

Chapter Six

IN IMITATION OF HIV

“Anyone who can swat a fly can kill a man. You did, did you not?”

Remy, his list of the dead completed, averted his eyes with a gaze westward and upward. Through the window of the taxi, its glass streaked by Algiers’ almost daily April showers, he descried atop the distant hill the umber-hued Notre Dame d’Afrique, long relegated by the Muslim state to a tourist-attraction curiosity, its Black Madonna inside, her words, “Pray for us and our Muslims,” issuing not from a pedestal below her *pieds noirs*, “black feet,” but floating like a gigantic halo on the apse above her head.

He knew his destination was imminent, for the cathedral seemed to cast a “hypothetical shadow” over Zaracova Beach.

At 10:30 that morning, Belmazoir had spoken of blackmail—*chantage* (in French a colorless-coded hisser)—which in time fortuitously led to an allusive *trou noir*, “black hole.” The technical term initially surprised Remy, until he considered that among his clientele, there probably had been a British Einsteinist who, having unwrapped his tongue from around the youth’s glans penis, babbled some physical lore.

“I’ve become a black hole,” Belmazoir had mourned, although Remy was conscious it was he himself (in the taxi) who had amended the verb tense from past to present perfect.

“Verbatim,” however, “is better.”

“Let me revise my previous question,” the prisoner had commenced without a greeting, for he was already positioned at the grating, “substituting ‘blackmail’ for ‘murder.’ Why would I blackmail M. John? Shake an apple tree which on its own has the generous inclination to drop its fruit?”

To some scarcely subtle appeals for baksheesh at the second and third stations—Belmazoir’s “amiable” guard having “disseminated that I’m no stingy Vellacott”—Remy had overcompensated, thereby ensuring a cooperative reception, and with this *gardien* again posted at the rear door, the two no longer felt the need to colloquy so softly as on Monday.

“But the ‘apple tree’ would soon be barren, to extend your metaphor—and here my argument imitates a possible line of reasoning by M. Foucin. This amity had entered its ‘ninth-month midnight’: M. Ballard was returning to America.”

“Never an inkling he gave of that: Scrapping . . . leaving me.”

Remy decided not to pursue this assertion at once. Instead he set forth to describe his trip to Bab el Oued, engaging the *captif* merely once to solicit the name of the woman leaning her corpulence out the window.

His account culminated with an altruistic rationale: “I speculate that the guards seldom, if ever, body-search women visitors, still why involve your sister in a risk not required?”

“Kind of you” was mumbled with a lackadaisical smile. “I’ve embroiled her in what she shouldn’t be.” Belmazoir’s sigh contained an “excess” of self-accusing incrimination.

“Oh yes,” Remy added, “while exiting, I met this French-speaking teenager Ghazi beside the stairs. For a dinar I received a full translation of the exchange between Madame—what did you say her name is?”

“Bourceli,” Belmazoir replied, his tinge of facial puzzlement vanishing with the discovery of how Remy had been able to summarize the conversation.

“Between Mme. Bourceli and the holy man. But I neglected to inquire of M. Ghazi what was meant by ‘the sweet smell of Ramadan,’ a phrase that inexplicably triggered the *alim* more fiercely to brandish a fist at her, grab me by my coat sleeve, and as I was tugged from the courtyard, push the just-agitated hand to the fore, in demand of his balance due.”

Since Remy’s account had censored Bourceli’s first question about Belmazoir’s mother and her summoning Houda to clean the toilet, the stripling began to snigger. “‘The sweet smell of Ramadan,’ she thundered! Wicked words for wicked ears.”

The youth stopped to chuckle again. “The Prophet Mohammed—and I mouth, ‘Peace be upon Him,’ only because my mother’s dying—was accosted in Ramadan by a sectary, who complained that fasting leaves a weedy stench to one’s breath. ‘Foul odor?’ the Prophet (PBUH) queried in mock disbelief, and casting his eyes heavenward, averred churlishly, ‘Of all smells, the sweetest.’”

Out of respect for his father, who with awe had narrated the Hadith to him (a boy of five), in lieu of participating in Belmazoir’s closing roulade of laughter, Remy spoke over it, “Ah, now I comprehend.” After a pause, beaming, he asked, “Must I give you a dinar?”

Belmazoir’s mirth settled into an appreciative grin.

“A story your M. John would have enjoyed. So he didn’t mention he was America-bound, a commitment struck in mid-January. Think, monsieur, did his conduct or mood alter during that month or the next?”

Remy waited, hoping that Belmazoir had been lulled into offering something. “Yes,” he finally rejoined. “Always I feared losing him. He could have stipulated them before.”

Glancing from side to side, he had slightly tilted forward, his countenance a mixture of vacillation and pain, and whispered, “I sucked his cock, and he tried to fuck me.”

2

“‘Tried to,’” as at the prison, Remy reiterated to himself. He was clipping the gold-tone dangle earring to his left lobe, having stalled till his Zaracova cabman had pulled away.

It was not that sex stales, as Belmazoir had observed, although there “he’s more of an expert than I,” Remy had told himself during the unwinding of the “long [venereal] preamble” leading up to the last two “intimacies” with Ballard: A nine-day amour with a middle-aged Dutch tourist—“I was a veteran fifteen!”

In the inceptive sessions, she had “‘domed’ my penis, disengaging her prognathous mouth” from time to time “to gape and gawk. A banging ritual, she ordered up the next three, and the succeeding two, ‘Ass-fuck!’ she pleaded. Nearing her room for the climactic frolic, I wondered, ‘What goodbye dose of love does “smelly breasts” have in the offing?’

“Prop by prop, I found out: She costumed me in a brassiere, a chiffon gown, a blond wig, all clapped on topsy-turvy. Belly-down on the bed, through the false strands which masked my features, I peeked back, past the cups strapped to my shoulder blades, and beheld her swaggering forward with a dildo thonged to her cunt.

“Subsequently I realized, ‘With cunning persistence, my cock had been hustled into the backdrop.’ It was not that I had tumbled into a black hole, but, with the pegging godemiché apace, I had become a black hole.”

His bowed head was raised slowly to reveal half-drooped eyelids. “Now you’ll understand the truth I speak, for I have slept with more o’ the world than Cleopatra, and thus am wise: We dingus-laden always have the deep-seated fear our sex will stale. Thus ’twas natural, this first time in my life having chanced on a windfall, I’d foster the dread his ardor, imitative, would dissipate.” He interposed two “stage business” tugs at his right earlobe.

“Ah, well. At our penultimate bedding, while I was hosing him, M. John asudden clamped my and guided it under his belly to his groin. A wave of chilling alarm swamped me, for his member was so shrunk within I could barely find it. How long had it been such and so, that my pumped air into his ass had not puffed up his cock?

“As he turned onto his side, slipping out my dong, his arm cradled my neck and piloted my face onto his chest. I was tonguing a lip-sealed nipple when, correcting my misreading of his cue, he started to nudge my head past his navel, across his guts, and into his pubes.”

Belmazoir halted, to distinguish his commentary from the scene he was limning. “It was nothing I hadn’t done to others before.”

Perfunctorily Remy took a notepad and pen from his right inner pocket. “And that was when? Use the murder as your reference point.” Belmazoir pondered, his ticking chin registering his calculations. “The fourth week.”

Having neatly printed “27 Feb the homicide,” Remy made four downward ink jabs at the paper. “Good, 30 January.” Still intent on the sheet, he stolidly ordered, “Continue.”

The interruption had seemingly flustered Belmazoir. “The, uh, head, uh, uh, was . . . hidden. I, uh, exposed it and, uh, began to kiss it. The, the anxiety . . . lurked, yet I—and this certainty kept me from panicking: It didn’t want me there, still he did.”

The tempo gradually accelerated. “I calmed it, in the same way a mother cat swathes the one of her kindle not purring, the runt she divines would as lief not live. With my tongue twined about, I lipped it. A minute on in seven grunting squirts he ejaculated. This crisis well-managed, I felt I hadn’t lost him. Not like the following week, our last together.”

Belmazoir paused to stroke his right nosewing. “My anal devoir consummated, I’d sucked him stiff, and he, gripping my hair, had lifted my head. Lordly, I expanded my chest to receive his cum. However, his hand must have been groping about the nightstand, for a second cellophane packet was wedged into my right. Though not presaged, it wasn’t a jolt.”

This time Belmazoir threw back his shoulders to indicate the impending gloss. “Nothing I hadn’t had done to me before.” The pause was also briefer.

“‘Quick or it’ll go dead,’ I chided myself. As I implied, it wasn’t smoothly handled. I’m adept with the tongue, a confident fellator. But this would be dependent on him, at least until I manipulated it inside, and even then you never know.

“Posthaste I slid the condom onto his penis, already receding in my pumping clutch, and with a flip onto my belly, rolling him with me, steered it to my asshole. I commenced to frisk, grimly aware it was hardly past my sphincter. After a few thrusts, he spit out a guttural ‘Damn!’ and jerked away viciously, leaving the rubber sticking in my crack.

“I spun around and fell upon his cock. Patting my head, he let me blow awhile before he hooked my chin and drew my face to his, taking my breath as his air, bequeathing his as mine. ‘Ah, my M. John!’ I murmured through the caress, ‘My M. John!’

“The kiss tiring, he quit the bed. Sloughed in despond I brooded till from the toilet a cheery voice confirmed our next meeting.”

“To which he did not come.”

The earring foreign to his lobe, Remy’s tweak at it occasioned the hollow heart, gold with pink acrylic sprinkles, suspended from a one-centimeter chain, to whirl and graze against his left carotid. “In the rays bouncing off Zaracova’s sands, it glitters,” he smirked.

Belmazoir had not bothered to jiggle a reaffirming no.

Hence you had lost him and your apple dreams, Remy, still in the guise of Foucin, deliberated advancing, *such reckless abandonment a throbbing enticement to kill him*.

“It’s not what you’re thinking,” an intuitive Belmazoir protested. “Three days after standing me up, M. John, as you know, telephoned, leaving the message with Fouad at Bendari’s, and scheduled the palm grove rendezvous.” His fists were clenched and quivering. “Bizarre treatment of a reject, wouldn’t you—even Foucin—concede?”

Amid the pad’s circled notations, the lacuna flaunted itself: “30 Jan sucked,” “6 Feb fucked,” “13 Feb no show,” . . . , “27 Feb the homicide.”

“‘Three days,’ monsieur? You must have misspoken. Ten, for a week’s unaccounted for,” he had contemplated acquainting the prisoner, before quashing the notion.

In his NY Yankee baseball cap, lime-banded Swatch, and beach thongs with mismatched fluorescent straps, as he trudged through the gray sand of a largely deserted Zaracova Beach, outfitted in a Hawaiian beach shirt of too many clashing hues for him to count, a pair of Bermuda shorts, the front pattern of which was orange boys and green girls in various erect, hunched, squatting, or recumbent poses, and the posterior design a giant azure fountain emanating from his gluteal cleft and spewing forth pink minnows to spell the vaulting English word *LOVE*, the shorts held up by a mauve and cinnamon-colored plastic belt, its silver buckle shaped like a nosegay, Remy concluded, “No, the *jeune homme* had not grown ‘stale, flat, and unprofitable’ to a ‘weary’ Ballard.”

For the eighth time, he halted to shift the white patent-leather woman’s clutch purse to his left hand and with his right tug anew at his earringed *lobe de l’oreille*. “By all logic, Ballard, who had wearied of himself and become his own black hole,” Remy susurrated as he stepped from sand to cement, “should have gone there to murder Belmazoir.”

With a peek at his Vacheron (11:02), Remy had stepped away from the grating, his further probing of Belmazoir's activities in the grove completed. Five hundred would be deposited at check-in, he yawned, as much to the approaching guard as to the inmate. Then, "quite inadvertent" his stress on the pronoun, he had declared, "I will return after two days."

3

In Le Puy, Remy had realized that for the persona foisted on him to succeed, he had to become not Ballard, "a horrible thought" (DGSE's predilection, which had gone unnoticed until two evenings ago), but a moveable imitation of him.

While Marie was preparing dinner, he had abstracted from Vellacott's reports a seven-part chronology of Ballard's verifiable experiences: 3:13 (leaves embassy); c. 3:40-3:45 (in Zaracova's changing room); c. 5:00 (near the end of his swim); c. 6:25 (returns to *vestiaire*); 6:39 (leaves it); 7:15 (time set for the rendezvous); and 10:51 (police find Ballard's corpse).

Of course, there was an eighth time, Belmazoir's 7:30, when to both the police and Vellacott he approximated he stumbled on the body. It and the 7:15 he had repeated that morning at the prison while describing his actions on the night of the murder.

"7:15," the prisoner sighed, exasperated by Remy's interruptions to verify an admission. "They have it in writing, M. John's instructions to me, 'Zaracova disco, 7:15 Monday,' taken down as I stated several minutes ago by the manager of a café where I get such telephone messages." He sneered a grin. "Our shack's without that public utility."

When Remy did not respond to the sarcasm, Belmazoir continued, "Likewise you're apprised I was a little tardy. In Algiers, nothing's on time except the prayer calls."

"By how many minutes late?"

"Fifteen or so: Satisfying makes one blasé! M. John knew I was a chronic laggard."

Remy squinched his brow, but instructed him to proceed. In the grove, he progressed to the disco where, "courtesy of a breeze that cracked the canopy," he chanced upon the body.

Taken unawares by Remy's next question, he shied away from addressing what he felt on recognizing that the battered face overhanging the top step was that of his "*bon ami*."

Rather, he skipped defiantly to a query of his own, "Why did I rifle his wallet?" His hand brushed the air. "Knowing that I hadn't killed him, M. John would have wanted me to take the money . . . and to spend it fast since they'd—he'd—be on my tail soon."

That night—"a son, God willing, conceived"—after Marie's weeping had yielded to snoring (against the grain of every marriage, for twenty-six years it had always comforted him), he had mentally driven with Ballard from the U.S. embassy (3:13; sign-out sheet), presumably straight to Zaracova.

"I traversed the sand with him and entered the public changing room (c. 3:45, according to its attendant), averting my eyes while he donned his bikini. Then I shadowed him as he located a sunbathing spot and swam, observed off and on by this attendant Mohisen. On his instruction at c. 5:00, a waiter from the adjacent café brought a beer and a cigarette pack, placing them on Ballard's towel, his swim near its end.

“He partook of these and may have napped an hour or so, tired by his swim (my supposition from a poor vantage point). However, I trailed him as he ambled back to the changing room, arriving at c. 6:25 (this Mohisen). Over the next fifteen or so minutes he showered and re-dressed, exiting at exactly 6:39 (‘for I heard the lining-up call for Maghrib prayers’ verbatim Mohisen, and bolstered by a customer).”

“Still his faithful umbra, I tagged along in his ten-minute traipse to the grove (Vellacott’s team), into which he slipped. And, the sole witness save one, watched as on the portico of its disco the rash erotopath was slain between 6:49 and 7:30 (the latter time, Belmazoir’s).

So the lines and whorls of the mysterious fingerprints had not been, from the first, the lure of Zaracova. Instead, “A conspicuous gap! Why had Ballard left so early, 6:39, for a 7:15 meeting? To return to his car for something? To meet another?”

4

“If not these, what else will convince that I’m a gay American tourist?” Remy, back from the prison, had self-bantered, contented with his purchases from the nearby Bon Marché and the Al-Nigma’s well-stocked boutique. “Still,” and this enhanced the gratification, “what will DGSE make of these two particular items on the receipt: a woman’s pair of earrings”—for the clerk would not sell him just one—“and a clutch bag?”

The 2:45 to Foucin had been dialed with the confidence that phone lines are not peepholes, for he was abashed at the thought of the *commissaire divisionnaire* spying him in the smeared palette of beach shirt and bermudas. The earring he had stashed in the large right pocket of the shorts although he fiddled with it throughout the conversation.

“Could I speak with Commissioner Foucin? This is M. Christian Lazar,” Remy informed the secretary. He discerned how greatly he intrigued Foucin since within thirty seconds an extension was picked up. Each man devoted merely a sentence to pleasantries.

“Impertinent, I own, is my petition. Forgive me, yet could I meet you at your office at 6:45 today?” Had Foucin remonstrated, “It’s Ramadan! So unversed in our customs, do you not appreciate at that time I’ll be readying my house to break the *sawm* (‘fast’)?” he was reconciled to set the conference for the next day. However, Foucin, with only a brief hesitation, said, “Although I’d not planned to be here, since you desire, I will.”

After copiously thanking him, Remy proceeded, “And could your department’s forensic specialist in fingerprint identification also be on hand?”

No dawdling in this response, “*Parbleu!*” The tone and rhythm of his “But of course!” expressed the amused deference of an “Any others? The prime minister? President Bendjedid himself?”

Yes, he can’t run the risk I’m not a virtuosic detective, putting down the receiver, Remy blithely commended himself. Twisting around, through the bathroom doorway he caught himself (“or my mask”) in its vanity mirror.

“Marie, Marie, what would you think if you beheld your Remy now, primped in the helter-skelter of a pop artist’s rainbow? Undoing God’s, as lacking imagination.”

He retrieved the earring and upraised it to his left lobe. “HIV,” he tittered, “are not you totally enchanted by HIV-2?”

Too embarrassed to walk through the lobby of the Al-Nigma, he had ridden the elevator to the underground parking lot. Two blocks from the hotel, he hailed a taxi, in French instructing its *chauffeur*, “To Zaracova via the coastal boulevard.”

Pulling onto Zirout Boulevard brought Remy eye-to-eye with the bay in daylight. One glimpse was all it took to evoke that Saturday in '56 when some Casbah pals and he had paddled a raft far out into its Mediterranean basin.

By then, everything had undergone political subsumption, the likely impetus for Khaleel, perceiving his stare into the gap, to crawl over, drape an arm across his shoulders, and verbalize the metaphor he was positive Omar had been fashioning: “It’s the keyhole the FLN shall pick. Once the door of Algiers is opened,—we’ll tend to it; you take care of Noura—the mansion of Algeria shall be ours.”

His best friend had been wrong (at that time) as had the insurrection’s leaders, most of whom one day would be designed the *neuf historiques*, Algeria’s “nine founding fathers.”

At a well-camouflaged summit, they approved the recommendation of Algiers’ political leader, the thirty-four year-old Larbi Ben M’hidi, to transfer the conflict, in its lackadaisical twenty-first month, from the countryside to the capital: “An eight-day workers’ strike will blazon the ‘depth’ of our aspiration to be free: No Muslim goes to work for his French ‘masters.’ All Arab shops in Algiers shall be closed.”

The Casbah, with its 100,000 Muslims crammed into one square kilometer, was primed: A hierarchy of one thousand four hundred FLN operatives; a newspaper, a primitive radio station, and several bomb-making factories, all clandestine and moveable. The last, under the skillful direction of M’hidi’s military commander Saadi Yacef, had already unnerved the city’s French sectors through two intrusive 1956 blasts.

“Uproot their shutters,” Algeria’s Governor-General Robert Lacoste had prescribed to *his* military commander Gen. Jacques Massu, the head of the 10th French paratrooper division, the unit assigned to suppress the FLN insurrection in the capital.

On the morning of the strike his armored trucks sped toward any closed Muslim shops. With hawsers attached to the sealed metal frame of a targeted store, the engine of the truck revved and nimbly plunked it from its fixture. Its protection decorticated, the looting which Massu had bargained on ensued. Its hapless Muslim proprietor could only watch.

Upon the Casbah other “paras” swooped down. Strikers were lugged from their homes, tossed into waiting busses, and, beaten all the way, chauffeured to their French places of employment. Even their children were quick-stepped to school.

