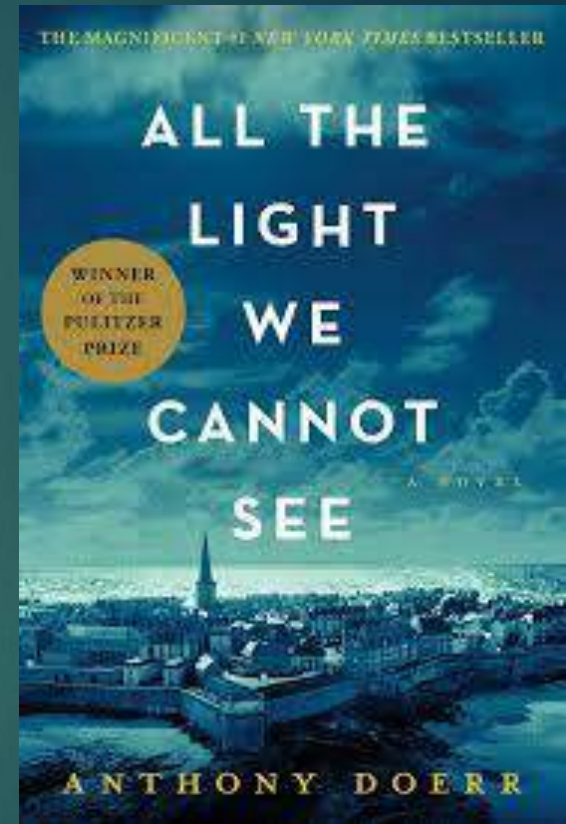


All the light we cannot see

ANTHONY DOERR



Stroll through Saint-Malo streets as the young Marie-Laure...

It is a book about World War II as seen through the eyes of a French girl and a German boy. The story begins in 1939, skips to August 1944, interweaving the lives of the two children and how the war affects them. The French girl, Marie-Laure is blind from an early age and raised by a devoted and loving father who is the keeper of keys and locksmith for a museum in Paris. The boy, Werner Pfennig, is an orphan, who lives in a small orphanage in Zollverein, 300 miles northeast of Paris.

The novel takes place in the walled city of Saint-Malo, a terrifically picturesque and apt setting for the most dramatic part of the story.



Introduction

- ▶ In August 1944 the historic walled city of Saint-Malo, the brightest jewel of the Emerald Coast of Brittany, France, was almost totally destroyed by fire. ... Of the 865 buildings within the walls, only 182 remained standing and all were damaged to some degree.

Philip Beck

Anthony Doerr was the Honour Guest of The International Writers House (4 rue du Pélicot - Saint-Malo) on May 22, 2015 when he launched his novel.

