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The Eiffel Tower Gang

*The Adventures of Inspector Migraine
of the DST*

Roy Lisker

*8 Liberty Street
Middletown, CT 06457
rlisker@yahoo.com
www.fermentmagazine.org*

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E-Mail: rlisker@yahoo.com



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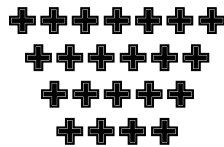
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Chapter I:

The Message of the Moving Sidewalks

1988; early April, the month that will always belong to Paris.

6 PM: the peak of the rush hour. Swirling impetuously, as

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vortexing bath waters will (in the Northern Hemisphere) churn clockwise down a drain, the crowds descended into all the Metro orifices around the Place du Chatelet. In its central plaza, midst more impetuously swirling vortices of traffic, squat four angry Sphinxes. Above them and just below the monument to Napoleon's cloud-capped victories which they carry on their backs , stands a plaque informing us that these harnessed beasts are situated at the geographical center of 13th century Paris. It was at this very place that barbarous executions of Templars were performed, in full view of hoards of spectators dropping like flies from the Black Plague.

Today Chatelet is a domain of elegance and arena for the performing arts. Parks, theaters and concert halls, restaurants and cafes abound in all the adjoining streets. Below the complex web of vehicular traffic, (previously described as impetuously swirling), sprawled over several descending levels like the cars of a derailed train, lies a speliologist's paradise of caves, caverns, corridors, gloomy passageways, tenacious odors, mysterious branchings, street musicians, pickpockets , fiends and beggars, witless advertising and existentialist philosophers: an uncharted *Cour des Miracles* of vast dimensions: Nowadays, *station Chatelet* amalgamates several branches of two independent Metro systems in tentacular stratigraphy.

Herein the French have accomplished a miracle of modern engineering, par for the course from the nation that razed the Bastille, raised the Eiffel Tower, rectified the Transit of Venus, reaffirmed existence through doubt, and restored the Pantheon. In

the preceding decades a new subway system had been immersed totally within the musculature of the old. Called the *Reseau Express Regional* (RER), it brings the suburbs into the downtown in a matter of minutes. What hope, indeed, can there be for a civilization that enables its Third World street cleaners to leap, in only a few stops, from the boiling hovels of Belleville to the crusty villas of the snobs of Neuilly?

Even as the RER was assuming its present shape, *Les Halles*, the picturesque "entrails of Paris", was being demolished. Its replacement is a most modern atrocity, a miscarriaged miscegenation of a megashoppingmall, a citadel constructed from the collective concatenation of random bulbous extrusions like the bumps on the head of a man who has fallen off the Butte Montmartre, architectural tribute to the wake of confusion inexorably engendered by greed.

The official name for this sleazy Bedlam is the *Forum Des Halles*: though one cannot doubt that its architects worked through long nights to make it certain that it would not contain as much as a single square meter of space where any discussion, debate or dialogue, educational, religious, political or otherwise, could even be imagined.

Beneath this duplicitous "Forum" lies *yet another* Metro complex pasting together the earlier station, *Metro Les Halles*, with the RER. Together *Chatelet* and *Les Halles* are multiply-connected through capillaries, viaducts and tubercles over a *superficie* of perhaps a square kilometer, to produce a monster of

chaos seething with humanity as foam will settle on the lips of a hydrophobic bat, and that most horribly during rush hours.

One enters these corridors to experience the despair written above the entranceway to Dante's Inferno. Wily Parisians know that it often takes them more time to reach and climb aboard the train they seek than it will to reach their destination. They have learned through hard experience that even their eventual return into the light of day is hedged about with dire uncertainties. In the shifting landscape there are many things to arouse anxiety. Sinister beings lurk in the darkness cast by long shadows, behind the pillars and the advertising and in the shops: criminals, spies, left-wing radicals, right-wing fanatics, and the ever omnipresent police.

Rigorous crowd control is exercised by a variety of means. Unvarying and obnoxious music, and monotonous imagery issuing from long rows of TV monitors make passengers eager to get out of there at the first opportunity; subliminal messages may also be implanted in them that incite the crowds to keep moving. In addition, the Metros of this district retain a lingering ambiance of rotten eggs. It speeds people up, those persons in particular who otherwise might wish to hang out for much of the day. Everything possible has been done to insure the prevention of the breakdown of law and order in this city of ten thousand subterfuges, a million stratagems and several quadrillion centimes.

Linking the ganglia of the *Chatelet/ Les Halles* network are sets of moving rubber sidewalks, known in French as *trottoirs roulants*. These horizontal escalators cart the multitudes through

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long, garish and gloomy tunnels. The longer of the two sets at this location consists of a group of four belts linking the RER station at Les Halles with the ancient *Mairie des Lilas* line at Chatelet. Two of them move in a direction which, for the sake of convenience, one can label "forward", the other two moving in the reverse direction. The belts extend the length of a city block, sloping downwards at the middle, flattening out near the entrance to Les Halles. Along the walls one finds a novel distraction: 40 or more huge advertising posters, all of them identical. Concrete aisles on either side have been installed designed for people persons who don't wish for any incremental assistance to their innately generated momentum. Whenever the machinery breaks down these are of course filled to overflowing.

Chapter 2

The Inspector

On this chilly evening in early April, when a general sentiment of dire portent hovered over the social order, when students at the University of Montpellier developed a fondness for reading tales of calamity, when the ducks in the ponds of all the chateaux on the Loire turned belly-up , and fat tourists in Bermuda shorts and cameras around their necks, excelled one another in their wretched mispronunciations of "*Champs Elysées* "
...*Inspector Guy de Migraine* , Senior Inspector for the DST ¹ , absorbed in his work, was standing on a belt of the *trottoir roulant* that, monotonously and irreversibly, transported him between *station Chatelet* and *station Les Halles* .

It was indeed he! None other than he! The famed Inspector Migraine , the living legend, a man as feared in the jungles of Borneo as in the stinking dives of Pigalle, every inch of him, every kilogram of that paunchy mound of flesh!
Not a detail was missing of that ever and again reinforced media image: the dissolute yet crafty face, as of a ferocious drunk waif; the fabled trench coat, draped slovenly-wise about those irritable shoulders which can never refrain from shrugging; the tattered English rainhat slapped atop his all but hairless head like a newspaper over the body of a derelict dead on a bench in the Place Furstemberg; last but not least, that permanently ragged, rarely lit

¹*Departement de Surveillance de la Territoire* , the French FBI

Gaulois cigarette butt jammed between cracked lips and the clamp of jaundiced teeth.

Between the four belts of this carpet of moving rubber are waist-high buttresses formed from longitudinal rows of metal plates . As the belt jerked the Inspector's fat jelly-belly through the bleak tunnel, he could be observed using his left hand to squeeze a lemon onto each panel as came into his vicinity. With his right hand he wiped selected areas of the panel with a chamois cloth. These areas were precisely those covered by a certain Chinese character, always the same, laid down in blue ink with a rubber stamp. When the Inspector wiped away the residue of ink a French word appeared.

This message had been painted at 3 AM that morning with invisible ink and a Sumi brush, then covered by the blue hieroglyph. Chung Wah, Chief Inspector of the Taiwan Secret Police, was its author.

Slow as the moving sidewalk may have appeared to those anxious to return to their homes, it was still moving too quickly for Inspector Migraine to retrieve the entire message from a single passage through the tunnel. Even after circulating the belts 4 times, there were still pieces missing. On the fifth pass Migraine ran out of lemons. This obliged him to walk out of the Metro station and onto the Place du Chatelet, where he could command a French lemonade, a *citron pressé* , from the Sarah Bernhardt café .

It is not to be imagined that any ordinary citizen would be allowed to take a glass from this elite café down into the Metro. One need not emphasize that Inspector Guy de Migraine was no

ordinary citizen. He handed the proprietor a standard DST requisition form whereon he might list anything he pleased: the glass, the lemonade, the spoon, even the ashtray Migraine had used to dispose of his weary Gaulois butt preparatory to lighting up another. Sooner or later the bill would be paid in full. The only hitch was that there was no way to guarantee that, in the interminable delay, the franc would not be so far devalued as to reduce its effective value to nothing.

On that particular night Inspector Guy de Migraine never did make it back down into the gigantic *Chatelet/Les Halles* terminus. Enervated by his alcoholic good cheer, his voluble and inexhaustible story-telling, the clientele of the Sarah Bernhardt continue to ply him with drinks, including the stiff *Marc de Bourgogne* that was known to be his favorite. Three hours later, still at it, he was discoursing at length on his previous case, the one involving the head of the Russian diplomat that had mysteriously rolled off the ledge of a window of the boarded-over *Hotel du Nord*, beside the old Paris canal on the *Quai des Jemmapes*.

Thus the brilliant and cunning Inspector Guy de Migraine, the most famous detective in all places around the world where the *Alliance Française* has installed its mission. never did retrieve the full message left for him by Inspector Chung Wah before going off to the Côte d'Azur. It remains to be seen whether or not this will have any further effects, good or bad, major, trivial or irrelevant, on the unfolding of this compelling drama.

Chapter 3

The BlueMill

In January, 1978, Jan van Klamperen, professor of nuclear engineering for three decades at the Technical University in Eindhoven, Holland, sank his life's savings into the purchase and reconstruction of a quaint, olden-style Dutch windmill. Located in neighboring Nuenen, this windmill may be seen in some of the early drawings of former resident Vincent van Gogh. A note of caution: it ought not be confused with the other windmill in Nuenen, that also appears in his drawings from this period.²

Seen from a distance the mill brought up the image of a giant chess rook. The grassy mound on which it stood raised it several meters above the level ground. Window slits had been carved out at unusual places. Before van Klamperen painted over its dull red brick facade in a uniform China blue, it had been decorated with white stripes around its base and midriff. The mill's dominance of the largely barren landscape was considerably amplified by 4 large and sleek slender vanes, their propeller blades set at right angles one to another and slightly scooped along their edges in the shape of parabolic hollows.

Sparrows and sea-gulls, rarities in these dismal flatlands, played about them on bright sunny days. Apart from the macadam road of half a kilometer that had been laid down under van Klamperen's supervision and connected with a dirt path through

²The one cited in this account may be seen on page 203 (F1324) of the monumental art reproduction project of Jan Hulsker : "van Gogh en zijn weg"; 1978

the fields , the Mill was surrounded only by pasture land reeking of fertilizer, and untillable soil criss-crossed by power lines.

At the time of the events about to be related at great length, at considerable length, perhaps too much length Dr Jan van Klamperen was a seedy and sedentary don in his mid-fifties, acknowledged as a competent teacher but , in the opinion of his colleagues, a scientist of little ability, a view which he did not share. Since the early 80's he'd been using the Blue Mill as a laboratory for cosmic ray research. His lonely, Herculean labors had begun paying dividends around 1986. Now it was his belief that he stood on the verge of discoveries in particle physics that would shake the scientific world.

van Klamperen had always been frail and underweight. He ate but little, rarely drank anything but light Belgian beer , never did any physical exercise apart from his work at the laboratory, which however was quite strenuous for a man of his age. He smoked like a chimney, compulsively generating the cigarettes on a hand roller from Dutch *zware shag* loose tobacco. High-strung, pensive , slightly cranky, mild-mannered in language, voice and gesture, never known to give way to an impulse to physical violence, van Klamperen was, all the same, capable of acting with complete ruthlessness when the occasion arose.

Over the last decade his weekly schedule had crystallized into an inflexible routine. His teaching duties at the Technical University went from Tuesday to Friday. This gave him 3-day weekend for his other activities. Saturday mornings he arose punctually at 5 AM . Taking nothing more than a hastily consumed

glass of orange juice and a roll, he left his condominium in Eindhoven to bicycle the 5 kilometers to Nuenen. He generally crossed the Eisenhowerweg highway at 5:45 . A succession of shortcuts over fields and marshes brought him to the entrance to the grounds of the Mill in the neighborhood of 6.

Among the major renovations of the Mill was a semi-spherical transparent plexiglass observatory bubble. Completely covering the flat roof, its installation had cost him as much again as the building itself . The mill's vanes had been covered with translucent stripes on which were streaked many fine spectral lines. The vanes could be turned by a motor sensitive to precise gradations of speed, putting at his disposal a precision instrument for the analysis of the spectra of incoming cosmic rays.

The complicated ritual of opening the door of the Mill took around half an hour. First five keys were applied to as many locks. This done , van Klamperen walked to a shed located about 10 meters away . There he'd installed a small home computer. The monitor was activated, several programs booted up. Once the system was warmed up the day's password was entered on the keyboard: a paragraph in English taken from *Alice in Wonderland* . Week by week the password advanced through the novel; in 8 years he'd gone through 390 paragraphs. In anticipation of the day when *Alice* would be finished, a *War and Peace* lay in readiness on a shelf above his bedstead. van Klamperen had picked up a reading command of Russian from his 3 year research fellowship at a high energy physics research institute in Minsk.

After typing in the password van Klamperen returned to the Mill. He inserted two more keys and the door sprang open. Like his colleagues everywhere van Klamperen was extremely absent-minded. It was not unusual for him to forget either his keys, his copy of *Alice*, or both. This necessitated a return trip to his apartment. Consequently, although he always arose punctually at 5 AM, it was not unusual for him to be unable to get into the Blue Mill before 8.

With the door opened he could at last roll his bicycle up the grassy mound into the building. Throwing a lever shut the door as securely as it had been before his arrival; then he locked the door behind him.

His first stop was the small kitchen on the ground floor, where he put together a breakfast large enough to carry him to the middle of the day. Another 6 hours of labor awaited him before he could, at last, permit himself the keen delight of climbing the winding staircase to the observatory and its magnificent collection of astrophysical instruments, many of them of his own original design and manufacture.

After a rest of perhaps half an hour, van Klamperen returned to the front room to roll up a threadbare carpet covering the floor. Underneath it lay a trapdoor to which a leather strap was attached. Opening it, he clattered down a ladder resting on the packed earth of the basement floor.

The room in which he found himself was filled with boxes tossed in random disorder. These boxes were of three kinds. The first kind, delivered via a complicated route that originated in

Taipei and went through a dozen countries, held many thousands of miniature souvenir Eiffel Towers, roughly the size of large paper clips. The second were crammed with square tin salt-shakers ordered from a salt-shaker factory in Breda . Under the beam of a powerful spotlight van Klamperen, using a flour scoop, worked for 5 hours , filling the saltshakers with the tiny Eiffel Towers, then repacking them into the remaining boxes, which were much bigger than the others. When finished, he'd packed 20,000 Eiffel Tower souvenirs into 800 salt-shakers.

Another two hours were spent taping, labeling and addressing the stuffed boxes. Having completed his morning tasks, he was now free to prepare himself a lunch and attend to what, for him, was the real function of the Mill: 16 uninterrupted hours in the observatory devoted to research in π - and μ - meson scattering in the upper atmosphere. Apart from a brief nap and moderate dinner, this work occupied him until well past midnight .

At 4 AM Sunday morning Dr. Jan van Klamperen descended back into the basement. The twenty or so cartons were carried upstairs, out the door, and piled into a cart which he attached to the back wheel of his bicycle . As the protocol for securing and locking the Blue Mill was as protracted and tedious as that used in opening it, he was never ready to begin the journey through the empty Sunday morning streets of bourgeois Nuenen until 6 AM. The boxes were pedaled to the Eindhoven train station and left to be picked up by the 7:30 AM train to Rosendaal.

Having completely and unimaginably taxing weekend devoted in the service of his two driving ambitions, money and fame, the eminent Doctor Professor Jan van Klamperen attached his bicycle to the top of his car parked in the train station parking lot, and drove home. A kiss to his wife and wave of the hand to his two school-age children, then straight to bed, from which he did not arise until supper time. It was quite agreeable to him that his wife and children should go to church without him: Science was his church.

It ought to be noted at this point that although his activities constituted an essential link in the illegal operations of an international smuggling ring, in the performance of which he violated several fine points of Dutch law, van Klamperen was confident in the knowledge that the government would never assemble enough information to make a case against him. Shrewd, painstaking and infinitely clever, he'd covered his bases well.

On a day between Monday and Thursday of the following week two Dutch businessmen (of aspect so anonymous that, even after a weekly routine that had not varied over 10 years the stationmaster could not have identified them with any certainty) drove up to the Rosendaal station and collected the boxes. On Thursday afternoon they were smuggled across the Belgian border by an English couple well known to the border patrols. They had been driving their antiquated Rolls-Royce up and down the local roads at all hours of the day and night for 20 years, and no-one paid any attention to them.

The rest of the operation may be briefly summarized. The boxes were flown out from the Brussels airport on a private plane and delivered to the Spanish island of Majorca. Here they were taken on board the yacht of a backward, corrupted and obscenely rich Texas playboy named Arthur Hodges. Unloading the souvenirs from the salt-shakers was directed by Hodges' Taiwanese wife, the beautiful and ruthless Mei Tay , sister of the leader of the Eiffel Tower Gang and manager of the factory in Taiwan that manufactured the contraband souvenirs : Low Bing.

The salt-shakers were shipped to a clandestine factory in the neighborhood of Vichy where low quality monosodium glutamate was manufactured. They were filled to the brim with the bogus meat tenderizer in preparation for re-smuggling back to Taiwan.

Eventually the Eiffel Tower souvenirs were loaded onto Arthur Hodges yacht, the *Dallas Star* , and transported to Cannes, from whence they were driven along the Riviera to a warehouse up in the mountains north of the resort town of Theoule-sur-Mer . Apart from a small percentage delivered other French cities, it was from this central location that this contraband was expedited to Paris, finding its their way onto the shelves of every souvenir shop every Tabac, every newsstand and bookstore of the City of Light.

A nifty two-way operation, mediated by salt shakers : Eiffel Tower souvenirs from Taiwan to France; monosodium glutamate in the reverse direction .

van Klamperen was personally responsible for expediting around a million souvenirs each year. He also directed the

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combined activities of 20 other operatives in neighboring countries.

Chapter 4

The Eiffel Tower Gang

Taiwanese souvenir smuggling had grown in the 80's to a multinational division within organized crime that, like an octopus nourishing itself on offal at the bottom of the ocean, spread its tentacles around the globe. In addition to the miniature Eiffel Towers Low Bing's factories manufactured and smuggled porcelain pissing boys into Belgium, plastic Marys into Rome, Wailing Walls into Jerusalem, statues of liberty into New York , Taj Mahals into New Delhi, replicas of the Buddha's tooth into Sri Lanka and Ka'aba's into Mecca.

In all other countries around the world this Taiwanese ersatz debris was considered nothing more than the refuse generated by pests muscling in on the trade of honest businessmen. Only in France was it treated as a threat to national honor:

" *On ne vend pas jamais la belle France aux Taiwanais!!* " This cry of outrage came from the throat of a representative from the extreme Right at the *Assemblée Nationale* , a fanatic follower of the fascist LePen. Thinking they'd been given the go-ahead, skin-head punks armed with iron bars attacked Chinese tourists sitting in the restaurant at the top of the Eiffel Tower. Articles in the right-wing tabloid press, notably *France-Soir* , *Minute* and *Le Parisien* , accused foreign tourists of undermining the French economy by purchasing these contraband souvenirs without bothering to inquire if they were of French manufacture. In January of 1985 the

entire staff of the Eiffel Tower went on strike for a day to protest the government's incapacity for action.

Early in 1989 the government announced that it was putting Inspector Guy de Migraine of the DST, France's most decorated detective, in charge of the war against the Eiffel Tower Gang.

The *Departement de Surveillance du Territoire* is the French version of the FBI. Comparisons between the two organizations, when not insidious, are certainly invidious. The imagination of the DST is greater; its methods are clumsier. It is fond of inventing conspiracies to ensnare honest citizens which they can blame on the Russians. It loathes its nearest rival, the DSGE, (France's CIA) far more than it does the enemies of the state; indeed it has been known to fabricate fantasy Arab terrorist organizations just to make the DSGE look foolish. It is mean, wicked and stupid. It is under the direct control of the Ministry of the Interior. And Guy de Migraine was its shining light.

At around the same time Chung Wah, the man who had left the message on the iron partitions separating the belts of the moving sidewalks at Chatelet, Migraine's Taiwanese counterpart, was assigned to track the illegal flow of contraband monosodium glutamate from Europe into Asia. Six months later, after installing a spy in every Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese, Korean and Thai restaurant in Paris, Chung Wah left for the Côte d'Azur.

Chapter 5

Two Restaurants

(a) La Jambe Cassée

Couched away in obscure alleyways of the eastern Right Bank of the metropolis were two restaurants which functioned as the privileged *rendez-vous* ' for , respectively, Migraine's special team of crime-busters and the Eiffel Tower Gang.

Unless called away on urgent business, the Inspector got together with his staff on Thursday afternoons in a crapulous , ribald dive stuck in an impasse on the rue Saintonge : *La Jambe Cassée* . The 3 Algerians who managed it were always drunk , at least during working hours: what they did with their free time is of no concern to the author. People of every description frequented this hole: prostitutes and small-time punks, spies, local businessmen, workmen, derelicts. It was a perfect cover.

The Inspector's motley crew of agents, informers, spies and bribed thugs were not invited to these meetings at this restaurant, which were restricted to members of his executive command. For the present these included: Chung Wah, when he was in Paris; Els Dordrecht of the Rotterdam Customs Authority; and Migraine himself in the company of several persons from or associated with the DST.

Migraine generally brought along two or more servile flunkies, either from the *Prefecture de Police* on the *Quai des Orfèvres* , or from the Ministry of the Interior on the *rue Nelaton* . Lukash and Fevrier were most often part of this group. Pavel

Lukash was a Czech policeman who, after being granted political asylum had climbed within the ranks of the French police until finding his place as Migraine's errand boy. Jean-Luc Fevrier. was a tall angular nitwit. His facial expression, even under duress, was always blank. His principal assets were:

- (1) He was good at carrying out orders, and
- (2) He enjoyed drinking with the Inspector.

Since last December a new face had been showing up at these meetings, that of the American marine and MP , Stanley Cobb. One might consider him Migraine's protégé. The manner in which he had come to be incorporated into his team was somewhat unusual. In the course of his investigation into the mystery of the skull of the Russian diplomat and KGB agent (later identified as Sergei Ipanchin Youpoff Ivanovitch Strogin) Migraine had found it necessary to pay a visit to the American Embassy. Sergei had been posted to the Russian Embassy in Washington in the 70's. He'd managed to hold on there for over a decade before his expulsion.

The accelerated pace of terrorist attacks in the late 80's had led to the American Embassy in Paris being put off limits to the public. For the time being all official business was being conducted at the Consulate, a much smaller building across the street on the inconspicuous *rue St. Florentin Richepance* . Through a series of random misdirections by security personnel, Migraine and his team ended up wandering about in the Passport Office, pigeon-holing people at random and getting nowhere.