“Within an hour,” Massu blustered, the strike was broken. However, a tac for tic, tit for tat, had resulted.

“But atrocities are not names. How many of the thousands killed in the two-hundred fifty-four days from the initiation of the strike, 28 January 1957, to the tracking-down death of Ali la Pointe, the last FLN leader in Algiers, on 8 October, can you toll in the fifteen minutes the cab will need to reach Zaracova?” Remy asked himself.

Nathr-bound, he had been obligated to stand aside during this urban guerilla warfare since, as his father’s eyes reminded him and the Casbah accepted, his mission was not to free Algeria from the French, but to ensure Noura was not made a captive of this world.

However, Ali la Pointe’s defiant courage—spurning surrender, preferring death to

profane submission—changed all. Within a week of it, Omar had swerved from his pledge and, with no remnant left of the Casbah's FLN, secretly joined its branch in nearby Blida.

On “my traitor's honor roll of martyrs,” first was M'hidi, whose body was found dangling from the window's top crossbar of his prison cell, according to the French. That was thirty-seven days into the strike-initiated confrontation, nineteen after the FLN leaders had conceded it a debacle, and a further ten when paras dragged M'hidi from a “safe house.”

Not French torture, but his own—“from my reckless decision,” the FLN's presence in Algiers had been virtually wiped out—constrained him nine days later (Remy romanticized) to fabricate a noose from strips of his prison shirt.

Heaving himself onto the windowsill, he slipped it around his neck and secured its “bitter end” to the bars. Satisfied that in *this* endeavor there would be no fiasco, he jumped, his last struggle dedicated to preventing his feet from instinctively seeking a cement-block toehold.

Next, Samia Hedouci, whom Omar's father had considered trothing him to before she voluntarily joined the female “corps” of Saadi Yacef, in charge of the resistance after M'hidi's death. The French had girded the Casbah with a three-meter-high barbed-wire fence, broken by five checkpoints through which those entering or exiting had to pass.

Samia was attempting to smuggle a bomb out in a rouge case—so adept had the munitions crew become—when a blockade soldier, wedging a hand into her bag, jostled it. High-powered hoses washed conjoined Muslim and Christian flesh from the fence.

Mourad and Kamel—Remy obeisantly used their *noms de guerre*—bombers extraordinaire, willingly hoisted with their own petard to taunt the besetting paras. Their pseudonyms were awe-gasped by Casbahians, vaunting over their sensible acts of random violence, e.g., the bomb sneaked under the platform of Algiers' Casino which disemboweled its unlucky bandleader and left severed feet in the shoes of young *pied-noir* dancers.

“Have I hurtled to the end of August?” and Remy solicited pardon of the martyrs he had bypassed, particularly those whom Col. Marcel Bigeard's colonial paratroopers, landing by helicopter on the Casbah's flat roofs, carted off to *Les tombeaux*.

Ali la Pointe: The pretty child, so adonic that the pederast beggars of the Casbah fought over his glance. Rescued from pimping by Yacef, he was with him at 3 Rue Caton, a street as narrow as one of the *maison-par-maison* tunnels which Yacef's miners had built.

(It was he who had audaciously proposed a subterrestrial route to extend beyond the Casbah, thereby frustrating the blockade. Twenty-eight months after the barbed wire and checkpoints had come down, with the Casbah presumably pacified and its Hydra-beheaded-and-cauterized FLN groping to reform, Yacef's idea was taken up by Omar's friend Khaleel and two fellow students, engineering majors, at Algiers University. “I helped in the tunnel's construction,” Remy meekly added, “if only by keeping it from my French case officer.”)

As for Ali, on September 22, with only around fifty FLN operatives still in the Casbah, he forsook his typical silence.

“*Le grand frère*,” he tutoyered Yacef, “with thy permission, I'll be off to ration forty paupers”: the Muslim ritual, feeding forty, when a man believes he is about to die.

Not for a month and a half, it turned out, though his “big brother” was captured two days later. “Get him out of the way,” Remy prodded himself, for he knew his epilogue, having pored over Horne's 1977 *A Savage War of Peace*. Though sentenced to death and

imprisoned in France, on the eve of Algerian independence in 1962, Yacef was amnestied. He repaired to Algeria as a *passé hero*, accorded status, but denied power.

Turning to the cinema, he helped script the acclaimed 1966 film *The Battle of Algiers*, in which he played himself, although it centered on mythologizing his lieutenant Ali.

“At this moment he’s probably busy siestaing at his ‘mansion in “the Heights,” the exclusive suburbs above Algiers,’” or so his residence was described in a *Herald Tribune* article Remy had chanced on. “Grudge him not . . . that he can’t be a part of your list.”

It was an Algerian turncoat, the redundantly named “Safy-le-Pur”—“a greater devil than I, yet like me he escaped”—who ushered the French commandos to Ali la Pointe, his “girlfriend” Hassiba Ben Bouali, and Yacef’s twelve-year-old nephew “Petit Omar.”

At the sound of machine-gun fire outside their Casbah *lieu sûr* (“safe house”), the three retreated through a false wall panel into a mew, just over a meter high. When the bullhorn shrieked, “Surrender! We’ve charged the house!” two must have apprehended their fate.

The blast leveled the entire alley, killing two score of Muslims. At the ultimatum, Remy imagined a quite gaysome, scrunched-down Hassiba taking two strides toward Ali, his snarl cold-shouldering death, and Petit Omar, scissors in hand, huddled over a crumpled newspaper sheet, for he occupied himself on the run with cutting out paper dolls.

The remaining *chefs historiques*—down to six with M’hidi’s death, two other “historic leaders” having been killed in ’55 and ’56—took scant notice of Algiers thereafter, it best to brush aside the fly “failure.” They had much weightier concerns, scheming ways to dispatch each other, for who would not relish being the last *chef* standing?

“You did, did you not?” And to escape that squirming rhetorical query, he turned his stare toward Notre Dame d’Afrique with its Black Madonna.

Arriving at the beach three minutes later, he overtopped the driver. To his beaming entreaty, “*Quand mon retour?*” he replied, “At 5:30 sharp, if you please,” sufficient time to return to the Al-Nigma and change before his session with Foucin.

On the pavement, Remy, his earring in place, commenced his saunter, the initial tread calling his attention to how dwarfed he was by his afternoon shadow.

5

The *vieillard*, his countenance striking Remy as misshaped and crammed as an ancient cartographer’s map of the world, had likewise waited for the taxi to leave. His “quarry” in motion, with an agility remarkable for one in his seventies, he dashed across the road, beseeching in English, “Any service?” the question immediately translated into French.

“No . . . no.” Remy, who had twirled around, delivered the second negation with a hint of vacillation. “Today I taxied. Perhaps tomorrow I’ll rent a snug compact, if this beach proves winsome and loose . . . somewhat.”

He spoke in slow French, tweaking his earring. “Is it safe to park one here?”

“I wish you joy o’ your joy,” the *aagooz* (“old man”) laughed. “Many a fellow whose left ear drips gold finds it at Zaracova. Even in Ramadan,” he chortled. “Not a pinkie’s smutch, provided the diligent Abukadir is its caretaker.” He thumped his chest.

Remy’s hand dived under an orange boy’s bottom to withdraw the clutch. “At my hotel,

the Al-Nigma, the concierge cautioned about some recent to-do at this beach.” He extracted a five-dinar note. “‘The more enticement,’ I should have parried, yet refrained. I’m discreet in some things.” He offered the bill. “In case I’m venturesome tomorrow.”

“‘May God give you joy o’ your joy!’ ole Abukadir shouts to the Ramadan Heavens.” Not rudely, rather spurred by excitement, he snatched the note. “May He grant you joy o’ your earring for bestowing upon a man as old as the millennial trees of Tamrit his breakfast tonight. Little opportunity I’ve had today to earn my daily bread.”

His scanning of the empty parking slots was abruptly terminated. “Be assured, monsieur,” he strove to arrest any disquiet in his prospect, “none of our local lads have been scared off by that flurry of a month and a half ago, an aberration, or I wouldn’t have accepted your stipend—my honey-dripping ‘cadi’s ear.’”

He patted the pocket above his heart where he had buried the note. (The lore came back to Remy: For one’s litigation to be successful, a cadi, “judge,” had to be whispered a bribe full of as much “honey” as permeated the large sweet-tooth cake.)

“In fact, that brouhaha’s a testament of my dependability. ‘Like a pregnant woman who dare not move far from her pissing pot,’ I tarried with the American’s sedan, waiving my eight o’clock prayers. ’Twas I who sent a child to Mohisen, the spindle-legged stripling who tends the changing room. Receiving word that my client had departed ninety minutes prior, I summoned the authorities, still never abandoning my charge.”

His arms shot outward. “How things exploded! Not with the first police car, yet once the tag number of the red Renault Quatreille, my ward, had been dispatched, asudden there were four, six, ten. ‘Is one patrol left to cruise Algiers?’ my mind boggled. Over twenty helter-skelter gendarmes were skittering about the beach like deserted kittens meowing, ‘M. Ballard, M. Ballard,’ as disposed to answer as a mama cat, till the ‘Great One’ appeared.

“Of course, he set them straight with his ukase, ‘Search the palm grove near the disco!’ As the rummaging proceeded, the boy Mohisen, distraught, paced back and forth across the pavement, pausing to brandish his fist at the sea. At one point I spied him ripping up a one-dinar note—the prodigal!—and throwing its shreds into the briny wind.”

Abukadir mimed a tearing motion, ended by his right hand thudding against his left chest pocket, where it scratched for the five-dinar bill. “I’m not such a fool. God in His Mercy gave us poor the pangs of hunger to keep us in sanity . . . or in a good imitation of it.

“Through all, I sustained my vigil, albeit my client had paid in advance. An aberration, I repeat. If not, tomorrow free gratis I’ll wipe clean the sea salt from your rental.”

“So Foucin was here the night of the murder.” Remy had been staggered by Abukadir’s revelations. “And DGSE off by sixty hours,” for all of its reports indicated he had become involved in the case on the third day after it—“As I noted to Foucin in his office!”

He was shuffling across the sand toward the sidewalk fronting Zaracova’s tiny tripartite accommodations section. “And how intuitive of the commissioner, to know so well the lay of the land that he could point the searchers to the corpse’s bier, the porch of the disco!”

Remy grinned. “Felicitations, M. Montpellier! Lured to the beach in search of a fingerprint, you’ve unearthed a hand!”

At that point—surprising even to him—his mind digressed to Ballard’s “black hole.”

The five blue-and-white wooden cabanas which he first passed had been locked down. However, as a sop to any foreign visitors, the Ministry of Tourism had decreed that Zaracova's two other servicing establishments be manned during Ramadan.

In ten strides he reached the beaded ingress of its public *vestiaire*, his destination, though he continued past it to the café. There he ascended its four steps, his arrival inciting not a stir from a waiter slouched over the outside table next to the doorway.

Peering through it, Remy descried its only customers, two early-twenties men and a late-teen girl, natives all, lounged in wicker chairs against the back wall.

The oldest, half-clad in washed-out purple cargo shorts, fastened his jaded scrutiny upon the intruder. His bare left foot slyly nudged the ankle of the drowsing *jeune femme*, who in twisting her neck no longer silhouetted her features, pretty and dazed. As a wisp of a smile robotically materialized, she tugged at the bow of the terrycloth belt. The full-length beach robe opened, revealing a maroon-colored bikini and embarrassing Remy.

"Not for you. I comprehend him better now," in fleering Arabic his espier notified. "Fayez, shape up."

The languid drone summoned, shirtless and in a white Speedo over the band of which climbed a few pubic hairs, stretched lazily as he staggered to his feet. His hands first cupped and massaged his above-middling pectoral muscles before his arms collapsed into a dangle, the pendulation rhythmically exerting his chest and crotch.

The synchronized visages of the three appeared to huff obsequiously, "Take this, take that, or since Ramadan has wrecked business, take the kit of us at a cut-rate price."

When Remy wheeled to exit, he heard a blatant and mean-spirited, "Fuck you, you uncircumcised queer!" The expletive provoked the *serveur* to snicker three audible bursts of air into the palm buttressing his chin.

With these words mudding his ear, Remy scuffed back to the changing room where he pushed through its strands of beads, "thirty-three—and each of thirty-three, for luck in Muslim society." Exhibiting a befuddled simper, he tentatively approached. "*Allô*. I want," and he simulated the unbuttoning of his shirt.

With a retral stretch the attendant—the Mohisen from the affidavits on Ballard he was confident—grappled a basket and placed it on the counter. "I speak the small English."

"*El-Hamdulillah!* 'Praise God!'" exclaimed Remy, flinging his hands heavenward. "No many *raagil*, 'man,' Algiers speak English. I talk little *arabee*. Two weeks I holiday, '*sayeh*,' Cairo. *Qam floos*—'How much money'—basket, '*sabat*,' and *dosh*, 'shower'?"

"Two dinar. After, soap, no dinar."

"*Bon, bon. Luqta*—'a bargain!'" In reaching for the bail of the wire basket, Remy patted the youth's wrist. A smile burst forth, which revealed gapped fulvous teeth.

"Sixteen or thereabouts," Remy speculated, "and each day worked as many hours as his years." His cicatricial complexion, the rib-puncturing torso, and the never-developed limbs were the patrimony of his childhood. His nose bent to the left "more than likely" (and Remy knew not why he so concluded) the byproduct of the irrevocable anger of a father, embittered by what suffering his reckless lust unflaggingly had brought into the world.

And yet in his grin, a "sentimentalizing" Remy detected, there was no more protest at his condition than in the rheum-cruste eyes of a two-month-old kitten that had crawled into a

breach and sealed it off with a bitten-off sprig, to savor its final starving moments.

“You no towel beach. You need? You give thirty centime. After I give fifty centime.” Remy recalled that in learning English he had jumbled the pronunciation of *fifty* and *fifteen*.

“Aywa, aywa. ‘Yes. Yes.’” Having released the bail, he bobbed his head while locating a five-dinar note. This handed over, he added, “I tourist, no centimes.”

From a drawer under the gray plywood, the youth retrieved two bills and some coins. In English he counted, “One, two” for the dinars and in Arabic the seventy coins. “I no the tourist,” he laughed, “I the centime.”

Leaping from his stool, he seized a towel from a shelf and scampered under the flap of the *comptoir*, in his right hand the basket padded with the white terry cloth. Motioning to one of the cubicles, he waited until Remy assumed the lead in the ten paces to it.

“I *Amrekaanee*. One week, ‘*wahda esbooa*,’ Algiers. Then, ‘*baadayn*,’ *tayyaara*”—Remy manually depicted an airplane soaring prior to banking toward his cap—“New York.” At the Arabic for “American,” the youth had turned away, in his squint “a jolted hurt.”

The playfulness of his eyes straightaway resurrected itself, for Remy, in spite of his twenty-eight-year exile, apprehended the truth and recited it silently: *In this hard and misaligned country, the poor have to grab any opportunity for happiness, just as the rich must manufacture some excuse to be sad.*

“You welcome at Algiers.” The lad’s response was timed to coincide with the door to the stall being swung open. Nevertheless, when Remy stepped forward, a blockading forearm shot up. “*Attendez un instant!*”

Scurrying back to the counter, he returned with a rag and plastic spray bottle. He squirted and wiped the cubicle’s bench and walls before falling to his knees to scrub the cement floor. “The now, mister.” With a flourish he invited Remy to enter.

“*Shokran*, ‘thank you.’ No ‘mister.’ *Esmee*, ‘my name,’ Michael. *Shismak?* ‘Your name?’” Seizing his hand, with each laconic a flattered Remy squeezed it affectionately.

“I? I Mohisen. Mohisen I.” His brow puckered, evidence of his meditative dithering. “Mister Mih-, Mih-al.” He looked for help from Remy.

“Michael. Michael.”

“Mek-eel, Mek-keel, Mi-keel.”

“Good. Little, Mike.”

“Mike. That easy!” Rapidly, Mohisen, his voice full of dense happiness, iterated, “Mike, Mike, Mike, Mike. Mi-keel, Mi-keel, Mi-keel.”

“Mohisen, Mohisen, Mohisen, Mohisen, Mohisen,” Remy paralleled.

While he removed the belt with the towel—“Perhaps in the very stall Ballard used!”—the chuckling of the adolescent, who was again perched on his stool, could yet be heard.

6

Outside the changing room, Remy glanced toward the grove and its ransacked disco ten minutes away. Not to arouse suspicion, he chose not to duplicate this linear route that Ballard had probably adopted, having put aside his Le Puy notion he had returned to his car.

Instead, Remy proceeded to the water’s edge. Looking back, he discerned that Mohisen

had flung up the wooden shutters, the top half of the façade of the beachside *vestiaire*, and was hanging over its front counter.

Remy doffed his baseball cap and waved to him, who shook the basket in answer. Two minutes earlier, the young man had trumpeted a parting warranty to him, entangled in the joggling beads. “No worry, Mr. Mike! I honest!” sounding the *h*. “My fist hold it!”

Remy began to wade through the cool and enfeebled remnant of some merged whitecaps, still amply potent to scour his sandaled feet with pebbles and grit.

Around the curve of the beach, at which point he quickly plucked off the earring, the level sand was overwhelmed by an upthrust of boulders, undergirding the seawall of the disco. After a series of dexterous bounds over the smaller ones, Remy had to employ his hands on the two graybacks directly beneath the concrete base of the patio’s barrier.

Although a smattering of posts and reinforcing torsels remained, without the assistance of either Remy hopped onto the wall. A two-meter plunge landed him on what had been the alfresco dance floor, and in ten measured treads he gained the seaside *porte de derrière*.

In contrast to the nine at Trimalchio’s, the disco had only three tiers. Eighteen descending strides brought Remy to the dance floor and an additional thirty to the landward threshold, where the “blood trail” had begun. There he stood frozen for half a minute. Then with a sidle to his right, he clasped his hands together, drew back his arms, and swung.

The blow had knocked Ballard to the middle of the portico, the reports stated, but no second was struck. And if rage had maddened the assailant, why allow the victim to tug himself the two meters to the steps, a “Sahara’s breadth”? Did not this nonchalant advance—and the *douk-douk*—better signal a calculated “more-than-the-more loathing”?

Seated on the top step, Remy was positive that should he frame this inquiry, Belmazoïr would reply with one similar to his others: “Why would I murder M. John? Why would I blackmail M. John? Why would I hate M. John?”

Above, the breeze-wafted palm fronds and pine needles faintly hummed. Below and to his front, the bramble weeds scraped against each other. Rearward the sea upheaved plopping bursts. Remy screwed his neck round to stare through the doorway into the adumbral hollow of the disco.

“Nothing imitates exactly. ‘How in step with your dance, M. Ballard, I do not know.’” Nonetheless, one conclusion from Le Puy was borne out: “The time is out of kilter,” a gap as conspicuous as Belmazoïr’s missing week.

Yet, as hinted, this afternoon had disproved another supposition, that Ballard had looped back to his Renault. Abukadir would have spied him since no one in the Arab World is more dutiful than an elderly parking attendant. One Le Puy prospect, enhanced by the widened span of time, remained: Did Ballard arrive early in order to rendezvous with another?

Remy stood up, quite aware that his bermudas had absorbed enough spindrift for the dirt and sand on the cement to permeate and smudge a majuscule of pink minnows.

If there was truth in molecular physics, possibly some infinitesimal trace of Ballard’s blood had penetrated the fabric and bounced against his flanks.

Two minutes later, stepping through the rusting barbed wire of the fence about the grove, he knew that the crowning revelation was ahead, the exigent magnet for his beach excursion.

In London, Le Puy, and Brussels, he had fretted over whether he could succeed in

protracting his stay so that his purpose would be camouflaged, even beyond its accomplishment. Not anymore.

