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Le grand Meaulnes

By Alain-Fournier

We lived above
the St. Agathe public school.
Father, whom I called Mr. Seurel,
like the others,
taught the Senior Class,
studying for the teaching certificate,
as well as the Middle Class.
Mother taught the Junior Class.
We called her Millie.

FALL TERM,

SEPTEMBER 8, 1910

He came the last Sunday of September.

Fall was in the air.

- Hello, sir.

- Hello, son.

When I returned from the village,

a woman was peering
through the windows.

Will you come out!

For heaven's sake!

Augustin!

Where is he?

Is that you, Francois?

Look what I did with that old hat...

I'm Madame Meaulnes. Hello.

Of course.

I must apologize.

I wrote that we'd be arriving
early afternoon,

but my son had disappeared.

Something to drink?

Just a glass of water.

Is someone upstairs?

- I don't think so.

- Yes, there is.

I knew it!

Augustin!

Where were you?

You really go too far.

Coming? I found this upstairs.

Stand back!

Not what you usually eat?

Tell me what you like.

I'll see what I can do.

No, ma'am. This is fine.
Some more?
I open the school at 8:00,
but I wake Franois an hour before
so he can wash and have breakfast.
In winter,
he helps me light the stoves.
I learned much later that his younger
brother had drowned in a river.
He kept running away, so his mother
sent him to boarding school here
to study for a teacher's license.
You shave?
Do you shave often?
Your whistles are neat.
I made them myself,
except for a few I bought in Bourges.
But mine are better.
I can teach you, if you want.
I'm glad you're here.
How old are you?
My father is a good teacher.
You prefer French or math?
I'll put out my lamp, if you want.
If you want.
I'm three years older than you.
How'd you know my age?
Take your seats.
We have a new pupil.
His name is Augustin Meaulnes.
He's studying for the general certificate.
Augustin, here are your books.
See Franois about notebooks
and stationery.
You can buy them anywhere,
as long as they're on the list.
Take a seat.
Wherever you like.
Augustin Meaulnes's arrival
was the start of a new life for me.
But during our last bathing party
he gained ascendancy
over the entire Senior Class.
Don't run near the water.

Mr. Seurel, come look!
Wait for me.
Ferdinand, watch your classmates.
Found something?
A fine specimen.
Boys, come look.
Gather around, quickly.
Look at this.
A male stag beetle.
Naturally fossilized,
or else you'd see it move
its mandibles, which aren't claws.
Also called a billy witch
because of its impressive size in flight.
As with all coleopterans,
the first pair of wings
evolved into elytra...
Elytra, with a Y...
or wing cases for the lower wings
that enable flight.
Can I have it?
- Want it?
- No, for him.
For your sister's hat.
Over the cherries.
Time for a swim!
Don't run!
Coming in, Meaulnes?
You scared or something?
Coward!
Maybe he can't swim.
Afraid of drowning?
Cut it out!
Watch this!
Didier fell in!
I think he's hurt.
Didier went under.
Hold on, Didier!
We're coming!
Go on, Augustin!
That's it, Augustin!
From that day on,
Augustin Meaulnes became for us
the Great Meaulnes.

You're crazy.
Completely crazy.
There's no danger.
And I've done it before.
But still!
What's the point?
- What are you doing?
- Shut up. Just look.
Sometimes I'm not sure
I want to be a teacher all my life.
Or else, somewhere far from here.
Africa.
China.
India.
Teaching. Not very ambitious.
You and your superior airs!
You never talk, never answer.
What do you really want?
Let's hear it.
What do I want?
The moon.
It's the moon I want, pal.
On the whole,
a fairly good dictation.
Except... Who can spell except?
Moucheboeuf?
E- C- C- E- P- T.
There you are.
E- X- C- E- P- T.
Spelling, Moucheboeuf.
Your weak point.
It's very important, especially
for getting into Normal School.
And punctuation is no less important.
Sentence rhythm depends on it,
and it often guides logical analysis.
Return the notebooks.
Except...
Moucheboeuf, write "except"
Franois has to pick up his grandparents
at the train.
Delouche, go with Franois
to Lamothe Station.
Aubertin is lending us his carriage.