On that particular day the most official- looking individual in the room was Stanley Cobb. He was sitting behind a typewriter dressed in camouflage jungle fatigues, a walky-talky at his belt, his Uzi in its holster at his side. Against the wall leaned an AK-47 assault rifle. This terrifying display of weaponry was principally for effect : the hope was that Moslem terrorists would thereby be dissuaded from mounting an attack on the Passport Office. So that he would not feel that his presence was totally useless, Cobb had been instructed to type out reports every half hour or so, stating that no Libyan, Iranian or Palestinian terrorist had breached Consulate security. He was not the only person thus uselessly deployed: Marines outnumbered visitors in all parts of the building.

Stanley Cobb and the Inspector somehow drifted into one of those mixed mangled French-pidgin English conversations that normally can be guaranteed to cast a chilling frost over budding friendships, yet which, once in a while and unpredictably, can lead to a more favorable outcome. Migraine was amazed to learn that since coming to Paris, Cobb had acquired the novel hobby of dredging the Seine in his spare time. Only a week before he'd fished out a thighbone of this same Russian diplomat from the Canal. That week-end Cobb took Migraine to the very spot near the *rue de la Grange aux Belles* where the thighbone had been found.

In the polluted green water between the bridge and the lock of the *Pont Tournant* , thick with black grease and garbage, and covered with leaves shedding from all the stunted willows lining the banks, they retrieved a few more fingers. Later, seated in the

Cafe des Deux Magots , they divided up the spoils. Two fingers went on Stanley's key-ring, secured by a wire passing through a hole bored through the knuckle. Keeping one finger as a souvenir, Migraine sent the rest of the bones to the forensic labs of the DST. As a consequence of this conversation Inspector Guy de Migraine reached the conclusion that Stanley Cobb could be trusted implicitly on any mission involving the common security of their respective nations.

(b) La Belle Noisette

The restaurant favored by the Godfathers of the Eiffel Tower Gang was called *La Belle Noisette* . Located on the rue Jules Verne in the Belleville district, it specialized in oriental cuisine.

La Belle Noisette was owned and managed by members of Low Bing's family. Though a vital ganglion in its network of operations, it was not its central headquarters in France.³ The importance of *La Belle Noisette* lay in its being the principal rendezvous for visiting members of the gang. Its staff were all close relatives of Low Bing, while its transient kitchen personnel , brought in from the Far East, were illiterates who spoke no European languages .

A steady stream of racketeers from all over the world passed through its doors. In addition to members of the Eiffel Tower Gang, one could expect to find representatives of all the Mobs and

³These were located in *Mormoiron* , a tiny medieval village in the Vaucluse, in the shadow of Mont Ventoux.

Mafias with which they did business, and big international operators such as the Vietnamese Trung Quac, whose protection rackets had maintained their hegemony over all smuggling activities from the Far East for decades.

To maintain its cover, La Belle Noisette was obliged, in the fashion of any normal restaurant, to accommodate the general public. Strangers to this district, knowing no better, might decide to drop in there for lunch and order its 52 franc special. This consisted of: (1) a bowl of leek soup; (2) two entrees, one of which was always bean sprouts drowned in soy sauce; (3) a huge bowl of wet rice; and (4) dessert: this was the expression used to describe a piece of raw fruit that had been soaked for two days in a bowl of sugared water. Clearly the menu had been designed to discourage trade. Visiting celebrities of the underworld and members of the gang were served delicious Chinese cuisine.

The most colorful item of decor in La Belle Noisette, (indeed its only decoration), was a peculiar manifestation of *papier-maché* that stuck out from a frame on the wall in back of the long table reserved for the gang. It was exquisite Chinese kitsch. Out of the frame 15 silver-leafed horse-heads lurched like the water jets on the great fountain on the Place de la Concorde. Projecting as far out as the center of the table, the heads turned down to hover just short of the level of the plates and bowls of food .

Unquestionably exotic if not in the best of taste, these horseheads served several useful functions. One of them was to obscure, even totally conceal, the faces of persons seated at the table. Another function was this: each horsehead responded, when

struck by the blunt end of an ivory chopstick, with a specific pitch. The Gang had devised a musical code in order to communicate with one another via the horseheads without being understood by the other customers.

A good part of the meal was therefore taken up with the spectacle of gangsters banging about the horseheads with their chopsticks. Whenever the gathering reached some sort of mutual agreement, it would knock out, as an ensemble, the melody of the famous piano piece, *Chopsticks*. The spectacle of *Chopsticks* being performed with chopsticks on the assemblage of *papier-maché* horseheads raised mountains of merriment among the paying customers. So effective was the charm of this ritual that many customers failed to notice that the second entree of the 52-franc special was, more often than not, a bowl of uncooked tofu.

We come now to a particular Wednesday afternoon in April of 1988. The list of guests present at the long table in a side room of La Belle Noisette was impressive. Just arrived from Taiwan was Low Bing himself. Surrounding him were: two of his fourteen brothers; his wife; 3 cousins on his mother's side; his sister's eldest son; and a grand-uncle, Yu Fahn, a naturalized Greek citizen, nonagenarian, benevolent and deaf, honored for his vast experience gleaned from a lifetime in international smuggling. His advice was always respectfully sought and never followed.

Up from Cannes was Arthur Hodges, pesky as a bucking bronco, whirling a 10-gallon hat, hammering away at *Amazing Grace* on the horseheads, yelling "Whoopee!!!", and guzzling Chateau-Mouton Rothschild wine as if it were Coors beer. The rest

of the gang dearly wished to dump him, preferably in the Seine in a barrel of rotten pickles. There were 3 reasons why, for the present, it was unwise to proceed along these lines. Because of his Texas oil wealth he cast too large a public shadow. Secondly, his operations along the Côte d'Azur coast were too valuable to the Gang. Most importantly, he was the husband of Low Bing's sister, the ruthless Mei Tay, and therefore, dreadful as it might be, family.

Sitting at the far end of the table was Jan van Klamperen. He'd taken the train from Eindhoven the day before, arriving in Paris via Brussels and spending the night in a little hotel called the *Hotel des Belges* near the *Gare du Nord*. He'd come to tell Low Bing that he wanted more money. Not too put too fine a point on it, he wanted the Bing family to pay him double the amount they were already giving him. Under the realistic assumption that they would not agree to his demands, he'd already worked out a scheme for double-crossing them.

The politician Marcel Ricard, from the Bureau of Vital Statistics and secret ally of the Gang, had come with the express intention of persuading it to phase out the production of miniature Eiffel Tower souvenirs and diversify into less inflammatory tourist items. The chauvinism of the French was legendary: why seek to inflame it further in this delicate affair of national honor? Paris was not known for its shortage of monuments that one could copy without offending anyone: the *Centre Pompidou*, for example, or the *Forum des Halles*; the *Tour Montparnasse*; the complex of government buildings at *La Defense*; even the famous toilet bowl

which Marcel Duchamp had donated to an exhibition of the Surrealists and signed " R. Mutt " .

The horseheads took quite a beating that afternoon, with chopsticks flying thick and fast. Arthur Hodges barked evangelical Christianity; van Klamperen demanded more money; Ricard pleaded with Low Bing to get out of the Eiffel Tower business. His own family pestered him with an infinite catalogue of petty gripes and grievances .

Finally Low Bing could stand it no longer. In a rage he dropped his chopsticks and proceeded to bang directly on the tabletop with his fists. Bing's outburst had the effect of an icy towel on a scalp wound: the cacophony that had roared uninterrupted for two hours came to a dead halt. In the petrified silence he began, very softly at first, tapping out his replies on the horseheads.

What was all this nonsense about?, he asked. Was this the sort of thing he was expected to take back to the plant managers in Taipei? How was he going to be able to pay the Dutchman more money, given the enormous sums it cost to fight the DST, the Taiwan secret police, Rotterdam customs and the American marines? Had anyone stopped to think how silly he would look if he were to ask the Art Department to begin designing Surrealist toilets? What was wrong with these strange Occidentals? Weren't pissing boys enough? Why not naked Madonnas? (Hodges roared in protest but they shut him up.) Low Bing was thoroughly disgusted with the lot of them. If they didn't like the way he was doing things he was prepared to resign. Frankly, he considered a

bloody pain in the ass , considering all the trouble involved in putting together another gang to rub all of them out.

He was not an unreasonable man. He was willing to compromise: van Klamperen would be receiving an additional thousand guilders a month; no more. It was a quarter of what he had requested. He should not think of it as a gift: he would have to earn it. A new operation was currently in the works: smuggling inferior Malaysian paprika into Hungary. Van Klamperen and the agents under his direction would have the new job of spraying the paprika with a harmless white varnish to give it the appearance of salt, then scooping it into the ubiquitous salt shakers preparatory to having it smuggled across the German border.

As he listened to this unthinkable proposition, no less humiliating from knowing that Holland produces its own excellent brands of paprika, van Klamperen's intense mortification vaporized his entrails. There was, now, no option left other than revenge.

As for the bizarre fantasies of Marcel Ricard, Low Bing was very much in favor of diversifying: not, of course, into toilet bowls and Pompidou Centers! The market research division at the Taipei plant had recently concluded that miniaturized TGV trains, those bullet-headed mastodons traveling at fabulous speeds, would be a sensational item for France's ubiquitous population of tourists.

After quashing his relatives with a few more scathing remarks, Bing indicated with a wave of the hand that the meeting was over. He'd satisfied no-one, yet protocol dictated that they finish off the meeting with the ritual performance of *Chopsticks* ,

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raining their chopsticks with redoubled fury on the batteries of horseheads and stimulating renewed laughter from the clientele.

To avoid detection the visitors , their faces drawn and hard, left the restaurant in staggered intervals . As they walked through the vestibule to the swinging doors leading out onto the street, all were closely scrutinized by the Thai dishwasher, Chung Wah's agent at *La Belle Noisette* .

Chapter 6

The May Rallye

A month passed. It was now the middle of May. Night was falling as fast as a brick through a mine shaft abandoned decades before because the elevator, (which could not be repaired because the model was out-of-date), had malfunctioned, dropping 6 workers to their deaths. In addition to which the foreman's wife had run off with the union president; and in any case the mine had run dry of gold.

A window into history : standing at the northwest corner of the intersection of the Boulevard de Montparnasse and the Avenue de l'Observatoire, shielding the Parc Jullian and grazing the southern edge of the *Jardins du Luxembourg* : the *Closerie des Lilas* ! Living relic of *La Belle Epoque* , fabled mead hall of the Gallic muse. Now it , like so many things - tigers and rain forests and Bach trumpets and literacy - casts but a withered shadow of its legendary past.

Who is alive today to recall how these walls once rollicked with music till dawn? How the air continually rang with poetry, heated arguments, bawdy jests, vain boasts! How many of today's customer's know that, not so very long ago, the finest poets of France once camped out at its bar like an army on the move? Who is there now to remind them that it was in this very place that, on the historic night of June 20, 1934 the Surrealists and Communists parted ways – Forever! Who reflects on its terrace, immortalized as the place where Ernest Hemingway conceived and wrote his

earliest novels? So much vanished glory, indiscernible to all save students, poets, and Parisian bibliomaniacs.

These days only fat cats come to the *Closerie*, a mode of natural selection effected by the prices posted on the menus at the door. Unlike its lively if vulgar competitor and close neighbor, *La Coupole*, (whose recently restored Art Deco interiors echo with the raucous cries of hundreds of elegant snobs until two in the morning), it appears to be deserted most of the time.

Yet, courtesy of the *Auto Club de France*, this evening at the *Closerie des Lilas* was destined to be somewhat out of the ordinary. It was planned that a gun would be shot off at precisely midnight. Wreathed in fulsome wine-guzzling, speechifying, bonhomie, hale-fellow-well met folderol, *mal-du-siècle*, and many an impromptu performance by 5 musicians from the *Beaux-Arts Band*, a flotilla of superb antique cars would be launched *en route* to Vichy.

This annual event is known as the *Rallye de Mai*. The leisurely all-night gambol of a few dozen museum pieces along the *Autoroute*, to the historically unlucky yet beautiful city of Vichy serves merely as the prelude to 3 riotous days of receptions, parties, and dances.

Such a gay, bubbling scene! The best vintage wines. The finest Brie, Roquefort, Ermenthal, Chèvre. Raffish drivers milling around, sporting the furs, scarves, leather coats and goggles of the Roaring 20's. Avid journalists storming the terraces of the *Closerie* to get at the free eats, to drink the wine they may never be able to afford. Plutocrats hanging in small groups, recognizable through

that sheepish 'embarrassment of riches' manner clinging to them , that disdain, mixed with shame, of mingling with the public.

And all the friends, relatives, associates and coat-tail hangers of the aforesaid plutocrats. And insolent by-standers, curiosity-seekers, connoisseurs of fine vehicles, and lucky pedestrians who just happened to be strolling by. And acrobatic restaurant *garçons* , white aprons draped over tuxes, slinking with professional anonymity through the crowds, trays of wine-filled goblets maintained horizontal and aloft.

And the musicians of the *Beaux-Arts Band*, costumed in brass helmets and the uniforms of 19th century firemen, frantically blurting out their ultra-violet jazz to hide their delirious sadness.

And lots of children, offspring of participants and spectators. Joining hands in a ring they danced around the statue of a sword-brandishing Maréchal Ney, scarecrow of Moscow.

The gathering, rather more in the nature of a *vernissage* than a street fair, did not remain concentrated around the terraces of the *Closerie* . Groups of friends, balancing their drinks and canapés, made periodic migrations to the adjacent Parc Jullian where, under the illumination of powerful spotlights, a glittering array of handsome vehicles from over half a century awaited their eager inspection.

These cars were remarkable not only by virtue of the craftsmanship that had gone into their original construction, but also for the excellent condition in which they had been maintained and periodically restored over the decades. Such toys could only be the hobby of the rich: the sparkle from off the hood of a Buick

Torpedo from the 20's twinkled no less impeccably than that coming from the Ferrari Coupe, circa 1965, parked across the Boulevard St. Michel. The eccentric appearance of some of them, like the 1922 Rolls Royce HP, and a tough 1933 Renault, (custom-made in Berlin, it conjured up the image of a one-coffin hearse), in no way diminished the aura of solid construction that riveted the eyes of the public.

Leaning against a street lamp, his team of Jean-Luc Fevrier, Pavel Lukash and Stanley Cobb at his heels, Inspector Guy de Migraine refilled his Durham pipe from a pouch of tobacco in his trench coat and made several unsuccessful attempts to re-ignite it. Even he was so far distracted from his omnipresent sense of duty by the sight of these gorgeous vehicles as to forget that he was supposed to be inspecting them for clues.

" Say Inspector! Get a load of that!" Lukash exclaimed, pointing to the fixtures on a 1931 Bugatti *Grand Sport* , "That stuff along must cost five million balls!"⁴

Migraine grimaced, twitched his shoulders with a habitual shrug, grunted. Without the least embarrassment he banged the stock of his pipe against the car's headlights to get rid of the dregs :

" *Je connais bien le plouc qui a volé ce bagnol* ⁵ . The only reason he's not in jail is because I don't waste my time running after spoiled punks. "

The trumpeter from the Beaux-Arts Band had separated himself from his fellows and , while continuing to improvise,

⁴Old francs, or centimes. About \$10,000

⁵The bum who stole this junk heap is very well known to me.

walked freely through the crowds. Bent double as if arming for battle, he suddenly lifted up his head until his throat was almost parallel with the pavement. The excitement of the glad occasion heightened immeasurably as he scalded the indigo night with his passionate obliigato rendition of *When The Saints Come Marching In* .

One noticed a well-groomed, middle-aged man limping across the square, dressed in the cover-alls of a grease monkey. He'd just finished an impromptu lecture on the care of antique automobiles, given to a crowd of fascinated spectators in the course of inspecting his own vehicle. Now he was going off to change into formal attire.

Soon afterwards an individual could be seen breaking away from a circle of friends. Comparatively young, he was heavy-set, coarse featured and unshaven, garbed in leather trench coat, black leather boots, goggles and a long pink foulard printed with nude dancing girls in a variety of postures. Beside himself with rage he advanced menacingly towards Migraine:

" Hey! You! Schmuck!", he cried ⁶ , " I'm going to beat your bloody head in!"

Yet : once he had approached the Inspector and come close enough to discern the granitic lines etched into Migraine's face - that pachydermous visage furbished with thick folds of disillusion, those eyes which had seen all and wearied of all seeing - the blood drained so quickly from his features that his eyes , even from beneath his goggles, made him look as if he were about to

⁶I give free translations from the French.

have a stroke. For an instant he stood caught between the urge to flee and the gnawing desire to avenge himself on the mutilator of his automobile.

One instant too many. While Lukash blocked his path, Fevrier ordered him to halt with an imperious gesture. Then Migraine, tugging at his coat sleeve, pulled him close to his face and whispered in the man's ear:

" You're too late, chump. *The games are made* ! From here on in you're dog-meat ."

Fevrier clamped on the handcuffs and chained him to the Bugatti.

" Look shithead!" , the prisoner whined, " Watch the chrome, will you? Spit on me all you want, but I beg of you , leave the car out of it! "

Fevrier loosened the cuffs. He had some appreciation for fine vintage cars. Migraine sneered in disgust, but withheld comment. Pulling up a pocket watch from his trench coat he remarked:

" It's time. *Allez - y les gars* !! Hey Stanley, where the hell are you?"

" Ay-ay commander! At the ready, chief! "

" Go arrest the Auto Club president, will you? "

" Roger and over!" Stanley saluted, pulled himself erect, clicked his heels and marched off to his duty . He withdrew the Uzi from the holster on his belt and held it by the barrel. The butt end bobbed like a lecher's member at a triple-X rated movie; or like a baton in the hands of Herbert von Karajan conducting the *Ride of the Valkyries* ; or perhaps like von Karajan's baton as he

conducts the *Ride of the Valkyries* in a recording studio in the process of making the sound track for the triple -X rated movie! Stanley strode off, stiff as a shot of rye whiskey , to stalk his quarry:

Migraine blew through a police whistle. Nothing happened: in an ambiance of honking klaxons and Beaux-Art Band raptures shrill sounds merited little notice . Migraine took out a hammer from his briefcase and smashed the windshield of a dazzling Rolls-Royce, circa 1927. Everyone froze. Then he shouted:

" Ladies and gentlemen! Mesdames, Messieurs! You are all under arrest! The charge is : conspiracy to smuggle artificial meat tenderizer into Taiwan , thereby aiding and abetting the unpatriotic importation of contraband Eiffel Tower souvenirs into our beloved France!!"

Taking this as their cue, the five musicians of the Beaux-Arts band threw off their costumes to reveal another set of uniforms: those of the C.R.S., the feared and despised French riot police! Their metaphorical axes, that is to say their musical instruments, were replaced by axes of the literal kind. With ruthless efficiency and demonic glee, they launched an orgy of wanton destruction wherein the finest antique cars in Western Europe were systematically gutted in the way pigs are dismembered , joint by joint, on the assembly lines of slaughterhouses.

Yet the rich harvest justified this ruination. Mounds of tin salt-shakers, spilling the incriminating white powder, covered the Boulevard de Montparnasse, as autumn leaves will blanket the valley of the Dordogne.

Chapter 7

Lost in the Paris Metros

Before leaving Paris and returning to Majorca and the low lifestyle which he fostered on his yacht, the *Dallas Star*, Arthur Hodges had an errand to attend to. Mei Tay, his domineering wife, sister of the sinister Low Bing, had instructed him to visit the offices of *Opera International Magazine* and pick up a back issue carrying an article on the Beijing Opera. Before he'd left for Paris, she'd called the offices of the magazine: the issue she'd requested was on a shelf awaiting his arrival. A detail that Hodges had not anticipated was a cause for some annoyance to him : the offices of *Opera International Magazine* are located at *10 Galerie Vero Dodat* , an exceedingly strange address . No-one, either among the clientele or the personnel of *La Belle Noisette* , knew where it was, or could imagine that such an address even existed.

Yet there had to be such an address: it was on the masthead of every issue of the magazine. Leaving the restaurant around 2 PM at a gallop Arthur Hodges, heedless of consequences, descended the staircase of the Belleville station into the tentacular Styx of the Paris Metro.

Belleville is Paris's primary neo-colonialist district for non-European immigrants. Long before he reached the basement level, Hodges began to feel intimidated by the crowds of alien forms of humanity swirling about him, lurid threatening beings with their peculiar mannerisms, their repulsive skin colorations, their iniquitous, suggestive glances, their exotic languages. He imagined

them crawling right out of the shadows and attacking him; he was certain that he saw them lurking in the mysterious passageways, or loitering with malevolent intent on all the staircases. Most unwillingly he found himself being jostled by people from every part of the globe: Senegalese, Algerians, Vietnamese, Turks, Hindus. It might appear paradoxical that a man as prejudiced as Hodges should have a Chinese wife. Yet she was rich, Wellesley educated, a Christian convert and something of a dragon lady; effectively Occidental, in other words .

" *Nothin' but'uh bunch'a dirty furriners, heah!* " he swore, in a voice loud enough to attract everyone's attention. It would appear that he was totally oblivious to the fact that he, too, was a foreigner here, or that someone might just decide that he was dirty as well.

A short, stoop-shouldered , bull-necked Moroccan rug merchant, his goods slung over his shoulder, wearing a colorful skull-cap, walked up to him with the probable intention of selling him a rug:

" *Voulez-vous achetez un tapis, Monsieur? Tapis perse! Bon qualité !*"

Hodges stared at him : points of fear overflowed his puffy eyelids, his gleaming eyes. Of a sudden he remembered his wife's errand. Waving the scrap of paper his wife had given him, he shouted, as if crying for help:

" *Dees ' Gay-Leer -Ie' yah Vier-o' Doo'dah ?* "

Convinced he was dealing with a madman the rug merchant dismissed him contemptuously with a broad wave of the hand. By

sheer coincidence this rude gesture had pointed in the direction of the signs indicating the entrance to the quai with trains going in the direction of Chatelet . Thinking his question had been answered, Hodges tipped his 10-gallon hat, said

"Thank you kindly. sir. And I want you'all t'know that Ah ain't got nothin' aginst niggers! ", before sprinting down the corridor towards the quais.

It was not until two hours later, after coasting a few times through the length and breadth of the Paris Metro, and returning for the third time to the station *Réamur-Sebastopol* , that Hodges conceded that he was hopelessly lost. He was preparing to walk up several staircases onto the street, when he remembered that his wife had advised him that the agents seated behind the ticket booths in the Metro kept a little brown book listing all the streets of Paris . Climbing to the upper level of the *Réamur- Sebastopol* station he got into line before a ticket booth. In front of him stood two other customers, Algerian and French.