No, Ballard had not returned to his car and would have had time to meet another in the grove. No, Foucin, who even before there was knowledge of a crime viscerally pinpointed its scene, had not become involved after three days and could have, but had not, corrected him, a divulgence of his fervor to conceal his early affiliation. No, Ballard, not scrimped of his dying seconds, magnanimously had been accorded permission to crawl an eternity.

Combing the beach, Remy mused, *you've discovered (i.e., invented) a continent.*

Even though he was approaching the café and the changing room from the rear, to be safe, he repinned the earring. At his transition from the sand to the pavement, he spotted Mohisen's gangly body, leaning out the front of the *vestiaire*, and also the three Algerians from the café, who were now poised on the steps of its veranda.

The one in the cargo shorts, uttered a muffled "Allô" as Remy ambled by. Not slowing down, he enounced, with a slight cephalic bow, "Hello," his voice projected to reach the ears of another.

"Mohisen, *raagil kwayis*, 'good man,'" he saluted the attendant, who was already scooting under the flap with the basket containing his shirt, watch, belt, purse, and a fresh folded towel dutifully held to his chest.

"I walk, no swim. No *dosh*, 'shower.'" Concurrently Remy made a treading motion with his right middle and index fingers, an arm-over-arm gesture, and an over-the-shoulder glimpse, the last two accompanied by a pronounced shaking of his head.

"Yes yes, I little English," Mohisen, extending the basket, reminded him.

In the stall, Remy used the new towel to loop the belt, pocket the clutch bag, and strap on the watch. He accepted that he would have to touch the youth some more.

The seven or eight antecedent times Mohisen had not blenched, each contact having been received as the normal complement of the words.

Remy folded the towel neatly and situated it atop the one carried to the beach. *This boy could have been corrupted by Ballard and never have known it*, he thought. And at that moment, the perverted American seemed to him to be one of the lesser devils which strive to imitate, in anticipation of overthrowing, the Great One.

About the veracity of what Abukadir had observed, he harbored no doubts. A tip had been left by Ballard, probably not a one-dinar note, but a five. It could not be kept, though desperately required, "the price of a 'cadi's ear.'"

In his *anima simplicetta*—Dante's "simple soul"—Mohisen had connected it with the death of a man, and in horror at the equation, he felt life had been cheated.

Yes, the bill had been torn up and flung into the wind by this boy, who articulated the mute in "honest."

7

When Remy hurried in, just before 6:45, the jaw of Foucin's anteroom sergeant dropped. The taxi had arrived almost an hour late—an accident had snarled traffic "and that rascal Abukadir not to be found!" No time to stop by the Al-Nigma, "at least," Remy consoled

himself, “I detached—jettisoned!—the dangling *boucle d’oreille*.”

Foucin’s own reception was a muffled snort which he attempted, too conspicuously, to wipe away with his right palm. Not speaking, Remy plucked two tissues from a box on the desk. With these he undid his belt.

Mirroring his caller’s reticence, Foucin tilted back in his chair, his beguiled eyes tracking as Remy deposited the first item on the desk pad. With the same care the Swatch was removed and the clutch unpocketed, each placed on either side of the memo holder.

“I’m most discomforted by my habiliments.” His props arranged, Remy unleashed his tongue. “And sincerely apologize for the distaste it must inspire in anyone of normal sensibility, still am secure in the knowledge that you, on occasion made a dissembler by your profession, an unwilling artificer, empathize with my humiliation.

“Would you kindly have the fingerprints checked on these? Although I endeavored to wipe them clean after their purchase, one impression may be those of the lady clerking the Al-Nigma’s boutique. Another, despite my pains, my own. ‘Is there a third?’ and ‘Is it the same as those without identity on M. Ballard’s wallet, belt, keys, et cetera?’ are questions for which answers in the seeking I’ve been obliged to adopt such a state of ill dress.”

Since by that juncture Foucin would have been habituated to the spectacle, it must have been “my tortured, belabored syntax” which induced him to roar out a callous laugh, the guffaw tapering off as he dialed 563.

He began by congratulating *Sayyid Saeed* (“M. Saeed”) on Ramadan and waited as he obviously received the same. “To your onus,” he resumed. “I’ll posthaste send three items, on all or any of which may be three distinctive prints. One may be a lady’s; the second, of the guest seated in my office. Those two you may have an arduous time distinguishing.”

Foucin, who had concentrated his stare on the nosegay buckle lying on his desk, glanced at Remy, and then away.

“Cloaking his quip in sinister Arabic, and I can’t forsake my lingual blind to unmask his own. A cruel man,” seethed Remy, “—as heartless as the slayer of Ballard, as monstrous as this Ballard himself, who tried to pervert one estranged from corruption—to make a jest of me, ‘bedfellow[ed]’ and bedecked in ‘misery.’”

This rancor was superimposed over Foucin’s request. “It’s the third which interests us. Utilizing your ‘magnetized dust,’ please confirm whether it might match the missing person’s prints in re M. Ballard. You’ll grace my family’s nine o’clock banquet . . . I insist, and won’t touch a morsel should you refuse.”

“‘Doodaded’ like a clown, I’ll be shown to be one!” Remy sulked, for nothing could coerce him, who had been triply smitten (by the roisterous glee, the evading peek, and the base joke), to palaver with Foucin. The latter’s own taciturnity was broken only once: His buzzed instructions to his sergeant to collect and deliver the articles placed on his desk.

“And if I’m wrong, what will I do with this Mohisen? Stand him up, of course. He’ll receive the blow as a compliment, the fool, the *honest proud fool*.” The attendant had been hunched over the counter, the fifteen centimes of refund in his palm. The basket surrendered, Remy waved away the coins and produced a light-blue ten-dinar note. “For you.”

“No, Mr. Mike. No.” Leaning across, he grasped Mohisen’s hand, fisted downward, and pressed against it, sandwiching the bill. “I tourist Algiers. I no friend. In Egypt, *keteer*

sadeek, ‘many friends.’ Here no.”

Concern registered on Mohisen’s face. “Ramadan no the good holiday Algiers. No many friend the beach. I sorry. I sorry, Mr. Mike.”

Remy tossed an oeillade in the direction of the café. “*El walad da?* ‘This boy?’”

The dismay quickened into alarm. “I sorry, Mr. Mike. Two boy, girl no the good. Problem three. *Wallahee!* ‘As [“By”] God!’”

Remy sighed. “Three nights I no friend Algiers. No good the *akl*, ‘food,’ I *bas*, ‘only.’” Withdrawing his hand, he gesticulated eating. As he resettled it on the counter, only the tip of his *petit doigt* brushed against Mohisen’s wrist. “Tonight, ‘*el-leela*,’ ‘you the *akl* me? *Akl*, no my room hotel. *Mataam*, ‘restaurant.’ You, me.”

The much slapped face nakedly evinced an inability to discern what it had had no experience in responding to. Remy comprehended that he had been a dolt to infer that Ballard, confronted with the likes of the virile “accessibles” at the coffee shop, had engaged in anything other than a playing upon Mohisen’s virgin infatuation for a modicum of regard.

He slid his right hand onto the young man’s, leaving as a supererogatory encumbrance the dinar note on the *comptoir*. That which he clenched was taut.

“Mohisen, Mohisen, Mohisen, Mohisen, Mohisen,” he sang.

The *walad* began to giggle, “Mike, Mike, Mike,” before curtailing his antiphonal song to proclaim in English, “I the good shirt, the good *bantagoon* [‘pants’].” In his excitement he switched to Arabic, vociferating that he would not embarrass his American friend.

Suddenly cognizant of his “slippin’ up in tongues,” he retreated into the iteration, “I good the shirt, good the *bantagoon*. I five day the Ramadan *akl* momma, poppa. Tonight, the sex, you, I. No *akl* you *bas*. No the good.”

In both Arabic and English Remy established the time—“*Tisah nous*, ‘9:30’”—and the place—“*Mataam Andaloos*, ‘Andaloos Restaurant.’”

Mohisen’s hand unclasped, in a moment Remy was being pelleted by the threshold’s 1,089 beads. “Mr. Mike!” outside he was halted by the distressed cry. The skirring teen was waving the azure bill Remy had hoped would go unobserved till he had absconded.

“For taxi *Andaloos!*” Still the note was forced into his palm. “No, Mohisen wake the good,” and with his index and medius, he mimicked Remy’s earlier striding motion.

At 7:12—Remy had to rely on the wall clock—the phone rang. “Yes, *Sayyid Saeed*.” Foucin’s studied expression was not altered by the “*Shokran*” he finally uttered. A second respite terminated in an admission, “Yes, I must.” A more prolonged quietude. “Thank you and your family, yet Mona and my brood are accustomed to my fickle schedule.” The last was ritualistic: “And to you and yours also the blessings of Ramadan!”

Foucin stared at the recradled *combiné* for approximately two minutes before, with a twist, he fixed his gaze on Remy, one which “has stripped me of my harlequin garb,” outfitting him “in a suit finer than the silk one Ambassa—” From this sartorial reverie he was jarred by the postulate, “So you think you have found the murderer.”

8

Prior to Remy's abbreviated disclosure of whose *empreintes digitales* these were and how he had obtained them, he had shaken a no to Foucin's posit.

Instantly the latter had commenced upon a profession of "my incompetence: the fallible presumption that since M. Mohisen Abdelghani, along with the other beach employees, had not the opportunity to kill M. Ballard—you, no doubt, read the reports—the prints could not have been his."

During the indictment, Foucin gradually swiveled his chair till only his left profile was visible. "He's embarrassed," to himself Remy mockingly sympathized, "and yet why? 'Twas entirely warrantable to exclude one with such an 'irony-clad' alibi."

From the time Ballard exited, Mohisen was never alone: His final customer—a "regular," who was quitting "a stall just as the foreigner left" (the co-verifier of Ballard's 6:39 egress)—partnered him next door to the café, likewise shuttered for Maghrib prayers.

There the two of them had tea with its staff (a cook, two waiters, and the cashier) and the cabana attendant. Afterward, Mohisen helped the waiters with their scouring and mopping. While they were reciprocating in the *vestiaire*, the message came from Abukadir.

His flagellation over, Foucin's continuation was perceptive, Remy had to admit: "Dislodging an obstacle, have not you complicated the task of your client, hence rendering more dire the predicament of his own?"

"The esteemed M. Vellacott could have cloaked the courtroom with the significance of the innominate fingerprints until all else appeared frivolous, given our lesser fascination with the known than with the unknown. When mystery vanishes, the seed of a yawn sprouts, and that bud hectically growing soon chokes the hillside of our attention."

Foucin ceased, perchance to allow Remy "to tongue-lash him" with some such riposte as the apriorism of M. Belmazoir's guilt "chokes [your] attention." When none ensued, he resumed with a probing which Remy forthwith conceived had a laudatory purport.

"Nonetheless, it intrigues me how you, a stranger to our land and, it must follow, to the ethnic eccentricities of our inhabitants, would know with such a certainty you announced it, amidst lavish apologies for disturbing my Ramadan, even before you had the proof that an Algerian basket-tender would fritter away his time pawing the objects entrusted to his care."

Remy's opportunity to reply was thwarted, for thereupon thundered the Great Cannon, situated on the grounds of the Gendarmerie, the end of the fast being signaled with gunpowder—"the scourge of our daily bread or 'cadi's ear,'" Remy appended to himself.

Foucin's chair whirled around, and the face, briefly shunted, was now shored up by a faint smile, a harbinger "he's not totally chagrined to be bringing upon himself the 'unluck' of terminating the *sawm* in the company of a pagan."

Reaching inside his left shirt pocket for his Gauloises, Remy offered one to Foucin. Declining, "Afterward, but please," he outstretched his right hand with its palm up.

It would be an hour and forty-five minutes later, in the course of their stroll to the Andaloo's Restaurant, that Remy would endeavor to clarify the issue piquing Foucin's curiosity: A tale, absent of suspicion because it had both particular and universal

implications, about having been orphaned at four, shuffled from relative to relative, all poor save one, an aunt in Mons. A spinster, she had peculiarly tired of him for being less, not more, of a nuisance than her seven cats and consequently ill deserving of her affection.

“An Aladdin’s cave of a house. Every afternoon, while she embarked upon a quotidian accounting of her garden, intent on determining what nature had piffled, I, supposedly napping, roamed about, delicately clasping vases, crystals, books, shiny doorknobs.

“In my final week there, my boldness ripening, I sneaked into her bedroom. On a vanity table was a box of jewels, all of which I delighted in fondling, as if through squeezing, my fingertips would absorb some molecules of their richness, sacrificing in compensation an atom of my poverty. I never wearied of touching what I couldn’t take.

“Humankind has assumed eminent on this planet, the sophist in me feels, by virtue of our being the species best able to control our greed, the one that by and large is content to be window-shoppers, not shoplifters. Most of the time people, I’ve noticed, starve their desires and thus rein in their avarice. Here I’ve droned on for the length of a block.”

Foucin would not speak immediately, and when he did, it would be about a segment of the fabricated narrative which to Remy was mere coloring, appropriated from the faux birth certificate given him in June 1961. “I too was orphaned, though after you. At eight. One night the French swooped down on our estate in the Aurès; unlike your childhood, mine was more than prodigal. All were slain, except a guest and me. On my father’s dying injunction, I led him through a tunnel to his (and my) escape.”

“The Aurès? You are Berber?” would be Remy’s too quick reaction since the questions revealed to Foucin his visitant’s extraordinary (and thus suspicious) familiarity with Algeria’s tortured demarcation between the plains of Algiers and the Aurès mountains, the centuried campaigns of the invading Arabs against the indigenous, in-retreat Berbers.

But with one rejoinder Foucin would naïvely address his double inquiry. It indicated, Remy realized, he had come to accept that the deserial of the fingerprints bared the Belgium inspector’s unique, unchallengeable ability: To generalize in the presence of few specifics.

“My name disguises it. I could say, ‘What orphan ever keeps his own name?’ Yet you would be aware, so cognoscible of our culture, that Islam exhorts the Muslim *yitiim* (‘orphan’) to retain his cognomen. Consider, however, Berber tradition predates Islam.

“I must redeem the privilege of being Matoub Lakhtour. Once the seventh traitor—‘Baby,’ the youngest—is dispensed with, God willing, I’ll return to claim my father’s land, cast aside the Foucin name, not disrespectfully for I treasure the Algiers family that fostered me, the enemy not having spared even one tenth-removed cousin, and with unbearable joy murmur into the ears of my two sons and three daughters, ‘Lakhtour. Lakhtour.’

“I’ll plunge into a new search, for the bones of my father, my mother, my six siblings. What the French did with their corpses I’ve not earned that right to contemplate. Until then, call me the imitation of a Berber.”

So the prisoner was insightful there: He hates the Belmazoirs. Remy’s thirty-three-year-old memory would summon up the December 1955 Aurès massacre and his more recent anamnesis, the words reported to have been carved into old Belmazoir’s chest, not “*La Heure*,” “the hour,” but “Lakhtour.”

Still this illation, to be gained after another block in which both would walk in silence,

was in the offing and could not, thereby, condition his response in Foucin's office.

Having blown out his first puff, which had somewhat screened the commissioner's visage, he conjectured, "Could it be that"—his hesitancy occasioned the repetition of the subordinating conjunction—"that M. Ballard entered the palm grove without the negative?"

Notes and Commentary: Chapter 6: “In Imitation of HIV”

April 12 (Wednesday)

- p. 82: SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TITLE OF CHAPTER 6: The structure of the title is taken from Thomas à Kempis’s Latin work *De imitation Christi*, usually translated as *The Imitation of Christ*. Here the one imitated by Remy is HIV, thereby turning himself into HIV-2: “‘HIV,’ Remy tittered [at his gay-garbed image in the mirror], ‘are not you totally enchanted by HIV-2?’” (87). The imitation concept reinforces the theme of appearance vs. reality discussed in the 2.28 notes, N2:45-47. Besides this overriding instance of imitation, variants of “imitation” not involving HIV by HIV-2 are used seven times in this chapter: Remy tells Belmazoir that he is imitating Foucin’s argument of why Belmazoir is the murderer (82); Belmazoir tells Remy that he always dreaded that Ballard’s “ardor” for him would turn out to be “imitative,” not real or genuine (84). Remy says that to understand Ballard he had to become a “moveable imitation of him” (86). The old parking attendant at the beach says that it is difficult to retain one’s sanity in this world, but a person must strive to present “a good imitation” that one is sane (91). Remy concludes that “nothing imitates exactly” (94). He speaks of Ballard as “one of the lesser devils which strive to imitate . . . the Great One [Satan]” (95). Finally, Foucin calls himself “the imitation of a Berber” (99). Thus four are specific: Remy imitates Foucin (82); Belmazoir believes Ballard’s affection for him were not genuine, but merely “imitative” (84). Remy speaks of becoming a “moveable imitation” of Ballard (86); Ballard was a human imitation of a devil, Remy affirms (95), and Foucin presents himself as not a true Berber but “the imitation of a Berber” (99). The other two are general: The parking attendant’s illusion that maintaining the appearance (“imitation”) of sanity is all that is possible in an insane world (91) and Remy’s conclusion about the nature of imitation (94). Although the word is not used, Belmazoir is transformed into an imitation of a woman by the Dutch tourist (83-84). Furthermore, on p. 94, Remy reenacts, that is, imitates, the murderer’s stunning of Ballard through the plank blow to the left side of his face.

- pp. 82 – 100: CHRONOLOGY OF CHAPTER 6: April 12, Wednesday. In the morning Remy visits Belmazoir at the prison (10:30 – 11:02). In the afternoon he goes to

Zaracova Beach (3:30 – 6:20). He leaves straight from the beach for Foucin’s office and is there from 6:45 – 7:20. The novel flashes forward to Remy and Foucin walking toward a restaurant (9:05 – 9:15) before the action returns to Foucin’s office (7:21 – 7:22).

In the narration, these four actions are interlaced; for example, at the beach, Remy will recall what happened at the prison, or in Foucin’s office he will recollect something that happened at the beach.

Also as if to attest to the “density of time” (5.78), Remy remembers events from Le Puy, and further most of section 3 (88-90) is devoted to a crucial event in the Algerian war for independence, the 1957 battle of Algiers.

pp. 82-83: SECTION 1: Time span: The chapter opens with Remy’s taxi approaching Zaracova Beach (3:27 p.m.). Remy thinks about the first part of his interview with Belmazoir at the prison (10:30 – 10:40).

p. 82: “can swat a fly”: The wording is historically symbolic, more so than will be indicated in the next note. On 10.154, as a souvenir Remy will buy an indigenous fly-swatter. The purchase will precipitate his recall of the fly-swatting incident which reduced Algeria to a French colony.

In 1827, at an acrimonious meeting with the French consul to Algiers, the city’s Muslim leader (dey) saw a fly buzzing near the diplomat’s chin and “accidentally” struck his cheek with his fly whisk. Having brooded over this insult for three years, France invaded Algeria with a large army in 1830, quickly reducing its coastal area to a French colony.

A more detailed explanation of this incident will be provided in a 10.154 note.

p. 82: “list of the dead”: During the fifteen-minute drive from the Al-Nigma to Zaracova Beach (3:15 – 3:30), as pp. 88-90 will disclose, Remy recalled some of the FLN martyrs who had died during the 1957 Battle of Algiers.

p. 82: Notre Dame d’Afrique: “Our Lady of Africa,” this ornate nineteenth-century Catholic cathedral is about two miles north of the center of Algiers and thus of the Al-Nigma.

See the 2.23 and 5.78 notes, N2.34 and N5:29, which compare it with Remy’s Cathédrale de Notre-Dame du Puy and further describe the basilica in Algiers.