Not now. Later.
It can wait until recess.
Open your notebooks.
We'll correct the dictation.
May I go out, sir?
Be quick about it, Meaulnes.
Harmonious music.
Delouche, you're like Moucheboeuf:
on bad terms with H.
I knew Meaulnes had run off,
and I feared someone else
would realize it and yell:
Sir! Meaulnes is leaving!
It was no surprise, but my heart pounded.
I saw the horse and cart.
Augustin Meaulnes
stood racing the cart through the village.
Meaulnes stole the cart!
Everyone back inside.
Make way!
Make way!
That a boy!
You can't go through!
We're on manoeuvres!
Stop! They're firing shells!
I hear a cart.
So do I.
The road was cut off
because of field manoeuvres.
Hello, Grandma.
How you've grown since last time.
We cut through the woods.
- Hello, Grandpa.
- Good evening, rather.
Yes, good evening.
Meaulnes stole the cart
we were going to take.
Who asked you?
Just see to the bags.
Stole?
Not really stole, I'll explain later.
How you've grown!
Move it, you nag!
Wait!

Wait!
No reason to worry yet.
Then why are you trying to reassure me?
Because you take things
too much to heart.
Go inside and calm down,
or you won't be able to sleep.
In any case,
that adventurer has to go.
- Let him explain first.
- No explanations.
We knew he was a wanderer.
Here he comes!
It's Meaulnes!
So he's back?
Well?
It's empty.
Wild rumours circulated
about the Great Meaulnes's flight.
What will you do?
I'll contact the police
so they can start looking.
As for the rest...
Isn't it time for class?
Inside, children.
Anxiety and silence
quickly infected us all.
The next night seemed even longer.
Augustin's absence
brought him closer to me.
This road will take you to St. Agathe
in two hours.
Have a nice hike.
There were too many misused commas.
Please be careful.
No books allowed for this exercise.

Middle Class:

Senior Class:

Quiet!
I'm back, sir.
So I see.
Sit down and take out your notebook.

I got lost.
Careful with the units.
Don't get your conversions wrong.
Well?
Where were you?
I really got lost, sir.
I'm tired.
That's not what I asked.
Where did you go?
If I only knew.
I haven't slept for two nights.
Go on.
What time is it?
And it's still light outside?
Already light. You slept nearly
a day and a night. It's Sunday.
Tell me about it.
You're making it all up.
You don't get that lost.
You went to someone's house. Who?
No one. No one's house.
Think what you want.
You found this in the woods?
Don't you dare touch that!
It's hard to explain.
And it's a long story.
- I can't see with this helmet!
- But you're protected.
Come choose an outfit!
It's magnificent.
You're ridiculous.
We were handsome once.
HONOUR TO THE BRIDE AND GROOM
- Evening, doctor.
- Mr. De Galais.
My dear Florentin,
welcome to Quarry House.
I expected you earlier.
A businessman can't always
do what he wants.
And there was all that fog.
I lost my way.
I understand. Of course.
Simonet!

Come on, Simonet.
Not helping these girls...
Excuse me.
You're not Simonet.
But that's all right.
Give them a hand. It looks heavy.
Our gift is a surprise.
Be careful.
It's not a surprise anymore,
but it's still a gift.
Where were you? Help them.
Take this with the gifts.
- I'll do it.
- This way!
You have a partner?
For the wedding,
for the dance?
If we wait for Frantz to rehearse,
we can't honour him
when he arrives.
The other way now!
Remember?
Shake one finger,
shake the other one.
Well?
Sorry, I'm taken.
Fine.
You're not Simonet,
but a friend of my grandson's?
Augustin Meaulnes, sir.
I think he mentioned a name like that.
Frantz is ruining us, you know.
But you know him.
He loves a party.
What better occasion than this?
And more gifts!
This marriage is a real surprise.
I never even met the fiancee.
Her father's some big-time weaver.
It was love at first sight.
Look how lovely it is!
The newlyweds!
But not the real ones!
You know the fiancee?

