

Chapter Fourteen

I, FOREIGN I

“So he climbed from my lap into yours,” for over four hours Remy had felt a need to confide.

Of course, he could not, instead puzzling, “Blumarn? I’ve frequently traveled through France, still can’t place that town.”

The last group of dinner guests having excused themselves, Foucin had just rejoined him in the *hoodit queaad* (“sitting room”) of the Kouba apartment, squatting onto the middle section of the three oblong red-with-gold-stripes chenille foam mattresses, the Arabian “low sofa” which lined the front wall. Slanting his trunk forward, he balanced an elbow on the matching cubical armrest between them.

Remy had commenced by thanking his host for “a repast even senility won’t induce me to forget.” A theatrical patting of his stomach gained him the transition to “Blumarn,” the word which had baffled him during Foucin’s earlier narration in the Al-Nigma driveway.

“An understandable three-year-old’s mispronunciation. Blumarn is Pleumartin, a town in midwestern France. After his son’s defection, Belmazoir had forthwith moved. I maintained the amiable deception with M. Ahmed a further six weeks, of course, declining his appeals to revisit his household, while our agents plied their craft in France.

“One feigned to be the niece of de Villiers’s, Belmazoir’s Pleumartin alias, and from a neighbor elicited that husband and wife had vacated their villa in October ’72, with no one apprised of their destination. ‘They kept to themselves,’ the elderly woman added.

“‘Did they simply vanish, decamp without their furniture?’

“‘Oh no, M. de Villiers hired a truck, loaded it himself since his son with his family had left several days before. Husband and wife made at least five trips.’

“‘A truck?’

“‘A moving van . . . Eurohaul. Yes, on its sides, the yellow rectangle shingling the green square.’

“That night, burgling its nearest office in Châtellerault turned up the receipt. I pinned it to Belmazoir’s chest three weeks later, egotistically scribbling my Berber cognomen across it, not carving it into his flesh, as the ‘rags’ would have it.

“Imprudently, he didn’t drive the van back to Châtellerault since noted on the receipt was ‘Surrendered to Fougères office,’ two hundred kilometers from Pleumartin. An adept, you apprehend that once the boundary coordinates (48.1-.6°, -1.1-.3°) surrounding Fougères are in place, the pinpointing is routine.

“On the outskirts of vicinal Louvigné-du-Désert, he had leased an isolated two-story chalet and, compliments of French intelligence, had a fresh and facetiously prescient CNI

faux nom: Malafont! I conjecture the moment his son opted to desert France, its *directeur* resigned himself to Belmazoir's fate.

"Flown in to discharge our inquisition, in the third hour I well-nigh educed a revelation. Before that night, I was convinced it's the memory of previous pain, engendering a fear of future pain, which incites a man to confess. No, it's not Lockean. Pain doesn't enliven the *tabula repletus*, the 'teeming brain,' rather blunts it, so truth like stagnant backwater gushes forth the twinkling the clog's dislodged.

"Omar Naaman!" he screamed.

Remy swung round the instant his name was evoked, a reaction evidently escaping the notice of Foucin, who continued, "I withdrew the electrode from the pink skin which a fingernail had screened. 'The only one faithful! The "true-blue" traitor!' Thereupon he thundered against a bond."

Ten or so seconds slid by. "Yes, Baby had come. You remember Baby. I alluded to him before: the youngest devil."

Remy nodded and, as Foucin proceeded, could not but conclude, *How much a tortured man will "out" and how accurate his babbling!* Mohammed's tumble into his lap had even been extorted.

"Discerning that we could reap no more, I rounded the chair and fired one bullet above the occipital bone. What a hue and cry his wife whipped up in the press! The effort of her agitation sadly, within a month, burst her heart. That night she'd been confined to a chamber far from her husband's shrieks, for the mouth protests exceedingly when the body's abused."

Foucin's right hand slumped onto the armrest, both men seemingly chilled into silence by the organismic reality. It was Remy who, by taking up a fatal repercussion mooted during the ride to and in the driveway of the Al-Nigma, dispelled it.

"So, M. Belmazoir," he paused, "the middle, forged the wrong connection, deducing—what were your words from five hours ago?—he was 'the instrument' [that effected] his father's death.' But despite the rather abrupt ending of your ten months of postured friendship, how can you be so positive he linked you with this lethal vengeance?"

After a self-contemning snort, Foucin said, "He tracked me down as I had his parent. His inheritance, passed on by the French after his mother's death, was exhausted on spirits and profligacy within two years. By the next, his family was in the flat under Mme. Bourceli's, his wife and, in time, Mlle. Houda reduced to charring.

"In the fourth, one March afternoon while I was ambling through the Casbah, a clavicular tap waylaid me, by then grown too recognizable. Pivoting, I was confronted by M. Ahmed.

"Was it something I said?" His eyes strained with anguish.

"I answered, truthfully, 'No,' subjoining it with an adamant shake of my head. He studied my face for a moment; then, wheeling slowly, he trudged away. Thirteen days later, I saw him again, as a lifeless form being held down by the shielding weight of his daughter, with the waves slashing about."

Foucin pushed to an erect position, *his past finally bared*, Remy annotated. An arm was tendered by one who knew the difficulty a foreigner has in ascending from the "Arab squat," as Remy had purposely evinced a dozen or so times earlier that night.

With his guest's right hand still clenching his left shoulder, Foucin spoke. "It's crept into

your mind that”—his labored smile was kindly—“I’m the murderer.”

His grip loosened, Remy averted his eyes. “Yes, I affirm my guilt, speculating *sub specie aeternitatis* it might be a moral murder and questioning myself rhetorically, even previous to gleaning the snippets of French conversation in this salon tonight, ‘Who in all Algeria is more of a moralist than Commissioner Tawfek Foucin?’”

“You inflate my sense of morality in the comparable manner you do my ‘status across the status quo.’ Yes, sub rosa I monitored the boy.

“Mlle. Belmazoir had established that condition: At the memorial reception, after I’d delivered my condolences, this girl of fifteen thanked me for gracing her father’s obsequies and for my assistance in retrieving the body. I was midway into my pivot when she halted me. ‘Monsieur, my family’s not ungrateful, yet will not be in need of your service again.’

“Consequently, at a distance, I ascertained last July that M. Mohammed had recently ‘scored’ an American ‘friend’: A minor embassy official, for I delved no deeper than his résumé. My impulse was to intervene, not through an encounter with the stripling, of course.

“However, I recollected what she—and you must remember what I told you earlier, her December 1973 half-asleep constation as I was putting him to bed, ‘You’re not our father’—had, in essence, implied, ‘You’ve done enough for our family.’

“The M. Ballard affiliation appeared not all that bad for M. Mohammed: no tourist spats, a downswing in his bouts of dipsomania, a little extra money for his mother and sister. ‘Let it be. She’s right.’ To substantiate how lofty my remove, I wasn’t abreast of Rue Toumi, Bendari’s notebook having no reference to it.”

Remy shook his head, bent on disputing the notion that Foucin could not know. “Who in Algiers does not believe you are ‘omniscient’?”—his transliteration of Karami’s “all-nosy”—“Out of range, you espied not merely him, but also her, scooting into the Renault. M. Ghazi’s story, I warrant, didn’t astound you so greatly as it did me.”

Foucin let Remy wax on till he was left speechless. “It’s so, it’s not so, and would that it were so! I was in France by and large, going about ‘my Father[land]’s business,’ on the scent of the sixth devil: December, January, through the middle of February.”

Because Foucin’s chin had sunk to his chest, Remy had to strain to catch his climactic words of shriving: “Yes, had it been as you ventured, I would have executed him . . . too.”

It was not this hypothetical confession that stayed with Remy during their return drive to the Al-Nigma. Rather his own “haughty” rejoinder to Foucin, an outburst which had prompted an immediate and sincere apology: “Given what you know she did, still you don’t blame her, so terrified of a ‘meting-for-meting’ confrontation. This alibi of yours, monsieur, reeks of the innocence of a man who’s already accepted his guilt!”

2

This exchange, Remy appreciated, would have surprised any overhearer who had glimpsed the proud warmth with which he had been welcomed by Foucin and his family.

The overture was made in the hotel’s driveway, following their “interminable, but enlightening” fifty-five-minute, rush-hour ride from Bendari’s. “When I let slip at Arris, my

Aunt Fatimah was horrified that I hadn't invited you to a Ramadan feast. 'Abandoning him,' clamored she, 'a guest in our country, to hotel fare for nine days!' Aunt Thana, always ready to conspire in an assault against me, stiffened her grimace."

A grateful Remy accepted, requesting time only for a shower and a *vêtements de rechange*. During the fifteen-minute drive to Kouba, they put aside the Belmazoir history, chatting instead about the coastal scenery, for neither wished to disrespect the repast.

Not at "nouveau 'raunch' Beaulieu," Remy punned to himself, did the journey end, but in the parking lot of a five-story pale-white apartment building housing policemen's families, six kilometers south of the Al-Nigma. As soon as Foucin exited his car, the twenty or so children playing in the street scampered over to him, who knelt to take their kisses.

The flat that Remy was guided to—on the first floor, not on one of the cooler and more scenic upper levels—tallied with Foucin's own description before the doorway: "humble." The reception within, however, overwhelmed him.

Leaping into Foucin's arms, the child slightly pecked at her father's cheek in her eagerness to launch from his arms and plant a solid kiss on the stranger's chin. "Yamina, three," Foucin informed him. When she resisted being detached, he ceded her, who clutched to Remy, and he to her, while they covered the five paces from the hall to a sitting room.

As the other children were brought in, Yamina clung the tighter, not only to assert her place of honor but also to determine whether it was properly envied. Advancing to greet him, the two girls and their younger brother—seven, nine, and six, Foucin again specified in giving their names—were forced to nudge aside her face to hit upon a spot.

The older boy, ten, hesitated: When Remy detected his arm cautiously extending itself, he maneuvered to receive the *poignée de main*. "Boualem," his father softly amended, "embrace our guest." The five Muslim lip touches, beginning and closing with Remy's right cheek, were thereupon bestowed. At the point her brother was pulling back, Yamina thrust a noisy smack on his tense mouth, occasioning everyone to laugh.

Three minutes later, Foucin's wife, unveiled and unabashedly wiping her hands on an apron, came in. On her approach he rose, as did the others, steadying his affected wobble.

"Monsieur, you distinguish us. Here, let me assume yon bonded bundle." As they shook hands, she grasped the squirming child, whose whines she hushed with the coax, "Mama needs you in the kitchen—and all of you," her eyes surveying the others.

She was a woman "tall in stature," he observed, "stately" in her retreat, though one child sprawled across her chest and four constituted a reluctant train. "'Lovely in her bones,'" her features were delicately shaped, save for her conspicuous zygomata. The tegumentary coarseness of her palm, grasped momentarily, caused Remy to suspect the residence had no domestics.

In her late thirties, she looked younger. From the Aurès—"A foregone!"—and given the age of Boualem, Foucin apparently had delayed marrying. In anticipation, however, just prior to embarking on his "sacred mission, indubitably the twenty-one-year-old parvenu" had journeyed to his mountain province to court her, who was entreated to wait.

What had Foucin said about Ahmed Belmazoir during the earlier c. 5:20 traffic jam on Boubela Avenue? To himself Remy recited the answer piecemeal: Through "a new, more impassioned 'mysterious plus' . . . the guilt . . . transferred to me . . . bonding me to them."

Yes, their marriage would have had to be in '78, after Belmazoir's suicide: You compensate for destroying one man's family by starting your own.

His having retired, Foucin was silent, "deeming it abhorrent to obtrude upon my reflections of my own in Antwerp, with whom he imagines me absorbed. 'Home is hardest for a traveler to pack,' he knows, reviving the many days away from his wife and children, tracking down his country's fifth and sixth 'devils.'"

"*Allahu Akbar!*" the 7:24 Maghrib azan sounded, for they were too far out to catch the fast-ending boom of the Algiers cannon. As Foucin was springing to his feet, Boualem and Zitouni reemerged, the former carrying a tray with a silver pot, some miniature tea glasses, a bottle of Saïda, and two saucers of dates. He deposited the salver on the carpet in front of Remy and, a glance having secured permission, poured him a cup.

Foucin leaned forward to retrieve a *sous-tasse*, from which he and his sons each picked a date and having eaten it, repeated "the prayer our . . . their Prophet Mohammed" uttered on breaking the *sawm*: "Lord, In Thy (name) we fasted; with Thy gifts we broke our fast; accept therefore (this our act of worship). Thou art the all-hearing, the all-knowing."

To Remy, Foucin craved, "Please excuse us," and the three, bowing, backed away, "headed for a proximal mosque and their fifteen minutes with God."

By himself, he mused, the wonder growing, "He leaves me, an *étranger*, alone in his house with the 'most prized possession' God vouchsafes to a man."

3

The notebook confiscated by the police had only seven pages with entries: Labeled 16 – 22 Rajab, they corresponded to the twenty-second through the twenty-eighth of February. Among those of the twenty-third was the message about the grove, and included in the next day's items, reconfirmation, "Mo-Mo, message delivered."

No records of antecedent phone calls were extant because, Vellacott reported, Belghiche scrapped pages once *paid* had been marked by each inscription.

"Tick me off," back from the embassy, Remy had mulled over the ostensible replication: "Had not Mohammed himself requested a pen to scribble his *cleared*?"

He conjured up an evening when he, five, walked in while his father was hunched over two candlelit account books. Seemingly disregarding his curious peeps, his father continued his methodical transcription from the one kept near the bulky cash register, in which was documented what a customer had purchased on credit, to a separate book.

"Does that mean they have to pay twice?" wide-eyed he inquired. His chuckling father motioned for him to climb into his lap.

"Always Omar"—since no one foresaw that in twelve years he would qualify as a "token Muslim" at the University of Algiers—"maintain a second ledger. Never be too busy for that. The original's for the customers' notice. The duplicate's for your security."

Around midnight, in bed Remy made two decisions: Revisit Bendari's, most pressing given the "Tick me off!" enigma, and delay his scheduled trip to Berrouaghia. The latter would squeeze the former, and an excuse was at hand: Vellacott's expected reply superseded "standing up" Mohammed, to employ the youth's lagomorphic French colloquialism.

The fax from Brussels was brought to Remy's suite during his late breakfast. Thereafter, he readied his speech to Belghiche and even had an hour to focus on another "baffler."

Gathering Leila's notes and hotel stationery to scribble on, he began to grapple with *when* Ballard would have had the chance to use the FLIRs. On February fourteenth, the afternoon he signed them out, she picked him up at the embassy at five. The evening they spent together, and he slept over. No nocturnal hours there for the night goggles.

As for the fifteenth, at seven he met Houda, gave her the key to the Toumi, and joined her there for their assignation, probably slated to span 7:45 to 8:15. He was supposed to be at Leila's at 9:30, but she expected him "punctually" at nine, where he was to (and ultimately did) spend a second night running. Because they were unscripted, set aside must be Mohammed's intrusion and all of its unintended consequences.

"Scant stint" for some furtive embassy assignment, Remy concluded, since Ballard returned the FLIRs to Quartermasters at nine the following morning. In the absence of an opportune moment, why check them out? "For someone else," which he promptly corrected to "for two others," the number requisitioned.

Nonplussed, he doodled on a sheet of the stationary, "as if it were M. Ballard's calendar," until two, the time he was to leave for Bendari's.

"Monsieur, my coffee, which you do not drink, must be to your taste. You circle back *not* to partake of another." Fouad hurried down his side of the counter to welcome him.

Remy addressed this greeting by initiating yesterday's ritual, "*Café noir*, please." Without a snicker, Fouad dutifully swaggered through the kitchen door and in three minutes was back with the order. The ten placed on the counter was supplanted by eight one-dinar notes. "Monsieur, I'd be extremely interested in seeing what, if any, messages M. Mohammed received in the second week of our February."

"Sorry, a sheet with all *paids* is destroyed. Why retain it? I never let my customers drag past a week, the reason the notebook Deputy Inspector Karami seized had only seven pages."

Lifting the demitasse, Remy seemed resolved on taking a sip. Instead anticlimactically he lowered it to the saucer. "Yesterday, I believe you stated that after marking his own message *paid*, M. Mohammed, instructed you, 'Tick me off.' . . . 'Tick me off' where?"

A more extensive pause ensued. "M. Fouad, could there conceivably be another ledger? Does not a second account book exist?"

As a dazed Belghiche retreated a step, Remy manipulated the dark-blue one-hundred-dinar bill onto the *comptoir*. "A book your customers couldn't access—for precisely like M. Mohammed, any client could inscribe *cleared* by his dues even though he had not. A twin journal with which your patrons, but not the police, would be acquainted, one to foil any arguments about whether they'd squared up.

"Wasn't it to that ledger M. 'Mo-Mo' was referring when he directed, 'Tick me off'?"

In the small kitchen Fouad nodded at a stool behind a dinette table where Remy was to sit. He shambled over to a cabinet and from a drawer dug out a spiral tablet. "Since it's in Arabic, you'll need my help." Espying Remy's hand bound for his wallet, he tapped the shirt pocket with the 108 dinars. "No, you've recompensed me enough.

Electing to stand, he centered the ledger, labeled 1409, so that it faced Remy. "The

second week of February. Of course, you're prepared to stipulate the Islamic date."

"The second of Rajab, please."

"Nothing, I'm sure, there." Fouad thumbed to the page. "A Wednesday, the day everyone knew Mo-Mo traveled to and slept over at the Plo camp." His fingers trailed down the page. "Yes, barren." Scattered over the subsequent four pages were nine with a "Mo-Mo" preface. "Drug messages," after translating each, Belghiche amplified. "He didn't get that many calls from the American."

He flipped the page to 7 Rajab, the thirteenth of February, the first of the two Mondays consolidated by Belmazoir during the second prison interview. At the next meeting when Remy had pointed out the discrepancy, the youth claimed Ballard "stood him up" on both.

Having translated the only one beginning with Mo-Mo, the barkeep inferred, "Most likely hashish-related too: 'Wednesday. Northeast Marengo gate. Exactly 7:30.'"

The adverb preceding the time intrigued Remy. "'Exactly'?" He arched his eyebrows.

Fouad pinched inward his face. "You're right. No Arab would adopt that specificity with another Arab." He moved his lips as he reread the item several times. Abruptly leafing one page ahead, after a moment, he signaled a middle one: "Mo-Mo, message relayed."

He flicked back to the previous sheet. "Yes, from the American. Now I remember. It similarly netted me two unexpected tips. Stopping by at noon, Mo-Mo made a beeline for the phone. Suddenly he sang out, 'Toss me a pen, M. Fouad. I'll mark this lovely off.'

"Strolling over, he passed it to me along with a one-dinar note. As I offered the fifty-centime change, his hand brushed it aside. 'For you. Tick me off. And kindly notify him when he rings back, I'll show.' He slapped a five on the counter. 'Quittance in advance.' Then some babble so strange as to be nonsensical: 'A high-heeled streetwalker!' And his voice slid into a risible spasm. '*Wallahee! Inshallah!* I'm going to reap what I'll sow!'"

Visibly aghast at what he had blurted out, Belghiche watched in silence as Remy turned to the next sheet. "The ninth of your Rajab, a Wednesday, anything noted or recollected?"

Squeezing his forehead into two broad "sinuous folds," Belghiche, his calm reasserting itself, contemplated the notebook for half a minute. "At about three, he dropped by. 'No trip'—he always left by noon—to the Plo camp?" I queried, affecting that the message had slipped my mind. 'A day off for a night that's on,' he flected.

"He guzzled from his arrival up to the summons to Maghrib, mixing beer and whiskey, as well as frequently sidling outside, doubtless for some hashish in an alley. Buzzed, floating, and introverted: Didn't want anyone near him, but he thanked me when I sauntered over to tell him, 'Prayer-closing time, young friend.'

"'Gotta goin',' he slurred, tottering as he blandished himself to his feet. "'Xactly," the message was. N' fif'en min'tes lag'rd this'n.'"

4

As Fouad began to scrutinize the entries on the following page, a customer hailed him from the front. Alone, a shaken Remy skimmed mechanically the fourteen pages of the ledger to March the first. "Staring at a loopholeless black hole!" he mocked, the messages of the twenty-third and twenty-fourth now seeming "consequently inconsequential."

With his hand trembling, he crammed two fifties under the tablet and hurried into the service area. Having caught sight of Remy scooting under the counter's down flap, Fouad rushed over despite being waved off. "I'm off to the Belmazoirs. If a nagging worry arises," as an afterthought Remy asked, "may I stop by later?"

"Most welcome," the escorting Fouad replied. "Perhaps after Asr, 4:45. I shut prematurely for the prayers."

In the now thronged street, Remy launched his assault on the five-block span, continually demanding of himself, "How could it be? . . . The green goggles." An additional liaison enthralled him. "To the seven o'clock, Ballard's transferal of the key, and to the approximate 7:35 when its recipient unlocked the room, a new number must be factored in: His tryst with Mohammed, 'exactly' at 7:30. The green goggles."

Halted at a curb, Remy flared out, "For God's sake, no!" his first audible words, the French comprehended by and astonishing a man in a cerulean *burnoose* at his right elbow.

Into the accustomed gloom a compliant Houda had slipped. Not needing to grapple, she undressed, got under the sheet, and waited. At, say, 7:45, a jiggling of the knob anteceded Ballard's "*Un instant!*"

She could no more have distinguished that the whiskey stench was exhaled by two, not one, than Mohammed could have been conscious that who was in the bed was not the promised stiletto-heeled *fille de joie*.

Houda, breathless, listened to the opening and closing of the door to the toilet. The light came on, its beam hissing through the crack, but after a minute, was switched off. With the bolt snapped back, she heard Ballard galumphing toward her.

Maybe he endeavored to hide her visage during the inchoate stage of their lovemaking. Delay putting on the FLIRs had possibly been insinuated to Mohammed. "And could one blame him, as smooth an actor as his grandfather, for simulating ignorance about them?"

At the Belmazoirs' block, "My relentless salvaging, I will not curtail," Remy averred: Since Mohammed was still "plastered and potted," the apprehension was staved off, another titillation of Ballard's scenario.

Inevitably his eyes adjusted to the green phosphor, bringing the carnality into focus, and "Did the youth cry out in pain, knowing he was looking on the nakedness of his sister—'a sin a man cannot forget or God ever forgive'—and did she, recognizing that voice, return his cry, more fraught with agony?"

Inside the building, speeding down the hall, Remy weighed the "brief of argument" he would lord over Houda: "What transpired that night between you, your brother, and the devil Ballard—true, a frightened one as his doodles intimate—I've determined. Yes, he should have killed him then, but didn't. Most certainly in the grove, yet once more no. You veiled your face from Mohammed in the Toumi. Shield it not from me! *I will save him.*"

At his first tread onto the dirt path, he observed that the door to the shed was ajar. "Mlle. Belmazoir, let me speak with you!" Remy entreated from the center of the courtyard.

