

Chapter Thirteen

BINDING WITH BRIARS

As every North African traveler knows, there are no street maps of Algiers in Algiers. None at the hotels, at the bookshops, or at the National Tourist Office, although at the last, one is pinned to the wall behind an official who has just denied there are any.

“Might I make a photocopy of that?” The zealous sightseer points.

The *fonctionnaire* lowers with indignation, “Oh no, never! In it’s an error as mammoth as a flea’s aedeagus. The Holy Qur’an forbids us from being party to the dispensation of what is false. A corrected version will soon be ready.”

The anecdote was from the Stevenses (1977), yet Remy had realized the promised “soon” had not arrived when Locker 2269 was without a street map.

From Marengo Park he weaved through the Ramadan celebrants bound for a mosque and Isha’ prayers, at 8:52 reaching the corner where the Casbah’s Rue Soualah Mohammed and Rue Arbadji Abderahmane (the Middle Street) decussate.

“With Mama on her watch and me in her wake,” Ghazi had begun his account of the last and “strangest” night that he had trailed Houda. She had set out at “the start of Maghrib prayers,” 6:28, Remy knew. A half-hour’s trek brought her “midway along Soualah, where she spotted the parked Renault and, without so much as a sigh of shame, jumped in.”

Remy, who was fusing his times with Ghazi’s account, walked the largely deserted three blocks westward to the approximated site of this ingress.

“Only to exit before I ceased huffing,” the experienced stalker had continued, “yet now held an oversized latchkey in her palm. As the Renault pulled away, she brooded over it prior to dropping it into her purse.”

Houda had retraced her path eastward to the intersection of Soualah and the Middle Street. There she climbed to Boulevard Abderazak Hadad. In eight minutes Remy likewise traversed the two legs. Surprising Ghazi, she had borne due west, leading her past Foucin’s office. “On tiptoes I crept by it—I’m sure she did too!—aghast that the Great One might overhear the thud of my sandals.” The youth’s voice had descended to a whisper.

With a liege-like regard on Foucin’s second-story office—“for am I not doing his bidding?”—in the crowd released by the mosques Remy trudged by. Where Abderazak curves into Taleb Mohammed Avenue, Houda shambled for two blocks.

“‘What a stupid girl you are!’ Ghazi said he had exclaimed, “my heels finally let down on Taleb. ‘West on Soualah would have landed you here in nothing flat. No need to prance by the Gendarmerie—why that compulsion?—putting my heartbeat in M. Le Grand’s earshot.’”

Remy peeped at his Vacheron, 9:17, mechanically converting it to the 7:21 of the night Ghazi had trailed Houda.

“Had I been less observant, she’d have given me the slip with her quick-to-the-left oblique, directly after veering off Taleb. One block, then right; another, left. I now grew less afraid of losing her than that I myself might be lost. The zigzag conveyed us—for my ‘dree’ had wed us, and I contemplated hailing, ‘You Houda, guide me home!’—to a lane as menacing as my mother.”

Certain of her destination, Remy inexactly heeded the directions, so it was from a *ruelle* merely fitting this maternal simile that he apostrophized, “But, M. Ghazi, you could have entreated another’s aid, one closer to her, if aware that he was also in pursuit.”

A reminiscent Ghazi had shuddered. “By God! Not a hair of hopeful grass grew from chinks in its blacktop. The gloom of the dwellings swallowed up mine, an appalling perdition for ‘apart from our shadows we have no friends.’ I knew she was leading me into a den that Satan would shiver to trespass. Salt sprinkled my cheeks for terror had dehydrated my tears. A quarter block more, dead in my tracks, I was stopped.

“From a second-story window a chesty ramp was beckoning me, ‘I have whate’er ye seek,’ her wanton wooing synchronous with Isha’ summons. With a grating about-face, I dashed toward what I hoped was home for her voice had merged my mama’s shrill bass and the enticing piccolo of our *alim*’s, and I was accustomed to the two being separate.”

Remy wondered whether it was the same woman who last called to him, a voice without a body in its alluring, yet once sucked in, like Ballard’s, a body without a voice. He affirmed, “A job in Algiers, if you’re fortunate enough to snare one, is for life.”

With his cicerone gone—a *plant of Foucin*’s, his every step convinced him—he plodded on. By the waxing Ramadan moon, he searched for the identity of the lane, only to conclude that he had stumbled on the flea phallus that had delayed till “soon” the map of Algiers.

At the next *quem quaeritis* from an upper window, “Whom do ye seek?” he sued for help, “A street, Toumi.”

“Ahead, where the line of buildings disconnects. An amber beacon, but everyone there has the claps.” He did not soldier onward till he had thanked the woman behind the voice.

“Fifteen,” Remy uttered aloud the numerals painted above the yawning *porte d’entrée* of the narrow, three-storied sandstone building. Hesitating, he pondered, *Had Houda also demurred?* The dimly lit stairs to the top floor brought him to the tight confines of the two-flat well, with a low-watt bulb above the crowning step.

Brilliant yellow polyethylene police line tape, riddled with holes, was strung across the doorway on the left. Only strips of it dangled from its counterpart, before which were two crumpled remnants. Their raven-lettered warning was in Arabic: *Sealed off b and National Security. Do not cro—*.

Ballard had leased both, though exclusively used the right one. In front of its threshold, Remy lip-synced the words he suspected the other stalker had adopted, “M. John, I know my sister’s there.”

The mute asseveration apparently rebounded onto Remy, for he skipped backward, and with such haste, that his left foot overshot the top rung of the stairwell. Had his hand not snagged the newel post, he would have tumbled down. In celebration of not blundering into a

pratfall, he gave a yelp.

Steadied, he waited, and in that respite evoked the coda which Ghazi had tacked onto his narrative: At length, “joyously” the teen had escaped from “the clutches” of that “harem of harlots. So transmogrified was I by that night even my mama took pity, or my ghostly visage terrified her into retreat. I plopped atop my bedroll. And yet, no peace.

“The barracking of my dame from her chamber window awakened me. ‘You’re grossly tardy, 8:45! I’m sure you said eight. I had to leave for a moment. I have a family too.’

“The acknowledgment came not from this Houda, but the drug-boy: ‘I’ll pay you for the time you sat and the time you didn’t.’

“Rushing to the window, blocked by my mama’s hulk, I was unnerved by a passionate shriek, ere the language disintegrated into crouching: ‘My Houda and my Mohammed! My joy and my desire! Tonight, together! The bond! . . . Loneliness is frightening!’”

And Remy concurred, falling into his first two planned downward strides. The general silence magnified the scream of the opening door and the voice, a familiar one, which accosted him.

“Why M. Lazar, and accompanied by M. Ballard’s ghost, hence unattended! Can you ever forgive my intrusion on your desolation, but is not ‘loneliness . . . frightening’?”

2

Despite the mordancy of Remy’s staircase riposte, “M. Commissioner, I’ve purchased at a great price ‘your’ motive,” they stepped into the flat and *côte à côte* sat on the bed.

An artificial sigh out of the way, Foucin commenced, “M. Lazar, if I judge correctly, your rejoinder exhibited an irritation not with me, but with yourself. Did you epiphanically perceive my intention that night at the Al-Nigma, to reveal the (not my) motive inculcating M. Belmazoir, and further how you thwarted it by your digression into the periphery, the PLO, and my background? Notwithstanding, like you, I’m an amateur of history.”

He squirmed, the joggle of the mattress triggering his arm to graze Remy’s. “Not like my wife, who while we’re abed I’m certain is envisioning how we shall be sleeping together ten years in the future, God willing. Is it so with yours? Not an entirely exiguous question: To repeat my susurrations from eight hours ago, yours has been a day of ‘mostly women.’”

Remy sought validation. “M. Ghazi will testify in court to what he witnessed, the string of trysts between Mlle. Belmazoir and M. Ballard?”

“I have his autographic statement.” Foucin’s indefinite reply digressed into a sequential non sequitur: “Women, mostly. Mine coincides. Two of Mona’s—have I mentioned the name of my wife?—spinster aunts came in at daybreak from their village Arris. They traveled like Mme. Ballard, unescorted by rail.

“Meeting and chauffeuring them to our Kouba apartment, I spent the morning in captivating chitchat with the dears, well, one of them, Aunt Fatimah. Holding that her niece married beneath herself, Aunt Thana keeps her face contorted in my presence and never speaks. This conviviality was twice infringed upon by telephone calls, from the police chief in Zouabi and a source at the judicial office.”

He caught his breath. However, not wishing to intimate he endeavored to hurry him along, Remy maintained his reticence. “Anything from the secretaries? I understand your tongue had that part of the day off. To my ‘What questions did he ask?’ ‘Not a one,’ answered Mme. Amal Laasouani, ‘that I recollect.’ In a trice, she’d procured corroboration from the other three.

“That was at my office about one. You’ll be happy to learn Mme. Ballard cleared the judiciary. Again accompanied by a police matron, I drove her to her Rue des Quatre Canons flat. Even your night was usurped by the ambulation of a woman. Did he denominate her ‘this Houda,’ not ‘Mlle. Belmazoïr,’ as he did with me six weeks ago?”

The affiliating nature of the query obliged a response. Ignoring the perimeter, he launched into an imputation. “With no one else in the room. Or, auguring mine, was yours staged on a park bench? Wherever, you were the solitary attestator. And M. Ghazi, was he solemnly advised by—what did he style you?—‘the Great One’ not to drool a syllable about the Belmazoïrs without your permission?”

Remy’s pause was too brief to tolerate an interruption. “True, much to my regret, we chanced not to colloque yesterday. We almost did, I fractionally missing you at Mme. Bourceli’s. You dropped by to see the son. I was invited up by the mother, supposedly.”

“‘And in the porches of [M. Ghazi’s] ears did pour,’ you connote, that he could reveal their nighttime rendezvous to the Belgian investigator, striking whatever profitable bargain he could. . . . Ah, it’s late, and my enchanting Aunt Fatimah swore she would rap my knuckles with her fan should I loiter. *With* your permission?”

In concert Foucin and he rose from the bed. “Tomorrow at my office, a Western ten? If you so desire, I’ll ‘spring’ M. Ghazi’s affidavit from my safe for your perusal.”

“You are too generous,” an appreciation slowly expressed.

“For reflection in your room tonight, I’ll toss in an hypothesis.” Foucin’s tone sank to a conspiratorial whisper. “The brother cared not a whit that Ballard was fucking his sister.”

He hooked his arm in Remy’s, and a minute later they were in the street proceeding toward Taleb Avenue. During the six-block amble, which ended at the white Peugeot, “from their lofty perches no *prostituées* declaimed their vendibles.”

The sergeant had already leapt out to snap a smart salute to Foucin, who, in returning it, had to withdraw his grip from Remy’s elbow.

“Enscorced in the front!” the commissioner insisted, opening the passenger door. “To the Al-Nigma, please,” from the *siège arrière* he instructed Ghouraf. A moment later, leaning in, he murmured, “No, he didn’t care, and that’s the devil of it! Nine forty-seven! It’s late. I’m late. Several blows I’ll sustain from my Aunt Fatimah’s tortoiseshell fan.”

For all that, not even in bed, “my second this night,” did Remy choose to ruminate on the premise. Instead, prayers for his father completed, working chronologically backward on “my women,” his three granddaughters and their mothers, he reached Marie.

It was near midnight and still ahead should have been Noura and his mother. However, he set to imagining how his wife and he would be “sleeping together ten years” hence and, without forethought, glided from that pleasant dream into a sound slumber.

3

“March seventh, the fifth day after I’d been officially assigned to the case, Sergeant Ghouraf skeptically announced that a pavement sprig hints he has a key to the Zaracova slaying. I recognized him immediately, the oldest Bourceli sibling, two times glimpsed dangling from the window of their flat during my first three futile visits to Mlle. Belmazoïr.

“Following some obsequiousness, he squiggled to the edge of the chair where I had bade him sit and, trembling, blurted out, ‘I’ve seen him, the throat-cut American!’

“I signaled for him to proceed. ‘Our *alim*’s gone to severe lengths to ensure we fleas of his flock have mastered the lesson of the black sheep of our field. The outside of our mosque has been plastered with every newspaper story limning the sanguinary accessories of the homicide.’”

Ghazi had hurled himself to the floor, “and despite my remonstrations continued on his knees. ‘Monsieur the Grand, the blame is his for my cropping up so dilatorily. It’s just two days back that he shoved my nose against a mosque wall, his bellow assailing my left ear, “Behold the picture of the uncircumcised infidel that ‘Pretty Boy’ killed!

“““Yes, young fool, verily it’s sanctifying for any Islamite to butcher an American, for so the Holy Qur’an declares, our High Ayatollah avouches on a cassette. Yet not if the blessed slaughter unbinds the sexual thorns of our faith. See, you makeshift Muslim, and learn. This Belmazoïr always wriggled free from my immaculate grasp. And now he’s to die for dispatching that pig face!”

““I looked upon a photocopy of the American’s visage and, calling upon my sooty brain, by the next day realized whose portrait I’d spied: the very driver of the red sedan this Houda entered, bent on engaging in an act of prostitution, which from all outward appearances Great God in His molding had little equipped her for.”

The silence having grown overlong, Remy finally spoke. “Did he disclose to you that he never informed M. Belmazoïr of his sister’s nocturnal windings?” (Ghazi’s verbatim: “And shipwreck my prospect of blackmailing this demirep? For though she’s ugly, when the blood tingles, a man, desperate, is at its mercy.”)

“Which for the last six weeks has left me with the puzzle of how the brother found out.” Foucin’s wince was almost imperceptible. “You have mulled over my lemma?”

Remy nodded (“a lie”) that he had. “How would it go?” Foucin pursued. “M. Ghazi wasn’t her sole tracker that night. The second—again, I stress, we’ll have to bypass how he knew to give chase—had no Bourceli terror of aggressing further, having often walked those streets. Not shadowing his sister in, he waited for Ballard, who always parked his Renault three or four blocks away, to materialize and vanish through the open entry.

“Leisurely he tackled the two flights of stairs, and once outside the room this aural voyeur most assuredly would have tarried to listen.” (“Eavesdropping on nothing,” Remy was confident, for the same “quiet sex” would have been imposed on Houda.) “Anon impatient, he set about banging, no, ‘gently rapping, rapping at [the] chamber door.’

“M. Ballard, as petrified as Poe’s student, would not have reacted until the tapper grouched, ‘I know what you’re doing, fucking my sister in our bed.’ With the door disconsolately eased ajar, in charged the enraged bull/beau/brother. To a Hamletic hilt he

played the role of the ‘betrayed,’ the victim of *son ami et sa sœur*.

“His tongue failing, M. Ballard stuffed some money into the obtruder’s readily unclenched fists, perhaps all the dinars he had with him, your pharmacies’ discovery.”

Remy did not interject an emendation, “all the dollars.”

After the American’s hasty retreat, the youth “marveled at the efficacy of a veneer of righteousness. This virtue likewise spurred him to assault the bathroom with a vigorous rat-a-tat: ‘Rival sibling,’ he blustered, ‘I would speak with you!’ The door unlatched and the aperture ever widening, brother and sister would now size each other up.”

Measure for measure, thought Remy before uttering the words.

“Popularized by Shakespeare,” replied Foucin, “the expression germinates from your Bible, does it not? ‘And with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.’

“The pompous berating must have swiftly burned itself out—and the pharmacies suggest she appropriately won control of the bulk of the dinars—for at ‘8:45,’ the two arrived at their shack, the time squawked at them by Mme. Bourceli.

“At full tilt the prodigal ran through his allotment, I suspect, only then discerning that his rash feat had deprived him of his steady salary. There followed the days of marking time, with the anxiety building inside him. The skein raveling from this dread leads to the negative of the Koni II sonar panel.

“But how?” Foucin demanded. “Through whom could the drug-carrier have obtained diplomatic contraband? I have much deliberated that quandary since your last Wednesday’s pricking remark about my stream of consciousness.”

He began a metronomic swiveling of his chair, which continued over the course of his explanation, “torturously persuasive” even prior to the climaxing tetrameter from the prophetic Blake.

From “a stormy petrel” in the upper echelon of the PLO legation, Foucin postulated, one seething from the February nineteenth decision by the PLO’s Algerian chief Al-Wazar to halt all prying into the Ballard matter. Not willing to abandon “this serendipitous testament of American rot,” he approached both Belmazoir and Ahmed Chabane, fixed on enmeshing either or both in a plot whose “ultimate target probably was Leroy.”

Preceding Al-Wazar’s interdiction, Chabane had obviously been groomed as a scapegoat, Foucin argued. “After the mission was aborted, ‘Did this malcontented PLO high-up secretly prod M. Chabane toward the blackmail-laced embassy confrontation with M. Ballard?’ It was his PLO friends I wished to question him about before he ‘bolted.’”

Belmazoir was even more exploitable. “Perhaps it was ‘their’ Monday, February twentieth, and Ballard had not called or come looking for him. But the PLO rogue elephant had. Finding the lad mired in his ‘Slough of Despond,’ he acquainted him with much about his ‘friend,’” from his being an inveterate confidant of the American ambassador to his espousal to an Algerian. “‘I’m at your service,’ mayhap he inveighed.”

A blitzed Belmazoir, convinced he had lost “‘my M. John,’ trumpeted that he was breaking off all dealing with ‘this lying Ballard, yet I don’t fancy letting him off scot-free: He’s ripe for extortion. I’ll split with you! But I need something tangible to cow him with.’ This contingency having been foreseen, “Presto! the ‘busy and insinuating’ fomenter pulled from his black-and-white checkered headscarf the strip of acetate.”

The DOD document, “the negative’s provenience,” Foucin explained, “undoubtedly had been harvested months before the Palestinians became aware of a ‘M. John,’” such copies obtainable through their bribing of Algerian workers at Western embassies.

With his right fingertips bobbing along the faux-leather border of the desk pad, he then proposed “a second vagary: Why would M. Ballard seek an assignation with one who had so intimidated him on the fifteenth that he’d rushed, a poorer man, from the room?”

“Perhaps the February twenty-third message in the notebook at Bendari’s, ‘Mo-Mo, ZB disco 7:15 Mon.’ is not an invitation to a meeting but a setting forth of the specifics by M. Ballard for one already mooted by the person addressed, perchance in a call to his embassy office: ‘That I can dial this number tells you much. We must rendezvous. The preferences I’ll allow you to dictate. Convey them, as usual, through Bendari’s.’

“Be that as it may, what’s indisputable is this message was read that afternoon by the fretful lad, who in his resultant elation tipped the café-tender an extravagant five-dinar note, the generosity a sign he expected his pockets before long to be bulging.”

Remy wanted to interrupt, “And what public-minded citizen so quickly alerted the police of the incriminating telephone log?” Still again he refrained.

“In the grove, I speculate, M. Belmazoir did not begin with the menacing exhibited in the Toumi room. Maybe he whined something analogous to ‘Take me, take my sister. Two for one price.’

“Perhaps—do I belabor the adverb?—a fleeing M. Ballard indicated his resolve to sever all constricting ties with both Belmazoirs, who were intent on ‘binding with briars my joys & desires.’”