Not even his friends!
Love is so secretive.
Out you go! Take turns.
My turn to be the bride!
Not all at once.
A beauty, isn't she?
My granddaughter. Frantz's sister.
Very beautiful.
Her mother was Tuscan.
Her father - my son -
was a local boy from Sologne.
They died when she was seven,
in a fire at the Florence Opera House.
Frantz must have mentioned it.
Italy, the opera...
the piano.
The bridal veil!
Parading the veil is a tradition here.
For good luck.
Straight from Paris, like the headdress.
A big Paris house, Delphine...
Delphine something- or- other.
Have you seen a tall girl
dressed in pink?
I don't know.
- The bride isn't a local girl.
- So I heard.
Have you met her family?
They must be coming with her.
I brought a cuckoo clock
or their kitchen.
Young man,
don't you have a costume?
...the fabulous tale
of Prince Hermatanzor,
who for seven years and seven months
has been searching
for the gentle Princess Fabia,
who will die in seven days
and seven hours
if he doesn't bring her
the potion of long life.
When the Prince reaches the cave,
a dragon with a tongue six feet long

tries to stop him.
Its nostrils spew coloured fumes,
like a volcano.
Grandfather says you're
a close friend of Frantz's.
But I know all of Frantz's friends.
All the others.
- I can't stay for the wedding.
- He'll be disappointed.
You're right.
I lied. I've never met Frantz.
I don't know him.
- I come from far away.
- Which is where you'd have met.
His favourite place to go.
Do you like music?
I like what you're playing.
Otherwise...
Not knowing Frantz is no problem.
You can quickly make friends
with a stranger.
You'll see, he's handsome and mad.
Very handsome, very mad.
His bride will change him.
Is that a good thing?
Changing people you love?
True.
Changing what we love
means losing what we loved.
I would never try...
if I loved someone like Frantz.
Does this traveler have a name?
My name is Meaulnes.
And you?
That's no question to ask a lady.
- Mademoiselle de Galais.
- Augustin Meaulnes.
Yvonne de Galais.
Yes.
As pretty as I hoped it would be.
Didn't you get anything?
I'll find you something.
Here.
Wonderful.

This will go with the vest.
I love watches. My Paris neighbour
is Gougeon, the watchmaker.
He knows my weakness.
Take it.
Take it.
I have so many more.
You look like an ogre.
I haven't eaten in two days.
What have you been doing till now?
Looking for you.
I must see you again.
Allow me to come again?
Who would stop you?
Would you like me to?
Would you like me to?
I'll be waiting for you, Augustin.
They're coming!
They're entering the lane.
Why don't they get out?
What's going on?
Well, children?
- She never showed up.
- That can't be!
- It's a mix- up.
- She sent a letter.
Please, leave me alone!
Stay with him.
You're his friend.
Go on.
Your sister is against it.
Your grandfather is against it.
And I'm against it, too.
I waited two deadly hours.
Then they brought me an awful letter.
"Frantz, my love,
"This marriage is impossible.
"We come from very different worlds.
"I lied to you...
"about who I am,
my family, my fortune and all.
"Even about my name.
"Adieu. You will never find me."
We could have talked it over.

Just what she didn't want.
Why? But why?
Because she loves you.
She wrote it.
Her pistol was this letter.
To end this dream
she thought impossible.
How wonderfully we met!
Her laugh made me lower
the carriage window.
I saw the sweetest, most natural face.
It was the very image of life,
unaffected and forthright.
Thank you.
Thank you all.
There will be other occasions.
That's right.
Take your gifts back.
What a waste!
We didn't even see the bride.
You've listened with brotherly patience.
We're made of the same stuff.
Ready to attempt
what others call an adventure...
which terrifies them.
If you agree to be my friend,
some good will have come
of this dreadful day.
I'll find the young woman.
I'll bring her back to you.
It's tremendous to restore my hope.
I promise you.
Hurry up, before
all the carriages are gone.
The tall young man there! Hurry!
You must help me.
Help you do what?
Will you help me?
You must.
Then I'll help you.
Over the next weeks,
You sure it's this way?
You said, Quarry.
We're going there.

