

Chapter Seventeen

EVERYTHING DISCONNECTS

“You leave Algiers today,” imposed the man, shorter by a head than Remy. He was in his late thirties with a cherub-pink complexion, apathetic black eyes, and a chevron moustache. After flinging off the hood of his ecru *burnoose*, he was dressed in a gray sports coat, an off-white shirt, and navy-blue trousers.

With his right index and middle finger still pressed to his mouth, he (“my crossed-wiry liaison”) had stepped to the television, turned it on, located the French channel, and adjusted the volume to semi-loud.

A nod had enjoined Remy, who had unhesitatingly shut the door, to sit on the French Empire sofa. From the right bergère Monitor had then delivered the four-word mandate, continuing at once, “To pass on that message, had you rung up earlier, as you were supposed to, I wouldn’t have to be engaging in this stealth.” The manufactured peevishness in his voice Remy judged to be from the phylum of patronization he kept in reserve.

“My memory’s likely mistaken, but at the end of our Monday chat, didn’t you say, call ‘if convenient’?” His question was accompanied by a pronounced squint. Reaching forward, he picked up the Gauloises near the tray, which he had neglected to put outside the door. “You’ll smoke mine? Housekeeping must not chance on dueling brands in the ashtrays.”

A drag out of the way, “M. Champagne” several times flexed his right leg, apparently intent on dislodging a cramp. “We believe the Americans have ferreted who you aren’t.”

The disclosure prompted Remy to hold in his own draw. “And so, who I am.”

“No, not that, not yet. Your contact spotted the activity. Since London, he’s devoted himself to little except over-the-shoulder watching out for you. A mother hen there.”

In Le Puy, with his third reading of 2269 over, Remy had been astounded that the folder listed only a sobriquet for his French embassy *intermédiaire* in Algiers.

“Accordingly, I’m fortunate,” Remy tapped his cigarette on the crystal ashtray, “M. Le Contact D’Al-gér-ie Fran-çaise,” opting for the moment not to utilize “M. Champagne,” the authorized pseudonym. “Hmm?” he signaled for the explanation to proceed.

“Picking up on two of their agents flying into Antwerp, he keyed our computers in on Roger Channel. Leroy snaps his fingers, and the whole American online in Europe crackles and pops. You’ve ruffled—”

“The lapels of one of his Givenchy double-breasts.” The intrusion manifestly roiled Monitor into a grimace. Fiddling with the pack, he dug out another cigarette, even though, his, untouched since the first puff, had a humped ash exceeding its stub.

“‘Not yet,’ you said.” Remy stood up, not solely to evince his foreboding, but also to secure some relief from the pinching elastic wrap.

“It’s already embarrassing. Following the homicide, we casually mentioned to the Americans that despite Vellacott’s investigation—they’re aware he sometimes fronts for us—we’re not interested. Now they know you’re our deputy not his. You’ll leave today.”

With the bow of his *robe de chambre* titivated, Remy scuffed to the draperies, forcing his liaison to crook his neck while reasserting, “You will leave today.”

With this third, he perceived that the insistence had acquired a nervous impatience. Focusing on the overlap in the curtains, he parried by asking, “Where’s the disconcertion, whether I’m exposed as your, not M. Vellacott’s, client? Since last Friday M. Foucin’s been sensible of that, he notified me some four hours ago. ‘So the French do have long proboscises’ was the exact couching of his illation.”

Remy eased round to study the visage of his “intruding guest,” whose right thumb was stroking the bottom seam of his lower lip. “And what has H—” He broke off his slip and commenced again, “What has my hen scratched up?”

Boosting himself to his feet, “Champagne” stamped to a teak wall table near the window and propped himself against its edge. “Oh, don’t overestimate his clout. He fluttered home from London ferrying a towheaded chap or rather towing a fair(y)-haired one. Installed him in a Montmartre flat. His flamboyant audacity’s irritated Internal.”

“He has uncovered what?”

“Oh, you’ll ascertain that soon enough. Hen will be tailing your spin from Brussels Airport to Antwerp. Hankers for a swift renesting. A nettled Pertelote, he charged in on Directeur as he steamed, wagging a beak in the Chief’s perspiring face and, with ruff huffed, clucking, ‘*The General!*’”

“And I will learn what tonight?”

“As clamorous as H . . . Hen was that encoder in our documents section, systematically disjointed between Good Friday and Easter Sunday ’87. We know, with Comtean positivism, given that we did it.

‘How he squealed his disapproval of his scission, imploring pardon: Stacks of files—“*Ouïe!*”—smuggled out—“*Zut!*”—photocopied—“*Mon Dieu!*”—and anon restowed—“*Putain!*”—this door revolver—“*Ça suffit!*”—had been peddling—“*Oh là là!*”—to the Americans—“*Quel dommage!*”—for cocaine—“*Merde, Mère! Mère, Merde!*”—working alphabetically. We unhinged him at the encrypted Ps.”

Remy felt compelled to sigh. “Beyond the indecipherable Ns. I was archived by my Arabic cognomen?” (*And with that prescience France had still conspired for me to come.*)

When “Champagne” let a half minute elapse, Remy persisted, “Yes, I can imagine how that would be compromising: France has brazenly sent ‘the Seventh Devil’ back to Algiers, up to some flouting mischief.” He finished with a more flagrantly expelled sigh.

“The ‘flit’ must not be adequate diversion. It took Hen six days to stumble on this leak, and such a hue he let out: ‘Treason, treason! Recall him at once!’ he cackled through the vapor. ‘That ghostly philippic well-nigh made me “poof” on the trestle,’ Directeur intimated, after dressing down the others for not crashing the computers the moment they’d discerned he was closing in.”

Monitor paused to smooth his mustache. “Consider, however, not an outsider, ‘H’ is cognizant of some shortcuts. Weigh what the Americans are up against. Over six thousand

daedalic files, which they had let gather dust—‘wasted cocaine’—for almost two years.”

The next was singsonged. “Naaman to Montpellier to Lazar, they must link. And pricked at every blind alley, they’ve got to transverse thirty years in which we’ve disconnected everything as best we could. A piece of hay in a stack of needles, eh?”

Liaison’s frail smile complimented the bewilderment surging over his countenance.

Tweaking the velvet pleats, through the gap Remy stared into the light-struck darkness of the Sahel Hills, supporter of the Casbah. “Nevertheless, you acknowledged that it’s no more than a ‘not yet.’”

2

“The fax from M. Vellacott summoning you to Antwerp will arrive at nine.”

“Such a hurry, such a hurry. Have you forgotten I have six thousand files of time?”

Remy’s obtrusion was treated as parenthetical by his intermediary. “An Air Italia’s Rome-bound at 5:42. You’ll make an almost immediate connection to Brussels by Sabena.”

“And here you were implying nothing connects,” Remy simpered. “Algiers with Rome, Rome with Brussels, and a Pertelote-tailed run to Antwerp. I assume I’ll be on my own to Châteauroux. Please excuse me.”

In the bathroom, he swallowed two Brufen and, four minutes on, advanced to the privy compartment where he flushed the toilet twice. During the interval as he crystallized the *changement de programme*—“my quid pro quo desideration—” he self-confessed, “In either situation, I use her.”

On his return Monitor, who was gazing through the curtains, wheeled about and began to move toward him, an approach which Remy had charted his speech to frustrate.

“And you concur that I must . . . ‘abandon Algiers,’ or did you, the impetuous ally of my contact in France, recommend it, M. Thierry Devereaux?”

Nonplus exhibited itself, obstesting a clarification.

“I detailed to you several of my colloquies with Mme. Ballard, ‘Leila,’ I think you tutoyer her. Does Paris appreciate how well you’ve kept her foddered about an investigation in which the façade projected was ‘we’re not interested’?”

“Has DGSE been disposed to interpret your traffic with this ‘queer’ American’s widow—and what manly man could not but be outraged by her selection?—as contrived to ‘woo some clue’ from her, promoting your ‘probe’? I’m acquainted that preceding M. Ballard’s courting you were an escort of hers.”

At the end of the string of queries, Devereaux took three aggressive strides toward him, pulling up two short of his person. “Preposterous! You’re not hinting my complicity in this,” he fumbled for a word, “matter.”

“If Paris comprehends all—your relationship with Mme. Ballard when she was Mlle. Chabane and your commerce with her subsequent to her widowhood—you stand upon no grounds for worry. Mother Hen should be able to elucidate the context of this” (a corresponding groping) “affair. You did remark he’ll somehow overhaul me in Antwerp?”

Reestablished in the bergère, Devereaux was irritably shuffling about. “An ordinary interdelegation friendship is all Paris will conclude”—he backhanded a dismissal toward

Remy, ensconced once more on the sofa—“so why should anyone care?”

“An apropos ‘rhetorical.’” Remy plumped his grin, its sweep conveying, he hoped, an attempt to extract all polemical flourish. “Or so much as know? *Mon Dieu!*”

Gingerly slapping the marble, he jingled the cutlery on the tray. “Why should the private hamstring the public, an outbreeding apt to birth Paris’s suspicions about a servant’s civil loyalty? The instant patriotism (‘paternity nationalized’) is in question—Goodness and the DGSE know!—one might ‘be cashiered to France, to swivel in a desk chair and linger over a file cabinet.’ Where’s the ‘fairity’ of it?”

Remy sprang to his feet and thrice pounded his right fist into his palm, visibly registering high “frantic indignation” at such misfeasance.

Built slowly, the persiflage asudden burst. “M. Devereaux, do not surmise I’m begging your permission on this?” Plodging to the velvet curtains, he held off his dictum till he had once more peeped through them. “I won’t leave Algiers without seeing my father.”

Whipping around to witness his liaison’s shock, he found himself, to his own surprise, watching a cinematic lap dissolve into enlightenment.

“Well, one puzzle’s solved. Paris was baffled by your winged acquiescence. The inaugural lure scripted was that your annuity, finally at its zenith, would be canceled and, in the event you balked, your protection, thereby betraying your family . . . anew. So it’s an older bond, one predating that of the Seven.

Succeeding a pensive lull, he tacked on dryly. “It’s as you just hinted: ‘The private face behind the public mask. The public face behind the private mask,’ the inditement of some English poet, a favorite quote in *Le Figaro*, where perchance you read it.”

Remy’s acknowledgment was to retrace his footsteps to the sofa. “Monsieur, this is the ‘all’ we’ll ‘give and hazard.’ Postpone M. Vellacott’s fax from nine until 12:30, and I’ll take the evening airbus to Paris at 8:12.” Despite the risk, he had to bid her adieu— and not over a telephone. “Why shouldn’t I? Everyone’s persuaded he knows who I really am.”

While he talked, he had spread the serviette over the items on the tray. At the door, balancing the salver on his left thenar, he raised three fingers to his mouth to cue “silence,” but only his index and annulary kissed his pooched-out lips.

His room “tidied up,” in his return he positioned himself behind the French Empire sofa. “With the Al-Nigma slipped out of, as insidiously as incrept, report to La Parc Peltzer at 6:30, as is your custom. Forthwith requisition a limousine, adorned with miniature French flags on its hood and boot.”

At his chuckling, Devereaux glanced up. “I’ve been knocked around enough in cramped taxis and M. Foucin’s Peugeot. My accoutrements: one of those gimcrack, military-attaché uniforms, size 48, and some counterfeit facial hair, which I’m positive your cloak-and-dagger section has on hand.”

He pursed his lips discriminatorily. “A rack-stretched carriage and ribbon-strewn frippery: Yes, yes, I’ll call on my father in au courant French *haute ‘culture.’*”

The smirk quit Remy’s face, and the lilt, his voice. “And a Braille Qur’an. The bookshop of the Organization of Blind Algerians has the six-volume set, a call from Brussels’ Hotel Argus illuminated me. Purchase it . . . at its ‘great price,’ subtracting the cost from my next pourboire. The first I’ll deliver today.”

After a few meditative seconds, he forged ahead jauntily, “And my guardian ‘hen’ will inform me when you’ve faithfully conveyed the other five. Ah yes, and most crucially, how to occupy M. Le Grand? I’m sure a buzz from no less than His Excellency M. Jean Audibert, Ambassador and High Representative of France, requesting a ten o’clock conference will distract him for my pilgrimage’s hour.”

Arranged were the time, the place, his strolling outfit, and the pickup car that would spirit him off to the embassy. From there, having been arrayed and bedecked, he was to be chauffeured to the Casbah.

Remy ceased the one-sided discussion at the bedroom threshold, where pivoting, to his chagrin, he was greeted by a visage blatantly absent of obliging deference and a forensic that brandished sedition.

“Quite the doyen of ‘spydom’ you’ve evolved into over the past eleven days. All the same, when you disclose to your father who you are, and he arraigns, streaking the air with blood spewed from his lungs, ‘Traitor, traitor!’ what will your rejoinder be to . . . the dot not aspiring to reconnect?”

And to himself Remy had to concede, while he had thought much through, that he had not.

3

The higher the limousine ascended Rue de la Victoire and the deeper it nudged into the Casbah, the tighter the squeeze became, constraining them five alleyways down “Rue de Thèbes” to haul up.

“It’ll narrow even more and at the loft’s trapdoor be reduced to a snapping sphincter!” Devereaux, also in a pomp-and-circumstance disguise, snorted. In the embassy’s subterranean parking lot, Remy had been surprised that he was to be the driver and that a third man would be involved, one “my ‘approximate’ in ‘shape and size and substance.’”

Devereaux, who had commenced by prescribing each to strip to his undergarments, oversaw the synchronized redressing. The uniform—light beige pants, coat, and shirt, severally embellished with a red waist sash, yellow fringed epaulettes, a bone-char tie, and a dark blue kepi with gold braid—was passed to Remy at the same time he delivered his blue chino suit and pink shirt.

“Jacques, you’re shortchanged here,” his superior remonstrated. The aide-de-camp, however, was busy exchanging his Boss Aviators for Remy’s Vuarnet nylon wraparounds.

As they retied black lace-ups, a swap not feasible, Devereaux unfurled what Remy should expect: “Inside the store, we’ve confirmed, there’ll be a lad at its counter, delegated to tend it while his feast-stuffed father sleeps in.” Remy should fling him a five-dinar note and mime “there’d be another on your descent, a sufficient promissory to keep him quiet. The ‘vampire’ at the top of the ladder is never bolted.”

Devereaux tarried, *apparently to permit me mental time to hoist myself through the ceiling door into the loft*, Remy speculated.

“But do I need to map out your campaign? Fabricated in Le Puy, was it not? Ah well, the ‘de rigueur’ is all. Next, the hunchbacked Widow Daidje—by that point you’ll, likewise,

be humped over, though not ‘over the hump’—as hideous as Milton’s Old Lady Sin, will similarly endeavor to disrupt your progress. ‘A *petit pourboire* conquers all.’” He nonchalantly extended his arms to illustrate how catholic was the adage.

“Draped over a clothesline, two bladder-green woolen blankets, divided by a cotton sheet, separate your father’s moiety of the nest from hers.” Devereaux straightened one of the medals pinned to the coat Remy had just slid into.

“He hasn’t shrunken in height, the stock fate of the elderly, but paralysis has shriveled his lower frame and consumption his upper. To be frank, the linen will be eminently dirty: Weekly Mme. Remidi used to dispatch aloft a fresh set, but the widow’s less particular.”

A kneeling Devereaux ran his palms along the seams of the pants, smoothing out some imaginary wrinkles. “Near the bed’s left side is tucked his black slop bucket. To the rear of the pail, a wobbly stand for his Qur’an, a superfluous candle, and a plastic vase of plastic flowers. Formerly Mme. R. would supply real ones. Alas, no more! And what’s a Daidje to do when times are hard for the old the world over?”

Having stepped back a pace to survey, Devereaux tilted forward and gave the epaulettes a tweaking fluff. “*Mon Capitaine!*” he acclaimed.

“Now your facial hair. Poor Jacques wept throughout the earlier shaving and clipping. I comforted him, ‘Virtually no one will regard you, except the driver of the taxi, which you’ll never exit. And the excursion westward is all sandy beaches and rocky capes, bellombras and blue sea, coming to a head in Chercell, albeit you won’t get that far.

“‘Precisely the sort of foray a Belgian inspector in lagoon-blue and rose-chambray would devise, Jacques. A day off to compensate for the beating’—this morning you neglected to divulge that—he harvested last night, prior to his rescue by Foucin.’”

He eyed Remy. “By the way, he’ll be strutting into His Excellency’s office the very second you bound into Papa’s half-tenanted studio. At our ‘midway in’ to the Casbah and his ‘midway out’ to Hydra, we might even crosscut.”

A further coifing squash to the sideburns out of the way, Devereaux canvassed the two. “The ‘*doubles*’!” he had clarioned. “French clothes do make the man!”

Seeming to intuit that Remy, his eyes shut, was reviewing the diagram of the attic, Devereaux chortled from the front seat of the halted car. “*Aha! La voici! Ton minute de vérité!*” With a trenchant yawn censored by the dorsum of his right hand, he intoned, “Tell me: What will you say to him?”

Startling Remy, the car phone rang, yet outwardly not Devereaux, who with a vexed suspiration snapped open the armrest compartment and lifted the receiver. “*Oui!*” was separated from *Au revoir!*” by less than a minute.

“Abort! We’ll abort! Scarcely before Foucin was to be admitted, some secretary stupidly passed on to him an urgent call. With a stark apology, he rushed out.” Devereaux had already restarted the engine.

“Peccable timing!” beamed Remy, reaching for the handle. “A fortuitous coincidence or a coincidental fortuity . . . but no.”

Hopping out of the limousine, he was conscious of the many pairs of eyes on him, and even one singlet—“a befitting candidate for Foucin’s ‘spy-nozy,’ given his tapir snout.” As

he ambled down the lane, youngsters scurried past him, the expansive, sable behemoth deemed more colorful than his garb.

In five minutes at the threshold of “28,” Remy glanced to his left, but the black-patched proboscidian was nowhere in sight. Within, the boy minding the *dukkaan* was snoring into some candy boxes.

Its two-kilo heft notwithstanding, he wedged the encased Qur’an under his armpit and had scrambled to the fifth rung by the time the sleeper stirred. Before he could bawl out, a crumpled-up five-dinar note was tossed toward the counter.

Snagged dexterously, the lad also construed the purport of the mounter’s two fingers pressed to his lips.

His whispered transcendent plea, “After, again,” was embraced by Remy’s bobbing gesture and a skim of the ceiling. As he pushed against its trapdoor, he was assured that the lad would retain that frozen pose, *not one to botch a second Heaven-sent chance to reconnect with cash.*

The loft had been the scene of countless adventures. Mahmoud Kechich, the owner of the notions shop, had let them use it for a tree-house aerie, despising the clamber: “What fool would build a storeroom upstairs?”

Remy’s father had crafted the veritable *échelle* he was about to leap from into the attic. “It’s out of our hands, Mahmoud, their tumbling from a sturdy one”—he was pointing to the rickety traverses—“yet when the ladder’s at fault, we are.” Kechich nodded his assent, and they split the cost of the lumber.

And so, with its piled-up cartons of unwanted vendibles as a backdrop, his playmates and he had metamorphosed it into Aladdin’s cave, a Saracen dungeon, or the hole of a Barbary corsair.

Once he had enticed Noura to come. Having climbed as far as would allow a peep inside, with a flinch, the radiant smile having vanished, she backtracked, her head trembling, and the soles of her sandals poised, he forefelt, to overshoot his hands, since he had positioned himself below, to catch her should she fall. Not until she was outdoors in the declining afternoon sunshine did it reappear.

He had spent the night importuning God’s absolution, certain He better comprehended his need.

“Father, Father, what have I brought you to?” Half of his body within, Remy mouthed the words into the startled darkness of the attic. “Dear God, forgive me.”

This prayer and its antecedent plaintive decrual had been delivered with shut eyes. At their reopening, the pitch, diffused into a haze as the *trappe* was folded back, still veiled the boxed Qur’an he had situated an arm’s length away.

Having braced his palms on the aperture’s jambs, with a thrust of his legs against the penultimate rung—“*Mnn-grr!*” the gradually roused harridan whimpered a snarl—he vaulted into the distantly known, laden heat.

4

“I entered as an impostor and became myself, only to leave as that impostor” pervaded Remy’s mind during the return trip to the embassy: an iconic caption to fingertips gliding across the Qur’an, to the candlelight glimpses of the face, to the puppetlike mandible, striving not to quiver while the voice proclaimed, “I do not want the pretender’s love. Dying, she clasped my hands and through her ‘forever-mourning’ *niquaab* implored, ‘Forgive! Forgive!’ And, as fiercely as I strained, she would not let me draw free. And now this impostor presumes I’ll take yours when, with all my mature strength, I labored to gain release from hers. I have no son! Praise God! *Allahu Akbar! Allahu Ak-awgh!*”

And the reflection endured, a rubric to the phantasma of his father’s neck being massaged, in the foreground the phlegm and blood being spat into the faded-black pail.

“This is my doing!” He recited aloud his ancient charge.

“Hmm?” Devereaux petitioned.

“Can’t I grab the first flight out? To Casablanca, Tunis, Cairo, Madrid. It doesn’t matter.” Remy leaned in, planting his left elbow atop the seat as *point d’exclamation*.

Devereaux’s glance mutated into an enchanted stare. “Ah, a bloody encounter—blood to blood!” His eyes followed the cruor-stained cuff as Remy snatched away his arm. “So you won’t tattle. Of no importance: The imagination’s richer.”

His hawked fleer was abridged. “You dilettanti are always dreaming up last-minute revisions. Foucin must be accorded the courtesy of inspecting Vellacott’s fax before you decamp. We’ve humored you in prosecuting your private connection; now collaborate on our public display. It will be expected.”

“So much we deem necessary probably isn’t” was Remy’s barely audible indictment, ignored if apprehended by Devereaux.

“If, after that, you can make the 5:42 Air Italia, who are we to object?”

With a drift backward, a resigned Remy wilted into an exhausted quiescence.

At the reverting trade, Jacques droned on about the half-hour ride toward Cherchell and his transitional palaver with the taxi driver.

