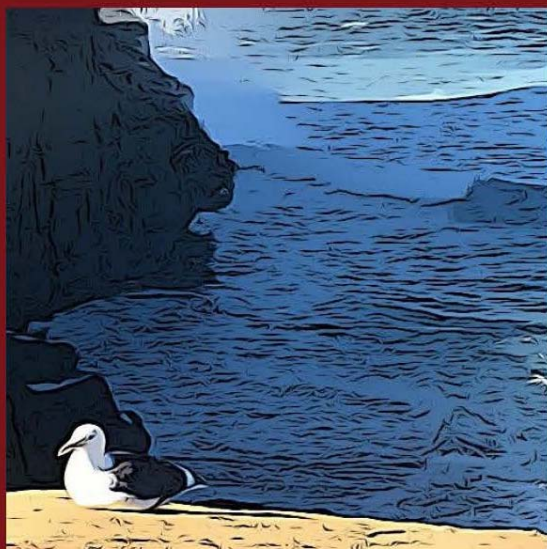


Le bruit des vagues
12 Short Suspense Stories
in French, Nr. 1

For French Learners
(Intermediate and Advanced)



With Glossaries, Grammar Tips, Cultural
Notes, Exercises and Full Audio for Each Story

Annick Stevenson

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Le bruit des vagues

12 Short Suspense
Stories in French

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by Annick Stevenson

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Cultural Notes, Exercises
and Full Audio for Each Story

*Apprendre une autre langue
est un peu comme devenir quelqu'un d'autre.*

(Learning another language
is like becoming another person).

Haruki Murakami

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FOREWORD

WHY SUCH A BOOK? As French teachers, we always like to recommend French books to our students, but most of them are too difficult for them to understand fully, which can lead to considerable discouragement or frustration. Therefore, we decided to publish a collection of short suspense stories with vocabulary glossaries sprinkled throughout the text, along with complete audio recordings of each story. The readers will have the option of listening to the entire story and, thus, improving their listening comprehension. The glossaries will make the reading more enjoyable as the student won't have to spend time looking up definitions in a dictionary. Compared to other stories that have been published with the objective of helping students learn French, these well-crafted stories are more exciting, even suspenseful, to read because each of them ends with a surprising twist that will bring a smile to the reader's face.

This book is the first in a new series of publications by *Languages at Home* (see page 4). They also complement the French lessons by Skype that we have been providing since 2004 to more than 3,000 students through our main online school: *Learn French at Home* (see page 125).

The 12 short suspense stories that you will find in this new collection have all been previously published in the *Petites his-*

toires section in various issues of our magazine *French Accent*. We have added much longer and more detailed glossaries, grammar tips and cultural notes, together with exercises for each story, with answers in French.

They are especially suited and designed for intermediate and advanced students. Reading these stories is an excellent way to learn more vocabulary, especially idiomatic expressions, and to familiarize yourself with the way French people express certain feelings in their everyday language.

The book is available in two different formats: a printed version, and an e-book version where you will be able to listen to the full audio of each story (see page 8).

It is a welcome addition to the many tools and aids for learning French, and we hope you will find it useful as well as tantalizing!

1. LE BRUIT DES VAGUES



Listen to the story, and read it out loud :

"SOUVENEZ-VOUS D'UN BRUIT particulier qui vous fut plus agréable que les autres." Jeanne trouva cette suggestion de l'animateur de l'atelier d'écriture plus difficile que d'habitude. Un thème sur lequel la vingtaine de participants devaient rédiger un texte de leur choix, en un peu moins d'une heure. Il y a beaucoup de bruits qu'elle aimait.

fut (simple past of the verb *être*) = was
trouva (simple past of *trouver*) = found
animateur = workshop leader, host, organizer
atelier d'écriture = creative writing workshop
vingtaine = around 20
rédiger = to write, compose
un peu moins d'une heure = a little less than one hour

Le ronronnement du chat lorsqu'il se blottissait contre elle, le bruit des pas sur les feuilles séchées, celui des clefs dans la porte quand les enfants rentraient de l'école, les accords de piano des *Nocturnes* de Chopin, le chant des oiseaux au lever du jour...

ronronnement = the purring (of a cat)
se blottissait (imperfect of *se blottir*) contre = cuddled up against
accords = chords
lever du jour = dawn