There should be a lane with a turret.
I've never been in love.
I mean, not really in love.
Except maybe
one of Uncle Florentin's girls.
The third one. Marthe.
I kissed her.
Is this where you bring me?
Can't you read?
The Sand Quarry.
But the chateau, the turret...
You wanted a quarry.
Can't you read?
But this isn't it. You mentioned
a pond where you used to bathe.
Don't shout.
The pond is just behind.
The girls would undress here,
and we'd watch through the holes.
You're just a bunch of snot-nosed kids.
I was sure you couldn't know it.
It's too good for you.
Maybe, but I don't talk nonsense.
Maybe you made it all up.
Just to show off.
The nameless girl. The lost country.
The ghost chateau.
And the vest?
Have you forgotten?
Slowly, as his confident,
I became imbued
with his adventure.
I felt as much the hero as he.
But we found nothing.
Meaulnes was in despair, unlike me.
They're coming!
Never could I have imagined
what I long considered
my friend's betrayal.
She looks like your mother.
- It is your mother.
- Yes, it is.
- I meant to tell you- -
- It's not vacation.

I'm leaving, Francois.
We're going in circles here.
I have a lead in Paris.
The De Galais town house.
I told my mother it was to study.
You know the real reason.
You alone.
I'll write when I know something.
You didn't come say goodbye!
It's better this way.
And I'd rather have you with me.
Where are you going?
As you see,
he only had to cross the street.
He'd come into shop:
"What' s new, Mr. Gougeon?
What rare piece do you have today?"
But he's left.
A great loss for me, you know.
Better than a client...
A connoisseur.
Don't you know where to reach them?
People like that have houses
all over the place, even abroad.
Say...
There's someone who might
be able to help.
I often saw her hanging
around the gate.
She must know one of the servants.
That is when the Congress of Vienna,
after Napoleon's fall,
redistributed his conquests.
Russia recovered territory,
especially in Poland.
Austria dominated
northern Italy and Prussia.
Good. You've made up for
the time you wasted last year.
Your mother must be waiting.
I doubt they'll test you on
the Congress of Vienna. Too hard.
I'm very pleased.
Honey?

If you get your certificate,
you can train as a teacher
without going to the Normal School.
It will save you a lot of time.
It smells good.
Not opening it?
What's the rush?
"The Galais mansion
is on Place des Vosges
"in a spacious inner courtyard.
"There is a girl who supposedly
knew the family...
"so I asked her about them. "
Everything's set for auction,
but we can rummage.
So let's rummage.
Looking for what? Books?
Anyway, I haven't a cent.
It's more out of curiosity.
Loads of books.
You know the people selling?
Sort of. I worked for them.
I work in fashion.
Head seamstress at Delphine Monnier's.
Know it? The hat shop's next door.
You must be new in town.
Their name is De Galais.
Very rich.
Then why sell?
The rich are like that. Buying, selling.
And weddings are costly.
Weddings?
But the son didn't marry.
Who's talking about the son?
The daughter.
Yvonne?
Yvonne married?
Married. And a trousseau
for someone like that...
You can't imagine its worth.
Plus the dowry.
Not bad.
What do you think?
"She told me that our Yvonne

"had married.
"Franois, my friend,
I'm in such despair.
"Forget about me now.
"Forget those people.
Forget it all.
"Life is elsewhere.
Mine is, in any case."
- In fact, you looked for me?
- In fact, I did.
You mentioned a milliner's shop.
It was easy to find.
A pity. I wish it had been
horribly complicated,
like in the days of chivalry.
Still, it's sweet of you to look for me.
So you work as a printer?
Usually their hands are all black.
I don't work a machine.
I proofread.
I correct mistakes on the proofs.
If I find any.