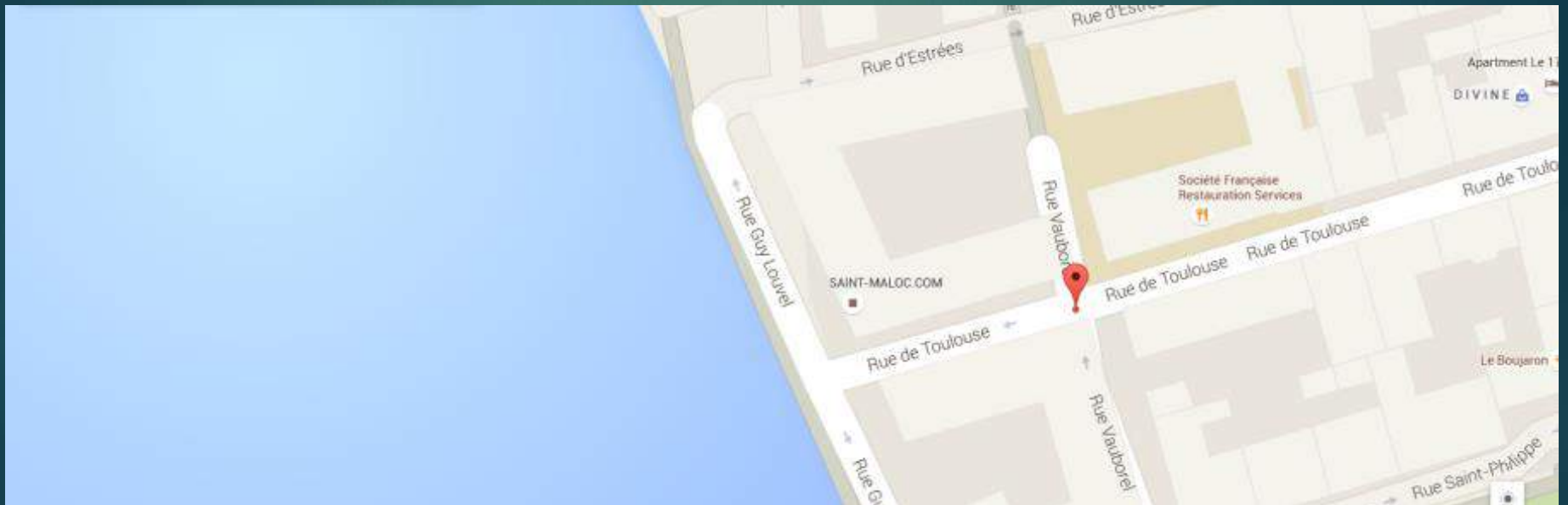


Places related to Marie-Laure's story

- ▶ *Number 4 rue Vauborel (page 12)*: « Number 4: the tall, derelict bird's nest of a house owned by her great-uncle Etienne. Where she has lived for four years. Where she kneels on the sixth floor alone, as a dozen American bombers roar toward her. »
- ▶ *The Boches (page 145)*: « [...] The first floor belongs to Madame Manec: clean, navigable, full of visitors who come through the kitchen door to trade in small-town scandal. [...] Eleven winding steps lead to the second floor, which is full of the smells of faded grandeur [...] More clutter on the third floor: boxes of jars, metal disks, and rusty jigsaws; [...] By the fourth floor, things are piled everywhere, in the rooms and corridors and along the staircase [...] Etienne's huge study colonizes the entire fifth floor, alternately deeply quiet or else full of voices or music or static. Then there's the sixth floor: her grandfather's tidy bedroom on the left, toilet straight ahead, the little room where she sleeps with her father on the right. »



