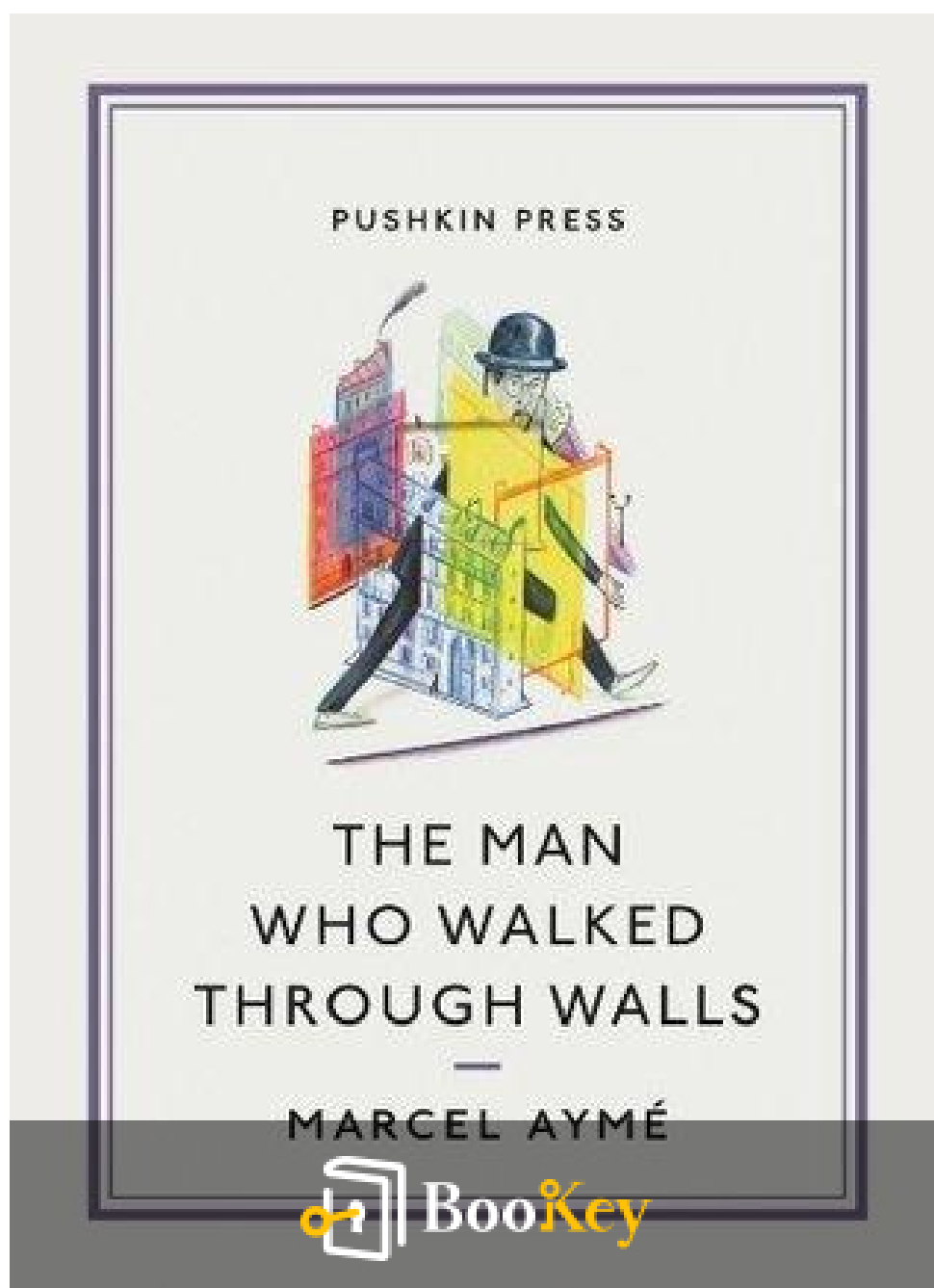


The Man Who Walked Through Walls PDF (Limited Copy)

Marcel Aymé



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The Man Who Walked Through Walls Summary

From Unassuming Clerk to Reluctant Super-Villain: A Comedic
Journey

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About the book

In "The Man Who Walked Through Walls," Marcel Aymé introduces readers to Monsieur Dutilleul, an ordinary clerk whose life takes a drastic turn upon the realization of his extraordinary ability to walk through solid walls. Despite this seemingly magical talent, Dutilleul has remained trapped in a mundane existence, constrained by the routine of office life and the oppressive nature of his tyrannical boss.

