

PIERRE ET JEAN

Chapter Summaries

CHAPTER 1

- The novel begins with a family fishing trip on board their boat, *La Perle*. The father, le père Roland, is the first character introduced, followed by Mme Roland, Mme Rosémilly then the two Roland children, Pierre and Jean.
- We learn that Pierre is the oldest, dark-haired and a doctor.
- M Rolland was a jeweller in Paris but is now retired, living in Le Havre on his pension.
- The two children, Pierre and Jean, completed their studies in Paris.
- Pierre is 5 years older than Jean: Pierre is 30 and Jean therefore 25.
- Pierre has made a start on various studies in accordance with his impulsive, idealistic, and inconsistent personality traits; he is hot headed and aggressive¹.
- Jean, unlike his brother, is blond, calm and poised². He has studied Law and is recently qualified.
- A latent jealousy is evident since childhood between the two brothers³: Jean is constantly praised, but Pierre teased.
- They are on their summer holiday in Le Havre.
- We are introduced to the mother in a little more detail⁴. She believes her two sons are fighting over Mme Rosémilly, a 23-year-old widow, whose husband, a transatlantic sailor, has died two years previously. She has been acquainted with the Roland parents since the previous winter.
- Mme Rosémilly is blond with blue eyes; she is presented as wise with an accepting personality. She prefers Jean.
- We then learn more about the father: he is passionate about the sea and fishing and regularly goes on expeditions with Beausire, a retired transatlantic captain, and Papagris ('Jean-Bart'), a sailor who also looks after the family boat, *La Perle*.
- The outing had been planned the previous week for the coming Tuesday, so the novel begins on a Tuesday.
- The party observes *La Normandie* due to arrive in the port of Le Havre on the same day.
- We then getting a second description of Mme Roland: she is 48 years old with brown hair and calm by nature⁵. She has gained a little in weight since her arrival in Le Havre. Her husband likes giving off an air of authority when they are together as a family.
- We return to the story of the fishing trip: the two brothers both take up an oar to begin rowing. Pierre starts off well but becomes exhausted and loses face. They pass by a boat from Southampton and greet it. Then, through the characters, we are presented with list of various types of boats and M. Rolland describes the landscape and towns along the coast.
- The family and Mme Rosémilly return to the port, and we have a glimpse of the streets of Le Havre: the rue de Paris with shops and the Place de la Bourse with the commercial port.
- The family invites Mme Rosémilly to dinner in their house on rue Belle-Normande. The maid, Joséphine, announces that a man has called three times while they were out to say that Me Lecanu, a solicitor, would be calling round in person that evening.
- All try to guess the purpose of the visit until the solicitor's arrival after dinner. At this point, Mme Rosémilly leaves the family gathering. Me Lecanu then reveals that Léon Maréchal, whom the Rolland family knew as he had been Head of Department at the Finance Ministry, has died and appointed Jean as the sole heir.
- There is huge surprise and Mme Rolland cries. Jean would be entitled to 20,000 francs per year on behalf of a man who was his father's best friend.

¹ « Il était exalté, intelligent, changeant et tenace, plein d'utopies, et d'idées philosophiques ».

² « aussi blond que son frère était noir, aussi calme que son frère était emporté, aussi doux que son frère était rancunier »

³ « une vague jalousie [...] les tenait en éveil dans une fraternelle et inoffensive inimitié ».

⁴ « économe bourgeoise un peu sentimentale » with « une âme de caissière »

⁵ « elle aimait les lectures, les romans et les poésies [...] pour la songerie mélancolique et tendre qu'ils éveillaient en elle ».

- They make an appointment for the following day and offer tea and biscuits to the solicitor.
- After the solicitor's departure, M Rolland is euphoric and recalls his time with Maréchal⁶.
- The two brothers go out for a walk. The parents are puzzled, and Mme Rolland is worried for Pierre who receives nothing in Maréchal's will.

