

Chapter Eight

THE TONGUE OF TONGUES

“English or French?” using the second alternative, the man, seated behind a desk as long and broad as a four-poster, called across the room after Remy had cleared the threshold. Although only half of the coat was discernible, he was certain that the rest completed a brown heather wool-flannel chalk-stripe suit. The straight-collar shirt was blue washed chambray, and the nutmeg silk tie, a Sulka, carried a seahorse motif.

“He wears his ‘bespoke’ upon his sleeves,” Remy self-quipped, “and not merely when seeing off his wife.”

A much less ebullient Belsches had again been waiting at the embassy’s pentagonal reception desk designated during his nine o’clock *appel téléphonique* to Remy, “Ambassador Leroy will meet with you at eleven, if that is convenient.”

It was the PAO, reserved in the ride up, who had opened the third-story office door though he balked at encroaching on the blue-based, elegantly patterned Persian carpet.

“The latter will leave Elbert ‘behind the arras.’” Leroy turned his head slightly to his right where a straight-backed Medlin was ensconced in an English Regency armchair, with his elbows on its gold-leaf arms and gabled index fingers nervously jabbing at his philtrum.

Leroy’s under-the-breath laugh ensued, probably occasioned by Remy’s undisguised bemused reaction: knowing the “arras” phrase—yet not from where.

“My English is not so very good,” Remy clarified in that tongue, before assuming the chair to which Leroy’s stare had directed him. At the opposite corner of the desk, it thereby situated Medlin farther away from Remy than from Leroy or reciprocally “positioned Leroy nearer to both of us.”

Like the DCM’s, its seat and back were upholstered with a beige silk, and as such both were “diluted contrasts” to the ambassador’s towering black-leather executive chair.

“*Donc, le français il sera!*” Leroy concurred, at once explaining to Medlin that despite the fact they would not be conversing in English, he wanted him to stay.

“No, no! I create a problem,” Remy exclaimed. “Let it be yours. I would not wish M. Medlin shadowed by the tapestry.” By adopting a variant of the phrase, he hoped not simply to awaken the original, but also to convey his interest in it.

A smug grin made apparent Leroy’s intention of not heeding either Remy’s avowed demur or covert appeal. “M. Foucin praises you highly, avouches you have a theory built on sound apodictic theorems.”

Remy did not delay his pronouncement. “The negative found on M. Ballard. There exists a reasonable probability he entered the grove without it.”

The negligible parting of the ambassador's lips was succeeded by a sustained intake of breath. "A sterling beginning. If the proof's as pure, no counterfeited disgrace for my friend."

Leroy twisted around to translate for Medlin, dressed in an off-the-rack navy-blue blazer. The revelation produced three immediate effects on the aide: The pricking ceased; his head jerked back; and his hands dropped into his lap where the triangulated indexes continued to move, treading the air about the inseams of his charcoal black pants.

With his gaze *de novo* on Remy, Leroy nodded for him to resume. During the next ten minutes, he summarized what Foucin and he had learned from Mohisen. At those times in which he averted his face from Leroy's, piece by piece he developed an inference about the office.

Except for his and Medlin's chairs, it contained only two other delicate touches: Far away on the wall to Remy's left, as the unrivaled occupant of the middle shelf of an inlaid bookcase, brooding in its dark-stained mahogany, was a small swirling pink crystalline vase.

In it resided a rose of the same muted tint, its burnet-hued stem, yellow-tipped thorns, and leaves, green-backed as a frog's skin, visible to him through the transparent, albeit blurring, receptacle, three-quarter-filled with water. *And newly plucked!* he marveled.

Moreover, covering the office's massive picture window were drained-blue sheers, so finely spun that the infiltrating sunlight had dissolved the "airy" cloth into a nothingness.

All else, however, had a masculine texture and conductivity. It was wallpapered in the solid deep blue of the carpet. Like the bookcase, Leroy's desk, the right-side racetrack conference table, and its fourteen captain's chairs were lacquered a fuscous brown. All had stocky, clean-cut legs.

Spying over the desk were two large framed photographs of nearly equal size, one hung a handspan below the other, of President George Bush and his Secretary of State James Baker.

As counterargument, the sheers were bordered by the thick velvet of tied-back maroon drapes that at a flick would shroud the chamber, save for the pink rose: Being artificially resuscitated by the vase's water, through its perspiration, it would transcend the darkness.

Either on the desk or in the bookcase, no pictures or other memorabilia. "As little use for the past as I have," thought Remy. Not even a photograph of his wife, and he remembered how protectively Leroy had embraced her two days ago. That image, as pleasantly expected, evoked one of Marie's plump and loving countenance.

Finished, Remy expected Leroy to swivel and translate for Medlin. Instead he was addressed, "I never believed Paul would have been involved with anything to hurt his country. Now, let's see. If he wasn't the agent, two tenable hypotheses remain."

He paused "unnecessarily," Remy self-glossed. "This boy Belmazoir, your client."

Remy injected two corrections. "M. Belmazoir is the client of my client."

"And M. Vellacott is paid, and pays you, to aver that *M. Belmazoir*—I apologize for my unmannered omission—didn't insert the negative in the billfold. The homicide

would become one committed not in a choleric fit.”

Not electing to rectify Leroy’s error about his “client’s” awareness of the strip, Remy watched him twitch his head, as if shooing away a fly. “This incongruence has always bothered me: Why would M. Belmazoir wish—premeditate it now seems—to kill Paul?”

“He wasn’t leaving Algiers, and their association wouldn’t be threatened by Paul’s impending marriage, provided that the youth was even privy to it. Few were: my friend’s opted discretion. (In every posting, Paul mingled well with, enjoyed the company of, the indigenes.)”

Stretching forth his right hand, Leroy beat out three two-step taps with his index and middle finger. “Unless M. Belmazoir’s concealing a motive he doesn’t want to be mined, he’d have been predisposed, I hazard, to ‘against [the] murderer shut the door, / Not bear the knife,’ as Shakespeare’s Macbeth agonizes.”

Once more gratuitously he halted. “This discovery about the negative by you and M. Foucin, I’m confident, was similarly cradled as good tidings by M. Vellacott.”

A plauditory smile attended this conjecture. “The second, that Paul rendezvoused with another party, either preplanned or unplanned. But please excuse me, for I have garrulously rambled on, keeping Elbert behind the linguistic arras.”

In the four-minute interval for the translation—an account which confined itself to the modus operandi executed in deducing that Ballard, on entering the grove, was not in possession of the strip—Remy, with his eyes fastened on the pink floweret, made the connection, thereby solving one clamant mystery.

He wheeled round only when Medlin elevated his voice: “Why? But why would Belmazoir put the negative in Paul’s wallet *after* he killed him?”

“If he did,” Leroy ambiguously replied.

Medlin’s outburst, instantaneous and punctuated by his right fist thumping his right thigh, was less so. “Of course, he did! To be sure, he did!”

2

“‘Behind the arras hearing something stir,’ according to his mother, Hamlet cried, ‘A rat, a rat!’ although (if I remember correctly) her retelling exaggerates. The prince alluded to merely one ‘a rat’ and phrased it as a question,” Remy expounded.

Under the central acacia tree, they had just sat down on its concrete bench. A moment previous, the ambassador, lagged by Remy, had skimmed up the three stories of the chalky-white, Moorish-baroque structure to the window of Leroy’s office. There they descried Medlin, peeping down on them from behind the sheers.

The deputy chief’s blare of conviction about Belmazoir had not been the occasion for Leroy’s proposal, delivered in English, that Remy and he adjourn into “the snatch of sunshine before the drizzle.”

More exigently Medlin’s agitated insistence had been met with an inquiry devised to restore both his composure and aplomb. “Elbert, I can’t recollect. How much money did the arresting police confiscate from M. Belmazoir’s dwelling?”

“Eight hundred fifty-one dinars.” Displaying a need to elaborate, Medlin proceeded, “Under grilling he revealed that of the ‘about 1,300’ he’d rifled from the billfold, he spent around 100 at a bar, 220 on a Qur’an for his mother, and 145 on an atomizer of

perfume for his sister.”

Leroy took up in French. “Thirteen hundred. He appeared to be mulling over the figure. “Did this other delver in wallets, M. Mohisen Ben Salah Abdelghani, recall the sum he fingered?”

So many times had Foucin compelled Mohisen to repeat the amount that Remy was as primed with the requested number, “1,325 dinars,” as Medlin had been with his, but it was announced to one who had already begun to shift round to his DCM.

“The teenagers harmonize: roughly \$130. Elbert, you’ll forgive me; I’ve noticed our guest’s regard of yon pink rose.”

Tilting his head toward the bookcase, he reverted to French. “Monsieur, it’s from a floribunda bush, transported full-grown from a local nursery. My wife had it planted eleven months ago at the onset of our posting here. Season permitting, semiweekly she would always clip a fresh bud to grace my office.

“Adhering to her ceremony, that one I culled this morning. She left for Washington on Tuesday: I believe you were in the lobby, M. Lazar, and witnessed her departure, out of the embassy at least. Would you fancy a scenting view of the shrub from which it was plucked?” Tacked on had been his weather forecast about an impending shower.

Remy’s nod completed, Leroy said to Medlin, “Our guest desires to see Gertie’s floribunda. Would you bid Miss Crippen have a lunch set up on the conference table?”

He turned back to Remy. “We have *le meilleur chef* in Algiers, on that all of its diplomats are in a rare concord. You’ll be so kind to lunch with us?” A controlled grin betokened Remy’s assent.

“Be forewarned, though, the ‘us’ is not literally used. In my four ambassadorial postings, it’s been my custom to observe the local conventions of the countries mine has done the honor of designating me its representative.”

While speaking, he had stood up, half-circled the desk, and brought himself level with Remy, who like Medlin had risen. “Here in Algeria, during Ramadan I fast the daylight as a Muslim.”

3

After a “wooden O” gasp, Leroy blurted out in English, his masseteric muscle having relaxed, “Perspicacious! Hamlet’s one interrogative became his mother’s two exclamations. I hadn’t spotted that philological embodiment of her ‘frailty.’

“A gross fib of modesty, your inceptive attestation: ‘My English is not so very good.’ Your English, your Shakespearean English, puts to the blush my Dumas-*films* French.”

“Late-blooming,” with a chuckle Remy confessed, ready to build a linguistic lie on a truth. In actuality—and last night’s tête-à-tête with Foucin had constrained him to revisit it—after Algiers, he never read *la littérature française*.

It was not that the classic French authors were less moral or more immoral than those of other nations. Rather, he could not dissociate their works from the agony France had wreaked on Algeria (“and Noura”).

“Obtrude upon one dying of cancer a book on the ravages of the disease,” he would snip during his early years in Le Puy, having afresh opened Racine’s *Phèdre*, scanned its initial three iambs (“*Le dessein en est pris*”), and promptly snapped it shut.

As for his selection of English, a University of Algiers professor had recommended prospective lawyers learn “*ingleezee*, atomically mandated to be the universal tongue.”

His fabrication to Leroy drew on his “nationality.” “Every Belgian youth is swamped by a linguistic overplus, so I never conscientiously essayed the fourth-language acquisition of English. Not till my second year as an investigator did I regret that polyglottal sloth.

“Then, on an assignment in Rome to track down a Liège magnate’s courtesan, at every via dolorosa door I rapped upon, I heard the same, ‘I li’l da *francese, olandese, tedesco*. Speaka da *inglese*?’ I fleetly realized that English had become the *lingua franca* of prostitutes, and should I aspire to broaden the horizons of my chosen vocation—”

“The tongue of tongues,” Leroy interposed with a self-arrided smirk.

When the more vulgar Latin locution did not emerge, a still whickering Remy continued, “. . . I must master a trace of English. For a person who, Keats-like, treasures reading, all English roads lead to Stratford.”

“One ‘much’ ‘travell’d’ by you,” answered Leroy, incorporating two words from the “Chapman” sonnet. “I’ll pass on to my wife your admiration of her rosebush . . . Whew!” With his right palm, he mopped his wide brow.

“In spite of the acacia, are not we ‘too much in the sun’? ‘Sun,’ ‘son,’ an instance of those equivoques that gambol so trippingly from the bard’s pen to Hamlet’s tongue. His giddy delight in ‘clinches’ exposes not simply a mind craftier than his stepfather’s but one disdainful—the world aside—of itself. Masochistically it must seek out suffering.”

Remy’s nod found elaboration. “His men err, his women suffer, and in the latter’s attempt to absolve their ‘errant knights,’ they suffer more, and the men still more. It’s as if the tragedies were indited to gainsay the Biblical version of the Garden of Eden, where the virgin grandam lapses and humanity’s uncircumcised *grand-père* comes ‘tumbling after.’”

While he lectured, Remy stared at a midsize oleander, its innocent glaucous bloom belying its poisonous nature, the off-centerpiece of the parterre.

“In the matter at hand, quite differently ‘the women suffer.’” Focused on Remy, Leroy’s dark eyes glittered in the rays of the sun. “One howls; one holds it in. The sister of M. Belmazoir has adopted the role of the god-struck Niobe, unwilling, perhaps unable, to abandon her stony silence.

“This fiancée of Paul, like the premetamorphic Niobe, pauses in the constant replenishing of her pool of tears to wail, ‘Surrender up my husband’s corpse!’”

Suddenly springing to his feet, Leroy took a pace which ushered him out of the meager umbrage of the acacia. He stooped to nip off some dead leaves from the stem of a syringa. “M. Lazar, I feel a need to recompense for your treason-absolving discovery. Not even in his thoughts could Paul have been disloyal to his country.”