- As I figured:

- More than the boss.
Look.
How do I look?
Terrific.
Buy me some cotton candy?
I'll have meringues.
Why you were at the manor that day?
I was there for a friend.
He wanted to find
the one who got married.
De Galais's daughter?
I saw her once.
Very beautiful.
So it's sort of because of her
that we met.
Do you believe in chance?
I did once.
Enjoy yourselves, lovers.
I don't like where you work.
At Delphine's?

- It's not respectable.

- What makes you say that?

The men waiting outside every night.

- The workers' husbands.

- In carriages?

Tickets?

Why the silence?

I hate being spied on.

I'm interested in you.

Interested in me...

You don't say!

You may be wrong.

I might not be interesting at all.

Hey, watch out!

You're splashing me!

And if I rock the boat?

Cut it out!

It's dangerous!

Stop, Valentine!

Getting familiar now?

Is this what you want?

- Some nerve!

- Don't like it?

You will join the valiant ranks
of your predecessors,
You will join the valiant ranks
of your predecessors,
soon to be your colleagues,
dispensers of Republican education
in 546 primary schools
throughout the department.

Here are the 14 students who have earned
their teaching certificate,
eight of whom have a father or mother
who belong to the great family
of educators.

Sometimes even both.

First, I would like to congratulate
young Ferdinand Bonpain,
whose father teaches at Blazy,
for his remarkable essay in French.
Congratulations as well
to Laurent Morche,
whose parents teach at La Bruyre.

I also congratulate young Seurel,
son of Emilie and Charles Seurel,
for his excellent exam results,
except his essay
on the Congress of Vienna.
His father teaches Senior Class
at the Sainte- Agathe school,
where his wife also teaches.
Please rise.
Stand up.
To you, my boy.
After these honours, Uncle Florentin
hosted me for a few days.
Please! Franois first.
Try to get appointed near here.
The teacher in Neuville is retiring.
I know the mayor.
What about me?
It's far from home.
Nothing's close to everything at once.
It's time to let go
of your mother's skirts.
Neuville is nice.
I'll take you there.
It's near Quarry House.
The quarry is around here?
But the sand pit was abandoned.
I mean the chteau.
The original one.
The Lebertons go back 100 years.
I know who started operating
the sand pit.
Madeleine Leberton's grandfather.
She married Mr. de Galais.
- De Galais?
- You know him?
By name.
His son and daughter-in-law
died in a fire.
He raised their two children.
Elodie, serve the pie, please.
A bad business deal
and a wedding sank him.
His grandson Frantz's wedding.

It didn't even take place.
We went.
It was beautiful!
Is the chateau far from here?
The turret!
Looking for someone, sir?
My name is Seurel.
Franois Seurel.
I'm spending vacation at my uncle's.
I may be...
I may do my teacher training
in Neuville, so I'm visiting families.
I see. Hello, Mr. Seurel.
Come in and tell me about it.
Come in.
They'll look nice in this vase.
So you did Normal School?
I studied with my father at St. Agathe.
I got my certificate with honours.
Congratulations.
We'll be neighbours.
I haven't been appointed
to Neuville yet.
I haven't been there yet.
You're my first visit.
You play the piano, I see.
How do you know it's me who plays?
You seem musical.
- And you?
- Not the piano.
I tried the violin. Teacher training
left no time to practice.
Teaching...
Grandfather forbade me,
because of my health.
He thinks holding class is exhausting.
It's not a concert piano,
but it has a lovely sound.
A very old sound.
I can teach you, if you like.
It's easier than you think.
If you're here for the watches,
young man,
the best were sold.

