

Chapter Nineteen

HAMLET DIES DIGRESSING

His transcendent concern was to relieve her guilt. Instead, positioned a half-pace from the doorway to the shed, he began by asking, “May I page you a taxi?”

They had been left behind by the funeral, she barred by her sex and Remy by “my supposed religion.” Unlike him, she had not ventured out to see it off: how the many gushed forth, squeezing around the sides and front of the casket, now draped with the green velvet, aspiring to delight Foucin, and how the procession, come to a halt by the end of the first minute, reembarked with only two bearing.

On the far side of the bed, she still wore the white three-pointed lace veil which obscured her lower face. “Thank you. No, the house must be cleaned. Mme. Foucin will return shortly. It’s our custom. Yesterday we did it for her mother,” an afterthought seemingly just recognized.

“Madam, no one could have forestalled her. From the day her brother was arrested, the note she left behind affirms, she had decided on this extreme course, hopeful to save him by assuming the blame herself.”

As a response, Leila sank to her knees and set to scrubbing with a camel’s hair brush, soon crouching and slipping underneath the bed frame, each heavy stoke presumably followed by a study of its effect.

It had been she who had persuaded Mohammed to recant his blasphemous explosion: “The strength of a sister will strengthen a brother.” She had laid her right palm atop Houda’s *kafan*-swathed ankles. “Such, God ordains. The world works toward His Love. Ah, that He would give me, the widow of your ‘M. John,’ the sacred rite today He grants to you . . . to bury one beloved.”

Her fingers crept upward, and in smoothing a crimp in the shroud, they brushed against the gauzed knuckles of Mohammed, clutching his sister’s knees.

During her retreat into the periphery, his eyes hovered, surveying the span of the burden in his arms. Thereupon he nodded once toward Foucin, who quickly signaled for the men to advance the coffin.

Tightening the clasp, Mohammed looked up and, fastening his gaze on Leila, softly acknowledged, “Mme. Ballard.”

The eight pallbearers, including Mohammed at the right front and Foucin at its left, had borne the casket through the courtyard, across the first threshold of the building, down the hallway, and over the second. Remy had trailed.

In the street, the cortège, at perhaps its tenth solemn footfall, stopped. Before Foucin stepped out from under, Mohammed slid to his left. The sub-warden bustled in to undo the

cuffs. His hands slowly elevated, Mohammed grasped the notched corners, balancing the casket on his neck and upper back.

Foucin was already pacing to the rear. "Messieurs, the brother of Mlle. Belmazoir is grateful for your encumbering office, but desires his onus aggravated." As its bearers withdrew, the commissioner, scrunching his shoulders, clenched the edging of the coffin. The medial *porteurs de cercueil* scooted out, relinquishing the elevated casket to the two.

"Thick cedar and piled velvet, not the lightest for any two lads to foot twenty blocks, first to the mosque, then on to begonia-scented El Kettar Cemetery," Remy annotated, quite confident that Foucin, detecting the lack-of-sacrificial rancor with which Mohammed trod the initial measures, had tendered the suggestion.

"You will leave this morning?" Leila inquired, the bucket and afterward herself having been pushed from under the bed. As she bent for a fresh rag and started on the mattress, the squat, gleamless drops on her brow quivered into prominence.

"This evening on a 6:21 to Geneva." He could not resist acquainting her of the earlier plane ("11:43"), waived because "I have to discharge one final obligation."

"To M. Vellacott." She was wringing the dishcloth into the gray thermoplastic pail. "He overworks you."

"To M. Belmazoir, and should you permit, to you," for Remy had determined to dispense with the charade. "I will revisit the Mirabout." He summarized his previous interview at the restaurant.

Her immediate response, "M. Medlin still haunts you," coincided with his preconception: *How dazzled by my brilliance will she be when I ring up to impart, "I have the crowning plank in our scaffold of truth"!*

Her subsequent comment broke off this congenial rumination. "And at that point as one of your obligees, I'll receive a call apprising me of the upshot of your Mirabout trip?"

"Madam, most assuredly. There at 4:15; a twenty-minutes conference; under five more, straight down to the Rue Bab Azoun taxi stand, and then a speedy repairing to the Al-Nigma. Within ten minutes after *salaat il-asr*, I'll contact you, if convenient."

Her reply, "a non sequitur," Remy adjudged, was delivered with her back confronting him, hunched as she was over the mattress. "Will M. Foucin drive you to the airport?"

"Prior to shouldering the casket, while whispering to me the two flight options, he graciously volunteered." Remy had forecast using the hotel's telephone to transmit his proposal, but decided her question allowed it to be sprung directly.

"Mme. Ballard, may I call on you at your apartment, in the company of M. Foucin and a police chaperon, on our way to Houari Boumediène?"

"I'd be most honored." As she drew her body erect and spoke her parting sentence (formalities aside), Remy imagined a complaisant grin materializing at the outskirts of her lips: "And is it there, M. Lazar, you'll breathe to me the name of my husband's murderer?"

At the Al-Nigma, having cashed some traveler's checks, he sealed five hundred dinars in

an envelope and instructed the receptionist to pass it on to Nemmiche. In another, he inserted five thousand, “and not to shortchange the jovial extortionist,” five hundred.

“M. Boshabo, at approximately 8:30 a Dr. Dahmani might arrive seeking me. Please exchange this for what he kindly remits.”

In his suite, while waiting for room service—asudden he realized he had “fasted” for exactly twenty-four hours—he phoned Air Algérie to make the 6:21 reservation. Following a meal and nap, at noon he strutted from the elevator in his white K-Swiss classics and his prized Le Puy sweats, a zip-front hunter-green fleece jog suit.

What Marie had not neglected to pack, was also, he had discerned, “the leisure walkabout garb of around a third of Algiers’ males during Ramadan. I must capitalize on this ‘coincidence,’ accepting it, James Joyce-like, as my ‘collaborator.’”

In the lobby, he was flagged down by Boshabo, flourishing an envelope from Foucin and a gilded etui. As he strapped on the Vacheron, “warranted to complement any ensemble,” and retrieved a gratuity, twice from one palm to the other he shuffled the yellow plastic sack, ballooned by the two changes of clothes—Arabic and HIV-2.

Foucin’s prison-bound inference about his identity had convinced him that his team of stalkers would be augmented. Thus he waved away a beaming Nemmiche, who was shaking the envelope, and plunged into his divagating, two-kilometer traipse through largely deserted streets.

Two blocks from the hotel, he read the note from Foucin, 10:35 its designated time: After the funeral, he had driven the sub-warden and Mohammed to Berrouaghia. “Back in Algiers, positive you must be sleeping, I stopped by the Al-Nigma only to scribble this request: Telephone my residence when we’re to leave for the airport.”

Remy dumped the shreds of the note and envelope into the next trash bin. Fifteen minutes on, from the speakers of nearby mosques, Friday’s noon sermon—*singular, since the government dictated the content*—blared. Thereafter, the congregations seamlessly flowed from it into the abridged Dhuhur prayers.

Soon coming into view was Ketchaoua’s impressive portico supported by four massive obsidian-veined marble columns, but this mosque was not Remy’s terminus.

Past it, he sauntered two blocks prior to sheering northward. Ten minutes later, at the moment he had his target sighted, the streets were beginning to teem with those spilling from the mosques, “and quite a few, I perceive, bullet toward my destination”: the Casbah’s largest, most trafficked public bathhouse.

On paying its attendant the five-dinar fee, Remy was handed an oversized white towel and a key on an elastic bracelet. In its changing room, he gingerly wove through the conflux of around twenty undressing, ahead their relish: cordially to while away the taxing wane of another Ramadan dawn-to-sunset.

At his locker, Remy stripped to his undershorts—full-frontal nudity, *cela va sans dire*, forbidden. Bath thongs and the white *chèche* purchased in the Casbah were extracted from the bag. He stuffed the jogging gear into it, which was then stowed in the locker.

Drawing the headscarf over his nose and mouth, in imitation of everyone else, for no *sawm*-breaking moisture must be ingested, shroudlike he entered the barn-sized steam room proper.

There the mousy comportment of the *vestiaire* exploded into roughhewn boisterousness: Hollered, cross-chamber palavers, bickering-feigned gasconades, and the dueling anthems of rival Algerian football clubs. Many of the hundred or so had shed their towels and frisked about in their skivvies (knee-lengths, boxers, and even jockeys), their jiggeting a rival for the brazen, ubiquitous cockroaches.

Remy, a Casbah *étranger*, was merely a witness of this “play.” For the next hour and a half, with the rubber circlet abutting his watch and the towel draped over his torso, a series of steam baths sweated out some of the residual pain from Tinfingers’ two blows.

As calculated, halfway through, in one of the vaporous alcoves, by means of some casual patter he wriggled himself into the society of four sedate Algerians. When they mutually exclaimed, “*Khalaas! Barakaat!* [‘Hold, enough!’]” and padded to the changing room, he tagged along, a member of their band.

Presently ambling out with them, he was now attired in the drab-white *djellaba* from the Casbah, about his face the damp scarf wrapped, the outfit of two others of his quintet.

The maize-colored sack he had entered with had swapped places with the silver one of his egression. After a near-hour’s maundering seemed to verify he had eluded his trackers, he squeezed into a suitable gap between two buildings.

The *djellaba* discarded, underneath was the HIV-2 disguise, which (owing to the downcast modesty of a Muslim dressing room) he had easily been able to slink into.

Three sets of apparel to untangle. “Not sufficient to fool the *commissaire divisionnaire*, though the prima facie insinuates his subordinates are not Foucins.” Nimbly he recalled his own resigned scruple, “So much we deem necessary probably isn’t,” which sparked an imagined retort from Algiers’ august Shakespearean scholar, “Claudius has both plan”

Memory had steered him into digression, he acceded, embarking on the direct path to the Mirabout: Foucin’s “Hamlet dies digressing” peroration given during their ride to fetch Mohammed from the prison. His argument admittedly had been strong.

“‘What an ignominious business is that in which Hamlet loses his life.’ He stumbles upon ‘an assassination so unpremeditated, so flippant even, as hardly to bear the character of voluntary action at all.’ Claudius has both plan and backup plan, but Hamlet’s main concerns are to beg ‘pardon’ of Laertes and to avoid disgracing himself in the duel. His revenge is the result of Claudius’s overplotting rather than any scheme of his.

“Hard to quarrel with that, hmm?” In the pause, the Peugeot decelerated to a hundred, as if the easing off would encourage a response.

When none came, Foucin continued, “Not a trifle out of character here: Throughout the drama Hamlet’s been plagued by doubts about his adequacy to the task. For Shakespeare to have resorted to any stratagem other than ‘casual slaughter’ would have compromised the thrust of the tragedy.”

De novo, he twisted his neck. “You rest your tongue, yet ‘the rest is[n’t] silence,’” half-smiled Foucin. “No, the ‘palpable’ inadequacy begins with his dying speeches. Always Hamlet had shown himself able to universalize, to wrest the cosmic from the particular. Absent here. A bare three words for his mother, ‘Wretched queen, adieu!’—so much for that Oedipus complex!—and an agitated fixation on his ‘wounded name.’

“How is it ‘wounded’? I ask. In his apology to Laertes, by re-exploiting his guile of

“madness,” he’d extenuated his treatment of Ophelia and the killing of Polonius. Apparently, the prince’s two-tiered slaying of his uncle was courtier-sanctioned since no one intervened, Laertes’ ‘the King’s to blame,’ obviously having been believed.”

Foucain’s deep inhalation, Remy was prescient, betokened that “the rub” was at hand. “No. Hamlet dies not heralding the completion of his mission, not ‘signifying [some]thing’ great accomplished, not synoptically touting the social rot of Denmark he has purged, but engaging in his favorite propensity: Hamlet dies digressing.”

The penitentiary’s roughly forty minutes away, Remy estimated. He’s scripted as badly as Tinfingers.

“And so a digression you’ve led us on, the Ballard/Belmazoir mystery a masquerade! This is the why and wherefore DGSE—no, he—sent you: To deliver Ramadan greetings to a traitor’s father, and a Braille Qur’an. You are, of course, Baby’s ‘contact’ in France.”

3

Overly punctual in his arrival—“not unlike M. Ballard”—Remy spent ten minutes fiddling with some broad-brimmed straw hats at a stall opposite the Mirabout’s service entrance and, with time to spare, marshalling the proofs that had brought him back.

Yesterday on the dirt road from the prison, the fleeting expanse of somber rocks, dull yellow sand, and scraggly mastic trees conjured up in his mind a series of spectral vincula.

“On my eighth earthly day, snipped in my bud,” Ballard had jokingly described his brith milah to Ahmed, who had scurried to hiss into his father’s ear, “He’s a Jew!” But was “circumcised” how Houda and Mohammed had described his penis?

Not to arouse Nemniche’s curiosity, he slowly withdrew the faux lighter from his vest pocket, eager to resolve this discrepancy.

As he did so, two other contraries had apace upreared. In whatever scenario Ballard had concocted for the fifteenth, the FLIRs would be used sequentially in the flat, by either him or Mohammed. “Why then the extra pair?”

And when “the light shineth in [the] darkness” of that pitch-black room, what had Houda “comprehended”? Was Ballard at the light switch by the door, his flip “undyeing the chamber’s darkness,” or near the foot of the bed, the skull-like goggles at his sides?

And had she described his expression as “horror-struck”? A “wondrous strange” reaction for one who had arranged the ruse.

With the ST Dupont screened by his palm, Remy buttressed his elbow on the armrest, propped his right ear on his fist, and shut his eyes. Tapping the refill screw and thumbing with the flint wheel, eventually he pinpointed Houda’s soft tones:

“. . . my pulling at the muslin to shield my ‘bare, forked’ demesne, the beholder’s horror-struck countenance. Except for two particulars: The thighs of my attacker weren’t scarred, and that ‘piece of flesh’—again excuse my lexical modesty—chastising me (for in a fight does not one come to more than know the size and shape and substance of one’s adversary?) did not duplicate that I’d fondled a week before, which was—*exempli gratia*—uncircumcised.”

Her pause was brief. “And, M. Lazar, will this save my brother, this revelation that a step from the footboard I saw the pairs of goggles dangling not from his hands?”

And Mohammed, how had he limned the session where he fretted that Ballard had staled of his sex? “The, uh, head, uh, uh, was . . . hidden” and with his tongue “I, uh, exposed it.” Rewinding the cassette, he played the segment, aware that the words would be unvarying, *for they unlike people cannot remold themselves*, he aphorized.

Two pairs of goggles. Ballard nowhere near the illuminating switch. And a flabby, *mish nedeeef* (“unclean”) penis. The lower limbs, however, were the pimply ones that Leila, Mohammed, and Houda had identified as his.

Two pairs of legs. And the fork of one accommodated “an uncircumcised *qadiib*.” At the phrase, which Remy had not intended to verbalize, the taxi momentarily swerved from its telluric ruts, and Nemmiche, whose voice was as tense as his grip on the steering wheel, shrieked, “Monsieur! Monsieur! Wake up! An evil *djinni*’s taken possession of your tongue. How he talks Arabic in your sleep!”

An exaggerated yawn covered the sliding of the lighter into his pocket. “Once I’ve saved the sister,” Remy had mulled, “it’d be almost worth missing my plane in order to drop by the American embassy tomorrow and petition to reexamine the corpse.” When Corporal Morris halted the unfolding of the sheet at the navel, “I’d crave, to M. Belsches’s consternation, ‘*S’il vous plaît*, may it be fully turned down?’”

Evinced would be the “circumcised penis” which, Remy was equally sure, neither Mohammed nor Houda had ever touched or stirred.

At the summons to Asr, Remy purchased and slapped on the unwieldy *chapeau de paille*, “the perfect topper for my HIV-2 attire.” Three minutes on, askance he watched Zerhouni and the cook Ali, arm in arm, exit via the service gate, not locking it.

They were no sooner out of sight than Remy was shoving against the ajar backdoor. The cigarette puffs bubbling up from underneath the sink located the huddled dishwasher, who at the salutation, “M. Samir,” jumped, banging his crown on a pipe.

“May we speak a moment?” Approaching, Remy proffered the blue-green fifty, but it had been his use of Arabic which doubly befuddled the Christian scullion.

Cognizant of his mimicry—“for why change the merchandise when the [customer] buys?”—he had Samir commence a segment, only to barge in with a tangential query. In time, Remy sneaked in what he had come for, “But you hurried out a second time, optimistic such assiduity might be rewarded.” The smirking “Yes,” in its blunt brevity, sought to conceal the contradictory pride and abashment in his eyes.

Afresh Remy ushered him back to the first trip, in the midst of which he veered to the latter. “And what was the reply when you trilled through the closed, gold-stained door, employing ‘my little restaurant English and French’: ‘*Messieurs*, Misters, *encore de l’eau*, water again?’”

“In English, French, and Arabic: ‘No, *non, la*,’ the lady said.”

At another detour six minutes later, Remy corrected, “You mean the gentleman, one of the gentlemen.”

“No, the lady.”

4

“So Leroy was absent from the booth, too!” Skelping down the hill, Remy shammed amazement, almost as great as that of Samir when he had extended the extra two hundred dinars, “a token of my confidence in your confidentiality.”

Two streets from the taxi rank, Remy halted to tug level the brim of his jouncing sun hat. “As they did, I make a beeline exit from the Casbah, but theirs was to the Fiat rental.”

Confused by the “desert-sand shifting” of the parking lot, Medlin had spent four minutes in chancing upon it, and Mme. Leroy even mentioned she did not recollect it being parked in that spot, which had been “luckily described,” the DCM added, by the Ambassador.

Having crossed to the other side, Remy stopped himself with the question, “How?” At the restaurant’s door, Leroy *had* passed the key to Medlin, who *had* used it to deposit the packages in the trunk. “A duplicate? But when would he have had the—”

“Monsieur.” Remy glanced up from the pavement. Five paces away, among the several plodding toward him, was a woman swathed in a hooded white *haik* and full *niquaab*. Her right hand held out a neatly folded ecru linen *burnoose*, beneath which, hanging from her wrist, was an oversized brown plastic sack. Stooped over a cane, she hobbled in her approach. “*Monsieur*, pity a poor *veuve*. *Vous achetez* from me?”

With the widow’s half-Arabic, half-French appeal over, her rasp abruptly shunted to a modulated English. “Pretend you’re dickering over the price.” Muffled by the veil, the effusion of commands fountained in keen spurts. “Do not proceed to the Al-Nigma! The fabric, stroke it as though inspecting its quality. It’s cordoned off. Bystanders buzzed about ‘the last of the Seven.’ M. Lazar, consider not returning! Or is my alarm extravagant?”

“Madam, you endanger yourself. Why?” With his fingers ruffling the garment, he had entwined a blue uncertainty into the word, before asseverating, “Banish your concern! . . . I wouldn’t invol—”

Her intruding voice was streaked with exasperation. “Do you have somewhere to hide? M. Foucin will soon have all Algiers searching for you.” When no answer was vented, she forged ahead, “Do you know Place Maurice Audin? Near it’s a squalid lane, more an alley, Riboux. The fourth building down on the left’s an empty shop, years ago inherited by my aunt. I keep an eye on it for her, a circumstance of which M. Foucin *may* be unaware.”

Opening the bag, Leila bade Remy—suddenly self-conscious that *she views me in such harlequin*—to stare inside, dissimulating interest. “Its key is in the pocket of the *burnoose*, one of Paul’s. I’ve included a few items you might require and some money, but as display you must transfer to me a modicum for the cloak.”

To any onlookers in the swelling after-prayers traffic, a bargain seemed to be struck. In the exchange of his five twenty-dinar bills for her sack, into which the *burnoose* had been inserted, his money-laden fingertips barely touched a fold of her overflowing cotton *haik*. Sidling away, she cackled a gravelly “*Shokran! Merci!*”

“Madam,” he re-solicited, “why this help?”

En passant, she whispered in Arabic, having suffered herself to be swooped up by the crush, “Because you’re in need of it.”

5

“As good a definition of the human bond as e’er I’ve heard,” Remy exulted.

With his silver bag, itself encompassing the yellow, wedged in her large mocha, he backtracked a block and switched to a side street. Midway down the lane, he located a shortcut seam between two structures and nipped in.

“Harried as a runway model!” he muttered, scrambling to pull the *burnoose* over his HIV-2 frippery. With the straw hat crammed under a pile of trash, he twisted the still-moist headdress around his face and in this dissemblance emerged from the opposite end.

The heart of the Casbah, not its fringes, he never disputed, afforded him the best hope. At a prepensely moderate gait, he climbed several more streets, each edifice scrutinized, persisting till just ahead he espied a small mosque.

As he crossed the gateless portal of its courtyard, his eyes flashed. “Here’s room to change!”

Steeped in the tradition that the Prophet devoted the last ten days and nights of Ramadan to mosque *salaat*, Remy expected to discover some fervid premature emulators in the prayer hall. Glancing about, he inferred his luck held: It and the yard were deserted.

In an alcove at the rear of the patio, shielded by an enormous brass urn, he removed Ballard’s cloak and the beachwear, the latter replaced by the cerulean *djellaba* she had packed. Before redonning the *burnoose*, he smacked it with the dirty sole of a bath thong.

At the bottom of Leila’s bag, which also contained a pair of Arab sandals and a gray-checked head scarf, was the money: a roll of three thousand dinars encircled by a rubber band. Under that she had tucked a slip, giving a telephone number, day, and time when he could call, with “if you wish” scribbled below.

How had she accomplished tant de travail, mooted tant de options, in such a brief time? he marveled as with his real ST Dupont he burned the memorized note.

Having stuffed the key and the dinars, including his four hundred, into a pocket of the *burnoose*, he stretched up on tiptoe and thrust the sack, bulging with the dress of two cultures, into the urn—“three, if the jogging suit and HIV-2’s ensemble disown each other.”

After a pose affecting reverent vacillation, Marie’s Vacheron was unfastened and lightly tossed “heavenward.” He fancied that its soft plash landed atop the pink-minnow word spouting from the azure fountain of the bermudas. Then he slid on the sandals and cinctured his head, neck, and features with the gray *chèche*.

As he was gliding toward the entrance, an old man, out of breath, scampered in. “*As-salaamu ’alaikum!* [‘May Peace be upon you!’]” he erupted in an impulsive, surprised greeting, a smile bursting through his rugose visage. “And may God’s Peace (as well) be with you!” Remy delivered the formal response.

“Akin to me you’re late offering Asr?” At his corroborating nod, the *aagooz* (“old man”) yoked their arms and with the jubilation, “Then we’ll partner each other!” marshaled him to the sunstruck water of the ablution pool.

Inside the prayer hall—three white-plastered naves separated from each other by two rows of horseshoe arches borne on onyx columns—both men focused on the filigreed Mecca-orienting niche (“*mirhab*”), above which was an unadorned bronze chandelier.

With the *vieillard* presiding, together they prayed. *My first in twenty-eight years, disregarding the imagined one with Foucin*, Remy mused, not sure *my breathlessness stems from fear or adoration*.

Afterward, as each was slipping on his sandals, “I’m Rachid Hadi Yala” came the introduction. “The prayers are good, even more so in Ramadan. Not encumbered by ‘food to choke on,’ the body becomes as wispy as the soul.”

Agreeing, Remy employed solely a praenomen, “I’m Ait.”

“A Berber!” rejoiced the ancient. “Unrivaled card-playing companions, my Berber customers, before our Arab bias drove them back to the Grande Kabylie and the Aurès. They reside here!” He pounded his chest.

Free of the mosque, Remy disclosed how he had just today arrived in the city, uprooted by the anticipation of work. “Misfortune, however, has overtaken me. At the swarming train station, versed in the etiquette of using open hands in applying for directions, I set down my carpentry box not for a moment and—whisk!—it was gone.”

Rachid gasped. “To steal in Ramadan! Unfathomable the wickedness of this world we live in, yet God knows best . . . and why.”