CHAPTER 2

- Pierre walks through the streets of Le Havre, feeling troublesome and numb⁷ with a "graine de chagrin".
- He walks to the jetty where he'll be alone and tries to work out where his irritation comes from. He wonders if it might not come from the news of Jean's inheritance, and he feels ashamed of his jealousy⁸.
- He walks on, looks at the port, the lights, the boats and goes through the list of boats due to arrive. He looks at the sky, and the moon appears. Pierre feels calmer.
- He then notices Jean and the two brothers talk: Pierre speaks of his dreams of departure, congratulates Jean and goes off, leaving Jean alone.
- Pierre realises that he believes Jean will marry Mme Rosémilly, or « la veuve » as he refers to her with disdain.
- Pierre decides to have a drink with Marowski, a Polish refugee chemist, who has come to Le Havre in the hope that Pierre, once set up as a doctor, will be able to send him his patients. Marowski gets Pierre to try a new redcurrant liqueur, which Pierre baptises *groseillette* (little redcurrant).
- When Pierre mentions the inheritance, Marowski warns Pierre twice: « Cela ne fera pas bon effet ». Confused, Pierre returns home to bed and then hears Jean coming back too, drinking two glasses of water and going to bed as well.

CHAPTER 3

- On waking up, Pierre has a desire to be positive and succeed, and works out how much he would be able to earn if he established himself.
- He goes into town to find an apartment for rent and looks at seven or eight.
- He goes home for lunch, arriving 15 mins late. He remarks with surprise that the family haven't waited for him.
- Jean's mother, followed by his father, give Jean advice on settling down and taking it easy. Pierre suggests that he work honourably and become a « lumière de droit ».
- The family visits the solicitor while Pierre goes looking again at apartments. On rue François-1^{er}, he finds a spacious one that he likes; but he doesn't have the 1,500 francs required for the deposit; he considers that he can ask Jean for the money and is embarrassed about being poor.
- Irritated again, he decides to have a drink with a barmaid he knows at a brasserie. When Pierre mentions the inheritance, she gives it to believe that Jean is not Pierre's brother: « alors ce n'est pas étonnant qu'il te ressemble si peu ».
- In a monologue in free indirect speech, Pierre is outraged, but recalls Marowski's words of the previous evening. Morally offended, Pierre thinks about his parents' reputation and how it might be tarnished.
- At home, he finds Mme Rosémilly and Captain Beausire, who have been invited round to celebrate the inheritance news.
- Through the eyes of Pierre, we see a scathing portrait of M Rolland⁹ and Jean is euphoric, feeling the « aplomb que donne l'argent ».
- The celebratory dinner is sumptuous with vermouth, absinthe, silk ribbons, flowers, fruit, whipped cream, etc. Beausire recounts his travels in the Tropics. The atmosphere

⁶ « Parbleu, il passait toutes ses soirées à la maison » ; « Tiens, justement, le matin de la naissance de Jean, c'est lui qui est allé chercher le médecin ! Il avait déjeuné chez nous quand ta mère s'est trouvée souffrante » ; « Comme il n'avait aucun héritier il s'est dit [Maréchal] : 'Tiens, j'ai contribué à la naissance de ce petit-là' »

⁷ « il avait mal quelque part, sans savoir où »

⁸ « Faut soigner ça »

⁹ « il avait un gros ventre de boutiquier »

becomes more and more euphoric, and the dinner rounded off with champagne. Pierre becomes « de plus en plus agacé ».

- Pierre puts a damper on the event though his detailed medical warnings of his father's indulgence and Mme Rosémilly looks at him, realising that he is jealous.
- Pierre calms down. Beausire proposes a toast to which M Rolland replies. Jean then speaks, followed by Mme Rosémilly who pays her respects to the dead Maréchal.
- Beausire, full of emotion, asks M Rolland about Maréchal, to which he replies: « un frère, vous savez [...] un ami, un vrai...un vrai ».
- Pierre goes to bed late in a desperate mood, and sleeps until 9am the following morning.