He had changed back to French. “What I will divulge, an embassy issue and thus ‘diplomatically immune,’ hasn’t been circulated, notwithstanding the resourceful M. Foucin has probably ferreted it out. It may be of assistance to your client M. Vellacott.”

After contemplating the lanceolate blades for a moment, Leroy started to grind them into a powder which sifted through his fingers.

“On the Monday of his death, a visitor to Paul’s office was the brother of Mlle. Chabane. Elbert has shown me the embassy log. He investigated further. The typist of

Paul's section was in the hallway several doors down when this Ahmed exited.

"His French was so poor she picked up only snatches of what he shouted: 'I am a desperate man!' He'd consulted an attorney about what an Islamic wife, not yet publicly wed, inherits if her partner should untimely die. According to Elbert, she reports that malice contorted his visage. If you wish, he can arrange for you to interview her."

Remy was quick to utter a "*Merci*." He, who a few minutes back had commenced a mirroring ascent, but been signaled out of it, uncrossed his legs and rose. "Mlle. Chabane: was she not a translator at your embassy till the middle of December?"

Leroy bobbed an affirmation. "And the photograph on the negative strip was lifted from a Department of Defense document we received on November 16."

A stride brought Remy's shoulders parallel to the ambassador's, the empurpled shadow of each diminished by the advancing noon. "Now I comprehend why you asked about the money. Persuaded that M. Ballard hadn't borne the negative to the grove, you imagined he might have gone to regain it."

Leroy edged closer to Remy. "Still the figures disprove that. An anonymous phone call with even the slightest hint coupling her to a purloined document would have scurried him to a clandestine meeting at Zaracova. Paul placed those he loved far above himself.

"Yes, I couldn't discount that possibility. The money, however, is wrong: \$130, 'less than the more' needed to entice a blackmailer. It seems M. Belmazoir solely was attracted by that 'less,' not his precedent wallet-rifler. . . . Shall we retire to the office?"

Remy's switch to English apparently checked Leroy, who had begun to sidle round him. "The egregious imbalance of M. Ballard's income-outlay ratio, quite askew, inevitably protrudes. A minor embassy officer with a modest salary, yet he maintained four apartments we're cognizant of, one for himself, one for Mlle. Chabane, and a well of two for his 'sessions' with M. Belmazoir—and liberal in his provisions for both recipients.

"To his affianced's father, a large dowry had been paid in full. And two thousand dollars recovered from a chiffonier in his flat. Your Excellency, if I'm the dispatcher of welcome news, it's purely incidental."

With a rightward twist of his neck, Remy's face, pinched into a frown, was separated by the length of two clavicles from Leroy's rigid profile. "Do not you, in postulation, clutch at the straw of his redemption too impulsively?"

"Since ostensibly he was not the bearer of the negative, you disconnect him from it, except through a solitary, propitious stab that he was the self-sacrificial retriever, nobly endeavoring to shield from ignominy *sa Dulcinée*."

As "stage business," Remy fretted his eyebrows. "'Save the appearances,' an hypothesis must. Additionally—and do you neglect this desideratum?—it has to be consilient.

"'A queer,' many whisper about your best friend, and the few who're aware of the negative, 'a traitor.' The overtones of both torment you, whose countenance, I perceive, tightens at my very use of that first nominal. It protests, 'But he did not save your life!'"

Leroy glanced over his shoulder at the rosebush in the corner of the garden, his dazed glare seemingly intent on "number[ing] the streaks" of each petal.

"The grenade caught us from behind, piercing our calves and thighs with slivers of

wood, grains of sand, and fragmented metal. I was conscious of a fiery pain, then of nothing, next of being dragged—the scraping revived the truculent burning—and finally *rien de tout encore une fois*.

“Awakening, I felt a guardian arm sprawled across my chest. I mewed, ‘Paul,’ yet after the effort of towing me clear of the Vietcong’s overreaching grasp, he’d passed out.”

He darted a contemptuous *coup d’œil* at Remy. “Unashamed, I make an ‘inductive leap.’ Death cannot wipe away these scars. The money troubles you, does it not?”

“From me,” with an aspect gloomy, unflinching, almost contrite, he answered. “A bank draft from First Boston, dated the twenty-sixth of January, fifteen thousand dollars. Not generous, less than eight hundred a year for our time together.

“The shop: mine and Gertie’s wedding gift. ‘Ten thousand dollars,’ Paul reluctantly disclosed that morning he informed me of his plans to remain in Algiers. Two thousand for the jacked-up dowry. The same amount found at his residence. A thousand off the fifteen, and is such a pittance enough to justify deeming him ‘askew’ with money?”

A benign smile slipped onto Leroy’s square-shaped face. “When Paul and I joined the diplomatic corps, I was the one with all the ‘rise-and-shine’ ambition. I yearned to hoist him with me, but he resisted. ‘Pressure cracks me.’ In marauding bounds my emolument increased; his wage, ‘at slow march.’

“After my marriage to Gertie in ’72, who delighted in Paul’s company from their first meeting, we had no financial worries, the sine qua non to being an ambassador. Not profligate, let us say he was overly bounteous with money. On suspecting he required some, I helped him out, not infrequently on Gertie’s cue, ‘The twentieth of the month. I bet Paul’s running short.’”

With two lumbering paces, Leroy extricated himself from Remy’s dwarfed shadow: “‘A traitor, a queer.’ Perchance, M. Lazar, it’s you who impetuously refuse to entertain that a redemption is unneeded. A single piece of acetate—for none was uncovered in his office, his apartment, or the three he leased—would brand him a ‘traitor.’”

He banged a fist into his left thenar. “And it is only one person, this Belmazoir—M. Belmazoir!—establishing a backup defense where the noun *acquaintance* by a twist of the tongue conveniently comes out as *homosexual*, who stigmatizes my friend as a ‘queer.’

“Trying to endow the baseborn fingerprints with a patronymic, M. Foucin’s team roped in all of these other hulking flesh-peddlers. Not one confessed to ‘knowing’ Paul, in either its common or Biblical sense. A lone strip . . . the words of one. For these, ‘shards, flints, and pebbles should be thrown on’ him?”

Three steps on Leroy halted to glimpse at his bulky Rolex. The fine sharpness of his postliminary behest “Monsieur?” enlightened Remy that, by not budging, he was putting “my host” in a “yet more awkward position.”

With his treading deliberate, he approached. The narrow garden path entailed that the shoulders of the two, walking side by side, would graze one another’s. By the fourth jiggling brush, Remy had converted the simple declaration formulated that morning at the Al-Nigma into a question.

“Your Excellency, have you considered that the target was not the intended victim?”

4

It was with Medlin that Remy lunched, the ambassador without iteration having excused himself.

Three overlapping pea-green linen *nappes* draped the conference table. The chef, whom Leroy prior to his departure had introduced as “M. Alain Forqué,” assumed two other roles: *maître d’hôtel* and *serveur*.

He escorted Remy and Medlin to their captain’s chairs and spent the meal careering back and forth with each dish. While gazpacho was being ladled into his soup bowl, Remy initiated a discourse with Medlin. “Two years, both as DCM,” he replied, snapping open the cardinal-red bishop’s-miter napkin.

Not till the Soufflé Suisse did it resume. As he dabbed a crumb of cheese from his lips, Remy noticed his companion’s fork picking at the uneaten fondue before him, “his appetite a mirror of his conversation.”

On discerning this attention, Medlin seized a knife and sliced it into three even sections. His gambit followed. “Did Ambassador Leroy mention to you that the brother of Paul’s fiancée visited the embassy the morning of the homicide?”

“Yes.” But Remy was resolved not to let this exquisite meal be upset by talk of such.

“Where else have you been posted?”

“There and thereabouts” was Medlin’s listless rejoinder, the last three words extracted by Remy, who, it must be said, courted no accretion. The vigilant Forqué hastened forward with servings of the main course, crown roast of lamb. Beside each cut were dished dauphine potatoes and vegetables.

Following a Belgian endive salad and chèvre cheese, *le dernier plat* was offered, pistachio marquise with fresh raspberries. The hurt look that trailed Remy’s declination led him to add, “M. Forqué, I doubt my ability to waddle across the room now. The marquise would leave me questioning whether I can stand up. I salute a Peerless *Maestro!*”

A second bowl of the dessert was presented for Medlin’s inspection. Squeezing more tightly shut his lips, he pushed to his feet and without a murmur to the “*maître*” hurried from the table.

Several minutes after a bowing Forqué had exited, Remy joined the DCM, who had morosely settled into his armchair. From his own, he was visually exploring for an ashtray when the side door next to the bookcase opened.

Leroy entered, in his right hand the item being sought. Shifting this to his left, he came to a standstill, took up the pink vase, and strode toward them.

“M. Forqué, in *inversion des rôles*,” he chuckled, “sends his compliments to the diner . . . diners.” He situated both the coruscant green marble ashtray and the vase, with the rosebud snuggling its top, directly in front of Remy.

As loath as the meal had rendered his volition to persevere in the investigation, he exhorted himself, *You must uphold your mask*. His first inquiry addressed how the negative was produced, “granted that’s something you may be at liberty to reveal.”

“Produced, yes,” précised Leroy. “Accessed, the avenues are myriad. Elbert.”

Medlin’s recital began with November 16, the Wednesday the deciphering teletypewriter in the embassy’s Code Room churned out the twenty-three-page DOD

report, “Economic Realities and Naval Aspirations in North African Countries.” He collected and personally delivered it to the ambassador.

“I ‘thumbed’ it,” Leroy interjected, “a perusal conditioned by its low-level SBU (Sensitive but Unclassified) denomination, and instructed Elbert to ‘adopt SOPs.’”

Medlin had supervised Miss Crippen while she made two photocopies, after which the original was consigned to the ambassador’s file. One of the copies was destined for Medlin’s office and the other for a research room on the second floor since, the DCM added, it incorporated “the most recent data on economic conditions in Algeria.”

Before Medlin’s copy was filed away, “Given that the communiqué had an REL (release) tag, authorizing dissemination to the British, French, German, Italian, and Spanish embassies in Algiers, via our secure interconsular hook-ups I faxed it to these ambassadors.

“The negative in Paul’s wallet—page 14 of the report: a photograph of the sonar instrumentation panel of a Libyan Koni II antisubmarine warfare frigate—which Commissioner Foucin allowed our Security to spend a morning scrutinizing, discloses that the negative is a snippet—”

“Excuse me,” Remy interrupted. “M. Medlin, you referred to a research room. Who has ingress to that?”

“A large number. While Confidential, Secret, and Top Secret documents are vaulted and their use restricted to Ambassador Leroy or someone he delegates in writing, Unclassifieds or SBUs, if deemed pertinent for researching in-country topics, are filed in this small library maintained by our Political and Economic cone.

“Our eight section heads have clearance to consult the material of the room, which also has books, magazines, newspapers, and even UCs received from NATO allies on Algeria and North Africa.

“Entry to and exit from it are through an access ID swipe card. Users sign and date an on-your-honor registry, additionally listing any materials checked out or being returned. No other security is required. After all, it contains only low-grade intelligence,” a mimicking, Remy noted, of an antecedent phrase used by Leroy.

“The ‘Naval Aspirations’ file has been dusted for fingerprints?”

“Yes. Miss Crippen’s and mine . . . both predictable.”

“But wouldn’t you expect a ‘smuggler’ to take full-barrier precautions?” Leroy glossed. “And the internal accessibility compounds, for chiefs of cones, passing on their swipe card, often ‘legwork’ staff members—American staff—to exhume some needed data.

“I’ve examined the register sheets: Ten to fifteen use the room each workday. And yes, Paul was as ‘frequent’ a ‘flier’ as others.” He waited a moment, and having determined Remy would not respond, swiveled to face his deputy chief. “Elbert.”

Medlin’s countenance evinced that he saw nothing faulty in the arrangement. “The negative found in Paul’s billfold is a snipped segment of a roll of film, shot by a Minox LX camera with the document about fifteen inches from the lens. Several electronics stores in Algiers stock that Minox, probably unaware it’s an espionage favorite.”

He stole a peek at Leroy, who nodded. “Most of our operatives, and those of other embassies, have their own personal Minoxes.”

“Did M. Ballard?”

“His oldest friend, since ’61, I can speak to that,” Leroy anew intruded. “No. Averse to photographs, Paul never had a camera—and was not one of ‘our operatives.’ Such would have ‘distained’ the cloak of our mutual empathy. Please . . . continue, Elbert.”

“Our embassy has five LXs in Quartermaster’s. The records indicate Paul never checked one out.”

The instant Medlin halted, Remy ejaculated, “And would it matter if he had?” An arid laugh—his eyes abstaining, its burden was borne by his lips—ensued. “With no or nominal clarifications of the *when, where, how, why, and in what manner*, our only surety is the *what*, the snip of film. It’s as the droll M. Vellacott quipped: We’re not looking for ‘a needle in a haystack,’ rather ‘a piece of hay in a rick of needles.’”

Tauntingly he smiled. “In essence, anyone here—anyone American—or in five other friendly embassies could have stealthily intercepted the document. And since Algiers is awash in Minox LXs, well-nigh anybody at all *ça et là et partout*—‘here, there, and everywhere’—could have lined up the shot. If that’s the conclusion that I’m being steered toward, I cry, ‘Hold, enough!’”

Medlin’s expression, as in the lobby on Tuesday, did not vary, yet Remy’s glance at Leroy discovered a cliquish gloat.

“Ah well, a contrary *démarche*. I must apologize in advance for an indelicate probing, but M. Vellacott having not pursued it, a curious lacuna emerges in his otherwise thorough reports. Was there any precedent friction between M. Ballard and anyone at the embassy, setting aside his visitor Mlle. Chabane’s brother, twice thrust upon me?”