These are all we have left.
Mr. Seurel may be the new teacher
at Neuville. He's training.
How nice.
But there are no children here.
I knew that.
I mean, I figured.
I began with you out of courtesy.
Have you any idea
what an airplane costs?
That couldn't interest...
On the contrary.
Young people today
all have their head in the clouds.
They're expensive.
And very fragile.
We now have the Excelsior 5.
You do know what "excelsior" means?
Higher still.
That's the motto of my grandson,
Frantz, the aviator.
You must come again.
We're quite isolated here.
We used to have the Paris house.
He worries about Frantz, my brother.
I didn't quite understand
"excelsior" and all that.
Frantz's flying record.
All his planes are called Excelsior.
Excelsior 1, 2, 3.
I see.
I'll be going.
Thanks so much.
Come again when you like.
I'll gladly call again.
Thank you.
Who told you about Quarry House?
You didn't come just like that,
nor out of simple courtesy.
Someone told you about us, the piano.
You knew there were no children here.
Someone who never found the way back.
A long time ago?
Fairly long ago.

There was a party.
Are you married?
Engaged?
It's not quite the word.
If you see him, tell Augustin Meaulnes
I haven't forgotten.
He sent you, didn't he?
He spent months looking for you.
Here and in Paris.
Then he heard you'd married.
I'll be back.
But not alone.
What are you afraid of?
Come into our chateau.
I hate chateaux.
What an idea!
I could never live here
between such cramped walls.
With the windows open, walls vanish.
You know nothing about me,
my background,
why I was outside the De Galais home.
I lied to you.
I lie all the time.
I'm just a milliner's apprentice.
I'm not two years older
than you, but three.
It's not funny.
I know the De Galais family.
Especially the son.
His name is Frantz.
Which Frantz?
The one who almost married.
Shut up.
He's like you, gullible.
- Not interested.
- I met him because it was raining.
I'd made a delivery to a rich customer.
He had me get into his carriage.
And I said
I'd been to a friend's and left
my umbrella at the Grand Hotel.
My father is a businessman.
Etc, etc.

He swallowed it all, lie after lie.
The mills in Bourges,
the Ballets Russes, the Spanish...
what the papers said about high society.
- He liked what I said, so he liked me.
- Stop it.
Finally, he proposed to me.
And I ran away on the wedding day.
I hid at my parents' for six months
so he couldn't find me.
Now you know the whole story.
Why are you telling me this?
Why don't you keep quiet?
Why?
Why did you ruin it all?
I have my pride.
I don't want you to live with a liar.
I feel relieved now.
It's all over between us.
I have to find Frantz.
I made a promise.
He loves you, and you love him.
Do you understand?
I love you too, Augustin.
I'm looking for the home
of Madame Meaulnes.
It's that house there.
Of course I remember you!
Franois from St. Agathe.
You've become quite a little gentleman.
Are you thirsty?
I'll get you a drink.
You were his best friend, you know.
His only friend, I'd say.
He'll be so glad to see you.
What a surprise!
It's the same as ever.
I never know where he is.
I'm sure he hasn't written you much.
He was living in Paris,
and he even had jobs...
In a printing shop,
then...
in a small foundry for artists.

And you know where else?
He worked on the Metro
construction site. Yessiree!
The Paris Metro.
Police came about his military service.
But I couldn't tell them much.
Know what I said: His own mother
doesn't know where he is!
But you're in luck,
he just came home.
Here he is.
You said she told you
about Yvonne's marriage.
Yes.
- And so?
- So...
She isn't married.
She lied.
She's not married?
I saw her and spoke to her.
She's waiting.
Look, Francois,
time's gone by.
We were still children then.
She was my reason to live and hope.
When I realized it was over
and accepted ordinary happiness,
I opted for the simple life
that everyone lives.
I can't tell you everything.
Besides, you wouldn't understand.
- Know where Frantz is?
- Who cares?
I promised to bring you back.
She kept her word.
She's waiting for you.
If you don't love her now,
go and tell her so.
You have to go... in person!
- I won't be your messenger.
- Fine.
Stay the night.
We'll take the train in the morning.
Why'd you keep looking?