After Algeria gained independence in 1962, by which time almost all of the Algerian Christians had fled the country, the cathedral fell into ruins, even though it was a popular destination for European tourists.

Shut down in 2005 for restoration work, it had a gala reopening in Dec. 2010, with the “mayor” of Algiers and the country’s Minister of Religious Affairs in attendance.

p. 82: “Black Madonna”: Inside the Algerian cathedral is a large Black Madonna statue of bronze. In my novel it becomes a counterbalance to the small Black Virgin

wooden statuette in the French cathedral and to Le Puy’s colossal bronze Notre Dame de France, called the “Pink Madonna” (2.32 and its note, N2.34).

During colonial times and even today (2011), some Muslims visit the Algerian cathedral to pray to the Virgin Mary because Sura 19 of the Qur’an is entirely devoted to her as the mother of Jesus, a prophet in Islam.

- p. 82: “Pray for us and our Muslims”: The translation of Horne in *Savage*, who writes that the Algerian cathedral has “a black madonna with the paternalistic inscription, ‘Pray for us and our Muslims’” (46; he does not capitalize “Black Madonna”).

The usual translation of the French legend (“*Priez pour nous et pour les musulmans*”) is not “our Muslims,” but “the Muslims.”

I retain Horne’s translation because he interviewed so many expatriate *pieds-noirs*, who I speculate told him that is how they translated the inscription.

- p. 82: “hypothetical shadow”: See the 1.1 note, N1:2-3, which states that the three Bab el Oued beaches that were unified into my Zaracova Beach could be seen from the terrace of the Notre Dame cathedral.

A meaning of “hypothetical” is “conjectural—contrasted with *actual*” (*Webster’s Third*). In that sense, the shadow of the real cathedral does not actually reach the beach, but Remy seems to accept that symbolically it does, as an image of France’s continuing influence on Algeria.

The word “shadow,” a diluted extension of “the light shineth in darkness” image, occurs frequently in the novel: On 1.13, from the blow of the plank Ballard’s “soul seeks refuge in my shadow.”

On 2.18, de Gaulle’s “shadow” is cast on a painting. On 3.50, Omar notices “the empurpled shadow of the lieutenant” merging with another’s just after Omar agrees to become a French collaborator.

On 4.59 and 5.77, the shadows of structures (the prison walls or Remy’s hotel) cast their images across the landscape, as does the cathedral here in chap. 6.

This verbal motif will climax on 16.266, where Remy says, “Foucin is my shadow, and I am his.”

And the last chapter, as is to be expected, opens with Remy moving from “purple shadows to a dim sunlight” (21.352), symbolically from ignorance to a particle of knowledge, from falsehood to a moment of truth. More than the murder mystery is solved.

- p. 82: “*chantage*”: The French word for “blackmail” is formed from *chanter*, meaning “to sing.”

Its etymology is based on the aural sense not the visual sense, which distinguishes color. Hence it is “colorless-coded.”

- p. 82: “*trou noir*, ‘black hole’”: The astrophysical term refers to a dark region of space whose gravitational field will not let even light escape.

See the 3.42 note on “wormhole,” N3:22, which lists the nine times “black hole” is used in the novel.

- p. 82: Einsteinist: A proponent of Einstein’s theory of relativity which in time led to the discovery of the concept of black holes in space.
- p. 82: “unwrapped his tongue”: Remy’s wording harks back to the section of the song “Orgy” on 2.27: “Feels so good wrapped / Around my tongue.”
- p. 82: “I’ve become a black hole”: On p. 84, Belmazoir will say, “I had become a black hole.”
Remy is aware of his emendation in changing the tense: Belmazoir’s use of the past perfect tense indicates that the scientific term refers to merely one incident of his life, while Remy’s present perfect tense signifies that he believes Belmazoir’s life was and still is a “black hole.”
Remy quickly corrects this bias.
- p. 82: “my previous question . . . substituting ‘blackmail’ for ‘murder’”: On 4.64 and 65 Belmazoir had twice asked, “Why would I murder him?”
Here by substituting “blackmail” for “murder,” the prisoner argues that far from gaining financially by Ballard’s death, he is monetarily the loser.
- p. 82: “apple tree”: In my novel, there are incidental allusions to key words in the story of the temptation as given in the Bible and the Qur’an, but no coherent pattern:
Apple, which is not given as the forbidden fruit in either the Bible or the Qur’an, but is accepted in Christian tradition: 3.40; 6.82; 6.85; 9.140; 13.207; 14.236; 16.273; and 21.353.
Eden: 3.40; 8.122; 15.256; and 20.341.
Adam: 7.107; 11.174; 12.190; 16.268 and 273; 17.289; 18.299 and 300; 21.353.
Eve: 11.173 and 174; 17.289; 18.299; and 19.326.
There are significant differences between the Biblical account in Genesis and the Qur’anic account in Sura 7: Adam’s spouse is given no name in the Qur’an, but in the Hadiths (accounts of Prophet Mohammed’s life and sayings) is called Hawwa.
In the Islamic version Adam and his spouse are tempted by *Shaitan* (Satan) and simultaneously eat of the forbidden tree. They ask Allah’s forgiveness which He immediately grants; thus Islam has no concept of original sin.
- p. 82: baksheesh: Tip or gratuity. See the 1.5 note.
- p. 82: *gardien*: French for “prison guard.”
- p. 82: “ninth-month midnight”: The phrase is from 1.3 of Whitman’s “Out of the Cradle.” In his poem, “Ninth-month” (referring to the Quaker designation for September) is capitalized.
Remy alters the quote by using it to refer to a span of time (Ballard’s relationship with Belmazoir, from May 24, 1988, to Feb. 27, 1989), thus necessitating the lowercasing.

- p. 82: "returning to America": On 4.66, when Remy put the question to Belmazoïr suggesting that Ballard was "abandoning" him, Remy seemed unaware that Ballard was not returning to America.
If he had known about this situation, he would not have been surprised by Belsches's explanation about Ballard's name first being on the list and then taken from it (5.73).
Also the reaction by "M. Champagne" on 5.77 indicates that this information was no where contained in the 2269 folder, which Remy stated had only "a modicum of information about the Americans" (5.75).
For instance, Vellacott's note (5.75) speaks only of Ballard marrying Leila, not of them staying in Algiers.
- p. 82: "scrapping . . . leaving me": A continuation of the theme of abandonment.
See the series of notes 2.16, N2:6-7.
- p. 82: "Remy decided not to pursue this assertion at once": After an interlude in which he showed concern for Belmazoïr's sister, sought the youth's help, and made a quip which caused Belmazoïr to grim, Remy returns to his own falsehood, that Ballard "was America-bound" (83).
- p. 82: *captif*: prisoner in French.

- p. 83: “embroiled her . . . an ‘excess’ of self-accusing incrimination”: Remy believes that Belmazoir’s sigh excessively draws attention to itself and thus is not heartfelt.
- p. 83: “‘Bourceli,’ Belmazoir replied”: The first mention of the name of the noisome neighbor introduced on 5.81.
- p. 83: “‘the sweet smell of Ramadan’”: Belmazoir’s explanation is loosely based on the account of the first-century AH (eighth-century CE) scholar Ja’far al-Sadiq, the source of the incident in the two most widely accepted Sunni compilers of Hadiths, the third-century AH scholars, Mohammad al-Bukhari and Muslim al-Hajjal. (The English plural of “Hadith” is either “Hadith” or “Hadiths,” and some dictionaries capitalize it while lowers lower-case it. Throughout my novel for consistency the word is capitalized and its plural is “Hadiths.”) Ja’far wrote that in a sermon the Prophet Mohammed stated, “The excess in the mouth of one who fasts is better in the sight of Allah than the sweet smell of musk.” In Al-Bukhari and Muslim, this becomes: “The Prophet said that Allah said: ‘The smell which comes out of the mouth of a fasting person is better than the smell of musk.’”
- p. 83: “Wicked words for wicked ears”: “Wicked words” refers to Mme. Bourceli’s speech and “wicked ears” to the *alim*’s reaction to her words.
- p. 83: sectary: member of a sect.
Belmazoir’s contempt for Islam suffuses his account.
- p. 83: PBUH: An abbreviation for “Peace be upon Him,” a phrase always repeated after speaking the name of the Prophet Mohammed or of any prophet mentioned in the Qur’an.
The abbreviation is sometimes used in English-language newspapers, books, and other printed material.
Only on a few occasions did I hear my North African Muslim friends employ the abbreviation when speaking in English and only to stress, I felt, how daring they were in religious matters—as Mohammed conveys he is here.
In Arabic, the expression “*Sall Allahu ‘alay-hi wa-sallam*” means “Peace be upon Him.” It is the salutation which is always said or written after the Prophet’s name. To save space, some English Islamic writers began to abbreviate it as SA, SAAW, or SAAS (in accordance with the Arabic words) or PBUH, the abbreviation of its English translation.
A different expression, but with the same meaning “Peace be upon him,” is used in Arabic after naming any Islamic prophet other than Prophet Mohammed: *‘Alayhis-salam*. English writers sometimes abbreviate this expression as AS, following the first letters of the Arabic words, or PBUH.
Every English language newspaper which I read in the Middle East or North Africa, even the *Arab News* in ultra-fundamentalist Saudi Arabia, used the PBUH abbreviation. However, I never heard a Saudi speaking in English use the English or Arabic abbreviation or even the English translation.

These Saudis would always switch to Arabic to voice the salutation after speaking the Prophet's name or that of another prophet and then return to English to complete their sentence.

- p. 83: roulade: a musical ornament consisting of a rapid succession of tones sung to one syllable.
Here it is used metaphorically to describe Belmazoir's laughter.
- p. 83: "Must I give you a dinar?": In the same way he had given Ghazi Bourceli "a dinar" for translating five paragraphs above.
- p. 83: "So he didn't mention he was America-bound": Remy returns to his point that in mid-January Ballard knew he was leaving for America. He asks Belmazoir if in the next six weeks any change had come over their relationship.
- p. 83: "mid-January": On 5.72, Belsches mentioned that Mrs. Leroy stopped by his office around "mid-January" to apologize personally for her husband's inability to place him on the Washington list.
In my chronology, the late-night meeting between Leroy and Ballard, where the latter agreed that as usual he would "tag along" to Washington, occurred on Friday night, Jan. 13. (See 1.2 and its notes, N1-6-7).
By Monday, Jan. 16, gossip was already circulating that Ballard and the Leroy's two secretaries would be accompanying the ambassador. On Wednesday, Jan. 18, my chronology placed Mrs. Leroy's visit to Belsches's office.
- p. 83: "Yes. . . . Always I feared losing him. He could have stipulated them before": Remy's tactic of not immediately seeking an elaboration of Belmazoir's assertion that Ballard had given no "inkling" of abandoning him (82) succeeds.
Attesting to a seeming trust between the two, Mohammed confesses that he was always afraid of losing Ballard.
He states that two changes did occur during January and February. Ballard asked for two sexual acts he had never before sought: He had Belmazoir perform oral intercourse on him and had tried to sodomize Belmazoir.
- pp. 83-86: SECTION 2: Two timelines are interwoven here: Remy's taxi reaches Zaracova Beach (3:30). He surprisingly attaches an earring to his left earlobe (3:31) and fiddles with it (3:32).
Having begun his shuffling across the sand in his garish clothes across the sand (3:44), he reaches the cement sidewalk of the public area (3:49). He walks past the cabanas, even the beach's changing room which is his destination, and reaches the café (3:52),
What happened in the interval between 3:32 and 3:44 will not be explained until p. 90.

The second timeline continues his hurried reminiscences about the second (10:40 – 10:52) and the fourth or last part (11:02) of his interview with Belmazoir at the prison.

The third part (10:53 – 11:02) will be given in sect. 3, p. 86.

- p. 83: "Tried to": The first two words of this section, which repeat the ending of sect. 1, indicate that Remy had spent the last several minutes of his taxi ride to Zaracova Beach thinking about the first part of his morning interview with Belmazoir.
- p. 83: "his left lobe": As the taxi has pulled away, Remy surprisingly attaches an earring to his left lobe. In a flash, the second part of the interview with Belmazoir (10:40 – 10:52) passes through Remy's mind since the one-sentence third segment of this section (p. 85) has him adjusting the earring.
As the title of the chapter indicates, in imitation of HIV's earring at Trimalchio's (2.29 and its note N2.50), Remy wears his attached to his left lobe, unaware of any homosexual symbolism.
In the 1980s, the placement of the earring was an easily discernible means to indicate the type of sodomy a person preferred: right lobe (the sodomizer, dominant, or top) and left lobe (the one sodomized, submissive, or bottom).
While such a distinction HIV might have been maintaining at Trimalchio's, in Algeria a male wearing an earring on either lobe would be regarded as a homosexual.
- p. 83: "It was not that sex stales": The verb "stale" has the meaning of to lose "a former novelty and power of pleasing" (*Webster's Third*).
Remy is thinking about what Belmazoir had concluded at the end of his description of a nine-day affair with the female Dutch tourist when he was fifteen: Hustlers "always have the deep-seated fear that our sex will stale" (84).
But Remy will conclude on p. 85 that Belmazoir was wrong: Ballard had not grown tired of Belmazoir's sex, but of his own stultifying lust (85).
- p. 83: "long [venereal] preamble": Mohammed begins his explanation about the change which came over Ballard with an example of an encounter with a female Dutch tourist which attested to how sex can become stale.
The quote is from the "Prologue to the Wife of Bath's Tale," l. 837, where the Friar tells the wife, "This is a long preamble to a tale."
The quote, here thought by Remy, will be used by Leroy on 11.178.

- p. 84: "domed": A slang term for "performing oral sex."
- p. 84: prognathous: having the jaws projecting beyond the upper face.
- p. 84: "banging": A vulgar slang for sexual intercourse.
- p. 84: "smelly breasts": Belmazoir's pet name for the Dutch woman.
- p. 84: "a brassiere, a chiffon gown . . .": The outfit Belmazoir is told to put on turns him into the imitation of a woman.
- p. 84: thong: as a transitive verb, "to furnish or fashion with a thong" (*Webster's Third*).
- p. 84: "my cock had been hustled into the backdrop": loss of masculinity; castration.
- p. 84: "pegging godemiche": Pegging is the act of penetration of a male anus by a female with a strap-on dildo.
Godemiche is a dildo with scrotum.
- p. 84: "had become a black hole": On black hole, see p. 82 and its notes N6:3-4 above. There is also a reference to "asshole" in its two senses, "the anus" and "a disgusting or stupid person."
- p. 84: "slept with more o' the world than Cleopatra": In comparing his sexual prowess with that of Cleopatra, Belmazoir equates knowledge of sex with wisdom ("and thus am wise").
Cleopatra: In the Middle East and even by Egyptians, Cleopatra's licentiousness is stressed, not her beauty, sexual appeal, intelligence, or wit.
The contraction *o'* for *of* will be employed a total of seven times in the novel, usually in an expression similar to that by the Clown in *Antony and Cleopatra*: "I wish you joy o' the worm" (5.2.259, 279).
See the 2.17 note, "joy o'," N2:11, for a listing of these.
- p. 84: "dingus": A vulgar term for penis, according to *Webster's Third*.
My notes indicate that I came across the term in a translation of one of Aristophanes' plays (not mentioned in my notes), in which one of the characters speaks of "an eight-inch dingus."
- p. 84: "imitative": not real or genuine, as discussed in the note on the title of the chapter, N6:1.
- p. 84: "stage business": a minor action or gesture in a play, such as pouring tea or, as here, Belmazoir's tugging at his earlobe, which typically provides a break in dialogue or in a long monologue, again as here, although it may establish atmosphere or character.

- p. 84: "hosing": to perform anal sex leisurely, slowly, and deeply (*Urban Dictionary*).
- p. 84: "dong": Vulgar slang for penis. It harks back to the "ding-dong" mentioned in the song "Big Black" on 2.20.
- p. 84: pubes: the region of the lower part of the abdomen covered by hair which surrounds the external genitals.
- p. 84: "The . . . head . . . was hidden": "Head" refers to the glans penis, the head or end of a penis.
- p. 84: "kindle": a brood or litter, especially of kittens.
- p. 84: "would as lief not live": gladly or willingly, as on 5.74. Here, "would as gladly die."
- p. 84: "lipped": Two meanings are suggested: The archaic meaning "kiss" and the musical, "to place the lips in the proper position for playing a wind instrument." The image of the twining tongues, as on p. 82, for a second time recalls the lines "Feels so good wrapped / Around my tongue" from the last section of "Orgy" (2.27).
- p. 84: nosewing: a nasal ala (*Webster's Third*).
- p. 84: anal devoir: sodomizing duty.

- p. 85: fellator: the sexual partner performing oral sex.
- p. 85: “the rubber sticking in my crack”: I borrowed the image from my 1999 novella “Portrait of a Statue as a (Very) Young Man”: “the rubber . . . tucked . . . in his asshole” (99 in my *Saint*).
- p. 85: “Sloughed in despond”: A reference to the Slough of Despond episode from Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*, where sinners who are trapped in a deep swamp (sough) are filled with fears, doubts, and apprehensions (despondency). “Sough” as a transitive verb means “to engulf in or as if in a slough” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 85: “The earring foreign”: The narrative makes a quick return to the beach (3:32) where Remy is adjusting the earring clipped on after the taxi had pulled away (83). His mind also returns to the interview with Belmazoir (10:56).
- p. 85: “left carotid”: The metallic earring grazing Remy’s left carotid is reminiscent of the knife piercing Ballard’s right carotid on 1.14.
- p. 85: “in the guise of Foucin”: In imitation of Foucin or at least his reasoning or his arguments as to why Belmazoir killed Ballard.
- p. 85: “an intuitive Belmazoir”: Inwardly Remy is impressed that Belmazoir had, in essence, read his mind.
- p. 85: Fouad: Fouad Belghiche, the manager of the Bab el Oued café Bendari’s, which Belmazoir frequented and where he received telephone messages. This is the first mention of the café-tender or the café, but Belmazoir assumes (“as you know”) that Vellacott would have briefed Remy, his investigator, about them.
- p. 85: “the lacuna flaunted itself”: From the police reports in the 2269 folder, Remy knows that on Feb. 23, not Feb. 16, as Belmazoir’s chronology suggested, Ballard called Bendari’s and left the message for Mohammed to meet him at the Zaracova Beach disco on Feb. 27. Thus the “no show” originally assigned to Feb. 13 could possibly be for the 20th. In either case, one of their usually scheduled meetings is omitted in Belmazoir’s account.
- p. 85: “before quashing the notion”: a brittle rhyming pun on the legal term “motion to quash.”
- p. 85: “In his NY Yankee”: The action switches to Remy’ as he is waking across the sand of the beach (3:42 – 3:49).
- p. 85: “a giant azure fountain . . . spewing forth . . . the English word *LOVE*”: This description will reappear twice more later in the novel, 18.312 and 19.320.

- p. 85: *jeune homme*: young man.
- p. 85: “For the eighth time . . . from sand to cement”: The time is 3:49 when Remy steps from the sand to the cement sidewalk that he makes his conclusion about the darkness of Ballard’s life.
- p. 85: “‘stale, flat, and unprofitable’ to a ‘weary’ Ballard”: See *Hamlet*, 1.2.133-34: “How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable / Seem to me all the uses of this world!” “All the uses” means “the whole routine.” Although l. 134 is not quoted, it would have been on Remy’s mind as a description of how Ballard’s sexual routine had overwhelmed him.
Remy speculates that to Ballard Belmazoir had not grown “stale” (“having lost a former novelty and power of pleasing,” *Webster’s Third* defines).
Rather, Ballard had grown “weary” of himself, the failure at anal sex symbolizing his emasculation, just as Belmazoir had undergone emasculation by the Dutch tourist.
On the penultimate page of the novel, 21.367, Remy will quote an altered version of this line from *Hamlet*.
- p. 85: earringed: an adjective meaning “wearing earrings” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 85: *lobe de l’oreille*: earlobe.
- p. 85: “Ballard . . . had wearied of himself and become his own black hole”: Remy concludes that Ballard is like Belmazoir, who confessed that during the last stage of his sex with the Dutch tourist he “had become a black hole” (84).