“You must tolerate the ragged red circle on the coat sleeve, Jacques.” Devereaux faced Remy. “He’ll brazenly advertise himself at Peltzer for the remnant of the day and dine in his blood-spotted regimentals at El Riadh tonight. By then you’ll be long departed.”

His glare penetrated, even though his remarks now were leveled at the adjunct. “Jacques, I’ll acquaint you with your splotch. You were spat upon by M. Naaman who, with a fervor tantamount to that reserved for the French, hates any allusion to his son.”

He retreated a valuating pace. “‘Mine eyes dazzle,’ confused as to which one they gaze upon. Is that not a good story? I must rely upon my fancy since you won’t circumstantiate your too protracted interlude in the garret. I’ll emend my inchoate version: Not simply richer, the imagination’s always truer. Don’t you agree?”

Remy failed to detect the signal betokening the aide to withdraw.

“Monsieur, we’ll not see each other again.” His eyes having descended, he waited—as *awkward for me as for him*—until it became obvious Remy would not grasp his extended

hand. “So with disdain you leave the city of your birth, and me to the field where I must joust with the Foucins, the Belmazoires, the Tinfingers, the Leroys, and,” he paused, “the singularly beautiful Mlle. Leila.”

“Mme. Ballard,” Remy corrected, “for so the courts have ruled.” He executed a volte-face, with the same precision as if he were still in the uniform.

The driver, who at nine had sneaked Remy into La Parc Peltzer, at twelve discreetly unloaded him on a *ruelle* near the National Theater. Only fifteen minutes from the Al-Nigma, he was “inordinately early, outvying even Ballard.”

As Devereaux had insisted, Foucin must read the fax summoning him to Brussels prior to “my entry, and I’m confident he’ll be at his Ramadan Dhuhr prayers until shortly after one.”

With time to kill, he set out on an all-points stroll, northeasterly, then westerly, and nearing his third kilometer a cut south toward his hotel. In this final leg “unavoidably and quite naturally,” he impinged on Rue des Quatre Canons. Walking by her building, he weighed a mad dash up to 508. She would be there, ardent for his 1:30 telephone call.

“*Ave atque vale*, Leila!” With Catullus’s “Hail and farewell!” impressively quoted into her pleasantly surprised countenance, he would resume, “I desired to inform you *en personne*—the phone being so ‘impersonal’—that I board Rome’s 5:42 today.”

But with a “No!” that impulse was resisted, “for such a digression would mean I’d fail my rendezvous with Foucin. From too much time, I’ve advanced to too little.” After a subconscious scoff, “And unbearable that her terminal belgard of me I’d be arrayed in this jesting motley!” he launched into a brisk assault on the nine blocks to the Al-Nigma.

Arriving at 1:25, he had anticipated Boshabo would surrender the fax with his key. Per contra, without comment solely the latter was presented, “an augury, despite my dawdling, that Foucin’s not perused it.”

However, at the elevator, he heard a modestly high-pitched hollo, “M. Lazar!” and pivoted to see a uniformed Foucin plodding toward him, an envelope in his right palm.

“May I accompany you up?” he asked at a handshake distance.

“Most welcome.” This too would be “the last time” he would see Foucin—“unless he gets lucky,” at breakneck speed Remy added, not wishing to endanger his own *hazze* (“good fortune”). He missed what had typically stalked Foucin’s declaration of his pseudonym, “and loitering before an elevator, the least bizarre, save for your outfit, of our meetings.”

“Are you at liberty to sit a spell in my room? You’ll mark me as I limn the beauty of your native land, its amber beaches and stoic capes, its ataractic bellombras and beryl-blue sea. Now I can fathom why the French were so reluctant to abandon it twenty-seven years ago.”

In the elevator, Foucin tapped the envelope for two floors, not inclined to repartee.

“This is for you. Held back on my standing order.” A whiff of shame lingered, Remy sensed, at not having had to subtilize such warrant. The fax scanned, he reflexly passed it back. “So you must leave today,” Foucin absently glossed.

“My inducement remains, although modified: Within the patriotic encomium a plane reservation and bag-packing will have to be interpolated. ’Twill bore?”

Deferred till they were in the hallway was Foucin’s semblant non sequitur, an appeal. “I have some things to tell you, that’s true.”

5

In his room, the reservation had been Foucin's premier concern. "There's an 8:12 directly to Paris, or in the event you're constrained to adhere to the DGSE-vamped façade, a one-stopover (in Geneva) 9:57 to Brussels."

He'd be aware of the 5:42 to Rome, Remy knew, at the slightest hint of the Seventh, ready to scoot to any "gross" "patch of ground" in Europe. He endeavors to delay me.

"Brussels," from the bedroom he answered, sliding hangers across the closet's rod, eager to settle on a change for the pink and blue, "reeking of Jacques."

"I'll check. May I?" Striding into the chamber, Foucin headed for the touchtone on the night table. "If required, I can better shout into the bathroom from here."

Leila. His mind seized on her name. "Monsieur, may I first dial Mme. Ballard? I promised to call her at 1:30."

Foucin hesitated, not letting the *combiné* budge from his clutch. "She won't be in. With Mlle. Belmazoir, whose mother died at around 3:30 this morning, 'in bliss,' I'm told, among the flowers you sent—the most somber of my tidings."

Customs implanted in childhood never melt away: Instinctively Remy breathed to himself, "*Ahsan Allah Azakum!*" His locution to Foucin was merely similar. "The news I receive with sorrow. 'God is Great!' I believe you invoke on such occasions."

"And thus entertain it not with overweening grief," Foucin clarified, his concentration again on the panel's numerals, "not holding with those who contend, 'Death disconnects.' Her passing is signally blessed, this being our Holy Month. *Allahu Akbar!* 'God is Great!'"—the stress was on the copulative, Remy observed—"Ahsan Allah Azakum! 'Praying to Allah for the family!'"

With the barest open juncture, his voice, mirrored by an abrupt grin, shifted: "M. Goudjil, Ramadan blessings to you, your family, and your colleagues at Air Algérie."

From the closet, Remy culled a faux-labeled Anderson & Sheppard charcoal two-button and Corneliani white-on-white satin spread-collar. With these and fresh undergarments in hand, he had reached the bathroom door when three animated nods from Foucin verified that there would be no problem with the flight.

Though keen to hear the elegiac details as they affected Leila, Remy had steamed his body under the shower. Thereafter he compensated by hurriedly twining a new bandage around his torso and hustling into his clothes.

As he came out, Foucin confirmed, "All's in order. I wasn't sure how generous 'M. Vellacott' is, so I booked business, but you'll be seated first class. May I chauffeur you to the airport, say, here at nine?"

"*Shokran!* By virtue of your and M. Goudjil's consideration, I'll 'abscond' in grander style than I alit." Back at the closet, he found his Kenzo mesh-overlaid black tie. "Please tender my regrets to Mlle. Belmazoir at my inability to solemnize the exequies."

Remy foreknew the disclosure. "*El-Hamdulillah!* 'Praise be to God!' it's accomplished. Our religion prescribes no moratorium in the burial: before the next daytime prayers, 'God willing!' Mme. Ballard's intercession secured consent for my participation in the cortège."

At 11:15, the corpse was borne to the neighborhood mosque, where in its courtyard the

imam presided over *Janazah*, the funereal prayer service. Then, the kilometer walk to Cimetière el Kettar, with the interment completed just previous to Dhuhr summons.

“At a nearby mosque, I extended my prayers, despite the imperativeness of linking up with you, by appending a special one for the Belmazoirs. A ten-minute ride brought me here, my entry preceding yours by the span it took to read the fax, dutifully thrust upon me.”

He paused, but the invitation to drop by and offer condolences, which Remy had predicted, was not forthcoming. Instead, he inquired, “In Cairo did you glean that males exclusively form the funeral train? The women stay at home.”

I must see her before I leave, Remy reaffirmed. Assuming the lead, he stepped into the salon where Foucin’s appropriation of a bergère consigned him to the sofa.

There more background ensued, frustrating for Remy because it focused not on his concern: *In order to see Leila, I must visit Mlle. Houda*. However, in detailing how he was apprised of the death, Foucin did enlighten him on one matter.

Summoned by the doctor, the ward’s gendarme had gone back to bed after signing the authorization for burial. The information, therefore, was not reported in until 9:45. “At that time, I was en route to your embassy, His Excellency M. Audibert having contacted me at 7:30 to propose a consultation at ten—the topic you and ‘French proboscises,’ he joked.

“In his outer office, five minutes before I was to enter, his receptionist handed me the phone: ‘The caller maintains it’s vital.’ Sergeant Ghouraf said Mme. Belmazoir had died, the message transmitted by a Bab el Oued precinct captain, privy to my interest in the family.

“To volunteer what solace I could—after all, I *had* destroyed it—I felt I must be hard by (at sympathy’s arm’s length) right away. I trolled to the secretary that something crucial had arisen, scribbled my apologies to the Ambassador, and hurried out. Availing myself of my blue light, I pulled into their block a quarter past ten.”

So I precipitously arraigned the French, Remy admitted to himself. *Deducing that the urgent call which had sent Foucin bolting was related to the French limousine, Audibert had decided to “abort” the operation.*

Foucin continued that Mme. Bourceli was “bristling in front of the building, ‘eluding the smell of death,’ she forewarned me. ‘Or murder, which I suspect, or why, Your Excellency, did she delay until sunrise going for the doctor? By then she and that other, in scrubbing the corpse, had time to wash away all the habeas corpus evidence.’”

Remy interposed, “Mme. Ballard,” principally to satisfy a need to speak her name.

“Yes. It was she who emerged from the shack to respond to my Ramadan felicitations and condolences, kindly borne by Mme. Bourceli. The welcome in her eyes ineffectually disguised her fatigue. After ritual greetings, she expressed Mlle. Belmazoir’s ‘appreciation of your thoughtfulness and her remorse at being unable to convey these in person. So little time has she, her desire is not to quit her mother’s side.’

“‘How is she?’ I switched to French, thereby excluding Mme. Bourceli.

“‘In such control of herself she rivals an angel’s. At around 3:30, she carried the Suhoor we’d prepared behind the sheet, returning in ten minutes. As we partook of the dates and tea, even more splendid than last night’s was her praise of God’s beneficence.

“‘Afterward, Fajr prayers completed, the dear girl, her eyes averting, murmured, ‘I must be about my family’s business.’” At that point Mme. Ballard swung round, but her account,

now uttered into the doorway, pressed on unbroken. ‘Not wishing to disrupt my *As-Suhoor* and Fajr, she’d postponed revealing her mother’s passing.’”

The air which had amassed in Remy’s lungs surged against the elastic bandage, swelling the pain throughout his chest. The overture could no longer be procrastinated. “There’ll be time for me to visit Mlle. Belmazoir, to proffer my commiseration.”

“Perhaps,” the rejoinder astounding Remy. Foucin leapt up and tromped toward the window, talking while he moved. “You must elect from several candidates. Ponder Mme. Ballard’s subsequent entreaty, broached on facing me anew, ‘May M. Belmazoir be released for the funeral?’”

The mocking tone inflicted on the question, Remy discerned, was contrived to recoil on Foucin himself, whose “sneer of cold command” intensified. “Yes, the widow’s the willing messenger, espousing the ad hoc liberation of her husband’s slayer.” His visage imparted that his mind had bored ahead, the portent causing his constricted fists to tremor.

“It’s not solely whether we men will ever approximate a woman’s compassion. Will we ever comprehend it?” His glower persuaded Remy that he was demanding an answer.

6

“‘Impossible!’ I explained. Pre-Dhuhr interment. The procession would have to commence no later than 11:15. Setting aside approval and paperwork, it’s a seventy-minute drive, as you grittily know, from the prison. It was already 10:25.”

Before being stuffed into his pockets, Foucin’s hands had drubbed the air emphatically. “In defense, I pleaded, ‘Mlle. Belmazoir puts an unfeasible submission to me.’ ‘It’s not from her. She cursorily let fall, ‘I abide by the penal code, and my brother would concur: His arrest forfeited his right to attend the funeral.’”

“Even so, of course,” Remy shrilled his voice to express irritation, “M. Belmazoir’s been apprised of his mother’s death.”

“Only after much effort, with Mme. Ballard as the gracious medium.” As Foucin elaborated, it dawned on Remy that Houda appeared to wish the death kept from her brother as long as possible. First, she dismissed the suggestion that she herself telephone him: “No, traumatized by a vicious slashing, he shouldn’t be told just yet.”

When Foucin accused her of being derelict in her Islamic duty by not informing Mohammed prior to the burial, she answered, “So be it. I will be punished.”

“‘As will your neighbors and I, all culpable in this remiss,’” I pleaded through Mme. Ballard, who never wearied through her to-and-fro. “‘If not you, designate someone to telephone him, who must begin his prayers for his parent.’”

This argument had seemed to succeed: “‘I would not promote religious delinquency in anyone on this day of my mother’s death,’ was what I exulted would terminate the parley, that is, until the coda was relayed.”

Foucin twisted round his head, certain her recourse would as much surprise Remy as it had him. “She nominated you.”

He had bolted to the nearest phone to ring the Al-Nigma. Boshabo said at eight that morning, in turning in his key, Remy stated he would be walking to the National Theater and

from there might even hire an excursion taxi to Chercell. “He was clad—perchance this will help in locating him—in a laguna-blue suit and pink shirt”

Foucain had hastened to inform Mme. Ballard that in all likelihood “M. Lazar is sightseeing outside Algiers. I supplicated for some other behest. She withdrew, reappearing momentarily with a solicitation: ““Then, as in the past our family’s ancilla, would you?””

“His immediate reaction to his mother’s death was the stammer, ‘My sister, my sister.’ I did my best to reason down his fears. ‘I’m assured she bears up well.’ I validated what he presumably knew: the sanctioned obsequies she had prearranged. ‘Of these relieved, she may engross herself in prayer. Neighbors and in particular a recently secured friend comfort her,’ my secours halting, I regret, with a half-truth.

““ . . . bears up well . . . comfort her,” my sister. *Awgh, awgh.*’ At that brink, mystically paralleling his sister, he insisted on you, over the phone roaring, ‘No, no, I must see the devil! Summarily fetch the “client of my client.””

It was obvious to Remy that having to repeat the “wild and whirling words” faithfully as they had been clamored abashed Foucain, who had puffed them into the velvet curtains. As he walked back to the bergère, whose crest he gripped, Remy mused to himself, *So for the fourth time in eight days, I’ve been deemed a “devil.”*

A hollow smirk crept into the corners of Foucain’s mouth. “And so ‘brave new’ options affront you: to rendezvous with the brother, who strangely woos; to deliver condolences to the sister, and incidentally Mme. Ballard who won’t leave her side; or to adopt neither.”

Foucain’s comment had starkly convinced him that Leila would never abandon Houda for their envisioned farewell tête-à-tête. What could he do but embrace the choice that would most enrapture her?

It similarly delighted Foucain. “*El-Hamdulillah!* I’ll spirit you back by six, in time to deliver the prisoner’s message, pack, and even take our ‘breakfast.’”

Remy gave a pat to be sure his wallet had been transferred from the chino suit to the inner pocket of the Anderson & Sheppard. The thump, not unexpected, alerted him that concurrent with that exchange he had routinely situated “HIV’s lighter” behind it. (“Oh what Foucain would expend for you!”)

As for his billfold, how much of the three thousand remained in it? Not planned for the old lady, the raining dinars tossed above her mat had engendered a shriek, but she followed as his thumb and index, having made the sign for “a little,” pointed toward his father’s berth.

“‘Part of it’ will, God willing,” he had tried to mollify himself as he lobbed from the mid-rung of the ladder a wadded ten to the yet riveted boy, “trickle down to my father.”

That, he must lay by, relegating it to the Qur’an-suffused, sheet-divided loft.

And from another, Leila, he must be severed. They were in the hallway when he lit on the solution least painful for both of them: Back from the prison well before his Brussels flight, it would be impossible to avoid an hour’s visit at the Belmazoïr shack, a torment for him (and her) since “the public occasion would thwart any ‘private causerie.’”

To render this infeasible, the span must be abridged. Thus nearing Algiers he would tell Foucain of his change of plans “or planes”: The 8:12 to Paris in place of the 9:57 booked.

The commissioner would be, as usual, accommodating: speed him directly to the Al-Nigma for packing and settling his account, volunteer to change the reservations, and return

at 7:15 to drive him to the airport, for it would be Foucin who would bear to Houda whatever message, if any, Belmazoïr had passed on.

The realization that he was able to engage in such pragmatic scheming enlivened Remy. He might even suggest to Foucin, “If Mme. Ballard can tear herself away, could you escort her to that nearby phone for a call to my room? I desire to express my earnest appreciation of her magnanimity.”

But even without that, at the broadcast of his chivalrous detour, solely to retrieve a brother’s comforting message for a distressed sister, this image of his self-sacrifice would be implanted in her heart.

There it would blossom and forever dance “like wind-nuzzled flowers, yea,” he inwardly sighed, “like Wordsworthian daffodils!”

In the elevator, Remy straightaway bearded Foucin. “Your case is weak. Granted M. Vellacott’s not my client, he’ll artfully engineer an acquittal for M. Belmazoïr.”

One floor, then another, glided by. “Therefore the client of your non-client, who missed the funeral of his mother today, may ere long, God willing, be reunited with his sister and hand in hand visit the graves of their beloved parents.”

They had proceeded to the revolving door when a shout whizzed across the lobby, “M. Foucin!” Boshabo was waving frantically. “One moment only,” Foucin apologized, wheeling toward the desk.

Remy observed as the telephone receiver was passed to him, but in under a minute with agitation was thrust back. The rush over left Foucin’s visage flushed and his breathing hectic.

“*Pardon!*” he began. “The father of the traitor Naaman’s been visited by an aide from your embassy. Of that,” his index jabbed at Remy’s sternum, “and its repercussion, I surmise, you’re aware. I must be off to interrogate him before his memory fails.”

Clenching his arm, Foucin propelled him into a compartment of the *tambour*. Outside, unshackling his handclasp, he sprinted away, calling over his shoulder, ““A hit’—I’ll radio for one of my confreres to whisk you to the prison.”

The next was exclaimed a minute later through the rolled-down window of the Peugeot, minimally decelerated, “. . . a very palpable hit.’ God willing, I’ll be here to motor you to the airport at nine. If not, I’ll send another.”

Alone in the curving driveway, Remy had not even shuffled his feet before his “regular” pulled up, bounced out, and scurried to open the taxi’s back door. Delaying his ingress, he inspected his billfold: “Five hundred” in tens, twenties, fifties, and one hundreds.

Inexplicably, the fortuitous round figure giddied him, as did an additional three numbers—“O decimals bibliothecal, *je viens!*”—translated from the face of his Vacheron Constantin: 2:27.

The ride to the prison begun, satisfaction afresh seeped in. He had consummated his mission to Algiers and would soon be leaving, this contentment inducing him to slough over the unnecessary, yet obligatory, kindness that he was embarked upon.

He congratulated himself on being able to effect an auxiliary desideratum (for “at the core of my anima,” he accepted, “necessity has come to be associated with practicality”): Sleep.

7

—You spent less time than Satan on Old Lady Sin.

—Why not? There’s always time to start a hell. I was going to end one.

—And he knew Adam and Eve weren’t going anywhere. For all *you* knew, given that the nest’s air was as stifling as a tomb’s, the angels Munkar and Nakir might have beaten you in, and were already recording, “of the family, careless with Noura,” words for eternity.

—If this you are insinuating, I agree: I entered thinking that the sins of the son had been visited upon the father.

—Suddenly there was scarrow, for the widow Houria Daidje was not too mortified to light a candle stub on her nightstand crate. Blinded at first, you approached and, to jigger mythologies, exposed Charon’s *pourboire*. Her dim eyes making out the turquoise-blue fifty-dinar note, she jumped from the mat to grab it.

—I pointed at the white sheet while my lips fashioned some jabbering motions. “He’ll be truly angry. He hates you as bastards,” she hissed in Arabic,

—but began her brief transit to the white divider, you in tow, and during it did I catch the click of a button activating “HIV’s recorder”?

—“*Sayyid* Naaman, our residence is with guest,” she roused. Her right hand drew back the cloth barrier as her left snatched the money.

—You avoided gawking at him, I recall. Anything to do with your gasping?

—A counterpart to Foucin’s when he barked at me, “I must be off to inquisition your father before he loses his mind!”

—Not asleep, he had propped the functioning demesne of his anatomy against the metallic headboard. “How thin and insignificant he has become!” was your initial—a physical—assessment. A yellowed muslin sheet enveloped his worthless legs and hips, clashing at the waist with the sea green of his *burnoose*.

—At the right acromion, a crease stood out, plainly the result of the taut hand, marbled with distended perse veins, being maneuvered all day, every day, across the Qur’an which shielded the lap of y— (Am I or you supposed to be utilizing the second-person?)

—You are the first.

— . . . my father’s lap.

—“Let no man enter, Grimalkin!” he adjured, identifying you quite precisely. The fingers of his right had been upheaved and scratched at the air. You, M. Naaman the Younger, advancing to the foot of the bed, raised your voice to lie, “Sent by the French ambassador, I won’t abandon my commission unfulfilled!” Harkening to Sin’s retreat to her mat, he reverted to sliding his fingertips over the indecipherable black script of his Qur’an and you acquiesced to competing with God’s Word.

—I held off approximately three minutes—

—One for each decade since your betrayal!

—unable to suppress a broadening grin, afraid somehow he would descry it. “My visit’s official: To enounce that your son’s—”

—*Damn, Foucin!* Your thoughts stanching the flow of your sentence. *I won’t let him cow me into revealing to my own father his son’s own death.* As if he would credit such an

affidavit! Verifying flesh M. Le Grand would fondle!

—“. . . that your son sends the greetings of Ramadan and acquainted with your condition has petitioned our Excellency to appoint a representative of our embassy—Capt. Jacques de Larosière at your service—to bear a holiday gift to you: a Braille Qur’an.”