4

As if artistry, unlike action, must be meditated on, Foucin lengthened his pause by pushing to his feet. “Rebuffed and cashiered, a galled M. Belmazoir sprang the negative, barely visible in the threshold of the disco. He vaunted how he could use it as substantiation that ‘you or even your betrothed, who I’m apprised once worked at your embassy, had peddled diplomatic secrets.’ A panicked M. Ballard snatched at it.

“In their tussle, the fledgling blackmailer, equally rattled, chanced upon a plank. This he smashed against his assailant’s cheek. With the Blakean dismissal echoing—the doom of his apple dreams of a conciliation—he permitted him to crawl across the veranda before producing the *douk-douk*, similarly brought to intensify his threat. In stripping the wallet of its bills, he slipped the negative inside, a red herring that the crime was political.”

Foucin halted. *He’s waiting for me to perfect his hypothesis*, Remy surmised. “So the sister’s deceived. ‘It is not his fault,’ she mewls, believing not that her sibling didn’t commit the murder, but did so to resurrect her honor.”

“Her ‘scaffold of truth,’ to appropriate Mme. Ballard’s conceit, has as its plank of lies her brother’s motive and as its plank of truth his deed. Persuaded that he killed M. Ballard, she’s freighted with the torment that her transgression compelled him to the slaying.”

“Nevertheless, those are only two planks. A scaffold has many,” Remy countered.

“Yet all divide into truth and lies.”

“And pataphysical *perhapses*, a ‘boggy ground to build on.’”

“M. Lazar, it’s you who are manufacturing possibilities. ‘M. Chabane may be the homicide,’ you hint, because of his embassy squabble with M. Ballard. ‘No, it’s M. Medlin, owing to a kindred argument six days previous.’ To lavish pain on the innocent is immeasurably cruel. Isn’t the time to retract such accusations upon us?”

Reseating himself, Foucin merged his splayed-out fingers, raised them so that the tips of their medii stroked his chin, and with closed eyes tilted his neck backward, not unlike a Christian monastic launching his compline prayer.

“The elusive motive—take your pick—is before you.” Foucin’s words flew upward. “And you may unfurl an accommodation *before* him: a delict not prepeded, self-defense, *non-compos-mentis* passion, all mitigating the punishment. He can be spared, but not freed.”

An adorant hand sideward fluttered prior to rejoining the stationary right. “Monsieur, convince him, who’s probably driven by fear of compromising the PLO—savage in their vindictiveness—at least while twinkles the hope M. Vellacott can get him off . . . to confess.

“The affidavit of that vile boy M. Ghazi will be destroyed. His sister, sanctuarized, will be exempted from a public shrift of the dishonor which his profligate conduct must bear the responsibility of instigating. She must be saved!”

This fervency was attended by a stentorian blow of his fist against the bark-brown pad, but its percussive reverberation apparently embarrassed Foucin, for he trawled the hand, no longer compressed, to the desk’s edge and let it slide beneath.

“It is their . . . her sin. Why must all Algiers clamor about it? I know her! She will scream to the judge, to the court, to the country whole, ‘You try the wrong sinner! What my brother did was perpetrated to wash white the scarlet I bedded upon our family’s honor!’

“And all Algiers will cackle in mock credulity, ‘A traitor’s family has honor?’ Not foreseeing that taunt, she also fails to realize the imperative: To recover this familial pride, it is *he* who must act.”

Upon the desk Remy twice drummed his index and middle finger. “You yearn for M. Mohammed to take the step you would, were you in his place.” Not granting Foucin the occasion to assert, “Am I not?” Remy hastened to maintain, “At any rate, that’s for M. Vellacott to determine, what’s to be put before his client.”

Watching Foucin’s anguish dissipate, he gathered that a digression would expedite things. “And did you endure that whacking from your Aunt Fatimah?”

A smile eased into the corners of the commissioner’s lips. “She wrapped my right hand with hers, the fan like a cat’s tail swishing in her left. No rap . . . God help her! She loves me. How will I ever reform?”

He reflected for a few seconds. “I drive them back today. Mona and I plan to sleep over in Arris. You’ll phone tomorrow afternoon with the decision of M. Vellacott?” Foucin started to his feet. “Please excuse me. I must rush home to collect them.”

Out of Algiers a whole day was Remy’s celeritous thought. Even though the door was not yet reached, a suspicion had already begun to sneak in, buttressing his initial disbelief.

“A petition,” he commenced, “for never do I quit you without tendering one. Until I receive M. Vellacott’s instructions, I’ll adhere to the protocol of my trade. On the way up, I inquired about the office of Deputy Inspector Karami. The desk sergeant, who said that he

was on home holiday for Ramadan, wasn't 'authorized' to release his address."

"It's here." Comically—and wishing his gesture to be so perceived—Foucin tapped his right temple. "In our El Harrach suburb, 14 Rue, Villa 9 Beaulieu." Scooting to his desk, he wrote both address and telephone number on a memo sheet. "I'll ring up M. Hussein, entreating him to accord you the utmost cooperation."

Remy had embarked on his "As always . . ." when Foucin, cutting him off with a "No, unnecessary," bent forward to twist the knob.

"I suppose in this evening's nipping gloom you'll skulk to a telephone booth, your conduit to another, perhaps the selfsame Algerian who grappled the 'floated bribe' of your Cairo colleague. He will, in turn, contact 'your client' about 'the client of your client,' and all will be settled, or . . . continue . . . disquieted."

Both pauses quite unmerited, Remy insisted to himself while observing the visage before him widen as if to convey it had unearthed a treasure.

"Ah, that's it, my professional colleague!" his hand knapping Remy's shoulder once. "Why you bought the thread-worn off-white *djellaba*, tattered brown *cachabia*, white head scarf, and dust-colored sandals in the Casbah warehouse. The rest of the gifts I could understand, but none of those seemed suitable for a wife."

He smirked. "You miss the skullduggery this case is lacking since your excursion to Zaracova. Now you have your disguise"—he contoured Remy's physique in the air—"and can slip into 'the foul womb of night,' there to dial your number in the decorated 'mysterious plus.'"

"A family's honor," Remy contemplated, exiting the Gendarmerie. "No longer than to tumble down a flight of stairs had it required," that span of time from "sleep over in Arris" to "Now you have your disguise."

In their gusto, his punctuating guffaws had eclipsed Foucin's. "As goodly humble . . . as your . . . 'char's,' and without . . . the gender bent . . . of my beach foray."

Free of the building, he vexatiously ruminated: "What we topple the women seek to salvage and restore. Why am I here? My father will spit in my face while howling, 'Where is my Noura? Allah, protect me from this devil!'"

No pat reply at hand, a silence accompanied him down the perron of the Gendarmerie, onto the sidewalk of Boulevard Abderazak, across it, and under the shaved and flattened plane tree, where, finally in a justifying submission, Remy whispered into his own ear, "*Vray est que quia plus n'en dict*: 'It is true I am at a nonplus and say no more.'"

5

As Nemmiche's taxi swept through the broad streets of Beaulieu, with its spacious French colonial style villas and mid-size stuccoed walls, Remy was pondering that at times human beings, reconciled to giving up as a distinct species, had not followed through. Homo sapiens perdurance had been no certainty, still it had, somehow and repeatedly, gotten beyond its "nonplus."

True, he could return to Marie and his daughters, and they would be none the wiser of

why he had gone or that he had come home empty-handed. But that would be a betrayal, the same as endorsing the easier option which always stares a life-form in the face (presuming it has one), “Curse life and die.”

His conclusion was that life has persevered because a “nonplus” necessarily posits a “plus,” conventionally entitled “God.” Each of the “nonverbal” species, he speculated, intuitively affirms this affirmation as the challenge of ego, that of all the self-deemed entities it is fittest, and thus most deserving, to survive. This “plus” had constrained each breed, humanity included, to look outward, farther than itself.

“To a connived French disguise.” He garbled his words with a cough, thereby not transmitting a signal that he wished to engage Nemniche in conversation.

In the driveway to the two-story white stone villa, an old man in a pea-green *gandoura* was polishing a jouvence-blue Mercedes 300SL coupe. Thinking of Foucin’s battered Peugeot, Remy mused, “O to be a deputy inspector, not a *commissaire divisionnaire!*”

Karami was sprawled across the middle cushions of the gold-white wall-length sofa of the den, clad in matching robin’s-egg pajamas and robe, “both silk.” He made no effort to hide the green bottle of Stella Artois, its base resting on a puffy left “moob.” By fiddling with a TV remote, his left hand eventually reduced the volume of the disco music.

A glimpse at the screen transported Remy to Trimalchio’s, albeit here the naked boys were girls and “probably well below a ‘ripe twenty-three.’” Keeping his eyes on the set, Karami extended no greetings. “Foucin encouraged me to ‘lock jaws’ with you. So?”

Remy assumed a chair which placed his back to the television. He opened with a routine exploration of the inchoate phase of the investigation. The sequence of “uh-huh” grunts confirmed that the answerer was only minimally listening.

“My compliments! What significant progress you had made!” Remy slapped his knee, the flump jarring Karami’s attention from the screen. “*You!* . . . had already arrested and built a case against the prime suspect. Suddenly an overseer tromps in, deposing you.” This pronoun, correspondingly emphasized, was followed by an upbraiding chortle.

Karami guided the beer over his swollen belly to his crotch where its punt scratched leisurely. The bottle having been drawn upward, he gulped down a ten-second swig. A belching cough produced a spatter of globules which bubbled from his nostrils.

“Some . . . some progress,” hedged Karami, bringing the clutched bottle to his bulbous nose where his thumb and index pinched its septum. The thin dribble extracted he gawked at before lowering the Stella Artois to the sofa.

“Your report states it was an anonymous source who enabled you to effect the speedy apprehension.”

“Aahm,” the slurred “uh-huh” oozed out. He jiggled the beer held in a right-hand cradle.

“Still, the ‘tattler’ wasn’t innominate . . . unless M. Foucin has lost all titular status?” The bottle slipped, and before he could regasp it, a short stream of beer flowed onto the silk robe and pajamas.

“*Ella’ana!*” Karami swore, Arabic for “Shit!” *And not a single of the four syllables indistinct*, beamed Remy to himself.

“You score that from Foucin?” Both his glower and rising intonation suggested he had been betrayed by his superior, who had conferred a confidence on Remy of which he had not been forewarned.

“But M. Foucin was present that night, in fact, supervising the search for M. Ballard.”

“He may have been. Recollection’s foggy. Anything else?”

“A final *fanfreluche*.” Karami’s puzzlement shone through his recrudesced disdain. “It was in the course of *your* tenure on the case a crucial piece of evidence was confiscated: The message book from Bendari’s points to an assignation between Messrs. Ballard and Belmazoir in the grove. I’ve studied well, but can divine nowhere how you deduced to pluck that needle from the haystack that’s Bab el Oued.”

With no reply imminent, Remy subjoined, “A fresh the omnipresent M. Foucin?” He dawdled before adding, “Aahm?”

Karami’s left thumb jabbed at a button on the remote, the music at once blaring from the television.

Startled, Remy wheeled round, and for a regretful second across his view was emblazoned the spectacle: Five teenage Algerian girls were rubbing their nipples against the potbellied torso of a facsimile of Karami.

With his eyes averted, he shouted above the Village People tune, “I fear I infringe upon your Ramadan fast. Adieu, monsieur.”

Remy had gained the Spanish cedar door exit when the voice from the sofa let fly its bellow, “Yeah, Foucin was there, and yeah, the all-nosy bastard sent us to Bendari’s!”

Struggling to catch the outburst being shrieked at him, he cognized why Karami had punched the volume to deafening. “A blessing on you and ‘the French five letters,’ if you can pin something on M. High-and-Mighty!”

“*Bâtard?*” with tongue in cheek, queried Remy, during his stroll past the bowing Mercedes polisher to Nemmiche’s taxi. “*Au contraire*, he told me he was an *orphelin*.”

6

The café, five blocks from the Belmazoirs’ residence, was open afternoons not to serve coffee but to furnish its regular daytime customers—quite a few, given Algiers’ thirty percent unemployment—a spot to while away the anxious tedium of Ramadan.

On Remy’s entry at 2:30, only one was availing himself of this courtesy. A graybeard, with shoulders drooped over the thermoplastic table, was napping, incontestably having situated himself at a window table to advertise his hope that someone would invite him home for the breaking of the *sawm* (“fast”).

The other fourteen dark-red tables were unoccupied. Nonetheless, all would be filled in under an hour since at three or so the neighborhood men, with a musty taste from the ten and one-half hours of fasting, would awake from their siesta. Gradually they would converge on cafés like Bendari’s for dominoes till the 4:10 call to Asr. All would be endeavoring to take their minds off their irritable stomachs while remaining pleasant to the world around them.

Behind and halfway down the stool-less pewter-gray counter hunched a burly man in his

forties, with a bird's-nest beard sprouting fingers, for his chin was palm-wedged. *Dreaming on his feet*, Remy discerned, just before the eyes intuitively snapped open.

Straightening himself, with an unforced smile, he welcomed his customer in French, "Monsieur, granted that you're a tourist, I may serve you tea or coffee." He nodded toward the empty shelves in back of him. "That's all I can offer you. No alcoholic beverages may be dispensed during Ramadan."

"*Café noir.*" As soon as the bartender had exited through the swinging door to the kitchen, Remy turned toward the black rotary-dial wall phone at the far end of the counter. Next to it hung a spiral student notebook, hitched to a bent nail by a leather shoestring looped through its top four coils.

There was not, "and probably never had been," a penholder for the same reason there were no *sucriers* or ashtrays about, Remy observed. "Omar, tempt not with your material belongings," his father, perched on the stool in their small grocer, had instructed him. (And so the women of Islam, a Muslim man's "most prized possession," were locked away.)

At the stage that the deep-brown coffee beans were being pressed into a thick syrup, the base of what was styled Turkish coffee in France, but Arabic coffee in Algeria, Remy sauntered over to the phone. It straddled the jut of the L-shaped *comptoir*, thereby allowing customers at proximal tables to handle calls when Belghiche was in the kitchen.

At the top of the page which the *calepin* was opened to, there was a big Arabic "11, today's date." Directly below, in pell-mell scribbling were five messages, the first two illustrative: "Ahmed G, contact Hassan" and "Abdulaziz T, after Isha', the cinema. Mahmoud." The scripts of both were uniform, doubtless Fouad's.

Flipping back to the preceding sheet, labeled "10," Remy counted eighteen messages, recto and verso, fourteen of which were crossed through and had the Arabic *paid* scrawled alongside. The sole page before it, "9," contained sixteen, all except one so marked.

As everything else in Muslim society "not involving women," the communications were "public," a battle-scarred cultural axiom stressed by Mohammed: Anyone could have conned the message, "Mo-Mo, ZB disco 7:15 Mon."

"It's fifty centimes to use the phone." Letting fall the book, Remy retraced his steps. When, by not bestirring, he denoted that he would drink the coffee at the zinc-covered counter, the café-tender set a tin of sugar in front of him.

"Thank you. You're very kind, M. Belghiche."

This cognomination not anticipated, the café manager sought to mask his astoundment, his success "*faible, au mieux.*" Remy placed a ten-dinar bill on the counter, but as Fouad's right hand extended with the correct change of eight dinars, his advanced to grip the saucer. The reaction compelled the barkeep to position the bills alongside the sugar bowl.

After a brief interval, he spoke, "You're here on this Mo-Mo thing."

"Yes. Employed by the attorney of M. Belmazoir."

"The imported lawyer. I've already been interviewed by one from him." Fouad seized on a diversion. "Is the coffee not to your liking?"

"I'm sure it's excellent, a potable par excellence. Still, a glance at the cubed sugar made me realize it's too humid for coffee."

"So that's why you were eying the pages." Remy shifted his gaze to the eight dinars. "I

took the message myself. (The police impounded the book. Its content, I assume, you've had translated.) Mo-Mo read it, even gesturing for me to chuck him a pen. That's his crossed-out line and his inscribed *paid*."

Fouad folded his arms resolutely. "He gave me five dinars, a grossly inflated tip for a fifty-centime call and apprised me that when the man rang back to tell him he'd be there. I think he'd been on a restive lookout for it, daily stopping by every three hours, it seemed, to check his messages the five days before it came. Mo-Mo normally swung by twice a day.

"The message at first seemed to lift his spirits, but an hour later, I spied him buried in that far corner table, still humped over the only beer he'd ordered. If a chum wandered over, inferring Mo-Mo would 'stand a brew,' he cold-shouldered him. Asudden he streaked out as if just recalling his Plo deliveries.

"The foreigner's next-day call for verification wasn't received until 1:30. (Being a Friday, we open after the noon sermon and prayers.) Yet Mo-Mo delayed scouting it out till five, and its reading garnered a forbearing smirk. Nervous in the stretch leading up to the message of your twenty-third, he was pensive the four days after."

Accepting that the *pourboire* on the table barely recompensed for the "psychologically rich" divulgence, Remy withdrew a turquoise-blue fifty-dinar bill from his wallet and situated it atop the eight. "The notebook's always open, available for anyone's perusal?"

Belghiche palpably was struggling to control his breathing. "Sure, in the same way, supposing you could decipher Arabic, you'd have been privy to today's five messages."

"You told the police the message was enounced in a second-language French."

"Not halting, but a non-native French."

"'Mo-Mo, ZB disco 7:15 Mon.' Anyone who browsed through the book would correlate Mo-Mo with Mohammed Belmazoir?"

"His nickname, employed by all the regulars."

"The caller did not use 'Mo-Mo.'"

"No. He said, 'Please convey a message to M. Mohammed Belmazoir.'"

"It wasn't a secret that he was 'at the beck' of a foreigner?"

Fouad wearily slouched across the counter. "The neighborhood was aware, even expected it from the grandson of a traitor. Mo-Mo was the target of messages from Western men, occasionally women, from the time he was fourteen."

"When did they start from the—let us designate him—the American?"

"Around eight months ago. That's from the homicide."

"And the other 'clients' continued to ring up?"

"Initially, yes." Belghiche's lips pursed. "But it's been at least a half year since the last, a German. I remember because of what Mo-Mo, inebriated into mischief, gibed. 'I'll remunerate you double, M. Fouad, if the next time the dirigible dials for me, you dirge, "Poor lad, he's HIV-dead.'"

Remy felt he could not jeopardize the rapport by not snickering. "With such prankish wit, he must have had many buddies here?"

"There the counterpart of his father, who also did his dreary carousing at Bendari's before he—shall we say, 'bottled in bond'?—staggered off the cliff." Fouad's loosely interlocked fingers tightened into a grip. "Provided Mo-Mo was footing, some would bunch

up around him. Only after he'd left would they snipe, tagging him effeminate and the scion of a traitor's family."

Mme. Bourceli's image: A portion of the money from Ballard was expended on drinks for those who would not sit with him unless he bought. *Giving or receiving*, Remy mused, *the stripling could not escape the moil of prostitution.*

"Quite a dazzling recollection you have of his response to the Zaracova message!"

"Not simply his tip but also his routine bolsters my memory. Traipsing over, to the ballpoint I'd tossed, he'd clipped that stupefying five dinars. 'Thanks, M. Fouad. Tick me off.' To iterate, that's his line through the message and his notation beside it. Mo-Mo was nice about bringing back the pen and without fail paid his fifty centimes on the spot."