- p. 86: “With a peek at his Vacheron (11:02)”: The action shifts from the beach at 3:49 p.m. to the prison at 11:02 a.m., when Remy closes his interview with Mohammed. His expensive watch, a Vacheron Constantin, was first mentioned on 4.60 and discussed in its note.
- pp. 86-87: SECTION 3: Time span: The section consists of three flashbacks, each consisting of Remy’s thoughts as he walks past the wooden beach cabanas toward the public changing room (3:52 – 3:55).
The first and third deal with the afternoon and night of April 7, 1989, in Le Puy, where he worked up the chronology of Ballard’s actions at Zaracova from Vellacott’s and the police reports.
The second is concerned with the third (10:53 – 11:02) of the four parts of his interview with Belmazoïr that morning, where he receives an account from Belmazoïr of his arrival for the meeting with Ballard.
- p. 86: “In Le Puy . . . while Marie was preparing dinner”: This sets the date as April 7, 1989; Remy arrived in the afternoon, but the time is not specified (4.52).
While Marie was preparing dinner, Remy studied the documents which DGSE had provided him, sorting through the ones he could take and those he must destroy (anything from DGSE).
- p. 86: “he had to become not Ballard . . . DSGE’s predilection . . . gone unnoticed until two evenings ago”: On his first night at the Al-Nigma, Remy concluded that DGSE was predicating that he “a traitor like Ballard would become the American” (4.54).
- p. 86: “a movable imitation of him”: Remy knew that on one of his early days in Algiers he would have to trace the American’s movements from Algiers to Zaracova Beach to the porch of the deserted disco.
In Le Puy he had sketched out what was known of Ballard’s chronology on the day he was murdered. There were seven verifiable times:
3:13: He signed out at the American Embassy.
From around 3:40 to 3:45: He is in the Zaracova Beach changing room, according to Mohisen, its attendant.
Around 5:00: As instructed, Mohisen has a beer and a pack of cigarettes brought from the café next door to the spot where Ballard had placed his towel. The American was nearing the end of his swim.
From 6:25 to 6:39: Ballard is in the changing room, where he showered, dressed, and left “at exactly 6:39,” the time of the call for the Maghrib *iqama*, the signal for those in the mosque to line up for the prayers. The attendant’s testimony about this time was supplemented by a customer in the changing room.
10:51: Ballard body was found by the police.
There were two other times: 7:30, when Belmazoïr said he found Ballard’s body, and 7:15, the time their beach rendezvous was set for.

- p. 86: *vestiaire*: the beach’s public changing room.
- p. 86: “‘7:15,’ the prisoner sighed”: The action shifts to the third segment of Remy’s four-part interview with Belmazoir (10:53 – 11:02).
It is joined several minutes into it because Belmazoir protests about “Remy’s interruptions.” Remy was obviously having Belmazoir recount what he did before entering the grove.
- p. 86: “nothing’s on time except the prayer calls”: Belmazoir must have taught Ballard this cultural truism because the American repeated it to Leila on 1.4: “The only thing on time in Algiers is the prayer call.”
- p. 86: “‘I was a chronic laggard.’ Remy squinched his brow”: Remy’s reaction indicates that he was unaware that Ballard had long come to expect Belmazoir would arrive late to their rendezvous.
He immediately realizes that Ballard would plan for Belmazoir to come at 7:30, not 7:15.
- p. 86: *bon ami*: good friend.
- p. 86: “he’d . . . be on my tail”: Instinctively Belmazoir felt that Foucin would connect him with Ballard’s death.
That Remy questioned him further about his exit from the grove and how he spent some of the money is indicated in the last paragraph of section 2 where at 11:02 Remy stepped back from the grating, having “complete his further probing of Belmazoir’s activities in the grove” (86).
- p. 86: “That night—“a son . . . conceived””: There is a flashback to the period after he and Marie had engaged in sex on the night of April 7 and his hope that he had impregnated her with a son (4.53). While she goes to sleep, Remy begins to think anew of Ballard’s chronology at Zaracova.
- p. 86: “averting my eyes”: Muslim men are forbidden to look at the genitals of another male.
See the 1.6 note, “the rule,” N1:16.
- p. 86: “a beer and a cigarette pack”: The Rothman cigarette pack and the Tango beer mentioned on 1.3 and in its notes.

- p. 87: “the lining up call for Maghrib prayers”: This chant is called the *iqama*, and it signals those in the mosque to line up for prayers (1.9 and its note N1.24).
This 6:39 call allowed the beach attendant Mohisen to state conclusively when Ballard left the changing room.
Remy would be unaware that Ballard confirmed to himself this time (1.9).
- p. 87: *umbra*: a person that tags along with or shadows another (*Webster’s Third*).
On 5.73, Belsches said that Ballard used “umbra” to describe himself as someone who followed Leroy wherever he was assigned.
Even earlier, 1.1, Ballard categorized himself as “Leroy’s tag-along.”
- p. 87: “the sole witness save one”: The other “one” would be the murderer.
- p. 87: *erotopath*: one affected with an abnormality of sexual desire (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 87: “left so early, 6:39, for a 7:15 meeting”: From his interview with Belmazoir that morning (86), Remy realized that this time span imagined in Le Puy would have been longer since Ballard had grown accustomed to Belmazoir arriving fifteen minutes late for their meetings.
The gap would actually be from 6:39 to 7:30.
- pp. 87-90: SECTION 4: Time span: This section deals with the interval between Remy’s return from the prison interview with Belmazoir (12:45) and his 3:30 arrival at Zaracova Beach.
He purchases the gay tourist disguise which he plans to wear to the beach (12:45 – 2:00), and at 2:45 telephones Foucin to set up an appointment with him at 6:45 that afternoon.
In his taxi ride to Zaracova Beach (3:15 – 3:30), he reminisces about the 1957 Battle of Algiers, so crucial to his own fate. Its history is the focus of this section.
- p. 87: *Bon Marché*: A large department store.
On 4.63, Belmazoir said that Ballard set their first meeting outside of its east entrance. See its note for some information on Algiers’ real *Bon Marché*, which as the text suggests is located near my fictional Al-Nigma.
- p. 87: *peepholes*: The peephole image occurs frequently in the novel. See the 3.42 note, N3:21-22, which lists the nine chapters in which it appears.
- p. 87: *commissaire divisionnaire*: divisional commissioner.
- p. 87: “the smeared palette of beach shirt and bermudas”: Remy’s beach outfit is described on p. 85.

- p. 87: “Impertinent, I own, is my petition”: This apologetic device will be used frequently by Remy in seeking the help of Foucin (7.114; 9.149; 10.166; 13.209; 14.236; and 16.272).
- p. 87: *sawm*: As the text indicates, the Arabic word for a Muslim’s Ramadan “fast” from sunrise to sunset.
- p. 87: “*Parbleu!*” As translated in the text, French for “But of course!”
- p. 87: President Bendjedid: This is the first mention in the text of the last name of the president of Algeria at the time of the novel.
His first name Chadli was given on 1.11 and in its note in reference to the 1988 anti-government demonstrations and the reforms which he sought after them.
Chadli Bendjedid (1929 – 2012) was the third president of Algeria, serving from Feb. 9, 1979, to Jan. 11, 1992. He was a protégé of Algeria’s second president Houari Boumediène, and served on his staff during the revolutionary war against France.
After independence Bendjedid’s military career exhibited a steady rise. In November 1978, he was appointed Minister of Defense, a post he was holding at the sudden death of Boumediène in 1979.
As a compromise candidate, Bendjedid was named President by the FLN Congress. At first, his economic reforms were successful, but financial mismanagement led to the October 1988 protests over food shortages and prices, which the army brutally suppressed.
Bendjedid then called for a multi-party democracy, but in the 1991 elections, the Islamist party soundly defeated the FLN slate. However, the military, led by Bendjedid’s Minister of Defense Khaled Nezzar, annulled the results and toppled Bendjedid.
A decade-long civil war followed.
After his overthrow in 1992 Bendjedid by and large steered clear of politics. In May 2012, after treatment for renal cancer at a military hospital in Paris, he returned to Algiers where he died on Oct. 6, 2012.
- p. 87: “through the bathroom door he caught himself (‘or my mask’) in its vanity mirror”: On the use of mirrors and masks in the novel, see the note on the title of chap. 5, N5:1.
- p. 87: HIV-2: The second of the retroviruses that cause AIDS.
See the 2.25 note, “At their inceptive,” for a brief discussion of AIDS.

- p. 88: *chauffeur*: Short for *chauffeur de taxi* or “taxi driver.”
- p. 88: Zirout Boulevard: The north-south artery on which the front or coastal side of the Al-Nigma is located.
- p. 88: “in ’56”: Until June 21-24, 1956, when FLN assassination squads gunned down forty-nine European Algerian civilians in Algiers, the war had not come to capital, and Algerian young men could still freely “indulge” in a swim in the bay.
- p. 88: subsumption: The inclusion of something smaller into a larger group.
Here, politics began to subsume the thoughts of all the Muslims in Algiers.
- p. 88: Khaleel: Omar’s best friend, he was mentioned on 3.40 and will be referred to on the next page as one of those who helped to build the tunnel.
On 10.157, he will be described as “Omar’s best friend,” and in the penultimate page of the novel, a reminiscing Remy will call him “a good-enough best friend, but I was not!”
- p. 88: “we’ll tend to it; you take care of Noura”: His friends were aware of Omar’s vow to God, made in the presence of his father (3.37), to dedicate his life to ensure that no harm came to his deaf-mute sister. Nine paragraphs down, this *nathr* is repeated.
- p. 88: “His best friend had been wrong (at that time)”: The 1957 Battle of Algiers, which will be described in the ensuing pages, proved to be a disaster for the FLN, whose presence was basically wiped out in Algiers by October of that year.
Not until what is called the Second Battle of Algiers, when for three days, Dec. 10-13, 1960, the inhabitants of the city openly demonstrated in support of the FLN, would Algiers become a significant force in the revolution.
- p. 88: FLN’s *neuf historiques*: historic nine, or as the text states, the “nine founding fathers” of Algeria.
These were selected as the first leaders of the organization that became the FLN: Mustafa Ben Boulaid (*wilaya* or district 1); Mourad Didouche (*wilaya* 2); Belkacem Krim (*wilaya* 3); Rabah Bitat (*wilaya* 4); Larbi Ben M’hidi (*wilaya* 5); and the four external leaders stationed in Cairo: Mohamed Boudiaf, Hocine Ait Ahmed, Mohamed Khider, and Ahmed Ben Bella.
An airplane carrying the four externals was hijacked by the French on April 22, 1956. They spent the rest of the war imprisoned in France.
Larbi Ben M’Hidi’s death will be described on the next page. Mustafa Ben Boulaid and Mourad Didouche died in battles with the French in 1955.
After independence, two of the historic nine, living in exile, were assassinated by agents of President Boumediène: Mohamed Khider in 1967 and Belkacem Krim in 1984.
Rabah Bitat, for three months served as president of Algeria, but was deposed by Bendjedid in February 1979; he died peacefully in Algiers in 2000.

Mohamed Boudiaf, long an exile, was called back to serve as president after the army unseated Bendjedid in February 1992, but was assassinated five months later. Ahmed Ben Bella, Algeria’s first elected president, as explained in the 2.17 note on N2:13, was deposed in 1965, briefly imprisoned, and then placed under house arrest until 1980.

He was granted exile to Switzerland, but was allowed to return to Algeria, under a looser form of house supervision, in 1990. He died on April 11, 2012.

At the time of this note (June 2013), Hocine Ait Ahmed, during the revolution the leader of Algeria’s Berbers, is the only surviving leader of the nine. Now eighty-seven and permitted to return to Algeria, he chooses to live in Switzerland.

p. 88: “well-camouflaged summit”: On Aug. 20, 1956, a summit of in-country FLN leaders convened in Soummam Valley in Kabylie in northeastern Algeria. It was to be in session for twenty days. Present were sixteen delegates from Constantine, Oran, Algiers and its neighboring Médéa-Blida, and Kabylie.

None of the four external FLN leaders stationed in Cairo were present. Absent also was a representative from the northeastern district, the Aurès, since its leader had recently been killed and his successor had not been agreed upon.

To conceal the meeting from the French army patrolling the district, the Kabylie’s leader Belkacem Krim and his military aide Amirouche Ait Humouda launched diversionary operations to distract the French to other areas of Kabylie.

The summit of Soummam, however, was largely controlled by another Kabylie, Abane Ramdane. The conference agreed upon the rebels’ military and political hierarchies, including a system of military units.

It also established a five-member Central Executive Committee (CCE) consisting of Krim and Abane from Kabylie, Larbi Ben M’hidi, representing Oran although he was at that time the FLN’s political leader in Algiers, Ben Youssef Ben Khedda from the Médéa-Blida district south of Algiers, and Saad Dahlab, a representative from Algiers.

Ben M’hidi convinced the Soummam delegates to bring the fight to the Algerian capital through a general strike by the city’s Muslims. Krim accompanied the other four members of the CCE in their secretive return to Algiers to coordinate the campaign.

p. 88: “its lackadaisical twenty-first month”: The revolution started on Nov. 1, 1954, when FLN *maquisards* (French for “guerrillas”) launched a score of attacks against basically rural targets, such as police posts, communication facilities, public utilities, warehouses, post offices, and electrical stations.

Thereafter the FLN used hit-and-run tactics, ambushes, and night raids, but had not inspired the bulk of the Muslim people to revolt against French rule.

The general strike in Algiers, approved in August 1956, was designed to accomplish that purpose.

The twenty-one-month span referred to here would be the period from Nov. 1, 1954 to Aug. 20, 1956, when the summit decided on the strike.

p. 88: “‘depth’ of our aspiration”: paradoxical phrasing.

- p. 88: Saadi Yacef: As the text indicates, he was M’hidi’s military commander. He operated out of the Casbah.
Notes on pp. 89 and 90 will explain his importance in the Battle of Algiers which followed the general strike.
- p. 88: “two intrusive 1956 blasts”: Yacef assembled some skillful bomb-makers, and on Sept. 30, 1956, the French sector of Algiers was rocked by two explosives set off in the Milk Bar café and the Rue Michelet Cafétéria.
Three young people were killed and over fifty seriously injured.
- p. 88: “Algeria’s Governor-General Robert Lacoste . . . *his* military commander Gen. Jacques Massu”: Lacoste was named governor-general of Algeria in Feb. 1956, remaining in the post until May 1958. He advocated forceful, often brutal, actions to suppress the FLN rebellion.
The word “*his*” is italicized to contrast his choice as Algiers’ military commander with Yacef, M’hidi’s selection.
Brigadier-General Massu, the commander of France 10th paratrooper division, was sent to Algeria in 1955, but he and his 8,000 troops were brought from countryside warfare to Algiers on Jan. 10, 1957.
Massu was affectionately called “*le Père des Paras*,” “the Father of the Paratroopers,” as reported in a 1958 *Time* magazine article and in Massu’s 2002 obituary in the *London Times*.
The 2002 obituary in the *New York Times* lists the phrase as “*le père de paras*,” translated as “the father of paratroopers.”
In May 13, 1958, Massu, now the military governor of Algeria, led a junta which seized power in Algeria. They insisted that de Gaulle be named prime minister of France in order to thwart Guy Mollet’s Socialist government’s movement toward granting Algeria independence.
De Gaulle was named to this post on June 1, 1958, and Massu’s junta dissolved itself, pledging allegiance to the new government. However, two years later, when de Gaulle showed signs of supporting an independent Algeria, on Jan 14, 1960, Massu challenged him and was promptly relieved as military governor of Algeria.
Ironically during the May 1968 French student riots against de Gaulle, it was the backing of Massu, then General of the Army, which de Gaulle sought and received.
- p. 88: “decorticate”: to remove the bark, husk, or peel from; it is used here metaphorically.
- p. 88: “paras”: paratroopers, who in Algiers functioned as the counter-insurgency unit to suppress the rebellion.
See 2.26 and its note, N2:40, and 3.37 and its note, N3.7.
- p. 88: “a tac for tic, tit for tat” reprisal: “Tictac” or “ticktack” or “tick-tack” has several meanings: It refers to (1) a recurring sound like the ticking of a clock; (2) a device

for making a tapping sound on a windowpane or door as a prank; (3) a form of backgammon in which pegs are fitted into holes.

The last is used in *Measure for Measure* 1.2.188, where Lucio says that Claudio’s death sentence resulted from his having engaged in “a game of tick-tack,” the peg in the hole carrying a sexual innuendo.

All three meanings suggest the mechanical or game-like nature of reprisal.

The FLN carried out an average of eight hundred shootings and bombings per month through the spring of 1957.

French paratroopers almost daily rounded up young Muslim Algerian men and some women suspected of being FLN members.

In addition, after most FLN bombings *pied-noir* mobs would attack and sometimes beat to death any Muslims near the explosion.

p. 88: Ali la Pointe: A lieutenant of Saadi Yacef and the last major Casbah FLN leader killed.

He is the hero of the acclaimed 1966 film *The Battle of Algiers*, directed by the Italian filmmaker Gillo Pontecorvo and based on a screenplay by Saadi Yacef, who plays himself in the movie.

p. 88: “in the fifteen minutes the cab will need to reach Zaracova”: 3:15 – 3:30.

pp. 88-89: “*Nathr*-bound . . . swerve from his pledge”: As explained in the 6.88 note above, “we’ll tend,” N6:17, a *nathr* is a vow to God.

Omar’s duty, which all of the Casbah respected, was to Noura. He must not endanger himself (and thus her) by joining this fight.

Yet the “defiant courage” of the last surviving FLN leader in the Casbah, Ali la Pointe, led Omar to swerve from his vow to God.