Although the DCM’s mouth had opened, it was Leroy who again reacted first. “None that I know of, and we talked every morning. Paul had a gentle nature. In our almost twenty-eight years together, I never heard him raise his voice. If he sensed he’d uttered an inadvertently irritating faux pas, he was ready with a joke, usually at his own expense.”

Chewing nervously at the vermilion border of his lower lip while Leroy spoke, Medlin further hesitated until he was positive his superior had finished. “I interviewed everyone here: not a trace of dissension between Paul and another. You may review the transcriptions of the tapes, if Ambassador Leroy approves.”

“With sensitive personal data appropriately veiled.”

That he “should have, but had not, foreseen” the stipulation somewhat wilted Medlin, for with a tentativeness he proposed, “Sir, may I discuss the rumors of ‘the Washington list’?” Leroy’s crisp tilt of his head was succeeded by a weary discharge of breath.

“In January, a general tension simmered among some,” Medlin resumed, “over who, as a member of Ambassador Leroy’s permitted entourage, was to gain the prized DC transfer. When rumor placed Paul on the list, and when it detached him, his deportment never fluctuated.”

“Elbert, I’ve apprised M. Lazar of the reason Paul himself elected not to accompany me to Washington, his betrothal to Mlle. Chabane.”

“And at our banquet, M. Medlin alluded to this espousal. Your Excellency, another delving: Of your employees—forty or so?—on the night M. Ballard was slain, does any from the haycock prick?”

In Medlin’s enumeration, Remy was surprised by how many of the embassy staff

were alone and without alibi. His list terminated with Belsches, who “stated he was listening to classical CDs in his apartment.”

At the cessation, Leroy, seemingly prevising Remy’s suspicion, appended, “Algiers isn’t renowned as a city for evening socializing.”

“And,” said Remy, refocusing on Medlin.

“And,” the DCM echoed the conjunctive, evidently mystified.

“Yourself.”

Medlin’s resigned inspiration was attended by a piqued sigh.

“Now it had to be mooted,” Leroy chortled. “Elbert was dining with Gertie and me in the Casbah. Garbed most ridiculously. I’ll explain. My wife was not scheduled to leave on Tuesday. Paul’s death postponed her traveling.

“Eight days previous to her original departure date, she suggested, ‘Let’s masquerade ourselves as tourists and prospect the Casbah’s golden honeycomb . . . and without any bodyguards.’

“I entreated Elbert to join us. Arriving there at four, we spent two hours at first dashing but eventually trudging from shop to shop—up, sideways, and down. Overladen and exhausted, back near the bottom, we convinced the *maître d’hôtel* of a restaurant, the Mirabout, to let us in, for he was closing for sunset prayers.

“A long meal, we didn’t exit till nine. It was at 11:30—11:32—when I received the grim communication about Paul.”

Medlin opened a folder on the desk and shuffled through some papers, pulling three sheets. “Here are statements from the *maître d’* at the Mirabout. I’ll provide you copies, if Ambassador Leroy approves.”

“Elbert, kindly have Miss Crippen ready them, as well as privacy-censured duplicates of all the affidavits, including mine, Gertie’s, and yours.”

After Medlin had left, Leroy approached and genially clasped Remy’s hand. “‘A piece of hay in a mound of needles,’ eh? Yours, I warrant, not M. Vellacott’s. I hope you have thimbles for fingertips.”

Remy was aware he had to submit a final request. Throughout it and Leroy’s acquiescence, however, his mind was elsewhere: Marie’s squeak had sent him rushing to the kitchen. “It’s nothing.” She was sucking her thumb. “All sewers know a prick enhances the needlework.”

To Leroy he closed with the anecdote. “My wife Marie told me, ‘An every-now-and-then prick improves the embroidery.’” His attempt to mimic her self-chaffing flier bestirred in Leroy an affinitive grin.

As the cleaving grip tightened, the conviction soared in Remy that he would procure an answer to his garden-path question.

“Yes, it weighs heavily . . . that I was responsible for Paul’s death: The killer struck him down, striking out against me.”

On their way to the door, Leroy did not unclasp Remy’s hand. “For that reason, that my ‘rise,’ my ‘shine’ may have foredoomed my friend, I beseech you, M. Lazar, ‘Find this murderer, whose extreme vengeance was misdirected.’

“You have, I believe, the philosopher’s ‘instinct for truth.’ Your remuneration from M. Vellacott, I’ll triply augment. At your service will be I and all my staff.”

As if to reinforce the point, he called through the *embrasure de la porte*, “Elbert, M. Lazar desires to see Paul’s office. He’s to be given full and free access.”

5

They first repaired to Medlin’s office where the deputy chief, unlocking a brown metal cabinet on the wall behind his desk, ran his index across the fourth row of keys from the top, stopping at a hook from which he plucked two.

During the silence of the one-floor ride down and their passage along the hallway to its western end, Remy was wondering how to proceed once there. In front of the door which Medlin was opening, he decided, *Irrelevant! All I must give is a performance which facsimiles how my chaperon expects me to.*

Into the room, “a cubicle compared to Medlin’s, a closet juxtaposed to Leroy’s,” had been crammed a desk, its vinyl-covered swivel chair, two putty-colored filing cabinets, a small table on which were a coffeemaker and three inverted cups, and a gray metal folding chair.

“Nothing’s been removed since the day it was padlocked?”

Bustling over to the Mr. Coffee and sliding out the brew basket, Medlin exhibited the canescent mold obscuring the grounds in the paper filter. “And won’t be until the investigation’s completed. It was sealed off the morning after Paul’s homicide.”

“M. Foucin’s staff inspected it?”

Not wagging his head, Medlin asserted, “That you know, just as you’re cognizant of how M. Vellacott’s staff was politely refused such a breach of diplomatic sanctuary.”

“Ah,” nodded Remy, “hence we two, as pioneers, are poised to mine the rich veins with which it is enseamed. . . . No coffee, please.”

In high dudgeon Medlin countered, “Mr. Lazar, not a professional investigator, I as an onlooker accompanied Dave Thompson, our security chief, and his two assistants. For three working days, they scrutinized every item here for any possible connection with Paul’s murder. If Ambassador Leroy approves, I’ll furnish you copies of Dave’s report and mine based on his.”

Rounding the desk, Remy plopped himself in Ballard’s swivel while Medlin grabbed the top rim of the folding chair and plunked it down in the threshold, *covetous of getting as far from me as this cubbyhole permits.*

In the twenty-five-minute interval leading up to his query about the “three capital Gs,” Remy had busied himself scan-reading papers and booklets taken from desk drawers and file cabinets. For show, he had passed several to Medlin, asking if they could be photocopied. Each time he received the same conditional answer.

“‘If Ambassador Leroy approves,’” japed Remy. “Through their use of a particular curtailed Latin adverb, scholars teach us a lesson in ‘Thrift, thrift.’ Hereafter, M. Medlin, would you consider employing, where the occasion warrants, ‘ibid.’?”

The reply by Medlin caught him off-guard: “If Ambassador Leroy approves.” With admiration at the riposte, Remy beamed into the visage five paces from him, yet perceived no twinge of a smirk.

Tipping the *fauteuil pivotant* forward, Remy embarked on a perlustration of Ballard’s

desk calendar. The twenty-eighth, which Ballard had doubtless preparatorily thumbed to before he left his office, was bare, but the twenty-seventh, the day of his murder, had dense black-inked patches of spiraled doodles.

Two entries, one above and the other below the scrawling, could be detected: Across the top border, superior to even the date, was printed in slanted, misaligned letters CHAB, virtually obliterated by staunch Xs, feasibly the provenance of Leroy's and Medlin's fixation on Ahmed Chabane.

The dissimilar ink (blue) made the other item, miniaturized and buried near the lower left, peep through the raven helices: ZB 7:15. Both abbreviations transparent, he refrained from quizzing Medlin about them.

"Best to wend chronologically," and Remy flipped the fifty-eight pages to the year's beginning. Nothing on January first or the second, presumably "taken off" as well.

The solitary *inscription* for the following day, the neatly penned "Redd, 10," he asked Medlin to interpret. "Bill Reddick, Paul's supervisor in our Political and Economic cone. Its staff convenes every Tuesday at ten. You can peruse my"—he paused—"my report if *ibid.*"

Only through his emphasis on "the Latin *abbr.*," an again appreciative Remy observed, was Medlin's "up-his-sleeve sniggering" evident.

"Sub rep," one of the first nameless notations he encountered and which Medlin explained referred to the submission of the weekly report, was diminutively scribbled every Friday, and most Wednesdays had a reminder, "Get fig" or "Get info."

Passing into February, Remy discerned that there had been a total absence of anything personal, such as "Pick up cleaning," "Buy tea," or, although he never envisaged this jotting being there, "Meet Mo." ("Testimony that 'ZB 7:15' appertained to 'embassy business'?")

"The twenty-seventh aside, an efficiently kept appointment book, avouching not merely Ballard's desire to be scrupulous and concise but also his need for prompts to ensure that precision," Remy had concluded, just before the meticulousness suddenly changed on Monday, February 6: *Griffonnages* around the margins cropped up, and the letters perceptively started to "lurch and grow bleary."

Like Saharan grit swamping a date palm grove, in the course of the next twenty-one days, the whorls encroached; and the entries, paralleling the trees mauled by this remorseless pressure, heeled further and further over.

Intent on this developing calligraphic agitation, Remy simply glided over the alliterative notation on the fourteenth of February (after all, it commenced with the familiar "Get"), not breaking off to appeal for Medlin's help with its puzzling truncations.

Nine pages on, the twenty-third, he was confronted with "ZB," *de novo* cringed and stowed away at the bottom, "Sch ZB Mon 7:15," and anew the day after, Friday, "ZB disco confirm," legible beneath four wavy lines.

Both of these, Remy knew, tallied with the messages left in the notebook at Bendari's café. Two blank weekend pages turned, the azure "ZB 7:15" once more stared him in the face.

And so he set the agenda for his Zaracova death. This resigned illation alerted Remy to the earlier glossed-over notation. "'Get' what?" Fashioning a moue, he shut his eyes,

consciously frustrated by the second and third parts. With no unraveling key at hand, he flipped back to the fourteenth.

The three shaky *G*s were not just majuscular but also grossly oversized, each towering above the subsequent, equally wobbly letter or letters, which were so minutely scribbled that during his inceptive scrutiny, Remy had to lean forward to determine that the *o* in the last clipping was not an *a*.

The contrast in size, not manifest in any of the other items, appeared to work at cross-purposes, the initiating capital letters, betokening the writer's craving not to forget the import of the message, and the dwarfish succeeding letters, the cacographer's avidity not to remember.

"M. Medlin, are you familiar with the entry of Tuesday, February 14, and if so, would you kindly elucidate?"

Medlin cautiously advanced, chary of Remy. Over the calendar held out he hovered, mouthed the three syllables, and then read aloud, "Get Gr Gog."

6

It was the DCM who supplied the explication, though not immediately. A ruminative no, he had said. Nevertheless, back at his chair, he inquired, "Is it significant?"

Remy answered with an equivocal shrug, and after a brief silence, in which he peered broodingly at the two apocopations, he walked to the filing cabinets.

Sliding out a middle drawer labeled "E - I," he located the *G*s and riffled through the alphabetically arranged folders until he reached the "Go" typed tabs: There was nothing between "God—Islamic View" and "Golan Heights."

Most of the subtitles of the more numerous "Gr" files Remy discounted: "Graduates," "Grain," "Grants," "Great Britain," "Grievances," "Gross National Product," and "Growth."

Resettled in the swivel, he strove to muster words in English with the anlaut "Gog." Only one occurred to him, but it was so ridiculous—"even more so than the Hebraism"—that he chided himself for even contemplating it as the basis of a question.

Finally, he relented. "M. Medlin, English not being my native tongue, pray, could I avail myself of your expertise? Except 'goggle,' what noun in your language opens with 'gog'?"

"Goggle, goggle," repeated Medlin, his hand pensively stroking his slicked-back brown hair. "Green goggles!" Leaping from his chair, he sped to the desk, seized the telephone, and tapped three numbers.

"George, this is Elbert . . . Fine. Could you check something for me? Did Paul requisition a pair of FLIRs circa February 14? . . . I'll wait."

Transferring the receiver to his left hand, with his right Medlin eased its base to his corner of the desk. With his eyes averted, he undertook the humming of a G&S patter song.

"I'm here," he spoke into the mouthpiece. "Yes . . . hmm . . . brought back the sixteenth at nine a.m. George, could you fax me those forms? . . . ASAP, if possible."

Medlin's account began as he cradled the handle. "On February 14, Paul signed out two pairs of FLIRs at four. 'The very model of [the] modern,' we got them about ten

months ago.”

His auditor’s bewilderment seemed to exasperate him. “FLIRs! Forward . . . Looking . . . Infrareds! Night-vision glasses, or what we nickname ‘green goggles.’”

Remy maintained a squinched face. “Oh come, Mr. Lazar, are you preparing a cloning *ibid.* retort? They’re for our marines, in case of a nighttime attack on the embassy. Seven pairs in Quartermaster’s. Straightaway George will have copies of Paul’s requisition/return papers in my office. We can drop by for them, should you wish.”

While the “green” still baffled Remy, the clarification had restored his sang-froid. “Most obliging of you. Two pairs, you say?”

“The extra one was probably for Leila, like Paul a naturalist. The FLIRs are perfect for studying the nocturnal fauna in the mountains east of Algiers. (Their flower shop could as well have been a pet mart.) Frames of metal alloys and carbon fiber, a shock-absorbing nosepiece, rotating arms, dual-action spring hinges, and a protective brow bar.