The woman behind the window of the ticket booth ⁷ , whether owing to some misfortune visited on her in childhood, or because of something that had occurred just the other day, had the bad habit of screaming at anyone who asked her for anything. She was dumpy and distraught, her hair done up in pin-curlers. It was more than likely that she was merely incapable of assuming a normal tone of voice.

⁷Not a window exactly, but an odd invention called an *Hygieaphone* , a sheet of plastic designed to protect both sides from bad breath

The Algerian was chased away by a memorable exhibition of ill temper. The Frenchman just wanted a standard packet of ten tickets (*carnet de dix*). Then Hodges stepped up to the window:

" Dees ' Gay-Leer -Ie' yah Vier-o' Doo'dah ? "

he bawled. The woman gazed at him , struck dumb with horror. As her breath was sucked in with a sharp hiss, her mascara-thickened eyelids closed to a dull suspicious squint. Clearly she didn't think Hodges was human:

"Quoi ?? "

" Dees ' Gay-Leer -Ie' yah Vier-o' Doo'dah!! You see, M'am, mah wife wrote it down on this heah piece'uh paper."

He pushed the paper underneath the Hygeiaphone. She barely glanced at it. Her nose wrinkled in contempt. With the hammy heel of a fat palm she shoved it back:

" Je n'en sais rien. Jamais entendu . "

Hodges pointed to her desk drawer:

" Book?" , he asked , "Little brown book?"

" Quoi ?? " she barked anew, hoping through the mere sound of her voice to intimidate him into an awareness of his own stupidity. She did however pick up on the word 'book' . "

" Non, m'sieur, Je n'ai pas le bouquin . " Hodges raised his voice:

" Book, lady? Book? Book? Little brown book?"

The woman jumped off the stool, and screamed at him with all her force:

" Je N'ai Pas Le Bouquin ! Je N'ai Pas Le Bouquin !! "

This caused Hodges in his turn to roar at her and stamp his feet:

" *Book ?! Book ?! Book ?! Book ?!* "

The woman pounded the counter with her flabby fists. Then she beat the Hygeiaphone with a rolled up copy of the gut-bucket right-wing tabloid *Le Parisien* . She removed her shoes and threw them against the wall of her cubicle. Then she executed a mad dance of rage, of the sort that a psychotic might improvise who'd just learned that someone else also claiming to be Napoleon had been admitted to the ward, or as might a gourmet at the restaurant *Le Tour d'Argent* who discovers a hair in his glass of vintage wine, or perhaps as did the monk Claude Frollo, enraged by Quasimodo's delectation at Esmeralda's bell-shaped curves.

" *Je N'ai Pas Le Bouquin ! Je N'ai Pas Le Bouquin !! Je N'ai Pas Le Bouquin ! Je N'ai Pas Le Bouquin !!*"

Hodges surrendered. He snatched back the note and walked around the lobby showing it to various people. As Mei Tay had written the words *Opera International* at the top of the paper, he soon discovered a nice person who assured him that this gallery was in the neighborhood of the famous old Paris Opera house , the *Salle Garnier* .

The figure of this individual was draped with an oversized tan trench coat which could only have been acquired at the Salvation Army store on the rue Cantegrel in the 13th Arrondissement⁸ . Large round spectacles that bulged like goblets lorded over a groomed bristly black moustache. A nervous tic disfigured the right side of his face. On his head there squatted,

⁸RER Boulevard Massena

crushed, a canvas rainhat much mended with numerous green patches.

The man took Hodges by the arm and led him back into the corridors of the Réaumur-Sebastopol station until they reached the entrance to the quai alongside which a train going to the Opera station would be arriving in a few minutes. Hodges thanked him with the grand and extravagant gestures, gave him a big-hearted hug and proceeded on his way.

Returning to the lobby, this providential Saint Bernard strode to a telephone booth. He knew that Inspector Migraine would be very happy to learn that Low Bing's brother-in-law, the Texan who plies the Dallas Star, loaded with many different kinds of contraband, between Majorca and Cannes, was now wandering about, hopelessly, lost in the gargantuan *Opera/Auber/Havre/Caumartin/ St Lazare* Metro labyrinth .

Chapter 8

The van Klamperen Gambit

By 2 o'clock on the Wednesday afternoon of the meeting at La Belle Noisette, van Klamperen had decided that further argument with Low Bing was useless. Still smarting from the humiliation of being told that he was expected to become a paprika smuggler, thereby traitor to his own country, he was the last to leave.

His heart, (like a cauldron of rustic stew over a roaring flame, into which yet another suckling pig had been thrown, alive and thrashing, (dying horribly yet forever unrepentant towards all other pigs of its acquaintance, (particularly those who clutch at any excuse for remaining fat))) , bubbled over with schemes of vengeance.

He walked around the corner to a rented car. Driving west as far as the Boulevard Sebastopol, he crossed over the Seine to the Boulevard St. Michel, then onto the Boulevard St. Germain, up the rue de l'Odéon and onto the rue de Vaugirard. He continued along this crabbed, narrow and somewhat dirty street, filled with many important government agencies, the length of its trajectory to the rue de Sèvres, where he turned off to the entranceway of the *Hôpital Laennec* . For the next hour he visited the Radiology Clinic.

He left the *Hôpital Laennec* at 4 with a pile of paperwork . From there he drove to the CNRS (*Centre Nationale de la Recherche Scientifique* , France's National Science Foundation) on the Quai d'Orsay where he picked some up more forms. At around 6 he went

to St. Germain des Prés and found himself a table at the *Café Flore*. There, on a glassed-in terrace, surrounded by the rich young fools of the Parisian braindead jet-set, the *jeunesse d'orée*, he passed two hours filling them out. It was already dark when he left the café to drive back to his room in the *Hotel des Belges* in the neighborhood of the *Gare du Nord*. After cleaning up he walked to a nearby cinema to attend a showing of the film *La Grande Bleue*⁹.

From 8 AM the following morning until he finally caught the train to Eindhoven via Brussels at 19:43, van Klamperen was on the move, practically without pause. Before noon he'd managed to once more visit the Science Faculties at Place Jussieu, the physics labs of the *Ecole Normale Supérieure* on the rue d'Ulm, the *Hôpital Laennec*, and the CNRS. That afternoon he made the long journey out to the suburbs, the city of scientists in Orsay-Ville, 20 kilometers south of Paris.

Over the course of these visits van Klamperen assembled a collection of ultra-high tech electronic equipment which he packed into 3 oversized trunks. Everything he leased was connected in some way with high energy elementary particle research, and most of were classified Top Secret.

Only recently had he acquired the prominence in scientific circles that enabled him to receive the clearances needed for requisitioning such specialized and costly equipment. Only 12 persons in research institutes spread over 5 continents understood

⁹A film that must appear fascinating to any scientist who has known those psychedelic states experienced by those brave souls who venture to penetrate the Unknown.

the arcane details of his discoveries. For the unwashed public he was known as the discoverer of an new, exceedingly exotic elementary particle: *the klamp* . The story of its discovery, its nature, and its unusual mix of properties will be described in an appropriate place.

van Klamperen returned to Paris, checked his trunks into the baggage room of the Gare du Nord , returned the car to the rental agency and went out to dinner. At 7:30 he boarded the night train to Brussels. Owing to an unanticipated half-hour delay in transit he missed his connection to Eindhoven and didn't arrive home until 1 AM. Exiting the Eindhoven station he walked quickly to his van parked in the station's parking lot. The van was backed up to the baggage docks where a porter helped him load on the four trunks. Then he drove directly to the Blue Mill.

Alas! He was already there and had actually gotten out of the car, when he realized that he'd forgotten to bring with him the copy of Alice in Wonderland he needed to open the doors. Cursing volubly, he backed the van out of the driveway and went home. His annoyance was by no means diminished by the fact that his password paragraph for this evening had been carefully chosen: "Beautiful Soup", a poem he'd memorized as a schoolboy in English class. Because an error in a single letter was enough to keep the program from responding, he was unable to trust to his memory which, furthermore, given his intense preoccupation with advanced research, was not all that good anymore.

Everyone was asleep. van Klamperen strode into his bedroom , retrieved the book on the shelf above his wife's slumbering form

and hurried back to his car. 20 minutes later he was back at the Mill. The job of unloading the trunks and storing them in the basement occupied him for another hour. At around 4 AM he finished up and began the journey home.

van Klamperen and his family occupied the entire fourth floor of a condominium in the chic district of Eindhoven inhabited largely by Phillips Corporation executives. The doorman had gone home for the night and the lobby was deserted. van Klamperen let himself in with his key and took the lift to the corridor outside his flat. Here he removed his shoes to avoid disturbing the others, and tiptoed through the vestibule into the living-room.

He need not have concerned himself: all the lights were on. In the center of the living-room, (furnished in the most outlandish late Victorian bad taste), he saw his wife, sitting on the couch. She was stroking the fur of their frightened tabby-cat and her face was streaked with tears like the tracks on the plates of a Wilson cloud chamber.

She was not alone. Directly across from her in a large upholstered chair sat Willem van Claes, captain of the Eindhoven police department, A sour-faced individual, he was occupied in ostentatiously filling up a stenographic tablet with notes. van Klamperen had picked up a few Taiwanese expressions through his collaboration with the Eiffel Tower Gang. Under his breath he muttered something like "*May the way of the Dao give you the mange!*" He quickly recovered his composure. Striding over to his wife he slopped a wet kiss on her forehead.

The situation had a very simple explanation: Around 2 o'clock Katje , his wife, had been awakened by his movements in the bedroom. When she sat up and saw he wasn't in the apartment she became frightened and called the police. As he listened to her, van Klamperen's imagination was working overtime. When she'd finished he related the following story: he'd lingered over dinner with a Parisian colleague and gotten drunk. When he got home he'd gone into the bedroom but suddenly became very sick. That was why he'd turned around and gone back to his car. For the last two hours he'd been driving about with all the windows open. Now he felt better.

Claes wrote up his story into a report, then asked him to read and sign it. Of course he was glad, he said, to learn that there had been no real emergency. What the good professor needed right now was to get to bed. Captain Claes stood up to take his leave.

At the front door he paused and turned around again. Either a new idea had struck him; or he'd seen too many "Columbo" re-runs. He remembered that police headquarters had received a call that evening from some French government official. Was he correct in understanding that van Klamperen was bringing classified military hardware with him from France into Holland?

"Yes officer, you are correct. I'm using it for rather advanced research in cosmic rays. For one month only. Is anything wrong?"

"No. Not really. The", he consulted his notes, " C.N.R.S. ?" he looked at van Klamperen , "What does that mean?"

" Those are the initials for France's scientific research ministry."

"Yes: it wants you to know that they'll be sending along another 72 forms to fill out. There's no hurry, the package won't arrive before Tuesday. You can come by the police station and pick it up at any time. Oh, and",

van Claes snickered, as cops do when they reserve the worst for last,

"There's one more thing. Some of the men were saying they'd appreciate it very much if you'd allow them to come over and inspect this equipment. We don't suspect you of compromising national security, you understand. Just a precautionary measure."

Notwithstanding a number of suitable choice Taiwanese expressions racing through his mind, van Klamperen replied that his request was more than reasonable. He needed a few days to install the equipment. He could set up an appointment with them on Tuesday when he came by for the package from the CNRS. Captain Claes nodded and took his leave.

Katje went into the kitchen to make them both some tea. They sat together in the living room for another two hours. They rarely spent this much time together and treasured the occasion. As they chatted, van Klamperen's mind continued to turn over various possible approaches to these new developments.

It was Friday morning. Already they could see the sunlight through the clouds. Classes would have to be canceled. He didn't have the stamina to put in a full day's teaching followed by another 48 hour stretch at the Blue Mill. That, unfortunately, could not be canceled. The Gang had to have their shipment on time. If he wanted to divert suspicion from himself he would have to comply.

As for the police, he could read them like a book. While ruminating on their predictable antics he found himself softly reciting to himself some lines from the Lobster Quadrille:

*“Will you walk a little faster?” said a whiting to a snail,
“There’s a porpoise close behind me, and he’s treading on
my tail.*

See how eagerly the lobsters and the turtles all advance!”

“ Yes, indeed!” he smirked, “ They are the lobsters and the turtles – and – well – I will be the porpoise – and they will join the dance! Aha!!”

On Saturday morning, van Klamperen deviated from his accustomed routine, taking his Saab automobile instead of the bicycle. It was still dark on this early March morning, yet not too dark for him to fail to notice the car parked at the corner or its two plainclothes detectives behind the windshield. This was nothing less than what he had expected.

As soon as he started up the van he heard, as an echo, the sound of their motor revving up. As a taxpayer and respected professor, he could not help but feel a certain righteous indignation that a portion of his hard-earned salary was being diverted to the support of such incompetent boobs. Why not blow a siren to let him know they were following him?

Keeping their drab Volkswagen in focus through his rear-view mirror he drove through the city and onto the highway at a moderate speed. Twice he stopped to give them time to catch up with him. In consequence both cars arrived more or less together at the Blue Mill at around 5:30 .

Every stage in the complex ritual of opening the door to the Mill was executed with a deliberate and somewhat irritating slowness. van Klamperen chuckled with grim delight as he pictured the frustration level in the nerves of his guardians building up to the boiling point. Finally the sixth key was inserted and he entered the Mill, closing then bolting the door behind him.

The cops sat and waited for him to come out until noon. When they returned to headquarters they recommended further surveillance. Their curiosity had been piqued by the weird plastic bubble on top of the building. It was their opinion that the real goods were stashed there: the ray guns, plastique bombs, grenades, false passports, skin diving gear and so on.

That afternoon a police helicopter flew out to the Mill. For two hours it hovered vertically above the observatory. A crane was used to lower an agent manipulating a video camera onto the roof. For upwards of an hour, he was swiveled about the turret, taking pictures of everything in sight. It was, needless to say, yet another scandalous waste of taxpayer's money. Van Klamperen would be spending all of this weekend in the basement. The following Monday, when he exited from the door of the Blue Mill in the pre-dawn to load up his boxes of salt shakers, the cops were nowhere to be seen.

Chapter 9

A Message in Dutch

It was perhaps unfortunate that the energetic activities of the Eindhoven police force did little more than increase its already considerable state of ignorance. Had they known of his connection with the Eiffel Tower Gang, they could have learned more than they needed to know of van Klamperen's intentions by contacting their colleagues in the French police.

It was van Klamperen himself who revealed them, with scrupulous accuracy, in a note sent to Inspector Migraine and received by Stanley Cobb a few weeks later. Migraine had sent Cobb to pick it up at the establishment of a reliable middleman who'd been handling correspondence between the DST and the underworld for many years.

Going under the name of Izzy the Litvak, this shady individual fronted as the manager of a souvenir, relic and devotional item gift shop in the rue des Rosiers in the Temple district on the Right Bank. Since the Middle Ages this part of Paris has always been the Jewish district. Izzy's shop was called *Le Mitzvah*, the Yiddish word for a good luck token. It was stocked to the rafters with fascinating trinkets: bangles, earrings, necklaces and rings in the form of Mogen Davids; Shalom buttons; Torahs; porcelain Islamic crescents; Korans engraved on penny-sized buttons; plastic Marys; crosses mounted on Coke bottles; Donald Ducks holding pieces of wood from Noah's Ark; soda cans holding

stale air from the Catacombs; bottles of water from the Jordan River blessed by rabbis, imams, priests, etc.

Need we bother to point out that most of these items were manufactured in Taiwan ?

These items were also used to convey messages between the underworld and the police. Izzy's favorite vehicle was a tin *mezzuzah* about the size of a toothbrush. Anyone entering the house of an orthodox Jewish family notices one of these little canisters attached by a nail or screw to the side of the door frame. Inside them one finds a copy of the Torah.

Izzy the Litvak would replace the Torah with the message he'd received, then mail a publicity brochure to the appropriate party in the police. Inspector Guy de Migraine received such a brochure around the first week of April. He then asked Stanley Cobb to go pick it up in his place. Migraine's instructions were that Cobb should go to the sales counter of *Le Mitzvah* and tell Izzy that he had been invited to the wedding of a former girl-friend who was Jewish. He wanted to make her a present of one of those " Torah things" (*ces trucs de Torah* was the exact password).

Stanley's French was not of the best, so for his sake the story was reduced to " *petite amie - juive - cadeau - Torah truc* ". Although he'd rehearsed it a dozen times, Stanley had completely forgotten this message by the time entered the doors of *Le Mitzvah* . Cobb, never at a loss whenever swift decisions were needed, dragged Izzy into a corner, flashed his DST deputy badge, and barked " Migraine !" This did the trick just as nicely.

After picking up the *mezzuzah* , Cobb stepped out of the shop and slid it onto his key-chain. Then he continued ambling down the rue de Rivoli until he came to a crowded café. Seated on the outdoor terrace over a glass of wine, he opened the *mezzuzah* and tried to read the message. It was from van Klamperen and written in Dutch. Cobb put it back into the *mezzuzah* and wrote a note in his pocket logbook, reminding himself to show it to Els Dordrecht at the general staff meeting in *La Jambe Cassée* when she returned from Holland in July. He then refastened the *mezzuzah* back onto the key-ring. In addition to a large stack of keys and a police whistle, this held two finger bones alleged to have belonged to Sergei, the Russian diplomat whose head had mysteriously rolled off a window ledge in the boarded-over *Hotel du Nord* on the Quai des Jemmapes .

As we will learn later on, Stanley never did get to read the message. We therefore under some obligation to translate, for the benefit of our readership, van Klamperen's note into English .¹⁰

" TO:

*Chief Inspector Guy de Migraine of the French
DST*

FROM:

*A Dutchman who wishes to remain
anonymous. PhD University of Leiden 1958 .
Post-graduate study, Cambridge, Berkeley.*

¹⁰As van Klamperen's command of English had all been acquired at physics conferences, our translation is actually better than the one he would have made himself, had he chosen to do so.

*Distinguished Professor of Nuclear Engineering
for 30 years, Eindhoven Technical University .*

Leading cosmic ray physicist:

To my esteemed colleague, Inspector Migraine

:

"Let us dispense with introductions. No fear! You will not learn my name from me. That is because Chung Wah already has heard of me, and if you mention my name to him he will realize that the person whose name he already knows, and me ,are the same person. Sounds like particle physics, doesn't it?

"Before today you might have called me the Dutch Connection for the *notorious Eiffel Tower Gang* ! But that's not all: I am also a famous physicist who knows that he will in a few years receive the Nobel Prize! Or maybe I repeat myself. Anyway it doesn't matter, because its true.

"*Ha! Ha!* I bet you don't meet many people like me in your profession, do you?

"Well, okay. Enough rubbish. You're being told enough when I let you know that this very morning I sent my last shipment of 20,000 miniature Eiffel Towers to *La Belle France* ! But that shipment wasn't like the others that I sent before! Because this time all the little Eiffel Tower souvenirs were irradiated with a powerful neutron beam! It was very difficult as I'm sure you already know. I had to use special equipment which only I could obtain because of my great importance!

"All of those little souvenirs are now emitting α , β and γ rays at low levels and very precisely tuned frequencies.¹¹ . You will have no trouble to find a laboratory in France to build a radiation counter to detect this feeble radiation. Tell the physicists and engineers who build it to read : *Volume XV, page 3372, June 1977 of Physica Scripta ; Volume VI, page 25 , April 1982 of Quarks and Hadrons in Review ; Volume XX, pages 1187-89 , January 1957 of the Electromagnetism Annals; and finally Volume VII, March 1966, page 18 of Korean Physics Notes, Series F.*

" I don't think I've forgotten anything, but it doesn't matter if I did. There's enough information there to figure everything out.

"With this instrument you can detect all those Eiffel Towers. This will destroy the Gang's finances. But don't expect any tears from me! I deserved a raise! They didn't give it to me! Now I'm getting even!

"Oh, one more thing : don't forget to say hello from me when you arrest them all at *La Belle Noisette* restaurant on the *rue Louis Bonnet* . *Chuckle! Chuckle! Chuckle!*

Sincerely Yours.

From the desk of a distinguished teacher and major scientist.

Dr. Anonymous, PhD

My little joke, which I hope you will share with me."

¹¹Here follows a page of technical specifications which we omit.

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Chapter 10

Migraine tracks his quarry

You may recall, (though it is not to be held against you if you don't) , that when we last saw Arthur Hodges he was in a train en route to the *station Opera/ Auber/ Havre/Caumartin/St. Lazare/ RER* which, coincidentally, is the most confusing of all the ganglia in the Paris Metro . Also, that he was heading there because a mysterious individual, balancing wire frame spectacles on the bridge of a nose inspiring little confidence, wearing an oversized trench coat that could only have been picked out of the bins of the Salvation Army store on the rue Cantagrel, grooming a bristling moustache, with an ugly nervous tic on the right side of his face, and a rainhat covered with incongruous green patches pushed down atop his scalp had, after directing Hodges to this particular train, immediately telephoned Inspector Guy de Migraine, Chief Inspector of the DST to let him know that Hodges had been set up.

Inspector Migraine received the call from a back table in his café of choice , *Le Boeuf Farci* , one of the dozen or so cop hangouts on the quais adjoining the *Ile de la Cité* .The chances of finding him here were always greater than that he would be in at DST headquarters on the rue Nelaton , a dismal cul-de-sac near the *Palais Elysée* , a neighborhood that otherwise glitters with exclusive art galleries, fancy clothing and gift shops, and government offices.

It was around 3 P.M. The author has not chosen this time at random. It is in fact a calculated estimate based on several factors: (1) The monotonic chart of Migraine's state of drunkenness over the course of a typical day; (2) The fact that the Inspector had just giving instructions to his bookie over the telephone, for placing bets at the Longchamps race tracks (3) The additional fact that back in their apartment in Neuilly, Mme Migraine had just removed a *gigot d'agneau* from the freezer (4) The pulsing of the cesium atomic clock at the historically distinguished Bureau of Standards (5) The habitual tendency of certain species of carp in the Seine to reverse direction at just about that time .

As well as a heterogeneous stock of other indicators.

Migraine jotted down the information given him by his agent calling him from the Réaumur-Sébastopol station, on the racing forms with which the pockets of his trench coat were always stuffed. These forms, often containing messages of some importance, were systematically shedded over the course of a working day. All those remaining in his pockets when he got home late at night were thrown in the trash. This was not due to negligence, but represented a standard procedure. The time had long since past when he could do anything with the information.

But Migraine had studied Arthur Hodges' photo one afternoon between a *calvados* and a *marc* . He felt that he knew him: at least he knew his 10-gallon hat! Now he knew where to find him. Half an hour later he once more picked up the telephone and rounded up a crew: Jean-Luc Fevrier, Pavel Lukash and César Blafard, a rookie cop who served as their chauffeur. Soon they were

racing through the streets of Paris in an official DST vehicle, its sirens turned on full blast.

