

Chapter Sixteen

SPEAKIN' IN TONGUES

With a flourish, Remy's regard passed from the Palestinian's face, with its flabby pockmarked nostrils, dark bulging eyes, and chin and cheek masked by a weedy scruff, down to his right hand, the glossy polish and tawny enamel of its plastic and silicon outer layers camouflaging, he was certain, a pair of metallic split hooks.

"It must make it difficult to pick your nose." After about fifteen seconds the *main artificielle* plummeted to the pine top of the workbench. The thump, Remy apprehended, was intended to complete the job of daunting him, the prosthesis by itself having failed.

Dragged from the floorboard of the Talbot, for a reason he had been whisked by two barracks, he realized the instant he was steered into the shed. Behind Khalaf ("Tinfingers"), who was perched on a stool, were shelves of workshop instruments, neatly laid out: large drop hammers, impact wrenches, gutter adzes, pneumatic nailers, straight-shank drills, and oversized screwdrivers.

Remy's lips fashioned a piddling simper. The fear and even the anger had quit him, though not the bitterness, mirrored by the residue of the chloroform in his eyes, nostrils, and throat. Poorly sited, most likely purposively, given his abductors, the handkerchief had engendered more torment than loss of sentience.

Following the quick transferal to the green Solara, duct tape had been clapped over his mouth and cinctured his wrists. Trundled onto the backseat's floorboard, where a woolen blanket was thrown over him, he became the ottoman for three pairs of distinctly soled footwear: sandals, loafers, and boots.

Almost midway (seventy kilometers) to the camp, when semiconsciousness totally crumbled, letting the burning surge in, he speculated it had been applied in such a clumsy way to effect just that, given his captors.

His captors: The anecdote—and anecdotes like rivers are mitotically addicted, inbred to divide at the first opportunity—has two endings, no signification, however, that it was not sourced in fact. In '55, the second year of the Revolution, a coded message was received by ZAA's Ben M'hidi: "Help imminent: 200 Philistine volunteers." Signed: Ben Bella, Cairo.

No one was deluded. Nasser had herded the tenscore, "refugees from Israeli persecution" who, after lying low in Cairo for a while, had set forth to assail the locals with a brand of revolution which outblazed the Egyptian president's own. In a flash, he offered the lot at a marked-down price to Ben Bella.

Piecemeal smuggled in through the Tunisian border, within six months a third had expulsed themselves from the country, a second third had joined ranks with the French, confident the FLN's cause was hopeless, and the third third, the laziest in making

decisions, had been content to be shuffled from one safe haven to another, never ostensibly mindful that the warrant was no one wanted them.

In time they sifted to the bottom, the Saharan oases of *Wilaya VI*: Tamanrasset, Tindouf, Chenachene, or smaller unnamed seminomadic collections of tents.

There they (our synecdochic focus is now on three) were not altogether displeased—lazy men seldom question their happiness till they have to work—for as *volontaires* in Algeria's fight for freedom, 'twas far beneath them to participate in the desert autochthons' drudgery, squiring out in the morning and home near sunset their goats, sheep, and camels.

Their major inconvenience occurred during the village's frequent relocations. However, the livestock, as tradition ordained, shouldered the task of optating the direction, and the natives would never have entertained beseeching these warriors to raze (or raise) the *khaymayya* ("tents"). Additionally as guests they reaped the choicest meat and wine. But best of all, the three had learned, the French seldom bothered with desert campaigns.

Be that as it may, every paradise has its lurking serpent. Now why did that pastoral youth have to stumble on that sun-sautéed Legionnaire lieutenant? And why did not someone suggest the transparent, that the French had abandoned him as one "swallowed up by the Sahara"? Fool! Anecdotes do not ask, "Why?"

Lugged to the lad's *qarya* ("hamlet") of tents, the lieutenant, already reduced to a powdery, burbling lunatic, was dimly viewed and darkly studied by its *alim*.

Suddenly in gasps he halloped the alarm, "A scout! . . . A spy! . . . Anon French bastards . . . will descend upon us!" (Hindsighters, blame not this holy elder for his misreading: Had not FLN propagandists regularly assured the thorpe of its gravity, that the fate of the Revolution and of Islam itself hung in its balance?)

What to do when the sky is falling with paratroopers and their realty is crawling with French cicadas, champing at them and theirs, bit by bit, in one last obliterating supper?

"Interrogate him! Elicit the evacuation trace they'll least expect!" cried out several of the thirty-three men assembled.

"Torture may have to be employed," an individualist, with solemn cadence, intoned, provoking jaws, grown tight, to drop.

"But we're shepherds, skilled in being harrowed by the elements, all ignorant of the racker's soul-scorching art," a choral croaking went up.

"Our Palestinian champions!" their true-path-leading *alim* beamed, an afflatus which widened the already agape mouths before being stoppled with camel-milk contentment.

"Why are we disturbed?" demanded the supremely peeved of the three, summoned from their shade tree to the hamlet's gritty heart.

"We've captured a French lieutenant," the *alim* imparted, "and though ardent to blister him, God's not blessed us with the pestle-and-mortar finesse of the torturer's trade."

"And that concerns us? Experiment," and the ternion began to shamble away.

"We've rifled his pockets." The religious father waited importantly. When the withdrawers persisted, he hurriedly exclaimed, "He's a Jew!"—words which from time immemorial have stopped in his tracks the walking Man, but that ye know.

And here our anecdote branches. The first:

“Say no more.” “Our duty eyeballs us.” “Where is he?” the turning, romping Palestinians yelped, one laconic for each. Toward a *khayma* all pointed. Three strides past, the resolute halted and now with one voice inquired, “He is securely bound?”

“Hogtied he is, to be sure, hands cuffed, legs hobbled, and we’ve extended the rope’s length to circumference the chair he’s trussed in. The camel-coat braiding next travels through the tent’s flapped aperture till its tail is thirty-three knots tethered to our sturdiest, deepest-rooted olive tree.”

“That is good,” one Philistine granted. Another: “Still, we’d have rolled a boulder.” The third: “Aye, o’er the residual slack.” For, as you also know, no Palestinian ever concedes a “good” without a following “better.”

The trio vanished into the tent. Had any time elapsed before there emanated a shriek, in stridency matching that voided by Prophet Mohammed—PBUH, to invoke the salutatory *tetragrammaton*—the groundbreaking moment the angel Gabriel sneaked up on him?

“A squawk to curdle my blood!” the *alim* screeched. “We have dispatched the Moses of torturers. The Commandments which their corrupt book inventories are even now being chiseled into the Frenchman’s flesh. We will know all!”

Thirty-three inclined their bodies, ravenous in their anticipation of a tantamount whoop.

Rien du tout. “Nothing at all.” Five minutes on, a roiling emerged from the congregation. The *alim*, clairvoyant of its implication—that the Palestinians were not *their* idea—as well apperceived he must hasten to redeem himself.

“What expeditious manglers! One of their thrusts has sent the pig squealing! *Anus* [sic] *mirabilis!* His mouth runs like an asshole that’s inherited from its gut five-day-old milk, passed on as two!”

Eyes darkening into pique swerved toward him, who cooed, “I’ll be so bold as to approach and petition.” At the fly, he begged permission to enter. “Only if you have the stomach of a goat!” A collective sigh of relief was heaved since all foreknew he did.

Directly he reappeared. A vengeance stalked him while he traversed the distance to his congregation, all digesting the pensive visage, the sullen gait, and the arms looped behind.

“Yes, we could learn much about the torturer’s ‘shalls’ and ‘shall nots’ from our Philistine brothers. For starters: ‘Ere he tattles, thou shalt not exsect the tortured man’s tongue.’” And that announced, he brought forth a pink “piece of flesh”—“no larger than a limp penis”—which (*Hélas!*) no prosthetist has ever rendered an artificial duplicate.

2

“Your jeer isn’t lost on me,” counter-snarled Tinfingers, with his right arm again arrect and his left hand tugging at a hem of his *kaffiyah*.

Effecting a semblance of perplexity, Remy fleered, “Monsieur, I hope the stroke didn’t damage your shammed mauley. You’ll sorely miss it in bed tonight. Always, without doubt, a ticklish maneuver. Or does one of these minions”—Remy skimmed the two men who loosely held his shoulders and the three behind the worktable—“discharge that grabbing too?”

The 2269 dossier had adumbrated Tinfingers' sexual proclivities.

"Ignoramus, we Arabs utilize our left . . ." As his voice trailed off, a retral tittering slied out. However, the instant he crooked his neck, the three countenances had gone severe. He motioned to those at Remy's side, who shoved him into the metal chair in front of the bench.

"A nosy intruder into this business of the fag American," he recommenced, "you've disrupted our operation a tittle, I'll accept, but your modus operandi having preceded you, I—a far cry from that twit Ahmed Chabane—won't be panicked into digression."

Remy had caught her scream and her advancing protest. She must have grasped at the point man covering the abduction, or why the injunction, "Shake her off"? He quivered at the thought that her sublime face had been struck.

Tinfingers finally noticed that a squirming Remy had succeeded in scooching to the edge of the folding chair. Ruffled by yet an additional distraction, he glowered at him, who, in turn, broadened his lingering smirk. "My wrists." He crouched to display them.

"Anything" to resume his examination, the Philistine's expression acknowledged. He aimed a sharp nod at one of the men who with a penknife sundered the binding gray tape. Freed, Remy stretched his arms, contorted his body, and flexed his right hand.

"Ah, how gratifying to have liberal movement of one's limbs!" His break was minimal. "Oh, monsieur, *pardon!*"

The transradial mechanism began to tremble as if poised to bang the tabletop a second time. Instead the hand sheered a few centimeters to a buff envelope beside an orange folder. "To dislodge the contents of this," he remarked calmly, sliding it across, "would engage my right forever. Still, you . . . *you* may with facility extract it."

Using the forefinger and thumb of his left hand, Remy lifted the manila, balanced it on his medius, flipped back its tab with his index, tucked this finger and his pollex inside, and slipped both out, clutching the sheet. The now dispensable envelope was released and glided onto the surface of Tinfingers' bench.

Relaxing against the metal backrest, with both hands Remy unfolded the paper.

It was a blurry fax of a picture. Three late-teens, uniformed in vertical stripes, were behind a fence, one partially concealed by a fortyish, white-suited Westerner standing outside its wire mesh. Remy took pains to accord a glint of recognition, positive Tinfingers would be studying his face.

"So you're acquainted that the youth on the perimeter is Ahmed Mustafa, alongside him Faisal Ali, and the one well-nigh eclipsed Anwar Suliman."

Remy's mind raced methodically through the three hundred pages of the 2269 file. "No, it's Faisal Suliman and Anwar Ali."

"*Malesh!* 'Doesn't matter!'" Opening the folder, Khalaf began to leaf through its papers. "The mature gentleman's quite distinguished: No argument there."

"Those poor lads were hanged, with President Mubarak watching via a peephole, shortly after this was snapped, if my memory serves me."

"Equally of no importance! This Faisal Suliman was 183 centimeters tall, and Ahmed Mustafa, 172. The one substantially expunged, Anwar Ali, merely 153." He read the figures from a typed sheet. "In fact, you can see a portion of his shorn crown sticking out from behind the left ear of the foreigner. Would not you concur that the other two tower over Anwar and his obscurer?"

No reply expected, Khalaf soured as Remy caricatured a scholarly, soldierly squint at the photograph.

“From a mere three years ago to now, Monsieur,” the Palestinian distended his brow, “you’ve shot up thirty-something centimeters. Is not that bizarre?”

Stringing out his contemplation of the paper, Remy delayed his answer. “But Christophe’s the mirror image today.” He evinced a reminiscent smile. “We buttressed one another in those proceedings, yet neither of us, the team of ‘Chris and Chris,’ the ‘*doubles*,’ the Egyptian jailers called us.” Still clasping the *télécopie*, he dropped his hands into his lap. “No, neither of us did enough to save those three sprigs of martyrdom.”

During Remy’s speech Tinfingers had focused his scrutiny on divers items in the folder. “This is a shot of M. Christian Lazar, M. Quel Que Soit.” (“*M. Whatever*,” Remy mentally echoed: *No more droll than having to identify myself as “M. Bulles.”*)

Aloud, he sniffed, “No. I’m afraid you’ve fucked up again, an inbred gift of you Plos. This is the one who seconded me on the case, M. Christophe Figuard. Your head office in Tunis—or was it originally faxed from Cairo to Tunis, subsequently a fax of the fax being faxed on to Algiers?—has transmitted the wrong Polaroid.”

Over a minute crept by before the Philistine’s two sleek faux digits instigated a rhythmic drumming on the tabletop. “Who are you? . . . Monsieur, I’ve had dogged violence unleashed on me, on my body. A professional, I’ve never favored physical negotiation. Once more I demand, ‘Who are you?’”

“Then you should not steal,” Remy glanced aside, “from your own people, shrewd to what Islam decrees as the thief’s condign punishment, of which even I, a Christian, am apprised.” With rigid fingers he executed an axing chop across his right wrist.

The *main artificielle*, stimulated into a partial fist by an overt deltoid twitch, thrice pounded, shuddering the table’s stout pine legs. “Israeli pigs! With a crude stone they bashed and battered until the fibers of my hand filigreed its shattered bones.”

One by one Remy peered into the eyes of the men who “had their leader’s back.” “If you say so. Perhaps my information’s as mistaken as your faxed photo.”

Bolting up, Tinfingers gestured to those beside Remy. In being wrenched from the chair, he succeeded in unbalancing one, and not till he had compelled the other three to streak forward did he oblige by going limp.

“Clamp his right arm to the workbench!” ordered Khalaf in Arabic.

Remy doubted not that all of this was bluff. Setting aside that he was a licensed European investigator, surely they were cognizant of his sodality with Foucin. They could abuse Mohammed since everyone must infer that the *commissaire divisionnaire* hated the family of one of the “Seven Devils.”

Remy, however, had been observed entering a restaurant with Foucin, been joined by him at a table in the Al-Nigma, been driven in his white Peugeot after they exited Bendari’s *bras dessus bras dessous*, and, moreover, been invited to his home to break the fast. “They would not dare!” he persuaded himself. All the same, in a mouth squeezed dry, his tongue pressed itself against his teeth.

Both unnecessary, for he quickly discovered he was not altogether wrong.

3

Scuffling to a filing cabinet against the left wall, Tinfingers slid open a drawer. On descreying the objects sought, Remy lowered his eyelids to shield his wonder. With his frame secured by three men, a fourth braced his right arm at his elbow and wrist. The fifth, using his left hand as a vise, with the other guided Remy's index to the ink pad.

"This coercion's superfluous," with a mock laugh, he objected. "I'll do it myself." Yet this option, he conceived, was not in the playbook. His finger was removed from the black ink and steadily rolled, left to right, over a piece of white cardboard.

As the operation was repeated with his other digits, he recalled the only time he had been knowingly fingerprinted. One by one taking his *empreintes*, the captain/psychologist at the assimilation camp had iterated, "It's standard procedure." He, not yet become Remy, accepted the precaution: They had to be able to verify the scraps in the event the FLN snared him.

There might have been another, couched in an "et cetera," his reflections emended. His Algerian case officer had averred, "If we have to spirit you away, during the flight to Marseilles entertain not a worry. I'll appropriate the file: any documents on you, pictures, photostats, microfilms, et cetera. Shred them myself." As confirmation Surveillant fervently shook his head. "You won't exist. How can a fellow who doesn't exist be hurt?"

A half year after independence he had been exposed as one of the "great traitors." So much for the word of a Frenchman! *And you would remonstrate I couldn't be hurt, whose sister was forsaken "amid the alien corn," whose mother died veiled, and for twenty-six years whose father's not been spoken to, outside the ritual of the mosque, by a man from his neighborhood?*

Five minutes later, Khalaf strenuously elevated the card with Remy's fingerprints. As a shoulder twitch, which in the Palestinian's harness and cuff prosthesis had previously transmitted a "grasp and hold" command through the control cable, across the wires of the wrist unit, and to the terminal device, so now a "relinquish" shrug caused the stiff paper to drop into the compartment of the cabinet.

"You kidnapped me for this?" following an aloof chortle, bantered Remy, no longer tightly gripped. "A set of prints, easily filched off any Al-Nigma cutlery or glass."

Disdaining a direct reply, Khalaf snorted, "Had you not been so insulting, at this point I would be done with you." The declamation with its succulent rest convinced Remy that the finale had arrived, the one "better" to the antecedent "good."

"Straddle the table with him!"

It catapulted onto Remy's divested upper back, knocking his breath into his stomach.

"Nevertheless, not a standing bruise must be palpable," two minutes prior Tinfingers had continued, "to flaunt in front of your comrade Foucin." And through the mind of Remy the locution—now a noun, then a verb—traveled thirty years.

"I had presumed you'd libel my medallion, my suffering. Lacking versatility, it has considerable power, as you will soon appreciate, but not a bruise. You really should have farewelled this city earlier. A modest trader in hashish for my country, can I be at ease

with you rummaging, delving into the queer's murder. Let the likely one be punished, the shitboy Belmazoïr. *Sadeekee* ('my friend'), the wrap."

Remy's neck had been left free to skew around and thereby not miss the white bath towel, being twined in exact folds about the prosthesis. "*La cuvette d'eau de source, s'il vous plaît.*" Into "the basin of spring water" was dunked the swathed hand.

"Careful. Tin rusts," prosaically flouted Remy through clenched teeth.

It would not have been his first encounter with the impact of a wet towel. Khaleel and he had practiced on each other, both akin in their incredulity that the wales vanished within a day, while five staggered by before the internal racking abated.

"My sole regret is that you're not a Jew. Thereupon, my insensate champion would swell with such hatred that the fury of the clout would tear through your petrified frame and cramp the wooden tissues of the bench you drape."

During Khalaf's orotund fulmination, Remy glared at his upper arm, searching for the twitch which would signal the assault of the muffled prosthesis upon his body.

Naturally his thoughts fled to her, she who had sheltered him from violence even during the years of neglect, just as her parents, by abandoning their religion—"As I have mine!"—had sought to protect her (and themselves) from the Nazis.