“The green’s not blurry, a defect of previous infrared sensors. Nor as cumbersome, their weight barely exceeding a skin diver’s mask and headgear. I checked out a pair myself the morning they arrived.”

During Medlin’s critique, Remy mused, *He aspires to impress because his superior’s been impressed by me.*

“To catch a rat in my apartment. An intelligent rodent, traps and poison hadn’t worked, but the FLIRs got him. Adjacent to the frig, I crouched, goggles on and broom in hand.

“The rat, a darker green, crawled from under the baseboard of the cabinet beneath my sink. The moment his pink lips and grayish teeth—to me all shades of verdure—set to munching on the milk-soaked bread, I swung. The blow had dispatched him, I was certain. For good measure, nonetheless, I conferred upon him three more whacks.”

Medlin’s laugh, “a first for the day,” emanated from so deep in his throat and with such boisterous satisfaction that the veins in his neck stood out.

‘*Behind the arras . . . “A rat, a rat!”*’ Remy’s mind forthwith declaimed before correcting the mother’s misquotation to Hamlet’s verbatim, “‘A rat?’”

7

In their return to his third-story office to collect the quartermaster’s faxes, Medlin volunteered to deliver photocopies of the statements and other relevant papers of his investigation to the Al-Nigma “this evening at seven, if that’s suitable.”

There Remy started to endure the humiliation of guilt. The DCM had untangled a logogriph, one which would have spoiled many a dinner of his. However, not till the elevator ride down did he express the apology. “M. Medlin, for any rudeness of mine at our lunch or afterwards, your pardon I humbly beseech.”

“Mr. Lazar, I’d have tendered the same prior to your leaving the embassy. I proffer it now along with my congratulations on your salient discovery about the negative.”

“M. Foucin’s unearthing more than mine,” Remy quickly interposed.

“Even had I not been petulant, I couldn’t have savored Mr. Forqué’s feast. I’m afflicted,” confided a risible Medlin. “Three months ago I lost my sense of smell. The

embassy doctor is treating it with spoonfuls of commiseration. I'm like the chameleon that feeds on air, for so is the taste—or, to speak precisely, the lack thereof—of any morsel which passes my lips.”

Remy smiled, “I join you in your mirth, but only with the concurrence that it's in appreciation of your ‘chameleon’ wit, not at what you term your affliction—anosmia—the most dreaded of all in a man . . . save one.”

Both chuckling and delighting in the other's laughter, they stepped from the elevator, the one from which Medlin had emerged with Leroy and his wife.

“Give me my husband's body!” the keen sang out in English. Remy, himself startled, marked how his companion's liberated grin tautened into a pained grimace. Without a word, Medlin bolted for the reception desk, calling out, “Leila! Leila!”

The first whom Remy singled out from the nine was the PAO. He was bobbing his head sympathetically to the woman, whose passion quivered the full *niquaab* veiling her face, the *higaab* which scarfed her hair, and the crown-to-sole *haik* draping her frame.

“Give me his b—” Her iteration was suspended by the evocation of her name. She strode toward Medlin, trailed by a hulking man clad in a light-mocha long-sleeve robe.

“Elbert,” she reclaimed, halting five paces from him, “*he* exulted that Paul was his best friend. How has he let him lie in that cold chamber these six weeks?”

Her ungainly escort plumped a large thick mauley on her shoulder as a marine, who had rushed past her, positioned himself between Medlin and the accuser. Four others, two more sentries and two women in Western clothes, had likewise advanced.

With his right hand, Medlin eased aside the marine and drew near the adjuror, who, after her last outburst, had buried her face in her hands.

“Leila,” he recommenced.

Remy was edging toward the cluster when her head shot up. “Address me by my name—Mrs. Ballard. I am Mrs. Paul Ballard!” her chant, unbroken by sobs, demanded.

“Yes, Leila, yes, and you're versed in the protocol which forbids me from adopting the appellative you (and I) desire,” Medlin tried to console.

The lubber in the *djellaba* interrupted to yammer, “My sister lusts for her due!” His French was so ill-formed that Remy was scarcely able to construe it.

Ignoring this vociferation, the DCM stretched forth his hands, palms upward and curved, until they hung several centimeters from her swathing robe.

“Leila, please understand. We, your abiding friends, are doing what we can. The one you castigate loved Paul as intensely as Paul, him. You know that.” Remy, who had begun to circle round toward “this championing brother,” adjudged Medlin's anguish to be sincere.

“We worked together. You realize how an embassy must proceed. Come with me: I will explain what progress is being made on the claim of Paul's foster-niece.”

It was she who initially moved, and in freeing herself from the clutch of her brother, she brushed against Medlin's beggar-cupped palms.

Remy, meanwhile, had slunk alongside his “mark,” this solicitor not of the “body” but of “her due.” *Through him, better than an alim, I'll get to his sister.*”

“Sabiha,” the deputy chief summoned one of the women, “would you please accompany us?” As the three entered the elevator, the brother bawled no protest at being abandoned.

With the doors starting to close, Remy hectically exclaimed in French, concerned not whether his voice carried, only that it appeared to reach its target, “M. Medlin, tonight at the Al-Nigma! Again thank Ambassador Leroy for the banquet!”

The DCM thrust his fingers toward the reopen button, but encountered as little success there as in comprehending Remy’s words. “Adieu, M. Lazar. Don’t forget our meeting to—” The temporal adverb was severed by the sliding *portes de l’ascenseur*.

Bien! A *goodbye, a title, and a rendezvous, all in French*, Remy gloated. As the crowd drifted away, a shoulders-drooping Chabane sidled beyond the reception desk and propped himself against a wall near the embassy’s front archway. His gawking scowl was riveted on the elevator into which his sister had vanished.

Suspecting it would take “this cloddish brother” forever to notice him, Remy pointedly approached and enounced in slow French. “I too am interested in the murder of Mme. Ballard’s husband.” Before he continued, he twisted his half-curved fist to expose the turquoise-blue fifty-dinar bill.

“I have a hired taxi. When your sister’s business is completed, it’s at your disposal, ready to whisk you and her to your next destination. If your plans aren’t fixed, perhaps to the restaurant of my hotel, the Al-Nigma? By helping each other, mutually we may profit.”

Synonymous with Chabane’s, Remy thrust out his right hand. They shook, and as divined, the one Remy withdrew was empty.

Notes and Commentary: Chapter 8: “The Tongue of Tongues”**April 13, 1989 (Thursday late morning and early afternoon)**

- p. 118: SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TITLE OF CHAPTER 8: The title, which plays upon the expression, “The King of Kings,” comes from a comment of Leroy on p. 122, “The tongue of tongues.”
- Remy’s lies, fabricated by DGSE, about his Belgian past result in a seeming truth, that the universal language of prostitutes (the synecdoche “tongues”) is the English “tongue.”
- “Tongue” is used seven times in the chapter. In its first and last, Remy proclaims to Leroy (118) and Medlin (131) that his English is weak since it is not his native tongue. Remy uses it a third time in referring to the atomic bomb as having made English “the universal tongue” (122).
- The other four are by Leroy: He refers to “Hamlet’s tongue” (122), from which spewed forth a barrage of puns. His next two uses (122) give the chapter its title, and in his fourth he stresses how the tongue can produce lies by charging that Belmazoïr “by a twist of the tongue” made Ballard seem to be a homosexual. Thus the tongue is used as both a language tool and a sexual tool, both functions producing pleasure as well as pain, truth in addition to lies.
- pp. 118-34: CHRONOLOGY OF CHAPTER 8: April 13 (Thursday), from 11 a.m. when Remy is shown into Ambassador Leroy’s office at the American embassy to 2:30 p.m. when he is about to leave the embassy. In between he has discussions with Leroy and Medlin either together or by themselves (from 11:00 – 1:15), is taken by Medlin to inspect Ballard’s office, where he makes a surprising discovery (1:16 – 1:53), and witnesses a commotion involving Leila in the embassy lobby, after which he speaks with her brother Ahmed (1:53 – 2:30).
- (Note: On this day, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Houda travels to Berrouaghia prison to visit briefly with Belmazoïr; then she returns to Bab el Oued.)
- pp. 118-20: SECTION 1: Time span: At nine that morning PAO Belsches called Remy to set up the meeting with the ambassador. The chapter opens with Remy entering Leroy’s office at exactly eleven. Remy explains to him and Medlin how Foucin and he had gathered proof that most probably confirms Ballard did not enter the grove with the negative (11:06 – 11:16).

Leroy quickly grasps the significance of the discovery. Since Medlin understood no French, Leroy translates what he and Remy had been discussing. Medlin's principal reaction is an agitated refusal to believe that Belmazoir is not the murderer of Ballard (11:22).

- p. 118: Sulka: The high-toned British haberdashery, which specialized in ties. The Duke of Windsor, Henry, Ford, Winston Churchill, Joseph Kennedy, and Clark Gable were among its clients.
- p. 118: "his 'bespoke' upon his sleeve . . . and not merely when seeing off his wife": Bespoke men's tailoring originated in Savile Row where cloth for a coat was said to "be spoken for" by individual customers. A bespoke garment or suit is completely original and unique to each customer. It differs from "made-to-measure" tailoring which uses preexistent patterns. Remy's wording is borrowed from Iago's speech in *Othello*: "But I will wear my heart upon my sleeve / For daws to peck at" (1.1.66-67). Remy also calls up the scene two days ago when he saw the ambassador wearing a gray silk suit (5:71 and 75).
- p. 118: *appel téléphonique*: "telephone call" in French.
- p. 118: PAO: Belsches, the embassy's Public Affairs Officer, so prominent in chap. 5.
- p. 118: "the third-story office": The American Embassy has three aboveground stories: Leroy's office is on the third, as is Medlin's. Belsches's is on the second, as was Ballard's.
- p. 118: "behind the arras": The phrase which Remy cannot yet identify is from *Hamlet* 4.1.8-10, where Gertrude says: "In his lawless fit, / Behind the arras hearing something stir, / Whips out his rapier, cries, 'A rat, a rat!'" (At the beginning of sect. 2, p. 120, an abridged version of ll. 9-10 are quoted.)
- p. 118: arras: wall-hanging tapestry.
- p. 118: English Regency armchair: Strictly speaking the Regency era in the United Kingdom is the period beginning in 1811, when the oldest son of King George III served as Prince Regent, and ending in 1820, when he became George IV on the death of his father. Some extend it so that it spans from 1795, the last part of George III's reign, to 1837, the coronation of Queen Victoria. Original English Regency armchairs are highly prized. Typically, they have upholstered backs, seat cushions, and arms (or arm pads). Their backs usually have scroll-over top rails and scrolling uprights. Their square seats are often caned, and all their woodworks are embellished with gilt metal mounts.

Often supporting the sabre legs of Regency armchairs are brass toes and castors.

p. 118: “gabled index fingers”: Pressed together, the index fingers formed the shape of a gable.

p. 118: philtrum: The vertical indentation between the upper lip and the nose.

p. 118: “*Donc, le français il sera!*”: “Therefore, French it will be!”

p. 118: “avowed demur or covert appeal”: His demur was that they should not inconvenience Medlin by speaking in French.

His appeal is for a clue from Leroy about the source of the “arras” words which he knows to be a quotation.

p. 118: apodictic: An adjective meaning “that can clearly be shown or proved.”

- p. 119: “sterling . . . proof . . . pure . . . counterfeited”: A series of numismatic puns: sterling (British coinage); proof (coins struck with care); pure (free from admixture, as pure gold); and counterfeit (imitation of genuine money).
- p. 119: *de novo*: In Latin, “again; once more.”
- p. 119: “the next ten minutes”: from 11:06 to 11:16.
- p. 119: “a rose”: The rose imagery, principally associated with women, occurs in seven chapters of the novel: Marie (2:16 and 4:52); Mrs. Leroy (8:119, 121-23, 126, and 11.177); Leila (9:149); Mme. Belmazoir (15:247); and Houda (18:300). However, the complexion of the youth Mohammed Belmazoir is said to be “dusky-rose” and rose-tanned” (4.61) and his tears become “roseate speckles” after passing across his wound (15.242). On 2.20, Saul described his blond hair as catching “the rose-tipped light of dawn.” The other uses of “rose” or a variant of it (3.46; 7.107; 11.182; 12.195; 14.229; 15.249; and 17.280) are by and large descriptive.
- p. 119: “dissolved the ‘airy’ cloth into a nothingness”: Words are appropriated from two Shakespearean plays: (1) *Midsummer*, 5.1.15-17: The “poet’s pen / Turns them to shapes and gives to airy nothing / A local habitation and a name.” (2) *Tempest*, 4.1.148-56: These our actors, / . . . Are melted into air, into thin air; . . . / “the great globe itself / . . . shall dissolve, / And like this insubstantial pageant faded, / Leave not a rack behind.” In a similar combination, these lines, here used as pictorial, provide a more serious commentary on 18.300. While “nothingness” occurs most frequently as an uncountable noun, it may be used, as here, as a countable noun. However, Shakespeare never uses the word “nothingness,” which first appeared in print in the 1630s.
- p. 119: racetrack conference table: a popular style of conference table which employs the oval shape of a racetrack.
- p. 119: captain’s chair: a sturdy hardwood armchair used in offices and restaurants. It has a low curved backrest and armrests, both supported by spindles, and often a saddle seat, if uncushioned.
- p. 119: “President George Bush and his Secretary of State James Baker”: See 1.1 and its note, N1:4-5, for more on them.
- p. 119: “artificially resuscitated . . . transcend the darkness”: The condition of the flower emphasizes several ideas of the novels: Ballard’s struggle against death through the affirmation that “nothing disconnects” and the last image of him, like the rose, trapped in water and descending into aphotic darkness (1.14 and its note),

and Saul's emphasis on the real vs. the artificial contrast on 2.28 and in its note, N2:45-46).