With neither inclined (for disparate reasons) to desert the other, they strolled across the cobblestones, the elder captivated by Remy’s garnishing of his plight: He had roamed about, debating whether to trudge over—“an artisan without his implements”—to the house of the man who was possibly hiring joiners. Nonplussed, he had entered this mosque, intent on beseeching God’s assistance.

Seizing Remy’s elbow, Rachid pulled up. “My friend, Allah sustains all in distress, and the proof is even now! At my room I have tools. I redeemed them from garbage bins, which airs their pedigree. With that forewarning, you’ll hazard a peek?”

During the four-block walk, Rachid importuned him to stay for iftar, two hours away, and Remy accepted, cognizing he could better traverse Algiers to Leila’s “safe harbor” post-Isha’ when the streets were thronged with Ramadan celebrants.

At the three-story building, its façade denuded of whitewash, Rachid conducted him down some wobbly cinder-concrete steps. Unlocked, the lime bosse-plywood door exposed a basement “as dark and cramped as a fox’s manger.”

Having lit two candles, Rachid brought out a warped box. Examining the tools, Remy hailed them as “my rescue, the means to reclaim my livelihood.” He promised to restore them, once settled in, but with a “*Mafeesh!*” flip of his hand the *aagooz* indicated, “No problem!”

Both seated on a straw mat, Rachid explained that he dwelt alone, his wife eight years passed. His children, three sons, had drifted away, presumably abandoning Algiers: “No dereliction there. Each must pursue his dream. Pray God they are well!”

An illness (and “desertion by *three* sons,” Remy self-chided, “not one!”) had cost him his notions stall. “Now I sweep the streets in front of shops, their merchants bestowing on me enough coins to eat and bed down. ‘God provides either healing or a remedy for each illness, except one . . . old age.’” His laughter and bobbing head were devoid of despair, Remy marked. “And you?”

A sympathetic fabrication was effortlessly spun: wife dead, deserting daughters, bolted

sons, “and so little work, wood crafting or otherwise, in the Aurès at present: A baby’s palms have more calluses than these!” He held them out. “Hearing that an Algiers contractor was putting out feelers for carpenters, I journeyed here straightaway, having naught to moor me to my birthplace.”

“And if God wills, you’ll find your future here!” The merry prospect induced Rachid’s brown eyes to glitter. He leapt to his feet. “We must begin our iftar.”

With the flat cakes prepared, at Rachid’s suggestion each lay on a reed mat to rest the hour before the cannon. Its booming woke Remy from a sleep he had not foreseen.

Assuaging their thirst and hunger with a sip of water and a pinch of cake, they retraced the path to the mosque, where the chatter of the courtyard was “The Seventh Devil recoils!” not cognizant of the fortuity, Remy chortled to himself, “500,000 *dinars* is a ‘scoop’ away.”

During their return, Rachid stopped to purchase a bag of dates, “our Prophet’s fruit—Peace be upon him!” And he launched into confirming Hadith accounts.

From several blocks away the complaint rose, but not until they reached their stairs could Remy distinguish the untended donkey in the scarrow two buildings over. Shackled at its fetlocks and with its neck on such a short leash that it could not drop to its knees, it intermittently brayed its “straits so dire.”

Excusing himself and hurrying over, Rachid began by scratching behind its miter ears. When he tendered a handful of dates, its thick flopped-out tongue—“for the hungry can’t be hesitant”—engulfed them with one lick, its teeth cracking the stones.

“The animals must be made to feel special too,” with a protestant shiver he commented on rejoining Remy, who murmured to himself, “Our Baby Snooks!”

In the cellar room, around a burgundy vinyl tablecloth spread over the concrete floor, they partook of a simple iftar: eating dates, drinking *shai*, and praising Allah’s Beneficence. About forty-five minutes later, at the call to Isha’, with a diffusing beam the host proclaimed, “Of all God’s gifts, most gracious is prayer!”

At the mosque, as they knelt in the fourth line from the *mirhab*, it was not this last pronouncement of Rachid’s, but a previous one, with which Remy acquiesced: “Not discommoded by ‘food to choke on’ indeed lightens *salaat*.”

With the close of the third *Raka’ah*, the unsought release descended: He prayed for Marie, his daughters, his father, his granddaughters, his mother, and Noura, and brimming over—“prayer does that”—for Leila, Houda, Mohammed, Rachid, Mohisen, HIV, Saul, “and, yes, M. Foucin and his family.”

Back at the subterranean, the menu of tea and dates was expanded by the sourdough cakes. Midway through, perhaps “*djinni*-tempted to doubt his esteem,” Rachid asudden bemoaned, “I’m nothing much! Still I would be your friend . . . the best a poor man can offer.”

When he started to weep, Remy clasped him and, reciting what he knew would most comfort, “*Allahu Akbar! Allahu Akbar!*” rocked him till the tears were staunched.

After the meal, “I’m truly ashamed,” the *aagooz* sighed, seemingly terrified by his confession. “No facilities for my guest. The communal toilet’s two blocks away, but we’ll have to queue. Only the pot.” He glimpsed toward a corner crate on which were clustered a bar of soap, toilet tissue, and a basin of water. Adjacent to it on the floor was a covered black polyethylene bucket with a wire bail.

“God who fills our bellies mercifully flushes our bowels,” chuckled Remy, the ancient proverb, laid aside so long, springing naturally to his lips. “So who can take offense where we decently squat?”

Allayed and tickled, Rachid sped out. With “M. Ballard’s *burnoose*” lifted above his shoulders, Remy used the pot. Then employing his left hand, he cleaned himself with soapy water and dried with sheets from the roll. After this final deposit, he recapped the pail.

As if I’d never left, he joshed, *praying like a Muslim and shitting like an Arab*.

In the shadowy wall to the left of the entrance, Remy, bucket in hand, descried a gunnysack of junk, “doubtless gleaned by Rachid, street sweeping that day. He’ll further comb through it, sorting out those things he’ll give away, sell, or reserve.”

Delving into it, he rummaged up a soup tin, its top curled over. Into it he inserted three royal-blue one-hundred-dinar notes, confident they could not help but be seen.

“Hers or mine? Does it matter, given both approve?” he smiled.

Rachid bounded forth the instant the door was opened and, notwithstanding the objection, drew free the pail. Twenty minutes later, he returned. Endeavoring to mask his wheezing, he confessed, “Please excuse my tardiness. I used the public facilities.”

Afterward, they brewed some fresh tea and sipping from it—one sincere, the other suspecting his hypocrisy—extolled the blessings of Ramadan.

The outside clatter persuaded Remy that the streets were teeming with gorged peripatetics. “Dear friend, please excuse me. I must go. By the time I’ve bridged the city, my prospective employer may be so mollified by his banqueting as to humor my supplication. God willing, tomorrow I’ll be unfettered from the chains of my bad luck. This respite with you heralds it.”

Straddling the threshold, Rachid embraced him, heartily slapping his back. As his hands trailed down Remy’s arms, his right crossed over. A wadded, crinkled paper was jammed between his palm and the leather strap of the oaken toolbox.

“If he’s not in, welcome here, my friend.” His parting “*Mahasalaama!*” was echoed by Remy’s “*Allah yisallimak!* [‘And may God’s Peace (as well) go with you!’]”

In the street, jostled on all sides, Remy did not unclench his fist, not even when a particularly rough slam trembled the tools of his feigned trade and almost dislodged the clutched ten-dinar note.

6

Without incident, he wended his way across town to the *dukkaan*, situated in a dingy alley of two-story mud-patched concrete-block dwellings. Not arresting his stride till he was several houses beyond it, there he rapped on a *porte d’entrée*.

A veiled woman glowered at him through its crack. Holding out and rattling the toolbox, Remy drawled that the owner of a shop had hired him to fix it up. “I’m told this is Riboux Lane. Is ‘8’ near?”

He spoke a Berberine Arabic, the dialect producing the envisioned disdain. “Cannot you cipher simple numbers?” She wedged her arm into the gap. “Three down,” the laconicism dinned by iterative, sidling jabs of her index.

As the door began to shut, he whined, “God’s Blessings on your home! I’ve traveled from dawn to dusk and on till now—and not a nibble! A bite for my delayed iftar, I beg.”

It was slammed to; nonetheless, presently with two slices of dried brown pita, the dogmatic, yet “Allah-wary,” shrew returned. “Not every night, Berber,” she scolded, *her voice as hard as the bread she shoves through*.

“Foucin seeks his Berber heritage, which I have found,” Remy self-quipped, scuffing away from the gendarme, of whom he had just entreated directions.

It was the third day. However, even from the first morning he had not secluded himself, for such sequestering would have “incited curiosity and be swiftly winged to a policeman.” With his gray *chèche* twined about his countenance, he set out grubbing for spare planks. From the three neighbors who had some, he attempted to wheedle the lumber gratis, before proceeding “to bargain like a Berber,” the flout of one who was haggled.

Not having shaved since Friday had so emboldened him that his scarf temerarily obscured only his brow and neck. The eyes-averted snippet of the gendarme had been brusquely growled since Remy, correspondingly unbathed except for the partial ablutions at the neighborhood mosque, had leaned in close.

“At least when I talk with her this evening (God willing!), my smell won’t blind.” With the first call last night, this malodorousness had not entered his mind.

“You!” Startled into a tutoyering vocative, Devereaux popped the tip of his tongue against his upper incisors. “I’ve got to have time to think . . . spirit you out.”

“I know the murderer of M. Ballard.”

Remy let the silence, blanketlike, lie there. “Who cares?” Devereaux finally countered. “Not a diplomat, you haven’t considered our delicate position. Suppose you’re captured—needless to say you’ll crumple under torture—all will spill out: Snickering up her sleeve, France reconnoitered the peerlessly despicable Algerian to *Al Djazair*, and on a ‘mocking mission.’ . . . All right, let’s dispose of the peripheral. Who is it?”

Piqued by this apathetic façade, Remy replied with a digressive question, but the one most pressing to him. “My wife, my daughters, they’ve not been disturbed?” He had not asked about his father, trusting Foucin would bulwark him from harassment.

“They’re discreetly guarded. We’re not insensitive. Where are you? No, withhold that, for now. Very well, who is it?”

Remy tarried a moment. “Six thousand files whizzed through. How?”

“We’re on that. Don’t venture to the embassy! We’re besieged by demonstrators. A statecraft-skirting ploy by Foucin: His men search every vehicle entering or leaving, ostensibly to prevent one of these, ‘righteously incensed, albeit diplomatically in the dark,’ from slipping in or (having done so) out.

“Conjointly, a fleet of their helicopters incessantly girdles our perimeter, thereby effectively precluding either of ours from taking off. ‘For your protection: They’ll fire on our impetuous youth should so much as one essay to scale your walls!’ we’re gibed. In Paris, to Foreign Minister Dumas’ ‘This indignity must cease!’ their ambassador boorishly riposted, ‘With the seventh, M. Pied-Noir.’”

His frustration vented, Devereaux snapped, "It's probably not, but who is it?"

A mischievous Remy cracked the door of the telephone booth. The ten o'clock promenade up and down the wide Boulevard Salah Bouakour, some five streets from the shop of Leila's aunt, was in progress. Music blared, as if a Hadith had connected "Ramadan feast" with "rhythmic beat": From gallivanting minstrels, car cassettes at full throttle, and "boomboxes," recently repopularized by Walkman-bored university students.

Algeria's own Raï (sensitive) and Pop-Raï (synthesized), Egyptian reggaelike Al Jeel, French space disco, American grunge, Italian neo-progressive rock, and Greek orientalized laïkó, all bounced off each other and en masse flooded the booth.

"What? What?" shouted Devereaux. "Can't you cup the receiver?" But Remy was positive he had caught the name uttered and, despite the acoustical interference, would "hang on my every word."

On the initial ring she picked up, and both commencing simultaneously, his *madame* and her *monsieur* merged. "Hang up, if you suspect I'm followed!" with heightened pitch her words careered. "Can they trace you through a tracking device?"

"Madam, *impossible!*" Remy's embroidered cachinnation aimed to calm her. "Be assured, my expertise: such 'tapping in' entails hours," he dissembled. "Please, I must know: How gravely are you ensnarled, menaced by my predicament?"

"In no way, none," her remark firmly dismissive.

"And Commissioner Foucin? Has he approached you?"

"Once, disregarding the 3:30 telephone call last Friday. Then, with overdone nonchalance he inquired if I knew where you were. I blurted out a puzzled "No. Why?" His pococurante evasion before hanging up so troubled me that I dared not dial your room. Instead I rushed to the—" (she interrupted herself) "I'm droning."

"No. Not a detail stint, each potentially crucial."

". . . to the Al-Nigma, discovering it barricaded by gendarmes and you their prey. The newspapers purport the French dispatched you. Can't they intercede to whisk you to safety? Your family in Belgi—"

"France. Virtually every breath of mine has hosted a lie!" interposed Remy.

". . . in France must be devastated with worry, and you for them. Are they at risk?" Her voice, he imagined, was at the point of breaking.

"My wife, my daughters, and their children are under judicious surveillance, I've been notified by *those*," depending on the emphasis to quell her anxiety, "who labor in my behalf."

Her "Thank God!" spread "a blessing" over both disclosures. "Your friends render my avail inconsequential, perhaps counterproductive; but if there's anything, here's a different number."

After his *shokran*, slowly she enunciated the six digits. "As before, so now, where would I be without your help?"

For a few meditative seconds she deferred her reply. "And in the future, *Inshallah!*, until you're out of danger and reunited with your family."

"But what of your—"

She intruded as if reading his thought. “Monsieur, needlessly you worry. Islam has laws even Commissioner Foucin’s not above. Tonight at 9:30 when I exited my building, no one could waylay me to badger”—her timbre was transmogrified into a gruff gaiety—“Raise your veil! Change that white *haik* to a hue easier to stalk! For we, your androgenic masters, would sleuthhound you! *Zreb, lefea!*”

“Hurry up, you “sharper-than-a-serpent’s-tooth” daughter of Eve!” with a bluster Remy translated, displaying that he retained his *dardja* (“vernacular”) Algerian Arabic.

Her roulade of laughter faded before his. “How I babble! Should not we stop?”

Not desiring the causerie to end, an invigorated Remy groped for an avenue to sustain it. “M. Foucin. You implied he called a second time.”

“Oh that. At ten this morning, accompanied by the requisite police matron and a court magistrate, who read a statement of the penalty for abetting a criminal of the state. *Avec une inclination de la tête*, I responded.”

“Mme. Ballard . . . how deeply I’ve—”

“Please. It’s my own choice, in the same way that it was yours. You could have left the afternoon of Mme. Belmazoir’s death. Instead, you stayed, striving to reverse her daughter’s verdict, and thwarted there, further abided to save—to save, not merely to set free—her brother. Such more-than-necessary kindness.”

She paused, as if listening, and continued, as if reciting something just whispered into her ear. “Should I decline to assist one who, through such self-negating service, has endured the arrogance of those resentfully insisting their wrongs are right?”

Is there no eluding the “categorical imper—” His intuitive reflection was aborted by a voice, suddenly become steeled. “What may I do? I’ll not bear the prospect of having dared nothing other than resigning you to Foucin.” And her resolve was magnified, he perceived, by her unwonted omission.

She “pines for an errand, even if purely symbolic,” and he cursed himself for not having devised one. “General ‘metaphysical legerdemain’” would have to suffice.

“Do not imperil yourself, above all. A soupçon I cull from the newspapers, augmented moderately by my benefactors. Should you chance upon something you esteem facilitating, advise me, again never jeopardizing yourself.”

With the time of the next call agreed upon, certain that her hazard was greater than his, he closed, “Then after two days, *Inshallah!*”

“Yes, God willing. *Merci,*” all four words projecting her conciliated relief. “*Au revoir.*”

A sending-off totally at variance with Devereaux’s spit-out terminal derision the night before: “An ‘uncircumcised’ cock! And on that you accuse one who conscripted every CIA operative in Europe into tracking you down. Dial Wednesday, if Foucin’s not bagged you!”

7

Over the next six days, from April 25 through May 1, seven additional telephone calls acquainted Remy with the maneuverings of Foucin, the French, and even Leroy.

At the subsequent one to Leila, however, his own compulsion to plug every loophole landed him in an embarrassing particular. “Madam, your brother—I pray he has rejoined

you!—mentioned that your husband adverted to a ritual . . . a Jewish . . . operation. Can you . . . did he . . . have you any intelligence of this?”

The term he had skirted she did not. “That my husband was circumcised? He was, and not from my brother’s lips do I know.”

“This, uh—*Shokran!* This revela—uh, *Merci!* Uh, this testimony” (a scandalized Remy comprehended that her unvarnished phraseology had been designed to “electroshock” him out of his circumlocution) “warrants I’ll have . . . enthusiastic cooperation . . . in decamping from Algiers. Not summarily, but it will be effected.”

Of the death of Medlin, both Leila and Devereaux had conveyed the news, though not from her of “the other murders.”

As for the DCM, he had manifested in his dying moments “the solicitous punctilio of all his living ones.” Not only did he scramble from the teal-blue 4x4, but also held in his vomit and feces, both arsenic-laced, till he had clambered to the rear of a large fossilized tree.

The corpse, rescued from the northern rim of the Tademait Plateau the previous morning, eight days subsequent to his bolting, “had been sucked dry by the sun, gnawed by lizards, and had a few chunks ripped off by a serendipitous fennec, which doubtlessly sauntered away Michelin-ing, ‘Three stars! Just the right *nouvelle-cuisine* hint of taint!’” Devereaux’s burlesque provoked Remy into remembering with chagrin his own.

This flippancy was the antithesis of Leila’s account, whose brevity was pervaded by grief. She halted with a quiet adamancy, “Elbert was not a murderer, either of my husband or of himself.”

The latter premise ran counter to what Devereaux, cognizant of the discoveries made that morning, had averred. Let into Medlin’s apartment by Leroy, Foucin and his men quickly turned up the tiny apothecary jar of arsenic trioxide, the poison in the coffee grounds of one of the two thermoses in the Land Rover, “corroboration that his suicide was planned.”

Moreover, they stumbled on a stash of slick magazines of nude Arab boys, with imprints of only the DCM’s fingerprints, so “not planted by Leroy.

“One deviate slew another is Foucin’s illation: Afraid that Ballard had found out about his pedophilia and intended to divulge it to Leroy, Medlin dispatched him at Zaracova and, panicked by your incriminating revelations, drove to the Sahara to self-destruct in peace.”

Realizing that nothing of Leroy’s version of “Elbert’s bolted” could be believed, Remy focused on the thermoses. “Did the tests for arsenic disclose whether the separate dregs were identically produced—perked, drip, or instant?—and from the same brand?”

“What!” After a half-minute came the antiphon, “Not specified in the reports released by Foucin’s office. Why?”

Remy’s hesitation was slight. “Do they contain any admission by Ambassador Leroy that on the night of the excursion he visited M. Medlin’s flat? For so he informed me. Could he perchance have been bearing a bon-voyage thermos to supplement his aide’s own?”

Devereaux’s snort traveled through the phone line. “Not a *felo-de-se*, a long-distance murder! So sly Claude’s two times the two-timing killer. Better and better! And here’s Foucin, so convinced the DCM was Ballard’s killer he uncaged Belmazoïr this afternoon.”

Not at once had the coarse laughter been taken up Remy, inwardly bantering, “For quite a different reason: Who’s even more dedicated than the commissioner to flushing me out?”

Earlier Devereaux had tried to conceal his excitement. “Your fantasia fascinates Paris which luxuriates in the dumb show of M. Claude dethroned. It was he who circuitously ‘outed’ you to Foucin, plopping us in this diplomatic quagmire. We’ve made some progress, fleshed out the skeleton from your bag of bones.”

First, through “an expensive aerie-dwelling agent” in Sûreté Nationale, they had obtained copies of the twenty-two anonymous fingerprints from Ballard’s Toumi Street room, nine of which were Leroy’s, from both the toilet and the headboard of the bed.”

Secondly, the ambassador’s log indicated no official engagements “on the glut” of those Mondays Ballard met with Belmazoir or on the last two Wednesdays with Houda.

On Sunday, Remy had suggested that Devereaux’s agents try to locate the Fiat Regata leased for the Casbah romp. “Mme. Leroy’s affidavit of that day—it’s among my faxes to Vellacott—states it was delivered to their residence. Was it picked up from there?” He had then speculated why the threads of its boot should be checked.

Devereaux’s Wednesday follow-up: They had burgled the rental agency for the receipt. It certified that the Fiat had been collected from the Leroy’s mansion at 10:30 the next morning. “A guard signed and returned the two keys. That means Le—”

“Two. Of course, two,” a mumbling Remy had interjected.

“. . . Leroy would have had scant time to scan for and scrub away any trace of his ‘best pal’ carried from the crime.”

Using a subsidized local, they planned to rent the “selfsame” Fiat tomorrow. “Our forensic team’s all ready to ‘microscope each fiber of the trunk,’ questing for that ‘two-month-old fleck of blood which Leroy might have neglected. Here’s to success.”

“Not the trunk. I was wrong there,” Remy admitted. “M. Medlin must have had that key. Have your team scour the inside matting instead.”

Its finding, of which Remy was apprised two days later (Friday), came in a hurried two-minute report: “No blood in the Regata! Still Leroy won’t know. Through his own suspicions he’ll inculcate himself. Embedded in the carpet on the driver’s side, however, was the residue of a butoxyethanol upholstery detergent, not available locally. Two months ago, our chemical crew estimates, a conscientious char felt the need to purge that spot.”

A racing Devereaux even condensed his guffaw. “No questions for now! By the way, one was ‘drip’; the other, ‘percolated’ most poisonously. Ring me in two days, the eve of May Day. Mayday! Mayday! Ha-ha! Aha! No longer wavering, Paris deems you’re brilliant, and I trumpet what a clever fellow as you must have plumbed: I’m also boosted by all of this.”

That Mohammed had “stormed” (Remy’s gloss) from the prison over to the Palestinian camp had been incidentally communicated to him in his call to Leila fifty minutes later. Ahmed had cropped up yesterday, cadging for money. “I’m among pals,” but to retain their friendship, he had to have minimally five hundred dinars.

In his mind—a “habit” of his—Remy deconstructed Leila’s rather bare narration. “Without bills to flash, I’ll squander M. Khalaf’s fancy, especially since we’re joined by this Belmazoir, on whom our chief has impetuously fixed his angel-ogling attention. Cash will betoken I’m of use, not one to be cast aside. The pansy, my chums unbosom, surmises we can steer him to this Lazar. But he’s long gone, don’t you think?”

“Or Commissioner Foucin has him . . . and isn’t saying,” I answered.” Her words (now

verbatim) acquired a ripening gravity. “Monsieur, so many nets shot for you. Your deliverance, can it not be hastened?”

“You’ll have to seek him out in Hell,” during their Sunday, April thirtieth, call, Devereaux prologued the “disgustingly tawdry” death notices. Remy had just been told, “Practically everything’s arranged”: He would be bound for France on Tuesday night.

“I’ll limn the ‘nitty’ and ‘gritty’ of your retreat tomorrow. Oh yes, your contact won’t be tailing you from Marseilles.” Having scoffed about where HIV could be found, Devereaux continued, “*In nomine solus*, a mother hen.

“DGSE caught up with them in a Rome hostel this morning. He it was who blitzed the six thousand files for the Americans. When we thundered in, on the edge of the bed he was perched, fully dressed, with the ‘blonde’ naked under the counterpane and the \$50,000 in a satchel stowed beneath. No incentive to delay (or deny) justice. The silenced PAMAS-G1 pistols blasted parts of him into Goldilocks.

“Reposed one on top of the other, they resembled a pretty *tableau*, a prettier tabloid. In the valise were two tickets to Algiers. A Leroy-imposed rider to the deal, we posit: Hen (and hen’s pecker) would jet in, somehow to help locate and coax you out.”

His voice rapidly transitioned from playful to professional. “Anything incriminating Leroy on the faux Dupont lighter, DGSE wants to know. Bring it Tuesday.”