From his crouching position, Fouad shrugged. "What he did was wrong, yet he never treated me rudely, for example, hallooing me as '*walad.*' That's Arabic for 'boy.' Is this the belly of a child?" he laughed, slapping his paunch.

Remy chuckled along, the jollity brimming into his culminating question, "'*Walad! Walad!*' That Tuesday you telephoned the police about the message book, did some thirsty, sodden patron oblige you to outshout that puckish denigration?"

His grin still in place, Fouad acknowledged at once, "But it was not I! News of the murder and of Mo-Mo's arrest had chilled my memory. I was still in a stupor that Wednesday morning at eight when Deputy Inspector Karami and three gendarmes charged in. They beelined for the phone, yanked the book from its shoelace, scanned it, and without so much as an '*As-salaamu 'alaikum!*' ('Peace be upon you!') rushed out.

"That dramatic hint revived the message, and not to appear I had withheld evidence, forthwith I rang up the gendarmerie to report it, although, I must confess, I felt I was betraying my—the neighborhood's—Mo-Mo."

Remy slid the fifty-eight dinars toward Fouad. "'Tick me off,'" he quoted, the words more to himself than to the café manager.

7

The residence of the American ambassador is one of Algiers' most impregnable buildings. Around its sandstone-sheeted concrete wall, as high as a mid-size palm tree, marines are stationed at its front and rear gates and double-man sentry boxes halfway down the other sides. Unmarked cars from Sûreté Nationale, Foucin's bailiwick, cruise or are parked a block away.

Nevertheless, Remy had no problems gaining entry, for at the point he was tweaking the white gold bezel of his diamond tie pin, Remoune dialed to inform him, "Your limousine awaits."

When the call had come, a few minutes past ten, with its fleetly reached capstone, "Elbert's bolted!" Remy had been crisscrossing the drawing room of his suite.

Two hours earlier, "Paris is pleased," his liaison had sycophantically begun. "That the negative was planted on Ballard has piqued Directeur's interest." He evaded any cavil about Remy's dereliction in not telephoning the previous night.

After the brief summary of Ballard's affair with Houda, Mohammed's contravention, what Foucin made of this, and the exhortation he was to deliver, his liaison protested, "Of course, you won't pass on to Belmazoïr any such message!"

"And let M. Foucin?" appealed Remy, biting scoff in his tone.

"Ah yes, I comprehend. Girded with arguments, you'll convince him to spurn the overture. De rigueur, fax 'Vellacott' tonight seeking his approval. Your sojourn here must be prolonged until this celluloid muddle's cleared up. Ring me two days hence . . . if convenient. Did I mention that Paris is pleased?"

With his hands clasped behind his back, Remy had negotiated the twenty-one paces from the window to the farthest wall of the suite's sitting room, all the time spurring himself to storm into the bedroom, tear open the souk bag, don his disguise, and in a mad dash by Reception whoop to the startled Remoune, "If M. Foucin dials from Arris, enlighten him that I'm Casbah-bound, there to salute my father, Ibrahim Naaman ben Ismail, give him Ramadan greetings, and beg for his."

Volte-facing, during the subsequent steps Remy dwelt on Marie, how "not pausing to pack," he must career to the airport and board the first plane which would most rapidly reunite him with her.

Seven strides to a wall table on the left, a retraced seven, an additional seven, and its return were devoted to his mother and Noura.

Barely halting at this well-trod intersection, he scuffed again to the window, castigating himself for not having secured Leila's number while obtaining Karami's.

If so, he could have precipitated his own assault: "I've just finished chapter 14 of *Decline*—Constantine has reconsolidated the Empire—and reluctant to plunge into Gibbon's onslaught against my church, I have the rest of the night on my hands. However, even had I not, I'd reserve time to prove to you what a monster this Ballard was."

At that instant the phone had rung. Without pleasantries, Leroy commenced, "M. Lazar, I must see you. I'll dispatch a limousine." He spoke like a person out of breath, each significant tagmeme interrupted by either the taking in or letting out of a burst of air.

A Godsend, extricating me from this constrictive room, Remy had resolved, when, as if to ensure his assent, Leroy blurted out what Medlin had done.

In the course of the drive, he reckoned the innocents Ballard had entangled. Leila, Houda, Mohisen, Belsches, and the Leroy's had all been seduced by his even-keeled charm. His "exquisite subtilty" was such that none of them, Mohammed now included, seemed desirous of obliterating him from their minds, on which he still exerted "the halo of a hold."

Of one of these, Foucin had proclaimed, "She must be saved!" banging his fist against the desk. Remy entertained a scene, say, between February sixteenth and the twenty-sixth where he, the "all-nosy," had chanced upon proof that Houda had been debauched by this fiend.

Did the impassioned blow against the desk pad signal what the commissioner's enraged reciprocation had been, the plank smashed against Ballard's face?

The political and the personal set aside, could it be "*un meurtre moral*," one which only a person would commit who so respected the law that he could put himself above it?

8

With a folio-sized book spread across his lap, Leroy was in the study, dark except for the light channeled onto the ambassador's shoulders by a shepherd's hook floor lamp. He motioned Remy to a black leather chair opposite his.

"Yes, Elbert's bolted. This morning in my office as we reviewed the day's agenda, he was in high spirits, his day off having obviously refreshed him. Shortly before eleven, in a frenzy he scurried in. 'It's all the buzz, Mr. Lazar's visit yesterday.' He buried his face in his hands. 'Everyone here believes I . . . I had something to do . . . with Paul's death.'"

Medlin had pleaded for an immediate stateside transfer. "A career-wrecking option, I knew, for such a retreat would only magnify the suspicion you've foisted on him. I urged, decreed, 'Elbert, take an afternoon beach drive to soothe your mind! Forget M. Lazar!'"

At seven, a less distraught Medlin telephoned. "'Some downtime. If I can get out of this city for eight or nine days, I'll be all right.' I told him I'd come over.

"As he let me in, I observed a packed duffel and overnighter. 'A trek to the Sahara. I've done three to the Great Sand Seas, all relaxing, but not the stony plateaus, Tidikelt or Tademait. You may have seen parked out front the Land Rover 110 I rented.'"

"By fleeing, aren't you reifying M. Lazar's insinuations?"

"He'll ferret out more!" Elbert agonized. 'I lied to you: Not from the Arab workers did the gossip originate about Paul's seaside romps. During the last two weeks of January and the first of February, when he had been selected for D.C., I stalked him three Mondays, hoping (how horrible I am!) to espy something flagitious to discredit him in your eyes.

On January twenty-third, he tailed Ballard to Zaracova. "'He swam till near sunset, dressed, and headed toward its palm-and-pine boscage. After ten minutes, he exited, walked to his Renault, and drove to where the protruding grove curves the highway. The moon was full so I could discern the young man who darted out and hopped in, Belmazoïr, I realized afterward from his photos.'" He had followed them without success.

"His calm dissipating," Leroy continued, "he ran his fingers, stiffened by nerves, through his hair. 'The meddlesome old attendant for certain will fix me there!' The second time, the thirtieth, nothing: He went from the embassy straight to his apartment.

"The next week, after spending two hours at the Palace of the Nations beach, alone he headed back to the city. Above the Casbah, he veered onto a side street near the jail. Yes, in the vicinity of the Rue Toumi apartment building. Once again I lost him.

"On the thirteenth of February, you announced that I, not Paul, would be on the Washington list. Thank God, I never had to sink so low as I knew I could, until . . .'

"His voice trailed off, and his drooped *paupières* lifted, exposing triple-textured eyes: frantic, defiant, resigned. 'Recoup! I will go! Sir, please grant me your permission!'

"What could I do but consent? M. Lazar, you realized a briar prick would be as effective as a *douk-douk* in panicking Elbert. You goaded him to pry into the recesses of everything that's private and personal, that keeps each one of us human and individual. He suffers, and I suffer. He left tonight at eight."

From his lap to an end table, he transferred the book, Xenophon's *Anabasis*, the gold-leaf title stamped on its crimson spine. "Your Excellency, I'm enjoined by my client M.

Vellacott not to gather evidence inimical to anyone. I'm simply to compile that which will cast a doubt on the accusations confronting his client."

"The client of [your] client," Leroy sighed with a smirk. "Unlike Paul, Elbert merely longed to be my lapdog. Ad nauseam I iterate, 'The fault is mine.'"

In the ride over, Remy had decided it would be unwarranted, given the ambassador's cooperation, not to divulge the intricacies of Ballard's masterminded *ménage à trios*.

"Sir, if I may employ the familiar address, to you he was a 'Damon.' Thus my impartation will be more-than-the-most fell: His perversion, his need to exploit every axis of sexuality, was murkier and more profound than I predicate you ever dreamed." Remy embarked upon a description of Ballard's affair with Houda, assimilating "the shock and revulsion which 'ice-flood'" over Leroy's visage.

"Not content to employ a sanctioned hustler in his deviancy, *votre meilleur ami* also had the compulsion to entice into his sexual trammel one whom I deem to be a guileless young woman. Antipodal to his relationship with M. Belmazoïr, freely—gladly—entered into by this feckless teen, M. Ballard subtly entwined Mlle. Belmazoïr, I posit, through the façade of kindness, tendering her money to procure medicine for her dying mother."

Remy paused to emphasize his conviction: "Sir, this you know: 'Chaos is come again' when no moral disparity exists between corrupting one who collaborates in the depravity and one who's helpless to resist its snares. Can you condone this?"

Pushing himself up, Leroy slipped into the darkness—"he seemed to know his way"—leaving Remy to peer at the light-invested empty chair. Though he heard no traversing over the carpet, the extenuation that at length issued forth was a distance from him.

"But he saved my life. Yes, over the years this . . . idiosyncrasy peeped out, yet so well bridled, never with a hue and cry, except for some minor incident in the Philippines. The pressure of this ill-conceived marriage . . ." That pendency was sustained until, stealing back into the circle of illumination, he reseated himself.

"M. Lazar, four days have lapsed since I implored you to track down and expose the murderer of my friend, exonerating him of these whirring imputations. Yet what you bring besmirches him the more. Desist, I beseech you. I'll quintuple the fee of M. Vellacott. Elbert's 'tranquil mind'—my 'content,' in as much as I destabilized it—will return. I fear, concerning him, what else you will unearth."

"You're afraid of that black thing, the negative strip."

"Or that sable-haired, raven-eyed woman Leila." Leroy's objurgation was barely audible. "What did she lead my dear Paul into?" The knuckle of his index rubbed his nether lip. "M. Lazar, let others discover—"invent"—the truth. I'll intercede with Commissioner Foucin, even President Bendjedid, to quash the indictment against the prisoner. However, soon it will be all about. My dear Paul!" His clenched fists quivered. "He saved my life!"

With an upward thrust from the black leather *fauteuil*, Remy gained his feet. "For the second time today I've been advised to step aside. When those who do not court the truth demand another to throw it over, is not that in itself reason to espouse its bond?" He chose not to promote the corollary, that hurled in his face *de novo* was the public shame of one who (her/his adherent concluded) did not deserve it.

Having vainly accorded an appropriate time for Leroy to rise, Remy strode to the door.

Glimpsing over his shoulder, he perceived Leroy's hair smothered by his hands, the aureole now riveted on his clasped fingers. "Your Excellency, will you walk with me?"

In Leroy's brief ascension through the incandescent shaft, he detected an indurate, self-deprecating grimace. "He's not accustomed to being denied." At his side, the Ambassador pulled back *la porte de cabinet de travail*. The effulgence from the hall revealed a countenance suddenly mellowed, "even serene." Leroy thanked him for his on-short-notice appearance and apologized for not having offered any refreshments.

At the front entrance, having waved away a servant, he held open one of the two leaves of the double door. "By the way I pursued some sleuthing of my own. A fax of your Staatsveiligheid dossier arrived this morning.

"Since regrettably I'm not yet on 'first names' with Herr Albert Raes, the director of your intelligence agency, we acquired it through the broking of its French counterpart DGSE. Scanning the list of your previous assignments, I can understand your devotion to M. Vellacott. Only two photographs, but both capture your distinguished air."

Then, its artificiality apparent, his countenance adopted a quizzical expression. "One minutia puzzles me. Your profile lists your wife's name as Evelyn. Last Thursday when you were speaking about her sewing, didn't you call her Marie? Either you're a bigamist, my friend," chuckled Leroy, "or M. Vellacott keeps double books on you."

Remy jacked up the collar of his CK overcoat, the wind having stiffened. "The truth is more matter-of-fact," he beamed, though his mind was racing from Leroy's "double books" to the bidding Fouad had been given, "Tick me off," and on to an additional forty-four years when he had intruded upon his father bent over his grocer's account books.

"*Binding with briars*" the three, he recited to himself.

"Eminently simpler. The same résumé lists the year of my birth as '39—off by one. Someone needs to check on the black, uh, gray matter of M. Vellacott's typist."

Notes and commentary: Chapter 13: “Binding with Briars”

April 16 (Sunday night) and April 17 (Monday)

p. 201: SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TITLE OF CHAPTER 13: The title is taken from William Blake’s lyric “The Garden of Love,” in which the speaker censures “priests” for “binding with briars my joys & desires.”

Foucin cites this line in speculating what Ballard could have said to Mohammed to emphasize his desire to end his relationship with both him and his sister (207).

The line is recalled by Remy on the last page of the chapter (218) as he connects an incident from the past with two happenings of the present.

Furthermore, the *alim* like the priest in Blake’s poem, according to Ghazi, spoke of the “slaughter” of Americans as being “blessèd” if it “unbinds” not “the sexual thorns of our faith [Islam]” (205). According to this concept, Ballard’s murder would have been justified if it had not shown a Muslim involved in perverted sexual acts, a slander on their religion.

References to thorns were prominent in the anecdote of the women of Tizi Aimoula on 9.138 and 150-51 where the thorns about the young French corporal’s head some considered had a Christian symbolism.

Leroy uses the other reference to the thorn image when he accuses Remy of persecuting Medlin: “M. Lazar, you realized a briar prick would be as effective as a *douk-douk* in panicking Elbert” (216).

The briar image previously occurred on 1.10, where a briar of an ivy plant scratched Ballard’s ankle, a pricking which foreshadows the piercing wound of the *douk-douk*. The image will reappear in three later chapters: 15.240, 19.331, and 21.362.

Finally, the word “bind” (or its negative “unbind”) is associated with the “bond” or connection/disconnection theme of the novel, which will be discussed in detail in the 15.253 notes, N15:49-50.

In chap. 13, the ailing Mme. Belmazoir will speak of the bond and of loneliness, in the process incorporating unknowingly some of the words of Blake’s line: “My Houda and my Mohammed! My joy and my desire! Tonight, together! The bond! . . . Loneliness is frightening!” (203)

pp. 201-18: CHRONOLOGY OF CHAPTER 13: Sections 1 and 2 follow Remy who, using Ghazi’s account of his tailing Houda on the night of Feb. 15, reaches her surprising destination (Sunday, 8:45 to 9:39 p.m.). Afterward he returns to the Al-Nigma, where he goes to bed near midnight.

Sections 3 and 4 are set in Foucin's office the next morning (10:00 – 10:26). In section 5, Remy subsequently taxis to the home of the first person, Deputy Inspector Karami, who was in charge of the Ballard case and interviews him (10:26 – 11:13).

In section 6, Remy speaks with Fouad Belghiche, the manager of Bendari's Café, where Ballard's Zaracova message was received (2:13 – 2:47).

The principal setting of sections 7 and 8 is the residence of Leroy, who at 10:03 phoned Remy to request a meeting. There is a flashback to Remy's brief telephone report to his French embassy liaison (8:00 – 8:08 p.m.). The meeting with Leroy lasts from 10:45 – 11:02.

pp. 201-03: SECTION 1

p. 201: "As every North African traveler knows": The lack of availability of street maps of Algiers in Algiers crosses Remy's mind as he walks from Jardin Marengo to the intersection of two main streets of the Casbah, the Middle Street and Rue Professor Soualah Mohammed (8:45 – 8:52).

p. 201: *fonctionnaire*: In French, "state employee; functionary."

p. 201: lower: to scowl or frown.

p. 201: "flea's aedeagus": "the intromittent [copulatory] organ of a male insect; phallus" (*Webster's Third*).

The genital apparatus of a male flea consists of the penetrating aedeagus, its armature of protective dorsal and ventral plates located in the eighth and ninth abdominal segments, and claspers or claws, in shape like the pinchers of a lobster, which are used by the male flea to detain and hold the female during copulation.

Penetration by the aedeagus, which contains spines, lobes, and tickling devices that resemble a feather duster, can take up to ten minutes, and copulation itself can last between three and nine hours, during which the male is beneath, not on top of, the female.

Once inside the female, the aedeagus follows a meandering route to the ovarian place where the sperm is deposited.

Although the aedeagus (or any part of a flea) could be considered diminutive (the inverted meaning of the Algerian tourist official), it does take up a third of a flea's body and when uncoiled is over twice the length of this body, ratios which make it the largest male organ, relative to its body size, of any insect.

p. 201: "The Holy Qur'an forbids": For instance, 45:7 states, "Woe to each sinful dealer in Falsehood."

Other verses in the Qur'an which forbid the spreading of falsehood or lies are 2:42, 4:82, 9:119, 16:105, 17:81, and 24:11.

- p. 201: The Stevenses: Valerie and Jon Stevens, *Algeria and the Sahara: A Handbook for Travelers* (London, 1977). They were cited in the 6.91 note and 8.130 notes.

Later references to them will occur in the 17.368 and 18.393 notes, but they are silently used on many other pages of my novel.

Here I have emended their account a little. The Stevenses were seeking a map of the country Algeria, not a street map of Algiers. (However, later internet research revealed that even in 2000, it was impossible to find a street map of the city in Algiers.)

The Stevenses' search took them to the Tourist Office in Algiers where they were told by an official there were none. His insistence continued even after they pointed out that there was one tacked up on the wall behind him.

Stonewalled there, they got an explanation from a tourist official in another town. He said that there was indeed such a map, but it had a "millimetre" error in it which prevented the map from being circulated. He assured the Stevenses that this glaring mistake would "soon" be corrected and the map would become available.

Remy's comment that the DGSE had not put an agency copy of a street map of Algiers in the 2269 locker is simply meant to round off his story.

Although it is not stated, Remy realizes that DGSE wanted to control his movements.

If he needed any directions to the "changed" Algiers, his French embassy liaison would provide him with that information.

Otherwise, the focus of his mission should be on the prison where Mohammed is.