- p. 119: "As little use for the past as I have": Remy draws a similarity between himself and Leroy concerning the past.
Remy's view of the past was stated on 2.18. See its note, N2.16-17.
- p. 119: "the agent": The person who performs an action; here, the person who brought the negative to the grove.
- p. 119: "injected two corrections": First, that Belmazoir should be titled not "this boy Belmazoir," but "M. Belmazoir," and secondly, that Belmazoir is not Remy's "client," but "the client of my client."
Here Remy revives the phrasing used by Foucin on 4.56 and examined in its note, N4:15.
- pp. 119-20: "And M. Vellacott is paid . . . the negative in the billfold . . . rectify Leroy's error": Leroy assumes that like Remy Vellacott knew about the negative. Remy decides not to correct this presumption.
In fact, he later reinforces the lie that Vellacott was cognizant of "the snip of film" (127).

- p. 120: “committed not in a choleric fit . . . premeditate[d] it now seems”: Leroy states that if Belmazoir was the bearer of the negative, he planned for some confrontation with Ballard.
Thus, as Foucin had pointed out (7.111), the murder becomes premeditated.
- p. 120: “shooing away an annoying fly”: Every “fly” (insect) reference in the novel harks back to the swatting of a fly incident which caused France to invade Algeria, as discussed in the 6.82 note, N6.2.
- p. 120: “against [the] murderer shut the door / Not bear the knife”: As identified by Leroy, the quote is from *Macbeth* 1.7.14-16: “[T]hen, as his host, / Who should against his murderer shut the door, / Not bear the knife myself.”
Leroy slyly provides a clue to his earlier quote from *Hamlet*, “behind the arras,” which had puzzled Remy, by citing a passage from another Shakespearean tragedy.
On 5.71, Remy had pinpointed the quote from *Macbeth* which Leroy had used in the lobby, “Hold, enough!” (5.8.34).
- p. 120: “cradled as good tidings by M. Vellacott”: On 7.111, Foucin had concluded that if there was premeditation behind the murder, Algeria’s “prosecutor will more fervently rejoice” than Vellacott.
Here Leroy draws an opposite conclusion: He argues that the premeditation lessens the possibility that Belmazoir is the murderer since he presumably would have lost an American friend, the implication being that such a friendship is highly prized in countries such as Algeria.
His argument, in a sense, tallies with Belmazoir’s on 4.64 and 65 and 6.82, although the prisoner concentrated on his monetary gains from the relationship, an area which Leroy seems unaware of.
- p. 120: plauditory: “laudatory” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 120: “‘behind the linguistic arras’ . . . made the connection”: With this second repetition of the key words from the quote, Remy remembers its Shakespearean source.
- p. 120: clamant mystery: urgent; demanding attention.
Remy’s mind uses “clamant” ironically as if putting the mystery of who murdered Ballard on a par with the identification of the quotation.
- pp. 120-21: SECTION 2: Time span: The narrative briefly flashes forward to 11:37.
Remy and Leroy are sitting on a concrete bench under an acacia tree in the embassy’s garden. Remy has just identified the quote from *Hamlet* which Leroy had used in section 1.

The action returns to 11:22 in the office. The three men discuss the money that Belmazoir admitted he had taken from Ballard's billfold.

Noting that Remy has been staring at the rose vase, Leroy asks him to visit the embassy garden from which it had come. It is obvious that he wishes to talk to Remy in private and away from his office (11:25).

Before they leave for the garden, Leroy asks Remy to stay for lunch in his office (11:26).

- p. 120: "Behind the arras": For the exact words of Gertrude on 4.1.9-10, see the p. 118 note above, N8.2.

The changes which she made in her paraphrasing of what her son said, I believe, have not been noted by Shakespearean scholars: On 3.4.25, on hearing someone call from behind the arras and thinking it is the king's voice, Hamlet asks, "How now? A rat? Dead for a ducat, dead." At that point he thrusts his rapier through the arras.

As Remy remarks, in her account to Claudius Gertrude exaggerates, changing Hamlet's one reference to "A rat?" to two, "A rat, a rat!" and his question to an exclamation.

I should add that Bradley in his 1905 *Shakespearean Tragedy* points out that Gertrude's account is false when she tells Claudius that Hamlet heard something stirring behind the arras; what Hamlet heard was a man's voice (105).

Also Jeffrey Paul Jordan in *Hamlet (Regained)* (2006), a publication which postdated my observation by fourteen years, in his commentary on Act 4, Scene 1 (what he terms Sc. 12) of the play, observes that Gertrude "does not have the details exactly right about . . . precisely what [Hamlet] said [after killing Polonius], but who would [given her excited state of mind]?"

- p. 120: acacia tree: A thorn tree which grows wild and in cultivation in Mediterranean Africa.

Its garden variety there usually grows to a height of about seven meters and has sweet-smelling yellow flowers.

This scene with Leroy compares and contrasts with the one from 3.53 where the seven-year-old Omar and his father sit beneath a "withering acacia" in the tiny garden behind the family's Casbah store.

- p. 120: "the snatch of sunshine before the drizzle": Leroy invited Remy to inspect the embassy's garden, specifically his wife's rosebush, at 11:25 a.m.

- pp. 120-21: "he had spent 100 at a bar, 220 on a Qur'an for his mother, and 145 on an atomizer of perfume for his sister": This catalog presents the whining, self-centered Belmazoir in a better light.

Of the money he stole from Ballard's corpse, he expended larger amounts on presents for his mother and sister than he spent on himself.

- p. 121: yon: Chiefly dialectical, meaning “that over there” or identifying something at a distance, but within sight.
- p. 121: floribunda: Latin for “abounding with blossoms,” this is a garden rose which has a wide color range and large flowers in open clusters.
In Leroy’s vase is merely a floribunda bud, not a clustered bloom.
- p. 121: “in the lobby”: On 5.71, Remy imagined that in perusing the lobby, Leroy caught sight of him. Here the Ambassador confirms this supposition.
- p. 121: “scenting view”: A rudimentary example of synaesthesia, the description of one kind of sensation in terms of another, here sight with aroma.
In another way it is inappropriate since the floribunda rose gives off little fragrance.
- p. 121: “Tacked on had been his weather forecast”: Given on the previous page, “the snatch of sunshine before the drizzle.”
- p. 121: Miss Crippen: Leroy’s personal secretary. Not mentioned since 5.72-73.
- p. 121: *le meilleur chef*: the best chef.
- p. 121: “four ambassadorial postings”: See the 1.7 note for a listing of Leroy’s ambassadorships: Chile (1978 – 81); the Philippines (1982 – 1983); Pakistan (1984 – 1988); and Algeria (1988 – present time of the novel).
Other diplomatic assignments included Brazil (1967 – 1970); Greece (1970 – 1974); and Sri Lanka (1975 – 1978, where he served as DCM). The only one of these mentioned in the novel is the first, an assignment to Brasilia (20.339).
- pp. 121 - 24: SECTION 3: Time span: Section 3 opens directly after Remy’s comment at the beginning of section 2 (11:37). Leroy and he talk for the next twenty minutes (11:57), after which they leave the garden to return to Leroy’s office.
They discuss sundry topics: Shakespearean tragedy and English as “the tongue of tongues” (11:40); the argument that Ahmed Chabane had with Ballard on the morning of the night the latter was murdered (11:45); Leila Chabane (11:41 and 11:46); Ballard’s spendthrift habits, the case against him as a traitor, and his saving Leroy’s life in Vietnam (11:47 – 11:56); and finally Remy’s startling suggestion as they leave the garden (11:57).
Not mentioned: From 11:27 – 11:37: They reach the garden, and Leroy gives Remy a six-minute tour of it. From 11:57 – 12:01 they return to Leroy’s office.
- p. 121: “wooden O’ gasp”: The reference, which was used earlier on 4.59, is from Prologue 1 of *Henry V*, ll. 11-14: “Can this cockpit hold / The vasty fields of

France? Or may we cram/ Within this wooden O the very casques / That did affright the air at Agincourt?"

The "wooden O" refers to a circular theater such as the Globe, although since it was not yet erected, it probably alludes to the equally round Curtain Theater, where *Henry V* was likely performed.

- p. 121: "Masseteric muscle": The masseter is the large muscle that raises the lower jaw. The demonstrative Leroy had expressed his "surprise and appreciation" by dropping his jaw.
- p. 121: "her 'frailty'": Leroy comments on how Remy's analysis reinforces Hamlet's idea of the "frailty" of women, stated in *Hamlet* 1.2.146: "Let me not think on 't; frailty, thy name is woman!"
- p. 121: "My English is not so very good": See this comment by Remy on p. 118.
- p. 121: put to the blush: to cause to blush with shame.
- p. 121: "Dumas- *fils* French": Alexandre Dumas (1824 – 1895), the son (*fils*) of Alexandre Dumas (1802 – 1870); the father is usually termed Dumas *père*.
- p. 121: *littérature française*: French literature.
- p. 121: "Racine's *Phèdre* . . . 'Le dessein en est pris'": The play is written in alexandrines (six iambic feet in each line). Hippolytus (Hippolyte in French) speaks the first line to his tutor: *Le dessein en est pris; je pars, cher Théràmène* ("The intention if taken; I leave, dear Theramenes").

p. 122: “*ingleese*”: Arabic for “English.”

p. 122: “atomically mandated to be the universal tongue”: In the nuclear age, atomic weapons dictate linguistic supremacy, the professor implies.
In my chronology, the dialogue occurred in Remy’s first year at the university, 1958. At that time three countries had nuclear weapons: U.S. (1945), USSR (1951), and Britain (1952).
France did not explode an atomic bomb until 1960. Thus the language of two of the three nuclear powers was English.

p. 122: “linguistic overplus”: One meaning of “overplus” is “excess.”
Belgium has three official languages, Dutch (the first or second language of 71%), French (of 86%), and German (28%); Dutch, however, is the majority first language, spoken by 60% of the population.
According to the region, one of these is the language used in the schools, although the other two languages are usually incorporated into the curriculum as a mandatory or elective course.

p. 122: polyglottal: Alternate form, as are “polyglottic” and “polyglottous,” of the adjective “polyglot,” all meaning “multilingual” (*Webster’s Third*).
Although all of this is a fabrication of the background DGSE provided Remy, he would be speaking of a period of his primary and secondary education (1946 – 1958), when English was a fourth language in Belgium.

p. 122: Liège: The capital of Liège province in French-speaking eastern Belgium.

p. 122: *via dolorosa*: Lower-cased, it means an arduous or distressing course or experience.
Capitalized, it is the path that Jesus, carrying the cross, walked on his way to his crucifixion. In Latin the expression means “the way of grief or suffering.”
Remy, perhaps playfully, associates this prostitute area of Rome as a street of grief and suffering, either for himself since his search for the Belgium prostitute is unsuccessful or for the women driven to this trade, one of whom, turning the tables, lectures him on his linguistic ignorance.
On 5.76, he had poked fun at the prostitutes lined up along the fence of the Palais de Justice.

p. 122: *francese, olandese, tedesco . . . inglese*: Italian for French, Dutch, German, and English.
Her pidgin English states, “I speak little” of the first three languages. “Do you speak English?”

p. 122: *lingua franca*: a language used for communication between different people.

p. 122: “the tongue of tongues”: The title of this chapter is taken from this witticism by Leroy. It means the language (tongue) of those who use their tongues in plying their trade.

It also plays upon the expression “the king of kings.”

- p. 122: “more vulgar Latin locution”: Cunnilingus, or oral contact with the female genitals.
Latin etymology: *cunnus* (vulva) and *lingere* (to lick). Language derives from the Latin *lingua* (tongue or language, altered by association with *lingere*).
- p. 122: “Keats-like”: In his sonnet, “On First Looking into Chapman’s Homer,” the speaker compares reading to traveling.
- p. 122: “all English roads lead to Stratford”: A verbal play upon “All roads lead to Rome,” which undergoes another variation on 19.329, “All roads digress to Rome.”
Remy’s metaphor: Stratford (Shakespeare) is the ultimate destination of every lover of English.
- p. 122: “One ‘much’ ‘travell’d’ by you”: As Leroy indicates, his comment draws words from the first line of Keats’s “On First Looking into Chapman’s Home”: “Much have I travell’d in the realms of gold.”
- p. 122: “‘too much in the sun’”: Leroy’s quote is again from *Hamlet*: “Not so, my lord. I am too much in the sun” (1.2.67).
Here Hamlet, in sarcastically stating that he is basking in the sunshine of Claudius’s royal favor, puns on “sun/son.”
- p. 122: equivoques: puns.
- p. 122: gambol: “to bound or spring as in dancing or play” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 122: “‘clinches’”: Archaic term meaning “pun or play on words” (*Webster’s Third*); however, it was a favorite word of Dr. Johnson in analyzing Shakespeare’s punning.
- p. 122: “a mind craftier than his stepfather’s but one disdainful”: Leroy contends that Hamlet’s prolific punning was designed to Shakespeare to reveal an aspect of the Dane’s character.
Their profusion indicates that Hamlet premeditated his puns (just as Oscar Wilde planned his witticism beforehand, though this is not mentioned in the novel).
Leroy further contends that this verbal fixation on punning reveals Hamlet’s disdain for his own mind, comparable to his stated disdain for “the world,” prominently seen in his first soliloquy (1.2.133-37), 2.2.294-311, and the third soliloquy (3.1.57-78).
- p. 122: “His men err . . . ‘errant knights’”: An easy play upon the word, “knight-errant,” a chivalrous hero, and “errant,” through an etymological confusion meaning “erring or straying from what is right.”