Lukash had brought along a rifle - just in case. Once in the car he handed it across to Migraine, who amused himself by shooting pigeons through the back seat windows. This may have been ill considered. One of his victims turned out to be a carrier pigeon. Its message affixed to its lower beak by airplane glue, it had been sent up from the Côte d'Azur by Chung Wah. The dead carrier pigeon was later picked up off the street by a member of the Eiffel Tower Gang and its note passed on to Low Bing. This additional bit of information made Low Bing very happy, as he now knew where to find Chung Wah and, if necessary, bump him off. The cook of *La Belle Noisette* threw the carcass of the pigeon into a pot of boiling water and served it up to the public as Mandarin Duck.

Sirens screamed, brakes screeched, birds scattered as the tourists of five continents fled up the steps of the Paris Opera. The DST car caroomed into the *Place de l'Opera* - something of a misnomer, as it holds little more a dirty patch of concrete and a huge metro entrance compiling 12 doors in pairs.

Blafard remained in the front seat. Brandishing clubs, Mace, pistols, 2-way radios, the rifle and several pairs of handcuffs, Migraine, Lukash and Fevrier sprang from the doors. They ran in a block across the plaza to plunge into the abyss of the *Metro station de l'Opera*.

The ticket booths stand at some distance from the entrance. To reach them one must pass through a dark cave inlaid with

bright, colorful, cheer-splurting shops: a clothing store; a newspaper stand; a concession of the chain of Chinese knick-knack and crockery shops named *Sheila Huang* ; a Tunisian shoemaker's stall; and a mean little café called *La Grignotte de l'Opera* .

Lukash began grabbing persons at random. While Fevrier twirled his billyclub above their heads, Migraine barked in their faces: "*Where's the American ?* " In despair, an elderly civil servant cried:

" *What American , officer? There are lots of Americans around here !* (Take note that we are in the neighborhood of the American Express, Harry's American bar, and the Cafe de la Paix .)

" *Texas !* ", he spluttered , "*The man from Texas! Like this!* " With circling arms he sketched a 10 gallon hat. Lukash pointed to a counter in the Sheila Huang where miniature Eiffel Towers were displayed in a row.

"*Contraband !* " he shouted , whereupon Fevrier brought his club down with devastating effect along its entire length. As a demonstration of professional zeal, the cops overturned all the tables and chairs of *La Grignotte de l'Opera* in search of plastic bombs.

The Tunisian shoemaker had been regarding their inexorable advance with some trepidation. Anticipating Lukash's arrival at his counter he pointed the head of his tack hammer in the direction of the turnstiles and cried:

" *Le mec ! He went that-away!*" As if one cue, they sprinted through the tunnel and jumped the turnstiles. That is to say, all

except Fevrier, whose right boot got caught in the metal bars, causing him to crash head-first onto the concrete floor. His injuries weren't serious: a broken rib, dislocated left leg, perhaps a bit of a concussion, (which would have made little difference or the other) . Fevrier volunteered to continue on with the search, but Migraine ordered him back to the vehicle, where he traded places with Blafard. The group waited for Blafard to join them. Then they all set off again through the halls of the Metro.

As at Chatelet/ Les Halles, the widely separated units of the combined Opera/Auber/RER station are linked by enormous *trottoirs roulants* carrying an ill-tempered humanity majestically through dull red tunnels in an atmosphere of gloom.

One can well imagine Migraine's astonishment when he discovered another display of Chung Wah's hieroglyphics stamped over the flat metal plates separating the adjacent aisles of the sidewalks!

Turning to Blafard, Migraine said: "Here's 50 francs. Run ahead and try to find a place where you can buy a sack of lemons. A bottle of lemon juice will do. Then come back here and decipher Chung Wah's messages. When you finish, drive Jean-Luc to the hospital. Having to work for me is enough misery; he doesn't need any broken bones! Come right back and wait for us in the car at the Place de l' Opera. Lukash and I will continue searching for *Monsieur* ", he consulted his notes , "*Artur Hadjh* . "

Finding the lemons turned out to be easier than anticipated. At the other end of the *trottoir roulant* a half-naked Oriental fruit merchant squatted cross-legged on a rug. Oranges, grapefruit and

lemons were piled up for sale. Given that he had neither permit nor license, his enterprise was illegal . Blafard flashed his DST badge and confiscated his entire stock. The merchant was given the choice of leaving the station immediately or facing arrest.

Blafard hurried back to Migraine and Lukash, still a hundred meters or so away from him on the *trottoir roulant* . Without bothering to commend him, Migraine took back his 50 francs: he'd already developed a powerful thirst and was in need of a double Scotch from the sinister cafe - called in fact *La Grignotte d'Auber* - that squats in the lobby of the lowest level of the Auber station.

On the way out the fruit merchant threw on some European clothes. Then he took a cab to *La Belle Noisette* . He'd done a first class job of planting a fake Chung Wah message on the panels of the *trottoir roulant* . Now he was needed back at the restaurant to help unpack, then repack, a shipment of ersatz sections of Saint Theresa's elbow bones destined for smuggling into Rome.

The two detectives strolled in a leisurely pace onto the terrace of *La Grignotte d'Auber* . Laying their guns, clubs and other weapons on a table, they sat down and ordered drinks. Lukash ordered a Coke, but Migraine called the waiter back and instructed him to bring a vodka and orange juice instead.

" You're going to need it", he touched his right temple with his forefinger, " This job wears out the little grey cells."

Rather than continuing to torment the reader with gratuitous suspense, (with which the delirious Parisian fog is always so densely saturated that relief can only be temporary), it should now be related that Arthur Hodges had already exited from the Auber

station long before the arrival of the DST. His luck changed from the moment he stumbled upon the headquarters of *American Express* , a very nice place filled with helpful people. By putting their collective heads together, half a dozen travel agents figured out where the *Galerie Vero Dodat* was located . They even commandeered a cab to take him there.

This arcade, as it turns out, is in the neighborhood of the Louvre, not the old Opera as one might be led to expect. Hodges picked up the issue of Opera International Magazine that had been put aside for him, paid his admission at the museum, then spent the rest of the day staring in open-mouthed amazement at the Mona Lisa.

Relaxing in the sub-sub- sub-basement of the oppressive Auber station, an arena evocative of an abandoned quarry at the time of a total eclipse, or perhaps a great cavern wherein all stalactites and stalagmites have been wrenched from their sockets by monstrous pliers, bathed in a light more grim than glowing, Guy de Migraine and Pavel Lukash, sipping their drinks and sheepishly content, were entertaining second thoughts about the search for Hodges. The excitement of the chase had totally exhausted them; their weary limbs soaked up well-being like croutons in minestrone. Neither felt any uneasiness on the score of being charged with dereliction of duty. In the larger picture, what difference did one gangster make? All that really mattered was Migraine's job security which, after 35 years with the force, was as indestructible as an endowed chair at Harvard. And as long as Migraine had a job, Lukash had a job. Just like Czechoslovakia, in

a way. With the additional freedom to bitch about his boss when his back was turned!

Migraine gazed at the soothing amber ooze at the bottom of his shot glass through jaded, half-closed eyes. He twirled it gently in the acidic neon haze, nurturing a vague suspicion:

"Whatever they put in this glass, Lukash, it wasn't Scotch. Make a note of that, Lukash! Just as soon as we get back to the Quai d'Orfèvres call up the liquor licensing boys."

"Sure thing, chief." Migraine's left leg rocked erratically in random Lissajous figures, an annoying habit which he indulged in when he was tired:

"Funny thing, Lukash: I can recall every one of my cases in terms of what I was drinking at the time. Ahhh!.. *Peach brandy* ! That was the "parakeet murders" . The parrot correctly identified the dirty bastard, but its testimony was thrown out of court... Let's see now. There was *Ouzo* ! You probably remember that one, Lukash, it was in all the newspapers. In 1983 the Louvre discovered that one of its exhibition halls was filled with nothing but forgeries of ancient Greek statuary. I was assigned to Athens to break up the ring of art forgers. I didn't get very far: the Greek government cut a deal. We agreed to drop our investigation, and they dropped a lawsuit involving 2 dozen fake post-Impressionist paintings that had somehow ended up in their museums.... *Ricard! Anisette!* Anisette and more anisette !" Migraine rollicked with delight.

"Lukash, this is strictly confidential. In the late 60's the American FBI hired me as a consultant for their *French Connection*

investigations I was decorated with the *Legion d'Honneur* because I'd taken advantage of the opportunity to spring 20 of our best secret agents who were rotting away in their federal penitentiaries.... *Lots of gin and scotch* ! California wine once in awhile. Only the most expensive labels are drinkable.....Yessiree, the Yanks really treated me well.....Hey, Lukash, I've been to your part of the world too! Czechoslovakia, Poland, Russia! I can't say much for Communism, but I give them credit for one thing: they really know how to make a man drunk."

"Vodka, chief?"

" *Vodka* ! and *slivovitz* ! *Schnapps* ! When a drop of vodka touches my lips, I always recall the case of Vladimir with the club foot. The sight of that foot aimed right at my head. It haunts my dreams! Imagine it, Lukash; a dagger in one hand and gun in the other!"

" Gosh chief! How did you escape?"

" As he threw the kick the rug flew out from under him. Before hitting the ground he banged his head on a samovar. He's still lying in a hospital bed somewhere, in a coma. Just as well for him: if he ever recovers he'll be hanged. ..."

Migraine paused to stare at the few remaining drops of Scotch in his glass. A wild crease whiffled across his brow as if the ecstasy of his recollection had rendered him temporarily insane:

"...Ah me, yes .. *Scotch!* ... Lukash: when I drink a glass of *Scotch* *real* Scotch mind you, not this stuff..... It was in 1977. For three months I was the guest of the Edinburgh police. We were

trying to catch a gang of terrorists, skin-divers who were sabotaging the North Sea oil derricks. Lots of Scotch ; Dunhill pipes; tweeds; bagpipes....."

" Did you catch them, boss?"

" Well... Yes and No. " With Migraine It was ever thus: no successes, no failures:

" We mostly sat around playing cards, drinking and telling dirty jokes..... a bit like the Quai des Orfèvres in fact .*Tant pis !* ", he made a gesture signifying futility, " International finance tied our hands."

Migraine exchanged the damaged old Gaulois butt that had been crammed into the corner of his mouth since leaving *Le Boeuf Farci* for a new *clope* :

" OPEC ! The skin divers were Iranians . The Anglos were worried about the adverse effect on the price of oil. After six months of doing nothing they sent me and two other DST agents back home with six cases of Johnny Walker apiece . Later Jacques Costeau descended in his bathyscaph and scared the hell out of them. Say, Lukash: why don't we just call it a day?"

It is an undeniable fact of potential history that they would have acted on his suggestion, were it not that, at precisely that moment, Migraine's mind registered the fact that the moist corner of his bleary right eye was picking up the glint from a deposit of silver powder on the floor of the hall.

Migraine set his glass on the table and crouched down on all fours.

A runnel of shiny white powder meandered along the black surfaced floor of the hall for about forty meters, trailing away in one of the entrance vaults leading onto the quais.

Either because of the quantity of Scotch he'd drunk, or his awareness of being France's greatest detective, Migraine was totally oblivious to the effect he was making. Resembling nothing so much as a German Shepherd dog reaching for a scrap of Alpo that had gotten lodged under the dinner table, Migraine crawled across the floor of the great concourse, sniffing at the trail of powder and shoveling samples from it into the small plastic envelopes taken from a kit bag strapped to his waist. The crowds going back and forth between the different parts of the station stared at him. A security guard sitting in a control center located to the right of the bar picked up on him through his banks of TV monitors. He came out onto the floor to see what this weird duck was up to.

Once the security guard came close enough Migraine to recognize him from his many television appearances, his manner changed dramatically. One might have imagined that an electric eel had crawled up his anus.

" *Ins-inspect-ta-teur!* ", he stuttered, " *I am at your command!* "

Migraine instructed him to go back to the control center, return with a bucket and shovel, and set to work shoveling up the powder for the forensic labs.

After a few minutes, Migraine stood up hurriedly and raced back to Lukash:

" It's the mono! ", he cried, " Monosodium glutamate ...glutarate ... glugo...you know what I mean.. Lukash! Quick! Before he gets away!"

Lukash gathered up the weaponry and they were off! There was no-one around to notice the security guard , as their receding forms disappeared into the blackness, giving them the finger and dumping the evidence in the dumpster.

Though dark at all times, the quais of the Auber-RER station are perpetually bathed in dim supernal glows, weird glimmers of sherbet red, steel blue, emerald green, citron yellow , diaphanous white. Passengers are forced to walk past a gauntlet of about a dozen TV monitors plugging the identical advertising, all emitting the same moronic musical logos, an invocation to Cybele arranged for percussion, clarinet and chorus of pregnant waitresses.

The track of white powder progressing snake-like on the ground came to a halt at the far end by the feet of a portly well-dressed businessman balancing a large burlap sack on his left shoulder.

The shriek of Inspector Migraine's police whistle reverberated through the tunnel like the anguished cry of a test pilot flying some Pentagon boon-doggle. Parisians old enough to recall the bombing raids of WWII dived for cover.

" Halt! In the name of the law!" As Migraine and Lukash dashed across the quai, the lengthy RER train pulled into the station. The doors opened and their quarry stepped inside. These doors, masterpieces of transportation design and the pride of France's famed engineering schools, *Les Grandes Ecoles* , generally

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stay open for several minutes: plenty of time for the cops to jump aboard. As fate would have it, they found the way blocked by the instruments of a dozen double bass players on their way home after a rehearsal of Don Giovanni at the old opera house, the *Salle Garnier* .

" Get the fuck out of my way!" Migraine swore lustily: "We're cops!"

One of the not-in-the-least-intimidated -by-authority's-menacing-tone, jolly bass players, raised a scolding finger to his lips and sang:

Ins - pect - tor Mi - graine Gives us a head - ache

Needs a va- ca - tion Take it from us

!

Then the door slammed too and the long train rolled out of the tunnel. Waiting for the next train would have been too time-consuming. Migraine and Lukash raced out of the station back to the DST vehicle where César Blafard was still waiting for them.

They jumped inside; Blafard turned on the ignition, and they were off to the *Forum des Halles* .

On the way Blafard passed Lukash the message he'd deciphered from the metal plates of the trottoir roulant. Lukash read it aloud:

" Mission completed. Returning to Taiwan. Chung Wah."

As the message had been put there by the Eiffel Tower Gang, it was of course false; but it was also irrelevant. The conspirators at *La Belle Noisette* could not have known that the famous Inspector Guy de Migraïne never listened to anything that was read aloud to him. This was partly a matter of ego, and partly a matter of principle. He'd spent the formative years of his childhood under the tutelage of an elderly maiden aunt from Normandy. She put him to sleep each night with readings from the Doomsday Book of William the Conqueror.

At about the same time that the cops reached the *Forum des Halles* Arthur Hodges was marveling over the fact that the eyes of the Mona Lisa seemed to be following him as he walked about the hall, "Just like the fuzz " he muttered. The thought gave him the jitters . Soon afterwards he left the museum and hailed a cab. After paying his bill at the Hotel Georges V, he hopped into his 1939 Bugatti and began the journey back to Majorca . Arrived at the *Forum des Halles* , the 3 detectives parked the car and descended in sync into the Metro station. They had to ride on escalators down numerous levels to get to the main concourse . Passing through the mechanized turnstiles brought them into a tile and concrete

wilderness. It contained fewer public distractions than Auber, and was more brightly lit.

Assigned to patrol this enormous area, Blafard amused himself by walking counter-clockwise many dozens of times around each of the 4-meter thick pillars holding up the low ceiling. Migraine and Lukash took an escalator onto the quais. Once again they picked up the suspicious trail of white powder. Following it took them back up into the lobby, all the way across the floor to the *trottoir roulant* described at the beginning of this narrative, the one connecting the *station Les Halles/ RER* with *station Chatelet*. Coming to the end of this, they strode through another winding corridor brining them to the mouth of yet another *trottoir roulant* connecting the lines *Mairie des Lilas*, *La Courneuve*, and *Mairie d'Ivry*, to *Porte d'Orleans*, *Porte de Clignancourt*, *Vincennes*, and *Neuilly*.

Here the trail of white powder disappeared.

There happened to be standing at this location a young subway violin player, a tourist from the United States. He was dressed in blue jeans and a tee-shirt and churning out an outlandish rendition of the Bach D-Minor Chaconne for Solo Violin. Before his opened case stood a hand-made sign, written in both English and bad French, which stated:

" I'm working to raise money to buy a gun so I can waste the entire faculty of the Science, Technology and Society department at MIT."

When the violinist saw Migraine and Lukash emerge from the corridor he nodded his head. Pointing his bow in the direction of the *trottoir roulant*, he cried:

" *Porte d'Orleans! Gare du Montparnasse !* "

After which he returned to massacring and otherwise plummeting to unheard of depths in the immortal Chaconne.

Migraine and Lukash galloped onto the *trottoir roulant* . This provoked a universal stampede that culminated in a pileup of bodies from the middle to the far end. In order to escape Migraine and Lukash had to crawl over them. The ever resourceful Lukash took advantage of this complication to snap pictures of everything in sight, including some highly suspicious graffiti on the overhanging metal beams.

Altogether it took them a half an hour to laboriously climb out of the conveyor belt . After stepping off they turned to the left and , after another turn, walked the short sloping corridor towards the entrance to the quai *Porte d'Orleans* .

Today, as on most days, a most miserable beggar, grimy and unshaven, wearing torn and dirty clothing, squatted just to the left of this entrance, his right arm outstretched and rigid, in a posture of catatonia. His sour profile was almost invisible in the lurid light. Contempt for existence had rendered him all but speechless. His glazed eyes were fixated onto a large wall poster directly opposite him, an advertisement for Dannon yogurt. Beside him on the concrete floor moldered a faded, dirt-encrusted sign:

" *J'ai Faim. Aidez-moi s'il vous plait* "

Approaching him the two detectives saw that his matted hair was covered with streaks of the same white powder they'd discovered on the floors of Auber. The circle of dust on the floor told the whole story: how their suspect had swerved to avoid colliding with the beggar; how, at the last minute he'd swung the bag above the beggar's head and generously baptized him.

Migraine removed a pen flashlight from the breast pocket of his trench coat and inspected his eyes.

" You see that, Lukash?"

Lukash stared at the pinpoints of light reflected from the derelict's eyes.

"Those eyes are glazed. It confirms what I've believed all along. *There's something in that powder besides the mono* ! That man is drugged!"

Migraine removed a remaining fragment of lemon from the pockets of his trench coat and squeezed it into the man's eyes. Not a twitch relieved the discomfiting fixity of their pupils.

From force of habit Lukash took a 2- franc piece from his shirt pocket and started to drop it into an all-but empty cardboard box beside him. Migraine prevented him by grabbing his arm, and yanked him toward the entrance of the quai:

" *Il a fait son choix. Lukash. Qu'il reste dans la boue!* "

The boss, Lukash reflected, always had and always would eat his hamburger raw.

They entered the quai. The train headed in the direction of the Gare de Montparnasse pulled into the station and they stepped aboard. Migraine leaned against the door to watch for traces of the

powder on the platforms of the half dozen stops along the way. This left Lukash free to indulge in a favorite pastime of his: intimidating persons in crowds by demanding to see their identity cards. The train moved slowly, and Lukash was able to write some 15 tickets by the time they reached Montparnasse.

Migraine, ever strong in camaraderie though somewhat deficient in sincerity, remarked:

" Eh bien! If you continue on like this, Lukash, they'll be giving you my job some day."

Migraine knew very well that there was virtually no chance that Lukash would ever make Inspector. If for no other reason, his Eastern European origins would forever place him under suspicion. Nervously, Migraine glanced around to see if the tail that the DSGE ¹² normally put on Lukash was in the car with them. He was.

Ambition? Yes. Dedication? Yes. Industry? Yes. Lukash had more than enough of these... Unfortunately ... Put the man in any situation requiring the use of those little grey cells... Migraine shook his head: Brains aren't manufactured in factories on Taiwan!

Migraine once again reminded himself, as he so often did, that in his 30 years with the force he'd met only one other cop who did as much thinking as he did: Bernard Magouille. Unsavory connections with the Underworld had terminated his career in

¹²DSGE: French counter-espionage. Similar to the CIA. It is not surprising that the DSGE had put a tail on Pavel Lukash. The DSGE and the DST are rival agencies and hate one another's guts. Each has been known to invent incidents to embarrass the another. In May 1966 it was learned that the DST had fabricated a Libyan terrorist group operating from Spain with the highly improbable name of *La Llamada de Jesu Christ* (The Cry of Jesus). This was done expressly to make the DSGE look stupid.

middle age. Now he was wandering at large somewhere in South America.

"He was corruptible", Migraine muttered , " It's not only being smart that got me to where I am today. That plus incorruptibility is the unbeatable combination."

Ruminating pleasantly, Migraine's mind drifted into the subject of his impending retirement. The dream of owning his own home in the country had fortified him over his long years of merciless war against of the empire of crime. Migraine knew very well that his wife wanted to retire to the Riviera, but he had tried to make her understand that was impossible. The Mediterranean coast, from the Riviera out to Marseilles, was crawling with gangsters with old scores to settle.

Last summer they'd driven around Burgundy. In the neighborhood of Clamecy they'd discovered an abandoned country chateau. They'd made inquiries. The going price was too high. Migraine chuckled to himself: that hardly mattered. He had enough dope in his dossiers to shake down anybody. Income tax evasion to begin with : he could nail just about anyone in France on that alone.¹³

The subway car pulled into *station Montparnasse* . Gleaming on the quais of the Metro like a hoard of de Beers diamonds lay a fresh trail of white powder. Though covered with shoeprints and rapidly disintegrating, what remained indicated

¹³Inspector Migraine still could not bring himself to believe the story he'd been told by his co-workers during his French Connection assignment in Washington, that most Americans, though citizens of an enlightened Western country, were such imbeciles that they paid income taxes, nor that those who tried to avoid doing so were treated like malefactors.

that the person who'd spilled it had been headed in the direction of the trains.

Once inside the train station, the *Gare de Montparnasse*, they were met by the DST agent assigned to patrol the station and look for suspicious people. He wore horn-rimmed glasses with oversized lenses, sported an all-too-obviously scraggly black beard, blue jeans and a Mickey Mouse tee-shirt, the notion behind this bizarre get-up being that he should pass for a foreign university student. He was in his middle twenties, and his name was Alphonse de Choucroute.