The "faith of our fathers," just like their "sins," comes round, for "Did not our Catholic daughters marry Jews?" Contemplating the cycle, Remy badgered himself, "Have not I cowered long enough? And is it not the mass of that memory which will incite me to proclaim what I must?"

His rationale was *comme suit*: The force of the initial blow has already been determined muscularly. Nothing can alter its motion and velocity squared, so why not call out? That the second and succeeding buffets will be more fell has no import at this juncture since the premier will anesthetize my corporeal feelers, which will consequently have several days to come to terms with the "better" pain.

Do not rhetorically question it again: Declare!

"Strike," in Egyptian Arabic trumpeted Remy to Tinfingers, both of whom had inflicted upon their countenances a show of demonic exultancy, "as if I were a Jew!"

"What . . . what did he say?" Tinfingers gawked at the four pinning Remy down. No response from them, he leaned in and queried, "What did you say?"

Yet that Remy could not repeat, his lungs lacking sufficient air.

"No matter."

So the words, receptively nonexistent, wreaked me no harm, Remy deduced. "*Ergo*, when my breath returns, more often must I utter them."

He clicked open his eyes, a baring which induced the Palestinian to jump back, but promptly Khalaf regained his composure. "M. Whatever, you have dishonored me, my people, and my hand. That pioneer whack was my requital."

The next smashed against his kidneys. At once conscious that the deadening had not seeped into his body's every cubicle, he clinched his eyelids, striving to keep his tears squashed in.

"And still you don't cry or cry out, in stately recognition of the indignities perpetrated on my people. At any rate, one collateral shot I have: My righteous hand, rapturous to avenge your desecration, is poised, like a God-tempered thunderbolt, to

smite the tender halves of your buttocks.”

Despite the self-levied darkness, Remy could follow the synthetic mauley's sweep upward. The third—“nonchalantly, I ween,” his self-intimation—he awaited.

In vain.

Instead, he heard a familiar voice radiating from the doorway and felt ashamed that he should be so apprehended: “Why M. Lazar, and is not this our most outlandish meeting yet, you bestride a bench and with your Geoffrey Beene shirt hoisted to your scruff and Bond Street trousers and underpants dropped?”

The tone of fabricated consternation was modified into the scruple of a plea. “And M. Khalaf, is this any way for a guest of our country to treat another of our country's guests?”

4

The fists gripping Remy slackened. He perceived himself sliding from the table, his obtunded legs unable to forestall the descent.

“Break his fall!” At Foucin's adjuration, the eight withdrawn hands sprang forth, snagging Remy at his armpits and the fork of his legs. Garments were being yanked over his thighs and buttocks. Afterward, a single set of fingertips was kneading his cervix.

“My apologies, M. Lazar. I'm a trifle tardy.” Remy struggled to speak, but could not. As Foucin pulled down, but did not attempt to tuck in, his shirt, he called toward the doorway, “Locate the camp's medic.” To Remy he asked, “Do you wish to lie here until the infirmary's ready?”

Shaking his head, he cast an unsteady glance to his left. “Gently lift him from this rack,” the four were charged, and, once Remy had been transported to the folding chair, Foucin himself bent down to fasten his pants and belt.

On his feet, he pivoted and, Remy blearily discerned, fixed his stare on Tinfingers who, having retreated to the wall, was endeavoring to screen his wrapped prosthesis.

“Please, M. Khalaf, a host should not shrink from his guests. Do I recoil from you?” As proof, with eager strides Foucin circled round, but, puzzling to Remy, sauntered past the Palestinian to linger in front of the back shelf. A half minute later, retracing his steps, he clasped an arm about Tinfingers' shoulder and with a thrust routed him back to the table. There he politely bowed in offering him the stool.

Remy's vision was so rapidly clearing that peripherally he detected Foucin's right arm hung not at his side, but curled slightly behind.

“One moment, M. Lazar. I beseech you to remain here as a witness. Then two of my men will assist you to the clinic.” Foucin glimpsed at the threshold. By twisting his neck, Remy saw Ghouraf and three blue-clad gendarmes.

“Relax, my friend.” He eased back around, misconstruing that Foucin was still tutoyering him. “Here you're as rigid as the tempered-steel lobster claw into which your arm plunges.” His left hand, plumped on Tinfingers' shoulder, drifted down the limb to the towel which he began to unwind.

“So this is the new one!” He did not tarry for an answer. “Incontestably not that Cairo crudity you had seven weeks ago. During those two sixteen-hour days you

rightfully boasted of a cutting-edge model ordered from Geneva. Harped on how they dawdled, protesting that these Swiss prosthetists have—‘on hand’—no concept of time.”

Foucin looked toward Remy, who tangentially established contact since his gaze had been drawn to the zigzagging path of the commissioner’s lethargic fingers over the smooth tan “epidermis.” Above the wrist unit (“where the real becomes the artificial,” Remy annotated), his hand, stopping, bolted a tightening grip.

“But here it is, safely arrived!” exclaimed a gleeful Foucin. “And has Algiers Orthopedics, their agent, provided a comfortable fit?” As he asked, the ten spectators beheld the right arm unveil itself and launch an ascent, not terminated until the claw hammer was level with his ear.

In a fierce plummet, its head fractured the hardened-polymeric cover, exposing and denting its volcanic hooks. To Remy the three sounds—of the splintering plastic, the clang of metal on metal, and the Philistine’s squeal—seemed to overlap one another.

And so swiftly crashed a second thud that its reverberation most certainly merged with the first. Only after the cacophony had subsided did Remy espy the blood oozing from the stub, sliced up by both the fractured socket and the mooring cable.

“A blow for a blow, a second for a second. How fortunate there wasn’t a third! This ‘Ai-ai-ai!’ for an ‘Ai-ai-ai!’ wearies. A good approximation, M. Khalaf, of your screams, and does it well transliterate M. Lazar’s wails? He did let out an ‘Ai-ai-ai!’ did he not?”

And with his own agony as the medium, Remy felt the interjection was aimed not at the one to whom it had been addressed, just as he perceived that for him it carried a significance far more incremental than the speaker could imagine.

Having released the wrist unit, Foucin brought this freed arm over Tinfingers’ cringed shoulders and with a tug buried the sufferer’s face in the left side of his uniform. His right hand swapped the hammer for the towel, and he commenced to rewrap it, now a makeshift tourniquet, about the stump.

Glancing up, he instructed the men at the door, “After the medico’s cared for M. Lazar, send him to minister to our host’s carpal laceration.”

Helped from his chair by the first two Palestinians darting forward, Remy emitted a rasp directed at Foucin. The latter, loosening his soothing hold, drew back from Tinfingers and hurried around the bench.

Remy essayed to innervate his leaden tongue. “Mme. Ballard?” the syllables issuing forth not without gaps.

Tilting so near that his day’s growth of stubble almost touched Remy’s, more recently shaved, Foucin whispered, “She must be telephoned: a solicited promise.”

“Ha- har-” Remy labored to form the word.

“Oh, ‘Was she harmed?’ No, she avers (though another told me of her being shoved to the pavement), but by scorpion worry, I suspect, yes. A lady of angelic attention. Had she been less vigilant, I’d have been even later.”

5

In the quarter hour at the infirmary hut, a thin, slump-shouldered Palestinian in his mid-twenties sprayed and wrapped with gauze Remy’s back, while extolling in English his medical training at the American University in Beirut.

He closed with an emphatic murmur, "Sir, my exile in this landfill has left me desperate. If any filaments remain in humanity's cord, *pour l'amour de Dieu*, abet me in securing a French *permis de travail*. Inconspicuously I've printed my Algiers POB on your prescription." With it was tendered a sealed bottle of ibuprofen.

From the *siège arrière* of Foucin's Peugeot, to which he had been shepherded, a galled Remy meditated, "If the corded bond was ever there, tonight's a witness of why it's become frayed. Save for a precious few, we tread the unfeeling earth with disconsolation and suspicion."

The analgesic having mitigated the pain, a lassitude displaced it. "Foucin is my shadow, and I am his. Were he privy to who I am," he embellished on a thought from the shed, "his transported soul would have possessed that terminal device, prompting its strike to shiver the earth's molten entrails."

He yearned to be back with Marie, who would not have so tightly wound the bandage. At that moment she was massaging his lumbar regions, her fingers, the splash of a mountain spring. Into the library she had marched at 4:55, installed her arm in his, conjoined their palms, and guided him from the building, iterating, "They don't deserve your overtime!"

He dreamed that their homeward stroll would trail away forever, listened while she spoke of things, "passing strange," none of which he understood, for the tongue, he swore, was alien, yet so enthralled were his straining ears, the words wooed. Then: In bed with her, his lips tugged at a glob of flesh below her navel, surrendering it only when tautened to its breaking point. The gambit had set off her tittering, at once smothered by his mouth.

"A 'kiss / Long as my exile.' 'Marie, Marie,'" he sighed, as sure of her name as of his own he was uncertain.

"Mme. Ballard's been rung up, and another," Foucin related, settling behind the steering wheel and tossing a piece of paper on the passenger's side dashboard. "Should you so desire, recumb. For that purpose, my colleagues didn't seat you in the front."

With a *voiture de police* crammed with five in its wake, the Peugeot began its transit across the cantonment, encircled by a chain-link fence canopied by barbed wire. Olive-green tent huts were interspersed among white one-story wooden buildings, suitable accommodations for five hundred, even though ninety-three, "Foucin's number," bivouacked there, quite ample for overseeing the PLO's hashish monopoly.

In one of them was Ahmed Chabane, perhaps under a cot shivering, "The Great One's come for me." Remy marveled, "She sent him here, cognizant of the chance her brother could have been ensnared."

As they neared the guardhouse, Remy discerned two Algerian sentries scurrying to run up the wooden crossbar. They targeted salutes at the automobile, reciprocated by Foucin.

Past the checkpoint, he peeped over his shoulders at Remy. "A comment of theirs—'They're all feasting in Building 4'—led me to you, for creeping along in first toward it, Sergeant Ghouraf spotted the oddity, a lit-up tool shed."

His voice suddenly assumed a tormented exasperation. "I've been negligent. M. Mohammed has suffered through my dereliction. I saw the carnal stripes. Back from

my meeting with Mlle. Houda, I was greeted by your message and one from Comdt. Souad Ayache, the warden at Berrouaghia.

“My immediate reaction was that your commission had been fruitful since the latter apprised me that M. Belmazoir ‘craved to confess.’ In an hour I arrived at the prison, and as we walked to the infirmary, the commandant described the knife attack.

“At his bedside, the patient had succumbed to a change of heart, for ripping off the gauze to disclose his stitched cheek, he snarled, ‘Foucin, this is your doing! May you slow grill in hell!’ I restrained M. Ayache who, esteeming himself duped, had bounded forward to pummel the inmate. Retreating at once, I accepted my responsibility.”

Peering into a charcoal darkness, Remy stayed his reply until they turned from the camp’s dirt road onto a graveled one. “Mme. Ballard. You alluded to my being in her debt.”

The shoulders of Foucin, whose hands had been gripping the steering wheel, relaxed. He did not start, as Remy assumed he would, by reprising, “A lady of angelic attention.”

Rather, he said, “Reckoning from your ambush to my linking up with her, I gather she endured a frustrating forty minutes: Inceptively, there was the apathy of the bystanders. ‘Summon the police,’ she had pleaded, and too expeditiously a patrol car did pull up.

“They were there to investigate a vandalized windshield—someone had called that in—but on her vociferous ‘An important Belgium citizen has been abducted!’ they began questioning those present about her claim. ‘A silver Renault! A862, the first four of the tag,’ she interposed. ‘Radio that to your precinct. Now! Before they switch vehicles!’

“When she requested the number of my office, they sternly shushed her. Their inquiry, which ended with the 7:26 cannon’s boom, inclined them to credit the majority. These had attested that a roguish European had pushed aside this woman, his clamoring, impeding Algerian escort, and hopped into a blue Renault with some Arab friends. The patrolmen spun round to enjoin her to go about her business, but she had disappeared.

“These details, manifestly not hers, came from two confreres of mine in the neighborhood. Having belatedly sped up, they were so thorough in gleaning the specifics of the kidnapping, after which they cruised around hoping to chance on the blue Renault, that by the time they notified me, two other sources had preceded them.

“Mme. Ballard—an ingenuous lady!—had rushed to her flat, having lit on an unlikely emissary. There she called Ambassador Leroy, whose home number M. Ballard had listed on their Rolodex, and asked if he had mine.

“On being informed you’d been seized, he was, above all, anxious about your safety and volunteered to ring me himself. At Maghrib, I didn’t receive his message left with Mona until 7:45. Three minutes after returning his call, I was speaking with her.

“As noted, she had memorized the initial four characters of the tag, herself articulating my thought, ‘No avail there.’ They bundled you into a second?”

Anew spying over his shoulder, he caught Remy’s nod. “Nevertheless, magnificent presence on her part. And a miscue on M. Khalaf’s not to have blocked out a dumb-show plagium.

““The dialect of their factitious bickering, not Algerian Arabic, was . . . Palestinian,’ her falter serving to qualify her postulation, ‘and later the driver, his tone frenetic, yelled to the one whose shoulder I’d grabbed for, “*Al-mukhay*—”’ The first three syllables of

our Arabic word for 'the camp,'" Foucin explained, before embarking upon his synopsis.

"A peeked-at license plate, background patois, a truncated noun: Had I been there, none of these would have seduced my attention, admittedly less than angelic." The face he chose to exhibit had a wry leer. "How do these women keep stage center the peripheral?"

Remy deliberated an avowal, *That we are never their all-and-all is the tickle in our ribs since Father Adam*, but in lieu of that raised his arms shoulder-high and molded his hands by upturning the palms into a *c'est-la-vie* pose.

The pantomime occasioned Foucin to erupt into an unexpected guffaw. A pensive quarter-minute lacuna followed, itself terminated by an enunciation of "my—or our linked—predicament: 'How to recover you?'"

6

That Foucin's priority focused not so much on his rescue as on Foucin being the rescuer, Remy had concluded early in the commissioner's elaboration of his plan.

Understandably, checkpoints along the one hundred and twenty kilometers of the southern artery to the PLO cutoff were not feasible. After all, the make and model of the car bearing him were unknown, and during Ramadan, Foucin had explained, "clogged is this segment of the Trans-Sahara Highway, and its feast-glutted drivers are in no mood to be stopped."

A query squiggled into Remy's mind and stayed buried there: But why not instruct the police in Ksar el Boukhari, the closest town to the cantonment, to set up a blockade at its sole access road? If that call had been made at around 7:50, just after your conversation with Leila, at best the Talbot would have been forty kilometers short of the cutoff. *But that would have made these rural gendarmes my liberators.*

Instead, Foucin had begun by telephoning the camp's Algerian-manned sentinel post and Tinfingers' private line there. "Neither 'picked up.' Not a daunting task for M. Khalaf, diverting the guards with a regal Holy Month spread till the car with you was sneaked in."

Next he had set a rendezvous with Sergeant Ghouraf and his team. "By nine we reached Ksar, and given our blue-light advantage, I was confident we were only twenty-five minutes behind them, who, I speculated, would just be entering the camp.

"In fact, when we pulled up, our sentries were back at their post." (*Why hadn't they been telephoned from Ksar?* Remy mused, the answer apparent. *Then they would become my saviors.*) "Nothing unusual today, I was told. Five dealers signed out this morning. (Your to-be abductors?) Everyone was in Building 4 where a sumptuous banquet had been set up. Toward it, with lights dimmed, we were headed, as I previously recounted."

Continuing to stare straight ahead, his voice now detached, Foucin said, "I never felt you were in danger, but had not I adjudged the same about M. Mohammed? Consider, however, two vast differences: he's from a traitor's family, always fair game the PLO evidently supposes, while you are employed by M. Vellacott, renowned as their champion. Would they dare carve a scarring X on the cheek of his investigator?"

Without explanation, Foucin paused to glance toward the paper he had tossed on the dashboard. “And further, prescient of how garrulous our Philistine brothers tend to be, especially with a bound prisoner, I felt that any corporal intimidation would be tantalizingly delayed—and thus denied by our precipitate arrival. Who could have suspected that M. Khalaf had drafted a curtailed script? *Pardon!* A two-welt blunder on my part.”

When Foucin swung round, there was a meekness in his smile. Remy's response was to retrieve the half-liter bottle of water brought from the clinic. With the analgesic spray wearing off, he joggled himself to put to use the recrudescing pain.

“And you yourself telephoned Mme. Ballard?” He noisily shook two of the white Brufen 600 tablets into his palm.

“No, Sergeant Ghouraf I dispatched, myself remaining in the toolshed, intent on summary interrogation.”

“I wondered what detained you the fifty minutes,” Remy paltered. Having slowed for the sharp right onto the tarmacadam surface of Route 1, Foucin at once picked up speed, the Peugeot in a short time topping off at one hundred and twenty kph.

“What did M. Khalaf reveal? The adage, ‘Never blame the one near at hand,’ he apparently esteems. Nary a word about the liability of his Algerian superiors or himself. Instead, ‘to Tunis, to Tunis’ you loomed as an inconvenience, he averred. A tad of pressure, Tunis adduced, would nudge you to abandon Algiers.

“In substantiating that all was ‘Tunis’s contrivance,’ he paraded before me a faxed photograph, one which Tunis maintains verifies that you’re not M. Christian Lazar.” Foucin again cast a head-swerving glimpse at the dashboard.

“And Tunis likewise ordered the attack on M. Belmazoir?” I inquired. ‘Just so! *Wallahee!* I speak the truth.’ He quivered his tense body as a testament.

“To confirm your veracity, which faults only Tunis, may I fetch your “nephew” for an “interrogation,” one not unlike yours of M. Lazar? Is it still so designated in France . . . Belgium?” The obligatory hiatus was not accompanied by an eyes-right.

“A match to M. Yasser Arafat, who has rubbed cheeks, frowzy to sleek, with the West’s most downy democrats, our M. Khalaf is ‘married to Palestine,’ the PLO chairman’s verbatim on being probed why he’d never wed”

Through the glaring lull, Remy deduced that Foucin sought to convey a measured retort to such hypocrisy. Having passed a Ksar and Médéa signpost, Remy realized they were about thirty kilometers south of “my cutoff to the prison.” He debated proposing to Foucin, “Why don’t we stop by Berrouaghia? With you as a witness, M. Mohammed and I could compare our Plo-inflicted wounds.”