- p. 122: “the tragedies were indited to gainsay . . . the virgin grandam lapses . . . uncircumcised *grand-père* comes ‘tumbling after’”: Remy’s theory is that in tragedies, unlike in the story of the Garden of Eden, the male errs and the female suffers.
In Genesis, however, the woman Eve (“the virgin grandam [grandmother]” of humanity) errs (“lapses,” from the Latin *lapsare*, “to fall”) and Adam, the “uncircumcised *grand-père*,” afterward suffers a fall.
- p. 122: “uncircumcised”: Presumably Adam was not circumcised since God’s commandment that all Jewish men be circumcised is not given until Abraham is ordered to undergo circumcision (Gen. 17:10).
A few scholars hold that Adam, being created perfect, did not have a prepuce. However, once he and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden, he grew a foreskin.
Some Muslims cite the Book of Barnabas, an Islamic account of the life of Jesus which coincides in many ways with his portrayal in the Qur’an. For instance, Jesus forecast the coming of Mohammed, the last prophet.
In this sermon from “Barnabas,” Jesus states that Adam was born with a prepuce, but after he sinned he was told by the angel Gabriel to take a sharp-edged stone and cut off this superfluous skin about his penis.
Thus in imitation of Adam, the first man, all of his descendants must undergo circumcision.
- p. 122: “tumbling after”: The wording is from the nursery rhyme “Jack and Jill,” where as in Shakespeare the male’s fall precedes the female’s: “Jack fell down and broke his crown, / and Jill came tumbling after.”
“Tumble” is from the Old English word *tumbian*, meaning “to fall.”
These lines from this nursery rhyme, with a sexual reference, will be used in 9.136.
- p. 122: oleander: The toxin oleandrin is present in all parts of the oleander, which is poisonous to touch and taste.
Despite this drawback, its hardiness, easy maintenance, colorful flowers, and sweet smell make it popular as a garden, park, and roadside landscaping plant.
Like this plant, in much of my novel, the outer appearance belies the reality, as implied in the title of chap. 5, “A Mask of Every Mirror,” and the later discussion of “the private face behind the public mask” and the “public face behind the private mask” (17.278).
- p. 122: parterre: In English “an ornamental garden area in which the flower beds and path form a pattern.”
When it is italicized, as it will be on 15.247, it is the French word for “flowerbed.”
- p. 122: “god-struck Niobe”: Niobe, queen of Thebes, boasted of her superiority to Leto, a Titan goddess, because she had only two children, the twins Apollo and Artemis, while Niobe had fourteen, seven sons and seven daughters.

To revenge this insult to their mother, Apollo killed Niobe's seven sons. As a wailing Niobe and her seven daughters prepare these corpses for burial, Artemis killed the daughters.

Niobe, who now has lost all fourteen of her children, was turned to stone, either directly by the goddess Leto or indirectly by the grief which the goddess's vengeance had brought. However, her tears continued to flow from the rock she had become.

"God-struck" is used to indicate the punishment of the god Apollo and of the goddesses Leto and Artemis.

Leroy compares the "stony silence" of Belmazoir's sister to this silenced Niobe because Houda has said nothing about the murder of Ballard since her first morning's response, "It is not his [her brother's] fault" (7.112 and 113).

- p. 122: "premetamorphic Niobe": Before she was metamorphosed into stone, a weeping Niobe, along with her daughters, wailed for her slain sons. Leroy compares this Niobe to the crying Leila who wails for the embassy to surrender Ballard's body to her for burial.
- p. 122: Premetamorphic: I found this term used only in biology texts; it is the adjective of "pre-metamorphosis" or the period before certain animals undergo a radical change in appearance, such as a larva becoming a pupa and in turn an insect or a tadpole transforming into a frog. According to scientific journals, "premetamorphic" may also be spelled with a hyphen, "pre-metamorphic." However, the noun form, "pre-metamorphosis," appears only with a hyphen.
- p. 122: umbrage: foliage, considered as shade-giving.
- p. 122: syringa: lilac.
- p. 122: "Not even in his thoughts could Paul have been disloyal to his country": Leroy employed similar wording in speaking to Ballard on 1.11: "Not even in your thoughts could you betray me."
- p. 122: "diplomatically immune": More wordplay by Leroy, here on "diplomatic immunity."
- p. 122: "lanceolate blades": The leaves of the syringa "narrow and taper like the head of a lance."
- pp. 122-23: "the brother of Mlle. Chabane": Ahmed Chabane. Leroy recounts the meeting which Chabane had with Ballard's at the embassy, which was described on 1.12-13.

- p. 123: “Mlle. Chabane . . . a translator at your embassy till . . . December.’ . . . ‘the photograph of the negative strip . . . document . . . on November 16’”: Remy begins and Leroy completes the observation that Leila could have had a window of opportunity to gain access to the document from which the negative was taken.
- p. 123: “asked about the money”: On pp. 120-21, Leroy had asked Medlin how much money Belmazoir confessed he took from Ballard’s wallet and then sought from Remy how much Mohisen had said was in it.
Both amounts that are given to him “roughly harmonize. About \$130” (121).
- p. 123: “less than the more”: Leroy uses a variant of the phrase from William James’s *The Principles of Psychology*, vol. 1, chap. 13. It contains several mediate comparisons, one of which is “the more than the more is more than the less.”
See the 4.66 note, N4:40, for a list of the eleven chapters in which this phrase or a variant of it is used in my novel.
- p. 123: “wallet-rifler”: “Rifle” means “to search with the intent to steal.”
- p. 123: “sessions”: The single quotes indicate that Remy’s intonation charged this word with irony, a maneuver he found preferably to overtly saying “sexual trysts.”
- p. 123: “two thousand dollars recovered from a chiffonier in his flat”: Remy’s contact from the French Embassy mentioned that there was found in Ballard’s apartment “two thousand in cash” (5.77), but Remy would have known this from the DGSE 2269 documents.
- p. 123: “in postulation, clutch at the straw of his redemption”: Postulation is an assumption that something is true or real, often without providing proof, especially as a basis for argument.
The theme of redemption is central to this novel. See the 3.41 note, N3:19-20, which discusses the idea of redemption in the first three chapters.
Also an essay surveying its importance in the sin/repentance/redemption pattern in the novel will be attached to the end of the notes of chap. 18, N18:72-74.
- p. 123: *sa Dulcinée*: French for “my Dulcinea,” the idolized lady love of Don Quixote.
- p. 123: “stage business”: A minor action or gesture in a play.
Here Remy’s frowning of his cheeks provides a break in his long monologue.
See the first reference to “stage business” on 6.84, which is discussed in it note, N6:9.
- p. 123: “save the appearances”: Remy says that an hypothesis must do two things: “‘save the appearances’ and be ‘consilient.’”

In logic, to “save the appearances,” an hypothesis should account for (“save”) the relevant phenomena (“appearances”).

Leroy’s hypothesis that Ballard was not a traitor does not account for the phenomenon of the monetary discrepancy: “the egregious imbalance of M. Ballard’s income-outlay ratio [is] quite askew” (123).

[This expression, “save the appearances,” most famously appears in the discussion of different conceptions of the cosmos in *PL*, 8.82.

Here Milton, through the angel Raphael, contemptuously uses the expression “to save the appearances” to describe the techniques of astronomers (whether Ptolemaic or Copernican) to explain discrepancies between their hypotheses and observed facts, which Raphael says “perhaps” “move[s]” God to “laughter” (77-78).

God’s movement comically contrasts with the issue of “whether heav’n move or earth” (70).]

- p. 123: “consilient””: Furthermore, Remy contends, Leroy’s hypothesis is not “consilient.”

In logic “consilience” means the concurrence of generalizations (inductions) drawn from separate classes of facts (phenomena). A consilient hypothesis not only predicts facts of diverse kinds, but also shows that beneath that diversity there is a fundamental accord.

Remy’s contention is that Leroy’s hypothesis of Ballard’s innocence lacks consilience because it makes an unsubstantiated “inductive leap” (although it will be Leroy who will use the term four paragraphs down), using too few deductive facts to conclude that Ballard was neither a homosexual nor a traitor.

Leroy had earlier said, “In every posting, Paul mingled well with, enjoyed the company of the indigenes” (120), as if to forestall the question of why Ballard sought out in Algiers a known homosexual hustler such as Belmazoir.

That he did not bring the negative into the grove, Leroy leaped on as proof that Ballard was not a traitor, but that argument evades an established phenomenon, that through some secretive means Ballard was obtaining a large amount of money.

Remy concludes that Leroy is tormented by the whispers of many that Ballard was “a queer” and those of the few who knew about the negative that he was additionally “a traitor,” trafficking embassy documents to support his fairly extravagant lifestyle.

In essence, Remy’s argument is that far from being logically driven, Leroy is too passionately involved, a passion which has caused him to “clutch at the straw of [Ballard’s] redemption too impulsively” (123).

- p. 123: nominal: noun.

Here Remy’s use of “queer.” He uses the vulgar term (when used by a heterosexual) to prod Leroy into a more complete confession.

- p. 123: “number[ing] the streaks”: From Johnson’s *Rasselas*, chap. 10, 6th paragraph, where “the ideal poet” is described: “‘The business of the poet,’ said Imlac, ‘is to

examine, not the individual, but the species; to remark general properties and large appearances; he does not number the streaks of the tulip, or describe the different shades in the verdure of the forest.”

At its primary level, Remy’s retrieving of Johnson’s image suggests the intensity of Leroy’s stare, which is preparatory to the vivid and painful account of the Vietnam incident.

At a secondary level, the image reinforces Remy’s criticism of Leroy’s blind insistence on Ballard’s innocence. In that sense, Leroy is like the writer of prose, who concentrates on prejudiced minutiae, what Johnson calls “the individual,” while overlooking “general properties,” on which “the ideal poet” focuses.

Leroy uses the former to absolve his friend of any guilt, ignoring the overall picture, Johnson’s “the forest,” for “the shades” of the trees.

That Remy applies Johnson’s quote about a “tulip” to Gertie’s rosebush indicates his application of Johnson’s theory that the “species,” not “the individual” is the province of the “ideal poet.”

Finally, a rose, like a tulip, may have streaks, usually caused in both by a virus. To Remy the “diseased” aspect of the image is in Leroy’s biased insistence on Ballard’s innocence.

Johnson’s quote thus is a bridge between Ballard’s “save-the-appearances” attack and Leroy’s “inductive-leap” defense.

pp. 123-24: “The grenade caught us . . . passed out”: The reader, unlike Remy, may compare Leroy’s description with Ballard’s on 1.10.

- p. 124: *rien de tout encore une fois*: French for “nothing at all once again.”
- p. 124: “Vietcong’s overreaching grasp.” This is a second reference to Browning’s poem “Andrea del Sarto” (ll. 97-98): “Ah, but a man’s reach should exceed his grasp, / Or what’s a heaven for?”
It first appeared in a garbled variant of cockney punning on 5.71. See its note, N5:10.
- p. 124: *coup d’œil*: a rapid glance.
- p. 124: “inductive leap”: An inductive inference or reasoning from a part to a whole, from particulars to generals, or from the individual to the universal.
Remy had not attacked this method of reasoning, only its misapplication through Leroy’s bias or emotional involvement.
The term “inductive leap” will occur one more time in the novel. In chap. 12, Remy jibes at this faulty “inductive leap” of “sophisticated” Arab women, who have concluded from the few Westerner bachelors they have seen or heard about that all unmarried Westerner men are “gay” (12.189).
- p. 124: “The money troubles you, does it not?”: Leroy addresses the “appearances” issue, the discrepancy in Ballard’s income and expenditures.
He refers to a bank draft from Boston for \$15,000, a gift for Ballard from him and Gertie. He itemizes how Ballard spent it: \$10,000 for the flower shop, \$2,000 for the increased dowry, \$2,000 found in Ballard’s room.
Unaccounted for would be a mere \$1,000. Leroy asks how, given that one small discrepancy, it could be contended that Ballard’s handling of his money was askew.
- p. 124: “A bank draft . . . the twenty-sixth of January [Thursday]”: On 1.11, Ballard refers to “Claude’s prepaid wedding check.”
According to my chronology, Leroy gave this check to Ballard on Saturday, Jan. 28.
- p. 124: “less than eight hundred [dollars] a year for our time together”: Leroy states that his “leap” is not passionate, but experiential. He is drawing a reasonable inference from his thirty-year friendship with Ballard.
This argument is designed to answer Remy’s contention that Leroy’s hypothesis is not consilient.
Leroy concludes by reminding Remy that no other strips or negatives have surfaced, which might suggest that Ballard was selling embassy secrets.
- p. 124: First Boston: Founded in 1859, the First National Bank of Boston was renamed Bank of Boston in 1982, but in 1989, the time of my novel, many still referred to it as First Boston.
It is now (2013) owned by Bank of America.