An obscure figure mugged to the entrance where, unruffled, she obliquely addressed his supplication. "Please excuse me, M. Lazar: My mother's very sick."

From behind the sheet a drawn-out, guttural cough was succeeded by a panicked bewailing, "Houda, where's my Houda? You? Who are you? Houda!" On a further barrage

of hacking, slowly, “without rudeness,” the plank-and-batten door she brought to.

As he stepped across the rear threshold, with a grating the shutters above swung open and Mme. Bourceli blared, “Cannot you keep her quiet? More cacophonous than our *alim*’s preaching, she rasps like a gagged Saharan virgin being circumcised. Surely two can stifle her.”

Outside the building, he pondered whether he had evolved into *the* fiend, covetous for her to confess to that which Ballard, perhaps out of spite for his sexual impotence, had flaunted before her brother: he was bedding his sister.

The victim of a French *ruse de guerre* thirty years ago, he felt that he had penetrated into the heart of this deviancy and “sympathized” even to the brink of a resolution not to let the artifice destroy their lives, “as Noura’s was and mine”—he retreated slightly—“albeit not devastated, maligned and would be until my reunion with my father.”

His imagination became feverish. They would save themselves by dint of his avail. He would be the intercessor, just as his mother, her death impending, had tried to mediate on his behalf.

“The dying mother,” Remy said aloud. “I’ve given too little thought to her.”

HIV was still narrating: “Since the men of the neighborhood refused to bear her to the grave—its five-foot depth dug earlier—your father, waiting for mid-evening prayers to clear the streets, loaded her ‘cereclothed’ corpse onto his shoulders and began the solitary tramp to the cemetery. He’d not slogged ten paces before one, his features cloaked, emerged and slid under the legs. His identity’s a mystery that we haven’t fathomed yet.

“The body having been lowered and positioned, as each strewed three handfuls of sand over it, they recited a prelude, ‘In the name of Allah, (we bury) according to the way of the Prophet of Allah,’ and then Sura 20:55: ‘From (the earth) did We create you. And into it shall We return you. And from it shall We bring you out once again.’

“With the mound of soil shoveled in and a few marking pebbles sprinkled over it, the stranger, rumored to be Satan, vanished as precipitately as he had materialized. Your father wended his way back to his house, alone in his grief, except for one other.

“An astounding rite occurred the nights subsequent, a lapidation not granted in life. Wheelbarrows of rocks were heaped on the grave by neighbors who prayed, ‘May these squash hellward this sow who farrowed a devil!’

“You wished to know all, so nothing have I omitted.”

Sister could save brother, and brother could save sister, but no one could save the mother. She would, “for a’ that,” die in that miserable shack. “What had Mohammed let slip about her?” stopping at a corner, Remy pestered himself. “Yes, and it must be.”

Whipping into the first store and greedy not to waste time, to the salesman he blundered out in Arabic, “The nearest florist?” Rushing the ten blocks, he charged into the flower shop. “May I help you?” asked the clerk startled by the out-of-breath foreigner.

Remy piled note after note onto the *comptoir*, the attendant’s mouth widening as the stack heightened. Seventeen hundred thirty dinars. He reinserted twenty for a taxi, there being no assurance Bendari’s would produce a ride back to the Al-Nigma.

“This in flowers. For Mme. Salima Belmazoïr. No. 22, Rue Mizon. Delivered now.”

Under the façade of No. 19, at 3:53 Remy watched the floral procession borne inside the building. The conveyors were the first of three teams, each of seven street urchins, whom the manager of the *magasin de fleuriste* had impressed. Spectators clustered, their wonderment growing at the sight of a second cavalcade, a third, and the last at 4:30.

A woman, veiled, yet too slim to be Houda or Mme. Bourceli, appeared at the entryway. Perusing, she eventually settled on him. A regarding nod followed, unreciprocated, for who it was, the cloud-choked sky, the adumbration of the doorway, and the full *niquaab* prevented Remy from discovering.

As he spun round to commence upon his recession to Bendari’s, the gift of flowers, he appreciated, had not been simply for Mohammed’s and Houda’s mother.

5

When the *porte d’entrée* swung open, Remy beheld a man in a charcoal suit clasping Boualem to his chest and another in an olive *djellaba* riding Zitouni on his back. A trailing Foucin, having first plucked his two sons and with a pat directed each toward the kitchen, escorted the arrivals to “M. Christian Lazar, an esteemed colleague from Belgium.”

Forthwith the *sonnette* began to ring and continued to over the ensuing forty minutes. Most stayed the time required to gulp down one tea and three dates, discerning that an extension would deprive someone else of his station.

Despite this courtesy, the walls of the sitting room stayed lined and the floor bunched with men, some not yet in their twenties, others middle-aged, still others old, and, rounding out, the venerable ones with their wooden canes, whom Foucin with much ado marshaled first to Remy and then to a cushioned armrest at the front, all there having risen to importune these elders to accept their place.

The Arabic chatter drowned out a cassette of Algerian music emanating from a side room. Those next to Remy, ever changing, communicated with him in French, and he responded. Nevertheless, his “inner ear” culled from what was said in Arabic by those in his vicinity, their comments wedged in during Foucin’s exits for supplementary platters of dates:

“Only on the first day he lighted here, our President Fool, to effuse Ramadan felicitations to Tawfek! Bendjedid’s ‘stately pleasure-dome’ is humbled by our host’s ‘four naked walls,’ though happy enough he is to skedaddle home to it.”

“Oh, it’s she who eggs him on to live beneath his means: She, who donated her dowry to feed the Aurès poor!”

“No! He’s their luxuriant tender, *ands* expanding his list of needy each month. ‘Your *plus*’s will land you in the *minus* when you are old,’ I signify to him. ‘God will provide’ is his sole rejoinder.”

Well before the call, they started their leave-taking, for Remy grasped that, likewise, none wanted to be the check, keeping Foucin from his *salaat*.

During this second abandoned interim, Remy heard the muffled footsteps “of a woman and two girls, shuttling in and out of the abutting *odit es-sofra* [‘dining room’].” Quite “oddly,” Mohisen’s adamant “No *akl* you *bas* [‘No dinner you only’]” preceded the inclining

of his meditations toward Châteauroux and Marie.

From Isha', eleven returned with Foucin and his sons. With the "Western guest" at the fore, the adults proceeded to the dining room. The display so abruptly halted Remy that those following jostled against each other: the panorama of the feast laid out on red and green plastic tablecloths across the floor.

As Foucin circled with a silver ewer, pouring a trickle of rosewater over each guest's right hand, Remy gazed at the platter of couscous: Its cone of steamed semolina, drenched with a soup of lentils, asparagus, courgettes, carrots, and peas, and lined with nuggets and slices of mutton, transported him to his last Ramadan feast, with his father and mother.

Without any disrespect, he assuaged himself, the journey had been evanescent, for the present fronting him tempted him more than the past.

As he ate with the cutlery provided only to him, the lone discomfort was he could not, without eliciting gapes, plunge his scented thumb, index, and medius into the mount panaché (no Mohisen here as "teacher").

He dared not even topple the *salata* greenery onto the wheat grains, lurking behind puffs of smoke, and had to content himself with imagining the plate being upended and his fingers diving in to mix its cucumbers, tomatoes, bell peppers, parsley, spring onions, coriander, and mint till they peeped out like gems from the orange semolina.

His nails, grown sentient, ached to crack open the origami-like triangle of a *fatayer* ("turnover") to expose its spinach, pine nut, and raisin center, and dip its riven halves into the bowls of tawny *baba ghannouj* (literally, "spoiled old daddy") with its eggplant base, and of hummus, whose chickpea paste, diluted by an excess of lemon juice and olive oil, would have slithered across his knuckles prior to being ushered to his mouth.

The spoon had that sensual rapture.

Subsequently, when the trays of fruit (and sweets, since it was Ramadan) were produced, with knife—by that point grown hateful to him—he deposited four apple slices and a piece of Algeria's own date-stuffed *makroud*, oozing honey, onto his dessert plate.

The meal was ended as begun, with rosewater. This time, after washing up, each guest himself sprinkled it from the sterling ewer over his head and inside his clothes.

Thereafter, they retired to the sitting room where Boualem and Zitouni served mint tea. With trays positioned in reaching distance of the twelve, the father and his sons withdrew to the *odit es-sofra* to dine hastily on the leftovers, for the host had, "as custom dictated," not eaten with his *invités*. (Mme. Foucin and the three girls would partake last.)

Within five minutes of his return, the eleven offered their excuses and departed, leaving, as their protocol entailed, Foucin and his *étranger* to each other's measure.

6

As Remy reentered Bendari's, one neon in the recess of the barren shelves scarcely illuminated the room, its windows still shuttered by Asr just ended. Except for a single client seated close to the front—"Yesterday's *vieillard*?"—prayers had emptied the café.

"Welcome!" boomed a haloed Fouad from midway down the counter.

In his approach, Remy cast a peek at the figure in the dusk, and on apprehending it was

not the graybeard, he sensed a happiness welling up and not solely by virtue of the possibility that the suit of the ancient claimant had been satisfied.

“Monsieur, I apologize for intruding on you again. Two stray constituents ultimately did find their way home.” A broad smile projected Fouad’s enthusiasm to cooperate.

“To the message of the thirteenth, are you positive that M. Mo-Mo did gleefully reply, ‘I’m going to reap what I’ll sow’?”

“That he did, and his preface, which you gentlemanly censured, unknotted his bizarre metaphor: To some hot-panting with this ‘high-heeled streetwalker,’ poetically he alluded.”

While retracing his steps to Bendari’s, Remy had thought back to Mohammed’s professed delight in voyeurism, presumably Ballard’s siren song in coaxing him to don the green goggles. The youth had come expecting to spy on his American “*mon ami*” frolicking with a strumpet before, in turn, during his own role-reversal romp, slavering over her.

“*Shokran!*” exclaimed Remy. “Now for my terminating clou: You’re acquainted with the illustrious commissioner M. Tawfek Foucin.”

Fouad’s eyes widened, his nostrils quivered, and the corners of his mouth drooped, a vortex of signals which among Arabs betokened more than “yes,” a “plussed yes.”

“He’s even graced your establishment, has he not?”

The café manager took a rearward stride, his vacillating silence protracted until an inflectionless voice hailed him from the front. “Tell him, M. Belghiche.”

“Yes, tell me, M. Fouad,” imperfectly echoed Remy. The legs of a magenta-red chair scraped the black-and-white checkerboard linoleum tiles, and unmuted footfalls sought not to disguise their advance to the bar.

“My, uh, it’s, uh, before been so . . . honored.”

“And when he called, by coincidence M. Mo-Mo was never present. His manifest purpose was to use your telephone since to it he always shambled. Sometimes in tarrying for his party to pick up, he thumbed through its notebook, merely to kill time, did he not?”

Fouad did not attempt to dissimulate that his scrutiny traveled beyond Remy’s shoulders to the man, by then poised directly behind his questioner.

“M. Belghiche, inform M. Lazar that on 19 Rajab, the twenty-fifth of February, at nine, an hour I was secure the late-sleeping M. Mo-Mo wouldn’t be hereabouts, I did drop by and that I didn’t feign to place a call. Paralleling earlier occasions, I, my person camouflaged, matter-of-factly scanned the entries in the telephone log. Is that not so?”

“It’s as you say.” Then with his eyes level with Remy’s, Fouad avouched, “It’s as he says. All Algiers knows he cannot lie.”

Remy wheeled, bringing him face-to-face with one not decked in his familiar tan uniform but a stone-hued *burnoose* and steel-gray *gandoura*, which “given their wrinkles had probably been worn in the drive from Arris.”

Through a headscarf partially masking his countenance, Foucin chuckled, “A two-month local salary you spent at the florist. Did you reserve a modicum for transport from Bab el Oued?” Before Remy was able to snap assent, he pursued, “At any rate, no matter. A compliment you’ll accord me if I may taxi you to the Al-Nigma or any other destination.”

“You are most kind.” With his stare on neither Foucin nor Belghiche, but straight ahead into the dimness of the coffeehouse, Remy’s “*douceur*” could have been interpreted as

serving double duty. He suddenly whirled around and, in the mode of Arab men, hooking his right arm into Foucin's left, with a tug led him toward the door.

He had been sent as an insider and received as an outsider, Remy counterbalanced his bind, thrust back onto the ash heap from which he had been plucked: "I, foreign I." Rearranging his knees so he could contemplate the gray Bab el Oued dust accumulated on his shoes, he further struggled to acknowledge it as "native soil."

Once the car was moving, Remy had opened by inquiring about Foucin's trip to Arris. "Pleasant. Nothing discordant, unlike the jangling which greeted us as we entered our apartment: Kamal with the message I should ring M. Belghiche. And your day?"

Remy opted to suppress Medlin's flight and only commented that Karami had been obliging. "Did M. Belghiche apprise you that I've become a 'regular' nondrinker at Bendari's?" he smiled.

A series of turns having conveyed them to Rue Mohammed Tazairt, they were nearing the intersection where it changed into Boulevard Abderahmane Taleb. The obvious had to be validated, Remy knew. "M. Fouad ostended to you the items I focused on?"

"Again you seem to know my country better than I," at length Foucin granted since the gears of the Peugeot had resisted the shift from first to second. "The duplicate ledger. M. Fouad wept, 'I didn't consider it of any importance,' at my 3:25 arrival at Bendari's. By then you apparently had made your decision about the flowers."

At Remy's nod, Foucin continued, "So one teaser's disposed of: It was M. Ballard who finessed brother and sister into an engagement neither divined."

Yes, he wants to talk, Remy concluded, noting that in preference to the speedier coastal boulevard one hundred fifty meters ahead, Foucin turned onto Avenue Mohammed Boubela. Since this route fringed Jardin Marengo, the high school, and Place de Martyrs, they would soon be enveloped by "snail-paced, rush-hour congestion."

Aloud, he countered, "And did not the American outmaneuver you, in wooing their . . . regard? What so compels you to prowl for it, snooping through the brother's messages and frothing the demand that the sister must be saved. That night in my Al-Nigma room, closed enigmatically by your "But little do you know of the Belmazoires and me," you maintained that you do not hate them, Islam forbidding moral genetic inheritance.

"And your persuasion was such that prior to today I've accepted it as part of 'the mysterious *plus*, the understood meaning.' Yet not hating is not the mirror of loving."

Remy paused. "Why do you love them?"

7

Staring into the bumper-to-bumper traffic, Foucin held off his rebuttal until he had reshifted to first. "You, an outsider, propose a new, more impassioned 'mysterious *plus*.' I've disclosed to you that my revenge encompassed exclusively the grandfather, but in getting at him I left those two—her fifteen and him eight—fatherless. This you're not mindful of because had you perceived, you wouldn't have petitioned why I love them.

"To snare wily Belmazoir, my best hope was through a family member. I employed

subterfuge to lure back his only son Ahmed. Stalking him, I discovered this twenty-eight year-old father of two to be as weak as only a cocksure man can be. Five months on, when we became quaffing buddies at Bendari's, I comforted myself that this languid egotism would inhibit him from deducing he'd be the instrument effecting his father's death."

In front of Lycée Emir Abdelkader, the city's largest high school, Foucin eased to an idling stop. "There I misjudged: Notified of his parent's execution, he began to besot himself nightly, endeavoring to black out the correlation he assumably at once hit upon: I'd ended our friendship—a job in Oran—a mere two weeks before this familial calamity.

"Four years he brooded. Then in March '78 he stepped off a cliff, and the guilt over what he was certain he'd done to his father transferred to me"—he hesitated, foraging for *le mot juste*—"bonding me to them."

With a shudder, the car lurched forward. "And would you hear all?" Foucin asked, but did "not stay for an answer."

"I was fifteen, already two years with the ALN, that deliverance morning, 3 July '62, when, to the triumphant *yu-yu-yus* of its women and the lowering of the French tricolor, we strutted into Algiers. For the first day in one-hundred-and-thirty-two years Algeria was free, as was I, to scour for my family's bones."

At a crawl the Peugeot escaped from the gray shadow of the high school, but through the fumes Place Mermoz, the square where Boubela Avenue becomes Rue Bab el Oued, appeared less a "mere fifty meters away" than an unreachable mirage.

A "dull opiate[d]" despondence usurped Foucin's tone of resolute joy. "The search just begun, the shame descended on me: In January, published were the names of the Seven Devils, one of which, with horror I realized, I had conducted to safety, abandoning my dying father and the corpses of my family. As far south as the Algerian Sahara would let me, I fled, seeking redemption in self-torture.

"Still sun and stone can martyr only the body. To harrow the soul, one must reinstate himself in the human 'halo.' At eighteen, I enrolled in our Sûreté Nationale Academy.

"At the graduation ceremony three years later, Chairman Boumediène, Algeria's leader, who had flown in to confer the awards, the first of which God had willed me the recipient, shook my hand and mumbled a few bromides, his attention mainly on the TV camera. I inclined and, with my fleer never wavering, softly accused, 'Your nation and yourself you dishonor while the Seven live.'

"He evinced no alarm and, his gaze riveted on the dead-ahead monitor, mouthed again, 'Your country's proud of you.'

"One month on, spent praying for God to either stir him or strike him down, I was summoned to his palace. He received me in his bedroom, his blue pajamas accentuating all the more his green eyes, reddish hair, and white wisp of his moustache.

"'You'll have whatever men and resources you crave,' without delay he commenced, 'and may call on me at any time. Now will you take your "evil eye" off me, who am your convert and accomplice? I pray to God I'll toast the death of the heptad.' He didn't: Four only, Belmazoir the last, before he was bled dry by Waldenström's macroglobulinemia."

Foucin fell silent for a minute, seemingly intent on the *embouteillage* in the two-hundred-meter leg to Martyrs Square or, Remy wondered, "simply testing" to determine whether the

narrative intrigued his audience.

“And?” his one-syllable prodding came.

“To adopt your simile, a ‘floated bribe’ will raise ‘flooded corpses’ or those about to be corpses. Our inducement was properly legislated, a bounty on each of the seven: Twenty-five thousand Algerian francs dead and double that alive. Publicized in the African community of south France, it snagged three within a year.

“As Noredine Ghozali postcoitally snored, his trusted Toulon bawd whacked him across the neck with a hatchet I’d personally blunted. Between two further unhurried blows, as he crawled about the room, by degrees decapitated, all I could gain about his confederates was a sanguine burble of having descried Morcel at the Monte Carlo casino.

“Four weeks on, at our Marseille consulate there arrived a crated casket. ‘These are the remains of Jamal Zbiri,’ an enclosed letter informed, “who seven months ago died from excruciating complications after a diabetic amputation. Kindly corroborate this bulletin, and if so, let us, his mortified issue, perish from your thoughts, we obsecrate.’”

As they neared Place des Martyrs, through the windshield Remy surveyed the square’s football-field esplanade and the three tiers of stairs, the gray hue of both obscured by the throng. His eyes soared up the face of the monument itself, Algiers’ principal memorial to those million or so who had died in the Revolution.

The geometry of the shrine was “familiarily aberrant,” he had adjudged, on reading about its erection seven years ago: Three inverted palm fronds of white reinforced concrete leaning against each other. These stretched seventy of the cenotaph’s ninety meters before intersecting in the apical lookout tower, the upturned base of the leafy crown. On ground level was the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and the lately fashionable “eternal flame.”

Greenery, including plane trees, sycamores, and not inanimate palms environed, but their cool umbrage the liveliest adolescents had not invaded. At least twenty had scaled the exterior lower swerve of the two visible stone fronds and, clinging to the embossed “midribs” with the fingers and toes of one side of their body, were unfurling their free limbs into coordinated gymnastic poses.

Songs and chanting, music from radios and portable recorders, bellows and squeals, auto horns and the *grrs* of their motors resonated across the square. Yet as packed as it was, hundreds more, awash with joy that they were within two hours of release from the *sawm*, were filing through the gaps between vehicles toward the monument.

Above the din, Remy followed Foucin’s account, by necessity rendered stentoriously, but it was the translation from *Othello* which caused him to turn from the noisy spectacle.

“This immediate harvest inspired me with the prospect the bounty would be sufficient to bag the other five. The third, Abdullah Morcel, compliments of Ghozali’s casino burbling, did come to pass later the same year, albeit the ‘enforc[ing]’ of ‘the censure of [that] hellish villain; / The time, the place, the torture’ incited the press, the outcry motivating DGSE to tighten its cordon around the extant quartet.”

Remy sensed a tragic weariness suffusing Foucin’s voice even before the second citation, this one from the Moor himself: “’Tis true, I admit it. ’Twas ‘wrought’ by one ‘perplex’d in the extreme’: I flew in with the only surviving son of a family that, like so many, had been virtually wiped out by the French, Morcel their betrayer.

“Ten years earlier, paras had hovered over Ferhat’s thirteen-year-old sister. (He, sixteen, with exultant parental approval had joined the ALN in *Wilaya IV*.) They promised if she, who had already sucked their seven penises, would do her father’s—he and his wife were gagged and strapped to chairs—they would leave them to their Ramadan refect—”

A “*Pardon!*” alerted, but did not hinder the propulsion and rebound of Remy’s frame. Having jammed on the brakes, Foucin had stalled the Peugeot, its fender just skirting the legs of four teenagers who had shot in front. As he struggled with the key and ignition, one of them, flinging himself across the hood, pressed his acned face athwart the windshield.

The lips, magnified and contorted, hooted, “Your clunker’s as old as you, old far—” A blow to his chin had truncated the yammer, and summarily two pairs of fists hauled him from his perch. The fourth hustled to the driver’s door. “Please forgive, M. Le Grand! The fast has made him—already a certified idiot—crazy!”

Shoved to the pavement, with misprision the japer was being kicked by his mates. “No!” exclaimed Foucin, his remonstrance halting the beating.

“He speaks the truth, and when does that merit pummeling in Algeria? I’m old. My jalopy’s old.” His merry eyes veered to the one cringed into a ball. “Here, you, give me your youth, and I’ll give you my death’s-door rattletrap.”

Remy recalled the 1989 Mercedes 300SL in Karami’s driveway, and the essentially ribbonless chest of this man who had dedicated his life to redeeming his country’s honor, conscious—and the link, as always, chilled him—he was the last Foucin sought.

As the four scampered toward the square, the motor came to life. In four minutes Foucin completed a left turn, which would usher them to the coastal Boulevard “Che” Guevara.

“The closure, do you wish?” Although he was aware of it, Remy nodded. Exhaling, Foucin resumed the narrative as if there had been no hiatus: “. . . refection. Though severely her father tried to shrink, retract it into his body’s fork, with their servants watching, de rigueur witnesses to spread the word that the French could do to us whatsoe’er they desired she *had*. And promptly they slit hers and her parents’ throats.