“It had sufficed earlier,” Foucin proceeded. “However, presently I ascertained, he had ‘*un nouveau neveu,*’ as *à la mode* as his hand. Such helpless cousins—‘How did we get this far?’—he routinely ferries in from Gaza. The moment the mid-teen was ostended, M. Khalaf’s visage gorged with anguish, and his stub shot up with ‘Haro!’”

You would have earned my love, Foucin, Remy blurted to himself, *had you just now, unclasping your right from the steering wheel and sucking it up your coat sleeve, brandished your arm, in aping mimic!*

“As I cuffed the stripling’s smooth chin and ringleted neck, M. Khalaf yawped garishly, bent on solemnizing that while visions of seventy-two dark-eyed virgins cubed

couldn't stir him to treason, consternation over his ganymede's welfare would. Acquiescence gained, I scooted him over to his 'uncle,' who staved off beginning till a jowl rested against the lad's elbow.

"I'm blamed for everything: Recruiting Belmazoir, poking into his intimacy with this Ballard—'without their consent,' brazenly they lied—endangering the November agreement, and hatching the notion in some that we're behind the American's butchery.

"My life's a forlorn hope. Since Boumediène granted us the monopoly, fearful of a native hashish lord's wealth and power, all the profits decamp to them. I have no secret Swiss accounts like Arafat and our Bekaa Valley drug barons. This piece of Helvetian shit I'm paying for in installments.' He surveyed the unstrapped shattered ruin.

"His subsequence, delivered after the medico had—to wax asyndetically—come, sewn, and cantered, in unrehearsed spurts evolved, coincident with such squeezing of his nephew's thenar that the palms wept sweat.

"I'll delete the splutter: Four days ago their Algiers' chief of security 'graced our camp. After a spate of whirligigging, he threatened to hustle me off to the West Bank, there to bolster the rock-throwers. "You have one good chucker," he scoffed.'

"M. Belmazoir was to be administered an enticement to wheedle him into confessing to a murder 'he so obviously committed.' Moreover, transferred to him was a file of documents on you, to be kept as a contingency. 'Anyhow, they're bobbling fools all—Cairo, Tunis, Algiers. They relayed the wrong photo, I astutely detected, and this M. Lazar's not the faxed M. Quel Que Soit.'"

For the next five minutes Foucin was silent. Not until the Peugeot decelerated to ease around a yawning pothole in the blacktop did Remy appreciate that a regard to locating this breach had produced the reticence. "Your back: I strove not to jar it."

Remy was pondering this uncharacteristic advertisement of his consideration when, a protracted interval having lapsed, Foucin appended, "So the French do have long noses."

7

As if not expecting a response, he continued immediately. "M. Khalaf told me nothing new: You're not who you say you are. Or more accurately: At this point we know what, if not who, you are.

"Zipping over the Med, the coded message touched down the Friday you were traipsing our Casbah. A bribe to a mid-level functionary in Vellacott's firm set her to snooping. *Voilà!* 'All of M. Lazar's documents have been doctored. And by the French DGSE!'"

He dimmed his beam for an oncoming truck. "You must be one of its well-buried operatives, severely disconnected, since channeling your prints—granted not of professional quality, given your habit of never grasping anything firmly—through our databases on the French bared nothing. Resurrected in spirit, you're a corpse without a name. Nonetheless, you must be circumspect, M. Whatever, not to embarrass either of our governments."

Remy discerned that in all probability Foucin would not speak again till he himself initiated a revival. He let him drive on for thirty kilometers to project the impression that with difficulty he had struggled to the illation.

Even then, he commenced with a binding obiter dictum. “Four times today, counting up and back, you like me have traveled this north-south artery. So M. Khalaf received a further mandate from the Algiers office: Should M. Belmazoir refuse to confess, actify the contingency plan regarding me.”

“He holds that he did receive a notification to kidnap you, but it came most surprisingly the day *before* M. Mohammed was attacked. Since with minimal prodding from me he himself painfully extracted the incident, I’m convinced his account is *holoverum*, ‘entirely genuine.’

Yesterday morning, the telephone at his building rang. The caller’s French was contorted and the voice so patently forged, ‘masked by thick twill,’ he couldn’t catalog it as male or female. He was asked whether he ‘had the stomach to turn an eight-thousand-dinar trick.’

“If so, with some of his reliable underlings, he must abduct you, obtain a good set of fingerprints, but ‘Do not harm him! Afterward, “ditch” his sedated anatomy, with his elegant habiliments whiskey-besmirched and some hashish stuffed in his pockets, under a seawall not far from the Al-Nigma, only his reputation bruised.’

“One thousand he was told he might acquire right away. The caller specified where in the public garden surrounding Al-Djazair Stadium this retainer, gift-wrapped in a crumpled newspaper, could be found. A prompt message would disclose the drops to be used in exchanging the fingerprints for the seven thousand.

“At noon he’d checked out of the camp, driven to Algiers, pried under the designated pile of moldering palm fronds, and ‘ripened into a thousand-dinar richer gent. It’s in the nature of a serendipitist to be suspicious. Abed I couldn’t sleep: Are my Plo brothers testing me, hankering to see what of the booty I’ll “cough up,” all, some, or none?’ Desdemona’s handkerchief—of course, not his image—danced about in his ‘black matter.’

“He reasoned that ‘no doubt they want this meddler’s fingerprints, but do they plot to use this enterprise to ensnare me? We don’t have a country because amongst ourselves trust’s a soupçon.’

The voice on the telephone, mentally recycled, became ‘the bass of Al-Wazar’s wife, who devoted her early years to hallooing far-distanced goats in Palestine. Husband-dictated, she had “falsettoed” it, for hers is as deep as the heft of a Bethlehem church bell.’

“By morning prayers, he’d determined, ‘I’ll do their bidding: waylay and fingerprint this Lazar and surrender all I garner, thereby displaying how stewed in obedience I am.’ At my hiked, skeptical eyebrow, he amplified, ‘When I have their unabridged confidence, I can cheat them on the trade “more than the more.”’”

After a half-minute Foucin audibly sighed, “In this recital of M. Khalaf’s psychical machinations, not much balm for your double-wealed back.”

“‘Desdemona’s handkerchief,’ a dazzling metaphor,” unhesitatingly commented Remy, the “[]varnished tale” never once interrupted.

Prior to settling his body into the façade of sleep, a posture he was to sustain for the final stretch, he mused: Desdemona dropped, Emilia found, Iago snatched, love withered, and Othello “took by th’ throat the circumcised dog” and “*stab[bed] himself*” in his own.

At 12:15 Foucin pulled into the Al-Nigma's underground garage. He had deferred until they were a minute away calling out in a loud, nevertheless pleasant tone, "M. Lazar!"

Remy languidly erected himself as Foucin, having sought permission from the attendant, maneuvered the car within three strides of the elevator. "Nearby is Mustapha Hospital," he suggested.

"Thank you, but I'm fine. My ritual's fixed." As they climbed out, he spotted Foucin reaching for the paper on the dashboard. "I'll implement the four stages of RICE: Elevated bed rest, preceded by ice therapy and a reswathing of the elastic compress from the infirmary. *Merci*, for ferrying me to the underground. It would have been a humbling, half-staffed passage across the sea of red carpet in the lobby."

Remy pushed the arrow, aware that Foucin had started to tap the paper in his right hand against his left palm. "It's I who should be chagrined. Had I accelerated my tempo, you'd have been better recovered."

The drumming halted. "I distinguished the blows simply by counting the stripes. One of M. Khalaf's men divulged that on the table you incensed them with the taunt of being a Jew. 'Strike, for I am a *yahoodee!*' he claimed you avouched, baring your teeth."

Divining Remy's conation, Foucin depressed the already lit button. "Could our word for 'Jew' be the seed of Swift's term for his Houyhnhnmland beasts? Without a doubt, 'Nay!' But I adamantly refuse to denominate you, 'M. Whateverstein,' . . . M. Lazar."

Remy grinned politely before averting his eyes to trail the sluggishly declining numbers above the door.

"Yes, quite beneficial the RICE sequence." When Remy wheeled about to impart an air of comity, Foucin was staring at the picture. "Taught in your DGSE training?"

Tilting in to scrutinize the fax, the commissioner, with a startled cock of his head, unexpectedly laughed, "What's this?" A connection had "apparently with . . . surprise" been made. "M. Lazar, the real M. Lazar, whose cognomen is, I hazard, as artificial as M. Khalaf's right, and you *do* bear a marked facial resemblance. Look here!"

While he was shoving the paper toward Remy, a stiff white card slipped from behind it and, seemingly unnoticed by Foucin, floated onto the strips in front of the *ascenseur*.

The door opened. "Monsieur, my rescuer, might I examine it tomorrow morning, if that's convenient?" In the compartment, Remy edged his body around to elaborate. "My rear-guard combat," he squeezed a smile, "prevents me from recommending a time. May I telephone? I'm eager to exchange notes on our separate interviews with Mlle. Belmazoir, and I'll likewise have a proposal for your inspection."

"How insensitive my tongue has been!" As the door began to close, Foucin, crooking a shoulder, retrieved the card with Remy's cleanly lifted *empreintes digitales*. From this crouch, the shaft's diminishing slit compelled him to troll, "*Bon nuit!*"

In his suite, having rebuked himself, "You've sufficiently inconvenienced her," he subjoined, "though perhaps you exacerbate her disquiet by not ringing, mayhap even causing her out of concern for you to postpone her trip to Mlle. Houda's?" His eyes widened, and paralleling all anticipants of flattery, his premonition he had to validate.

“Forgive me, Mme. Ballard,” Remy spoke into the mouthpiece. “I continue to derange your day with the ruffling early hour of this call.” He had knotted his Adam’s apple to produce a “tighter breathing.”

“M. Lazar, you are unharmed?”

Remy smirked, contented that his physiognomy was not transmittable through telephone wires. “I’m fine . . . fine. Barely bruised. At the Al-Nigma.”

By tilting his voice, while sundering the two *finés* with a tiny gasp, and employing an alliterated phrase, immediately regretted, he relied on her to penetrate the mist into the battle raging in his body. “Your invaluable assistance”—he could not bring himself to use “angelic attention”—“I was acquainted by M. Foucin, effectuated my rescue.”

“Monsieur, please the unshrouded truth. ‘Bruised,’ how?”

He heaved a sigh wrenched from his gut. “’Tis no more than a gnat’s peck. For now a few plucked phrases only. However, tomorrow, perhaps half past one, with grander spirit I will elaborate, telling all.” *That means*, he fastidiously deduced, *Foucin at 11:30*, full of self-awe at his *adept stage managing*.

Her response caught him off guard. “My egoistic probing retards your needed rest. I return to Mlle. Belmazoir tonight, but by noon I’ll be back here, your call anxiously awaiting. God wills that you sleep well!”

Too late he chastised himself, “Fool, overacting, you drive your ‘adoring audience’ away!” for no sooner was her benediction declared than he heard buzzing from her end.

Notwithstanding, her prayer, he was secure, would be answered, but not without some delay. Comestibles had to be summoned and eaten since it had been most of a day and all of a night of fasting for him.

Afterward, during a numbing, yet bracing, bath, in which at times his back rested against an ice-cube-stuffed pillowcase, he refined his account for Leila: “pick your nose” bowdlerized as “pinch your earlobe”; “tin rusts” repeated with a defiant flout; and the Jew squib, *de rigueur*, omitted. Thereupon her complicity in his plot would be entreated.

Under the covers, he had scarcely finished the alternate *dénouement* of the Philistine anecdote when he heard the doorknob to his suite being minaciously twisted. “Has my dream conjured the Plos?” he scrupled, creeping through the dark into and across the salon.

“Yes?” exhaled he into the crack at the jamb.

The reply whispered from the other side was similarly a question: “M. Bulles?”

9

The second: There was the undoctored pivoting and gamboling, albeit their injunctions differ. “No time not to be redeemed.” “You forty, busy your drabs in toppling the tents.” “We three have ahead of us a towering night of little rest,” successively barked the Palestinians.

Nigh on sunup the *alim* crouped to a fellow early-riser, “They’ve worked him relentlessly, verily surpassing our women’s toil in preparing the village for displacement. A spell ago I stepped from my mat and blanket to fertilize the backdrop of yon argan tree and even yet he was rasping—or they were out of exhaustion. ’Tis Qur’anicly certain

they've ground out much. I'll scamper to determine the direction of our strategic withdrawal."

He wagged the flap of the single tent standing. "Enter, for I'm privy to your goat-belly shake."

Gaping at the leftovers of the Legionnaire's well-racked body, the *alim* "wheed":

*All the King-on-High's best prosthetic men
Couldn't put Jew Screwed together again.*

Eyes had been dredged out, ears cropped, nostrils sliced, penis whittled ("circumcised to the extreme"), scrotum crushed flat, and from every pore on his yellowing chest and legs a pinkish stream laced through onto crusts of blood already black.

"Nonetheless," the *alim* swore to himself and to God (in that order), "I detected a left eyelid twitch."

His exultant assessment: "Praise be to Allah! Prompt us the way to salvation, for I'm afeard to entrust our burdened animals with such a momentous decision, 'ungenerated' as they are in jihad. What have you elucubrated to save our tribe from Gallic destruction?"

The Palestinians, with chins slumped, looked askance at each other. Serially the three protested in Arabic, each word, slowly enunciated, coming like drips from a faucet, "better" and "better":

"*Mafeesh haga*, 'nothing!'" "With all our might, we've tried." "But only French will the Jewish bastard gibber!"

And Remy, at the very instant he had comprehended the *bouton de porte* being jiggled, recollected:

*Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus,
He's got us speakin' in tongues.*

Notes and Commentary: Chapter 16: "Speakin' in Tongues"

April 19 (Wednesday night) and April 20 (Thursday early morning)

- p. 257: **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TITLE OF CHAPTER 16:** This chapter is a counterpoint to chap. 2, from which its title is taken; chap. 3, where "Noura," thrown across a table and with her tongue cut out, is tortured; and chap. 8, through the symmetry of its placement and its title, "The Tongue of Tongues." "Speaking in tongues" is a thematic symbol not just of the lack of communication between human beings but also of an absence of the desire to communicate or "connect."
- The phrase is drawn from Paul's Acts, Chap. 2, which describes the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles, who are in an "upper room" in Jerusalem, on the seventh Sunday after Easter.
- At His appearance, the Apostles began to speak in "other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance," and although each spoke a different language the Apostles were able to understand each other.
- Using this passage, Pentecostal Christians believe that "speaking in tongues" or "glossolalia" is a gift of the Holy Spirit. It is a heavenly language or even the language of angels.
- For nonbelievers glossolalia is mere gibberish. Although it is phonologically structured, it has no systematic resemblance to any natural language because it has no meaning for anyone beyond the person uttering it.
- Thus it fails in the essential quality of a language, communication between one human being and another based upon events in a commonly perceived world.
- Such distortion of the communication process is evident in the lies, digressions, non sequiturs, etc. which are prevalent in chap. 16.
- The principal image of glossolalia occurs three times in the novel, the spelling of its first word, "speakin'," through the omission of its final letter signaling a disregard for the principles of communication.
- The first is part of the song "Georgie": "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, / He's [Georgie's] got us speakin' in tongues" (2.20), where the expression indicates an act of fellatio or sexual communication.
- The second appears on 4.66 where Remy describes his analysis of Mohammed's search for a father figure in Ballard as descending "into the twentieth-century equivalent of 'speakin'-in-tongues': 'psychobabble.'" This statement indicates his belief that psychology has decreased intercommunication or interconnection by stressing intraindividual or intracerebral communication.
- In chap. 16, the third instance quotes the lines from the 2.20 song (274). Furthermore, it questions the efficacy of any torture which begins by eliminating

the requisites of communication: the tongue (259) and language as a system of meaning (274).

Both are parables about the lack of communication and of the desire to connect in the modern world. In contrast, the aim of Foucin's torture on 14.220 is to break down the barriers which prevent "truth" from being "dislodged."

In the mouth of one of the most egotistical and sycophantic characters of the chapter is put a major point of my novel, the question about whether "any filaments remain in humanity's cord" (266). Is there anything binding one person to another?

pp. 257-74: **CHRONOLOGY OF CHAPTER 16:** There are four time segments: the drive to the PLO camp after the kidnapping (7:06 – 9:03 p.m.), briefly treated since Remy is semiconscious (section 1); Remy inside the camp (9:03 – 10:33) (sections 1-5); the drive back to his Algiers' hotel (10:33 – 12:15 a.m.) (sections 5-7); and Remy's early morning at the Al-Nigma (12:15 – 2:50 a.m.) (section 8). In addition, much of section 1 and all of section 9 deal with a 1955 anecdote about the torture of a French soldier by three Palestinians, who had been sent to Algeria to fight in the war for independence.

pp. 257-59: **SECTION 1**

p. 257: "With a flourish, Remy's regard": The chapter opens at 9:06 with a bound Remy seated at a table inside the tool shed of the Palestinian camp.

p. 257: split hooks: Tinfingers has a late 1980s modified harness and cable prosthetic device. Its shape is that of a hardened polymer hand (often referred to as a terminal device).

However, two of the digits, the "opposable thumb" and "forefinger," are covered with a flexible or compliant polymer, inside which are two stainless-steel lobster-clawlike hooks of jointed construction.

These allow the amputee to grasp and hold objects.

The forearm section of the device contains a hardened polymeric socket in which is embedded electronic circuitry that allows the split hooks to work.

Attached by a hinge to the forearm section is an upper-arm cuff, made of leather. A control cable runs from this cuff to the hooks, and a leather harness holds the prosthesis on the wearer.

Tinfingers' prosthesis is powered by a small electric battery built into it. To activate the grasping and holding functions, current flow is regulated by small switches operated mechanically by subtle body movements.

When a muscle contracts, it generates small electrical currents. These signals are picked up by electrodes in the forearm socket, the circuitry which amplifies the signals and uses them to control the flow of current to the split hooks.