- p. 201: "bound for a mosque and Isha' prayers": These prayers were performed from 8:50 to 9:05 p.m. on the date of this chapter.
- p. 201: Rue Soualah Mohammed: The major east-west street which traverses the entire length of the northern part of the Casbah.
The Middle Street, running north-southwest, intersects with Soualah about fifty yards below Blvd. Hadad Abderrazak, on which is located Foucin's Gendarmerie. For Hadad, see the 4.55 note.
- p. 201: decussate: intersect.
- p. 201: "With Mama on her watch and me in her wake": That is, Bourceli is temporarily in the Belmazoirs' shack and Ghazi is following Houda.
- p. 201: "she spotted the parked Renault": As was his habit, Ballard had arrived early.
- p. 201: "who was fusing his time with Ghazi's account": The following chart shows that the trek of Houda, partially followed by Ghazi, on Feb. 15, and that of Remy on the night of this chapter, Apr. 16, lasts around thirty minutes:

	Houda /Ghazi on Feb. 15	Remy on Apr. 16
Left Rue Soualah.	7:02	8:58
Arrived Boulevard Abderazak.	7:10	9:06
Passed Gendarmerie and Jail.	7:14	9:10
Down Abderazak and two Blocks of Taleb Avenue, where they turn off.	7:21	9:17
Zigzagging in this rundown red-light area; Ghazi and Remy stopped by voice. A frightened Ghazi bolts for home.	7:29	9:24
Houda proceeds to Toumi; after one- minute conversation with prostitute, Remy likewise reaches the flat's entrance.	7:31	9:27
Houda walks to third floor; Remy does same.	7:34	9:29

p. 201: “walked the largely deserted three blocks”: Rue Soualah has emptied because the timespan of Remy’s passage down this street is 8:53 – 8:58 during Isha’ prayers.

p. 201: ingress: the act of entering (here, the Renault).

p. 201: “in the crowd released by the mosque”: For Remy, the time is around 9:08; the prayers ended at 9:05, so this street is now crowded.

p. 201: “The Great One”: See the 6.91 note, N6:29-30, for a list of the fourteen times the epithet for Foucin is used.

p. 201: “for am not I doing his bidding?”: The person referred to as orchestrating this night’s foray is not mentioned.

p. 201: Taleb Mohammed Avenue: The straight quarter-of-a-mile Blvd. Abderazak at its western end becomes the dipping Taleb, a long avenue extending westward for three-quarters of a mile.
As Ghazi notes, Houda walked only two blocks down Taleb before turning northward into a rundown section (my invention in the novel) of Algiers.

p. 201: “why that compulsion?”: Ghazi wondered why Houda had not taken the westward route along Soualah which would have led her directly to Taleb. What

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had compelled her to take a detour which would bring her under the office window of Foucin?

This latter question is not answered in the text, but Remy would have realized the reason: This detour is part of Houda's mental torture of herself for proceeding to a rendezvous which she knows is immoral.

For the same reason, once she had received the key she had "brooded over it prior to dropping it into her purse."

p. 201: M. Le Grand: The French epithet to denominate Foucin is first given by Mme. Bourceli on 11.173.

See its note, N11:9, which lists its seven occurrences in the novel. Like the fourteen times "The Great Man" is used, the number seven is symbolic.

- p. 202: Vacheron: Remy's watch. For his Vacheron Constantin timepiece see its 4.60 note, N4:27.
- p. 202: "One block, then right; another, left": The frequent turns in this squalid area of Bab el-Oued confuse Ghazi just as those of the Casbah had addled Medlin on 11.180-81.
- p. 202: dree: In Scottish, "dree" as a noun means "misfortune" or "suffering" (*Webster's Third*), but my use of it also has the connotation of the verb form, "dread" or "fear."
- p. 202: "You Houda": A variant of "this Houda" used by Ghazi on 11.175-76 and 12:197-99.
- p. 202: *ruelle*: French for "lane."
- p. 202: "you could have entreated another's aid, closer to her, if aware that he was also in pursuit": Not apparent at this point, but a play upon distance and relationship.
- p. 202: "Not a hair of hopeful grass": From "Song of Myself" where Whitman states that "the flag of my disposition" was "woven" "out of hopeful green stuff [grass]" (101), which he later calls "the beautiful uncut hair of graves" (110).
- p. 202: "apart from our shadows we have no friends." The quote is the first line of a couplet in *Chinggis Khan: The Golden History of the Mongols* (Folio Society, 1993), chap. 2, p. 15: "Apart from our shadows we have no friends."
- p. 202: "ramp": "a bold woman" (*Webster's Third*).
- p. 202: "her wanton wooing synchronous with Isha' summons": This first summons to midevening prayers came at 7:29.
- p. 202: "a voice without a body": Remy contrasts the prostitutes of this area not with Ballard's corpse but with his silence while engaged in sex with Mohammed (4.64, where it is specified that Ballard "would never 'banter' during sex"). However, Remy's description of the face of Ballard's corpse mentioned "the sucked-in, gnarled left side" (5.69).
- p. 202: "job in Algiers, if you're fortunate enough to snare one": Later in the chapter (211), Remy will cite Algiers' unemployment rate at the time of the novel as thirty percent.
- p. 202: *cicerone*: A tourist guide.
- p. 202: "*a plant of Foucin's*": Remy's mind reveals that he is certain that Foucin had arranged for Ghazi to approach him at the Bourcelis' apartment building with the

lure that he had information about Houda.

This thought clarifies the identity of the person referred to in the p. 201 note above as the one orchestrating Remy's actions this night.

p. 202: "waxing Ramadan moon": In the Islamic calendar, the day of this chapter is 10 Ramadan 1409.

The full moon would appear around the fifteenth, so on the tenth the moon would be moving from the waxing crescent phase to the waxing gibbous phase; thus a little more than half of the moon would be visible.

p. 202: "flea phallus . . . till 'soon' the map of Algiers": See the third paragraph of p. 201.

p. 202: "*quem quaeritis*": Latin for "Whom do you seek?"

The phrase has a liturgical derivation. Beginning in tenth-century religious services as part of an Easter ritual, the *quem quaeritis* trope was spoken by an angel to the three women who visited Jesus's tomb.

This ritual proved to be the germ of medieval drama (the miracle and mystery plays), the first European expression of drama since the fall of Rome.

p. 202: "A street, Toumi": The destination which Remy mentioned on 12.199 was the Toumi apartment where Ballard had taken Houda for sex: "a far, retracing road, 'for I must accord the washerwoman the [same] ceremony'" that he had "granted" Ballard in retracing his steps at Zaracova Beach.

p. 202: "amber beacon": That is, a brownish-yellow light is above its entrance.

p. 202: "the claps": gonorrhoea. Variant of "the clap."

p. 202: *porte d'entrée*: In French, "front entrance."

p. 202: "yawning": A metaphor which indicates that the doorway is open.

p. 202: "the two-flat well, with a low-watt bulb": That Remy connects the defilement of Houda with what his sister Noura experienced is indicated by the "low-watt bulb."

Such a bulb also provided the lighting of the *Les tombeaux* room in which she was "raped" (3.42).

p. 202: "*National Security*": A translation of the Arabic *bullis il-hamn* ("police the security").

Most Algerians in speech and writing still use the French equivalent *Sûreté Nationale* in referring to this primary policing authority in the major cities of Algeria.

See the 4.55 note, N4:13.

- p. 202: “the words he suspected the other stalker had adopted, ‘M. John, I know my sister’s there’”: From the last part of Ghazi’s account in the park, Remy had suspected that Mohammed had also followed his sister that night. This “coda” will be revealed on the next page.
During his trek to the Toumi flat, Remy hints that Mohammed is the second stalker by noting that Ghazi, who had contemplated calling out to Houda for help, could have “entreated the aid of another, one closer to her” (260).
- p. 202: “newel post”: The post at the top or bottom of a flight of stairs, supporting the handrail.
- p. 202: “tumbled down” the stairs: Reminiscent of 2.26, where Omar was tumbled down the stairs leading from their living quarters to his father’s first-floor shop.

- p. 203: “evoked the coda which Ghazi had tacked onto his narrative”: As Remy steadied himself, there passed through his mind what Ghazi had said happened to him after he had fled the voice of the prostitute.
By rushing, the youth had made it safely home in thirty minutes (c. 8:00, though not specified). Ghazi said he went to bed, but was awakened by his mother calling into the courtyard to Houda that she was late since it was now 8:45.
Ghazi said that the answer came not from Houda but from Mohammed, who stated that he would pay her for the time she had sat and the time she had not. (Mohammed was unaware that Houda had prepaid Bourceli.)
- p. 203: “And yet, no peace”: Ghazi seems unaware that he immediately contradicts this statement by saying that he was “awakened,” an indication that he had fallen asleep.
- p. 203: “8:45. I’m sure you said eight”: To hide the fact that she had deserted her charge, Bourceli tries two lies.
She first says that she had been hired only until eight; since Houda was tardy she had left the patient forty-five minutes ago.
Then she quickly adds that she “had to leave” Mme. Belmazoir only for a moment to handle a family emergency. That is, she had stayed with the mother until 8:40, rushed to her apartment for several minutes, and was about to hurry back down to the patient when Houda arrived.
- p. 203: “not from this Houda, but the drug-boy”: It is surprisingly Mohammed who answered Bourceli, so at 8:45 he, who had always slept over on Wednesday nights at the PLO camp, is with his sister in the courtyard.
And he speaks of money (“I’ll pay you”), just as the next day Houda will have cash to begin settling up with the pharmacies (11.171-72).
Remy will also recall Leila’s account of the after-midnight arrival of a drunken Ballard, very late for his 9:30 Wednesday night meeting with her and without the money he had promised to bring (12.191-92).
Although none of these events are mentioned, as Remy walked Houda’s path to the Toumi apartment, his mind would have begun to connect them and thus speak with confidence “Mohammed’s” words into the doorway.
- p. 203: crouching: An intransitive verb, “croup” means “to cough with the hoarse ringing cough of croup” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 203: “My Houda and my Mohammed! My joy and my desire! Tonight, together! The bond! . . . Loneliness is frightening!”: Though not stated, Houda had obviously rushed to the side of her mother, who had heard Mohammed’s voice.
As mentioned above in discussing the title of the chapter, Mme. Belmazoir, her rapture overcoming her terror, asserts the central theme of the suffering of disconnection and the happiness of connection.
Her words, “My joy! And my desire!” prefigure Foucin’s later use of the line from

Blake, “binding with briars my joys & desires” (207), which he ironically imagines Ballard as saying to Mohammed.

“Tonight, together!” indicates that she is surprised to have both of her children with her on a Wednesday night when Mohammed was always away.

- p. 203: “falling into his first two planned downward strides”: Remy begins to leave, having completed both of his missions: His original, made as he left the park, was to pay homage to Houda, who he believed had prostituted herself in order to get money for the medicine her mother needed.

The second mission, considered in the park when he learned that Mohammed was with Houda in the courtyard and developed during his walk to the Toumi apartment, was to speak the brother’s words into the doorway which indicated Mohammed must have somehow discovered Ballard had initiated an affair with his sister.

- p. 203: “a familiar one”: Using Ghazi’s account, by the time Remy walks by Foucin’s office (9:12), Remy suspects that Foucin arranged for Ghazi to schedule the Marengo Park meeting: “for am I not doing his [Foucin’s] bidding” (201). On the next page Remy mentally designates Ghazi as being Foucin’s “*plant*.”

Again unmentioned, Remy probably suspected that as soon as Ghazi left him on the park bench, he would have contacted, as instructed, Foucin.

Undoubtedly Remy was being tailed by Foucin’s agents from the park. In receiving their reports, Foucin saw from the direction which Remy was taking that he was mimicking Houda’s progress on Feb. 15 and consequently was heading to the Toumi apartment.

Given those factors, it is not surprising that Foucin had arrived ahead of time and was already inside the room waiting for Remy’s arrival.

The noise Remy made when he stepped back from the door would have been Foucin’s cue to open it.

That Remy is not taken by surprise by Foucin’s words suggests that he believed there would be a confrontation with Foucin that night, perhaps at the Al-Nigma, although there is no indication that he suspected Foucin would be in the apartment.

- p. 203: “Why M. Lazar”: This will be the third of the six uses of Foucin’s formulaic greeting.

The first two occurred on 7.108 and 12.194.

The last three will appear on 16.264; 20.351; and 21.359, although there are variations in the speaker or the name in the final two.

- p. 203: “is not ‘loneliness . . . frightening’”: This quotation from Ghazi’s words to Remy indicates that Foucin had previously received an account of the evening from Ghazi.

This section ends at 9:33.

pp. 203-04: SECTION 2

- p. 203: “purchased at a great price”: Echoes Matt. 13:46: “Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it” (KJV).
- p. 203: “‘your’ motive”: By using “your” Remy refers to the motive which Foucin believes impelled Belmazoir to murder Ballard, anger or a sense of betrayal at the American’s seducing of his sister.
Ironically this familial motive parallels that which Remy contends drives Foucin, his hatred of the Belmazoir family: “It’s familial. *Lex talionis*,” the law of retribution (7.114).
Also earlier the commissioner had said that Belmazoir “seeks to veil his motive” (7.105). In this chapter, Foucin admits and justifies that it is also he who had kept concealed from Remy a piece of evidence which possibly establishes Belmazoir’s motive for killing Ballard.
Finally, on 7.114 Remy had used the pronominal adjective in stating to Foucin that “only Belmazoir can be ‘your’ murderer.”
- p. 203: “they stepped into the flat”: The time is still 9:33, when section 1 ended.
- p. 203: *côte à côte*: In French, “side by side.”
- p. 203: “‘an irritation not with me, but with yourself’”: Foucin does not comment on any possible motive immediately. Rather he gibes that the fault is Remy’s who had fixated on Foucin’s past on Wed., Apr. 12, at the Al-Nigma, while they were discussing Belmazoir’s possible motives.
- p. 203: epiphanically: “in an epiphanic way” (*Wiktionary*). Not listed in standard print dictionaries.
- p. 203: “‘my intention . . . to reveal to you the (not my) motive inculcating M. Belmazoir’” before Remy “‘thwarted it by your digression into the PLO and my background’”: At the Al-Nigma Foucin stated that “was about to betray to you . . . a recital of something . . . which would conceivably justify my faith that the murder was ‘personal,’ not ‘political’” (7.112)
That is, he was going to tell Remy about this familial motive which he had learned from Ghazi.
However, Remy had led them into two digressions, first a political motivation of the Palestinians to kill Ballard.
- p. 203: “‘my background’”: The second digression, that Foucin has a familial reason for hating the Belmazoirs, Remy had stated earlier: “‘I know *your* history,’ the accentuation designed to impart that he was not referring to his country’s” (7.113).
At this point it is Foucin who brings up a digression to avoid any excursion “into personalia” (113).

After Foucin's explanation which seems to exonerate the PLO (7.112-13), Remy once again alleges that Foucin's investigation was "personal" (113), which will lead to his charge that an examination of Foucin's "family history" will reveal that he had reason to hate the Belmazoirs (7.114).

- p. 203: amateur: "devotee" or "admirer" (*Webster's Third*), both of which are closer to the etymology of the word, the Latin *amator* ("lover").
Foucin's conclusion that like him Remy is a lover of history ("the past") springs from two places where Remy exhibits or Foucin concludes he could do so a knowledge of Algerian history (6.99 and 7:114-15).
Remy's hypothesis expressed on 12.186-87 and 200 that men basically look to the past while women focus on the future has not been previously discussed by him and Foucin, although as the next paragraph evinces, Foucin, like Remy, accepts the idea.
- p. 203: "to graze Remy's": Cf. 7.116, where Remy's and Foucin's "slightly graying temporal hairs grazed."
In both places, the touching is symbolic of a connection forged through experienced or observed suffering: the destruction of Foucin's family, the death of Noura, and the exploitation of Houda by Ballard.
- p. 203: "how we shall be sleeping together ten years in the future": This is Foucin's admission that he believes women are attuned more to the future than to the past or present.
- p. 203: "from eight hours ago": At 1:42 p.m., as they were leaving the Aladdin Room, Foucin whispered to Remy, "Like mine, yours has been a day of mostly women" (12.196).
The time in chap. 13 is 9:35 p.m.
- p. 203: "M. Ghazi will testify in court to what he witnessed, the string of trysts between Mlle. Belmazoir and M. Ballard?": The question is designed to determine what use Foucin plans to make of Ghazi since obviously he had ordered the youth—who, who, p. 205 will reveal, had told Foucin of the rendezvous on Mar. 7—not to speak of them to anyone.
- p. 203: "'mostly women'" and "'women, mostly'": The principal words of the title of chap. 12 are used twice.
They occurred together three times in that chapter (12.188, 196, and 200).
- p. 203: Mona: The second mention of the given name of Foucin's wife.
The first occurred on 6.97.
- p. 203: Arris: A Berber town of around 30,000 in northeastern Algeria. It is about 90 miles south of Constantine and approximately 200 miles east of Algiers.

- p. 203: “twice . . . by telephone calls, from the police chief in Zouabi and a source at the judicial office”: The first was from the police chief in Zouabi to tell him that Ahmed Chabane had taken a bus from there to Constantine. The Chabane farm is near the village of Zouabi. See 1.12-13.
The second was from the judicial office informing him that the marriage of Leila and Ballard was valid (12.195).
Both calls had brought Foucin to the Aladdin Room at 1:34 that afternoon (the 12.194 note, “Mme. Ballard, a name,” N12.20).

- p. 204: Mme. Amal Laasouani: The spokeswoman at Remy's interview with the embassy secretaries (12.187-90).
Foucin brings up Remy's interview with the secretaries, but seems to know what had occurred, saying he talked on the phone to their spokeswoman Mme. Amal Laasouani, "about one."
According to the note to 12.189, "if Remy," N12.9, the conference with the secretaries ended at 12:43.
This is another instance of how closely Foucin is tracking Remy's action. Although he had not spoken to Remy the day before, Foucin had learned of the meeting with the secretaries and had contacted one, most probably Amal, to telephone him after the meeting.
Here he is again quite open about informing Remy that he has in place a system of agents to keep him informed of everything which Remy is uncovering.
- p. 204: "Mme. Ballard cleared the judiciary and I drove her to her Rue des Quatre Canons flat": . . . is settled in": On 12.196, Leila told Remy and Foucin of her intention to move immediately into the flat which Ballard had rented for her and her brother. Foucin volunteered to facilitate the process.
Not until 15.248 and 252 will there be an account of Leila's first afternoon and night in the apartment.
- p. 204: Rue des Quatre Canons: French for "The Street of the Four Cannons."
It is located in a fashionable Biar area of modern Algiers about a kilometer due west of the Al-Nigma.
On 17.283, in a roundabout stroll Remy will walk toward it.
Currently (2013), the Ministry of Planning, the Environment, and Tourism is located on this street.
- p. 204: "the ambulation of a woman": Houda on Feb. 15.
- p. 204: "'this Houda'": The term which Ghazi used to refer to Houda on 11.175-76; 12.197-99; and 13.203.
- p. 204: "six weeks ago": On p. 205, Foucin will say that Ghazi came to his office to tell him about his following Houda to her rendezvous with Ballard on Tues., Mar. 7, eight days after the murder of Ballard (Feb. 27).
From Mar. 7 to the date of this chapter, Apr. 16, there are 41 days, rounded off by Foucin to six weeks.
- p. 204: augur: portend.
- p. 204: attestor: "one that attests" or "bears witness" (*Webster's Third*).
- p. 204: "'the Great One'": In quotes because Remy is quoting Ghazi's use of the epithet (201).

