

Chapter Four

A PRODIGAL RETURN

No.

The Bay of Algiers had retained its royal blue, Remy observed from the window seat of the Air Algérie Airbus A310-200 he had boarded three hours ago in Brussels. Its enormous semicircle, however, was now broken by far more compartmentalizing levies and piers than at his last view of it twenty-eight years ago.

The push against the sea, a Turkish enterprise, had succeeded in connecting the basin's four green islets to the mainland by 1525, thus rendering meaningless the name *Al Djazair*, "the islands," a millennium before given to his native land. Behind it was the city: Like dull white lichen, it had crawled farther up the dark-brown resistless slopes of the Sahel Hills.

"I'll do what I've been told to do," Remy thought—unperturbed that this inceptive sighting of his birthplace had evoked no cry, "I return to my city, familiar as tears"—"and what *I* have come to do, and promptly speed home to Marie."

He had barely spoken "*Allô*" into the Orly telephone when she began, "My dearest, a telegram has arrived from Whitehorse, Canada: Gaston Corneille—I'm so sorry—has died. It states that you two forged an orphanage blood-bond to attend the other's funeral, and his attorneys delay his burial till you send word. He revived this affinity on his deathbed."

Yes, she would want him to go. DGSE had fathomed her as deeply as they had plumbed him. Honoring a commitment made thirty-nine years ago to a friend, long-distant, would strengthen her wavering trust that he would keep true to the quarter-century plus-two vow to her, his wife and the mother of his children. "Should you wish, fly direct from Paris."

"No, I must see you first. If your approval's yet there, I will go."

No sooner had he exited from the Lyon taxi than the red oak door of their two-story chalet opened and she, lovelier than he remembered for many years, scurried past the lane's rosebushes toward the gate, a sun-yellow paper clutched to her chest. She started in immediately, *his* news surpassing in importance the embrace he yearned for.

"After all these years, he authorized you to settle his estate. I've notified the library how time-consuming this obligation may be. He was without family. How pitiful! '*Ein Dilettant in Liebe*,' my mother's styling of Hitler. An orphanage will do that. How lucky you were to escape those nuns' sly workings!"

He summoned up how last year she had received as a compliment what her older sister had destined as a slight. Looking not at him, but at Marie's plump frame, Caroline had

undercut, “Dear brother, the passing years make you the more athletic and handsome.”

That night in bed, though taken by surprise, she had contained her reaction until they had finished. It was he who broke the verbal silence. “You’re to hire a limousine to Châteauroux. No cramped taxi! With Baby Snooks,” their fourteen-year-old cat, “as your traveling companion. So overjoyed by your visit, Caroline won’t dare refuse his entry.”

She who had turned her back to him rolled over and, draping a lumbering arm across his stomach, relaxed her brow on the few dark hairs about his sternum. “I suppose, as in all your other out-of-country trips, you’ll not telephone till back on French soil.”

“And *you* are not to worry that I do not.” The fingers of his left hand pantomimed the dialing of his sister-in-law’s number on her shoulder blade. “I think in the Yukon they still rely on smoke signals.” To restrain a snicker, with her chin she pecked at his chest, each tap shaking loose a sprinkle of teardrops from her cheeks.

“You shouldn’t have brought me the signed Haskell pearl cabochon earrings: ‘Real after years of the artificial!’ you confided.”

He drew her body close until her breasts, which he had not touched for eleven years, nestled against his lower ribs. Lifting her head at its gnathion, with a string of kisses, he circuited her face, its flaccidity tightened by her sobbing. “And that makes you cry?”

A concerned smile glided onto his lips as they brushed against hers. With her annulary she jabbed at his carotid artery. “But of course,” and pulling away, she had kissed him once on his left collarbone.

The memory of the casualness of that kiss seduced Remy into averting his gaze from the brown hills, the whiteness of the city, and the blue bay.

“Please advise my beloved sister-in-law that for me, the passing years make her sister more beautiful . . . and athletic.” His errant hand cupped and squeezed her right buttock.

“Conceivably when I return you’ll have a gift for me, one . . .” Her attempt to giggle and weep simultaneously had produced a scale of burbles which curtailed his divination.

“Why now do I want a son?” asked Remy, five thousand meters above the city of his birth and falling, or so the trajectory blip on the wide-body’s TV screen testified.

2

That no one would meet him at Houari Boumediène Airport, for so the 2269 file had apprised him, was not entirely true. “Business?” the customs agent inquired, in the middle of riffling through the navy-blue folder, bulging with photocopies of reports by Vellacott and his staff and of Algerian police files that they had amassed. Remy nodded.

“*Un moment, s’il vous plaît.*” Twenty minutes later the official shambled back. Locating the elastic-bound file, instead of an overt check to ascertain that nothing was missing, Remy pressed his fingers against several pages. “A few ‘small calories’ are still emitted,” he lied, presenting his grin as involuntary.

That night, for late in the afternoon he reached his hotel, the “celestial” Al-Nigma, he again leafed through the pages of Vellacott’s accounts: In the three-hour train trip from Paris to Lyon, where initially he had perused the 2269 cache, he had been struck by the absence of

any reference to the negative. HIV had not prepared him for that.

Even the transcripts of Vellacott's three interviews with Belmazoir revealed the lawyer had not raised the issue. For a librarian, who had spent most of his *jours ouvrables* ensuring that nothing which should be there had gone astray, the breach was less puzzling than the motive for it. Why had DGSE, whose 2269 instructions to him were emphatic about the centrality of the snippet—"your reason for going"—withheld it from Vellacott?

During his one-evening stay in Le Puy, he had put aside the gap as he also had throughout his next-day travels, a return by taxi and rail to Paris. There another, his "*double*," the term employed by 2269, presumably grabbed a cab to Orly and, using Remy's passport, immediately boarded a half-day flight for Quebec.

His own transition was less taxing: In two hours, an SNCF train sped him to Brussels, where he registered at the three-star Hotel Argus under the name of Christian Lazar. At any moment envisioning his "shadow" would emerge with some last-minute instructions, when he failed to, Remy surmised the lacuna would be clarified by his Algiers' liaison.

However (and he had not anticipated this), a native country begins its work on a "reinstated son," no longer an absent-there-awhile librarian. One who has deceived comes to brace himself for deception, in the same way a murderer looks to be murdered and "a traitor to be betrayed," Remy mused during his Al-Nigma room service meal.

"And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." Vellacott was not a traitor. Send an Algerian to "prize open [the] lips" of a fellow Algerian, Directeur had resolved. *Yet*—and Remy's "leaping" deduction halted the spoon, plunged into the thick white bean stew—*had HIV been adjured to emend somewhat the chief's verbatim?*

"Dispatch a traitor to catch a fellow traitor," one who would appreciate that the first step to descrying the light is to comprehend the darkness of treason. They were predicating that he, a traitor like Ballard, would become the American, an impossible demand of Vellacott, but a compulsory prelude to unsealing Belmazoir's lips.

The basal discovery out of the way, the sequent befell as quickly as "a second sin the original. And so they'd have me commence by roiling my own 'embalmed darkness'—light to them," from which he was expected to extract "a particle of darkness." He had been sent not as a follow-up to Vellacott and crew; rather they, as a preparing-the-way-for-another: him.

Near midnight, closing the file *de novo*, with his revised agenda for HIV's "forty-two-year-old tarboosh" in place, he climbed into the pediment-style neoclassic four-poster.

His eyes were focused on the panoramic window and, before he drifted off to sleep, repeatedly his thoughts—otherwise of Marie—traveled twenty-three streets to where, detached by one and a half levels from the Ramadan reveling of the Casbah, there was one "who understands absence and darkness better than I."

3

The man who stood up, offered his right hand, and indicated on its release the easy chair where Remy was to sit was not dissimilar to him in appearance.

But he remained in Algiers was his rationalization for the exiguous contrasts in their features: the marginally tawnier complexion which Le Puy's less brilliant sun would have dimmed, the full black untousled moustache (the Prophet-dictated facial hair that Muslim men must have), and the hint of wrinkles at his canthi, all "repercussions of climate or culture," not heredity.

"Forgive me, M. Lazar. A thousand *pardons* for keeping you waiting," besought *Commissaire divisionnaire* Tawfek Foucin, the city's "only . . . *decent gardien de la paix*," according to HIV.

Remy had not needed to counsel himself, *Exude ennui*. Nil admirari: "Never exhibit enthusiasm." *The Arabs respect a bored mien*. "Indeed, M. Commissioner," he answered, "I'd imagined, in my rush from the Al-Nigma this morning, I'd be imploring those from you, convinced our meeting was scheduled for ten."

An uphill eight-minute taxi ride had transported Remy to the half-block, three-story Gendarmerie (police headquarters), which from its Boulevard Abderazak Hadad perch brooded over Algiers' storied Casbah.

Foucin's countenance negligibly stiffened. "No, 10:30." He glanced at the wall clock to confirm that it was now 10:51, corroboration Remy had been outside no more than the requisite twenty minutes. "Perhaps my secretary misspoke. Your call yesterday came as he was hurrying from the office to his Asr prayers."

With this concession, Remy, bending forward, handed Foucin a manila envelope. The commissioner's lips moved during his silent reading of the two-page deputation, the labial motion "an Arab World" signal that conscientious scrutiny was being given to the matter at hand.

In French, it informed Algiers' Sûreté Nationale (the metropolitan police force) that Vellacott had delegated Christian Joseph Lazar, a Belgian national, to continue his investigations apropos of the government's action against his client Mohammed Ahmed Belmazoïr and detailed all the juridical prerogatives which such investiture allowed.

"Exact," Foucin acceded. Withdrawing a stamp and pad, he affixed a seal at the bottom of the second page and with a fountain pen initialed the aquamarine *cachet*. "The seal's in Arabic, but I believe you know some," he added, passing the legal instrument to Remy.

"If you deem the Arabic of Egypt Arabic," he retorted, sliding back into his chair.

Foucin stifled a laugh, "or pretended to." Rising abruptly, he took a stride toward a sofa, covered with the chair's tone-on-tone fabric, and gestured for Remy to join him.

"This couch is all the comfort I can offer: No tea or coffee." He glimpsed down at the unadorned tempered-glass table. "Or for their omission, even an apology, forbidden, since who would crave pardon for a glorious religious pillar, our Ramadan fasting?" Once Remy had positioned himself, two cushions divided them.

"I was sent by M. Vellacott to Cairo, that's true, three years ago." He was not averse to elaboration for 2269 had assured him his new *arrière-garde* was as impermeable as his first. His reply had incorporated the Arabic (Egyptian dialect) *ana* ("I"), *ostaaz* ("Monsieur"), *sah* ("that's true"), and *talahta* ("three") into a sentence that preserved its French structure and was designed to evince how rudimentary his Arabic was.

Leaning toward him, "*Solliciteurs pour la justice sans frontières*," Foucin whispered.

“My client is M. Vellacott,” Remy maintained, not changing his vocal modulation.

“And his client is that organism ‘without borders’ which jubilates in embarrassing those of the Third World, or have we graduated to the Second, now communism collapses?”

Remy could not repress the piquant smirk fudging onto his lips. “Physicians, bankers, lawyers,” Foucin resumed, “all ‘hell-bent’ to broadcast how . . . disheveled we are. Is no one left at home to tidy up your own house?”

There ensued an elongated pause as if a time for rebuttal evidence was being awarded. “Your clients—excuse me—the clients of M. Vellacott, in ’86 were three Palestinians, hanged for attacking a busload of Israeli tourists in Gaza. Here I wish you better success.”

“Yes, I had the opportunity to acquire a little Egyptian Arabic, Third (or Second) World justice being so slow, that is, provided the defendant survives the rigors of police interrogation. I speak of Cairo, the Mideast judicatory with which I’m familiar.” Standing up, Remy held out the document. “This will permit me to see M. Belmazoïr.”

Foucin likewise rose. “The client of your client. *Solliciteurs* espouses all causes Palestinian.”

“*Misharif*.” Remy employed the Arabic for “I don’t know.”

“Perhaps you should have used ‘*Mishkallem*,’” Foucin countered, “I don’t say.”

“*Misharif*.” As he walked toward the pine two-panel door, Remy felt he had turned from a mirror, leaving his image behind. *This man won’t make my departure easy*, he prevised, beginning to rehearse his exit line.

Foucin circled round the steel-framed *table basse* in front of the sofa. “The case against M. Belmazoïr is strong: His homosexual servicing of M. Ballard; their scheduled meeting in the grove; the smear of his victim’s blood on his sneakers; his fingerprints on the wallet; and, as plinth, his own admission that he was at the scene.

“Albeit you’re a First World professional, be consoled: We don’t hang. A firing squad at dawn our constitution mandates, yet even that we seldom, shall I say, capitalize on.”

“*Malesh!*” and Remy translated the word, “‘Doesn’t matter!’ As long as I give a proficient account of myself, M. Vellacott will pay. Provident of me to have devoted some of my downtime in Cairo to mastering a soupçon of Arabic. This assignment may betoken I’m to be his subsidiary in the Arab World.”

At the door, during their firm handshake, Remy fixed his eyes on the commissioner’s. “There’s just one glaring teaser—the snippet of acetate. Colloguing one professional to another, regardless of which World, what do you make of the negative?”

4

The question did not appear to nonplus Foucin for his grip neither tautened nor eased. “Ah, that will be M. Vellacott’s line of defense: M. Ballard was peddling embassy documents through his hustler M. Belmazoïr. On that fatal night, the two argued, fought over it. But would the youth disremember to tote off the negative he’d just killed for?”

Releasing his hand, Foucin puckered his lips into a self-effacing simper. “Still it is a puzzler: why M. Ballard brought that ‘snippet of acetate’ to the beach. What the Americans know, the deceased’s friend His Excellency Ambassador Claude Sebastian Leroy has chosen

to diplomatically immunize. Accommodating him, we've not publicized the strip. Indeed till just proven wrong, I believed even M. Vellacott was unaware of it. *Malesh!*"

Hesitantly shrugging, Remy clasped, yet did not turn, the doorknob. "I learned in Egypt that few secrets in the Arab World can be kept buried when the idea of a generous bribe is floated. Like flooded corpses they rise. The morning I received the M. Belmazoir commission, I was on the phone to my former Cairo PI. 'Yes,' he verified, he had some connections in Algiers. Four days later I was privy to the negative."

From a step away, taken while Remy was speaking, Foucin remarked, "A photograph of an instrumentation panel of a Soviet-made Libyan antisubmarine frigate, a 'corpse' easily unearthed in *Jane's* or some other demotic military journal."

The lull that followed was protracted, but, Remy mused, *The interval's mandatory: Cumbersome scenery is being rearranged.*

"M. Ballard"—having extended the title and the cognomen, Foucin's voice gathered pace—"was not nicked to death by a piece of celluloid. His face was bashed in by a slab of wood; the artery of his throat, severed by a slipjoint pocketknife."

Remy twisted the knob though made no attempt to open the door. "An El-Baraka *douk-douk*, the wound indicates, which M. Vellacott informed me you had not found. Now largely an ornamental weapon prized for the carved arabesques on its handle and blade, yet wielded with intolerable efficiency, I understand, during your country's revolution."

"Our ALN's 'dagger-ette,' and, practical nostalgia never dying, still prodigally available in our Casbah markets, and just as easily disposed of."

"So you despond of its recovery?"

"I despair of nothing, although the criminal world would justify desperation." A pinched smile anew formed at the corners of Foucin's lips.

Remy's mimicked—"or mocked"—this chagrin. "A burden . . . with which I agree: the *justitia* of despair and the negation of its conatus. A professional necessity."

The door was edged open. "The dagger's merely one thing missing. The negative's pristine, not one whorl of a fingerprint, as if it had magically wafted itself into M. Ballard's wallet."

When the crack did not widen, Foucin answered, "Nor of 'the client of your client,' perhaps you fancy appending. A diplomatic precaution, I speculate, on M. Ballard's part: One mustn't smudge delicate embassy property or, if conscientious, let it out of one's sight.

"That no prints of M. Belmazoirs are on the negative should convince even a 'Socrates dissatisfied' of its unimportance. In abstracting the money from the main compartment of the billfold, on which he did deposit five excellent left-hand impressions, his fingers could not have avoided brushing against the adjacent strip."