CHAPTER 4

- Pierre wakes up in a better mood. He believes the barmaid's words may have been a « vraie pensée de prostituée » and he decides to be positive at the mealtime.
- He borrows *La Perle* and goes off on a three-hour expedition with Papagris.
- Pierre is full of positivity and daydreams, but the mist descends and forces them to return early to port.
- On returning home, Pierre is ready to ask Jean for the 1,500-franc deposit for the apartment he has found but walks in on a conversation between his parents discussing an apartment that his mother has rented for Jean during the afternoon: it transpires that the apartment is the same one that Pierre was hoping to secure with Jean's financial help. Pierre is furious and his mother advises him to find one for himself, something similar, but « bien plus modeste, puisque tu n'as rien ».
- At dinner, Pierre begins asking questions about Maréchal. M and Mme Rolland tell him that they had met him in 1858 at that it was Pierre's scarlet fever that had brought them all together and, at that point, they had become friends, which causes a dramatic anger in Pierre¹⁰.
- Pierre returns to Marowski after dinner. From now his suspicions begin to eat away at him. Leaving Marowski alone, he starts frantically analysing everything to defend his mother¹¹.
- Alone on the jetty, he pictures Maréchal in his thoughts: an affable man, 60 years old with a white beard and thick eyebrows who seemingly had no preference for either of the two brothers – he is tormented as if in a nightmare: « Il faut savoir, mon Dieu, il faut savoir ».
- Pierre goes back further in his thoughts and recalls him bringing his mother bouquets of flowers, and his mother's frequent gratitude in her responses : « Merci, mon ami ».
- Pierre then reveals his doubts: Could Maréchal have been his mother's lover? He recognises that Maréchal was a sophisticated and educated man. As such, how in fact could he have been a friend of his father's? ¹²
- Suddenly, Pierre remembers that Maréchal had been blond, just like Jean¹³, and he recalls seeing a portrait of him above the fireplace when they lived in Paris.
- A ship's foghorn interrupts his memories. He regrets the suspicions he has about his mother but then has to face the facts: she was indeed in love with Maréchal. He has a desire to kill them all.
- When the *Santa-Lucia* comes into port from Naples, this renews his desire to escape¹⁴.
- Pierre returns home to bed after a hot toddy at a sailors' café.

¹⁰ « Et cette pensée brusque, violente, entra dans l'âme de Pierre comme une balle qui troue et déchire ».

¹¹ « il fallait dans son cœur la vérité complète, car il n'aimait que sa mère au monde »

¹² « il comprenait que cet homme sentimental n'avait jamais pu, jamais, être l'ami de son père, de son père si positif, si terre à terre, si lourd, pour qui le mot « poésie » signifiait sottise »

¹³ « Et soudain un souvenir précis, terrible, traversa l'âme de Pierre. Maréchal avait été blond, blond comme Jean »

¹⁴ « Oh ! S'il avait pu partir, tout de suite, n'importe où, et ne jamais revenir ! »