“My probing of Morcel over, I was excused by Ferhat, whose lust for justice—a son’s for his parents, a brother’s for his sister—had for a decade swelled. The flaying torture was sustained throughout the night (I slept!) and would have been prolonged, he intimated, were it not necessary for him to scurry back to Constantine and his charges: He was and continues to be a dutiful kindergarten teacher there.

“The photos of Morcel’s cadaver enraged the French. Our Ambassador M. Bedjaoui was summoned by Foreign Minister Debré: ‘Monsieur, this savagery must cease!’ His riposte, ‘With the seventh, M. Pied-Noir,’ reportedly occasioned de Gaulle’s fat proboscis to suction so much air that scant lingered in the executive chamber.”

On Guevara the less stifling traffic, mainly stragglers of the late afternoon commute, enabled Foucin to shift into second and, directly, third. They picked up speed as if in mockery of his own retributive clip.

“Four years of nothing. I approached Chairman Boumediène, begging pardon for my failure. ‘You must have a chiseled “rabbet” up your sleeve, to bond with your last.’ He coerced a self-indulgent, Ozymandiasian ‘sneer’ onto his bad-tempered physiognomy. I advanced my second legislative proposal.

“Expediently ratified by our National Assembly, the law states: Those Algerians and their families, all of the circa ninety thousand collaborators, were pardoned. They or their descendants could repatriate themselves by ‘coming home,’ where a legal mechanism was in place to compensate them for properties forfeited through tergiversation.”

How well had he timed it! admired Remy, who foresaw the story would carry them to the Al-Nigma, for at that point there flashed by on their right the rectangular, just-adverted-to Palais Assemblée Nationale.

“We didn’t have to publicize that decree. French newspapers blazoned it, heralding the long-overdue end of the war’s enmity and politicking for a sizable increase in French aid to Algeria ‘to knot the cords of bilateral harmony.’”

Foucin slowed to turn into the hotel’s driveway. “For me France’s most bounteous ‘aid’ would be if an offspring or so of the four remaining devils chose reversion—and are you not inferring, ‘Ahmed, the son of his own personal demon’?”

8

Taking the key from Remoune, Remy cued himself that his new scheme, concocted in the driveway, would necessitate setting out for the prison at daybreak.

In his room, he fixated on how twice his name, both praenomen and cognomen, had been afflictively invoked, though there were differences: One time, in the Kouba sitting room by Foucin, quoting another; the second, by himself not fifteen minutes ago, with the Peugeot parked in the same spot as roughly five hours earlier.

De novo Foucin had waved the Al-Nigma’s doorman away. “And the remaining two devils?” asked Remy once they had converged upon the hood.

“Three,” Foucin rectified his math. “Khedda, Mahmoudany, and Baby makes three.”

“Omar . . . Omar Naaman,” Remy replied, aggrieved that he had to throw out his own name as if it were a stranger’s.

“‘Baby Omar’: the bond’s seal. Afterward, the search for my family’s bones.” Foucin’s thought seemed rooted for a moment. “The fifth Bachir Khedda, we eliminated four years back. Degenerated into a midlife-crisis sot, he tended to blathering, and from Nice it drifted home to us.

Bendjedid, Boumediène’s successor, pleaded for his death to resemble an accident. We complied, not fooling DGSE, yet no one was ‘PNG-ed (*persona non grata*-ed)’ so they obviously appreciated the façade. Don’t you agree the French are ‘big’ on façades?”

Remy evaded the question by launching into a traipse up the driveway, an off-guard Foucin a pace arear. At his third stride, “Aahm?” he inquired, slowing.

“Ah, Yahia Mahmoudany. You’re aware it was in February. Eighty-one, paralyzed from below his waist and with a mandible mostly eaten away by cancer. The latter wreaked havoc with my attempt to slip the ‘kinch’ around his scrawny neck.

“A trusted orderly at the hospice, piloting an ancient on his weekly push through its deep lush gardens, I crooked in to whisper in Arabic some advice—good, I still insist: ‘If you’re very deathlike, pendent man, perhaps the wheelchair won’t give an em.’

“I had poised it on the incline of a mound, tossed the preplanted rope over the preselected

branch of a foreordained apple tree, and as noted noosed him.

“‘*Awgh, awgh,*’ his larynx gurgled the formal complaint drafted by his brain. I unfastened the locks of the chair. ‘No more of that. The slightest esophageal reflux, to wit, a belch, might unbalance it. The stillness is all.’”

Succeeding two conjoint treads, he elaborated, “Gravity—to be expected, given we have it in surplus—overwhelmed. Mitterrand twisted arms to keep ‘Barbaric Lynching of Octogenarian Invalid’ out of the media, so I was only half-victor: No publicity to panic ‘Baby’ into a misstep.”

The top reached, Remy halted. “After him, you’ll write me in Antwerp, closing the chapter, by no means with tonight’s rich detail, which both diplomatic policy and policing diplomacy forbid, but in an affable code, e.g., ‘The seventh sealed’ or ‘Baby sleeps.’”

He felt a squeeze at the underside of his elbow. “Is why I love them now demystified, assuming ‘love,’ transcending the ‘understand[ing of] all mysteries,’ can ever be? Let the brother do what unknowingly he binds himself to do. Let the sister, the oft sacrificed in our culture, be saved.

“I’ll ensure no harm befalls him in prison, as brief his custody as sympathetic legitimacy tolerates, and—There it is!—brother and sister, God willing, will be reunited.”

He offered his hand to Remy, who hesitated—and wanted Foucin to grasp the significance of the equivocation—before he situated his right in it.

Their grips relinquished, Foucin forged ahead: “Most surely I’ll correspond, perhaps holiday in Antwerp, once my residual duty’s been accomplished. A beautiful city: provincially cosmopolitan, I’ve heard.”

“I anticipate that visit with unqualified delectation, more so than mine with the oft fickle M. Mohammed tomorrow morning: M. Vellacott’s authorized me to moot your terms.”

Sans avertissement, Foucin thrust forth his hand, and they shook a second time. Their hands yet clasping, Remy commented, “The each adjudges the other responsible. It may be both are wrong, in the selfsame vein I was in conjecturing that the murderer could be nothing less than a moralist. Monsieur, I’d be more comfortable with your tender to the brother if I could talk with the sister.”

The germ of a plan had begun to stir in his mind. “I would speak with her.”

Foucin presaged his answer with an unshakable swish of his head. “My colleague, I’m sorry: There I can be of no help.”

The farther-distanced evocation of his name tersely resurfaced, old Belmazoir’s piercing “Omar Naaman!” And under the ivory satin sheet Remy was conscious that he was summoning it up simply to retard the final grappling *affrontement*, his bedtime story of another bedtime story: Foucin’s recountal, embarked upon at around six in the Al-Nigma’s arcing driveway, prior to his invitation to dine at his apartment.

“As I alluded, for five months I stalked and studied M. Ahmed Belmazoir, the returned ‘prodigal son.’ Then, purporting to be a writer from Oran, I leased a small flat in Bab el Oued near his. The four of them were living off some money brought from France, probably a moderate paternal bribe to bond his son to silence. Daily, in seeking his repatriate’s compensation, he groped through the bureaucratic maze I had designed.

“At Bendari’s, even then the quarter’s café, we soon became tippling chums. Yes, I suspended that Islamic vow. I didn’t have to unduly champion the amity since few would drink with him, the son of a great traitor, unless he was treating.

“By the end of the third month, he was accompanying me to my walk-up for late-night beers. He boskily gloried, ‘At last I have—Praise God for sending you!—a *‘mon ami!’* I trusted that in that privacy he’d spill a heedless drop during his slurred rambblings.

“A further five months, nothing: no inkling that he’d been in France or outside Algeria. That which I strove for was achieved through none of my machinations and from a source not envisioned. One night, December eighth—the date of your calendar, not mine, is how I always remember it—around twelve, he invited me to his apartment, a first.

“M. Ahmed went to rouse his wife, and I beheld his daughter, at that time ten, trailing her mother into the kitchen, to brew the *shai* and prepare a tray of sweets.

“He rejoined me, cradling a sleepy lad of three. ‘Mohammed, kiss Uncle Mabrouk,’ instructed the father. His lips, compliant, brushed mine, ahead of squiggling to be free. While M. Ahmed and I talked, he set to rolling a toy car across the rug.

“‘What’s keeping my women?’ Springing up, my host rushed out, leaving me alone with the child. He accelerated the cobalt-blue racer through the legs of a table, visibly delighted I was watching.

“‘Such speed and power!’ I marveled.

“‘No,’ and he shoved it so hard that it banged against my shoe. Several times it flipped over, each somersault elevating to a higher pitch his giggling. ‘My papaw g’t me choo-choo long’n this room. He rich!’

“‘And may I see the choo-choo?’

“‘S at Papaw’s house.’

“‘Here in Algiers? No problem: Your father and I’ll g’ get it for you.’

“He had retrieved the Porsche 911S and was rubbing its shiny hood against his mouth. ‘You go far, far! ’S in’—he drew up, intent on correctly enunciating it—‘Blumarn.’

“‘Blumarn? Where’s that? South, east, north, west Algeria?’ The all-embracing question both pleased and enticed him, for he cast aside the toy and clambered into my lap. ‘But you are such a beautiful boy that tomorrow I’ll track it down, fetch you your choo-choo.’ My lips touched his brow.

“His countenance expanded. ‘You go France for me!’

“‘My lovely child,’ I kissed him on his left cheek, ‘to get your choo-choo, I’ll take an auto, a boat, and another choo-choo. Yet this must be our secret.’”

Bmph! Bmmp! Bmmmp! The aggressive beeping erupted from an Alpine-white BMW M3, which had pulled behind the Peugeot despite Foucin’s being so near the curb “even a truck could have maneuvered around.”

With a leap, the afternoon *portier* slammed his fist against the roof of the sedan. Foucin bolted out, and through the rearview mirror Remy witnessed him start into an apology. The driver must have recognized him since, crouching as he sidled out, he initiated a series of tipsy bows.

Come back, and without speaking, Foucin moved his Peugeot farther down the incline. “My dragging tale,” he grinned, “has inconvenienced more than you.”

“No!” countered Remy.

“Ah well, its release time impends. On M. Ahmed’s reappearance, he beamed when he beheld his son nestled in my arms, for the child, once hearkening to a magical promise, had been enthralled into a dream-fulfilling slumber. ‘Mohammed,’ he breathed into the left ear of the dozing tot, ‘you have found a second father.’

“He slept there until, the third tea finished and the wife and daughter long since retired, I insisted I must go. Permitted to bear him to the children’s room, as I eased him under the spread, from the opposite side, she, half-awake, raised herself.

“‘Mohammed,’ she called out. The light slanting through the ajar doorway revealed the stranger tucking in her brother. ‘Who are you?’ she demanded, alertly for one who, for the second time that night, had been awakened. ‘You’re not our father.’ When I made no reply, her body—with the similar slow misgiving inexorably manifested just over four years on, as ‘cliff hanger’—fell back onto her pillow.”

With Foucin’s past rounded out, Remy commenced to flesh out his own plot: “I have ferreted out his weakness: It is she, no matter how ‘too much’ he ‘doth protest’ his equal love for the boy. And I must use it,” he affirmed. “Mme. Ballard”—for he was too embarrassed to employ “Leila” while contriving his subterfuge—“may be of some avail there. Succeeding the prison foray, I must ‘look her up,’ ‘feel her out.’”

His prayers for family, living and dead, followed. Then influenced by the faint and undeveloped image of a dangling Houda, Remy drowsily altered what he had previously urged himself to say, but, of course, could not:

“So he climbed down into my lap and up into yours.”

Notes and Commentary: Chapter 14: “I, Foreign I”

April 17, 1989 (very late Monday) to April 18 (very late Tuesday)

p. 219: SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TITLE OF CHAPTER 14: The title is a serious pun on the expression an “eye for an eye.” Remy has just thought how “he had been sent as an insider [that is, a native Algerian by the French] and received as an outsider [a Belgian investigator by Algerians]” (231).

Willingly he had involved himself in the political struggle by Algeria for independence, an ordeal which had ultimately caused him (the “I”) to destroy his first or Algerian family.

Now, a second political embroilment, foisted on him by the French, has put him in a “bind” (231) which threatens him (the “foreign I”) and his second or French family, although he recognizes that the references may be reversed with his early life in Algeria being viewed as “foreign” and his later life with Marie as being his true life.

The word “foreign” is used four times in the chapter. On p. 231, “I, Foreign I,” as discussed. Earlier this duality is symbolized in a simple gesture: Foucin helps Remy to arise from the low cushion sofa, knowing “the difficulty a foreigner has in ascending from the ‘Arab squat’” (220), the words symbolic of Remy’s dual life and also of his artificiality since he, as a perceived foreigner, must pretend that this standing up poses a problem.

Furthermore, Remy is “the out-of-breath foreigner” of p. 227. The last use of “foreign” in the chapter is the mention of the overweening French presence in Algeria even after independence: French “Foreign Minister Debré” (234).

“Revenge”—the essence of the judgment, “an eye for an eye,” which means that someone who has injured another receives the same injury in compensation—is mentioned only once. Foucin says that his “revenge encompassed exclusively the grandfather” (231).

“An eye for an eye” justice is akin to the Latin *lex talionis* (“the law of retaliation”), a term used by Remy on 7.114. Places in the Bible where the phrase occurs are Lev. 24.19-21; Ex. 21:22-25; Deut. 19:16-21; and Matt. 5:38-29, where Jesus transforms “an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth” into “turning one’s cheek.”

The Qur’an uses the wording “eye for an eye” only once (5:45), labeling it as a Jewish concept. However, many Muslim countries adhere to this form of retributive punishment.

The concept is also similar to “tit for tat” punishment, a phrase which occurs three times in the novel, once in a trivial situation (12.19) and twice in serious incidents (2.30 and 6.88).

The word “eyes” occurs nine times in the chapter, four of them significant in character or thematic development: Foucin says that Ahmed Belmazoir’s “eyes

strained with anguish” at the thought he might have been responsible for his father’s death (220).

Remy imagined that in the Toumi room Mohammed Belmazoir inevitably adjusted “his eyes . . . to the green phosphor” and saw his sister in bed with Ballard (226).

As Remy and Foucin drive close to Martyrs Square, Remy’s “eyes soared up the face of the monument” since it is an ironic symbol of his treason.

Finally President Boumediène’s “eyes” are described as green, his hair are red, and his mustache white, the three symbolic colors of the Algerian flag.

A similar play upon the phrase, “eye for an eye,” will be used on 16.265: “This ‘Ai-ai-ai!’ for an ‘Ai-ai-ai!’ wearies.”

“Ai” is an interjection expressing “sorrow, pain, pity, etc.”

pp. 219-38: CHRONOLOGY OF CHAPTER 14: Chronological inversion is an important narrative technique of my novel. A chapter or a section of a chapter will open by revealing an episode’s climax (although the reader does not initially recognize it as such) and will proceed by portraying what led up to the opening, whose relevance then becomes apparent.

Narrative inversion was a favorite technique of the novelist Henry James since it approximates how the mind works: Insight is often missed during an occurrence. The events of chap. 14 are presented in a particularly inverted and jumbled fashion. For instance, it opens with the puzzling, “So he climbed from my lap into yours” (219).

Not until the next to last page of the chapter (237) will it be revealed who climbed and whose lap was climbed into, a disclosure which leads to the last sentence of the chapter, “So he climbed down into my lap and up into yours” (238).

This statement ties together the events of the chapter and further bonds the novel’s protagonist Remy and his principal antagonist Foucin.

The twining, coiling, and disjointed chronology of this chapter spans from the period after Remy left the embassy (11:02 p.m., Monday), to his bedtime (11:46 p.m., Tuesday).

Below are listed the seven major Tuesday sequences:

(1) 1:00 – 1:42 p.m.: In his hotel room, by studying Leila’s notes, Remy makes a discovery about Ballard and the FLIRs (section 3).

(2) 2:30 – 3:00 p.m.: A comment by Leroy the night before and an incident from his childhood compel Remy to revisit Bendari’s. There with Fouad’s help, Remy finds out how Mohammed learned about Houda’s affair with Ballard (sections 3 and 4).

(3) 3:00 – 4:31 p.m.: Remy walks to the Belmazoir shack to tell Houda of his discovery, but she says her mother is worse and she cannot speak with him. Remy orders flowers (section 4).

(4) 4:50 – 6:10 p.m.: Foucin tracks down Remy, and they embark on a long drive in which Remy recognizes his duality (“I, foreign I”). Foucin explains how he brought to justice the first four Great Traitors. He goes into details about the fourth, old Belmazoir, and in the process discusses his son Ahmed Belmazoir

and his grandchildren Houda and Mohammed. (sections 1, 6, and 7).

(5) 6:10 – 10:50: In the Al-Nigma driveway, Foucin delves further into his relationship with Ahmed Belmazoir and his children Houda and Mohammed; Remy accepts an invitation from Foucin, meets his family and neighbors, and partakes of a Ramadan feast with them. Afterward he and Foucin speak more about the Belmazoirs, a “moral murder,” and Remy’s promise to take Foucin’s plea bargaining to Mohammed the next day (sections 1, 2, 5, 7, and 8).

(6) 10:50 – 11:15 p.m.: Foucin drives Remy back to the Al-Nigma. In its driveway they talk, with Foucin explaining how he “executed” the fifth and sixth traitors and what he would do after he captured the seventh (section 8).

(7) 11:15 – 11:46 p.m.: Back in his hotel room, Remy recalls the two times that night his Algerian name (Omar Naaman) came up. He speaks of a new plan which he believes will allow him to visit his father, and before he goes to sleep, he recalls the unexpected means which allowed Foucin to locate old Belmazoir. (section 8).

pp. 219-21: SECTION 1

p. 219: “So he climbed”: Section one jumps almost twenty-four hours, from 11:02 Monday night when Remy leaves Leroy’s residence to 10:20 Tuesday night when Remy is at Foucin’s apartment. Thus much of the chapter will be a flashback.

p. 219: “So he climbed from my lap into yours”: This bewildering statement will be provided a meaningful context on p. 237, which will in turn breed a rewording of it in the last sentence of this chapter (238).

However, the image of someone climbing into a lap is reminiscent of the 1972 incident described on 2.32 where Remy met with his fellow traitor Belmazoir and his son Ahmed.

The latter had brought along his two-year-old son Mohammed: “Perched atop the headrest, with a bound the *enfant* [Mohammed] thumped into Remy’s lap.”

p. 219: “for over four hours Remy had felt a need to confide”: Remy had heard about the incident of someone jumping into another’s lap over four hours ago. Later events in the chapter will establish this time as 6:04, four hours and sixteen minutes from the 10:20 time established in the first note of this section.

p. 219: “The last group of dinner guests . . . Foucin rejoined him . . . the Kouba apartment”: The place is established, the sitting room of Foucin’s apartment in Kouba. There has been a dinner feast since the other invitees beside Remy have just left.

p. 219: *hoodit queaad*: “sitting room,” as defined in the text, or what is sometimes termed “living room.”

Along its walls are a series of floor, or low-set, sofas. The Arabian “low sofa”

consists of a rectangular mattress (often called a “bolster”), a similarly-shaped long flat cushion for back support, and compacted cubical armrests.

p. 219: Kouba: A western suburb of Algiers. Twice earlier (7.113 and 13.203) the text referred to Foucin’s apartment in Kouba.

The note to 7.113, N7:31, describes the apartment building in Kouba on which I modeled Foucin’s, which is also mentioned on p. 222 below.

p. 219: “low sofa”: Instead of using legged or raised sofas in their sitting rooms, most Algerians have mattresses, with covers richly colored and designed, around a wall or even all the walls of the room.

My North African friends always termed them in English as “low sofas.”

The arms of a Western-style sofa are replaced by moveable armrests or hard cushions. The low sofa’s back consists of soft pillows.

p. 219: “Blumarn . . . Pleumartin”: Pleumartin is a village in the Poitou-Charentes region in midwestern France. Its population at the time of this episode of the novel (1974) was around 1,500.

p. 219: “Foucin’s earlier narration in the Al-Nigma driveway”: Foucin’s 6:04 p.m. narrative about someone climbing into someone else’s lap occurred in the driveway of the Al-Nigma.

p. 219: “an understandable three-year-old’s mispronunciation”: In Arabic there is no *p* (or voiceless bilabial plosive) phoneme. Thus foreign words with *p* are typically pronounced using *b* (the voiced bilabial plosive).

Here the first syllable of the town (“Pleu-”) became “Blu-” as pronounced by the three-year-old child.

In the back of my mind was that “Blumarn” is similar in sound to a “Blue man” from the Touarég Berber tribe in Saharan Algeria.

See the 9.138 note, N9:10, on the indigo garments which the men of this tribe traditionally wear. These often leave a blue stain on their skin.

p. 219: “After his son’s defection, Belmazoir [one of the Seven Great Traitors] moved”: The next sentence states that Belmazoir’s son was named Ahmed.

This familial division was described by Remy, who involved himself in it, on 2.31-32.

p. 219: “I maintained the amiable deception with M. Ahmed a further six weeks”: Foucin says that deceptively he became friends with Ahmed, but broke the friendship off six weeks after he learned about “Blumarn.”

The time frame of Foucin’s relationship with Ahmed Belmazoir will be revealed on p. 220. Further details about this period will be provided on 231-32 and 235-238.

p. 219: De Villiers: The alias which old Belmazoir was given by the French intelligence

agency at that time, *Service de Documentation Extérieure et de Contre-Espionnage* (SDECE), the precursor of DGSE.

Just as it settled Omar as Remy in Le Puy, France, so Pleumartin, France, was where the agency established Belmazoir.

The adopted family name was partially given by the child in his grandfather's Audi when he protested in Arabic that he was not "Pierre de Vil—" (2.32).