I found it by chance.
I don't believe you.
You kept looking!
I told you to forget it all.
Forget it!
It's not the same life
for me anymore, Seurel.
I'm stopping. She's changed.
Go alone.
You must be joking!
You dragged me around for months,
going on and on : the piano, her beauty!
You made my head spin!
And now you think you can say
"Forget it" to erase it all?
Tell her so she stops waiting.
I see now!
It's as clear as day.
What's clear?
Why you want her to know.
To know that she's free.
- You're in love.
- Me?
Yes, you!
You're in love with Yvonne de Galais!
Recognize it?
Yes.
But I didn't come this way.
Things are rarely as beautiful
as our memory of them.
We're not here
to compare dreams and reality
but to hear you speak to someone.
Nothing to say?
To anyone?
I believed in you.
I was proud to be your friend.
I'd often think,
What would he do in my shoes?
You've changed so much- -
Leave me alone!
I don't have to answer to anyone.
Not to you or her...
Tell her.

Turn around and tell her.
Show some guts.
Tell her.
Hello, Mr. Seurel.
You're a man of your word.
And I recognize Augustin Meaulnes.
The ideal would be
a mechanical invention.
The ideal would be
a mechanical invention.
We invent it, patent it, sell it.
Marketing it ourselves would be ideal.
I have several in mind.
The perpetual watch, for example.
The prototype is on my desk.
Unfortunately, it keeps stopping.
Is all this boring you?
A mechanical invention,
yes, that would be nice.
Have you heard from Frantz?
My poor mad Frantz.
He kept looking for that girl...
Valentine, who stood him up
on their wedding day.
No luck, not a trace.
So he felt it was all his fault.
She's the one who lies
and he's the one who feels guilty.
He was afraid she'd drown herself
or God knows what.
At the worst,
those little ladies sink into sin,
or find consolation with soldiers.
Then one day he gave up.
After that,
it was the new craze,
aviation, setting records.
Others go as far as possible.
He goes as high as possible.
What an awful thought:
At any moment your child can fall
from a point in the sky
never reached by another human being.
There's no consolation in that.

Mr. Seurel,
I have something for you.
Come with me.
I hope I get the Neuville position.
We'd see each other often.
I thought of something.
You could bring your children over,
and I could teach them piano.
And with the warm weather,
you could hold class on our grounds.
You should teach your pupils punctuality.
Some people think they're so important
that others will wait for them forever.
I must be going.
Thank you for your hospitality.
Hurry. If it gets dark,
you may get lost again.
I'll never forget you.
Be happy.
The wedding took place in the fall.
Augustin asked me to be his witness.
Frantz was Yvonne's witness.
Grandfather looks very tired.
He couldn't have stood a big wedding.
It was a wonderful day,
with the people I love.
You don't talk to me anymore.
You're absent.
You've changed since your conversation
with Frantz.
I know exactly at what point,
with what word...
The word, oath.
That's where boys are weakest.
To commit themselves to noble deeds,
they make an oath.
Don't worry.
I won't ask what yours is.
I know that at your age,
nothing resists an oath.
Like Frantz, who swore to fly higher
than the highest mountain.
To be like the angels.
And do you know what wish angels make?

Never to come back down.
Here, we all have lead in our souls.
- Do you love me?
- Yes, I love you.
Truly love me?
Truly, infinitely.
- You could change.
- No.
Truly, infinitely, eternally.
Come what may?
Come what may.
"My love,
Only you can understand me.
"That's why we found each other.
"You know what a promise is.
You believed mine.
"And now you are my wife.
"I'll bring Valentine back to Frantz
as I promised.
"A thousand kisses,
"Augustin."
Flown the coop, my friend.
Meaulnes has decamped.
Decamped?
You mean he's gone?
But where?
To do what?
Maybe you'll know more than me soon.
How can anyone do this?
It's the oath he made to Frantz.
Valentine.
He told you about her?
He was like a lost child,
distracted.
He couldn't find any release.
I helped him make a decision
so remorse wouldn't poison his life.
And his life is also mine.
I just didn't think he'd go so soon.
Conditions are ideal.
He could beat his own record.
Where are you going?
You have no business here.
Frantz de Galais.