During his dazed response, “Nothing. Along with some clothes I stuffed it in a courtyard urn in a Diar Echems mosque,” the lie had come instinctively.

“So that’s where you’ve been blending in, the city’s shantytown. I’ll get directions to the mosque after you’re safely out. Mustn’t leave anything implicating us. Till tomorrow.”

HIV and Saul flying in to betray me? Remy resettled the phone in its hook. Saul, who had professed, “I would not deceive you . . . *mon père*” and augured, “I’d like to suppose we’ll cross paths again,” invoking the artificial becoming the real. And HIV, who had disconcertingly avouched, “Not looking for your *pourboire*? (As true a patriot as I, neither ‘greedy of [the] filthy [‘lilty’] lucre.’ The bond is all, eh, for you, for me.)”

Why had Devereaux imparted so much, as if all private treasons had to be given a public face? On his walk back to the shop—for the adage (“mangled”) upheaved, “All roads digress to Rome”—he fixed his May Day agenda: trips to several widely separated agricultural stores, where his purchases would be too miniscule to arouse suspicion.

At the six p.m. call, to his consternation, Remy learned that he himself, with a tape recorder strapped to his back, was to be the one to beard Leroy the next day.

“You think this smacks of Hamlet’s *Mousetrap*,” Devereaux annexed with a cynical chuckle. Peremptorily he elaborated on where and when Remy was to come for his disguise and how Foucin would be diverted during the meeting.

When Remy pressed, “Is my presence necessary?” the question merited a three-verb asyndetic ratification: “Paris thinks so, wants so, commands so. With me anticipated, spying you, Leroy will recognize, ‘Poof! Cut a deal!’ In diplomatic courts the innuendo of soft evidence is more deadly than one hundred proof, the courts of law’s obsession. Simply entertaining your recitativo about how he slew Ballard will be by and large a peccavi.

“In the call this morning, I straight off proposed, ‘Quite essential we colloque’—a pause—‘in re the homicide of your economic officer.’ His Excellency was intrigued and, grunting a flier, said so. ‘Far from either embassy’s earshot, the Café de Flore in Upper Casbah, perhaps?’” Devereaux’s suggestion had met with Leroy’s approval.

“Chosen for your convenience,” he assured Remy. “A step up to Boulevard Abderazak Hadad, where two BMWs, one’s a backup, from the German embassy will be ‘cooling their wheels’ for you.” His giggle trailed into a vocable puff.

“‘Boggy Fathom’ and the CIA will be grateful to us for a while, our quietly nipping in the bud a potential international scandal. A pithy news release will be issued: ‘Claude Sebastian Leroy, career diplomat, today announced his intention to enter the private sphere.’ And their appreciation will be protracted should Leroy be goaded into a compromising aside, captured on the tape. It’s worth a stab, don’t you agree?”

Through the wires, Devereaux appeared to be sensing his discontent. “What did you envisage? A headline, ‘American Ambassador *Douk-Douked* Embassy Employee in Sex Charade Escapade.’ Not possible, not permissible, not seemly. In the fine-tuning, Leroy’s of no greater importance than Ballard, Belmazoir, or even Foucin.”

Devereaux had brought him up. “And M. Belmazoir?”

“Still haunted by him?” He coughed, ostensibly irritated by Remy’s question. “Maybe he’ll be flown out as a ‘certain someone’ was in ’61. Who knows twenty-eight years down the line, DGSE may have occasion to consign *him* to Algiers? That is, provided he aspires to be tethered to us. Most likely he will, having faith we can lead him to you.

“Another brother after another brother who caused yet another sister’s death, hmm?”

8

On his way from the booth to the shop, Remy veered off to a special confectionery and purchased a box of Turkish Delight for Marie. “To all appearances, like Foucin’s Hamlet, I’m digressing,” since ahead of him, before the ten o’clock with Leila, were two more pressing concerns: the booby-trap charge to be rigged up and the letter to her.

“Thank God!” she had rejoiced. “A favorable time. At sunset tomorrow *Lailatul Qadr*, our ‘Night of Greatness,’ begins. God’s Blessings will be on you.”

“Mme. Ballard, before I leave, you must know all.” He imagined her resolutely shaking her head.

In the last ten days, he had peeked at the front pages of eight newspapers, on each a three-column photograph of him, “patently the butt of much shooting, my initial thirteen days.” Above each was a large 72- or 80-point boldfaced streamer, “Satan Regurges His Seventh Paramour” or “Slimy Rat of Seine Slinks In.”

A red or green sidebar appealed to greed: “DA500,000 Reward, Captured Alive!”

Prime Minister Kasdi Merbah was quoted: “Noble citizens, restrain your natural urge to smite dead the devil. Leave it to Allah to ‘roast him in Gehenna—an evil homecoming!’ For us, only through his interrogation can be lifted this apostate shadow that long has hung over our beloved country. We must expose why *now* this sore recrudesces and, speaking frankly,

who would infect us with their Black Death!”

“Yes, I am the traitor, rightfully branded, but of the ‘imperative’ you must be told.”

“The past. Monsieur, let tomorrow’s escape secure your release from that demon,” the words, even the final, striking Remy as more prayer than plea.

“I’ve set down the history: my *nathr* to God that I would protect my afflicted sister, her capture, mine, the torture of an unfortunate second girl whom I misjudged to be my Noura, and how this French ruse broke my resolve. Read it, and perhaps you can understand.”

“There’s nothing to understand.” And Remy divined the *mot juste* both sought was *forgive*. “Monsieur, I will, if by the virtue of such scrutiny you’ll ‘unprick’ the briars binding you to a past, better forsaken.”

With the promise exacted, Remy described the small device behind the plank where the letter was hidden. “Large enough to sear the papers, it can likewise burn a finger. I wouldn’t have you scarred by my apologia or entangled by someone else stumbling on it. Unloosen the board from your, not its, left, and nothing will happen. From your left.”

“*À ma gauche*,” she dutifully enunciated in French. “Will it threaten you, after a year or so, to write a brief note . . . that you and your family are well? Or does that draw you into another bond?”

“I will, ‘and before if possible,’ God permitting,” Remy affixed the seal.

“*Inshallah!* Adieu!”

The receiver was buzzing prior to Remy’s own uttered *au revoir*.

Back at the shop, with “HIV’s lighter” deposited and “Marie’s Turkish Delight” slipped into a pocket of the gray cloak, he lay down on his mat and reviewed the past six days.

With his prayers concluded, he mumbled, “May Day down and the Night of Greatness ahead, now I can sleep.”

Notes and Commentary: Chapter 19: “Hamlet Dies Digressing”

Friday, April 21, 1989 – Monday, May 1, 1989

- p. 313: SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TITLE OF CHAPTER 19: The title is taken from Foucin’s discussion of the ending of *Hamlet* where he concludes that “Hamlet dies digressing” (317). (This opinion ultimately derives from a 1990 essay of mine on the endings of tragedies published in *Modern Language Quarterly*, as was mentioned in the 18.311 note, N18:66).
- When Foucin began this exegesis of the play during their ride to the prison to collect Mohammed, Remy termed it a “digression” (178.311), but at its end he realizes that the commissioner’s analysis is a segue to his assertion that Remy has led him and everyone on a digression.
- He has used his investigation of Ballard’s murder as a smokescreen to conceal his true reason for coming to Algiers (317). However, it is Remy’s postliminary conduct which suggests digression. On 4.52, as his plane is descending to Algiers’ airport, Remy vowed, “I’ll do . . . what *I* have come to do, and promptly speed home to Marie.” Yet since his meeting with his father—the climactic point of his mission—he has digressed from this avowal.
- His “sidetracking to Berrouaghia” and his resultant “detour to Bab el Oued” (18.294) on Apr. 20th to convey messages between Houda and Mohammed, he recognizes as digressions, which cause him to miss three flights which would “speed [him] home.”
- Remy is also aware that as a youth he had brought tragedy to his Algerian family and himself by abandoning (or digressing from) his *nathr* regarding Houda in order to become involved in the Algerian insurrection (3.37 and 6.88)
- Out of overconfidence or affection for Leila, is Remy falling into the same trap? Ominously near the beginning of chap. 19, Remy decides upon a further delay involving another digression. He chooses to take “the evening [flight] to Geneva,” not an “earlier [11:43] plane” (314) in order to reveal to Leila “the name of [her] husband’s murderer” (314).
- Four other times variants of the word “digression” occur in the chapter. “Memory had steered him into digression,” Remy thinks as he makes his way to the Mirabout (316), the word propelling him to recall Foucin’s discussion about Hamlet.
- Next, wishing to irritate another person whom he had assumed he had bidden farewell to, Remy uses “a digressive question,” but one which is, he admits, “most pressing to him” (324).
- On p. 329, he muses, “All roads digress to Rome” where two earlier characters unexpectedly turn up. Finally, he describes his detour to a confectionary shop as

an instance of where “like Foucin’s Hamlet, I’m digressing” (330).

Throughout the chapter, the many disguises and guises that Remy will employ ironically assert another point: His survival frequently depends less upon direction than digression.

The first word in the title, “Hamlet,” occurs principally in the literary discussion about the prince. Another character does bring up a different scene of the tragedy when he refers to the “*Mousetrap*,” the play within the play which Hamlet used to verify King Claudius’s guilt (329).

As for “dies” and its variants, three deaths will be revealed in the chapter, and incited by his “sister’s death” (330), Mohammed is more-than-the-more determined to bring about Remy’s death (327 and 328). There is even a reference to the “Black Death” (437).

An incidental comment: This is the second time I have had a character in the novel appropriate ideas about tragedy from one of my literary essays.

This device was previously used on 7.106, N7:15 (Oedipus as”), where Foucin and Remy discuss Oedipus, and the latter paraphrases a passage from my essay, “A ‘Feeling of Reconciliation’ and the Tragic Calm,” published in *The Comparatist* (1995), pp. 46-59.

pp. 313-31: CHRONOLOGY OF CHAPTER 19: Well over half the chapter (313-24) covers the events of Friday, Apr. 21, from 6:23 a.m. to 11:58 p.m.

The action of the next ten days, from Saturday, Apr. 22, to Monday, May 1, is revealed by and large through nine telephone conversations. During this span, never does Remy outwardly show any regrets for his delays and digressions, perhaps accepting that, unlike kindness, they were necessary.

pp. 313-14: SECTION 1

p. 313: “His transcendent concern”: This scene begins at 6:23 a.m., fifteen minutes after Mohammed declared that the neighbors shall not participate in his sister’s funeral (18.311).

The obsequies had obviously proceeded because only Leila (inside the shed) and Remy (in the courtyard) are left behind.

p. 313: “barred by her sex and Remy by ‘my supposed religion’”: Neither statement is entirely true.

Muslim women are allowed to be part of the funeral procession to the mosque, where at a prayer service (*al-janazah*) for the deceased, they sit segregated from the male mourners at the back of the mosque (the Hadiths of Bukhari 1278 and Muslim 2.368).

However, women are not allowed to follow the corpse to the cemetery or be present at its burial service because the Prophet Mohammed observed that females tended to wail loudly during this stage of the procession and at the

gravesite, thus disturbing the solemnity of the occasion (Muslim 2.368).

At first, for the same reason the Prophet forbade women even from visiting graves, but in a later ruling, he rescinded that degree (Bukhari 2.372 and Muslim 2.2013).

As to Remy's second assertion, men of other religions are allowed to take part in the funeral procession, but only a few out of ceremonial duty do so (such as those Christian dignitaries who attended the 1981 funeral of the assassinated Egyptian President Anwar Sadat) since they can participate in so little of the burial ceremony.

For instance, they cannot perform the Janazah or take part in any of the rituals at the gravesite. It is in that sense that Remy says his "supposed religion"—nominally he is a Catholic—barred him from the burial procession.

That Remy declares his Christian religion as "supposed" indicates that he had adopted it as part of his disguise. Later in this chapter, he will have an Islamic reawakening (321 and 322) although shortly after it he seems to doubt its seriousness (323).

- p. 313: "to see [the funeral procession] off": There is a brief flashback to a scene (6:15) where the funeral procession is just taking shape on Rue Mizon outside the apartment building, but Remy notes that it stopped after a minute (6:16) and proceeded with only two carrying the coffin.
Why Mohammed allowed the neighbors to participate, why the procession stopped after a minute, and why the normal eight pallbearers in a Muslim funeral was reduced will be presently answered by another flashback.
- p. 313: "around the sides and front of the casket": Mourners at Muslim *janaazaat* (plural of *janaaza*, the Arabic word for "funeral") typically walk before or parallel with the coffin.
Only those in vehicles or riding an animal, say a horse or a camel, would follow the bier.
- p. 313: "On the far side of the bed": The action shifts back to the shed where Leila is cleaning the bed and the area about it (6:24).
- p. 313: "three-pointed lace veil": The half-face *niqaab* (veil) is sometimes folded so it resembles a triangle.
See 18.300 and its note, N18:27.
- p. 313: "Mme. Foucin will return shortly": The reason Foucin's wife left for a little while was to check on hers and Foucin's children at their apartment in Kouba, according to scribbling of mine which did not make it into the novel.
- p. 313: "the note she left behind affirms": To ease Leila's worry, Remy lies about the content of this note: That from the day of her brother's arrest Houdda had decided on her course of action, to confess to being the murderer in order to save her brother.

In fact, her suicide note “never mentioned” Mohammed—“as if she had no brother” (18.302).

However, while not in her written confession, this determination was probably made on Feb. 28, the day when Mohammed was arrested and she learned about the death of Ballard, the man she loved.

At Remy’s second meeting with her, he had noted that her plea for her brother’s life to be saved sounded “theatrical, artificial” (11.222). After her suicide he had realized why: She had long determined how she herself would save him.

p. 313: “It had been [Leila] who had persuaded Mohammed to recant his blasphemous explosion”: A flashback to 6:08.

After Mohammed’s outburst, “It is *not* as God ordains!” (18.311), it was Leila’s speech that had convinced him to allow the communal participation in the funeral.

p. 313: *kafan*: In Arabic “shroud.”

p. 313: “The world works toward His Love”: The world strives (or should strive) to achieve the love which God manifested by creating life.

p. 313: “to bury one beloved”: From her first speech, Leila has been obsessed with the burial of Ballard’s corpse: “Give me my husband’s body” (8.133).

p. 313: “into the periphery”: A favorite word of both Remy and Foucin.

See the 7.106 note, “In Greek,” N7:12, for its use throughout the novel.

Here, in his mind Remy employs it to describe a situation where Leila’s words seize the stage although she quickly and gladly disappears into the periphery.

p. 313: “Mme. Ballard”: This is the only time that Mohammed mentions the surname of the man whom he knew as his “M. John.”

p. 313: “Remy had trailed”: Since he will not take part in the funeral procession, Remy stays toward the rear. From 6:09 to 6:15, the body is placed in the casket, which is borne though the building to its front entrance.

p. 313: “the cortege, at perhaps its tenth solemn footfall, stopped”: A reiteration from paragraph two of how “the procession . . . came to a halt by the end of the first minute.”

p. 313: “the sub-warden”: The deputy warden of the prison who was delegated to accompany the prisoner Belmazoir on his extraordinary furlough (18.309 and its note).

- p. 314: “his onus aggravated’ . . . Foucin . . . had tendered the suggestion”: Foucin’s action here in dismissing the other six pallbearers seems to contradict his insistence that the funeral be a communal endeavor (18.310-11).
 However, this purpose has been met by Mohammed’s agreement to allow representatives of the community to participate. This having been gained, Foucin now desires to elevate Mohammed’s mental suffering through a greater bodily punishment.
 With every step, the youth must be made aware that he ultimately was responsible for his sister’s death: Such suffering in body and soul is a prerequisite to redemption.
 See 14.232, where Foucin describes his retreat into the Sahara: “Still sun and stone can martyr only the body. To harrow the soul, one must reinstate himself in the human ‘halo.’”
 This he wishes for Mohammed and even for himself since he partners with the youth in carrying the coffin.
- p. 314: *porteurs de cercueil*: In French, “pallbearers.”
- p. 314: “not the lightest for any two lads to foot twenty blocks”: Remy mildly scoffs at Foucin’s didactic ardor by punning upon some words from Housman’s poem “With Rue My Heart Is Laden”: “And many a lightfoot lad” (4).
- p. 314: “first to”: Prior to burial, the corpse is taken to a mosque for *salaat al-janazah*, the funeral prayer service mentioned above on p. 313, “barred,” N19:2-3.
 It may be held either inside the mosque or in its courtyard since it is reported that Prophet Mohammed attended Janazah in both settings (Bukhari 2.337 and Muslim 2.2077 and 2121).
 The prayers of the funeral service are distinctive since throughout their performance the mourners remain standing; that is, there is no bowing or prostration as in the daily prayers.
- p. 314: “begonia-scented El Kettar Cemetery”: This cemetery that mainly services Bab el Oued is about one kilometer southwest of the Belmazoir residence.
 It is filled with begonia plants which give off a sweet, spicy smell.
 See the 17.285 note.
 To look ahead, the timespan of the procession to the mosque, the funeral ceremony, and the bearing of the casket to the cemetery will be 6:22 to 7:40 a.m. The interment ceremony is completed at 8:05, according to my chronology.
- p. 314: “‘You will leave this morning?’”: With the flashback and the flash-forward inserted into it finished, the action returns to 6:27 where Leila finally addresses Remy.
 She begins by asking the first of what will be four questions, all relating to his schedule that day.
- p. 314: gleamless: “having no gleam; lacking brightness” (*Merriam-Webster’s Online*)

Dictionary).

- p. 314: “could not resist acquainting her of the earlier plane”: Because he had maneuvered Foucin so well in having gotten him to agree to let Mohammed attend the funeral and had obviously fooled Foucin again as to who he is, Remy forgets his frequent admonitions to himself that he must get out of this country as quickly as possible (7.101; 10.169; 17.282; and 18.295 and 302). Such overweening confidence is a sign of tragic hubris.
- p. 314: waive: to dismiss with a wave of the hand” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 314: “M. Medlin still haunts you”: Since in his first visit to the Mirabout Remy had discovered that Medlin was absent from the restaurant during the time Ballard was murdered (10.166-68), Leila assumes that he is returning to gain further proof about the DCM.
- p. 314: “*the crowning plank in our scaffold of truth*”: Leila first introduced the metaphor of truth being a structure consisting of planks of lies on 9.145: The “structure of his truth has as its support and planking . . . ‘vanquishing’ lies.” On 12.196, however, she attributes the metaphor to Remy by telling Foucin, “M. Lazar postulated that the scaffold of truth may be inlaid with some planks of lies.” On 13.207, in discussing Houda’s motives, both Foucin and Remy return to the image, but it is the commissioner who cites Leila, “Her [Houda’s] ‘scaffold of truth,’ to appropriate Mme. Ballard’s conceit.”
- p. 314: “*crowning plank*”: Here “crown” means “to bring to a happy, suitable, or successful conclusion; round off; finish up; climax” (*Webster’s Third*). Yet the word will ironically carry an almost opposite meaning since “crown” is used to describe the warping of a hardwood plank through repeated cycles of wetting and drying. Unbeknownst to Remy, his decision to revisit the Mirabout will “warp” his plans and not produce the rounding-off conclusion he touts here.
- p. 314: obligee: “one to whom another is obligated” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 314: *salaat al-asr*: Asr prayers.
On this day the call to Asr comes at 4:10 p.m., with its prayers occurring from 4:30 – 4:45. Remy planned to be in a shop opposite the service entrance to the Mirabout at the 4:10 call to Asr. He knows that Zerhouni and Ali will leave three minutes later, but he will watch until they are out of sight (4:16). After another minute he plans to be speaking with Samir, the Christian waiter. Their conversation will last from 4:17 to 4:37 (“a twenty-minute conference”). He says directly after the meeting he will walk down the hill to the taxi stand (4:37 – 4:42). He will take a taxi to the Al-Nigma (4:42 – 4:52).

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Thus ten minutes after the end of Asr (4:55), he tells Leila that he should be telephoning her.

p. 314: “the two flight options”: The 11:43 a.m. flight whose destination is not specified in the text, but in my notes is Brussels, and the 6:21 p.m. to Geneva, his connection to Brussels.

p. 314: Houari Boumediène: Algiers airport.
See the 2.27 note for the history of the airport.

p. 314: “(formalities aside”): The ritual of goodbyes.

p. 314: “And is it there . . . the name of my husband’s murderer?”: Leila notes that Remy is still obsessed with things of the past.
This scene ends with Remy leaving the courtyard at 6:35.

pp. 314-17: SECTION 2

p. 314: “At the Al-Nigma”: At around 7:00 a.m. Remy reaches his hotel. It took a little longer because there were fewer Bab el Oued taxis since most were preparing for the obligatory Friday noonday sermon.
He deals with his financial promises to Nemmiche and Dahmani and leaves for his room at 7:25.

p. 314-15: “five hundred dinars . . . to pass on to Nemmiche”: See 18.293-94.

p. 315: Boshabo: The daytime receptionist.

p. 315: “five thousand . . . five hundred”: For the “five thousand,” see 18.303.

The “five hundred” was the total of the following: “the three-fifty for the morphine and the two hundred for the house call” (18.303) minus the “fifty” Dahmani needed for “some sweets” (18.304).

p. 315: “‘fasted’ for exactly twenty-four hours”: Ordered at 7:30 a.m., Friday, Apr. 21, the meal arrives at 7:45. Remy finishes eating at 8:15 and naps till 11:15. Afterward he showers, dresses in his jogging suit, and leaves his room at noon. The last time that the text mentions Remy as eating is the very early morning meal he had from 12:45 – 1:15 a.m. on the previous day Thursday, Apr. 20, ordered after his talk with Leila.

That meal also followed a lengthy “fast,” as he noted: “Comestibles had to be summoned and eaten, for it had been a portion of both a day and night of fasting for him” (16.273 and its note, “it had,” N16:47-48).

The 1:15 time that he finished his early Thursday morning meal would seem to suggest that his fasting time had been longer: Over thirty hours, from 1:15 a.m. Thursday until 8:15 a.m. Friday morning.

However, his insistence that it was “exactly twenty-four hours” indicates that on Thursday morning, following Devereux’s exit, after a short nap, Remy awoke at seven, had a quick shower (7:15), called Room Service before dressing, and ate a light breakfast from 7:30 to 7:45 (from my chronology since none of this is mentioned in the text, except obliquely by Remy’s specifying his twenty-four hours of fasting.)

He left the Al-Nigma at eight (verified by the receptionist Boshabo, 17.286), beginning the journey which would bring him to his father’s loft later that morning at 10:07. The rest of this day and night he never had the chance to eat.

Thus from 7:45.m. on Thursday, Apr. 20, when he finished his breakfast, to 7:45, Friday morning, Apr. 21, when he began his breakfast, Remy did not eat, hence his exactness.

Symbolically the lengthening Ramadan “fast” periods are a subconscious manifestation of his burgeoning fixation on his Islamic heritage.

p. 315: K-Swiss classics: K-Swiss is an American footwear company founded by two Swiss brothers in California in 1966.

Their tennis shoe, the first to be all-leather, has a distinctive five-strap band on each side to prevent the shoe from stretching.

Not until the purchase of the company by an American group of investors in 1986 was the tennis shoe given the name “classic.”

Soon afterward the K-Swiss company became one of the premier makers of a wide range of athletic shoes, a position it still holds today.

p. 315: “fleece jog suit . . . ‘the leisure walkabout garb’”: A Western jogging outfit, I found, is the after-work garment of choice for quite a few Muslim males in North Africa and the Levant and has become a rival to the indigenous *djellaba*.

p. 315: “I must capitalize on this ‘coincidence,’ accepting it, James Joyce-like, as my ‘collaborator’”: The internal quote is from an anecdote about James Joyce, which was provided by Samuel Beckett, who on several occasions took dictation for *Finnegans Wake*.