- p. 257: “about fifteen seconds”: The time it usually took for a signal to be transmitted, received, and processed in a harness and prosthesis.
- p. 257: *main artificielle*: “artificial hand” (French).
- p. 257: Talbot: Talbot is the brand name of a number of models produced by Peugeot in the 1980s.
The Solara model, mentioned two paragraphs down, was one of the least successful; it was manufactured for a short span, 1980 – 1986.
Used Talbots often ended up in North African countries.
- p. 257: whisk: As an intransitive verb, “to move briskly.”
- p. 257: “more torment than loss of sentience”: While a small amount of chloroform has a pleasant sweet odor, in concentration its odor is pungent and its vapors leave a sweet burning taste in the mouth.
Since an overdose was crudely administered to Remy to partially anesthetize him, he experienced its immediate effects: irritated mucous membranes, eyes, and facial skin; excitation; loss of reflexes and sensation; and semiconsciousness.
Its residual effects include an intensification of the above symptoms as well as dilation of the pupils, stomach and intestinal sickness, and dullness and dizziness.
- p. 257: “Following the quick transfer to the green Solara”: Remy was kidnapped by the five Palestinians, who bundled him into their silver Renault at 7:06.
They drove to a second car, the green Talbot Solara, where he was hurled onto its backseat’s floorboard (7:10).
There he remained for almost two hours (7:10 – 9:03).
- p. 257: “Almost midway (seventy kilometers) to the camp”: As the 15.256 note, indicates, the camp or cantonment is located about 140 km. south of Algiers.
Not given in the text is a breakdown of the legs of the abductors’ drive:
7:10 – 8:28 (100 km., from Algiers to Ksar el Boukhari, the town closest to the camp);
8:28 – 8:42 (20 km., from Ksar to the cutoff access road);
8:42– 9:03 (the sixteen km. of the graveled access road and the four km. of the dirt road to the entrance of the cantonment).
- p. 257: “His captors: The anecdote”: At this midway point (c. 8:10, in Remy’s mind), he conjured up a revolution-era anecdote involving Palestinians sent to help the Algerians’ cause.
- p. 257: mitotically: By a process or processes involving or as if involving indirect cell division.
- p. 257: “two endings”: The first is given here; the second will be given in section 9, pp.

273-74.

- p. 257: ZAA's Ben M'hidi: The initials stand for the FLN name for the capital, "the Autonomous Zone of Algiers" (in French *Zone Autonome d'Alger*). This is the only reference to it in the text, but in the 7.114 note, "six provinces," N7:33-34, it is mentioned. It was surrounded by *Wilaya IV*, out of which Omar operated both before and after he became a French agent. Ben M'hidi was the first FLN political leader of Algiers. He was captured and executed by the French in 1957, events described on 6.88-89. For his history, see the series of notes on these pages, N6:17-26.
- p. 257: "Ben Bella" and "Nasser." Ahmed Ben Bella is discussed in the notes on 2.17 (N2:13); on 3.49 (N3:35); on 6.88 (N6:1718), and on 9.135 (N9:2-3). In 1955, he was one of the four "exterior" leaders of the FLN, all stationed in Cairo. The next year, the four were on a plane to Tunis when it was intercepted and captured by the French. Ben Bella spent the rest of the war in a prison in France. After the war, he became the first elected president of Algeria. As a parallel, both he and Abdul Nasser, the president of Egypt (N3:35 and N9:2-3), are mentioned in the other extended narrative of my novel, that of the women of Tizi Aimoula (9.135).
- p. 257: tenscore: "(archaic) two hundred" (online *Wiktionary* and *Wordnik*).
- p. 257: outblaze: As a transitive verb, "outshine" (*Webster's Third*).
- p. 257: expulse: A transitive verb meaning "expel" (*Webster's Third*).

- p. 258: warrant: Justification or reasonable grounds for an action.
- p. 258: sift: As an intransitive verb, “to pass through or as if through a sifter; filter” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 258: “the Saharan oases of *Wilaya VI*”: *Wilaya* is Arabic for region or district. The FLN divided Algeria into six districts, the sixth being the Sahara, and the autonomous zone of the capital Algiers.
- p. 258: Tamanrasset: The unofficial capital of Algeria’s Sahara region, it is an oasis town in south-central Algeria approximately 250 km. from the Niger border. It had a population of around 20,000 at the time of the novel. Under French rule it was called Fort Laperrine. Because of Tamanrasset’s military and commercial importance, its population has grown to around 80,000 (2010). It has long served as a major trading post for nomads.
- p. 258: Tindouf: A Saharan oasis in western Algeria close to the border with Morocco. Its population in the 1950s was c. 1,000. After independence (1962), Algeria began to build up the hamlet because of its importance as a last outpost before the southern Moroccan border. On 2010, its population had grown to around 55,000.
- p. 258: Chenachene: An oasis hamlet in southwestern Algeria about 150 km. west of Mauritania. Its population at the time of the novel I estimate was around 1,500.
- p. 258: seminomadic: Of or relating to “people living usually in portable or temporary dwellings and practicing seasonal migration but having a base camp at which some crops are cultivated” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 258: *volontaire*: French for the noun “volunteer.”
- p. 258: autochthons: Earliest inhabitants of a place, such as the Saharan Berbers in Algeria.
- p. 258: optate: “to decide to do one of two or more alternatively possible things” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 258: “razing (or raising) the *khaymayya* (‘tents’)”: Tearing down or putting up their tents. In Arabic the singular of *khaymayya* is *khayma*, which is used on the next page.
- p. 258: “every paradise has its lurking serpent”: The hamlet was a paradise for the three Palestinians since they were not required to do any work and were

pampered by the native Saharans.

The Frenchmen brought to the hamlet of tents is considered as a satanic serpent invading their "Garden of Eden."

However, the PLO trio, like Adam and Eve, bring their own downfall because of their inbred desire to torment a Jew (their fatal flaw).

Their fate is never mentioned, but it is to be assumed that having exposed their ineptness as torturers the hamlet's residents will soon expel them from their "Eden."

p. 258: pastoral: Of shepherds or their way of life.

p. 258: *alim*: The religious leader of the Saharan hamlet.

p. 258: "Anon French bastards . . . will descend": Reminiscent of the cry by old Matoub in Foucin's account of the French attack on his family's village: "The French! The French! Bastards come!" (7.115).

p. 258: "hindsighters": A neologism meaning "one who has hindsight."

p. 258: thorpe: A small village.

p. 258: "sky is falling . . . realty . . . champing at . . . bit by bit . . . last . . . supper": A series of banal puns.

p. 258: trace: "a path or trial beaten by . . . the passage of feet," as in "a sheep trace along the hill" (*Webster's Third*).

p. 258: "thirty-three men": For the symbolism of the number in Islam, see the 1.5 note, N1:15, and the 6.92 note, N6:32-33.

p. 258: racker: "one who tortures a person on the rack" (online *Free Dictionary*).

p. 258: "true-path-leading *alim*": "True path" is a phrase used to refer to a Muslim who disdains any innovations or imported ideas in Islam; that is, Islamic fundamentalists.

(The term is not to be confused with the True Path political party prominent in Turkey in the 1980s and 1990s. This centralist party, in fact, opposed fundamentalism.)

p. 258: afflatus: inspiration.

p. 258: stopple: to close with a stopper or plug.

p. 258: "camel-milk contentment": A metaphor for a smile.

p. 258: ternion: A rarely used noun meaning "a group of three persons, things, ideas,

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etc.”

- p. 258: “He’s a Jew!”—words which from time immemorial have stopped in his tracks the walking Man”: The Jewish theme of the novel will reappear later in this chapter (263).
- p. 258: “the walking Man”: The capitalization of the noun indicates that anti-Semitism is seemingly innate in the human species, present since human beings began to cease walking on all fours.
- p. 258: “but that ye know.” The interrupting commentary of the narrator (Remy himself) stresses the long history of anti-Semitism. This clause, “but that ye know,” was previously used on 3.39 when the lawyer tells Omar that it was a certainty that Noura had been raped by her captors. A variant of it appears four paragraphs down: “as you also know” (259).

p. 259: romping: frolicking in a boisterous way.

p. 259: laconic: brief or terse speech.

p. 259: resolute: As a noun, “one who is resolute or daring” (*Webster's Third*).

p. 259: “circumference”: As a transitive verb, “to include in a circular space; to bound” (*Wiktionary*, which lists the verb form as obsolete).

p. 259: “no Palestinian ever concedes a ‘good’ without a following ‘better.’” During my twenty years of working and living in the Middle East, I heard this sentiment used by Algerians, Moroccans, Egyptians, Lebanese, Turks, and Saudi Arabians in speaking of Palestinians.

I always viewed this as good-natured ribbing rather than deep-seated prejudice. Two of my best friends in Saudi Arabia were Palestinians, but I noticed that when I had published some article or received some praise for my educational work, even they, while beginning with a compliment, would proceed to tell me how the article could have been improved or the educational praise had been insufficient.

I speculate that this one-upmanship may have much to do with the fact that the last several generations of Palestinians have been stateless, a condition which, I believe, could cause a people to insist that they are most deserving of it by expressing how they, if given the opportunity, could vastly improve the world.

I found confirmation of the contrast between “good” and “better” in the second line of Voltaire’s poem *La Bégueule*: “*Le mieux est l’ennemi du bien*” (“Better is the enemy of good”). But I am certain the sentiment is older than Voltaire.

p. 259: “PBUH, to invoke the salutatory *tetragrammaton*”: The lowercasing and italicization indicate that the Greek word, meaning “four letters,” is being used and not “Tetragrammaton,” the word designating the four consonants of the ancient Hebrew name for God.

For PBUH, see the 6.83 note, N6:6-7, the only other use of the abbreviation for “Peace be upon Him” in the novel.

In Arabic, the expression *‘Alayhi s-salam*, meaning “Peace be upon him,” is said after naming any Islamic prophet other than Prophet Mohammed. The abbreviation which some English writers use is AS or PBUH instead of writing out “Peace be upon him.”

The salutation said after speaking or writing Prophet Mohammed’s name is “*Sall Allahu ‘alay-hi wa-sallam*,” again translated as “Peace be upon Him.”

Since this expression occurs so frequently in writing about the Prophet, some writers abbreviate it as SA, SAAW, or SAAS (in accordance with the Arabic words) or PBUH, the abbreviation of its English translation.

The abbreviation occurs frequently in print to save space, but is very seldom used in speech.

p. 259: “Prophet Mohammed . . . the angel Gabriel”: The narrator (Remy, of course) compares the shriek of the tortured French Legionnaire lieutenant to the cry

which the Prophet Mohammed made when Gabriel suddenly appeared to him. See the 11.176 note, N11:17-18, for a discussion of Gabriel (or Jibril or Jibrail in Arabic) as he is portrayed in the Qur'an.

In its 96:1-5, which narrates this first appearance of Gabriel, there is no mention of the Prophet's reaction. Only the angel's words are given, that Allah has chosen Mohammed to be his last Messenger to humanity.

According to some Sunni Hadiths, the Prophet was disturbed by this first revelation. Shiite Muslims, however, hold that Mohammed was neither surprised nor frightened by Gabriel's appearance, but had been expecting it.

So Remy's portrayal of the Prophet's yelp must be seen as part of the *joie de vivre* of his narration, further evidenced by the fecal and flatulent puns of "voided" and "groundbreaking."

p. 259: "Moses . . . Commandments": The Biblical Moses (or Musa in Arabic) is revered as one of the greatest Islamic prophets and lawgivers.

He is mentioned more often than any other person in the Qur'an. His life from his birth to his death as given in the Qur'an is almost identical to that of the Torah.

However, although the Qur'an states that Moses was visited by God on the mountain (just as Gabriel was to appear before Prophet Mohammed), there is no explicit reference to his bringing down the Ten Commandments.

Thus the Saharan *alim* refers to the story of them as being from a "corrupt book." Scholars of comparative religion, nevertheless, have located passages from the Qur'an which express the idea of each commandment: first (47:19 in Qur'an); second (14:35); third (2:224); fourth (62:9); fifth (17:23); sixth (5:32); seventh (17:32); eighth (60:12); ninth (2:283); and tenth (20:131). (The source of this note is *Wikipedia*.)

p. 259: tantamount: having equal force or equivalent (to).

Here a cry equal to the first shriek by the Frenchman.

p. 259: *Rien du tout*: As translated in the text, French for "Nothing at all."

p. 259: "hasten to redeem himself": The redemption theme is used twice in this chapter, both times ironically.

Here the Saharan *alim* seeks redemption in the eyes of his fellow villagers for too quickly celebrating the torturing ordeal of the Jewish lieutenant.

In its second use on p. 273, a Palestinian will seek to redeem the time by rushing off to torture this lieutenant.

An overview of the redemption theme in the sin/repentance/redemption pattern of the novel will be given at the end of the notes of chap. 18, N18:72-74.

p. 259: "*Anus [sic] mirabilis!*": The *alim* uses the Latin phrase which may be translated as "wonderful asshole" and continues the scatological metaphor by averring that the Frenchman's "mouth runs like an asshole."

That the *alim* speaks Latin is not inappropriate since the anecdote is

occurring in Remy's imagination.

Thus out of his love of punning, Remy has the *alim* confuse *annus* (Latin for "year") with *anus* (Latin for "ring or anus"), hence the use of "*sic*."

Annus mirabilis is Latin for "a wonderful year" or "a year of wonders." It is the title of a long historical poem by Dryden which treats the catastrophes that wracked England in 1666.

According to Dryden these were blessings in disguise.

p. 259: vergence: "a turning movement of the eyeballs" (*Webster's Third*).

p. 259: exsect: to "cut out; excise" (*Webster's Third*, which gives as an example, "an exsected uterus").

p. 259: "a pink 'piece of flesh'": The inceptive torturing act of the three Palestinians was to cut out the tongue of the French lieutenant whom they were supposed to interrogate.

The severed tongue is compared to a castrated penis. See 15.251 and 253 where Houda modestly uses "piece of flesh" to describe the male sexual organ.

The 15.251 note, N15.41, states that the expression is from *Romeo and Juliet* where Samson in a series of penile puns says, "Me they shall feel while I am able to stand [maintain an erection] and 'tis known I am a pretty piece of flesh" (1.1.28-29).

Additionally, the stand-in for Noura "her tongue" "exsected" so that her sounds would mimic those of the dumb Noura (15.240).

p. 259: "no larger than a limp penis": The expression was first used by HIV to describe the cassette of the microrecorder: "Its cassette's no larger than a limp penis" (2.25).

This is the fifth use of the "limp penis" image.

The simile, slightly varied, will appear two more times, 20.341 and 21.365.

p. 259: "*Hélas!*": French for the interjection "Alas!"

Its plural was used by the lieutenant on 3.46: "Ah me, a million *hélasses*."

p. 259: "no prosthetist has ever successfully rendered an artificial duplicate": Closing the narrative with a reference to prosthetists' failure to create an artificial tongue brings the long narrative back to Tinfingers' artificial hand, while reinforcing the theme of reality and artificiality.

This anecdote that arose in the mind of the semiconscious Remy at c. 8:10 ends at c. 8:15. with forty-eight minutes left before he arrives at the Palestinian camp.

pp. 259-61: SECTION 2

p. 259: "Your jeer": After the anecdote the action returns to 9:06 with Tinfingers

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responding to Remy gibe about “pick your nose.”

- p. 259: counter-snarled: As a noun, “counter-snarl” is used in *Webster’s* 1830 dictionary with the meaning, “snarl in defense or opposition.”
The word appears in Burton’s *Anatomy of Melancholy*.
On the internet I found two variant spellings of its noun form, “counter snarl” and “countersnarl.”
However, used as a verb, it is a neologism.
- p. 259: arrect: “rigidly erect” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 259: *kaffiyah*: A headscarf worn by Middle Eastern Arabian men.
See the 13. 206 note where the distinctive Palestinian black-and-white checkered *kaffiyah* is discussed.
- p. 259: mauley: hand (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 259: “that grabbing too”: The five men with Tinfingers in the shed are the five who “grabbed” or kidnapped Remy.

p. 260: “The 2269 dossier . . . Tinfingers’ sexual proclivities”: Later in this chapter (269-70), Tinfingers, like Bab el-Oued’s *alim*, will be shown to be a pedophile. From the dossier left by DGSE in the 2269 airport locker, Remy would know this proclivity.

Thus he is aware that Tinfingers would not be interested in having any of these five men masturbating him. Remy makes the association merely to acquaint Tinfingers that he is aware of his sexual preferences.

p. 260: “utilize our left”: Muslims, here designated as Arabs, always use their left hand for masturbation.

In Islam the right is considered the “nobler” hand. Thus it is used for eating, drinking, shaking hands, washing before praying, and similar “nobler” acts.

The left, however, is associated with impurities. Consequently it is utilized for blowing one’s nose, cleaning oneself after using the toilet, masturbating, etc.

This distinction also applies to actions: One enters a mosque from the right and exits from the left. In putting on garments, pants, and shoes, a Muslim begins on the right side, but in taking them off starts on the left.

Many Hadiths support these customs. For instance, in his Hadith 2020, Muslim al-Hajjal states that a companion of Prophet Mohammed declared that he said *Shaitan* (Satan) “eats with his left hand,” so Muslims should eat with their right.

As for masturbation (*istimna* in Arabic), all Shiite Muslim and most Sunni scholars consider the act as forbidden. A minority of Sunni scholars classifies masturbation as merely disliked, but not forbidden, and do not condemn its use if it prevents one from entering into an affair with a prostitute.

Prayer beseeching God to help one to abstain from masturbation, however, is preferred.

p. 260: retral: situated at or toward the back.

p. 260: sly out: an intransitive verb meaning “to move slyly; slip, slink, usually used with ‘out’” (*Webster’s Third*).

p. 260: modus operandi: a way of doing or accomplishing something.

p. 260: “that twit Ahmed Chabane”: Chabane, who is hiding at the PLO camp (12.196), had informed Tinfingers that Remy had maneuvered their conversation (9.140-43) in order to gain some information which had convinced Foucin that Chabane should be interrogated about the murder of Ballard. In a panic, Chabane had bolted (12.190).