—On the lower part of the mattress, you flopped the circa two-kilo box.

—The right-to-left progress wasn’t discontinued. Nonetheless, I had his mark because his pale, drawn lips began to move, reciting the text he envisaged his fingers read.

—Edging your crook’d figure closer, you spoke—Oh my, how you as de Larosière did speak!—resolved to over-chant his rhapsody. How long? . . . Here you yourself flounder. Three minutes? Five minutes? Ten?

—Not during that interval, but back at the limousine, I peered at my, Jacques’s, watch.

—Then how long?

—

—Aha! You gawked at it, yet overlooked the time designed for your redemption. You who nodded at the arimasp, sunlight regained, and prepared yourself to espy Foucin perched on the hood of the limo.

—Even while descending the ladder, had not I expected to trample on his knuckles or alternately have my ankles clamped by him, ascending?

—Instead, you simpered at the two gendarmes, who, busily shooing away the crowd, mainly children, must have been coached in *immunité diplomatique* since both maintained a safe distance, neither having dared to approach “Chauffeur Devereux.”

—Nor had the office of Foucin been whirred since less than ten dreamtime minutes ago was he informed that a Frenchman had visited my parent. At that very moment, I calculate, he was receiving Mlle. Belmazoir’s vicarious appeal to hunt me out.

—Be that as it may, your paternal circumspection or lack of it intrigues. No praenomina falsified suggests the impromptu. All the same, some discretion’s evident in your never uttering Le Puy. Marie, your wedding, Françoise’s and Claudia’s births, their schooling, Snooks, the girls’ weddings, your granddaughters, Marie’s late-blooming regard: “About all this your son bade me proclaim,” you finessed. “I am his messenger.”

—I already had his voice, recorded “for eternity” on “HIV’s cassette.”

—Nevertheless, you coveted more. “And what will you say to your son?” A jaunty interrogative. “I wouldn’t keep you from your Holy Book.” Having sneaked down, your right hand grazed his paralyzed left leg.

—His fingertips balked. I fretted that he had heard my touch. But, no. His face upreared slowly. “There no man can hinder another,” he corrected in Arabic, and I rejoiced.

—And surpassingly exulted when in French he hailed the French messenger: “Monsieur, you bring what I cannot rip into pieces and toss to the wind. Without offending God, I cannot refuse His Gift to this ungrateful world. You will—please—leave. I have no son. Forward that impartment, humanely, to this illuded one who so calls himself.”

—“‘More than the more,’ and I would have the more,” my spirit screeched. His words, you must understand, were not “stone” and “serpent” to me. Don’t you comprehend how I must have known that which I didn’t know I knew? My father could never let a lie slip by unchallenged. I hadn’t purposed it, but it had to happen.

—You talk as if things could be foreordained, as if a mist of “*Inshallah!*” hung over the world even before the first dewdrop was sweated. If the dregs of the future settle on the bottom of the past, I ask you: “How did we get this far? Why can’t we get that far?” Are there only phantom understudies on the torturer’s altar? Is not Noura still tearing through that cornfield, dodging its blades till you rescue her? Can the forever-mourning veil be lifted from your mother’s face and the blind see the mute, pitch-humped letters? Can the living be resurrected, there being no death? Have you taken leave of your soulful senses and come to doubt that which everything, everyone, affirms, “Everything disconnects”?

—“Most irrefutably you do, a worthy son!” I punched the air, buffeting the heat.

—You’ve not heard a thing I said!

—Two paces transported me to the divider. “One final message: He exacted a bond from me, that I would pass on, ‘I love you, Father.’ May I step forth and present my hand in testimony that his singular term of endearment I have meticulously conveyed?”

—The banging fist against the Book triggered your whirling about, the velocity such that you feared you would gyre forever. Anteceding this counterclockwise rotation that delivered you, measure for measure, to the point you trusted “is the defining confrontation,” he’d joined his hands to demonstrate to you—who can see—how he labored to wriggle out of your mother’s, aspiring to shrink from her shadowing “Forgive! Forgive!” His bay resonated: “I have no son! Praise God! *Allahu Akbar! Allahu Ak-awgh!*” He had swung his torso over the side before you reached him and was coughing up blood and spittle.

—My thigh brushed against the loins from which I sprang as my right hand’s feelers—I shake them at you so you won’t fail to heed—clasped his forehead. With my left I gripped my father’s crown and massaged the right side of his neck, then the other, and penultimately the center. The tips of my pollex and annulary terminated with a clicking snap at the atlas vertebra of the cervix. As easily as angels access this world (no fiery friction), my hand wended. The dark-red blood, with unambiguity, was correlatively plunging.

—Into the hushed-black bucket. “Father, Father,” the “foster-child of silence” mimed, “what have I brought you to?” While your right hand cupped and its twin kneaded religiously, these watchwords, rehearsed so often, were mumbled not to be apprehended. But maybe he did hear, for his cervical plexus, grown less strained, abruptly stiffened, as if all his old-man’s blood lightning-struck the ganglion where your left caressed.

—His head jerked up. A speck of phthisic blood, flung loose from his lips, landed on the military cuff. His lids he’d kept drooped even when his fist thundered on the Book. Now, the ripples of his grizzled cheeks started to twitch. His eyes opened, unbinding the dammed stagnum of tears. With all of the fury of free will, he wrenched from my grasp.

—“No, no!” Your nerves betrayed you. “A surety, every father’s always adopted this procedure. Never has there been a son in bloodline’s archives—and never will be—fallen sick, *son cher père* hadn’t sought, won’t seek, through a squeeze at the crown, a massaging to the nape, and a flourishing, thumb-ring-finger crack, to exorcise the poison.”

—“Munkar! Nakir!” I conjured, “is that scrawled in your book, exclusively the family Naaman employs this ritual? *You* will know!” The answer emanated, though not from those angelic presences: My father’s upper body, paralyzed by thought, slumped forward, the collapse an attempt to conceal his visage from mine.

—And just as in you was ‘foisoned’ a hopeful tinge of doubt, you were positive a slow coming to belief seeded in him.

—“Go!” the voice, wintry, instructed me, his hands already in search of his Qur’an.

—“I’ll fetch a doctor,” a beggar in your puling. “The embassy will pay.”

—“No, . . . leave! . . . You go!” He inserted the redundant pronoun, having never lost his French. “Monsieur, I solicit merely for someone to be about to lessen your suffering, and if your son were here, I have faith he would so desire.”

—His fingertips commenced their *droit-à-gauche* quest across the verse lighted upon. It was toward, not to, that Qur’an he colloqued quietly, “I have no son.”

—I was at the white sheet again, divining nothing further, when from the bed the torrent issued: “So she’s a Jewess, the wife of my impostor-son! . . . Well, at least, she’s of the Book, its circumcised leaf, not an unclean pagan!”

—[“Ballard likewise was a Jew,” you interrupt your attic dream to mull and weigh, “and, more than just through the Ridgemont alias, an ‘impostor,’” to echo your father, the origin of your earlier limousine illation.

Had not Mohammed divulged in their ride to the Toumi, you query, how his American *sadeek* joked with him and complementarily how his goodbyes were gaily vented from the toilet, but “the rest” (the sexual interlude) was surly “silence”?

You ponder over why such a mood inversion had even been necessary in the flat, where, so to speak, Ballard became another person, an “impostor” (or alternately himself) in the “Jew-Screwed” interim between his coming and his going. Like (yet unlike) me!”

Your head shoots forward from its backseat perch, the “spang” startling Nemmiche. “A Jew. Houda must have been wrong, that mention of Ballard’s foreskin. . . . But was Mohammed also in error?” you puzzle.

“O limèd soul, that struggling to be free, / Art more engaged!” Heed the bard’s caution. Reject your consequent linkage: “How can that be? . . . Yet how adamant had Leila been that her husband was not a sexual impostor!” Return to your father, I beg, that bottom-nesting dreg of the past. He was why you looped back to Algiers, was he not?]

—“And no son or grandson. On that account he is blessed, yet he perseveres, you say, insisting that the real can rise out of th’artificial.” My father’s stay was protracted. “Monsieur . . . the Braille tongue: Do you think an old man can teach it to himself?” No fresh pause for me to tender an answer.

—“Advise the delusionist who brands himself my son, if you please, that had I one, this solely I’d enjoin him to undertake.” The *conclusio*, you were persuaded, would perforce be anticlimactic, for in the beginning—supposing Trimalchio’s can be so sacredly dubbed—that “call to action” had been the pristine harangue you scripted.

—Even there I fucked up. “The haj I never could.” I waited for the levying of the second, the third, the fourth *nathr* . . . But they were not yoked.

—Aha! I have you! Most Glorious-on-High! . . . So on that slighting patripassian heresy, do you now affirm what everything, everyone, doubts: “Everything disconnects”?

Notes and Commentary: Chapter 17: “Everything Disconnects”**April 20, 1989 (Thursday)**

p. 275: SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TITLE OF CHAPTER 17: This is the third of four chapter titles which links an indefinite pronoun with a variant of “connect” (chaps. 1, 9, 17, and 21).

See the 1.1 note on the title of chap. 1, N1:1-2, and the 9.135 note on the title of chap. 9, N9:1. Also see the essay on “Philosophy, Religion, and the Murder Mystery Genre” at the end of the notes on chap. 3, N3:41-44, which provides an analysis of the relationship among the titles of the four chapters.

The title of chap. 17, “Everything Disconnects,” is seemingly ironic since it is here that Remy finally does “connect” with his father. Additionally each is aware of, but will not openly acknowledge, the connection: “And just as in you [Remy] was ‘foistened’ a hopeful tinge of doubt, you were positive a slow coming to belief seeded in him [his father]” (291).

Similarly it is through the conversation with his father that Remy comes upon two clues which will help him identify the murderer (292), although his superego or anti-self chides Remy with seizing on these discoveries at the expense of his connection with his father: “Reject your consequent linkage: . . . Return to your father” since “he was why you looped back to Algiers” (292).

Remy’s last statement about his meeting with his father also stresses the negative, that “they were not yoked” (292).

Augmenting the irony is that Remy’s anti-self twice uses the clause “everything disconnects” to justify opposing conclusions: On p. 291, he says “everything, everyone affirms” that “everything disconnects,” while on p. 292, he affirms that “everything, everyone doubts” whether “everything disconnects.” The other uses of variants of “connect” attest to the ambiguity with which the term is treated. His French Embassy liaison argues that in seeking to protect Remy, DGSE “disconnected everything” binding him to his Algerian identity Omar. Similar it masks as many ties as possible linking him to his new identity Lazar (277).

When this embassy contact says that by taking the 5:42 Air Italia flight, he will make “an almost immediate connection to Brussels,” Remy scoffs that “you were [just] implying nothing connects” (277), a reference to the “disconnected everything” of six paragraphs above.

A similar jeering tone is used by his liaison when he tells Remy that after all his efforts, once he is in his father’s room, he may confront “the dot [his father] not aspiring to reconnect” with him, a possibility that Remy himself must accept (279).

The “reconnect” variant is also employed in describing the boy tending the shop above which Remy’s father lives. Having been tossed a five-dinar note by Remy, his countenance indicates that he desires to “reconnect with cash,” that is, that Remy will pay him a second bill when he descends the ladder after his meeting with his father (281).

His French liaison also speaks of how he and DGSE had striven to allow Remy to make his “private connection” with his father, so now he must help them in establishing the public show which France needed. For that reason, he must not bolt out of Algiers, but make a civil exit, principally by exhibiting to Foucin his reason for having to leave (282).

Foucin will use the variant of the term which stands out most vividly. He declares that the Islamic perspective does not entertain the idea that “Death disconnects” (284).

pp. 275 – 92: CHRONOLOGY OF CHAPTER 17: Chapter 17 is the climax of the novel since Remy meets with his father. The chapter consequently has three sections: The events leading up to the meeting, the encounter itself, and its aftermath.

The first is dominated by Remy’s three morning encounters with his French Embassy liaison from 2:50 – 3:13; 9 – 10:01; and (after Remy’s meeting with his father) 10:38 – 11:30 (sections 1 – 4).

His father commands the second (10:10 – 10:31 a.m.), and it is some unrelated words of his that later will lead Remy to believe he knows the murderer of Ballard (section 4 and 7).

In the afternoon aftermath of the meeting, Foucin is central because he confronts Remy with news about the Belmazoires and Leila (1:31 – 2:25). The chapter ends with Remy embarking on yet another trip to the prison (2:27 – 3:40), during which in a sleep or half-sleep he makes his discovery about the murderer (2:28 – 2:38).

However, as 19:317-18 will reveal, he will not realize this discernment until he thinks about this dream during his trip back from the prison (6:20 – 7:45).

pp. 275-77: SECTION 1

p. 275: “You leave Algiers today”: Remy lets his French Embassy liaison in at 2:50 a.m.

This first speech about Remy leaving Algiers will be repeated three times, each one more insistent.

Remy is resistant because he has not yet completed his own mission of meeting with his father.

p. 275: *burnoose*: A hooded cloak worn by men. It is defined in the text on 7.104 and in its note.

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- p. 275: “my cross-wiry liaison”: A neologism formed by blending “wiry” (“sinewy and lean” in describing a person or an animal), the idiom “get/have wires crossed” (“be confused or mixed up or mistaken about something”), and the expression “cross wire” (“one of the cross lines mounted in the optical system of a telescopic gun sight to assist in precise aiming or centering”), usually termed a cross hair.
- p. 275: bergère: An upholstered armchair.
See 7.106 and its note.
- p. 275: Monitor: A duty name which Remy uses for his French Embassy liaison.
- p. 275: “four-word mandate”: “You leave Algiers today.”
In French, “*Vous quittez Alger aujourd’hui*,” though the five-word expression may also be used, “*Vous laissez à Alger aujourd’hui*.”
- p. 275: “had you rung earlier, as you were supposed to”: His liaison’s tone, servile during their Monday, Apr. 17, conversation, has changed because Paris is withdrawing Remy from Algiers, a goal the liaison had openly stated that he desired in their conversations on Apr. 11 and 13.
While he had not protested during their Apr. 17 meeting that Remy was one day late in calling him, he brings it up now that Remy was supposed to call him earlier that evening, Apr. 19.
It is now 2:54 a.m. Apr. 20. Since he has an important message from DGSE, he has had to sneak into the Al-Nigma to deliver it firsthand to Remy.
- p. 275: Room Service tray: See “comestibles had to be summoned and eaten” (16:273).
Remy ate the meal brought to his room from 12:45 – 1:15 a.m.
- p. 275: “At the end of our Monday chat”: Remy reminds his liaison that on Apr. 17 he had told him to make the call on Wednesday “if convenient” (13.215).
Remy feels no need to offer the explanation that he had been kidnapped during the time he was supposed to make the call.
His evening, he had speculated just before his abduction, would be “infringed upon only by a call to “M. Champagne,” which I might pass on” (15.255).
- p. 275: “M. Champagne”: His liaison’s code name.
See the 5.76 note, N5:23, for the significance of this and other alcohol-related codenames.
- p. 275: “mother hen”: This fowl metaphor will be extended by both the liaison and Remy: On p. 275: “ruffled [his feathers]” and on p. 276: “hen scratched up”; “fluttered home”; “Hen will be tailing”; “swift reneesting”; “nettled Pertelote”; “wagging a beak”; “ruff huffed”; and “clucking.”
- p. 275: *intermédiaire*: In French, “intermediary” or “go-between.”

- p. 275: “M. Le Contact D’Al-gér-ie Fran-çaise”: Mr. French Algerian Contact.
“*Al-gér-ie Fran-çaise*” (“Algeria [Forever] French”) was a chant used by the *pieds-noirs* from 1958 until the 1962 end of the war.
See the 5.79 note, N5:34.
- p. 275: Roger Channel: The State Department’s “telegraphic communications channel used for intelligence matters,” according to the pamphlet “U. S. Department of State Foreign Affairs Manual Vol. I—Organization and Function” (p. 10, online version).
It was and still is the joint responsibility of the INR (Bureau of Intelligence and Research) Watch and the Office of Intelligence Operations (INR/IPC/I).
- p. 275: “snaps . . . crackles and pops”: A play upon the catchphrase of the cereal Rice Krispies: “Snap, crackle, and pop.”
- p. 275: Leroy: See 13.218, where Leroy says that “a fax of your Staatsveiligheid dossier arrived this morning [Monday, Apr. 17],” obtained not through Belgium intelligence but the French DGSE.
- p. 275: Givenchy: Givenchy, the French high fashion house founded by designer Hubert de Givenchy in 1952, began to offer a menswear line “Gentleman Givenchy” in 1973.

- p. 276: “despite Vellacott’s investigation”: According to my chronology, Vellacott and his legal team were in Algiers, off and on, from Mar. 8 to Apr. 2, 1989, arriving nine days after the murder of Ballard.
- p. 276: “they’re aware he sometimes fronts for us”: See 2.30 where HIV says that “few are privy to [DGSE’s] tie-in with [*Solliciteurs* and hence Vellacott], probably only the Americans.”
- p. 276: “‘you’ll leave today’”: The second time he has so insisted.
- p. 276: *robe de chambre*: French for “dressing gown.”
- p. 276: titivate: spruce up or smarten up.
That is, Remy adjusted and straightened the bow of his dressing gown.
- p. 276: “‘you will leave today’”: The third time this order is given to Remy.
- p. 276: “Since last Friday . . . some four hours ago”: On 16.270, Foucin told Remy that he was aware he was a DGSE agent, not an employee of M. Vellacott, saying that he had learned this secret five days ago, Apr. 14.
The time of that revelation was 11:15 p.m., Wednesday, Apr. 19.
Since Remy is speaking to his liaison is 2.54 a.m., Thursday, Remy’s “some four hours ago” is actually three hours and thirty-nine minutes ago.
- p. 276: “So the French . . . long proboscises”: Remy’s quotation is not “exact” since, to irritate his French visitor, he substitutes the jocular usage to describe a large nose. Foucin had used “noses” on 16.270 and “long Gallic noses” on 4.58.
- p. 276: illation: conclusion or inference drawn.
- p. 276: “And what has H—”: So accustomed to thinking of him as HIV, Remy almost speaks this sobriquet.
- p. 276: “ferrying a towheaded chap (or towing a fair(y)-haired one)”: A reference to the blond Trimalchio waiter Saul.
The puns, I find, quite sophisticated and give a new insight into “M. Champagne’s” intellect.
This is the first indication that Saul had accompanied HIV to Paris. On 2.33, after Saul had said to Remy, “I’d like to suppose we’ll cross paths again,” HIV had offered himself as a replacement: “I am here.”
To this Saul had responded, “Perhaps you’ll prepare a way to another,” presumably meaning Remy.
- p. 276: Montmartre: A district in the northern part of Paris on the Right Bank. A writers’ and artists’ hub for much of the twentieth century, it has more recently become a nightclub and rock music center.

- p. 276: “irritated Internal”: Internal Affairs is a special section of an agency or a company which is empowered to conduct investigations into misconduct by a section or an employee.
- p. 276: “from Brussels Airport to Antwerp”: Remy as Lazar will fly into Brussels and then take a DGSE-prearranged taxi to Antwerp where the “real” Lazar lives. At some point along the way, Remy will transfer to HIV’s car or he to Remy’s taxi. (None of this skullduggery plays out.)
- p. 276: Pertelote: A character in Chaucer’s “The Nun’s Priest’s Tale,” she is the favorite of the proud rooster Chanticleer’s seven wives. She advises Chanticleer not to heed his dream that he will be killed by a fox. In my novel, HIV is more like Chanticleer since he has the premonition that something evil will happen to Remy, not Pertelote. She gives Chanticleer disastrous advice by chiding his foreboding, but HIV’s counsel that Remy should be recalled immediately since the American CIA has incriminating files on him, is sound.
- p. 276: Directeur: Director of DGSE.
- p. 276: “with ruff huffed”: “ruff” refers to the feathers around the neck of a bird; “huff” means “to puff out from anger, annoyance, or threatening mood.”
- p. 276: “The *General*”: On 2.18, in Remy’s imagination De Gaulle had implied that the seven great “traitors,” a term he disdained, should receive not only a kingly ransom for their service to France but also protection from possible Algerian retaliation.
- p. 276: “And I will learn what tonight”: For the third time Remy asks this question.
- p. 276: “As clamorous as H”: His embassy liaison deliberately drops the “H” to signal to Remy that he knows of HIV’s appellation.
- p. 276: “between Good Friday and Easter Sunday ’87”: Between the Christian holy days commemorating the crucifixion and the resurrection of Christ in 1987.
- p. 276: Comtean positivism: Auguste Comte, a 19th-century French philosopher and founder of positivism, a system of philosophy which is based solely on observable, scientific facts and their relations to each other.
- p. 276: scission: “the state of being cut, divided, or split” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 276: “‘*Ouïe!* . . . ‘*Zut!* . . . ‘*Mon Dieu!* . . . ‘*Putain!* . . . ‘*Ça suffit!* . . . ‘*Oh là là!* . . . ‘*Quel dommage!* . . . ‘*Merde, Mère! Mère, Merde!*’”: Monitor interrupts his narrative with the protesting exclamations—all rather mild malisons, thus rendering the torturing scene comical—which the encoder supposedly howled.

The French may be translated as follows: “Ouch! . . . Damn! . . . My God! . . . Bigger! . . . That’s enough! . . . Dear oh dear! . . . What a shame! . . . Shit, Mother! . . . Mother, shit!”