4 Rue Vauborel



4 rue Vauborel, today



View from Rue Vauborel

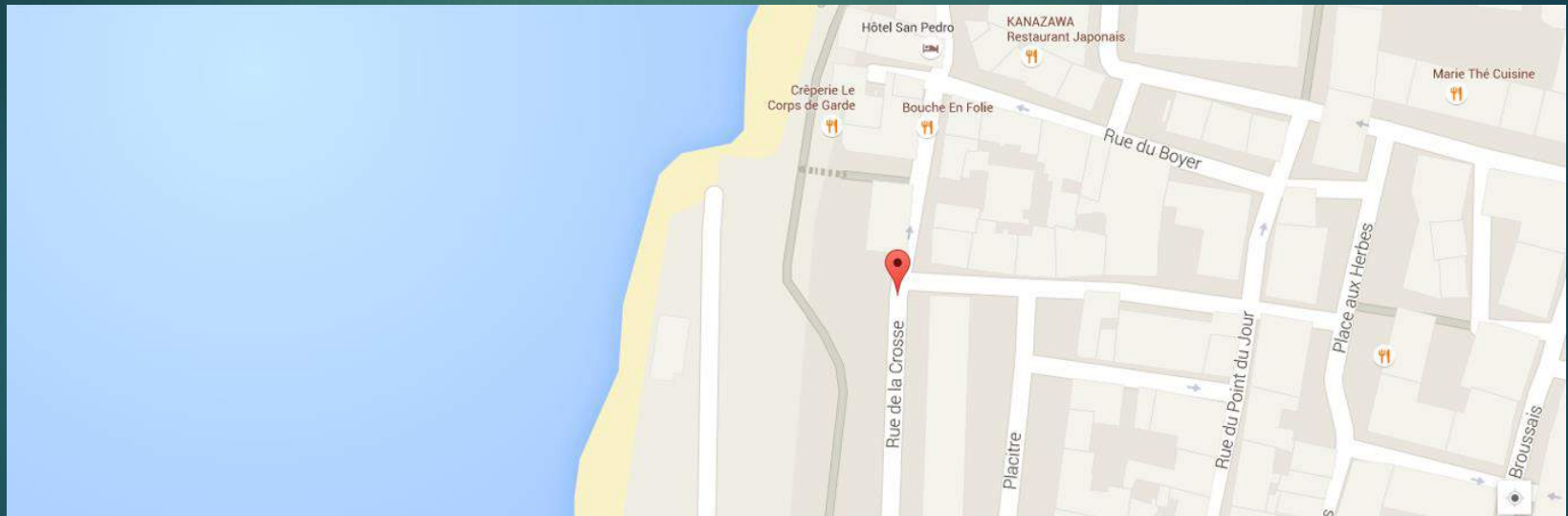


Hotel of Bees

- ▶ Werner arrived later in St Malo citadel and stayed at the Hotel of Bees (from the author's imagination)
- ▶ *The Boy (page 7)*: « Not so long ago, the Hotel of Bees was a cheerful address, with bright blue shutters on its facade and oysterson ice in its café [...] It offered twenty-one guest rooms, commanding sea views, and a lobby fireplace as big as a truck. »



Hotel of Bees, situated Rue de la Crosse



Hotel rue de la Crosse, today



When Marie-Laure goes out

- ▶ Marie-Laure's first walk within the citadel
- Marie-Laure goes out with Mme Manec to discover the Môle beach