- p. 204: “without your permission”: Remy is puzzled how Mohammed found out about the relationship between Ballard and his sister. On the next page, he thinks about what Ghazi had answered when he had asked him whether he had told Mohammed about it.
Here, he intimates that Foucin had stressed to Ghazi not to mention anything about the rendezvous without his permission.
Receiving no confirmation, Remy will bring the matter up on again on the next page after partially revealing to Foucin Ghazi’s answer.
- p. 204: “we chanced not to colloque yesterday”: Remy responds to what Foucin had said to Remy in the Aladdin Room, “I was saddened by a breach which I’m sure escaped your notice: Yesterday we did not converse” (12.196).
- p. 204: “You dropped by to see the son”: On p. 202, Remy acknowledges that Ghazi was “a *plant of Foucin’s*.”
Here he states what he has concluded during his walk to Toumi: The reason Foucin visited the Bourcelis on Saturday and “hauled aside [Ghazi]” (11.176) was to direct him to set up a meeting with Remy to reveal his tracking of Houda.
On 11.221, as soon as Ghazi opens the door he tries to arrange this meeting, and he continually maneuvers to set it up, finally giving the time and place at the doorway as Remy is leaving (11.174-77).
- p. 204: “And in the porches of [his] ears did pour”: Foucin quotes from Hamlet 1.5.64-65, where the Ghost of Hamlet’s father recounts how his brother Claudius sneaked upon him while he was sleeping in his orchard: “And in the porches [the ears are viewed here as a porch or entrance to the body] of my ear did pour / The leprous distilment.”
- p. 204: “striking whatever profitable bargain he could”: FYI: Ghazi made 200 dinars that night: the fifty put in his palm before he began his narrative (12.197); the one hundred which Remy placed between them on the bench (12.197) and which Ghazi seized when he turned over the license number (12.199); and the fifty for the narrative of Feb. 15 (12.199).
- p. 204: “*With* your permission”: Foucin balances his prepositional phrase with the one which Remy had just used.
- p. 204: “a Western ten”: On 4.55, it was mentioned that Arab dignitaries typically kept callers waiting twenty minutes.
- p. 204: “‘spring’ M. Ghazi’s affidavit”: The single quotes indicate “spring” is used ironically since the word means “to make something appear suddenly or unexpectedly,” yet here Foucin announces that this exhibition will occur.
- p. 204: “The brother cared not a whit . . . his sister”: Foucin now reveals what he believes was Mohammed’s motive for killing Ballard.

It was not the familial motive toward which the Ghazi narrative seemingly pointed, Belmazoïr's anger at being betrayed by both his sister and his friend. (See the p. 203 note above, N13.11.)

Rather it was the same monetary one which Belmazoïr had exposed in stripping the money from the dead Ballard's wallet: He felt that by surprising Ballard in the Toumi room with his sister he could embarrass him into surrendering all the money the American had on him.

p. 204: "a minute later they were in the street . . . six-block amble . . . the white Peugeot": They leave the apartment at 9:40 and reach Foucin's car, where Sergeant Ghouraf is waiting, at 9:46.

p. 204: *prostituées*: female prostitutes.

p. 204: *vendibles*: As a noun, "a vendible article—usually used in the plural" (*Webster's Third*).

The adjective "vendible" means "available or suitable for sale."

p. 204: *siège arrière*: French for "back seat (of a car)."

p. 204: "For all that, not even in bed": Driven to the Al-Nigma, Remy sups in his room and goes to bed near midnight.

p. 204: "my second that night": His first was the one he and Foucin sat on in the Toumi apartment (203).

p. 204: "working chronologically backward": In his prayers this night, he uses the nearest-to-furthest pattern which he had employed in speculating about which woman was waiting for him in the Aladdin Room (12.186-87).

p. 204: "sleeping together ten years hence": Foucin's wording of his wife's thoughts given on the previous page. It exemplifies how women always look to the future. It also reveals Remy's deep devotion to Marie since at several times during this day and night his concentration on Leila had given the appearance that he had forgotten her.

Remy falls to sleep at 11:55 p.m.

pp. 205-07: SECTION 3

- p. 205: “March seventh, the fifth day”: Section 3 opens at ten the next morning (Monday, Apr. 17) with Remy in Foucin’s office. The commissioner reveals how he learned from Ghazi about Ballard and Houda: On Tuesday, Mar. 7, the fifth day after he had been officially assigned to the case (Mar. 2), the youth came to his office.
- p. 205: “the throat-cut American”: Ghazi’s play upon the adjective “cutthroat” is inaccurate. Ballard received a piercing wound to his carotid artery.
- p. 205: “the black sheep of our field”: A metaphor for Mohammed Belmazoir in Ghazi’s mixed metaphorical sentence.
- p. 205: “Monsieur the Grand”: This is the only appearance of this variant of “the Great One” or “M. Le Grand” (11.173; 13.201; 14.234; 15.244; 19.329; and 21.353 and 355).
However, “*Monsieur Le Grand*,” with the title spelled out, does appear once (20.332).
- p. 205: crop up: “to appear on the surface” or “to turn up unexpectedly or casually” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 205: “just two days back”: On Mar. 5.
- p. 205: “uncircumcised infidel”: This chapter’s variant of “circumcision.” It will prove to be ironic.
- p. 205: “Pretty Boy”: Mohammed Belmazoir, who rebuffed all overtures from the *alim*, the holy man confides in the next paragraph.
- p. 205: “young fool”: Cf. 12.198, where Ghazi reports his mother saying to him, “Fool—the praenomen I’d have tagged you with at birth.”
As when he cites his mother calling him a fool, Ghazi believes that in reporting the *alim* also so designated him he will arouse sympathy from Foucin.
- p. 205: Islamite: “Muslim” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 205: “High Ayatollah”: The Iranian Shiite religious leader Ayatollah Ruholla Khomeini. He died on June 3, 1989, almost two months after the *alim*’s tirade to Ghazi.
Even in basically Sunni Islamic countries, such as Algeria, cassettes of Khomeini’s lectures were popular, particularly the one of his speech of Nov. 5, 1979, where for the first time he referred to the U.S. as “the Great Satan.”
The *alim* comically confuses what Khomeini said with “what the Holy Qur’an declares.”

The disreputable characterization of the ulema (plural of *alim*) in my novel was a prejudice I picked up from a small circle of young North African and Middle East friends.

They stressed four principal aspects of their own ulema: hypocrisy, greed, aberrant sexuality, and religious ignorance. These I sought to personify in the Bab el Oued *alim*.

- p. 205: “unbinds the sexual thorns of our faith”: The *alim* maintains that it is meritorious for any Muslim to kill an American but not when the investigation of the murder reveals (“unbinds”) that the Islamic murderer was engaged in a forbidden act, such as Mohammed’s homosexual prostitution.
- p. 205: makeshift: “shifty” (*Webster’s Third*), in the sense of deceptive, evasive, or fraudulent; the conventional meaning of “temporarily expedient” is not connoted here, although there is implied that Ghazi is a “poorly made Muslim.”
- p. 205: immaculate: The word shows the self-delusion, not the hypocrisy, of the *alim*; its use carries most of the word’s denotative and connotative meaning: clean, not spotted, pure, faultless, innocent, sinless, and (through a confusion of it with the virgin birth) non-sexual.
- p. 205: “that pig face”: Ballard.
- p. 205: “I looked upon a photocopy of the American’s visage”: On 12.199, Ghazi said that he had gotten a good view of the person driving the Quatrelle as he rushed from the car to a tobacco shop and back.
Not until he saw the photocopy of a newspaper picture of Ballard did he make the connection with Houda.
- p. 205: “sooty brain”: Ghazi’s confusion between “black cells” and “gray cells” first appeared on 12.198-99.
- p. 205: “shipwreck my prospect of blackmailing this demirep”: Ghazi revealed that he never disclosed to Mohammed anything about his sister’s weekly meeting with a foreigner because he planned to use the information to “blackmail” Houda into having sex with him.
- p. 205: “Which for the last six weeks has left me with the puzzle of how the brother found out”: Foucin seizes on the point which Remy was most interested in: How Mohammed knew to follow his sister that Wednesday night.
He had even canceled his trip to the Palestinian camp in order to trail her.
- p. 205: lemma: A proposition assumed to be true.
Foucin’s was stated on the previous page: Mohammed “cared not a whit that [Ballard] was fucking his sister.”

- p. 205: “again, I stress, we’ll have to bypass how he knew to give chase”: Foucin again alludes to the mystery which will not be solved until the next chapter.
- p. 205: “Bourceli terror”: Ghazi had not proceeded to the Toumi, having been terrorized by the prostitute’s proposition (202).
- p. 205: “aural voyeur”: A synaesthetic construction; here, the depiction of sound in terms of sight.
- p. 205: “quiet sex”: See 4.64, where in describing sex with Ballard Mohammed said, “I could speak if exigent, though he would never ‘banter’ during sex.”
- p. 205: “gently rapping, rapping at [the] chamber door’ . . . Poe’s student”: “The Raven”: “As of someone gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door” (4). In “The Philosophy of Composition” Poe writes that the speaker of the poem is “a student, occupied half in pouring over a volume”
- p. 205: “to a Hamletic hilt”: Concerning the adjective of “Hamlet,” no standard print or online dictionary listed one.
A search of Google revealed two forms, “Hamletic” and “Hamletian.” The latter was used in the Indian English dialect only, principally in newspaper or semi-scholarly articles.
The “Hamletic” form occurred in a few articles by Western native speakers of English, but not enough to justify it as standard.
I feel “Hamletian” is more euphonious, but kowtowed to the few Western writers and used “Hamletic” here and later on 18.304.
I (or Foucin) had in mind Hamlet’s conduct at Ophelia’s grave (5.1).
- p. 205: “to the hilt”: “to the very limit,” as in “played the role to the hilt.”

- p. 206: “*son ami et sa sœur*”: “His friend and sister” in French.
- p. 206: “‘dinars . . . your pharmacies’ discovery’ . . . Remy did not interject . . . ‘all the dollars’”: On 12.196, at the Aladdin Room conference, Foucin noted that he was aware of the “windfall” Remy had come upon while visiting the pharmacies: On Feb. 16 Houda seemed to have come into some money for she had begun to pay her mother’s outstanding prescription bills and subsequently had used cash for all purchases.
Earlier, on 12.193-94, Remy speculated to Leila that the thousand dollars which Ballard was planning to bring to her on Feb. 15 had instead been given to the Belmazoires.
Foucin seems to be unaware of the thousand dollars and simply assumes that Ballard thrust dinars on Mohammed.
- p. 206: “the youth ‘marveled at the efficacy of a veneer of righteousness’”:
In Foucin’s account there is no suggestion that Mohammed had expected to receive such a large sum of money from his intrusion.
It is not until Ballard had rushed from the room that the youth realizes how much had been stuffed into his hands. This amount Foucin can only speculate about using what Houda the next day began spending in settling up the family’s arrears. Foucin would not think it irrational for Mohammed not to have considered that he received a princely weekly stipend from Ballard. Instead, he knows Mohammed to be an alcoholic and a hashish-addict, neither of whom tend to act sensibly.
- p. 206: “*Measure for measure*”: While Remy speaks the words, it is Foucin who explains that although the phrase was “popularized by Shakespeare,” it came from “your Bible”: “‘And with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.’”
As noted in earlier annotations (the 1.3 note, N1.11, and the 5.71 note, N5.9), the quote is from Matt. 7:2 (the Geneva Bible used by Shakespeare): “For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.”
In Shakespeare’s play, Duke Vincentio says to the corrupt Angelo, “Like doth quit [requite] like, and measure still for measure” (5.1.419).
- p. 206: mark time: to wait in readiness or to await developments.
Foucin believes that that Mohammed felt Ballard would forgive him for his intrusion and for taking the money and would soon make contact through a telephone message for him at Bendari’s Café.
Not an unreasonable assumption on Mohammed’s (or Foucin’s) part given the nine months of the relationship with Ballard, the span of which (let us say for the moment) Foucin had learned about during his investigation of the murder.
- p. 206: “the anxiety building inside him”: Foucin speculates that a period of time passed when Ballard did not contact him, causing Mohammed to grow concerned

that their relationship was over. (Foucin seems to be relying on Bendari's telephone message notebook, where the next message from Ballard to Mohammed does not come until Thursday Feb. 23, which is eight days after the Toumi intrusion.)

- p. 206: "the negative of the Koni II sonar panel": The negative is first mentioned by HIV On 2.29-30. Foucin states that the negative is of an instrument panel of a Libyan antisubmarine frigate (4.57 and its note, "a Soviet-made," N4:17), and Medlin gives its model, a Koni II, on 8.161.
- p. 206: "your last Wednesday's pricking remark": See 7.114, where Remy said to Foucin that "you've visualized the youth blundering on and pocketing the strip, perchance in his 'friend's' car or in their rendezvous room."
- p. 206: "the course of his explanation, 'torturously persuasive'": Because so much of Foucin's lengthy scenario is at variance with what actually happened, as revealed in chap. 1, I considered having Remy synopsise it in one paragraph. However, this dismissal would seem to deny truth the opportunity (as Locke states) "to shift for itself" (12.196 and its note, N12:24). That some details of Foucin's are inaccurate (the taunting by Ballard or the fight in the disco between Mohammed and him, for instance) does not mean that his conclusion is wrong, for truth—Remy will quickly argue—has seams of lies (207-08). Indeed, Remy admits to himself that Foucin's account, while "torturous," is "persuasive" (206). Most telling, the previous evening itself had revealed to him how Mohammed had been lying to him by holding back what had happened on Wednesday, Feb. 15. At the prison when Remy had pointed out that in Belmazoir's narration a Wednesday encounter with Ballard in February was missing, Mohammed had lied by saying that Ballard had "'stiffed' me two weeks running [Feb. 13 and 20]" (10.161). Mohammed himself caused the cancellation of the 20th by his decision to confront Ballard and Houda with his awareness of their affair on Feb. 15. In his account Foucin exposed Belmazoir's lies, particularly that he had no motive for killing Ballard. Foucin's narration also stresses how the youth was upset by learning how he had two unlikely rivals for Ballard's attention since Ballard had become engaged to Leila and was sleeping with Houda. Remy recognizes realizes that these events bolster Foucin's contention that Belmazoir believed that he had lost his "M. John" and consequently should strive to get what money he could out of the dead relationship. That Remy was impressed by Foucin's scenario will immediately manifest itself on p. 208 when he agrees to approach "Vellacott" with a proposal by the commissioner. He also thinks that he sees an opportunity to visit his father. Because of these far-ranging effects of Foucin's narration, I resisted the urge to shorten Foucin's long account.

p. 206: “the climaxing tetrameter from the prophetic Blake”: The line from “The Garden of Love” is quoted by Foucin on the next page as the closing sentence of section 3.

A tetrameter is a line with four feet.

Blake’s line is not prophetic since it occurs in *Songs of Experience*, a collection of lyrics principally dealing with the past.

Blake did write twelve prophetic books during two periods of his life (1789 – 1797 and 1804 – 1820).

On 21.363, Foucin will quote from a poem in the preface to one of these books *Milton* (1804 – 1810).

p. 206: “‘stormy petrel’”: “one fond of strife; a harbinger of trouble” (*Webster’s Third*).

p. 206: “the February nineteenth decision by the PLO’s Algerian chief [Atef] Al-Wazar to halt all prying into the Ballard matter”: See 7.113-14, where in Remy’s hotel room Foucin said that on Feb. 19 Al-Wazar, the head of the Algiers office of the Palestine Liberation Organization, halted all investigation of Ballard and assured Foucin that “no agent of Palestine was . . . involved in the . . . homicide of M. Ballard.”

p. 206: “‘this serendipitous testament of American rot’”: The quotations indicate that this harsh description of homosexuality as “rot” is the judgment of the Palestinian malcontent, not Foucin.

p. 206: “‘secretly prod M. Chabane toward the blackmail-laced embassy confrontation with M. Ballard’ . . . I wished to question him about before he ‘bolted’”: Using few details, Remy acquainted Foucin about this “friction” on 9.149.

The blackmail insinuation Foucin would have picked up in investigating the matter, perhaps through the Algerian typist who overheard Chabane’s threats (8.122-23).

From the lawyer Ouenough Foucin presumably learned about Chabane’s PLO friend. It was about that connection, he reveals here, that he wanted to question Chabane before he fled (12.190).

p. 206: “Perhaps it was ‘their’ Monday, February twentieth . . . the PLO rogue elephant”: This would be one day after the decision by Al-Wazar and also the night when Mohammed always spent with his “friend.”

The Palestinians had been tracking the relationship between Ballard and Belmazoir since Jan. 30, so the PLO malcontent would know where to find Mohammed after his Monday night rendezvous with Ballard.

His aim was to convince their drug-runner that blackmailing the American would be more profitable than the money he earned from the homosexual relationship.

p. 206: rogue elephant: An elephant that wanders apart from the herd.

p. 206: “‘Slough of Despond’”: See the 6.85 note, N6:11, where this reference to

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Bunyan's Slough of Despond is discussed.
 "Slough" means a swamp.

- p. 206: blitzed: Simultaneously intoxicated by drugs and alcohol (combined definition from *Webster's Online* and the online *Urban Dictionary*).
- p. 206: "my M. John' . . . 'this lying Ballard'": Foucin couches the depth of Mohammed's reaction to what the Palestinian told him, particularly that Ballard had become engaged to an Algerian, through the contrasting names. Thus Mohammed brings up the idea of blackmailing Ballard even before the Palestinian can propose it.
- p. 206: "busy and insinuating": Emilia to Desdemona in *Othello* 4.2.137-40: I will be hanged if some eternal villain, / Some busy and insinuating rogue, / . . . Have not devised this slander."
- p. 206: "black-and-white checkered headscarf": In Arabic "*kaffiyah*," which is also spelled as *kaffiyeh*. Its plural is *kaffiyaat*.
 A headdress worn by Middle East Arabian men, the *kaffiyah* consists of a large square cotton cloth that is folded in half into a triangle which is then draped across the forehead and skull.
 A black circular padded cord called an *agal* holds it in place.
 In most of the Arabian Peninsula countries this headdress is called a *ghutrah*, and its color is typically all white. Multicolored *ghutar* (plural), however, are worn by Yemins and Omanis and red-and-white *kaffiyaat* by Jordanians.
 Palestinians wear the black-and-white checkered *kaffiyah*, which has become a symbol of Palestinian heritage. (The PLO leader Yasser Arafat was seldom seen without one.)
 Palestinians in foreign countries typically do not wear the distinctive headdress in public in order not to draw attention to themselves, such as the one who approached Ahmed Chabane (9.142).
 However, in chap. 16, partially set in the PLO refugee camp south of Algiers, and in chap. 20, in order to readily identify each other in a crowd, they do wear the zebra-hued headdress.
- p. 206: "the strip of acetate": The photographic negative of the Libya Koni II.