CHAPTER 5

- Pierre sleeps badly and wakes up after two hours.
- His suspicions and anxiety reach their peak.¹⁵
- Through the wall, he hears his brother Jean snoring and decides that he won't mention anything.
- In an interior monologue, Pierre asks himself how he will be able to live alongside his mother.
- He feels choked up and goes downstairs to drink water.
- On returning to his room another noise now keeps him awake: his father's snoring.
- His anxiety increases again as he comes to the realisation that his father isn't Jean's father.¹⁶
- Pierre realises that he is the only one to have uncovered the truth.¹⁷
- He goes into Jean's bedroom, leans over him, and then goes out again without making a noise.
- It feels like a long night, punctuated by the striking of the clock.
- In the morning, Pierre decides to go to Trouville and passes by his mother's room before leaving; his father is still asleep at her side.
- He asks her for Maréchal's portrait, about which he had been thinking the night before, claiming that he would like to offer it to Jean; she will look for it, she says.
- Having left the house, Pierre thinks again about the portrait, suddenly remembering that it had disappeared from above the fireplace when Jean started to grow a beard, a few years earlier.
- In Trouville, Pierre walks along the beach amongst a cheerful crowd, remaining lost in his thoughts.
- Although his beach walks had previously done him good, this time the cheerfulness of the passers-by exasperate him, especially when walking by women: he gets angry with their flirtations, their desire to seduce and the game played by men towards them.¹⁸
- On returning home, he takes the moral high ground as his mother advises Jean on the layout of his new apartment.
- Pierre observes his father and contemplates the reality of the situation.¹⁹
- Pierre once again asks his mother for Maréchal's portrait; his father announces that he had seen it on Mme Rolland's writing desk the previous week while she was burning some letters.
- On M Rolland's insistence, Mme Rolland goes to get the portrait and Pierre notices that both Maréchal and Jean have the same forehead, the same beard, but nothing more precise than that to link them.
- Mme Rolland turns away, which for Pierre is equivalent to a confession.
- The three men smoke while Mme Rolland does some embroidery.
- Pierre cannot help keeping an eye on his mother, who does the same to him.²⁰
- Maréchal's portrait is now in fully view over the fireplace.
- When Mme Rosémilly knocks at the door, Mme Rolland looks anxiously at the portrait and Pierre discreetly removes it from the fireplace.²¹
- When Mme Rosémilly comes into the living room, Pierre has disappeared without saying a word, which Jean finds extremely rude.

¹⁵ « Il se sentait traîné par sa logique, comme par une main qui attire et étrangle, vers l'intolérable certitude »

¹⁶ « Aucun lien, même le plus léger, ne les unissait, et ils ne le savaient pas ! »

¹⁷ « Un mensonge impossible à dévoiler et que nul ne connaîtrait jamais, hors lui, le vrai fils »

¹⁸ Toutes ces femmes ne pensaient qu'à la même chose, offrir et faire désirer leur chair déjà donnée, déjà vendue, déjà promise à d'autres hommes [...]. Sa mère avait fait comme les autres, voilà tout ! »

¹⁹ « Ce gros homme flasque, content et niais, c'était son père, a lui ! Non, non, Jean ne lui ressemblait en rien »

²⁰ « On eût dit qu'ils s'épiaient, qu'une lutte venait de se déclarer entre eux ; et un malaise douloureux, un malaise insoutenable crispait le cœur de Pierre »

²¹ « Il eut peur, une peur brusque et horrible, que cette honte fût dévoilée »

CHAPTER 6

- There is a pause in the story: we are told nothing in particular happens in the Rolland household for a week or two.
- M Rolland spends his time fishing whilst Mme Rolland helps Jean settle into his new flat; Pierre remains downbeat, and M Rolland is not aware of the reasons as before ²²
- One day, M Rolland notices that his wife has become very pale and asks Pierre as a doctor to examine her. Pierre prescribes some tranquilisers.
- Mme Rolland bursts into tears²³ and M Rolland is at a loss as to why. Pierre tells his father that it is just her age; there are daily repeated episodes; Pierre finds it hard to contain himself. ²⁴
- Jean is now moved to his new apartment, coming back home for dinner in the evening.