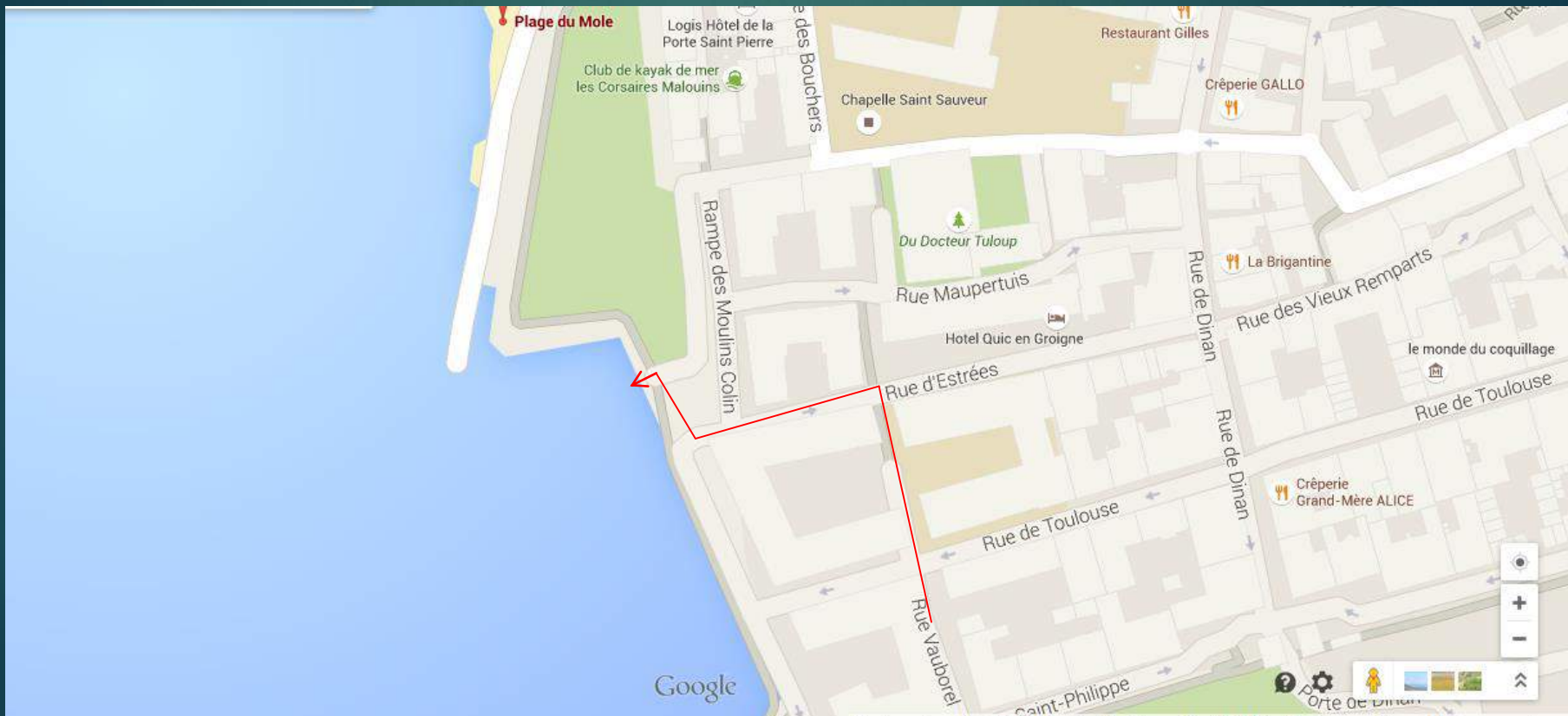


Rue Vauborel - Beach

- ▶ *The Rounds (page 241):* « Twenty-two paces to the intersection with the rue d'Estrées. Forty more to the little gate. Nine steps down and she's on the sand and the twenty thousands sounds of the ocean engulf her. »



To the beach



Grotto

Grotto (page 259): « He leads Marie-Laure and Madame Manec down what Marie-Laure thinks is the rue du Boyer, though it could be the rue Vincent de Gournay or the rue des Hautes Salles. They reach the base of the ramparts and turn right, following a lane Marie-Laure has not been on before. They descend two steps, pass through a curtain of hanging ivy [...] The alley grows narrower and narrower until they must walk single file, the walls close on either side, and then they stop. [...] From what she can tell, it's a low grotto, maybe four yards long and half as wide, shaped like a loaf of bread. »



The watchdogs

► The watchdogs

During the night, the local people released 24 enormous dogs, fed and housed by the chapter of cannons, to guard the town moat. They had a very bad reputation, they were wild beasts and caused numerous accidents. They terrified strangers who, unaware of their existence, were savagely bitten.

(Editions Gisserot - Saint-Malo)