De Choucroute had indeed seen the suspect enter the station, a short chubby individual in a business suit, carrying a burlap sack and sweating with over-exertion and fear. de Choucroute had chased him all the way across the concourse right into the concession that rented toilets and showers to travelers. His quarry had rushed through the glass doors and gotten himself into a shower right away. Rather than go inside De Choucroute had posted an agent outside the door: Sergeant Hector Berque. The three detectives hurried over to him:

"Where's the sack, you dumbbell?" Migraine snapped.

"Sack, boss? Jesus - I wasn't told about no sack! I was just told to see he didn't get away!"

Migraine gave a characteristic shrug, lit up another Gaulois and belched like a hippopotamus. Those who had worked with him on enough cases knew the meaning of this combination of gestures: *The French cop is a jackass*. He threw open the door with

a great show of authority and, flanked by his entourage, entered the establishment.

At the front counter they came face-to-face with the facial grimaces of a brazen, embittered old woman's face. The story of her life is simply told: she had come up from the provinces to Paris in her teens, drifted into the profession of WC concierge, and stayed with it for the next 30 years.

A prime minister inspired less respect in her than a street walker: she knew, beyond a doubt, that it is at the level of defecation that all men are indeed created equal.

Even the forbidding Inspector Guy de Migraine aroused no tendencies to deference in her:

" Well! folks! What ken I do fer'yer?" , snarled the good lady, "Th'showers 're filled up! Two francs if yer wanna piss. Three francs t'get'ah load off'n yer mind. I never did see a bunch that looked more likes they got their brains up their asses than youse guys!"

" Madame!" Migraine snapped, "We are the police! This is official business! And, Madame, if I may be forgiven for saying so: WE HAVEN'T GOT TIME TO FUCK AROUND! Madame, tell me: Am I correct in saying that a man has just come in here carrying" - he made a wide circling gesture - "a big burlap sack??!"

" Yeeeeahhhh!!... And spreadin' some nasty white stuff all ovr' everything! It's not enough we gotta be cleanin' up all the shit and puke

around here. Why, some'ov yer drunk types, (*nothin' personal, you unnerstan', Inspector*) , craps all over'uh floor before they even makes it innah'deh john! Why? What's it to you? Whaddah you want wid'im?"

" Madame! This is very serious! Is he still in there?"

" Naaah... left ten minutes ago."

Migraine muttered an old Norse oath he'd picked up from his aunt: *May you drown in your own stupidity* . The shriveling glance he cast in the direction of de Choucroute could not be mistaken: his career was on the line.

Then Lukash was assailed by a rare brainstorm:

" But the sack, Madame!" he cried, " The sack! The sack! Surely he didn't take it into the shower with him?"

" Say!...Yeah! Wasn't that the funniest thing That's exactly what he did ! He took it right innah'duh' shower. But there was somepin'else that I found funny ... he didn'task me for no soap, or towel, or nothin'! Just turns on the water as soon as he gets inside. Hey! And yeah! I'm sure he didn't have no bag when he runs ouddah here.. Say! He musta left dat piece'a shit sittin' in the showers!..."

" Boss, that's why..." Berque began making excuses for not having prevented his escape. de Choucroute waved him to silence.

" Madame!" Migraine barked, stubbing out his Gaulois on a bar of soap for sale on the counter, "What was the number of his shower stall?"

" Number six. But yer can't go in dere! Somebody's usin' it !"

Migraine and his crew pushed through the waist-high gate separating them from the corridors of shower stalls, and thundered their way to number 6. He lifted the rifle out of the Lukash's hands and banged its stock against the door : " Open up! Open up immediately! In the name of the law!"

At the grinding of the latch they sprang back in a body. The door swung open. Inside stood an angry black-haired woman in her 30's, stark naked, tall, svelte, dripping wet and squinting at the quartet with horror.

Lukash fainted.

Migraine grimaced with contempt : gallantry has its limits. Berque dragged Lukash back to the front lobby as Migraine stomped past them into the stall.

There, in a corner of the metallic shower stall , slinking like a spoiled omelette atop a pail filled with other slops, lay the burlap sack. It was soaking wet and completely empty. The smuggler must have recognized that the police were closing in on him and used the opportunity to ditch the goods. Nothing remained of the white powder but what was encrusted in the trench coats, clothing and shoes of the cops.

There was little hope now that the suspect could be apprehended. Where could he have gone? There were hundreds of towns accessible from the trains departing the Gare de Montparnasse. He may even have gone back into the Metro ; or out of the station into one of the dozens of cafés emanating from the intersection of the Boulevard de Montparnasse and the Boulevard

de Maine, in which anonymity can easily be protected merely by burying one's face in a newspaper.

The widely celebrated Inspector Guy de Migraine gnashed his teeth in sullen rage, "*Sacre bleu de merde !*" he cried, "I will hang these ninnies by their tendons!!!"

Suddenly he recalled that he was not alone. Indeed, he was in a shower stall together with a dripping wet and very naked woman. Mumbling apologies, he picked up the sack and, with many awkward gestures, (mostly shrugs), left the stall and returned to the lobby.

Lukash had recovered. He was sitting on a chair beating, a trifle over-dramatically, his head against a wall. The concierge had gone behind the counter and was now filling out a DST voucher form. On it she listed: the cost of a case of soap bars identical to the one Migraine had ruined; the rent for the shower stall the cops had entered; the cost for a new lock, given that they'd threatened to break the present one; an estimate of the amount of trade lost by persons who'd stayed away owing to the presence of the police; a fee for having to clean up the stains of the mysterious white powder, which would not have covered her floors if the cops had not chased their quarry into the bathrooms; the confiscation of the burlap sack, technically her property; the rental fee for the damp towel used to revive Lukash; compensation for the mental distress suffered by the woman in the stall, (a sum slated to go to the concierge because said distress might cause said woman to avoid the Montparnasse showers in the future); voluntary contributions to the vacation and retirement funds for the entire staff. Last,

though hardly least, she insinuated that she needed a generous bribe to keep her from selling the story - either to the tabloid press or to Georges Simenon, (who was still alive at the time) - of exactly what Inspector Guy de Migraine was up to alone with a strange naked woman, in a shower stall, in the Gare de Montparnasse. The total came to 10,000 francs.

Migraine signed the voucher without hesitation. Finances were the province of the accounting department. In the best of all possible worlds she might, in a decade or so, receive 10% on her bill.

Since the proprietress didn't know this she now became more kindly disposed to the cops. She reached behind the sales counter, extracted a slip of paper and passed it along to Migraine:

" The jerk dropped this on the way out."

It was a train schedule. On it their quarry had circled the arrival and departure times of trains to Quimper.

" Quimper!" de Choucroute exclaimed, " That train doesn't leave for another 7 minutes!"

As part of his job-training de Choucroute had memorized all the Gare de Montparnasse schedules . The train in question was slated to leave the station at 17:48 , arrival in Quimper at 23:36. They dashed out of the showers and onto the quais. Their man was nowhere in sight. As de Choucroute and Berque climbed up onto the Quimper-bound train, de Choucroute cried out that they would telephone back when they caught him.

As they walked out of the Gare de Montparnasse onto the Boulevard de Maine, Migraine turned to Lukash and asked:

" Tell me, Lukash: do you always faint when you run across a beautiful woman naked in a shower?"

" No, chief, though I must admit I haven't had much opportunity to put it to the test."

" So, what happened?"

" It's nothing, chief. Really nothing."

" Come on, Lukash - you can tell me."

" Well, chief..... If you really want to know: she's my wife."

" Hmmmm! That really does put a new face on things, doesn't it?"

" Not really, chief. I didn't faint just because of that. I knew right away that she'd just come from her lover. He lives in this part of town, up on the rue Daguerre. "

" Don't give me that, Lukash!" Migraine threw a punch at his shoulder, " I thought you were a man of the world!"

" I am, Inspector. I wasn't upset by the lover. It was the fact that she was taking a shower at the train station instead of in his apartment. His bathroom has every modern convenience."

Migraine absently studied the swarms of emaciated pigeons flying over the plaza. He whistled:

" It's all beginning to look very mysterious, if you don't mind my saying so. In that case, why the dickens was she taking a shower in there ?"

" Oh, that's the easy part , Inspector: she murdered him."

" What devil! ¹⁴ - How did you figure that one out ?"

" There was blood on her dress. It's his blood type."

¹⁴Que diable !

Lukash held up a small square of material that had been cut from her dress.

" I snipped this off just before I fainted. Then I ran a test on it while sitting in the front lobby. That's why I was banging my head against the wall."

" Ah! Now I understand: the faint - it was just a ruse?"

" No, chief. It was the real thing."

Migraine was beginning to think that Lukash might some day make Inspector after all.



Chapter 11

La Jambe Cassée

There is a desolate district on the right bank of the Seine, running parallel to the *Boulevard Beaumarchais* between the *Place de la Bastille* and the *Place de la Republique* . Getting off at *Metro Filles de Calvaire* , one enters a warren of streets which, despite the astronomical value of Parisian real estate, hold essentially nothing on them and which, in addition, go just about nowhere.

It is a debris strewn waste-basket, sodden and melancholy, without restaurants, stores, or cafés, and, at most, an occasional pedestrian.

All the more delight, therefore, in discovering the rare exception! Such as the café-bar- restaurant which bears the designation *La Jambe Cassée* , a veritable oasis within these precincts of sloth, despair, abandon, gloom and indifference (which, like the sighting of arcing rainbows, cause the hearts of bewildered tourists to skip a beat, if not to stop altogether.)

La Jambe Cassée is easily found. After exiting *Filles de Calvaire* on the west side of the *Boulevard Beaumarchais*, you can walk down the *rue de Temple* as far as the *rue Poitou* . Turning right, walk a few more blocks, perambulate the environs, and you may discover the *rue Saintonge* . If you don't, just keep looking: this street has a way of disappearing for months at a time, only to re-emerge just about the time that mankind has, to its great relief, come to the conclusion that it is gone forever.

Alighting upon the rue Saintonge you then search for a certain *impasse*, not indicated on any of the standard city maps, identifiable only by a plaque affixed to a whitewashed wall. The plaque states that one is standing before the *Impasse de la Béquille*. La Jambe Cassée is located at its uttermost end.

Three Algerians manage the restaurant: a waiter, a barman, and a cook. No one has ever testified to seeing them when they weren't drunk ¹⁵.

There is reason to believe that its name did not originate with its present owners. It hints at a darker past, when *les Apaches* roamed the seedy districts of Paris, and rough justice was enacted without benefit of law.

The ambiance smacks of an endless carnival. The prevailing climate is filled with promises of immanent violence that sometimes spill over into a real brawl. Were this rude fellowship not so cheerful, not so replete with forced gaiety, it might be deemed merely gross. Were the Arabic Pop Music pouring out of the radio above the bar not so raucous, the foul obscenities passing between staff, customers and a table near the bar reserved for friends of the management, might appear less shocking.

No one, himself least of all, can recall the strange chain of events which led the celebrated Inspector Guy de Migraine to this outlandish hole. Its' sole recommendation appears to be that one could never hope to find it merely by looking for it - implying that Migraine must have uncovered it by some other means. That neither the staff nor the regulars had the faintest notion of who he

¹⁵No slur is intended on restauranteurs, nor Algerians, nor Islam which forbids drinking.

was, what the initials DST stood for, or the location of the Eiffel Tower, had certainly been key factors in the decision to settle upon it as the headquarters for the Thursday afternoon planning and debriefing luncheons for the specialists of the DST team assigned to the Eiffel Tower Gang case.

It didn't take long before every crook in Europe knew where to find Inspector Migraine on a Thursday afternoon. Spies from various secret services and the Mob, who would normally have not been caught dead in such a place, mingled with the clientele on these days. Migraine's own plainclothes spies were also dispersed at various tables around the room.

The three partners of *La Jambe Cassée* had distributed the functions essential to running the restaurant among themselves. Over the cash register presided Mohammed, the barman. On most occasions he could be expected to be a shade less inebriated than the others. Hamid, the cook, his torso more sinewed than a *djellaba* that had too often been laundered by being beaten on rocks, stood all afternoon long in his tiny kitchen at the far wall opposite the bar. Sweat dripped over his tormented brow as he choke lustily on the billowing fumes that poured out of his cell and suffocated the clientele.

The third partner, the waiter, Aziz, was a paradigm in extroversion. It is no mere metaphor to state that he never stopped talking. When he was not forcing more food (and, above all, drink) on their customers, he'd be boasting of all the ships he'd sailed on, the restaurants he'd worked in, his unimaginable exploits in the many brothels he'd frequented. Or again he might loudly promote

the charms of the two dumpy and very fat prostitutes, as old and tired as the district itself, crouched over the high stools at each end of the bar.

Indeed there was something frankly malevolent in the appearance of Aziz, in the distemper around his eyes, the seeping warts on his swollen nose, the wild flailing of his arms, in his ruthless determination to get the whole restaurant as drunk as himself, in the extravagant craziness of his monologue in 5 languages, Arabic, French, Greek, Spanish and English, delivered in a voice so loud that it could be heard even above the deafening noise of the radio. The brainless yelling and screaming of Aziz and Mohammed over the ridiculous matter of the radio's volume was one of the predictable features of the day's entertainment.

Aziz's behavior indicated a man obsessed by his perceived self-image as a Bacchus in residence, the presiding genius over some Roman orgy, Circean revel, transmigration of damned souls or roller coaster to hell. lubricated by strong, cheap, poisonous rotgut table wine (*tord-boyau*).

This setting made Migraine feel very much at home. It pleased him that the noise level was always so high that none of the perpetually present underworld spies could hear, let alone understand, the conversations buzzing about his table. It was also the case that this state of affairs applied in equal measure to the cops and informers who surrounded him: they were rarely able to make out more than a few words of what they were saying to each other. This also didn't trouble him, Migraine being of the opinion that really important information should not be communicated

verbally. If what his subalterns had to say was all that important, they could always write a note and slip it to him under the table.

This, too, carried its risks ; for it sometimes happened that *Kif-har'lech* , the restaurant's enormous , dirty, hairy and lazy French sheepdog, might decide that the note was meant for him, and eat it. Migraine, who often fed *Kif-har'lech* the left-over *frites* from his plate, wasn't unduly concerned with this either. He felt that any message not worth the trouble of writing up and passing twice, should not have been written in the first place.

These luncheons, mind you, were taken very seriously. Many a case stalled for years had been cracked wide open by some idea introduced during them; and even more by some that had not. Greasing the cogs and gears of criminal justice involves more than the transmission of dull, meaningless facts! Of far greater importance were intangibles such as camaraderie, team spirit, male bonding, reckless conviviality. tribal rite and ritual, the quaffing of much dubious wine, and the stimulation of bibulous cheer!

Notable among the many challenges faced by them was the presence of the two prostitutes, Olga and Minna. Any member of Migraine's team caught using their services was kicked off the force for life! This had nothing to do with Migraine's morals: both of them were KGB agents.

Around 1 PM on a certain Thursday afternoon in early July, 1989, Pavel Lukash and Jean-Luc Fevrier were sitting at the bar of *La Jambe Cassée* , waiting for the arrival of the rest of the team. To the left of Fevrier sat Olga; Minna, to Lukash's right, was talking to

him in Russian. Together they were comparing notes on working conditions in their respective agencies:

"Life is a paid vacation when you work for our side". Minna's tone of voice could not have been more bored. She was a stocky woman with Slavic features that dripped with thick makeup. Aloft she bore a fantastic reddish-brown wig. Beneath a torn black lace dress, her exposed varicose legs looked as if they'd been greased with chicken fat.

"I did hear something to that effect once", Lukash replied, "I think it was in Czechoslovakia before I got out. Speaking to you frankly, working for Migraine here isn't all that much better than being locked up in a labor camp over there."

"So? Why don't you quit? This is a free country! "

Lukash debated the question: "I don't know, really. You get to feel sorry for the boss. Where else will he find someone to take the fall for him every time he fucks up? Migraine becomes like a bad habit; like his name, a kind of headache. It gets so you depend on him to keep you from getting lonely."

"Sounds like Joe Stalin. Boy: I sure missed him when he dropped dead! "

"Hey, you rotting penis! Where's that shitty Basque chicken! Up your asshole?"

"Here it comes! Don't spew your vomit on it, dog's fart!"

A scrawny, oily, burnt, onion-swaddled chicken came flying through the upper part of the kitchen's Dutch door. It streamed across the room to splatter on the large mirror at the back of the bar. Mohammed wiped it off the mirror, put it onto a plate, tidied

its trimmings and handed it over to Aziz. He handed the plate to Olga, who was apparently used to being served in this fashion.

Turning towards the kitchen, Aziz screamed.

"Stick of sick slime! Having fun??!"

He ran behind the bar and returned with a garbage can overflowing with wine bottles, paper and food slops. Kicking open the Dutch door he heaved the can into the kitchen:

"Take that, you moronic bugger!! Go chew the Devil's cock!"

Hamid charged out of the kitchen, a meat cleaver in his right hand:

"Another one of your jokes, weasel snot? I'll hack you to bits!"

"May leprosy rot your bladder! Get back to work!"

"May you be Satan's toilet seat in the afterlife!"

"I'm not afraid of cockroach spit like you!"

"Will you or will you not apologize, flesh of venereal pig?"

"What? ME apologize!? Pigeon shit! Who was it threw the chicken??"

The cook whirled about and raced back into the kitchen. After slamming the door behind him, he started banging pots and pans together.

Scenes like these erupted several times a day. They were staged events, primarily for the diversion of the clientele. Aziz strolled to the radio and turned it on full blast. Then he waltzed about the room singing along with the crooners, substituting obscene lyrics in a variety of languages.

During the time in which this quarrel was working out its dreary inner logic, the American marine Stanley Cobb had entered

unnoticed through the open doorway. His hands twitched like a nuclear reactor on the verge of a meltdown, and he felt something diarrhoetic in his hams. Such scenes of unrestrained violence aroused the military cop in him. It was only with the greatest difficulty that he restrained himself from clubbing everyone in sight, before arresting them all . Only his mystical veneration of "*The Inspector* " stayed his hand. Migraine figured third in a hierarchy topped by his mother and followed by the Stars-and-Stripes. Had he not worshipped Guy de Migraine as more than a second father, not even his commanding officer could have ordered him to attend these Thursday afternoon debauches.

His anger mastered, yet (even as a tick resting in the ear of a hapless mastiff will swell to indecent proportions) its growth unchecked , Cobb stomped to the nearest table with an arrogant show of high dudgeon. There, heavily emitting a weary sigh of world-weariness, he seated himself. He draped his trench-coat over his chair and lay his Marine hat on the table. The holster belt hooked to his bulletproof vest, holding several rounds of bullets and an Uzi pistol was unstrapped, then deliberately dropped on the table from a great height. The clatter resonated across the room with menacing intent . Once again he sighed.

The clientele froze, petrified. Even Lukash and Fevrier blanched. Only the inebriated restaurant managers continued their tasteless and despicable threnody of curses, mock quarrels and loud abuse.

Cobb lifted a truncheon the size of a bowling pin and brought it crashing down on the table, breaking it in two. No longer was there a whimper to be heard from anyone.

"Hey! You!" he shouted. With an imperious swipe of an index finger he pointed to Aziz: "Go get another table! Pronto!"

Waiter and barman hopped to it. Exiting into the inner courtyard they went down into the basement. Soon they were back with another table. Generating much needless commotion, they pulled it into the room. In a restaurant in which a semblance of normalcy reigned, this would have been the signal for a mass exodus. Given that La Jambe Cassée on this day of the week contained only Eiffel Tower Gang spies, spies from the Mob, KGB operatives, DSGE operatives, occasionally CIA, Mossad and Special Branch operatives, nobody made a move.

The old table was removed and the new one put in its place. Cobb planted his boots on the table, stretching out his porcine figure to its full length, and began indolently picking his teeth with a grenade pin. Lukash and Fevrier came over and joined him

Shortly afterwards Inspector Migraine entered through the doorway of La Jambe Cassée. Accompanying him were Alphonse de Choucroute and Els Dordrecht of the Rotterdam Customs Authority. In her left hand, she held a briefcase; her right supported a *papier-maché* cast of the Eiffel Tower. Migraine lugged along a briefcase stuffed with documents and a laundry sack full of monosodium glutamate. Bag and Eiffel Tower were placed at the center of the table. Then everybody sat down and ordered drinks. The meeting had begun.

de Choucroute spoke up first: "Well, boss: we were able to trace that guy. You know - the one we lost in the showers at the Gare de Montparnasse ?"

" Don't remind me of it". Migraine scowled: " I still break out in a cold sweat whenever I think about it. So: what did you find out?"

" That powder, boss: it was the mono, all right."

" Aha! What did I tell you? Where's he from? What's he up to?"

" He's an Englishman." de Choucroute flipped through a stenographic tablet and began to read ...

" Monsieur le detective! Ze stupeed feelthy whore sends you siz! "

Aziz planted an apricot brandy before Migraine's cherubic red nose. Migraine turned his head around far enough to see Minna wink at him through her mascara laden eyelashes. He acknowledged the gift with a wave of the hand. Relations between the DST and the KGB were not always adversarial. Stanley Cobb glared at Aziz:

" Lower the fucken music - okay ?" Aziz nodded and did nothing.

" Like, if you don't want your head broken." Aziz waltzed out of reach. Migraine steadied Cobb with an outstretched arm. Turning to de Choucroute, he said: " Go on, Alphonse. Read the report."

" We learned that the suspect enters France on the night ferry from Dover. It arrives in Calais at 2:00 AM. He carries several

passports, only one of which we believe to be authentic. The name on that one is 'Llewellyn Jones' (Choucroute pronounced the name as ' *YownYownz* '), an odd name common among English Bretons. Yownz is employed as a salesman for a company that manufactures pipe fittings. He boards the train for Paris at 6:30 AM and arrives at 9:30."

" Did he pass through customs?" de Choucroute rubbed his ears to cover up his embarrassment:

" At that time of night, boss, our customs officials do not always operate at that level of ruthless efficiency which is our special pride and makes us honored among nations."

" Yes, yes , Choucroute - please go on."

" Chief", Fevrier interrupted, " Aren't you overlooking the *key notion* ?"

" What's that, Fevrier. Hey, you there! " Migraine snapped at Aziz ,

" Take this soup away. It's been rotting for days . "

" Sure thing your excellency. *Hey there! Hamid* ", Aziz shouted into the kitchen , "*Hey , you dog's scrotum! The inspector doesn't like your swill! Have you got a bowl of pig's phlegm for him to slurp ?* "

Els Dordrecht, who had never been to La Jambe Cassée before, was feeling sick : " Do we have to put up with this stuff much longer?" Migraine apologized:

" It's what the locals call color. Don't forget who we are, or why we're here. These foul *bougnols* ¹⁶ protect our anonymity."