Foucin's shoulders upturned. "Hashish-prompted robberies often go awry. The sole objective of this pathetic strung-out pusher of his drugs and of himself was the 1,325 dinars in the wallet. It's a matter-of-fact murder."

With a slight grin Remy nodded. "M. Vellacott concedes his client's prints are there, as are another's, whose prolifically overlap M. Ballard and in three cases are imbricated by M. Belmazoir's. Your confident declaration indicates you've had better luck than with the *douk-douk*, have located the possessor of these eight fingers and two thumbs who also 'left his

mark' not only on the wallet, but also on M. Ballard's belt, watch, car keys, et cetera?"

As Remy desired, his endeavor to curb his derisive tone simply accentuated it, neither stratagem seemingly escaping Foucin.

"Fingerprints are not punched in like time-clock cards. Into black ink we've pressed many a digit of those, our 'Genet' boys, who cater—themselves the entrees—to those gluttonous First World tourists who slip by our customs inspectors.

"Again it must be a supposition: those of a different young man M. Ballard picked up, perhaps the night before. Such conjecture spurned, no, to my second or third discomfiture, he is not identified, relegating me to no 'better . . . than a fool [dis]satisfied.'"

"'When the guardians of the peace confide unease, the accused's prospect perforce grows less dismal,' my client, the esteemed M. Vellacott, often intones, on perceiving me with abjection sigh." Remy loosed his hand from the knob. "You weren't the original investigator to head this case, but swiftly appropriated it. A 'matter-of-fact murder,' and yet 'the cream of the cream' of Sûreté Nationale . . ."

This was the fourth and, he had told himself at the Al-Nigma, "the least important" issue he planned to broach. Even a trailing off as soon as he had uttered the compliment had been prearranged. Nonetheless, to his astonishment it was the one that engendered a physical rejoinder, quickly overhauled by an apology.

Foucin advanced, and, in pushing shut the door, the shoulder of his tan uniform grazed Remy's tweed jacket. "*Pardon!*" he mouthed before restoring their two-stride separation.

"An American embassy official was brutally slain, I could indignantly asseverate, and I—You bombast my worth!—am here, a figurehead, to certify to our diplomatic community that Algeria assigns a more-than-eight-day circumcising priority to this offense, which 'shrieks out,' while other crimes 'only speak.' . . . Still you would know the lie."

Foucin's eyes, until that moment downcast, shot up. "We've not been able to determine if *Solliciteurs* is a front for the Palestinians or for the French. In the event the sponsor of the client of M. Belmazoir is the PLO, we want to be abreast of what these guests of our nation—we maintain a camp for some of their refugees—are involved in.

"Why the French, other than that they have long Gallic noses which bridge the Mediterranean? A little history. I may bore you, for with all of this M. Vellacott probably acquainted you. Every country has a devil or so. Mine had seven, who in the top echelon of our Revolution perfidiously served the French and whom France contrived to save.

"M. Belmazoir is the grandson of one of those, the fourth brought to justice. Perchance the French, having failed to protect the grandfather, seek recompense and redemption by proffering aid through *Solliciteurs* to his descendant. I welcome such, for their intervention may fortuitously route me to the fag end of the traitors sheltered by France. For twenty-six years I've had a fascination with those seven."

Remy struggled to steady his words. "So the murder interests you less than the interest shown in the murder. Then I'm deceived by my client." Reopening the door, he stepped into the anteroom, where the secretary, a sergeant, sprang to his feet.

"M. Vellacott averred that one week elapsed before he was contacted and contracted to defend the ill-starred M. Belmazoir. Yet your name manifests itself on documents as the officer supervising the investigation three days succeeding the homicide. Being a

professional, mayhap you anticipated the interest of others.”

As they mouthed their goodbyes, Remy noted to himself, *So from another I discover I am the last.*

5

In virtually all Arab societies, not much distinction is drawn between the accused and the convicted since such a discernment might unduly malign the prestige of the police. Thus after interrogation, the arrested who confesses and the one who does not, while awaiting trial or more likely a trial-less sentencing, are carted off, not to a holding cell, but a prison.

Belmazoir could have been consigned to one so named, the Prison Civile. Contiguous to the Gendarmerie, it would have entailed Remy to embark on a brief saunter to interview “the client of your client,” as Foucin had taken to alluding to Belmazoir.

In truth, however, the Prison Civile was no more than a jail, so for the past fifty-five minutes Remy had been in the backseat of a taxi hired at the Al-Nigma, twitching at the front of his spuriously labeled mold-white Armani shirt to prevent it from sticking.

His misery was shortly compounded, for the quarter-hour final leg to Berrouaghia Penitentiary was over an unpaved road. Though the windows were rolled tight, the fallow yellow dust spun up by its wheels seeped in, suffusing the humid air with a choking grit.

The russet walls of the prison, their hue softened by the afternoon sun, materialized. From the *siège arrière* of the taxi, it appeared less imposing than thirty-one years ago.

The components of the land mine wouldn’t reassemble. I’d made the trek for nothing. Resigned to a moonlit trudge back to Algiers, for ten minutes I slogged across the rolling, bramble-patched expanse, out of which the dirt road to Berrouaghia, the major French internment center for “rebels,” had been hewn.

What compelled me to double back? I yearned to distill an essence from the mission, even if it was just “to see and curse.” Stowing the basket with the mine under a bush, I slunk to a cluster of *palmiers sauvages*, the nearest I dared approach.

Stripping off my ragged goat-hair *cachabia* (“a wraparound hooded cloak”) and black *djellaba* (“a full-sleeve robe”) left me clothed in an undershirt and three-quarter-length shorts. My bare arms enfolded the shaggy trunk of the loftiest tree, perhaps twenty meters high, and scrabbling for natural stumps, I commenced my scoot up its rough bark.

The bristles scraped my limbs and cut into my pushing soles. I glimpsed neither down nor up until the crown of my head was tickled by the feathery tips of a frond. Then, two stems grasped, I heaved myself into the nest, stifling with the flatulence of rotten dates.

My position secure, I eased aside a branch and beheld that I could peek beyond the concrete wall. Past its dense tiresome shadow, a respite of moonstruck sand terminated in a canal, its stagnant water mist-concealed save for one gleaming swath.

Ten paces farther on was a chain-link fence, bonneted with whorls of razor wire. My survey traveling the length of a football field, I found myself glowered at by a massive, circular building of hoary timber. A “wooden O,” I’d call it later.

All at once a peevish gust assailed my nest, and as I swayed with the fronds, this breeze conveyed on its winds the burthen of a tortured distant wail, “*Allah! Al-awgh!*”: my journey’s end. And, just as abruptly becalmed, the flurry snatched it away.

“Dear God, let it blow,” I supplicated, “that I may ‘glom’ anew my brother’s dirge.” Motionless I hung for a time, unspecified since unrealized, and then I released the feathery leaf, which in seeking its place swished to and fro.

Down the trunk in a straight line of crisps bursts I slid. Shivering and with eyes teared by its lacerating setae, I donned my *djellaba* and *cachabia* and set out for the bush.

“I came to curse, but will not,” I resolved quietly, resurrecting the plangent cry which, for a moment, God through the wind had gifted me.

6

“Slip me the shit,” through one of the diamond-shaped openings in the thick wire grating, Belmazoir in an underbreath prescribed. Remy’s squinted puzzlement, “probably interpreted as fright,” hastened the prisoner to assure, “The guard will pretend not to notice. I’ll dole out some to him.” Only when affronted with a visage grown “fully enigmatic” did he launch into the “rehearsed begging, indigenous to pathos”:

“I cannot eat. The shit will let me eat . . . merely think. The shit will staunch the flow of my thoughts. . . . I’m the pretty boy, nightly targeted by a stream of buggers. . . . Oh, do not tell me that bastard Vellacott paltered. . . . My sister’s not due till Thursday. I have no shit.” So closely did he tilt in, his nose almost touched the grating. “I cannot shit . . . The shit will let me shit.”

“And what of their wailing?” Remy had chided himself, watching the driver angle the taxi into the minimal shade of a withered plane tree.

Through a window in the black-and-yellow guardhouse to the right of the prison’s huge steel portals, he handed the authorization. When the initials on the seal were espied, one sentry scurried out. The dwarfing gates soon were minimally cracked, and Remy found himself *à pied* crossing the yard which a generation ago he had visually traversed.

The iron ramp over the canal’s chocolate-colored water led to another *poste de garde*, this one fronting a four-meter barbed-wire fence. There he was searched, the faux “cigarette lighter,” requested from HIV at Trimalchio’s, arousing no suspicion. Escorted into the Cyclops-eyed building, he presently arrived at a Dutch-door cubbyhole, visitor’s check-in.

“The free access your documentation guarantees does not mean unlimited,” its guard gnarled, “especially in Ramadan. Thirty minutes you have to palaver with the criminal.”

Remy tinkered with the green-bordered badge pinned to his chest while being steered along a rafted corridor to an oversized slate-gray door. When opened—the bulky key operosely turned seven times in the hole—it revealed an oblong room (“eighteen by twelve meters”), divided by a metal grille running from a cement floor to a low wooden ceiling.

“Did not what you passed on to your French *surveillant*, your ‘handler,’ send many an Algerian brother to this bastille? And what of their howls?” A self-condemning Remy, at his red line two paces from the grating, peered at his Vacheron Constantin, 2:29.

In Châteauroux, to Caroline's remonstrance, Marie would be spooning some minced roast beef into Snooks's dish. The lavish outrage would be accorded a scant de rigueur heed, for her tiered meditations, eclipsing bland reverie, would be on him. "Of that I am certain."

His brown study was dispelled by a taut creaking as the single door at the rear wall was swung back. "M. Ballard, you selected well." This appraisal tumbled to Remy's lips, prior to being censored and supplanted by the mutter, "HIV's camel boy."

The adonic face had a well-perfected stung expression, one Remy recollected old Belmazoir had adopted that night in the hangar's office: "We're the despicable . . . 'l'immonde'," to which no one had reacted, cognizant of the inaccuracy of the pronoun.

"Yes, his grandfather's good looks, dusky-rose complexion, height, and sturdy frame—stoutly muscled in his upper body, yet with narrowed waist and compact flanks—all that adolescent retinue the bellsire doubtless viewed with horror as Foucin piecemeal went about its discomposure: scarring, caning, racking, corkscrewing, and—*pièce de résistance*—carving *La Heure*, 'the Hour [of Reckoning].'

"Now if he would simply raise those long curled cilia, I could detect whether his eyes are imbued with the 'raven' conviction which emboldened his *grand-père*, despite his faults, to dominate many an FLN debate," for with such thoughts Remy had diverted himself during Belmazoir's seven-step listless approach to his equally distanced mark.

With the *captif's* intense monologue played out, Remy deferred an immediate response, not wishing to stem the flow of his ruminations: *Oh yes, M. Ballard, you chose as well as the French. An easy prey, for beauty, rose-tanned in its cheeks, carries with it its own faiblesse. It is its own weakness and awaits, seductively, a coiling Satan.*

But he was not contemplating the young man behind the grille or even the still majestic profile of the masked old Belmazoir in the *siège avant* of the silver Audi the night the child, who became this immured springald, plunged into his lap. *And what of their baying?*

"I am to you M. Christian Lazar, an investigator retained by M. Vellacott, no 'bâtard' that I know. Though I've read your statements, afresh I must put some queries to you. Be honest, for in the fullness of truth resides your chance of being acquitted.

"In re your assertion, M. Vellacott—Your ridiculous assertion!—would never have deputized me to 'smuggle in' any 'shit,' a vulgarism (I slowly apprehended) for 'hashish.' M. Belmazoir, I think of myself as totally as you, yourself. Well remunerated, I'll endeavor to help you, yet not to the extent of risking my career, my status, or my freedom."

Belmazoir's pogonion sank to a sternal base. The weary collapse resulted in his words entreating commiseration from the concrete floor: "I am the lied to."

7

With one of his probable "lies," Remy had confronted Belmazoir. Back at the Al-Nigma, with his room service dinner finished, he pressed the microrecorder to his ear and found the place on the cassette. "In your depositions you refer to the American as M. John."

His voice on tape was pitched nominally higher, and its intonation throughout stilted. (Would that one he came for—the vocal legacy for Marie, Françoise, Claudia, and possibly

another—sound equally artificial?)

“You’re charged not with the murder of M. John Ridgemont, but with that of M. Paul Ballard, an economic officer at the U.S. embassy.”

With lips snarled, Belmazoïr riposted, “Only under interrogation did I learn of that. For an endless night they strung me upside down—and I’m sure Algiers’ beloved commissioner, who hates my family, was ogling through some peephole—whacked my behind and genitals, yet never did I admit to a relationship with a ‘M. Ballard.’”

A bumptious snicker followed. “He was M. John for all nine months: He sucked me. I fucked him. What he liked.”

Yet the negative in Ballard’s wallet made no sense—and Remy perceived that his thoughts were mirroring Foucin’s—if Belmazoïr had not at some point become aware of the embassy connection.

According to the 2269 folder, others had made the discovery: An affidavit which the police obtained from Salam Khalaf (aka ‘Tinfingers’), the leader of the Palestinian refugee cantonment south of Algiers, indicated that in early February a “potted” Belmazoïr, “who handled some odd jobs for us,” had bragged about having a rich American friend.

A Palestinian investigation had uncovered his identity and embassy position, but Tinfingers swore “never did we reveal this finding to this feckless dope boy.”

His subsequent question, Remy decided, must give the appearance that he accepted the prisoner’s contention. “And did your M. John ever allude to his profession?”

“No, and I never asked,” Belmazoïr jiggled his head. “The flat we went to, mean-statured, was just for sex. Since he paid me well—better than the tourists, who ‘off-season’ you even during the season—I divined he had more-than-gainful employment.”

“And you never speculated whether more could be extracted?” For a reason he did not grant time for a reply. In Le Puy, Remy had settled on his strategy regarding Belmazoïr and the negative: Until he had completed his personal mission, through indirection must he broach that matter with the prisoner. Such hints would satisfy DGSE that he was proceeding deliberately, albeit obliquely, in order to gain the youth’s confidence.

Now having bared the *pépé* in the *petit-fils*—the vortex of old Belmazoïr, flitting from cluster to cluster at FLN “consults,” afraid of missing something and eager to exploit anything stumbled on—Remy was convinced he could manipulate that fear and avidity in the grandson, who like his grandfather had to be lured into believing he was the one maneuvering not being maneuvered.

His superseding question seemed an innocent digression. “How did you meet M. John?”

A firm tap at the bottom refill screw of the ST Dupont silver-plated lighter stopped the recorder. Once from Belmazoïr and twice from his voice on the cassette, he had heard the answer, sufficient for him to conclude that the *jeune homme* was genuinely fond of Ballard, though “he strives to hide it.” How had Vellacott and his staff overlooked that affinity?

Remy pressed the *Marche-Arrêt* screw again. “At Palais des Nations Beach, the end of May. No luck cruising the tourist umbrellas, I traipsed to the far end for some volleyball exercise. During the game, a middle-aged gangly foreigner strolled up and spread his beach mat not far from us. I sensed he was scouting me more than the rest, so I contrived a mishit.

“While I loped over to get the ball, the *khawaaga* [one of the Arabic words for ‘a

foreigner,’ but Remy knew its connotation was ‘a gay foreigner’] had already moved to retrieve it, four paces only so deft my spike. When I was two from him, lobbing it to me, he articulated in a spasmodic non-native French, ‘*Bon Marché . . . côté est . . . ce soir . . . huit heures, s’il vous plaît.*’

“Not lingering for a rejoinder, nonchalantly he scuffed back to his mat, collected it, and began sauntering away. As he retreated, I decided to try my English and called, ‘I, please, supermarket the Bon Marché, east door, eight night. Good?’ He didn’t halt, but his neck twisted just enough for me to descry the right edge of a billowing grin.”

Using the flint wheel to fast-forward to the room, Remy came up short. “. . . a quarter block in front of me, and we remained that way for a couple of streets. I was sure he was an American. They’re usually cautious. I’d had two others, tourists, a quinquagenarian, tight-fisted, loose-cunt widow—the reverse is preferable—and a greasy teen-fag, pimple ugly.”