- p. 89: “profane submission”: This would be the opposite of Islam, a word which literally translates as “submission” (to Allah’s will).
- p. 89: Blida: A city located forty-five kilometers south of Algiers.
See the 3.38 note.
Since the Casbah FLN had been wiped out, Omar secretly joined the nearby Blida branch, although he continued to live with his family in the Casbah.
- p. 89: “my traitor’s honor roll of martyrs”: In the taxi, Remy drafts a “list of the dead” (82) during the guerrilla warfare of the ten-month Battle of Algiers, qualifying it by noting that the honor roll was drawn up by him, a traitor.
He cites by name Ben M’hidi, Samia Hedouci, the bombers Mourad and Kamel, Hassiba Ben Bouali, Petit Omar, and Ali la Pointe, although many others died heroically, he acknowledges.
I basically followed the account of Horne in *Savage War*, chap. 9, pp. 183-207, although certain aspects (the nature of the killing of Ben M’hidi, Omar’s supposed engagement to a fictional Samia Hedouci and her death, and the final actions of Ali, Hassiba, and Petit Omar) are my inventions.
- p. 89: “dangling from”: The dangling image is employed in seven chapters of the novel.
See the 1.14 note, N1:37, for a list of its occurrences.
- p. 89: “thirty-seven days . . . nineteen . . . a further ten . . . nine days later”: The general strike began on January 28, 1957.
At a secret meeting in Algiers on Feb. 15, the five FLN leaders decided that the strike and resultant confrontation with the French had been a mistake and planned to get themselves out of the city before they were trapped and killed (nineteen days into the strike).
Four were whisked out of Algiers successfully—Krim, Abane, Saad Dahlab, and Ben Khedda.
On Feb. 25, Ben M’hidi, awaiting evacuation, was captured (ten days after the decision was made to abandon Algiers, M’hidi was seized).
On March 5, he was taken to an isolated farmhouse south of Algiers and hanged (nine days after his capture and thirty-seven days since the strike began).
The next day, the French announced that he had committed suicide by hanging himself in his cell using strips of material from his shirt.
- p. 89: “safe house”: A residence of a French or other European descendant sympathetic to the FLN; it was sometimes referred to as a “house of refuge.”
M’hidi had left the Casbah and was arrested in an apartment on Rue Claude Debussy in the European quarter of Algiers.
- p. 89: “Not French torture, but his own—‘from my reckless decision,’ the FLN’s presence in Algiers had been virtually wiped out”: By March 5, fifty-one FLN cell chiefs in the Casbah, twenty-three of its skilled assassins, and one hundred seventy-four of its

- tax collectors had been either killed or arrested, and much of the remainder of its fifteen hundred active members had fled the city.
- p. 89: “Remy romanticized”: Remy admits that his is an idealized version of the death of Ben M’hidi, the political leader of Algiers: Distraught over the failure of the Battle of Algiers, M’hidi hanged himself in his cell.
As the seventeen-year-old Omar, he would have heard Muslim gossip about M’hidi’s death and read the French version in Algiers’ newspapers at the time. It was not until 2000, long after the events of this novel, that the French paratrooper in charge of torture during the 1957 Battle of Algiers admitted that M’hidi was hanged by his torturers at an isolated farmhouse near Algiers, thus disputing the story given to the press by the French that M’hidi hanged himself.
- p. 89: “bitter end”: Plays on two meanings of the expression: “the inboard end of a ship’s anchoring cable or line” and “the last extremity however painful, distasteful, or calamitous” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 89: Samia Hedouci: A composite of the young women recruited by Saadi Yacef as bombers. Her last name is that of the woman Lakhdari Hedouci, who planted the bomb at the Rue Michelet Cafétéria on Sept. 30, 1956.
- p. 89: “three-meter-high barbed-wire fence, broken by five checkpoints”: In July 1956, following the random shooting of forty-nine European Algerians in the capital from June 21 -24, the French military cordoned off the Casbah with this fence.
This is the third major setting affiliated with the “barbed-wire” image. See the 1.10 note, N1:25, for a discussion of it.
Checkpoint blockades were set up at the northern end of Rue Marengo (the Middle Street); its southern exit at Marché de la Lyre; the eastern Rue du Divan running in front of the Place du Gouvernement building (now Martyrs Square); Blvd. de Verdun (now Blvd. Hadad Abderrazak), the boundary of the Upper Casbah; and Blvd. Gambetta (the present Blvd. Ourida Meddad, the western boundary).
- p. 89: *noms de guerre*: pseudonyms; French, literally, “war names.”
- p. 89: “Mourad and Kamel . . . bombers . . . hoisted with their own petard”: The expression means “destroyed by the very explosives (petards) with which they meant to destroy others.”
See *Hamlet*, 3.4.213-14, “For ’tis sport to have the engineer / Hoist with his own petard.”
In *Savage War*, p. 212, Horne provides a vivid account of the deaths of Mourad and Kamel on Aug. 26, 1957. Cornered in a second-story apartment by the paras of Col. Marcel Bigeard, one of Massu’s officers, they seemingly agreed to surrender when Bigeard promised that they would be treated as prisoners of war and given a fair trial.
Demanding that Bigeard sign a paper of the terms he had verbally agreed to, they lowered a basket containing not only the paper but also a bomb the size of a

cigarette pack. When two paras approached the basket, it blew up, seriously wounding them and a nearby French officer.

Delighted by this last ruse, Mourad and Kamel rushed from the apartment. The latter was cut down by a fusillade from the paras, but Mourad was blown to pieces by a grenade which he was in the act of throwing at the French besiegers. So, in truth, only one was hoisted with his own petard.

p. 89: Casbahians: The residents of the Casbah. A variant is "Casbahites," according to a search through Google, but the term which I heard English-speaking Arabs use was "Casbahians."

p. 89: "sensible acts of random violence": A pedestrian play upon the expression, "random acts of senseless violence."

p. 89: "Algiers' Casino which disemboweled its unlucky bandleader": Located six miles west of downtown Algiers, the Casino de la Corniche was bombed on June 9, 1957. The name of the orchestra leader was Lucien Seror, 38, but he used the stage name "Lucky Starway," hence the cruel pun on his name. He was considered the heartthrob of Bab el Oued.

The timed bomb was slipped under the bandstand by a fifteen-year-old Muslim dishwasher, who fled before the explosion and ultimately escaped to the countryside.

Nine (some sources list eleven) were killed, and around eight-five wounded, orchestra members or young, mainly teenage, dancers from prominent *pie-noir* families who patronized the Casino.

Those dancing closest to the orchestra who were not killed had the legs or feet blown off.

As part of the tit for tat, at the funeral services for the victims two days later, a riot broke out in which five Muslims were killed and around a hundred Arab shops were looted or burned.

Mourad and Kamel were also responsible for the three bombs planted in lampposts near crowded bus and streetcar stops which exploded, killing eight and wounding ninety on June 3, 1957, and the five bombing in central Algiers on July 17 which killed five and wounded three.

p. 89: "the end of August": Mourad and Kamel were killed on August 26.

p. 89: Col. Marcel Bigeard: Not mentioned in the text until here, in the note five above, he was referred to as the French officer who negotiated with Mourad and Kamel.

In 1957, he was commander of the 3rd Colonial Parachute regiment, part of Gen. Jacques Massu's 10th Paratroopers division.

Bigeard and the 3rd had the responsibility for the Casbah during the first (1957) Battle of Algiers. After his success there, he was transferred to the Atlas Mountains to lead the fight against its ALN.

- p. 89: *Les tombeaux*: "The Tombs." See 3.31 and its note. Omar was taken there to witness the torture of his sister Noura.
- pp. 89-90: "Ali la Pointe": Ali la Pointe is the alias of Ali Ammar (1930-1957). The catalogue of martyrs concludes with an extended account of the last days of him, his reputed girlfriend, Hassiba Ben Bouali, and Saadi Yacef's twelve-year-old nephew Petit Omar.
Again Horne's *Savage War*, pp. 213-18, is the principal source, as is acknowledged by Remy who notes that he had "spent three weeks in 1977 [the year of its publication] poring over Horne's *A Savage War of Peace*" (89).
- p. 89: adonic: "like Adonis . . . exceptionally handsome" (*Webster's Third*).
- p. 89: "*maison-par-maison* tunnels": tunnels running from one house to another.
- p. 89: "Yacef it was . . . Casbah . . . twenty-eight months": This paragraph is by and large my concoction, not Yacef's.
The fictional building of the secretive underground tunnel leading from the Casbah to the Bay of Algiers began in March 1960, hence "twenty-eight months" from the November 1957 end of the Battle of Algiers.
A detailed account of its tunneling will be discussed on 10.157-58.
- p. 89: subterrestrial: "subterranean" (*Webster's Third*).
- p. 89: "Hydra-beheaded-and-cauterized FLN": In Greek mythology, Hydra is the nine-headed monster slain by Hercules.
Since it regrew any head cut off with two new ones, immediately on cutting off a head Hercules had a friend cauterize the open stump so a head could not grow back.
- p. 89: "groping to reform": The defeat in the 1957 Battle of Algiers destroyed its FLN presence. Thus there was a gap between Yacef's leadership, which ended in Sept. 1957, and the emergence of Larbi Alilat as his successor in late 1959, signaled by an FLN bomb which exploded on the Rue d'Isly, the European section of Algiers, on Dec. 25. Three were killed and forty injured.
However, another year would go by until the FLN allowed its supporters in Algiers to march in support of independence.
From Dec. 10 - 13, 1960, in what is often called the second Battle of Algiers, Muslims from the Casbah poured into the streets brandishing the FLN flags. Rioting ensued with several European Algerians being lynched and many of their stores being burned. One of the "victims" was the Great Synagogue of the Casbah, which was gutted.
- p. 89: "keeping it from my French case officer": In December 1958, Remy became an agent for the French and continued so until April 1961 when he and the other six great traitors were flown to France.

Thus from March through November 1960, the building of the tunnel, Remy chose not to tell his French case officer about it.

p. 89: “*Le grand frère!*”: As is indicated in the next paragraph, this means, “Big brother!”

p. 89: tutoyer: to speak to someone familiarly.

p. 89: “ration forty paupers”: In Horne’s account, Ali said, “I’m going to give food to forty old paupers. I’m going to die” (216).

Horne’s footnote states that this is a Muslim custom when one has a premonition of imminent death. I was unable to verify that statement, but would never consider challenging Horne.

p. 89-90: “his ‘big brother’ was captured two days later . . . his epilogue”: Saadi Yacef was captured on Sept. 25, 1957, surrendering passively. The fact that he did not die fighting like Mourad and Kamel and later Ali la Pointe sullied his reputation, as did the gossip that to avoid torture he gave the French information which led to the killing of Ali and others.

It is in some ways ironic that Yacef, the military leader of the 1957 Battle of Algiers and the one most responsible for the bombing campaign, survived the war.

Sentenced to death, he was later pardoned by de Gaulle. He returned to Algiers, supposedly at the encouragement of the French to promote an independent Algeria closely aligned to France.

However, the first two leaders of Algeria, Ben Bella and Boumediène, had little use for him. As indicated in the text, Yacef became a writer and filmmaker.

See the 6.88 note, N6.19, for his seminal role in the production of *The Battle of Algiers*, a film which honored Ali la Pointe.

At the time of this note (June 2013), Yacef was eighty-five and serving as a senator in the upper house of Algeria’s parliament.

p. 89: “having pored over Horne’s 1977 *A Savage War of Peace*”: Without any Algerian contacts, Remy would have known what was happening there only through skimpy newspaper and magazine articles.

Horne’s book relied on firsthand interviews with the participants in the revolution and thus provided Remy with much information about what had occurred after the traitors’ 1961 flight to France, such as the post-independence career of Yacef.

- p. 90: "*Herald Tribune* article": This must be a catch-all for several gossipy articles I read about Yacef, for I have been unable to track it down.
The *International Herald Tribune*, under several mastheads, has been the major English-language newspaper for Europe since 1887.
- p. 90: "the 'Heights'": Algiers' exclusive suburbs, Hydra, Ben Aknoun, El Biar, and Bouzareah, are called the "Heights" not just because they are located on or near the top of the Sahel Hills but also because most of the foreign embassies, many Algerian ministries, and the majority of the capital's five-star hotels are located there.
- p. 90: "Grudge him not . . . that he": Despite his significant role in the 1957 Battle of Algiers, Yacef cannot be on a "list of the dead" (82) since he was still alive.
More significantly, here Remy's anti-self is speaking to Remy, thus the second person, "among your list," is used instead of "my list."
The pause indicated by the ellipsis is designed to convey the anti-self's insinuation that Remy begrudges Yacef's material comfort and wealth, an impression which is trumped by his emphasis on what Yacef has lost, the status of being on the list of martyrs.
Remy's anti-self is forcing Remy to see himself in the light of Yacef: He too gained much materially by not dying for the Revolution, but he lost his honor and his Algerian family.
- p. 90: "redundantly named 'Safy-le-Pur'": As Horne points out, *safi* is an Arabic word for "pure." (*Naqi* is the more common word.)
The French word for "pure" is *pur*. Thus this redundantly named turncoat had the "purity" of both languages, a more-than-the-more pureness.
Remy sanctimoniously contrasts himself with Safy, by calling him "a greater devil than I," yet admits their similarity, for "like me he escaped."
Here Remy is again compared to a devil, this time by himself, perhaps anticipating his anti-self.
- p. 90: mew: a secret hiding place.
- p. 90: "two score of Muslims": I got this number from an Algerian article. Horne places the Muslim dead as seventeen not counting Ali, Hassiba, and Omar. Another source lists twenty-four.
- p. 90: "a quite gaysome": A Romeo-and-Juliet romanticizing by Remy, similar to his account of the suicide of M'hidi (89). For effect, Remy maintained to Belmazoir that he was a "sentimentalist" (4.67).
Since there were no witnesses to Ali's, Hassiba's, and Omar's death, there is no way to know their final actions.
- p. 90: gaysome: "full of gaiety; blithe" (*Webster's Third*).

- p. 90: "his snarl cold-shouldering death": "Cold-shouldering" is a transitive verb meaning "to give the cold shoulder to" (*Webster's Third*).
- p. 90: *chefs historiques*: "historical leaders"; a synonym for *neuf historiques*, mentioned on p. 88 and discussed in its note N6.17-18.
- p. 90: "down to six with M'hidi's death, two other . . . killed in '55 and '56": Mourad Didouche died in 1955 battling the French in Constantine. Soldiers of the Aurès leader Mustapha Ben Boulaid brought him a French military radio dropped in a parachute. Thinking it was intended for paratroopers in the Aurès, he ordered them to inspect it. Intentionally booby-trapped by the French, it blew up killing him and everyone else in the room.
- p. 90: "took scant notice of Algiers thereafter": The 6.89 note indicates that four members of the CCE successfully got out of Algiers. On Feb. 22, 1957, they were driven by the wife of a sympathetic European Algerian to Blida, a city south of Algiers. However, so overwhelmed by the fiasco of the Battle of Algiers, they did not stop in Blida but immediately headed for the border. Abane and Dahlab eventually reached Morocco, and Krim and Ben Khedda fled to Tunisia.
- p. 90: "brush aside the fly 'failure'": The image of the "fly" began this chapter (82; see its note on N6:2 for the significance of the swatting of a fly in the history of Algeria).
- p. 90: "You did, did you not?": This question returns Remy to the opening of the chapter. Paralleling Remy with the historic nine, his anti-self accuses Remy of having desired to be the last of the seven traitors standing, which is what HIV called him in 2.29: "you are . . . the last standing."
- p. 90: "the Notre Dame d'Afrique with its Black Madonna": The glance at the cathedral establishes that the time is 3:27 p.m.
- p. 90: "Arriving at the beach three minutes later": In imitation of Ballard, Remy arrives at Zaracova at 3:30. He requested the taxi driver to return at 5:30, which would give him time to return to the Al-Nigma and changed clothes before his meeting with Foucin at 6:45.
- p. 90: "*Quand mon retour?*": "What time my return?"
- p. 90: "how dwarfed he was by his afternoon shadow": The image is designed to suggest how the roll call of the martyrs has diminished Remy's judgment of himself.

pp. 90-93: SECTION 5: Time span: The section opens by filling in the conspicuous gap from the previous section, where Remy converses with the beach’s old parking attendant Abukadir (3:32 – 3:44).

Remy then walks from the parking lot to the public area where the beach’s cabanas, changing room, and café are (3:44 – 3:52). He continues past the deserted cabanas and even by the changing room. Instead, he goes into the café next door and observes its customers (3:52 – 3:59).

He doubles back to the changing room, entering it exactly at four. He speaks with the teenager attendant Mohisen and in the changing room undresses, placing his items in the basket which the youth had provided (4:00 – 4:09).

p. 90: *vieillard*: “old man” in French.

Here, the old beach parking attendant.

p. 90: “joy o’ your joy”: As explained in the 2.17 note on N2:11, this construction with the elided “of” is based on the Clown’s comment in *Antony and Cleopatra*: “I wish you joy o’ the worm” (5.2, 259, 275).

Variants of it were also on 3.37 and earlier in this chapter, p. 84.

p. 90: *aagooz*: Arabic for “old man,” as the text indicates.

p. 90: “Many a fellow whose left ear drips gold”: Even the old parking attendant knows that this is a sign that the wearer is homosexual.

p. 90: “the clutch”: The clutch purse mentioned on p.84.

- p. 91: "the Ramadan Heavens": The Qur'an mentions the existence of seven heavens, one on top of the other (Suras 67:1-3 and 71:15-16).
- p. 91: "millennial trees of Tamrit": The trees in the Tamrit valley of southeastern Algeria are "2,000 years old" (Stevens and Stevens, *Algeria and the Sahara*, p. 228).
- p. 91: "his breakfast tonight": *Iftar*, the evening meal in Ramadan which breaks the day-long fast, is called "breakfast."
- p. 91: "that flurry of a month and a half ago": A reference to the murder of Ballard at Zaracova Beach on Feb. 27.
Since the date of this chapter is Apr. 10, forty-five days would have elapsed.
- p. 91: "cadi's ear": A honey-drenched cake.
The lore, which is explained in the next paragraph, is basically taken from *Savage War*, pp. 34-35, where Horne states that the custom of having to sweeten the bribe for a judge (*cadi*) led to the renaming of a cake drenched with honey.
- p. 91: "Like a pregnant woman": The simile Abukadir uses to describe his faithfulness is paraphrased from *Chinggis Khan: The Golden History of the Mongols* (Folio Society, 1993), chap. 7, p. 120.
There a cowardly opponent of Genghis Khan is described as "a pregnant woman who dare not move beyond her pissing place."
- p. 91: "ninety minutes prior": When Mohisen said the American had left at 6:40 (Maghrib prayers were just beginning), it would have been around 8:30 when Abukadir sends someone to call the police.
- p. 91: "the tag number of the red Renault Quatreille, my ward": On 1.4 and 7, Ballard's car is described as a red Renault Quatreille.
- p. 91: "M. Ballard, M. Ballard!": They call out the name identified by the tag number of the car, not the name which Ballard used at the beach, "M. John."
- p. 91: "as disposed to answer as a mama cat": This after-the-fact commentary by Abukadir indicates that the dead Ballard was as likely to answer as a mother cat which has deserted her kittens.
The feline image occurs five times in this chapter: 84, 91 (twice), 92, and 99.
- p. 91: "the 'Great One'": This is the first use of the epithet used by most Algerians in speaking of Commissioner Foucin.
The designation is not only used by Abukadir, but also by Bourceli (11.172), her son Ghazi (13.201), an Algerian youth (21.353), and the chant of the Algerian masses (21.355).

Remy immediately takes up Abukadir’s epithet for Foucin (6.95) and mentally (and sometimes mockingly) will uses it quite frequently (7.106; 13.204, recalling Ghazi’s reference; 16.266, imagining Chabane employing it; 18.310, imagining its use by a group of Algerians; and 20:342 and 44.

The alternate form of the epithet is “*M. Le Grand*,” used on 11.173 (Mme. Bourceli); 13.201 (Ghazi); 14.234 (a Martyrs Square youth); 15.244 (Mohammed); 19.329 (a French embassy official); 20.332 (an ambassador); and 21.353 (an Algerian youth). Another variant is employed only once, “Monsieur the Grand” (Ghazi; 13.205).

The three epithets appear a total of twenty-one times.

p. 91: ukase: an order.

p. 91: “Search the palm grove near the disco!”: At 10:35, “the Great One” arrived, Abukadir says, and tells the police officers to search the grove. They do and Ballard’s body is quickly found (10:51, although this time is not given by Abukadir). Here Remy discovers that Foucin was involved in the investigation of the murder two and one-half days earlier than official documents about the case reveal (4.58).

p. 91: “Mohisen . . . ripping up a one-dinar note—the prodigal!—and throwing its shreds into the briny wind”: Abukadir reports that an upset Mohisen tore up a one-dinar note and threw it away.