The tension escalates as Dutilleul's patience is tested, leading him to embrace his gift in unexpected ways. What begins as an escape from the drudgery of his daily life soon evolves into a thrilling escapade as he embarks on a series of intramural adventures that blur the lines between right and wrong. Gradually, Dutilleul's actions transform him into a reluctant super-villain, using his ability to flout authority and turn the tables on those who have oppressed him.

As Dutilleul delves deeper into this newfound life of crime, the narrative explores themes of identity and rebellion. His journeys reveal not only the absurdity of his circumstances but also instigate moments of deep introspection, highlighting the pathos of his unremarkable existence. Aymé's blend of anarchic comedy and genuine emotion invites readers to reflect on the complexities of human nature and the desire for freedom in a conformist world. Ultimately, through Dutilleul's unique lens, the story challenges our

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perceptions of normalcy, power, and the lengths one might go to reclaim autonomy.

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About the author

Certainly! Here's a smooth and logical summary of "The Man Who Walked Through Walls" by Marcel Aym  , incorporating background information as needed:

In "The Man Who Walked Through Walls," Marcel Aym   introduces readers to the protagonist, Dutilleul, an ordinary office worker living in a Parisian neighborhood. Dutilleul is initially depicted as a mundane figure trapped in a monotonous routine, working at a government office where he feels unappreciated and overlooked. His life takes an unexpected turn when he discovers an extraordinary ability: he can walk through walls. This newfound power symbolizes liberation from the confines of his humdrum existence and opens doors to a myriad of adventures.

As Dutilleul embraces his ability, he begins to indulge in small acts of mischief, using his power to navigate through obstacles and escape the frustrations of everyday life. His antics quickly escalate from lighthearted escapades to more daring exploits, as he finds himself robbing expensive jewelry from stores and infiltrating the homes of the wealthy. Aym   cleverly critiques society's moral ambiguity through Dutilleul's actions, showcasing the contrast between the mundane world and the fantastical elements of his

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new abilities.

However, the trajectory of Dutilleul's life changes once again when his extraordinary talents attract the attention of the authorities. He becomes a target of the police, indicating that society struggles to accept anyone who defies its norms, regardless of how innocuous their intentions may be. As he navigates the challenges posed by his duality—being both an extraordinary being and a hunted man—Dutilleul grapples with the implications of his powers on human relationships and personal integrity.

The story culminates when Dutilleul's ability leads to unforeseen consequences, forcing him to confront the reality of his existence. By walking through walls, he transcends physical barriers but ultimately finds that he cannot escape the emotional and social barriers that define human experience. Aymé's blend of humor and poignant social commentary culminates in a thought-provoking reflection on freedom, identity, and the human condition.

In this whimsical yet reflective tale, Aymé not only entertains but also invites readers to ponder the complexities of life and the choices we make when faced with extraordinary circumstances. "The Man Who Walked Through Walls" remains a celebrated work among Aymé's oeuvre, standing as a testament to his ability to weave magic realism with profound insight

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into the human psyche.

This summary captures the essence of the narrative and its themes while providing context for understanding the character's journey and the author's intent.

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Chapter 1 Summary: THE MAN WHO WALKED THROUGH WALLS

Summary of Chapter 1: The Man Who Walked Through Walls

In the idyllic Montmartre district of Paris, we are introduced to Dutilleul, a modest and reserved clerk at the Ministry of Records. Living a mundane life, Dutilleul possesses an unusual ability: he can walk through walls, a skill he unwittingly discovers during a brief power outage. Although this talent initially unsettles him, he chooses to suppress it, preferring the comfort of his ordinary routine.