Tinfingers says Remy will not be able to trip him up since he is well prepared for any diversionary tactics. The reference to Chabane causes Remy to think about whether Leila had been struck by his PLO abductors.

p. 260: “Shake her off”: See 15.255.

p. 260: scooch: An intransitive verb meaning “to slide a short distance while seated.”

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- p. 260: transradial mechanism: A transradial prosthesis is an artificial limb that replaces an arm missing below the elbow.
See the p. 257 note on “split hooks” above, N16.2, for a description of Tinfingers’ prosthesis.
- p. 260: “Using the forefinger and thumb . . . clutching the sheet: Remy mimics the procedure of the “split hooks” (p. 257, N16.2), which in a transradial prosthesis replaces the thumb (pollex) and the forefinger (index).
Mocking Tinfingers’ assertion, he retrieves the paper inside the envelope, employing only these two digits.
This taunting continues when “with both hands” Remy grandly “unfolded the paper.”
- p. 260: “Three late-teens, uniformed with vertical stripes, were behind a fence”: These are “the three Palestinians, hanged for attacking a busload of Israeli tourists in Gaza, [Egypt]” (4.56). Lazar (Remy’s alias) investigated the case.
- p. 260: *Malesh!*: Arabic for “[It] doesn’t matter!” as translated in the text.
- p. 260: “with President Mubarak watching via a peephole”: Hosni Mubarak was president of Egypt from 1981 – 2011.
- pp. 260-61: 183 centimeters . . . thirty-something”: Conversions: 183 cm. = c. six feet; 172 cm. = c. five feet eight inches; 153 cm. = c. five feet one inch; thirty-something cm. = c. one foot.

- p. 261: “scholarly, soldierly”: The odd combination was inspired by a line from Yeats’s “In Memory of Major Robert Gregory”: “Soldier, scholar, horseman, he” (86).
- p. 261: “Chris and Chris”: Christian Lazar and Christophe Figuard, the two investigators sent by Vellacott to Cairo.
- p. 261: “*doubles*”: In every Arabic country which I visited, even those without a French connection, I found the French term *doubles*, not the Arabic *gooz*, used in card games in referring to “a pair of.”
In French one meaning of the noun referring to a person who looks like another is *double*.
- p. 261: *télécopie*: French for “fax.”
- p. 261: *quel que soit*: As translated in the text, the French for “whatever.”
- p. 261: M. Bulles: The code name which the DGSE folder instructed Remy to use in speaking with his French embassy liaison in Algiers (5.76 and its note, N5.23).
- p. 261: Plos: The plural of an acronymic one-syllable pronunciation for the abbreviation of Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), meaning “Palestinians.”
See the 1.12 note for a longer explanation.
- p. 261: “your head office in Tunis”: From 1982 – 1993, the headquarters for the PLO and thus of its chairman Yasser Arafat was based in Hammam al-Shatt, Tunisia, twelve miles from its capital Tunis.
All major decisions concerning the PLO were made there.
See the 2.30, “Mitterrand” note, N2:53.
- p. 261: “Who are you?”: The search for Remy’s true identity occupies other characters as well as Remy himself in the novel.
Here Tinfingers bluntly asks Remy to disclose it.
In an earlier chapter, the same question is put to him by Leila (9.143).
Leroy has sought it, as he reveals on 13.218, and later in the present chapter Foucin will declare that he has discovered this true identity, at least partially (270).
On 18.298, Houda will ask Remy, “Who are you?” which Remy will immediately answer with a rewording, “Who am I?”
As to be expected in any novel, self-discovery or recognition (Aristotle’s *anagnorisis*) occurs in the last chapters.
Here Remy will seek answers to the question of who he is (20.341-42 and 21.364).
- p. 261: dogged: Unrelenting, but the word is chosen by Tinfingers to indicate that he viewed Israelis as animalistic.

- p. 261: “Islam decrees as the thief’s condign punishment”: In Islamic jurisprudence, for the first offense of stealing, the punishment is amputation of the right hand, as prescribed in the Qur’an 5.38.
For a second theft, the left foot is cut off. A third offense, the left hand is amputated.
If stealing is again committed, the right foot is severed. If somehow a person commits another act of thievery, the person is executed, according to a Hadith of Abu Dawud 4396.
- p. 261: condign: Deserved or suitable, especially in reference to a punishment for wrongdoing.
- p. 261: “a Christian”: Remy japes at Tinfingers by punning on his own pseudonym.
- p. 261: *main artificielle*: “artificial hand” in French.
- p. 261: filigree: As a verb, “to ornament with filigree” or delicate work or design of intertwined wires of gold, silver, etc.
According to Tinfingers, his Israeli torturers meshed strands of his flesh with his shattered bones.
- p. 261: sodality: fellowship; companionship.
- p. 261: *commissaire divisionnaire*: Foucin’s title, “divisional commissioner.”
- p. 261: *bras dessus bras dessous*: French for “arm in arm.”
- p. 261: “All the same, in a mouth squeezed dry”: As Remy waits for what will happen, he is aware of how unpredictable Palestinians can be.
This section ends at 9:16.

pp. 262-64: SECTION 3

- p. 262: "Scuffling to a filing cabinet": This section takes up directly after the previous one, at 9:16.
- p. 262: brace: to bind firmly; to get a firm hold with the hands or feet.
- p. 262: *empreintes*: Prints, a shortened form of the French *empreintes digitales* ("fingerprints").
- p. 262: "the captain/psychologist": Mentioned on 3.35.
- p. 262: "during the flight to Marseilles": Even before the Apr. 13, 1961, flight to Marseilles described on 2.27 and 32, the French had drafted this contingency.
- p. 262: photostat: "a photocopy, especially one made by a Photostat machine" (*Wiktionary*).
- p. 262: *surveillant*: In French "supervisor." The title is used to describe Omar's case officer in Algiers from Dec. 8, 1958, to Apr. 13, 1961. It is translated on 2.21 and 4.60 as "handler" and on 2.26 as "boss." In its only other use (5.79), as here, it is capitalized.
- p. 262: "A half year after independence": Algeria became independence on July 5, 1962. In January 1963, the names of the seven great traitors were revealed. See Foucin's account of the publication of their names on 14.301.
- p. 262: "amid the alien corn": From Keats's "Nightingale": Ruth "stood in tears amid the alien corn" (67). See the 15.239 note, N15:4, for a closer analysis of this line. Remy was told by his French case officer that four survivors of the attack on the nunnery where Noura was living were found "among the cornstalks below [its] southern gate" (3.40). From this account Remy developed the image of Noura running through the cornfield mentioned on 2.22, 5.70, 15.239, here, 17.290-91, and 18.300 and 312. Thus in seven chapters this image appears.
- p. 262: "mother died veiled": Referred to on 3.38.
- p. 262: "whose father's not been spoken to": See 10.154: From January 1963 when "the names of the Unholy Seven were proclaimed, its men [of the neighborhood] had never . . . spoken to him except in the mosque, where greetings were requisite."
- p. 262: "harness and cuff prosthesis . . . control cable . . . wrist unit . . . terminal device": See the p. 257 note above on "split hooks," N16:2, where these prosthetic terms are defined.

- p. 262: “‘better’ to the antecedent ‘good’”: See the p. 259 note above, N16:8: “no Palestinian ever concedes a ‘good’ without a following ‘better.’”
- p. 262: “It catapulted”: In a one-sentence paragraph the action moves ahead two minutes to describe how Remy felt when the first blow from Tinfingers’ prosthetic hand landed across his upper back. (9:23)
The prelude to the blow (9:21) is then established.
- p. 262: divested: to strip of clothing.
Here it refers to Remy’s shirt being pulled up to his neck.
That his pants and shorts were also pulled down will be revealed on p. 264.
- p. 262: “the locution—now a noun, then a verb—traveled thirty years”: The locution is “bruise.” Here Tinfingers uses it as a noun, “a standing bruise.”
On Dec. 8, 1958, thirty years and four months ago, the French lieutenant had said of the raped “Noura,” “Yet she is but bruised” (3.44).
He mockingly repeated the verb on pp. 45-46 and on p. 50, where he quotes from Isaiah 53.5.
This scene where Remy is stripped and thrown across a table to be tortured is a counterpoint to the similar position of the unclothed “Noura” on 3:43- 50.
- p. 262: medallion: A large medal. The metaphor which Tinfingers employs in describing his artificial hand as if it had been earned in battle against the Israelis.
- p. 262: farewell: As a transitive verb, “to bid farewell” (*Webster’s Third*).

- p. 263: **shitboy**: A name given to a person who is “really drunk or wasted” on marijuana; variant spellings include “shit boy” and “shit-boy” (*Urban Dictionary*).
- p. 263: **sadeekee**: As translated in the text, the Arabic for addressing a person as “My friend.”
- p. 263: **skew around**: “swerve, twist” as in “skews around in his chair” (*Webster's Third*).
- p. 263: **la curvette d'eau de source**: Exactly translated in the text: “the basin [*la curvette*] of spring water” [*d'eau de source*].”
- p. 263: **Khaleel**: Omar's best friend. Remy remembers “the many nights he and Khaleel had rehearsed, exchanging sodden-hawser whacks to their legs and back” (3.40). Khaleel is also mentioned on 6.88-89 and 10.157-58, where his death is described. He will be recalled on 20.349, and on and 21.364, Remy will establish Khaleel's importance in his life.
- p. 263: **wale**: A raised streak made on the skin by the slash of a stick or whip; welt; weal.
- p. 263: “**orotund fulmination**”: bombastic thundering.
- p. 263: “**sheltered him from violence even during the years of neglect**”: Remy elaborates on a point mentioned on 15.239, where Marie is shown as dealing with the only type of violence which occurred in their household, injuries to their cat. The reference to “years of neglect” concerns her relative unconcern for him from the birth of their first child Françoise in November 1962 until the wedding of their second child Claudia in 1985, the twenty-third year of their marriage (2.16).
- p. 263: “**her parents, by abandoning their religion**”: On 2.28, before they married Marie told Remy that her “shrewd parents” had “put aside” their “Jewishness” before the Nazi Occupation of France.
- p. 263: “**“As I have mine!”**”: As part of his disguise as Remy, Omar adopted the Catholic religion (implicit on 3.35). Despite this outward apostasy, on Apr. 12, his fourth night back in Algiers, he finds himself imagining the stages of the daily prayers of a Muslim (7.101-03).
- p. 263: “**“faith of our fathers,’ just like their ‘sins’**”: This noun phrase combines a reference to the 1849 hymn by the Roman Catholic Frederick Faber, “Faith of Our Fathers,” with its refrain, “Faith of our fathers, holy faith! / We will be true to thee till death,” with the Biblical and Qur'anic passages dealing with the “sins of the father.”

See the 7.116 note, N7:41, for a discussion of this concept.

- p. 263: "Did not our Catholic daughters marry Jews?": See 10.156: "Françoise and Claudia . . . had both, 'without conspiracy,' married Jews."
Their married names and those of Remy's grandchildren will be given on 20.341-42.
- p. 263: *comme suit*: "as follows" (French).
- p. 263: "motion and velocity squared": Remy's plays upon the formula of Einstein's theory of relativity: $E = mc^2$ (energy equals mass multiplied by the square of the velocity of light).
- p. 263: "corporeal feelers": nerves or nervous system.
- p. 263: "the 'better' pain": See the above pp. 259 and 262 notes on "better," N16:8 and N16:17.
- p. 263: "Strike . . . as if I were a Jew": This affiliation with Jews continues the examination of anti-Semitism in this chapter.
It presents the only remedy for any type of prejudice: affiliation with the victim of it.
The Judaism theme in the novel will be discussed in the 20.341 note, N20:45-46.
- p. 263: "What . . . what did he say?": This two-minute flashback ends with the catapulting blow against Remy's upper back, mentioned twelve paragraphs above.
It was struck at 9:23.
- p. 263: "his lungs lacking sufficient air": A mirroring of the blow which Ballard described as knocking his soul from his body (1.13).
Here Tinfingers' smash expelled the oxygen from Remy's lungs.
- p. 263: *Ergo*: "Therefore" (Latin).
- p. 263: "more often must I utter them": Remy means that hereafter he must challenge all forms of bigotry.
Ironically, later he will refer to this episode as "the Jew squib" (273).
- p. 263: "in stately recognition": Tinfingers' words contain a political undertone, the recognition of statehood which the Palestinians have long demanded.
- p. 263: "righteous hand, rapturous": Obvious puns on "right" and "wrapped."

- p. 264: “self-levied darkness”: Remy had squeezed tight his eyes.
- p. 264: “synthetic mauley’s”: artificial hand’s.
- p. 264: “ween”: “believe, conceive, imagine, suppose” (*Webster’s Third*, which labels it archaic although the internet provides examples from Scott, Dickens, Poe, and Melville).
Remy imagines himself to be casually indifferent to the blow.
- p. 264: “Why M. Lazar, and is not this”: This is the fourth use of the “Why M. Lazar” expression by Foucin. It was previously used on 7.108; 12.194; and 13.203. Its last two appearances will occur on 20.351 and 21.359, but the communicative context or wording is different.
- p. 264: Geoffrey Beene: An American fashion designer who started his own company in 1963 with a showroom in Manhattan.
Over his forty-year career he dressed many notable political and entertainment figures, including three First Ladies (Johnson, Nixon, and Reagan).
- p. 264: Bond Street: One of the most fashionable streets in the world.
It is located in the West End of London and has fashion boutiques of leading designers for women and men.
- p. 264: scruff: the back of the neck; nape.
- p. 264: “a guest of our country”: The wording harks back to Foucin’s speech in Remy’s room at the Al-Nigma: “I’m a guest in your room . . . as you are in my country” (7.112).
This 9:25 speech ends this section.
- pp. 264-65: SECTION 4
- p. 264: “The fists gripping”: The action proceeds directly from the preceding section, so the time is 9:25.
- p. 264: obtund: to deaden or make dull as in “obtunded reflexes,” the example from *Webster’s Third*.
- p. 264: cervix: the back of the neck.
- p. 264: “three blue-clad gendarmes”: There are four, but one had left at Foucin’s instruction, “Locate the camp’s doctor.”
- p. 264: tutoyer: to speak to familiarly.

p. 264: tempered-steel lobster claw: The metaphor is from *Columbia Encyclopedia* which states that some 1980s models of artificial hands utilize “a split hook resembling a lobster claw.”

The hook was typically made of stainless steel.

p. 264: seven weeks ago: On 7:112, Foucin described to Remy the “two sixteen-hour days” he spent questioning Tinfingers and the other ninety-two Palestinians at the camp.

This interrogation occurred on Mar. 3 and 4, the third and fourth days after the murder and forty-seven days (or almost seven weeks) before the Apr. 19th date of this chapter.

- p. 265: “rightfully”: A playfully trite pun by Foucin on Tinfingers’ right-handed prosthesis.
- p. 265: “cutting-edge model”: The most advanced or innovative product, but Foucin employs the expression to foreshadow what is to happen to Foucin’s new prosthesis.
- p. 265: “Swiss prosthetists have—‘on hand’—no concept of time”: Two puns, one previously used. On 1.7, Leroy told Ballard that “these *Genève horlogers* have no regard for time.”
“On hand”: Foucin doubles the quibble. This expression means “near” or “available or ready,” which Tinfingers’ prosthetic hand was not at that time. Additionally it plays upon the hands of a clock.
- p. 265: “epidermis”: The outermost layer of the skin, used here facetiously by Remy, who has just been struck twice by the device, to describe the polymer cover of the artificial hand.
- p. 265: “wrist unit”: See the p. 257 note above on “split hooks,” N16:2.
- p. 265: “the real becomes the artificial”: The artificial-real theme appears throughout the novel. For a summary see the 11.183-84 note, N11:36-37, and the 2.28 and 34 notes, N2:45-46 and N2:64.
Here Remy seems to be remembering what Saul told him, the “real only tries to pass itself off as the artificial” (2.28) and “if the artificial applies itself, it can become the real” (2.34).
- p. 265: Algiers Orthopedics: At the time of the novel the only medical establishment in Algiers which ordered and fitted prostheses.
- p. 265: “the ten spectators”: The five Palestinian kidnapers; Remy; Sgt. Ghouraf; and the three gendarmes.
- p. 265: volcanic: Of or relating to “working in iron or other metals” (*Webster’s Third*). Tinfingers’ hooks are made of stainless steel, the principal element of which is iron.
- p. 265: “sliced up”: While Foucin’s overt purpose is to revenge the two blows against Remy, this verb also suggest the slicing of Mohammed’s face.
- p. 265: “both the fractured socket and the mooring cable”: For both prosthetic terms, see the p. 257 note above on “split hooks,” N16:2.
The “mooring cable” is synonymous with the “control cable.”
- p. 265: “there wasn’t a third”: From counting the welts on Remy’s back, Foucin had theorized correctly that were just two blows.

He will say later, "I distinguished the blows simply by counting the stripes" (272).

- p. 265: "'Ai-ai-ai!' for an 'Ai-ai-ai!': An interjection to express pain, grief, despair, pity, or anguish.
It is a homophone for "eye," hence the pun on an "eye for an eye."
The concept means that someone who has injured another receives the same injury in compensation.
For a list of the Biblical and Qur'anic uses of the eye-for-an-eye concept, see the note on the title of chapter 14, N14:1-2.
- p. 265: "aimed not at the one to whom it had been addressed": Foucin is speaking to Tinfingers, but his words are meant to soothe Remy's physical pain by showing that the Palestinian in recompense has received the two blows which he delivered to Remy.
It is also intended as a commentary by Foucin on Remy's charge that he is guilty of misapplying the law of retribution.
- p. 265: "for him it carried a significance far more incremental": Foucin's comment on the eye-for-an-eye concept has an increased weight for Remy since he knows that he is that last of the seven traitors whom Foucin seeks.
As such, to Remy it is ironic that Foucin unknowingly rescues him and even punishes the person (Tinfingers) who sought to torture him, that is, to do to him what Foucin also desires to exact against the seventh devil.
- p. 265: medico: a doctor or a medical student.
- p. 265: carpal: of the wrist or carpus.
- p. 265: innervate: to stimulate a part of the body to movement of action.
- p. 265: "more recently shaved": On 15.247, this afternoon Remy showered and shaved (although the latter is not specified) at around 4:35 p.m., preparatory to his meeting Leila at 5:15.
Thus Remy had shaved about five hours ago, while it has been c. fifteen hours since Foucin did so.
- p. 265: "shoved to the pavement": This confirms what Remy had suspected: "She must have grasped at the point man covering the abduction . . . He quivered at the thought that her sublime face had been struck" (260).
- p. 265: "scorpion worry": From Macbeth's speech, "O, full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife" (3.2.39).
- p. 265: "lady of angelic attention": Foucin implies that Leila's attentiveness was instrumental in Remy's being located.
This section ends at 9:35 with this speech.

pp. 265-68: SECTION 5

p. 265: “In the quarter hour at the infirmary hut”: Remy is slowly walked to the infirmary (9:35 – 9:45) where his back is wrapped by the camp’s Palestinian doctor (9:40 – 9:55).