Beckett provided the following anecdote to Richard Ellmann, who included it in his *James Joyce*: “In the middle of one such [dictation] session there was a knock at the door which Beckett didn’t hear. Joyce said, ‘Come in,’ and Beckett wrote it down. Afterwards he read back what he had written and Joyce said, ‘What’s that “Come in”?’ ‘Yes, you said that,’ said Beckett. Joyce thought for a moment, then said, ‘Let it stand.’ He was quite willing to accept coincidence as his collaborator” (1959 ed., pp. 661-62).

The final-sentence commentary about “coincidence” is neither Joyce’s nor Beckett’s, but Ellmann’s.

p. 315: “an envelope from Foucin”: An indication that the commissioner had stopped by the Al-Nigma.

He was last seen by Remy at 6:22 a.m. partnering Mohammed in carrying the casket.

p. 315: *etui*: An ornamental case for small articles.

Dahmani encased the Vacheron in a small jewelry box, probably one of his wife’s.

p. 315: “two changes of clothes—Arabic and HIV-2”: Thus Remy is carrying with him the beachwear outfit, which he called “HIV-2” (6.115), and two of the native garments which he had bought in the Casbah, the “drab-white *djellaba*” (robe) and the “soiled-white *chèche*” (headwear for males) (10.157).

Again details are mentioned without establishing their purpose, but giving the reader an incentive to plod on.

p. 315: “Foucin’s prison-bound inference about his identity”: On 18.311 he had called Remy “Baby’s [Omar Naaman’s] ‘contact.’”

p. 315: “Nemmiche was shaking the envelope”: With the 500 dinars that Boshabo had passed on to him. Remy had promised it to him on 18.294.

p. 315: *divagate*: to wander about.

From 12:00 to 1:15 p.m., Remy meanders through the streets, largely deserted by the preparations for the noon sermon.

He is basically steering toward the Casbah.

p. 315: “he read the note from Foucin”: For the schedule of the procession and the burial, see the p. 314 note above, “begonia-scented,” N19.5.

Foucin writes that he drove Mohammed and the sub-warden back to the prison from 8:05 to 9:15 and himself back to Algiers and a stop at the Al-Nigma, 9:15 – 10:35 (unspecified times except for the last).

- p. 315: “Friday’s noon ‘sermon—*singular, since the government dictated the content*”: At this time in Algeria and in most other dictatorial Muslim countries in North Africa and the Middle East, the government appointed and thus tightly controlled what the imam (the leader of prayers in a Muslim mosque and the person who delivers its Friday sermon) preached. The Friday service consists of two parts: the sermon (*khutbah*) and a shortened form of Dhuhr (noon) prayers. The sermon is delivered by the imam from a pulpit-like platform (*minbar*), which in all mosques is located to the right of the *mihrab*, the niche that indicates the direction toward Mecca. The sermon also consists of two parts, with the imam stopping and sitting between them. The first and longer segment is religiously oriented, an explication of a verse in the Qur’an or an incident in the Hadiths. The second shorter part is worldly, many times applying the first part to a political or contemporary matter. Here is propagandized the position of the government. This section closes with a call on God to favor Muslims and forgive them their sins. During the sermon, a congregant who does not whisper or talk is said to have the minor sins between this Friday and the previous Friday forgiven. Immediately after (or “seamlessly,” according to the novel) the supplication to God, the congregation begins to perform the last half of Dhuhr prayers, after which they exit the mosque. On this Friday in the novel, the Dhuhr prayer ended at 1:02 p.m.
- p. 315: Ketchaoua: The largest mosque in the Casbah, it was previously mentioned on 10.163 and 168 and 12.198. It is located about two hundred meters south of Martyrs Square. In my novel the Mirabout Restaurant is several blocks further south of Ketchaoua.
- p. 315: “the Casbah’s largest, most trafficked public bathhouse”: Remy enters it at 1:10. I based this bathhouse on ones I used in Rabat, Morocco, and Cairo, Egypt.
- p. 315: “full-frontal nudity . . . forbidden”: Exposing one’s private parts to another is forbidden in Islam (and some Islamist scholars even include this prohibition to a husband and a wife who are supposed to perform sex in the dark). The interdiction for men is based on Qur’an 24:31, which states that Muslim men must “restrain their looks and guard their private parts.” Thus when taking a shower where others are present or changing clothes in public, a man must not remove his shorts. Some Muslims regard the private parts of a man to go from his navel to his knees, an area which must always be kept covered during public activities, such as swimming or other sporting events. From personal experience, I can attest that this rule is not followed in the Muslim Levant or North African countries, where some of the Muslim men wear short, tight-fitting swimming trunks to the beaches and go nude or have on bikini-type

briefs in steam rooms or public bathhouses.

p. 315: *cela va sans dire*: French for “that (or this) goes without saying.”

p. 315: *chèche*: A long headdress cloth worn by some Algerian men which can be wrapped around the skull, the forehead, the lower part of the face, and the neck, leaving uncovered only the eyes and sometimes the nose.
The *chèche* thus can function as a turban, a veil, and a scarf.
See the p. 315 note above, “two changes,” N19:9.

p. 315: *sawm*-breaking: Breaking the daytime Ramadan “fast.”

p. 315: shroudlike: “resembling or characteristic of a *shroud* (*Wiktionary*).
Often spelled “shroud-like.”

p. 315: “the barn-sized steam room proper”: This is the third use of a steam room/bathroom image in the novel.
See the 2.16 note, N2:5. There HIV and Remy’s 1988 meeting is in a gay bathroom in Amsterdam.
On 17.276 (N17:7), HIV storms into a DGSE steam room to confront its Directeur.
Remy enters the Casbah steam room at 1:15.

- p. 316: *vestiaire*: In French, a sporting term meaning a “changing room” (Britain) or a “locker room” (US).
- p. 316: palaver: idle chatter by several.
- p. 316: gasconade: boastful or blustering talk.
- p. 316: jiggeting: moving lively as if dancing a jig (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 316: *étranger*: French for “stranger.”
- p. 316: “the next hour and a half”: From 1:20 to 2:50.
- p. 316: “the rubber circlet”: The “elastic bracelet” on which Remy’s locker key is.
- p. 316: “*Khalaas! Barakaat!* [‘Hold, enough!’]”: Arabic exclamations, the first literally translated as “It’s finished!” and the second as “Blessings!” or “Favors from God!” Remy’s companions are expressing that for now they have had enough of the steam room, which is a blessing during the Ramadan fast. However, Remy employs a free translation, remembering the last words of Macbeth, his defiant challenge to both Macduff and the Fates: “Lay on, Macduff, / And damned be him that first cries, ‘Hold, enough!’” (5.8.33-34).
- p. 316: “Presently ambling out with them”: At 3 p.m. Remy exits the bathhouse in his disguise.
- p. 316: “the drab-white *djellaba* from the Casbah”: A robe-like outer garment worn by Algerian men.
See the p. 315 note above, “two changes,” N19:9.
- p. 316: “the maize-colored sack . . . silver one”: Remy had put a silver bag in the yellow sack since that too must be disguised if he is to escape Foucin’s agents tailing him.
- p. 316: “After a near-hour’s meandering”: From 3:00 to 3:50 Remy wanders around. Then he slips into an alley and removes the *djellaba*, underneath which is the HIV-2 disguise, described on 6.85.
- p. 316: “three sets of apparel”: The jogging outfit, the native *djellaba* and *chèche*, and the HIV-2 beachwear.
- p. 316: *commissaire divisionnaire*: Foucin’s title.
- p. 316: prima facie: An abridged form of “prima facie evidence,” that which is adequate to establish a fact or raise a presumption of fact.
Remy had eluded the agents assigned to track him the previous morning when he

had left the Al-Nigma dressed in the blue suit and pink shirt (17.279 and 287), but his means of doing so are not specified in the text.

And the night before these agents had not been able to prevent Remy's kidnapping in front of Leila's building or even determine which car was used in the abduction (16.267).

However, they had been able to find out what items he had bought in the Casbah (10.156 and 157 and 13.209).

p. 316: "So much we deem necessary": From 17.282: "So much we deem necessary probably isn't" was Remy's barely audible indictment, ignored if apprehended by Devereaux."

Remy is deriding himself for the excessive maneuvering he is going through to elude Foucin's agents.

p. 316: "Algiers' august Shakespearean scholar's retort, 'Claudius has both plan': Foucin is the Shakespeare scholar, and the full quote of this incomplete sentence will be given two paragraphs down.

p. 316: "Memory had steered him into digression . . . the direct path": Although Remy again mocks himself for letting his memory of both his and Foucin words lead him into a digression, he is conscious that the detours he has made in his saunter to the Casbah are a form of necessary digression to lose his trackers.

With that task seemingly accomplished, he says that he can now use a "direct" path to the Mirabout, but during the short stroll (3:55 – 4:00), he occupies himself with another instance of excursus: his memory of Foucin's lecture on Hamlet's digression.

p. 316: "Foucin's 'Hamlet dies digressing' peroration": Remy's mind flashes back to the end or "peroration" of Foucin's "ten-minute monologue" (18.311) during the ride the previous night to fetch Mohammed from the prison (10:39 – 10:49).

p. 316: "What an ignominious business": The remainder of Foucin's opening sentence on Hamlet from 18.311 is given here: "What an ignominious business is that in which Hamlet loses his life.' He stumbles upon 'an assassination so unpremeditated, so flippant even, as hardly to bear the character of voluntary action at all.'"

As mentioned in the 18.311 note, N18:66, this analysis is taken from Prosser Frye's book *Romance and Tragedy* (1961 ed.; originally pub. 1922), p. 285, with Frye's exact words placed in single quotes.

p. 316: "Claudius has both plan and backup plan": The next part of Foucin's argument is abridged from my analysis of the implication of Frye's statement in my essay, "Tragic Closure and "Tragic Calm" (*MLQ*, 1991, pp. 20-21).

There I wrote, "Hamlet, while proclaiming his 'readiness' [5.2.220], approaches the court with no stated plan of action, although his antagonist Claudius has both plan and backup plan to administer the poison.

“Hamlet’s main concerns seem to be to apologize to [beg ‘pardon’ (5.2.224) of] Laertes and to avoid disgracing himself in the duel.

“The Queen’s exclamation that she has been poisoned and Laertes’ declaration that ‘the King’s to blame’ (5.2.323) spur Hamlet to action, which takes the form of unpremeditated assassination—in fact, the result of Claudius’s overplanning rather than any plan of Hamlet’s.

“To counter Frye’s argument, it might be noted that there is nothing out of character here, that from his assumption of the revenge with ‘cursèd spite’ (1.5.197), Hamlet has been dogged by doubts about his adequacy to the task.

“For Shakespeare to have used any premeditated stratagem except ‘casual slaughter’ (5.2.384) might well have compromised the play in another fashion.”

p. 316: overplot: A transitive verb meaning “to devise an unduly complex or elaborate plot for (as a novel)” (*Webster’s Third*).

In my article I used “overplanning,” but decided to have Foucin change this to “overplotting.”

p. 316: *de novo*: once more; again.

p. 316: “the rest is[n’t] silence”: Foucin’s variation on Hamlet’s dying words, “The rest is silence” (5.2.360).

He is chiding Remy for not commenting on his analysis of *Hamlet*.

pp. 316-17: “No, the ‘palpable’ inadequacy”: Foucin’s argument about Hamlet continues, again abridged from my article, p. 21: “The real [Foucin’s ‘palpable,’ quoting from 5.2.283] inadequacy in *Hamlet* begins, I would contend, with Hamlet’s dying speeches.

“Earlier in the play Hamlet had always shown himself able to universalize, to take the particular and reveal its significance. None of this occurs in his dying speech. After a bare three words for his mother [Foucin’s insertion: “Wretched queen, adieu!” (5.2.335)—so much for that Oedipus complex!], he spends his last seven lines on “the news from England” and on Fortinbras, who “has my dying voice” (355-60).

“While Hamlet expresses concern for his “wounded name” (346), one might well ask *how* his name has been wounded. In his apology to Laertes, he had justified his treatment of Ophelia, his killing of Polonius, and his skirmish with Laertes (5.2.225-242).

“Claudius, not he, will be held accountable for the deaths of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, the letter having been forged (5.2.1-62; 373-74). That his slaying of Claudius was just is clear since no one intervened to stop the killing; Laertes’ ‘the King’s to blame’ (323) obviously had been believed.

“Hamlet dies not heralding the completion of his mission, not signifying something accomplished, not synoptically touting the social rot he has removed from Denmark, but engaging in his favorite propensity. Hamlet dies digressing.” Having made the decision to use the passages from my article, I realized how prolix I had been, so I had Foucin synopsis or clarify in many places.

- p. 317: “the ‘rub’ was at hand”: See the 18.311 note, N18:66.
- p. 317: “‘signifying [some]thing’ great”: A play upon the closing line of Macbeth’s “Tomorrow and tomorrow” soliloquy: “It is a tale / Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, / Signifying nothing.”
- p. 317: “The penitentiary’s roughly forty minutes away”: They left Rue Mizon at 10:27 p.m. At 10:32 Foucin began his account of his interrogation of old Naaman and Widow Daidje, concluding it at 10:39.
At that point he mentioned Remy’s mastery of Arabic and commenced on his ten-minute monologue on the ending of *Hamlet*, finishing it 10:49 by contending that Remy is Omar Naaman’s “contact” in France.
They will arrive at the prison thirty-eight minutes later at 11:27.
- p. 317: “scripted as badly as Tinfingers”: On 16.269, Foucin asked, “Who could have suspected that M. Khalaf had drafted a curtailed script?”
Remy says to himself that Foucin has likewise poorly scripted his narrative here.
- p. 317: “‘And so a digression you’ve led us on, the Ballard/Belmazoir mystery a masquerade!’”: Remy thinks that the *Hamlet* exegesis is a digression until Foucin says he now realizes that Remy had led him and everyone else on a digression: That his real reason for coming to Algiers was not to investigate the murder of Ballard or to gain evidence to free Mohammed Belmazoir
- p. 317: “‘the why and wherefore’”: Today a redundant idiom in English since both words means the reason or cause of something.
However, up until around 1600, English writers distinguished between the two: “why” indicated the reason for something, and “wherefore,” how something came to be (*Amer. Her. Dict. of Idioms*).
- p. 317: “‘DGSE—no he—sent you . . . Braille Qur’an’”: Foucin contends that Remy was sent to Algiers by Omar Naaman to deliver Ramadan greetings and a Braille Qur’an to his father.
- p. 317: “‘Baby’s ‘contact’ in France’”: Foucin concludes that the likely person whom the traitor Naaman would entrust with such a mission would be his DGSE case officer. He tells Remy that he must be “Baby’s ‘contact’ in France.”
See the 18.311 note, N18:66-67, where it is also pointed out that “Baby” was used by Foucin to refer to Omar Naaman on 6.99 and 14.220, 235, and 236.
[As an epithet, the word is used three times to refer to his and Marie’s cat, “Baby Snooks” (4.53, 12.199, and later in this chapter 19.322).]
This flashback ends at 4 p.m. with Remy’s arrival at a stand behind the Mirabout Restaurant.

pp. 317-18: SECTION 3

- p. 317: “Overly punctual in his arrival—‘not unlike M. Ballard’”: Since it is ten minutes before the 4:10 call to Asr prayers, Remy bides his time by looking at some straw hats at a stall opposite the back entrance to the Mirabout
While on 15.247, Remy disdains any comparison with Ballard by affirming that “I’m not Ballard” in the latter’s obsession with arriving ahead of time, here he stresses that like the American he is “overly punctual.”
On 1.4, 9.150, 12.191, and 14.228, Ballard’s “prepunctuality” (a coined word) is stressed by the American or Leila.
On 18.299, in speaking to the dying Houda, Remy begins to moderate his opinion of Ballard, speaking of his “vitiating,” not his corruption. A realization and a change are coming over Remy regarding this man whom Leila loves very much. That she would love him is causing Remy to conclude that Ballard must not have been the evil person or “devil” whom he had made him out to be (6.95 and 13.215 and 217).
- p. 317: “Yesterday on the dirt road from the prison”: On the drive back from the prison to Rue Mizon on Apr. 20 (6:20 – 7:45 p.m.), Remy remembers some of the details from the dream he had on the 2:27 – 3:40 p.m. drive out to the prison (17.289-92).
To the dying Houda, he reveals some of what he had concluded from his memory of the dream: that he had almost certain proof that the murderer of Ballard was not her brother (18.298), that Ballard was weak and probably unaware of the trick played on her and her brother on Feb. 15 (18.299), and that the “true villain” behind this deception more than likely murdered Ballard twelve days later (18.299).
What had set off Remy’s train of reasoning was a comment of his father about Remy’s wife being a Jewess and thus part of the “uncircumcised leaf” of “the Book” (17.292).
This statement set Remy’s mind to contemplating that Ballard was a Jew and thus was circumcised, yet he recalled that both Houda and Mohammed referred to his penis as uncircumcised (17.292).
- p. 317: mastic tree: A Mediterranean evergreen tree of the cashew family.
- p. 317: vincula: “links or bonds” which Remy ties together to solve the murder. He thinks of them as “spectral” because he invokes the “ghost” of Ballard and cites passages where Houda and Mohammed likewise call up their times with the American.
- p. 317: “On my eight earthly day, snipped in the bud”: See 9.141.
The pun on “nipped in the bud” was also used by Saul on 2.20: “Some don’t fancy the ‘snipped-in-the-bud.’”
- p. 317: brith milah: From the Hebrew *berit mila*, meaning the “covenant of

circumcision,” which is performed on the eighth day after the birth of a Jewish male child.

p. 317: “He’s a Jew!”: See 9.141.

p. 317: “whatever scenario Ballard had concocted for the fifteenth”: February 15, when unknown to Houda Ballard brought a drunken Mohammed to the Toumi flat. On 14.230 Remy believed that Ballard’s script called for Mohammed to don the FLIRS and “spy on his American ‘*mon ami*’ frolicking with a strumpet before, in turn, [putting them on] during his own romp, slavering over her.” On 15.253 he reasoned from Houda’s account that Ballard’s scheme was to use the FLIRs to watch Mohammed rape his sister. In either scenario, only one pair was needed.

p. 317: “‘the light shineth in [the] darkness’ . . . ‘comprehended’”: Remy slightly emends the version of John 1:5: “And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not.” He also cites this Biblical passage on 4.54, near the beginning of his investigation of the murder, and he returns to it here as he approaches the resolution of the mystery. See the 4.54 note, N4:10, where I generalize that “almost all murder mysteries (as well as tragedies) move from darkness to light, from mystery to comprehension.”

p. 317: “‘undyeing the chamber’s darkness’”: Houda’s wording: “The clicking on of the light undyeing the chamber’s darkness” (15.253).

p. 317: “horror-struck”: On 15.253, Houda had described Ballard’s expression when the lights came on as “horror-struck.” Remy wonders why he should have been horrified since he had drafted both parts of the ruse: the brother unknowingly having sex with his sister and the exposure to each other of what they had engaged in.

p. 317: “wondrous strange”: From *Hamlet*, 1.5.173, where Horatio exclaims, “O day and night, but this is wondrous strange!” Remy may also be thinking of the close connection of the two words in Othello’s speech in 1.3.162-63: “She swore, in faith, ’twas strange, ’twas passing strange, / ’Twas pitiful, ’twas wondrous pitiful.”

p. 317: “the ST Dupont”: S. T. Dupont (the periods are deleted from its brand name) is a French manufacturer of luxury cigarette lighters. See the 4.62 note, N4:32. On 2.33, Remy had requested that HIV get him a microcassette recorder in the shape of a lighter. Thus he has two, a real Dupont and its twin a tiny recorder (10.164).

- p. 317: “tapping the refill screw and thumbing with the flint wheel”: Parts of the faux lighter allow Remy to play, stop, fast-forward, and rewind the recorder. These functions were mentioned on 4.62-63 and 66.
Anachronistically, Remy’s has a built-in speaker. My research indicated that the microcassette recorders of the late 1980s needed an external headphone for listening.
- p. 317: “. . . my pulling at the muslin . . . The thighs of my attacker . . . uncircumcised”:
For this quotation, see 15.253 and its notes, N15:47-48.
- p. 317: “size and shape and substance”:
See the 15.253 note, N15:47-48.
For Remy’s use of the “shape, size, substance” polysyndetic order, see 3.50 (and its note, N3:38) and 17.279 (N17:17-18).
The series will occur later on 21.354 (N21:9).
- p. 317: “I’d fondled a week before”: Houda described the experience of Feb. 8 to Remy on 15.251.
- p. 317: *exempli gratia*: “for example” (Latin).
- pp. 317-18: “uncircumcised . . . a step from the footboard I saw the pairs of goggles dangling from [Ballard’s] hands”: In his revulsion at what Houda is describing (that she was raped by her brother who thought she was some unknown prostitute), at the time Remy had missed three important details of her narrative: that her rapist on Feb. 15 was circumcised unlike the person whom she touched the week before; that when the lights came on Ballard was at the foot of the bed and thus could not have turned on the light switch beside the door; and that Ballard had in his hands two pairs of goggles.

- p. 318: “‘The, uh, head, uh, uh, was . . . hidden’ and with his tongue ‘I, uh, exposed it’”: This quote by Mohammed is from 6.84. If the glans penis was covered by its foreskin, it would be uncircumcised. While Houda might have been mistaken about whether or not the penis was circumcised, Mohammed could not be since he had done far more than just touch it over the nine-month span of their relationship. Additionally, unlike Leila or her brother Ahmed, neither Mohammed nor Houda knew that Ballard was born a Jew and thus circumcised.
- p. 318: “*they* [words] *unlike people cannot remold themselves*”: This is the only reference to the imposture motif which ran through Remy’s mind after he had left his father’s apartment: “I entered as an impostor and became myself, only to leave as that impostor” (17.281). Additionally, his father had referred to the man who claimed to be his son as an “impostor” (17.282 and 292), comments which Remy draws upon in concluding during his taxi dream, “Like me, he [Ballard] entered as an impostor and become himself, only to leave as that impostor” (17.292). Next he further associates these discoveries with the adamancy of Leila that “her husband was not a sexual impostor [a homosexual]!” (17.292). These remembrances lead to Remy’s conclusion that Ballard had remolded himself while he was in the room by passing himself off as someone he was not. That person was hiding in the bathroom, which in the Toumi ritual Ballard always entered before having sex with Belmazoir, but from which, Remy was certain, this other man came out. Neither Mohammed nor Houda had been aware of the switch because of the darkness of the room and the similar physical size and shape of the two men.
- p. 318: “Two pairs of goggles”: One pair would have sufficed, but Houda mentioned two, and Ballard had checked out two. “For whom was the other pair intended?” is Remy’s unstated question.
- p. 318: *mish nedeef*: In Arabic, “dirty,” that is, *mish* (“not”) *nedeef* (“clean”), as translated in the text.
- p. 318: “pimply ones that Leila, Mohammed, and Houda indentified as his [Ballard’s]”: On 4.64, Mohammed described Ballard’s thighs as “the rough, pimply back sides of his legs, the remnant of a Vietnam wound, he later explained.” Houda said during her first night in the Toumi bed her hands touched “the bumpy cicatrices dotting the back of his thighs” (15.251) and on the second night there because the “thighs of my attacker weren’t scarred,” she knew that it was not Ballard in the bed (15.253). On 9.145, Remy tells Leila that Mohammed was able to describe “the peculiar marks on his anatomy.” She does not deny this characteristic for she had said to Ballard on 1.10 (of course, unknown to Remy) that the backs of his thighs and calves were “a little ‘picklely’ [defined by the *Urban Dictionary* as “pertaining to a

pickle” or a merging of “pickle” and “prickly”].”

Belsches said that the corpse of Ballard had “some minted scars [which] pimple his thighs and calves, a wartime wound” (5.70).

Finally, Leroy said that the “grenade caught us both from behind, piercing our calves and thighs with slivers of wood, grains of sand, and fragmented metal” (8.123-24), adding, “Death cannot wipe these scars from his legs or mine” (124).

p. 318: “Two pairs of legs. And the fork of one accommodated”: Echoes *Lear* 3.4.105-06: “Unaccommodated man is no more but such a poor, bare, forked animal as thou art.”