- p. 276: restow: “to stow again or anew” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 276: “door revolver”: The phrase refers to the encoder. It plays on “revolving door” since the encoder slipped documents first out then back in, after having photocopied them.
- p. 276: “unhinged”: This verb extends the pun started with “disjointed” in the previous paragraph. Both words carry psychological meanings:
“disjointed”: incoherent
“unhinged”: confused; unbalanced.
- p. 276: “my Arabic cognomen”: Naaman.
- p. 276: “with that prescience”: Never having placed much faith in the French, Remy realizes how justified was his conclusion. DGSE had sent him back to Algeria with the full knowledge that the Americans had the documents to uncover who Omar Naaman had become, Remy Montpellier, and thus could connect him with Christian Lazar.
- p. 276: flit: A slang term referring to a male homosexual. Here, the waiter Saul.
- p. 276: “stumble on this leak”: This sentence establishes that when HIV convinced Remy to return to Algiers, he did not know of the 1987 leak (the encoder’s selling of DGSE documents about its agents).
- p. 276: ““Treason, treason!””: This outcry by HIV will be balanced by “Champagne’s” mocking ““Traitor, traitor!”” on p. 279
- p. 276: “ghostly”: In the vaporous steam room the speaker would be so hidden that it would appear that the words were spoken by a voice without a body, hence a ghost.
- p. 276: philippic: A bitter verbal attack.
- p. 276: ““poof” on the trestle” of the steam room: The wording recalls that used by HIV himself in the Amsterdam bathhouse: “If in this steam we ‘poof” (2.16).

- p. 277: daedalic: mazelike; “ingenuously formed”; “intricate” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 277: “gather dust—‘wasted cocaine’—for almost two years”: DGSE investigation has revealed that since 1987 the CIA decoders had done little work on the 6,000 files. Thus their “cocaine” payment to the encoder had not yet shown a profit.
- p. 277: singsong: A transitive verb, whose past is “singsonged,” meaning “to speak, chant, or declaim in singsong” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 277: “thirty years”: From Dec. 8, 1958, when Omar became an agent for the French, to the present, Apr. 20, 1989.
- p. 277: “we’ve disconnected everything as best we could”: Another use of one of the key words of the title of this chapter.
- p. 277: “A piece of hay in a stack of needles”: This mirrors the phrase used by Remy on 8.127: “a piece of hay in a rick of needles.”
Although not specified, during their phone call on Thursday night, April 13, his liaison could have picked up the phrase from Remy’s summation of his conversation with Leroy: “An abstract of the session with [the Ambassador] ensued” (9.147).
- p. 277: Sahel Hills: The Casbah and other highland districts of Algiers are located on the slopes of these hills.
See the 4.52 note.
- p. 277: “a ‘not yet’”: The phrase was used by “Champagne” and repeated by Remy on p. 275.
The time is 2:57 a.m.
- pp. 277-79: SECTION 2
- p. 277: “‘The fax from M. Vellacott’”: This section continues from the last: 2:57.
- p. 277: Sabena: The national airlines of Belgium at the time of this novel.
- p. 277: “And here you were implying nothing connects”: Toward the end of section 1, Liaison had spoken of the “thirty years in which we’ve disconnected everything” (277).
- p. 277: Châteauroux: The city in the center of France where Marie had gone to visit her sister while Remy was abroad.
It is c. 170 miles northeast of Le Puy.
See the 2.16 note.

- p. 277: *changement de programme*: In French “change of plan.”
- p. 277: *quid pro quo*: one thing substituted for another.
- p. 277: *desideration*: “something desired as essential or needed; something that is sought for or aimed at” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 277: “In either situation, I use her”: In his original plan (the “quo”), he was going to use Leila as a decoy who would allow him to sneak off to visit his father (15.246 and 16.273).
In his new plan (the “quid”), he will use the threat of disclosing his liaison’s relationship with Leila to coerce him into agreeing to his new design of how he would visit his father.
- p. 277: *charted*: plotted on a map.
That is, Remy had planned how many steps he would allow “Champagne” to approach before stopping him with his announcement.
- p. 277: “must . . . ‘abandon Algiers’”: The pause indicated by ellipsis marks and the single quotes signify that Remy is evoking France’s abandonment of French Algeria in 1962—termed by many Frenchmen as “*brader*” (“sell-out”).
See the two notes on 2.16, N2:6, and the one note on 3.41, N3:18, for this specific historical use of “abandon” and the theme of abandonment in the novel.
- p. 277: *Thierry Devereaux*: The chief of security at the French embassy.
He was previously mentioned by Ballard on 1.4 and in its note, N1:13, and to Remy by Leila on the two notes on 9.143-44, N9:23-24.
The sound of his names, not their etymology, was considered in selecting them.
As for the latter: *Thierry* comes from a word meaning “power of the tribe” or “ruler of the people,” ultimately from Theodoric, the king of the Ostrogoths in the sixth century CE.
The derivation of *Devereaux* is “river bank, which is the place name *Evreux* in Normandy or the river name *Ebura* (now the *Eure*) in northern France, a tributary of the *Seine*.”
- p. 277: *obtest*: beseech.
- p. 277: *tutoyer*: speak to someone familiarly.
On 5.77, his liaison (*Devereaux*) had mentioned Leila by her first name and called her “beautiful.”
On 9.147-48, he again referred to her by her praenomen, which Remy had corrected to “Mme. Ballard,” afterward noting to himself that this was “the second time” his intermediary had done so.
On 9.143-44, Leila spoke of *Devereaux* as “a friend predating Paul, who has cordially offered his help” since Ballard’s death. She also referred to him as an important official at the French embassy.

- p. 277: fodder: As a transitive verb, “to feed with or as if with fodder” (*Webster’s Third*).
Remy is surmising here. On 9.144, Leila did not suggest that Devereaux “kept her foddered about [the Ballard] investigation,” stating only that he “offered her help with my petition.”
- p. 277: “‘we’re not interested’”: Stated by Devereaux on p. 276.
- p. 277: “‘traffic’ . . . ‘probe’ . . . commerce”: The first two terms here and the third used two paragraphs down all carry slangy sexual connotations.
- p. 277: “‘queer’ American . . . outraged at her selection”: On 5.77, Devereaux used the vulgarity to refer to Ballard in venting his displeasure: “What did she see in that queer? That’s the real mystery.”
- p. 277: “‘woo some clue’ . . . ‘probe’”: Single quotes are used to indicate that Remy modified his tone of voice to indicate how suspiciously DGSE could interpret Devereaux’s relationship with Leila.
The rhyme and the *p* alliteration reinforce how jovially he is presenting his accusation.
- p. 277: “an escort of hers”: Again Remy is speculating here since Leila never referred to having a date with Devereaux (9.144).
From 1.4, however, we know that she had because she told Ballard that “I accompany him to improve my French.”
- p. 277: “Preposterous”: This word comes from Latin where it means “getting things back to front.” Its use here reinforces the theme of the past’s influence on a present situation.
See also its latter occurrence on 18.300, in which the sentence opens with “preposterous” and closes with the contrastive temporal word “foregone.”
Devereaux’s reaction here mirrors the comment which Remy made when HIV suggested that he return to Algeria (2.30 and its note, N2:54-55).
- p. 277: subsequent to: after; following.
- p. 277: backhanded: The weakest shot in tennis for most amateur players is the backhand.
Remy’s use of it in describing Devereaux’s answer indicates how feeble he regards it.

- p. 278: ensconce: to place or settle oneself comfortably or snugly.
- p. 278: “‘rhetorical’”: A rhetorical question: a question asked only for effect.
- p. 278: plump: to make full; distend.
- p. 278: “polemical flourish”: The smile both asserts that Remy is celebrating his victory (“flourish”) in the disputation (“polemical”) and minimizes this triumph through his friendly and cooperative tone.
- p. 278: “*Mon Dieu!*”: The French interjection, “My God!”
- p. 278: “Why should the private hamstring the public”: Five paragraphs down, Devereaux will reveal the probable source of Remy’s idea.
- p. 278: outbreeding: “the breeding of stocks or individuals that are not closely related.”
The metaphor continues with “birth” and “paternity.”
- p. 278: “a servant’s civil loyalty”: A trifling inversion of “civil servant.”
- p. 278: “cashiered to France”: Remy remembers and cites the words which the French lieutenant had used over thirty years ago at the end of the torturing of “Noura”: “I’ll be cashiered to France, to swivel in a desk chair and linger over a file cabinet” (3.49).
- p. 278: “fairity”: As the 12.198 note indicates, the word “fairity” (I assume) was coined by Shaw.
In act 2 of *Pygmalion*, Doolittle asks, “Is it fairness to take advantage of a man like this?”
- p. 278: “high ‘frantic indignation’”: From Dryden’s poem “A Song for St. Cecilia’s Day, 1687”: Violins exclaim their “frantic indignation” (39).
- p. 278: misfeasance: Such punishment of Devereaux, Remy maintains, would mean that France, not Devereaux, is guilty of “committing a lawful act in an unlawful or improper manner.”
That is, it would be lawful for DGSE to punish Devereaux for withholding information about his relationship with Leila, but the agency would never admit that this wrongdoing had been committed.
Instead it would unlawfully sentence him by silently closing any avenue for his promotion in the agency.
- p. 278: persiflage: light, flippant style of speaking.
- p. 278: asudden: suddenly (*Webster’s Third*).

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- p. 278: plodge: “to walk heavily.”
It is probably a “blend of *plod* and *trudge*,” according to *Webster’s Third*, which lists it as dialectal.
- p. 278: “I won’t leave Algiers without seeing my father”: Remy reveals to Devereaux, DGSE’s representative, his real reason for coming to Algiers.
- p. 278: lap dissolve: A cinematic term meaning “a dissolving view in which a new scene is blended in with a scene being faded out, as by lapping two exposures on one film or two images on a TV screen.”
Devereaux’s shocked expression “dissolves” into a visage of enlightenment.
- p. 278: “winged acquiescence”: In Trimalchio’s, Remy’s initial reaction to the revelation that he must return to Algiers was an adamant no.
However, as soon as HIV pronounced Belmazoir’s name (an interval of under a minute), Remy’s actions indicate that “with cursèd spite” he will accept this mission (2.30-31).
However, earlier in the evening, his thoughts reveal that he had mulled over a return, if only conditionally, “If I made that trip [to Algiers]” (2.20).
- p. 278: “annuity, finally at its zenith”: With the death of the sixth great traitor, Remy would receive all of the annuity which France allocated for the heptad (2.29).
- p. 278: “betraying your family . . . anew”: Devereaux says that DGSE was prepared to remove Remy’s “protection,” thereby exposing his French family to danger or, in essence, betraying them.
He then taunts Remy with having betrayed his Algerian family.
- p. 278: “an older bond, predating that of the Seven”: When Remy reveals that it was his father’s physical condition which had brought him back to Algiers, Devereaux speaks of this familial allegiance as “older” than that bond he had made with the seven traitors in 1961, described on 2.32-33.
- p. 278: “The private face . . . the private mask”: Devereaux’s quote is based on the epitaph to Auden’s *The Orators*, a dedication to a friend and fellow poet Stephen Spender: “Private faces in public places / Are wiser and nicer / Than public faces in private places.”
My addition of “mask” was influenced by Yeats’s contrast between the public self (the anti-self mask) and the private sel. See his *A Vision* for this contrast or his short poem “The Mask.”
See also the paragraph from section 4 of Chekhov’s “The Lady with the Dog,” in which Gurov speaks of the “double life” a person leads—“one in public . . . and another which flowed in secret.”
My novel portrays Remy as leading such a double life: His public mask (the life which the French gave him and the perceptive Saul, Leila, and Houda term as “artificial”) concealed his true self (the life which connects his Algerian past with

the past which the French had forced on him).

Many characters in the novel wear masks, thus making themselves impostors. Hence, the title of chap. 5, "A Mask of Every Mirror," indicates that when a person looks in a mirror the person sees only the mask of himself/herself.

p. 278: "the inditement": A pun on "indictment," "inditement" means a "composition," such as "a poem or story" (*Webster's Third*).

p. 278: *Le Figaro*: The oldest and second-largest French newspaper.

p. 278: "this is the 'all' we'll 'give and hazard'": From *Merchant of Venice* 2.7.15-16: "What says this leaden casket? / 'Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.'"

p. 278: "fax until 12:30 . . . 8:12 . . . airbus . . . bid her adieu": Remy is supposed to give Leila a telephone call at 1:30 (16.273). He plans to tell her that the fax has just arrived, his imminent departure perhaps inducing her to meet with him. This decision to spend some time with her dictates that he not take the 5:42 p.m., mentioned on p. 277, but the later 8:12 p.m. Remy is so confident that his visit to his father will be successful he plots beyond it, to a matter which has also become important to him, his courteous farewell to Leila.

p. 278: "Everyone's persuaded he knows who I really am." See the 2.28 note, N2:45-46, for a discussion of the identity theme and its relationship to the reality/artificiality theme.

p. 278: serviette: table napkin (British).

p. 278: salver: tray.

p. 278: thenar: palm of hand.

p. 278: "three fingers to his mouth to cue 'silence,' but only his index and annular kissed his pooched-out lips": Remy makes an obscene gesture to Devereaux—which in its slang form means "give someone the bird" and thus incidentally continues the fowl metaphor—although his victim does not seem to recognize this insult.

p. 278: annular: "the ring finger" (*Webster's Third*).

p. 278: "increep": "creep in" (*Webster's Third*).

p. 278: Le Parc Peltzer: The name of the French Embassy in Algiers.

Located on the heights of Hydra, a wealthy suburb west of downtown Algiers, it covers a wooded estate of fifteen acres.

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It received its name from Serge Peltzer, a Russian-Dutch entrepreneur, who in 1902 purchased the 18th-century Moorish villa at the center of the park. The Peltzer family, which later returned to Russia, was swept away by its revolution in 1917.

The city of Algiers bought Peltzer Park from its descendants in 1942. The villa served principally as a military headquarters during World War II and the Algerian revolution.

On independence, Algeria leased it to France as the site of its embassy.

p. 278: “at 6:30 [a.m.], as is your custom”: The text never reveals how Remy knew the time Devereaux reported to work.

In my notes, I had it as being inferred from a time span during the day in which if an emergency arose Remy could dial “M. Champagne” at the French embassy.

p. 278: accoutrements: personal outfit; clothes; apparel.

In the following descriptions and puns, Remy shows his contempt for French culture.

p. 278: gimcrack: showy but cheap and useless.

p. 278: cloak-and-dagger: Characteristic of the activities of spies and undercover agents.

p. 278: “rack-stretched”: Pun on stretch limo, as if his “carriage” has been stretched on a rack.

p. 278: “ribbon-strewn”: Military ribbons pinned to the coat of the uniform.

p. 278: au courant: up-to-date.

p. 278: “*haute culture*”: “high culture,” a pun on “haute couture” (high fashion; in French, literally “high sewing”).

p. 278: Braille Qur’an: The Braille system was probably brought to Egypt in the 1870s. Some sections of the Qur’an were transcribed in Braille over the next eighty years, but it was not until a 1951 conference in Beirut that significant progress was made toward achieving this goal of a complete Qur’an in Braille.

The participants of this conference, who were representatives of the major Middle East associations concerned with the education of the blind, approved a uniform Braille system for Arabic.

The standard translation would not appear until 1985 –1986 when the Saudi Arabian publishing company, the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques’ Braille Press, produced a complete Qur’an in Braille.

It consists of six hefty volumes and has a total weight of ten kilograms (just over 22 pounds).

Remy plans to deliver only the first volume today.

- p. 278: Organization of Blind Algerians: In full and officially, Organisation Nationale des Aveugles Algeriens (ONAA).
It is located at 4, Boulevard Mohammed Khemisti, a street previously mentioned on 7.104 as one of the first exclusive streets encountered in moving from the Casbah (old Algiers) to the modern section of the capital, Alger-Centre.
This international call from his Brussels' hotel indicates that Remy planned the gift of the Braille Qur'an before he left for Algiers.
- p. 278: Hotel Argus: The hotel in Brussels where Remy stayed on Sat., Apr. 8, the day before he flies to Algiers.
See 4.54, which, however, does not mention this phone call.
That "eyes" (and hence his father's blindness) were on Remy's mind is suggested by the name: In Greek mythology, Argus is a giant with a hundred eyes. On Zeus's order after putting all his eyes to sleep with spoken charms, Hermes killed him with a stone.
- p. 278: "at its 'great price'": From Matt. 13:45-46: "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: / Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it."
Since the Braille Qur'an is a gift to his father, Remy wishes to bear its cost, so he specifically indicates that the French are to be reimbursed from his *pourboire*.
The set of the Custodian's Braille Quran costs around \$600, although charitable organizations, not the blind person, typically bear the cost, which, I must add, is still only a fraction of the production expenses borne by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
- pp. 278-79: "The first I'll deliver today . . . when you've faithfully conveyed the other five": Given the bulk of the six volumes, Remy cannot bring the entire set.
Again, he has prepped this situation: Devereaux will see that the other five volumes are delivered, or Remy will inform HIV ("hen") of his liaison's communications with Leila.
These must have been more frequent than Remy suspected or Leila revealed since Devereaux gave in to Remy's demands so quickly.

p. 279: “buzz”: Informal for “a telephone call.”

p. 279: Jean Audibert: Jean Audibert served as the French Ambassador to Algiers from 1988 to 1992.

The actions of the fictional character I created bearing his name in no way are based on those of the real Audibert.

Foucine is to be diverted through an arranged 10 – 11 a.m. conference with the French ambassador.

p. 279: forensic: “an argumentative exercise in the form of a speech” (*Webster’s Third*).

p. 279: “doyen of ‘spysdom’”: “Doyen,” an authority because of superior knowledge and long experience, is used sarcastically by Devereaux.

p. 279: “spysdom”: “the world of spies and espionage” (*Wiktionary*).

p. 279: “past eleven days”: From Remy’s arrival in Algiers on the afternoon of Apr. 9 to the date of this chapter, the early morning of Apr. 20.

p. 279: “blood spewed from his lungs”: Old Naaman has TB (10.155).

p. 279: “the dot not aspiring to reconnect”: The chapter closes with a reference to a variant of the “disconnect” of its title.

See the note above on the title of this chapter, N17:1-2.

p. 279: “And to himself Remy had to concede”: After Devereaux leaves at 3:13 a.m., Remy admits that he had not considered what he will do when confronted by such a greeting from his father.

pp. 279-81: SECTION 3

p. 279: “The higher the limousine”: This section begins at 9:55 a.m. with Remy and Devereaux driving up a narrow street in the Casbah bound for the attic of Remy’s father.

p. 279: “Boulevard de la Victoire . . . ‘Rue de Thèbes’”: These two roadways are mentioned twice in chap. 3: On 3.38, “two trucks from the . . . Boulevard de la Victoire convoy [turned] onto Rue de Thèbes and, the drivers having shifted downward, commenced the rumbling descent.”

In these are the paras who will kidnap Noura. The convoy is described as descending, having turned south at the intersection of the higher Avenue Mal de Bourmont and Boulevard de Verdun.

Contrarily, Devereaux and Remy approach Boulevard de la Victoire from the

southwestern Boulevard Ourida Meddad.

The symbolic descent/ascent contrast stresses that the fall of the family which began with the kidnapping of Noura is balanced by the possible resurrection or rise of the family through Remy's ascending visit to his father that day.

On 3:50-51, the aspect of Remy's mind speaking to Remy as Omar says that "you turned from Boulevard de la Victoire onto Rue de Thèbes, ushering you into the Casbah and within five alleyways of your neighborhood."

To echo this passage, the limousine driven by Devereaux is described here as traveling "five alleyways down 'Rue de Thèbes'" before it stops.

On 10.154, Remy enters his neighborhood on foot from the east, bound for Ruelle Bensdid, on which is located both his father's shop and the shop above which his father lives in the attic (2.27 and 15.246).

"Rue de Thèbes" is placed in quotes because as Devereaux and Remy drive the route the latter is thinking of the colonial names of the streets leading to his neighborhood. After independence Rue de Thèbes was renamed Rue Boudries Père et Fils.

However, Boulevard de la Victoire is not put in quotes because it was one of the few streets of Algiers which retained its colonial name.

Finally Rue de Thèbes is important in the Algerian Revolution. On Aug. 10, 1956, late at night, a powerful bomb was placed by French agents in front of No. 9 Rue de Thèbes, reputedly housing FLN terrorists responsible for the June 1956 random shooting of *pied noir* civilians.

The explosion destroyed three other houses and killed seventy, including women and children. It would be a catalyst for the 1957 Battle of Algiers, which was described on 6.88-90.

p. 279: haul up: to stop.

p. 279: "Devereaux, also in pomp-and-circumstance disguise": The chief of French embassy security, likewise disguised, is driving so that he will be present if any problem arises.

p. 279: "In the embassy's subterranean parking lot": The action flashes back to 9:00 a.m. in the basement of the French embassy.

p. 279: "my 'approximate'": In single quotes to indicate the adjective form is used as a noun.

p. 279: "in 'shape and size and substance'": See 3:50: "whose sundry colors blur and blend and bruise . . . shape and size and substance."

With these thoughts Omar accepts that he has become a French agent and hence a traitor to Algeria.

In this trip to visit his father, it is natural that he would recall this moment of his acceptance of his treason.

Remy will use the "shape, size, substance" polysyndetic wording (repetition of *ands*) again on 21.354, where he improvises a ploy against an agent of the

French.

On 15.253, Houda uses a similar expression: “size and shape and substance,” which will be repeated on 19.317.

- p. 279: “Jacques”: Only the first name of Remy’s double is given here. His full name will occur on pp. 289-90: Jacques de Larosière.
- p. 279: “red waist sash . . . gold braids”: The modern full dress of a French marine (*troupes de marine*) officer.
It is used to indicate the unit of the French army to which Devereaux’s aide Jacques de Larosière belonged.
- p. 279: “his Boss Aviators for Remy’s Vuarnet nylon wraparounds”: Two stylish men’s sunglasses.
Vuarnet wraparounds are produced by the French company Sporoptic Pouilloux and Boss Aviators by the German high-end fashion company Hugo Boss.
- p. 279: “we’ve confirmed, there’ll be a lad”: Earlier that morning Devereaux had the shop scouted since a different plan would have had to be used if an adult was managing the store.
- p. 279: “vampire”: “a stage trapdoor” (*Webster’s Third*).
Devereaux uses it metaphorically and theatrically here to indicate the ceiling door to the attic.
- p. 279: “fabricated in Le Puy”: In 1986, when Remy was informed by HIV of his father’s illnesses and his having been relocated to the attic of a shop, he had pressed HIV to find out certain details not mentioned (10.155-56).
- p. 279: “the ‘de rigueur’ is all”: Devereaux states that “proper form,” the essence of the diplomatic service, requires him to brief Remy on what he is likely to encounter in the attic.
However, he recognizes that Remy had mapped out the details before he came to Algiers.
His wording plays upon Hamlet’s “The readiness is all” (5.2.220) and Edgar’s “Ripeness is all” (*Lear* 5.2.11)
- p. 279: Widow Daidje: The widow Houari Daidje was his father’s caretaker and lived in a part of the attic divided by blankets from his area (10.156).

