to believe you.
The English guy...
Charlie's back.
Good.
SQ?
Arsenic?
Why would you think that?
That's not it?
Not at all.
What is it then?
She choked to death.
Choked?
Yes, choked.

On a piece of bread.
That Wizzy...
She could have cancelled
her birthday party.
We share your pain. Be strong.
- Can I speak with you?
- Sure.
I think I killed her.
What?
With a loaf of bread.
With my bread.
Don't talk crap.
I'm the guilty one.
What?
The English guy...
Charlie's back.
Six months later
Wipe your feet, Julien.
- Seen the new neighbours?
- They moved in?
They're Russian.
Russians?
The woman has an ass to die for.
Spare us, Julien.
Guess what their name is.
It starts with a
Adulteress, tragic death.
Jumped in front of a train.
Anna Karenina?
Bingo.
In fact it's Kalenina.
Almost the same.
This is wild.
Just crazy.
I'm kidding.
As Russian as me.
They're from Rouen.
Their name is Mercier.
You scared me, you idiot.
What an imbecile!
Me... neighbour of you.
If help you need,
me, available.
Very kind of you.

What perfect French!
Thank you... So is yours.
Where did you learn it?
School, like everyone.
Let me help you. Yes, I insist...
You have no accent.
Neither do you.
For me it's normal.
I'm from here.
Born here?
The name is Jouberri.
Martin Jouberri.
I came back to Normandy 7 years ago.
To take over my father's bakery.
Do you make
gluten-free bread for diets?
I make very low-cal bread.
My specialty is the croquhinette.
Multi-grain.
I can make pirozhki too.
With ham...
with cheese.
Have you read Anna Karenina?