Et le bruit des vagues. Le plus beau, le plus romantique des bruits, évocateur de sable fin, de soleil, de chaleur, de vacances, se dit Jeanne. Mais comment distinguer un bruit particulier ayant gravé à jamais la mémoire ? Elle hésitait encore quand, soudain, elle se souvint d'un moment unique, marqué par le son du ricochet des vagues sur les rochers.

se dit (simple past of *se dire*) = wondered, asked herself
ayant gravé à jamais = having made an indelible impact
se souvint (simple past of *se souvenir*) d' (*de*) = remembered
marqué par = cadenced by, paced by

C'était il y a si longtemps... presque une autre vie. Tout comme les autres participants, penchés sur leurs cahiers, elle commença sa page d'écriture, choisissant la forme du conte, la plus appropriée, lui semblait-il, à décrire l'aventure qui lui était arrivée cet été-là.

penchés = leaning over, huddling over
commença (simple past of *commencer*) = started
conte = tale
lui semblait-il = she thought, it seemed to her
qui lui était arrivée (*arriver*) = that had happened to her; "note that *arriver* also means "to arrive", "to manage to"..."

--- GRAMMAR TIP---

Passé simple and stories

The present perfect (*passé composé*) and the imperfect (*imparfait*) are the two verb tenses most often used when speaking about past events; while the simple past (*passé simple*) is used in literature, like in many of these short stories. The *passé simple* is very close to the *passé composé*: Both express an action which took place at a definite time in the past, whereas the *imparfait* expresses an action that took place repeatedly or was continuing. Try, with the help of the glossaries, to recognize the verbs conjugated in the simple past, and to familiarize yourself with it.

"Il était une fois une jeune fille blonde et romantique, qui n'avait qu'un amour : la lecture. Chaque été, quand venait le moment de partir au bord de la mer ou de l'océan avec ses parents, elle emportait toujours une valise remplie de livres, qu'elle dévorait, durant de longues heures, dans la maison de location, ou sur la plage.

Il était une fois = Once upon a time
n'avait qu'un amour = only had one love
venait (imperfect of *venir*) le moment = when it was time (in more usual language you would say: *quand le moment venait*)
dévorait (imperfect of *dévorer*) = devoured

"La plage, surtout, car le bruit des vagues emporte si bien le lecteur au-delà des possibles, même lorsqu'il pose son livre, et ferme les yeux...

emporte (*emporter*) = carries off, transports
au-delà des possibles = far from reality, like in a dream; *au-delà* = beyond
même lorsqu'il (*lorsque*) = even when he

"Ce jour-là, la mer était particulièrement mauvaise, et les vagues se jetaient, furieuses, sur les rochers auprès desquels elle s'était allongée.

Ce jour-là = That specific day
se jetaient (imperfect of *se jeter*) = through themselves
auprès desquels = close to which

"C'est au moment précis où, les paupières fermés, elle suspendit sa lecture pour se laisser bercer par ce tumulte grisant qu'elle sentit une présence à ses côtés. Une présence paisible, douce, presque envoûtante. Lorsqu'elle ouvrit les yeux, elle aperçut un homme entre deux âges, au physique de baroudeur, mais au regard tendre, presque moqueur.

paupières = eye lids
suspendit (simple past of *suspendre*) sa lecture = interrupted her reading
se laisser bercer = to allow herself to be soothed, cradled (*bercer* = to cradle)
grisant = exhilarating
sentit (simple past of *sentir*) = felt
envoûtante = entrancing, bewitching
ouvrit (simple past of *ouvrir*) = opened
aperçut (simple past of *apercevoir*) = perceived, saw
entre deux âges = neither young nor old
baroudeur = adventurer, who has been around a bit

"Il lui disait : 'Est-ce que vous avez vu que la marée est montée, et que vous êtes prisonnière des vagues ?' Elle jeta un coup d'œil affolé. Le banc de rochers était entouré d'eau. "Venez avec moi, n'ayez pas peur..."

marée = tide

jeta (simple past of *jeter*) un coup d'œil = cast a glance

affolé = panicky

banc de rochers = rock outcropping

n'ayez (imperative of *avoir*) pas peur = don't be afraid; lit.: don't have fear

"Mais... comment est-ce possible... c'est incroyable... Vous vous connaissiez avant ?" La question presque brutale de l'animateur, outrageusement penché sur son texte, alors qu'elle attaquait le vif du sujet, fit sursauter Jeanne.