The first sentence repeats the syntactic pattern of the previous paragraph, “Two pairs of goggles.”

p. 318: *qadiib*: Remy uses the formal Arabic word for “penis.”

The slang term (similar to “dick” or “cock” in English) is *zebb* or *sambool*.

p. 318: telluric: terrestrial; of or arising from the earth or soil.

p. 318: “An evil *djinni*’s taken possession of your tongue. How he talks Arabic in your sleep!”: See the 1.9 and 10.155 notes, N1:24-25 and N10:7.

As mentioned in the Qur’an, a *djinni* (plural, *djinn*) is of one of the three orders of beings created by Allah, with angels and human beings the other two.

They live on the earth, but have little interaction with their fellow inhabitants, humanity. They may be good or evil spirits.

Since the Muslim Satan was a disobedient *djinni*, they are often portrayed in Arab lore as treacherous or mischievous.

p. 318: “Once I’ve saved the sister”: In this flashback Remy is on the way from the prison (6:20 – 7:45, Thurs., Apr. 20) where Mohammed has convinced him that Houda may be planning to commit suicide.

In the taxi Remy imagined that he would succeed in preventing her from doing so.

p. 318: “missing my plane”: Although Remy had told Foucin to book him on the 9:57 p.m. to Brussels (17.284), he had decided, without telling Foucin, even before they left the hotel to change this to the earlier 8:12 p.m. to Paris (17.287).

p. 318: Corporal Morris: The marine corporal who showed the corpse of Ballard to Remy and Belches (5.69).

p. 318: “touched or stirred”: Remy’s last conclusion was that an imposture and a ruse had repeatedly taken place in the Toumi room and that neither Mohammed nor Houda had ever touched Ballard’s private parts.

The wording here is similar to Remy’s speech to Houda: “The blame is mine, for stirring what should have been let lie, for groping what should not have been touched” (18.298; its note indicates that the phrases are taken from the book

Chinggis Khan.)

Thus this speech is given earlier in the text, although the original wording of the idea came to Remy during his taxi ride back from the prison.

- p. 318: “At the summons to Asr”: The flashback, which began at four, ends with the call to Asr prayers at 4:10.
- p. 318: *chapeau de paille*: French for “straw hat.”
- p. 318: “the perfect topper”: In millinery terminology, a “perfect topper” or “perfect royal topper” designates a hat which complements the outfit to be worn to a dignified or formal occasion.
By itself, “topper” may refer to a man’s “silk top hat or opera hat.”
Remy also probably had in mind another use of “topper”: “something (as a joke) that surpasses or climaxes everything preceding it” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 318: “May we speak a moment?”: The questioning of Samir lasts from 4:16 to 4:36.
- p. 318: “the blue-green fifty”: A fifty-dinar note.
- p. 318: “for why change the merchandise when the [customer] buys?”: An emendation of Ghazi’s rhetorical question, “Why change the merchandise when the fool [his mother] buys?” (12.199)
This technique where the interrogator switches from one topic to another was used by Foucin in questioning Mohisen on 7.110.
- p. 318: “a second time”: Samir’s first trip to the room to bring the table settings and water to the Leroys and Medlin was described on 10.166-68. There he found only the Leroys.
In thinking back on that scene, Remy remembered that “Samir’s lips had opened” (169) as if he planned to add something. At the time Remy had concluded that it was an apology for what he had suggested about Medlin.
At an unspecified time later, however, Remy speculated that the novice waiter probably intended to disclose what he had found on a second trip to the room. On p. 169, the headwaiter Zerhouni had silenced Samir through an insult, “You’re as nasty as your uncircumcised cock!” (169)
- p. 318: “employing ‘my little restaurant English and French’”: Remy is quoting the words that Samir had said in his previous narration of his second trip to the room (not given in the text).
- p. 318: *encore de l’eau*: French for “More water?” although a native speaker would ask, “*Plus d’eau?*”
- p. 318: *la*: As the text indicates, this is the Arabic for “no.”

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p. 318: “No, the lady”: Had a man been present in the booth, Arab culture would have demanded that he, not the woman, deliver the answer to a question from a male waiter.

p. 319: SECTION 4

p. 319: “So Leroy was absent”: After giving Samir an enlarged *pourboire*, Remy left the Mirabout at 4:38.

Section 4 begins a minute later with him walking toward the taxi stand. Remy believes that Leroy’s absence from the booth points to him as the murderer of Ballard in the same way Medlin’s absence had incriminated him.

However, he is puzzled about several circumstances which suggest that Leroy could not have committed the murder.

Stylistic note: To draw attention to sections 4 and 8, both involving Leila and Remy, each is shortened to one page.

p. 319: skelp: hurry along; hustle.

p. 319: “my confidence in your confidentiality”: Remy’s weakest wordplays typically come at his moments of triumph.

p. 319: jounce: to move in an up-and-down manner as in “her head jounced as the horse began to gallop” (*Merriam-Webster Online*).

p. 319: “‘desert-sand shifting’ of the parking lot . . . spent four minutes”: Medlin said “the layout” of the lot in which Leroy had parked the Fiat rental had undergone “a desert-sand shifting” so it took him “four minutes” to locate the rental Fiat (11.181).

p. 319: “Mme. Leroy . . . did not recollect it being parked in that spot”: According to Medlin, Mrs. Leroy had noted “the Fiat . . . doesn’t appear to be where we left it” (11.180).

p. 319: “which had been ‘luckily descried,’ the DCM added, by the Ambassador”: Medlin said, “Like Mrs. Leroy, I’d let slip our parking spot, a moment later luckily descried by you [Leroy]” (11.180).

Remy believes that more than luck was involved in the Ambassador’s locating the car.

p. 319: “Leroy *had* passed the key . . . to deposit the packages in the trunk”: Medlin said, “Ambassador Leroy escorted me to the front door,” where he said, “‘Here’s the key [to the Fiat rental]” (11.179).

The “bags and mat [were] stowed in the truck” by the DCM (11.181).

p. 319: “‘A duplicate? But when would he have had the—’”: In her written account of the afternoon of shopping, Mrs. Leroy stated that “the agency delivered [the Fiat rental] to the Leroy’s residence at ‘eleven; Donald, the guard who signed for it, telephoned up to inform me” (11.181).

The “key” would have been with her or Donald until the Ambassador came home at around three. He and his wife left immediately to pick up Medlin, and the

three then drove to the parking lot near the Casbah, starting their walkabout at 3:45.

Thus there would have been insufficient time for Leroy to have a duplicate key made.

That Leroy would have rented and parked thereabouts a second car to drive to Zaracova is unlikely since the first impressions of both Medlin and Mrs. Leroy are that the Fiat rental had been moved.

p. 319: “Remy glanced up from the pavement”: The time is 4:42.

p. 319: *haik*: An outer robe worn by Muslim women. The typical color of it in Algeria is white.

p. 319: “full *niqaab*”: A veil covering all of the face.

p. 319: *burnoose*: a hooded wraparound cloak worn by an Algerian man usually over a *djellaba* (robe).

p. 319: *veuve*: French for “widow,” as the text translates in the first sentence of the next paragraph.

p. 319: “*Vous achetez*”: French for “Will you buy?”

p. 319: fountained: As an intransitive verb, “fountain” means “to flow or spout like a fountain” (*Webster’s Third*).

p. 319: “the last of the Seven”: Leila chooses not to employ the word “Traitors.”

p. 319: “extravagant”: In the sense of “excessive or unrestrained.”

p. 319: “blue uncertainty”: From Dickinson’s “I Heard a Fly Buzz”: “There interposed a Fly— / With blue—uncertain stumbling Buzz” (12-13).

p. 319: “Place Maurice Audin”: Maurice Audin was a French mathematics assistant at the University of Algiers who clandestinely aided the FLN.

He was abducted by French paratroopers during the 1957 Battle of Algiers and taken to *Les Tombeaux* where he was tortured.

Several who saw him there give different versions of how he died. His body was never found.

After the Revolution, a square near the university, Place Maurice Audin, was named in his honor.

p. 319: Riboux: Ruelle Riboux is an invention of mine.
Riboux is a village in southeastern France.

p. 319: harlequin: The word was used on 6.127 where Remy deemed his HIV-2 outfit as

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“my harlequin garb.”

- p. 319: “one of Paul’s”: That Leila takes the time to specify that the *burnoose* was her husband’s indicates that the ideals which she saw in Ballard she also found in Remy.
- p. 319: “the swelling after-prayers traffic”: Asr prayers lasted from 4:30 – 4:45. The time is around 4:47.
- p. 319: “his money-laden fingertips barely touched . . . her . . . *haik*”: On 12.197, Remy noted that in her transfer of his handkerchief back to him, “had it not been for the screening cloth of the *mouchoir*, their fingers would have touched for the first time.”
- p. 319: “*Shokran! Merci!*”: The Arabic and French for “Thank you.”
- p. 319: “re-solicit”: Not listed in the standard online or print dictionaries. As one word or a hyphenated word, I found it listed in some articles through a Google search. There it had two meanings: (1) to call for a new printing of a comic book and (2) to seek an additional bid on a military project or item. Neither of these fits my meaning here, “to ask or seek earnestly or pleadingly a second time.”
- p. 319: *En passant*: In passing [by him, “*par lui*” being understood]. At 4:48, Leila steps away from Remy and is lost in the crowd.

pp. 320-23: SECTION 5

p. 320: “As good a definition”: Section 5 takes up directly after section 4.

p. 320: “the human bond”: The human bond, as implied by Leila and defined by Remy, is the affinity which compels one human being to help another simply because she/he needs such help.

Using an appeal for a selfish end, the Palestinian doctor had wondered whether “any filaments remain in humanity’s cord” (16.266), and Remy almost immediately questions whether “the corded bond was ever there” (266).

He will reach a conclusion about the viability of “humanity’s corded bond” near the end of the novel (21.365).

The concept of humanity as a teleological, not merely a biological, species is discussed at two other points in the novel: On 13.209-10, Remy concludes that the human species has survived because most of its members see themselves not as an individual but as part of a species (and Remy applies this concept of an absence of egotism as crucial to all species which have not voluntarily become extinct).

And on 14.232, Foucin recognizes the necessity of returning to the “human ‘halo.’”

p. 320: nip: As an intransitive verb, “hurry; dart”; often followed by an adverb of direction, such as “in, back, off, etc.” (*Webster’s Third*).

p. 320: “‘Harried as a runway model!’”: Despite his predicament, Remy does not lose his sense of humor.

p. 320: *burnoose*: The hooded cloak of Ballard’s which he received from Leila is used to hide his HIV-2 tourist garb.

p. 320: “the still-moist headdress”: It is damp from the public steam room.

p. 320: “the heart of the Casbah”: On 10.153, Remy had employed a common description of the Casbah as the “white heart of Algiers.”

Here he recognizes that to escape he must go deeper into this heart.

p. 320: prepensely: “with premeditation; deliberately” (*Webster’s Third*).

p. 320: “room to change”: A pun on a “changing room” since Remy will use the mosque to change his clothes, but there is also the suggestion of “room” as “an opportunity, occasion, or capacity, for something (as an action, development, or mental process)” (*Webster’s Third*).

Furthermore, On p. 322, while going through the motions of praying in the mosque, Remy seems to undergo a religious “change,” albeit temporary.

The time he enters the mosque is 4:57.

p. 320: “the Prophet devoted the last ten days and nights of Ramadan to mosque *salaat*”: From his arrival in Medina (1 AH/622 CE) till his death (11 AH/632 CE), the Prophet Mohammed observed *I'tikaf*, that is seclusion of a fasting person in a mosque during the last ten days of Ramadan (the Hadiths of Al-Bukhari 4.2025-26 and of Muslim 2636-40).

I'tikaf (“seclusion” in Arabic) is mentioned in the Qur’an 2:187: “But do not associate with your wives while you are in seclusion in the mosques.”

Following the practice of the Prophet, it is considered a community duty that some people, or at least one person, go in seclusion in the neighborhood *masjid* (mosque).

However, all Muslims are supposed to read and recite the entire Qur’an during Ramadan.

The Muslim in *I'tikaf* performs additional prayers, recites and studies the Qur’an, analyzes the Hadiths, and exhorts himself or herself (since women are allowed to perform the ritual, according to Muslim 2640) and the members of their community to obey Allah and His Messenger.

Since Muslims in *I'tikaf* are not permitted to go outside the mosque except for emergencies, they sleep and use the facilities there.

At night, when the fasting ends, food is passed to them by their families or neighbors.

p. 320: “some fervid premature emulators”: If there were imitators of the Prophet at the mosque, they would have begun *I'tikaf* three days early since the date is 15 Ramadan (Apr. 21) in my chronology, thirteen days before the last day of Ramadan. Hence, Remy calls the possible emulators “premature.” (I decided against using Ballard’s “prepunctual.”)

p. 320: *salaat*: prayers.

p. 320: *djellaba*: The robe worn by many Algerian men.

In his bags Remy has two *djelaliib* (plural of *djellaba*): the drab-white one which he purchased in the Casbah and wore from the public bathhouse and this sky-blue (“cerulean”) one in the brown bag which Leila passed to him.

p. 320: *redon*: To put on (garments) again. Exemplary sentences using the verb “redon” are listed in the online *Wordnik*, but the site offers no definition.

p. 320: *tant de travail . . . tant de options*: French for “so much work . . . so many options.”

p. 320: “dress of two cultures . . . three, if the jogging suit”: The cultures of North Africa (the white *djellaba* and the damp white headdress) and of the West (the jogging suit, presumably from France; the K-Swiss tennis shoes, despite their name, made in America; the Western tourist beachwear, affiliated with America or England through the English word “Love” on the bermudas; and the Al-Nigma bath thongs, again associated with Western guests at the hotel).

The macho sports clothes and the gay HIV-2 garb might want to “disown” each other, Remy banter to himself.

- p. 320: “lightly tossed ‘heavenward’”: The quotes around “heavenward” indicate that Remy mouths the words, his vocal identification of Marie not only with home but also with heaven.
Significantly at the time Leila has helped Remy the most his deepest thoughts flow toward Marie.
- p. 320: *plash*: “a movement or sound suggestive of the splashing of water” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 320: “the pink-minnow word spouting from the azure fountain”: As mentioned three notes above, the word is “Love” (6.85).
- p. 320: *cincture*: A transitive verb meaning “to girdle with or as if with a cincture” as in “her face cinctured with a band” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 320: *chèche*: A headdress worn by Algerian men.
The white *chèche* which Remy had bought in the Casbah and worn to the baths is replaced by the gray-checked one which Leila had packed.
- p. 320: “*As-salaamu ‘alaikum!*”: The formal greeting of one Muslim to another.
It is translated in the text as “May Peace be upon you!”
The Arabic word for “peace” is *salaam*.
- p. 320: “And may God’s Peace (as well) go with you!’ . . . the formal response”: This is the expected answer to the greeting.
In Arabic: “*Wa-alaikumu-salaam!*” Literally, “And upon you be Peace!”
However, the parenthetical “(as well)” is semantically understood.
- p. 320: *Asr*: The afternoon prayers, on this day in my novel from 4:30 to 4:45.
Since the time here is 5:02, Rachid is just over thirty minutes late performing the prayers.
Remy seizes on his invitation since he will be less conspicuous if he is with another Algerian instead of by himself.
- p. 320: *aagooz*: The Arabic word for an “old man” as the text indicates.
- p. 320: *marshal*: to lead or guide ceremoniously.
- p. 320: *sunstruck*: An adjective meaning “affected or touched by the sun” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 320: *ablution pool*: The courtyard of every mosque has a central fountain and pool (in Arabic *howz*) for worshippers to perform partial ablution before they enter

the mosque to pray.

p. 320: *mirhab*: All prayers must be offered in the direction of Mecca.
Thus every mosque has a niche which shows the direction which the congregants must face.

p. 321: *vieillard*: French for “old man.”

p. 321: “*My first in twenty-eight years . . . imagined one with Foucin*”: Their prayers last from 5:07 to 5:22.

Omar (Remy) was flown out of Algiers on Apr. 13, 1961. On the morning the French came to his family’s shop to abduct him, he had awakened and was anticipating dawn prayers (2.26).

Therefore, his last prayers were Isha’, the evening prayers of the night before. The span would be from Apr. 12, 1961, to the date of this chapter, Apr. 21, 1989.

His imagined prayers in Foucin’s office occurred on Apr. 12, nine days ago (7.101-03).

p. 321: “slipping on his sandals”: Sandals or shoes are typically left in the courtyard of a mosque, even though there are Hadiths of the Prophet Mohammed praying in his sandals (Al-Bukhari 386 and Muslim 555), just as there are of his praying without footwear (Abu Dawood 650).

Muslims scholars point out that in the Prophet’s time the floor of a mosque was sand or pebbles. Thus the matter of dirt on the shoes was not an issue, but the type of dirt was.

In Abu Dawood 650, while praying the Prophet suddenly took off his sandals because, he said later, the angel Jibril (Gabriel) whispered to him that there was some impurity on them. Thus foot covering may be worn if the congregant is certain that it does not contain any filth.

Today the floors of mosques are covered with carpets. For practical reasons, most Muslims do not enter a mosque with shoes because they could track dirt to areas of the carpets where others will pray. Also over time this dirt will damage the floor coverings.

Muslim scholars, however, make exemption for soldiers wearing boots. Military regulations may forbid them from removing their boots while on duty. Additionally military footwear is often cumbersome to take off and put back on.

Thus no fellow Muslim would take exception to members of the military wearing boots while praying in the mosque, trusting that they would have cleaned them very well to insure that no impurity is brought in.

On a less dogmatic note, on seeing a plethora of identical-looking sandals covering a courtyard of a mosque, I asked a Muslim friend how each prayer remembers which pair is his.

He answered, perhaps facetiously, certainly mischievously, “Allah guides him!”

p. 321: “food to choke on”: Rachid incorporates a phrase from the Qur’an where Allah is describing the torment of Hell: “Leave Me alone to deal with the beliers (those who deny my Qur’an). Respite those who possess good things for a little while. Verily, with Us are heavy shackles (to bind), a raging fire (to burn them), food that chokes, and a torturous penalty of painful doom” (73:11).

p. 321: “body becomes as wispy as the soul”: Islam distinguishes between the body and the soul or flesh and spirit.

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See the 18.303 note, “still a clot,” N18:40, where it is explained that after conception the body of the fetus goes through three forty-day stages (matter, clot of blood, and piece of flesh).

On the 121st day, Allah sends an angel to breathe the “soul” into the fetus.

Thus human interaction and development make the “body” of the fetus while an agent of Allah instills the “soul.”

Rachid seems to accept that the “soul” is the ethereal or “wispy” aspect of a human being. Thus the bodily fasting of Ramadan is a testament of the triumph of the spirit over the flesh which, in turn, makes the prayers better in this month.

p. 321: Ait: Not used as a first name by non-Berber Algerians. Hence Rachid's recognition.

“Ait” is yet another pseudonym which Remy assumes.

p. 321: “our Arab bias drove them back to the Grande Kabylie and the Aurès”: Arabs make up approximately 85% of Algeria's population with Berbers, the aboriginal inhabitants, constituting around 15%.

See 2.24 and its note, N2:35, where Remy describes how the invaders of Algeria drove the Berbers into the mountainous Kabylie east of Algiers and into the Aurès Mountains in the country's northeast.

Despite the contribution which Berbers made to the revolution, after independence in 1962, the ruling Arab-dominated FLN political party decided to Arabize Algeria.

Arabic was made its only official language, and the FLN virtually excluded Berbers from high-ranking positions in the government.

It would not be until 1995 that the government recognized the Berber language, Tamazight, as a national language, and it was not until 2005 that it allowed a Berber-language television station.

Thus the prejudice against Berbers which Rachid mentions here and which Remy will experience on pp. 323-24 is based in fact.

p. 321: “the swarming train station”: Algiers' main train station (Gare d'Alger) is located in central Algiers on Rue d'Angkor.

It is around three-hundred meters northeast of my fictitious Al-Nigma hotel and an equal distance southeast of the southern border of the Casbah, Blvd. Ourida Meddad and Place de la Lyre.

p. 321: joiner: A person who constructs and finishes interior woodwork, such as doors, molding, or stairs.

p. 321: “I redeemed them from garbage bins.” Rachid implies that God guided him to save the tools in order for him to help Ait (Remy). Here the redemption theme and the garbage imagery coalesce.

The source of Remy's redemption (for at Rachid's insistence he has just prayed), I borrowed from the third section of Yeats's “The Circus Animals' Desertion,” where the poet gains salvation (a resurrected life) by lying down “In

the foul rag and bone shop of the heart” (40). Earlier in l. 35 Yeats asserts that poetic images begin in “A mound of refuse.”

The garbage imagery was also influenced by Job’s sitting “down among the ashes” (2:81, KJV) and *Billy Budd*, chap. 14, “Down among the groundlings, among the beggars and rakers of the garbage, profound passion is enacted.”

For a short essay on the pattern of sin, repentance, and redemption in the novel, see N18:72-74.

- p. 321: iftar: The fast-breaking meal at sunset. The cannon blast, accompanied by a mosque call, ending the fast will come at 7:28.
Thus the time Rachid asks Remy to stay for iftar is 5:28.
Remy accepts the iftar invitation, knowing that he needed to be off the street until darkness settled in.
- p. 321: “safe harbor”: A haven which provides refuge, shelter, asylum, protection, etc. from weather, attack, capture, etc.
- p. 321: post-Isha’: Isha’ is the evening prayer, on this night of the novel, from 8:56 to 9:11.
- p. 321: bosse-plywood: “the pinkish to reddish brown wood of the [African] bosse tree used especially for plywood” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 321: “a basement ‘as dark and cramped as a fox’s manger””: Rachid’s cellar is meant both to compare and contrast with the attic of Remy’s father.
- p. 321: “*Mafeesh!*”: As the text indicates, the Arabic for “No problem!”
- p. 321: “desertion by *three* sons, Remy self-chided, not one!”: Remy uses Rachid’s account of how his three sons left him to admonish himself for his desertion of his father twenty-eight years ago.
- p. 321: notions stall: A commercial booth which sells a wide variety of small inexpensive household items.
- p. 321: “God provides either healing or a remedy for each illness, except one . . . old age””: Rachid is summarizing a statement of Prophet Mohammed, as reported in the Hadith of Abu Dawud 28.3846: “The Bedouins came to him and said, ‘O Messenger of Allah, should we seek medicine?’ He said, ‘Yes, O slaves of Allah, seek medicine, for Allah has not created a disease except that He has created its cure, except for one illness.’ They said, ‘And what is that?’ He said, ‘Old age.’”
Similar versions of this idea that if God created a disease He also created its cure are given in other Hadiths: Al-Bukhari 7.582; Muslim 3.1199, and Ibn Majah 5.3436.