Some dictionaries list as an alternate spelling of the noun “quarter hour” the hyphenated “quarter-hour.”

p. 265: American University in Beirut: The major private university in Lebanon. See the 15.244 note. It has a Faculty of Medicine, Faculty of Health Sciences, and School of Nursing.

Since bogus educational transcripts are rife in the Middle East, the Palestinian’s assertion is not necessarily true.

- p. 266: “filaments remain in humanity’s cord”: One of the major ideas of my novel I put in the mouth of a sycophant: That hatred based on religion, ideology, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, etc. has frayed the cords bonding humanity.
- p. 266: *pour l’amour de Dieu*: In French, “For the love of God.” Ironically the Palestinian uses this expression in speaking of humanity’s bond.
- p. 266: *permis de travail*: In French, “work permit.” Ahmed Chabane sought a “work visa” to France (1.12 and 9.139, 140, and 148).
- p. 266: Algerian POB: To hide from Tinfingers his dealings, the Palestinian medico had rented a Post Office box in Algiers.
- p. 266: ibuprofen: An analgesic and anti-inflammatory drug which after its patent in 1961 was originally marketed under the name of Brufen.
- p. 266: *siège arrière*: French for “back seat of a car.”
- p. 266: “corded bond . . . frayed”: The beating has “galled” Remy and caused him to doubt if empathy within the species even exists.
He concludes that except “for a precious few [family and friends],” most human beings view everyone else, not with apathy, but with an active suspicion and a belief that others are incapable of offering sympathy.
This point is the depth of Remy’s despair about the human condition, a reaction which normally he treats with passing sarcasm (e.g., p. 269, where he proposes that Foucin detour the car to the prison where he and Mohammed can compare their wounds).
- p. 266: “analgesic”: The spray administered to Remy mentioned on p. 265.
It will be referred to again on p. 269.
- p. 266: “Foucin is my shadow, and I am his”: That the two men mirror each other was foreshadowed by their physical similarities described at their first meeting (4.54).
A weary Remy concludes that his long-ago treason has bonded them, making each of them inexorably both the pursued and the pursuer of the other.
- p. 266: “shadow”: A repeated image in the novel. To cite some prominent examples:
On 1.13, the blow knocks Ballard’s soul into his shadow; on 2.18, de Gaulle casts his shadow, which has become a symbol, on a painting; and on 3.50, the shadow of Omar’s lieutenant merges with that of his new case officer.
On 5.77 and 6.82, buildings cast real or symbolic shadows; on 6.90, Remy thinks that his body is dwarfed by his shadow, an image which reoccurs on 8.124, where the reference to “Remy’s dwarfed shadow” suggests that his arguments have been diminished by Leroy’s rebuttal.
On 7.102, Remy says that in his imagined prayer the shadow cast by him as the boy Omar and that of Foucin was “undistinguishable”; on 7.114, Remy notes that

the words of Foucin “shadow[ed] him into [his] sleep; and on 13.202, he hears Ghazi repeat the proverb, “Apart from our shadows we have no friends.”

- p. 266: “embellished on a thought from the shed”: The imagery is similar to that used by Tinfingers in which he mentions how powerful his blow would be if Remy were a Jew (263).
But the thought Remy is focusing on is the one which Foucin would not know, that sitting several paces from him is the seventh traitor on whom he had dedicated his life to exacting revenge.
- p. 266: “terminal device”: The artificial hand per se as distinct from the cuff and harness components of the prosthesis.
See the p. 257 note above on “split hooks,” N16:2.
- p. 266: “earth’s molten entrails”: The inner core or innermost part of the earth is a solid ball, but its surrounding outer core, which is from around 1,800 to 8,200 miles beneath the Earth’s surface, is molten lava.
- p. 266: “things, ‘passing strange,’ . . . the words wooed”: Some phrasing is appropriated from *Othello* 1.3.162 and 168: “She [Desdemona] swore, in faith, ’twas strange, ’twas passing strange,” and added that such a story as *Othello*’s has narrated “would woo her.”
This *Othello* image reappears on 17.287.
Remy’s dream is probably guilt-driven since the first word he had uttered to Foucin in the tool shed was Leila’s name (265) just as it will be the first he speaks in the car (267).
- p. 266: “A *kiss / Long as my exile*”: From *Coriolanus* 5.3.44-45: “O, a kiss / Long as my exile, sweet as my revenge.”
The word “exile” refers to Apr. 13, 1961, when Remy was flown out of Algiers, not to the brief period (Apr. 8 to this night Apr. 19, 1989) he has been away from Marie.
- p. 266: “as sure of her name as of his own he was uncertain”: Remy has grown certain of who Marie is, and she is manifestly not the pouting whiner of 2.16.
Of his own identity, each day in Algiers appears to make himself less certain.
- p. 266: “Mme. Ballard’s been rung up”: At 10:31, Foucin returns to the car, having finished his interrogation of Tinfingers, so Remy sat in the Peugeot by himself for around thirty minutes.
- p. 266: “and another”: Ambassador Leroy, as suggested by the reference to him on p. 267.
- p. 266: recumb: An intransitive verb meaning to “recline” (*Webster’s Third*).

- p. 266: “my colleagues”: On p. 264 Foucin said that “two of my men will assist you to the infirmary.”
- p. 266: *voiture de police*: In French, “police car.”
- p. 266: “barbed wire”: This is the fourth major setting which is surrounded by barbed wire: the Zaracova pine grove (1.10, 6.94, and 15.252); the inner barrier of the walled Berrouaghia Prison (4.60); the three-meter-high barbed-wire fence with which the French circled the Casbah in 1957-58 (6.89); and here, the Palestinian camp.
See the 1.10 note, “*fil*,” N1:25, for a detailed discussion of the barbed-wire image.
- p. 266: “Foucin’s number”: Foucin spoke of “M. Khalaf and the ninety-two other Palestinians” housed in a camp south of Algiers (7.112).
- p. 266: “She sent him here”: An assumption of Remy that Leila had directed Foucin to the camp.
It is based on Foucin’s statement, “Had she been less vigilant, I’d have been even later” (265).
On 12.196-97, Remy whispers to Leila that he believes her brother Ahmed is at the Palestinian camp. Her reaction suggests that his assumption is true.
- p. 266: “the oddity, a lit-up tool shed”: Foucin tells about his entry into the cantonment and how he knew to stop at the tool shed (9:22 – 9:25).
- pp. 266-67: “Back from my meeting with Mlle. Houda”: Following the conference with Houda from 11:45 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. (15.247), Foucin returns to his gendarmerie office at 2:10.

- p. 267: “message . . . from Comdt. Souad Ayache, the warden at Berrouaghia”: Back at his office, Foucin receives Remy’s message, left at 1:45, and, more importantly, one from the warden at the prison saying Mohammed sought a conference with him.
- p. 267: “your commission had been fruitful”: On 13.208, Foucin had asked Remy to present an “accommodation” to Mohammed: If he will confess to the murder, the charge against him will be reduced to unpremeditated murder and Houda will be spared from being questioned in court about her affair with Ballard.
On 14.236, Foucin embellishes his offer by saying that he will ensure that Mohammed’s prison sentence will be as brief as propriety will allow.
- p. 267: “In an hour I arrived at the prison”: Foucin drives to the prison (2:20 – 3:20), but when he is brought before Mohammed (3:30), the youth insults him. Foucin returns to his car (3:45) and drives back to Algiers.
Not mentioned in the text: The return trip took longer because Foucin stopped to perform Asr prayers (4:15 – 4:45, including the preparation for the prayers). Thus he does not reach his office until 5:15.
There (also not given in the text) he tried to telephone Remy, but received no answer since Remy is on his way to pick up Leila (5:05 – 5:16).
Foucin leaves for his apartment in Kouba to ready his family’s breaking of the fast.
- p. 267: “succumbed to a change of heart”: No reason is given for this change, but Mohammed probably wishes to talk with his sister first, especially since he would have been aware of what Houda told Foucin at the funeral of their father: That the family wishes no future associations with him (14.221).
This interpretation will be reinforced on 17.287 where Mohammed will choose to use Remy as an emissary instead of Foucin.
- p. 267: “accepted my responsibility”: That his negligence had caused the egotistical Mohammed to lose what he prized most, his handsome features.
As the 14.236 note, N14:58, reveals, ironically within three hours after Foucin stressed to Remy that “I’ll ensure no harm befalls him,” Mohammed is attacked.
- p. 267: “they turned from the camp’s dirt road onto a graveled one”: The dirt road is around four kilometers long, so they drove it in four minutes (10:33 – 10:37).
- p. 267: “Mme. Ballard. You alluded to my being in her debt”: Instead of commenting on Foucin’s account of Mohammed, he asks about Leila, her title and name being the first words that he speaks in the car.
- p. 267: “a frustrating forty minutes”: Remy was ambushed at 7:06. Foucin telephoned her as soon as he got the message at his apartment that she wished to speak with him, that is, at 7:48,

Although the text does not mention some of the times, the following gives the chronology of the events from 7:07 – 7:54:

A frantic Leila was able to memorize part of the tag number. As she is asking the bystanders to telephone the police and report the abduction, a patrol car pulls up. Someone had called about the cracked windshield (7:07 – 7:12).

Told of the abduction by Leila—even given a description of the car and part of its tag number—the two patrolmen begin taking statements about the kidnapping of Remy from the other eyewitnesses.

Most of the bystanders agree that a foreigner had willingly gotten into a blue Renault with some Arab friends (7:14 – 7:24).

During the questioning, the two men whom Foucin had tailing Remy also pull up and overhear what had happened (7:16).

From these statements, the policemen conclude that no abduction has occurred and turn to tell Leila this (7:25), but she, frustrated, had gone to her apartment a minute before.

At 7:26, when the cannon boomed signaling the end of the fast, Foucin's agents pull away to look for the blue Renault.

In her apartment (7:27), since she does not have Foucin's phone number, Leila calls Ambassador Leroy at his residence to see if he has it. He is very concerned by the news of Remy's abduction and says he will call Foucin to have him contact her (7:33).

Leroy calls Foucin's apartment, and when told that he is at Maghrib prayers (7:26 – 7:41), he leaves word for the commissioner to telephone him (7:33 – 7:35).

At 7:45 Foucin returns Leroy's call and is told of Remy's abduction.

Foucin calls Leila (7:48), who gives him the details about the abduction. She tells Foucin that the abductors spoke a non- Algerian Arabic, which sounded like a Palestinian dialect (7:52).

- p. 267: “two confreres of mine in the neighborhood”: The agents whom Foucin had following Remy.
- p. 267: “two other sources had preceded them”: Leroy and Leila.
His two agents called in while he is rounding up his team to drive to the Palestinian camp (c. 7:57).
- p. 267: Maghrib: sunset prayers, which occurred from 7:26 – 7:41 that night.
It would have taken Foucin approximately five minutes to walk from the Kouba mosque to his family's apartment.
- p. 267: Mona: Foucin's wife.
- p. 267: block out: A theatrical term meaning “to plan or direct the movements on stage of actors.”
Some dictionaries consider the “out” redundant.

p. 267: dumb-show: A part of a play done in pantomime.

On 15.252, Remy used the term, and it will reappear on 19.327.

p. 267: plagium: A legal term meaning “kidnapping” (*Webster's Third*).

p. 267: “whose shoulders I'd grabbed for”: Confirmation that Leila had bodily tried to prevent the kidnappers from completing their abduction.

pp. 267-68: “*Al-mukhay—*”: In the text Foucin explains to Remy that this incomplete word is the first three syllables of the Arabic noun phrase “*Al-mukhayyam*,” meaning “the camp.”

See the 15.255 note on “The cam—” (N15:55).

- p. 268: “kept stage center the peripheral”: Foucin’s third theatrical image.
This expresses the idea discussed on 12.186-87 that women concentrate not only on the present and the near (“stage center”) but also on the future and the far (“the peripheral”).
- p. 268: “tickle in our ribs since Father Adam”: A playing upon the Biblical account that Eve was made from the rib of Adam: “And the rib, which the Lord God, had taken from man, made he a woman” (Gen. 2.22).
- p. 268: “*c’est-la-vie* pose”: “‘that’s-life’ pose.” The same phrasing was used by Ballard on 1.3 in describing his reaction to Mohammed’s protest at what had been done to his sister and him.
The French clause will reappear on 18.302.
- p. 268: “How to recover you?”: This question which closes this section is asked at 10:43.
- pp. 268-70: SECTION 6
- p. 268: “That Foucin’s priority focused . . . Remy concluded early”: Foucin’s account of the actions which he took after speaking to Leila (not to set up checkpoints, telephoning the Palestinian camp, and gathering a team to drive there) lasts from 10:43 – 10:56.
After four minutes into Foucin’s elaboration of his plan (at 10:47) Remy realizes that there were several decisions the commissioner could have made which could have possibly expedited his rescue.
- p. 268: “southern highway . . . Trans-Sahara Highway”: The name of the major north-south highway in Algeria is Route 1. It is part of the N1 Trans-Sahara Highway which runs from Algiers through Niger to Lagos, Nigeria.
The Algerian segment has good paved roads for the 625 km. from Algiers to Ghardaia, the major metropolis in the north central part of Algeria’s Saharan Desert, but the 1700 km. section from Ghardaia to the Niger border is unpaved or poorly paved.
- p. 268: “artery . . . clogged . . . feast-glutted”: This medical-automotive analogy prepares for a series of whimsical images which Foucin incorporates into his narrative.
- p. 268: “A query squiggled into Remy’s mind”: At this point, 10:47, Remy begins to think that Foucin wants to be his rescuer.
- p. 268: Ksar el Boukhari: A town of around 40,000 at the time of the novel, it is located around 100 km. directly south of Algiers.

Surrounded by the wooded ridges of the Atlas Mountains, Ksar, as it is abbreviated in the novel, is a commercial center for herders, farmers, and carpet weavers.

- p. 268: “blue-light advantage”: Foucin carries a rotating beacon in his Peugeot which will flash a blue light when placed on the top of his car to indicate that his civilian vehicle is on police business.
- p. 268: “behind them, who, I speculated, would just be entering the camp”: The Talbot bearing Remy and his kidnappers entered the PLO cantonment at 9:03. Although the times are not mentioned in the text, the following provides a chronology of Foucin’s actions after speaking with Leila:
- 7:52 – 8:00: He telephones the camp and gets no answer; he rounds up and meets with Sgt. Ghouraf and the other four members of his team.
 - 8:00 – 8:55: In two cars, they drive the first leg of the 140 kilometers to the camp: 100 km. down Route 1 to Ksar el Boukhari.
 - 8:55 – 9:04: They proceed down Route 1 a further 20 km. south to the cutoff road to the cantonment.
 - 9:04 – 9:22: There they turn left onto the 16-kilometer graveled access road and then turn left again to a four-kilometer dirt road leading to the entrance to the camp. They arrive there at 9:22. Thus by speeding, they make the trip of about 87 miles in around 82 minutes (8:00 – 9:22).
 - 9:22 – 9:23: Foucin speaks briefly with the Algerians guards at the camp’s checkpoint and are told the building where Tinfingers is hosting a Ramadan feast.
- p. 268: “Toward it, with lights dimmed, as I previously recounted”: Inside the camp Foucin’s Peugeot was “creeping along in first” toward Building 4 when Ghouraf “spotted the oddity, a lit-up tool shed” (266).
- p. 268: “from a traitor’s family”: Another instance of dramatic irony where the words carry a meaning for the hearer Remy which is not known by the speaker Foucin.
- p. 268: “Vellacott, renowned as [the PLO] champion”: On 4.55-56, Foucin says that Vellacott is retained by *Solliciteurs pour la justice sans frontières*, which “espouses all causes Palestinian.”

- p. 269: “with a bound prisoner”: An indication that Foucin was aware of the anecdote about the Palestinians. In it the three PLO members will not proceed until the question is answered, “He [the Jewish prisoner] is securely bound?” (259)
- p. 269: “intimidation . . . delayed—and thus denied”: Another instance of the playful wording in Foucin’s monologue.
This one is based on the legal maxim “Justice delayed is justice denied,” which some attribute to the 19th-century British Prime Minister William Gladstone.
- p. 269: recrudescence: to reappear after a period of latency.
- p. 269: Brufen 600: A brand name of the analgesic and anti-inflammatory drug ibuprofen produced by Abbott Laboratories.
The number 600 indicates that each white, pillow-shaped tablet has 600 mg. of ibuprofen.
- p. 269: “detained you the fifty minutes”: From 9:35, when Remy is led to the infirmary, to 10:25, the time Foucin gets in his Peugeot where Remy has been sitting since 10:00.
- p. 269: palter: prevaricate.
Remy had not been thinking about Foucin during this span.
- p. 269: “tarmacadam surface of Route 1”: The northbound N1 Trans-Sahara Highway leading to Algiers. See the p. 268 note above.
Tarmacadam is a mixture of small broken stones and a tar or asphalt binder, used to pave roads.
- p. 269: “one hundred and twenty kph”: Around 75 miles an hour.
- p. 269: ““Never blame the one near at hand””: A typical north African sentiment, I found. If you criticize someone near to you, that person is at hand to attack you either verbally or physically.
It is better to attack someone far-distanced from you. By the time this person is near and can retaliate, you could dismiss it as mere hearsay.
- p. 269: Tunis: A metonymic reference to the PLO leaders in Tunis.
See the p. 261 note above, N16:14.
- p. 269: “*Wallahee!*”: Arabic for “By God!” or “I swear by God!”
- p. 269: “To confirm your veracity, which faults only Tunis”: Foucin implies that he is suspicious of this account, which seemed designed to absolve the Algiers PLO office and Tinfingers himself of any blame for the two attacks.
- p. 269: “nephew”: Many older pedophiles still introduce a young man they are seeing

or living with as their “nephew” or “cousin.”