- p. 280: “humped over, though not ‘over the hump’”: The informal cliché “over the hump,” meaning “over the worst part of something,” is invigorated (at least in Devereaux’s mind) by pairing it with the “dowager’s (or widow’s) “hump,” an abnormal curvature of the spine, typically occurring in older women. It manifests itself as a rounded hump in the upper back.
- p. 280: “as hideous as Milton’s Old Lady Sin”: Devereaux associates Daidje with the character Sin in Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, 2.748-814: Sin along with her malformed son is the gatekeeper of Hell, preventing anyone from escaping. Consequently she (more specifically her son Death) stops Satan, who must pass through the gates of Hell to reach Eden. Sin tells Satan, who does not recognize her, that during the conspiracy in Heaven she sprang from Satan’s head and was so beautiful that she enamored the previous Lucifer and was impregnated by him. At the defeat of the rebellious angels in the battle, she too was cast from Heaven, but her fall was stopped at the new gates of Hell since God had designed her duty to be its keeper. She gave birth to Death, Satan’s child. Death in turn raped his mother who littered the pack of dogs that kennel in her sides and gnaw her bowels, their repast. Thus Old Lady Sin is a victim of double incest (raped as a daughter by her father Satan and as a mother by her son Death), which I loosely paralleled with her attempt to stop Remy from seeing his father until he bribes her. Daidje will appear again on 18.311.
- p. 280: “A *petit pourboire* conquers all”: The expression “Love conquers all” is transformed by Devereaux into “A small tip conquers all.”
- p. 280: moiety: Either of two equal, or more or less equal, parts.
- p. 280: Mme. Remidi: Mme. Hanifa Remidi is the woman who fell in love with Remy’s father early in her life and continued to love him even after she married Rafik Remidi. See the 3.55 note, N3:11, for the significance of her name and 10.155 and 157-59 for her love of his father, which cruelly brought her death. She will be listed as an exemplar of selfless love on 20.342 (“attained the level of [her] love”) and 21.364 (“the stately matron”).
- p. 280: “*Mon Capitaine!*”: “My Captain!” in French. Devereaux applies de Larosière’s title to Remy.
- p. 280: bellombra: A shade tree (*phytolacca dioica*) native to South America, but which has been much cultivated in the Mediterranean area. Variant spellings include “bellombre,” “bella ombra,” and “bella ombu.” It grows about 15 meters high and has a thick gnarled trunk with tops of dense foliage.

The tree thrives along the coast leading to Cherchell, Algeria, and within the city itself. They have “great galls at their forks” which “the people use as seats” (Stevens and Stevens, 106).

Excellent pictures of the tree are available online by Googling “bellombras of Cherchell.”

p. 280: Cherchell: A seaport town and tourist attraction fifty-five miles west of Algiers. Located in or near it are Punic, Numidian, and Roman temples, statues, and other antiquities.

In 1989 its population was around 20,000.

p. 280: “coming to a head in Cherchell”: An atrocious pun here.

A first-century CE bust of Cleopatra-Selene, the daughter of Antony and Cleopatra, “graces the fountain in the main square [of Cherchell] today” (Stevens and Stevens, 106).

The city was called Iol when it was part of the Roman Empire.

Thus Jacques’s excursion, going by what he originally told the taxi driver, will “culminate” or figuratively “come to a head” in Cherchell where it will literally “come to a head,” the bust of Cleopatra-Selene.

p. 280: “into his Excellency’s office the very second”: Foucin is scheduled to enter the French Ambassador’s office at 10 a.m., the same time it is planned for Remy to climb into his father’s loft.

Actually, Remy’s entry will be slightly delayed, occurring at 10:07.

p. 280: Hydra: The suburb west of downtown Algiers where the French Embassy is located.

p. 280: “The ‘*doubles*!’”: Remy told Tinfingers that he, Christian Lazar, and his partner, Christophe Figuard, in Egypt were called the “*doubles*” (16.261 and its note, N16:14).

p. 280: “French clothes do make the man!”: The expression “Clothes make the man” originates in the Latin proverb, the source of which has not been identified: “*Vestis virum facit*” (“Clothes make the man”).

In English *The Oxford Dictionary of Proverbs* traces it back to a 1400 translation of Erasmus’s “Ever [always] manner and clothing maketh man” and Idley’s 1445 “For clothing oft maketh man.”

With this axiom the flashback ends at 9:35.

p. 280: “Seeming to intuit that Remy”: The action returns to 9:58.

p. 280: “*Aha! La voici! Ton minute de vérité!*”: “Aha! Here it is! Your moment of truth!”

p. 280: “dorsum of his right hand”: the back of his right hand.

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p. 280: “Peccable timing”: Remy plays upon the phrase “impeccable timing” or “faultless timing.”

“Peccable”: “liable or prone to sin” (*Webster’s Third*).

Remy believes the French are once again playing a trick on him by bringing him so close to a reunion with his father, only to snatch it away.

p. 280: “spy-nozy”: This pun on the name of the Dutch philosopher Spinoza is from Coleridge’s *Biographia Literaria*, chap. 10 (paragraph beginning, “Far different were . . .”).

Coleridge writes that while he and Wordsworth were staying in Somerset in 1797, the government sent down an agent James Walsh to discreetly spy on them because of their supposed sympathy with the French Revolution.

Walsh overheard the two poets discussing Spinoza and thought they were referring to him as “spy-nozy,” particularly since Walsh was self-conscious of his very large nose.

- p. 281: “expansive, sable behemoth”: The limousine, which in the eyes of the youngsters is a monstrous animal.
- p. 281: “28”: His father lives at No. 28 Ruelle Bensedid.
See 10.156 and its note, “red,” N10:9, for the number and its symbolism.
See 2.27 and its note, N2:43, for the name Bensedid.
- p. 281: proboscidian: A mammal distinguished principally by its large trunk. Remy uses the word metaphorically to refer to the long-nosed person who he thinks is Foucin’s spy.
- p. 281: *dukkaan*: Arabic for “store” or “shop.”
At 10:05 Remy enters the shop.
- p. 281: “two-kilo . . . encased Qur’an”: As the p. 278 note above indicates, the six-volume Arabic Braille Qur’an weighs ten kilograms. Thus the weight of each volume is just under two kilos (c. 1.7 k. or c. 3.75 lbs.).
- p. 281: “a second Heaven-sent chance”: An echo of a line from the “Georgie” song: “Proclaimed his cock as Heaven-sent” (2.33).
- p. 281: “reconnect with cash”: One of the variants of the “disconnect” imagery so prominent in this chapter.
- p. 281: “The loft had been”: Remy recalls a time when he was a child of around ten (1949 – 1950) when the owner of the shop let him and his friends use the loft for play-acting adventures.
- p. 281: clamber: a clumsy or hard climb.
- p. 281: “What fool would build a storeroom upstairs!”: See 10.155 and its note, “haberdashery,” N10.7, for the history of this building and of its attic storeroom.
- p. 281: *échelle*: French for “ladder.”
The new ladder was built around forty years ago by his father.
- p. 281: traverses: rungs of the ladder.
- p. 281: “nodded his assent”: A pedestrian pun on “ascent,” which is extended from “Heaven-sent” two paragraphs above.
- p. 281: “Once he had enticed Noura”: My chronology placed Noura’s visit to the attic in 1950, when Omar was ten and Noura six.
Their father will be moved to this attic in 1986.
The episode posits that Noura, through her revulsion at peeping into the attic, thirty-six years previously divined that the loft would be the final

accommodations of her father.

- p. 281: “since he had positioned himself below, to catch her should she fall”: See Mohammed’s description of the ascent of Foucin, Houda, and the corpse in 15.242: “He gestured for her [Houda] to go first: ‘The gentleman always,’ several of my informants glossed, ‘for he’d be below to catch her should she misstep.’”
- p. 281: “importuning God’s absolution, certain He better comprehended his need”: Omar (Remy) believed that Noura would never have entertained a thought that she should forgive him for taking her to the attic. Thus, feeling both guilty and a need to seek absolution, Omar sought God’s forgiveness. This Cassandra-like foresight of Noura’s smacks of the supernatural determinism which will be dismissively presented on pp. 290-91 of this chapter.
- p. 281: “Father, Father, what have I brought you to?”: This question torments Remy throughout the novel. It was previously mentioned on 2.17 and 10.159 and will be reprised later in this chapter on 17.291.
- p. 281: *trappe*: French for “trapdoor.” Remy pushes himself into the attic at 10:07.
- p. 281: “*Mnn-grr!*”: The animalistic sounds of Daidje suit Milton’s Sin, who gave birth to a litter of dogs. See the p. 280 note above, N17:19.

pp. 282-83: SECTION 4

p. 282: “I entered as an impostor”: The scene in the loft between Remy and his father is not detailed in chronological order. This section will provide a few hints of what happened in the confrontation, but a full account will be delayed until the last section of the chapter (288-92).

Instead the action jumps forward from 10:07 a.m., when Remy pushes himself into the attic, to 10:42, when he is back in the limousine and being driven to the French embassy.

p. 282: “as an impostor and became myself, only to leave as that impostor”: Remy concludes that he entered as an impostor (Jacques), became himself (Remy/Omar) when he was massaging his father’s neck, but left as the impostor of his entry (Jacques).

The word “impostor” will be used seven times in this chapter, three times on this page and four times on p. 292.

It will reappear one last time on 20.339.

From far before Saul detects the artificiality in Remy (2.28), Remy has wrestled with this aspect of his life.

However, it is his father’s use of the word “impostor” during their conversation in the loft which not only focuses Remy on this personal artificiality but also allows him to solve the mystery of who murdered Ballard.

In this sense, the word connects the two main plots of the novel.

p. 282: “the return trip to the embassy”: This trip lasts from 10:38 – 11:00 a.m.

p. 282: “iconic caption”: The “impostor” sentence is the “iconic caption” to three tableaux of events that happened in the loft: his father moving his fingertips over his own Qur’an, his father’s face, and his violent proclamation that he had no son. “Iconic” refers to his father both as “an image or figure” in a tableau and as “a revered person.”

p. 282: “caption”: Its cinematic meaning is “the descriptive intertitle used in silent films. It is a frame with a printed text edited into the photographed action.”

An example of a descriptive (as opposed to a dialogical) intertitle is the caption, “The Destruction of War,” which is followed by several scenes exemplifying this idea.

p. 282: “‘forever-mourning’ *niqaab*”: A veiling garment which drapes over a woman’s body from head to feet.

See the 8.133 note, N8:35, for the three types of veils and 3.38 for an account of the Dec. 6, 1958, afternoon in which Mme. Aziza Naaman is first seen by her son Remy covered by this garment.

She wore it until her death in 1982.

p. 282: “*Allahu Akbar! Allahu Ak-awgh!*”: “God is Great! God is Gr-awgh!” The

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Akbar is broken off by the interjection *awgh*, which has been mainly used throughout the novel as an expression of pain, although it may register disgust (as on 11.176).

Not until p. 291 will it be disclosed what caused Naaman to break off the word with this interjection.

To symbolize disconnection between God and man, the severing of the *takbir* (the phrase *Allahu Akbar* which opens the *azan*) occurs three other times: On 1.3, a faulty electric wire in a microphone renders it as “*Al-shrh Akbar!*” This will become the closing words of the novel (21.368).

On 15.254, another clipping insertion is used by Bourceli to suggest that the alim is coughing up sputum while giving the *azan* summons: “*Al-awgh Akbar!*”

In addition, although the exclamation is not a part of the *takbir*, on 4.60 “Allah” is broken off as “*Al-awgh!*”

p. 282: rubric: An explanatory comment or gloss.

p. 282: phantasma: In the philosophical sense, “a mental impression of a real person or thing.”

Its more common sense, “a perception of something that has no physical reality” is also suggested since the events described may be considered as figments of Remy’s imagination, not a real depiction of what happened in the attic.

p. 282: “‘This is my doing!’ he recited aloud his ancient charge”: A rewording of his self-indictment, “Father, what have I brought you to?” See the p. 281 note above, N17:23.

Although never overtly connected, this variant expression by Remy may be influenced by what Foucin said that Mohammed, showing his stitched cheek, called out, “Foucin, this is your doing!” (16.267)

p. 282: *point d’exclamation*: “exclamation point (or mark)” in French.

p. 282: “bloody encounter”: In order to dismiss his request, Devereaux glances toward Remy and sees the spot of blood on the sleeve of the coat.

This sight transforms his planned rejection to enchantment since the stain is a confirmation of what he had said earlier in Remy’s hotel room, that his father would spew blood toward him while calling him a “traitor” (279).

Although unstated, it is apparent that Remy himself had not noticed the spot.

p. 282: “blood to blood”: Here the word no longer refers to the fluid, but to the “family line or lineage.”

p. 282: *cruor*: coagulated blood.

p. 282: cuff: The lower band or fold of the sleeve. On military jackets, it often has decorations sewn on it.

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- p. 282: “hawked flier”: coughed derisive laugh.
- p. 282: dilettanti: the plural of “dilettante,” a “superficial dabbler in something, particularly arts or sciences; an amateur, not a professional.”
The German of it, “*Dilettant*,” was used by Marie, quoting her mother, to describe Hitler’s attitude toward love (4.52).
- p. 282: “dreaming up”: Having just extolled the use of the “imagination,” Devereaux does not seem to realize the contradiction of criticizing Remy for using his by “dreaming up” (or “conceiving or devising, as by giving free rein to the imagination”) a revision.
- p. 282: “private connection . . . public display”: A continuation of their discussion of the private and the public from p. 278.
See its note, N17:11 and 12-13.
- p. 282: “after that”: That is, after Foucin has inspected Vellacott’s fax informing Remy to return immediately to Brussels.
- p. 282: “5:42 Air Italia”: See p. 277 for this Rome-bound flight.
- p. 282: “At the reverting trade”: At eleven Remy and Devereaux reach the French embassy parking garage, and he and Jacques de Larosière begin changing clothes. They finish at 11:25.
- p. 282: palaver: idle chatter. Almost all excursion taxi drivers in Algiers speak French, so this would have been their medium.
Jacques tells Remy about the coastal trip in case he is asked about it by Foucin.
- p. 282: “ragged red circle”: This is the third of the four uses of the “ragged circle” image.
See the 2.33 note, N2:62-63, for an analysis of it.
- p. 282: “Peltzer . . . El Riadh”: Peltzer refers to the French Embassy. See the p. 278 note above, N17:13-14.
El Riadh was an exclusive hotel with one of the best restaurants in Algiers in 1989.
See the 1.4 note, N1:13.
- p. 282: valuate: appraise.
- p. 282: “‘Mine eyes dazzle’”: From Webster’s *The Duchess of Malfi*: “Cover her face; mine eyes dazzle: she died young” (4.2.245).
- p. 282: “Not simply richer, the imagination’s always truer”: In literature and life, truisms are often spoken by despicable characters or people.

Here Devereaux's idea about imagination will lead to Remy's comment about memory on 18:295, "A devil being all memory . . . 'I am none!'"

The distinction between memory and imagination used in my novel is Swift's. He writes in the "Digression on Madness" chapter of *A Tale of a Tub* that "imagination" is "the womb of things," while "memory" is "the grave of things."

From the second chapter to his meeting with his father (chap. 17), Remy is overwhelmed by the "memory" of the desertion of his family and of his treason to his country. After the confrontation with his father, "imagination" becomes more crucial.

Much of chap. 2 and almost all of chap. 3 deal with Remy's memory, sometimes conveyed subtly. For instance, on the day Omar becomes Remy, he is "memorizing [library] classification subsections" (3.35).

As his plane is landing in Algiers, he dwells on the "memory of . . . [Marie's] kiss" (4.53). On 4.67, he prides himself on his "memory."

On 5.76 the phrase "committed to memory" contains subliminal wordplay to stress the importance of memory in Remy's life.

He further says that "only memory is dense" (5.78) and substitutes "biased 'memory' for his father's unitary 'time'" (5.79), an indication of an antipathy toward connecting past, present, and future.

However, on 8.119, in Leroy's office, he tells himself, that the ambassador seems to have "as little use for the past as I have."

"Qur'anic memorization" is affiliated with Islam (11.175), and on 12.187 Remy accepts the contention that a man's spirit "prefers to occupy itself with the certain past, not the unreliable future."

Until Remy's liberating meeting with his father (chap. 17), memory thus is seen as Swift's grave. On 18:295, Remy even tells himself, "A devil, being all memory, has none [no memory since its definition depends upon concepts of a present and a future]" and concludes that therefore "I am none."

On 19:330, when he begins to emphasize events long ago, another character will call his obsession with "the past" a "demon," thereby urging Remy to set aside his tormenting obsession with memory.

As for imagination, Remy's early uses of it tend to be negative and marginal. He quotes Gibbon's "languid" "imagination" (4.67) and speaks of the colors of God's rainbow as "lacking imagination" (6.87).

Yet, as in Remy's treatment of memory, there is ambiguity: Swift's hopeful "womb" of imagination is often surrounded with death ("the grave of things" representative of "memory").

On 14.227, Remy's "imagination" grew "feverish" when he thought about the trick played on Houda and Mohammed by the French; he vowed he would save them, but is brought back to reality by remembering their "dying mother."

On 17.282, he hears Devereaux's mocking words about how the imagination must interpret what happened between Remy and his father: Remy realizes that only imagination can make it "richer" and "truer" than the reality of the confrontation.

And on 18.310, after a horrible death, he will look into a flameless barrel, and "his imagination" will work "on the delicate, puffy ashes," conjuring up the spirits of

those who had been a meaningful part of his life.

In each of the three episodes, memory as a grave is replaced by imagination as a fertile womb: the flowers for Mme. Belmazoir; the reunion with his father; and the sacrifice of one character to save another.

Remy's nourishing of his imagination will allow him to re-explore the past, thereby transforming his memory of it, in two recountals of what makes life meaningful (20:341-42 and 21.365).

p. 282: "not see each other again": Devereaux assumes that Remy will leave Algiers that afternoon on the 5:42 flight.

- p. 283: “the singularly beautiful Mlle. Leila”: Devereaux wishes to taunt Remy, believing that he, like Devereaux himself, has fallen in love with Leila.
- p. 283: “for so the courts have ruled”’: Remy paraphrases Foucin at the Aladdin, “Mme. Ballard, a name which now the courts approve” (12.194).
- p. 283: volte-face: about-face.
Remy exits at 11:30.
- p. 283: “The driver . . . *ruelle* near the National Theater”: Again employing a circuitous route, Remy is dropped off near the National Theater at noon.
- p. 283: *ruelle*: “lane or alley” in French.
- p. 283: National Theater: The Algerian National Theater is housed in a grand 19th-century Italianate building in the southwestern section of the Casbah between Rue de la Lyre and the small park Port Saïd Square.
In addition to a regular production of Arab plays and Western dramas translated into Arabic, it also presents musical and dance programs.
An important scene in chap. 21 will occur in front of the National Theater building.
- p. 283: outvie: “to surpass in a rivalry or competition” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 283: “inordinately early, outvying even Ballard”: As Leila told Remy, her husband “always came twenty minutes early” (9.150).
- p. 283: “he’ll be at his Ramadan Dhuhr prayers until shortly after one”: The call to Dhuhr (midday or noon) prayers occurred at 12:27 on this day, with the prayers themselves lasting from 12:47 – 1:02.
- p. 283: “with time to kill”: Thinking of Ballard, Remy inevitably turns to a word involving violent death.
- p. 283: “an all-points stroll, northeasterly, then westerly, and nearing his third kilometer a cut south toward his hotel”: My notes indicate Remy took the following route: He walked east from Place de la Lyre, near which the National Theater is located, to Rue Bab Azoun, turned north for half a kilometer to Martyrs Square, where Azoun becomes Rue Bab el Oued, and continues northwesterly for a kilometer to Jardin Marengo.
There he turns westward onto Boulevard Hadad Abderrazak, on which is located Foucin’s office in the Gendarmerie Nationale. He casually walks by it as if intent on advertising his presence.
Down Abderrazak and Avenue Mohammed Taleb he proceeds for a kilometer and a half to its intersection with Rue des Quatre Canons, where he cuts south for a quarter of a kilometer to Leila’s apartment.

Then he follows the eastward veering Quatre Canons until he reaches Rue Joinville which leads him to the Al-Nigma, this last leg almost a kilometer.

Total distance: c. four kilometers (c. 2.5 miles).

Time: 12 noon to 1:25 p.m.

p. 283: Rue des Quatre Canons: See the 13.204, and 15.246 notes, N13:14 and N15:27, for more information about the street on which Leila lived.

p. 283: “508”: The number of Leila’s apartment (15.246).

p.283: “1:30 telephone call”: Remy set the time for his call to Leila on 16.273.

p. 283: “*Ave atque vale*’ . . . Catullus’ ‘Hail and farewell!’”: The final three words of the line 10, the end of poem 101 of the 116 poems by Catullus which have survived. The short poem, which begins “Carried through many nations,” was addressed to the ashes of his deceased brother.

p. 283: *en personne*: French for “in person.”

p. 283: *belgard*: “a loving look” (*Webster’s Third*).

Through termed an obsolete word, it is a particular favorite of Remy (or me) since it occurs four other times in the novel: 3.50; 5.70; 10.163, and 18.300.

p. 283: “jesting motley”: A simplistic word play on the garnish or multicolored outfit (“motley”) worn by a court jester.

p. 283: *per contra*: on the contrary.

p. 283: *hollo*: Used in its noun form here, it is “a shout or call used to attract a person’s attention.”