- p. 219: "in October '72": The time that Ahmed Belmazoir deserted his father Mohammed and his unnamed mother in Pleumartin and returned with his wife Salima and his children Houda and Mohammed (only the last has his French name given, "Pierre" on 2.32) to Algiers.
- p. 219: Eurohaul: Based on Europcar, France's largest automobile and truck rental company. It has offices throughout western France. I appropriated the emblems on the side of its rental moving vans: yellow square and green rectangle.
- p. 219: shingle: "to lay [something] so as to overlap" (*Webster's Third*).
- p. 219: Châtelleraut: A city of c. 40,000 in 1974 in the Poitou-Charentes region of midwestern France.
- p. 219: "scribbling my Berber cognomen": On 2.32, Remy said that newspaper accounts of the tortured corpse of old Belmazoir stated that "the blurred '*La Heure*' [was] carved into his chest." They speculated that this meant "the hour" (in French, "*la heure*") of reckoning for the fourth traitor. Remy must have believed the account for on 4.61, he imagines Foucin "carving '*La Heure*'" into Belmazoir's chest. On 6.199, when Foucin reveals that his real name is Matoub Lakhtour, Remy concludes it was this Berber surname that had been the word engraved across the chest of the traitor. Here, Foucin reveals that he scribbled his name on the van receipt and pinned it to Belmazoir's chest, "nor carving it into his flesh, as the 'rags' [newspapers] would have it."
- p. 219: Fougères: A town of approximately 25,000 (in 1974) in Brittany in northwestern France.
- p. 219: "once the boundary coordinates . . . are in place": The geographic coordinates of Fougères are 48.35°, -1.20°. Broadening these coordinates to 48.1° to 48.6° and -1.10 to -1.30 and researching a husband and his wife, both in their late forties, who moved into the area surrounding Fougères in 1972, allowed his agents to locate old Belmazoir.
- p. 219: Louvigné-du-Désert: A village of around 4,300 in 1972, it is in the Fougères-Vitré district of Brittany in northwestern France.

Its coordinates are 48.48° and -1.12°.

I chose the name of this village because in French *désert* is the noun not only for “the act of desertion” and “a deserter,” both indicative of the seven traitors, but also it denotes a dry, barren region, such as the Sahara, into which Foucin will say later in this chapter he had fled (p. 232).

- p. 219: “compliments of French intelligence”: As noted above, at this time (1972), the French intelligence agency was SDECE, *Service de Documentation Extérieure et de Contre-Espionnage*.

Founded in 1947, its director reported to the French Prime Minister until 1965, at which time the agency was transferred to the Ministry of Defense.

In 1982, its name was changed to DGSE.

In real life, its *directeur* from 1970 to 1981 was Alexandre de Marenches, who in no way resembles my SDECE director mentioned here.

- p. 219: CNI: The *carte nationale d'identité* was the national identity card of France from 1955 to 1988. At that time a laminated version of it was introduced and renamed the *carte nationale d'identité sécurisée*.

It contained a national identification number, a photograph, and basic information (name, address, and year of birth)

p. 220: *faux nom*: In French “alias.”

p. 220: Malafont: This surname appears, though infrequently, in western and northwestern France. It is derived from combining *mal* (evil) with *font* (the present tense, third person plural of “make” or “do”; a “basin used in baptism”; “a fountain”, or the “source or origin” of something or someone; in printing, “the size and style of type”).

Thus the name is “facetiously prescient,” with the *mal* unambiguously denoting “evil,” but *font* carrying numerous implications: old Belmazoir was “born” evil or he is the “source” of evil or his new name, as typed on his CNI, is indicative of the evil fate that SDECE in crafting his alias is sure awaits him.

p. 220: “Flown in to discharge our inquisition”: Foucin always handles this interrogation, hoping from the traitor about to be killed to gather some information which will lead him to the ones still not tracked down.

In disguise Foucin flew into France on Feb. 5, 1974, to interrogate and execute old Belmazoir. This is around fifteen months after Ahmed Belmazoir and his family left Pleumartin (Nov. 3, 1972) and several days later flew to Algiers (Nov. 8).

Old Belmazoir and his wife moved from Pleumartin to Louvigné-du-Désert (over a three-day period, Nov. 5 – 7, 1972).

p. 220: “nor Lockean”: In *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, the first paragraph of Chap. 26, “Of Cause and Effect,” Locke notes the philosophical importance of the concepts of cause and effect: “That which produces any simple or complex idea we denote by the general name, cause, and that which is produced, effect.”

Foucin argues that torture is not based on cause and effect: the memory of past pain causes the tortured person to desire to prevent future pain.

Rather, the repetition of pain dulls the senses to a point of stupor, which weakens one’s will not to respond.

p. 220: *tabula repletus*: As defined in the text, “the teeming brain,” it literally means “the full slate.” The phrase is meant to contrast with Locke’s *tabula rasa* (“a clean slate”) in which the mind is regarded as blank until impressions are recorded upon it by experience.

p. 220: “the ‘true-blue’ traitor”: This paradox, supposedly uttered by one of its most despicable characters, is at the heart of my novel.

p. 220: “thundered against a bond”: The bond of the seven traitors described on 2:32-33.

p. 220: “Baby, I alluded to him before”: During their stroll to the Andaloos, Foucin spoke to Remy of “the seventh traitor—‘Baby,’ the youngest” (6.99).

- p. 220: “Mohammed’s tumble into his lap had even been extorted”: Although not specified, Foucin had tortured old Belmazoir into describing in detail the night of Remy’s meeting with him and his son Ahmed, who had brought along his two-year-old child Mohammed (2.31-32).
- p. 220: “organismic reality”: The truth that is at the basis of all living things, the life of whom or which is maintained by the various parts or systems functioning together.
This “reality,” as conceived by Remy, is that the mind or mindless essence of any biological organism will protest through some part of its system (termed “mouth” here) when it is impinged upon (its “body’s abused”).
The idea is a corollary of his concept, expressed on 13.209-10, of the seeming incapacity of a species to will itself out of the Chain of Being.
- p. 220: “M. Belmazoir . . . the middle”: Ahmed Belmazoir, the son of the traitor (old Belmazoir), and the father of Mohammed Belmazoir.
- p. 220: “deducing—what were your words from five hours ago?—he was ‘the instrument [that effected] his father’s death’”: The time of this speech by Remy is 10:22 p.m. The single quoted words are from a comment by Foucin made earlier at 5:22 that afternoon as he and Remy were discussing the Belmazoirs during their drive from Bab el Oued to the Al-Nigma.
This discussion is given out of chronological order, as are many scenes in this chapter. It will be presented on p. 232.
- p. 220: “the rather abrupt ending of your ten months of postured friendship [with Ahmed Belmazoir]”: Again a reference to something which was mentioned earlier but which will be revealed later in this chapter.
On pp. 236-37, Foucin will narrate how he, posing as a writer from Oran, Algeria, moved to an apartment in Bab el Oued in April 1973. He was soon a drinking buddy of Ahmed’s, hoping through him to find out where in France his father lived. Not until December 8, 1973, does Foucin obtain what he sought.
On p. 219, Foucin revealed that he continued the friendship with Ahmed for six more weeks, until January 21, 1974, when his agents in France located old Belmazoir.
Thus Foucin’s pretended friendship with Ahmed lasted from early April 1973 until Jan. 21, 1974, almost ten months.
- p. 220: “how can you be so positive he linked you with this lethal vengeance”: On p. 232, Foucin told Remy that Ahmed’s very heavy drinking began when he received word of his father’s death, which occurred shortly after his friend from Oran broke off their friendship.
- p. 220: “He tracked me down as I had [tracked down] his father”: Foucin “self-contemning snort” manifests that he recognizes the irony.

- p. 220: “within two years. By the next . . . in time . . . in the fifth [year] one March afternoon”: Foucin summarizes the downfall of Ahmed and his family:
1974 – 1975: By the middle of March, shortly after his mother’s death, Ahmed received his inheritance. Within two years he ran through it, leaving his family near poverty.
1976 – 1977: They moved into a flat in the cheap apartment building of No. 22, Rue Mizon. Ahmed’s wife and Houda had to hire themselves out as housecleaners.
1978: In March Ahmed confronts Foucin and around two weeks later committed suicide by throwing himself from a seaside cliff.
- p. 220: “by then grown too recognizable”: Foucin implies that in early 1978 by chance Foucin had been pointed out to Ahmed, who realized that he was the writer from Oran who had been his friend. Presumably he began to follow Foucin, trying to build up courage to confront him.
- p. 220: “Was it something I said?”: Ahmed waylaid Foucin to determine whether during the period when Foucin, using an alias, had pretended to be his friend, he had drunkenly mumbled something about his parents in France which led Foucin to his father.
- p. 220: “I answered truthfully, ‘No’”: How Foucin’s answer is truthful will be revealed on pp. 237-38.
Remy is already aware of how Foucin’s answer is technically truthful since the information of those pages had been given to him earlier, 5:57 – 6:10, in the driveway of the Al-Nigma.
- p. 220: “thirteen days later . . . a lifeless form being held down by the shielding weight of his daughter, with the waves splashing about”: Brief hints about Ahmed Belmazoir’s death were given by Bourceli (“ere their fortunes ‘dived,’” 12.199) and Belghiche (“staggered off the cliff,” 13.213).
Foucin provides some additional details here: A besotted Ahmed jumped (of course, “fell” is possible) from a seaside cliff and somehow Houda had gotten to his body to shield it from the waves.
A full account of this suicide will appear on 15.241-42.
- p. 220: “*his past finally bared*”: On p. 232, the action of which precedes this section but which is not presented in chronological order, Foucin had asked Remy, “And would you hear all?” meaning whether he wished to have an account of the history of Foucin’s relationship with the Belmazoirs.
Remy’s supposition that all has been revealed about this relationship he quickly learns is not accurate.
- p. 220: “Arab squat”: A phrase I heard used in the Middle East to describe the tucked-under, crossed-legged position of sitting Arabs where the left foot is wedged under the sitter’s right thigh and his right under his left calf.

- pp. 221: *sub specie aeternitatis*: The Latin phrase translates literally as “under the aspect of eternity.”
Remy apparently believes that moral issues can only be viewed from this eternal or universal perspective.
- p. 221: “more of a moralist”: See 13.215 for Remy’s internal debate over whether Ballard’s could have been “*un meurtre moral*.”
- p. 221: “Commissioner Tawfek Foucin”: The first used of Foucin’s first name since 4.55.
- p. 221: “gleaning the snippets of French conversation in this salon tonight”: Chronology is again inverted. Remy refers to something which happened in Foucin’s sitting room between 7:50 and 8:20 earlier that night where some people praised Foucin’s sense of morality.
- p. 221: ““Yes, sub rosa I monitored the boy”: Mohammed is eight and Houda fifteen at the time of their father’s death.
Since he was responsible for this death, Foucin says that he wanted to help the fatherless Mohammed, death, but had to do it at a distant because of Houda’s dictum.
- p. 221: “At the memorial reception [for Ahmed Belmazoïr] . . . ‘Monsieur, my family . . . will not be in need of your services again’”: Houda senses that Foucin bears direct or indirect responsibility for the deaths of her father, grandmother, and grandfather.
Although this suspicion is not stated, she does inform Foucin that her family wishes nothing to do with him.
- p. 221: “last July”: Ballard and Leroy took up assignment in Algiers on May 15, 1988. On 1.5, Ballard noted that Mohammed was “snared quickly.” On 4.62, the youth told Remy that they first met “at the end of May.”
My chronology placed their meeting at Palais des Nations beach on May 24, 1988. That Foucin did not find out about their relationship until July indicates the “distance” (221) he kept between himself and the Belmazoïr siblings.
- p. 221: ‘scored’ an American friend”: As a transitive verb it means “to obtain something desired or to succeed in acquiring.”
Its meanings of “to procure illicit drugs” or “to succeed in seducing someone sexually” are implicit.
- p. 221: constatation: A positive assertion (a combination of the definitions for “constatation” and “constate” from *Webster’s Third*).
Houda’s “constatation,” “You’re not our father,” contains negative phrasing.
- p. 221: “as I was putting him to bed”: Given in context on p. 238. Foucin revealed this scene to Remy at 6:10 in the parking lot of the Al-Nigma, but it will not be

disclosed to the reader under Remy recalls it at 11:43 p.m. while in bed.

p. 221: “I wasn’t abreast of Rue Toumi”: At the Rue Toumi apartment, Ballard and Mohammed met most Mondays from May 24, 1988, to Feb. 6, 1989, (and unexpectedly on Wednesday, Feb. 15, 1989).

Between Dec. 28, 1988, and Feb 15, 1989, Ballard met with Houda each Wednesday, but at this point it is not clarified how many times during this span he took her to the Toumi apartment.

p. 221: “Bendari’s notebook having no reference to it”: Foucin’s statement indicates that he used Bendari’s notebook to gain some information about Mohammed.

Again this is a reference to something which happened earlier, but which will not be revealed until later in this chapter (230).

p. 221: “Karami’s ‘all-nosy’”: See 13.211.

p. 221: wax on: to express oneself.

p. 221: “It’s so, it’s not so, and would that it were so!”: Foucin admits that from a distance he did spy on Houda (“it’s so), but during her rendezvous with Ballard he did not (“it’s not so”), but he wishes that he had (“would that it were so!”). The explanation of the middle assertion follows.

The third part of the statement is seemingly heretical, for Foucin intimates that instead of attending to his life’s work (tracking down another of the great traitors in France) he wishes that he had stayed in Algiers to protect Houda from her entanglement with Ballard.

His situation parallels Remy’s, whose mission is to meet with his father (his Algerian heritage) and then hurry back to Marie (his French family), but who is apparently being diverted from both by Leila.

Foucin’s mission in life, to revenge his slain family and redeem Algeria’s honor, has been diverted by guilt and love which arose from the collateral damage he had done to the children of a family he had destroyed.

p. 221: “‘go[ing] about . . . ‘my Father[land]’s business’”: Foucin indicates that during the span of Ballard and Houda’s relationship (their eight Wednesday meeting from Dec. 28, 1988, to Feb. 15, 1989, mentioned by Ghazi), he was by and large in France in pursuit of the sixth great traitor.

This is the second use—the first was employed by Remy’s Algerian liaison in 5.77 (see its note, N5:27)—of the “father’s business” image, from Luke 2:49: “I must be about my Father’s business.”

It is paraphrased in *Lear* 4.4.423-24, where Cordelia says, “O dear father, / It is thy business that I go about,” the verb *go* (as it did on 5.77) indicating that this play is Foucin’s source.

p. 221: “‘executed him . . . too.’ It was neither this hypothetical confession”: Foucin says that if he had known of Ballard’s sly enticing of Houda, he would have

executed him,” the conditional “had it been” making this a “hypothetical confession.”

The “too” is ambiguous. It seemingly refers to the execution of the sixth traitor, which will be described on pp. 235-36.

However, it may refer to his belief that Mohammed was the murderer: I too (as Mohammed did) would have executed Ballard.

p. 221: “during their return drive to the Al-Nigma”: According to my chronology, from 10:50 to 11:05.

p. 221: “Given what you know she did, still you don’t blame her”: Remy declaims that Foucin is intimidated by Houda and thus does not blame her for her affair with Ballard.

Remy’s implied accusation is that Foucin’s goal in the investigation of the murder is to protect Houda, even though it means her brother will be sacrificed.

p. 221: “‘meting-for-meting’ confrontation”: A measure-for-measure confrontation. See the 1.3 note, N1:11, for a listing of the seven chapters in which this image appears.

It is drawn from Matt 7:2 (Geneva Bible): “For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.”

On 13.206, N13:20, Foucin quotes the second half of this verse, where “mete” is used, and points out that it is the source of the title of Shakespeare’s *Measure for Measure*.

On p. 229, whose action immediately precedes that of section 1, the guests at Foucin’s feast exit, “leaving . . . Foucin and his *étranger* to each other’s measure,” a fatidic prologue to what happens in this section.

p. 221: “their return drive to the Al-Nigma”: After Remy’s accusation, discussed in the next note, he apologizes. They walked to Foucin’s car, speaking some more (10:42 – 10:50), and then begin the ride back to the Al-Nigma, which will pass in silence.

p. 221: “alibi . . . reeks of the innocence of a man who’s already accepted his guilt”: Remy says that since Foucin already accepts his guilt in destroying the Belmazoïr family, he will never feel he is innocent of anything that follows.

Remy’s closing speech is spoken at 10:42. Thus the scene in the sitting room lasted twenty-two minutes.

pp. 221-23: SECTION 2

p. 221: “This exchange, Remy appreciated”: During the drive back to his hotel (10:50 – 11:05), Remy reminisces how warmly he had been received by Foucin’s family.

[Click to return to page 221 of text.](#)

The invitation to partake of a Ramadan feast had been given earlier in the driveway of the Al-Nigma at 6:10.

- p. 221: “fifty-five minute, rush-hour drive from Bendari”: As will be revealed on p. 230, at 4:50 p.m. Foucin is at Bendari’s waiting for Remy. After a brief conversation, Foucin offers to drive him to the Al-Nigma.
They leave at 4:57, walk to Foucin’s car, and begin the drive (5:02). Because of heavy traffic, Foucin’s “detour,” and an interruption, they pull into the driveway of the Al-Nigma at 5:57.
That the trip took far longer than it should have (“fifty-five minutes”) makes it duplicate Remy’s first to Bab el Oued (Tuesday, Apr. 11), where “a ride of just over fifteen minutes had consumed nearly forty” (5.79).
- p. 221: “Arris”: Yesterday Foucin and his wife drove her two aunts to Arris, their village, and slept over there last night (13.208).
See the 13.203 note on Arris, which gives its location.

- p. 222: “abandoning him”: A light-hearted use of the theme of abandonment. For earlier and more substantial examples of the theme see the following pages and/or notes: 2.16 (N2:6-7); 3.41 (N3:18); 4.66 (N4:41); 5.68 (N5:2, “*nol-pros*,” and N5:3 on Virgil); 6.82 (N6:5); 10:156 (N10.10 on “his daughters”); and 11.176. Later instances of the theme of abandonment occur on 14.232; 15.256; 16.258 and 264; 17.283, 287, and 289; 18.306; 19:321; and 21:354 and 365.
- p. 222: “nine days”: Remy arrived on April 9; the aunt made the comment on April 17.
- p. 222: *vêtements de rechange*: French for “change of clothes.”
- p. 222: “fifteen-minute drive to Kouba”: From 6:45 – 7:00 p.m. Although not mentioned, Foucin waited while Remy rushed to his hotel room, showered, and changed clothes (6:10 – 6:45).
- p. 222: “putting aside the Belmazoir history”: Another indication that in the drive from Bendari’s (5:02 – 5:57) and in the Al Nigma driveway (5:57 – 6:09), Foucin and Remy had spoken about the Belmazoirs.
- p. 222: “nouveau ‘raunch’”: Remy puns on “nouveau riche,” designating the ostentatious, “newly rich” inhabitants of El Harrach, where Deputy Inspector Karami lived, as so lacking in sincerity and sophistication that they are best termed as “raunchy.” See the 13.209 note, N13:30, for the Beaulieu neighborhood of the El Harrach suburb of Algiers.
- p. 222: “housing policemen’s families”: The apartment building referred to is modeled on Garidi Estate in Kouba. In the late 1980s it was a five-floor apartment building housing security officers and their families. Given his “status,” that Foucin would choose to live here—to Remy an immediate contrast is Karami’s Beaulieu villa—is a testimony of Foucin’s modesty and his desire not to set himself above other people. A major theme of this chapter is the elevation of Foucin’s character.
- p. 222: Yamina: Foucin’s youngest daughter is named in honor of his youngest sister, mentioned on 7.116 as among those who, he feared, were killed during the French raid on their villa in 1955. His two older daughters, aged “seven and nine,” are introduced to Remy, but their names are not given. Presumably they are named after Wafah and Zouina, the young Lakhtour’s other two sisters who were also presumably killed by the French. See the 7.116 note, N7:38. Foucin’s sisters will also be mentioned on 18.306.
- p. 222: *poignée de main*: In French, “handshake.” The oldest child, ten, wishes to display that he understands the Western form of greeting, unlike his younger siblings who employ the embrace Arab salutation.

- p. 222: “five Muslim lip touches”: In a Hadith reported by Al-Tirmidhi, the Prophet was asked whether a Muslim man meeting another should embrace and kiss him. The Prophet replied, “No.” He subsequently added that the two should shake hands.
However, there are numerous examples from the Hadiths where the Prophet embraced and kissed a male Muslim friend (never on the lips, but on the cheeks or forehead). Thus this Hadith by Al-Tirmidhi is considered “weak.”
In Arab countries, there has long been this social custom of the five-cheek touches, although sometimes the lips merely kiss the air about the cheek.
When a Muslim father introduces his children to a foreigner, they usually step forward to kiss the visitor.
- p. 222: Boualem: Foucin is also naming his sons after his brothers killed during the French raid on their villa in 1955.
Boualem, “my eldest brother,” was the first killed (7.115).
- p. 222: “a noisy smack on his tense mouth”: This mischievous kiss which Yamina gives her brother contrasts with the Judas-like kiss which will be placed on a child’s left cheek on p. 237.
- p. 222: “affected wobble”: A born Arab, Remy (Omar) had long practice in rising from the Arab “low sofa.”
However, when standing up here and throughout the evening in Foucin’s apartment. he reinforces his guise as a foreign by haltingly getting to his feet.
- p. 222: “‘yon bonded bundle’”: This reference to Yamina, who has bonded with Remy, in its alliteration recalls what Belghiche had said about Ahmed Belmazoir, “bottled in bond” (13.213).
- p. 222: “three minutes later”: The time is now 7:16.
- p. 222: “Foucin’s wife”: Her name is Mona (6.98 and 13.203 and 208). In Arabic, Mona means “wish or desire.”
- p. 222: “‘tall in stature’”: Foucin had used these words to describe his mother on 7.116.
- p. 222: train: A group of persons following as attendants in a procession; retinue.
- p. 222: “lovely in her bones”: From the first line of Roethke’s “I Knew a Woman”: “I knew a woman, lovely in her bones.”
- p. 222: zygomata: Plural of “zygoma” or the cheekbone.
- p. 222: tegumentary: Of or relating to the natural outer covering of the body or a plant, including skin, shell, hide, etc.

- p. 222: “Foucin . . . delayed marrying”: Foucin was thirty-one when he married in 1978. Mona is twenty-seven.
According to my chronology, ten years before, in 1968 he had courted the seventeen-year-old Mona, asking her to wait for him.
Knowing how precarious his life would be because of the mission he had chosen, he had planned to bring to justice the seven traitors before marrying.
As stated on p. 223, after Ahmed Belmazoir’s unexpected suicide in 1978, Foucin had told himself, Remy speculates, “You compensate for destroying one man’s [Ahmed’s] family by starting your own.”
- p. 222: parvenu: Remy imagines the young Foucin to have been perceived as an “upstart,” perhaps based on Foucin’s own statement that Mona’s Aunt Thana held “my wife married beneath herself” (13.263).
- p. 222: Boubela: Avenue Mohammed Boubela is a southeasterly avenue which goes past Jardin Marengo and the Emir Abdelkader High School.
During Ramadan, it is heavily congested since it is the first leg of a major artery leading from Bab el Oued to central Algiers.
As will be explained on pp. 231-32, Foucin and Remy will be caught in a traffic jam on Boubela from 5:16 – 5:30.
- p. 222: “‘mysterious *plus*’ . . . the guilt . . . bonding me to them”: William James phrase, the “mysterious plus,” is taken from his *The Principles of Psychology*, vol. 1, chap. 12.
It was first used by Foucin on 13.209. See its note, N13:31.
Here Remy recalls piecemeal what Foucin had said about “the mysterious *plus*” in an incident recounted on p. 231. See its N14:42 note.
Again the chronology is inverted. At 7:21 as Remy watches Mme. Foucin and her children exit the sitting room, he thinks of a conversation that occurred two hours earlier. Yet that 5:20 scene has not been presented to the reader.
Here the “mysterious plus” means that a chain was forged: The death of old Belmazoir in 1974 led to the suicide of his son Ahmed in 1978 and out of Foucin’s guilt to a bonding of him with Houda and Mohammed Belmazoir and their mother Salima.