A pivotal shift occurs when Monsieur Lécuyer, a stern and authoritarian deputy clerk, takes the helm at the Ministry. His brusque demeanor and oppressive management style disrupt Dutilleul's tranquil existence, pushing him into a cramped cubbyhole office and instituting burdensome reforms. Frustration builds within Dutilleul as he suffers Lécuyer's disdainful treatment, ultimately leading him to act on a whim of revenge.

In a moment of audacious mischief, Dutilleul uses his extraordinary gift to manifest just his head through the wall of Lécuyer's office, hurling insults at the beleaguered clerk. This supernatural confrontation leaves Lécuyer horrified and triggers a downward spiral that results in his job loss. Free



from Lécuyer's tyranny, Dutilleul harbors an insatiable curiosity to explore the full extent of his powers.

Embracing a life of crime, Dutilleul adopts the moniker "The Werewolf," becoming a notorious burglar who effortlessly infiltrates banks and jewelry stores across Paris. His clever heists captivate public attention and earn him a blend of admiration and humiliation, particularly when he admits his wrongdoings to bemused colleagues.

However, Dutilleul's luck eventually falters. Captured during one of his escapades, he yearns for the camaraderie of his colleagues, who mockingly label him "Werewolf." Even in custody, he is unbothered, flaunting his skills and mockingly taunting prison guards as he escapes time and again.

The turning point comes when a chance encounter with a captivating woman leads him to ingest a medication that inhibits his ability to pass through walls. In a cruel twist of fate, he becomes tragically trapped within a wall, reflecting on the irony of his once-great adventures now culminating in isolation and lament.

This chapter elegantly explores themes of conformity versus individuality, the consequences of revenge, and the quest for identity. Dutilleul's whimsical journey from the ordinary to the extraordinary and back again serves as a cautionary tale about the delicate balance between embracing



one's uniqueness and the perils that can come from deviating too far from societal norms.

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Chapter 2 Summary: SABINE WOMEN

Summary of Chapter 2: The Man Who Walked Through Walls

In the vibrant neighborhood of Montmartre, we are introduced to Sabine, a young woman with a remarkable and secret ability to multiply herself. This power, which she usually employs for mundane tasks—such as making breakfast or preparing for outings—remains hidden from her husband, Antoine Lemurier. However, Sabine's life takes a thrilling turn when she meets Theorem, a charming painter whose allure awakens a tempest of desire within her.

As Sabine begins an affair with Theorem, she skillfully navigates her dual existence. She juggles her feelings by physically multiplying herself, enabling her to spend time with both her husband, Antoine, and the seducing artist. Initially, Sabine intends to remain faithful, yet her growing attachment to Theorem leads her to indulge in two vacations simultaneously: one idyllic retreat with Antoine at a tranquil lake in Auvergne, and another enchanting escape with Theorem at a beach in Brittany.

As days pass, Antoine becomes aware of a shift in Sabine's personality; the joy that once filled her presence now carries a weight of hidden sorrow. While he is baffled by the change, Sabine's guilt deepens as she becomes



increasingly entangled in her dual relationships. The financial hardships faced by Theorem exacerbate their tumultuous bond, compelling Sabine to relinquish her jewelry to support him. Yet, Theorem's own insecurities and emotional volatility, exacerbated by his drinking, create barriers that strain their connection.

Amid Sabine's efforts to balance her romances, her complex emotional landscape unravels. She grapples with her loyalty to Antoine and the guilt of her illicit affair. This tension culminates in a chance encounter that forces both Theorem and Antoine to confront the reality of Sabine's infidelity, triggering chaos and conflict in their intertwined lives.

The chapter delves into themes of duality—illustrating how one person can inhabit multiple realities—and examines the societal pressures surrounding fidelity, the nature of love, and the pursuit of artistic ambition. As Sabine navigates her shifting loyalties and emotions, the lines between fantasy and reality blur, prompting her to reflect on the profound consequences of her choices. In this dramatic climax, Sabine's hidden truths become poised to unravel the connections they all share, immersing them in a web of complicated relationships and self-discovery.



Chapter 3 Summary: TICKETS ON TIME

Summary of Chapter 3: "Tickets on Time"

Chapter 3 of Jules Flegmon's diary delves into the surreal world shaped by a government decree that implements a life rationing system. This draconian measure, presented as a means to boost productivity, targets those labeled as “unproductive,” including the elderly, retirees, and creative individuals such as artists and writers. Flegmon conveys his mixed feelings of amusement and outrage as he observes the societal upheaval this policy generates.