Vous vous connaissiez (imperfect of *connaître*) = Did you know each other

outrageusement = outrageously

alors qu' (*que*) = while, whereas

attaquait (imperfect of *attaquer*) le vif du sujet = was getting to the heart of the matter

fit (simple past of *faire*) sursauter = made (Jeanne) jump with surprise

- Que voulez-vous dire ?

- Excusez-moi, mais... ce que vous racontez, c'est exactement la même histoire que celle que Jean-Paul est en train d'écrire..."

Qui était Jean-Paul ? Elle regarda autour d'elle et vit un homme qui la fixait du regard. Un long moment s'écoula. Puis il s'approcha d'elle, lentement. Elle ferma les yeux, et sentit à ses côtés une présence paisible, douce, presque envoûtante*...

□

ce que vous racontez (*raconter*) = what you are telling
est en train d'écrire = is presently writing
regarda (simple past of *regarder*) = looked
vit (simple past of *voir*) = saw
la fixait (simple past of *fixer*) du regard = stared at her
s'écoula (simple past of *s'écouler*) = passed
s'approcha (simple past of *s'approcher*) = came over to her

*repeat of phrase page 19.



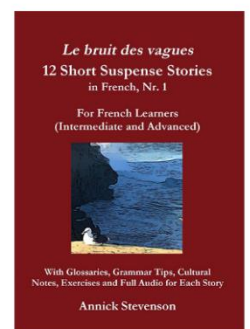
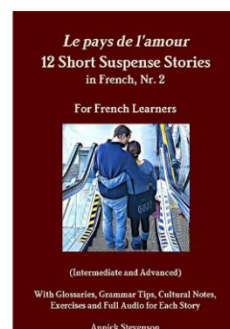
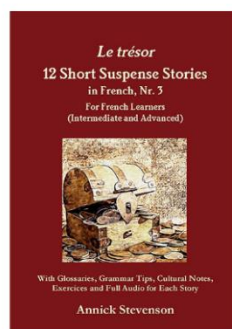
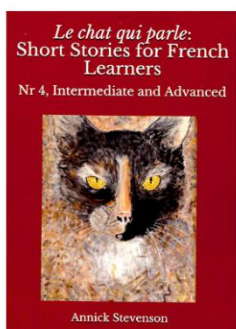
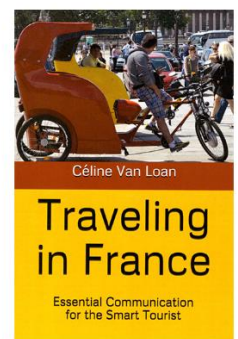
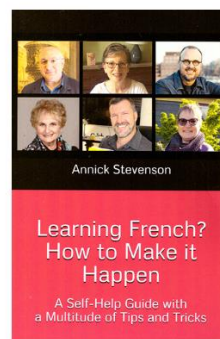
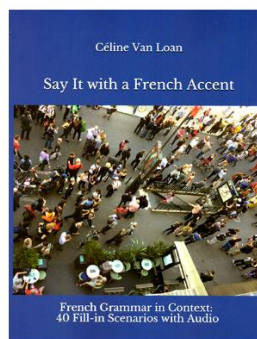
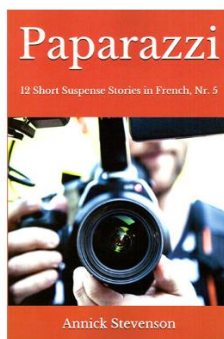
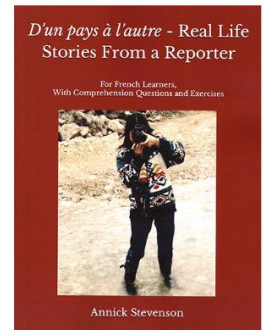
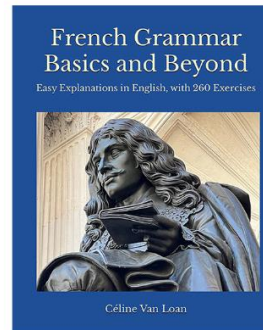
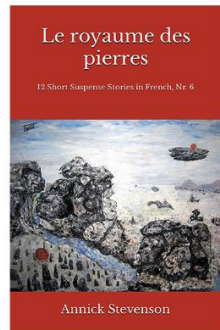
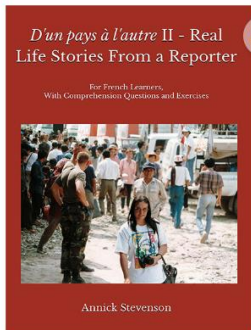
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