- p. 207: “DOD document . . . ‘the Palestinians were aware of “M. John””: Leroy said that the “photograph on the negative strip was lifted from a [U.S.] Department of Defense Document we received on November 16” (8.123).
On 8.124-25, Medlin described the DOD report and listed the Western embassies which received faxed copies of it. Any of these copies could have also been used in making the photograph.
Not until Jan. 31, around two and one-half months after the DOD document was received, did the PLO learn that Belmazoir’s “M. John” was Paul Ballard, a U.S. embassy official (7.112).
- p. 207: provenience: origin; derivation.
- p. 207: vagary: oddity.
- p. 207: “so intimidated him on the fifteenth that he rushed, a poorer man, from the room”: Foucin is paraphrasing his assumption from the previous page where he speaks of “the American’s hasty retreat after he had thrust upon Mohammed all the money which he had on him.
- p. 207: “‘Mo-Mo’ . . . not an invitation to a meeting but . . . the specifics by M. Ballard for one already mooted by [Belmazoir]”: The Zaracova message is first given in full on 10.160. It could be interpreted as Foucin suggests: The message was Ballard’s answer to an ultimatum from Mohammed.
However, this supposition runs counter to Ballard’s own account: “At Mohammed’s suggestion, ‘but not this evening [of Feb. 27],’ a few times they had met there [at the deserted Zaracova disco], the last [time] five weeks ago” (1.10).
Crucially, chap. 1 clearly indicates that Ballard’s purpose in setting the rendezvous is to apologize for the incident of Feb. 15: “Tonight having revealed everything to Mohammed (and his dear sister) . . . *I’ll beg him to shepherd me to Houda. Dropping to my knees, I’ll woo her pardon. That he’s here attests he’s . . . forgiven me*” (1.13).
- p. 207: “in his resultant elation tipped the café-tender an extravagant five-dinar note”: This is the first revelation of how Mohammed reacted to the call from Ballard. It is news to Remy since in the “affidavit” of Fouad Belghiche, the café manager, given on 10.160, there is no mention of Mohammed’s “elation” or of his “extravagant” tip.
Thus Foucin must have gained this information through interviewing or having an aide interview Belghiche.
- p. 207: “incriminating telephone log”: Also on 10.160, Remy recalled that as far back as his train ride to Le Puy, Apr. 7, he had been puzzled by Vellacott’s report of the nearly immediate seizure by the Algerian police of the inculcating pages of the notebook “and with no attribution of how they learned of it” (160).
- p. 207: “Two for one price”: Reminiscent of what the Filipino said to Ballard, “Two one

price better one two price” (1.8), one of those coincidental connections that dot the novel.

- p. 207: “Perhaps—do I belabor the adverb?”: On the next page, in his rebuttal, Remy will suggest Foucin does.
- p. 207: “binding with briars my joys & desires”: From Blake’s “The Garden of Love”: “And Priests in black gowns were walking their rounds, / And binding with briars my joys & desires” (11-12).
Foucin, who began his monologue with “Popularized by Shakespeare” (206) at 10:06, ends it at 10:13, with the quotation from Blake.

pp. 207-09: SECTION 4

p. 207: “artistry, unlike action,” must be meditated on: “Artistry” refers to Blake’s line.

p. 207: cashiered: discarded.

p. 207: “doom of his apple dreams”: Again a subtle mental connection between Remy and Foucin, although the “apple dream” image is a common one.
On 6.85, in his mind, Remy uses the phrase “apple dreams” in thinking about Mohammed’s fear of losing Ballard.
Also he hears Mohammed speak of “dreaming about traveling to America” (4.63) and Ahmed Chabane voice his “apple hopes of a French visa” (9.140).

p. 207: “a red herring”: A plot device frequently used in murder mysteries in which events point to one or another character as the murderer, but the least likely suspect turns out to be the guilty party.
The term derives from the training of hunting puppies so that they would not be diverted by a stronger odor than, for instance, the fox or badger they were chasing.
The trainer would drag the carcass of a herring (red from having been salted and smoked) across the trace. At first, the pungent odor of this fish would be followed by the young dogs, but with training they would learn to ignore it.
Mohammed planted the negative in the billfold in order to make it seem that the murder was political, not personal.

p. 207: “Foucin halted”: The time is 10:14; only a minute has elapsed since the end of section 3.

p. 207: “*He’s waiting for me to perfect his hypothesis*”: Foucin’s hypothesis is, “I’ll toss in an hypothesis. . . . The brother cared not a whit that Ballard was fucking his sister” (204), which he restates three paragraphs later as “No, he didn’t care, and that’s the devil of it!”

He again brought it up on the next page by asking Remy, ““You have mulled over my lemma?””

Foucine’s scenario (205-07) at every point stresses that Mohammed acted out of a concern for money, that is, a financial motive, not out of what Ballard had done to his sister, a familial motive, which on p. 203 he had said the narrative of Ghazi pointed toward and which he felt Foucine accepted as Mohammed’s motive: “I’ve purchased at a great price ‘your’ motive [the familial motive which Foucine believed proved Belmazoire was the murderer].”

After his lengthy narration, he expects Remy to “perfect” or justify this thesis that Mohammed was not driven by any concern for his sister, thereby discounting the familial motive.

p. 207: “It is not his fault”: See the note to 7.112, N7:28, for a list of the ten times this sentence is employed in the novel.

Aloud Remy seems to agree, saying that Houde believes Mohammed killed Ballard to resurrect her and their family’s honor. Thus she believes she is ultimately at fault: If she had not engaged in the sexual affair with Ballard, her brother would never have murdered him.

p. 207: “‘scaffold of truth,’ to appropriate Mme. Ballard’s conceit”: See 12.196.

Her scaffold’s plank of truth is her belief that Mohammed murdered Ballard. However, Houde unknowingly accepts a plank of lies: Mohammed acted in order to redeem her honor, that is, he was at fault in being the agent who caused her to come into contact with one such as Ballard.

Foucine insists that Mohammed never cared a whit about the latter.

p. 207: “all divide into truth and lies”: Foucine here expresses the semantic principle of bivalence: something is either true or false.

In logic, the concept is similar to the law of the excluded middle, which holds that either a proposition is true or its negation is true; there is no third or middle alternative.

The middle position, that a proposition is neither true nor not-true, is excluded by logic. The earliest known formulation of the law of the excluded middle occurs in Aristotle’s *On Interpretation*.

Remy’s response challenges Foucine’s bivalent argument, using Karl Popper’s theory of provisional truth which doubts the validity of sense perception. See the commentary on 6.95, “you’ve,” N6:39, and 12.196, N12:25, for a longer examination of Popper’s idea.

Popper held that empirical truth is never satisfactory because truth is located in the human mind, not in the outside world. Thus in speaking of events in this world, one must always use the concept of “perhaps this is so or not so.”

- p. 208: “pataphysical *perhapses*”: “Pataphysics” is the science of imaginary solutions; the term was used by French absurdist writers to parody modern science, an aim not coincidentally of Popper’s.
In employing this phrase, Remy harks back to the last sentence of section 3 where Foucin had said, “Perhaps—do I belabor the adverb” (207).
Remy implies that though there may be some truth, there is too much imagination and supposition in Foucin’s account of the murder.
- p. 208: “a ‘boggy ground to build on’”: From *Billy Budd*, Chap. 4: “But the *might-have-been* is but boggy ground to build on.”
- p. 208: splay: “to cause to spread apart . . . usually used with *out*” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 208: medii: plural of “medius,” “the middle finger” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 208: “compline prayer”: In the Christian religion, compline is the seventh and last liturgical prayer said just before retiring; it is “also called the *night song*” (*Webster’s Third*).
The metaphor is Remy’s since Foucin is basically suggesting that Remy retire from the case.
- p. 208: “The elusive motive—take your pick—is before you”: The familial motive (redemption of his sister’s honor) or the financial one (Mohammed’s seizing the Toumi flat incident in order to finagle some extra money from Ballard).
- p. 208: “his words flying upward”: From Claudius’s speech in *Hamlet* 3.3.97: “My words fly up, my thoughts remain below.”
- p. 208: delict: A legal term for “an offense or transgression against law.” It is principally used in civil cases.
However, Foucin is not suggesting the civil matter of *diyya* (the Arabic word for “blood money”) whereby public punishment is foregone if the heirs of a person murdered agree to forgive the act or to receive monetary compensation.
The practice is approved in the Qur’an 5:45.
- p. 208: premed: “premeditate” (*Webster’s Third*).
In Foucin’s account Mohammed went to the grove to negotiate with Ballard, not to kill him. The wounding of Ballard with the plank occurred during a struggle, and the murder with the *douk-douk* in a moment of panic.
Absence of premeditation, the possibility of self-defense, and *non compos mentis* (“not of sound mind”) at the time of the murder are all mitigating circumstances.
- p. 208: “He can be spared, but not freed. . . . convince him . . . to confess”: Foucin asks Remy to place before Belmazoir the option of bargaining for a lesser charge. This accommodation will not allow Belmazoir to get off scot free. He must admit to his guilt, be sentenced, and serve some unspecified time in prison.

- p. 208: adorant: “adoring,” but carrying the implication of the religious meaning of “adoration,” “worship given God alone” (*Webster’s Third*).
Thus it extends the image of the compline prayer mentioned six notes above.
- p. 208: “compromising the PLO”: Foucin again draws a conclusion from his hypothesis that it was a PLO malcontent who passed the negative to Mohammed.
- p. 208: “that vile boy”: This epithet occurred to Remy in characterizing Ghazi (12.199).
- p. 208: sanctuarize: A transitive verb meaning “to shelter by a sanctuary or sacred privileges” (*Webster’s Third*).
The word will carry particularly meaning for Remy since as Omar he had thought he had “sanctuarized” his sister Noura in a nunnery where she could not be harmed (2.27 and 3.40).
- p. 208: “She must be saved! . . . I know her!”: This impassioned speech undoubtedly causes Remy to remember what Foucin had said before the door to his hotel room, “But little do you know of the Belmazoires and me” (7.117).
For some reason he seems deeply and emotionally committed to the sister.
Another character will use similar words in speaking of Houda on 18.295.
- p. 208: bed: “to fix or place firmly; embed.”
However, there is suggested another, albeit ungrammatical, meaning, “to have sexual intercourse with.”
- p. 208: “To recover this familial pride, it is *he* who must act”: Next Foucin seems to desire Mohammed to redeem the family’s pride, lost by the treason of their grandfather, in the same way that Foucin is trying to regain his family’s pride and hence his true name through tracking down the seven great traitors.
Remy sees the similarity and even points out that Foucin wants Mohammed to do as Foucin would in this situation, that is, to own up to his fault and crime and accept the punishment.
Redemption can come only through suffering; thus this is the path which Mohammed must travel.
In an essay at the end of the notes on chap. 18, N18:72-74, the novel’s sin-repentance-redemption pattern will be discussed in detail.
- p. 208: “wrapped my right hand with hers No rap”: Sophomoric punning on “wrap” and “rap,” influenced by Robert Walpole’s 1739 prophetic statement that the people of England “now ring the [church] bells” to celebrate the declaration of war with Spain, “but they will soon wring their hands.”
- p. 208: Arris: The village where the wife of Foucin’s two aunts live.
See the p. 203 note above.

p. 208: celeritous: “swift-moving” (*Webster’s Third*).

p. 208: “never do I quit you”: An exaggeration by Remy.

On 4.58, the conversation between Remy and Foucin closes with Remy pointing out an inconsistency in something averred by Foucin.

On 7.87, over the phone Remy does ask two favors of Foucin, but on 7.114, the latter volunteers before Remy can ask to facilitate a meeting between him and Ambassador Leroy.

However, on 9.149, Remy does seek Foucin’s help in obtaining the name of the lawyer.

On 10.166, it is Foucin who says that he needs Remy’s help with the “Medlin loophole.”

On 12.196, the only request Remy puts to Foucin is that he be allowed to speak briefly with Leila in private. And on 18.204, Foucin leaves Remy by asking him to consider an hypothesis.

p. 208: Deputy Inspector Hussein Karami: The first member of Foucin’s department who was assigned to the Ballard case.

In his interrogation of Mohammed, he used physical torture (7.107 and 10.160).

- p. 209: El Harrach suburb: Located about seven miles east of Algiers, it had around 40,000 residents at the time of this novel.
A largely commercial area and the site of El Harrach prison, the largest in Algeria (see the 4.59 note, “prison,” N4.23), it also has some exclusive sections with luxurious French colonial style villas, such as the Beaulieu neighborhood where Karami lives.
- p. 209: conduit: “pipe, tube, or tile for receiving and protecting electric wires or cables (as for telephones or power lines)” (*Webster’s Third*).
Foucine also means the less specific definition, “any channel or means by which something is passed on.”
- p. 209: “‘floated bribe’”: On 4.59, Remy told Foucine he had discovered that “few secrets in the Arab World can be kept buried when the idea of a generous bribe is floated.”
With a joshing tone, Foucine presents the idea that he knows Remy is regularly making phone calls to a liaison in Algiers, the identity of whom the commissioner appears not to know, hence the speculation about the unknown Algerian agent used by his Egyptian private investigator. This person received the floated bribe for his information about the negative.
Foucine’s agents obviously have had no success in tracing the person in Algiers, his liaison from the French Embassy, to whom Remy had spoken to on the telephone on Tuesday Apr. 11 and Thursday, Apr. 13.
Remy was supposed to call him the previous night Sunday, Apr. 16, but had not.
- p. 209: “‘your client’ about ‘the client of your client’”: Foucine means “M. Vellacott about M. Belmazoir.”
- p. 209: “my professional colleague”: Foucine and Remy had sparred over the term “professional” on 4.56, 57, and 59.
- p. 209: knap: rap or hit with an object.
The 10.161 note to “knap,” N10:24, cites its use in *Lear* 2.4.119-23.
- p. 209: “*djellaba . . . cachabia*”: A *djellaba* is a robe with a hood and long sleeves. A *cachabia* is an open-front cloak sometimes worn over a *djellaba*.
For both see the 4.59 note.
- p. 209: “Now you have your disguise”: This parallels Remy’s whispered apostrophic exclamation on 10.159, “Father, I have my disguise!”
- p. 209: “he contoured Remy’s physique in the air”: A comical gesture, as if Foucine is sizing up Remy or taking his “measure-for-measure-ment” (to coin a phrase).
- p. 209: “‘the foul womb of night’”: From *Henry V*, 4. Prologue, l. 4: “From camp to camp, through the foul womb of night.”

- p. 209: “mysterious plus”: This term, which provided the title for my novel, is used in a footnote in the “Universals” subsection of Chapter 12, entitled “Conception,” in William James’s *The Principles of Psychology*, vol. 1, although the footnote indicates it was taken from an earlier essay by James (which I could not locate). James is discussing how concrete images can be turned into abstract or universal ideas. This conversion/representation is made by a special mental function, called “the representative function,” which James assigned to the fringe of consciousness. This “representative function” is “the mysterious *plus*, the understood meaning.”
- In my novel, I used the term “mysterious *plus*” not to describe a mental process, but an emotional or symbolic situation which combines the objective world with the subjective world.
- Here Foucin refers to “the decorated ‘mysterious *plus*’” of the night which Remy can “slip into,” where in his “disguise” (209) Remy can become his real self—subject and object having become one.
- At its three other uses in the novel, 14.222, N14:17, and 231 (twice), N14:41, the term is used to define the “understood,” but unstated, relationships or connections between the characters and their situations.
- Sometimes these connections involve a play upon the word *plus* (an optimistic view), as contrasted with the word *minus* (a pessimistic outlook).
- p. 209: “A family’s honor”: This subsection begins with Remy outside the Gendarmerie at 10:24 a.m., although his mind quickly flashes back to the concluding comments by Foucin and him in the commissioner’s office. He begins to think about how the discussion of the Belmazoires’ “family honor” (207-08) is applicable to his own family’s situation. Through his treason from Dec. 8, 1958, to Apr. 13, 1961, he had brought dishonor on his family.
- p. 209: “tumble down a set of stairs”: Remy recalls how that Apr. 13 day had begun with the French paras shoving him down the stairs of their Casbah house. He parallels the quickness of that physical fall with the speed at which his hope to visit his father while Foucin is gone—“sleep over in Arris” (208)—is crushed by Foucin’s minute description of the disguise he had bought in the Casbah. He realizes that this disguise, now known by his adversary, makes it worthless.
- p. 209: “As goodly humble . . . as your . . . ‘char’s [disguise], and without . . . the gender bent . . . of my beach foray”: Remy’s mind flashes back to 10:23 and his response to Foucin’s comment about “your disguise” and the “mysterious plus.”
- He says that the outfit he had bought in the Casbah was as “humble” as the “charwoman’s rags” (7.103) which Foucin had worn as a disguise in his pursuit of the fifth great traitor.
- Not wishing to emphasize Foucin’s transgender dress, Remy makes himself the butt of the joke by referring to the “gender bent” disguise—“bent” being a term for a homosexual—“of my [Zaracova] beach foray”—his HIV-2 disguise (6.85 and 87).

- p. 209: “women seek to salvage and restore”: On 8.156-57, Remy tells Leroy that in tragic plays (the essence of real-life for him), women “attempt to absolve [men]” of any blame for bringing suffering upon both of them.
This idea connects with the concept of women as future-oriented while men are occupied “with the certain past” (12.187).
- p. 209: “Allah, protect me from this devil!”: The wording is designed to be similar to that early chant in a Muslim’s daily prayers in which he or she says, “I betake me for refuge in God against the accursed Satan” (quoted on 7.102).
Mohisen had partially quoted from this passage on 7.111.
With his planned disguise exposed, Remy knows that this means a further delay in visiting his father. To console (or torment) himself, he images that if he does succeed in his mission, the moment his father sees him he will spit in his face and call him a devil.
- p. 209: perron: an outside stairway leading to a platform or porch at the front entrance of a building.
- p. 209: “shaved and flattened plane tree”: Many boulevards and avenues of Algiers are lined with palm and plane trees which are kept trimmed.
- p. 209: “*Vray est que quia plus n’en dict*: ‘It is true I am at a nonplus and say no more’”: From Rabelais’s *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, Book 5.
The phrase “at a nonplus” means “in a quandary or a dilemma.” It is derived from the Latin expression *non plus*, meaning “no more.”
In using it in this novel, I often play upon the joining of the negative (*non*) with the positive (*plus*) in the word “nonplus.”
Section 4 ends at 10:26, according to my chronology.
- pp. 209-11: SECTION 5
- p. 209: “As Nemmiche’s taxi swept”: Presumably during his slow taxi ride from the Gendarmerie to Al Harrach (10:26 – 11:00), Remy had been meditating on how at certain points the human race individually and collectively must have doubted that its species would or even should survive.
- p. 209: Beaulieu: The exclusive section of El Harrach where Foucin had told Remy that Deputy Inspector Karami lived.
- p. 209: perdurance: “persistence” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 209: “True, he could return to Marie”: Remy applies this general doubt which has sometimes faced the human species to his specific situation, that he must abandon his mission to reconnect with his father.