- p. 124: “that morning he informed me of his plans to remain in Algiers”: Monday, Jan. 23. This scene is reported on 1.6 and 10-11.
- p. 124: “‘askew’ with money”: Leroy is quoting Remy, who on the previous page referred to Ballard’s “income-outlay ratio” as being “quite askew.”
- p. 124: “‘rise-and-shine’ ambition”: *Webster’s Third* lists the meaning of “rise and shine,” which is “often used as a command,” as “get out of bed.”
More recent dictionaries probably best captures the optimism of the idiom by noting that “shine” here means “act lively and well” or “get out of the bed smiling.”
It originates in a military command for soldiers to shine their boots directly after climbing out of their bunks.
Leroy will use a variant of the phrase on p. 128: “my ‘rise,’ my ‘shine.’”
- p. 124: “‘at slow march’”: The slowest of the types of ceremonial military marching, the slow march is often employed at funerals or in religious processions.
In the slow march the parading group of soldiers (often the band) takes only sixty paces per minute. This compares with 120 for quick march and 180 for double march.
- p. 124: sine qua non: “an essential condition or qualification.”
To entertain in a style befitting their rank, many U.S. ambassadors must use their own personal wealth since his or her so-called “representational allowance” is seldom sufficient.
According to my chronology (not incorporated in the text), the Leroy’s married in 1977 while he was serving as DCM to Sri Lanka. The next year he was named ambassador to Chile.
- p. 124: “dwarfed shadow”: The time is 11:55, but the “dwarfing” image suggests that Remy’s arguments have been diminished by Leroy’s counterarguments.
On 6.90 and in its note, N6:27, Remy had used similar phrasing to indicate how he felt “dwarfed” by the martyrs of the Algerian War.
- p. 124: “redemption is unneeded”: A summarizing answer to Remy’s comment on p. 123 that Leroy presumptuously was clutching “at the straw” of Ballard’s redemption.
- p. 124: thenar: palm of hand.
- p. 124: “by a twist of the tongue”: Again a reinforcement of the central word of the title of this chapter.
- p. 124: patronymic: a family name.

- p. 124: “knowing”: common definition: “to be acquainted with”; Biblical definition (now listed as archaic): “to have sexual intercourse with,” as in Gen 4:1 (KJV), “Now Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived and bare [bore] Cain.”
- p. 124: “shards, flints, and pebbles”: Their conversation in the embassy garden had begun with an analysis of *Hamlet*.
Just before they leave, Leroy symmetrically brings up another quote from this play (5.1.231): The First Priest says to Laertes that instead of “charitable prayers” (230) intoned over Ophelia’s body, “shards, flints, and pebbles should be thrown on her.”
See the 3.48 note, N3:33, for a list of the three instances of the shard imagery in the novel.
- p. 124: “bulky Rolex”: Rolex is a Swiss manufacturer of high-quality, luxury wristwatches.
In the 1980s, a diamond inlay Rolex watch had a price range from \$20,000 to \$75,000.
- p. 124: postliminary: “done or carried on after something else or as a conclusion” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 124: “putting ‘my host’ in a ‘yet more awkward position’”: In some ways, this situation will reversed on 13.217.
- p. 124: “formulated that morning at the Al-Nigma”: According to my persnickety chronology, Remy worked on his list of points for his interview with Leroy from 9:02 – 10:10.

pp. 125-29: SECTION 4 SUMMARY: At 12:01, Leroy and Remy are back in the ambassador's office, and it is there from 12:04 – 12:50, with Leroy having excused himself, Remy has an elaborately prepared lunch with an irritable and detached Medlin.

Once they had returned to their chairs, Leroy reinters and from 12:55 – 1:11, Remy receives answers about the source of the negative, how it was produced, who had access to the document which was the source of the information on the negative, any disagreements Ballard had with anyone at the embassy, the Washington-ho list, and the alibis of other embassy workers.

After Medlin is excused at 1:12, the Ambassador addresses the question which Remy had asked him as they left the garden. Leroy says he is tormented that to destroy his diplomatic career, someone might have killed his friend, and he promises to triple Remy's salary from Vellacott if he finds the murderer. Remy's request to see Ballard's office he grants (1:15).

p. 125: *iterance*: Alternate form of "iteration," meaning "repetition."

p. 125: *nappes*: "tablecloths" in French.

p. 125: *maître d'hôtel*: headwaiter.

p. 125: *serveur*: French for "waiter."

p. 125: *gazpacho*: A soup of tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, and onions chopped up raw and served as a cold soup.

p. 125: *Soufflé Suisse*: A cheese soufflé which prior to its last fifteen minutes of baking is topped with cream and a blend of gruyère and cheddar.

p. 125: *chèvre*: a soft cheese made from goat's milk.

p. 125: *le dernier plat*: In French, "the final serving or dish."

p. 125: *declination*: a polite refusal.

p. 125: "Peerless *Maestro* . . . *maître*": "*Maestro*" means "master" in Italian, which Remy mentally contrasts with the word in French.

p. 125: *inversion des rôles*: role reversal; a literal French translation is "reversal of roles."

p. 125: *coruscant*: glittering.

p. 125: "*You must uphold your mask!*": Remy's pretense to be a professional investigator.

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For the use of “masks” in the novel, see the 5.68 note on the title of chap. 5, “A Mask of Every Mirror,” N5:1.

p. 125: DOD: Department of Defense, as established by Leroy on p. 123.

- p. 126: “thumbed”: “to leaf through (as a book or periodical) rapidly” (*Webster’s Third*).
More common is the expression “thumbed through”; hence the single quotes around “thumbed.”
- p. 126: “low-leveled SBU: Defined by Leroy.
In 2008, along with more than one hundred designations for unclassified information, the SBU became part of a new category, Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI).
The Unclassified (UC) designation at the time of my novel (and even now) is a default classification placed on any U.S. documents which do not fall into the three specific categories which require explicit clearance: Top Secret (TS), Secret (S), and Confidential (C).
- p. 126: SOPs: Standard operating procedure.
- p. 126: REL: A U.S. State Department abbreviation which gives permission to “release” a copy of a document to someone specified in the document, as explained by Leroy in the text.
See the 7.101 note, N7:3, for the symbolic use of “release” in the novel.
- p. 126: “Libyan Koni II”: See the 4.57 note, N4:17, which explains when the Libyan government purchased the two Koni II antisubmarine frigates, their names, and what happened to them in the 2011 Libyan civil war.
- p. 126: ingress: Here it means “the right or permission to enter.”
- p. 126: “Political and Economic cone . . . one of eight”: A cone refers to an office, a section, or a service of an embassy.
At the time of the novel, the U.S. Embassy in Algiers had eight cones, each with its own head: Agriculture service, Commercial service, Consular section, Defense Attaché office, Management section, Political and Economic section, Public Affairs section, and the Middle East Partnership Initiative, which consisted of several community involvement programs.
- p. 126: UCs: Unclassified documents.
- p. 126: “‘low-grade intelligence,’ a mimicking”: Leroy had used “low-level” (161).
- p. 126: “smuggler”: The single quotes are intended to convey the self-amused tone of Leroy’s voice at having chosen this term.
- p. 126: “full-barrier precautions”: A medical term, “full-barrier precautions” are “the methods or devices used to prevent contact with potentially infectious body fluids and airborne particles, such as facial masks, doubled gloves, shoe and head covers, and fluid-resistant gowns.”

- p. 126: “chiefs of cones”: heads of embassy sections.
- p. 126: “legwork”: Leroy uses the noun, meaning “work such as collecting information or doing research for a project, which involves much walking,” as a verb, quite without precedence.
- p. 126: “exhume”: Again the choice of words suggests Leroy’s contempt for such mundane matters.
- p. 126: “as ‘frequent’ a ‘flier’”: A “frequent flier” is a person who travels often by air, frequently with one airline.
Again, Leroy, whose wit was perceptive in his conversation with Remy in the garden, strains to be entertaining here.
- p. 126: “Minox LX camera . . . an espionage favorite”: Minox is a German company which has specialized in subminiature cameras since it began operating in Latvia in 1922.
The close-focusing lens and small size of the Minox LX model made it an espionage favorite for covert document copying.

- p. 127: “since ’61”: See 1.2, where Ballard notes that his and Leroy’s friendship started in 1961 in Ann Arbor at the University of Michigan.
- p. 127: distain: Archaic, “stain” or “disgrace.”
- p. 127: “Quartermaster’s”: A part of the Defense Attaché cone, Quartermaster’s provided the clothing, equipment, and so forth for the marines attached to the Algiers embassy.
- p. 127: “the droll M. Vellacott”: In quoting his supposed employer about the negative, Remy seems intent on reinforcing Leroy’s assumption that Vellacott knew about the negative (119-20 and its note, N8.5).
On 4.54, very early on Remy had realized that DGSE had “withheld [the negative] from Vellacott.”
- p. 127: “a needle in a haystack”: This figure of speech means “something difficult or impossible to locate.”
Its earliest known source appears to be in the writing of the 15th-century English philosopher Thomas More although the later wording employed by Cervantes in *Don Quixote* is closer to the modern meaning.
Supposedly quoting his “employer” Vellacott, Remy reverses the idiom. This is the first time he speaks about Leroy’s assumption (119-20) that Vellacott knew about the negative.
Remy needle/haystack image will be repeated by Remy on the next page. It will occur two other times in the novel: 13.211 (by Remy) and 17.277 (by another character).
- p. 127: “*ça et là et partout*”: As the text indicates, this French expression translates as “here, there and everywhere.” The meaning of this English idiom is “at all points” or simply “everywhere.”
It was employed earlier on 3.43 and will appear two other times: 10.158 and 20.341, the latter an eerie echo of its use here.
- p. 127: “Hold, enough!”: Leroy had used the Macbeth quote (5.8.34) on Tuesday in the lobby of the embassy (5.71).
- p. 127: *démarche*: “move”; “countermove”; or “maneuvers, especially in diplomatic relations.”
- p. 127: “twice thrust upon me”: By Leroy on pp. 122-23 and Medlin on p. 125.
- p. 127: vermilion border: The exposed pink or reddish margin of a lip.
- p. 127: “the Washington list”: Those three from the Algiers embassy whom Leroy had selected to accompany him to Washington.

Medlin assumes that Remy does not know about it, not cognizant of his discussion with Belsches on 5.72-73.

The list was first mentioned in the novel on 1.6-7.

In mid-January (the 16th in my chronology) word began to circulate through the embassy that Ballard and the Leroy's two private secretaries were on the Washington list.

On Jan. 23, Ballard asked Leroy to remove him from consideration because on Jan. 7 he had secretly wed Leila.

On Feb. 16, Leroy formally announces the list, which contained Medlin and the Leroy's two private secretaries.

p. 127: "his betrothal to Mlle. Chabane": Leroy's phrasing throughout has shown that he believed that a Muslim marriage entailed a public proclamation of the marriage contract.

Without that, he considered Ballard and Leila as merely engaged.

p. 127: haycock: "a small rounded somewhat conical pile of hay" (*Webster's Third*). Remy uses this diminutive form of a haystack since he concentrates only on one small area of Algiers, the U.S. embassy.

- p. 128: “classical CDs”: The second association of PAO Belsches with classical music. On 5.69, he had mentioned that Ballard had given him a CD of Schumann’s *Carnaval*.
- p. 128: inspiration: “the act of breathing in, specifically, the drawing of air into the lungs” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 128: “Eight days previous to her original departure date”: Mrs. Leroy’s originally scheduled date of departure was Wednesday, Mar. 1, so she made the suggestion for the Feb. 27 excursion to the Casbah on Feb. 21, coincidentally the day that Ballard and Medlin had their argument in the embassy coffee room. As was presented on 5.94-95, she left two days before this chapter, on Tuesday, April 11.
- p. 128: “prospect the Casbah’s golden honeycomb”: Leroy (or Mrs. Leroy) mangles her metaphor: “prospect for gold” and “golden honeycomb.” The latter is an allusion to the intricate patterns of the streets and alleys of the Casbah.
- p. 128: “*maître d’hôtel* . . . maître d’”: Leroy, as Remy on p. 125, employs the formal and complete form, *maître d’hôtel*, while two paragraphs down Medlin uses the abbreviated and informal expression for “headwaiter.”
- p. 128: “if Ambassador Leroy approves”: Medlin’s overuse of this correct but sycophantic expression will be mocked by Remy later in the next section (pp. 129-30).
- p. 128: “a final request”: Revealed in the last paragraph of this section (p. 129).
- p. 128: “My wife Marie”: A careless misstatement by Remy who uses his wife’s name, not that of the wife of the Belgium inspector whose alias he has assumed. Leroy will casually bring up this misidentification on 11.177 and more pointedly on 13.218.
- p. 128: fleer: a derisive grimace.
Marie is self-gibing her carelessness.
- p. 128: “an answer to his garden-path question”: The last sentence of sect. 3 (124) was Remy’s question about who the murderer of Ballard was really targeting. Leroy admits here that he believed “the killer struck him [Ballard] down, striking out against me.”
- p. 128: “my ‘rise,’ my ‘shine’”: See p. 124, “I was the one with all the ‘rise-and-shine’ ambition,” and its note, N8:15.
- p. 128: “‘instinct for truth’”: My early notes indicate that the phrase was taken from two philosophers: In bk. 1, chap. 1 (6th paragraph) of *Rhetoric*, Aristotle writes,

“Men have a sufficient natural instinct for what is true, and usually do arrive at the truth.”

And in *Treatise on the Love of God*, chap. 4 (“What is Truth?”), Unamuno writes, “And thus it can be said that it is the instinct of self-preservation that creates reality for us and fashions the truth of the sensible world.”

However, a later note, which allowed me to put the phrase “instinct for truth” in quotations, was copied from the 19th-century English philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce’s essay “On the Logic of Drawing History from Ancient Documents, Especially from Testimonies”: “For the existence of a natural instinct for truth is, after all, the sheet anchor of science.”

p. 128: “At your service will be I and all my staff”: So impressed by Remy, Leroy takes an entirely different approach from the dismissive one accorded Vellacott.

See 5.75, where Leroy “bulwarked” Vellacott’s question about whether any arguments involving Ballard had recently occurred by stating, “He was a personal friend of mine.”

This observation indicated that Ballard’s closeness to the ambassador would prevent anyone from daring to engage in arguments with his closest friend.

The novel mentions no other interview Vellacott had with Leroy.

p. 129: *embrasure de la porte*: doorway.

pp. 129-31: SECTION 5: Time span: This section takes up where sect. 4 broke off (1:15). Having first stopped at Medlin's third-story office to pick up a key, the DCM and Remy reach Ballard's padlocked second-story office at 1:25.