The chapter introduces several key characters, notably Roquenton, Flegmon’s elderly neighbor, who expresses concern over his younger wife’s future in a world where life expectancy is calculated based on utility. Flegmon also engages in discussions with Maleffroi, a city councillor, who explains the mechanics of the life ticket system—those deemed non-contributors are relegated to a meager allotment of days based on their perceived worth. Alarming, Flegmon discovers that he, as an artist, will be granted access to only two weeks of life per month.

As registration for life tickets gets underway, Flegmon witnesses the humiliating spectacle of citizens lining up, their dignity eroded, reduced to mere numbers in an uncaring system. Amidst the chaos, the community's



spirit remains resilient, with some making light of their grim predicament, illustrating human adaptability even in the face of absurdity. Flegmon's own experience of a bizarre "temporary death," where he loses all awareness of time, highlights the surreal nature of the crisis.

When Flegmon awakens on the 1st of April, he discovers a world that has continued to evolve without him. This disorienting realization prompts him to grapple with the profound societal changes, including the rise of a black market for life tickets, complicating the moral landscape further. His interactions with characters like the widow Madame Roquenton weave threads of connection and concern, enriching the narrative with themes of loss, hope, and companionship.

Amid fleeting relationships and darkly humorous encounters, the chapter poignantly examines the concepts of mortality and value in a world bound by arbitrary restrictions. The balance of humor and horror creates a compelling narrative that challenges readers to reflect on the nature of life and death when shaped by a mechanized and inhumane societal framework. Ultimately, Flegmon's experiences highlight the resilience of the human spirit, even as it confronts the absurdity of existence under such dire circumstances.

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Chapter 4: THE PROBLEM OF SUMMERTIME

In Chapter 4 of "The Man Who Walked Through Walls," reality takes on a bizarre and surreal quality amid the backdrop of war. The narrative opens during a tumultuous period when world leaders, in a misguided attempt to ease public unrest and anxiety, concoct a scheme to artificially advance the world's clock by seventeen years. This whimsical decree is viewed as a ploy to distract citizens from the dire realities of conflict. However, once implemented, it leads to an unforeseen phenomenon: the populace believes they have genuinely lived through those missing years, complete with vivid memories and personal transformations.

The protagonist, who begins the chapter in Paris, suddenly finds himself at the port of Le Havre after this temporal manipulation takes effect. Strangely, he experiences the phenomenon of aging and evolving—writing books, raising children, undergoing life changes—despite the blink of an eye that truly separated each era. This uncanny situation compels him to ponder the essence of time and memory, as he wakes to find that the years he never actually lived feel profoundly real within his mind.

As he grapples with this surreal revelation, the protagonist prepares to visit an old friend in the Jura region. However, nature intrudes when a storm erupts, leading to a disorienting awakening in a younger, unrecognizable forest. In a shocking twist, he realizes he has been transported back to 1942,



a time when his country was under German occupation. This sudden plunge into the past places him in the midst of daunting experiences with German soldiers and townspeople, each grappling with the harsh realities of war.

As he navigates through this newly familiar yet disconcerting landscape, he

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Chapter 5 Summary: THE PROVERB

Summary of Chapter 5 from "The Man Who Walked Through Walls"

In Chapter 5, we delve into a tense family dinner led by Monsieur Jacotin, a strict and domineering father whose unpredictable temper casts a shadow over his household. As the evening unfolds, the atmosphere thickens with dread, especially following news that Jacotin might be honored with the **palmes académiques**—a prestigious recognition for his contributions to education. Despite this potential honor, Jacotin's focus shifts to his thirteen-year-old son, Lucien, a timid boy struggling under the weight of his father's expectations.

The meal quickly spirals into confrontation as Jacotin accuses Lucien of neglecting his homework, a simple French assignment that becomes a symbol of his father's rigid control and obsession with discipline. The exchange escalates as Jacotin interrogates Lucien about his day, reflecting the father's authoritarian approach and his fears of failure. Aunt Julie, a supportive figure in Lucien's life, tries to defend the boy but inadvertently exacerbates Jacotin's fury, leading to a climactic moment where she faints from the intensity of the situation, underscoring Jacotin's volatile nature.