Remy twirled the wheel *encore une fois*. “. . . not slip his hand onto my crotch. Still too much traffic, I supposed. In English I inquired, looking out the window of his red Quatrellé, ‘You holiday here?’ His disclosure, ‘I have an apartment,’ evinced that he gauged my insinuation. It’s difficult sneaking an Algerian into a tourist hotel.”

Remy stopped the cassette. “And AIDS-obsessed,” he discerned, for Belmazoir said there had been no sex that first night, though in the flat Ballard had asked to see his penis.

“I made a joke in French and straightaway attempted to translate it into English. Later, when we’d been together about a month—his French had progressed, but didn’t blossom fully till August or September, as if by then he’d acquired a second tutor—he sought a reprise of what I’d japed. I told him, a case in point on how Islam shamefully outlaws the inherent delights of voyeurism. We both laughed.”

At that initial session Ballard had given him five hundred dinars—“a week with a ‘fairy Brit,’” the stripling had interjected—though much of it was to be spent on a visit to a specified private doctor.

“He affixed what I slowly grasped from his elementary French, ‘Bring his report and any prescriptions to our next meeting.’ He’d be ambling along the street opposite the eastern wrought-iron gate of Jardin Marengo two Mondays from then at seven.”

At that assignation, again no sex. “‘A tiff of gonorrhea’ was all the redoubtable doctor found. I submitted the proof that I’d received two injections of penicillin. ‘I’m clean,’ I affirmed, ‘and desire to be your friend.’ Two weeks I’d spent dreaming about traveling to America,” and Belmazoir’s voice sighed a *déjà-vu* wistfulness.

The documents of Vellacott’s staff had indicated the usual circumstances environing the sex in which they ultimately had engaged, still Belmazoir’s delineation never intimated he considered these bizarre.

“We rode around for an hour or so during which he nonchalantly detailed what was expected of me. As previously, he parked four blocks from the Toumi Street building. I was to loiter for ten minutes, thereupon following. At the third landing, as before, I noticed no shafts of illumination sluicing through the jambs of the other apartment, which, since it was always thus, was probably unleased.”

Remy elected not to interpose that Ballard rented both. “I knocked, and he let me into the aphotic chamber. I’d been told in the Renault to undress and climb into bed while he would

disrobe in the bathroom.

“Three minutes later, with its light flicked off, he shuffled to the bed, crawled under the muslin sheet, and quite tentatively slid his body against mine. Do you wish to hear more? To verify my honesty and my ardor to enjoy your confidence?”

Remembering Trimalchio’s, only after a substantial hesitation did Remy nod. From Belmazoir’s account Remy learned much. Ballard’s physical peculiarity: “I licked the rough, pimply back sides of his legs, the remnant of a Vietnam wound, he later explained.”

His sexual likes and dislikes: A joyful fellator, Ballard did not wish fellatio performed on him: “He’d interdicted in the car that I was not to suck him . . . suddenly he flipped over, his head diving—I know no better synonym—onto my cock.”

And some homosexual jargon, the meaning obvious through the context: *Derb* as in “He ‘derbed’ me for six or seven minutes. Twice, so close to spurting, I had to pull him gently away since he’d specified I was not to cum in his mouth. And *jizz*: “‘*Pardon,*’ I colloqued, for I could speak if exigent, though he would never banter during sex. That night his lone sound was a whine, exuded when I ‘jizzed’ inside his ass.”

Belmazoir’s left hand had swiped his crotch with a quick tap. This signal that his narrative was finished induced Remy to self-quip, “The lad’s talked himself into a ‘*resurrezione della carne*’ (‘resurrection of the flesh’).”

He recalled how old Belmazoir, having verbally triturated an antagonist, would puff out his chest and with his right index finger make a slash across his throat.

“What then?” asked Remy, and the “princox’s” lungs, which correspondingly had swelled, emitted a gasp of disbelief that more was required.

“He, uh, immediately quit the bed. The light in the toilet clicked on, a gratifying tear in the blanket of darkness, and a moment later the two lamps in the room came on, the breaker box doubtless in the WC. Prenotified of the basin of water, soap, and towel under the bed, I washed and dressed. ‘M. John, I go, okay?’ over the running faucet in the bathroom I called out in English, for I’d been forewarned he wouldn’t drive me back.

“‘*Merci, Mohammed.*’ His words, euphonious, wafted from behind the door. ‘On the side table, under the doily.’ I secured the note: five hundred dinars. Silently I praised America and cursed every other nation whose perky dregs I’d bedded.

“‘*Merci beaucoup!*’ I couldn’t contain myself. ‘My mother, my sister, thank you, M. John.’ ‘Next Monday, eight. Le Place des Trois Horloges. Discreetly follow.’ I soughed with relief—five hundred for fifteen sportive minutes—deeming myself a very lucky fellow.”

His jet-black eyes, which had meekly fallen for a pretentious scrutiny of the cement, had darted upward, widening into stupefaction. “Why would I murder him?”

8

“And did you reserve any for your family?” Remy knew from Vellacott’s reports that Belmazoir’s mother was dying of cancer and his twenty-six-year-old sister had been reduced to a washerwoman.

The prisoner exhaled a frustrated chortle. “You, parroting M. John, will not let me be. Still and all, he would make me laugh.

“One night heading for the apartment after having shared some beers, we distinguished this ‘worse-for-wear’ lamplighter struggling to yank free a lime-colored heel snagged by a crack in the pavement. ‘Shout to her to dismount her high horse,’ he chaffed, but as I started to roll down the window to yell, he stayed me.

“No killjoy, I set him chuckling: ‘Algiers’ streets aren’t made for walking. Poor strumpet-tramper! How little the government has taken care of this, your wants!’”

Belmazoir, elevating an arm, had pointed his index, as if the wrenching *fille de nuit* were situated not far behind Remy. “A friend’s someone you can laugh with. Why would I murder him?”

His own question evaded, Remy waited.

“Part of it.” The petulant retort was succeeded by an edgy suspiration which apparently relaxed his body. “I love my family. M. John understood. My mother, my sister, they glory to behold me in American Levis and Italian boots. They know a young man should have license as a gift.

“‘Let me embrace my son,’ and I’d kneel beside her, whose lips, chewed raw from pain, would press against my cheek, yet the gauntly beautiful face that withdrew would be . . . blessed with a smile.

“Having retreated beyond the bedsheet dividing the room, I’d promise my sister, ‘I’ll whisk the money from my American boss straight home today. No veering, hauling.’ Houda would obviate, ‘God will provide,’ and kiss me on the same spot my mother had.

“A measure of it. ‘Some for your family,’ M. John would gently advocate in the Renault as I pocketed the five hundred, sometimes a thousand, now prepaid dinars, ‘or I’ll have to hold back on you, hunting out your family to give them their . . .’” Again there was “dead air” on the cassette. “No, that wasn’t . . . he didn’t . . . God, I need some shit!”

The spluttering Belmazoir began to swivel his head, but after a few moments continued. “Yes, I spent much on hashish, occasionally exceeding what I sold for the Plos’ Tinfingers. Vellacott ‘clued you in,’ I’m sure, that I deal for the Palestinians.

“But in addition, I surprised my mama with almond-rich baklava soaked with honey, which she hadn’t eaten since my father’s fortune downward spiraled. And weekly bouquets: ‘My flowers, my hanging pots, my varied beds,’ my sister revealed to me she cried when we left our house in France.

“And for my Houda, who had spanned that time never having donned a frock not pre-worn by another, a chiffon blouse and a velvet jacket, both with Parisian labels, albeit sewn on in Algiers.”

In the course of the monologue Belmazoir’s eyelids, which, like those of a sleepy child, had gradually narrowed, snapped open with the mention of the capital.

“Another son, another brother,” he resumed, “would have done more. Still would this mother have preferred the less-than-prodigal son? This sister, the more-than-thrifty brother? Would they have been happy, denying me? For as well they are a part of me, I am, of them.” In timbre, intensity, and pitch, he had ceased to whine or dream.

“On Thursday my sister will spirit in the hashish, appreciative of the depth of my dire necessity, even as she comprehends the extravagance of my love.”

A finger jab at the faux lighter's refill screw halted the tape. "Another son, another brother would have done more." With the speech completed, each countenance had mirrored the other's embarrassment, the one at having given too much away and the other at having received more than he sought.

He's vulnerable. Remy focused his stare on the ST Dupont. *Searching for one lost, who is not?* Briefly waylaid by the rhetorical query, when he persevered, he realized he had descended into the modern equivalent of "speakin'-in-tongues": psychobabble. *Fatherless too early, he misses Ballard, someone to joke with.*

Past the shoulders of Belmazoïr, the burly, mustached guard, propped against the rear wall, was flinging impatient glances at his watch. "Sidle a hint," Remy advised himself, "and follow it up with a kindness."

"Yet not just sexual favors you dispensed to M. Ballard?" His merry rhythmus, he was positive, even Belmazoïr would recognize as specious. "Some hashish?"

"No!" Derisively the head was jerked back.

"And more than money he bestowed on you?": a second veiled allusion to the negative.

The seasoned teen limned a rakish smirk. "What is there that's 'more than money'?"

"Something which can be converted into 'more than the more,'" Remy answered, a twinkle in his mind, as he conjured up the logician's essential definition of *prodigality*: "More than the more is more than the less."

He took a pace away from the grating. "On Wednesday I'll return, commencing with, 'What did you feel when you learned your M. John was abandoning you?'"

The question, probably "unheard" and thus "sweeter," did not rouse Belmazoïr from his dream of opulence squared. That lot fell to the truncheon's sharp clavicular tap, accompanied by "Your time's up!" The paunchy *gardien* seemed less intent on Belmazoïr than his caller.

"And now"—Remy was nodding compliantly to the billy-wielder—"the candy that entices a child to walk with a stranger."

Drops from the late afternoon run of showers would still be "trickling their salt and grit" from the pollarded palm and plane trees lining the streets that he would have to tread.

Earlier, certain these besmirchers lay in wait, Remy had made his decision: Since he had leeward there, the path to M. Xérès would not be traveled until tomorrow night.

The Calvin Klein double-faced cashmere overcoat would "stand up, but why endanger the midnight-blue cotton-knit sweater which the cool, damp air would require? And to entrust a Gabicci to an Algerian dry cleaner!" Not till the third course of a room service supper did he recuperate from the consequent overweening shudder.

Still later, the "lighter" pocketed, he ambled over to the *escritoire*, the top of which was decorated with two maroon Levant-grain tomes. "Foucin, sic your customs agents on my blue folder, but paw not my Gibbon's!" the magnum opus that Marie had intuitively packed.

Thumbing to chapter 8, two hours later he shut the book after chapter 9, the Germanic threat to Rome. *How careless were the Huns with their personal property*, Remy mused, as

was M. Ballard with his, at Zaracova Beach!

Remy's "languid" "imagination" stirred, and so sufficiently that in pondering over the anonymous fingerprints on the corpse's possessions, at length it asked, "Can such be so?"

As he returned the book to the table, he was not tempted to detour to retrieve the sham *briquet* since the "envoi" of the conversation with Belmazoir was fixed in his memory.

Remy had begun with the child's play. "I'll leave four hundred dinars at the visitor's desk. God willing, it will get to you. Expend some on importing food and toiletries, not all on your toxic habit. I assume even in prison money can be converted into 'more than money.' And remember your friends." Remy drifted his eyes to the guard.

"Monsieur, please, your time's elapsed. I'll ensure the stipend, unwhittled, will reach your client." His gruff officialism had been discarded.

"You are one steeped in virtue, monsieur. May your Allah reward you! And may He watch over this besieged youth, for though many men of influence and wealth abroad regard him, it is God alone who can protect and succor. And His 'virtuous servants,' who have the sanctified deputation to champion the unfortunate and condignly punish those who would assail the weak, disturbing their nights."

Remy tossed an insouciant glimpse at Belmazoir. "If indeed the poor wretch lusts for rest unpestered."

Tilting toward the grille, Belmazoir vented an indignation "rivaling that of a fallen angel," whose "'orbs,' plopped open on his initial bounce off the Lake of Dis," had digested the "'darkness visible'" of Hell.

"Is this the slander that bast—, that dev—, the 'Supreme' Commissioner Foucin's been feeding you? I desire no beast on my back. I've serviced of my own free will, but never willingly been served." (*I'll ace you later, HIV's camel boy*, Remy sniggered to himself.)

"I'm innocent. Believe me!" And the mettle in his voice had fleetly dissolved into the pleading artifice with which thirty-five minutes ago the *captif* had accosted him.

A sweet sardanapalian tooth, Remy decreed.

"When brother talks of being son and son talks of brotherhood, I dwindle into the sentimentalist." His uplifted shoulders were designed to suggest that "not yet" was he ready to admit having been won over. "Not solely the French labor under the strain of Rousseau," he added.

Belmazoir's perplexed expression convinced Remy that the allusion was squandered on the *jeune homme*, "snatched from France" too soon.

"I will be paid, but oh surpassingly so, should I 'get you off,' conceivably with something commutable into a much 'more than the more.'" The lilting tone of the words and the words themselves—lacking any detectable particle of darkness—had induced Belmazoir, stepping backward, with the guard's hand behind his scapula, to beam a smile.

Closing the drapes, having cast one last prodigal gaze in the direction of the berth in Algiers which he steered small toward, Remy summoned up this rapacious grin, aware even prior to it that such allusive talk, for sure, the young man "comprehended."

Notes and Commentary: Chapter 4: “A Prodigal Return”

April 7-10 (Friday – Monday)

p. 52: SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TITLE OF CHAPTER 4: All three basic meanings of “prodigal” are used: “recklessly wasteful”; “extremely generous or lavish”; and “extremely abundant.”

The first meaning is the basis of Luke 15:11-32, the parable of the prodigal son (although the word “prodigal” is not used in the verses).

Remy sees his life in some ways as paralleling the biblical prodigal son. With v. 18 he can particularly identify since his mission is the same as that of the prodigal son: “I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee.” (KJV)

Verse 24, where the father of the prodigal says, “For this my son was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found,” foreshadows later events in the novel.

A syntactic pattern is taken from the passage. In v. 24, “this my son,” and in v. 30, where the father says to the older brother, “this thy brother,” influenced the wording that Mohammed later uses on p. 65: “Another son, another brother.”

Section 7 of the chapter also establishes Mohammed as a prodigal son who spent almost all of his hustling and drug-dealing money on himself, not on his dying mother or his older sister, a washerwoman. The youth even uses the word “prodigal,” questioning whether his mother would prefer “the less-than-prodigal son” (65).

In three other places in the chapter the word or a variant of it occurs employing the other meanings. On p. 57, Foucin says that the dagger is “prodigally available,” meaning “abundantly.”

On p. 66, Remy uses “prodigality” to mean a “lavish” amassing of money. On p. 67, he casts “one last prodigal gaze” toward his father’s building, where the word can incorporate all three definitions.

Earlier in the novel, it was used on 2.30 by de Gaulle to mean “abundant.”

Variants of the word will occur at other crucial points in later chapters: 5.74, meaning “abundant”; 6.91, as “wasteful” and 6.99 meaning “lavish”; 12.189, as both “abundant” and “wasteful,” and 12.197, both “abundant” and “lavish”; 14.236, where the biblical “prodigal son” is mentioned; and 18.309, with the meanings of both “lavish” and “abundant.”

“Return” in “A Prodigal Return” has a geographical, financial, legal, familial, and personal subtext.

pp. 52-67: CHRONOLOGY OF CHAPTER 4: The action of this chapter occurs over a

four-day period, although the central events occur on Apr. 10.

The chapter opens at around 5:10 a.m. on Apr. 7 with Remy's answer to his anti-self about whether he will sleep now. Later that morning he flies to Paris and takes a train and a taxi to Le Puy for an afternoon-and-night reunion with his wife Marie.

On Apr. 8, he travels by train to Brussels where under his new alias Christian Lazar, a Belgium private investigator, he spends the night.

On April 9, Remy flies to Algiers and registers that afternoon at its exclusive Al Nigma hotel, which will be his residence during most of his time there.

During the morning of Apr. 10, he meets with Police Commissioner Tawfek Foucin, who heads the investigation into Ballard's death and who will be Remy's principal antagonist in the novel.

In the afternoon Remy taxis to the prison south of Algiers where Mohammed Belmazoir is incarcerated. He interviews him from 2:31 – 3:07.