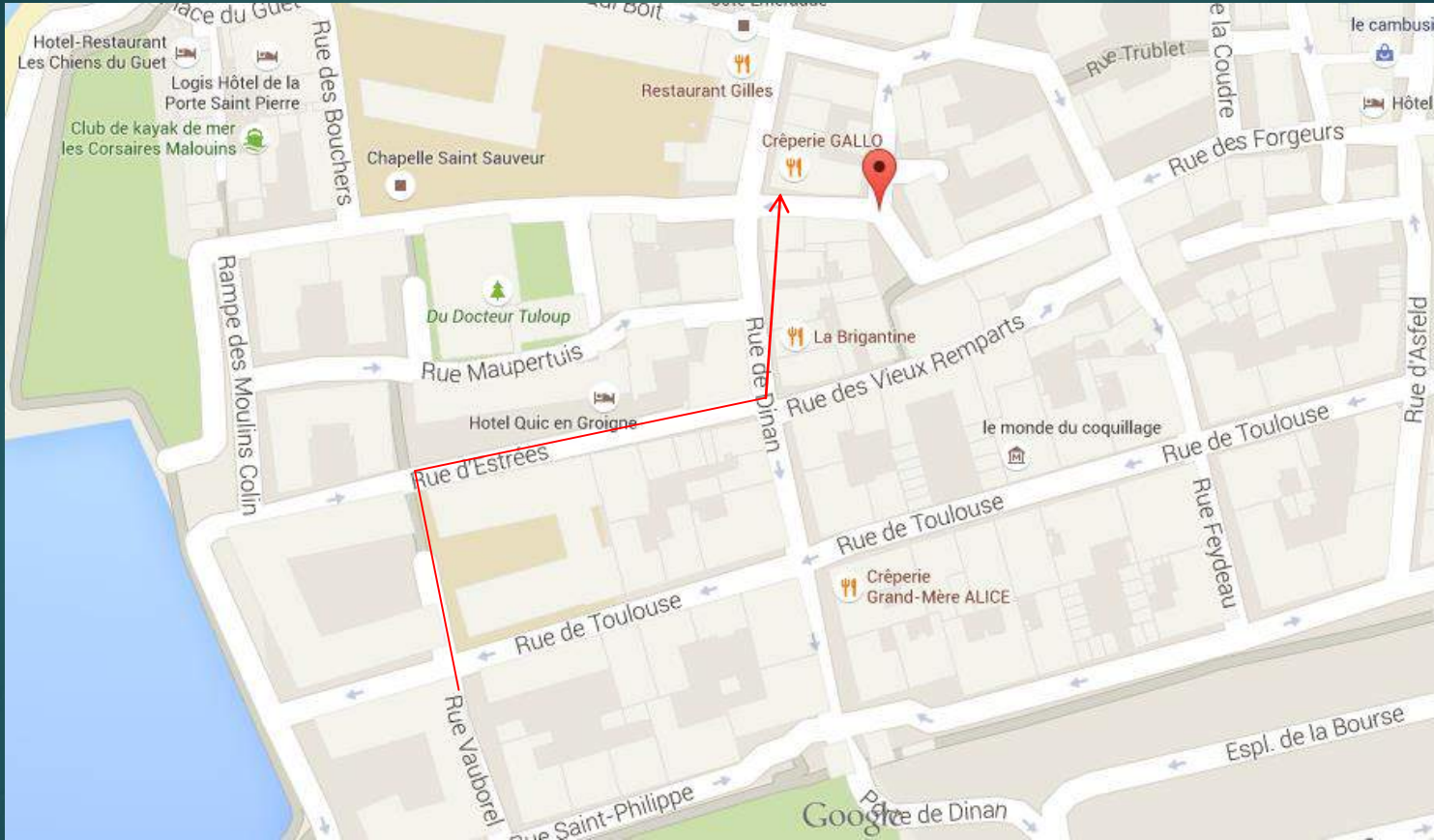


To the bakery

Grotto (page 341): « Twenty-two paces down the rue Vauborel. Then right for sixteen storm drains. Turn left on the rue Robert Surcouf. Nine more drains to the bakery. »



From rue Vauborel to bakery



Bakery rue de Dinan, today.