¹⁶ racist term for an Algerian

Migraine covered his blank face with a faraway look no less blank. Within the creases of his troubled brow lay many astonishing innuendoes which, like the breakers of tidal waves in the clutches of *El Niño* , rippled their spasms over its shoe leathery folds.

The perpetual Gaulois butt , already thoroughly soaked in rotted cabbage soup, dribbled from the carious teeth at the right corner of his mouth like a platyhelminthe spontaneously generated from spoiled meat tossed by a supermarket into its waste bins, then sprayed with insecticide so that the beggars who eat it will croak. His clenched muttonous fists rattled helplessly on the table.

The truth of the matter was that Inspector Guy de Migraine entertained only the vaguest notions about any of his cases, including the ones he happened to be working on at that moment. Dozens of them, mostly unsolved, were always crowding in at the back of his head. It was a question of professional ethics that he should treat all leads, however far-fetched, with the same degree of seriousness, (or perhaps indifference depending on one's point of view) What counted was that they were given equal weight, all such multiple considerations buzzing about his brains (rather like bees stinging the soft nose of a Yosemite grizzly bear debilitated over the years through all the stale pizza fed him by witless tourists) , interfering with his concentration, scrambling the signals on the way to his cerebral cortex, distracting him from his primary focus which, in the best of cases, was at most a matter of convention.

On top of which the Inspector was drunk. To do him justice, he was no drunker than customary for the ritual Thursday afternoon luncheons at La Jambe Cassée. He might have remained in this fixated state indefinitely, if Stanley Cobb hadn't bent over and whispered something in his ear. Exactly what it was we will never know, but it had the effect of a strong jolt of electricity applied to the gonads. Migraine pulled himself up to a rigid sitting position and said nothing. After a moment he seemed to recall that Fevrier's question to him had not been answered. By nodding reassuringly in Fevrier's direction he indicated that he would be giving his answer at the appropriate moment. Immediately afterwards there began a frantic search through all of his pockets for his pack of *Gaulois*. It was nowhere to be found. He'd probably lost it out in the street, during the time he'd wasted looking for the rue Saintonge (which, as is well known, has a way of showing up at various places over time) .

" Carry on, men. I'll be back in a jiffy!" The Inspector stood up and walked briskly out the front door of La Jambe Cassée to scour the neighborhood for a *Tabac*. He would not be returning for another half hour.

After Migraine left the room, Els Dordrecht turned to Stanley and said : " Where's the message you wanted me to see?" Cobb lowered his booted foot from the table top and dug into the pockets of his Marine vest.

" It's on this thing, m'am." he replied, pulling out his keyring. The mezzuzah, obtained the month before from Izzy the Litvak, had been attached to the key ring between the fingerbones

of the dead Russian diplomat and a collection of stamped metal disks of the sort disgorged by stamping machines in penny arcades. These constituted Stanley's addressbook. On these disks were recorded the names and addresses of all suspects associated the contacts associated with the Eiffel Tower Gang case .

Els Dordrecht manipulated the keyring to carefully tease out van Klamperen's message from the mezzuzah. While she was absorbing its contents, Olga slid off her stool at the bar and walked over to the table. Something in the blanched fingerbones had attracted her attention. She ran her fingers over their knobby contours with caution, even a certain tenderness. Bending down she fixed her eyes closely on their indentations. As she sat upright once more, she rattled the balls of pink tinsel on her shoddy black knee-high dress. Her wig fell earthwards like the strands of a penitentiary mop, as she threw her head back and roared the demonic laugh of a schizophrenic committing suicide from eating 3 copies of Sigmund Freud's "Interpretation of Dreams" .

" Those fingerbones - Why! - They're Sergei's, aren't they ?! "

Stanley Cobb stared at her, thunderstruck . The DST had conducted a lengthy investigation to learn that these fingerbones, (and the mysterious head that had fallen into the Paris Canal from a windowsill on the boarded-up Hotel du Nord on the Quai des Jemmapes) , had once served as body parts for a Russian diplomat with the name of Sergei Ipanchin Vladimirsky Nepimov Ivanov Akakyevitch Strogin. Stanley shook his head, as if asking himself , 'Am I really that stupid'?

"Excuse me, m'am", he said. The mock courtesy in his manner sank under the weight of its own sarcasm, " Like, I know you're not a lady - but - maybe - just maybe - I can still call you ma'm, okay? How the *HHELL* ! did you manage to steal that state secret ? I should warn you you're one inch from being put under arrest, m'am. So don't push your luck."

" Don't be stupid, kiddo! I didn't steal no classified info! I recognized that fingerbone from a distance of 6 meters. Sergei, if you must know, was a cousin of my uncle by the second marriage of my mother's eldest second cousin on my grandfather's side."

" That don't convince me none, m'am. Could you try explaining how you just happened to know what his bones ought to look like?"

" Oh. I thought you knew; you should ask the Inspector about me. I was the assistant to the famous paleontologist Gerassimov for 12 years. He invented all the modern techniques for reconstructing complete bodies on the basis of a few pieces of bone. Just looking at those fingerbones I visualized the person, my cousin that is, they came from . That's real my profession. What a surprise to find my cousin here! "

" Whoa, m'am! Us marines ain't *that* dumb ! I mean, m'am - I ain't never been so drunk I couldn't tell a bull from a pig! *Your* profession? Ma'm? Huh? You mean to tell me you ain't just a tart?"

" No of course not, you cute Yank blubber-puss! I'm the senior bone identification specialist for all KGB operations in Western Europe. May I?"

Aziz brought over a chair for her and she sat down at the table. When Olga overturned the contents of her pocketbook, more than 30 bone fragments dropped onto its surface. Sorting through the pile she isolated an ankle bone splinter:

"Take a good look at that one. It came from a dancer with the Bolshoi Ballet. She defected a few years ago during one of its routine visits to Paris. Before her entrance to the *pas de deux* in Swan Lake, the KGB seeded the stage of the Paris Opera with curare coated splinters. Look .. " Olga raised it up to the light " .. There! You can still see the hole where the splinter penetrated. I try not to think of how horribly he suffered before she died. This bone was sent to me afterwards for identification . Purely routine you understand."

Aziz had once again turned the radio up full blast and it was impossible for Stanley to hear anything Olga was telling him. In the meantime Els had finished read van Klamperen's message and handed it back to him:

" Here, Stanley: you keep it. Stick it back into that cylinder thing; its important. After we get back to headquarters I'll transcribe the message. Then we'll run a test for fingerprints, although I know it's a waste of time. This is a master criminal we're dealing with."

Mohammed got off his stool and turned the radio down, while Olga continued her lesson in osteology. She lifted out a bone fragment shaped like a pottery shard: " This was once part of a shoulder blade belonging to some American cop."

Stanley's right hand gripped his Uzi. Gooseflesh chilled the back of his neck.

" Put that thing away, stupid! It wasn't us what terminated him. The jerk , some dumb cop from a place called, uh, 'Cincinnati' - You ever heard of it? - was drunk for a week in Pigalle. He collapsed in the street during a shoot-out between local gangsters. Later a comrade heisted this bone from the American Embassy just before the dumb jerk's body was driven to the crematorium. My job was to find out if he was CIA. He wasn't. Nothing but damn routine all the time . "

Migraine re-entered the room just as Cobb was replacing the Uzi in its holster. He twisted van Klamperen's message back into the mezzuzah and put the keyring into his trousers back pocket. Then he savagely attacked the monstrous plate of spaghetti with mutton chops which Aziz had dumped in front of him. In a few minutes everyone at the DST table was greedily wolfing down the unsavory yet filling Franco-Maghrebian cuisine devised by Hamid, the cook of La Jambe Cassée . In between guzzlings and gurglings they belched, swore , made wide gesticulations and proudly generated loud lip-smacking noises. They were altogether a crude bunch.

Hamid had left the kitchen, from which smoke continued to pour over the tops of the Dutch doors into the room . With his left hand down her busom, holding a meat cleaver high in his right hand, he danced cheek-to-cheek with Minna. Aziz alternated between yelling at his friends seated at a corner table, and

guzzling *tord-boyaux* directly from bottles which he then broke on the cobblestones of the inner courtyard.

During a pause between eating and drinking, Migraine turned to de Choucroute and asked:

" Choucroute: weren't you about to tell me what happened to the man you followed to Quimper?"

deChoucroute picked up his steno pad: "Shall I continue where I left off, boss?"

" Yes: who is this suspect? Did you arrest him?"

As the swim-bladder of teleostean fish will burst if it rises too quickly out of the water, Stanley Cobb broke wind:

" Pah'din me folks", he apologized, rising from his chair, "It looks lahk this is gonna' be the big'un!" Stanley lumbered off to the WC.

Choucroute consulted his notes:

" The suspect checks in at a place called the *Hotel ... des Voyageurs* At midnight he leaves the hotel to wait for a taxi. It takes him down to the docks. We've got the number of its *permis de conduire* ... There he boards a tugboat. It was very difficult to see anything clearly in the darkbut we were able to identify at least two other persons with him on the boat...

" Soon afterwards we hear some kind of loud commotion coming from below deck. It sounds to us as if a fist fight was happening there. That made sense to us : the others were angry because he'd lost the stuff....

" Then, all of a sudden, they stopped fighting. They'd wised up to the fact that the police were closing in. One of the gang, it

may have been the pilot... he wore a navigator's cap ... came running up onto the deck with a searchlight that he beamed across the docks. We're quite certain he was looking for us."

" So? So ?? SO??? Don't leave us all in suspense, Choucroute. He didn't find you, did he?"

" Er yes, boss..... he did."

" AND???"

" I don't know how put this, boss. There was a shoot-out. I got wounded in the shoulder. Nothing to worry about . My buddy, remember the guy you met at the Gare de Montparnasse ?"

"Indeed I do. Hector Berque if I remember correctly."

"Yes ; he was also hit. It's pretty bad I'm afraid. The tugboat got away."

" It's bad? It's bad!? What in buggering hell does that mean- IT'S BAD??!"

"Well, boss ... I hate to have to put it this way .. Forgive me.. In fact he's dead."

" WHAT???" Migraine stood up with such force that he lifted the table with him, spilling the rest of the swill into everyone's lap. His voice leveled out at a roar:

" An *officier* of the DST is killed on an assignment! The crooks get away! And I, your Inspector, your *chef* , your *general* , don't hear a fucken thing about it for a month ??"

de Choucroute looked as if he were trying to squeeze his body into a tennis ball:

" Boss ... I'm afraid it's more complicated than that."

" How more complicated? How can it be more complicated?"

" The ballistics report indicates that our man was shot
....from *behind* !"

" From behind? From behind? FROM BEHIND? " Migraine continued to repeat this phrase over and over again, employing slight modifications of inflection to render it either ridiculous or outrageous as the fancy moved him. Unable to control himself further he seized de Choucroute by the lapels and slapped his face:

" WHO , CHOUCROUTE ? WHO DID IT? WHAT'S GOING ON HERE? WHO SHOT HIM ??"

de Choucroute banged deliriously on the table with his fists, then buried his head in his hands and sobbed:

" We don't know."

The celebrated Inspector Guy de Migraine, roused to total fury, strode away from the table. He yanked a wine bottle from the tripey fingers of Aziz, now very drunk and trembling, and threw it across the restaurant. It connected with the mirror behind the bar just above the head of Mohammed, asleep on his stool behind the cash register. Glass fragments flew in all directions.

" FIND THEM!" Migraine screamed at his staff, " FIND THEM IF YOU HAVE TO GO TO CHINA!"

As if on cue , 3 customers lowered their faces into their soup.

His fury unleashed, Migraine folded his hands into a hammer fist and demolished the *papier-maché* Eiffel Tower with half a dozen effective swipes. Waltzing about the room, he whirled the sack of monosodium glutamate around his head until it slammed him in the face and knocked him down. Fevrier came over and pulled him up.

Migraine dusted off his trench coat. He pawed its pockets until he found the new pack of *Gaulois*, then jammed another cigarette between his teeth. The great Inspector, shapeless as a sack of potatoes, sat down. His face was grim, more grim than anyone had seen it in a long time, as least as grim as it was during the Massage Parlor Case, when he'd lost so much kneaded evidence.

"Jean-Luc!", he barked: "Go to the bar and get me a double Scotch." He felt as foolish as a Spanish matador who'd just learned from one of the picadors that the bull was stoned on psychedelic mash. A gloomy, bleary, bleak, shabby haze soaked his sunken jowls. Sick of life, he suddenly felt very, very old.

A door clicked open at the back of the room. It was Stanley Cobb, falling out of the jakes. He stumbled across the room back to the table, tripped, and clutched for support at the back of his chair with both hands. Leaning his whole weight against the chair he stiffened his body. His head, bent with shame, hung down at a vertical angle from his neck.

There was no doubt in anyone's mind that something truly dreadful had happened in that room, something far worse than the slaying of the DST agent in Quimper. Stanley grimaced, bit his tongue, clenched and unclenched his fists. His hands shot up to his temples, which he squeezed as one pushes a grapefruit through a juicer. Then he screamed:

"SHIT!! FUCK!! GARBAGE!! MERDE!! HELL!! DAMN!!"

¹⁷In transcribing this afternoon's events, Stanley's colorful dialect has been translated into an approximation of standard English.

Before anyone could stop him his right arm lunged for his Uzi. In a single gesture he yanked it out of his holster and opened the safety catch. With bewildering speed he raised the muzzle to the front of his brains. One can be certain that Stanley Cobb would never have needed to apply for his pension, had not Hamid rushed out of the kitchen holding a cauldron of boiling cous-cous stew, and dropped its contents over his head.

The gun misfired. The bullet sped across the room, shattering a canister of rotgut wine before plowing into the radio, mercifully silencing it. Mohammed once again slid his lethargic appendages off the tall stool behind the cash register, and entered another dozen or so items in the DST compensation voucher that he filled to repletion every Thursday afternoon.

Stanley collapsed over the table and moaned like an infant. Aziz and Hamid went into the kitchen and returned with a pile of steaming damp towels to wrap about his brow. His behavior would have been embarrassing coming from anyone. That it was emanating from a Marine as tough as they come, could only mean that his entire world had collapsed. Migraine passed him the rest of his double Scotch, then ordered two more, one for himself and another one for Stanley.

Gripping Stanley's hand in his own, Migraine transmitted his immense store of confidence. Like a kindly uncle he stroked the crown of his head ever so gently. In his 30 years with the force Migraine had learned to recognize every kind of crisis liable to bring a cop to his knees. Certainly he was more than a match for anything that might happen to a Stanley Cobb. Migraine pictured

Cobb as a loveable Yankee lump, the most loveable thing about him being that he *was* a lump .

" Why don't you talk about it?" he encouraged him, " You'll feel better afterwards."

" Inspector ... No ... I can't..." Stanley's voice caught in his throat.

" Come on, Stanley. You're a tough Marine. *Un cou de cuir* - isn't that right? You must protect your dignity; your sacred honor! Tell me what happened."

" Inspector! It's the stockade for me. For life!"

" Nonsense, Stanley. You're on assignment to us . The DST will protect you."

" Sure, Inspector ..." Lifting his head he gazed at him through eyeballs covered with red streaks and moist with gratitude "

Okay ... but even you gotta can me when you learn what I done! You gotta believe it ... but you won't ! Nobody would believe this damn story! And the Marines, they're gonna wanna know why you canned me, which you gotta do when you learn the awful truth!" Stanley broke down again. Migraine continued to stroke his head:

" I'm not going to fire you, Stanley. You've got my word on that. Now will you tell me what happened? "

" Inspector... well, okay... I know you won't believe me. *I lost the evidence* !"

" Evidence? What evidence? I didn't know we had any evidence! Where did you lose it?"

" *The key ring , Inspector!* Remember? It had everything on it: the Torah *truc* with the Dutch message! My secret address kit on

the metal disks! The Roosian's finger-bones! All the evidence we got on the Eiffel Tower Gang! I ruined your case for you!"

" Well, Stanley ... that's not so bad.. It was getting to be boring anyway ... But of course I would like to know how you lost it."

" *IN THERE!* " With one hand over his eyes, like that figure in Michelangelo's *Last Judgment* who cannot bear to look at the engulfing horror, Cobb pointed to the water closet with the other .

" Okay, men". With a sigh Migraine heaved himself erect, " Let's go in there and take a look around."

Migraine, Cobb, Pavel Lukash, Els Dordrecht and Alphonse de Choucroute walked to the back of the room and approached a tall wooden door displaying a plastic plaque: *Toilette* .

Migraine turned the latch and pulled open the door. Within stood a contraption rarely to be found in the Anglo-Saxon world, although quite common in the Latin, and elsewhere. On the moist pavement lay a porcelain drain sunk into a basin of cement. Two ridged mesas near the middle of the drain were raised for the accomodation of the feet of any and all visitors . In back of these hillocks, directly behind the valley running between them, was positioned a hole about the size of a buttermilk pancake ¹⁸. A roll of coarse brown paper slumbered against the wall, alongside a miniature broom. Slightly above eye-level hung a chain. When activated by the pulling of the chain, the flushing tank released volleys of water scurrying into the hole.

¹⁸specifically those obtainable at the House of Pancakes on University Avenue in Berkeley, California

The user of this device lowers his/her pants/skirt (or whatever) , and squats over the hole. With a little practice one can train oneself to do this without spreading any excrement over one's clothing. Theoreticians of this regimen claim that this apparatus is good for the bowels, much better for one's health than the crappers one normally finds in the rest of the civilized world.

*"THE KEYRING! " Stanley moaned ... " IT FELL!
...AAAAAAAAAARRRRRUGHH... CHIEF! THERE! DOWN ...
THAT THING ! "*

Cobb clutched at the walls to steady himself as he vomited into the stall.

" Steady, boy! " Migraine rasped, while at the same time making a desperate attempt to contain his laughter,

" Remember Boot Camp. Nothing can be worse than that."

Migraine had always been astonished and amused at the puritanical reaction of the finicky Anglos to this ordinary French installation.

" I'm not used to those things, Inspector! ", Cobb whimpered, " I never will get used to them! Put me out in the jungle in Nam, surrounded by a thousand gooks, and I'll blast them all to Timbuctoo! But you put me on one of these monkey doo-hickeys a million times and I'll never, never remember to take the stuff out of my pockets before dropping my pants!"

" How did it happen, boy? Treat this as a debriefing, just like it is in the corps. "

" Well, chief, it was like this:" Cobb plunked his carcass onto the tile floor. He'd wiped away the vomit around his lips. Breath and pulse were back to normal.

" The chow they serve in this dingbat joint always gives me the runs! I don't know why you force us all to come here every Thursday afternoon to bolt this pigswill! ... Well, sticking to the point, the shit

(begging your pardon, m'am), was blurting out, watery like ..."

Els Dordrecht fainted. Not all customs officials are hardened by war.

" It was sort of , well, thin, and creamy you know .. something like a McDonald's milkshake ... and I thought , ' Jesus! It's going to splatter all over my pants and boots! ' So I began leaning over backwards, trying to support myself with my left hand while grabbing onto the wall with my right. ... That's when it happened! The keyring rolled out of my back pocket . *Splatch* !! Down that there hole these uncivilized frogs call a toilet! "

Tears streamed copiously down his face.

" I'm a fucken disgrace, Inspector!! I'm a living mound of turd on the face of the leatherneck oath I took 7 years ago! On top of which I'm just a dumb fucken moron! You asked me to help you with this case, and I've made a balls of it! We haven't got a clue to work on without that evidence!!"

" Oh, I don't know about that, Stanley. Don't forget, we ..."

Migraine whirled around, just in time to see a dozen tear gas grenades being lobbed through the front door and exploding in the dining-room. In a few seconds a relatively peaceable if

somewhat rebarbative luncheon had degenerated into a whirlwind of pandemonium and confusion.

Customers, spies, cops and staff, gasping for breath, crying out in fear, collided past one another and into tables and chairs. Those who ran out onto the street staggered as far as the Boulevard Beaumarchais. Others, their mouths and noses covered with wet handkerchiefs helped their comrades to the doors. Fevrier carried out the still unconscious Els Dordrecht, while Aziz and Hamid dragged Mohammed from behind the bar. Then Olga and Minna helped carry him outdoors.

Stanley Cobb had completely recovered his presence of mind. He always functioned best in an emergency. With a forcefulness one could not have imagined possible in him a moment before he yanked Migraine, Lukash and de Choucroute with him into the street.

Migraine seated himself down beside the curb. Between gasps and shrugs he made making vain attempts to re-light his Gaulois.

"Low Bing's work, boss? Huh?" Fevrier clung to a lamppost

"Yes, Fevrier" Migraine coughed and wiped his brow "But its even worse than that. Much worse."

"What makes you say that, boss?"

"That tear gas! It's not our *police materiel*. You can taste it." Migraine wiped his face again with a handkerchief, which he then applied to the tip of his tongue.

"*C'est factice* ! This stuff, it was not manufactured in France! It was not made anywhere in the Western world!"

#112...

" My God! Boss .. Do you mean, it...?"

" Yes; I do. Those slant-eyed *cretins* will stop at nothing! They are smuggling tear-gas into France from Taiwan! That's a direct threat to the economic security of every *policier dans la rue* ! Fevrier, that's your pocketbook and mine! We must stop at nothing to bring those odious bastards to justice!"

Pavel Lukash had been applying mouth-to-mouth resuscitation to Els Dordrecht. Now he looked up and asked:

" Say, boss - what do we do now?"

Migraine stewed in his grim, bitter, bored, confused, lazy and sour thoughts for several minutes without replying. Suddenly he became very agitated. Raising his index finger to the heavens, he yelled:

" *TO THE EIFFEL TOWER!! EVERYONE TO THE EIFFEL TOWER!!*"

End of Part I

Part II
Chapter 12
Sergei

On a certain mild and cloudless dead of night in early September, 1988, when an unconfident autumn tentatively ventured a few tentative breezes, a charming month which, in Paris, is (as the weather is just as mild, and more cloudless, and the percentage of tourists much reduced), oftentimes more charming than the more enthusiastically publicized April:

at (if one is to believe the time recorded in the dossier submitted by DST special agent Pavel Lukash) exactly 3:42 A.M,

Olga Glazunova,
the charming *fille de joie* / KGB agent/ osteologist,
dressed in a starchy, tight-fitting business suit, traces of mascara under her eyelids, rouge-caked cheeks, a dash of cherry-vanilla lipstick;

hands covered by spotted deerskin gloves, gripping the handle of a bakelite attache case;

sporting a dark green beret from which, over her high Mongolian cheekbones fell, (like cascading rapids falling over high Mongolian cliffs) , a tangled and knotted black veil,

shuffled out of the stale, spacious interior of a black limousine inconspicuously parked on a miniscule street adjacent to the Soviet Embassy, (40 Boulevard Lannes, metro Porte Daupine, XVIème).