Endeavoring to play the role of a professional investigator, Remy looks through Ballard's desk, a safe, folders in the cabinet, and his desk calendar. A Feb. 14 notation puzzles him, and he finally asks Medlin's help about what Ballard's scribbling "Get Gr Gog" means (1:53).

p. 129: facsimile: As a transitive verb, "to be an exact copy of something" (*Webster's Third*), in this case a copy of Medlin's conception of what a professional investigator would do in examining a room.

p. 129: Mr. Coffee: The first automatic drip coffee maker, it was introduced in 1972.

p. 129: canescent: grayish white.

p. 129: "pioneers": An obsolete meaning is "one who excavates or undermines" (*Webster's Third*); therefore it is the first of four mining metaphors in the sentence: "mine," "rich veins," and "enseamed."

p. 129: in high dudgeon: "aggrieved or angering feeling," usually used "with *in* and a qualifier," as in the example, "stalked off in high dudgeon" (*Webster's Third*).

p. 129: "the three capital Gs": To be explained in the last sentence of section 5 (131).

p. 129: "'If Ambassador Leroy approves' . . . curtailed Latin adverb . . . *ibid.*": The abbreviation *ibid.* is shortened from the Latin *ibidem*, meaning "in the same place."

p. 129: "'Thrift, thrift'": From *Hamlet* 1.2.180-81: "Thrift, thrift, Horatio! The funeral baked meats / Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables."

To indicate that he opposes the "thrift" on his father's funeral, Hamlet unthriftilly adds a second "thrift." Another interpretation is that the first "thrift" applied to the "funeral" and the second to the "marriage tables."

p. 129: *fauteuil pivotant*: French for "swivel chair." A synonym for it is *fauteuil tournant*.

p. 129: perlustration: "the act or process of examining something thoroughly" (*Webster's Third*).

Commentary from other dictionaries state that it is used in reference to the inspection of buildings.

However, several indicate it may also be used as I have here: the act of examining a document.

- p. 130: “one above and the other below the scrawling”: Both notes are palimpsests. The abbreviation CHAB was printed using a black pen above one of the black doodles previously made and then was nearly obliterated by black Xs: black on black on black.
The note ZB 7:15 was made by a blue ink and was subsequently nearly smothered by the black doodling (“raven helices”).
- p. 130: “the provenance of Leroy’s and Medlin’s fixation on Ahmed Chabane”: Both Leroy and Medlin had pointed out to Remy that Leila’s brother had confronted Ballard in his office on the day of his murder (122-23 and 125).
Here Remy believes that the “provenance” or “origin” of their fixation on Chabane arose from the discovery by the embassy security chief Dave Thompson and Medlin of this abbreviation CHAB, which seems to have been angrily crossed out.
- p. 130: “the fifty-eight pages to the year’s beginning”: From Jan. 1 to Feb. 27, there are fifty-eight days.
- p. 130: *inscription*: One of the meanings of the French noun is “an entry in a diary or ledger.”
- p. 130: “my report if *ibid.*”: This is Medlin’s second display of wit, and once again his countenance refuses to acknowledge it.
- p. 130: *abbr.*: The abbreviation of “abbreviation.”
- p. 130: “up-his-sleeve sniggering”: Laughing up his sleeve; the idiom means “to laugh secretly or inwardly.”
- p. 130: “Meet Mo”: Since Remy had come across no reference to Mohammed Belmazoïr in the desk calendar entries, he wonders whether “ZB 7:15” could have been a remainder of some embassy assignment at Zaracova Beach to be handled before his meeting with Belmazoïr.
- p. 130: “meticulousness [of the desk calendar] changed on Monday, February 6”: The following dates are listed:
Mon. Feb. 6: As the novel develops, the events of the week before will be shown to be a time during which Ballard was under great pressure.
Tues. Feb. 14: The importance of this date will be established in the next section.
Thurs. Feb. 23: The day Ballard called Bendari’s café and through the barkeep left a message for Belmazoïr to meet him at Zaracova. See 6.85 where Belmazoïr spoke of this telephone call.
Fri. Feb. 24: Belmazoïr’s reply to the message that he would be at the rendezvous, again passed through the bartender.
Mon. Feb. 27: The night Ballard was murdered.

p. 130: *Griffonnages*: French for “doodles.”

p. 130: “Saharan grit swamping a date palm grove”: In *Algeria and the Sahara*, a book on which I much relied since it was the only one on Algeria in the library of the small branch college at which I taught in Saudi Arabia for seventeen years, the Stevenses write about the effect on palm trees of the moving sand dunes in the Sahara: “As you drive on some tarmac roads in dune country you will see palms obviously being killed by a moving dune. Only the upper third of the tree will be showing and perhaps in ten years it will be completely covered” (38).

p. 130: *de novo*: once more; again.

p. 130: illation: conclusion; inference.

p. 130: “the earlier glossed-over notation [beginning with] ‘Get’”: The “alliterative notation on the fourteenth of February [beginning] with ‘Get,’” mentioned three paragraphs above.

- p. 131: majuscular: resembling a majuscule, that is, the size of a large or capital letter.
- p. 131: “at cross-purposes . . . not to forget . . . not to remember”: Remy’s analysis of the scrawling is reminiscent of the battle which raged in Ballard’s mind at Zaracova Beach over whether or not to go to the meeting with Belmazoir (1.2 and 4).
- p. 131: cacographer: A person who exhibits the traits of bad handwriting. Listed in the unabridged *Collins English Dictionary* and in *Wiktionary*, but the other dictionaries which I consulted mention only the noun of action *cacography* or the adjective forms *cacographic* or *cacographical*.
- pp. 131-32: SECTION 6: Time span: After Medlin says he does not know what the abbreviations mean, Remy searches the folders in the filing cabinet labeled “Go” (for “Gog”) and “Gr” (1:53 – 2:00).
Returning to Ballard’s chair, he concludes that there is only one common word in English beginning with *Gog*. He mentions that word to Medlin, who after a moment says “Green Goggles.”
By phoning the embassy’s Quartermaster’s section (2:05), he learns that at four o’clock on Feb. 14 Ballard checked out two pairs of FLIRs, nicknamed by embassy personnel as “green goggles” because the Forward Looking Infrared glasses shows objects principally in shades of green and black. Ballard returned them on at nine on the morning of the 16th (2:10).
As Remy is thinking that the FLIRs indicate Ballard was performing a secret mission for Leroy, Medlin adds that he probably checked out two because Ballard and Leila liked to drive to the nearby mountains to watch animals at night. Medlin adds that even he had checked out a pair to catch a rat in his apartment (2:12).
- p. 131: apocoptation: the loss of one or more letters (or sounds) at the end of a word. Since “Get” is not abbreviated, the two apocoptations are “Gr” and “Gog.”
- p. 131: “muster words in English”: Cf. with the example by E. B. White given in *Webster’s Third*: “have to muster the right words,” meaning “to call forth, develop, or invoke.”
- p. 131: anlaut: a term in phonetics meaning “the initial sound or position of a word or syllable” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 131: “the Hebraism”: Gog is probably the Hebrew transcription of the name Gyges, a king of Lydia in the seventh century BCE. Writing one hundred years later, Ezekiel in 38:2-3 lists Gog as a foreign prince of the land of Magog, who (or whose way of life) should be rejected by Israel and Judah.
In Rev. 20.8, Gog and Magog are listed as the nations of the earth.

- p. 131: “what noun in your language”: Remy assumes that the verb “Get” would be followed by a noun.
- p. 131: “G&S patter song”: G&S: Gilbert and Sullivan.
Patter song: A musical-comedy song with a simple tune and comic lyrics sung with great rapidity.
- pp. 131-32: “Paul signed out two pairs of FLIRS . . . Night-vision glasses . . . ‘green goggles’”: On p. 1.3, Ballard mentions “the two pairs of night-vision goggles” in his hands in the sketchy description of a scene involving Belmazoir and his sister.
- p. 131: “the very model of [the] modern”: Medlin’s description of the FLIRs subtly identifies the G&S tune Medlin had been humming: “The Major-General’s Song” from *The Pirates of Penzance*, the most famous of patter songs with its opening and repeated line, “I am the very model of a modern Major-General.”

p. 132: “a cloning *ibid.* retort”: See p. 129.

p. 132: “their flower shop”: Medlin’s comment shows his awareness that Ballard and Leila had been planning to open a flower shop in Algiers, but this would have been learned in his investigation after the murder of Ballard, although this nicety is not specified.

p. 132: dispatch: kill; to put an end to.

p. 132: “*Behind the arras . . . ‘A rat, a rat!’ . . . ‘A rat?’*”: Gertrude’s quote is not exact: “In his lawless fit, / Behind the arras hearing something stir, / [Hamlet] Whips out his rapier, cries, “A rat, a rat!” (4.1.8-10). Hamlet’s verbatim speech is “How now? A rat? Dead for a ducat, dead!” (3.4.25) See p. 118 above and its note, N8:2, and p. 120 and its note, N8:7.

pp. 132-34: SECTION 7: Time span: After returning to the DCM’s office, Remy and Medlin take the elevator to the lobby. Each apologizes to the other for any untoward comments or actions. Medlin arranges to bring the photocopies of the statements by embassy personnel to Remy’s hotel that night (2:12 – 2:20). As they exit the elevator, they hear someone near the reception desk crying out to Belsches and eight other workers that the embassy must give her the body of her husband. It is Leila accompanied by her brother Ahmed. She rushes toward Medlin, who convinces her to come upstairs to review what is being done to facilitate her claim (2:26). Remy approaches Chabane and through a bribe obtains his consent for Remy to speak with him and his sister about Ballard (2:30).

p. 132: logogriph: A word puzzle.

- p. 133: “like the chameleon that feeds on air”: A superstition and a characteristic of the chameleon are invoked here.
So rapid is the European lizard’s tongue, it was popularly believed to feed on air, and is so used twice in Shakespeare: *Hamlet* 3.2.91-93 and *Two Gentleman* 2.1.167-68.
The later play definitely and Hamlet’s speech probably refer to the ability of some chameleons to change the color of their skin quickly and expediently.
Medlin, who has shown no knowledge of Shakespeare, undoubtedly has heard the popular superstition, but wittily applies it to his food’s lack of taste.
Remy’s use of “chameleon” to describe Medlin’s “wit” does not employ the usual “fickle” denotation, but wit’s ability to react precipitately to any situation.
- p. 133: anosmia: Total or partial loss of the sense of smell. “An intact sense of smell is necessary to fully taste food. Loss of smell could cause [one] to lose interest in eating” (Mayo Clinic report on anosmia).
- p. 133: “the most dreaded of all [losses] in a man . . . save one”: Impotency, Remy jokes.
- p. 133: “Give me my husband’s body!”: The first words that Remy will physically hear Leila speak in the novel.
- p. 133: keen: a wailing for the dead.
- p. 133: PAO: Belsches.
- p. 133: *niqaab*: As explained in the text, it is a veil worn by some Algerian women. During the novel, three distinct styles will be mentioned:
(1) a full *niqaab*, which completely covers the face, as here. This was used earlier on 5:80 and 81, and will later appear on 9.141, 143, and 149; 11.173 and, although not specified as a full *niqaab*, 183; 12.193 and 196; 14.228; 15:250; and 19.319. See the 5.80 note, N5.37.
(2) a forever-mourning *niqaab*, an extreme veil which drapes over a woman’s entire body from head to feet, as on 2.26; 3.38; and 17.282. See the 2.26 note, N2:41.
(3) a half *niqaab*, the most popular facial veil, which covers the lower face, but leaves the eyes and brow exposed, as on 3.37; 18.305 and 306; 19.313 where a half veil will be implied in the description, “three-pointed lace veil”; and 21.360. See the 3.37 note, N3.8.
- p. 133: *higaab*: A headscarf, as indicated in the text.
This is the first use of this Arabic term in the novel.
It will occur on 10.157 (in its plural form *hugub*) as well as in its singular; 11.183; and 15.248.
- p. 133: *haik*: An outer robe worn by Algerian women, sometimes draping the entire frame and sometimes simply from the shoulders down to the feet.

- p. 133: reclaim: “to cry out, object, protest” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 133: mauley: “hand or fist” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 133: adjuror: a person who entreats earnestly.
- p. 133: *djellaba*: A man’s robe which has long sleeves and a hood.
See the 1.14 note, N1.37, its first occurrence in the novel.
This Arabic term appears twenty-four times in the novel, a testimony to the popularity of the garment.
- p. 133: “His French was so ill-formed”: On 1.12, Ballard had similarly described Chabane’s French: “In French less native-sounding than my own.”
- p. 133: “the claim of Paul’s foster-niece”: Belsches referred to Ballard’s “foster-niece” on 5.69.
- p. 133: “mark”: Slang for a prospective or actual victim of a swindle.
- p. 133: “better than an *alim*”: To converse with this second sister Leila, Remy will work through her brother, which he jibes will produce a better result than the *alim* whom he had used in approaching the first sister Houda (5.79-81).

p. 134: *portes des l'ascenseur*: In French “elevator doors.”

p. 134: “Don’t forget our meeting to—“: The “temporal adverb” truncated by the closing doors of the elevator is “tonight.”

p. 134: *Bien!*: “Good!” in French.

p. 134: “a title”: Medlin typically addresses Remy as Mister (Mr.), not Monsieur (M.).

p. 134: “Mme. Ballard’s husband”: A wily Remy refers to Leila’s marital status depending on his audience.

Here to her brother he calls her the name she had on the previous page insisted upon.

With Leroy, he spoke of her as unmarried, “Mlle. Chabane” (pp. 123 and 127).