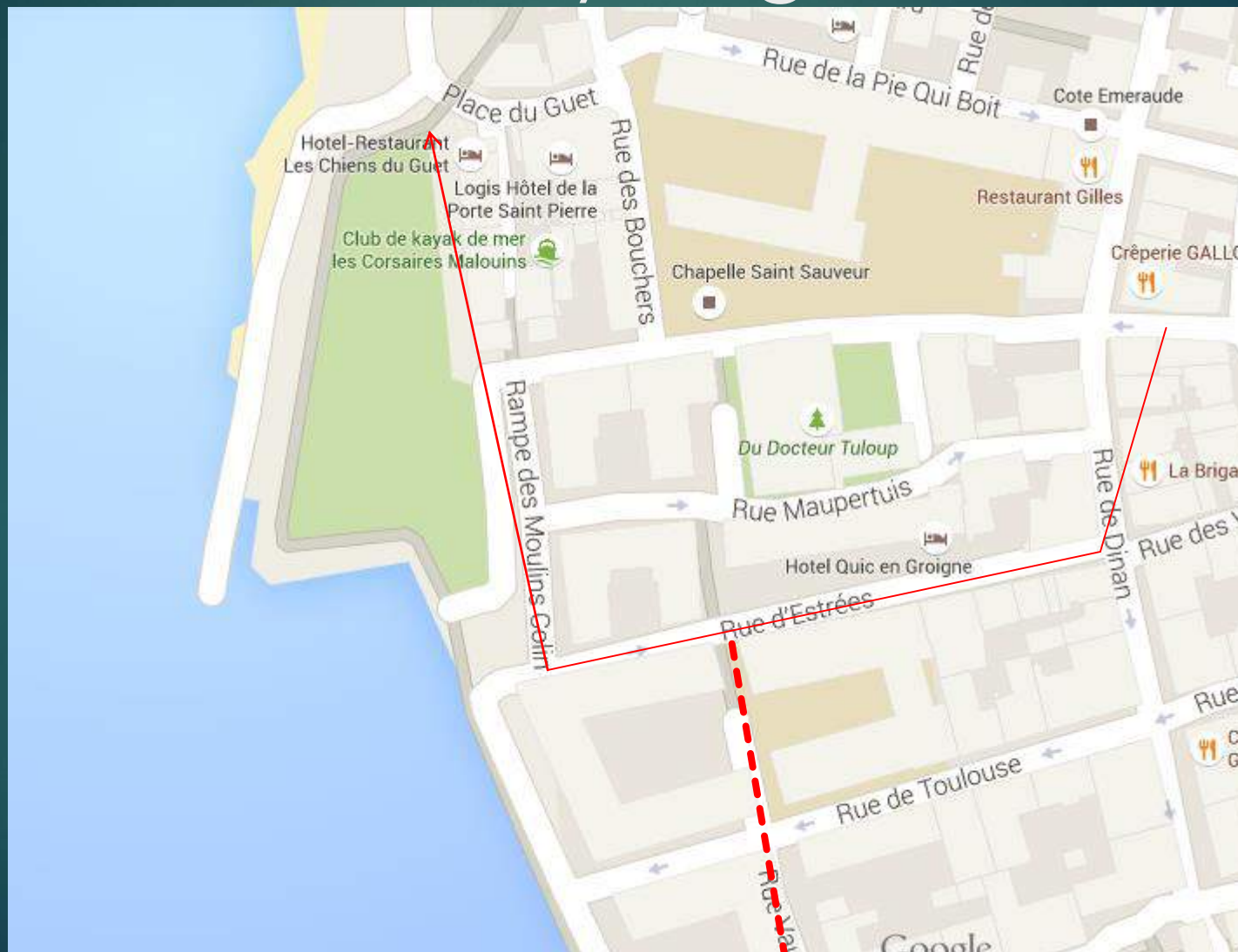


From the bakery to grotto

May (page 403): « At the intersection with the rue d'Estrées, she turns not left, toward home, but right. Fifty meters to the ramparts, a hundred or so more along the base of the walls. »