- p. 322: “A baby’s palms have more calluses than these”: Remy realizes that he must explain the contradiction between his workman trade and his librarian hands.
- p. 322: “to rest the hour before the cannon”: They sleep from 6:25 to 7:28.
- p. 322: “a sleep he had not foreseen”: For the second time this day this situation has occurred.
On 18.309-10, at 1:26 a.m., Remy “plopped down” in a wicker chair in the Belmazoir courtyard “with the stern self-injunction not to nod off,” but immediately did, sleeping until 4:13 a.m.
- p. 322: “500,000 dinars”: This is the first time the 1989 reward for the capture of Omar Naaman is given.
On 2.30, Remy said that in 1963 the “bounty” was 25,000 Algerian francs (the currency at the time) on each of the Seven Great Traitors turned in dead “and double that alive.”
Since the parliamentary act establishing the rewards stipulated that these should be increased regularly until all seven were executed, “God knows what the rewards are now!” Remy had then exclaimed to HIV.
On p. 330, the 500,000 figure will be mentioned again, and on 20.335, Remy will say that the bounty is “200,000 dead” to another character’s emphasis on the half-million reward.
- p. 322: “a ‘scoop’ away”: Two senses of “scoop,” neither exactly fitting the situation, hence the enclosing single quotes: “an amount of something obtained in large quality as if with a scoop” and “the taking in of all the cards on the table in one play in casino” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 322: “dates, ‘our Prophet’s fruit’ . . . confirming Hadith accounts”: According to the Hadiths, the Prophet always broke the Ramadan fast with dates and always had dates and raisins for breakfast throughout the year.
“Dates” are mentioned twenty-two times in the Qur’an, far more than any other fruit and among food products second only to “cattle,” referred to on thirty-four occasions.
In the Hadiths, Prophet Mohammed said, “A family which has dates will not be hungry” (Muslim; in another place in his Hadiths he reports this negatively, “People in a house without dates are in a state of hunger”).
The Hadith of Al-Tirmidhi cites the Prophet as saying that when a person praises Allah, “a date tree is planted in Paradise.” According to Bukhari, he declared that “the *ajwah* dates [from the Medina region] come from Paradise, and they are a remedy for poison or magic.”
A Muslim “should break his fast with dates; but if he cannot get any, then with water,” Abu Dawud quotes the Prophet. Bukhari states that he declared that “there is a tree among the trees which is similar to a Muslim (in goodness), and that is the date palm tree.”
The same writer reports the Prophet declaring that “you should save yourself

from hellfire by giving even half a date-fruit in charity.”

Since Rachid is a poor man, for himself he had not bought any dates with which to break the fast since they are more expensive than water, tea, and bread. Realizing that the absence of this fruit was disrespectful of his guest, he buys some dates at his first opportunity, on the way back from Maghreb prayers. (Not in the text, this rationale must be inferred by the reader.)

p. 322: scarrow: “a shadowy or faint light” (Scottish dialect).

p. 322: “‘straits so dire’”: Remy’s rewording of the cliché “dire straits.”
He is not ridiculing the beast of burden.

p. 322: “The animals must be made to feel special too”: In early versions of the novel, Rachid said, “We must pity the animals too,” employing the wording from *War and Peace*, bk. 12, the penultimate paragraph of chap. 12: “One must pity the animals too.”

However, after numerous readings, I decided that the word “pity” is too condescending here and thus would certainly not be an aspect of Rachid’s outlook since he regards all of life as “special.”

p. 322: Baby Snooks: Remy and Marie’s cat (4.52-53 and 61; 12.199-200; 15.239-40; 17.290; and later, 20.342).

p. 322: *shai*: Arabic for “tea.”

p. 322: “at the call to Isha’’: Its call comes at 8:36. Its prayers last from 8:56 – 9:11.

p. 322: “diffusing beam’’: A smile spreading across his face.

p. 322: *mirhab*: As mentioned on p. 320 and in its note, each mosque has a Mecca-orienting niche toward which a Muslim prays.

p. 322: “‘food to choke on’’: For Rachid’s rewording of the Qur’anic verse, see p. 321 above and its note, N19:30.

p. 322: “‘lightens *salaat*’’: Here “lighten” has not only its denotative meaning of “to make less heavy,” but also a connotative meaning of “enlighten.”

p. 322: *salaat*: prayers.

p. 322: “*Raka’ah*’’: A prayer cycle. See 7.102, where Remy says that at the close of the third *Raka’ah*, the person praying can seek Allah’s blessings on his/her family and friends.

p. 322: “the unsought release descended’’: See the 18.294 note on “release,” N18:8-9, which summarizes the symbolic importance of the word on 2.33; 3.38; 7.101;

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17.282; and 18.294-95 and 309, among others.

The “release” from his guilt for deserting his family which Remy sought on 2.33 he achieves, he maintains, through his father’s recognition of him on 18.295.

The advice his father gave him about prayer—“Seek release in the ritual” (7.101)—is manifested here where “release descended” upon him and he is able to pray not only for those he loves but even for Foucin, the person who is committed to his destruction.

The use of “release” on 17.282 will balance with the final major employment of the word on 19.330. In the former, old Naaman said that he sought “to gain release” from the gripping hand of his dying wife, who was pleading that he put behind him the treason and desertion of his son by forgiving him.

On 19.330 someone will pray for Remy to “secure your release from that demon,” his guilt about his past.

p. 322: subterrane: “an underground cave or room” (*Webster’s Third*).

p. 322: *djinni*: See the p. 318 note above, N19:20.

p. 322: *Allahu Akbar!*: “God is Great!”

See the 1.1 note, N1:2.

p. 322: “After the meal”: The time is 9:46.

p. 322: bail: a hoop-shaped handle for a bucket.

- p. 323: “the ancient proverb”: A Moroccan friend of mine used this quote in excusing himself to go to the toilet. When he returned, I asked him about it, and he said it was a traditional expression.
I have been unable to verify this statement about “flushing our bowels” through a Google search.
Several sources did state that on coming out of a toilet, most Muslim say, “Praise be to Allah, who relieved me from suffering and gave me health,” but they listed no attribution to a Hadith or a North African folkloric tradition.
- p. 323: “employing his left hand”: Muslims use their left hand for cleaning themselves after a bowel movement.
For that reason, they also use only their right hand for eating, shaking hands, touching the text of the Qur’an, etc.
See 3.44, “puking,” N3:25, and 7.111, “the correct hand,” N7:25.
- p. 323: “*praying like a Muslim and shitting like an Arab*”: The reverence of the “release” which Remy said he gained through the prayer six paragraphs above (322) and the cultural gratification he exhibited in quoting the “ancient proverb” of Arabs on bowel movements are deflated by the impudence of this thought.
For every two steps Remy makes toward identifying with his religious and cultural heritage, he seems compelled, on crab-like reflection, to take one step backward.
- p. 323: “street sweeping that day”: Rachid would have dropped off this sack before going to Asr (afternoon) prayers at the mosque where he met Remy.
- p. 323: “Hers or mine? . . . given both approve”: Of the 3,400 dinars, “three thousand” were provided by Leila and “four hundred” were Remy’s (320).
He is certain that she would approve of his leaving the money.
- p. 323: “Afterward . . . one sincere, the other suspecting his hypocrisy”: According to my chronology, they drank tea and talked from 10:16 to 10:55.
The further from his prayer of “release,” the more Remy suspects his religious hypocrisy.
- p. 323: peripatetics: As a plural noun, one of its meanings is “pedestrians” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 323: “I’ll be unfettered from the chains of my bad luck”: Compare this statement with Ballard’s hope just before his murder: He “nourished a fanatic hope . . . All would be . . . joyous” (1.13).
- p. 323: “*Mahasalaama!*”: In Arabic, the person staying says this “goodbye” to either a male or female leaving. It translates as “Go in Peace!”
- p. 323: “*Allah yisallimak!*”: In Arabic, the person leaving answers this “goodbye”

to a male person staying.

Its translation is given in the text with the parenthetical “as well” being understood.

To a female, either a male or female would respond, “*Allah yisallimik!*”

p. 323: “clutched ten-dinar note”: Just as Remy left money for Rachid, so the latter was plotting all along to pass some money to a person who, he felt, was more in need of it than he was.

This section ends at 11:00.

pp. 323-26: SECTION 6

p.323: “Without incident”: Through the thronged streets, Remy walks across town and finds Riboux Lane where Leila’s aunt’s shop is located; he scrounges some bread from a neighbor (11:00 – 11:58 p.m.).

p. 323: *dukkaan*: A shop (Arabic); plural, *dakakiin*.

p. 323: *porte d’entrée*: French for “front door of a building.”

p. 323: Berberine: Of or relating to the Berbers or their languages” (*Webster’s Third*).

p. 323: “cipher simple numbers”: A malapropism for “decipher.”

p. 323: laconicism: An alternate form of “laconism,” meaning “brevity of speech or expression.”

- p. 324: “Allah-wary”: Remy knows that she brings the bread not out of compassion for a fellow human being but out of fear that Allah will punish her for not doing so during Ramadan, when He gave the world the gift of the Qur’an.
- p. 324: “Foucin seeks his Berber heritage”: On 6.99, Foucin says that he was born a Berber, but not until he has brought to justice all seven of the Great Traitors can he assume his Berber name: “Until then, call me the imitation of a Berber.”
- p. 324: “It was the third day”: Remy arrives at the shop at 11:58 p.m., Friday, Apr. 21. Three days have passed in which he has done carpentry work there. On Monday morning, Apr. 24, he is so confident in his disguise that he approaches a policeman to ask for directions. There follows a brief flashback to his “first morning” there, Saturday, Apr. 22.
- p. 324: *chèche*: The traditional headdress worn by Algerian men. See the p. 315 note above, N19:11.
- p. 324: grubbing: searching about or rummaging for something.
- p. 324: temerariouly: recklessly.
- p. 324: “Remy, correspondingly unbathed”: A cosmopolitan Algiers’ prejudice of the majority Arab population is that all Berbers are dirty. See the p. 321 note above, “our Arab,” N19:31, on the blatant discrimination of Arab Algerians against Berber Algerians, which continues even today (2013).
- p. 324: “the first call last night”: Remy telephoned Devereaux on Sunday, Apr. 23, and they talked from 10:00 to 10:10.
- p. 324: tutoyer: to speak to familiarly. Devereaux uses the French “*Tu!*” form of “you.” In French, the singular pronoun *tu*, the derivation of the Middle English word “thou,” is used in speaking with an intimate friend. The pronoun *vous* (the plural form of “you”) is used in formally addressing an individual (as well as plural discourse, familiar or otherwise). *Webster’s Online* notes that a person who uses *tu* in speaking to an elder is considered to have committed a breach of etiquette.
- p. 324: vocative: Here a pronoun of direct address.
- p. 324: blanketlike: *Random House Dict.* lists “blanketlike” as an adjective and spells it without a hyphen. A hyphenated form is also common.
- p. 324: “you’ll crumple under torture”: A sarcastic reference to the collapse of Omar’s willpower when he saw that Noura had not been tortured (3.50).

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- p. 324: “Snickering up her sleeve”: A variant of “laugh up one’s sleeve,” meaning “to become elated: congratulate oneself secretly (as on having successfully played a trick on someone)” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 324: *Al Djazair*: In Arabic, “Algeria.”
See 4.52 and its note, N4:3.
- p. 324: “mocking mission”: Devereaux’s argument is that under torture Remy will confess that France sent him, not to visit his father, but to meddle in Algerian affairs.
The “gall” (even my commentary cannot resist a pun) of DGSE in believing that it could dispatch the most hated Algerian is what would be most taunting to Algeria.
Later in this chapter (330), its government will hyperbolically proclaim that there must be a more sinister reason (than Ballard’s murder or a family visit) for sending this Great Traitor, one which points to the overthrow (“Black Death”) of an independent Algeria.
- p. 324: “dispose of the peripheral. Who is it?”: The first of three times that Devereaux will ask Remy about the identity of Ballard’s murderer.
- p. 324: “digressive question”: Remy digresses by not answering Devereaux’s question, but even he acknowledges to himself that the question is scarcely a digression since it relates to Marie and his daughters.
The phrasing is an instance of the “digression” motif of the title of the chapter.
- p. 324: bulwark: “protect” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 324: “We’re not insensitive”: This wording echoes what the second lieutenant told Omar (Remy) twenty-eight years earlier, “We are not unfeeling, M. Montpellier” (3.40), an example of how political hypocrisy never changes: In destroying an individual’s life, government typically presents the façade of a concerned conscience.
- p. 324: “Very well, who is it?”: The second request about the identity of the murderer.
- p. 324: “Six thousand files”: On 17.276-77, Devereaux spoke of over “six thousand daedalic files” on DGSE agents and affairs which the American had brought from one of its encoders in 1987, and stressed how long it would take the Americans to go through them.
- p. 324: “We’re on that”: On p. 17.275, Devereaux revealed that Leroy had commandeered some CA operations in Europe to investigate “Lazar.” A team had presumably been assigned to speed up work on the six thousand files.
Devereaux says that they are working on how they made the connection of Lazar to Remy to Omar Naaman.

There is no indication that Devereaux or DGSE knows who Ballard's murderer is.

- p. 324: Foreign Minister Dumas: Roland Dumas was President Francois Mitterrand's Foreign Minister in 1989, the time of the novel. My fictional Dumas bears no resemblance to the real Dumas.
- p. 324: "With the seventh, M. Pied-Noir": Diplomatic maneuvering also seldom changes.
Compare this exchange between the Algerian ambassador to France and Dumas in 1989 under Mitterrand with that between the Algerian ambassador to France and the French Foreign Minister Michel Debré under President de Gaulle in 1968.
My fictional Debré protested the torturing to death of the third Great Traitor by demanding, "Monsieur, this savagery must cease," to which the Algerian ambassador (my anachronistic Mohammed Bedjaoui) replied, "With the seventh, M. Pied-Noir" (14.234 and its notes, N14:50).
- p. 324: *pied-noir*: The term used to describe the European colonial settlers in Algeria before independence in 1962.
See the note on them on 3.57.

- p. 325: “It’s probably not, but who is it?”: This is the third time that Devereaux, who had greeted Remy’s statement with a “Who cares?” dismissal, asks who Remy thinks the murderer of Ballard is.
- p. 325: Boulevard Salah Bouakouir: Boulevard Telemly in colonial times, it is the major boulevard west of the University of Algiers.
- p. 325: “boomboxes”: A colloquial expression for a large powerful portable cassette or CD player, popular in the 1980s.
In my visits to North Africa in the late 80s and early 90s, I found that teenage Arabs preferred it to the much smaller Walkman, which was too inconspicuous for them and did not allow a male high school or university student to share his musical tastes with others.
- p. 325: “Algeria’s own Raï . . . and Greek orientalized laïkó”: Unlike Egyptians, Lebanese, and Turks, who prefer indigenous or pan-Arabian music, Algerians and Moroccans (perhaps because of their French affiliation through colonialism) enjoy an international variety of musical styles.
All of the following types of music I heard in clubs, discos, on the radio and TV, or on my friends’ cassettes during my numerous visits to the Maghreb countries in the late 1980s, although in writing this paragraph I also relied on articles in *Wikipedia*:
Raï is a type of folk music which originated in Algeria in the 1930s. Its lyrics is punctuated by the cry “Raï!” This is a Berber exclamation, similar to “Listen up!” in English, which indicates an opinion, usually a protest about social conditions such as poverty or colonialism, is being expressed.
Attempts were made by the colonizing French and afterwards by the Algerian FLN to outlaw or censure Raï songs. The flute and the drum were the two instruments which were used in folkloric (or “sensitive”) Raï.
This qualifier was not needed until a different type of Raï appeared in the 1970s. Though the idea of protest was still present in the lyrics, the principal instruments of this new Raï became trumpets, the electric guitar, synthesizers, and a drum machine. This music came to be called Pop-Raï or synthesized Raï. It is still (2013) the most popular music in Algeria.
Egyptian music is also popular in Algeria, particularly Al Jeel, which arose in Cairo in the 1970s. It often incorporates a background similar to reggae and uses bass, synthesizers, and a drum machine. Its typical subject matter, as with most Egyptian music, is love.
French space disco was popular in France in the late 1970s. It typically has an outer-space motif, with the vocalists often using robotic voices. Spaceship sound effects are also incorporated into the heavily synthesized music. Space disco had two good years in France, but cassettes of it are still popular in Algiers.
American grunge is an alternative rock that emerged in the mid-1980s in Seattle, Washington. Its major instrument is the electric guitar, and its sound is a hybrid of punk and hard medal rock.
Italian neo-progressive or symphonic rock arose in the 1980s. Employing digital

synthesizers, it blended rock with classical music and jazz.

Greek orientalized laïkó, which became popular in the early 1980s, merges folkloric Greek laïkó (which means “song of the people”) with the sounds of rock and disco music. In its orientalized version, it adds musical themes, motifs, and instruments from Turkey and the Middle East, hence the “oriental” influence.

- p. 325: “caught the name uttered and . . . would ‘hang on my every word’”: After giving the name of the murderer, Remy speaks with Devereaux for a further six minutes (10:04 – 10:10).

A verbatim account of this segment is not given except for Devereaux’s three-sentence farewell response reported at this end of this section.

There he will refer to “an ‘uncircumcised cock’” (326), an indication that Remy had explained how Leroy, not Ballard, was the one who over a nine-month period clandestinely had sex with Mohammed and once attempted to do so with Houda. From the information which Devereaux will bring to their second telephone conversation, 8:00 – 8:10 p.m., on Wednesday, Apr. 26, three days after the first (327-28), it can be inferred that Remy explained that he had proof that Leroy was absent from the Mirabout during the time when Ballard was murdered.

Stressing the importance of the rental used in the excursion to the Casbah, he asked Devereaux to have his agents try to locate it in order to determine if some evidence of the murder had been left in its trunk.

- p. 325: “On the initial ring she picked up”: The note which Leila had left in the sack indicated that if Remy wished he could call her at the “number, day, and time” on the enclosed “slip” of paper (320): Monday, Apr. 24, at 10 p.m.

She is at a phone booth as is Remy.

They will speak for six minutes.

- p. 325: “his *madame* and her *monsieur* merged”: The titles which they use in addressing each other, “Mme. Ballard” and “M. Lazar.”

The word “merged”—a product of Remy’s mind—signals his developing affection for her, who three days previously, he is quite aware, at great risk to herself had saved his life.

- p. 325: cachinnation: overdone laughter.

- p. 325: “the 3:30 telephone call last Friday”: This time allows a speculation on when Foucin received the phone call informing him that Remy (or Lazar) is actually Omar Naaman. (The identity of the caller who “outed” Remy is obvious, but it will be confirmed on p. 327.)

Since Leila received her call from Foucin at 3:30, the commissioner (according to my chronology) got his call from the “outer” around 3:00. At that time Remy is exiting the bathhouse in his Arabic disguise.

Earlier that morning, after dropping off the note for Remy at the Al-Nigma, Foucin went to his residence in Kouba to prepare his sons for the Friday sermon.

On receiving the anonymous call identifying Remy, Foucin first contacted the

agents whom he had trailing Remy. They informed him that he was still inside the bathhouse.

Foucin ordered them to seal it off and called Ghouraf to send reinforcements to the area. Barricades were also set up around the Al-Nigma, which Foucin reached after a fifteen-minute drive from Kouba. [None of this is spelled out in the text.]

From the hotel Foucin called Leila at 3:30, asking if she knows where Remy is, a sign that the agents trailing Remy had lost him.

p. 325: pocourante: indifferent; apathetic.

p. 325: “I rushed to . . . the Al-Nigma, discovering it barricaded”: Afraid to call Remy’s room at the Al-Nigma, Leila took a taxi there to find it sealed off. Standing outside the hotel, she picked up the gossip: That Remy was being sought as the last traitor (c. 3:45).

[Leila does not explain what she did next, but it is easily inferable: She taxied back to her apartment, the plan to help Remy already fixed in her mind (3:53). There she gathered the items she felt she needed: the large bag, the *burnoose*, the *djellaba*, the sandals, the money, her cane, the note giving a time and day in which he could call her, etc.

She left her apartment (4:10) and took a taxi to the Casbah, stopping once at a booth to get a telephone number, which she added to the note. She knew from her morning conversation with Remy at the Belmazoir shed that he would be on his way from the Mirabout to the taxi stand at around 4:35.

She arrived at the taxi stand of Rue Bab Azoun at 4:30 and began to walk up the lane that led to the Mirabout. At 4:40, she saw Remy and approached him, completely veiled by the old widow’s disguise (319).]

p. 325: “every breath of mine has hosted a lie”: Remy is trying to show her how unworthy he is of her help.

p. 325: “. . . in France”: Leila displays her lack of concern with his fabrications by casually emending her sentence and continuing as if he had not interposed.

p. 325: “both disclosures”: His family is safe, and he has some friends in Algiers helping him.

p. 325: “his *shokran*”: “his ‘thank you.’”

p. 325: six digits: In the late 1980s telephone numbers in Algiers had six digits.

p. 325: “*Inshallah!*”: “God Willing!”

p. 325: “‘But what of your—’ he began”: Remy was about to protest, “But what of your danger, your risk!”

- p. 326: transmogrify: transform, especially in a grotesque or strange manner.
- p. 326: “Raise your veil! Change that white *haik*”: The imagined orders to her by Foucin’s stalkers indicate that in the teeming Ramadan streets she had easily blended in with other women veiled and dressed in white outer robes (*haiks*). For that reason she hoped she had been able to lose her trackers on her way to the phone booth.
- p. 326: androgenic: Relating to a type of natural or artificial steroid that acts as a male hormone.
Here in essence “macho” or “exhibiting machismo.”
- p. 326: sleuthhound: As a transitive verb, “to sleuth” or “to follow the trail of a person” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 326: “*Zreb, lefea!*”: In colloquial Algerian Arabic, “*Zreb!*” means “Hurry up!”
Lefea translates as “a venomous snake; a scheming woman; or a sharp-tongued woman.”
Remy’s English translation amalgamates several of these meanings for *lefea*.
- p. 326: “you ‘sharper-than-a-serpent’s-tooth’ daughter of Eve”: See *Lear* 1.4.287-88: “How sharper than a serpent’s tooth it is / To have a thankless child!”
- p. 326: *dardja*: Arabic for “colloquial” or “vernacular,” as indicated in the text.
- p. 326: roulade: The musical term is used metaphorically here: “a vocal ornament or coloratura (as an arpeggio or quick run) sung to one syllable” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 326: causerie: conversation; chat.
- p. 326: “At ten this morning”: Monday, Apr. 24.
- p. 326: “*Avec une inclination de la tête*”: French for “with a nod.”
- p. 326: “to save, not merely to set free”: See 18:308-09, Remy spoke to Foucin of a desire “to save this boy [Mohammed]” and of his “salvation,” neither implying the physical “fetters” of his imprisonment.
Although Leila was close by when Remy made this plea, there is no suggestion that she overheard this phrasing and repeats it here.
Here conclusion comes from Remy’s actions, not some words on which she eavesdropped.
- p. 326: “more-than-necessary kindness”: See the note on the title of chap. 11, “An Unnecessary Act of Kindness,” N11.1, which discusses the yoking of variants of “kind” and “necessary” in four other chapters of the novel.
In the 11.182 note, N11:33, Qur’anic verses discussing the obligation of Muslims

to show kindness are cited.

- p. 326: “She paused, as if listening, and continued, as if reciting something just whispered into her ear”: A pondering Ballard used the 1 Cor. 13:4-7 passage on 1.13 (see its note, N1:35).

That Leila will quote some words from it suggests that Ballard discussed it with her. Remy would not have known of this.

He did hear Leroy use a part of the passage, “insist on its own way” (11.179 and its note, N11:25)

Thus “as if listening” and “as if reciting something just whispered into her ear” are post-factum inferences made after Leila’s speech, in which Remy recognized the phrases from 1 Corinthians and concluded that the likely source of them would be her Western husband.

It is another instance of the *simpatico* which has developed between Remy and Leila which allows him to visualize what he cannot possibly see: Her pausing to recall a passage from Corinthians which someone (perhaps even her Paul or St. Paul) was whispering into her ears.

I base this observation on personal experience: Often during a long-distance (or even local) phone call with someone I care deeply for, I have caught myself imagining the person’s facial gestures as well as the thoughts which precipitated a certain response. This Remy is doing here.

- p. 326: “Should I decline to assist one . . . resentfully insisting their wrongs are right? . . . bear the prospect of having dared nothing”: Words or their variants which Leila borrowed I have boldfaced in the verses from 1 Cor. 13:4-7:

“Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not **arrogant** or rude. Love does not **insist** on its own way; it is not irritable or **resentful**; it does not rejoice at **wrong** but rejoices in the **right**. Love **bears** all **things**, believes **all things**, hopes **all things**, and **endures all things**.”

- p. 326: “*categorical imper—*”: Remy associates her decision to help him with Kant’s “categorical imperative.”

Kant presented this concept in chap. 2 of his *Groundwork for the Metaphysic(s) of Morals*. According to Kant a categorical imperative denotes an absolute, unconditioned requirement that asserts its authority in all circumstances.