That night at his hotel room, several times he plays back this interview which he had secretly recorded.

pp. 52-53: SECTION 1: Time span: After the one-word paragraph, "No," spoken at 5:10 a.m. on Apr. 7, the action shifts to about 2:40 p.m. on Apr. 9, when Remy's airplane to Algiers is preparing to make its descent.

He flashes back to 10:10 a.m. on Apr. 7, at which point he called Marie from Paris's airport and was told that a telegram from Canada had come.

Next Remy recalls his arrival in Le Puy and what happened at around 10:00, Apr. 7, in their bedroom. There he had initiated something which had taken Marie by surprise. Afterwards, they talked from 10:30 until around midnight. (The account of how he left Le Puy and got to Algiers is delayed until the next section.) Section 1 closes with his plane in its descent to Algiers.

p. 52: "No": Examined partially in the 3.51 note, N3:40.

Remy's no is an indication that he will spend the rest of that early morning in London not sleeping, but over and over reviving those events about Noura and his commitment to being a traitor.

On 2.18 at Trimalchio's, he had said he "reenact[ed]" that Dec. 8, 1958, day only during "the hajlike journey to collect his [annual] *pourboire*," thereafter putting the day aside until his next year's meeting.

The "No" also serves double duty since it offers the ironic possibility that he repeats this London "no" just as the airplane brings him within sight of the city of his birth.

p. 52: Air Algérie: The national airline of Algeria. In 1985, it put into service its Airbus A310 series.

p. 52: "twenty-eight-year-old memory": Remy left Algiers on April 13, 1961, and returned on April 9, 1989. He compares this view of the city with that of twenty-eight years

ago when he, for the first time on an airplane, was flown from the city to France.

- p. 52: “*Al Djazair*, ‘the islands’”: The name Algeria is derived from the Arabic words “*Al Djazair*,” which means “the islands.”
The Bay of Algiers originally had four islets, which Hayreddin Barbarossa (“Redbeard” to Europeans at the time), an Ottoman Turkish admiral and Pasha of Algiers from 1518 to 1545, had his engineers connect to the mainland in 1525, largely to make more difficult Spanish attacks on the city and his navy.
- p. 52: “a millennium before”: The present-day city of Algiers was founded in C.E. 944 by Berbers, the original inhabitants of the region.
- p. 52: Sahel Hills: Part of Algiers, including the Casbah, is located on the lower slopes of these hills, which run parallel with the Mediterranean coast.
The city, both its old section (the Casbah or the medina) and its modern section (Alger Centre; downtown or modern Algiers since it was largely built by the French colonists), extends ten miles (sixteen kilometers) along the western side of the Bay of Algiers.
- p. 52: “‘I return to my city, familiar as tears’”: The first line of the poem “Leningrad” by the twentieth-century Russian poet Osip Mandelstam.
- p. 52: Orly: Paris-Orly Airport, in operation since 1932, was France’s main airport until the Charles de Gaulle Airport was opened in 1974.
In 1989, the time of my novel, Orly offered international flights to all major cities in Europe.
- p. 52: “telegram”: On 2.33, Remy had told HIV to have DGSE send this telegram. The content of it was fabricated by the intelligence organization to strengthen Marie’s trust that Remy would keep his marriage bond to her and return from his trip abroad.
- p. 52: Whitehorse, Canada: The capital of the Yukon Territory, a region which will be deprecated on the next page, a preparation for a distant Canadian about-face on 20.344.
- p. 52: “orphanage blood-bond”: DGSE invented Gaston Corneille, a childhood friend of Remy’s orphanage days, his death, and the idea of a blood bond between them.
On 3.35, its predecessor had likewise given Remy such a background, telling Omar that as Remy he was reared in “a Carmelite orphanage in Rheims.”
A pledge of eternal friendship is often sealed by boys (less frequently girls) through each boy’s cutting the other’s finger and then pressing the blood together.
This mingling of blood becomes a minor motif of the novel. On 2.24, Omar noted that the blood of the French private whose throat he had just cut “flowed” into a scratch on his own right temple made when he ritualistically wiped the blade there.

See the 2:24 note, N2:36, for the three other uses of Remy's blood mingling with two others.

- p. 52: "made thirty-nine years ago . . . the quarter-century plus-two vow to her": Thus, Remy concludes, the concocted bond would have been made in 1950, when he was ten years old.
Remy married Marie in March 1962, twenty-seven years ago.
- p. 52: "'No, I must see you first. If your approval's still there'": These sentences imply that the decision to try to renew his bond with his father in Algiers has intensified Remy's love for his French family.
The formal tone of his comforting conversation on 2.16 had revealed a reluctance to change their marriage, based on self-interest (a cover protecting him from any agents sent by Algeria, "quiet companionship," and at least initially a sexual outlet) to one of love, that epiphany which Marie had experienced three years ago.
- p. 52: "Lyon taxi": On p. 53, it will be mentioned that Remy took a train from Paris to Lyon, the largest city close to Le Puy. During this trip he read many of the papers left by DGSE in the 2269 Orly locker.
Remy hires a taxi to drive him the 110 kilometers (70 miles) from Lyon's train station to Le Puy. At the time of my novel, a train ran from Lyon to Le Puy, but because of its many stops, it took over three hours, more than twice as long as the taxi.
- p. 52: "He was without family": Marie here presents a defense of the family structure, which virginal nuns in their "sly workings," she believed, could undermine. "Without family" is painful dramatic irony to Remy since he had long ago deserted his Algerian Family. The reference to nuns revives a memory of Noura's nunnery. The words also remind Remy that he had selfishly married Marie in order to protect himself from any agents which post-independence Algeria might send to track him down.
- p. 52: "*Ein Dilettant in Liebe*": Marie says that her mother, using German, described Hitler as this, "a dabbler or amateur in matters of love."
The word "dilettanti" will occur one other time, on 17.282, another of those early-late chapter verbal balancing acts.
- pp. 52-53: "plump frame . . . 'more athletic and handsome'": Remy remembers that last year (1988), Marie's older sister Caroline had mischievously praised Remy's appearance ("athletic and handsome"), hoping to make Marie self-conscious about her "plump" figure.
However, so happy that the husband was being extolled, Marie had taken the slight as a "compliment."
Recalling this selfless response of his wife, which is reminiscent of Ballard's quotation of St. Paul's definition of love (1.13), makes Remy realize how much he

loves Marie.

The word “plump” will reappear in the last chapter of the novel, 21.364, where Remy describes Marie’s love as being as “smothering as God’s—and I hope He’s as plumply ripe as she!”

- p. 53: Châteauroux: The city where Marie's older sister lived. See the text on 2.16 and its note for details about the city.
- p. 53: Snooks: Their fourteen-year-old cat.
A personal allusion since my first cat I named Baby Snooks after the character of the cantankerous infant created by the American comedienne Fanny Brice.
The cat will be mentioned later in this chapter (61), as well as on 12.199-200, 15.239-40, 17.290, 19.313, and 20.342.
- p. 53: "not telephone till on French soil again": Since HIV had become his case officer nearly eight years ago (1981), Remy had made numerous annual trips abroad on 1 library matters. Rome, Athens, and Amsterdam (2.25 and its note on N2.37), besides London, are mentioned.
Marie's comment suggests that each time he had never telephoned her until he was back in France. Remy is aware that Algerian agents are scouring Europe for him as one of the great traitors. Thus he is very cautious when forced to travel outside France.
- p. 53: "Haskell pearl cabochon earrings": Miriam Haskell was an American designer of costume jewelry whose vintage earrings, both signed and unsigned, have become collectors' items since she stopped designing in 1950 and have further increased in value since her death in 1981.
The company she founded still produces excellent jewelry using her designs and those of her creative partner Frank Hess.
- p. 53: cabochon: "any precious stone cut in convex shape, polished but not faceted."
- p. 53: "earrings": On 6.87, Remy will hold a single earring to his lobe and muse, "Marie, Marie, what would you think if you beheld your Remy now?"
- p. 53: "'Real after years of the artificial!': See 2.28 and its notes, N2.45-47, about the theme of the real vs. the artificial. Previously all of Remy's presents to his family were "real," but he had passed them off as "artificial."
Here the "real" is presented as the "real," a symbolic statement by Remy of his desire to remove the artificial stigma from his marriage.
- p. 53: gnathion: "the midpoint of the lower border of the human mandible [lower jaw]" (*Webster's Third*).
- p. 53: "With her annulary she jabbed at his carotid artery": "Annulary" is "the ring finger" (*Webster's Third*).
Not until 5.70 will it be revealed that the dagger entered Ballard's carotid artery; however, Remy would have known this entry point since he had read the reports in the 2269 folder during the train trip from Paris to Lyon (53).

- p. 53: “‘more beautiful . . . and athletic’”: Remy turns Caroline’s snide phrasing into a compliment with delightful sexual overtures.
The bantering post-sex conversation between Remy and Marie attests to how much he, so long neglectful of and neglected by his wife, now cares for her and reaffirms how deeply she loves him.
Additionally, because of the danger of his trip to Algiers, Remy knows that this may be the last time he will see her.
This repartee is also designed to be reminiscent of that between Ballard and Leila, particularly on 1.4.
- p. 53: “Now why do I want a son?”: Remy is hopeful that his and Marie’s coitus on the night of Apr. 7 will result in the birth of a son.
- p. 53: “five thousand meters above the city of his birth”: The Airbus A310-200 is far into its descent and is now at about 16,400 feet.
Its normal cruising altitude is 30,000 to 35,000 ft. (9,000 to 10,000 m.) although it can reach 40,000 ft. (12,200 m.).
- p. 53: “the trajectory blip on the [plane’s] TV screen”: Some of the airlines I took in flying about the Middle East and North Africa in the 1980s, while I was a teacher based in Saudi Arabia, would project the airline’s flight pattern on a small TV screen at the front of the cabin.
- pp. 53-54: SECTION 2: Time span: This section skips about, touching on events from April 7-9.
It opens at around 3:15 on April 9 with Remy (now Lazar) passing through the customs line at Algiers’ airport. From there he takes a taxi to his hotel.
In his room he recalls his two train and taxi trips, from Paris to Lyon to Le Puy on April 7 and the return on April 8. At the Paris train station, he did not proceed to the airport for the flight to Canada, but took a train to Brussels, Belgium.
There he registers at a hotel under his new alias Christian Lazar, sleeps over, and at noon the next day (April 9) takes the three-hour flight to Algiers.
That night at the Al-Nigma he develops a theory about the real reason DGSE sent him to Algiers and the points he plans to bring up in his meeting the next day (April 10) with Police Commissioner Tawfek Foucin.
Remy goes to bed near midnight, thinking about Marie and his father in the Casbah.
- p. 53: Houari Boumediène Airport: Named in honor of the second president of Algeria. See p. 27 and its note for the history of the airport.
The airport is located 10.5 miles southeast of Algiers.
In its English press releases, it is spelled without the grave accent.
For Boumediène, see the 3.38 note, N3.9-10, and the 2.17 and 32 notes on N2.13 and

58.

p. 53: “the 2269 file”: The locker at Paris-Orly Airport where DGSE left several folders relating to the Ballard murder (not all of which he is to take to Algiers) and other material, such as Remy’s new identity papers, a microcassette disguised as a lighter, and so forth, as well as his *pourboire*.

HIV mentions the 2269 locker on 2.29; there is a note on it on N2.51.

p. 53: “*Un moment, s’il vous plaît*”: “One moment, if you please” in French.

p. 53: “small calories”: “The amount of heat needed to raise the temperature of one gram of water one degree celsius” (*Webster’s New*).

Remy pointedly informs the customs agent that he knows the documents in his blue folder have been photocopied because they give off some units of heat.

Remy acknowledges to himself that his accusation is a lie; photocopied papers, especially when a large number are made, are sometimes hot, but the original used in the photocopying would never be.

p. 53: “the ‘celestial’ Al-Nigma”: The Arabic for “star” is *nigma*, hence the description of the hotel as “celestial.”

My Al-Nigma Hotel is modeled on the Aletti Hotel, at the time of the novel one of the premier hotels in modern Algiers. The Aletti is now (2013) called the Safir Hotel, and despite renovations it is no longer highly rated.

- p. 54: *jours ouvrables*: French for “working days.”
- p. 54: “his one-evening stay at Le Puy . . . return by taxi and rail to Paris”: Marie meets Remy at the gate to their chateau in Le Puy at c. 4:15 p.m. on April 7. The next morning at ten he takes a taxi from Le Puy to Lyon. The train trip from Lyon to Paris Gare Lyon (Paris station for arrivals from Lyon) lasted almost two hours (11:30 to 2:25).
- p. 54: *double*: look-alike. Remy stresses that this is DGSE’s term; the more exact term in French would be *imitateur* (“impersonator”). Using Remy’s passport (which the 2269 file had instructed him to leave in the locker), the *double* flies to Canada, while Remy takes a taxi to Paris Nord station (2:25 – 2:40).
- p. 54: SNCF: France’s state-owned rail services: *Société Nationale des Chemins de fer français*. From 2:52 to 4:40, Remy continues by SNCF to Brussels.
- p. 54: Hotel Argus: There was and still is a Hotel Argus located in the center of Brussels. I chose it because in Greek mythology Argus is a giant with one hundred eyes. And Remy is vigilantly looking for a French agent who will pass on some last-minute instructions about why the negative found on Ballard had been kept from Vellacott. When he was not contacted, he assumed his French embassy liaison in Algiers would enlighten him.
- p. 54: Christian Lazar: Since this is the name of a real investigator for Vellacott, as the conversation on pp. 55-56 will immediately bear out, the symbolism of this, Remy’s second alias, cannot be attributed to French intelligence. However, that is not to say that DGSE did not delight in the fortuity of the name, probably as much as its predecessor did in selecting Remy’s first alias on June 25, 1961. See the 3.35 note, “M. Remy,” N3:2. Thus the overt symbolism of his names is all my doing. His given name Christian associates him with “Christ,” while his surname Lazar is the French word for “leper,” unfortunately a diseased outcast in many societies. I came across it as a French surname in an article and at once selected it to be Remy’s second alias. In 2011, Googling turned up that several prominent French personalities have Lazar as their cognomen: Liliane, Ingmar, Flora, Benjamin, Marc, Claude, and so forth.
- p. 54: “reinstated son”: Remy’s own pun; he realizes he is once again back in his native “state.”
- p. 54: “no longer an absent-thee-awhile librarian”: The hyphenated phrase is based on one of Hamlet’s dying speeches to Horatio: “Absent thee from felicity awhile” (5.2.349). “Absent” as a transitive verb means “to keep oneself away.”

Remy's "awhile" is an understatement since he has absented himself from Algeria for twenty-eight years.

- p. 54: "“a traitor [looks] to be betrayed”": Similar to the statement inferred from old Belmazoir's speech on 2.33: the idea "that traitor to traitor can be true."
- p. 54: "And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not": Remy cites John 1:5 (KJV) in trying to resolve why Vellacott and his team had been sent to Algiers.
Three words from this biblical verse will be used throughout the novel: "darkness," "light," and "comprehend." (The other crucial word in the verse *shine* is not used so frequently.)
Since Remy was once a Muslim, he would have been aware of a similar passage in the Qur'an, Sura 6.39: "Those who reject our revelations are deaf and dumb, in the midst of darkness profound. Whom Allah will He sendeth astray, and whom He will He placeth on a straight path."
In truth, I might add, almost all murder mysteries (as well as tragedies) move from darkness to light, from mystery to comprehension.
- p. 54: "Send an Algerian to 'prize open [the] lips'": Remy examines the rationale given by HIV near the end of chap. 2 on why DGSE, disappointed in Vellacott, had decided to send Remy: "One Algerian to another, you can intuit how to prize open [Belmazoir's] lips" (46), that is, learn what the youth knows about the negative.
- p. 54: "Remy's 'leaping' deduction": Remy makes a deductive leap of faith; that is, by accepting a premise which he cannot prove or for which he has no empirical evidence (the definition of a "leap of faith"), he deduces a seemingly logical valid conclusion.
Remy has no proof that HIV (on instructions) had emended the verbatim of the head of DGSE, "Dispatch a traitor to catch a fellow traitor," to "Send an Algerian to catch a fellow Algerian."
Yet it is that "leap" which Remy makes since it seems more logically to explain why the existence of the negative was hidden from Vellacott.
Additionally, there is a petty verbal irony here: Just as Remy's deduction leaps, his spoon halts its plunge into the bowl of soup being eaten.
- p. 54: "Dispatch a traitor to catch a fellow traitor": Remy tells himself that DGSE had reasoned that Vellacott, not being a traitor, could not sufficiently comprehend the darkness of treason; however, here there was a bond between Ballard and Remy.
The intelligence agency seemed to believe that Remy as traitor could intuitively convey that he was sealing the same traitorous bond which Ballard had with Belmazoir, who, DGSE assumed, was the conduit in the trafficking of classified documents to the Palestinians.
- p. 54: "as quickly as 'a second sin [followed] the original'": A reference to Adam and

Eve's first sin (against God) and their second sin against each other (their lustful uses of each other's body implied in Gen 3:7, but most vividly described in Milton's *PL* 9:1011-79).