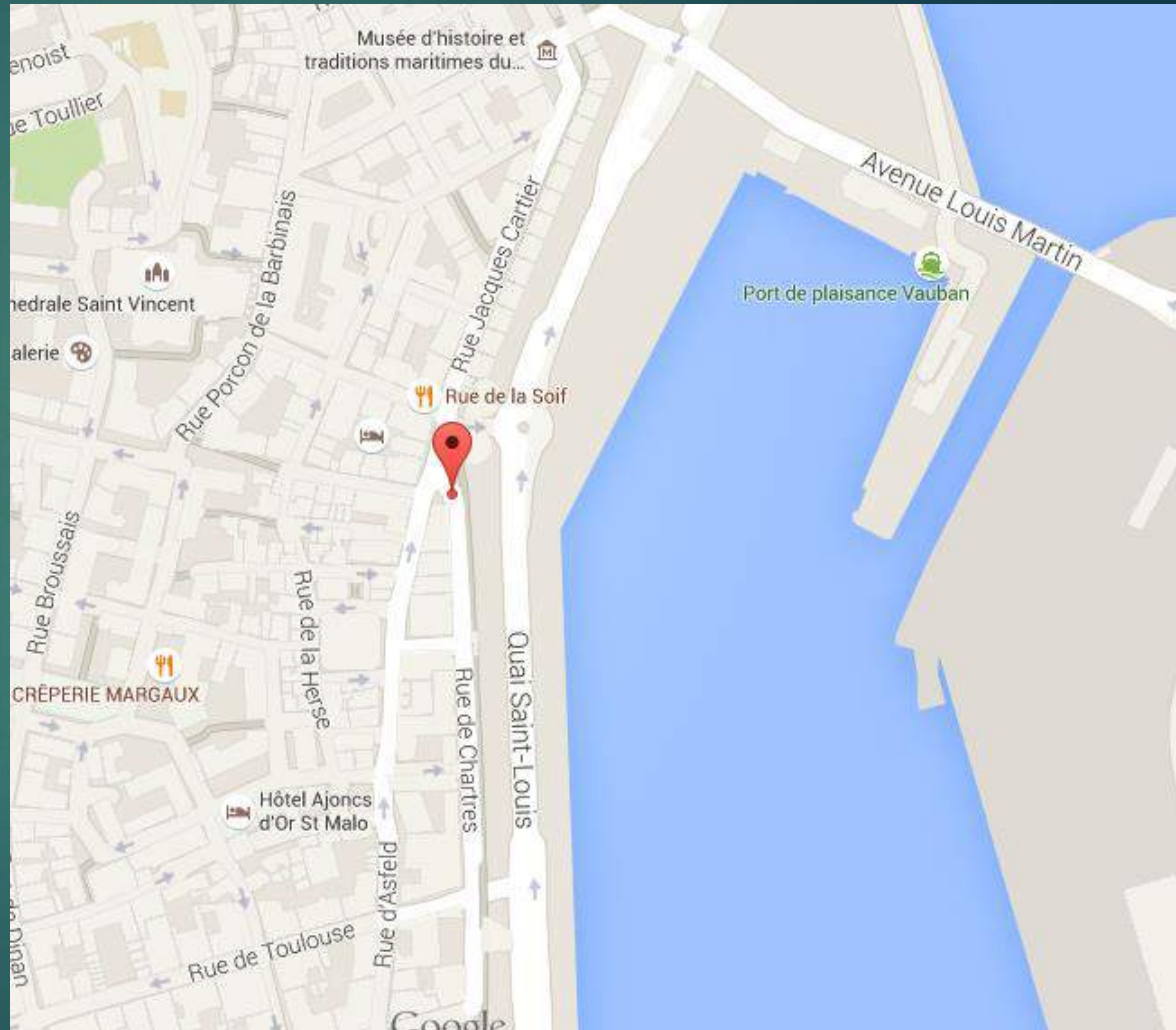


From the bakery to grotto



27 rue de Chartres

Mandatory Surrender (page 171): « Members of the population must relinquish all radio receivers now in their possession. Radio sets are to be delivered to 27 rue de Chartres before tomorrow noon. Anyone failing to carry out this order will be arrested as a saboteur .»



Saint-Vincent Cathedral

In the attic (page 376): « For all of Marie-Laure's four years in Saint-Malo, the bells at St Vincent's have marked the hours. But now the bells have ceased. »



Bastion de la Hollande

The Girl (page 5): [...] « She finds the opening atop the walls where four ceremonial cannons point to sea. « Bastion de la Hollande, » she whispers, and her fingers walk down a little staircase. « Rue des Cordiers. Rue Jacques Cartier. » [...] Her fingers travel back to the cathedral spire. South to the Gate of Dinan. »

Visitor (page 447): « [...] Where are you headed, Corporal ? The fortress at la Cité, sir. We are evacuating. Leaving everything. We still hold the château and the bastion de la Hollande. All other personnel are to fall back. »





Bastion de la Hollande

Hollande bastion

Le bastion de la Hollande a été bâti à partir de 1674 à la suite de l'écroulement d'une partie du mur d'enceinte primitif de la ville protégeant une ancienne plateforme. Cette dernière supportait trois moulins à vent dénommés Moulins Collin.

Le nouveau bastion prit le nom de Hollande parce que la construction de l'ouvrage commença pendant la guerre contre ce pays. Il fut terminé par l'ingénieur Siméon de Garegeau et armé de