To check Khalaf’s honesty, Foucin said that he would send for his “nephew.”

- p. 269: “‘interrogation’”: Placed in single quotes to indicate Foucin’s wry intonation, which insinuates that he will employ on Tinfingers the same interrogation techniques the Palestinian had had used on Remy.
- p. 269: “in France . . . Belgium”: The relevance of this purposively made mistake and its correction will become apparent in the last sentence of this section.
- p. 269: “Yasser Arafat . . . ‘married to Palestine’”: See 15.244 and its note, N15:20, for rumors of Arafat’s homosexuality.
 Through much of his career, to explain why he never wed, Arafat numerous times answered that he was “married to Palestine” or “married to the Palestinian cause.”
 In 1990, perhaps to quell the rumors about his homosexuality, Arafat married Suha Daoud Tawil, a Christian Philistine; she was 27 and he 61.
 Their only child, a daughter, was born in 1995 in Paris, where Suha spent most of her time. After Arafat’s death in 2004, she set up residence first in Tunisia and then in Malta, but she and her daughter still spend most of their time in Paris.
- p. 269: Médéa: At the time of the novel, a city with a population of around 100,000, it is about 72 kilometers (45 miles) south of Algiers.
 It is the capital of Médéa province. Basically a farming community, it is also a center of the country’s pharmaceutical production.
 See its 6.88 and 7.114 notes.
- p. 269: “Plo-inflicted wounds”: The physical attack on Mohammed during the early morning of April 19, described on 15.243, is balanced by the kidnapping of Remy at the end of that chapter and the physical punishment of him in this chapter. Both acts are “Plo-inflicted wounds.”
- p. 269: “sufficed earlier”: A reference to his interrogation of Tinfingers and the Palestinians on Mar. 3 – 4.
 See 7.112.
- p. 269: “*Un nouveau neveu*”: “A new nephew” in French.
- p. 269: *à la mode*: stylish or in fashion.
- p. 269: “How did we get this far?”: By chance, Foucin uses the same wording as Remy heard in the pederastic song “A Modest Proposal” (2.23 and 31).
- p. 269: “with ‘Haro!’”: A variant of “Harrow!” an interjection used to express alarm or distress” (*Webster’s Third*).

p. 269: ringleted: “having ringlets”; curled, as in the example, “ringleted locks,” from *Webster's Third*.

p. 269: “seventy-two dark-eyed virgins cubed”: The concept of seventy-two virgins in Islam is based on 55:56, 70, 72, and 74 of the Qur'an, which states that in *Jannah* (Paradise or Heaven) the saved will live in “(goodly) pavilions” (72); “in them (Maidens), caste, restraining their glances, whom no man or *djinn* before them has touched.”

The number of virgins comes from the Hadith of Jami' Al-Tirmidhi, one of the six major Sunni collections of the sayings and actions of Prophet Mohammed. Tirmidhi reports that a companion of the Prophet stated that Mohammed said, “The smallest reward for the people of Heaven is an abode where there are eighty thousand servants and seventy-two houri[s].”

“Houri” is derived from the Persian word meaning “black-eyed woman” and is defined as “one of the dark-eyed virgins of perfect beauty that in Muslim belief live with the blessed in paradise” (*Webster's Third*).

Tirmidhi is also the source of the idea that a martyr to Islam will be married to seventy-two maidens in Paradise, a reward which has been used in recent times by Islamic fanatics to encourage acts of terrorism.

Most mainstream Muslims regard the concept of the seventy-two virgins propounded in Al-Tirmidhi's Hadith not as a literal description but as a metaphor of the perfect happiness of *Jannah* and of how favorable Allah regards those who defend Islam.

Foucín seems to regard the doctrine of the seventy-two virgins as fanciful, given his slighting treatment of it, particularly in the added word “cubed.”

- p. 270: “stir him to treason”: That is, to detail the role of the PLO office in the attacks on Mohammed and Remy.
- p. 270: ganymede: In Greek mythology, Ganymede, a Trojan youth, was so beautiful that Zeus brought him to live in Heaven as the cupbearer to the gods. Lowercased, “ganymede” refers to a cupbearer or a youth who serves liquors. Foucin, however, seems aware of its relationship to *catamite* (a youth in a pederastic relationship), which is derived from the Latin *catamitus*, itself based on the Greek name Ganymede.
- p. 270: “‘without our consent,’ brazenly they lied”: According to Tinfingers, the Algiers PLO officials planned to make him the scapegoat in the Ballard affair. Foucin would know that Tinfingers was lying since PLO chief Al-Wazar had admitted that he had “sanctioned [Tinfingers’] additional probing” into the Ballard-Ballard relationship from Jan. 30 to Feb. 19, at which time on instructions from the Tunis PLO headquarters he had “commanded [Tinfingers’ and his agents] to desist” (7.112).
- p. 270: “endangering the recently consummated agreement”: See the note on 1.10 concerning the Nov. 10, 1988, declaration by the Palestinian National Council, which was meeting in Algiers, in which Palestinian statehood is affirmed and crucially the PLO recognized Israel’s right to exist.
- p. 270: Boumediène: The head of Algeria (first as Chairman and then as President) from 1965 until his death in 1978. That he granted the PLO camp a monopoly on hashish distribution is a plot contrivance which I cannot even justify by saying that I heard it from North African friends as a rumor.
- p. 270: “no secret Swiss accounts like Arafat”: In 2003, the IMF conducted an audit which revealed that Arafat had diverted US\$900 million in public funds to a Swiss bank account controlled by Arafat and his financial adviser. In the same year, an American accounting firm, hired by Arafat’s own finance ministry, concluded that he had a secret portfolio worth close to US\$1 billion. In his last years, Arafat paid his bodyguards and personal security forces US\$20 million from public funds.
- p. 270: Bekaa Valley drug barons: The Bekaa Valley (also transliterated as Beqaa) in eastern Lebanon has historically been associated with cannabis cultivation. In the Lebanese Civil War (1975 – 1990), it was the source of most of the hashish and opium produced in Lebanon. By the 1980s, the PLO, now entrenched throughout Lebanon, had established two bases in the Bekaa Valley, manned by around one thousand fighters. Arafat and his close subordinates, working with the local drug lords and the Syrian army which militarily controlled the region, were raking in a decent percentage of the \$6 billion a year made from facilitating the trafficking of drugs

to Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa.

In fact, the Lebanese used to joke that PLO stood for “Poppy Lovers’ Organization.”

p. 270: Helvetian: Swiss

p. 270: “the medico had . . . come, sewn, cantered”: A pun which garbles the usual translation of Julius Caesar’s Latin “*Veni, vidi, vici*” (“I came, I saw, I conquered”).

This is another example of Foucin’s puckishness in recounting the interrogation of Tinfingers.

The Palestinian doctor was in the tool shed from 9:58 – 10:05 since he finished with Remy at 9:55.

p. 270: asyndetically: The adverb form of “asyndeton,” a rhetorical device in which the expected conjunctions are omitted, leaving the items separated by commas. Caesar’s is the most famous example of asyndeton.

p. 270: thenar: the palm of the hand.

p. 270: “palms wept sweat”: Loosely based on Luke 22:44: “And being in agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.”

p. 270: “Four days ago their Algiers chief of security ‘graced our camp’”: Saturday, April 15.

p. 270: whirligig: An intransitive verb meaning “to whirl like a whirligig [a child’s spinning toy]; spin; turn” (*Webster’s Third*).

It is used metaphorically by Tinfingers to indicate that their conversation began with the childish spinning of greeting rituals, before the chief threatened him with deportation to the West Bank.

p. 270: “bolster the rock-throwers”: The First Intifada (uprising) by the Palestinians against Israeli occupation lasted from 1987 to 1993.

It began spontaneously in the second week of December 1987 in the Jabalia refugee camp and quickly spread to Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem.

Although the movement used strikes, boycotts, refusal to pay taxes, demonstrations involving women and children below ten, and barricades, the tactic which attracted the most attention was stone-throwing, where Palestinian teenagers hurled rocks or used sling blades to propel them at the patrolling Israeli police force, thereby creating a David vs. Goliath symbolism.

The First Intifada wound down as two diplomatic initiatives, the Madrid Conference of 1991 and the Oslo Accords of 1993, both of which the Intifada was responsible for bringing about, came to the fore.

The Oslo agreement set up the Palestinian National Authority, to be presided

over by Yasser Arafat. It was to govern most of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, from which the Israeli policing force withdrew.

p. 270: “he so obviously committed”: On p. 263, Tinfingers said of Belmazoir, “Let the likely one be punished.”

p. 270: “I astutely detected”: Having dealt with the “bobbling [PLO] fools” in Cairo and Tunis, Tinfingers accepts Remy’s version that the “wrong” photograph had been transmitted (261).

p. 270: “the faxed M. Quel Que Soit”: The sobriquet (“M. Whatever”) which Tinfingers applied to Remy on p. 261 he now withdraws, stating that Lazar has proven that he is who he claims to be.

p. 270: blacktop: asphalt used as a surface for a road.

p. 270: “So the French do have long noses”: On 4.58, Foucin described the interference of the French in Algeria as a case of where “they have long Gallic noses which bridge the Mediterranean.”

This charge that Remy is a French DGSE agent was hinted earlier when he quickly corrected himself by saying, “Is it still so designated in France . . . Belgium?” (p. 269), an indication that he knows Remy is from France, not Belgium.

This section ends at 11:15. They have passed Ksar and are about five km. from the cutoff to the prison.

Thus they are around eighty km. or fifty-five minutes from the Al-Nigma.

pp. 270-71: SECTION 7

p. 270: “As if not expecting”: This section continues the previous one, so the time is 11:16.

p. 270: Med: the Mediterranean Sea.

p. 270: “the Friday you were traipsing our Casbah”: On Apr. 14 Remy visited the Casbah (10.153-59). Thus for five days Foucin has known that Remy was a DGSE agent, not an investigator for Vellacott.

(Interested readers may wish to go back to see how from that point on, chapter ten, a confiding Foucin treats Remy with greater professional respect.)

p. 270: “severely disconnected”: Another instance of the connect/disconnect motif of the novel.

While knowing that he is not Christian Lazar, Foucin says that the DGSE has so well hidden him his real identify has not yet been determined.

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The wording undoubtedly causes Remy to recall that when he was Omar and an agent for the French in Algiers a castrated native Algerian was described as “severely circumcised” (5.79).

p. 270: “your prints—granted not of professional quality, given your habit of never grasping anything firmly”: Foucin confesses that Remy’s fingerprints have been lifted from items which he has touched.
Foucin’s comment implies that he would like a set of them “of professional quality.”

p. 270: “Resurrected in spirit . . . a corpse without a name”: Having spoken of his use of a bribe to find out that Remy was not “Lazar” but a DGSE agent, Foucin once again plays upon Remy’s comment that a “floated” bribe causes secrets to rise to the surface (here “resurrected”) “like flooded corpses” (4.57).
His wording, “a corpse without a name,” would evoke in Remy’s mind his own references to a prostitute as “a voice without a body” and to Ballard as “a body without a voice” (13.202).

p. 270: “M. Whatever”: Since the two are speaking in French, Foucin said, “M. Quel Que Soit,” which in his mind Remy translates to “M. Whatever.”
See p. 261 and the end of section 6 (270) where Foucin reported that Tinfingers mentioned this dubbed alias.

p. 270: “not to embarrass either of our governments”: Foucin seemingly now adopts a variation of the suggestion that he had made at his first meeting with Remy: “Perchance the French, having failed to protect [old Belmazoir], seek recompense and redemption by proffering aid through *Solliciteurs* to his descendant [Mohammed]” (4.79).
Foucin knows that that DGSE had directly sent one of its own agents passed off as an investigator from Vellacott. Since his relationship with Remy is now equal, not government to agency (*Solliciteurs*), but government to government, Foucin stresses international protocol must be observed.
In telling Remy that his conduct must not embarrass either France or Algeria, Foucin seems to be acknowledging that he has embarrassed his government by allowing an emissary of the French to be manhandled.

p. 270: thirty kilometers: 18.62 miles.

p. 270: illation: The conclusion Remy had immediately realized is that Tinfingers must have received additional instructions from the Algiers PLO office telling him that if the attack on Mohammed did not succeed he should have men in place to intimidate Remy through abducting him.

His reasoning would have been the following: As a contingency Tinfingers had sent five of his men into Algiers that morning to carry out the kidnapping if so instructed.

At 3:30, Mohammed flouted Foucin and withdrew his confession. A PLO agent at

the prison telephoned Tinfingers about this reneging.

Khalaf then called his team in Algiers, who spotted Remy on his return to the Al-Nigma at 4:10.

At around 5:00, they followed him from the hotel to Leila's apartment, on to Bab el Oued, and back to her apartment, where at 7:06 they waylaid him.

None of these times figured in Remy's kidnapping, as he is quickly informed by Foucin, who says that Tinfingers contends he received instructions to abduct Remy on Tuesday, the evening before the attack on Mohammed.

p. 271: “binding obiter dictum . . . four times today”: An “incidental remark” called “binding” because it connects Remy’s two trips up and down the N1 highway with Foucin’s.

Earlier this Wednesday morning Nemmiche drove Remy from Algiers to the prison (8:00 – 9:10) and back (11:00 a.m. – 12:25 p.m.).

His kidnappers drove him down NI, past the cutoff to the prison and on to their camp (7:06 – 9:03 p.m.).

Foucin is driving him from the camp (10:27 p.m. – 11:31, the time Remy makes the observation).

Foucin drove down N1 to the prison (2:20 – 3:20) and back to his office in Algiers (3:45 – 5:15).

He and his team drove from Algiers to the PLO camp (7:52 – 9:22) and with Remy as his passenger is driving from the camp (10:27 – 11:31). It is at this point that Remy notes the “four times today” each of them has driven a leg of the N1, back and forth to the prison and to the cantonment.

p. 271: actify: “activate” (*Webster’s Third*).

p. 271: “the day *before* M. Mohammed was attacked”: Tinfingers says that yesterday morning (Tues., Apr. 18) he received the phone call about kidnapping Remy. Mohammed was not attacked until around 2:08 a.m. on Wed., Apr. 19 (15.317).

p. 271: “*holoverun* (‘entirely genuine’)”: I came across the word in Williamson’s 1981 translation of the sixth-century historian Procopius’s *The Secret History*, chap. 25, p. 167. The book is a scandalous account of the private lives of Emperor Justinian and his wife Theodora.

Procopius notes that the imperial dye was known as *holoverum*. Williamson’s note points out that this is a hybrid word made by combining the Greek *holos* (“complete”) and the Latin *verus* (“true”), hence Foucin’s translation, “entirely genuine.”

p. 271: have the stomach: possess the “emotional power or capacity to meet or withstand a demand on the feelings” or, in its obsolete sense, “valor, temper, spirit” (*Webster’s Third*).

Although the context is different, this is a curious echo of an earlier use of “stomach”: “Only if you have the stomach of a goat!” (259).

p. 271: “eight-thousand-dinar trick”: Around US \$800.

p. 271: “ditch”: As a transitive verb, “to get rid of” (slang, hence the quotes).

p. 271: “anatomy”: “the human body” (*Webster’s Third*, citing Shakespeare).

p. 271: Al-Djazair Stadium: It is located in the Cheraga suburb of western Algiers.

It is also called the 5 July 1962 Stadium, so named to honor Algeria’s Independence Day.

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It was opened in 1962; it is still (2013) the largest football stadium in the country.

p. 271: retainer: A fee paid in advance to make such services available when needed.

p. 271: "drop": A predetermined clandestine location for the deposit and subsequent removal of messages or goods, usually illicit.

p. 271: "At noon": On Tues., Apr. 18.

p. 271: serendipitist: "one who finds valuable or agreeable things not sought for" (*Webster's Third*).

Tinfingers returns to the camp "a thousand-dinar richer gent."

Not mentioned in the text: After his return, Tinfingers selected his five most trusted PLO companions.

They will travel to Algiers the next morning (Wednesday, Apr. 19) where they will locate, tail, and at a favorable opportunity kidnap Remy.

Then they will bring him to the camp where Tinfingers will supervise the fingerprinting.

p. 271: "Plo brothers": For this derogatory designation of a PLO member, see the p. 261 note above.

It was also used on p. 269 and will appear a fourth time on p. 272.

p. 271: "cough up": to hand over money, usually under coercion. A slang expression.

p. 271: "Desdemona's handkerchief": In Shakespeare's tragedy this handkerchief was a gift from Othello to Desdemona.

Out of her love for him she was trying to tie it about Othello's brow to ease his headache. It was not so much that she dropped it as that Othello brushed it aside.

Again since her entire attention was focused on Othello's pain, she did not notice its fall. It is found by Iago's wife Emilia. When she tells Iago about it, he snatches it from her (3.3.301-32).

Iago plants it in Cassio's lodging, who gives it to his mistress Bianca (3.4.180-92). In 4.1.147-79, through Iago's maneuvering, Othello sees Bianca with the handkerchief as she confronts Cassio about it.

In 5.2.232-36, Emilia tells Othello that she had taken the handkerchief which Iago had often begged her to steal. In 5.2.361-66 (one of the epigrams of my novel), Othello stabs himself.

As noted in the text, the "image" is Foucin's way of expressing Tinfingers' suspicion that the money (for he would have never agreed to the kidnapping without a pecuniary lure) is a Palestinian trap to destroy him just as Desdemona's handkerchief is used to enmesh Othello.