As tensions mount, Jacotin's relentless criticism weighs heavily on Lucien,



filling him with guilt and shame. The dinner transforms into a battleground for respect and obedience, revealing Jacotin's frustration with feeling unappreciated despite his dedication to the family. In a rare moment of vulnerability, Lucien breaks down, prompting Jacotin to temper his initial anger and offer to assist Lucien with his homework. However, this attempt at connection is marred by Jacotin's stubbornness, highlighting the emotional chasm still present between father and son.

The chapter reaches a turning point when Lucien receives a disappointing grade, overshadowed by a classmate named Béruchard who excels. Jacotin's reaction to Lucien's performance reveals the depth of his emotional investment in his son's achievements; he stakes much of his own self-worth on Lucien's success.

By the chapter's end, a fragile truce emerges between father and son. Jacotin insists they will collaborate on future homework, signaling a tentative shift towards a more cooperative dynamic. Yet, the underlying need for control persists, suggesting that while some progress has been made, the father's authoritarian tendencies will continue to shape their relationship.

Themes and Character Development

This chapter intricately examines themes of parental authority, the



breakdown of communication, and the conflict between tradition and modernity within family life. Monsieur Jacotin's struggles reflect societal pressures regarding masculinity and the expectations of fatherhood. In contrast, Lucien emerges as the innocent victim caught in the crossfire of his father's lofty demands and his intrinsic yearning for understanding and connection. The evolving interaction between them deftly blends humor and poignancy, capturing the complexities of growing up in a rigid, emotionally austere environment.

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Chapter 6 Summary: POLDEVIAN LEGEND

In Chapter 6 of "The Man Who Walked Through Walls," we are introduced to the devoted Marichella Borboïé, an elderly maid whose life centers around her faith and her efforts to guide her wayward nephew, Bobislas. Marichella's steadfast piety stands in stark contrast to Bobislas's moral decline, influenced by a corrupt upbringing. Despite her attempts to instill virtues in him, Bobislas succumbs to a life filled with theft and debauchery, leading Marichella to face the painful reality of his choices.

As tensions escalate with the outbreak of war between Poldevia and Molletonia, Bobislas finds himself conscripted into the military, where he adopts a swaggering demeanor that alienates Marichella further. Observing his slide into arrogance and entitlement, she eventually feels liberated when he is sent to the front lines, relieved from his demands.

However, the narrative takes a tragic turn with the eruption of an epidemic in Cstwertskst, claiming Marichella's life. As she transitions to the afterlife, she encounters the notary—representative of her unfulfilled ambitions for Bobislas—who reveals an unsettling truth: while soldiers can pass through heaven's gates regardless of their sins, civilians must linger in purgatory. This revelation disturbs Marichella, particularly as it confirms that Bobislas is among those entitled to enter.



In a shocking twist, Bobislas recognizes Marichella during his heavenly ascent and offers her a ride on his horse, a gesture filled with both humiliation and desperation for her. When questioned by Saint Peter about her presence, Bobislas irreverently labels her a “regiment’s harlot,” which oddly facilitates her entry into heaven despite her virtuous life on Earth.

Ultimately, Marichella’s passage into the eternal realm symbolizes her redemption, despite the complex irony of her situation, as she leaves behind earthly judgments and issues.

The chapter delves into significant themes such as morality, the nature of redemption, and the ambiguity of judgment. It poses thought-provoking questions about the seeming randomness of fate and offers a poignant exploration of the disparities between virtue and vice, challenging readers to contemplate the intricate dance between faith, justice, and the human condition. Marichella's transformative journey reflects a movement from despair to acceptance, illustrating the complexities inherent in life and the afterlife.



Chapter 7 Summary: THE WIFE COLLECTOR

Summary of Chapter 7: The Wife Collector

In the charming town of Nangicourt, tax collector Gauthier-Lenoir grapples with financial pressures exacerbated by his extravagant wife, Madame Gauthier-Lenoir. She has developed an infatuation with a dashing lieutenant, indulging in costly dresses and beauty treatments, which strains their marriage and Gauthier-Lenoir's finances. Despite his diminishing income and growing frustrations—especially towards punctual taxpayers like Monsieur Rebuffaud, whom he regards with disdain—Gauthier-Lenoir remains affectionately patient with his wife.