At 1:29 Foucin hails Remy who is in front of the Al-Nigma elevator.

p. 283: “‘the last time’ he would see Foucin—‘unless he gets lucky’”: Remy cannot discount the possibility that Foucin would ultimately track him down.

p. 283: *hazze*: As translated in the text, it is Arabic for “good luck” or “good fortune.”

p. 283: “what had typically stalked Foucin’s declaration of his pseudonym”: Four times previously Foucin used the salutation “Why M. Lazar, and [a comment on the situation of their meeting]”: 7.108, 12.199, 13.203, and 16.264.

p. 283: *ataractic*: tranquilizing.

p. 283: *bellombra*: Remy’s description of the tree varies little from that given by Devereaux on p. 280.

See its note, N17:19.

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p. 283: “to abandon [Algeria] twenty-seven years ago”: On July 5, 1962, Algeria gained independence from France.

Here is an historical incorporation of the “seven” symbolism.

p. 283: semblant: As an adjective, “seeming or apparent” (*Webster’s Third*).

p. 283: “in the hallway”: This section ends at 1:32 with Foucin’s hallway comment.

pp. 284-86: SECTION 5

p. 284: “In his room”: The action immediately follows the end of section 4: 1:33.

p. 284: vamp: invent; fabricate.

p. 284: “*any ‘gross’ ‘patch of ground’ in Europe*”: From two passages of *Hamlet* 4.4: The Captain says to Hamlet, “We go to gain a little patch of ground / That hath in it no profit but the name” (19-20) and later in the scene, Hamlet soliloquizes, “Examples gross as earth [a reference to the Captain “patch of ground”] exhort me” (47).

p. 284: “‘reeking of Jacques’”: Jacques had worn his pink shirt and blue chino suit (279) during the taxi ride toward Charchell.
Remy had redonned these at the “reverting trade” (282).

p. 284: “I promised to call her [Leila] at 1:30”: Almost thirteen hours earlier, Remy had promised to call Leila at “half past one” (16.273).

p. 284: *combiné*: In French, the “receiver” of a telephone.

p. 284: “‘in bliss,’ I’m told”: Presumably a comment from Leila that the period before Houda discovered her mother dead was a peaceful one for Mme. Belmazoïr.
No religious significance should be attached to the phrase, although the Islamic Paradise is referred to as “bliss” (56:8) or “the Gardens of Bliss” (56:13; 70:35). Even the time in the grave preceding the Day of Judgment, according to many passages in the Hadiths, will be a time of bliss for the true believer since a window will open which will give the deceased a view of the Gardens of Bliss (just as the unfaithful will have a view of Hell).
Foucïn or Leila would never be so presumptuous as to speculate on Mme. Belmazoïr’s fate.
This is the first mention of her c. 3:30 a.m. death, one of the “some things” which Foucïn has come “to tell” Remy (283).

p. 284: “*Ahsan Allah Azakum!*”: The Arabic phrase, typically spoken on hearing of a Muslim’s death, is used (and translated for Remy’s supposed benefit) by Foucïn in the next paragraph.

p. 284: locution: a word, phrase, or expression.

p. 284: “I believe you invoke on such occasions”: Remy knows that the phrase “God is Great!” is not recited here, but does not want to seem too knowledgeable about Islamic customs.

p. 284: “‘not holding with those who contend, ‘Death disconnects’”: By negation, an affirmation by Foucïn of the Islamic view that “Nothing Disconnects” or phrased

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positively “Everything Connects.”

- p. 284: “Her passing . . . blessed . . . our Holy Month”: Foucin like most Muslims accepts this belief, even though it is not explicitly stated in the Qur’an. However, in a passage from the Hadiths of Al-Tirmidhi, the Prophet Mohammed is reported to have specified Friday as better than other days for death: Allah will save those who die on Friday “from the punishment of the grave” (Al-Tirmidhi). As for the month, the revered fifth-century A.H. Hadith scholar Al-Bayhaqi states that “in the month of Ramadan, torment of the grave is lifted from the dead.” Many Islamic scholars contend that a faithful Muslim during Ramadan (as on the holy day Friday) is more spiritually oriented and thus more acceptable to receive God’s Mercy. During that month, a Muslim has refrained during daylight hours from such earthly or bodily pleasures as eating, drinking, and sex. Furthermore, in Ramadan, a Muslim typically prays more often than in the other months, reads the Qur’an more thoroughly, and gives more in charity.
- p. 284: “*Allahu Akbar*”: Translated by Foucin (again for Remy’s benefit) in the text. As noted, in the previous paragraph Remy had said what he knew not to be true, that when a Muslim hears of the death of another Muslim, he or she should say, “God is Great!” Foucin tactfully quotes the accepted statement, “Praying to Allah for the family!”
- p. 284: copulative: a linking verb, here “is.” There is no present tense of the verb “to be” in Arabic, this absence perhaps influencing Foucin’s stress on the French *est* (or *is* in English).
- p. 284: open juncture: “a juncture between two consecutive sounds in speech having less mutual assimilation than a close juncture and less hiatus than a terminal juncture” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 284: Air Algérie: The national airline carrier of Algeria. See the 4.52 note, N4:2.
- p. 284: “faux-labeled”: In 1961 Remy was told “not to attract notice” (2.28) to his generous French stipend through purchases of items beyond that of a library clerk. Thus he began the custom of having the designer *marques* of his expensive garment purchases removed and replaced with labels of *prêt-à-porter* clothiers.
- p. 284: “Anderson & Sheppard”: A Savile Row tailor, founded in 1906, which deals only in bespoke (custom-made) men’s garments. Among its clients have been royalty such as Prince Charles and celebrities such as Fred Astaire and Gary Cooper. In the mid-1980s one of its suits cost around \$1,500. Since an A & S tailor spends around fifty hours measuring and making a suit,

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Remy could not have purchased the suit mentioned here during his London meeting on Apr. 6, 1989, where HIV commented, “Our rendezvous expressly set in London so you could stockpile some Tory duds” (2.29).

Since used A & S suits are sought after, my notes indicate that Remy purchased this one secondhand in Paris.

p. 284: “two-button”: The coat of the suit had two buttons.

p. 284: Corneliani: A Milan men’s clothing house founded in the 1930s.

p. 284: “spread-collar”: A dress shirt which has a wider spread or distance between the collar points than usual.

A thin man or a man with a thin face looks better in a spread-collar shirt than a round-faced or heavy-set man.

p. 284: elegiac: Of, relating to, or befitting a poetic lament for a dead person.

p. 284: “as they affected Leila”: Remy hopes that the grieving after the funeral will not prevent him from seeing her before he leaves on the 9:57 p.m. flight.

p. 284: hustle: to do something rapidly or energetically.

Remy showers and dresses in the bathroom from 1:36 – 1:54 p.m.

p. 284: “M. Vellacott”: The single quotes indicate that Foucin pronounced the title and the surname ironically since he knows Remy is a DGSE agent, not an investigator for Vellacott.

p. 284: *Shokran!*: Arabic for “Thank you!”

p. 284: “abscond”: Used facetiously, as if Remy were portraying himself as withdrawing “from a battlefield or an area of combat” (*Webster’s Third*).

p. 284: Kenzo: Takada Kenzo is one of Japan’s most famous fashion designers. His company launched its first men’s collection in 1983.

p. 284: exequies: funeral rites and ceremonies, including the procession.

p. 284: “*El-Hamdulillah!*”: The Arabic exclamation is defined in the text.

p. 284: “Our religion prescribes . . . burial before the next daytime prayer”: Islam forbids night burial and daytime burial at sunrise or at the sun’s zenith in the sky. Many Muslims, like Foucin, hold that the burial ceremony should be completed before the first daytime prayer after death.

Thus, Mme. Belmazoir’s funeral was completed at 12:25, two minutes before the first call to Dhuhur (noontime) prayers.

p. 285: *Janazah*: The name of the Islamic funeral service.

It is not held inside a mosque, but in its courtyard. There the casket is placed so that the deceased's head is pointed toward Makkah. The imam stands in front of it, facing away from the mourners, which includes, albeit segregated, both men and women.

The *salaat al-Janazah*, funeral prayers, has four parts, each begun by the imam intoning aloud the *Takbir*, the Arabic name for the phrase "*Allahu Akbar!*"

The rest of the prayers is rendered silently by each individual, as if to control any impulse to speak loudly or to wail.

In the first part, *Al-Fatihah* or the seven verses which make up the first chapter of the Qur'an are mutely recited.

After the imam calls out the second *Takbir*, this section of the prayers begins. During it, silent greetings are given to the Prophet, using the words of this salutation from the kneeling position in the five daily prayers.

After the imam's third vocal "*Allahu Akbar!*" he and the congregation offer a silent supplication for the deceased, beseeching Allah to forgive his/her sins and to admit her/him into Paradise.

After the fourth *Takbir*, all silently make a general supplication for all Muslims.

Unlike the five obligatory prayers, in the *salaat al-Janazah*, there is no *ruku* (bowing) or *sujud* (prostration).

Directly after the prayers, the coffin is taken to the cemetery for burial.

p. 285: Cimetière el Kettar: One of the three major Muslim cemeteries of Algiers, it held about 60,000 graves in its fourteen hectares in 1989, the principal year of the novel.

As Foucin mentions, it is located about "one kilometer" southwest of the heart of the Bab el Oued neighborhood.

It is thus half a kilometer due west of the National Gendarmerie and Boulevard Hadad Abderrazak, the northern boundary of the Casbah.

p. 285: "At a nearby mosque, I extended my prayers": The call to Dhuhr prayers lasted from 12:27 to 12:47 and the performances of these from 12:47 to 1:02.

p. 285: "despite the imperativeness of linking up with you": This inserted phrase continues the suspense from p. 283 where Foucin said, "I have some things to tell you" and from p. 284 where he spoke of Mme. Belmazoir's death as "the most somber of my tidings," the implication being that he has some other matter(s) to convey to Remy.

p. 285: "a special [prayer] for the Belmazoir family": A personal prayer may be given at any time. This one arises out of Foucin's oppressed soul, and it asks Allah's forgiveness for the tribulations which he inflicted on Ahmed Belmazoir's family, but not on the traitor old Belmazoir.

As mentioned above, during *salaat al-Janazah*, Foucin would have offered a supplication on behalf of Mme. Belmazoir, praying for Allah to forgive her of all her sins and to admit her into Paradise.

Thus here his prayer does not repeat this supplication for her. Rather it seeks Allah's forgiveness for what he had done to the innocent members of the Belmazoirs.

According to my chronology, this special prayer lasted from 1:02 to 1:10, at which point Foucin makes the ten-minute drive to the Al-Nigma, entering it at 1:20, five minutes before Remy.

At 1:22, he receives and reads the fax. He is mulling over its implications when Remy enters the hotel, is given his key by Boshabo, and walks to the elevator (1:25 – 1:29).

- p. 285: “the fax, dutifully thrust upon me”: Foucin excuses Boshabo for letting him read the private message by saying that he had ordered the hotel staff to report any matters regarding Remy to him.
Therefore, the fault is his.
- p. 285: “to visit and offer condolences”: In Islam, the family of the deceased observes a three-day mourning period during which they receive visitors and condolences.
- p. 285: “males exclusively form the funeral train”: Muslim women are not allowed to participate in the procession from the mosque to the cemetery, a custom dating to the Prophet's time when he condemned women's wailing too loudly in the cortège as inappropriate.
In pre-Islamic Arabia, it was customary for grieving women to sob loudly, and some families even hired wailers.
According to the Hadith collection of Mohammed Al-Bukhari, the Prophet speaks of this overwrought grieving as a tradition from “the Days of Ignorance [pre-Islamic Arabia]” (2.23.382, repeated on 384 and 385).
In his 2.23.386 Hadith, Al-Bukhari notes, three times Mohammed sent orders for “the women” to cease their wailing for a deceased man and finally threatened to have “dust put in their mouths” to stop their excessive mourning.
- p. 285: “*I must see her before I leave*, Remy reaffirmed”: During his early-morning conversation with Devereaux, to himself Remy avowed that “despite the risk,” he must personally, “not over a telephone,” bid Leila farewell (278).
- p. 285: “*In order to see Leila, I must visit Mlle. Houda*”: Remy realizes that Leila will not leave the grief-stricken Houda's side.
Thus he knows that in order to see Leila, he will have to visit Houda to offer condolences.
- p. 285: “in detailing how he was apprised of the death . . . the doctor . . . the ward's gendarme”: Foucin gives an account of the events after Mme. Belmazoir's death, the specifics of which are not given in the text, but are as follows, according to my chronology: Houda and Leila bathe the corpse and prepare it for burial from 4:50 to 5:55.
At 6:05, Houda summons a doctor who prepares the death certificate and sends

for the neighborhood policeman. The gendarme arrives at seven and signs a certificate authorizing the burial. Instead of registering the death at his precinct, he goes back to bed and does not report for duty until 9:45.

From 7:05 to 10:20, Houda contacts the gravediggers and pallbearers she had previously hired. At around 7:30, Leila suggests to Houda that she petition for her brother to be allowed to attend his mother's funeral, but is told that his arrest forfeited that privilege.

After the policeman presents the burial certificate, a precinct officer, knowing about Foucin's interest in the Belmazoir family, contacts the commissioner's office.

At 9:55, five minutes before Foucin's meeting with the French ambassador, Sgt. Ghouraf telephones and tells him of Mme. Belmazoir's death.

Foucin immediately leaves in order to be close at hand to assist Houda.

The last part of this account enlightens Remy about the reason the telephone in Devereaux's limousine had rung at 9:58, its caller informing him to abort their mission.

- p. 285: "French proboscises": To Devereaux Remy had quoted Foucin (inaccurately) as saying, "So the French do have long proboscises" (276 and its note, N17:5).

Although not specified in the novel, Devereaux seized on this quotation as the pretext for the French Ambassador's request for a consultation with Foucin at the embassy, presumably to apologize for DGSE's action of sending one of its agents to Algeria.

- p. 285: "I *had* destroyed it [the family]": Another statement by Foucin which shows how heavily it weighs on his mind that in bringing to justice the fourth of the seven great traitors, he used the innocent members of the Belmazoir family.

- p. 285: troll: An intransitive verb meaning here "to speak rapidly" (*Webster's Third*). The noun "troll" is played upon since at this moment Foucin sees himself as monstrous.

- p. 285: "blue light": Foucin has a blue light in his Peugeot which he can place on the top of his car. It allows him to exceed the speed limit.
See 16.268 and its note, N16:32.

- p. 285: "precipitously arraigned the French . . . 'abort' the operation": On p. 280, Remy had scoffed at the limousine call aborting his mission to visit his father as a trick by the French.

Here, he realizes that it was genuine: The French ambassador had surmised that Foucin had charged from the embassy because a neighborhood spy had informed him of an embassy limousine in the neighborhood of the father of the seventh traitor.

- p. 285: "the habeas corpus evidence": An in-character confusion by Bourceli: The

Latin *habeas corpus* is an abridged form of *habeas corpus ad subjiciendum* meaning “you have the body brought before the court.” In it, “corpus” means a “detained person.”

Bourceli, however, interprets “corpus” to refer to the “corpse” and contends that by washing it Houda and Leila have removed all evidence indicating that they murdered Mme. Belmazoir.

- p. 285: “It was she [Leila] who emerged from the shack”: Arriving at 10:15, Foucin will be at the Belmazoir’s residence until 11:15, at which time Mme. Belmazoir’s funeral procession will begin.
Much of this time (10:24 – 10:57) will be spent trying to convince Houda that Mohammed must be told about his mother’s death before the funeral.
- p. 285: “the welcome in her eyes”: An indication that Leila is wearing a half-veil.
- p. 285: “rivals an angel’s [control]”: Leila’s comparison of Houda to an angel would evoke in both Remy and Foucin the latter’s comparison of Leila herself to an angel on 16.265: “A lady of angelic attention.”
- p. 285: Suhoor: The pre-dawn meal. Its Arabic, *As-Suhoor*, will be used in the next paragraph (286).
See the 15.239 note, N15:6.
It is derived from *Ashaar*, the Arabic word for “the time before the beginning of dawn.”
- p. 285: “returning in ten minutes”: From 3:30, when she discovered that her mother has died, to 3:40, Houda performs the first duties to the corpse, a ritual not mentioned in the text: closing the eyes and tying the jaw while continuously uttering silent prayers for her mother.
Sensing that her death was near, Houda would have already positioned her mother’s body toward Mecca.
- p. 285: Fajr prayers: The dawn prayers. In Arabic, *salaat al-fajr*.
See the 2.26 note, N2:40, for an explanation of how dawn is determined.
On the early morning of this chapter, the call to Fajr lasted from 4:14 – 4:34; the prayer itself was performed from 4:34 – 4:49.
- p. 285: “my family’s business”: This is the third reference to the image of a family member’s “business.” For the first, see 5.77 where Remy refers to “my father’s business” and its note N5:27. In the second, Foucin speaks of “my Father[land]’s business” (14.221 and its note N14:11).
Here Houda means her “mother’s business,” that is, preparing her mother’s body for burial.
See Luke 2:49, where Jesus said, “I must be about my Father’s business.”
Houda withheld telling Leila about her mother’s death, which occurred a little before 3:30, until 4:50.

- p. 286: “The overture could no longer be procrastinated”: Remy had hoped that Foucin would invite him to visit the Belmazoires’ shack to offer Houda condolences.
- p. 286: “sneer of cold command”: Remy applies to Foucin a quotation which the commissioner had used in describing Boumediène on 14.234: From Shelley’s sonnet “Ozymandias”: “And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command” (5).
- p. 286: ad hoc: In Latin “to this”; in English, it means “made, established, acting or concerned with a particular end or purpose” (*Webster’s Third*).
Leila knows that freeing Mohammed for his mother’s funeral is a violation of the law.
Her request was made to Foucin at 10:23 that morning.
- p. 286: “approximate a woman’s compassion . . . comprehend it”: Foucin’s awe of women is seen in his admiration of his wife (13.203), Houda (13.208, 14.221, and 15.242), and Leila (16.265).
Foucin’s statement to Remy about women is delivered at 2:07 p.m.

pp. 286 - 88: SECTION 6

- p. 286: “Impossible!”: At 2:07 p.m. in the hotel room, Foucin continues to give Remy an account on his morning conversation with Leila (10:24).
- p. 286: pre-Dhuhr interment: The burial must be completed before the first call to noontime prayers, 12:27 on this day.
The prayers would begin at 12:47.
- p. 286: “I abide by the penal code . . . His arrest forfeited his right to attend the funeral”: According to the Algerian Penal Code, a person held in pre-trial detention for a serious crime may not be given temporary release for family emergencies.
As mentioned in the p. 285 note above, N17:36-37, Houda’s decision not to petition for her brother to be freed to attend his mother’s funeral was made at 7:30, according to my chronology.
- p. 286: “appeared to wish the death kept from her brother”: Remy is puzzled by Houda’s persistence in attempting to keep from her brother their mother’s death.
- p. 286: “shouldn’t be told just yet”: Her wording and attitude are similar to Mohammed’s request to Remy about the knife attack, made twice: “Don’t tell my sister . . . just yet” (15.240 and 242).
- p. 286: “derelict in her Islamic duty . . . your neighbors and I, all culpable . . . him, who must begin his prayers for his parent”: The duty is both reverent and legalistic.

In the Hadiths, it is reported that the prophet Mohammed said that one of the ways a righteous child can help a parent after death is by praying for them (Hadiths of Al-Bukhari 1617; Al-Tirmidhi 1376; and Ibn Majah 3660).

The three other ways specifically mentioned are immediately settling up any debts that the parent owed, paying for the funeral and burial expenses, and ensuring that the testamentary will is faithfully executed.

Concerning inheritance, according to the Qur'an (4.11), if a woman's husband is dead, the sons are the principal heirs of their mother. They receive twice that of any daughters.

Thus jurisprudence required that Mohammed Belmazoir, the principal heir, be notified at once of his mother's death.

Finally, the community is at fault if it does not verify that all aspects surrounding the rights of the Muslim corpse are observed according to instructions in the Qur'an and the Hadith. This as well applies to any other Muslim, such as Foucin (and Leila, although Foucin politely does not mention her).

p. 286: "her to-and-fro": This negotiation between Foucin and Houda with Leila as the go-between lasted from 10:27 to 10:38.

p. 286: "she nominated you": Houda's 10:38 selection of Remy seemingly is part of her mysterious intention to delay having her brother informed of their mother's death.

Although not mentioned in the novel, Houda probably reasons that when Remy was located, he would be reluctant to have anything more to do with her family, given his reaction to what she had revealed about the incest unknowingly committed by her and her brother (15.253-54).

- p. 287: Cherchell: Tourist city east of Algiers.
See the p. 280 note above.
- p. 287: laguna: “lagoon” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 287: ancilla: “aid”; “helper,” with its derivation coming from Ancula, a Roman ministering god.
As such, Houda seems to be strangely going out of her way to praise Foucin.
At 10:55 Houda agrees to let Foucin telephone her brother.
The call is made at 10:57, but it is not until 11:08 that Mohammed can be brought to the phone.
They talk for three minutes.
- p. 287: “My sister, my sister”: Mohammed’s immediate concern is not for his dead mother, but for his living sister.
- p. 287: reason down: From Emerson’s essay “Montaigne, or the Skeptic,” in his *Representative Men* (1850).
In its twelfth from the last paragraph Emerson writes, “I can reason down or deny everything, except this perpetual Belly.”
I interpret “reason down” here to mean more than “deny,” but to use reason to achieve an end or to counter and defeat an argument.
It is in that sense Foucin uses the expression.
- p. 287: obsequies: Funeral rites or ceremonies.
As mentioned in the p. 285 note above, N17:36-37, Houda had already hired the gravediggers and pallbearers.
- p. 287: secours: “aid, assistance, succor” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 287: “halting, I regret, with a half-truth”: Foucin had said the family’s neighbors and Leila were comforting Houda. Only the latter was.
- p. 287: *Awgh*: A coined interjection, usually an expression of unbearable pain.
See the 3.43 note, N3:23, which lists the seven chapters in which *awgh* is used, and the pp. 15.253-54 notes, N15:45 and 51, which comment on the symbolism of the interjection.
For instance, in both chap. 3 and 15, *awgh* is used a balancing seven times.
- p. 287: brink: the very edge at the top of a steep place.
Foucin uses it metaphorically to indicate that Mohammed had been so staggered by the news that he was at the point of mental collapse.
- p. 287: “I must see the devil”: Again like Foucin Remy is equally surprised by this demand since yesterday morning, the last time he had seen Mohammed, as reported on 15.245, the latter had tried to fire him and had threatened to kill him.

p. 287: “wild and whirling words”: This phrase is not spoken by Foucin, but it occurs in Remy’s mind on hearing about Mohammed’s insistence.
From *Hamlet* 1.5.133: After Hamlet had ended his private conversation with the ghost, he pretends to Horatio that nothing has happened and starts to leave. A frantic Horatio tells Hamlet, “These are but wild and whirling words, my lord,” meaning that Hamlet’s response is more far-fetched than the appearance of the ghost (or so I interpret the line).

p. 287: “So for the fourth time in eight days, I’ve been deemed a ‘devil’:

(1) On Wednesday, April 12, Mohisen calls him a “demon” and “the accursed Satan” (7.111).