- p. 223: “Foucin was silent . . . ‘my reflections of my own [family] in Antwerp’”: Remy imagines that Foucin supposes him to be thinking about his family in Antwerp, the city where his alias Lazar and his family resided.
- p. 223: “his country’s fifth and sixth devils”: These were the two brought to justice after Foucin’s marriage.
In disguise he had frequently travelled to Europe, principally France, as soon as the 1968 legislation was passed putting a bounty on the heads of the seven traitors, as will be explained on pp. 233-34, which deal with the first three traitors.
The capture and the death of the fourth, Belmazoir, were described on pp. 219-20, but will be returned to on pp. 236-38.
Foucin’s travels regarding the fifth and the sixth traitors will be detailed on pp. 235-36, although a hint about the first was mentioned on 7.103.
See the 2.17 note, “expired,” N2:12, which lists the six traitors and describes their fates.
- p. 223: “*Allahu Akbar!*”: The opening of the azan (prayer call), meaning “God is great!” As the text notes, it begins at 7:24.
- p. 223: Maghrib: The sunset prayers, the call which ends the fast.
- p. 223: Zitouni: Foucin’s second son is named after his second-oldest brother, the third and final son killed in the French raid on their villa (7.116, although the page does not clarify that he is older than Salah, the brother killed after Boualem).
- p. 223: *sous-tasse*: French for “saucer.”
- p. 223: “our . . . their Prophet”: Remy’s quick correction of himself shows that he is still in denial about his Muslim identity.
These dismissed, but persistent, religious connections parallel the incident earlier in the day (5:03 p.m.) when he debated about his Algerian heritage (not presented until p. 231).
- p. 223: “Lord, In Thy (name) we fasted”: This is a translation from the Hadith of Abu Dawood which reports the prayer which the Prophet Mohammed said after breaking *sawm* (the fast) in Ramadan.
Other translations use the first person singular pronoun and different wording, although the ideas are the same.
Abu Dawood further states that the Prophet Mohammed broke the fast by eating dates (other writers of the Hadiths mention only one date) or, if the fruit was not available, by drinking water.
- p. 223: *étranger*: French for “foreigner.”
- p. 223: “‘most prized possession’”: Many Muslim men, according to Remy on 13.212,

considered women as a material “possession,” albeit their “most prized” one. Implied is that Remy spends the time from the exit of Foucin and his sons (7:27) to their return (7:48) thinking about family in France.

pp. 223-25: SECTION 3

- p. 223: “The notebook confiscated . . . back from the embassy”: Section 3 begins with a flashback to last night (Monday, Apr. 17, 11:20 – midnight).
- p. 223: Rajab: The seventh month in the Hegira (Islamic) calendar. Lunar-based, it shifts in reference to the Gregorian calendar. Thus in 1989, the time of the novel, the third week of Rajab corresponds with the fourth week of February.
Note: In the Hegira calendar, as in the Gregorian calendar in Europe, the day is placed before the month. Hence, 16 – 22 Rajab, but Feb. 22 – 28.
- p. 223: “Vellacott”: Remy received this information from Vellacott’s reports in the 2269 files.
- p. 223: “Tick me off . . . a second ledger”: This mental review of the late February dates had been occasioned by the connection that Remy had made as he left the embassy (13.218): Leroy’s reference to “double books,” Belghiche’s statement that Mohammed had said, “Tick me off,” and an incident from his childhood where his father explained to him why he always kept duplicate account books for their grocery store.
- p. 223: replication: the act of repeating or duplicating.
Remy notices a redundancy: Even though Mohammed had marked the call *paid*, he requested Belghiche to do the same.
- p. 223: “climb into his lap”: The five-year-old Omar climbing into his father’s lap is a counterpoint to the two incidents in the chapter where the child Mohammed will climb into someone’s lap (219 and 237-38).
- p. 223: “in twelve years”: According to my chronology Remy began to attend the University of Algiers in the spring semester of 1958, which began in January. He would not become eighteen until April 2 of that year.
- p. 223: “token Muslim”: In 1958, only about eight percent of the students at the University of Algiers were Muslim Algerians. These were closely monitored by the French authorities, especially after the Jan. 1957 Algiers strike and the resultant nine-month urban guerrilla warfare which lasted until the death of Ali la Pointe (6.88-90).

- p. 223: “Delay his scheduled trip to Berrouaghia”: At the end of his Apr. 14 visit with Mohammed at the prison, Remy told him, “I may not return until Tuesday,” Apr. 18 (10.162).
Late Monday night, Apr. 17, after returning from the embassy, Remy decides to postpone this trip until Wednesday.
- p. 223: “Vellacott’s expected reply”: On Monday morning, Remy promised Foucin that he would contact Vellacott with the plea bargain offer and call him on Tuesday afternoon with the lawyer’s answer.
By that time Foucin would be back from Arris, (13:208).
- p. 223: “standing up Mohammed, to employ the youth’s lagomorphic French colloquialism”: The informal French expression meaning “to stand someone up” or “to fail to keep an appointment” is “*poser un lapin à*” which incorporates the French word *lapin*, meaning “rabbit.”
It is typically used to connote the failure to keep a rendezvous with a boyfriend or girlfriend. In familiarly referring to a person, *lapin* means “darling” or “pet.”
Twice Mohammed used the idiom: (1) “after standing me up” (6.85) and (2) “the second ‘stand-up’” (10.161).
- p. 223: lagomorphic”: “of or relating to gnawing mammals, such as rabbits or hares.”

- p. 224: “The fax from Brussels . . . late breakfast . . . speech to Belghiche . . . an hour to focus on another ‘baffler’”: Implied in the text is that Remy plans to meet with Belghiche at 2:30, the same as the previous day.
Thus he leisurely eats a late breakfast, rehearses the points he wants to make to Belghiche, and at one focuses on something which had baffled him: When would Ballard have had time to use the FLIRs which he had checked out on Feb. 14?
- p. 224: “Leila’s notes”: To answer this question, Remy relies not only on the two pages of diary-like notes which Leila gave him (12.193), but also on his memory of her verbal account of Feb. 14-16 (12.191-92).
These sources state that Ballard slept over at Leila’s place on Tuesday the fourteenth, failed to make his 9:30 p.m. appointment on Wednesday the fifteenth, arrived quite inebriated just after midnight, technically Thursday the sixteenth, and slept over that night, leaving at around seven Thursday morning.
It was not possible to use the FLIRs on Feb. 14 since that night he had never left Leila’s side and had slept over at her apartment.
The night of Feb. 15 presented two openings: the 7:00 – 7:45 when he was not accounted for while Houada walked to the Toumi room. And c. 8:05 to the 9:30 time when he was supposed to arrive at Leila’s, although she planned for nine given Ballard’s being overly prompt.
What happened because of Mohammed’s intrusion had to be set aside because Ballard would have not planned for that.
Both spans, Remy realizes, allowed scant time for Ballard to use the FLIRs. Remy wonders why he had checked them out since he would seemingly not have time for them. He answers that he may have checked them out for someone else.
- p. 224: “Ballard returned the FLIRs to Quartermasters at nine”: On 8.131, Medlin informs Remy that according to Quartermasters records, Ballard checked out the two pairs of FLIRs at four p.m. on Tues., Feb. 14, and returned them at 9 a.m. on Thursday, Feb. 16.
- p. 224: “prepromptly”: See the 1.4 note, which explains that I found it in the online *Urban Dictionary* with the annotation “isn’t defined yet.” No other print or online dictionaries list it.
In my novel, it connotes that someone is “more than punctual” since he or she “arrives well before an appointed time.”
- p. 224: “doodled on a sheet of the stationary, ‘as if it were M. Ballard’s calendar’”: On 8.130, Remy noted that the 27th of Ballard’s calendar had “patches of spiraled doodles” and “*griffonnages*,” French for “doodles.”
- p. 224: “until two, the time he was to leave for Bendari’s”: According to my chronology, Remy left his room at two, took a taxi to Bab el Oued, told Nemmiche not to wait for him, and walked the last several blocks to Bendari’s, entering it at exactly 2:30, the same time as the day before (Monday) (13.211).

- p. 224: *café noir*: black coffee, that is, without cream.
This was the same order Remy made the day before (13.212).
- p. 224: demitasse: “a small cup of coffee, usually taken black; the cup in which it is served” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 224: “a sheet with all *paids* is destroyed”: Fouad explains that at the point all *paids* are listed, the sheet is ripped out of the notebook and discarded.
- p. 224: “‘Tick me off.’ . . . ‘Tick me off’ where?”: Remy brings up a contradiction. According to Fouad, after Mohammed marked through the message of the 23rd, he told Fouad to tick him off as paid (13.214).
Remy asked where Fouad could have made this ticking mark since Mohammed had already ticked himself off by marking through the entry for him in the notebook and writing *paid* beside it.
Remy asks if there could be a second account book, a non-public ledger which Fouad maintained. The customers would know about it, but not the police
- p. 224: *comptoir*: counter of a bar.
- p. 224: “In the small kitchen”: At 2:40, Fouad leads Remy into the small kitchen to examine his second set of books.
- p. 224: “Since it’s in Arabic, you’ll need my help”: Belghiche says he will translate for Remy, who as always cannot reveal that he is fluent and literate in Arabic.
- p. 224: “the ledger, labeled 1409”: The novel is set in the Hegira year 1409, comparably in part to 1989.
- pp. 224-25: “The second week of February”: Seven paragraphs above Remy told Belghiche that he would be “extremely interested in seeing what, if any, messages M. Mohammed received in the second week of our February.”

- p. 225: “the second of Rajab . . . a Wednesday”: Feb. 8. Mohammed was at the PLO camp.
- p. 225: Plo: As noted repeatedly, this is a one-syllable pronunciation (rhyming with “grow”) which I found sometimes used by English-speaking Arabs in the Middle East and North Africa, in preference to the pronunciation of the three letters, P, L, O, in referring to a Palestinian.
See the 1.12 note.
- p. 225: “Scattered over the subsequent four pages were nine [messages] with a ‘Mo-Mo’ preface”: Rajab 3 – 6, Feb. 9 – 12, Thursday through Sunday.
- p. 225: “7 Rajab”: Monday, Feb. 13. On 6.85, Mohamed had seemed to combine the two Mondays Feb. 13 and Feb. 20.
Questioned about this “missing week” on 10.161, Mohammed said that Ballard had stood him up on both Mondays.
Because of that contradiction by the prisoner, Remy was interested in whether Mohammed had gotten any messages around this date.
- p. 225: “Wednesday. Northeast Marengo gate. Exactly 7:30”: Fouad does not connect the Monday message with being from the American until Remy points out the word “exactly”: In setting a meeting, Arabs typically tend to give an approximate time.
- p. 225: Marengo gate: An entrance to Jardin Marengo, the central park in the Bab el Oued district.
Remy met Ghazi there on 12:197-200.
See the 4.63 note for more details about the park.
- p. 225: “leafing one page ahead”: To Tuesday, Feb. 14 (8 Raj.). There Fouad sees his notation that Mohammed said he would be there.
He recalls that when Mohammed had read that message on Tuesday he was almost giddy and twice tipped Fouad.
- p. 225: “ring back”: “to return a phone call” (online *Wiktionary*).
- p. 225: quittance in advance: Payment which would discharge the debt to Fouad which Mohammed would owe when the café manager delivered his message to the caller.
- p. 225: “A high-heeled streetwalker”: Reminiscent of Mohammed’s description of the prostitute “struggling to yank free a lime-colored heel” (4.65).
- p. 225: “*Wallahee!*”: An Arabic interjection meaning “By God!” or “I swear by God!”
- p. 225: “*Inshallah!*”: An Arabic interjection meaning “God willing!”

The two religious interjections normally would never be used side by side, part of the reason Belghiche labels Mohammed's "babble" as "so strange as to be nonsensical."

- p. 225: "I'm going to reap what I'll sow!": Mohammed plays upon a popular phrase based on St. Paul's agricultural figure in Gal. 6:7-8: "Be not deceived: God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. / For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."
 Mohammed seems familiar with the fleshly aspect of the passage since by twisting the phrasing he means that he will reap or harvest sexual pleasure from sowing or scattering his seeds (ejaculating) in the vagina of the prostitute.
 For Mohammed (or Remy) "reap" probably contains a pun on "rape" and, as a homograph, "sow" plays upon the reference to a female hog, "sow," which, according to the *Urban Dictionary* may denote a "slut, bitch, or whore."
- p. 225: "The ninth of your Rajab, a Wednesday": On 9 Raj. (Feb. 15), Remy asks if Mohammed stopped in.
- p. 225: "sinuous folds": The image is from the first paragraph of Baudelaire's 1852 essay, "Edgar Poe: His Life and Works": Poe was one of those "men who bear the words 'bad luck' etched in mysterious characters in the sinuous folds of their foreheads."
 "Sinuous" here means "wavy" or "not smooth" as when a person wrinkles his brow.
- p. 225: "buzzed": inebriated or intoxicated, usually from the effects of alcohol.
- p. 225: "floating": under the influence of drugs.
- p. 225: "from his arrival up to the summons to Maghrib . . . 'Prayer-closing time': Belghiche said that Mohammed arrived "at about three."
 In the chronology of the novel, on Wednesday, Feb. 15, the call to Maghrib (or sunset) prayers came at 6:08, with the prayer lasting from 6:28 – 6:43.
 Thus Mohammed has plenty of time to make the thirty-minute walk to Jardin Marengo for his 7:30 meeting with Ballard.
 The latter arrived at around 7:10, his usual twenty minutes early.
- p. 225: "N' fif'n min'tes lag'rd": His slurred words indicate that he will not be the laggard by fifteen minutes for the meeting that night, Feb. 15.
 On 6.86, Mohammed had told Remy he was "fifteen or so" minutes late to the Feb. 27 meeting at Zaracova, adding that "M. John knew I was a chronic laggard."
 On 10:159, Remy confirms Mohammed's admission that he was "usually fifteen minutes tardy to your assignations with M. Ballard."

pp. 225-28: SECTION 4

- p. 225: “As Fouad began to scrutinize”: The section continues the previous one. According to my chronology, it starts at 2:56.
- p. 225: “a shaken Remy”: Foucin said that since he heard Ghazi’s account he had been “puzzled how the brother [Mohammed] found out” about Houda’s relationship with Ballard and “how he knew to give chase [to follow her on Feb. 15]” (13.205).
Remy believes that the notebook entries and Belghiche’s accounts establish how Mohammed was at the Toumi apartment on the fifteenth.
Why this discovery makes Remy tremble will be revealed on pp. 226-27.
- p. 225: “the fourteen pages of the ledger to March the first”: That is, from Feb. 16, the page to which Belghiche had turned before he was called away, to Mar. 1, the day Karami and his officers seized the notebook.
- p. 225: loopholeless: Although not listed in any dictionaries which I consulted, it is used in popular and learned journals and theological, financial, and fictional books on the internet to mean “without loopholes.”
Setting aside the 1991 manuscript of my novel, the earliest reputable instance of it in print is 1992.
At five other places in the novel “loophole” appears: 10.166 and 169; 11.173 and 185; and 19.326.
- p. 225: black hole: In science “a dark region in space, perhaps formed by the collapse of a great star.” Also a “void or emptiness.”
See the 3.42 note on “wormhole,” N3:22, where “black hole” is discussed, as well as the 6.82 note, N6.3-4.
The image was introduced in a sexual and psychological sense by Mohammed on 6.82 and 84. Remy continues this context of the term on 6.85 and 91.
Medlin employed “black hole,” also as a metaphor, on 11.180. It will be used later on 15.243 (again by Mohammed) and on 20.350 to describe a dark setting.
- p. 225: “messages of the twenty-third and the twenty-fourth”: The two messages relating to the Zaracova meeting: Feb. 23 when Fouad took the message, presumably from Ballard, which set up the meeting at Zaracova, and Feb. 24, Fouad’s message to Mohammed that he had informed the caller that the youth would make the disco rendezvous.
- p. 225: “now seeming ‘consequently inconsequential’”: A serious play upon the words: After or as a result of (“consequently”) what Remy had learned about the fifteenth, the events of those two days (Feb. 23 and 24) seemed unimportant (“inconsequential”).

- p. 226: “with his hand trembling”: A second emphasis on how severely Remy was upset by his discovery.
- p. 226: “the counter’s down flap: A hinged segment of the counter of a bar which can be raised, thus allowing for passage in or out.
Here hoping he can slip out without Belghiche’s notice, Remy slips under the bar flap.
- p. 226: Asr: midafternoon prayers. On this day, the summons to Asr came at 4:10 and prayers lasted from 4:30 – 4:45.
- p. 226: “I shut prematurely for the prayers”’: The first duplicitous statement by Belghiche as will be revealed on p. 231.
- p. 226: “five-block span”: The distance from Bendari’s, which Remy leaves at three, to the Belmazoirs’ shack.
- p. 226: “seven o’clock . . . the approximate 7:35 . . . ‘exactly’ at 7:30”: At seven, Ballard gave Houda the key to the Toumi flat (13.201).
At approximately 7:35 Houda entered the flat (not stated but apparent from the time Remy entered the apartment as given on 13.202, but see the chart collating his times with Houda’s in the 13.201 note, N13.3-4).
Exactly at 7:30 was the time when the Feb. 13 message from Ballard to Mohammed indicated they would meet at Marengo Park on Feb. 15 (225).
- p. 226: “The green goggles”’: Remy realizes why Ballard checked out the FLIRs. They were to be used by Mohammed who came to the dark Toumi apartment thinking that the FLIRs would allow him to watch Ballard engaged in sex with a prostitute.
- p. 226: “For God’s sake, no!”’: Having lined up the times and determined the role of the FLIRs, Remy, who had been physically shaken by his discovery, next exclaims to God his protest about the horrible act foisted on this brother and sister.
- p. 226: *burnoose*: a hooded, cape-like cloak.
- p. 226: gloom: darkness (of the Toumi room).
- p. 226: grabble: “to feel about with the hands.”
Remy assumes that since this night of Feb. 15 is their eighth nighttime meeting Ballard had brought Houda to the room enough time that she did not have to grope through its darkness.
- p. 226: “at, say, 7:45”: Ballard was to meet Mohammed at Jardin Marengo at 7:30. It is just over a five-minute drive to the place Ballard typically parked, “four blocks from the [Toumi] building” (4.63).
Mohammed is both drunk and “high” so it could have taken them ten minutes to

walk from the car to the building and up the stairs to the third floor, or so goes Remy's reasoning.

- p. 226: "*Un instant!*": An exclamation in French meaning, "One moment!"
The room had been left unlocked by Houda, who has the key. Therefore Ballard simply jiggles the knob and enters.
The exclamation indicates that Ballard would take just a moment to undress in the toilet, as he did when he had sex with Mohammed: "I'd been told in the Renault . . . he would disrobe in the bathroom" (4.63).
- p. 226: *fille de joie*: "prostitute" (in French literally "daughter of joy").
- p. 226: galumph: to walk noisily.
- p. 226: inchoate: in the early stages.
- p. 226: "endeavored to hide her visage": In the same way, in raping "Noura" the French paras had hidden her face, first by "a wool blanket" (3.43) and next with the "huge buttocks [of a soldier] resting on her bosom," whose "flanks" encircled her face (3.45).
- p. 226: "Delay putting on the FLIRs had possible been insinuated to Mohammed": The ruse arranged by the American Ballard is similar to the one of the French: Omar thought that he was seeing his sister raped.
Here Belmazoir has thrust on him the discovery that his sister is having sex with his best friend.
The colonial and neocolonial political symbolism is apparent to Remy, but unstated at this point in the novel.
- p. 226: "simulating ignorance about [the FLIRs]": See 10.161. However, note that there Mohammed "halted prior to the third" reference, obviously not understanding the first (the term "FLIRs") or the synonym "night-vision goggles."
- p. 226: "At the Belmazoir block": Remy arrives here at 3:07.
- p. 226: "plastered and potted": Slang descriptions of someone "intoxicated by alcohol and hashish."
- p. 226: stave off: "to delay or postpone something unwanted."
That is, according to Remy, Ballard sought to prevent Mohammed from immediately identifying Houda.
- p. 226: green phosphor: Images seen through FLIRs are shades of green.
To quote from the Globalsecurity.org webpage on "Night Vision Goggles": "A night vision goggle (NVG) phosphor screen is purposely colored green because

the human eye can differentiate more shades of green than other phosphor colors.”

However, the image is often blurred because “NVGs can, at best, provide only 20/25 to 20/40 vision.”

This latter factor would contribute to Mohammed’s difficulty in adjusting his eyes to the scene and thus his delayed recognition of Houda.

- p. 226: “a sin a man cannot forget or God ever forgive”: On 3.43, Omar used the same words on seeing his naked sister Noura: It “was a sin a man cannot forget or God ever forgive.” Thus the single quote since Remy is quoting himself (as Omar). On 1.2, Ballard used similar wording in describing what happened in the Toumi room: “among Muslims a sin God cannot forgive or a man ever forget.” See the 1.2 note for the Islamic strictures against nakedness.
- p. 226: “brief of argument”: A document drawn up by a lawyer on behalf of a client and presented to a trial or appellate court; it provides considerable details dealing with the facts or the legal precedents of the client’s complaint.
- p. 226: “lord over”: Remy’s egotism over having made a crucial discovery which Foucin had puzzled over irritatingly asserts itself here and in the following six paragraphs: “I’ve determined. . . . I will save him.” On 227: “he had penetrated into the heart of this deviancy and ‘sympathized’ . . . His imagination became feverish . . . by dint of his avail . . . the intercessor.” Only when he thinks of his own mother’s death and funeral does he dispel (for the moment) this arrogance.
- p. 226: “his doodles”: See “spiraled doodles” and “*griffonnages*” (French for “doodles”) on 8.130 and Remy’s p. 224 thought about “doodles.”
- p. 226: “I’ve determined”: Two meanings of “determine” are applicable here: “to reach a decision after much thought and investigation” and “to establish or fix the nature of something.” In the first, a person is an investigator; in the second, he or she is the one who decides. The egotism of Remy is again coming to the fore: “I discovered what happened” becomes “I fix or decree that this is what happened.”
- p. 226: “killed him then”: The night of Feb. 15 in the Toumi room.
- p. 226: “You veiled your face from Mohammed in the Toumi. Shield it not from me!”: A supposition by Remy since Houda’s covering her face is not mentioned in Foucin’s conjecture, which implies that she fled to the bathroom (13.206). Remy, however, did twist from the peephole when he first saw his sister naked and, thrust back to it, kept his eyes closed, thus twice shielding his line of vision (3.43). His imagination is also influenced by Gen. 3.7: “And the eyes of them both

[Adam and Eve] were opened, and they knew that they were naked, and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons” (KJV).