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- To celebrate Jean's moving in, the Rolland family hire a carriage and take a trip to Saint-Jouin. Captain Beausire and Mme Rosémilly accompany the family outing.
- Whilst stopping for lunch at Alphonsine's inn, they decide it would be good to spend the afternoon fishing for shrimps. They get the necessary equipment and clothing.
- The narrative follows Jean's POV, and we learn that he finds Mme Rosémilly particularly attractive in her beach clothes and decides that he will declare his love for her.
- They both arrive at the top of the cliff then descend, followed by Beausire, Mme Rolland, then Pierre and M Rolland.
- Jean's attempt to express his love to Mme Rosémilly ²⁵ is not altogether gratefully received and she evades his advances.
- While they are fishing, their faces come into contact; Jean blows her kisses and then declares his love, despite Mme Rosémilly believing that Jean may have «perdu la tête» ²⁶.
- Mme Rosémilly is surprised by this. She and Jean sit on a rock to talk seriously. He is keen to leave the decision with her and she in turn is more worried about being accepted by Jean's parents. Jean is disillusioned by Mme Rosémilly's response and the whole scene in general ²⁷
- In the meantime, Beausire catches lots of shrimps. Mme Rolland and Pierre stay together in silence; they understand that something has happened between Mme Rosémilly and Jean. Pierre is cynical of this ²⁸ as he comments on this to his mother, looking at Jean from afar; Mme Rolland is shocked and goes over to Jean, who explains to his mother about the marriage proposal.
- Mme Rolland, pale, barely reacts to this news at first, but then relaxes and talks about the marriage with Jean.
- Mme Rolland notices Pierre, who pretends to be taking a siesta. ²⁹

²² « C'est comme si nous était arrivé un accident, comme si nous pleurions quelqu'un ! »

²³ « Elle [...] semblait déchirée par un chagrin horrible et profond »

²⁴ « L'infâme secret, connu d'eux seuls, l'aiguillonnait contre elle »

²⁵ « C'étaient les premières paroles un peu galantes qu'ils échangeaient »

²⁶ « Non, je n'ai pas perdu la tête. Je vous aime, et j'ose, enfin, vous le dire »

²⁷ « Et c'était fini, il se sentait lié, marié, en vingt paroles »

²⁸ « J'apprends comment on se prépare à être cocu »

²⁹ « Elle aperçut [...] un corps étendu sur le ventre, comme un cadavre [...] : c'était l'autre, Pierre, qui songeait, désespéré »

CHAPTER 7

- The group returns to Le Havre in the carriage at night and to Jean's new place having dropped off Beausire.
- Jean is keen to show his fiancée her future home.
- M Rolland is impressed by the lavish décor; Mme Rosémilly blushes on seeing the bedroom and the Japanese-style dining room fills the visitors with awe and rapture.
- M Rolland accompanies Mme Rosémilly home; Mme Rolland remains at the apartment with Pierre and Jean, in Jean's bedroom.
- An argument breaks out between Pierre and Jean concerning Mme Rosémilly and Jean announces his marriage to Mme Rosémilly; he reprimands Pierre for his jealousy and Pierre tries to defend himself.
- Pierre is enraged³⁰ and Jean continues to list all the sources of Pierre's jealousy.
- Pushed to the limit, Pierre fights back with his own criticisms, revealing his suspicions.³¹
- Jean is taken aback when Pierre reveals his suspicions in full detail and fears that their mother will hear the revelations.
- Pierre leaves abruptly.
- Jean is left traumatised. Finally, he decides to go and find his mother in his bedroom and finds her in his bed, face down with her head buried in the pillow as if blocking out what she may have heard.
- Jean is overcome with pity and compassion seeing her pale and sobbing and Mme Rolland confesses.³²
- Jean persuades his mother to stay and takes her in his arms.³³
- Mme Rolland threatens to leave for good if Jean demonstrates the same hatred for her as she has seen from Pierre³⁴. She reveals the torture she has felt during the previous weeks because of Pierre³⁵; she also describes the relationship she has had with her husband compared with what Maréchal was able to offer her³⁶.
- Jean takes her back home during the early hours of the morning; M Roland is asleep, snoring, and unaware of everything; Pierre hears them coming in.