(2) On Thursday, April 13, Leila said to Remy, “You are evil! . . . my brother and I sit with a devil!” (9.148).

(3) On Saturday, April 15, Leroy censures Remy as “*Diabolique!*” (devilish or diabolical) (11.184).

(4) On Wednesday, April 19, Houda asks Leila, “Is he [Remy] devil or angel?” (15.247).

This list excludes 13. 209, where Remy imagines his father calling him a “devil,” and 14.220, where Foucin refers to Omar as “the youngest devil” of the seven great traitors.

p. 287: “‘brave new’ options”: From *Tempest* 5.1.185-86, where Miranda exclaims, “O brave new world / That has such people in ’t!”

In Shakespeare’s line, “brave” means “splendid” or “handsome.”

Foucin is not using the word as ironically as Miranda’s father Prospero interprets her exclamation, “’Tis new to thee” (187), or as Aldous Huxley does in the title of his novel, where human beings basically have no options.

Instead, in utilizing the phrase, he seems to indicate that Remy has three splendid options, none of which will discredit him, although certainly he inwardly feels that, like Portia’s father’s caskets in *Merchant*, one is glistening golden (continuing with his packing for his flight to Brussels), another silver (visit Houda), and a third leaden (go to Mohammed).

At 2:13 in the hotel room, Remy chooses the last.

p. 287: “who strangely woos”: The combination of “strange” and a form of “woo” suggests the influence of *Othello* 1.3.162, 168: “’twas strange, ’twas passing strange . . . and that would woo her.”

This is the second appearance of this passage. On 16.266, Remy imagined Marie speaking “of things, ‘passing strange,’ . . . the words wooed.” See its note, N16:26.

p. 287: “*El-Hamdulilah!*”: “Praise be to God!” as defined in the text on p. 284.

p. 287: “deliver the prisoner’s message”: Foucin expects that Mohammed will send some words of comfort to his sister through Remy.

p. 287: “our ‘breakfast’”: The cannon breaking the fast will sound at 7:27 p.m., so

Foucine says that Remy will have time even to eat iftar, the fast-break evening meal, before the nine o'clock hour at which the commissioner will arrive at the Al-Nigma to take him to the airport.

p. 287: "HIV's lighter": As on 10.164, this is the way that Remy refers to the disguised microcassette recorder embedded in the faux lighter, although it was provided by DGSE, not HIV, as part of the "cache" in the 2269 locker (4.53).

The request for the fake lighter, however, had been made to HIV at Trimalchio's (2.32).

Its workings are described on 4.62 and 66. It will reappear on p. 289 (out of chronological order), clicked on just before Remy entered his father's section of the attic.

p. 287: "flung on the old woman's mat": Once Remy suspects his father knows who he is, he will not sully that moment by offering the money that he had brought. Instead he snatches from his billfold what money his fingers light on and tosses the loose dinars above the mat of the old lady, pantomiming that a portion should be spent on the man with whom she shared the attic.

This unscheduled dropping on the floor of a wad of money parallels Ballard's action in the Toumi room after the ruse played on Mohammed and Houda (1.2).

This widow Daidje scene lasts only a minute. Then Remy climbs down the ladder, tosses a ten-dinar note to the youth tending the store, and rushes from it (10:31 – 10:33).

He walks the two blocks to the limousine where Devereaux is waiting (10:33 – 10:38).

p. 287: berth: "any sleeping place." Here Remy refers to the bed of his father, hence the pun on "birth."

p. 287: "Part of it": Single quotes are used because Remy is aware that he is quoting Mohammed, who had answered, "Part of it," when Remy asked him if he reserved any of the money received from Ballard "for your family" (4.65).

p. 287: "a previously wadded ten": Twice what Remy had silently signaled he would give the lad (281).

p. 287: trickle down: A phrase popularized in the Ronald Reagan presidency, it describes a laissez-faire economic theory which holds that a reduction of taxes on the wealthy will result in some of their additional money trickling down to the middle class and the poor, who consequently will benefit economically.

Remy hopes that a portion of the three thousand dinars left with Mme. Daidje will be used to make his father's last days as physically comfortable as possible. She will believe that it came from the French Embassy and will rationalize that if she is seen spending some on Naaman the French will increase the salary that they already pay her.

- p. 287: lay by: As a transitive verb phrase, it means “to lay aside; put aside; store for future use” and dialectically, “to store (a harvest) after harvesting” (*Webster’s Third*).
Remy believes that this familial reunion has brought a mental comfort to his father, as it has to him.
The rest Remy tells himself he must relegate to his father’s religious faith which will strengthen his mind to face the physical suffering ahead.
A longer discussion of this paragraph will occur in the p. 292 note, “not yoked,” N17:62-63..
- p. 287: “And from another, Leila, he must be severed”: Remy concludes that having fulfilled his mission by meeting with his father, he must abandon all aspects of Algeria, and this would include Leila.
First, he feels that it would be too painful for him and for her (although she is reduced to a parentheses) to see each other in a public setting where they cannot express their private thoughts.
Next he will convince himself that a phone call would not be inappropriate (288) and even without that, he believes that it is preferable for her to carry throughout her life the memory of his “chivalrous detour” to visit Mohammed at the prison (288).
The egotism of these final thoughts of Leila is not out of character for Remy, whose imagery always becomes overbearing when he lets arrogance have free rein.
- p. 287: “private causerie”: private chat. The single quotes are Remy’s remembrance that Leroy and his wife had to seize “the opportunity for private causerie in the midst of public brummagem” (5.71).
- p. 287: “change of plans, i.e. planes”: As noted above, whenever Remy’s mind stoops to a trivial pun such as *plan/plane*, an unpleasant narcissistic aspect of his character, of which he is unaware and usually even praises, comes to the fore.
- p. 287: “The 8:12 to Paris in place of the 9:57 booked”: Foucin mentioned these two flights on p. 284, with Remy agreeing to the latter, the one to Brussels through Geneva.
He decides now that he will take the 8:12 to Paris.

- p. 288: “that nearby phone”: Foucin told Remy that at one point in the negotiations with Houada he had rushed to the phone “nearest” to the shack (286).
It is not specified if it is in the No. 22 Rue Mizon apartment building or a shop nearby.
In the late 1980s few residences in Algiers beyond those of the rich had private phones.
- p. 288: “Wordsworthian daffodils”: A reference to his lyric, “I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud,” where the speaker comes upon the physical presence of “a crowd, / a host, of golden daffodils/ . . . Fluttering and dancing in the breeze” (3 – 6) and for many years afterward the image of them becomes a spiritual presence and “They flash upon that inward eye / . . . And then my heart . . . dances with the daffodils” (21 – 24).
- p. 288: “In the elevator”: The time is 2:17 p.m.
- p. 288: beard: A transitive verb meaning “to face or oppose courageously or brazenly, as if grasping by the beard.”
- p. 288: “the client of your non-client”: Wittily, Foucin notes that he need no longer address Remy as the client of Vellacott.
He had first used the phrase, “the client of your client,” in referring to Remy’s relationship to Mohammed and Vellacott on 4.56.
See its note, N4:15, for a list of all eleven uses of it in the novel.
- p. 288: “a shout whizzed across the lobby”: Ironically, this shout by the Al Nigma receptionist was a crucial part of the scheme which Remy in vain developed to visit his father: “As they [Remy and Foucin] crossed the foyer, ‘the receptionist will flag us down’” (15.246).
- p. 288: “Of that . . . you’re aware”: Foucin quickly realizes that Remy, a DGSE agent, was involved in the visit to old Naaman. However, he regards it not as a personal affront but as a professional stratagem.
For that reason, he politely says that he will keep his promise to take Remy to the airport at nine or send a replacement who will.
- p. 288: *tambour*: French for “revolving door.”
- p. 288: “A hit . . . a very palpable hit”: From *Hamlet* 5.2.281: “A hit, a very palpable hit,” a reference by Osric to a “touch” in fencing.
- p. 288: whisk: As a transitive verb, “to transport swiftly; hurry; speed,” as in “ships that will whisk him across the Atlantic” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 288: “his regular”: Nemmiche, the taxi driver hired by Remy.

- p. 288: “O decimals bibliothecal, *je viens!*”: “O decimal system of [my] library [in Le Puy], I come.” With apparent joy Remy looks forward to returning to Marie, his quiet life, and his library work in Le Puy.
- p. 288: decimals: A decimal classification system uses numbers with decimals.
- p. 288: bibliothecal: Of or relating to a library.
- p. 288: “*je viens!*”: The last words which Ballard speaks before he is struck by the plank are “*Je viens, mon bon ami. ‘I come’*” (1.13).
- p. 288: Vacheron Constantin: For this expensive Swiss watch, see the 4.60 note, N4:27. Not until 18.304 will it be revealed that the watch was a present from Marie.
- p. 288: 2:27: The time is numerically symbolic. Ballard was murdered on Feb. 27, 1989 (2-27-89), and his last act, walking through the entrance to the disco, is similar to Remy’s stepping though the back door of the taxi. Although the number is not listed, the drive to the prison would begin at 2.28, twenty-eight being the number of years of Remy’s exile.
- p. 288: “the unnecessary, yet obligatory, kindness”: An echo of the title of chap. 11, “An Unnecessary Act of Kindness.” See the 11.170 note on this title, N11.1, for the instances in the novel where variants of the words “necessary” and “kindness” are joined, and the 11.182 note, N11:33, which discusses passages from the Qur’an on the “kindness” which one person must show to another.
- p. 288: anima: soul.
- p. 288: “Sleep”: The last word of Keats’s “Ode to a Nightingale,” in which he accepts his return from his poetic vision to reality: “Do I wake or sleep?” “Sleep” is also the last word of three chapters of this novel: 3.51, 15.256, and 19.331.

pp. 289 - 92: SECTION 7

- p. 289: “—You spent less time”: Section 7 presents Remy’s dream during the early minutes of the taxi ride to the prison, 2:28 to 2:38 in my chronology. It recounts what happened in his father’s attic from 10:07 – 10:31 a.m., beginning at the point where Section 3 ends (281), at which point Remy had pushed himself into the loft and awakened the Widow Daidje. The narration is in the form of the interior dramatic duologue, a merging of two literary techniques, the interior monologue and the dramatic monologue. Here two aspects of Remy’s psyche describe, discuss, and debate his visit with his father: the instinctive Remy (self or id) and the inhibiting, often mocking, Anti-Remy (anti-self or superego). Thus the interior dramatic duologue presents a dramatic scene in which an aspect of the mind of a character (his ego, in Freudian terms) creates two separate characters (an interior antagonist or superego and an interior protagonist or Freudian id) who debate an event in the work. See the 1.3 note, N1:10, for further discussion of the interior dramatic duologue and a list of the three other major times it is used in my novel (2.21-22; 3.47-51; and 15.255-56).
- p. 289: [Use of dashes in place of quotation marks]: In this section, to indicate a change of speakers, a dash is used as the equivalent of the opening quotation marks in English. This dash is so employed in many French novels and was mimicked by James Joyce in his *Portrait*. However, quotations may be used within a speech set off by a dash to indicate that the speaker is citing the words of another. French writers use single quotes, but I have opted for the American preference of double quotation marks.]
- p. 289: “Old Lady Sin”: A phrase Devereaux had used on p. 280 to delineate the widow Houria Daidje, who was the caretaker of old Naaman. As explained in its note, N17:19, Sin as a character is taken from 2.648-870 of Milton’s *PL*. For Daidje, see 10:155-56. The real time, not the narrated time, is 10:07 a.m.
- p. 289: “There’s always time to start a hell. I was going to end one”: Remy’s answer to his anti-self disassociates him from Satan, who journeyed to Eden to turn it into a hell on earth. Remy sees himself as a redemptive figure going to end the hell into which he had doomed his father. The redemption theme throughout the novel will be discussed in an essay at the end of the notes on chap. 18, N18:72-74.
- p. 289: “And he knew that Adam and Eve weren’t going anywhere”: Ironic since the couple will soon be exiled from the Garden of Eden. However, in Milton’s epic, Satan did not know this at the time he encountered

his daughter Sin (*PL* 2.648-870.)

p. 289: nest: A metaphorical reference to an attic; loft; aerie.

p. 289: Munkar and Nakir: The two angels in Islam who question the recently deceased in his/her grave about God, the Prophet, Islam, and what the deceased did while alive.

The answers given to Munkar and Nakir, who will also be referred to on p. 291, will determine whether the deceased will spend a pleasant or chastising time in the grave until Judgment Day.

See the 3.41 note, N3:17, for a longer discussion of the two angels.

Here the mocking Anti-Remy refers to the attic air as “stifling as a tomb’s,” as if his father were not only dead, but also buried.

p. 289: “‘of the family, careless with Noura,’ words for eternity”: Anti-Remy gives the angels’ supposed verdict on the Naamans which was first used by Omar/Remy (3.41).

p. 289: “the sins of the son had been visited upon the father”: Remy typically reverses the family members.

See the discussion of this concept in Islam in the 7.116 note, N7:41.

For the Biblical doctrine see Exod. 20:5 and Deut. 5:9, both of which speak of “the sin [iniquity] of the father” being “visited upon” his children.

p. 289: scarrow: Scottish dialect, “a shadowy or faint light” (*Webster’s Third*).

p. 289: “To jigger mythologies [that is, to shift from Milton’s Christianity and Islam’s angels to Greek mythology], exposed Charon’s *pourboire*”: In Greek mythology, Charon was the boatman who ferries souls of the dead across the river Styx to Hades.

His fee was one obol (a bronze coin usually translated as a “penny,” but in purchasing power it was worth much more.

A proper burial entailed that the obol be positioned on a corpse’s tongue.

p. 289: “He hates you as bastards”: From the military uniform, Daidje recognizes the caller to be French.

Old Matoub, the attendant of the young Lakhtour (Foucin), called the attacking French “bastards” (7:115).

p. 289: *Sayyid*: An Arabic title equivalent to “Mr.” in English. See the 6.96 note, N6:42.

p. 289: “with guest”: The Old Lady announces to old Naaman that he has a visitor. Arabic being gender-sensitive distinguishes between a female and a male “guest”; thus the blind Naaman will know that the caller is a male.

The time is now 10:09 a.m.

- p. 289: *roup*: As a dialectical intransitive verb, “to call or shout hoarsely” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 289: “to inquisition your father before he loses his mind”: A pejorative rendition of what Foucin had said on p. 288: “I must be off to interrogate him before his memory fails.”
The distorted magnification is the result of the half-asleep Remy’s despise of both himself and Foucin for this additional agony to which his father is about to be subjected.
Since it is only 2:30 in Remy’s taxi and Foucin sped from the Al-Nigma driveway at 2:25, he would not have reached the attic of Remy’s father by then.
- p. 289: *inquisition*: As a transitive verb, “to subject to inquisitional examination” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 289: *demesne*: “a region or domain.”
Here it is used figuratively to refer to old Naaman’s upper body.
- p. 289: *burnoose*: A wraparound hooded cloak, often worn over a *djellaba* or robe.
- p. 289: *acromion*: The upper outer point of the shoulder blade.
- p. 289: “the taut hand, marbled with distended perse veins:” The pun *taut/taught* is a prelude to old Naaman’s question about “teach” on p. 292.
The word “marbled” also suggests how chiseled his reliance on Allah has become; his body is broken, but not his faith.
An indication of this fidelity is that he spends most of his waking hours moving his fingers over the verses of his Qur’an, reciting silently passages of memorized texts that he cannot see.
- p. 289: “perse”: dark grayish blue.
- p. 289: “—You are the first”: Omar was the firstborn of the Naamans.
- p. 289: “Let no man enter, Grimalkin!” The first words of his father that are recorded are this admonition to Daidje.
Anti-Remy says that with the designation “no man” old Naaman identified Remy “quite precisely,” since Remy is “no man” in the eyes of his father.
A weak quibble on their family name Naaman, it will be repeated during old Naaman’s second speech on p. 290.
The punning name is appropriated from *The Odyssey* 9.384, where Odysseus famously tells the Cyclops, “My name is Nobody.”
- p. 289: *grimalkin*: a cantankerous old woman.
- p. 289: “for three minutes”: 10:10 – 10:13.

- p. 289: “one for each decade since your betrayal”: On Dec. 8, 1958, Omar agreed to become a collaborator for the French.
The date of this chapter is April 20, 1989, so thirty years and four months had passed since he became a traitor to Algeria.
- p. 289: “your son’s—”: Remy had planned to tell him that his son is dead and that his dying wish was that his father receive a Braille Qur’an.
This scheme, as Anti-Remy recognizes, was meant to plant in the mind of Foucin, who he knew would interrogate his father, that the seventh traitor is dead.

- p. 290: “Verifying flesh”: The corpse of Omar (Remy).
- p. 290: Larosière: The first mention of Jacques’s last name in the text.
His surname means “a young virtuous girl” in French, so I chose it with malicious delight.
- p. 290: “a Braille Qur’an”: Remy chooses not to explain that this is merely the first of the six volumes of the Braille Qur’an.
See the pp. 278-79 notes above, N17:14-15, on this Arabic Braille edition and how Remy is assured that Devereaux will have the other five volumes delivered to his father after he has left Algiers.
- p. 290: “right-to-left progress”: Arabic is written and hence read from right to left.
- p. 290: mark: “attention; notice” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 290: crook’d: bent; curved.
- p. 290: “back at the limousine”: In his dream, Remy flashes forward to 10:38 a.m.
He has left the shop (10:33) and walked back to the limousine.
There he finds that two policemen have come up, but they have not approached Devereaux.
Instead they are engaged in keeping the neighborhood youngsters away from the car.
- p. 290: “overlooked the time designed for your redemption”: Anti-Remy chides Remy that at this crucial point when he had planned to redeem his life, he fails to notice the time.
Remy’s silence indicates that he does not know how long he had spoken to his father about his life since he had left Algiers in 1961.
Although the timespan is not stated, according to my chronology, it is a symbolic seven minutes: 10:14 – 10:21.
The idea of “redeeming time” is from *1 Henry IV* 1.2.211, “Redeeming time when men think least I will.” See the 16.273 note, N16:49.
As mentioned in the above p. 290 note, N17:47, an overview of the theme of redemption in the sin-repentance-redemption pattern of the novel will be found at the end of the notes to chap. 18, N18:72-74.
- p. 290: arimasp: One-eyed man; from the Arimasp, a mythical race of one-eyed men of Scythia.
He is the man with a black patch over one of his eyes, the “befitting candidate for Foucin’s ‘spy-nozy’” (280-81).
- p. 290: “while descending the ladder . . . trample on his knuckles . . . my ankles clamped by him”: Remy descends the ladder at 10:32.
This description mirrors two earlier situations: On 15.242, when Foucin and

Houda ascended on the rope ladder with Foucin below to catch her if she misstepped.

And earlier in this chapter (281), Remy positioned himself several rungs below Noura to catch her if she should slip going down the ladder.

- p. 290: *immunité diplomatique*: In French, “diplomatic immunity.”
- p. 290: whirl: As a transitive verb, “to move or carry rapidly with the sound of whirring” as in “had been whirring the dial of the telephone” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 290: “less than ten dreamtime minutes ago was [Foucin] informed that a Frenchman had visited his parent”: This time helps to establish how long Remy’s dream lasted. At this time he is just under one-third of the way through it. Foucin was informed at 2:22 through the phone call he took at the Al-Nigma reception desk that old Naaman had been visited. Under ten minutes from that point would be 2:31. Remy had entered the taxi at 2:27 and fell asleep almost immediately (2:28), so he has been dreaming around three minutes. The dream thus lasted about ten minutes.
- p. 290: “Foucin, who at that very moment”: The time Remy reaches the limousine is 10:38, the same time when Houda tells Foucin that she nominates Lazar (Remy) to be the one to telephone her brother (286 and its note “she nominated,” N17:40).
- p. 290: “vicarious appeal”: It is “vicarious” since it is made through Leila, the intermediary between Houda and Foucin in the negotiations.
- p. 290: circumspection: “caution and earnest attention to all significant circumstances and possible consequences of action”; “prudence and discretion” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 290: praenomina: Plural of “praenomen,” the first or personal name. Remy used the first names of his family members (a lack of caution), but without the last name (a show of discretion). He also never mentions Le Puy or anything about where he lived. In describing Marie, he must have said that her family was born Jewish because on p. 292 old Naaman will refer to Marie being a Jewess.
- p. 290: “I already had his voice, recorded ‘for eternity’”: Recording his father’s voice was the stated purpose of his visit: There “was a voice he must record, one for Marie and Claudia and Françoise” (2.33). The phrase “for eternity” is put in quotes because it is from Omar’s (Remy’s) thoughts on waking up in the prison: Their “inquisition completed, beside his name the latter [angel, Nakir] would record, ‘Of the family, careless with Noura, beloved in Heaven,’ words for eternity” (3.41).