This account is also reported in the Qur’an: “They both ate of the tree, and so their nakedness appeared to them: they began to sew together, for their covering, leaves from the Garden; thus did [Adam] disobey the Lord, and allow himself to be seduced” (20:121).

p. 226: “*I will save him*”: Remy’s frantic avowal is occasioned by the connection that he has drawn between his and Mohammed’s sin of looking on a sister’s nakedness.

p. 226: mog: “to walk slowly and steadily” (*Webster’s Third*).
At 3:11, Houda appears at the door to their shack.

- p. 227: “gagged Saharan virgin being circumcised”: Female circumcision involves the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia. It dulls a woman’s sexual enjoyment and thus decreases any desire to commit adultery. Although no data is available, it is accepted that the procedure is performed on girls in rural areas of Algeria, especially in the regions of the Algerian Sahara abutting Mauritania (where 70% of women are circumcised), Mali (92%), and Niger (20%).
- p. 227: “two can stifle her”: The mystery of who this other person is will not be resolved until 15.247.
- p. 227: “Outside the building”: The time is 3:15.
- p. 227: “*the fiend*”: Remy imagines himself as Satan and Ballard as one of his lesser devils. He desires Houda and Mohammed to confide in him, a confession which would put him on the level with God. This theological interpretation was influenced by the portrayal of the Satanic-like character Roger Chillingworth in chap. 10 of *The Scarlet Letter*. Here he seeks for the sinner Dimmesdale to confess his sin to him, “to lay open to him the wound or trouble in your soul,” and through much of the novel Chillingworth strives to prevent Dimmesdale’s public confession, a necessary prelude to forgiveness from God. Certainly, egotism—the essence of Satan—begins to take control of Remy’s mind after his discovery of what he believes happen in the Toumi apartment.
- p. 227: “Ballard, perhaps out of spite for his sexual impotence, had flaunted before her brother: he was bedding his sister”: Remy speculates that the “spite” arose from Ballard’s unsuccessful attempt to sodomize a willing Mohammed on Mon., Feb. 6, nine days before the deceit on the brother and sister.
- p. 227: *ruse de guerre*: stratagem; literally, “a trick of war.” Remy parallels the plight of the two sets of siblings: Mohammed was tricked into seeing his sister engaged in sex with the American Ballard in the same way he as Omar had been forced to watch helplessly as “Noura” was sexually assaulted by the French paras
- p. 227: “‘as Noura’s [life was destroyed] and mine’—he retreated slightly—‘albeit not devastated, maligned and would be until my reunion with my father’”: Remy realizes how egotistical his thoughts appear: Equating his comfortable life in Le Puy with the suffering his sister had endured. He believes that he retreats from this egotism by speaking of the effort in which he is now engaged, to reunite with his father, but even sees that meeting in terms of how much better it would make his own life, not his father’s.
- p. 227: thirty years ago: On December 8, 1958, Remy was forced to watch the torture of “Noura.”

- p. 227: “just as his mother . . . had tried to mediate on his behalf”: See 3.38, where in 1982 his mother, 62, on her deathbed pleaded with her husband to forgive the reason of their son Omar.
- p. 227: “The dying mother”: Thinking about his own mother’s death causes Remy to consider the dying Mme. Belmazoir.
- p. 227: “HIV was still narrating”: The action flashes back to the 3.38 scene where HIV continues his narration about the incidents before and after the death of Remy’s mother. Here the details about the night of her funeral and what happened on subsequent days are given.
- p. 227: “five-foot depth dug earlier”: The minimum depth of a Muslim grave is 1.5 meters or five feet.
- p. 227: “mid-evening prayers”: Isha’ prayers. They typically occur around an hour and a half after sunset (Maghrib) prayers, although they may be performed anytime before midnight.
The Hadiths of Muslim and Ibn Majah report that the Prophet said he disapproved of burying someone at night unless one is compelled to do so. However, the majority of Islamic scholars hold that night burial is permissible, citing that the Prophet buried a friend at night.
His daughter Fatima also had a night burial as did some early associates of Mohammed. Such nighttime burials were often designed to hide from enemies of Muslims the site of the grave, thereby preventing it from being desecrated.
- p. 227: “cereclothed”: A transitive verb now adjudged obsolete (hence the single quotes), it means “to cover with a cerecloth” (*Webster’s Third*). Here it is used as a verbal.
- p. 227: “three handfuls of sand”: The sand is ceremonially thrown: the first handful during the recitation of the first clause of Sura 20:55 (“From the . . .”); the second handful with the recitation of the second (“and unto . . .”); and the third during the last clause (“and from . . .”).
- p. 227: Sura 20: The twentieth sura (chapter) is called “Ta-Ha” because it starts with these Arabic letters.
It treats the story of Moses and the Fall of Man, as mentioned in the above p. 226 note, “You veiled.”
- p. 227: “a few marking pebbles”: The final act of the burial ceremony is to sprinkle some pebbles on the grave.
Grave markers, not exceeding 30 centimeters (one foot), with identification of the deceased are permitted by some sects of Islam, who disregard the Hadith reported by Al-Tirmidhi in which the Prophet Mohammed forbade any writing (such as the deceased’s name or a Qur’anic verse) or decorations on the grave.

- p. 227: “rumored to be Satan”: Recalling this narration about his mother’s funeral influenced Remy’s above reference to himself as “*the fiend*.”
It is Foucin who helped with the burial; his motive is presumably ulterior since he hoped that the grieving husband might drop some hint about his son, the traitor Omar.
- p. 227: “alone in his grief except for one other”: Mme. Remidi. See 10.155 and 157-59.
- p. 227: lapidation”: the act of pelting with stones; stoning to death.
On the afternoon Noura was seized by the French soldiers the neighborhood “boys . . . were gathering stones to hurl at the invaders” (3.38).
- p. 227: “hellward”: “toward hell” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 227: farrow: to give birth to a litter of pigs.
Swine are forbidden in Islamic countries because of the verse 2:173 in the Quran: “He [Allah] has made unlawful for you [to eat] the flesh of swine [except when you are driven by necessity].”
- p. 227: “Sister could save brother”: The action returns to the place, in front of the Belmazoirs’ building, and to the time, 3:17, before the flashback.
- p. 227: “‘for a’ that””: “for all that or in spite of that.”
The refrain is from Burns’s “Is There for Honest Poverty,” first used in the four line of the poem: “We dare be poor for a’ that!”
- p. 227: “‘What had Mohammed let slip about her [love of flowers]?’”: See 4.65 where Belmazoir said that Houda had told him their mother had cried over having to abandon her flower beds when the family left France.
- p. 227: blunder out: to blurt
- p. 227: *comptoir*: In French, a “counter of a shop.”
- p. 227: “the flower shop”: According to my chronology, Remy reaches this shop at the blatantly symbolic 3:33.
- p. 227: “Seventeen hundred thirty dinars”: Numerological symbols are like peanuts: A person cannot stop with just one.

p. 228: “Mme. Salima Belmazoïr”: The first time her given name appears in the text.

p. 228: “No. 22, Rue Mizon”: The Belmazoïrs’ address was previously mentioned on 5.78 and 11.172.

p. 228: “three teams, each of seven urchins”: A total of 21. Numerical symbolism seems to breed like rabbits.

p. 228: *magasin de fleuriste*: French for “florist’s shop.”

p. 228: “at 3:53 . . . the last [delivery] at 4:30”: The first delivery arrived at 3:53. The fourth and last came at 4:30, the beginning of the second call to Asr prayers.

p. 228: adumbration: “shade” (*Webster’s Third*).

p. 228: full *niqaab*: A veil which covers the entire face.
See the 8.133 note for the differences among the three types of veils mentioned in the novel.

p. 228: recession: retreat or moving back to a previous point.

pp. 228-29: SECTION 5

p. 228: “When the *porte d’entrée* swung open”: The action jumps forward to Foucin’s Kouba apartment, taking up at the end of section 2, p. 223.
Foucin and his sons had performed Maghrib prayers at a nearby mosque from 7:24 – 7:39. Accompanied by two neighbors, they return to the apartment at 7:43.

p. 228: *porte d’entrée*: French for “front door.”

p. 228: *djellaba*: a hooded long-sleeved robe worn by some Algerian men.

p. 228: *sonnette*: French for “doorbell.”

p. 228: “continued to [ring] over the ensuing forty minutes: From 7:45 to 8:25.

p. 228: “inner ear”: A poetic, not a medical, allusion.

In his essay, “Wordsworth and the Music of Sound,” John Hollander contends that in his mature poetry Wordsworth suggests that through an “inner ear” the poet transforms sound images into symbols, thereby elevating auditory perceptions to the sublime.

Remy uses the “inner ear” image in that sense, to suggest that over the babble in the sitting room, his “inner ear” was able to cull those comments about Foucin

which show that his neighbors have come to mythologize Foucin and his wife: They praise how they help the poor and live humbly.

- p. 228: “our President Fool”: Chadli Bendjedid, president of Algeria from 1979 to 1992. See the 6.87 note, N6:16, for his military and political career.
- p. 228: Tawfek: As indicated on p. 221, Foucin’s first name.
- p. 228: ““stately pleasure-dome””: From Coleridge’s “Kubla Khan”: “In Xanadu did Kubla Khan / A stately pleasure-dome decree” (1-2).
- p. 228: ““four naked walls””: From Wordsworth’s “The Ruined Cottage”: “I found a ruined house, four naked walls / That stared upon each other” (31-32).
- p. 228: “to live beneath his means”: An obvious pun on “live above one’s means.”
- p. 228: Aurès: The mountainous region of northeastern Algeria which is the homeland of the country’s Berbers.
Foucin and his wife Mona are from the region.
- p. 228: tender: “one that tends; one that takes care of a person or thing” (*Webster’s Third*).
Here it carries, as usual, the connotation of the adjective “tender.”
The speaker means that Foucin is the one who luxuriates in taking care of the “needy.”
- p. 228: “*plus’s* will land you in the *minus*”: A paradoxical play upon a realistic (not mysterious) aspect of *plus*, that too much of this positive quality will have negative consequences.
- p. 228: “the call . . . *salaat*”: The summons to midevening prayers (Isha’) came at 8:31. The prayers themselves lasted from 8:51 – 9:06.
- p. 228: *odit es-sofra*: As defined in the text, Arabic for “dining room.”
- p. 228: “Mohisen’s adamant ‘No *akl* you *bas*’”: Said by the Zaracova Beach attendant on 6.97.

- p. 229: Châteauroux: The city in central France where Marie's sister Caroline lived. Marie was staying with her while Remy supposedly was in Canada. See the 2.16 note for a description of the city.
- p. 229: "From Isha' eleven returned": With Isha' completed, at 9:10 Foucin and his sons, now accompanied by eleven male neighbors, returned to the apartment.
- p. 229: "the panorama of the feast": The description of the foods is thematically important for they invoke Remy's Algerian heritage past (despite the irony of his denying the temptation of this past), with which he struggles throughout this chapter.
- p. 229: "a silver ewer, pouring a trickle over each guest's right hand": Once the guests are seated, the Muslim host traditionally passes among them pouring rosewater over each guest's right hand. More usual in the 1980s when I was working in the Middle East, this pre-meal ritual is performed not by the host but by each guest, who stops at a lavatory outside the dining room to wash his hands and douse them with rosewater.
- p. 229: courgette: "a small squash" (online *Free Dictionary*).
- p. 229: "last Ramadan feast with his father and mother": In 1961, the first day of Ramadan corresponded with the sixteenth of February. Its last day 30 Ram. corresponded with Mar. 18, which would thus be the last Ramadan meal Omar took with his parents since on Apr 13, 1961, Omar (Remy) was flown out of Algiers.
- p. 229: "thumb, index, and medius": Arabs use only these three fingers of the right hand in eating.
- p. 229: index: short for "index finger."
- p. 229: medius: "the middle finger" (*Webster's Third*).
- p. 229: "with the cutlery provided only to him": During the hundreds of meals at which I was a guest during my seventeen years in the Middle East and North Africa, never once did the host not provide me or any other Westerner at the feast with a spoon and a knife. (I was never provided with a fork, that I recall.)
- p. 229: panaché: "comprised of several foods" (*Webster's Third*), a fitting description of couscous. The Algerian foods, even those given in Arabic, are described in the text, so no repetitious footnoting is needed.
- p. 229: "no Mohisen here as 'teacher'": See 7.111 where Remy, Foucin speculated, asked Mohisen to "teach me the native manner of eating."

p. 229: *salata*: “salad” in Arabic.

p. 229: sentient: capable of feeling or perception.

Yet the word evokes the idea of the “sentience” of inanimate objects which Poe presents in “The Fall of the House of Usher” (the first paragraph after the story’s poem “The Haunted Palace”).

Just as the stones, the plants, and the water about the Usher mansion were “evidence of [a] sentience” which had more life than the Ushers themselves, so Remy’s “nails [psychologically] ached,” and he speaks of the “sensual rapture” that “the spoon” must be experiencing

p. 229: “sweets, since it is Ramadan”: Desserts are served at the end of an Algerian meal only in Ramadan. In the other months, a selection of fruits ends the repast.

p. 229: “The meal was ended”: I found that the Arab meal lasts around twenty-five minutes. There is almost no over-dinner conversation since total attention is focused on the food.

Guests leave when they wish, some, I have seen, after just ten minutes.

According my chronology, the meal of Foucin’s begins at 9:13 and the last diners leave for the sitting room at 9:45.

p. 229: “the father and his sons withdrew . . . to dine hastily on the leftovers”: From 10:00 to 10:15.

p. 229: *invités*: French for “guests (male).”

p. 229: “the eleven . . . departed”: At 10:20.

p. 229: *étranger*: French for “foreigner.”

p. 229: “each other’s measure”: As mentioned in the p. 221 note above, see 1.3, the first reference in the novel of characters taking “measure” of each other.

The note to this page, N1:11, discusses the Biblical source of the concept (Matt. 7.2), which Shakespeare incorporated into the title and a speech (5.1.419) of *Measure for Measure*.

Foucin and Remy are left alone, and begin the conversation which was reported in section 1, pp. 219-21.

pp. 229-31: SECTION 6

p. 229: “As Remy reentered Bendari’s”: This section opens just after the end of section 4 (228).

Remy is back at Bendari’s (4:52), having left the Belmazoir resident at 4:32 and walked slowly to the café.

[Click to return to page 229 of text.](#)

p. 229: *vieillard*: In French, “an old man.” Remy had seen an old man sitting in Bendari’s yesterday, probably hoping that someone would invite him to their post-fast feast (13.211).

- p. 230: constituent: As a noun, “an essential part” or “component” “which along with others serves in making up a complete whole or unit” (*Webster’s Third*), although the word “stray” here gives it a personified implication.
- p. 230: “I’m going to reap what I’ll sow”: See p. 225 and its note above.
- p. 230: “his preface, which you gentlemanly censured . . . to some hot-panting with this ‘high-heeled streetwalker’”: On p. 225, apparently quoting Mohammed verbatim, Belghiche said that the youth had opened his reap-sow image with two inappropriate references to Allah, which Remy had courteously not repeated.
- p. 230: “hot-panting”: A shortened form of “hot-panting sex.”
Although a Google search uncovered “hot-panting” or “hot, panting” occurring as a present participle, I did not find it employed as a verbal, Belghiche’s use of it here.
- p. 230: delight in voyeurism: On 4.63, Mohammed spoke of “the inherent delights of voyeurism.”
- p. 230: “his American ‘*mon ami*’: “my friend.” Here the phrase, as elsewhere, has the connotation of a compound noun meaning “special friend” or “best friend.”
A literal translation produces a shaky grammatical construction: “his American ‘my friend.’”
I base this usage on experience since my Moroccan friends would frequently address me as “You are my ‘*mon ami*,’” literally “you are my ‘my friend.’”
The tautological phrase is used by Ballard on 1:14 (“his ‘*mon ami*,’” or literally “his my friend”); by the French lieutenant on 3.43; twice by the Remy’s French embassy liaison on 5.76 and 77 (“one *mon ami*” or literally “one my friend”); later in this chapter, 14.237 (“a ‘*mon ami*’” or “a ‘my friend’”); and on 20.335, “your ‘*mon ami*.”
- p. 230: “*Shokran!*”: Arabic for “Thank you!”
- p. 230: clou: “the point of chief interest or attraction” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 230: “a plussed yes”: As a verb, “plus” means “to add something to” or “to increase” (*Webster’s Third*).
The connotation here is an “intensified yes.”
- p. 230: “unmuted”: “not muted” (*Merriam Webster Online Dictionary*).
- p. 230: “the twenty-fifth of February”: Thus Foucin read the Feb. 23rd message from Ballard to Mohammed about the meeting at Zaracova and Belmazoir’s Feb. 24th answer, conveyed by Fouad, confirming that he would be there.
- p. 230: “Paralleling earlier occasions”: Foucin implies that he had used Bendari’s

notebook to keep track of Mohammed. At this point, 4:56 p.m., Remy does not pursue how long Foucin had used the notebook entries.

In the inverted structure of this chapter of the novel, this information has already been revealed to the reader.

On p. 221, at 10:41 – 10:42 p.m. in the sitting room at the Kouba apartment, Foucin tells Remy that “at a distance” he stayed informed about Mohammed’s activities, adding, “To substantiate how lofty my remove, I wasn’t abreast of Rue Toumi, Bendari’s notebook having no reference to it.”

- p. 230: “stone-hued *burnoose* . . . *gandoura*”: a hooded cloak worn over a sleeveless, hoodless robe.
- p. 230: “in the drive from Arris”: Accompanied by his wife, Foucin drove her aunts to their village Arris, leaving yesterday afternoon (Monday). They slept over and on the day of this chapter (Tuesday) were supposed to be back in Algiers in the afternoon (13.208).
On 14.221-22 and 231, Foucin reveals aspects of the trip and its return, again reported out of chronological order.
- p. 230: “two-month local salary”: Remy had spent 1,730 dinars (around \$173). See the 12.193 note, N12:18, on the minimum monthly salary in Algeria in 1988.
On the next page, Foucin will explain how he knew about Remy’s activities that day, including his large purchase of flowers for Mme. Belmazoir.
- p. 230: “Did you reserve a modicum for transport from Bab el Oued?”: The commissioner also seems to know that Remy had not requested his taxi driver Nemmiche to wait for him.
That Remy suspected Foucin or one of his agents would approach him was hinted on his keeping back twenty dinars: “He reinserted twenty for a taxi, there being no assurance Bendari’s would produce a ride back to the Al-Nigma” (227).
Furthermore, on reentering Bendari’s, he notices “the single client close to the front” and through a glance recognizes the person is not the old man from the day before, but is dressed in a “stone-hued *burnoose*” (229-30), the same color of the cloak which he saw Foucin donning on 7.104.
- p. 230: “*douceur*”: a “compliment” in its archaic meaning. *Webster’s Third* so designates it, although as a synonym for “compliment” “*douceur*” is used in *Sense and Sensibility* by that most non-archaic stylist Jane Austen.
Incidentally she, like *Webster’s Third*, does not italicize it as does *Webster’s New World* in giving a variant definition.

- p. 231: “serving double duty”: The compliment thanks Belghiche for his past service and Foucin for his proffered service.
- p. 231: “in the mode of Arab men, hooking his right arm”: Remy returns the compliment accorded him by Foucin on 13.204, where the commissioner “hooked his arm in Remy’s.”
This custom of Muslim men walking arm in arm is common in both the Middle East and North Africa.
Also see 7.110, where Foucin “hooked” arms with Mohisen.
- p. 231: “He had been sent as an insider and received as an outsider”: The subsection begins at around 5:03, just after Remy has gotten in Foucin’s car.
Remy begins to examine his dual existence: He was sent as an insider (an Algerian), but had been received as an outsider (a Belgian investigator).
- p. 231: “bind”: The informal meaning of its noun form is “a difficult or restrictive situation.” A formal meaning is “anything that binds,” fastens, links, or connects.
It appears in the title of chap. 13, “Binding with Briars.” There it is affiliated with a key word of the novel, “bond.”
- p. 231: “ash heap”: To emphasize his mourning and humiliation, Job “sat down among the ashes” (2.8), or as some Biblical commentators state, on a heap of ashes or a pile of cinders, probably outside of his village.
The expression is used in the phrase “the ash heap of history,” a political term, first used by Leon Trotsky, to designate a figurative place where a person or an ideology is relegated when it is marginalized in history.
A third instance influenced my wording, the closing stanza of “The Circus Animals’ Desertion,” where Yeats states that all “masterful [poetic] images” “began” in “a mound of refuse” (33-34).
All three, I felt, were applicable to Remy’s situation.
Like an incognizant Job being tested by God, Remy was a guinea pig used by the French, one of their many experiments to quell the insurrection.
The suffering or fate of Job, Remy, or the guinea pig was of no consequence since the experiment was all. Unlike Job who was ultimately “plucked” from the ash heap, Remy sees himself as being pulled from it only to be thrust back onto it.
From a political perspective, Remy seemingly desires the anonymity of Le Puy; that is, he wishes to be relegated to “the ash heap of history” because it was a political struggle which had destroyed his first or Algerian family (the “I”) and suddenly it reappears to threaten his second or French family (the “foreign I”).
However, these references may be reversed with his early life in Algeria being viewed as “foreign” and his later life with Marie as being his true life.
Finally, like Yeats’s speaker, Remy step by step seems to be coming to the realization that he must confront the two worlds which he straddles by throwing himself onto “the mound of refuse,” the situation he finds in his “native” land, whose people still are apparently being maneuvered by outside powers.

His early resolution on 4.52, “I’ll do what I’ve been told to do [in Algiers] . . . and what *I* have come to do, and promptly speed home to Marie,” is still his principal strategy, but with the discovery of how Mohammed and Houda were tricked not his only one—at this point of his musing since Remy vacillates frequently.

p. 231: “I, foreign I”: The title of the chapter. See N14:1-2 for the importance of this pun on the expression an “eye for an eye.”

As noted in the discussion of the title, a similar play upon the phrase will be used on 16.265: “This ‘Ai-ai-ai!’ for an ‘Ai-ai-ai!’ wearies.”

“Ai” is an interjection expressing sorrow, pain, pity, etc.

p. 231: “struggled to acknowledge it as ‘native soil’”: Remy’s native ties are strengthened by his discovery of the relationship between the trick played on Mohammed and Houda by an American and that perpetrated on him and Noura by a Frenchman.