There. He's trying to beat
his own record.
Can you imagine?
Stop!
I brought Valentine.
As I promised!
What's going on?
Nothing.
Just some troublemaker.
Contact?
I brought Valentine!
I kept my word!
I bet you didn't do your service.
You look like a deserter.
And with a war coming...
He can think things over in prison.
- Who are you?
- His wife.
Go on.
Keep going.
Augustin is back?
I'm going to have a baby.
I'm sure of it now.
You're the first to know.
A baby?
What baby?
I'm going to have a baby.
Meaulnes's child!
You must be happy.
So happy.
So happy.
No one knows what it is:
their size, the way they hold
their head, their gaze,
but some people
exert an irresistible attraction.
Grandfather says they're birds of prey,
or pirates.
And you?
I think they're princes.
Princes who travel in disguise.
That's too easy!
I waltz in, I love and I leave!
Yvonne here, Valentine there.

Your grandfather's right.
A pirate, an adventurer.
That's my opinion.
The adventurer starts an adventure.
Meaulnes left to finish an adventure,
give aid, save someone.
I'd have been ashamed to hold him back.
Of course. Besides,
who could have held him back?
Me, I think.
A girl. A big baby girl.
Nearly six pounds.
You can look.
How are you?
I'm fine. Just fine.
Lift the curtain.
She's a beauty.
You're sweet, but she's not.
She's all red and ugly.
When she's prettier
we'll show her to her daddy.
I just saw Dr. Morin.
What is it?
We thought we were going
to lose them both last night.
The doctor said the child is saved.
But he's only a doctor.
He went to get ice at the hospital.
But by the time he gets back...
But, ice or no ice...
Poor Franois.
I ruined his Sunday.
I'm not well,
but the child is out of danger.
Oh, my God!
It's like a knife!
Don't tell Augustin
how ugly I was before...
Before what?
You know.
I wish I could have waited for him.
I forbid you to...
You don't say it...
You don't even think it.

Poor Francois
thinks he can still tell me
what not to do.
You'll see.
One morning, Augustin will be back.
Tell him I couldn't wait.
Tell him...
Tell him I was never angry with him.
I'm not sad, you know.
Don't be sad either.
Promise to be happy.
We're all so awkward
when it comes to happiness.
With the first cold spell of winter,
Mr. de Galais expired peacefully,
after making me the child's guardian
until Meaulnes returned.
I moved into Quarry House
to be with the darling girl we had saved.
- Yvonne...
- I know.
Her name's Jeanne.
Jeanne Augustine Marie Meaulnes.
They imprisoned me the day
I took Valentine to Frantz.
Nothing's changed.
Everything's changed.
- The flowers?
- That's my doing.
Every two or three days.
We loved her so much.
Field manoeuvres at Salbris.
- Even at night.
- Manoeuvres...
They're not just manoeuvres.
Mobilization is around the corner.
I saw the posters.
They're itching for war.
She won't sleep.
You naughty girl.
- Jacquet, Oliver.
- Present.
Despointes, Guy.
Delouche, Jasmin.

Roy, Grard.
That's me!
He'll never change.
Seurel, Franois.
Meaulnes, Augustin.
Come back to us.
Wait for me, guys.
While we're at it...
Hurry up.
Where's Bourges?
My wife is delivering at Christmas.
We'll be home long before then.
What's he up to?
- Delouche, hurry up.
- Coming.
Let's go.
A stag beetle
For Dutremblay's sister's hat.
Over the cherries.
- It's moving.
- It's alive.
Delouche is dead!
Meaulnes is hit!
Help me.
Don't leave me, Meaulnes.
You can't go like this.
Speak to me.
Don't leave me.
"I SEEK ESCAPE TO DREAMT-OF LANDS.
THAT, AFTER ALL, MAY BE DEATH."
Henri Alain-Fournier
Le Grand Meaulnes (2006)