On 1.8, this note given Mohisen by Ballard was actually a one-hundred-dinar note.

p. 91: “to keep us in sanity”: Abukadir argues that hunger (the needs of the body) compels a person to stay sane (the sole need of the mind). There is a play on the phrase “in sanity” and the noun “insanity” to suggest how dubious the battle between the two are.

p. 91: “in a good imitation of it”: The key word of the title of the chapter is used to suggest that human beings have less sanity than they imagine since often they simply give a “good imitation” of being sane.

p. 91: free gratis: “without cost; free; gratis.” The construction is considered informal English (*Webster’s Third*).

p. 91: “DGSE off by sixty hours”: DGSE apparently was unaware that Foucin was at the beach on the night of the search for Ballard’s body since its files had indicated to Remy that Foucin became involved in the murder investigation on the morning of Mar. 2, “sixty hours” after the body was discovered.

p. 91: “So Foucin was here the night of the murder”: This subsection covers the 3:44 – 3:52 period when Remy is walking across the sand to the area of the beach where the cabanas, the changing room, and the café are (the “tripartite accommodations section”).

It was during this walk that he processed Abukadir’s revelations about Foucin and reached two conclusions that the commissioner.

- p. 91: “As I noted to Foucin in his office!”: Remy thinks it significant that Foucin did not correct him when he made this observation in the commissioner’s office (4.58). His exclamation point implies that Foucin wanted to hide his presence at the beach.
- p. 91: “how intuitive of the commissioner, to know the lay of the land”: Abukadir had reported that Foucin had told the police to search the palm grove. Remy is also intrigued how Foucin’s intuition told him that the body would be found in the grove near the disco. Remy knows from the 2269 folder that the notebook containing Ballard’s message listing the disco in the grove as the site where Belmazoir was to meet him was not seized until two days after the murder. (Belmazoir refers to the message left at Bendari’s on p. 85.)
- p. 91: “Felicitations, M. Montpellier!”: Remy as Lazar congratulates Remy as Montpellier because just as his first discovery, that Foucin had hidden from him his early involvement in the case, this second one will provide Remy with a possible avenue of investigation which can extend his stay until he is able to maneuver the meeting with his father.
- p. 91: “At that point—surprising even to him—his mind digressed to Ballard’s ‘black hole’”: Directly after his conclusions about Foucin, Remy surprisingly thinks about Ballard. These 4:39 thoughts about him were given earlier on p. 85 when Remy for “the eighth time shifted the . . . purse,” tugged at his earlobe and concluded that Ballard’s deviancy had sucked him into a “black hole” and that he should have killed Belmazoir for bringing home that truth to him.

- p. 92: "The five blue-and-white cabanas": From 3:49 to 3:52, Remy walks past the cabanas and the changing room and reaches the café.
- p. 92: *vestiaire*: public changing room.
- p. 92: "he continued past it to the café": A "cruising" homosexual such as Remy is pretending to be would check out the café first, the likely gathering point for any hustlers. Thus he is in character in bypassing his true destination, the changing room.
- p. 92: *jeune femme*: "a young woman" in French.
- p. 92: pendulation: "a pendular movement," that is, "swinging back and forth" like a pendulum (*Webster's Third*).
- p. 92: exsert: a transitive verb meaning "to thrust forth or out; cause to protrude" (*Webster's Third*).
- p. 92: "the kit of us": A shortened form of the expression "kit and caboodle," meaning "the lot of us" or "all of us."
 Prostitutes appear frequently in this novel where Mohammed Belmazoir, a major character, is a male hustler. On 4.65, however, he presents only a show of sympathy for the female streetwalker.
 On 1.7-8, Ballard picks up the Filipino male prostitute and his sister. On 3.39, the desk sergeant speaks jovially of the *filles de joie* of colonial Algiers.
 Remy typically views prostitutes with good-natured derision, such as the female and male ones lined up along the fence in front of the Palais de Justice on 5.76. On 8.122, he joins Leroy in joking about "the tongue of tongues [a synecdoche for prostitutes]."
 However, on 13.202, surprisingly he will thank a prostitute for her help.
- p. 92: "you uncircumcised queer": All chapters incorporate a form of the word "circumcise" and "throat" because of an early title of my novel.
 I dropped the title, but kept in the references to it.
- p. 92: *serveur*: waiter. Remy leaves the café at 3:59.
- p. 92: mud: as a transitive verb, it means "to cover or soil with or as with mud."
- p. 92: "thirty-three—and each of thirty-three, 'for luck in Muslim society'": At exactly 4:00 Remy enters the changing room.
 See the 1.5 note, although the explanation here of the significance of the number "33" in Islam is more detailed.
 For instance, the two most popular forms of Islamic prayer beads (*subha* in Arabic) are (1) ninety-nine beads in three groups of thirty-three and (2) thirty-three beads in three groups of eleven.

Note: Prayer beads are not mentioned in the Qur’an; however, very early in Islam’s history some Muslims developed a supererogatory prayer ritual consisting of a person saying or thinking three prayers of (1) praise, (2) thanks, and (3) extolment of Allah.

Each component was repeated thirty-three times before going to the next. Thus there were a total of ninety-nine separate prayers.

Some followers seem to have begun to use small stones to keep their count because one tradition holds that the Prophet Mohammed said that one’s fingers, not stones, should be used in keeping track of one’s ninety-nine praises of Allah.

This counting of prayers reputedly became the basis of the *subha* (sometimes translated as “rosary”).

A second sign of the mysticism surrounding the number is that of the ninety-nine Beautiful Names of Allah, mentioned in the Hadiths, number thirty-three is “the Supreme Glory” (or in an alternate English translation, “The Most Grand”).

Finally, according to Al-Ghazali, the major and most influential early Islamic scholar, the dwellers of Paradise will exist eternally in a state of being age 33.

p. 92: retral: directed or turned backward or to the rear.

p. 92: “the Mohisen from the affidavits on Ballard he was confident”: “Mohisen” as the changing room “attendant” is mentioned five times in Remy’s imitative chronology of Ballard’s activities at Zaracova (86-87).

p. 92: “*arabee*”: Arabic. The other Arabic words are translated in the text.

I found from my many years in the Middle East and North Africa that in the communication between two speakers there, both of whom know a little of the other’s tongue, both parties tend to give a word or phrase in both languages, hoping that at least one term will register with the hearer.

Also a lot of pantomiming is employed, as in this section.

p. 92: “*Bon, bon*”: The French for “good” Remy does not have to translate.

p. 92: bail: A hoop-shaped handle for a basket or bucket.

p. 92: fulvous: brownish-yellow.

p. 92: patrimony: “property inherited from one father’s”; it is used metaphorically here.

p. 92: “His nose bent . . . anger of a father”: Remy’s description of Mohisen, even down to his speculation about how the youth’s nose had been broken, parallels that made by Ballard on 1.5.

The similarity between the perceptions of Ballard and those of Remy intuitively bind the two men, although Remy is unaware of this connection.

On p. 86, he viewed as “horrible” the thought of becoming Ballard. Nevertheless, as “a moveable [physical] imitation of him,” unconsciously he becomes his mental counterpart.

Remy’s inimical attitude toward Ballard through most of the novel will be analyzed in a 21.361 note as will the evolvment of this attitude in the last part of the novel.

- p. 92: “‘sentimentalizing’ Remy”: Another instance of Remy’s sentimentalism in this chapter.
See p. 89 where he admits to “romanticiz[ing]” the death of M’hidi.
Furthermore, as a ruse, Remy told Belmazoïr on 4.67 that at times “I dwindle into the sentimentalist.”
- p. 92: “a two-month-old kitten”: The third feline reference in this chapter.

- p. 93: *comptoir*: In French “the counter” of a store or shop.
- p. 93: *Amrekaanee*: Arabic for “an American.”
- p. 93: *baadayn*: Arabic for “then.”
- p. 93: “toward his cap”: On p. 85, Remy’s disguise includes a “NY Yankee baseball cap.”
- p. 93: “a jolted hurt”: The word “American” invokes in Mohisen’s mind a painful memory of Ballard, Remy quickly picks up.
- p. 93: “twenty-eight years of exile”: From April 13, 1961, to the day of this chapter, April 12, 1989.
- p. 93: “*the poor have to grab any opportunity for happiness, just as the rich must manufacture some excuse to be sad*”: A truth I found among those I came into contact with during my holidays in North Africa, countries where there is a great divide between the few wealthy and the many living in poverty. The first group (university professors, businessmen, etc.) were constantly complaining, while the second (typically unemployed or underemployed young men in cafés, at beaches, etc.) maintained a joyful demeanor, although most likely this disposition was the result of their desire to keep me happy and amused.
- p. 93: “*Attendez un instant!*”: “Wait a moment!” in French.
- p. 93: laconic: As a noun, “a curt or concise expression” (*Webster’s Third*).
- pp. 93-95: SECTION 6: Time line: Remy leaves the changing room (4:11) and using a roundabout route reaches the back or seaside entrance to the palm grove disco (4:36). Walking through it, he reaches the front portico and sits on the same spot where Ballard had died (4:39). There he makes an additional discovery and confirms a supposition which he had made in Le Puy (4:39 – 4:51). He leaves and reaches the barbed wire fence (4:54), where he summarizes the discoveries he has made and notes that one more remains (4:57). At about 5:03 he enters the changing room and is greeted by Mohisen, who shows him to a stall where Remy begins to don his shirt and with a towel loops the belt, pockets the purse, and puts on the watch. He thinks about Mohisen’s innocence and his honesty (5:09). What happened next in the changing room (5:09 – 5:15) is not revealed directly, but through Remy’s thoughts later in Foucin’s office (96-97).
- p. 93: “ten minutes away”: From Vellacott’s reports, he knows that walking straight to the disco would take him around ten minutes.

However, not to arouse the suspicion of Mohisen or anyone whom Foucin might have following him, he decides to approach the disco by means of a roundabout walk along the seashore.

This will mean it will take him around twenty-five minutes to reach the disco.

p. 93: “having put aside his Le Puy notion [that Ballard] had returned to his car”: In Le Puy, mulling over how early Ballard left the changing room (6:39) for a meeting which might not commence until 7:30, Remy had speculated that perhaps Ballard had returned to his car to pick up something or had arranged to meet another person before his rendezvous with Belmazoir (87).

The reason for dismissing the first supposition will be revealed on p. 94.

- p. 94: *vestiaire*: the beach’s public changing room.
- p. 94: “The level sand” minimally recalls the last line of Shelley’s “Ozymandias”: “The lone and level sands stretch far away.”
- p. 94: grayback: a large boulder (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 94: torsel: here, a piece of iron used in a baluster to support the weight of a coping beam (*Webster’s Third*, but supplemented by an internet article on masonry.)
- p. 94: alfresco: outdoor.
- p. 94: *porte de derrière*: back door.
- p. 94: “contrast to the nine at Trimalchio’s”: See 2.19.
- p. 94: “where the ‘blood trail’ had begun”: See 1.13-14.
- p. 94: “with a sidle to his right . . . drew back his arms, and swung . . . the reports stated”: In imitation of the murderer, Remy reenacts the movement of the plank being slammed against the left side of Ballard’s face. Through the “blood trail,” police forensic reports would have established the point from which the blow was delivered, its effect on Ballard, and the American’s desperate attempt to drag himself toward the steps.
- p. 94: *douk-douk*: The knife used as the murder weapon. See 4.57 and its note, N4:17-18.
- p. 94: “calculated ‘more-than-the-more’ loathing”: Another reference to James’s “the more than the more is more than the less” (from *The Principles of Psychology*, vol. 1, chap. 13, subsection “The Principles of Mediate Comparison”). See 4.66 and its note, N4:40, where James’s phrase is discussed in more detail.
- p. 94: “‘Why would I murder M. John? Why would I blackmail M. John?’: On 4.64 and 65, Belmazoir asked, “Why would I murder M. John?” On p. 82 above, he asked, “Why would I blackmail M. John?”
- p. 94: “Nothing imitates exactly”: The sentence is another echo of the title of the chapter.
- p. 94: “one conclusion from Le Puy was borne out”: See p. 87 where in Le Puy Remy pondered over the “conspicuous gap” between Ballard’s arrival at the grove’s abandoned disco and when he expected Belmazoir to come.
- p. 94: “out of kilter”: conflicting, out of step, at variance, discrepant.

- p. 94: "a gap as conspicuous as Belmazoir's missing week": On p. 85, Remy notices that "a week's unaccounted for" in Belmazoir's account of his last meetings with Ballard.
- p. 94: "Yet, as noted, this afternoon had disproved another supposition, that Ballard had looped back to his Renault." In Le Puy Remy had speculated that Ballard may have "return[ed] to his car for something?" (87)
On p. 93, he stated positively that he had "put aside his Le Puy notion that he had returned to his car."
After his conversation with Abukadir, he realized that Abukadir would have spied him "since no one in the Arab World is more dutiful than an elderly parking attendant."
- p. 94: "One Le Puy prospect, enhanced by the widened span of time, remained": Remy had considered this possibility in Le Puy: "To meet another?" (87) Since he had learned from Belmazoir that morning that Ballard would not expect the youth to come until 7:30, the unaccounted time, given as 6:39 to 7:15 (87), could be expanded by perhaps ten minutes, to 7:25.
- p. 94: spindrift: sea spray, usually blown from a rough sea or surf.
- p. 94: majuscule: A capital letter. On the back of Remy's Bermuda shorts, pink minnows were used "to spell the English word *LOVE*" (85).
One of these four capital letters might be smudged, Remy playfully suggests.
- p. 94: "the rusting barbed wire": The time is 4:54.
For this image in the novel, see the p. 10 note, N1:25.
- p. 94: "the crowning revelation was ahead, the exigent magnet for his beach excursion":
The "anonymous fingerprints" which Remy mentioned two nights ago (4.67).
- pp. 94-95: "he had fretted over whether he could succeed in protracting his stay": Remy again states his reason for "stirring the waters" over Ballard's murder: He realizes that because of Foucin's manic interest in the last of the traitors, he must with caution map out his meeting with his father.
He implies that just as Ballard's murderer had strung out the vicious act so he must not rush into this conference.

p. 95: "*Combing the beach*": One of those simplistic plays on words which Remy too often slips into.

p. 95: "*you've discovered (i.e., invented) a continent*": Outwardly, Remy seems to be averring that he is not concerned with discovering the identity of the murderer, rather with inventing means to allow him to extend his stay.

However, his statement has a philosophical implication. The idea that knowledge/truth is invented, not discovered, is a corollary from Karl Popper's concept of provisional knowledge, first presented in Popper's *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (1935, German edition; 1959, first English edition).

Truth is not located in the empirical world, just waiting there for a human to discover it. Rather a person's mind, by observing and contemplating about the "real" world, will impose a truth upon it.

In other words, the mind invents truth.

My notes indicate that for my understanding of Popper I relied principally on an essay by the Peruvian novelist Mario Vargas Llosa, "The Importance of Karl Popper" (first published in 1991).

"Truth, for Karl Popper," Vargas Llosa writes, "is not discovered, but invented. It is, therefore, always a provisional truth, one that lasts only so long as it is not refuted." (p.160; I cite from the online source that I have at hand, the republication of the essay in Vargas Llosa's *Wellsprings*, 2008).

Since the action of my novel takes place in 1989, it would seem to be anachronistic to rely on a 1991 essay, but Popper's concept of provisional truth had been much discussed since the 1959 English translation of *The Logic*.

Therefore, that Remy, philosophically bent as all true librarians must be, uses this concept should not be unexpected.

Popper's ideas, as presented by Vargas Llosa, will occur in three other places in the novel: On 12.196, Foucin, a devout Muslim, is an opponent of the theory that truth is invented, though he blithely presents it.

On 13.217, a second antagonist Leroy pleads with Remy that he "let others discover—'invent'—the truth."

Finally on 15.250—the anachronism is blatant here!—Remy, without acknowledging Popper, quotes from Vargas Llosa's 1991 description, presumably a paraphrasing of Popper's idea, of how difficult it is for one to wade through the false truths of this world.

p. 95: "cephalic bow": nod of his head.

p. 95: "over-the-shoulder glimpse": At the shower area.

p. 95: "he would have to touch the youth some more. The seven or eight antecedent times Mohisen had . . . received [them] as the normal complement of the words": Remy "patted the youth's wrist" (92); their hands touched in handing over the money and making change (93); and Remy "squeezed" Mohisen's hand four times before the changing room stall (93).

- p. 95: “one of the lesser devils which strive to imitate . . . the Great One”: Three images are merged by Remy: the Ballard/devil comparison, the word “imitate,” and the epithet which Abukadir had used in referring to Foucin (91).
- p. 95: “probably not a one-dinar note, but a five”: On 1.8, Ballard had tipped Mohisen a one-hundred-dinar note.
Abukadir stated that he saw the “distracted” Mohisen tearing up a bill which he speculated was “a one-dinar note” (91 and its note, N6:30).
Here, Remy thinks that it was probably a “five” dinar bill.
This passage exemplifies Popper’s theory about the difficulty of knowing truth.
Both Abukadir and Remy underestimate the generosity of Ballard and the true financial sacrifice of Mohisen.
- p. 95: “the price of a ‘cadi’s ear””: Remy had tipped Abukadir a “five-dinar note” that the old man said would allow him to buy a large honey cake (91 and its note, N6:29).
- p. 95: “In his *anima simplicetta*—Dante’s ‘simple soul””: Dante uses *l’anima simplicetta* (usually translated as “the simple soul”) in *Purgatory*, canto 16, ll. 88-89: “*l’anima simplicetta che sa nulla / salvo che, mossa da lieto fatture.*”
Dante’s phrase will be used by Foucin on 7.107, first in Italian and then translated as “simple heart.”
Such parallelism between Remy’s and Foucin’s citations is meant to suggest the similarity of their thoughts. On 4.54-55, Remy stressed their physical similarities.
- p. 95: “connected [the tip] with the death of a man, and in horror at the equation, he felt life had been cheated”: Mohisen had torn up the one hundred because he had connected it with the death of his American friend.
Such a monetary-human parallelism is sacrilegious since it equates life with money.
- p. 95: “who articulated the mute in ‘honest””: On the previous page, Remy notices that in saying “honest,” Mohisen (like many Arabs speaking the English word) pronounces the silent *h*.
On the next page, Remy will recall the mispronunciation in a different light.
- pp. 95-97: SECTION 7: Time span: At 6:44, when Remy arrives for the meeting he had set with Foucin in the latter’s office to 7:15, when Foucin postulates that Remy thinks that he has found the murderer of Ballard.
There is one extended mental flashback (6:52 – 6:57 in the commissioner’s office) which reports the last part of Remy’s conversation with Mohisen (5:09 – 5:15).
- p. 95: “just before 6:45”: On p. 87, over the telephone Remy had set his post-Zaracova meeting Foucin at 6:45.

- p. 95: "the taxi had arrived almost an hour late": On p. 90, Remy had instructed the taxi driver to pick him up "at 5:30 sharp."
Delayed by a traffic jam, the driver had arrived at around 6:25.
Thus Remy did not have time to go to his hotel to change out of his garish clothes.
- p. 95: "that rascal Abukadir not to be found!": When matters do not go as planned, Remy exhibits a propensity to blame others.
Under an hour ago, on the steps of the disco, he had praised Abukadir as the model of dutifulness (94), but since the parking attendant was not there to find him a replacement taxi at 5:25, he calls him a "rascal," not conceding that he had not hired Abukadir for that day, but the next.
Not mentioned except in my notes: having earned enough money through Remy's five, Abukadir had rushed off to buy his honey cake and nap before the call for Ramadan's sunset prayers.