As the story unfolds, Madame Gauthier-Lenoir elopes with the lieutenant, plunging Gauthier-Lenoir into heartbreak and irrationality. Grieving and disoriented, he absurdly addresses a warning notice to himself about being delinquent as a taxpayer, reflecting his spiraling mental state. This self-reflection leads to odd dialogues where he complains about losing his wife to his own bureaucratic role.

The narrative takes an even stranger turn with the introduction of a new tax regulation that humorously mandates taxpayers to "pay in" their wives, leading to confusion and resignation among the townspeople. When



Gauthier-Lenoir suggests enforcing this bizarre policy, it results in a queue of men at the tax office, eager to comply. The situation draws the attention of a Minister of Taxation, who finds amusement in the chaos, suggesting a satirical take on bureaucratic absurdities. Ironically, this farce culminates in Gauthier-Lenoir receiving a promotion.

Overall, this chapter explores themes of marital loyalty, the weight of authority, and the absurdities inherent in bureaucracy against the backdrop of economic hardship and societal norms. Ultimately, it invites readers to reflect on the tension between personal desires and societal obligations.

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Chapter 8: THE SEVEN-LEAGUE BOOTS

Summary of Chapter 8: The Seven-League Boots

In this chapter, we are introduced to Germaine Buge, a dedicated mother who tirelessly works as a housekeeper to provide for her son, Antoine. On a bitterly cold December day, Germaine anxiously leaves her employer's apartment, filled with worry for Antoine, who hasn't yet returned from school. Antoine is grappling with a dilemma: while he is eager to join a group of adventurous boys led by the bold Frioulat, he feels a strong sense of responsibility toward his mother. Ultimately, the thrill of camaraderie wins out, and he stays with his friends.

The boys set off on a neighborhood expedition, buoyed by dreams of adventure. Their curiosity leads them to a junk shop, where they discover a pair of legendary "seven-league boots." These magical boots are said to grant the wearer the ability to travel vast distances with just one step, igniting their imaginations and hopes for escape from their mundane lives.

However, the dynamics within the group begin to unravel as Frioulat's domineering personality alienates some boys, resulting in conflict and division. Antoine and his friend Baranquin, feeling marginalized, decide to leave the group after observing Frioulat's arrogance.



Their day takes a turn when, in their haste to escape an encounter with the shopkeeper, they tumble into a trench, leading to injuries that require hospital attention. Germaine, upon learning of the accident, rushes to the hospital, her heart heavy with anxiety. In contrast to the affluent backgrounds of the other boys, she feels the painful weight of her own poverty and isolation, which becomes more pronounced as she interacts with the other families.

In a moment of determination, Germaine seeks out the seven-league boots, successfully negotiating with the eccentric shopkeeper to purchase them for just twenty-five francs. This purchase sparks a transformation in their small, dreary garret, filling it with new hope. That evening, Antoine eagerly tries on the boots and, to his astonishment, takes a leap into a fantastical adventure, veering into a world of dreams and possibilities.

Key Themes and Character Development:

- **Poverty and Sacrifice:** Germaine's struggles underscore the sacrifices she endures for Antoine, starkly contrasting with the more privileged lives of the other boys.
- **Friendship and Rivalry:** The evolving relationships among Antoine and his friends illustrate the challenges of childhood friendships, where loyalty and leadership often clash.
- **Dreams and Escapism:** The seven-league boots symbolize the



children's craving for adventure and freedom, serving as an escape from their harsh realities.

- **Parental Relations:** Germaine's relationship with Antoine is filled with deep love and concern, intensified by their shared hardships throughout the chapter.

This chapter artfully intertwines themes of childhood imagination, social class disparities, and the search for belonging, all woven into a delightful tale of adventure and hope.