Thus connecting incidents become symbols of the colonialism of France and the neocolonialism of the U.S., a political theme of the novel in which Muslim North Africans have been and continue to be exploited by Western Christians, who often regard the former as less than human.

p. 231: jangling: the ringing of the telephone in Foucin’s apartment.

p. 231: “Kamal with the message I should ring M. Belghiche”: The following chronology, presented piecemeal on this page, explains how Foucin found out about Remy’s discovery from the second account books kept by Belghiche:

3:00 – 3:05: As soon as Remy left Bendari’s for the Belmazoirs’ residence, Fouad called Foucin’s office and spoke with Ghouraf, who contacted Foucin at his home.

The commissioner, who had just returned from Arris, called Fouad, who confessed that he had failed to mention that he kept a duplicate ledger of telephone messages. He had thought it of no importance until a foreign investigator representing Belmazoir had asked to see it. He appeared to have made some discovery from the notebook.

3:05 – 3:25: Not even changing his clothes, Foucin drives from his apartment to Bendari’s.

3:25 – 4:57: With Fouad showing him the pages on which Remy had concentrated, Foucin gradually makes the same discovery Remy had, that Ballard had been the mysterious person who had coaxed brother and sister to the Toumi apartment on Feb. 15.

Fouad also informs Foucin that Remy, after saying he was going to the Belmazoirs, indicated he may return to the café after Asr. Word about the extraordinary delivery of the flowers would have drifted to the café (c. 3:45 – 4:10), and in such detail that Foucin is able to specify to Remy how much money he had spent on them.

4:10 – 4:13: The call to Asr prayers comes. Foucin and Fouad go to the neighborhood mosque, do ablution, and perform their prayers (4:13 – 4:45).

4:45 – 4:52: They return to the café, where Foucin, who probably had put a neighborhood agent on Remy, receives word about the last delivery of the flowers and that Remy seems to be wending his way toward Bendari's. (If Remy had not headed for the café, Foucin would have had a backup plan to intercept him.)

- p. 231: Rue Mohammed Tazairt . . . Taleb: Tazairt is Bab el Oued's major easterly street leading toward the sea. Foucin reaches it at 5:06.
They drive down it until they reach the intersection where Tazairt becomes Blvd. Abderahmane Taleb (5:10).
- p. 231: ostend: A transitive verb meaning to "show clearly, exhibit, manifest" (*Webster's Third*).
- p. 231: "Again, you seem to know my country": See 6.98, where Foucin expressed surprise that Remy would know the beach attendant Mohisen would fondle the items left in his care.
- p. 231: "the speedier coastal boulevard": Boulevard Amara Mohammed Rachid. Not mentioned in the text, but Remy's taxi ride to Zaracova Beach in chap. 6 would have taken this boulevard.
- p. 231: "Avenue Mohammed Boubela": One of the southerly streets of a major artery from Bab el-Oued to Remy's destination, the Al-Nigma.
See the p. 222 note above for more details about Boubela.
At 5:16, Foucin turns off of Taleb onto Boubela.
- p. 231: "did not the American outmaneuver you, in wooing their . . . regard": Remy is responding with a mild gibe to Foucin's previous statement that Ballard maneuvered ("finessed") Mohammed and Houda into the Toumi apartment confrontation.
- p. 231: "the demand that the sister must be saved": Foucin emphasized, "She must be saved!" (13.208). Remy recalled his words on 13.215.
- p. 231: "'But little do you know of the Belmazoirs and me": The closing sentence of chap. 7, p. 117.
- p. 231: "Islam forbidding such moral genetic inheritance": This wording paraphrases Foucin's assertion on 7.116, where he says he had cause to hate old Belmazoir, but not his son or grandson.
Foucin asserts that such hatred is forbidden in Islam, and he quotes from Prophet Mohammed's Last Sermon: "'Beware, no one committing a crime is responsible for it but he himself. Neither the son is responsible for the crime of his father, nor the father responsible for the crime of his son,' our Prophet—Peace be upon Him—adjures."
This translation is from Ibn Hanbal's Hadith *Musnad*, the most complete Sunni

text of this sermon.

See the 7.116 note, “Beware,” N7:41, for a more complete analysis of the “sins of the father not being inherited by a son” and a list of passages from the Qur’an dealing generally with this concept.

- p. 231: “the mysterious *plus*, the understood meaning”: As noted in the commentary on the first use of this phrase, 13:209 (N13:31), in *The Principles of Psychology*, Vol. 1, chap. 12, William James uses the term “to explain a psychological, “representative function” whereby an image received by the mind comes to “represent” an abstract or universal concept; that is, through a “mysterious” addition (“*plus*”) the image takes on an “understood meaning.”
Section 6 ends at 5:17 with Remy’s comment about “the mysterious *plus*.”

pp. 231-35: SECTION 7

- p. 231: “Staring into the bumper-to-bumper traffic”: This section continues where the previous one broke off. The time is 5:18, and they are still on Avenue Mohammed Boubela.
- p. 231: reshift: to “shift again or anew” (found only in the online *Wiktionary*).
- p. 231: “a new, more impassioned ‘mysterious *plus*’”: Foucin perceives that Remy is proposing a concept whereby “hating” becomes “not hating” (the Qur’anic insistence or the simple “mysterious *plus*”) which in turn becomes “loving.”
In the “new [equally mysterious], more impassioned” addition to the equation, hate > not hating > love: Negative hatred becomes apathetic notice which becomes positive bonding, as when Foucin avers that the “guilt . . . transferred to me . . . bonding me to them.”
In essence, Foucin concludes that in asserting “not hating is not the mirror of loving,” Remy is presenting an extension of the idea: That out of hate love can develop.
- p. 231: “her fifteen and him eight”: The ages of Houda and Mohammed when their father committed suicide.

- p. 232: Lycée Emir Abdelkader: On 12.199, Ghazi said that one of the meetings of Ballard and Houda took place “near” this high school.
See its note, N12:33.
- p. 232: “his parent’s execution”: See p. 220 for Foucin’s account of the torture and death of old Belmazoir, which occurred in early Feb. 1974.
- p. 232: “he began to besot himself nightly”: See p. 220 and its notes, N14:8, for a more detailed account of Ahmed Belmazoir’s conduct after learning of his father’s death.
- p. 232: “a job in Oran”: Oran is the major city in northwestern Algeria.
On pp. 236-37, Foucin will reveal that the first name of the alias he assumed during his friendship with Ahmed was Mabrouk, a writer from Oran.
Thus for Ahmed there would be no initial suspicion when his friend told him that he had secured a job in Oran and would be leaving Algiers.
At this point Remy does not know that detail.
- p. 232: “Four years he brooded. Then in March ’78 he stepped off a cliff”: From Feb. 1974, when Ahmed received news that his father had been murdered, to March 1978 when he committed suicide, Ahmed brooded over his responsibility in causing his father’s death.
Foucin admits that he “misjudged” Ahmed, who, he believed, was too much an egotist to be upset by the death of a father with whom he was seemingly never on good terms.
- p. 232: “guilt”: In human relationships Foucin seems to feel that “guilt” is a necessity, at least in this situation for it was “transferred to me . . . bonding me to them.”
- p. 232: *le mot juste*: In French “the right word.”
- p. 232: “did ‘not stay for an answer’”: From the opening sentence of Bacon’s essay, “Of Truth”: “‘What is truth?’ said jesting Pilate; and would not stay for an answer.”
Bacon paraphrases John 18:38: “Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he said this, he went out among the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault.”
- p. 232: “I was fifteen”: Foucin begins this narration at 5:22.
- p. 232: “3 July ’62 . . . *yu-yu-yus* . . . French tricolor . . . one-hundred-and-thirty-two years”: On July 1, 1962, the referendum in Algeria on self-determination was approved by 98.2% of the voting, the Algerian colons having boycotted the election.
On July 3, French President de Gaulle declared Algeria independent, and the provisional government of the FLN took control of the government.

On that day the first troops of the ALN marched into Algiers to the cheers of the Muslim populace, particularly the *yu-yu-yus* (piercing ululation; see note 9.176) of the women.

Contrary to my text (and I apologize for synopsising the events), the French tricolor in Algiers was not lowered until July 4 because the first act of the provisional government was to declare that the next day July 5 would be the official Independence Day, since it was on that date in 1830 that French troops had entered a defeated Algiers (Horne, *Savage War*, p. 529).

In an earlier version of the text, I described here the two-month internecine fighting among Algerian factions, finally halted by the women of Algiers who, with their babies in their arms, placed themselves between the warring group and cried, "Bread, not war. Enough, seven years of it [war], enough."

The Algerian war lasted seven years, eight months, and five days, from Nov. 1, 1954 to July 5, 1962.

- p. 232: "family's bones": On 6.99, Foucin told Remy that after he had captured the last great traitor, "I'll plunge into a new search, for the bones of my father, my mother, my six siblings."
- p. 232: "unreachable mirage": The traffic jam is symbolic and parallels Foucin's narrative.
For him the revelation of January renders his resolution of July a "mirage."
- p. 232: "dull opiate[d]": From Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale": "Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains" (3).
- p. 232: "In January": 1963.
- p. 232: "one of which": Foucin's wording dehumanizes the "Seven Devils."
- p. 232: "I had conducted to safety, abandoning my dying father and the corpses of my family": See 7.116.
- p. 232: "As far south as the Algerian Sahara would let me, I fled": Ironically, Foucin seems unaware that the night before Medlin also made such a flight to the Sahara (13.216).
- p. 232: "redemption in self-torture": The theme of redemption is central to the novel. See the 3.41, 4.58, 6.99, 8.123, and 12.190 notes (N3:19-20, N4:21, N6:50, N8:14 and 18, and N12:12) where it is discussed.
At the end of the notes on chap. 18, N18:72-74, the theme of redemption will be discussed in the sin/repentance/redemption pattern of the novel.
- p. 232: "the human 'halo'": Foucin would mean no religious significance here since the halo does not occur in Islamic art. In fact, Muslim art seldom depicts human beings because it is feared by many of the faithful that the depiction of the human

form is a form of idolatry and therefore a sin against Allah. (Despite this constraint, a few human portrayals on artwork not intended for public display can be found in every era of Islamic art.)

In using “the human ‘halo’” image, Foucin unknowingly suggests “the ragged circle” used at four points in the novel.

For a discussion of the circle, see the 2.33 note, N2:62-63.

p. 232: “Sûreté Nationale Academy”: After independence in 1962, the headquarters of the French Foreign Legion in Sidi Bel Abbès in northwestern Algeria became the country’s police academy. In the novel, Foucin entered it in 1965.

p. 232: Chairman Boumediène: Si Houari Boumediène, then the Defense Minister, headed the bloodless coup that in June 1965 overthrew Algeria’s President Ahmed Ben Bella.

As Chairman of the Revolutionary Council, he was the de facto ruler of Algeria from then until December 1976, at which time he was formally elected President, serving until his sudden death on December 27, 1978.

See the 3.38 note, N3:9-10, for Boumediène’s career before independence.

p. 232: “green eyes, reddish hair, and white wisp of his moustache”: Coincidentally the colors of the Algerian flag.

p. 232: “evil eye”: According to the Hadiths (Al-Bukhari 5048 and Muslim 2187-88), the Prophet Mohammed stated that the “evil eye is real”: Certain people are able to harm another person merely by looking at the individual.

The evil eye, according to the Hadiths, can be warded off by reading the Qur’an, prayers, and (for women) clothing that largely conceals the face.

Amulets were reportedly forbidden by the Prophet (Al-Saheehah 492), although certain Muslims wear such talismans to protect them from the evil eye, contending that in this Hadith the Prophet was addressing those who wore amulets with Qur’anic verses on them.

p. 232: heptad: a group of seven.

p. 232: Waldenström’s macroglobulinemia (WM): A rare and untreatable cancer caused by a sudden proliferation of white blood cells. After unsuccessful treatment in Moscow, in Nov. 1978, Boumediène was flown back to Algiers, where he slipped into a coma. Thirty-nine days later he died (Dec. 27).

He is the second most famous person who died of WM. French President Georges Pompidou died of it in 1974.

The time of Foucin’s narration to this point is 5:30.

p. 232: *embouteillage*: French for “traffic jam.”

- p. 233: “‘floated bribe’ will raise ‘flooded corpses’”: See 4.57.
- p. 233: “or those about to be corpses”: The seven traitors.
- p. 233: “Twenty-five thousand Algerian francs dead and double that alive”: The first mention of these figures occurs on 2.30. Its footnote, N2:55, explains that the 1963 bounty on each of the seven traitors would be the equivalent of \$2,500 (dead) and \$5,000 (alive), a sufficiently enticing sum at that time.
- p. 233: “the Algerian community of south France”: The Muslim Algerians who helped the French and were able to flee Algeria before the FLN assumed power mainly settled in southern France.
Their number, which is given by Foucin on p. 235, is “circa ninety thousand,” but see its note below, N14.45.
- p. 233: Noredine Ghozali: The surnames of all seven traitors are given in the text, 2.33, but an earlier 2.17 note “expired” (N2.12) gives a fuller account of them. According to my chronology, Ghozali was the second oldest.
Born in 1913, he was fifty-four when he was hacked to death by his prostitute in early 1968.
- p. 233: postcoitally: after coitus (*Wiktionary*; only the adjective form is given in *Webster’s Third*).
- p. 233: Toulon: A seaport in southeastern France on the Mediterranean.
- p. 233: “hatchet . . . blunted”: So that its first blow would stun but not kill.
- p. 233: sanguine: “hopeful or optimistic” (for Ghozali hoped that the information would forestall the progress of his decapitation), but also in its archaic sense of “sanguinary.”
- p. 233: Monte Carlo casino: the town in Monaco, a famous gambling resort.
- p. 233: Jamal Zbiri: Born in 1917, he was fifty when he died in 1967, according to the letter from his family.
I modeled the details of his death on that of the French poet Arthur Rimbaud, whose legs were also amputated.
- p. 233: “mortified”: shamed; humiliated (to have had such a despicable family member), and its rare meaning, “gangrenous,” to suggest that the family mentally agonizes over this treason just as Zbiri had physically suffered from the gangrene which led to the amputation (of his leg).
- p. 233: obsecrate: An archaic transitive verb meaning “to entreat or beseech (someone for something).”

[Click to return to page 233 of text.](#)

- p. 233: “As they neared Place des Martyrs . . . its erection some seven years ago”: Monument of the Martyrs (*Maquam E'chahid*, in Arabic) with its surrounding Place de Martyrs or Martyrs Square (*Sahat ech-chouhada*, in Arabic) was opened on July 5, 1982, the twentieth anniversary of Algerian independence, nearly seven years before the events of this chapter. It was designed and constructed by a Canadian architectural firm.
See 9.142, N9:19-20. Martyrs Square will be the setting of a crucial scene of the last chapter of the novel, 21.356.
- p. 233: esplanade: A level, open space of paved ground.
- p. 233: cenotaph: A monument honoring a person or persons whose remains are elsewhere.
- p. 233: apical: of, at, or constituting the apex.
- p. 233: “leafy crown”: The leafy head of a tree.
- p. 233: “the lately fashionable, ‘eternal flame’”: The eternal flame on the grave site of President John F. Kennedy in 1963 captured the attention (and envy) of various national leaders.
Thereafter eternal flames proliferated at a pace rivaling nuclear arsenals and every aging national leader, in planning his (and a few her) funeral, incorporated an eternal flame.
- p. 233: “midribs”: The central vein, or rib, of a leaf, usually running from the stem to the apex.
The midribs are quite prominent in the concrete structure of the Martyrs monument.
- p. 233: “gymnastic poses”: In an earlier version, I had Remy elfishly comment to himself, “If this calisthenics borders on disrespect, the Casbah’s nickname for the patriotic commemoration is even more so: ‘The Banana!’ (because the monument looks more like the peeled skin of this fruit than the fronds of a palm tree.)
- p. 233: *sawm*: In Arabic “the fast” of Ramadan.
- p. 233: Abdullah Morcel, compliments of Ghozali’s casino burbling”: The third of the seven great traitors brought to Foucin’s justice. Before dying, the first traitor had said that he had seen Morcel at the Monte Carlo casino.
- p. 233: “‘enforc[ing]’ of ‘the censure of [that] hellish villain; / The time, the place, the torture’”: In *Othello* 5.2.378-80, Lodovico orders Cassio to have Iago tortured to death: “To you, Lord Governor, / Remains the censure of this hellish villain, / The time, the place, the torture. O, enforce it!”

p. 233: “the extant quartet”: The remaining or still existing four Great Traitors.

p. 233: “‘wrought’ by one ‘perplex’d in the extreme’”: The second quote from *Othello* 5:2.355-56, where Othello speaks of himself as “one not easily jealous but, being wrought, / Perplex’d in the extreme.”

Wrought: worked upon or worked into a frenzy; however, it is used by Foucin to mean “formed” or “fashioned.”

Perplex’d: distraught.

This quote was earlier used by the lieutenant on 3.48.

- p. 234: “Ten years earlier”: The torture of this family took place during Ramadan 1958 “ten years” before the capture of Morcel in 1968.
- p. 234: paras: French paratroopers.
- p. 234: Ferhat: The first name of the Algerian teenager whose family had been slain in a horrible fashion by the French paras using information passed on by Morcel.
- p. 234: *Wilaya IV*: The FLN divided Algeria into six provinces and one autonomous zone (Algiers). *Wilaya IV* encircled Algiers.
See 2.21 and its note, N2:28, for additional information on *IV*.
- p. 234: “sucked their seven penises”: The number seven occurs again to designate the French torturers of the thirteen year-old Algerian girl.
See 3.43, for the seven rapists of “Noura.”
- p. 234: “Ramadan refect—”: This defilement occurred during the Holy Month of Ramadan. In 1958, Ramadan lasted from March 21 to April 19. Easter in 1958 occurred on April 6. In my chronology, I placed the incident on Apr. 5. It parallels the seizing of Noura on Dec. 5, 1958. Three days later Omar is forced to watch his “sister” being raped.
One of Omar’s visits to see Noura in the nunnery occurred on or near Christmas 1958, although this time is not specified in the novel.
- p. 234: “old far—”: The rash youth was forming the word “fart.”
This comic interruption of Foucin’s narrative lasts four minutes (5:38 – 5:42).
- p. 234: M. Le Grand: This epithet for Foucin was used by Mme. Bourceli (11.173) and her son Ghazi (13:201 and 205).
See their notes, N11.7 and N13.4, for a complete list of the use of this epithet and variants of it.
- p. 234: misprision: scorn; contempt.
- p. 234: rattletrap: a dilapidated old automobile.
- p. 234: “the 1989 Mercedes 300SL in Karami’s driveway”: See 13.210; however, the year is identified here.
- p. 234: “ribbonless chest”: “Ribbonless” is listed in *American Heritage Dictionary* and the online *Wiktionary* as meaning “without a ribbon.”
In Remy’s description of Foucin’s uniform on 7.103, he mentioned that Foucin wore only one tiny ribbon on its left pocket, far fewer police decorations than even his sergeant.
- p. 234: “redeeming his country’s honor”: Another instance of the redemption theme.

See the p. 232 note above, N14.39. The redemption theme will be discussed in an essay on the sin-repentance-redemption pattern in the novel at the end of the notes on chap. 18, N18:63-65.

- p. 234: “In four minutes . . . ushered them onto the coastal Boulevard “Che” Guevara”: The time is 5:48.
- p. 234: “Although he was aware of it, Remy nodded”: As the next sentence states, the French brought the family’s servants as “witnesses” of what the girl was compelled to do in order “to spread the word that the French could do to us whatsoe’er they desired.”
Thus Omar, who joined the FLN on Oct. 15, 1957 and who would not become a secret agent of the French until Dec. 8, 1958, would have heard of the atrocity.
- p. 234: refection: Food or drink taken after a period of hunger.
- p. 234: de rigueur: “according to good form or required by fashion,” the expression is used facetiously by Foucin.
- p. 234: “the flaying torture”: On 1.17, Remy said that through the media he had learned of the death of three of the great traitors, one by “flaying.”
Morcel was skinned alive as part of his torture.
- p. 234: Constantine: The major city in northeastern Algeria.
- p. 234: M. Bedjaoui: I keep in this anachronism because I was unsuccessful in locating the Algerian ambassador to France in 1968.
Mohammed Bedjaoui served in that post from 1970 to 1979, so I used him.
My Bedjaoui is entirely fictional.
- p. 234: Foreign Minister Debré: Minister of Foreign Affairs from June 1968 to June 1969, when he was named Defense Minister.
My fictional Debré in no way is meant to resemble the real Debré.
- p. 234: M. Pied-Noir: The term used to describe the European settlers in colonial Algeria. See 3.40 and its note, “black-footed,” N3:15.
Bedjaoui aligns Debré, de Gaulle, and France with colonialism since they still harbor and protect four of Algeria’s seven great traitors.
- p. 234: de Gaulle: President of France from Jan. 1959 to April 1969, so he could have so reacted to the Algerian ambassador’s late 1968 riposte, if both men were not my fictional creations.
- p. 234: “in mockery of his own retributive clip”: The speed of the car contrasts with (“mocks”) the slow pace of Foucin’s attempt to locate the four great traitors remaining and thereby achieve retribution (“punishment for evil done”).

- p. 234: “four years of nothing”: From late 1968 to the middle (not specified) of 1972.
- p. 234: “chiseled ‘rabbet’ up your sleeve”: A “rabbet” is a groove or recess cut in the edge of a board in such a way that another piece may be fitted into it to form a joint (rabbet joint).
Boumediène puns that there must be a relationship between the new (1972) initiative by Foucin and the 1968 plan of smoking out the traitors through a bounty on their heads.
The pun of having a magician with a rabbit in a hat or up a sleeve is obvious.
- p. 234: “to bond with your last”: The bonding theme is reinforced by Boumediène’s connection between the two plans.
The bonding theme throughout the novel will be summarized in the 15:253 note, N15:42-43.
- p. 234: Ozymandiasian ‘sneer’”: From Shelley’s “Ozymandias”: “whose frown, / And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command” (4-5).