With this image, Remy suggests that since his first reasoning may be as false or distorted as sin so may his subsequent argument be.

- p. 54: "roiling my own 'embalmed darkness'—light to them": Remy continues that DGSE had faith that this mission to his native land would stir up Remy's thoughts about his treason, these dark thoughts becoming the means to his solving the mystery of the negative (the "light" which the intelligence agency sought).
- p. 54: roil: To make (a liquid) cloudy, muddy, or unsettled by stirring up the sediment. By "roil," Remy means that his darkness (his treasonous past) must be made even darker by stirring it up. To achieve light, he must create and plunge into a greater darkness.
- p. 54: "'embalmed darkness'": By this point, Remy is aware that he is speaking about his desertion of his family, thought of which he had "embalmed." Here "embalm" means "to treat a dead body in order to keep it from decaying rapidly" and "to preserve in memory."
These are apposite meanings to the phrase used in Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale" (ll. 41-43): "I cannot see what flowers are at my feet, / Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs, / But, in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet."
In Keats's poem "embalmed" means "perfumed."
- p. 54: "to extract 'a particle of darkness'": The word *particle* will be used at five crucial points in the novel.
It was borrowed from the famous passage in Tolstoy's *War and Peace*: "Love is God, and to die means that I, a particle of love, shall return to the general and eternal source" (Bk. 13, chap. 16).
In my novel its associations move from darkness to beauty to love. For instance, at the end of this chapter, p. 67, its exact wording, "particle of darkness" echoes and balances its employment here in section 2; there Remy is establishing his strategy for dealing with the deceptive Mohammed Belmazoir.
On 9.148, the word will be used in describing the beautiful face of a woman: "Hardly a particle of its beauty."
On 18.300, a character, closely paralleling its use in *W&P*, says, "No particle of love ever dies . . . dissolves into nothingness."
And latter on 18.312, Remy refers to "the residual particles of Ballard's blood" becoming one with "the word *Love*."
- p. 54: "preparing-the-way-for-another: him": Remy concludes that he had not been sent as a follow-up investigator for Vellacott and his assistants. Rather they had been sent to gather preliminary information which would assist him.

DGSE had planned all along to utilize Remy in solving the mystery of the negative found on Ballard.

In the novel, Remy will sometimes be seen as a Christ figure and at other times as a satanic figure. Here he is the Christ whom John the Baptist (Vellacott and company) prepared a way for (Matt 3:3 and 11:9-11).

p. 54: *de novo*: In Latin, “once more; again.”

p. 54: “his revised agenda for HIV’s forty-two-year-old tarboosh”: On 2.30, HIV had so described the “dashing” Commissioner Tawfek Foucin, the Algerian in charge of the investigation of Ballard’s murder.

Remy is to meet with him the next morning, so he had worked up and then revised the topics that he planned to introduce.

p. 54: “who understands absence and darkness”: Absence has dogged his father: It has been seven years since his wife died, twenty-six years since he learned that his only son was a traitor, and thirty-one years since Noura’s kidnapping.

Three years ago, he had suffered a physical darkness when a stroke left him partially paralyzed and blind.

pp. 54-56: SECTION 3: Time span: From 10:50 to 11:08 on the morning of Apr. 10, 1989. It deals with the first part of Remy’s meeting with Foucin.

p. 55: “the Prophet-dictated facial hair that Muslim men must have”: For some Muslims it is obligatory to have a beard and a mustache since Prophet Mohammed wore them. Others contend that these are not required since the Qur’an makes no comment on the need for facial hair, which is also not listed among the five compulsory pillars of Islam.

In the Hadiths of Al-Bukhari 5892 and Muslim 259, the Prophet is quoted as saying, “Let your beards grow and trim your moustaches.”

In conservative Islamic countries, such as Saudi Arabia, all male Muslims who are able to grow facial hair sport a beard, although often trimmed neatly. In Mediterranean Muslim countries and in Muslim communities in England, I saw few with beards and only about half with mustaches.

p. 55: canthus: either corner of the eye; plural, canthi.

p. 55: “A thousand *pardons*”: It is a planned coincidence that the wording of the apology mimics that of the French lieutenant on 3.48.

p. 55: *Commissaire divisionnaire*: The highest rank in the Algerian urban police force (Sûreté Nationale), the term is usually translated as “divisional commissioner.” It is equivalent to the British “superintendent.”

At the time of the novel, in Algeria the responsibility for the maintenance of law and order and for operating against internal security threats was shared by two organizations since President Bendjedid had limited the authority of Algiers’s intelligence agency to foreign espionage:

Sûreté Nationale is the primary policing authority in the major cities and other urban areas. Rural and remote parts of Algeria are policed by a separate force, called the Gendarmerie Nationale, under the Ministry of National Defense.

A divisional commissioner of Sûreté commands one of the district police headquarters or stations in a metropolitan area, such as Algiers.

Foucine’s is the Gendarmerie overlooking Algiers’ Casbah, as is mentioned in the next paragraph, although he, as the novel will show, has wide-ranging power.

A divisional commissioner, like Foucine, reports directly to the Minister of Interior and Localities. In his division or district, he is charged with the maintenance of law and order, the investigation of crimes, the apprehension of offenders, and even routine police functions, such as traffic control.

p. 55: “Algiers’ ‘only . . . decent *gardien de la paix*’”: HIV’s description of Foucine on 2.30.

p. 55: “*Nil admirari*”: While a Latin phrase is normally italicized, roman type is used when it occurs within a passage already italicized.

“*Nil admirari*,” which Remy translated to himself as “Never exhibit enthusiasm,” is from Horace’s *Epistles* 1.6.1-2: “*Nil admirari, prope res est una, Numici, / solaque, quae possit facere et seruire beatum*,” usually rendered as, “Never to show enthusiasm, Numicius, is almost the one / and only thing that can make and

keep [a person] happy.”

- p. 55: Boulevard Abderazak Hadad: It is the northern boundary separating the Casbah from Bab el Oued. It was previously mentioned in the 3.37 note as being the post-colonial name for Rue Verdun.
- p. 55: “requisite twenty minutes:” Remy arrived at Foucin’s office at 10:30 and was shown in at 10:50.
My North African friends informed me that out of a sign of respect for the office, an Arab police commissioner usually keeps visitors waiting twenty minutes. I never had the occasion (Thank Goodness!) of testing their assertion.
This initial dueling of Remy and Foucin over the time of their meeting inaugurates a pattern which will extend throughout the novel since by the end of section 3 of this chapter, Foucin becomes, at least in Remy’s mind, his principal antagonist.
- p. 55: “Your call yesterday . . . his Asr prayers”: At around 4:15 on Apr. 9, from his room at the Al-Nigma Remy telephoned Foucin’s office and set up the appointment for 10:30 the next morning.
Foucin’s secretary took the call while the Asr (afternoon) prayer summons was in progress: c. 4:15 since Asr prayers on Apr. 9 began at 4:27.
- p. 55: Joseph: The middle name which I assigned Christian Lazar is quite uninspired, the praenomen of the earthly father of Jesus.
- p. 55: “*Exact*”: A French indication that the details of the document are “correct.”
- p. 55: *cachet*: French for an “official seal.”
- p. 55: “If you deem the Arabic of Egypt Arabic”: This joke I found to be widespread in the Middle East and North Africa, even though (or perhaps because) most of the region’s Arabic movies come from Cairo.
- p. 55: “a glorious religious pillar”: The fourth pillar of Islam is fasting (in Arabic *sawm*) during Ramadan.
- p. 55: *arrière-garde*: In French, the “rearguard” of an army, but Remy uses it metaphorically here as on 1.16 to indicate the past life of Christian Lazar.
He reminds himself that the information in the Orly locker 2269 indicated that DGSE had changed all records with physical descriptions or photographs of the real Lazar so that they fit Remy.
- pp. 55-56: “*Solliciteurs pour la justice sans frontières*”: Translated in the 2.30 note as “Appellants for Justice without Borders.”
That note explains why I could not use the simpler *Advocats sans frontières* (“Lawyers without Borders”).

- p. 56: “Third World, or have we graduated to the Second, now communism collapses?”: By Apr. 10, 1989, when Foucin is speaking, there were signs that Soviet-imposed communism was tottering. That the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev was speaking of *glasnost* and *perestroika* (open discussion of the social and economic failures of communism and the need for political restructuring) in the mid-1980s indicated the severity of the problems facing communism. The unrest in the USSR’s Eastern bloc had forced the communist leaders in Hungary to adopt democratic reforms in 1988, and a more extensive victory was obtained by the Polish Solidarity movement on March 9, 1989. Although the fall of communism in Poland, Hungary, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Romania would not come until later in 1989 (after the events of my novel), with the spillover from these upheavals not producing the breakup of the USSR until 1991, many (Foucin apparently being one) saw the imminence of the collapse of the Second World (communism).
- p. 56: “hell-bent”: firmly resolved or recklessly determined.
- p. 56: “rebuttal evidence”: In law, evidence that is presented to contradict or nullify other evidence that has been presented by an adverse party; counter-arguments.
- p. 56: “in ’86 were three Palestinians, hanged for attacking a busload of Israeli tourists in Gaza [Egypt]”: A fictional merger of two attacks on Israeli tourists, one of which postdated the events of my novel. On Oct. 5, 1985, an Egyptian policeman machine-gunned a group of Israeli vacationers, killing seven. And on Feb. 4, 1990, a secret cell of Palestinians in Egypt attacked a bus carrying Israeli tourists near Cairo, nine of whom were killed.
- p. 56: “the client of your client”: In using this phrase, Foucin means that Belmazoir (or those championing his innocence) has retained Vellacott as his lawyer, who in turn has retained Remy as his investigator. The phrase will become a bantering favorite of both Remy and its originator Foucin. It will be used by Remy on 4.59, 8.119, 9.145, 10.161, and 15.240. On 13.216 he hears it mockingly quoted by another. Foucin uses it here and on the next page. Other uses of it by him will occur on 7.112, 13.209, 17.287 (quoting another who had used it sarcastically), and 17.288 (with slight modification).
- p. 56: “*Misharif*”: As translated in the text, Arabic for “I don’t know.” Remy’s second “*Misharif*” in response to Foucin’s accusation that he should have said “*Mishkallem*” (“I don’t say”) is the witty, “‘I don’t know’ if I should have employed ‘I don’t say’ instead of ‘I don’t know.’”
- p. 56: “turned from a mirror, leaving his image behind”: Section 3, pp. 54-55, had opened with the similarity of Remy’s and Foucin’s physical appearances. Their conversation has revealed their mental, especially verbal, resemblance.

- p. 56: “*This man won’t make my departure [from Algeria] easy*”: Significantly, this intuition precedes Remy’s uncovering how dangerous Foucin is on p. 58.
- p. 56: *table basse*: French for “coffee table.”
- p. 56: plinth: the block at the base of a column or the base of a statue.
Foucin uses it as a simile to argue that the foundation of the case against Belmazoir is the youth’s own admission to being at the scene of the murder.
- p. 56: “We don’t hang”: In Egypt at the time of the novel (1989) as today (2013), either hanging or the firing squad could be used in capital punishment.
In Algeria, its only form was (and still is) the dawn firing squad, although this sentence was infrequently used in the 1980s.
The last execution in Algeria occurred in 1993.
- p. 56: “‘capitalize’ on”: Foucin’s mordant pun on “capital punishment.”
- p. 56: “*Malesh!*”: Remy translates it in the text as “Doesn’t matter!” Another translation is “No Problem!”
- p. 56: “the snippet of acetate”: Cellulose acetate is a thermoplastic used in the making of photographic film.
The time Remy asks this question about the negative would be around 11:08.
- pp. 56-59: SECTION 4: From c. 11:08 to 11:20 a.m., April 10. The continuance of Remy’s conversation with Foucin is reported here. Remy came to the meeting prepared to asked questions about four matters: the negative, the murder weapon, the unidentified fingerprints on Ballard’s belt, wallet, etc., and the reason Foucin, a divisional commissioner, was heading up the investigation of a rather mundane murder case.
- p. 56: “disremember to tote off the negative he’d just killed for?”: Foucin says that the negative must not be important since Belmazoir, who did strip Ballard’s billfold of its money, neglected to take the negative, which, he killed for, or so Foucin speculates that Vellacott plans to argue.

- p. 57: “diplomatically immunize”: the diplomatic and medical meanings are merged.
- p. 57: “*Malesh!*”: Arabic for “It doesn’t matter!” as used by Remy on the preceding page. Foucin employs the term to convey that since the negative is of no importance, it “does not matter” that his supposition about Vellacott was wrong. In point of fact, he makes another incorrect, but understandable, assumption: That Remy had learned about the negative from his employer Vellacott. Remy will quickly correct him.
- p. 57: “float”: As a transitive verb, one meaning is “to offer for consideration, to put forward, or to propose as an idea.”
- p. 57: “Like flooded corpses they rise”: Remy’s simile states that secrets can be obtained if the bribe is great enough in the same way that a corpse, no matter how weighed down with the stones used to cover a Muslim’s grave, will be forced out of the soil by the rising water level underground. The image of the dead rising is part of the resurrection theme of my novel. Also just like the dead, Remy’s (not Lazar’s) past will unexpectedly rise up on the next page.
- p. 57: PI: slang abbreviation for private investigator. From the papers provided by DGSE in the 2269 locker, Remy would have learned about the real Lazar’s assignment in Cairo. Whether they contained a mention of an Egyptian investigator is not clear. This person could be his invention, a part of his acknowledged “elaboration” (55) about the real Lazar.
- p. 57: “a Soviet-made Libyan antisubmarine frigate”: Libya purchased two Koni II antisubmarine frigates from the Soviet Union in the early 1980s. They were christened *Al Hani* and *Al Ghardabia*. Both were still in operation during the 2011 Libya civil war. The first was captured by the Benghazi rebels early in the conflict, and *Al Ghardabia* was struck by NATO bombers in a raid on Tripoli on May 20, 2011.
- p. 57: *Jane’s*: *Jane’s Fighting Ships*, published annually, lists and describes warships, nation by nation.
- p. 57: “Cumbersome scenery”: Another theatrical metaphor, this one suggesting that Remy’s revelation of how easily he found out about the negative is causing Foucin to reevaluate him as an investigator.
- p. 57: “El-Baraka *douk-douk*”: As defined in the text, it is a “slipjoint pocketknife,” that is, one which consists of a sheet-metal handle and a carbon steel blade. Toward its end there is a short pronounced curve which ends in a sharp point. This curve is called a “chip” because it looks as if that part of the blade has been chipped off. The chipped line can be straight or concave; if the latter, it resembles a scimitar and hence is said to end in a “Turkish clip” point.

When a *douk-douk* is used as a weapon, the sharp clip point allows for less drag during the stabbing and faster withdrawal.

The bottom line of the blade is razor sharp. The clip-point piercing would stun the victim, usually in the neck or face, and the lower part of the blade would slice the person's throat.

As Remy indicates it was used efficiently during the Algerian war, particularly for sudden urban street attacks.

In fact, the French Algerian authorities banned its importation since the original *douk-douks* were designed, manufactured, and denominated by a French cutlery firm.

Douk-douk is not an Arabic term, but the name of an Oceanic mythical spirit, which was the first design engraved on the handle. However, the knife has become such a part of Algerian heritage that most pocketknives (even those not made by the French firm) are called *douk-douks*.