- p. 271: “black matter”: The term which both Remy and Foucin heard Ghazi employ in referring to the “gray matter” of his brain (12.198; 13.205 as “sooty brain”).
- p. 271: “trust’s a soupçon”: “a tiny amount,” although its other literal meaning, “a suspicion,” is also suggested since it will contrast with “trust.”
- p. 271: Al-Wazar: Atef Al-Wazar. In my novel he is the character who is the head of the PLO mission in Algiers.
See 7.112 and its note, N7:29, and 13.206 and its note, “the February,” N13:22.
- p. 271: “falsettoed”: This verb/verbal form of “falsetto” is not listed in any print or online dictionary.
However, in a Google search I found it in a few articles and books on music, particularly as a past participle modifier and typically spelled as “falsetto’ed,” where its meaning appeared to be “to sing or speak falsetto.”
- p. 271: “more than the more”: This is Foucin’s first use of Remy’s favorite phrase from James’s *The Principles of Psychology*, Vol. 1, chapter 13: “The more than the more is more than the less,” although he presents that he is quoting Tinfingers’ citation of it.
Since Remy had never employed it around Foucin, the commissioner must have previously been acquainted with the phrase as an expression of excessive greed.
- p. 271: weal: As a transitive verb, it means “to raise a weal on (as with a whip)” (*Webster’s Third*).
Foucin uses “double-wealed” because Remy had been struck twice.
- p. 271: “[]varnished tale”: Adapted from Othello’s speech about his wooing of Desdemona: “I will a round unvarnish’d tale deliver / Of my whole course of love” (1.3.92-93).
Remy believes that Foucin has embellished Foucin’s account, a technique which Remy himself frequently employs.
- p. 271: “the final stretch”: Remy pretended to sleep the final leg from a midpoint between Médéa and Blida to the Al-Nigma, around 60 kilometers or 37 miles, but near to and inside the city, they had to slow down, so the time span is c. 11:36 – 12:15.
For Médéa see the 16.269 note above.
Blida is a city located forty-five km. southwest of Algiers. In 1989, the year of this chapter of the novel, it had a population of around 100,000, though today (2013) it is more than double that size.
It is a center of agriculture and forestry, particularly noted for its oranges, wheat, and cork and cedar trees.
During the revolution, Blida was the city where Omar joined the revolution since the FLN had been virtually eradicated in Algiers.
As such, it is mentioned on 2.21 and 2.24 (N2:28 and 35); 3.38 (N3:9); 6.89

(N6:21); 7.114 (N7:33-34); and 10.158 (N10:15).

- p. 271: “Desdemona dropped”: See the note above on “Desdemona’s handkerchief” (N16:42).
- p. 271: “Othello ‘took by th’ throat the circumcisèd dog’ and ‘*stab[bed] himself* in his own”: From 5.2.365-66: “I took by th’ throat the circumcisèd dog / and smote him, thus. [*He stabs himself.*]”

pp. 272-73: SECTION 8

- p. 272: Mustapha Hospital: It is located about a mile south of my fictional Al-Nigma Hotel or in real life a half mile south of the University of Algiers.
- p. 272: RICE: The acronym for a treatment typically recommended for soft tissue inflammation, straining, or bruising.
 Rest: Bed-rest the injury until the pain is greatly reduced.
 Ice: Ice, placed in a towel or therapy wrap, is usually applied to the injury for twenty minutes each hour to reduce inflammation and pain.
 Compression: A loosely wrapped bandage, preferably elastic, will reduce the swelling that results from inflammation.
 Elevation: Keep the injury raised if possible since elevation reduces swelling.
- p. 272: reswathe: Not listed in print or online dictionaries, a Google search turns up it in novels and medical articles meaning “to swathe again.”
 An alternate spelling is the hyphenated “re-swathe.”
- p. 272: “half-staffed passage across the sea of red carpet”: The naval metaphor is resurrected from 12.186 in Remy’s description of the lobby of the Al-Nigma.
- p. 272: “I distinguished the blows simply by counting the stripes”: Foucin’s non sequitur is designed to explain how he knew to crash the revengeful claw hammer twice against Tinfingers’ prosthesis.
 In pulling down Remy’s shirt (264), he had counted the two whelps.
- p. 272: *yahoodee*: The Arabic word for Jew.
 See p. 263 where Remy said in Egyptian Arabic, “Strike as if I were a Jew!”
 The Palestinian had rendered this as “Strike, for I am a *yahoodee*!”
- p. 272: conation: A psychological term meaning an “inclination to do something.”
- p. 272: “the seed of Swift’s term for his Houyhnhnmland beasts”: A reference to the Yahoos of the fourth book of *Gulliver’s Travels*.
 Foucin answers himself with one of the worst puns in my book: “Without a doubt, ‘Nay!’” The pun on *neigh* (the cry of a horse and thus of the equine masters of Houyhnhnmland) is seemingly impossible since Foucin and Remy are conversing in French, which does not offer the homonymic pair *nay/neigh*. (Yet one never quarrels with the English puns which Shakespeare’s Italian, Greek, French, etc. characters make.)
 This impossibility becomes only an improbability if one considers that in pronouncing “*Non!*” (the French word for *no* and consequently *nay*) Foucin so contorts and extends its nasalized vowel it will mimic a whinnying sound.
 Shakespeare’s love of punning is most famously noted by Johnson in his *Preface to Shakespeare* (the paragraph beginning, “A quibble [pun] is to Shakespeare”):
 “A quibble, poor and barren as it is, gave [Shakespeare] such delight, that he

was content to purchase it, by the sacrifice of reason, propriety and truth.” Johnson found punning to be a fault, but I hold it as a rule to write by.

- p. 272: “apparently with . . . surprise”: Remy’s positive variant of the title/first line of Dickinson’s “Apparently with no surprise.”
- p. 272: *ascenseur*: French for “elevator.”
- p. 272: “our separate interviews with Mlle. Belmazoir”: Earlier this day Foucin had met with Houda from 11:45 a.m. – 1:45 p.m. (15.246 and 247) and Remy had interviewed her from 5:49 – 6:35 p.m. (15.250-53).
- p. 272: “a proposal”: Remy’s plan that he and Foucin would take Houda to the prison for a confrontation with her brother, but a telephone call from Leila would divert Remy from the trip.
She and he would then go to the Casbah where, with her permission, he would slip away supposedly to investigate some matter, but instead would try to visit briefly his father since he knew Foucin would be on the way to the prison.
Thus Remy would complete the purpose of his mission to Algiers.
- p. 272: “cleanly lifted *empreintes digitales*”: On p. 270, Foucin noted that the fingerprints that he had of Remy, presumably taken from items he had touched at the Al-Nigma, were not “of professional quality, given your habit of never grasping anything firmly.”
Those taken by the Palestinians on a fingerprint card, however, would be “cleanly lifted.”
- p. 272: troll: One meaning of the intransitive form of this verb is “to speak rapidly,” although this sense of the word is rarely used.
The elevator door closes, ending Foucin’s and Remy’s conversation, at 12:23 a.m.
- p. 272: “In his suite”: Remy’s is in his room at 12:25, but he debates until 12:28 before deciding to telephone Leila.
- p. 272: “to postpone her trip to Mlle. Houda’s”: On 15.255, Leila told Remy, just before his kidnapping, that she was “returning to Mlle. Houda’s tonight.”
Because of his abduction, Remy imagined that she might still be at her apartment awaiting additional news on him before leaving for the Belmazoirs’ shack.
According to Foucin Sgt. Ghouraf had telephoned her from the PLO camp reporting Remy had been found and freed (266).
The call was presumably made at c. 9:38, shortly after Remy was taken to the infirmary.

- p. 273: “tighter breathing”: From Dickinson’s “A narrow fellow in the grass”: “But never met this fellow [a snake], / Attended or alone, / Without a tighter breathing, / And zero at the bone.”
Remy’s “tighter breathing” is artificial. Thus he knows that he is acting the part of the serpent, whose sudden appearance causes “tighter breathing.”
- p. 273: physiognomy: facial features and expression; the face.
- p. 273: “‘Barely bruised’ . . . an alliterated phrase (immediately regretted)”: The French lieutenant had described Noura as “but bruised” (3.44 and 46).
Remy immediately regrets using the term “bruise,” particularly with a preceding word which contained an alliterated *b*.
At once he realized that his two-whelp beating is in no way comparable to the torture endured by “Noura’s understudy.”
- p. 273: “‘angelic attention’”: Foucin’s term to describe Leila’s observant actions after the kidnapping (265).
- p. 273: unshroud: As a transitive verb, “to expose; uncover” (*Webster’s Third*).
Here it is used as a past participle.
- p. 273: “wrenched from his gut”: This jejune play upon “gut-wrenching” is meant to convey the artificiality of Remy’s cliché-ridden mind at this point.
“Gut-wrenching” is a relatively new word, its first use occurring in 1974, according to *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary*.
- p. 273: “For now a few plucked phrases only”: This statement indicates that Remy wishes and plans to extend the flattering conversation with Leila by giving her some few details of his “heroic” behavior during his kidnapping ordeal.
- p. 273: “around half past one . . . *Foucin at 11:30 . . . adept stage managing*”: Remy still intends to implement his plan to visit his father while Foucin is at a meeting with Mohammed and Houda at the prison.
Later this morning (Thurs., Apr. 20, at 11:30), he plans to meet with Foucin (mentioned on p. 272) and afterward with Leila at around 1:30 p.m. to secure their agreement.
Therefore the schemed visit to the prison would be planned for Friday, Apr. 21.
The theatrical image “*adept stage managing*” prepares for “overacting” and “adoring audience” two paragraphs down.
- p. 273: “God wills that you sleep well”: Leila seemingly interprets Remy’s answer as subtly suggesting that he wants to lie down and rest.
Therefore at 12:33, she hurriedly closes the telephone conversation.
- p. 273: “it had been most of a day and all of a night of fasting for him”: Although not mentioned in the text, Remy took breakfast between 6:45 and 7:30, prior to

leaving for the prison in Nemmiche's taxi at 8 a.m.

The interview with Mohammed, the drive back to Algiers, the wait at Foucin's office and Leila's apartment, her afternoon call to him as soon as he walks into his room at the Al-Nigma, their drive to Bab el Oued, the interview with Houda, the ride to Leila's apartment, his abduction, the drive to the PLO camp, his experience there, Foucin's intervention, and his ride with the commissioner back to Algiers and the Al-Nigma proceeded one after the other without a time for Remy to eat.

He telephoned Room Service as soon as he finished his telephone conversation with Leila, 12:33 a.m. While the time when the food arrived is not mentioned, it would have come at c. 12:45.

Thus from 7:30 a.m., Wednesday morning, until c. 12:45 a.m., Thursday morning—a span of slightly over seventeen hours—Remy had not eaten. Symbolically Remy fasted longer during that stretch than a Muslim observing Ramadan would have (from before sunrise, 4:36 a.m., to sunset, 7:26 p.m., almost fifteen hours).

p. 273: "Afterward, [a] bath": From 1:15 to 2:40 a.m.

p. 273: "picking nose" and "tin rusts": Taunts hurled at Tinfingers by Remy (257 and 263).

p. 273: "the Jewish squib": I did not envision this expression as a repudiation by Remy of his celebration of the Jewish heritage of his family in France.

I reasoned that he would decide to omit it because it might cause Leila to remember that her husband was born a Jew and thus take her attention from him to Ballard.

However, it can be viewed as characteristic of Remy, who shows a certain nobility in a crisis, but pushes it from his mind once the problem has been overcome.

For instance, see 12.190, where he has "a mania to confess" to Leila that it is his fault her brother has fled. However, when she does not openly blame him, Remy's conviction rapidly wilts.

p. 273: "in his plot": See the p. 272 note above on "proposal," N16.46.

p. 273: "he had scarcely finished the alternate dénouement of the Philistine anecdote": See p. 258: "And here our anecdote branches. The first:" This one is given on p. 259.

In bed by 2:45 a.m., Remy finishes thinking about this second anecdote by 2:48.

p. 273: "minaciously": Listed as an acceptable adverb form of the adjective "minacious" ("menacing or threatening") in *Amer. Her. Dict.* and *Collins*.

p. 273: "the Plos": This is the fourth time this derogatory term is used to refer to Palestinians or PLO members in this chapter.

See pp. 261, 269, and 271 and their notes.

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Also see 1.23 for its derivation and pronunciation.

- p. 273: M. Bulles: Remy's codename when speaking with his French Embassy liaison in Algiers, who calls himself M. Champagne.
Bulles means "bubbles," presumably of champagne. See 5.75.
This section ends at 2:50 a.m.

pp. 273-74: SECTION 9:

- p. 273: "The second": This narrative passes quickly through Remy's mind (2:45 – 2:48).
- p. 273: "undoctored": An adjective meaning "not doctored" (*Webster's Third*).
One meaning of "doctored" is "altered," as in "doctored the play by . . . abridging the last act," the example given in *Webster's Third*.
Thus here "undoctored" means "not altered," that is, the actions of the Philistines in the second version began the same as those of the first.
- p. 273: "pivoting and gamboling": The movements of the three Palestinians when they were told that the French prisoner was a Jew are synonymous with theirs on p. 259, "turning" and "romping."
- p. 273: "No time not to be redeemed": The first of two instances in the novel in which the two key terms in Prince Hal's speech in *1 Henry IV* about redemption are coupled: "Redeeming time when men think least I will" (1.2.211).
As mentioned in the note to p. 259, an overview essay on the pattern of sin, repentance, and redemption in the novel, which will analyze the theme of redemption, will appear at the end of the notes to chap. 18, N18:72-74.
- p. 273: "you forty": On pp. 258-59, the number of men in the hamlet was given as thirty-three. This Palestinian has paid so little heed to his host that he rounds the number off as "forty."
- p. 273: "busy your drabs with toppling the tents": In the first version of the anecdote, it is established that the nomadic villagers never asked the three Palestinians to assist in the raising or razing of the tents (258).
Here it is stated (and confirmed in the next paragraph) that the village's men had the women ("drabs") perform this task.
- p. 273: "towering night": Dramatic irony, but the present participle connects with the Tower of Babel, the beginning of linguistic division (Gen. 11:1-9).
- p. 273: croup: "to speak hoarsely," a British dialectic verb (*Webster's Third*).

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- p. 273: “worked him”: “to cause to work” as in “to work a crew hard,” but with the informal term “work over” (“to torture”) implied.
- p. 273: backdrop: Its theatrical meaning of a curtain “hung across the rear of a stage . . . to serve as scenic background” (*Webster’s Third*) is metonymically implied: The *alim* becomes part of the background scenery behind the tree.
- p. 273: argan tree: A thorn tree endemic to the semi-desert area of western Algeria close to the Moroccan border.
Pressed from the pit of the fruit of the tree, argan oil has recently found favor as an anti-aging cosmetic.
The tree establishes the locale of the anecdote, near the oasis of Tindouf, the southern intersection of the borders of Algerian and Morocco.
See the p. 258 note above on Tindouf, N16:5.
- p. 273: “Qur’anicly”: The adverb form of the adjective “Qur’anic.” *Webster’s Online Dictionary* defines its variant spelling “Koranicly” as the “rarely used adverbial inflection of the adjective ‘*Koranic*.’”
However, a Google search revealed “Qur’anicly” is quite frequently used in religious articles although not as often as “Koranicly.”
When “Qur’anicly” samples were found, most often the word was capitalized, but not always.

- p. 274: “our strategic withdrawal”: The *alim* believed that the Legionnaire was scouting the area preparatory to a French invasion of their hamlet. By interrogating him, he hoped to find out the best way for his villagers to escape (258).
- p. 274: “goat-belly shake”: A reference to p. 259, where the *alim* is said to have “the stomach of a goat.”
- p. 274: “wheed”: A neologism: The interjection “whee,” meaning “to express delight,” is used as an intransitive verb.
- p. 274: “*All the King-on-High's best prosthetic men*”: Adapted from the nursery rhyme: “Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall, / Humpty Dumpty had a great fall. / All the king's horses and the king's men / Couldn't put Humpty together again.” The use of “prosthetic men” or prosthetists connects this second ending to the anecdote with the first (259): “no prosthetist has ever rendered an artificial duplicate” of a tongue.
- p. 274: “circumcised to the extreme”: Similar wording, “severely circumcised,” was used to describe the castrated Arab worker on 5.79.
- p. 274: “to entrust our burdened animals”: On p. 258, it was established that the path of migration which the nomadic villagers typically used would be decided by the direction in which their camels, sheep, and goats moved.
- p. 274: “‘ungeneraled’ as they are in jihad”: In the 1911 *Century Dictionary*, “ungeneraled” is listed as an adjective meaning “local” or “particular,” certainly not the sense intended here. Thus “ungeneraled,” used as a past participle, is a neologism formed as the negative of the rarely used transitive verb “general,” meaning “to command as a general” (*Wordnet*).
- p. 274: jihad: A religious war carried out by Muslims against the enemies of Islam. “FLN propagandist” had lied by stressing the importance of the village: “the fate of the Revolution and of Islam itself hung in its balance” (258).
- p. 274: elucubrate: A transitive verb meaning to “work out or express by studious effort” (*Webster's Third*).
- p. 274: “‘better’ and ‘better’”: See p. 259 (and its note, N16.8): “no Palestinian ever concedes a ‘good’ without a following ‘better.’”
- p. 274: *Mafeesh haga*: As defined in the text, this expression is Arabic for “nothing.”
- p. 274: “But only French will [he] gibber”: An allegory of linguistic disconnection: how people of one language naturally assume that those of a different tongue will understand what they say and think.

The torturer and the tortured were fluent only in their native tongues. Thus the PLO men interrogated in Arabic, and the French Legionnaire gibbered in French.

p. 274: *bouton de porte*: doorknob.

p. 274: "He's got us speakin' in tongues": The last two lines of this section of the song "Georgie" (2.20).

It provides the title for this chapter, which connects torture, whose end is through disconnecting parts of the body in order to dishevel the mind, with a linguistic disconnect.

Religious imagery infiltrates the process, a commentary on the divisions which, I feel, religion, ideally a unifier, has brought.

Likewise, sexual imagery infuses the process since in the song "speakin' in tongues" refers to fellatio, as it does in the title to the balancing chap. 8, "The Tongue of Tongues," a parody of the designation of Christ, "the King of Kings."