- p. 235: “National Assembly . . . Palais Assemblée Nationale”: The legislative body of Algeria as translated in English and French. The time is 5:54.
- p. 235: “circa ninety thousand”: This supposed law (a fictional creation of mine) was first discussed on 2.31, where Remy’s second contact mentions the figure as ninety-one thousand, the number of the Muslim collaborators who gained exile in France just before and after Algerian independence in 1962. Concerning the figure, see its note, N2:58.
- p. 235: tergiversation: desertion or the act of abandoning something or someone.
- p. 235: “an offspring or so of the four remaining devils chose reversion . . . Ahmed, the son of [my] own personal demon [old Belmazoïr]”: Remy paraphrases himself from earlier during the drive, “To snare wily Belmazoïr my best hope was through a family member” (231).
Ahmed Belmazoïr was born in 1945 and was old Belmazoïr’s only known child before he was flown to France. Foucin was unaware if Belmazoïr, living under an alias, had sired any children in France.
- p. 235: “turned into the hotel’s driveway”: At 5:57.
- p. 235: “the four remaining devils”: old Belmazoïr, Khedda, Mahmoudany, and Omar Naaman (Remy).
- p. 235: reversion: the act of reverting or returning to a former condition; as such it is the opposite of or the anecdote to tergiversation (abandonment).

pp. 235-38: SECTION 8

- p. 235: “Taking the key from Remoune”: This scene begins at 11:16 p.m., directly after Remy finished his second conversation with Foucin in the Al-Nigma driveway.
- p. 235: “his new scheme, concocted in the driveway”: The new scheme to visit his father is not detailed in this chapter, but it is mentioned in a flashback (at 11:15, the “germ of a plan,” p. 236) and as a flash forward (at 11:43, “Remy fleshed out his plot,” p. 238).
Here he stresses that one aspect of it regarded going to see Mohammed at the prison early the next morning, that is, as quickly as possible.
- p. 235: praenomen and cognomen: first name and family name. On p. 220, at 10:30 in the Kouba sitting room Foucin had reported that the tortured old Belmazoïr had screamed, “Omar Naaman!”
And as the ensuing flashback will reveal, at 11:06 in the hotel driveway Remy himself identified “Baby” as “Omar Naaman.”

- p. 235: “roughly five hours earlier”: Remy and Foucin spoke in the driveway of the hotel two times: from 5:57 to 6:10 p.m. and 11:05 – 11:15 p.m.
- p. 235: “*De novo*”: The Latin phrase means “once more; again; anew.”
This begins Remy’s flashback account of the second conversation in the driveway.
- p. 235: “‘And the remaining two devils?’ asked Remy . . . ‘Three,’ Foucin rectified”: Remy means the two (traitors five and six) whom Foucin said he had brought to justice, but Foucin thinks that Remy has forgotten that there were three traitors left beyond those four whose death or execution he had discussed earlier.
- p. 235: Bachir Khedda: On 2.33, he is identified as the second youngest of the seven traitors. According to my chronology, he was born in 1935 and, as mentioned three paragraphs down, was terminated by Foucin and his agents in what was designed to look like a car accident in Nice in early 1985 (“four years back”).
On 7.103, Foucin said that he used a charwoman’s disguise in locating Khedda, described there as the “fifth devil.”
- p. 235: Yahia Mahmoudany: The oldest of the seven great traitors—he was born in 1907—he proposed the bond between the traitors (2.32-33).
The description of what happened to him begins five paragraphs below.
Foucin says that Remy was “aware it was in February” since he had told him that he was in France tracking down the sixth traitor (Mahmoudany) “through the middle of February” and thus was not cognizant of Houda’s meetings with Ballard (221).
For a list of the traitors and their fates, see the 2.17 note, “expired.” N2:12.
- p. 235: “‘Omar . . . Omar Naaman,’” Remy replied, aggrieved that he had to throw out his own name as if it were a stranger’s”: Another signal that Remy has not put behind him his Algerian past.
- p. 235: “the bond’s seal”: A seal both “closes” and “confirms or authenticate.”
The capture of Omar Naaman will close Foucin’s quest to capture the seven and will confirm that he has fulfilled his pledge or bond.
- p. 235: “my family’s bones”: Foucin said that he had just begun this search when in January 1963 the names of the seven traitors were revealed.
After a period of retreat, he emerged with a mission—to track down the seven traitors—which he had to complete before he could return to his principal one, to search for his family’s bones.
See p. 232 and its note, N14.44.
- p. 235: “midlife-crisis”: I found some instances on the internet where the noun “midlife crisis” is used as a compound adjective, as in “midlife-crisis drunk” and “midlife-crisis car.”

However, I did not discover it so listed in any print or online dictionary.

p. 235: Nice: Mediterranean seaport in southeastern France.

p. 235: Chadli Bendjedid: The president of Algeria during the main action of the novel, 1989.
See the 14.228 note above and, as mentioned on p. 228, for a discussion of his life, the 6.87 note, N6:16.

p. 235: “PNG-ed”: A diplomatic acronym for *persona non grata* (PNG), as the text indicates.
The Latin phrase *persona non grata* is used to indicate that a member of a diplomatic staff is considered by the host country as not acceptable or welcome and must leave immediately.
Not listed in standard print or online dictionaries, the acronym as a verb occurs frequently in books on diplomacy and articles on the internet. Alternate spellings are “PNGed” and “PNG’ed.”

p. 235: “Aahm?”: Used facetiously by both Karami and Remy on 13.210-11 to mean “uh-huh” (“yes”), here Remy uses it to indicate that he does not want to answer Foucin’s question about the French but that he does desire a further account of Foucin’s narrative about the seventh traitor.

p. 235: “aware it was in February”: In the sitting room of his Kouba apartment at around 10:44, Foucin told Remy that from December 1988 through the middle of February he was out of Algeria tracking down the sixth traitor.
Since he is speaking here in the Al-Nigma driveway at 11:08, only twenty-four minutes have elapsed since Remy heard the month.
However, as early as Apr. 3, 1989, when a disguised HIV had secretly passed on the note to meet in London on Apr. 6, Remy suspected that the sixth traitor had “encountered a ‘timely or untimely succumbence’” (2.17-18).

p. 235: “kinch”: A noose (principally a Scottish term).

p. 235: ancient: An aged person.

p. 235: pendent man: Hanging or suspended.
The dangling image occurs in seven chapters of the novel: on 1.14 (Ballard); 5.79 (Omar); 6.89 (an FLN leader); and 10.158 (Remy’s father). In chap. 14, it occurs twice (Mahmoudany here and Houda on p. 238).
On 15.242, another father will be adangle, and in the last chapter, 21:356 and 363, Remy himself will be in pendency.

p. 235: em: In printing, a unit of measure the width of a capital *M* in a type font.

p. 235: “preplanted”: Not listed in either standard or online dictionaries, it is used in

[Click to return to page 235 of text.](#)

numerous articles found in a Google search.

Its meaning is “to plant or position something beforehand,” as in “preplanted explosives.”

A variant hyphenated spelling is “pre-planted.”

- p. 236: apple tree: Neither the Bible nor the Qur'an specify the apple as the fruit of the forbidden tree, but in Biblical culture the apple has become a symbol of temptation, the fall of humanity into sin, and sin itself. Not so in Islam. Therefore in selecting this tree, Foucin intended to create a symbolism which his Christian audience could relate to: Mahmoudany was tempted into committing the sin of treason (like Adam and Eve's treason to God) and thus was punished by a fall (his apple tree lynching, which Christians also would connect with Judas's hanging himself in Matt. 27:3-10). This scene also connects with the Christian crucifixion symbolism which the French passionately affixed to the death of the French corporal at the hands of the women of Tizi Aimoula on 9.135-38 and 150-52.
- p. 236: *Awgh*: This coined interjection is used in seven chapters, usually to convey unbearable pain or an aggrandizement of it: 3.43 and 50; 4.60; 11.176; here, 14.236; 15.253, 254, and 256; 17.282, 287, and 291; and 18.311 and 312.
- p. 236: "The stillness is all": A play upon two uses of this grammatical construction in Shakespeare: Hamlet's "The readiness is all" (5.2.220) and Edgar's "ripeness is all" (*Lear* 5.2.10).
- p. 236: conjoint: "simultaneous" (*Webster's Third*).
- p. 236: "Gravity—to be expected, given we have it in surplus": An example of understatement and overstatement in the same expression.
- p. 236: Mitterrand: François Mitterrand was president of France from 1981-1995. He was mentioned on 2.30 and in its note, N2.53, and will be spoken of a third time on 21.366.
- p. 236: 'keep [the killing of Mahmoudany] out of the media': Thus Remy only suspects on 2.17-18 that the sixth great traitor has died or been killed. However, on 2.29, HIV confirmed that Remy was the last one alive. See the note on p. 235, "aware," N14:54. Foucin's account of Mahmoudany's death ends at 11:10.
- p. 236: "seventh sealed": Tongue in cheek—for quickly he plays upon a baby sleeping—Remy is comparing the execution of Algeria's seven great traitors with the catastrophic depiction of the destruction of humanity in the Book of Revelation. Rev. 5-8 deals with a description of a dream which its author John had: In Heaven Christ breaks open the seven seals of an apocalyptic document. Each of the seals represents a judgment against humanity so that when a seal is broken off a cataclysmic event occurs on earth. The breaking of the first four seals releases the four horsemen who bring conquest, war, famine, and death. The unsealing of the fifth reveals the cries of the martyrs, those slain because of the "word of God" (6.9-11). The breaking of the sixth seal brings cosmic disturbances, such as earthquakes and the

destruction of the sun, moon, and stars.

When the seventh seal is opened, a “silence” falls over Heaven which lasts “about the space of half an hour” (8.1).

Seven angelic trumpeters then appear (8:1-13). The blast of the first angel’s trumpet destroys one-third of the earth’s vegetation; the second blast wipes out 1/3 of sea life; the next poisons 1/3 of fresh water on earth; the fourth, extinguishes 1/3 of the light which the earth receives from the heavens; the fifth depicts monsters tormenting those people who do not have the seal of God on their forehead; and the sixth shows the destruction of 1/3 of humanity through plague.

The seventh blast announces the beginning of God’s kingdom. This exultation is followed by lightning, thunder, an earthquake, and a hailstorm, which presumably complete the destruction of the two-thirds of the earth not previously mentioned.

I made no conscious attempt to parallel the destruction of the first six Algerian traitors with the destructive forces of the first list or the destructive consequences following the blasts of the first six trumpets.

p. 236: “‘love,’ transcending the ‘understand[ing of] all mysteries’”: From 1 Cor. 13.2: “And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I can remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing” (KJV, Amer.).

“Mysteries” and “knowledge” here refer to the deep truths connected with religion (such as the concept of the trinity) and to all the undiscovered secrets of nature.

Such religious and scientific understanding, Paul contends, is worth nothing unless love of God and for other human beings is the principle and motive of a person’s conduct.

Foucín quotes from a Biblical source, not the Qur’an, because of his audience, the Christian Remy.

As are all sacred books, the Qur’an is replete with statements about love. For instance, there are 66 allusions to *hubb* (the principal Arabic word for “love”) or derivations of it in the Qur’an. These deal with God’s love of humanity, what God does not love, and a Muslim’s love of God, of other Muslims, and of earthly things.

Foucín’s comment about “demystifying” love, even though love transcends the realm of natural and spiritual “mysteries,” is paradoxical, not redundant.

See 1.13, where Ballard quotes from the subsequent verses, 1 Cor. 13:4-7, a passage to which Leroy briefly referred on 11.179 and which Leila will cite from on 19.326.

p. 236: “the brother . . . unknowingly he binds himself to do”: Here “bind” means “to put [oneself] under an obligation (as by making, accepting, or exacting a solemn promise)” (*Webster’s Third*).

p. 236: “the sister, the oft sacrificed in our culture”: Houda is a representative of all

Muslim women. This statement suggests that Foucin, a devout Muslim, accepts that many in Islamic society subordinate and hence mistreat women.

- p. 236: “I’ll ensure no harm befalls him in prison”: Ironic because within three hours after Foucin makes this 11:12 p.m. statement something will happen to Mohammed at the prison (15.243).
- p. 236: Antwerp: The city in Belgium where Christian Lazar, Remy’s alias, lives.
- p. 236: “residual duty’s been accomplished”: Foucin seems optimistic that the discovery of his family’s bones will occur quickly.
On p. 233, he likewise displayed this attitude regarding the snaring of the seven devils: “This immediate harvest [of the first two traitors in 1968] inspired me with the prospect the bounty would be sufficient to bag the other five,” a projection which still had not been realized in 1989, twenty-one years later.
- p. 236: “with the oft fickle M. Mohammed tomorrow morning: M. Vellacott’s authorized me to moot your terms”: Remy is confident that Foucin already knows of this permission since it was received that morning at the Al-Nigma (224).
- p. 236: *sans avertissement*: French for “without warning.”
- p. 236: “I was [wrong] in conjecturing that the murderer could be nothing less than a moralist”: On 13.215, Remy speculated that the killing of Ballard might have been “*un meurtre moral*,” which would make Foucin a suspect.
Here at 11:14 p.m., Remy again admits his error, it having been seemingly dispelled by his and Foucin’s discussion in the Kouba sitting room from thirty-five minutes earlier, at 10:39 – 10:41 (220-21).
- p. 236: “with your tender to the brother”: “Tender” is used in two senses: its general meaning of “an offer or proposal made for acceptance” and a specialized meaning in Scottish law: “an offer of compromise settlement made during litigation” (*Webster’s Third*).
The adjective meaning of “tender,” as almost always when the word is used, is connoted.
- p. 236: “The germ of a plan had begun to stir”: Chronologically this is the first mention of a “plan” that Remy is devising to forward his ultimate purpose, the meeting with his father.
The context suggests that the scheme has something to do with a meeting with Houda since he requests Foucin’s help in arranging that.
Given earlier, but happening later, on p. 235, he said the scheme also involved an early meeting the next morning with Mohammed.
On p. 238, in his hotel bed, his sketchy elaboration suggests that he must make use of the commissioner’s love of Houda and that he will need Leila’s help as well.

- p. 236: “unshakable swish”: The phrase is intended to call attention to its contradiction, since “swish” means “a swinging movement,” not unlike a “shake.” Here, however, the definition of “unshakeable” is “firmly grounded” (*Webster’s Third*) or “staunch or resolute.”
- p. 236: “There I can be of no help”: After this speech, the two bid each goodbye and at 11:15 Remy enters the hotel.
- p. 236: “The farther-distanced evocation of his name . . . old Belmazoir’s piercing ‘Omar Naaman!’”: See p. 220, where the calling out of Remy’s Arabic name occurred in Foucin’s sitting room at 10:30 p.m. While he was getting ready for bed (11:20 – 11:40), Remy had thought about the second conversation with Foucin in the Al-Nigma driveway (11:05 – 11:15) where at 11:06 Remy himself had spoken his name. A longer interval is allowed for this flashback since Remy is doing other things (brushing his teeth, putting on his pajamas, etc.). The second reminiscence occurs quite quickly (11:40 – 11:43) since now he is in bed “under the ivory satin sheet” concentrating only on it.
- p. 236: *affrontement*: French for “confrontation.” Remy recognizes that this recalling of his name being shouted out is merely a segue to Foucin’s earlier narration about how he learned where in France old Belmazoir was.
- p. 236: “his bedtime story of another bedtime story”: In recalling the episode, Remy is telling himself a bedtime story of the bedtime story which Foucin had told him from 5:57 – 6:10 p.m. in their first stop in the driveway of the Al-Nigma.
- p. 236: “As I alluded, for five months, I stalked”: On p. 232, Foucin spoke of stalking Ahmed for five months, studying for what weaknesses in his character which he could exploit in obtaining where his father resided in France. Since Ahmed settled in Algiers in early Nov. 1972, Foucin stalked him until early April 1973, when he maneuvered for Ahmed to strike up a conversation with him in Bendari’s.
- p. 236: “prodigal son”: Unlike the Biblical story, Ahmed Belmazoir is fleeing from his father, old Mohammed Belmazoir, although ironically he is returning to his fatherland Algeria. For the Biblical story of the “prodigal son”—an epithet which Luke 15:11-32 does not employ—see the 4.52 note on the title of chapter, N4:1. There the use of the term to describe and characterize Remy and Mohammed Belmazoir is examined.
- p. 236: Oran: Seaport in northwestern Algeria.

- p. 237: “Islamic vow”: In Islam, alcoholic beverages or any intoxicants are forbidden and are viewed as instruments of *Shaitan* or Satan (Qur’an 5.90-91). However, according to the “law of necessity” in Islamic jurisprudence, that which is necessary makes the forbidden permissible. For example, to keep from dying of thirst, a person may drink wine or alcohol. See the earlier pp. 3.48 and 13.212 notes, N3:33-34 and N13:38, for the religious theory and the actual practice concerning alcohol in Muslim societies.
- p. 237: “few would drink with him . . . unless he was treating”: Belghiche described Mohammed as the “counterpart of his father”: Nobody would drink with him unless he “was ‘footing’ the bill” (13.213).
- p. 237: “By the end of the third month”: By the end of June 1973.
- p. 237: walk-up: An upstairs apartment in a building without an elevator.
- p. 237: boskily: in a tipsy manner. This definition is based on the adjective form “bosky” in *Webster’s Third*. *Webster’s Online Dictionary* cites the adverb form “boskily”, but notes that it is the “virtually never used adverbial inflection of the rarely used adjective *bosky*.” However, a Google search turned up several novels and articles which use “boskily” to mean “in the manner of a near-drunken person.”
- p. 237: ‘a ‘*mon ami*’: As explained above in the p. 230 note, N14:37, literally “a ‘my friend.’”
- p. 237: “A further five months”: Early December 1973.
- p. 237: “One night, December eighth—the date of your calendar, not mine, is how I always remember it”: My connection is blatant. Foucin was invited to the Belmazoirs’ apartment on Dec. 8, 1973, the same date when Omar was maneuvered by the French into becoming a traitor in 1958. That Foucin accepts that he used an unethical means to discover where the traitor Belmazoir resided is shown in his not sullyng the Hegira calendar in his remembrance of the date.
- p. 237: “his daughter, at that time ten”: Houda is born in France on July 5, 1963. July 5 is celebrated as Algeria’s Independence Day.
- p. 237: *shai*: tea.
- p. 237: “a sleepy lad of three”: Mohammed was born on Nov. 1, 1970. Nov. 1, All-Saints’ Day, was the date the Algerian War of Independence began in 1952.
- p. 237: “Uncle Mabrouk”: The first name of the alias which Foucin assumed. It is a

common male name in Algeria and means “Congratulations!” or “You are blessed by God!”

Thus Ahmed plays upon the name by saying two paragraphs earlier, “Praise God for sending you!”

p. 237: Porsche 911S: Porsche introduced the 911S in 1966. Die-cast model toys of it began to appear in the 1970s.

p. 237: ““You go far, far! ’S in””: The elided form of “It’s in” produces a crucial word of the novel, “sin.”

p. 237: Blumarn: See the two p. 219 notes on it above, “Blumarn” and “an understandable,” N14:4.

p. 237: “clambered into my lap”: The first and the last sentence of this chapter incorporate the idea of the child Mohammed climbing into Foucin’s lap.

p. 237: ““You go France for me!””: Foucin suspected that “Blumarn” was in France, but the child’s last comment establishes that here is where his grandfather lives.

p. 237: “kissed him on his left cheek”: Three gospels mention that Judas identified Christ, thus betraying him, with a kiss: Matt. 26:47-50; Mark 14:43-45; and Luke 22:47-48. John does not mention the kiss.

None indicate where he kissed Jesus although a Christian tradition arose that it was on the left cheek.

In telling Remy that this was where he kissed the child Mohammed, Foucin is conscious that the act would be subject to a betrayal interpretation.

As for Judas, he is never mentioned in the Qur’an, although certain Muslim scholars hold that it was he who was crucified in place of Jesus.

p. 237: BMW M3: The high-performance sports sedan of the Bavarian Motor Works in Munich, Bavaria, West Germany (at the time of my novel).

It was first offered to the public in 1985 and continues to be produced today (2013). Some consider it to be superior to its main competitors, the Mercedes-AMG and the Audi RS.

p. 237: *portier*: French for “doorman.”

- p. 238: release time: That point when Foucin jokes that Remy will be freed from his long narrative.
 “Release” is a central motif of the novel. On 2.33, when Remy is asked to sign a “letter of release,” he muses over the implication of the word, his release from the agony of having deserted his family.
 On 7.101, his father told him to “seek release in the ritual” of prayer. See its note, N7:3, for the symbolism of the word “release” in the novel.
 To cite some examples from that note, the DOD document containing the photograph which will be copied and placed on Ballard’s corpse had an REL (release) tag (8.126).
 On 9.140, Chabane dismisses a wedding as a “ritualistic release.”
 The word “release” will also be symbolically important on 15.256; 17.282 and 286; 18.294 (which in its immediate repetition duplicates the pattern of 2.33), 295, and 309; and 19.322 and 330.
 See
- p. 238: “a second father . . . not our father”: Ahmed identifies Foucin as “a second father” to his children, but Houda instinctively characterizes him as the opposite of “our father.”
- p. 238: “‘Who are you?’ she demanded”: This Dec. 8, 1973, question which Houda puts to Foucin she will also ask of Remy on Apr. 20, 1989 (18.298).
- p. 238: “just over four years on”: In Mar. 1978. Her father Ahmed committed suicide four years and three months after Foucin visited their apartment: the four and three, themselves symbolic numbers, total seven.
- p. 238: “cliff hanger”: The idea of Houda hanging over a cliff becomes an end-of-the-chapter literary cliffhanger, which will be quickly clarified on 15.241-42.
- p. 238: “With Foucin’s past”: The flashback over at 11:43, this subsection lasts only two minutes, from 11:44 – 11:46.
- p. 238: round out: As a transitive verb, the expression means “to bring to completion or fullness; finish out” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 238: “‘too much’ he ‘doth protest’”: From Queen Gertrude’s comment on the speech of *The Mousetrap’s* Player Queen in *Hamlet*: “The lady doth protest too much, methinks” (3.2.228).
- p. 238: “And I must use it”: Foucin’s weakness, which is his father-like love of Houda.
- p. 238: “‘look her up,’ ‘feel her out’”: “Look up” is informal for “to call on.”
 “Feel out” means “to find out someone’s attitude by an indirect approach.”
 Yet here, in combination, the phrases have a nasty, almost sexual, implication, as in “feel [a woman] up” or fondle her private parts.

- p. 238: “the faint and undeveloped image of a dangling Houda”: Two paragraphs above Foucin had described Houda as a “cliff hanger.”
- p. 238: “what he had previously urged himself to say, but, of course, could not”: In the opening two sentences of this chapter, at 10:20 p.m. in Foucin’s sitting room, Remy thought that he “felt a need to confide” that the child Mohammed had also been in his lap.
However, Remy realized that he “could not” since it would expose himself as Omar Naaman, the last traitor.
- p. 238: “climbed down into my lap and up into yours”: A rephrasing of the sentence which opened the chapter, “So he climbed from my lap into yours.”
For the scene where he “climbed down into my [Remy’s] lap,” see 2.32: “With a bound the *enfant* thumped into Remy’s lap.”
For the scene where he “climbed . . . up into yours [Foucin’s],” see p. 237: Mohammed “cast aside the toy and clambered into my lap.”