The El-Baraka version of the knife, as Foucin notes, was sold in the bazaars of the Casbah. The French word *baraka* means "a lucky person," but it was borrowed from the same Arabic word meaning "blessing" or "divine favor."

The El-Baraka *douk-douk* version does not have the image of the pagan Melanesian spirit on its handle. Instead the local ectypes of the original pocketknife is typically engraved with a Berber star, although local craftsmen add other appropriate arabesque designs to it and its blade.

p. 57: "Our ALN's dagger-ette": Foucin coins a word to indicate that a *douk-douk* is a "small dagger."

As the 3.38 note, N3:9, indicates, the ALN was the FLN's Army of National Liberation.

p. 57: "prodigally available": This is the first use of a variant of the word "prodigal" from the title of the chapter. Here it means "abundantly."

p. 57: *justitia*: "Justice" (Latin). The maxim, which I strove to make as oddly pithy as possible, may be subjected to the following paraphrase: For one dealing with the criminal element, despair is justified, but the professional must rebuff that natural tendency ("conatus").

This use of *justitia* will be balanced by a famous Latin quotation employed on 20.340: "*Fiat justitia ruat caelum*" ("Let justice be done, though the heavens fall.").

p. 57: whorl: any of the circular ridges that form the design of a fingerprint.

p. 57: "Socrates dissatisfied": Foucin pays this backhanded compliment to Remy. It is from J. S. Mill's famous observation in *Utilitarianism* (1906 ed.), chap. 2, p. 260: It is "better to be a Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied."

p. 57: "pusher of his drugs and of himself": That is, as a drug-dealer Belmazoir peddled hashish and as a male prostitute sold his own body.

p. 57: “1,325 dinars”: The amount which Belmazoir took from Ballard’s wallet would equal about US\$130.

Official dinar conversion at the time of the novel: US\$1 = 10 dinars.

Given that easy-to-remember equivalency, few other dinar-to-dollar conversions will subsequently merit a note.

p. 57: imbricate: As a transitive verb, it means “to overlap in a regular pattern” (*Amer. Her. Dict.*).

pp. 57-58: “who also ‘left his mark’”: The idiom “leave one’s mark” means “to leave an impression upon” or “to influence someone.”

This figurative meaning of “mark” plays upon its literal meaning, “a visible trace or impression on a surface.”

- p. 58: “‘Genet’ boys”: homosexual prostitutes, such as those portrayed in Jean Genet’s autobiographical novels. As in the second section of the nightclub song “Modest Proposal” (2.31), here an extended food metaphor (“cater,” “entrees,” and “gluttonous”) is connected with sex.
- p. 58: “fool [dis]satisfied”: The Mill’s quote from the previous page which has been altered by Foucin by deride himself.
- p. 58: “the fourth [point or issue he had drafted] at the Al-Nigma”: On p. 54, Remy noted that just before going to bed last night he completed the “revised agenda” for his meeting with Foucin.
- p. 58: bombast: As a transitive verb, it means “to make speciously impressive; inflate” (*Webster’s Third*). Foucin is referring to Remy’s compliment that he is “‘the cream of the cream’” of Algeria’s Sûreté.
- p. 58: “a more-than-eight-day circumcising priority”: Foucin’s assertion is that the Algeria authorities placed a greater priority on solving Ballard’s murder than just an investigation of a few days. Foucin uses the time for the Jewish circumcision ceremony (*Brit milah*), conducted on the eighth day after birth. As pointed out in the 3.46 note, circumcision is recommended in Muslim societies, even though the practice is not mentioned in the Qur’an. Its time, however, is not fixed. Some Islamic scholars hold that it should be performed only when the youth can recite the entire Holy Qur’an (typically between seven and twelve years old, the latter making it a puberty rite). Two Hadiths state that the Prophet Mohammed circumcised his grandsons on the seventh day after birth. A modern Muslim view is that it should be performed directly after birth by the obstetrician. Foucin’s use of the circumcision metaphor therefore emphasizes that Ballard’s murder was being subjected to a more than going-through-the-ritual investigation.
- p. 58: “this offense [murder], which ‘shrieks out’ . . .”: Foucin quotes from John Webster’s play *The Duchess of Malfi* 4.2.222, where Bosola tells the Duchess, “Do you not weep? Other sins only speak; murder shrieks out.”
- p. 58: “we maintain a camp for some of [the PLO] refugee”: Partially based on fact. In 1982, as the chairman of the PLO Yasser Arafat and other of its leaders were trapped in Beirut by the Israeli invasion, Algeria offered to receive some of the PLO fighters. However, the offer was subsequently withdrawn, and Arafat and his aides were evacuated to Tunis. Secretly Algeria did receive a contingency of PLO refugees. This is the basis for the PLO “camp” in my novel, located about 140 kilometers south of Algiers just off Route 1, the same highway which is used to go from Algiers to

Berrouaghia Prison, where Mohammed is being held.

In 2010, the latest figures which I could obtain, Algeria houses roughly four thousand Palestinian refugees, but they are integrated into the society, not held in camps.

- p. 58: “they have long Gallic noses”: This description of “long Gallic noses” will reappear in a slightly varied form on 16.27 and 17.276 and 285.
- p. 58: “recompense and redemption”: The redemption theme was previously discussed in the 3.41 note, N3:19-20.
At the end of the notes to chap. 18, N18:72-74, there will be a short essay on the pattern of sin, repentance, and redemption, which will discuss the theme of redemption throughout the novel.
Here there is a touch of sarcasm in Foucin’s stating that France, a country which he has reason to hate, is capable of redemption.
He speculates that the French are using *Solliciteurs*, Vellacott, and by implication Remy to help this descendant of old Belmazoir. He says he welcomes this interference for it may help him find his country’s last great traitor.
- p. 58: “the fag end of the traitors”: The “fag end” is “the last and worst part of anything; the frayed, untwisted end of a rope.”
Omar (that is, Remy) is the “fag end” or the last of the seven traitors whom Foucin has dedicated his mature life to tracking down.
See the 2.17 note, “expired,” N2:12, for a list of the six traitors whom Foucin feels he has directly or indirectly brought to justice.
- p. 58: “For twenty-six years”: From Jan. 1963, when the names of the seven traitors were publicized—Foucin was sixteen at that time—to the date of this chapter, April 10, 1989.
- p. 58: “Remy struggled to steady his words”: Remy is internally shaken to be face to face with the man whose mission has been to eliminate the seven traitors, knowing that he is the last on his list.
Since Foucin does not recognize that the man standing before him is Omar Naaman, he must not have had a photograph of Omar, a not unlikely circumstance in Algeria in the late 50s and early 60s when photography was not popular.
In fact, many devout Muslims still do not wish to be photographed for the same religious reason that human figures are typically absent from Islamic artwork.
Without photographs of the seven, in tracking them down, Foucin would have had to rely on descriptions of them from family or neighbors and especially from each early traitor whom he caught.
Still this method must have been ineffectual since he never lists that such descriptive information gathered ever allowed him to catch one of the traitors.
Also twenty-eight years have elapsed since the last Algerian saw Omar, and Remy has a seemingly impenetrable alias from the DGSE.
Finally, would anyone suspect that a person would present himself or herself before

another who is committed to that person's destruction?

Thus these four reasons (the absence of photographs, the twenty-eight-year passage of time, the perfect alias, and the mind-bobbling idea of such a confrontation) satisfied me that Foucin would have no reason to suspect that the person standing before him is the last traitor that he is seeking.

- p. 59: “*So from another I discover I am the last*”: The first was HIV who on 2.29 had told him, “You’ve won the skin game” and are “the last standing.”
- pp. 59-60: SECTION 5: Time span: After the interview with Foucin (11:20 p.m.), Remy returns to the Al-Nigma. At around 12:50 he hires a taxi for the seventy-minute trip to Berrouaghia Prison south of Algiers.
As the prison comes into view at around two, he remembers an incident thirty-one years ago when as an FLN recruit he first saw the prison.
- p. 59: Prison Civile: Civil Prison, as opposed to a military prison. At the time of my novel, the Civil Prison near the Gendarmerie housed those detailed or convicted in connection with common crimes. It was known as the Serkadji Civil Prison.
It had served a more brutal function in the 1954 – 1962 war for independence when it was known as Barberousse Civil Prison. Built by the French in 1856, it was used as one of the torture centers during the Algerian War.
After independence it was renamed the Serkadji and served as little more than a jail for common criminals. However with the rise of the Algerian Islamists, which plunged the county into a virtual civil war, the Serkadji again became a prison for torture, this time of Algerians by Algerians.
In the early 1990s, detained, often not charged, Islamists were reportedly brutally tortured there. By 1995 their number at Serkadji had far outnumbered the inmates charged with civilian crimes: 920 Islamists to 600 common criminals.
An infamous prison riot occurred at Serkadji on Feb. 21-22, 1995, in which over one hundred inmates, almost exclusively Islamist detainees, were killed.
In 2005, Algeria announced that it was replacing and relocating all prisons built before 1900. Serkadji was closed in 2010.
- p. 59: “prison”: My novel does not state, but does imply, that the closest prison for Belmazoir’s confinement would be Berrouaghia Prison, a seventy-minute drive from Algiers.
It makes no mention El Harrach Prison, located in a suburb of Algiers ten kilometers east of the capital’s center. At the time of the novel it housed, as it does today, mainly prisoners convicted of or charged with treason, terrorism, and other crimes against the state.
Assigning Belmazoir there, I reasoned, would make it seem that Algeria was advertising that it viewed the Ballard murder as a political assassination, yet Foucin insisted on p. 57 it is merely a “hashish-prompted” robbery gone “awry.”
- p. 59: “‘the client of your client,’ as Foucin had taken to alluding to Belmazoir”: See the note to p. 56 above, N4:15, which lists the frequent uses of the phrase in the novel. Here and on p. 57, Foucin had employed it.
- p. 59: “the past fifty-five minutes . . . the quarter-hour final leg to Berrouaghia’: The trip

to Berrouaghia Prison has two legs: The first, a distance of 82 km. (51 miles), is on the southbound asphalt Highway 1 and takes around fifty-five minutes.

Just before Berrouaghia, a town of about 50,000, which gives its name to the prison, Remy's taxi takes a western unpaved cutoff for another 15 km. (nine miles) to the prison. The dirt road causes this leg to take around fifteen minutes.

p. 59: Armani: The Italian designer of high-fashion clothes and accessories for men and women.

p. 59: fallow: pale yellow or brownish-yellow.

p. 59: *siège arrière*: French for "the back seat of a vehicle."

p. 59: "thirty-one years ago": As the taxi nears the prison, Remy remembers one of his earliest assignments after he (Omar) had joined the FLN on Oct. 15, 1957 (2.24, although the date is not specified): He was assigned to bury a landmine along the dirt road to the French Berrouaghia Prison.

Not specified, but according to my chronology, this mission took place on Nov. 1, 1957 (All Saints' Day), which was the anniversary of the date when the Algerian insurrection began in 1954.

Omar, 17, would have been an FLN member for only about two and one-half weeks, and this section attests to his youthful fervor for the revolution.

p. 59: "I'd made the trek for nothing": This is one of the few places in the novel which is told from the first-person singular point of view. I used it in order to convey Remy's perception of the immediateness of a remote event.

At only one point in it will he reveal that he is confronting the experience from a distance: "A 'wooden O.' I'd call it later" (59).

p. 59: "to see and curse": Similar to the wording of Job's wife, "Curse God, and die" (2:9).

p. 59: *palmiers sauvages*: In French "wild palm trees." Unlike cultivated palms, these have no hewn stumps to make ascending their trunks easier.

Compare Gide's description of the climbing of a cultivated palm in *The Immoralist*: The Arab youth "climbed to the top of a pollarded [a cultivated tree with its top branches cut back] palm using the stumps of sawn-off branches as a makeshift ladder" (chap. 4, p. 37, in Watson's edition).

Omar's entering a palm grove here connects with Ballard's entrance to one on 1.9-10.

p. 59: *cachabia* and *djellaba*: Both Arabic words for Algerian men's garments are defined in the text. *Djellaba* was used (and defined) in the 1.14 note.

The *cachabia* has the same design as a *djellaba* (hooded and long sleeved), but it has an open front, making it easy to slip over a *djellaba* for warmth or protection from the elements.

It is often made from camel or goat hair and is associated with the countryside, just as

its counterpart, the *burnoose*, a smoother and more stylish cloak, is associated with the city.

p. 59: “twenty meters”: about sixty-six feet. The conversation: 1 m. = c. 31.3 ft.

p. 59: “beyond the concrete wall”: My description of Berrouaghia Prison is not meant to be factual. In fact, it could not be since none of my North African Muslim friends were able to describe it for me.

On Dec. 27, 2010, almost twenty years after this section was written, on the internet I located a 2009 article about the real prison which had one accompanying photograph. It has less massive walls, is without a moat, and has several building to house the inmates.

I decided to keep the Berrouaghia as created by my imagination.

p. 59: “a chain-link fence, bonneted with whorls of razor wire”: As on 1.9-10 Ballard entered through a barbed-wire fence, so Omar’s eyes pass through one to get to the center of the prison.

See the 1.10 note, N1:25, for a listing of other settings in the novel which have barbed-wire barriers.

p. 59: “A “wooden O,” I’d call it later”: When he was settled in Le Puy.

From Prologue 1 of *Henry V*, lines 12-14: “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?”

Here “this wooden O” refers to a round theater, although probably not to the most famous one, the Globe, but to the Curtain Theater where *Henry V* most likely was first performed.

The “wooden O” quote will also be used on 8.121.

- p. 60: “*Al-awgh!*”: The beginning of the word *Allah* is broken off by the *awgh* that Omar used (or will use) on 3.43 and 50, the latter to indicate that the French lieutenant had shattered his resolve.
The *-awgh* wail here is a universal and innate animalistic cry made by any human being whose agony (from torture, isolation, despair, etc.) has been so intense that it negates an attempt to connect with God.
Ironically Omar views it as an effort to communicate with him.
- p. 60: flurry: a gust of wind.
- p. 60: “glom”: In the Scottish dialect, a transitive verb meaning “to seize” or “to steal.”
- p. 60: “the feathery leaf, which in seeking its place swished to and fro”: A microscopic image of the fate of Omar/Remy: the straddler of two states (the spiritual and the physical), two worlds, and two time periods (his Algerian past and his French present), mentally swishing to and fro between them, seeking his identity.
- p. 60: “I came to curse”: A denial of the philosophical thrust of the advice of Job’s wife, “Curse God, and die” (2:9) and of his initial purpose in entering the palm grove, “to see [the prison] and curse” it (59).
- p. 60: “resurrecting . . . God through the wind had gifted me”: Another instance of the image of an undeserved “gift” from god, here bolstered by the religious reference to “resurrecting.”
- pp. 60-61: SECTION 6: Time span: The section opens with Belmazoir’s opening speech to Remy at the visitor’s room in the prison at 2:33 p.m. It flashes back to Remy’s arrival at the prison (2:00), being checked in, and taken to the visitor’s room (2:29). Mohammed is led in four minutes later and delivers his short rehearsed speech (2:33), which Remy briefly answers (2:34).
- p. 60: “shit”: Slang for “hashish, cannabis, hemp, marijuana,” the cheapest and hence most popular euphoric drug in Algeria.
It is smuggled in through Morocco. In my novel the hashish which the Palestinians in Algeria trafficked came from the Bekaa Valley in Lebanon.
- p. 60: “‘probably interpreted as fright’ . . . ‘fully enigmatic’ . . . ‘rehearsed . . . pathos’”: The exact “wording” of Remy’s thoughts will be reported either by placing quotes around them, as here, or by italicizing them, as in the sixth paragraph on the next page, “*Oh yes, M. Ballard, you.*”
- p. 60: “rehearsed begging”: See the 3.50 note, N3:37-38, for an overview of the use of theatrical images in the novel.