³⁰ « Tout ce qui s'amassait en lui de colères impuissantes, de rancunes écrasées, de révoltes domptées depuis quelques temps et de désespoir silencieux, lui montant à la tête, l'étourdit comme un coup de sang »

³¹ « Je dis qu'on n'accepte pas la fortune d'un homme quand on passe pour le fils d'un autre. Je dis [...] que tu es le fils de l'homme qui t'a laissé sa fortune »

³² « C'est vrai, mon enfant. Pourquoi mentir ? »

³³ « Moi je t'aime et je te garde »

³⁴ « Tu es attendri, mais quand ce sera passé, quand tu me regarderas comme me regarde Pierre, quand tu te rappelleras ce que je t'ai dit... »

³⁵ « Sauve-moi de lui, toi, mon petit, sauve-moi, fais quelque chose »

³⁶ « Je l'aime encore tout mort qu'il est [...] il a été toute ma vie, toute ma joie, tout mon espoir, toute ma consolation [...] tout pour moi depuis si longtemps ! »

CHAPTER 8

- Focus of narrative turns now to Jean.
- He is left feeling paralysed by the encounter with Pierre and his desire to flee, « accablé par un coup du destin qui menaçait en même temps ses intérêts les plus chers ».
- The question of his inheritance returns to him, and he believes that his mother can no longer live with Pierre.³⁷
- He first decides that he must give it away to poor people but then revises his thoughts, seeing a woman passing in the street and thinking of Mme Rosémilly – he will keep the inheritance, concluding that is it right to keep the money from his real father.
- However, he will not touch anything from M Rolland – that should go to Pierre.
- He asks himself how Pierre can be separated from the family.³⁸
- The whistle on a passing boat entering the port gives him an idea.
- The following morning, Jean returns to his parents' house where M Rolland is impatient to have breakfast and is surprised that neither Pierre nor his wife have come downstairs.
- Jean goes upstairs to find his brother, and both greet each other as if nothing had happened between them.
- Jean is affectionate towards his mother, but Pierre has only one desire – to leave.³⁹
- Jean then returns to the idea that had come to him for Pierre's departure: *La Lorraine*, a transatlantic boat whose maiden voyage is due to take place the following month.
- Jean has learnt that life is good on such boats and that Pierre could earn a decent living as a doctor on board.
- Pierre and Mme Rolland understand what Jean is referring to (i.e. the opportunity for Pierre's departure from the family) and Pierre is interested in taking up the position as doctor on board *La Lorraine*.
- M Rolland is happy with this plan and Pierre suggests that he'll be able to obtain good references from his university professors in Paris.
- Jean agrees immediately to help put the plan in motion.

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- Jean goes with his mother to Mme Rosémilly's apartment to formalise the marriage proposal; M Rolland is unaware of what is going on!⁴⁰
- Mme Rolland confides in Jean about her regrets⁴¹ and how she would have been happier marrying someone else.⁴²
- Jean equally realises that he has unconsciously always felt ill at ease as M Rolland's son.⁴³
- At Mme Rosémilly's apartment, we find etchings representing marine life.
- Jean asks Mme Rosémilly to confirm his marriage request and Mme Rolland gives the couple her blessing.
- Mme Rosémilly has substituted Pierre in the Rolland family.⁴⁴
- Mme Rolland believes asking M Rolland for his opinion on the matter is useless.⁴⁵
- On returning to Jean's apartment, Mme Rolland tidies up and then hands over the portrait of Maréchal to Jean, who quickly locks it away.

³⁷ « Il était [...] inadmissible que leur mère continuât à demeurer sous le même toit que son fils aîné »

³⁸ « Il revint à la question de la présence de Pierre dans la famille. Comment l'écarter ? »

³⁹ « Il était envahi maintenant par un besoin de fuir intolérable »

⁴⁰ « ... habitué d'ailleurs à ne jamais comprendre ce qu'on disait devant lui »

⁴¹ « C'est si affreux pour une jeune femme d'épouser un mari comme le mien »

⁴² « Ah ! comme j'aurais pu être heureuse en épousant un autre homme ! »

⁴³ « Depuis bien longtemps il souffrait inconsciemment de se sentir l'enfant de ce lourdaud bonasse »