Thus this phrase connects Noura's supposed fate with Remy's possible redemption through this confrontation with his father.

- p. 290: "There no man can hinder another": In Arabic, believing the Frenchman will not understand, Naaman says that no man can keep another from his holy reading: that is, no human being has the power to stop a true Muslim from communicating with God through the Qur'an.
Again an instance of dramatic irony appears in his father's second use of "no man" because Remy (his father's audience) would perceive there is a play on words here, of which his father (the speaker) would be unaware: "There no man [young Naaman] can hinder another [old Naaman]."
- p. 290: "and toss to the wind": An echo of the 100-dinar note which Ballard gave to Mohisen (1.8-9) and which the youth ripped up and threw "its shreds into the briny wind" (6.91).
- p. 290: "His Gift to this ungrateful world": In her early years, Noura had been seen by the Naaman family as their "Gift from God" (3.38).
I borrowed the adjective "ungrateful" from Dostoevsky's famous definition in part 1, chap. 8, of *Notes from the Underground*: "I believe the best definition of man is the ungrateful biped."
- p. 290: impartment: communication; disclosure; revelation.
- p. 290: illude: delude; deceive (*Webster's Third*).
- p. 290: "'More than the more,' and I would have the more": This phrase from James's *The Principles of Psychology*, vol. 1, chap. 13, was used earlier in the novel to express the epitome of greed (4.66 and its note, N4:40 which lists the ten chapters of the novel in which the phrase is used).
However, here in the presence of his father, who in truth has spoken minimally, Remy employs it to suggest "bounteous superfluity" or Lear's "superflux" which shows "the heavens more just" (3.4.35-36).
- p. 290: "were not 'stone' and 'serpent' to me": The reference is to Matt. 7:9-10 (KJV):
"Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?
/ Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?"
Speaking to his counter-self, Remy exults that it was not by chance he had brought the Qur'an since it was the instrument which made his father speak directly to him.
He maintains, "I hadn't purposed it, but it had to happen."

- p. 291: “a mist of *Inshallah!*”: An aura of “God willing!”
Remy’s response sends Anti-Remy into a philosophical rant in which he contends that Remy’s comments suggest this is a rational world, governed by a caring God, and thus imply that “everything connects.”
- p. 291: “How did we get this far? Why can’t we get that far?”: To prove there is no caring God, his Job’s comforter calls up the lines about pedophiles preying on helpless teenage boys from the Trimalchio’s number, “A Modest Proposal” (2.23 and 31): “How did we get this far? / Why—can’t—we—get—that—far?”
- p. 291: “Are there only phantom understudies . . . Can the living be resurrected, there being no death”: Anti-Remy contends that such a philosophical viewpoint would mean human impossibilities are superhumanly possible, therefore “foreordained”: The tortured understudy was a phantom and thus incapable of feeling pain since torture does not exist in this best of all possible worlds; Noura is still alive and can be rescued; his mother’s veil of mourning need not be donned and certainly not worn “forever”; and his father only appears to be blind for he can “see” the “letters.”
He then offers the paradox of the “living” (instead of the dead) being “resurrected.”
- p. 291: “‘forever-mourning’ veil”: See p. 282 and its above note, N17.24, for a description of this veil.
- p. 291: “soulful senses”: This oxymoron is designed to reinforce Anti-Remy’s argument.
- p. 291: “everything, everyone, affirms, ‘Everything disconnects’”: Anti-Remy scoffs at this deluded view of the universe and accuses Remy of “having taken leave of his soulful senses.”
That is, he has adopted a metaphysical view that nothing disconnects (the physical senses and the spiritual soul are one and the same) in lieu of the more plausible physical (sensuous) view which disconnects everything.
- p. 291: “Most irrefutably you do!”: Remy bypasses all that Anti-Remy has argued and instead answers his father’s avowal, “I have no son,” by affirming that “irrefutably” he does have one.
- p. 291: “the divider”: The sheet partitioning off his father’s part of the room.
Remy sees it not just as a room divider, but also as a familial symbol since once he passes through it, forever will he be separated from his father.
Wishing to delay this division as long as possible, Remy improvises his next speech. (The time in the attic is 10:24.)
- p. 291: “exacted a bond”: See the 15.253 note, N15:47-48, which lists instances of the bonding theme throughout the novel.

- p. 291: singular: The definition used in logic is intended: “of an individual or particular thing considered by itself.”
However, other meanings are pertinent: “unique, exceptional, remarkable, peculiar, or strange.”
- p. 291: gyre: As a noun, “a circular of spiral motion; whirl; revolution.”
This fear foreshadows a scene on 18.310.
- p. 291: “delivered you, measure for measure, to the point you trusted ‘is the defining confrontation’”: This sixth use of the “measure for measure” phrase in the novel defines Remy’s relationship with his father.
The sources are Matt. 7.2 (Geneva Bible): “. . . and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again,” and the title of Shakespeare’s play where it is also mentioned in the Duke’s speech condemning Angelo: “Like doth quit [requite] like, and measure still for measure” (5.1.419).
- p. 291: “defining confrontation”: A “defining moment,” that is, an event that results in a significant change for a person; a turning point.
The term “confrontation” is frequently sought out by Remy: On 2.18, he speaks of “a confrontation of brother [himself] and sister [Noura].”
On 5.78, he notes his “unsolicited confrontation with time” as he is driven through the Casbah for the first time.
On 10.154, in his first walk through the Casbah, he calls it a “spatial confrontation.”
However, his wording on 14.221—that Foucin is “terrified of a ‘meting-for-meting confrontation” with Houda—most nearly parallels his use of confrontation here on p. 291.
- p. 291: “he labored to wriggle out of your mother’s . . . shadowing ‘Forgive! Forgive!’”: Paraphrased here by Anti-Remy, the exact wording is given earlier on p. 282 as part of Remy’s reminiscence in the limo of what had happened in the attic.
- p. 291: “*Allahu Ak-awgh!*”: See the p. 282 note above, N17:24-25, which states that the context of his father’s breaking off of “*Akbar*” with “*awgh*” will be given on p. 291.
The clipping of the word is caused by his father’s beginning to vomit blood.
- p. 291: “feelers”: A “feeler” is a sensory tentacle of an animal.
Remy uses its plural metaphorically to designate the fingers and palm of his right hand.
Two emotive meanings of “feel” are also suggested: “to have sympathy or pity” and “to react emotionally or instinctively rather than as a result of rational or meditative analysis” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 291: “with my left [hand] I gripped my father’s crown . . . massaged . . . snap at the

atlas vertebra of the cervix”: Remy gives a summary of the steps of this massage three paragraph below: “a squeeze at the crown, a massaging to the nape, and a flourishing, thumb-ring-finger crack, to exorcise the poison.”

Also, see the description of Remy’s imaginary massage of his father on 11.185 and its two notes, N11.41.

p. 291: pollex: thumb.

p. 291: annulary: “ring finger” (*Webster’s Third*).

p. 291: atlas vertebra: The topmost cervical vertebra of the spine.

It is named for the mythical Atlas because this vertebra supports the head, metaphorically the globe.

p. 291: cervix: the back of the neck.

p. 291: “Father, father,’ the ‘foster-child of silence [Remy]’ mimed”: Since Remy “mimed” the words, he turns himself into the “foster-child of silence.”

As noted before on 15.239 and its note, N15:3, the phrase refers to the dumb Noura.

It is from line 2 of Keats’s “Grecian Urn,” in which the urn is called, “Thou foster-child of silence.”

Thus both of the Naaman siblings are considered as “foster-child[ren]”: Noura has a greater allegiance to God than to her human family (even her parents and brother admit) and Remy forfeited full familial rights through deserting his family.

p. 291: “Father, Father, what have I brought you to”: See the p. 281 note above, N17:23, which lists the other places in the novel where this indictment appears.

p. 291: watchword: “a word or motto that embodies a principle or guide to action of an individual or group”; “a guiding principle” (*Webster’s Third*).

p. 291: cervical plexus: “a plexus [or network] formed by the anterior divisions of the four upper cervical nerves” (*Webster’s Third*).

p. 291: “his old-man’s blood”: From *Macbeth* 5.1.38-39, whee the sleepwalking Lady Macbeth says of King Duncan, “Yet who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him?”

p. 291: ganglion: A mass of nerve cells serving as a center from which nerve impulses are transmitted.

p. 291: phthisic: Of or relating to “any wasting disease, as tuberculosis of the lungs.”

p. 291: “on the military cuff”: The mystery of how the drop of blood (282) got on the

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cuff of the jacket of Jacques' uniform is solved.

p. 291: rimple: As a noun, "wrinkle" or "fold."

p. 291: stagnum: "a pool of water without an outlet" (*Webster's Third*).

p. 291: "the fury of free will": The previous use of "free will" in the novel was mock-comical: Mohammed on his sexual preferences (4.67).

p. 291: *son cher père*: French for "his dear father."

p. 291: "Munkar! Nakir!": As mentioned in the p. 289 note above, Munkar and Nakir are the two angels who question the recent dead. Ironically, in a sign of his agitation, here Remy is questioning them.

p. 291: scriven: A transitive verb meaning "to put in writing" or "to write." *Webster's Third* lists it as "archaic," but the example it gives is from the 20th-century poet Wallace Stevens.

- p. 292: “in you was ‘foisoned’ a hopeful tinge of doubt . . . a slow coming to belief seeded in him”: Remy begins to put aside his doubt that his father does not know who he is, and he is positive that a seed of belief was growing in his father that the person before him is his son.
- p. 292: foison: A verb formed from the archaic noun “foison” meaning “a rich harvest.”
Neither *Webster’s Third* nor other dictionaries that I consulted listed a verb form for it.
However, it appears in Gower’s *Confessio Amantis* as a transitive verb and in several contemporary sources, such as Garry Will’s *Sexual Offenses: Saint Augustine’s Sin* and Bauer-Slate’s online study of Hugo.
- p. 292: seeded: As an intransitive verb, “to form seeds; specifically, to become ripe and produce seeds.”
- p. 292: “Go! . . . leave! . . . You go!”: Although not specified, old Naaman instinctively wants to protect his son.
His directive springs from his concern that the longer his son stays the greater the danger to him.
The time in the attic is 10:29.
- p. 292: puling: The gerund of “pule,” meaning “whining,” although typically used not to describe a beggar’s request but what a sick or fretful child (such as Remy has become at this point) does.
- p. 292: “inserted the redundant pronoun, having never lost his French”: In French, “Go!” can be rendered as either “*Allez!*” (“Go!”) or “*Vous, allez!*” (“You, go!”).
- p. 292: “if your son were here”: No longer dramatically ironic for old Naaman is doubtless convinced that the person in front of him is his son.
- p. 292: *droit-à-gauche*: French for “right-to-left.”
- p. 292: collogue: to converse privately.
- p. 292: “So she’s a Jewess . . . at least, she’s of the Book, its circumcised leaf”: Muslims refer to Jews and Christians as “People of the Book” (*Ahl al-Kitab*, in Arabic), since all three religions have their origins in the teachings by Abraham about the worship of the One God.
Thus, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are called the Abrahamic religions.
Of the three, only Christianity does not require circumcision; thus uncircumcised Christians are considered by Jews and Muslims as “unclean.”
- p. 292: leaf: A sheet of paper, especially as part of a book.
Here it is used by old Naaman synecdochically to refer to those pages of the

Qur'an and the Torah that speak about circumcision.

- p. 292: “[Ballard likewise was a Jew . . . was he not?] The following five paragraphs are bracketed to indicate that Remy’s Anti-Self has broken the chronology of the attic account.

In his taxi dream, recalling his father’s statement about “Jewess,” “impostor” and “circumcised,” Remy will make his twin discoveries.

From two places, Remy had heard about Ballard being a Jew. On 9.141 Ahmed Chabane told him that the American had revealed to him that he was born a Jew and had been circumcised on the eighth day after birth.

Leila confirmed Ballard’s his Jewish heritage (9.144).

The reader knows about it from the second page of the text, 1.2.

- p. 292: “Ridgemont alias”: Ballard says that a fake ID card in his billfold . . . identified him as John Ridgemont” (1.7).

Mohammed maintains he knew him only by this fake first name, “M. John” (4.62).

Ballard introduced himself to Houda as “John Ridgemont” (12.249).

Leila used “John Ridgemont” in speaking of her husband (14.248), but she apparently learned about this alias only after his death.

- p. 292: “the origin of your limousine illation”: Back in the limousine, Remy thinks, “I entered as an impostor and became myself, only to leave as that impostor” (281). Here Remy acknowledges that his thoughts about “impostor” originated in his father’s use of the compound noun “impostor-son.”

- p. 292: *sadeek*: Arabic for “friend.”

- p. 292: “joked . . . goodbyes were gaily vented . . . surly ‘silence’”: On 4.64 Mohammed characterized Ballard as one who “would make me laugh.”

Mohammed said that after their sex Ballard’s “words, euphonious, wafted from behind the [bathroom] door” (4.64) and on 6.85, he noted that “from the toilet, a cheery voice confirmed our next meeting.”

The words “gaily vented” contain a sexual pun on “gallivanted” in its archaic sense, “to gad about with members of the opposite sex.”

On 4.64, Mohammed mentioned that “I could speak if exigent, though he would never ‘banter’ during sex.”

- p. 292: “‘the rest’ (the sexual interlude) was surly ‘silence’”: Based on Hamlet’s last words, “The rest is silence” (5.2.360).

- p. 292: “why such a mood inversion had even been necessary . . . an ‘impostOr’ (or alternately himself) in the . . . interim between his coming and his going. Like (yet unlike) me!”: The half-dreaming Remy can understand why he himself had to use a disguise, but he wonders why Ballard had to employ one.

Outside the Toumi room, the American was jovial and talkative (his true self, for

instance, as seen by Leila and most of his coworkers at the embassy).

Inside the room, during sex with Mohammed, he was silent and sometimes gruff. However, afterward when he had retreated to the bathroom, he called out good-naturedly to Mohammed, usually about their next meeting.

Thus applying to Ballard Remy's own thoughts about himself before, during, and after his meeting with his father (281), Remy concludes that like him Ballard "entered as an impostor [a person with a pleasant nature] and became himself [his silent moodiness in the room], only to leave as that impostor [his affable self]," although Remy acknowledges that at two places in the sentence "an impostor" could be replaced by "himself" and "impostor" could become "himself" at once point.

Because of that addendum, Remy concedes that Ballard's actions show him to be "like" Remy (in assuming an alias) but "unlike" him (in having a need to become another).

This questioning of Ballard's true nature finally leads Remy to question the sexuality of Leila's husband.

- p. 292: "Jew-Screwed": Anti-Remy recalls the garbled nursery rhyme of 16.274: "Couldn't put Jew Screwed together again."
He uses it to phrase crudely what went on in "the sexual interlude": Belmazoir had anal intercourse with (the slang "screwed") the willing Jew, Ballard.
His anti-self's revival of the religion which his father had mentioned causes Remy to think of a third term his father had used: "circumcised."
- p. 292: "spang": A chiefly Scottish word meaning "a sudden violent movement" (*Webster's Third*).
- p. 292: "Houda must have been wrong, that mention of Ballard's foreskin": On 15.251, she described his member as "dwindling into its veil [foreskin]." On 15.253, she said that the one she had "fondled a week before" was "uncircumcised."
- p. 292: "But was Mohammed also in error?": On 6.84, an addled Mohammed describes the glans and foreskin of Ballard's penis: "The, uh, head, uh, uh, was . . . hidden. I, uh, exposed it."
- p. 292: "O limèd soul that, struggling to be free / Art more engaged [entangled]!": From *Hamlet* 3.3.68-69. The lines are spoken by Claudius just before he kneels to pray.
"Lime" refers to birdlime, a sticky substance used to ensnare birds.
On 18.295, another "entangling" image will be used by Remy: "Extricated from one burning robe, am I to don another?"
- p. 292: "But how adamant had Leila been that her husband was not a sexual impostor!": At their first meeting Leila called Remy's accusation that Ballard was a homosexual "a lie" (9.144) and continued that "nothing connects my husband to that slander" (9.144).

At their next meeting, she reaffirmed that she did not accept the “caricature of him” as a homosexual (12.191) and by revealing their intimacy seeks “to dispel [Remy’s] cliché” portrayal of her husband (12.191).

[Note: Leila’s use of “lie,” “slander,” and “caricature” is not meant to sound homophobic. She simply means that this charge of homosexuality is conveniently hurled against Ballard in the same way as anti-Semitic remarks about him have been; either the sexual or religious aspect is employed to reduce a person to less than or distastefully different from other human beings.

In summarizing her statements under the category “sexual impostor,” Remy likewise is not characterizing all homosexuals as impostors. He shows no prejudice toward the homosexual waiter Saul and seems to believe HIV is adopting a homosexual pose, which would make him a sexual impostor. He clearly distinguishes between them and the pedophiles, the Bab el Oued *alim* and Tinfingers, both of whom use their positions to exploit young people.

Like Leila and Remy, I hold that homosexuality is as valid a sexual experience as heterosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, transgenderism, or any sexual encounter not harmful to or exploitive of either partner.

One becomes a sexual impostor by assuming a sexual preference which is based on pretense. For example, for many years many male homosexuals were forced by society to enter a sham marriage with a woman in order to survive or escape from being a social outcast.

Remy, Vellacott, and Devereaux posit that that Ballard did in “marrying” Leila (5.74,75, and 77); consequently, for much of the novel he is viewed as a sexual imposter.]

- p. 292: “dreg of the past”: His anti-self uses this phrase in referring to Remy’s father. He had also used similar wording on p. 290, “If the dregs of the future settle on the bottom of the past.”
The superego aspect of Remy’s mind does not desire him to look to the future (for instance, to the fate of Mohammed and Houda), but to the past, his life in France.
He argues that since Remy has completed his mission by meeting with his father he must leave Algiers immediately or face being exposed and executed as the seventh traitor (not stated, but implied in Anti-Remy’s desperate tone).
- p. 292: “And no son and grandson”: The action returns to Remy’s father continuation of his speech before the bracketed, five-paragraph insertion.
In his narrative about the family of old Naaman’s son, “Jacques” said that Omar/Remy had only daughters and granddaughters: “Francoise’s and Claudia’s births . . . the girls’ weddings, your granddaughters” (290).
- p. 292: “insisting that the real can rise out of th’artificial”: See Saul’s two references to the artificial becoming the real on 2.28 and 34.
- p. 292: delusionist: “one given to deluding or to having delusions” (*Webster’s Third*).

- p. 292: *conclusio*: In classical Roman rhetoric, the standard format for argumentation had six steps, the last being the *conclusio*. Here the argument is summarized, the urgency of the viewpoint is stressed, and a call to action about the needed remedies is given. Anti-Remy says that the *conclusio* here is anticlimactic since the “call to action” which old Naaman asks “Jacques” to deliver to his “impostor-son” was imagined by Remy at Trimalchio’s (2.20).
- p. 292: “in the beginning—supposing Trimalchio’s can be so sacredly dubbed”: The obvious Biblical reference continues the sacrilegious attitude of Anti-Remy.
- p. 292: “the pristine harangue you scripted . . . “The haj I never could””: Remy had foreseen that his father would make this suggestion: “If I made that trip [to Algiers], without stipulating he would impose a haj on me, a second, a third, a fourth” (2. 20).
- p. 292: patripassian heresy: The belief, denied by most Christians, that God the father shared in the human sufferings of Christ his son. Just as Remy reverses the Biblical doctrine that the sins of the father are visited upon his son by maintaining that his sins were visited upon his father, so here the heresy is reversed: the physical sufferings of the father are taken up by the son. In noting that his father refused to exact a *nathr* (promise to God) for Remy to perform a second *haj* (for his mother), a third (for Noura), and a fourth (for him, old Naaman), Remy stresses his father’s love. His father is concerned only with Remy doing a haj that will insure salvation for himself. Remy understands the benevolent motive behind his father’s words and expresses this realization in saying that the hajjes for others “were not yoked” with the first haj exacted. This idea (that a person shows love for another by trying to lessen their burdens, as old Naaman attempts to lessen his son’s) is met by a contrary idea (that a person desires to manifest his love for another by increasing his burdens, as Remy wishes). Suffering must be increased in order for repentance to be complete; hence Remy’s sadness because “they [the other hajjes] were not yoked.” This self-flagellation will be seen on 19.314, where a load will be increased, an augmentation which both literally and figuratively suggests that such enriching suffering is needed in order to gain repentance. Compare this concept with the self-punishments of the sinners in *Purgatorio* or Dimmesdale’s self-flagellation in *The Scarlet Letter*. A final note on this passage: Although at its time Remy seems disappointed at not being urged to do additional hajjes, by that afternoon he seems to have gained an accommodation with what his father meant by the omissions. On p. 287, as he and Foucin are ready to leave his hotel room, on his unselfish trip to the prison, Remy decides that he “must lay by” thoughts about the insufferable condition in which he was leaving his father (and thereby mitigating

the condition in which he left his family twenty-eight ago).

He says that he must relegate his father “to the Qur’an-suffused, sheet-divided loft,” in essence to God.

This conclusion I borrowed from *Hamlet* (for any writer must a borrower be and hope to be a lender to other writers).

On 5.2.10-11, Hamlet concludes that he can do no more to avenge his father. Divinity must do the rest: “There’s a divinity that shapes our ends, / Rough-hew them how we will.”

Significantly on 21.363, Remy will ask a Muslim man whom he trusts to ensure that his father is buried properly.

p. 292: “Everything disconnects”: Anti-Remy, however, seizes on this admission by Remy that in this instance the connection which he thought would follow did not.

From this absence he generalizes that Remy must accept the philosophical concept that there is no connecting force in the world.

Remy leaves the room at 10:31, directly after his father says, “The haj I never could.”

Thus the last word of Remy’s taxi dream is given to his anti-self since he contends that old Naaman’s failure to impose on Remy the other hajjes proves his point, that “everything disconnects,” the title of this chapter.