ALVIN ET MIMI

French Short Stories

Intermediate Level

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Before you start

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Before you start

This book is aimed at intermediate students to help you deepen your knowledge of French. The sentences are simple, using everyday vocabulary. Each chapter is accompanied by a list of the harder words and expressions to help you understand the text without the use of a dictionary. The complete English translation is included, so that you can double-check your understanding.

Always learn new words in a sentence, preferably in a sentence that relates to your experience, as it is a lot easier to commit them to memory that way.

The short stories are written in past tense, helping you practice the passé composé, the imparfait, and the plus-que-parfait in an easy way. You will also find a few conditional and subjunctive forms, although they do not represent the main grammatical focus of the text.

When reading, be aware of *liaison*, the pronunciation of a final consonant that is normally silent because the word that follows begins with a vowel. The final consonant of the first word phonetically becomes a part of the first syllable of the second word (les‿amis, *lay-za-mee*). *Liaison*, which beginning students often find challenging, will be marked with an undertie sign ‿ (for example, en‿avril).

Le petit‿écureuil° s'installe°

1

      Derrière la vieille maison jaune s'élevait°‿un vieil olivier. Un petit‿écureuil a choisi cet arbre pour s'y installer. Sur une des nombreuses branches° de l'arbre, il construisait° son premier nid°. Malgré° la fatigue, il s'est‿encouragé° :
      —Encore une brindille° et c'est fini !

l'écureuil (m.) = the squirrel
s'installer = to settle
s'élever = to rise, to stand tall
la branche = the branch
construire = to build
le nid = the nest
malgré = despite
s'encourager = to encourage oneself
la brindille = the twig

The little squirrel settles down

      Behind an old yellow house stood an old olive tree. A small squirrel chose that tree to settle down. On one of the tree's numerous branches, he was building his nest. Despite fatigue, he encouraged himself, "One more twig and it will be done!"

2

　　　Son travail achevé°, il observait la cour, perché° sur la branche. Il avait‿une faim de loup°. Son regard s'est‿arrêté sur un grand‿amandier° plein de noix° qui se trouvait de l'autre côté du mur en briques° entourant° la maison jaune.
　　　Le petit‿écureuil a remué° la queue° et commencé sa descente°. Il a sauté° de l'olivier au mur, du mur sur un rocher° énorme et du rocher au sol.

achever = to finish
percher = to perch
avoir une faim de loup = to be famished
l'amandier (m.) = the almond tree
la noix = the nut
en brique = brick
entourer = to surround
remuer = to wiggle
la queue = tail
la descente = the descent
sauter = to jump
le rocher = the rock

　　　Having finished his job, he observed the yard, perching on his branch. He was famished. His eyes stopped on a tall almond tree full of nuts, located on the other side of the brick wall that surrounded the yellow house.
　　　The little squirrel wiggled his tail and started down the olive tree. He jumped from the olive tree to the wall, from the wall to an enormous rock, and from the rock to the ground.