- p. 60: “I cannot eat . . . let me shit”: The speech is designed to show how “despicable” (61) a state Belmazoir has fallen into, leading Remy to compare the youth with his grandfather, Remy’s fellow traitor.
He seems to care only about the momentary “high” that the hashish would bring him, not that he is charged with murder or that he is endangering his sister, who he says will sneak in some drugs on “Thursday” (60).
- p. 60: “their wailing”: As Belmazoir drones on, Remy thinks back to his entry into the prison at around 2:00. Five paragraphs down, Remy discloses whose wailing he is thinking about: Those Algerians who were tortured because of the information he as Omar the collaborator passed on to the French.
- p. 60: “initials on the seal”: Commissioner Foucin’s.
- p. 60: *à pied*: French for “on foot.”
- p. 60: *poste de garde*: guard station.
- p. 60: “the faux ‘cigarette lighter,’ requested from HIV”: It holds the microrecorder (2.33).
- p. 60: “Cyclops-eyed building”: In Greek mythology a giant with one eye in the middle of his forehead.
The “wooden O” building which housed the prisoners is compared with the eye of a Cyclops, the rim of his face constituting the walls of the prison.
- p. 60: *operosely*: “laboriously” (*Webster’s Third*). More recent dictionaries list the adjective “operose” as archaic.
- p. 60: *surveillant*: As defined in the text, Omar’s French Algerian espionage “handler.”
- p. 60: Vacheron Constantin: The Swiss company is one of the three most prestigious watchmakers in the world, the other two being Patek Philippe (the watch which Leroy presented to Ballard on 1.7) and Maudemars Piquet.
On 18.304, Remy’s watch is said to be a 1988 Christmas present from Marie, who would have had to spend around \$10,000 on one of the lowest-priced Vacherons. How his wife got the money is explained on p. 304.

- p. 61: “brown study”: reverie.
- p. 61: “HIV’s camel boy”: HIV’s sobriquet for Mohammed Belmazoïr, 2.30.
- p. 61: “adonic”: “of, relating to, or like Adonis; extremely handsome” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 61: “‘We’re the despicable . . . *l’immonde*’”: See 2.33 and its note, N2:62, for this French expression.
It will appear a third time on 21.35.
- p. 61: “the inaccuracy of the pronoun”: The accurate use would be “I,” old Belmazoïr referring only to himself since the other six did not regard their acts of treason as “despicable.” Even Omar at this time believed his deception had saved his sister.
- p. 61: “his grandfather’s good looks”: Remy compares Mohammed to his grandfather, whom he had seen at FLN meetings, not to Mohammed’s father Ahmed since his face, like his father’s, had been masked at their clandestine 1972 meeting described on 2.32.
- p. 61: “dusky-rose complexion”: The phrase was borrowed from Burroughs’s *The Wild Boys*. In its “The Miracle of the Rose” chapter, the narrator describes the complexion of a Moroccan young man: “The other [Moroccan Berber guide had] a dusky rose complexion with long lashes.”
- p. 61: “belsire”: Obsolete term for “grandfather” (*Webster’s Third*).
I chose it to suggest old Belmazoïr’s fixation on his handsomeness, the prefix *bel* indicating “beautiful.”
- p. 61: *pièce de résistance*: the main item or event in a series. It is the part of a creation which defies (i.e. “resists”) orthodoxy or common conventions and practices, thereby making the whole of the creation unique.
- p. 61: “‘*La Heure*’”: As explained in the text, French for “the Hour [of Reckoning].”
See the 2.32 note where Remy refers to newspaper accounts of how the body of old Belmazoïr was tortured by Algerian agents, who supposedly carved the word, “the hour,” into his chest.
On p. 58, Foucin said that he had brought old Belmazoïr “to justice,” so Remy concludes he must have participated in the torture.
- p. 61: cilia: eyelashes.
- p. 61: “‘raven’ convictions”: The phrase means the fixed resolution of Poe’s “raven,” not a pun on “raving.”
- p. 61: *grand-père*: French for “grandfather.”
- p. 61: *captif*: In French, “prisoner.”

- p. 61: “M. Ballard, you chose as well as the French”: The apostrophe to the absent Ballard leads Remy to condemn himself: The French had chosen the seventeen-year-old Omar knowing his weakness about Noura just as Ballard had selected the eighteen-year-old narcissistic Belmazoïr.
- p. 61: “an easy prey, for beauty, rose-tanned in its cheek, carries with it its own *faiblesse*. It is its own weakness and awaits, seductively, a coiling Satan”: These sentences combine the Billy Budd narrative with the Garden of Eden story, a jointure which Melville himself pursued.
 However, Remy employs a deliberately mixed metaphor. “Rose-tanned in its cheek” is based on Melville’s description of Budd’s complexion in chap. 2, par. 2: “the lily was quite suppressed and the rose had some ado visibly to flush through the tan.” Chapter 2 of *BB* also contains Melville’s linking of Billy with Adam: “Billy in many respects was . . . perhaps as Adam presumably might have been ere the urbane Serpent wriggled himself into his company.”
 And in the penultimate paragraph of chap. 25, Melville writes that “Billy ascended; and, ascending, took the full rose of the dawn.”
 However, the adamic Mohammed is more closely tied with Eve in Remy’s description, for it is she as beauty who awaited, “seductively, a coiling Satan,” much more so than Melville’s “urbane Serpent [who] wriggled himself into [Adam’s] company.”
- p. 61: *faiblesse*: weakness.
- p. 61: *siège avant*: French for “front seat of a vehicle.”
- p. 61: “silver Audi”: The car in which the three generations of Belmazoïrs met with Remy on the night of Nov. 1, 1972 (2.32).
- p. 61: immured: imprisoned.
- p. 61: springald: “a young man; stripling” (*Webster’s Third*).
 An alternate spelling is “springal.” Earlier used by HIV on 2.30.
- p. 61: “*And what of their baying?*”: For a second time Remy thinks of those Muslim Algerians whom the information he passed on to the French caused to be tortured.
- p. 61: “*bâtard*”: bastard.
- p. 61: pogonion: “the most projecting median point on the anterior surface of the chin” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 61: “I am the lied to”: Remy curtly informs Belmazoïr that his suggestion about M. Vellacott’s instructing him to smuggle drugs into a prison is a ridiculous lie. The youth, his bluff called, resignedly asserts that he was the one “lied to.” On 2.30, HIV forewarned Remy that Belmazoïr was “born and bred to lie.”

pp. 61-64: SECTION 7 : Time span: From 8:30 – 9:30 p.m., back in his room at the Al-Nigma, three times Remy listens to the cassette recording that he had secretly made of his afternoon interview with Belmazoir (2:33 – 3:07), studying vocal nuances and looking for inconsistencies and apparent “lies.”

Section 7 is principally concerned with Belmazoir’s account of how he met Ballard and his description of their first night of sex. Stressing the American’s generosity, Belmazoir asks, “Why would I murder him?” (2:55).

pp. 61-62: “possibly another”: Remy hopes that he had impregnated Marie on the night of Apr. 7 (53).

- p. 62: “beloved commissioner, who hates my family, was ogling through some peephole”: Belmazoir suggests that Foucin, who hates the descendants of one of the great traitors, was probably watching with delight as Mohammed was tortured in an attempt to get him to confess to Ballard’s murder.
The peephole image would resonate with Remy because he had watched the torture of Nouza through a peephole thirty and a half years ago (3.42-50).
- p. 62: “the negative in Ballard’s wallet made no sense . . . if Belmazoir [had never] been aware of the embassy connection”: Belmazoir contends that during their relationship he never knew that Ballard (his “M. John”) worked for the American embassy.
If that averment was true, it would seem that he could not have been the conduit in Ballard’s trafficking of embassy documents.
- p. 62: “Salam Khalaf”: Khalaf, the head of the Palestinian refugee camp south of Algiers, told the police his agents had found out in early February (less than a month before the murder) that Ballard used an alias with Belmazoir, a drug-runner for the PLO, and that he was also an official at the U.S. Embassy.
Khalaf, however, maintained that that his men never informed Belmazoir of Ballard’s alias or employment.
This account may be compared with what Ahmed Chabane told Ballard on the morning of the murder (1.12.).
- p. 62: “aka Tinfingers”: The synecdochical nickname was coined from several sources, principally the name of the villain in the 1964 Bond movie *Goldfinger*.
The PLO camp leader has an artificial right hand and presumably his earlier versions of it were made of cheap metal, hence the sobriquet.
He and his enamel prosthesis figure prominently in chap. 16.
- p. 62: “potted”: Slang for “intoxicated” or “under the influence of a hallucinogenic drug.”
- p. 62: “question . . . must give the appearance that he accepted the prisoner’s contention . . . postpone the negative . . . an innocent digression”: Remy decides not to challenge Belmazoir’s assertion that he knew nothing about an American embassy officer.
He also realizes that Belmazoir has all the cunning of his grandfather; thus it would be precipitous to mention the negative found on Ballard.
- p. 62: ““off-season””: In quotes because its use as a verb is atypical. As a noun, “off-season” means “that time of year when business is slow.”
- p. 62: “the vortex of old Belmazoir”: an activity that resembles a whirl or eddy in its rush or absorbing effect.
- p. 62: “consult”: Archaic (hence the quotation marks) for “cabal” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 62: *pépé*: Familiar French term for “granddad” or “grandpa.”

p. 62: *petit-fils*: In French, “grandson.

p. 62: ST Dupont: S. T. Dupont Paris (the periods are absent from its brand name) is best known for its luxury cigarette lighters.

Various parts of the “faux” lighter that DGSE provided Remy will allow him to play, stop, fast-forward, and rewind the microcassette.

p. 62: *jeune homme*: French for “young man.”

p. 62: “*Marche-Arrêt* screw”: Start (or Play) and Stop.

“Screw” refers to the “bottom refill screw” of the false lighter.

p. 62: Palais des Nations Beach: The Palace of the Nations Beach near Algiers was first mentioned on 1.7 and in its note.

pp. 62-63: *khawaaga*: As defined in the text, it is an Arabic slang word for a “gay foreigner.”

It will be used twice more in the novel: 12.189 (in its plural form) and 18.311.

- p. 63: “*Bon Marché . . . vous plaît*”: Ballard’s French instructions to Belmazoïr are translated into English in the next paragraph. Algiers has a branch of Le Bon Marché (“the good market” or “the good deal”). By 1850, its parent store in Paris had established itself as the first department store in the world. Its Algiers branch is located on the fashionable Rue Ben M’hidî Larbi. In my novel the Al-Nigma Hotel is close to this department store.
- p. 63: “the flint wheel”: As the text states, this facet of the pretense lighter allows Remy to fast-forward.
- p. 63: quinquagenarian: a person between fifty and sixty. To any readers who would protest that it is unrealistic for an eighteen-year-old Algerian to be using such words as “quinquagenarian,” I answer, “When did any novelist ever write a realistic novel?” Additionally, all the events of the novel, save the first chapter, pass through Remy’s mind, which has the liberty of using a Latinate synonym in translating Belmazoïr’s “woman in her fifties.”
- p. 63: “the reverse is preferable”: An early display of Mohammed’s wit; he would prefer a “loose-fisted” spendthrift and a “tight-cunt widow.”
- p. 63: “teen-fag”: A crudity meaning an effeminate teenage homosexual.
- p. 63: “*encore en fois*”: In French “once more or again.”
- p. 63: “red Quatrelle”: On 1.4, Ballard drives a “Renault Quatrelle,” a French-made hatchback. See the 1.4 note.
- p. 63: “a joke in French”: On 1.6, Belmazoïr giggled, “This [exhibition of his penis] doesn’t count with God.” Since Ballard was a Christian, this exposure was not forbidden.
- p. 63: “a second tutor”: In August 1988, Ballard began to date Leila.
- p. 63: “the inherent delights of voyeurism”: Belmazoïr’s statement will be recalled on 14.230: “Mohammed’s professed delight in voyeurism.”
- p. 63: “fairy Brit”: This wording occurs in the second section of “Bangkok-alota” on 2.24: “That fairy Brit / Was fingering my slit.” This is an overt sign of Remy’s mental emendation of Belmazoïr’s speech.
- p. 63: Jardin Marengo: A park just north of the Casbah in the Bab el Oued district. It was renamed Jardin de Prague, but the French colonial name was still principally used in 1989. On 12:197-200, an important scene of the novel will be set there.
- p. 63: tiff: a little drink of weak liquor or punch. Rarely used, here Belmazoïr employs it

figuratively to minimize his infection.

- p. 63: “Toumi Street building”: As pointed out in the 1.6 note, N1:16, Rue Toumi is my invention, as is the seedy neighborhood of apartment buildings, filled with a smattering of window-hanging prostitutes, in which it is located. In my novel this area is about a half mile northwest of the Casbah in the western section of the Bab el Oued district of Algiers. It is just over a quarter-hour walk from Foucin’s Gendarmerie, as a character who will make the trek in chap. 13 reports. Ten minutes further westward from my Toumi is the real-life El-Kettar Cemetery, the pun on “tomb” being the reason the street’s name was chosen. This cemetery was and still is (a Google site informed me), a cruising area for heterosexual and homosexual males. My fictional Rue Toumi should not be confused with the real-life street in Algiers, Rue Toumi Idir.
- p. 63: sluice: As an intransitive verb, “to run or flow in or as if in a sluice.”
- p. 63: aphotic: dark; without light. This adjective was used previously on 1.14 and will occur two other times, 15.251 and 20.339.

- p. 64: “remembering Trimalchio’s”: Remy had basically kept his eyes cast downward throughout the erotic numbers at the nightclub (1.1).
- p. 64: “the rough, pimply back sides of [Ballard’s] legs, the remnant of a Vietnam wound”: The text does not clarify whether Remy knew this detail from Vellacott’s reports. If not, he will look to verify it later to determine how truthful Belmazoir, “born and bred to lie” (2.30), is being with him.
Of course, the reader has an advantage on Remy (just as the audience at a play such as *Oedipus Rex* has on Oedipus, this foreknowledge being the essence of dramatic irony) since she or he knows from 1.10 about Ballard’s Vietnam wound.
- p. 64: fellator: the sexual partner performing oral sex.
- p. 64: “derb”: to give or receive fellatio, according to the online *Urban Dictionary*.
- p. 64: “cum”: In standard dictionaries, “cum” is used as a vulgar slang noun for semen. However, the *Urban Dictionary* lists it as both noun and verb.
- p. 64: “jizz”: ejaculate (slang). According to the online *Wiktionary*, it is a shortened form of “jism” or semen.
- p. 64: “*resurrezione della carne*”: An Italian phrase defined in the text. Eschatologically, it refers to the Roman Catholic doctrine that at the end of time the bodies of all, whether of the saved or the damned, will rise and be reunited with their souls.
However, by the Renaissance the term had taken on the sexual implication of a “male erection,” as in the tenth story of the third day of Boccaccio’s *Decameron*, where “*la resurrezione della carne*” is used quite casually, even cheerfully, in this obscene sense.
Cf. Belmazoir’s speech where his own narration gives him an erection with 1.8, where the Filipino’s jabbering about sex “excit[ed] himself.”
- p. 64: triturate: pulverize.
- p. 64: “princox”: Used in its archaic meaning of “a pert youth” (*Webster’s Third*); this word was also employed to describe the Filipino (1.8).
- p. 64: “the blanket of darkness”: The metaphor is similar to Lady Macbeth’s on 1.5.53-54, where in invoking the night, she prays for it to be so “thick” that “heaven” cannot “peep through the blanket of the dark / To cry ‘Hold, hold!’”
- p. 64: prenotify: “to warn or notify in advance” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 64: breaker box: a circuit breaker panel controlling the flow of electricity to each outlet.
- p. 64: WC: In informal British English, “water closet; toilet.”

- p. 64: “*Merci beaucoup!*”: In French, “Thank you very much!”
- p. 64: Le Place des Trois Horloges: “The Market of the Three Clocks,” a major shopping bazaar in Bab el Oued City in the Bab el Oued district of Algiers.
- pp. 64-65: SECTION 8: Time span: This five-minute segment of the interview (2:55 – 3:00, not specified) is largely concerned with Belmazoïr’s confession of how much he loves his family, a stark contrast to his earlier whining and the humiliating portrait of himself as a male prostitute.
- p. 64: “And did you reserve any for your family?”: In the penultimate paragraph of section 7, Belmazoïr had mentioned his family, perhaps to gain Ballard’s sympathy and in the future an increase in his pay: “My mother, my sister, thank you, M. John.” Remy seizes the opening to question him about his family, hoping to obtain more about them than was in Vellacott’s files.
- p. 64: “twenty-six year-old-sister”: Houda is just over seven years older than Mohammed, as will be revealed metaphorically on 15.241: “Seven years I [Houda] awaited his [Mohammed’s] budding.” According to my symbolic chronology, she was born in summer 1963, specifically July 5 (Algeria’s Independence Day), and he in autumn 1970, specifically Nov. 1 (All-Saints’ Day, when the war for Algerian independence began in 1954). Thus there are seven years and almost four months between their births.
- p. 64: “parroting M. John”: Belmazoïr delays revealing the circumstance of how Ballard inquired about his family.