- p. 96: *jettison*: to abandon or discard as being as useless or a burden.
Here Remy means he shoved the embarrassing earring into his pocket, presumably as he saw his taxi approaching.
The ride to Foucin’s office took only twelve minutes (6:30 – 6:42) since it was nearer to is nearer to Zaracova than the Al-Nigma, a fifteen-minute drive.
- p. 96: *boucle d’oreille*: earring.
- p. 96: *habiliments*: clothing; attire; dress.
- p. 96: “an unwilling artificer”: In its obsolete sense, “a cunning or artful fellow” (*Webster’s Third*).
Remy posits that Foucin, being a professional investigator, must have used a disguise, no matter how distasteful, in pursuing a case.
- p. 96: “the lady clerking the Al-Nigma boutique”: On p. 87, Remy bought some items for his HIV-2 disguise from the “clerk” at “the Al-Nigma’s well-stocked boutique.”
- p. 96: *Sayyid*: One of the Arabic words used as an equivalent to “Mister” in English or “Monsieur” in French, the latter indicated in the text.
The other Arabic title is *Ostaaz*.
- p. 96: “his stare on the nosegay buckle”: “its silver buckle shaped like a nosegay” (85).
- p. 96: “in sinister Arabic”: The meaning of “sinister” here stresses not only the wickedness of Foucin’s quip accusing Remy of being effeminate, but also the mysterious guise he uses.
Remy is also punning on the writing of Arabic, which moves from the right margin to the left.
- p. 96: “my lingual blind to unmask his own”: Here “blind” is “a thing used to deceive or mislead.” Thus Remy contends that he cannot reveal his deceit (that he knows little Arabic) in order to expose (“unmask”) Foucin’s deceitful attack on him.
- p. 96: “as heartless as the slayer of Ballard”: For a second time Remy associates Foucin with the murderer of Ballard, neither seriously.
Here out of pique and before humorously and opportunistically: “So Foucin was here the night of the murder” and intuitively pointed “the searchers to the corpse’s bier, the disco’s porch” (91).
- p. 96: “as monstrous as this Ballard himself, who tried to pervert one estranged from corruption”: Next Remy magnifies Foucin’s quip by comparing it with Ballard’s attempt to engage that “simple soul” Mohisen in a homosexual act, forgetting that earlier at around 5:13 Remy, in conversation with himself, had dismissed that idea as doltish (not revealed until the next page).

- p. 96: “bedfellow[ed]’ . . . in ‘misery’”: Based on *Tempest*, 2.2.39-40: “Misery acquaints a man with strange bedfellows.”
Standard dictionaries, including Webster’s *Third*, do not list a verb form of “bedfellow,” but a check of the internet reveals this use in reputable books.
Thus its single quotes, like those of “misery,” indicate its Shakespearean source.
- p. 96: magnetized dust: The powder, a mixture of iron and pigment particles, which is used in dusting for fingerprints.
- p. 96: “doodaded”: Two meanings of “doodad” from *Webster’s Third* are applicable here: a fancy article for wear about the person and an ornamental decoration.
No dictionary, except one entry in the online *Urban Dictionary*, lists it as a verb.
Its use here as such provides another sign of how linguistically disturbed Remy is by Foucin’s jest. (Incidentally, all Arabs hate to be laughed at, so this overreaction is part of Remy’s Algerian heritage.)
The irony is that Remy has dressed himself as a stereotypical gay, but resents being judged by Foucin on the tagging gay accessories of his attire.
- p. 96: “the *honest proud fool*”: An irritated Remy mocks Mohisen’s pronunciation. See the p. 95 note above, N6:40.
- p. 96: “light-blue ten-dinar note”: Algerian currency is color-coded and depicts different scenes.
In the 1980s, while several earlier minted versions of notes circulated, the ten-dinar bill was basically light-blue with a train on its obverse and mountains on its reverse.
The twenty was brown with handicrafts on its obverse and a tower on its reverse.
The fifty was turquoise with a shepherd scene on its obverse and a farm combine on its reverse.
Finally the one hundred was dark blue with a minaret on its obverse and ships and flowers on its reverse.
- p. 96: “No, Mr. Mike”: No Algerian worker would ever refuse a gratuity. However, as was pointed out on p. 95, Mohisen connects the tip that Ballard had left him with his American friend’s death.
Out of the superstitious fear that he might cause another American’s death, he refuses to take the *pourboire* from Remy.

- p. 97: oeillade: “a glance of the eye; especially ogle” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 97: “*El walad* [the boy] *da* [this]?”: Arabic for the question, “This boy?”
- p. 97: “*Wallahee!*”: This much-used Arabic attestation means “I swear by God [that what I say is true]!”
- p. 97: “No good the . . . ‘only’”: Literally, it’s not enjoyable to eat dinner by myself.
- p. 97: *petit doigt*: French for “the pinkie.”
- p. 97: “evinced an inability . . . a modicum of regard”: On p. 95, Remy had speculated that Ballard could have corrupted Mohisen without the youth knowing it; that is, he could have fondled him sexually, and Mohisen would have regarded this groping as no more than a pat on or squeeze of the hand. On this page, at Mohisen’s “inability to discern,” Remy realizes that this conclusion was ridiculous. The puzzlement of the attendant was not caused by a failure to understand what homosexuality is and what it involves. When Remy asked about “this boy” next door at the café, Mohisen knew what he sought. Thus, in that abstract sense, Mohisen is not the innocent whom Remy had imagined Ballard as having corrupted (95). What caused Mohisen’s puzzlement, Remy now “comprehended,” was that the youth had never imagined anyone being physically attracted to him. (On 1.5, he referred to himself as “the ugliest boy in all Algiers.”) Certainly, given the availability of the handsome male prostitutes at the café, Ballard, Remy reasoned, would have been too repulsed by “his cicatricial complexion . . . and the never-developed limbs” (92) to make any sexual overtures. However, the unattractive attendant could be useful (in the same way he had been in providing Remy information about the café’s prostitutes). Therefore, “playing upon Mohisen’s virgin infatuation” of him, Ballard presumably had offered the attendant a modicum of regard. In imitation of what Ballard had done, Remy discerned that this attention is what he must offer to Mohisen since neither the proffered tip nor sexual insinuation had succeeded. This desire to connect with the youth on a level beyond the monetary and the sexual is conveyed through Remy’s sing-song repetition of Mohisen’s name. This response sets the attendant giggling, an act which not coincidentally exemplifies the definition of friendship given by Belmazoir to Remy on 4.65: “A friend’s someone you can laugh with.” To look ahead, on 7.108, Mohisen will be shown still to be internally debating about what he had committed himself to by accepting the invitation for a meal with “Mr. Mike.”
- p. 97: “accessibles”: Not listed as a noun in any dictionary, including the all-embrasive online *Urban Dictionary*, but I cannot claim to have coined it since I heard it used

by gay Americans abroad in speaking of Mediterranean male hustlers, as in “The bar’s ‘accessibles’ just came in.”

I think the noun may have evolved from a use of the adjective by Tennessee Williams, as reported in a notorious 1970 essay by Kenneth Tynan, “A Visit to Havana” (reprinted in Bruccoli’s *Conversations with Ernest Hemingway*).

Tynan arranged a meeting between Hemingway, the literary symbol of American masculinity, and Williams, who sometimes accentuated his femininity in order to irritate bull-brained writers such as Hemingway.

At the opening of the conversation, the playwright brings up the name of a Spanish matador whom he knew the novelist admired, mischievously adding that in his meeting with this bullfighter he found him to be “a delightful fellow extremely accessible” (152).

I think the word “accessible” stayed with quite a few literary gays.

p. 97: supererogatory: superfluous.

p. 97: *comptoir*: French for “counter.”

p. 97: *walad*: “boy” in Arabic.

p. 97: “slippin’ up in tongues”: In addition to the meaning “to make a mistake,” the wording harks back to a line from the song “Orgy” on 2.20: “He’s got us speakin’ in tongues.”

p. 97: “Tonight, the sex, you, I”: Again Arabic speakers have difficulty in distinguishing between “six” and “sex.”

The Arabic date of this chapter is 5 Ramadan 1409, so Mohisen would have broken fast with his family for five days.

p. 97: “No *akl you bas*”: Paraphrased: “You won’t eat dinner by yourself.”
This sentence will be recalled by Remy on 14.228.

p. 97: “*Tisah nous*, ‘9:30’”: *Tisah* is the Arabic word for “nine” and in telling time “*nous*” means “half or thirty minutes after the hour.”

p. 97: “*Mataam Andaloos*, ‘Andaloos Restaurant’”: This fictional restaurant I have located in an exclusive section of downtown Algiers.

p. 97: “1,089 beads”: Thirty-three beads per strand x 33 strands.
See p. 92 and its note, N6:32-33.

p. 97: *skirr*: As an intransitive verb, “to move or run swiftly.”

p. 97: “wake the good”: “walk.” This is another pair which Arabs speaking English as a second language have trouble differentiating.

- p. 97: “At 7:12”: The action returns to Foucin’s office.
- p. 97: “Remy had to rely on the wall clock”: His Swatch had been sent to be dusted for fingerprints.
- p. 97: “Yes, *Sayyid Saeed*”: “Yes” (“*Aywa*” in Arabic), the typical way a phone is answered by an Arab.
- p. 97: “the *Shokran*”: “Thank you!” in Arabic.
- p. 97: Mona: The first mention of Foucin’s wife.
- p. 97: *combiné*: “telephone receiver” in French.
- p. 97: “in a suit finer than the silk one”: The suit which Ambassador Leroy was wearing the first time Remy saw him (5.71 and 75).

pp. 98-100: SECTION 8: Time span: The section opens at 7:15, directly after Foucin’s assertion about the murderer, which closed section 7. He and Remy begin to discuss the relevance of Remy’s discovery that the anonymous fingerprints were those of the beach attendant Mohisen.

The cannon blast at 7:20 signals the end of the Ramadan fast and breaks off a question being put to him by Foucin.

The action abruptly flashes forward to 9:05, at which point the two men are walking toward the Andaloos Restaurant. Remy answers Foucin’s question (9:05 – 9:10), and in Foucin’s long response he understands why the commission hates the Belmazoirs (9:18).

The last paragraph of the section returns to Foucin’s office at 7:21 where Remy poses another question.

p. 98: *empreintes digitales*: In French “fingerprints.”

p. 98: “Foucin’s posit”: At the end of section 7, Foucin had posited that Remy believed he knew the identity of the murderer.

p. 98: “Mohisen Abdelghani . . . had not the opportunity to kill M. Ballard”: Remy is aware of the alibis from copies of police reports placed in locker 2269, a discernment which conditioned his immediate response that identifying the anonymous fingerprints did not reveal the murderer of Ballard.

p. 98: “Remy mockingly sympathized”: Remy is still offended by the joke which Foucin had made about him on the telephone (96).

p. 98: “‘irony-clad’ alibi”: One of Remy’s hopeless puns. He is giddy that the tables are ironically turned on Foucin.

p. 98: Maghrib prayers: sunset prayers.

p. 98: “complicated the task of your client, hence rendering more dire the predicament of his own”: The noun phrase “your client” refers to Vellacott, while “his own [client]” applies to Belmazoir.

p. 98: hectically: excitedly.

p. 98: apriorism: “a belief in a priori principles or reasoning” or “an assumption” (*Webster’s Third*).

p. 98: “a laudatory purport”: Foucin intends to praise Remy.

p. 98: “you announced it”: In the 2:45 telephone call to Foucin before Remy visited Zaracova during which he asked for a “forensic expert in fingerprint identification” to be available (87).

- p. 98: Great Cannon: In Ramadan, loudspeakers from mosques and in some large cities a cannon blast signal the end of the fast.
At that point, the faithful Muslim should take a sip of water and a few dates and then hurry to the mosque to perform Maghrib. After prayers, the feasting begins.
- p. 98: “gunpowder—‘the scourge of our daily bread’”: Remy is pointing out the irony of using a military instrument to break the fast since the scourge of war almost always devastates the supply of food.
- p. 98: “daily bread or ‘cadi’s ear’”: Both expressions were used by old Abukadir on p. 91.
- p. 98: shore up: “to support or brace” (*Webster’s Third*).
Metaphorically, the clause means that Foucin’s face, sagged with embarrassment, was now supported by a smile. The change was dictated by the discoveries which Remy had made at the seashore that day.
- p. 98: “unluck’’: Labeled by *Webster’s Third* as chiefly a Scottish term (hence the single quotes), it means “bad luck” or “misfortune.”
Although it is not specified in the Qur’an that a Muslim should not break the fast with a non-Muslim, most Islamic scholars hold that it should be done only with the end of converting the non-believer (“pagan”).
If the fast is broken with them just to be friends or to enjoy their company, Allah might be angered because the principle of befriending the believers and showing enmity toward the disbelievers is one of the basic principles of Islam.
Concerning this principle, the Qur’an states that Allah ordered Muslims to befriend other Muslims, not disbelievers, with Jews and Christians specifically singled out.
Notwithstanding, in chap. 14, Remy will be invited to an iftar feast, and there seemingly is no intention to convert him.
- p. 98: *sawm*: Arabic for the “Ramadan fast.”
- p. 98: Gauloises: The first mention of the brand of cigarettes which Remy smokes. Gauloises, first marketed in 1910, is a strong French cigarette made from dark Syrian and Turkish tobaccos.
More expensive than other cigarettes, it was the brand smoked by Picasso, Sartre, Camus, Orwell, and John Lennon.
- p. 98: “Afterward’’: After he has performed his prayers.
- p. 98: “an hour and forty-five minutes later, in . . . their stroll to the Andaloos Restaurant’’:
The action jumps to 9:05 and indicates that Remy and Foucin are walking toward the restaurant where the former had set a 9:30 meeting with Mohisen (97).

- p. 99: "orphaned at four": In the DGSE-concocted background of Christian Lazar (Remy's alias), he was made an orphan, just as its predecessor had made Omar one (3.35 and its note).
Four paragraphs down, Remy will think about this "faux birth certificate given him in June 1961."
- p. 99: Mons: a city in southwest Belgium.
- p. 99: "seven cats": Again the heptad.
This is the fifth reference to felines in the chapter: cat (84, 91, and 99) and kitten (91 and 92).
- p. 99: Aladdin's cave: In a different context, but one which perhaps explains this reference, Aladdin's cave will be used on 17.281. Also the restaurant of the Al-Nigma is named the Aladdin.
- p. 99: quotidian: daily.
- p. 99: "molecules of their richness": Cf. the "molecular physics" of p. 94 where Remy speculated that some molecules of Ballard's blood seeped through his Bermuda shorts and "bounced against his flanks."
- p. 99: "I never wearied of touching what I couldn't take": Remy reaches his point of connection: He suspected that the vestiaire attendant also liked to touch the items in Ballard's basket, but would never have considered stealing them.
- p. 99: "the sophist in me": Remy mocks his generalization as being sophisticated: clever and plausible, but basically unsound.
- p. 99: "I too was orphaned At eight": The assault on the estate of Foucin's natal family occurred in 1955 when Foucin was eight years old.
- p. 99: Aurès: This is the first reference in the text to the mountainous region of northeastern Algeria which is the homeland of the country's Berbers.
However, in the notes on p. 88, "well," N6:18, and p. 90, "down," N6:27, the Aurès are mentioned.
Aurès also designates the mountains of the region.
- p. 99: centuried: an adjective meaning "having lasted for a century or centuries" (*Webster's Third*).
- p. 99: "the invading Arabs": See 2.24 and its note for a partial list of the invaders of Algeria.
- p. 99: descrial: discovery or disclosure of something through careful observation.

- p. 99: “Islam exhorts the Muslim *yitiim* (‘orphan’) to retain his cognomen”: In speaking of adopted children, Sura 33:5 of the Qur’an states, “Call [orphans] by (the names of their) fathers. But if you do not know their father’s (names, call them) your brothers in faith or your trustees. But there is no blame on you if you make a mistake therein: (what counts is) the intention of your heart.”
It is the last part of this verse which Foucin stresses in his decision to employ the name of his adoptive parents.
The “intention” of his “heart” is noble and steeped in Berber tradition: he must “redeem the privilege” of using his Berber name.
Once this is earned, he plans to replace his adoptive name Foucin with his biological name Lakhtour.
- p. 99: “redeem the privilege of being Matoub Lakhtour”: The pattern of sin, repentance, and redemption in the novel will be discussed in an essay at the end of the notes to chap. 18, N18:72-74.
The theme of redemption was mentioned in the 3.41 note, N3:19-20, relating to the redemption of Omar/Remy, and to the 4.58 note, N4.21, concerning Foucin’s pursuit of redemption.
Here, Foucin again speaks of a future redemption, employing an idea similar to that of Prince Hal in *1 Henry IV*, 1:2:211: “Redeeming time when men think least I will.”
- p. 99: “Once the seventh traitor—‘Baby,’ the youngest—is dispensed with”: The first use of Foucin’s nickname for Omar Naaman (Remy).
- p. 99: “the Algiers family that fostered me”: Islamic adoption, as Foucin implies here, is very similar to a foster-parent caretaker relationship. In fact, the word for adoption in Arabic is *kafala*, which originates from the word meaning “to feed.”
That the adopted child is not considered a full member of the biological family is manifested in two ways: The child, when grown, may be considered as a marriage partner for a member of the biological family. Sura 33:37 specifically allows a foster-father to marry the divorced wife of an adopted child, as Prophet Mohammed himself did.
Secondly an adopted child inherits from his or her biological parents, not automatically from the adoptive parents.
One last point: Prophet Mohammed was himself orphaned at the age of six.
- p. 99: “one tenth-removed cousin”: The same expression is used by old Belmazoir in the airport hangar: “Algeria will no sooner forget our branch and seed than it will us. Not even one tenth-removed cousin will be spared” (2.33).
- p. 99: “a new search, for the bones”: Just as Remy lost his beloved sister Noura in the war, so Foucin lost his father, mother, three brothers, and three sisters.
Unlike Foucin, who plans to spend his last years searching for their bones, Remy has succeeded in putting aside the assumed death of his sister, calling up her memory only when he goes on his annual trip to pick up his *pourboire* (2.18).

- p. 99: “the imitation of a Berber”: This final use of the key word of the title contrasts with the flippancy of its earlier uses.
Foucin says that not until he has brought to justice the last of the seven great traitors will he retake his Berber family name Lakhtour. Until then, he views himself as merely “an imitation of a Berber.”
- p. 99: “the prisoner was insightful there”: On 4.62, Belmazoïr said that Foucin “hates my family.”
- p. 99: “Remy’s thirty-three-year-old memory . . . December 1955 Aurès massacre”: The devastating news of the 1955 massacre in the Aurès would have reached Omar, then fifteen, and not yet a member of the FLN.
(Numerologically fixated, I purposively placed seven years between the ages of Foucin and Remy.)
Knowing that Foucin was born a Lakhtour, Remy realizes why he hated the Belmazoïrs so intensely.
- p. 99: anamnesis: a recollection of past events.
- p. 99: “the words . . . carved into Belmazoïr’s chest, not ‘La Heure,’ ‘the hour,’ but ‘Lakhtour’”: On 2.32 and 4.61, Remy recalled the press accounts of how a noun had been carved into Belmazoïr’s chest.
It was reported to be “*La Heure*,” French for “the hour” of reckoning for the traitor. Remy now knows that the word probably was “Lakhtour,” Foucin’s family name.
On 14.219, Foucin will correct the press account.
- p. 99: illation: a conclusion drawn; inference.

p. 100: in the offing: “the near or foreseeable future” (*Webster’s Third*).

p. 100: “M. Ballard entered the palm grove without the negative”: Since there had been no mention of the negative in Ballard’s chap. 1, though other aspects of that chapter had been borne out by Remy’s findings in chaps. 4, 5 and 6, any readers of my novel might welcome Remy’s suggestion, since, if proven to be true, it would mean they had not wasted their times on a murder mystery that smells of red herrings.