- p. 210: “that would be a betrayal”: That is, another act of treason.
- p. 210: “Curse life, and die”: Based on Job 2:9: “Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God, and die.”
Some Biblical authorities interpret Job’s wife as presenting two viewpoints, one theistic and the other as humanistic.
The first: By cursing God Job will bring down His wrath, resulting in his death. Others interpret it as meaning that by denying God or the theistic meaning of life, Job becomes the master of his fate. His wife seems to advocate that he has every right to destroy himself in order to end his human suffering.
- p. 210: “a ‘nonplus’ necessarily posits a ‘plus’”: At these points of “nonplus” (this affirmation of “no more”), the species had persevered because its members intuited that a “nonplus” presupposes there must a “plus” (God or the challenge of ego), which is greater than the individual or the species.
Its acceptance had been a sufficient goad to negate any collective- or self-doubt. The definition of “nonplus” as a “state of bafflement or perplexity” is based on the assumption that its opposite and hence positive state exists and has existed before it.
Additionally, the prefix (“non”) is linguistically subsidiary to the base/stem/root (“plus”) in the word.
- p. 210: “the challenge of ego . . . it is fittest . . . to survive”: The humanistic viewpoint is expressed through Darwin’s concept of the “survival of the fittest.” [This phrase was coined by Herbert Spencer from his reading of the 1859 edition of *Origins* and was first used in Spencer’s *Principles of Biology* (1864 ed., 1.444). Darwin liked the phrase and incorporated it into the title of chap. 4 and in its first paragraph in the fifth edition of *Origins* (1869 ed., 91-92).]
- p. 210: “to look outward, farther than itself”: In essence, Remy argues, from the humanistic point of view, egotism produces its opposite.
- p. 210: “connived ‘French disguise’”: Remy ruefully concludes that to survive he has had to assume an identity (“disguise”) contrived by DGSE.
That identity is the essence of his looking outward or beyond himself.
- p. 210: “In the driveway”: Remy’s taxi reaches Karami’s villa at 11 a.m.
- p. 210: *gandoura*: A sleeveless, hoodless robe worn by some Algerian men.
See the 3.39 note.
- p. 210: *jouvence-blue*: “a moderate bluish green or greenish blue that is deeper than gendarme or cyan blue and duller than parrot blue” (*Webster’s Third*).
I came across the color in the description of a 1988 Mercedes 300SL coupe.
- p. 210: “a deputy inspector, not a *commissaire divisionnaire!*”: Both Karami’s villa and

automobile contrast with the residence and vehicle of Foucin.

On 7.113, Foucin, a divisional commissioner, mentioned that his “apartment” was in the “Kouba” suburb of Algiers, which Remy knew was middle-class. Foucin himself described his white Peugeot as a “demoded ‘heap’” (7.110).

- p. 210: “‘both silk’”: Although the Qur’an states that silk will be the raiment of believers in Paradise (18:31; 22:23; and 35:33), numerous Hadiths report that Prophet Mohammed forbade men from wearing silk on earth, although he specifically did not extend this prohibition to women (Abu Dawood 27.4046; Bukhari 7.731; Muslim 24.5140; and Al-Tirmidhi 1152). Similarly Muslim men are not allowed to wear gold (Abu Dawood 27.4224).
- p. 210: “Karami was sprawled”: At 11:05, Remy is shown to Karami’s den.
- p. 210: Stella Artois: A “reassuringly expensive” Belgian beer (for so it advertised itself in the 1980s).
- p. 210: “moob”: A blend of “man” and “boob,” it refers to the plump and flabby breast of a man. Coincidentally, Remy described Mme. Bourceli’s “enormous fallen [left] breast” (11.172).
- p. 210: “below ‘a ripe twenty-three’”: See 2.19 (repeated by Remy on 2.23) for Saul’s disclosure about Trimalchio’s performers. As if showing his contempt for Remy (and indirectly for Foucin), Karami makes no attempt to hide either the forbidden beer or the pornographic video cassette.
- p. 210: “lock jaws”: Several quibbles are involved: The transitive verb “jaw” meaning “to talk at someone tiresomely”—how Karami views the meeting with Remy—is modified to suggest the disease (“lockjaw”), an indication of how Karami plans to keep his jaws locked and thus confrontationally irresponsive during the interview (“lock horns” and the supposed “locking-jaw grip” of pit bull terriers).
- p. 210: “the inchoate phase of the investigation”: Karami headed the investigation for its first three days (Feb. 28 and Mar. 1-2).
- p. 210: flump: “a dull heavy sound (as of a fall)” or “a movement producing such a sound” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 210: “arrested and built a case against the prime suspect”: Mohammed was arrested on Tuesday, Feb. 28, the morning after the murder.
- p. 210: tromp: Variant of “tramp”
- p. 210: punt: “concave bottom” of a molded glass bottle; also called the “kick” (*Webster’s Third*).

See the 1.2 note, “the collar,” N1:8, and the 3.47 note, N3:32, for the parts of a beer or wine bottle.

p. 210: “Aahm”: After a moment, this slurred “uh-huh” will be used against him.

p. 210: “tattler”: Put in quotes to indicate that Remy is not employing the principal meaning of “tattle” (“to gossip”), but a subsidiary meaning, “to inform against someone.”

Thus here “tattler” means “informer.”

p. 210: innominate: not named; anonymous.

p. 210: “titular status”: Remy incorporates a favorite term of his in speaking of Foucin.

See 7.106, 111, and 113, and 12.195.

p. 210: *Ella'ana!*: As the text states, Arabic for “Shit!”

- p. 211: “score”: to “gain, achieve, win” as in “a reporter scored a scoop” (*Webster’s Third*), although the slang narcotic meaning is suggested, “to succeed in obtaining some illicit drugs,” as in “scored some dope.”
- p. 211: *fanfreluche*: A French noun meaning “trifle, slight little thing, bauble, trinket, or decorative embellishment.”
- p. 211: “to pluck the needle from the haystack”: See 8.127, the previous use of this image.
- p. 211: “Aahm?”: Remy mocks Karami’s use of the interjection.
- p. 211: Village People: An American disco group meteorically popular in America from 1978 – 1979, but its music retained its popularity into the 90s in North Africa.
- p. 211: “all-nosy”: The criticism which Foucin made of the French is turned on him: “Why the French, other than that they have long Gallic noses which bridge the Mediterranean” (4.58).
The image will reappear on 16.270 and 17.276.
- p. 211: “why Karami punched the volume to deafening”: Karami fears either that Foucin has had his villa “bugged” or that there is a listening device on Remy.
- p. 211: “the French five letters”: The French expression means “Good luck!” As explained in the 9.149 note, N9:35-36, the phrase is a counter-euphemism for the French five-letter word *merde* (“shit”).
Karami’s outburst is the first attestation that there were some in Algiers who disliked the great commissioner.
His interview over, Remy shows himself out of the den at 11:13.
- p. 211: *bâtard*: “bastard” in French.
- p. 211: “during his stroll . . . to Nemmiche’s taxi”: At 11:16, Remy is walking to his taxi.
- p. 211: *au contraire*: on the contrary.
- p. 211: *orphelin*: “orphan” in French.
On 6.99, Foucin told Remy, “I too was orphaned.”
- pp. 211-14: SECTION 6
- p. 211: “The café . . . Remy’s entry at 2:30”: Not depicted: Leaving Karami’s residence at 11:16, Remy returns to the Al-Nigma at around noon. At 2:15 he has Nemmiche drive him to Bendari’s Café in Bab el Oued, entering it at 2:30.

- p. 211: Algiers' thirty percent unemployment": See 12.193 and its note.
- p. 211: "graybeard": an old man.
- p. 211: *sawm*: "the fast," as defined in the text. In Ramadan the fast is broken at sunset, the time for Maghrib prayers, 7:24 on the date of this chapter (Apr. 17 or 11 Ramadan).
- p. 211: "ten and one-half hours of fasting": Fasting begins with Fajr or dawn prayers, 4:39 this day. By three in the afternoon, it would have lasted ten hours and twenty-one minutes.
- p. 211: Asr: Afternoon prayers, 4:30 – 4:45. The call to Asr, as the text indicates, would come at 4:10.
- p. 211: stool-less: "without stools."
Used in describing bars on the internet, it is sometimes spelled "stoolless." I did not find it listed in any print or online dictionary.

p. 212: “No alcoholic beverages may be dispensed during Ramadan”: The sale of alcoholic beverages is not prohibited in Algeria except during Ramadan, and even during the Holy Month they are served to non-Muslims in large hotels in Algiers.

The country, which had extensive vineyards in colonial days, still has a small domestic beer and wine industry. Hard liquors have always been imported from abroad. At the time of my novel, but not nowadays (2013), beer was served in coffeehouses in Algiers.

According to 1995 data (postdating the time of my novel), around 80 percent of Algerian men and over 95 percent of women totally abstain from the consumption of any alcoholic beverages.

Thus a segment of the population with governmental approval do not follow the Islamic prohibition of the consumption of alcoholic beverages, or any intoxicants, which in the Qur’an, 5.90-91, are called “Satan’s handiwork.”

See the 3.48 note, N3:33-34, for the theoretical and practical positions on alcohol in Muslim countries.

p. 212: “*café noir*”: black coffee, that is, without cream.

p. 212: “As soon as the bartender had exited . . . to the kitchen”: Belghiche would normally have kitchen help, but no Muslims could eat or drink during the daylight hours of Ramadan.

p. 212: *sucrier*: “a sugar bowl, usually with cover” (*Webster’s Third*).

In most neighborhood North African cafés, I found, ashtrays are usually brought with the order.

p. 212: “a Muslim man’s ‘most prized possession’”: This statement is open for challenge. What I was told by Muslim friends is that within the family a Muslim woman typically has much power, but in wielding it she must assume the guise of the wily slave.

Outside the family, she has little because the law and custom, both the product of men, regard her as property.

p. 212: *comptoir*: French for “counter” of a bar or coffeehouse.

p. 212: *proximal*: “situated close to” (*Webster’s Third*).

p. 212: *calepin*: “notebook” in French.

p. 212: “Arabic ‘11, today’s date’”: As indicated in the 13.211 note “*sawm*” above, the date is 11 Ramadan. The year is 1409 AH (the year of the Hegira).

p. 212: Isha’: The midevening prayers, which on this night finished at 9:06.

p. 212: “the cinema”: At the time of the novel (1989), there were eleven movie theaters

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in Algiers, but only one in Bab el Oued (the Maignan). Therefore in “Abdulaziz T, after Isha’, the cinema” would refer to the Maignan.

p. 212: recto and verso: front and back of a sheet of paper.

p. 212: “cited by Mohammed”: Belmazoir exclaimed, “The notebook [at Bendari’s] hangs alongside the phone. Anyone could have read it, an open advertisement” (10.160).

p. 212: con: peruse carefully.

p. 212: “Mo-Mo, ZB disco 7:15 Mon”: First given on 10.160, Remy expanded on the shorthand phasing on 11.185.
It is three times quoted exactly in chap. 13: on p. 207 by Foucin and twice by Remy, first to himself and then aloud to Belghiche (here and on the next page).

p. 212: “fifty centimes”: Equivalent to a US nickel.

p. 212: cognomination: cognomen or surname.

p. 212: *faible, au mieux*: French for “feeble, at best.”

p. 212: “a potable par excellence”: A drink beyond comparison.

- p. 213: “grossly inflated tip”: Belghiche’s account confirms the one by Foucin on p. 207: “in his resultant elation tipped the café-tender an extravagant five-dinar note.”
- p. 213: “restive lookout for it”: Again a seeming verification of Foucin’s supposition: “There followed the days of marking time, with the anxiety building inside him” (206).
- p. 213: “the five days before it came”: Eight days elapsed between the night of the Toumi apartment incident and the morning Belghiche took the message for Mohammed about Zaracova (Wed, Feb. 15, to Thursday, Feb. 23), According to my chronology, Belmazoir spent Thursday the 16th making up the Wednesday the 15th trip to the PLO camp. He returned on the 17th, early Friday afternoon and spent the day spending the share of the money which Houda had allocated to him. In his cockiness, he was certain that Ballard would call him. According to Belghiche, beginning Saturday, Feb. 18, Mohammed was repeatedly dropping by Bendari’s to see if any message had come. This every-three-hour checking continued until Wednesday, Feb. 22, when at noon he left to spend the night at the PLO. Monday, Feb. 20, had been extremely painful since that was his and Ballard’s rendezvous night. As soon as he returned from the PLO camp on Thurs., Feb. 23, around noon—earlier than he usually came back to Algiers—he rushed to Bendari’s. After he read the message, his large tip indicated his relief and happiness. However, his elation defused quickly: He did not finish the one beer he had ordered; he shooed away anyone who approached him; and even forgot that he should be delivering the hashish he had picked up at the PLO camp. Suddenly remembering, he dashed from the café.
- p. 213: “stand a brew”: “to pay the cost of (as a treat).” Example “standing drinks for the crowd” (*Webster’s Third*). Here, “treat him to a beer.”
- p. 213: Plo: The abbreviation PLO is pronounced by many characters in the novel as a one-syllable word rhyming with “blow.” See the 1.23 note, N1:34, for the background of this usage.
- p. 213: “the foreigner’s next-day call for verification”: The person who had left the Thursday message called the next day, Feb. 24, not in the morning as he usually did but at 1:30 since it was Friday and commercial establishments close until the noon sermon and prayers are finished. Belghiche gave him Mohammed’s answer from the previous afternoon that he would be at Zaracova.
- p. 213: “pensive the four days after”: From Feb. 24 – Feb 27. On pp. 206-07, Foucin speculates what Belmazoir was thinking about (and

doing) during this span. Although never stated, it is reasonable to assume that Foucin (not an agent of his) had interviewed Belghiche.

The café manager's account establishes the pattern of Mohammed's thoughts: worried before the call, relieved by the call, then depressed by the prospect of the meeting at Zaracova and possibly even contemptuous of the caller: he read the message with "a forbearing smirk."

Belghiche's description of Mohammed's pensiveness strikes Remy as "psychologically rich," the adverb returning his mind to an early "psychobabble" observation that he had made about the prisoner: "He's vulnerable" because he lost his father "too early" (4.66). And to another where Belmazoir confessed to Remy that "we dingus-laden always have the deep-seated fear our sex will stale" (6.84).

- p. 213: *pourboire*: French for "tip; gratuity."
- p. 213: "to control his breathing": Belghiche is startled by the size of the augmented tip.
- p. 213: at the beck: The full phrase is "at the beck and call of," meaning "at the service of."
- p. 213: "expected it [servile selfish behavior] from the grandson of a traitor": Just as old Belmazoir had sold his soul to the French as a traitor, so his grandson was mentally programmed to sell his body to foreigners.
- p. 213: "Around eight months ago . . . from the homicide": Ballard picked up Belmazoir at Palais des Nations Beach on May 24, 1988, (4.62 and its note, N4:32, and the 9.144 note, N9:26).
Thus, according to Belghiche, the first message from Ballard to the youth came late in June or early July, eight months before the Feb. 27 murder.
- p. 213: "by not snickering": The casual mentioning of HIV, which is also the alias of his French case officer, surprisingly makes Remy not wish to laugh at someone with the disease.
- p. 213: "bottled in bond": The barkeep Belghiche makes a pun on the term used on such popular imported American bourbons as Taylor, Old Granddad, and Wild Turkey.
The phrase "bottled in bond" is applied to whisky which has been "bottled unblended at 100 proof under U.S. government warehouse supervision after aging at least four years" (*Webster's Third*).
Belghiche means that Ahmed Belmazoir, Mohammed's and Houda's father, had drunk so much one night that he was like a bottle of American bonded whisky.
- p. 213: "staggered off the cliff": According to Belghiche, the drunken Ahmed Belmazoir fell over a seaside cliff and died (in 1978).
Through a cruel pun Mme. Bourceli had referred to his death: "their [the

Belmazoirs'] fortunes 'dived'" (12.199).

Ahmed was first mentioned on 2.21 when in 1972 Remy had met with him, old Belmazoir, and the two-year-old Mohammed in a car on a darkened French road.

That night the child climbed from his father's arms into the lap of Remy, who was sitting in the back seat.

- p. 214: *moil*: All of the meanings listed in *Webster's Third* are suggested: drudgery, mire, taint, turbulence, state of confusion, and turmoil.
- p. 214: "Tick me off": Mohammed's and Belghiche's obvious meaning is "to mark or check off (an item on a list) with a tick or check mark."
However, when Remy repeats it in the last sentence of this section, he seems to incorporate the phrasal and informal meaning of "tick someone off": "to annoy or bother."
- p. 214: "To iterate, that's his line": Repeated by Fouad from p. 213: "That's his crossed-out line."
- p. 214: *walad*: As the text indicates, in Arabic this is the word for "boy."
However, in small restaurants and cafés in Middle East and North African countries, it is also the term used to summon a waiter, no matter how old the person is.
- p. 214: "That Tuesday you telephoned the police about the message": Karami had already confirmed Remy's supposition that it was Foucin who had told his colleagues to confiscate the telephone notebook from Bendari's Café (211).
Remy deliberately uses Tuesday, the day Mohammed was arrested, although he knows the notebook was seized by the police on Wednesday at 8 a.m.
Since Foucin was not officially assigned to the case until Thursday, Remy is seeking to find out who might have telephoned Foucin about the message.
His question assumes the Belghiche did because he was in charge of the notebook at Bendari's.
- p. 214: *beeline*: As an intransitive verb, it means "to go fast over the straightest quickest course" (*Webster's Third*).
- p. 214: "*As-salaamu 'alaikum!*": As the text indicates, the phrase means "Peace be upon you!" which is the typical formal greeting of one Muslim to another.
The formal response to it "*Wi 'alaikum as-salaam!*" will not be given until 19.320 and then only in its English translation: "And may God's Peace (as well) go with you!"
- p. 214: "Remy slid the fifty-eight dinars": After the tip, Remy leaves the café at 2:47.

pp. 214-15: SECTION 7

- p. 214: "The residence of the American ambassador": Section 7 opens with a description of the perimeter of the residence of the American ambassador to Algeria.
Remy, who apparently had been briefed on its layout in the 2269 files, is

musings about its security during the last three minutes (10:39 – 10:42 of his limousine ride from the Al-Nigma to the residence (10:25 – 10:42 p.m.).

p. 214: Sûreté Nationale: The primary policing authority in the principal cities and other urban areas of Algeria.

See the 4.55 note, N4:13.

p. 214: bailiwick: “office or jurisdiction” (*Webster’s Third*).

p. 214: “at the point he was tweaking”: The events of this section will switch rapidly. From an account of the security at the ambassador’s residence, the action flashes back to 10:20 when Remy received a phone call from Remoune, the Al-Nigma’s night receptionist, informing him that a limousine has just arrived for him.

p. 214: bezel: “the groove or flange holding a gem in place.”

p. 214: “When the call had come, a few minutes past ten, with [the exclamation] ‘Elbert’s bolted’”: At a still earlier time, 10:02, Remy receives a phone call saying that Elbert Medlin has “bolted.”

p. 214: capstone: The uppermost stone of a structure, used metaphorically to describe the climax of the phone call about Medlin (10:04).

p. 214: “bolted”: The word is used to describe significant actions by two other characters:

The hasty exit of Ahmed Belmazoir, with his wife, Houda, and Mohammed in tow, from France to Algiers (2.32).

Ahmed Chabane’s absconding from his village when he finds Foucin wants to speak to him (12.196 and 206).

p. 214: “two hours earlier”: The action moves to an even earlier event, eight p.m. From a telephone booth Remy talks with his French Embassy liaison, whom he was supposed to call the previous night.

p. 214: Directeur: The chief of DGSE.