Flanked by KGB agents placed at each vertex of a regular heptagon, all of them burly,(albeit each in his own way) , they moved up a sagging staircase located at the back of the Embassy, in group formation, impacted as a soliton, as might a massive mound of freshly manufactured lasagna dough emerge between the screeching rollers of a pasta factory, to a small windowless room in the 3rd floor.

Nothing visible from outside the Embassy would have led any Parisian eccentric enough to be strolling about this neighborhood at that time of night to suspect that a meeting was in session. It lasted for 10 hours, until 8 A.M., during which time all the room's light bulbs, (save one that was used up and had to be replaced), were kept burning. This much was later deduced by the DSGE from its methodical inventory of all the utility bills of the Soviet Embassy. However, because their principal spy on the staff of the embassy had, that very afternoon, taken a swim in a bath of rapidly drying concrete, the French secret police were unable to learn of anything that was said at this meeting.

The DST were better informed. During the aforementioned luncheon at La Jambe Cassée, Lukash had saturated the lipstick pencil in Olga's pocketbook with a synthetic chemical that magnetized her lips upon contact. Electromagnetic impulses went from her lips to a receiver in the DST squad car occupied by Lukash and stationed around the corner. There a high tech servo-mechanism transformed them back into intelligible sounds - in Olga's native Russian of course, of which Pavel know more than he wanted to.

The technology had its limitations. The sound quality was poor, Lukash was unable to pick up on the voices of the others at the meeting. He did learn enough to know that the news Olga had brought to her bi-monthly KGB debriefing was dynamite! In effect, pieces of Sergei, the diplomat who'd been kidnapped off the streets of Paris and vanished without a trace a year before, had mysteriously surfaced - a pair of fingerbones to be precise - on the key ring of an American military cop assigned to work on a case involving contraband Eiffel Tower souvenirs.

Sergei, it should be recalled, refers to Sergei Ipanchin Vladimirsky Nepimov Ivanov Akakyevitch Strogin. A seemingly innocuous Embassy underling, in July of 1987 he'd been kidnapped by parties, persons or agencies unknown, and presumably murdered. Prior to Olga's discovery, the KGB had not realized that Migraine had been working on the case of Sergei ever since his skull rolled off a window ledge in the boarded over Hotel du Nord on the Quai des Jemmapes, nor that the discovery of his fingerbones had been retrieved by the uncouth, impulsive yet gullible American Marine Stanley Cobb, in the sluice gates of the Old Canal.

Obviously Sergei had been more than a low-level diplomat. In addition to his being a spy, as was only normal, he had been charged with a mission of considerable importance: the orchestration of a series of inter-related acts of sabotage aimed at the Bi-Centennial commemoration of the French Revolution. These were to be coordinated over a two year period to culminate in the placing of a bomb that would blow up the Eiffel Tower on

the night of July 14th, 1989. In the jargon of the Comintern, it had been Sergei's job to unleash the wrath of the inarticulate proletariat, struggling in its chains since the triumph of France's nefarious bourgeois revolution.

Less than a month after his arrival in Paris, Sergei was abducted and his mission neutralized. This much was now known: he had indeed been terminated; by whom, and for what motive, being still as incomprehensible to them as it was to Inspector Migraine and the DST. The fluctuating attention Migraine bestowed on closing down the Eiffel Tower Gang, was still enough for him to totally ignore the case of Sergei; but the books remained open.

Olga informed her superiors of the ruthless, better said disgusting, manner in which Cobb had contrived to dispose of the evidence. The KGB had long been of the opinion that agencies of the French Secret Services had gotten rid of him: the DST, or the DSGE, or the SGDN; or perhaps the GCR, or the GSPR; or the EDS; then again it may have been the STS, or the MPS, or the DISSI, or the CIEEMG - or even some organization whose very initials were top secret. Now it appeared, given that Stanley Cobb was an American militarist, that the CIA were implicated.

"But Olga", Viktor, the groomed -and -monocled KGB attaché assigned to the debriefing of Section 5 agents, compulsively wiping an imagined smudge of coal tar from his chin, asked her, "Why did this C.I.A. operative hold onto the fingerbones after disposing of the corpse? That I still fail to understand. And, you say, the bones are lost?"

" Yeah..... the jerk was very clever. Once he learned that I knew them bones came from Sergei, he dropped them down the crapper. He gave us a real class act of making it look like he'd fucked up! It still makes me sick to think about it."

" I find that hard to believe. You only need to look at how the American Secret Services botched the Kennedy assassination, to recognize how bloody incompetent they are! There are no conspiracy theories in the Soviet Union about the death of Beria! What do you suggest we do now?"

Viktor replaced the filtered American cigarette at the far end of his ornate and willowy cigarette holder with another, drove the palm of his right hand through his greased hair, wiped the smudge (that, after all, was there) from his chin, and, owing to a sudden reflection through comparing the rise in the black market price of caviar, and the sums demanded these days by double agents, winced . He lit his own cigarette, a Benson & Hedges, then bent over to light hers. Pavel Lukash picked up the sharp intake of breath that comes with starting a new cigarette. He scowled. He didn't approve of smoking.

As Olga continued her story, Lukash, seated in his '*bagnol banalisée*'¹⁹, on an alleyway between the quais of the Seine and the hyperboloid ORTF building, (the government television station), attempted, by the pale light of an arc-lamp , (its body curved like the graceful head of an *Apsarsa* trying to read a

¹⁹ French expression describing the process of damaging a police car to make it look like a jalopy of the proletariat.

newspaper over one's shoulder²⁰, to make out his own handwriting on a police regulation steno pad. This task was particularly difficult as the French, in a belated tribute to René Descartes, have a penchant for using graph paper as stationary. Lukash could never understand why they did so; for him, writing inside the little boxes was all but impossible.

Olga believed that the only persons in the DST who knew the real identity of the former Sergei were Migraine and Cobb. Either one of them ought to be able to lead them to the rest of the evidence. She surmised that they also knew who had murdered him.

She wanted nothing to do with Migraine. She let Victor know in no uncertain terms that she had no intention of trying to seduce him. He was ugly, always drunk, sedentary, well into late middle-age, and altogether too much the respectable bourgeois for her to be seen with him publicly. He was too famous, too set in his ways; she doubted she could arouse a glimmer of lust in that debilitated carcass. Not that she could make even a pretense of getting excited about him.

Cobb : now that was a different story! She was eager to have a shot at him. She would do her best to find some way of getting information out of him; barring that she see to it that he was seriously compromised in some way. If nothing else, she could give him a fatal dose of the clap.

Victor, his eyes gleaming with sinister connivance, nodded his assent, "Okay, Olga. You do that. You can leave the fat tub of

²⁰They appear by the hundreds, in Jacque Tati's film, "Playtime"

guts , the so-called 'Inspector' Migraine to us. We'll figure out some way of getting him down to the Embassy for some - uh -'friendly' discussions. "

Having reached agreement on how to proceed, Victor and Olga sealed their mutual accord by a tight clench and firm kiss on the lips. The bilateral exchange of salivary acids ate into the electrochemical paste on Olga's lips and set off a short circuit in the apparatus resting on Lukash's seat. As it burned a hole in the upholstery, Lukash swore, twice in Russian and three times in Czech. He'd seen his fill of Communist plots in his day, but this was going too far. Lukash was considering asking the Inspector if he could be removed from the case.

Chapter 13

The Verdier Affair

Occasions for enticing DST Inspector Guy de Migraine over to the Russian Embassy lay ready to hand. Events in recent years had combined to dam up a capacious reservoir of bad blood between the KGB and the DST. The accumulating hostility was rooted in the details of the lamentable Ariane Missile affair, a modern replay of the Dreyfus affair, substituting Eastern Europeans for the Jews. These are the facts:

In March, 1986, Pierre Verdier, an engineer working on military aircraft in a plant near Rouen, and his Russian-born wife Ludmilla Varyguine, were arrested and charged with having leaked the blueprints of the Ariane missile to the Soviet Union. It was an odd sort of accusation. Apart from the fact that the French had consistently been unable to get the thing to fly, its capabilities were less than one percent those of the Soviet SLX16. Even the evidence that the DST gave to the court showed that Pierre Verdier, though being charged with having passed them along in June of 1985, did not have access to these documents before August of that year.

A few weeks later, on April 2nd 1987, France expelled 6 diplomats at the Soviet Embassy, among them an air force attaché by the name of Valeri Konorev. In a confidential report the DST justified its actions this way: "*Konorev represents the GPU. This means that he was Verdier's boss. He was uniquely positioned to analyze Verdier's effectiveness and to identify opportunities for*

getting hold of technologies and military applications for transfer to the KGB. "

It was not the flimsy frameup of Verdier which angered the Russian government, but the sudden collapse of all the plots that Konorev had in fact been concocting.²¹

The Russians responded, first by kicking 6 French citizens out of the U.S.S.R., then by a campaign of vilification against the French nation in the press the likes of which had not been seen since Napoleon's invasion.

Government prosecutors dug out more than one rotting boot at the bottom of this steamy brew. Apparently the arrests had been inspired by contradictory letters that a spurned lover of Pierre Verdier, Nina-Notheaux-Manole, a Romanian, had written to various authorities. One had been sent to the Russian government: it accused Verdier and Ludmilla of being in the pay of art thieves employed by West Germany.

The letters accusing Verdier and his wife of being KGB agents had been sent to Mitterand and various secret service agencies. Nina -Notheaux-Manole is also a published poet: in 1983 she brought out a bi-lingual book of original poetry, in French and Romanian: dedicated to Pierre Verdier : *Chants d' Amour* . It's dedication is to Pierre Verdier , '*of the beautiful grey-green eyes*' .

²¹ including Sergei's mission to destabilize the Bi-Centennial. Because of Olga's information, the KGB became convinced that the Ariane arrests and expulsions of diplomats had been parts of a cover-up for the murder of Sergei.

At the of the events herein related, Pierre and Ludmilla Verdier were still waiting to be tried, although the absence of even a single piece of credible evidence had long rendered the case obsolete. A single word from the DST would have sufficed to close the books. Needless to say it was not forth-coming.

This brief account provides the background for the invitation that the KGB eventually sent to Inspector Migraine. The congenial ambiance of an Embassy cocktail party and banquet would be the ideal setting for bringing up the delicate matter of Sergei's bones. Where had they been discovered? Under what circumstances? Had the DST identified the murderers? What, if anything, had the government learned about Sergei's mission?

In exchange, even though the Russians had never even heard of Pierre Verdier before he was arrested, the KGB was willing and able to manufacture enough evidence to hang him , and his wife if necessary: her defection from the Soviet Union was, by itself, enough to render her expendable.

The official invitation to attend the October Revolution cocktail party and banquet was delivered at the beginning of the month by regular courier to Migraine's office in the Ministry of the Interior at 11 rue de Saussaies. Per his invariable custom, Migraine was not in there. On this particular afternoon he was hanging out in *Le Mont Olivet* , a cafe on the other side of the cramped and sun-starved Place de Saussaies.

" Comrade Guy de Migraine ! " it began , " Chief Inspector of the Departement de Surveillance de la Territoire , the internationally respected and feared DST !

" The workers, soldiers, students and peasants of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics stand united in their determination to invite you to a cocktail party and festive banquet at its embassy, in celebration of the great liberating October Revolution of 1918. "

The invitation was signed by the ambassador himself. Migraine's secretary carried it over to *Le Mont Olivet* . Migraine tucked the card away in his trench coat, lit his pipe and sat back for a spell of cogitation .

The Russians, he knew, would only extend such an invitation to a high-ranking member of an intelligence agency if a matter of major importance was involved: a request for information, striking a deal, the exchanging of spies or betrayal of double-agents: some sort of *quid pro quo* .

It was almost a certainty that this invitation was connected with the Verdier business. Were the Russians prepared at last to pass along some real evidence? What might they want in exchange?

Late in the long afternoon, (in which, unable as of yet to decide on a drink to associate with the Eiffel Tower Gang case, he'd drunk mostly pastis) , Migraine returned to his office. There he asked his secretary, before going home, to bring him the documentation of the Verdier affair. Twenty thousand pages was a sizable amount of reading to be gotten through this late in the afternoon. Migraine was satisfied that he could learn all that he really needed to know through a leisurely perusal of the first 8.

Twenty minutes later he rose from his desk to light his pipe: " It really doesn't matter if Verdier is guilty or not", he sighed, " The

security of France demands the removal of any stain on the sacred honor of the DST!"

If the Russians were ready to give him the dope on Verdier, they wanted something. Could there be a connection with the current investigation of the Eiffel Tower Gang case... or ... *that was it* ! Something to do with Sergei bones ! No doubt if he could lead them to believe that he was well informed concerning Sergei's kidnapping and murder, they could easily concoct enough incriminating evidence to put Verdier away for life. Migraine was not inclined to be vindictive at this stage. It was enough that they furnish the DST with another 10,000 pages or so of new documentation to justify another round of investigations and trials:

He picked up his hat and umbrella and prepared to leave for the day,
" That Verdier's got to be guilty!", he muttered, " Any man who is such a cad as to betray the woman who dedicates a book of *Chants d'Amour* to him, would not hesitate to betray his own country as well! "

Chapter 14

Point Counter-Point

In predicting that Stanley Cobb would be interested in another meeting with her, Olga had given evidence of her accustomed shrewdness. He'd suspected all along that Sergei had been implicated in espionage at the highest level. His error lay in the assumption that Olga knew more about Sergei's belated mission than he did. Although they were related, Sergei's and Olga's paths had rarely crossed. It was important all the same to keep Cobb guessing that she had been intimately involved with all of his maneuvers.

Over the month negotiations between Olga and Stanley were channeled through artifacts from Izzy the Litvak's store, the *Mitzvah*. Olga's messages were delivered to Stanley in small statuettes of the Madonna sculpted from rocks on the Mount of Olives. After being melted down in ovens in the forensic labs of the DST, their contents were extracted by spectroscopy. Stanley's replies were sent via codes woven into the fabric of replicas of the shroud of Turin.

Their meeting was timed to coincide with Migraine's visit to the Soviet Embassy. There were several reasons for this. Knowing where the Inspector was likely to be made it easier to avoid him. Then if Olga showed up at the Embassy afterwards, the bag of Sergei's bones might catalyze a better deal. They also came to an

agreement about the place: a triple-X rated movie house named *La Chatte Chauve*.

The *Shaved Pussy* is located at the far end of the *rue des Debiles*, one of those streets that suppurate like a toxic infection in the groin of Pigalle, Paris's most notorious crime district. The misguided tourist who, in his innocence, happens to promenade along this corridor of debasement, quickly becomes mired in a swamp of leers, perverted gestures and lewd invitations. If he continues to linger, he will soon find himself surrounded by a crowd of torn and twisted faces, housing brains cauterized to the roots by the incendiary flames of lurid and obsessive lusts.

A putrid stench, (as the sun, (as, in the lower gut of a hardened and remorseless killer, a hardened morphine lozenge will melt), melted without remorse in the evening sky) , reeking of eternity, decadence and history's slime, rolled, like the wind breaking from the constipated bowels of Hell, over this God-forsworn dungmound. Junkies (with the non-chalance of high school dropouts passing hamburgers over the counters of McDonalds') delivered their puke onto the sidewalks. Rogue males hunted for prostitutes in packs, hauling them into alleyways for quick lays, with payment in the form of a curse or a blow to the face. Flashers of every description roamed about, craving attention yet totally ignored, in the same way that people avoid looking at the sun-burnt gob of spittle lying on the sidewalk. Hypodermics and switch-blade knives were brandished aloft with the same bright frivolity that leaves shed from autumn trees, with the same

jaunty insolence with which London lawyers brandish bowlers, briefcases and umbrellas.

In this jungle fear was the only law. Relative safety was to be found only among the prostitutes, pimps and the police. Olga and Stanley had no trouble fitting in.

As he entered the precincts of *La Chatte Chauve* for that afternoon's matinee performance, Stanley Cobb was physically attacked by a certifiable maniac, a grime encrusted, unshaven sot who reeked of urine, half naked in rags, with pulped eyeballs hard and white like baked eggs, their pupils paralyzed by visions of impossible crimes. In his futile attempt to snatch away the bags of Sergei's bones from Stanley hands, he vomited onto his trenchcoat. Stanley wrestled him to the ground and sprinted into the lobby.

Ivan Kulygin, the KGB agent assigned to trail Cobb, entered soon afterwards. He also had to fend off the lunatic, who wrapped his arms around Ivan's neck and tried to bite his ear off. Ivan threw him to the ground and kicked him out into the street. In the confusion of the struggle the man was able to slip him a Faxed sheet containing last minute instructions from Moscow.

Kulygin in his turn was followed by two CIA agents, Murph Gutsy and Bob Squint.

Stanley Cobb walked all the way down to the front aisle and took a seat near the center. Kulygin sat two rows behind him and off to the left. The pair from the CIA remained at the back of the theater, where Gutsy was able to observe Kulygin through X-ray binoculars.

10 minutes before the 3:00 Matinee , Olga entered through the back entrance. The selection of this rendezvous had been dictated largely by Cobb's intention of maximizing their anonymity. Olga Glazunova clearly had other ideas. From wig to manicured toenails she was dressed to kill. She was well-known to this neighborhood, whose denizens had learned to their cost that nobody messed around with Olga.

Brass knuckles tightly encircled each of her palms. Inserted in the topknot on the crown of her head the tip of an icepick gleamed at a distance.

At a discrete distance followed Pavel Lukash. Behind him, in the shadows, crept Mireille Moustique, DSGE agent assigned to keep watch over Lukash for suspected espionage in behalf of Czechoslovakia.

After entering Olga walked along the front row and sat down at Stanley Cobb's right. Lukash positioned himself on the third row, slightly to Olga's right and about 10 seats away from Kulyghin to the left. Lukash and Cobb communicated back and forth by tapping out coded messages on electronic buttons jammed into their left ears . Olga and Kulygin commandeered a comparable technology.

Moustique joined Gutsy and Squint at the back of the auditorium: there was nothing unusual in this: the DSGE and the CIA are cognate organizations. Moustique unpacked her own X-ray binoculars and trained them on Lukash.

The situation, in schematic diagram , looked like this :

Stanley Cobb DST	Olga KGB
Ivan Kulygin KGB (2-way radio to Olga)	Lukash DST radio to Cobb)
	Pavel (2 way
Murph Gutsy , Bob Squint CIA (X-ray binoculars)	Mireille (X ray binoculars)

The lights went dim. Movie houses in France generally screen several commercial spots , then cartoons and newsreels, before the main feature. The American movie-goer tends to feel that since he is already subjected to a relentless barrage of advertising on television, the cost of admission should spare him this indignity. French advertisers try to get around such justifiable resentment by making an attempt , however lamentable , to make their ads as funny as the cartoons that follow them.

After a delay of half an hour, the main triple-X feature got under way: *Partouzes à Douze* : "Orgies by the Dozen" .

As this film is too base to instill emotions other than embarrassment and disgust in those of healthy mind, too stupid to retain the interest of the intelligent, of an eroticism too crude to inspire the aesthete , too sexist to amuse champions of sexual liberation, too ignorant to receive the Imprimatur of the psychiatric profession, and - this being in fact the main objection -

definitely too insipid to excite the virile, this author is not about to waste his reader's time by describing the plot of this heap of excremental celluloid in any detail . Specific scenes may be alluded to as the need arises

It being the case that both France and the United States do make a pretense at upholding democratic principles of freedom of expression, we dare not presume to deny Bob Gutsy and Murph Squint the right to uncover virtues in this vile flick that totally escape him! When, in its opening scenes, the audience witnessed a dozen plump women, all stark naked, administering glandular stimulation to a sunburned, hairy and muscle-bound cousin of Rambo, the two CIA agents emitted husky pants, squeals and barks along the lines of what a dog might emit, were it to fall into an enormous vat of bloody beef livers being boiled for dinner at San Quentin Penitentiary .

Their unmannerly display, simultaneously naive and gross, signaled to others in the audience that there were some ugly Americans amongst them. Turning around and craning his neck, Kulygin recognized the two CIA agents. He sent the news along to Olga via their radio hookup. Without moving a muscle she said to Cobb:

" I think we're being watched."

Cobb turned his head to look the back of the auditorium. He recognized Murph Gutsy ; they had grown up together in Terre Haute , Indiana. With a sharp hand gesture , he indicated to Gutsy and Squint that they should lower their voices. Addressing Olga again he explained:

" They's just suhm gahys from thuh See Ah Ay , m'am. If yoo've gaht nothin' to hahd they won't hurt yoo nuhn."

Now the male protagonist of *Partouzes à Douze* unveiled a hypertrophied stiff and swollen member. Without more ado he began jamming it into adjacent orifices in an indiscriminate fashion.

Stanley blushed green, then let out a dozen loud war-whoops, followed by spates of giggles and uncontrollable hiccups. Throwing all caution to the winds, Gusty and Squint redoubled their medleys of shrieks and squeals.

The spectacle of 3 clean-cut mid-Westerners going bananas over the projection of a triple-X rated pornographic movie which most Frenchmen would consider somewhat tame, raised a cloud of hisses, whistles, curses and cat-calls from the rest of the audience. Intimidated into silence, Stanley and the CIA agents calmed down. Sporadically, depending on the action on the screen, they once again released loud yelps. By that time however, most of the audience was caught up in some private form of lewd debauch , and ignored them.

Olga whispered to Cobb: " Stare at the screen as if you're watching the show. Don't move your head. Act as if we're a couple who've been married too long and go to watch this kind of thing to get ourselves stimulated."

The more repugnant the orders, the better he liked them: Cobb was a Marine down to the marrow of his bones, a patriot to the blood's last bitter drop! With their eyes fixated on the screen, their hands went through the mechanical motions of feeling each

other up. From the boredom evident on their features and the sighs of disgust that periodically escaped them, their neighbors estimated their term of connubial incarceration at a minimum of 30 years.

Speaking out of the side of her mouth, Olga whispered:
"What can you tell us about Sergei?"

" He's dayd. " Cobb winced, " Watch them marbles, m'am, they's all Ah've got! What else do you want to know, m'am ? "

" Where did you find the body? Who killed him? Why? Don't look at me. Watch the screen, and no funny business, okay?"

Cobb conveyed her questions to Lukash. He wanted to know what the DST was prepared to offer.

Lukash replied, also in code, that it was all right for Cobb to reveal that the skull and fingerbones of Sergei had been found alongside the Old Canal, and had probably come from the abandoned building of the Hotel du Nord. Although the DST did not in fact know who had murdered Sergei, Cobb was instructed to give the impression that the DSGE had done the dirty work.