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Chapter 9 Summary: THE BAILIFF

Summary of Chapter 9: The Bailiff Malicorne's Transformation

In this chapter, we follow the journey of Malicorne, a bailiff in a small French town. Historically, bailiffs were responsible for enforcing the law, often leading to a harsh enforcement of regulations that impacted the vulnerable, such as widows and orphans. Malicorne embodies this unyielding duty, operating with a callousness that brings ruin to those in distress.

The narrative takes a sharp turn when Malicorne dies in his sleep and finds himself facing Saint Peter, who prepares to condemn him to hell for his ruthless actions. Despite Malicorne's defense that he was simply doing his job, Saint Peter emphasizes the suffering he has inflicted on others.

In a moment of divine compassion, God intervenes, recognizing Malicorne's situation as a chance for redemption. Instead of casting him into hell, God sends Malicorne back to Earth, assigning him the mission of reform through good deeds. Awakened to a second opportunity for life, Malicorne resolves to alter his path.

His transformation begins with small gestures of kindness, such as



increasing the salaries of his clerk and maid, meticulously noting every good deed in a notebook while disregarding the bad. His attempts at altruism are primarily driven by self-interest, as he hopes to bolster his case for entry into Heaven. Yet, the community begins to recognize his efforts, and he earns admiration as a philanthropist.

However, as Malicorne immerses himself in this newfound kindness, he confronts a profound emotional struggle. During a visit to a destitute family, he encounters a terrified child and a distraught mother, leading to an unexpected conflict with the landlord, Gorgerin. In an act of courage, Malicorne stands up for the family, shouting “Down with landlords!” This noble act, however, results in his violent death at Gorgerin’s hands.

When Malicorne arrives in the afterlife, Saint Peter initially dismisses him, but God intervenes once more. Acknowledging Malicorne’s one significant act of goodness—defending the impoverished mother and child—God welcomes him into Paradise. The chapter concludes with the sound of angelic music that celebrates Malicorne's transformation from a soul hardened by duty to one that stands courageously on the side of the oppressed.

Key Themes: Redemption and Transformation

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This chapter eloquently depicts the themes of redemption and transformation. It illustrates that personal change is achievable through positive deeds, even if initially driven by self-serving motives. Malicorne's story resonates with the idea that societal roles can shape individual actions, yet it ultimately champions the possibility of moral evolution through empathy and bravery, offering a narrative of hope that even those with troubled pasts can forge a path towards goodness.

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Chapter 10 Summary: WHILE WAITING

Summary of Chapter 10: The Man Who Walked Through Walls

In this poignant chapter from Marcel Aymé's "The Man Who Walked Through Walls," the setting of wartime Montmartre serves as a backdrop for a group of fourteen individuals gathered in line outside a grocer's shop. Each character is linked by the profound struggles and shared adversities wrought by the conflict, forging a collective bond amidst their hardships.

The chapter unfolds through the reflections of various characters who provide insight into their emotional burdens and the grim realities of life during the war. An elderly man shares his heart-wrenching tale of loss, mourning his late wife, Marie. Her death followed her sacrifice of selling a treasured silver fox-fur coat—a piece that once symbolized joy and comfort—underscoring the fleeting nature of happiness amidst sorrow and survival struggles.

Amidst the diverse voices, a young woman grapples with her shifting identity as she adjusts to her husband's absence on the battlefield. Her journey toward self-discovery and independence creates a poignant tension as she anticipates his return, questioning how she will reconcile her changed self with the woman he once knew.



Other characters contribute to the narrative tapestry with their own stories: a housewife voices her distress over her children's suffering, an aging dressmaker laments the decline of her career, and a young girl recounts a terrifying experience in the streets, illuminating the emotional toll inflicted by the war. Their experiences highlight the relentless fight for survival, the desperation for basic necessities, and the stark inequalities faced by the impoverished amidst scarcity.

The chapter reaches a tragic climax with the sudden collapse and death of the young woman, overwhelmed by the crushing weight of poverty and despair. As her newfound friends come together to navigate the painful logistics of her funeral, themes of solidarity, loss, and communal grief resonate deeply.

Through this chapter, Aymé poignantly illustrates human resilience, personal transformation, and the bonds that form in times of crisis. It captures the essence of how wartime experiences fracture lives yet also weave together shared memories, grief, and essential companionship in the face of overwhelming adversity.