He elaborates, “I am never to act otherwise than so that I could also will that my maxim should become a universal.”

That is, a person’s behavior should be governed by principles which one would have govern the behavior of all people.

The phrasing of Remy’s thought suggests that he (and presumably most people) would prefer to avoid this moral commandment: “*Is there no eluding the ‘categorical imper—*”

The term “categorical imperative” seems to embarrass Remy for in his response to Leila he quickly resorts to “metaphysical legerdemain,” his term from the next paragraph.

However, there is no suggestion that the word “imperative” is broken off because

Remy wanted to avoid saying it. The text clarifies that Leila's utterance terminated his thought.

Similarly there is no ulterior motive when, in his later use of the concept on p. 330, he simply refers to "the 'imperative,'" leaving out "categorical."

Leila's resolve to help Remy (from her perspective) is an absolute and moral obligation or commandment just as, she maintains, Remy's decision to help Mohammed and Houda was.

However, on 17.87, Remy's motive—choosing the option "that would most enrapture [Leila]"—suggests it was not an entirely "self-negating service" (326) to the brother and sister, as Leila contends.

p. 326: "unwonted omission": She fails to put "Monsieur" or "Commissioner" before Foucin.

p. 326: "general 'metaphysical legerdemain'": a slight-of-hand vagueness.

The phrase is from Hazlitt's satirical essay, "Sir James Mackintosh," in *The Spirit of the Age*.

There Hazlitt describes the intellectual politician Mackintosh as a "political and philosophical juggler," whose audience "greedily swallowed [his] gilded bait of sophistry," since he was a master of "metaphysical legerdemain."

Having just expressed Kant's idealistic desideratum, the "categorical imperative," the contrary Remy felt the immediate need to resort to his opposing, conniving nature toward the person whose selfless statements had led him to dredge up Kant's phrase.

p. 326: "the next call . . . after two days": Wednesday, Apr. 26.

Their conversation ends at 6:06; thus they spoke only six minutes.

p. 326: "A sending-off totally at variance with Devereaux's": This is a flashback to the ending of his conversation with Devereaux.

The first four minutes of it were given on pp. 324-25. The next six minutes have to be inferred (see the p. 325 note above, "caught," N19:42), except for this three-sentence speech by Devereaux prior to hanging up at 10:10.

p. 326: "An 'uncircumcised' cock!": The single quotes indicate that in his six-minute explanation of the case against Leroy Remy had used "uncircumcised" to describe Leroy's penis but not the vulgar slang "cock," an emendation by Devereaux.

p. 326: "who conscripted every CIA operative in Europe into tracking you down": Devereaux scoffs at Remy's evidence that Leroy is Ballard's murderer while stressing the power of the official whom Remy is charging.

The accusation apparently took him by shock.

p. 326: "Dial Wednesday": Apr. 26, after three days.

p. 326: bag: seize or capture.

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pp. 326-30: SECTION 7

p. 326: “Over the next six days, from April 25 through May 1”: Sections 7 and 8 are told from the perspective of Remy, the thoughts that he had of the events of the past six days (331).

The information which he gleaned from the seven telephone calls is not necessarily presented in chronological order.

p. 326: “seven additional telephone calls”: After the first to each, there are four calls to Devereaux and three to Leila:

Apr. 26, Wednesday

8:00 – 8:10 p.m.: Second call to Devereaux.

9:00 – 9:04 p.m.: Second call to Leila.

Apr. 27, Thursday

No calls.

Apr. 28, Friday

9:00 – 9:02 p.m.: Third call to Devereaux.

10:00 – 10:03 p.m.: Third call to Leila.

Apr. 29, Saturday

No calls.

Apr. 30, Sunday

9:30 – 9:35 p.m.: Fourth call to Devereaux.

May 1, Monday

6:00 – 6:07 p.m.: Fifth call to Devereaux.

10:00 – 10:04 p.m.: Fourth call to Leila (to be depicted in Section 8).

Thus on nine occasions, Remy speaks to either Devereaux or Leila.

After the first call to Leila, which lasted six minutes, the subsequent ones are kept brief: four minutes, three, and four.

He knows that she is being followed and realizes that since Foucin did not arrest her after the first call, he must believe that through her he can locate Remy.

Brevity is necessary since he does not know how long it will take Foucin, after his agents inform him which booth Leila is calling from, to track the phone from which Remy is calling.

There would be no problem with Devereaux since the line of his phone would have been blocked by the embassy. Subsequently the first of his five calls lasts ten minutes as does his second. The next three are finished in two, five, and seven, the durations of all dictated not by security concerns but the content of their discussions.

As indicated in the 5.76 note, N5:22-23, I took a novelist’s liberty of providing Algiers with far more telephone kiosks than it had in 1989.

p. 326: subsequent one to Leila”: Wednesday, Apr. 26, 9:00 – 9:04 p.m.

p. 326: “landed him in an embarrassing particular”: The wording is from Plato’s *Meno*. See the 7.109 note, N:18.

pp. 326-27: "I pray he has rejoined you": On Apr. 15, eleven days ago, afraid that Foucin suspected he was involved in Ballard's murder, Ahmed Chabane fled from Tiddis to Algiers and thence to the Palestinian camp (11.190, 195, and 196).

- p. 327: “a ritual . . . a Jewish . . . operation”: See 9.141.
- p. 327: “*Shokran!*”: “Thank you!” in Arabic.
On p. 318, Remy had playfully suggested examining Ballard’s corpse to determine where he was circumcised.
Instead he gains the proof, which flustered him, from Leila.
- p. 327: “electroshock”: “to administer electroconvulsive therapy” (*Wiktionary*).
Although not found in standard print dictionaries, a Google search turns up numerous instances in reputable publications where “electroshock” is used as a transitive verb.
- p. 327: “Of the death of Medlin”: At their phone calls of Wednesday, Apr. 26, Remy receives an account of this death from both Devereaux (8:06 – 8:10 p.m.) and Leila (9:03 p.m.).
- p. 327: “the other murders””: Remy will not learn of these until his call to Devereaux on Apr. 30.
It is expected of mystery writers to incorporate periodically some cheap suspense.
Mine is typically the cheapest since I resolve it quickly, here on p. 329.
- p. 327: DCM: Deputy Chief of Mission, Medlin’s embassy position.
- p. 327: punctilio: observance of petty formalities.
- p. 327: “teal-blue 4x4”: On 13.216, Leroy said that Medlin had rented a Land Rover 110 for his Saharan trip.
Remy was provided these descriptive details about it by Devereaux since Leila’s was a mere one-minute account of Medlin’s death, conveying her sorrow at it.
- p. 327: “held in his vomit and feces, both arsenic-laden”: About two hours after a person ingests arsenic, he or she will experience vomiting and diarrhea.
On 20.339 and in its note, N20:31-32, the earlier symptoms of arsenic poisoning, particularly with coffee as its medium, will be discussed.
- p. 327: “fossilized tree”: Petrified trees are found in the Sahara and are 90- to 95-million years old, dating back to the time when the desert was lush-green.
In a fossilized tree, its tissue has been completely replaced by minerals, converting trunks and branches into stone.
The cell structure of one of these dead trees is so perfectly preserved that in shape it resembles a living tree.
- p. 327: Tademait Plateau: See 13.216, where Medlin mentioned this part of the Sahara as his possible destination.
Its note, N13:48, describes it.
Some additional details: The Tademait is a flat plain with no villages, few

animals, and infrequent patches of bushes.

It is sometimes called the beginning of the Sahara, but its surface, covered by stones and pebbles, differs from its southern neighbor, which is characterized by rolling sand dunes.

p. 327: “eight days subsequent to his bolting”: Medlin left on the night of Apr. 17 (13.216). He died the next day from arsenic poisoning. His body was found on Apr. 25.

p. 327: fennec: A small nocturnal fox that inhabits the Sahara.

It has large ears to dissipate heat and hairy soles to protect its feet when crossing the desert in search of lizards and locusts.

Since its renal system restricts water loss, it can live without free water (water not absorbed through food consumption).

Families of fennec dig dens in the sand, which often interconnect with the dens of other fennec families.

The name “fennec” comes from the Arabic word for “fox.”

p. 327: “Michelin-ing, “Three stars!” . . . Devereaux’s flippancy provoked Remy”: See 5.74 (and its note, N5:18) where Remy used the coined verbal to refer to the *Michelin Guide*, a publication which awards restaurants with exceptional cuisine three stars.

For those which are luxurious, a set of five forks and spoons are awarded. It was this rating that Remy partially used on 5.74.

Here he seems to censure himself that there he had employed Devereaux’s “flippancy” in thinking about the death of another human being, the imagined Bihari woodcutter.

p. 327: *nouvelle cuisine*: A style of French cooking that emphasizes light sauces, fresh ingredients, and simple presentation.

p. 327: arsenic trioxide: A poisonous compound of arsenic: As_2O_3 .

p. 327: “a stash of slick magazines of nude Arab boys”: Gossip about Medlin’s sexual proclivities was brought up by one of the Algerian secretaries on 12:190: “What wouldn’t he give to be, arm-locked-in-arm, escorting a lassie-lad from the grove!”

p. 327: “One deviate slew another”: Medlin, a pedophile, killed Ballard, a homosexual, in Devereaux’s wording of Foucin’s apparent reasoning.

p. 327: dispatch: One meaning of this transitive verb is “to kill.”

p. 327: self-destruct: As an intransitive verb, “to destroy oneself” (*Wiktionary*).

p. 327: “Elbert’s bolted”: See 13.214-16.

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- p. 327: “whether the separate dregs were identically produced . . . and from the same brand”: Remy wants to know whether tests on the coffee sediment (since the Saharan heat would have evaporated the undrunk coffee itself) revealed that the same type of coffee was used in each thermos.
- p. 327: antiphon: In its nonmusical meaning, “response; answer” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 327: “any admission by Ambassador Leroy . . . visited M. Medlin’s flat? For so he informed”: See 13.216.
- p. 327: “a bon-voyage thermos”: Remy has come to realize that Leroy had decided that he had to murder Medlin, making his death appear a suicide, in order to divert any suspicion from himself.
 Like Claudius in *Hamlet*, Leroy had “plan and back-up plan” (316). Fearful that Remy, having discovered Medlin had been absent from the Mirabout, might find out he likewise had been, Leroy began to plot the death of his DCM.
 Since someone might have seen him at Medlin’s apartment on the night he left for the Sahara, Leroy informs Remy that he did call on him, but not to convince him not to make that excursion.
 Instead, he suggested that Medlin go on it, and he came over to see him off with a thermos of coffee laced with arsenic to supplement the one which he knew Medlin would have prepared.
 The words of the plea that Leroy makes to Remy for him not to pursue the case against Medlin take on an added significance when it is comprehended that the Ambassador, growing more desperate with each of Remy’s discoveries, is really pleading for himself: “You goaded him [Medlin, but actually himself] to pry into the recesses of everything that private and person [his closeted homosexuality], that keeps each one of us human and individual. He suffers, and I suffer” (13.216).
- p. 327: felo-de-se: suicide.
- p. 327: “sly Claude”: The reason I chose the names is by now apparent: To parallel *Hamlet’s* Claudius the King and his wife Gertrude.
 Claudius becomes Claude; Leroy is French for “the king,” and Gertrude becomes his wife Gertie.
- p. 327: “two-time”: A slang expression meaning “to deceive or double-cross; especially, to be unfaithful to a wife, husband, or a lover.”
 Devereaux states that Leroy deceived both Ballard, who was his best friend, and Medlin, a worker who fawned over him, by killing each.
- p. 327: “Better and better”: The expression was used on 16.274 in describing the three Palestinians’ method of torture.
- p. 327: uncage: “to release from or as if from a cage” (*Webster’s Third*).

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p. 327: “For quite a different reason”: Devereaux had suggested that Foucin released Belmazoir from prison because all the evidence now pointed toward Medlin as having murdered him.

Remy does not try to correct Devereaux, but he is certain that Foucin freed the youth to employ his animus in the search for Remy, knowing from his own experience how powerful an impetus hatred is.

- p. 328: “Earlier Devereaux had tried to conceal his excitement”: There is a flashback to the first part of Remy’s Wednesday, Apr. 26, conversation (8:00 – 8:05) with Devereaux.
It explains why Devereaux’s brusque attitude after their first telephone call has become amiable and cooperative: Paris is pleased by Remy’s discovery that Leroy is the murderer, aware that it can be of use to DGSE in dealing with the Americans.
- p. 328: fantasia: a fanciful, improvised musical composition, used metaphorically here.
- p. 328: “the dumb show of M. Claude dethroned”: Since this sequence is a flashback, this is Devereaux’s first use of the analogy between *Hamlet’s* Claudius and Claude Leroy.
A “dumb show” is “a part of a play done in pantomime,” such as the one which Hamlet arranged for *The Mousetrap* in 3.2, stage directions between lines 133-34, as part of his scheme to expose (dethrone) Claudius.
- p. 328: “outed”: Identified as a homosexual someone not previously so identified.
At the time of the novel, “out” in this sense was considered “informal” or “slang,” hence the quotation marks.
Devereaux’s wording turns the tables by using a term which better fits what Remy has done to Leroy in describing what Leroy has done to Remy.
- p. 328: “fleshed out the skeleton from your bag of bones”: A “bag of bones” refers to “an extremely thin individual” (*Webster’s Third*), a metaphor for how disjointed and brittle is the evidence against Leroy which Remy presented in his first telephone call to Devereaux on Sunday, Apr. 23.
DGSE, he says, has fattened the case (“fleshed out the skeleton”).
- p. 328: “‘an expensive aerie-dwelling agent’ in Sûreté Nationale”: Algiers’s police force. Each gendarmerie in the city had a divisional commissioner.
Foucine was the divisional commissioner of the Gendarmerie Nationale overlooking the Casbah.
The “agent” mentioned here, who has appeared previously in the novel, but not so identified, will reemerge on 21.354-55.
- p. 328: “the last two Wednesdays with Houada”: Feb. 8 and 15.
- p. 328: “On Sunday”: The initial telephone call to Devereaux, Apr. 23.
- p. 328: Fiat Regata: The rental that the Leroy’s and Medlin took to the Casbah on their Feb. 27 excursion.
It is first alluded to on 11.180 and is more fully delineated on 11:181 as “a 1988 silver Fiat Regata 85S.”
- p. 328: “Mme. Leroy’s affidavit . . . [the Fiat] was delivered to their residence”: The

affidavits of Leroy, his wife, and Medlin are summarized by Remy on 11.181-82. Her statement noted that the Fiat was “delivered to the Leroy’s residence at ‘eleven; Donald, the guard who signed for it, telephoned up to inform me” (181). Another aspect of Leroy’s scheme to divorce himself from being able to use the Fiat in the murder of Ballard: He planned it so that the rental was not delivered to him. Thus he would not have had the time or occasion to make duplicate keys of it.

p. 328: “my faxes to Vellacott”: On 10.166, Remy mentioned that he had faxed the photocopies of all the affidavits from embassy employees to Vellacott on Friday morning, Apr. 14. Medlin had brought them over the previous night (9.146-47), on the instructions of Leroy (8.128) on Apr. 13.

p. 328: “boot”: the British term for “the trunk of an automobile.”

p. 328: “Devereaux’s Wednesday follow-up”: Apr. 26.

p. 328: “Two. Of course, two”: Remy realizes that the Fiat Regatta had a key for the door/ignition and a separate one for the boot.

Leroy had given only the trunk key to Medlin, so the DMC could not have driven to Zaracova as Remy envisioned on 11.182-83.

The ambassador had kept back the door/ignition key and basically made the drive to Zaracova to kill Ballard in the way Remy imagined Medlin had.

Leroy’s chronology on the late afternoon-night of the murder:

6:14 – 6:17: At the Mirabout, after seating the Leroy’s and Medlin, Zerhouni locks the door to the restaurant and goes to the kitchen.

6:15: Medlin leaves to buy the present for Mrs. Leroy.

6:17 – 6:23: At 6:17, Zerhouni tells Samir to take water and cutlery to the table. The Christian youth prepares the tray, takes it to the room, but finds only the Leroy’s there at 6:20. He is back in the kitchen by 6:23 because he sees Zerhouni and the cook Ali leaving through the back doors for Maghrib prayers.

6:23 – 6:25: Ballard walks to the changing room.

6:25 – 6:28: Directly after Samir leaves, Leroy does (6:25) and reaches the Fiat at 6:28.

6:23 – 7:03: Medlin is lost in the maze of the Casbah. At 7:01 he finds his way out and gains Rue Bouzrina, the major street above the Mirabout.

6:28 – 6:38: Leroy drives the ten minutes to Zaracova.

6:32 – 6:34: Samir returns to the closed dining room and when he asks if anything is needed receives an answer from the woman, an indication that both men are absent from the room.

6:38 – 6:43: At Zaracova, Leroy puts on the Arabic *djellaba* and sandals which, along with the *douk-douk*, he had stored in a bag under the driver’s seat of the rental before he and his wife went to pick up Medlin for the Casbah excursion. He walks to the disco and hides inside. There he finds a plank

and waits for Ballard.

- 6:39 – 6:50: Ballard walks from the changing room to the grove and reaches the picnic tables in front of the abandoned disco at 6:48. He knows that Mohammed, who is scheduled to arrive at 7:15, will arrive late. He seats himself on a picnic table, waiting and thinking about his and Leila's future in Algiers.
- 6:40 – 6:55: Maghrib prayers performed.
- 6:45 – 7:00: Zerhouni and Ali pray, staying longer since they began their prayers late.
- 6:50 – 6:55: Ballard hears a cough from inside the disco and thinks it is Mohammed's (6:50). Leroy's voice, high-pitched to convince Ballard that it is that of a stressed Mohammed, beckons him to enter. As Ballard steps across the doorway, Ballard is struck by a plank which knocks him midway across the porch (6:51). Leroy approaches, and through his blood-covered eye Ballard recognizes him, as Leroy desires. The Ambassador brings a knife to Ballard's right carotid artery. Ballard is killed at 6:53. No motive to murder his best friend is yet revealed.
- 6:53 – 6:58: Leroy quickly washes the blood that had gotten on his *djellaba* and from the knife. He rushes back to the car, takes off the robe and puts it and the *douk-douk* into the sack and returns it to its place under the driver's seat.
- 7:00 – 7:10: Zerhouni says that he and Ali talk with some friends outside the mosque.
- 6:58 – 7:12: Leroy drives back to the parking lot (7:08), takes a minute to find a parking place near the first one, and at 7:09 leaves for the Mirabout. By 7:12, he is standing outside the restaurant waiting for Medlin.
- 7:03 – 7:08: Medlin walks from Bouzrina to the Mirabout (he cites the 7:08 time) on the way to the Fiat to store the packages.
- 7:08 – 7:11: Medlin hurries to the car, getting near it just as Leroy is leaving the parking lot.
- 7:10 – 7:20: Zerhouni and Ali leisurely walk back to the Mirabout, a quicker trip since it is downhill. They have another cigarette in the kitchen.
- 7:11 – 7:19: Medlin has a problem finding the car. He stows the packages in the truck and jogs back to the restaurant, getting there at 7:19. He is met by Leroy outside the restaurant.
- 7:20: They enter the restaurant and rejoin Mrs. Leroy at the table.
- 7:23 – 7:25 Zerhouni opens the restaurant and goes to the private room to take the orders.
- 7:25 – 9:00: The Leroy and Medlin eat leisurely.
- 7:30 – 7:35: Mohammed arrives at the disco and finds Ballard dead. He takes the money from the billfold and flees.
- 8:15 – 9:00: The Zaracova parking attendant Abukadir becomes worried when the American does not return to his car. He contacts Mohisen who says Ballard left over an hour and a half before. Abukadir has the police called. Mohisen is upset. He is seen tearing up a dinar bill and throwing it to the wind.

9:00 – 9:30: The Leroy and Medlin go back up the hill ostensibly to let Leroy buy an additional present for Ballard, but really to allow Medlin to slip off and purchase the Qur'an present for Mrs. Leroy (9:15). They walk back to the Fiat (9:30).

9:30 – 9:45: The Leroy drop Medlin at his apartment building at around 9:45.

p. 328: “Leroy would have had scant time to scan for and scrub away any trace”: To continue the chronology, which Devereaux’s agents would have turned up, and which Remy partially knew about.

10:00: The Leroy arrive at their residence (11.182).

10:36 – 10:51: Foucin arrives and takes control of the search for Ballard, instructing that the grove area be searched. The body is found at 10:51.

11:32: Leroy receives the telephone call about Ballard’s death (5.73, 8.128, and 11.182). He and his wife leave immediately for the morgue at the Gendarmerie Nationale where Foucin’s office is.

Thus that night Leroy, having removed the package under the driver’s seat, would have had around an hour and a half (“scant time,” c. 10:10 to 11:32) to check the interior of the Fiat to ensure that no drops of blood or hair of Ballard or sand or twigs from Zaracova had been left.

Three paragraphs down, at their Friday, Apr. 28, conversation Devereaux will reveal that a cleaning product had been used in the carpet beneath the driver’s seat around two months ago, a signal that Leroy had done some quick cleaning of the area during the 10:10 – 11:32 span.

12:00 midnight: Leroy calls Medlin about Ballard’s death, and the DCM sits with the Leroy at the morgue until 2:15 a.m., when Leroy tells him to go home since the next day or so Medlin must attend to embassy affairs (11.182).

7:30 – 8:00 a.m.: The autopsy and paperwork completed, the Leroy take Ballard’s corpse to the embassy, where it is housed in the embassy morgue (5.73; 11.182).

8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.: The Leroy are at the embassy. The Ambassador is in contact with numerous officers, including the Secretary of State and President Bush, about the death of an American Embassy employee. An afternoon call from Washington informs that Ballard’s foster niece, his only relative, wants control of the funeral arrangements. Leila’s family also immediately retains an Algerian lawyer to present her claim. Leroy likewise receives condolences visits or calls from other friendly ambassadors in which Mrs. Leroy is present. She also called Ballard’s foster niece. [Not mentioned in the text.]

10:30 a.m.: Agents from the rental pick up the Fiat Regatta, the keys having been left with a guard at the Leroy’s residence. Thus during the next day there was no time for Leroy to check the Regatta for telltale signs of the murder, even if he had dared to be seen in the daylight examining or cleaning the car.

p. 328: “best pal”: Devereaux uses the colloquial expression to describe the relationship between Ballard and Leroy. Belches called them “*le meilleur des*

amis” (French for “the best of friends”) on 5.73.

In speaking to Leroy, Remy used “best friend” in referring to Ballard (8.123), and Leila used the same term in describing the relationship of Ballard and Leroy (8.133).