- p. 65: ““worse-for-wear””: The phrase harks back to the second section of “Bangkok-alota” (2.25): “That baggy fag / (For wear the worse).”
- p. 65: lamplighter: a prostitute.
- p. 65: “strumpet-tramper”’: a cacophonous and slant-rhymed coined word for “prostitute.”
- p. 65: “How little the government has taken care of this, your wants!”: The same sentiment is expressed by the storm-battered Lear: “O, I have ta’en / Too little care of this!” (3.4.32-33)
Such echoes from Shakespeare and other writers by Belmazoir will be partially justified on 15.243 where this male prostitute admits to having numbered a Cambridge don among his clientele.
This scholar quoted lines from English poets into Belmazoir’s genitals during oral sex.
Belmazoir’s argument is that what a streetwalker principally needs from a caring government is repair of pavement cracks.
- p. 65: *fille de nuit*: French for “lady of the night.”
- p. 65: “a friend’s someone you can laugh with”: A generalization of his earlier assertion, “he would make me laugh” (64).
The definition further indicates that Belmazoir saw his relationship with Ballard as more than just the commercial one about which he had spoken in section 7: “He sucked me. I fucked him . . . he paid me well” (62).
- p. 65: “Why would I murder him?”: Mohammed asks again what reason would he have for killing Ballard, the inference being that the American was not just his customer, but also his friend.
- p. 65: “license as a gift”: See the 3.37 note on “gift,” N3:6.
In chap. 4, “gift” is used three times. Remy refers to Marie’s possible “gift” (53) of a son.
On p. 60, Omar speaks of God’s “gift” of the wail of the FLN Berrouaghia prisoner, and here, where Mohammed asserts that his mother and sister recognize that young people should have the “license” to explore life as a “gift.”
- p. 65: “the bedsheet dividing the room”: The one-room shack where the Belmazoirs live will be described on 5.80-81.
Down the middle of it had been hung a white bedsheet which divided the section of the room where the mother and daughter slept from the corner with Mohammed’s cot and the dining/food preparation area.
- p. 65: “veering and hauling”’: A nautical term meaning “to vary the course or direction” (*Webster’s Third*).

- p. 65: “A measure of it”: A “limited amount or degree of something.”
The use of “measure” conjures up the “measure for measure” passage in Matt. 7:2 and the title of Shakespeare’s play.
For an analysis of the Biblical and Shakespearean passages, see the 1.3 note, N1:11.
- p. 65: “No, that wasn’t . . . he didn’t . . . God, I need some shit!”: Belmazoir’s drug withdrawal anxiety may explain his loquaciousness, which leads not only to the contradictions of whether he viewed Ballard as a customer, a friend, or both, but also to his attempt to retract what he has just blurted out, that Ballard spoke of visiting Belmazoir’s family.
- p. 65: “dead air”: “silence occurring during a radio or television broadcast” (*Webster’s Third*); used metaphorically here.
- p. 65: “some shit”: hashish.
- p. 65: “Plos”: See the 1.12 note for the transformation of the three-syllable abbreviation PLO into the one-syllable familiar or derogatory acronymic term “Plo,” meaning “a Palestinian or a member of the PLO.”
- p. 65: “my father’s fortune downward spiraled”: The irony of Belmazoir’s wording will become apparent on 14.220 and 15.241-42.
- p. 65: “My flowers . . . my varied beds”: Belmazoir’s casual divulgence about his mother’s love of flowers will have an unexpected repercussion on 14.227-28 and 15.247.
- p. 65: “spanned that time”: The period since something bad happened to their “father’s fortune.”
- p. 65: “with Parisian labels, albeit sewn on in Algiers”: The artificiality of the labels of clothes identified with Remy on 2.28 is summoned up by Belmazoir.
- p. 65: “Another son, another brother.” As mentioned in discussing the title of this chapter (N4:1), this syntactic pattern is similar to that employed in the “prodigal son” parable, where the father’s reference to “this my son” is balanced by “this thy brother” (Luke 15: 24 and 30).
The title of chap. 18, “Another Sister, Another Brother,” is foreshadowed by the phrasing here.
The novel, as will become apparent, centers around three brother-sister relationships: Omar-Noura Naaman; Leila-Ahmed Chabane; and Mohammed-Houda Belmazoir.
- p. 65: “less-than-prodigal son”: Here Mohammed identifies himself as the prodigal son. Again see N4:1 for a more complete discussion of the relevance of the Biblical parable.

p. 65: “On Thursday”: Since the time of Remy’s interview is Monday, Apr. 10, it will be three days before Houda is scheduled to visit her brother at the prison.

p. 65: “my sister will spirit in the hashish . . . the extravagance of my love”: Mohammed states that by slipping the hashish into the prison, Houda affirms not only how much she loves her brother but also how deeply she comprehends that her brother loves her.

This definition of love may be compared with the Pauline definition of selfless love which Ballard thought about shortly before his death (1.13).

- pp. 66-67: SECTION 9: Time Span: In this section, the action swings back and forth, from Remy's hotel room that night (7:17 – 11:30) to the last seven minutes of his afternoon prison interview with Belmazoir (3:00 – 3:07).
- p. 66: “‘Another son, another brother would have done more’ . . . received more than he sought”: As the single quotes indicate, Remy, having stopped the cassette, repeats what Belmazoir had admitted about his familial responsibility. The youth's divulgence unexpectedly causes Remy to realize that he had “received more than he sought” (66): Belmazoir's words have forced him to question whether he had done enough for his father, his mother, and his sister Noura. Too embarrassed to confront his abandonment of his family, Remy begins a Freudian interpretation of Belmazoir as an orphaned son in search of a father figure in Ballard.
- p. 66: “psychobabble”: the employment of the concepts of psychology in a trite or superficial way. Harking back to the lyrics from “An Orgy with Georgie,” Remy deems “psychobabble” “the twentieth-century equivalent of ‘speakin’ in tongues” (2.20). He seems unaware of how his jesting analysis connects him with Belmazoir: Remy is seeking his father in Algiers just as the early-orphaned Belmazoir had sought a father figure in Ballard.
- p. 66: “rhythmus”: a synonym for “rhythm” (*Webster's Third*).
- p. 66: “sidle a hint [about the negative] . . . ‘And more than money he bestowed on you?’: a second veiled allusion to the negative”: The first hint occurred on p. 62, “‘And you never speculated whether more could be extracted?’”
- p. 66: seasoned: experienced through training or practice.
- p. 66: “More than the more is more than the less”: In *The Principles of Psychology*, vol. 1, chap. 13, “Discrimination and Comparison,” in the last paragraph of the subsection “The Principle of Mediate Comparison,” the American philosopher William James uses several mediate comparisons, one of which is “the more than the more is more than the less.” Only incidentally (the opposite of Remy's “essential”) does the statement refer to “*prodigality*.” This phrasing will be used in ten of the twenty-one chapters, and not always as here in reference to money: 4.67; 5.73; 6.94; 9.144; 10.161; 12.189; 13.217; 16.271; 17.290, and 18.301. All save one will be by Remy, although once as Omar he reputedly is quoting another. Foucin uses it the other time, supposedly quoting someone else. A variant, “more than that more,” appears on 9.141, spoken by an unlikely source.

- p. 66: “‘abandoning you’”: The theme of abandonment of family, religion, and country in the novel was discussed in a series of 2.16 notes, N2:6-7.
- p. 66: “opulence squared”: Remy’s “definition” of more-than-the-more money which he is sure Belmazoir is dreaming about.
- p. 66: “probably ‘unheard’ and thus ‘sweeter’”: From Keats’s “Ode on a Grecian Urn”: “‘Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard / Are sweeter” (11-12).
- p. 66: “truncheon”: A chiefly British synonym for a policeman’s stick or billy.
- p. 66: *gardien*: French for “(prison) guard”; in full, *gardien de prison*.
- p. 66: “pollarded palm and plane trees”: Most major streets in Algiers are lined with well trimmed, that is, pollarded, palm and plane trees.
See the p. 59 note above, N4:24.
- p. 66: “Since he had leeway there, the path . . . M. Xérès”: DGSE had given Remy the option of contacting his French Embassy liaison on either the second or third night of his arrival. He decides to postpone it to the third.
The seemingly comical code name that DGSE had assigned to this contact is *xérès*, the French word for “sherry.”
The significance of the wine alias will become evident in the 5.76 note, “M. Xérès,” N5:23.
- p. 66: Calvin Klein: a prominent American fashion designer since 1968, particularly of menswear.
- p. 66: Gabicci: In 1973, two British designers strongly inspired by Italian fashion launched Gabicci. The brand rapidly became an underground and then an entrenched leader in menswear, particularly their cardigan sweaters.
- p. 66: “overweening shudder”: Through exaggeration, Remy pokes fun at himself.
- p. 66: *escritoire*: writing desk or table.
- p. 66: “Levant-grain”: An expensive morocco leather from sheep, goat, or seal skins with a large, irregular grain, used principally in book-binding.
- p. 66: “paw not my Gibbon’s!”: A reference to Gibbon’s *Decline and Fall*, here in a two-volume edition.
His comical apostrophe to Foucin and others sent by the inspector attests to his certainty that his room was and will be daily searched.
He had been reading Gibbon’s in Le Puy since Marie “intuitively packed” the two volumes.
- pp. 66-67: “the Germanic threat to Rome. *How careless were the Huns with their personal*

property . . . as was M. Ballard with his, at Zaracova Beach!”: In the second from the last section of chap. 9 of *Decline*, Gibbons contrasts Germanic obsession with personal honor with their carelessness about personal property.

Gibbon’s observation leads Remy to contemplate how careless, it seemed, Ballard had been with his personal property at Zaracova Beach.

- p. 67: “Remy’s ‘languid’ ‘imagination’ stirred” and began to ponder over “the anonymous fingerprints on [Ballard’s] possessions”: Remy’s mind goes back to an earlier passage in chap. 9 where Gibbon writes that without literacy, “the judgment becomes feeble and lethargic, the imagination languid or irregular.”
Remy realizes that ironically he has become sleepy (‘languid’) from too much literacy: For two hours he had read chapters 8 and 9 of Gibbon, both heavily footnoted by editors in his edition.
But his mind was roused by Gibbon’s observation, and it soon develops a possible connection, again unelaborated, between Ballard’s carelessness at the beach and the anonymous fingerprints left on Ballard’s possessions, but not on the negative.
- p. 67: *briquet*: “(cigarette) lighter” in French.
- p. 67: “envoi”: something said or done in farewell or conclusion.
- p. 67: “the child’s play”: A reference to Remy’s thought on the previous page, “the candy that entices a child to walk with a stranger.”
- p. 67: “though many men of influence and wealth abroad regard him”: Remy concocts this lie in order to convince Belmazoir that he is trying to gain him more favorable treatment in the prison.
- p. 67: “His ‘virtuous servants’”: Remy quotes a phrase from the five-times-repeated daily prayers of Muslims: “Peace be on us and the virtuous servants of God.”
This benediction occurs at the end of the second *Raka‘ah* (“prayer cycle” of the prayers).
This segment of the daily prayers will be given in full on 7.102, which deals with a specimen of the prayers in their entirety.
- p. 67: “‘a fallen angel,’ whose ‘orbs,’ plopped open on his initial bounce off the Lake of Dis”: Remy adds a glib comment based on Belmazoir’s opening description of his supposed abuse in prison, described on p. 60: “I’m the pretty boy, nightly targeted by a stream of buggers.”
He indirectly asks Belmazoir whether he wishes to “rest unpestered.”
The youth’s countenance, Remy tells himself, rivaled that of “a fallen angel.” What follows is a comical amplification which merges Milton’s and Dante’s descriptions of Hell.
The fall of the angels is several times pictured in Milton’s *PL*. Here I basically used two passages from bk. 1 which stress their astonishment: (1) ll. 279-82: The fallen angels “lie / Groveling and prostrate on yon lake of fire / As we [Satan and Beëlzebub] erewhile, astounded and amazed, / No wonder, fall’n such a pernicious highth [stet].” And (2) ll. 312-13: The fallen angels covered “the flood / Under amazement of their hideous change.”
In Dante’s *Inferno* the ninth circle’s Lake of Dis is usually called Cocytus, the frozen lake at the center of hell into which all the infernal rivers flow.

Unlike Milton's lake of fire, Dante writes, "All Cocytus was enwrapped in frost (canto 34.1.52).

The fourth round of Circle 9 (canto 34), called Giudecca (after Judas Iscariot) shows a three-headed Satan, half-frozen in the lake's ice, chewing on the spirits of humanity's three greatest traitors: Brutus, Cassius, and Judas.

The only other movement is the beating of Satan's wings, an action which keeps the lake frozen.

Dis almost always refers to the city of hell next to the lake, but in one instance it is another name for Satan. Virgil tells Dante as they approach Satan: "Behold Dis" (34.19).

- p. 67: "darkness visible": From *PL* 1.62-63: "Yet from those flames [of Hell] / No light; but rather darkness visible."
- p. 67: "the slander that bast—, that dev—, the 'Supreme' Commissioner Foucin": Truncating his initial terms for Foucin, "bastard" and "devil," the youth protests to Remy that it must have been the commissioner who had spread such false gossip about him.
- p. 67: "no beast on my back": Belmazoir paraphrases a line from *Othello* (which he probably had picked up from one of his Cambridge U hustling customers): "your daughter and the Moor are now making the beast with two backs" (1.1.119-120).
- p. 67: "never willingly been served" and "I'll ace you later, HIV's camel boy": Belmazoir's wording reminds Remy of the quibbles of Saul and HIV on 2.29: "'twill serve . . . 'twill receive . . . I am the server . . . I'll ace you later." He also remembers HIV's sobriquet for Belmazoir, Ballard's "Arab camel boy," on 2.30. Remy used the latter on p. 61, so his first impression of Belmazoir duplicates his assessment of him near the close of the interview.
- p. 67: mettle: spirit; ardor.
- p. 67: "thirty-five minutes ago": Their conference had begun at 2:31 with Belmazoir's whining, "Slide me the shit" (60).
- p. 67: *captif*: prisoner.
- p. 67: "A sweet sardanapalian tooth": The image is from Byron's *Sardanapalus: A Tragedy*. The real Sardanapalus was a king of Assyria and, according to legend, notorious for effeminacy and love of luxury. Both of these qualities Remy associates with Belmazoir at this point. However, they change somewhat when he listens to the recording of the interview back at his hotel.
- p. 67: "the strain of Rousseau": A reference to the sometimes excessive sentimentality of

the eighteenth-century French Romantic writer.

Ambiguously Remy answers Belmazoir's plea that he is innocent: He says that he has a sentimental feeling toward any devoted son and brother, which Belmazoir had maintained he was on p. 65.

p. 67: *jeune homme*: "young man" in French.

p. 67: "much 'more than the more'": The second reference in this chapter to William James's phrase, "The more than the more is more than the less." See the p. 66 note above, N4:40-41.

p. 67: "particle of darkness": See the p. 54 note above, N4:11. As indicated there, this late use of the phrase is designed to balance the earlier occurrence.

p. 67: "one last prodigal glance": Having readied himself for bed, Remy walks to the window where he stares toward the Casbah and his father's attic. "Prodigal" here suggests how Remy sees himself as the son who deserted his father and whom he fears his father will "drive away" (the etymology of "prodigal"). However, the word also conveys the abundance of his love for his father. See the note on the significance of the title of this chapter, N4:1, in which three central characters of the novel (Remy, Belmazoir, and Foucin) affiliate themselves with the word.

p. 67: "steered small": A nautical term meaning "to steer in an almost straight course" (*Webster's Third*).

p. 67: "comprehended": This last word of the chapter extends the reference to a "particle of darkness" to the darkness of John 1:5: "And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." See the p. 54 note above, N4:10.