On 9.147, his liaison had scoffed, “So? The negative was placed on Ballard to hurt [Leroy]. What’s that to Paris?”

He now informs Remy that Paris *is* intrigued with this discovery.

- p. 215: After the brief summary”: 8:02 – 8:07 p.m.
- p. 215: “De rigueur, fax ‘Vellacott’ tonight seeking his approval”: During his summary Remy had not explained to his liaison that Foucin was aware via his telephone calls on Apr. 11 and 13 he was working through an intermediary in Algiers (209). Remy must have heeded his liaison’s injunction about faxing Vellacott since during breakfast the next day (Tuesday, Apr. 18), he will receive a “fax from Brussels” (14.224).
- p. 215: “Your sojourn must be prolonged””: A double-edged sword to Remy: He will have time to develop another means which will allow him to visit his father. However, Foucin’s itemizing of his purchases in the Casbah convinces Remy how closely he is being followed. Additionally he has begun to miss Marie very much and subconsciously is aware that his attraction to Leila could lead to mental, if not physical, infidelity. Thus news of this extension conditions the wide-ranging and reckless projects he envisions soon after his return to his hotel room. Not stated, but understood, is DGSE’s motivation: It hopes Remy’s investigations will uncover some scandal which will embarrass the Americans, make a breach between them and the Palestinians, and consequently diminish U.S. influence in the region.
- p. 215: “Did I mention that Paris is pleased?”: The call ends at 8:08.
- p. 215: “With his hands clasped behind his back””: Back at the Al-Nigma at 8:20, he sends the fax to Vellacott and until 9:30 reads chap. 14 of Gibbon’s *Decline*. [Although not mentioned in the text, logic indicates that Remy read chaps. 12 and 13 over two hours in that broad span of free time (3:10 – 7:40) which he had between his return to the hotel after the interview with Belghiche and his walk to the telephone booth for the call to his French liaison.] Around 9:30 he began to pace the sitting room of his suite principally concocting wild schemes involving his father, Marie, and Leila.
- p. 215: Ibrahim Naaman ben Ismail: His father’s full name has not been given since 2.27.
- p. 215: “Seven strides . . . retraced seven, an additional seven”: Another occurrence of this numerically significant number in the novel. The four seven’s mentioned total twenty-eight, the number of years of Remy’s exile from Algeria: He was flown to France on April 13, 1961 and returned to Algiers on April 9, 1989. For the “seven” symbolism, see the 2.23 note, N2:33; the 10.156 note, N10:11; and the 11.178 note, N11:23-24. A further examination of that number will occur on the 21.352 note, N21:2-3. For the use of “twenty-eight” symbolically, see the 9.136 note, N9:5.

p. 215: scuff: to walk without lifting the feet.

p. 215: “not having secured Leila’s number while obtaining Karami’s”: On p. 209, Remy had received from Foucin the deputy inspector’s phone number.

He realizes that he should have asked him for Leila, certain the all-knowing commissioner would have it—yet forgetting that Islam’s rules of morality would have prohibited Foucin from passing it on.

Remy imagines what he would say if he could speak to her over the telephone.

p. 215: “chapter 14 of *Decline*—Constantine has reconsolidated the Empire”: Chap. 14 deals with Constantine’s destruction of the six claimants as Emperor of Rome and his resultant reunification of the Roman Empire. In chap. 15, Gibbons begins to examine the rise of Christianity in a highly critical light.

This will be Remy’s final reading of Gibbon. Since one aspect of the novel deals with the conflict between the four major modern viewpoints about religion (Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and atheism), I symbolically halted Remy’s reading of *Decline* with a reference to Remy’s reluctance to hear attacks upon religion.

On 15.255, there will be a final mentioning of Gibbon since Remy says to himself that he looks forward to an evening of reading Gibbon, but this pleasure does not materialize.

The note to that page, N15:54, points out that while in Algiers Remy read chaps. 8-14 of *Decline*, that is, a symbolic seven.

p. 215: “At that instant the phone had rung”: 10:02.

p. 215: tagmeme: In linguistics, the smallest meaningful unit of grammatical form.

p. 215: “In the course of the drive [to the ambassador’s residence]”: This last subsection of sect. 7 returns to an unspecified portion of the timespan of its first: 10:25 – 10:42.

In my chronology Remy spent most of this time (10:28 – 10:39) thinking about what he had wanted to tell Leila if he had possessed her phone number, “what a monster Ballard was.”

His mental argument over, as mentioned above, he spent the last three minutes of the drive on the elaborate security of the ambassador’s residence.

p. 215: ““exquisite subtilty””: The phrase is from the Apocryphal book The Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach, or Ecclesiasticus 19:25-26: “There is an exquisite subtilty, and the same is unjust; and there is one that turneth aside to make judgment appear; and there is a wise man that justifieth in judgment. / There is a wicked man that hangeth down his head sadly; but inward he is full of deceit.” (KJV)

I was steered to this Apocryphal passage by a footnote to a passage in Melville’s *The Confidence Man*, chap. five, where the narrator paraphrases a verse from “the Scripture”: “There is a subtle man, and the same is deceived.”

p. 215: subtilty: subtlety.

p. 215: “the halo of a hold”: The phrase means that certain individuals held Ballard as a revered or idealized person, one encircled like a saint in religious artwork with a halo.

p. 215: “She must be saved!”: On p. 208, Foucin had exclaimed, “She must be saved!” To emphasize this necessity, he delivered “a stentorian blow of his fist against the bark-brown [desk] pad.”

p. 215: “between February sixteenth and the twenty-sixth”: Remy places the timespan of Foucin’s discovery from one day after Belmazoir confronts his sister and Ballard in the Toumi flat to one day before Ballard’s murder.

Remy does not speculate how Foucin could have known about the meeting or about Ballard’s overly prompt arrival and Belmazoir’s contrasting habitual tardiness.

Nor does he have proof of how Foucin obtained the negative planted on the body. Furthermore, he does not consider whether the commissioner had an alibi for the speculated time of the murder.

All Remy has is a possible motive.

p. 215: “all-nosy”: The epithet Karami used to describe Foucin on p. 211.

p. 215: “*un meurtre moral*”: a moral murder. Remy concludes that Ballard deserved to be killed. He speculates that the murder of Ballard could have been a moral murder, which would make the moralistic Foucin a suspect.

p. 215: “one who so respected the law that he could put himself above it”: A disturbing paradox except for every political or religious dictator since society began.

pp. 216-18: SECTION 8

- p. 216: “With a folio-sized book”: Remy arrives at the residence at 10:42 and is shown into Leroy’s study at 10:45.
- p. 216: Great Sand Seas: Formally, the Grand Erg Oriental or Great Eastern Sand Sea, it is a massive *erg* (field or sand dunes) in the Saharan lowlands of northeastern Algerian and western Tunisia.
It measures 600 km east to west and 200 km north to south.
- p. 216: Tidikelt or Tademait: In *Algerian and the Sahara*, the Stevenses write, “South of the Great Sand Seas the [Algerian] Sahara changes its appearance dramatically. Sand gives way to stone . . . and you have the Tidikelt, Tademait and Tinrhert Plateaux.” All “three share similar characteristics. Over long stretches they are level, solid plains with a surface of small flat stones” (39).
- p. 216: Land Rover 110: A British four-wheel-drive off-road utility vehicle. It was introduced in 1983. The 110 number represents the wheelbase in inches (2,800 mm.)
- p. 216: reify: A transitive verb meaning, “to regard (as an abstraction, a mental construction) as a thing; to give definite form and content to” (*Webster’s Third*).
- p. 216: flagitious: vile and scandalous.
- p. 216: boscaige: a natural growth of trees or shrubs.
- p. 216: “On January twenty-third . . . ‘headed toward its [palm grove]. After ten minutes he exited . . . I could discern the young man who darted out and hopped in [Ballard’s car], Ballard, I realized [after Ballard’s death] from his photographs”:
On 1.10, Ballard recalled that he and Belmazoir had met in the Zaracova grove, “the last time five weeks back.” Five weeks from Feb. 27 would be Mon. Jan.23.
- p. 216: “meddlesome old attendant”: Abukadir from 6.90-91.
- p. 216: Palace of the Nations beach: The Palais des Nations is the name of the beach about twelve miles west of the center of Algiers.
See the 1.7 note for a description of the Palace of the Nations conference center and its nearby beach.
- p. 216: “so low as I knew I could, until . . .”: Medlin does not finish the phrase, which would have referred to his slighting treatment of Ballard in the embassy coffee room on Feb. 21.
- p. 216: *paupières*: “eyelids” in French.

- p. 216: “Recoup [Frantic] . . . I will go [Defiant] . . . Sir, please [Resigned]”: The verbal equivalents of his “triple textured eyes,” as indicated by the bracketed words.
- p. 216: “a briar prick”: Another allusion to a key word in the title of the chapter.
- p. 216: *douk-douk*: A reference to the type of knife used to stab Ballard in the throat. See the 4.57 note, N4:17-18, for a detailed description of it.
- p. 216: “Everything that’s private and personal”: Not verbally, but ideologically, Leroy’s statement was influenced by Dimmesdale’s condemnation of Chillingworth in Hawthorne’s *The Scarlet Letter*, chap. 17: “He has violated, in cold blood, the sanctity of a human heart.”
I identify my source since my paraphrasing is so inadequate and debased that few would ever suspect its origin.
- p. 216: Xenophon’s *Anabasis*: Leroy would have been aware that Remy would discern the symbolism of his having chosen this most depressing of epic works. Written c. 400 BCE, it deals with the desperate struggle of a dwindling Greek army to escape from Asia Minor.
Leroy wishes to suggest his loss, first of his best friend Ballard and now his right-hand man Medlin.
The word “anabasis” was used on 12.186. Its note, N12:3, discusses Xenophon’s work.

- p. 217: “the client of [your] client”: On 8.119, Remy had corrected Leroy’s comment, “This boy Belmazoir, your client,” by interposing, “M. Belmazoir is the client of my client.”
Leroy sarcastically recalls the emendation.
- p. 217: “The fault is mine”: On 11.228, Leroy said, “It’s my fault” that Medlin left the Mirabout Restaurant, and two pages later, he murmured the same, “My fault.”
As mentioned in the p. 207 note above, see the 7.112 note, N7:28, for a list of the instances in the novel where characters attempt to deflect blame from another by stating that they themselves were the ones at fault.
Leroy’s assertion of his fault is given at 10:52, seven minutes into their conference.
- p. 217: *ménage à trois*: Its literal translation from the French is “household of three,” although the term has come to mean “any sexual act involving three people,” thus making it a clumsy synonym for “threesome.”
Remy employs the idiom to stress that Ballard connived to involve two members of a household (brother and sister) in his threesome.
- p. 217: “if I may so familiarly address you”: In addressing an ambassador, a transnational interlocutor should say, “Your Excellency.”
Those diplomats or other embassy workers who serve under an ambassador may address him as “Mr. Ambassador.”
In addressing Leroy as “Sir,” Remy seeks a softer, yet still respectful, term, as if trying to cushion the despicable revelations about the ambassador’s “best friend.”
- p. 217: Damon: Half of the pair in classical mythological renowned for their devoted friendship. Pythias, of course, is the other.
In the legend Daman put his life in danger in order to save his friend Pythias, who had been sentenced to death.
Remy chose the image because Ballard (Damon) had saved Leroy’s (Pythias’s) life in Vietnam, according to 1.10, 5.73, and 8.123-24.
- p. 217: “more-than-the-most fell”: Another variant of James’s “the more than the more is more than the less” from *The Principles of Psychology*, vol. 1, chap. 13.
- p. 217: ice-floed: As a verb, a neologism formed from the noun “ice floe”; its meaning is “to move like an ice floe, cold and jagged, across the surface of something.”
- p. 217: *votre meilleur ami*: In French, “your best friend.”
- p. 217: trammel: a fishing or fowling net.
- p. 217: feckless: Several definitions of this word from *Webster’s Third* Remy would apply to Mohammed: lazy, irresponsible, shiftless.

- p. 217: tendering her money: A play upon “tender,” where meanings of the verb (“to offer in payment”), of the noun (“legal tender”), and of the adjective (“expressive of love, affection, consideration, etc.”) are implied.
On 1.11, similar puns upon the word are used as explained in its note, N1:30.
- p. 217: “this you know”: Remy invokes Leroy’s familiarity with Shakespeare (5.71; 8.118 and 120-22; and 11.185) before providing a quotation from the playwright to certify his conclusion.
- p. 217: “Chaos is come again”: From *Othello* 3.3.99-100: “And when I love thee not, / / Chaos is come again.”
The time when Remy finishes his speech is 10:56.
- p. 217: “‘But he saved my life’”: On 1.10, Leroy said to Ballard that he gave him the present “because you saved my life.” On 5.73, Belsches will state, “Paul saved his life.”
Here Leroy uses the same wording twice within three paragraphs of each other.
- p. 217: the Philippines: See Ballard’s account 1.7-8 and DGSE’s reference to the incident in one of the documents in the 2269 folder (5.75).
- p. 217: “four days have elapsed”: See 8.128, set on April 13, where Leroy told Remy that if he will “find the murderer” of Ballard he will “triply augment” what Vellacott is paying him.
- p. 217: whirring: whizzing or buzzing.
- p. 217: “‘I’ll quintuple the fee of M. Vellacott’”: Leroy says that he will offer Remy five times what Vellacott is paying him if he will stop the investigation.
- p. 217: “Elbert’s ‘tranquil mind’—my ‘content’”: From *Othello*’s speech to Iago (3.3.363-64): “O, now, forever / Farewell the tranquil mind! Farewell content!”
- p. 217: objurgation: harsh reproof or rebuke.
- p. 217: “discover—‘invent’—the truth”: Another reference to the twentieth-century philosopher Karl Popper’s concept of provisional truth (from his *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*), which is more thoroughly discussed in the 6.95 note, “you’ve,” N6:39.
A corollary to the concept is that truth is not empirically present to be discovered, but that the human mind must invent truth through its interpretation of the physical world.
Thus what is regarded as truth must always be held in suspect.
Remy, Foucin, and Leroy all allude to Popper’s ideas:
(1) Remy on 6.95, through a pun on the phrase “discover a continent,” suggests that it should be “invent a continent.” In a later chapter (15:250), he will present

a more pontifical approach to Popper's concept by maintaining that, despite the interferences placed in front of him, he had found out the truth about the complex relationship of Ballard, Houda, and Mohammed.

However, there Popper will get the last laugh since Remy's truth is almost immediately shown to be false.

(2) Foucin on 12.196 dismisses the concept of "Karl Popper and his ilk" as "infidelic."

(3) Here, Leroy suggests that truth is not discovered but invented, but "invent" for him is a diplomatic ruse meaning "to avoid the truth" since he pleads for Remy to stop his pursuit of the truth about Ballard.

p. 217: *fauteuil*: An upholstered chair, especially one with open arms.

p. 217: "For the second time today I've been advised to step aside": Remy refuses Leroy's pleas because (unstated in the text) he has still not maneuvered a way to see his father.

Foucin was the first person who had indirectly asked Remy to halt his investigation: "Isn't the time to retract such accusations upon us?" (208). All "will be settled," he tells Remy (209), if Belmazoir simply accepts a generous plea bargain.

p. 217: "throw it over": to give up, abandon, or forsake something or jilt someone. The last meaning stands out because of the antecedent word "court," meaning "to woo."

p. 217: "espouse its bond": This continues the metaphor that one must "court" truth, never contemplate jilting her, and aim for "espous[al]" with her, resulting in a till-death-do-we-part "bond."

p. 217: "the corollary, that hurled in his face de novo was the public shame of one who (her/his adherent concluded) did not deserve it": Remy perceives the similarity of Leroy's fear that Ballard's shame will be revealed with Foucin's concern that Houda will be exposed to public ridicule: "And all Algiers will cackle [at Houda] in mock credulity" (208).

p. 217: *de novo*: once more.

- p. 218: aureole: Metaphorically a halo, but only in appearance since the illumination is coming from the floor lamp.
- p. 218: “Your Excellency, will you walk with me?”: Remy’s request here balances in situation if not in words that of Leroy’s in the garden scene (8.124). There the ambassador pointedly signaled that by not moving to accompany him Remy was delaying their exit from the garden.
- p. 218: indurate: hardened.
- p. 218: *la porte de cabinet de travail*: French for “the door to the study.” Remy and Leroy leave the study at 11:00.
- p. 218: Staatsveiligheid: Belgium’s State Security Service, abbreviated as SV. Leroy uses the Dutch name; its French name is *Sûreté de l’Etat* (SE). Albert Raes served as director of SV/SE from 1977 to 1990.
- p. 218: broking: The British term for “brokering” or “the work of a broker who acts as an agent or intermediary in transactions.”
- p. 218: “its French counterpart DGSE”: The French intelligence agency would have doctored the Staatsveiligheid folder, substituting details, descriptions, fingerprints, and photographs of Lazar with those of Remy, as necessary. Subsidiary information, such as the name of Lazar’s wife or other aspects of his family, would not have been changed. Remy was supposed to have memorized those details.
- p. 218: “your called her Marie”: See 8.128, where Remy uses the name of his (not Lazar’s) wife. The attentive Leroy referred to Remy’s wife as Marie on 11.177.
- p. 218: “keeps double books”: Leroy means that since Vellacott frequently has his investigator Remy use pseudonyms in his assignments, he keeps different books for each of Remy’s aliases. However, Remy connects the phrase with a simplified double-entry bookkeeping system often used in the Middle East in North African. Employing it, a small shop owner, who often sold on credit, would keep a back-up book of financial transactions as a security against the first book being lost.
- p. 218: CK overcoat: Calvin Klein. This overcoat by the famous American designer is mentioned first on 4.66 and later through the signature abbreviation on 5.76.
- p. 218: “to an additional forty-four years when he had intruded upon his father bent over his grocer’s account books”: Omar would have been five years old at that time. On 14.223, Remy will give a more detailed narration of this scene where he first learned about the double-entry bookkeeping practice used by his father.

- p. 218: “*Binding with briars*”: Remy revives Foucin’s quote on p. 207 from Blake’s “The Garden of Love”: “And binding with briars my joys & desires” (12).
- p. 218: “year of my birth as ’39”: Omar Naaman was born on April 2, 1940, according to my chronology.
On 3.35, Omar was given a new “birth certificate” by his first *contact*, but its date is not specified.
The year, however, was kept the same because the record book of the nunnery indicates “its beginning entry [was] from 1940.” This first entry indicated that he was “a foundling” (3.35).
None of this about Omar or Remy is relevant since he is discussing the year of birth of his alias Lazar, which is listed in Vellacott’s records as 1939, but is “off by one year,” although Remy does not specify which way: Is it 1938 or 1940?
- p. 218: “the black, uh, gray matter”: Remy borrows the terminology of Ghazi (12.198-99 where he speaks of his “black” or “charcoal matter” and 13.205 in his reference to his “sooty brain”), a self-amusement of which Leroy would be in the dark.
Remy leaves the embassy at 11:02.