The Bastion
lower
plate
windmills
The bastion
began
It

Bastion de la Hollande

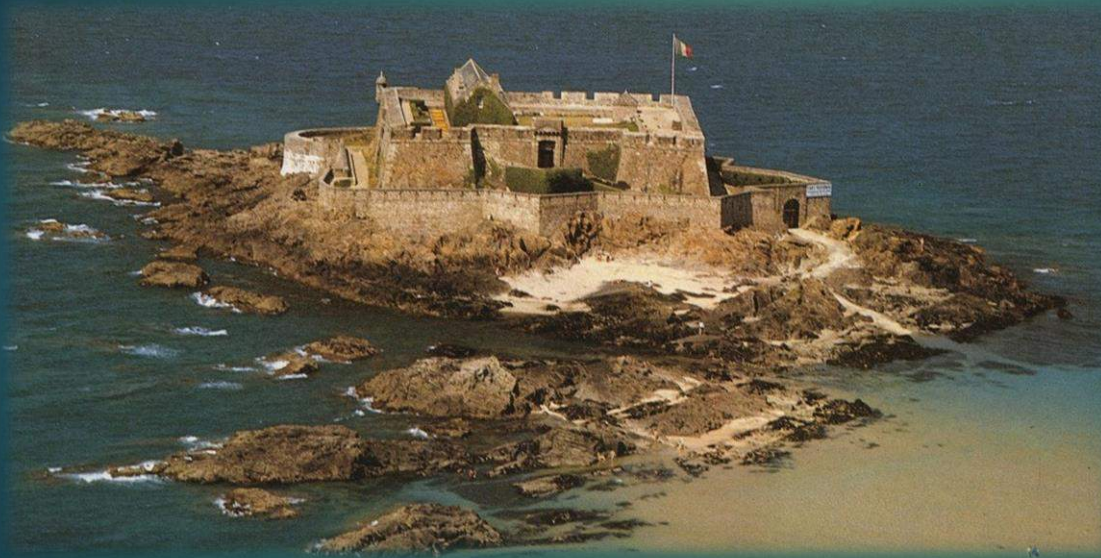
Antenna (page 408):

[...] « The Austrians at the Hotel of Bees use a crane to lower an 88-millimeter cannon onto a bastion in the ramparts. »



Fort National

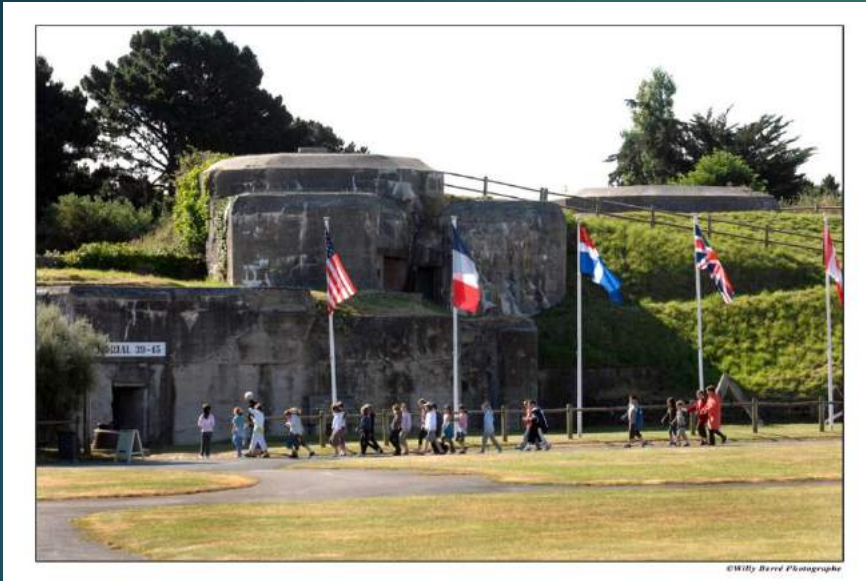
Used as a prison under German occupation



Numbers (page 428): « [...] That they are going to check everyone's papers, and every man of fighting age, anyone who could be taking part in the resistance, will be imprisoned at Fort National. »



Cité d'Alet



- ▶ *Saint-Malo (page 10): [...]*
« But not here. Not this last citadel at the edge of the continent, this final German strongpoint on the Breton coast. [...] Beneath the peninsular fort of La Cité, across the river from the old city, there are rooms of bandages, rooms of ammunition, even an underground hospital, or so it is believed. »



View from la Cité d'Alet



Grand Bé islet

- ▶ The Rounds (page 241) : [...] « Her greatest pleasure is to walk to the north end of the beach at low tide and squat below an island that Madame Manec calls Le Grand Bé and let her fingers whisk around in the tidepools.»



Historical museum, place Chateaubriand

- ▶ Saint-Malo (page 241) : [...] « On their second morning, they sit in the Place Chateaubriand across from the historical museum, where sturdy benches face flower beds ringed by shin-high metal half loops. »