⁴⁴ « Elle avait perdu un fils, un grand fils, et on lui rendait à la place une fille, une grande fille »

⁴⁵ « Nous faisons tout sans rien lui dire. Il suffit de lui annoncer ce que nous avons décidé »

CHAPTER 9

- Pierre is nominated as doctor on board *La Lorraine* within a few days thanks to the references from his university professors.
- Pierre feels a sense of relief at this news.⁴⁶ At the same time, he feels regret at having revealed everything.
- Jean and his mother do everything to avoid Pierre.
- M Rolland is euphoric at learning that Pierre has been accepted.
- Pierre contacts a colleague, Dr Pirette, who is doing a similar job on *La Picardie* to find out what the job entails. He discovers what life is like on board and the sounds of the ship.
- A sudden sadness overcomes Pierre ⁴⁷ and he feels threatened.⁴⁸
- His contempt and hatred die down a little and he appears to seek only a little compassion for his situation.
- So Pierre decides to visit Marowski, but this doesn't work well and Marowski feels betrayed when he learns that Pierre is leaving Le Havre.
- So Pierre then decides to visit the barmaid in the brasserie and find some comfort in her company, but this doesn't work well either and the barmaid is busy at work and indifferent to Pierre's visit.
- Pierre then walks down to the jetty and spots Papagris and M Rolland on board his boat *La Perle* and reflects on their happiness.⁴⁹
- Mme Rolland helps Pierre to prepare his luggage.⁵⁰
- On the 1st October, *La Lorraine* arrives in the port of Le Havre from Saint-Nazaire. Pierre is due to depart on 7th October.
- Pierre starts moving into his cabin "où serait désormais emprisonnée sa vie".
- Pierre doesn't want his mother to visit him on board, whilst M Rolland is delighted with the luxuriousness of the ship.
- On the evening before departure, Pierre shows tenderness towards his parents. The ship is due to leave the following morning at 11 am and M Rolland suggests that, to say a proper good-bye, he should take out *La Perle* to go alongside *La Lorraine* as it departs the quayside.
- In the evening, Pierre sleeps on board; his pain has gone, and his irritation has subsided.
- On the morning of departure, Pierre greets his colleagues, and observes the wealthy passengers; he then notices the poor ones.⁵¹
- M and Mme Rolland are present, and Pierre notices that his mother's hair has become totally white. M Rolland is once again excited about what's happening whilst Mme Rolland and Jean remain calm; Mme Rosémilly is also present, alongside Beausire.
- On board *La Perle*, Jean rows energetically, as in the beginning scenes of the novel, whilst M Rolland is once again euphoric as he sees *La Lorraine* leaving the port. Pierre blows kisses to his mother.
- M Rolland is surprised at Mme Rolland's sadness given that the ship is due to return to port within a month.
- Mme Rolland seeks comfort in the marriage of Jean and Mme Rosémilly and announces the news to M Rolland, who accepts and welcomes it.
- Mme Rolland turns round for the last time to see Pierre's ship disappear on the horizon, shrouded in mist.

⁴⁶ « Un condamné à mort à qui on annonce sa peine commuée »

⁴⁷ « Ce n'était plus une douleur morale et torturante, mais l'affolement d'une bête sans abri, une angoisse matérielle d'être errant qui n'a plus de toit »

⁴⁸ Plus de sol sous ses pas, mais la mer qui roule, qui gronde et engloutit [...] et il se trouvait condamné à cette vie de forçat vagabond parce que sa mère avait cédé aux caresses d'un homme »

⁴⁹ « Bien heureux les simples d'esprit »

⁵⁰ « Elle avait au fond des yeux l'expression si humble, si douce, si triste, si suppliante des pauvres chiens battus qui demandent grâce »

⁵¹ « Cette foule de misérables vaincus par la vie [...] partant pour une terre inconnue où ils espéraient ne pas mourir de faim, peut-être »