- p. 328: “two-month-old fleck of blood”: Ballard was murdered on Feb. 27 and this day is Apr. 26.
- p. 328: ““Not the trunk. I was wrong there [last Sunday] . . . Medlin must have had that key”: The DCM had the key to the trunk of the Fiat. Therefore Leroy could not get inside it.
- p. 328: “the inside matting”: Remy posits that since Leroy knew that he could not use the trunk, he must have stowed a bag crammed with the disguise garment and sandals which he would wear at the beach and the *douk-douk* murder weapon under the front seat of the car.
If these had a speck of his blood or Zaracova sand or twigs on them, they may have dropped on the matting.
At this point during the Wednesday call (8:06), Devereaux begins to present his last piece of news, the death of Medlin, after which he sets the time of the next call and hangs up (8:10).
- p. 328: “two days later (Friday)”: Apr. 28. A two-minute conversation between Devereaux and Remy.
- p. 328: butoxyethanol: Technically, 2-butoxyethanol.
It is the principal ingredient in some foam cleaners of automobile carpet and upholstery.
- p. 328: “conscientious char felt the need to purge that spot”: The major words in this clause have a moral as well as a physical import: “Conscientious” means “governed by what one knows is right” and “showing care” or “painstaking.” In its material sense, “purge” means “to make free of physical impurities”; “to remove by a process of cleansing: take off or out of or as if by washing.” Morally, it denotes “to cleanse of guilt or sin.”
“Purge” also denotes “getting rid of (as disloyal or suspect elements from a group).” The relevance of this definition will become apparent on 20:340.
Concerning “char,” on 7.103 Foucin acknowledged that as a disguise he assumed the garments of a “charwoman” (recalled by Remy on 13.209).
Three characters associate the word with Houda: Bourceli (12.198); Foucin, who speaks of her reduced to “charring” (14.220); and Leroy, who spoke of her as a “char” in a conversation with Ballard (recounted on 20.335).
In reducing Leroy to a “char” here, Devereaux unintentionally gains Houda a measure of revenge.
The allusion is far-fetched, but in using “spot,” there came to my mind Lady Macbeth’s famous, “Out, damned spot! Out, I say!” (5.1.33)

- p. 328: “one was ‘drip’; the other, ‘percolated,’ most poisonously”: Had Medlin prepared the two thermoses of coffee found in the Land Rover, both would have used the same coffeemaker.
Devereaux’s agents had gotten specimen of the sediments of each. His embassy lab technicians had determined that the arsenic-laced grounds were from a percolator while the dregs from an electric drip coffeemaker or a dripolator contain no trace of the poison.
- p. 328: “the eve of May Day. Mayday! Mayday!”: Devereaux puns on May Day (a celebratory day) and Mayday (a call for help).
The eve of May Day is Sunday, Apr. 30, the day of their next telephone conversation.
- p. 328: “Ha-ha! Aha!”: The last of the three uses of the combined interjections “Ha-ha!” and “Aha!”
Devereaux used them on 5.76 during Remy’s first phone call to him, although at that time he knew the person on the other end as “M. Champagne.”
Its second use, on 9.138, is by Remy as the narrator of the Tizi Aimoula anecdote.
On 5.76, Devereaux/Champagne used the two interjections to mock Remy, this derision perhaps dictating their order, “Aha! Ha-ha!”
Here on 19.328, at least overtly, he is celebrating Remy’s discoveries. Thus he begins with “Ha-ha!” an exclamation of joy, and follows it with “Aha!” a triumphant interjection.
- p. 328: plumbed: Again some trivial playing upon words by Devereaux: “plumb” means to “fathom or understand.”
One of the meanings of its nominal homonym “plum” is “something choice or desirable; specifically, a well-paying job requiring little work.”
- p. 328: “That Mohammed had ‘stormed””: The action shifts to his third telephone call to Leila, on Friday, Apr. 28, from 10:00 – 10:03, an hour after the one to Devereaux.
Remy had inquired about Leila’s brother in his second call to her (326-27). Leila begins their third conversation by telling her that he dropped by to see her yesterday (Thursday, Apr. 27).
On Wednesday, Apr. 26, Devereaux had told Remy that Foucin had freed Mohammed. From her brother Leila will incidentally learn where the youth, now without any family, had gone.
She informs Remy so that he will know he has another enemy. Mohammed is proclaiming that he plans to hunt down this person responsible for his sister’s death.
- p. 328: “Remy’s gloss”: A “gloss” is “words of explanation or translation inserted between the lines of a text.” Remy will embellish the “text” of Leila’s speech by inserting words which she did not use.
That is, she did not say “‘stormed’ . . . over” or indicate that her brother was

“cadging for money” or anything about the Khalaf’s “angel-ogling attention” to Mohammed or “pansy.”

Leila’s account of her brother’s visit was, as Remy notes, a “rather bare narration,” the intent of which was to stress that Remy had another enemy, Belmazoir, seeking to hunt him down.

In his mind, Remy translates this minimalism into a garnished elaboration, his invented version being more truthful than that which was presented. Like Devereaux on 17.282, Remy seems to agree that “the imagination’s richer” and “always truer.”

Remy indicates that he ceases his embellishment of Leila’s account of her brother’s visit by stating that with the paragraph beginning “Or Commissioner Foucin” her “words” are “now” given “verbatim.”

p. 328: *cadge*: to sponge; to beg for something.

p. 328: “In his mind—a “habit” of his—Remy deconstructed: Deconstruction is a method of literary analysis which is based on the theory that by the very nature of language and usage, no literary text can have a fixed meaning.

Remy applies this to conversation since he sometimes “deconstructs” the speeches of people with whom he is conversing.

He confesses to this “habit” here and on 9.140, he tells himself that he had “grown adept at rendering (and ‘elevating’) Chabane’s ‘villainous French.’”

Even when he does not overtly acknowledge this tendency, it is obvious at places during his rendering of the speeches of the women of Tizi Aimoula (9.136-38 and 150-51) and of the desert villagers and their *alim* (16.258-59 and 273-74) in the embedded tales.

Certain speeches of Ghazi’s narratives are elevated not only by Remy (12.197-99 and 13.201-03) but also by Foucin (13.205-06).

p. 328: “angel-ogling attention”: In thinking of Tinfingers (M. Khalaf), Remy distorts the compliment which Foucin had paid to Leila: “a lady of angelic attention” (16.265).

Tinfingers is a pedophile who prefers mid-teenage boys (16.269 and the 16.260 note, “The 2269”). He would not be sexually interested in Belmazoir, 18, and now with a scarred cheek which would make him look even older.

Leila’s spare account would mention that M. Belmazoir had come to the camp of his former employer, hoping that he can pick up something from the Palestinians, who have their nose in everything, about Remy’s whereabouts.

All of the sexual references are Remy’s palimpsest.

p. 328: “pansy”: Vulgar slang for “an effeminate male homosexual.”

- p. 329: “‘You’ll have to seek him out in Hell’”: The action shifts to 9:31 p.m., the second minute of Devereaux’s fourth phone call, 9:30 – 9:35 p.m., Sunday, Apr. 30.
- p. 329: prologue: A transitive verb meaning “to introduce or provide with a prologue” (*Webster’s Third*).
The more common “prologize” or “prologuize” may not to be used here because it is an intransitive verb.
- p. 329: “bound for France on Tuesday night”: Devereaux began the conversation by informing Remy that the French had developed to plan to sneak him out of Algiers. Late Tuesday, May 2, he would be bound for France.
- p. 329: “the ‘nitty’ and ‘gritty’”: Devereaux’s playful rendering of “nitty-gritty,” a slang expression meaning “the actual, basic facts.”
- p. 329: “tailing you from Marseilles”: On 17.276, Devereaux said that Remy’s French contact (HIV) would be “tailing your spin from Brussels,” into which Remy was then expected to fly.
- p. 329: *In nomine solus*: The Latin phrase means “in name only.”
- p. 329: “a mother hen”: On 17.275, Devereaux had used the expression “a mother hen” to describe Remy’s contact in France (HIV).
See its note for the extended fowl metaphor, N17:3.
- p. 329: “a Rome hostel”: As the city affiliated with one of the major branches of Christianity, Rome appears eleven times in the novel: 1.17; 4.66; 8.122; 17.277 (three times), 283, and 284; 19.329 (twice); and 20.341.
Two deal with imperial or pagan Rome; three associate it with sex; five cite it not as a religious destination but a commercial one, an airline connection.
The last puns upon an axiom about its importance, “All roads digress [not lead] to Rome.”
- p. 329: “the ‘blonde’”: Unlike English, where the masculine *blond* and the feminine *blonde* have the same pronunciation, in French the feminine *blonde* has two syllables.
Hence the single quotes for Devereaux’s gender-bending characterization of Saul, called “Goldilocks” in the last word of this paragraph.
For the color of his hair, see 2.17, 19, and 34.
- p. 329: “\$50,000”: The amount which the CIA had given HIV to betray Remy.
- p. 329: “to delay (or deny) justice”: Based on the legal maxim, “Justice delayed is justice denied,” its English version is usually attributed to William Penn (the 17th-century founder of Pennsylvania) or William Gladstone (the late 19th-century British Prime Minister).

- p. 329: “silenced PAMAS-G1 pistols”: Modeled on the Beretta 92G, this has been the standard issue pistol of the French military and the Gendarmerie Nationale since 1987.
It is a semi-automatic pistol which fires 9mm. parabellum cartridges and comes with a silencer.
PAMAS: *Pistolet Automatique de la Manufacture d’Armes de Saint-Étienne*. (The automatic pistol manufactured by the state-owned military light weapons manufacturing company located in Saint Étienne, a city in eastern central France.)
G1 indicates that it is in the Beretta 92G series.
- p. 329: “*tableau* . . . tabloid”: Devereaux shortens “*tableau vivant*,” which is “a representation of a scene, picture, etc. by a person or group in costume, posing silently without moving.”
For symmetry, “tabloid” is also shortened to mean a grisly photograph which often appears in a tabloid.
- p. 329: “Hen (and hen’s pecker)”: HIV was Remy’s “mother hen” and Saul is HIV’s homosexual lover or his “pecker,” vulgar slang for “the penis.”
- p. 329: “dazed response”: Remy is astounded by the revelation of both the treachery and the murders of HIV and Saul.
- p. 329: Diar Echems: Located in the El Madania municipality three kilometers south of central Algiers, it contained one of the city’s largest shantytowns (*bidonvilles*), tin shacks which date from the late 1950s.
- p. 329: “‘Till tomorrow’”: Monday, May 1.
Their conversation ends at 9:35 p.m.
- p. 329: “‘I would not deceive . . . cross paths again’ . . . the artificial becoming the real”:
For the three speeches by Saul, see 2.20 and 34.
- p. 329: “Not looking for your *pourboire* . . . ‘greedy of [the] filthy [‘lilty’] lucre.’ The bond is all, eh, for you, for me”: See 2.29.
As pointed out in its note, N2:50, the internal quote is from 1 Tim. 3:3 where Paul lists as one of the adjectives which should describe a Christian bishop is “not greedy of filthy lucre.”
The slant-rhymed coined word “lilty,” as mentioned on the 2.29 note, N2:50, suggests how merrily HIV sings out that proclamation about “lucre.”
- p. 329: “all private treasons had to be given a public face”: This idea extends yet contradicts the notion, “The private face behind the public mask. The public face behind the private mask” (17.278 and its note, N17:12-13).
While the title of chap. 5 indicates that “every mirror” shows not the real person, but merely a “mask,” thus making the mirror itself a mask, here DGSE through

Devereaux seems intent on giving “a public face” to HIV’s and Saul’s “private treasons.”

This exposure of these acts of treason to him, Remy seems to feel, was designed by DGSE to remind him of his own treasonous past and to reinforce how dependent he is on the French.

- p. 329: “his walk back to the shop”: 9:35 – 10:45 p.m. Remy always took a winding way through the crowded Ramadan streets.
- p. 329: “All roads digress to Rome”: The saying “All roads lead to Rome” is tweaked since the killing of HIV and Saul in Rome has caused Remy to digress from his happiness at learning that in two days he will be flown to France.
The “mangled” adage also reinforces a key word in the title of this chapter.
- p. 329: “his May Day agenda: trips to several widely separated agricultural stores”: Remy does not specify either what “his purchases” will be or why he feels the need to make them.
- p. 329: “At the six p.m. call”: Late Monday afternoon of May 1.
This will be the fifth and last telephone call to Devereaux. It lasts seven minutes.
- p. 329: beard: As a transitive verb, “to confront and oppose with boldness and resolution” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 329: “Hamlet’s *Mousetrap*”: In 3.2.235, Hamlet answers Claudius’s question about the title of the play which they are watching by answering, “*The Mousetrap*.” It is referred to earlier as “The play’s the thing/ Wherein I’ll catch the conscience of the King” (2.2.605-06).
See the p. 328 note above on “dumb show,” N19:53.
- p. 329: asyndetic: The adjective of “asyndeton,” or the omission of conjunctions between coordinate sentence elements.
- p. 329: “Poof!”: Used as an interjection meaning a sudden disappearance or appearance.
For its four other uses, see 2.16 and 28, 7.114, and 17.276 and their notes, N2:5 and 48; N7:34; and N17:7.
- p. 329: “soft evidence”: In law, evidence may be classified as “soft” or “hard.”
Legal scholars consider the best “soft evidence” (testimony of an authority in a field or a witness’s hearsay) as inferior to the worst “hard evidence” (conflicting eye-witness accounts).
Types of hard evidence are ranked with DNA evidence being “very strong” and eye-witness evidence “weaker.”
- p. 329: “one hundred proof”: Hard evidence. Devereaux is punning on the legal and

alcoholic use of “proof.”

In law “proof” is sufficient evidence for the truth of a proposition, as in the phrase that the prosecutor has the “burden of proof.”

p. 329: recitativo: “recitation” or “the act of enumeration; detailing” (*Webster’s Third*).

p. 329: peccavi: A confession of sin or guilt.

- p. 330: *collogue*: to confer or converse privately.
- p. 330: “economic officer”: Ballard’s title.
- p. 330: *Café de Flore*: *Flore* is French for the botanical term “flora” and as capitalized for the Roman goddess of flowers and spring.
The Casbah café is an invention of mine, but one of Paris’s oldest restaurants is the *Café de Flore* located in the 6th *arrondissement*. It was named for a nearby statue of *Flora*.
As envisioned, my Casbah café is located at a corner of the real Rue Mohammed Azouzi (named for a member of the FLN martyred in 1955), the narrow east-west street below the major Boulevard Abderazak Hadad.
To the south of the Azouzi is an alley, but below it there is a large residential area, with seams or breezeways between its buildings until it reaches the broad Rue Soualah Mohammed.
- p. 330: Boulevard Abderazak Hadad: The street that separates the Upper Casbah from a southern boundary of Bab el Oued.
Foucin’s office is located on it.
- p. 330: “two BMWs . . . from the German embassy”: The role which the German embassy is scheduled to play in Remy’s escape will be explained on 20:333-34.
- p. 330: “cooling their wheels”: A dreadful pun on the informal expression “cool one’s heels,” meaning to “wait or be kept waiting for a considerable time.”
- p. 330: “Boggy Fathom”: A pun on “Foggy Bottom,” a metonym for the U.S. Department of State whose headquarters, the Truman complex, is located in a foggy area of Washington D.C.
Remy would be unaware that Leroy used the pun “Boggy Fathom” on 1.1.
See its note, N1:4, for a longer explanation of the quibble.
- p. 330: “*Douk-Douked*”: A facetiously ungrammatical use of the noun *douk-douk*, the type of pocketknife used to murder Ballard.
See the 4.57 note, N4:17-18, for a discussion of the knife.
- p. 330: “Not possible, not permissible, not seemly”: A balance for the first instance of asyndeton four paragraphs above, “Paris thinks so, wants so, commands so” (329).
- p. 330: “a ‘certain someone’ was in ‘61””: Remy, when he was Omar, was flown from Algiers to France on Apr. 13, 1961.
See 2.27.
- p. 330: “Another brother after another brother who caused yet another sister’s death”:
Mohammed will be in pursuit of Remy (Omar) who, Devereaux states, caused the

death of his own sister Noura and of Mohammed's sister Houda.
This section ends at 6:07 p.m.

pp. 330-31: SECTION 8

p. 330: "On his way from the booth to the shop": 6:07 to 7:15 p.m.

p. 330: "Turkish Delight": A jellylike candy flavored with rosewater, lemon, mint, cinnamon, etc., shaped as bite-sized cubes, and covered with powdered sugar. It may have chopped nuts, such as pistachios or walnuts, or dates bound by the gel. Turkish Delight was created by an 18th-century Turkish confectioner (hence its name). Its popularity quickly spread throughout the Arab World and Europe. In France, it is called *loukoum* and in most of northern Africa, *halqum* (although *malban* in Egypt).

p. 330: "like Foucin's Hamlet, I'm digressing": See the commentary on of the title of this chapter, N19:1-2, and the pp. 316-17 notes, N19:13-14. The word "digress" is symbolically forced, as Remy knows, since it is a "detour" he makes to buy the box of candy.

p. 330: "the booby-trap charge to be rigged up": "Charge": "the quantity of explosive used in a single discharge." "Rig up": "to fit up as a makeshift; set up as an expedient." The question of what he bought at the agricultural store is answered (329): chemicals or other materials which would allow him to make an explosive. However, new ones arise: where, how, and why the "bobby-trap charge" would be used.

p. 330: "the letter to her": Equally puzzling: How would he get a letter to Leila without endangering her? What could he tell her in a letter that he could not communicate during their last telephone conversation? Is there a connection between the "bobby-trap charge" and the letter more than just the conjunction "and"?

p. 330: "Thank God!": This fourth and last telephone conversation to Leila occurs on Monday, May 1, from 10:00 to 10:04.

p. 330: "she had rejoiced": Unrevealed by Leila was that she had received some joyful news on Sunday, Apr. 30, and performed a duty long sought. Since her focus is on Remy's future, she does not digress to this event of the past day. Remy will learn of the source of Leila's happiness and relief from Devereaux on

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20.333.

p. 330: *Lailatul Qadr*: Literally, *lailatul* (“night”) *qadr* (“of revelation”), but usually translated as the “Night of Greatness” or the “Night of Power.”

It is the night during Ramadan in which Muslims believe the first verses of the Qur’an were revealed to the Prophet Mohammed by the angel Jibril (Gabriel) at the Hira cave on Mount Nur in Mecca in 610 CE (that is, thirteen years before the Hegira calendar began).

According to Sunni scholars, *Lailatul Qadr* falls on one of the last five odd nights of Ramadan: the 21st, 23rd, 25th, 27th, or 29th.

However, most Muslims celebrate it on the 27th. In the Qur’an it is mentioned in Sura 97:1-5 as the night “better than a thousand months.”

In the text of my novel, this phrase provides the title of the next chapter and will be discussed on 20.332 and in its notes, N20:1-2. The novel will symbolically end with the commencement of *Lailatul Qadr* (21.368).

Since Remy will be en route to France “on Tuesday night” (329), *Lailatul Qadr*, which commences as Leila notes at “sunset” Tuesday, would have begun.

p. 330: “In the last ten days”: Apr. 22 through May 1.

p. 330: “my initial thirteen days”: Apr. 9 through Apr. 21.

p. 330: regurge: a transitive or intransitive verb meaning “regurgitate” (*Webster’s Third*).

p. 330: “DA500,000”: This amount for capturing Remy alive would equal around \$50,000 at the time of the novel (1989).

Dead, he would be worth just under half this figure.

p. 330: Prime Minister Kasdi Merbah: He served as Algeria’s prime minister from Nov. 5, 1988, to Sept. 9, 1989. On Aug. 22, 1993, perhaps because he took a moderate approach to the electoral victory of the Islamic party (FIS), he, who had left the FLN government by that time, was assassinated.

His portrayal in my novel is entirely fictional.

p. 330: “smite dead the devil”: See the 9.148 note, N9:34, which lists the thirty-three instances where Remy is referred to in devilish terms and the 18.295 note, N18:12-13.

p. 330: “to Allah to ‘roast him in Gehenna—an evil homecoming!’”: The quotation is from the Qur’an 4:115 (Arberry translation): “But whoso makes a breach with the Messenger after the guidance has become clear to him, and follows a way other than the believers’, him We shall turn over to what he has turned to and We shall roast him in Gehenna—an evil homecoming!”

Gehenna is the name given to Hell in Islam.

Gehenna is also mentioned in both the Old and New Testament of the Bible.

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In the first, it is a place outside Jerusalem where certain pagans sacrificed their children in fire (2 Chr. 28:3 and 33:6; Jer. 7:31 and 19:2-6 and 11-14).

In the New Testament, it is used to refer to Hell as a fiery place: Matt. 5:22, 29, and 30; Matt. 10:28; Matt. 18:9; Matt. 23:15 and 33; Mark 9:43, 45, and 47; Luke 12:5; and James 3:6.

p. 330: apostate: guilty of abandoning what one has believed in, as a faith, cause, or principles.

Thus, the “shadow” of the treason of the Seven challenged both Algeria’s religion and its political independence from French colonialism.

p. 330: recrudescence: to break out again after a period of latency, such as a disease.

Here Merbah refers to a belief that France has plots to recolonize Algeria.

p. 330: “speaking frankly”: A pun on a word that is twice associated with France: the peoples who established the Frankish Empire, which incorporated what is now France, and “franc,” the monetary unit of France.

- p. 331: “their Black Death”: Colonialism is compared with the bubonic plague which devastated Europe and Asia in the 14th century.
- p. 331: “the ‘imperative’”: This is the second reference in the chapter to Kant’s “categorical imperative” from his *Groundwork for the Metaphysic(s) of Morals*, chap. 2, that impulse in every rational creature always to act morally. See the p. 326 note above, N19:45.
Remy uses the term in order to explain why he betrayed his country.
- p. 331: “‘The past . . . your release’”: Leila calls the past “a demon,” from which he must obtain “your release.”
On 12.186-87, women are affiliated with the future and men are tied to the past.
- p. 331: “even the final [word]”: The final word of Leila’s prayer-like plea is ironically “demon.”
- p. 331: “‘I’ve set down the history: my *nathr* . . . ruse broke my resolve’”: In his letter to Leila Remy had written of another loyalty to his family.
His speech to Leila touches on some aspects and consequences of his disloyalty regarding his family.
He mentions a *nathr*, a bonding promise to God (3.37) to protect his afflicted sister from all suffering, her capture, his own, and being forced to watch her being tortured only to discover the French had used a substitute.
It was the French ruse of the “substitute” which broke Remy’s patriotism and turned him into a traitor.
- p. 331: *mot juste*: exactly the word or phrase wanted.
- p. 331: “*forgive*”: To gain release from sin, one must desire forgiveness for it (repentance); this granted (by oneself, other human beings, and/or God), redemption is secured.
- p. 331: “‘unprick’ the briars binding you to a past, better forsaken’”: The neologistic “unprick” as a verb is a back formation of the adjective “unpricked,” meaning “not punctured or wounded by a prick” (*Webster’s Third*).
Leila also draws on the image from Blake’s “The Garden of Love,” which provided the title of chap. 13, “Binding with Briars”: “And binding with briars my joys & desires” (12).
See the 13.206, 207, 216, and 218 notes, N13:1, 25, 49, and 54.
- p. 331: “the small device behind the plank . . . ‘Large enough to sear the papers, it can likewise burn a finger’”: Leila is offered an explanation as to why he built a “booby-trap charge” (330).
He is aware that since Foucin’s agents will trail her long after Remy is gone, she will not try to recover the letter until she deems it safe to.
If someone tries to dislodge it improperly, the small explosive surrounding it

will burn the letter, Leila from being incriminated.

p. 331: *apologia*: a defense of one's own beliefs or conduct.

p. 331: "*À ma gauche*": In French, "To my left."

p. 331: "another bond": Her tentative proposal of establishing a human bond between them may be sourced in Remy's reference to the *nathr* or "promise to God" of which he had just spoken or to his own earlier desire at their second meeting to "cement a bond, albeit human, between us" (12.194).

p. 331: "and before if possible": On 2.16-17, Marie had asked Remy to come back from his library conference in London after the "four days" it would last. Remy answered, "Yes, and before if possible. You know I am never in comfort apart from you." Here when Leila asks whether "after a year or so" he could "write a brief note" to her about the health of his family and him, he replies, "I will, 'and before if possible,' God permitting."

p. 331: *Inshallah!*: "God willing!"

p. 331: "Back at the shop": The call to Leila ended at 10:04 p.m. A meandering route brought Remy back to the shop at 11:15. He goes to bed at 11:45, according to my chronology.

p. 331: "HIV's lighter": The first reference to it since he had lied to Devereaux that he had "ditched" it in a mosque courtyard urn (329).

p. 331: "reviewed the past six days . . . 'May Day down'": Section 7, which began, "Over the next six days, from Apr. 25 through May 1, is based on this last-gasp-of-May-Day review.

p. 331: "now I can sleep": Close to midnight Remy falls to sleep. This is the third chapter (3 and 15 are the other two) which ends with "sleep." In addition, "sleep" is the key word in the last sentence of chap. 11. Finally near the end of two other chapters (10 and 14) Remy is in bed and is close to falling asleep.