Lukash's instructions to Cobb were picked up by DSGE agent Mireille Moustique on a short-wave interceptor, which fed them into a computer at DSGE headquarters in the boulevard Mortier. The code was cracked within a matter of minutes. Shortly after that, Moustique received the translation. It was as clear as the diction of *La Comédie Française* that the DST intended to focus the heat of the KGB on the DSGE. She leaned towards Murph Gutsy and said : " Your agent, Stanley Cobb, is selling secrets to the KGB."

Gutsy instructed Squint to sneak down to a place on the second row directly in back of Stanley Cobb, and eavesdrop on his conversation. If Moustique's suspicions were justified, he had orders to stick him in the back of the neck with a poisoned needle.

After Cobb had received the message from Lukash, he whispered to Olga: "What are your boys willing to trade?"

She hissed : " Boys AND girls, you sexist Yankee pig! In our nation complete equality of the sexes was guaranteed by Lenin in 1922 . "

Olga tapped out a message to Kulygin. In response, he transmitted the official KGB statement imprinted on the faxed sheet he'd received at the entrance. It said that Cobb should be told that Sergei's mission had involved the recruitment and training of a network of double agents inside the DST. They was prepared to reveal the names of these double agents in exchange for similar information about French and American double agents *intheir* ranks.

This message, too, was picked up by Moustique and rapidly decoded. Breaking in over Kulygin's receiving frequency, she asked him if one of these double agents was named Pavel Lukash. Without a moment's hesitation he responded in the affirmative. When she heard this, Moustique pulled up a silencer-equipped Luger and focused its range-finder on the back of Lukash's head.

Just then the KGB lunatic from the entranceway sprang over the row, smacked away the gun and began ripping off her dress. The shot misfired. The audience saw nothing abnormal in their behavior and did not react. Moustique broke his neck with a single

arm-hold and sent his body flying under the seats below her, where it disappeared in the rising pool of human effluvia . Then she headed off to the bathroom, returning in 10 minutes none the worse for wear.

Olga transmitted the KGB's offer to Cobb. It was obvious that she was being fed a parcel of lies, but he had to continue to play ball:

" Look hieh, m'am: Ah've got thuh skuhll of this hieh Sergei in this hieh bag Ah brought with me into this - kinda - snaeke piyit! If Ah lets you haeve it, can yoo pull off that stuhnt Ah saw in thaet weird flick, *Gorky Park* ? Can you -lahk - put hyis face baeck awn yt?"

' Of course , blubber-puss. Professor Andreyev is based on Gerassimov.'

Cobb lifted the skull up by a wisp of hair still clinging to it. It cut the projector beams , casting its shadow onto the screen, smack onto the grimacing face of a nude actress being stroked to orgasm by actors playing the roles of her husband, son and father-in-law.

Cries of horror broke out over the theater. Bob Squint whipped out an automatic pistol, rose up from his seat in the back row and shattered the skull with a single bullet.

Kulygin sprang out of his seat to attack Squint. Slipping in feces and other unwholesome excretions Squint, Gutsy and Kulygin wrestled around the auditorium. Digging their heels into naked bodies, they mashed testicles and squished eyeballs, savagely kicking away knives, guns and other weapons.

Oblivious to the commotion around them, Olga and Stanley had gotten down onto their knees on the floor and were sweeping the fragments of bone into a bag. The bag was sealed with tape and handed over to Olga, who headed up the aisle, laboriously forging a way through the rioting crowds.

Part way up the aisle she was assaulted by Murph Gutsy, who pinned her to the floor with a flying tackle. The bag went flying in the direction of Mireille Moustique. She grabbed on the way down to the row in which Pavel Lukash was seated. As soon as she reached him she began clubbing him with her pair of X-ray binoculars.

The audience broke into loud applause, This was much more fun than the movie. Lukash grabbed the bag out of Mireille's hands, pushed her out of the way and escaped from the building. He jumped into a DST squad car where César Blafard had been waiting for him. Sirens wailing, they drove through every red light from Pigalle to the Russian Embassy at Porte Dauphine.

Ivan Kulygin and Bob Squint drew revolvers and, point-blank, shot one another through the brains. Breaking a dozen or so of Murph Gutsy's bones, Olga extricated herself from his clutches. Together she and Stanley exited through a door in back of the screen. Before slamming and bolting the door Cobb lobbed 4 tear-gas canisters into the auditorium. At the nearest metro he placed an emergency call to the CRS, the French riot police. They sent a squad car loaded with bullies to *La Chatte Chauve*. They piled in and beat up all but a handful who managed to get away.

Murph Gusty was patched up in the American Hospital in

#136...

Neuilly and sent back to the United States. After being given an honorable discharge from the CIA, he spent the next 20 years as a janitor at his old high school in Terre Haute.

Chapter 15

The Russian Embassy

Inspector Guy de Migraïne, now into his 8th shot-glass of vodka, had been entertaining his hosts at the reception in the Russian Embassy by a vivid re-enactment of his hair-raising encounter with Mad Vladimir of the club foot while on assignment in Novosibirsk in the 60's. Viktor thought that Vladimir might still be alive. In the relaxed and forgiving atmosphere of Glasnost, he might even be persuaded to come out of his coma.

"Long live the Soviet Union!" Migraïne lifted yet another glass of vodka, "They understand job security over there!"

"Long live France!" countered the Russian ambassador, "Your Communist Party is worse than ours!"

"Long live the KGB!" Migraïne roared, "It does most of our work for us!"

Viktor chimed in: "Long live the DST! Long live all secret police!"

Pavel Lukash had just walked into the Embassy. he quickly hurried over to Migraïne and passed him the bag of Sergei's remnants. With all the toasts being offered for this and that, he could not refrain from crying out:

"Long live Czechoslovakia!"

A chilly silence blanketed the lobby. The ambassador sighed and apologized:

"I keep forgetting the names of the ones we've let go. I had you mixed up with Estonia."

Migraine yelled:

"Long live the free market economy!"

" Long live the free market economy!" retorted Andrei Nyetyev, another diplomatic functionary, " We get our salaries in any case."

Thoroughly carried away by the spirit of levity, Migraine auctioned off the bag of fragments of Sergei's skull in exchange for a bottle of vodka, two tickets to the Bolshoi Ballet, and honorary membership in the Order of the Volga Boatmen.

And it was on that same night that Jan van Klamperen, working all alone in the plastic bubble at the top of the Blue Mill, sat poised on the edge of an epoch-making discovery in high-energy physics.



Chapter 16

Jan van Klamperen

Now in his middle sixties, Jan van Klamperen was a frail, slender, tall and anemic professor of nuclear engineering at the Eindhoven Technical University (ETH) . His life was one of regular habits, fixed ideas and disordered ambitions. The interfacing of all of these facets of his personality benefited none of them. A respectable middle-aged professor who imagined himself an incorruptible *patroon* , he could be better described as a ruthless *poltroon* .

Though a man of strong conscience and sense of duty, his chronic absent-mindedness made him, more often than not, undependable. A Dutch patriot at heart, yet one who, because every penny of his ill-gotten gains was invested in scientific research, saw nothing wrong in amassing a small fortune through smuggling . The importance of his work had only recently been acknowledged by the scientific world. Accordingly it was with regard to this activity only that he deemed himself exempt from the banal bourgeois morality governing all other aspects of his life.

Jan van Klamperen might perhaps be described as someone with fingers in many pies, but not that many fingers.

Driving his simplistic goals was an obsessive vanity bordering on ego-mania. These were: to win the Nobel Prize in high-energy physics; to avenge himself on the Eiffel Tower Gang; and to allow nothing to disrupt the rigid mediocrity of his lifestyle: his stable roster of courses, based on lecture notes

routinely and minimally updated over a period of twenty years; summer vacations at nearby resorts such as Ostend and LaPanne; paying taxes and other fees to keep up the condominium suite his family had occupied over 25 years, and which they'd owned for the last 10; watching the evening news at 7:00; wife, two children, pets, television, magazine subscriptions, contributions to local charities; a new car every few years, etc.

No mistresses; no one-night stands; no drunken flings in Amsterdam; no sudden escapes to luxury hotels on the Riviera; hardly any travel apart from science conferences ; no hobbies, and, if it could even be called that, the bare bones of a social life.

What amusements he did allow himself were few and characteristically dull. For the last two years he had been translating *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass* into Dutch; the contract with the publisher had already been signed. Once or twice a week he spent the evening at home, sitting in the living room with his wife, watching television. When the broadcasts were not up to their standard, they played videocassettes of BBC productions of Shakespeare's plays. Given that this collection of performances is justly deemed a major contribution to world culture, it shouldn't surprise us too much that they'd gone through it from beginning to end 15 times in a decade.

Sometimes, under an impulse to relieve a sudden malaise, he might get up from his chair and wander over to the baby grand piano that had rarely been tuned. Grazing the keys he would play, softly and with excruciating slowness, passages from the

Moonlight Sonata, Schumann's Liebstraum or Chopin's Raindrop Etude.

Years of smoking coarse *sware shag* tobacco had endowed him with a hacking cough. Recently he'd gotten into the habit of mumbling under his breath even in the presence of company. He was fond of combining rumpled, moth-eaten black sweaters with baggy coveralls. These always had big pockets in which he was forever finding strange things he'd quite forgotten were there. His socks tended to be a few sizes too large for him, and slid under the heels of his torn tennis shoes as he shambled along.

His pale blue eyes were covered over with film. From a distance they could be mistaken for tiny bowls of shaving lather. Remnants of hair, graying with white streaks, covered his scalp. As he had spent most of his working life indoors, his skin was yellowed, even parchment white in some places.

To students and colleagues alike, Jan van Klamperen represented the very caricature of a lovable elderly science professor, a genial soul much addicted to normalcy, perhaps a bit stodgy, awaiting retirement and anxious about the adequacy of his pension. Apart from, a few years of post-doctoral study at Berkeley, and occasional stints abroad as an exchange scholar, notably in France, Russia and Australia, his whole life had been spent in this corner of the world, his unwrinkled existence covered with that opaque obloquy which, like the antediluvian slime carried by the first amphibians onto the continents, coats most of us always, almost all of us almost always, and the rest of us most of the time.

This detailed description of the outward impression he gave has overlooked a basic element, discernible in a certain taut energy that pulled everything together, a stark contradiction to his physical appearance that would have come as a rude shock to those who thought they knew him, akin to that experienced by Laertes when Hamlet cries "*I have in me something splenitive and rash; which let thy wisdom fear* ."

What few of his colleagues at the ETH realized was van Klamperen's capacity for endless hours of concentrated scientific research. None of them came close to him. Only at world centers of elementary particle research, on the scale of CERN in Geneva, or the Fermi Accelerator in Chicago, could one find his equals in this regard. One can therefore well imagine their astonishment when, in less than a year, Jan van Klamperen (known to them simply as "J.K.", an abbreviation which we, too, will sometimes employ), had shot to the top of his profession through his revelation of the existence of an elementary particle, the "klamp", an entity whose odd properties were (as is ever the way in science) predicted only after it was discovered. Which is another way of saying that theory caught up with practice through hindsight.

Since his return from Paris in April of 1988, J.K. had been spending 4 to 5 days out of each week holed up in the plastic bubble at the top of the Blue Mill. The equipment borrowed from the French military was still in his possession. Initially he'd intended to use it only to irradiate a shipment of Eiffel Towers. He quickly realized however that the tools now at his command could be used to sky-rocket him to world fame. Even the strategms he

devised to hold onto them gave testimony to his native intelligence:

In July of 1988 , J.K. paid a visit to the Phillips Electronics Company, world headquarters in Eindhoven. In this part of Holland Phillips is the principal employer. Indeed Phillips more or less created the city of Eindhoven back in the 1920's . Since then its reputation as the largest electronics corporation outside the United States had reigned unchallenged.

However in recent decades its control of the market has been shrinking owing to competition from the Japanese. If Phillips ever goes under, it will take the rest of the Brabant with it, which then risks returning to the state it was in at the time of Vincent van Gogh, whose famous "Potato Eaters" accurately depicts living conditions then .²²

J.K.'s promise of a new age of technical marvels through the harnessing of the klamp was as valuable to Phillips in their competition against the Japanese, as their fiscal support was to him in his struggle against the Eiffel Tower Gang. Because of the crass tourist market in souvenir Eiffel Towers, the mighty economic interests of Europe and Asia became locked in deadly combat!

Phillips Electronics had no trouble convincing the Dutch government that J.K.'s research was vital to the economic stability of the Brabant. Influential Dutch politicians brought pressure to bear on the French government to allow him to keep its top secret high energy research equipment indefinitely, under the terms of

²²Which only means that the Brabant might produce another van Gogh, whose paintings, after all, do sell for \$62,000,000 .

an exorbitant lease, the costs to be borne by the Dutch taxpayer. Among the guarantees Holland gave to France was a promise not to use the occasion of the French Bi-Centennial celebration as a pretext for vaunting the crushing defeat inflicted by the Dutch on the French revolutionary army on March 1st, 1793.

The local police closed down their investigation of J.K.'s research at the Blue Mill . Instead, a small contingent of police was stationed in its vicinity to prevent any attempts on the part of French secret agents, Japanese businessmen or Taiwanese smugglers to break into the building.

The Dutch government also arranged with the Eindhoven Technical University for van Klamperen to be given a two year leave of absence with no loss in salary. In consequence he was now to be found in his laboratory at the Blue Mill at least 12 hours each day, six days a week.

Chapter 17

The Klamp

J.K.'s discovery of the klamp between December 1987 and February 1988, immediately reverberated through the clammy corridors of particle physics like a DeBroglie pilot wave through the skull of a Stegosaurus. Because of its mix of contradictory properties it does not fit any modern classification schemes. It is neither a fermion nor a boson, neither a lepton nor a hadron. Only through the application of esoteric techniques of homological algebra on 7-dimensional spherical monopoles ²³, has its spin been calculated at $\pm 3/4$! What this means in ordinary language is that no one can positively state whether or not it can or cannot be distinguished within a cloud of particles identical to itself.

A carrier of the weak force associated with radioactive decay, it can also influence electromagnetic fields, instigating disturbances in appliances such as radios, refrigerators and televisions. The klamp, in fact, is best understood as some sort of carry-over from an archaic force field believed to have existed for the duration of a split second some 15 billion years ago, only to disappear without a trace. As elementary particles go, the klamp is so rare that atomic accelerators have to be souped up to gigantic energy levels of 100 billion electron volts before they can be detected.

Incredibly, like the Z^+ , the particle predicted by the electroweak theory of Salam, Glashow and Weinberg that has been

²³so-called Hopf bundles

shown to unify electricity, magnetism and radioactivity, the klamp also brings about the unification of all these forces, but at room temperatures.

Klamps arise naturally from reactions in the upper atmosphere. Normally π mesons, which are hadrons, decay into μ mesons, which are leptons. In the process of decaying from a hadron to a lepton, a number of gratuitous particles have to be thrown out so that physics can maintain its symmetry principles: the spontaneous creation of a neutrino and anti-neutrino conserves the lepton number. The conservation of fractional isospin requires the ejection of another particle, a *topological spinorino*, of infinitesimal mass and only 2 spatial dimensions!²⁴ Its isospin remains finite. When this same reaction is introduced in the laboratory using anti-matter mesons in the presence of a rapidly oscillating magnetic field, a minute perturbation of the spinorino chiral current algebras arising from the anomalous quantum Hall effect, redistributes all the quantum numbers in a peculiar fashion that is far from being understood. It does however generate a beam of klamps.²⁵

The mass of the klamp is given by:

$$M_{klamp} = 6 \text{ electrons} + \text{one graviton} + 1 \text{ topological diquark} - 2 \text{ antiquarks} \\ (\text{'up' and 'strangeness'}).$$

²⁴ This is not my invention: contact Frank Wilczek at M.I.T.

²⁵ This may or may not be the author's invention. It depends on the vital signs of the Schrödinger Cat.

Klamps are only found in bound matter/anti-matter pairs! These do NOT annihilate, because a slight broken symmetry in the electric charge of the two particles causes them to spin about one another like binary stars. Arguments derived from elementary quantum mechanics show that any knowledge whatsoever about one member of this couple pair must inevitably annihilate the other one.²⁶ Both matter and anti-matter beams fade away like the morning dew at the instant of their being identified. However, it is possible to have precise knowledge of what the positions velocities of the klamps were *before* their inexorable disappearance, without violating the Uncertainty Principle.

After J. K. had convinced the Dutch government that klamps allowed for faster-than-light signal transmission, it set up a top secret military research project in a tiny coastal village in Friesland (code name *Final Triumph*) to develop a weapon might eventually be used to conquer the world, the traditional ambition of all nations.

Remarkably enough, and there is little about this particle that is not remarkable, its half-life is variable. One can actually breed klamp-pair beams with half-lives from a micro-second to half an hour! Their range of interaction with electric fields is in direct proportion to their half-life. It was this labor of breeding klamp-beams of varying half-lives that kept J.K. in his laboratory around the clock 6 days a week. The work was back-breaking and dangerous. He dared not hire a lab assistant, and did it all himself.

²⁶ That's the real meaning of the statement that the klamp is neither a fermion nor a boson. The particle itself is so improbable that no known statistics can be applied to it.

The process of breeding klamp beams is simple. Blocks of long palladium rods are dipped into containers of heavy water. Methane gas is bubbled through them in a room permeated by ultra-violet light and shot through with enormous discharges of static electricity from Tesla coils. ²⁷

Cascades of klamps are generated from the multitudes of anti-pions churning out from the wake of the cold fusion neutrons produced by this method. From these one can filter out vanishing percentages of klamps. Several weeks of a complex feedback cycle are needed before one begins to generate pure coherent strains of matter-antimatter klamp pairs over a range of specified half-lives.

The astronomical labors involved would have daunted anyone less fanatical than J.K. Yet such is the nature of science: many are called but few are chosen, and among those who are chosen one scarcely find one whose psyche is not more twisted than the wreckage from a 10-car collision on California's coastal highway climbing over Big Sur.

²⁷At one time J.K. was considering a lawsuit against Fleishmann and Pons, who'd obviously plagiarized his research.

Chapter 18

Another Kind Of Science

No scientific geniuses of the caliber of J.K. were to be found working in the forensic laboratories of the KGB. The Soviet government had compensated for the agency's deficiencies in intellect and imagination by putting together a corps of well-trained and maddeningly methodical lab technicians. No expense had been spared to furbish the labs with cutting-edge instrumentation. From a speck of gasoline scraped from the exhaust of a car the KGB could, in a matter of days, learn the site of the well from which it had been extracted, the factory that had refined it, the service station that had dispensed it, the make of the car that had burned it, and so on.

Shortly after the reception at the Russian embassy attended by Inspector Migraine, an insulated tungsten can holding the remaining of Sergei's skull reached Moscow via a route that passed through Oran, Capetown, Madagascar and Samarcand. In a few weeks, reports were being transmitted daily to the Soviet Embassy in scrambled code via closed-circuit E-mail.

In the beginning the analysis proceeded slowly, as the debris from the floor of *La Chatte Chauve* had to be separated from the bones. At this stage Olga Glazunova's help would have been of great use to them.

However, since our last encounter with her, both she and Stanley Cobb had mysteriously dropped out of circulation. This could only

mean that, provided she were still alive, she'd gone over to the other side.

Sergei's dust contained a complex mix of substances, evidence of a trajectory as devious as any encountered by the dust of Alexander the Great on its way to the nearest bunghole. Flakes of algae, sludges, sewage, birdlimes from pigeons and sea-gulls, and dried scales of flat bottom fishes. were combined with traces of machine oil and automobile soot. Together they told a story of river barges , hydraulic locks , canal refuse, and heavy urban traffic. If Sergei's bones had been kept in Paris, the only place where they could have been deposited for any length of time was in the vicinity of the Old Canal.

The bone was dilated and honey-combed with microscopic chambers, and very brittle . It had been boiled for a long time in brine. The presence of an array of organic molecules indicated the added presence of raw vegetables and beef stock.

A different story was told by the traces of droppings from rats, ants and bugs. These pointed to a warehouse where a temperature of 13° Centigrade was maintained at all times . From the ant droppings the KGB's physical chemists determined that this temperature had kept steady over a period of 9 months.

Other deposits were traced to a low grade of meat tenderizer made from cheap chemicals, ground plastics and animal bones. Microscopic wood fibers were shown to have come from barrels used in the transportation of goods from the Far East.

On the basis of these indications, the following picture was assembled: Sergei had been knocked unconscious by a blow from

the butt of a revolver, then kidnapped in the vicinity of the Trocadero on an afternoon in July of 1987. A few days later he had been murdered by being fed a dish of pork fried rice into which two entire salt-shakers of monosodium glutamate had been introduced. His body was hacked into pieces the size of pork chops, his head severed from the neck. Everything had then been boiled together in a large pot for many hours until all the flesh dropped away from the bones.

Then the bones were ground down to a fine powder and mixed in with other items in the wooden barrels. These had stood in a warehouse located beside the quais of the Paris Canal . His skull, and several finger bones, had somehow become detached, rolled off a window ledge and fallen into the Canal, to be fished out at a later date by Stanley Cobb and Inspector Guy de Migraine. The exact location could be determined by an analysis of the chemistry of the sludges impregnating the skull. Instructions were accordingly transmitted to the French units of the KGB to collect samples of the waters all along the Canal at distances of every two meters.



Chapter 19

L'Espace Cardin

Seated at his usual place in the shady corner at the back of the café *Le Mont Olivet* , between a *muscadet* and *sandwich paté campagne* , Migraine regarded with some bafflement the invitation from Marcel Ricard, senior official at the Bureau of Vital Statistics, to dine with him in two weeks time at the restaurant *L'Espace Cardin* on the *Champs Elysées* . The motives that accompanied a luncheon invitation from such highly placed politicians or government officials were always few in number and easily predictable. No matter what way one looked at it, *L'Espace Cardin* didn't fit in.

In the majority of cases it would be a matter of bringing in the DST on some crisis involving national security. The ambiance of mediocre restaurant in the class of *L'Espace Cardin* was not ruled out, yet hardly worthy of consideration. Important meetings necessitated important expenditures. Winning the confidence of an Inspector Guy de Migraine was worth a dinner at *Fouquet's* , the *Tour d'Argent* , even the Eiffel Tower itself, or at the very least (and this might be considered almost slumming), *La Coupole* in Montparnasse. There the food was adequate, the service competent; but it might be considered an imposition to obliged the Inspector to put up with the *parvenus* , the *nouveaux riches* , the international yuppie set, and the dumb tourists, for an entire evening.

On the other hand, Migraine considered, it might be one of those affairs requiring the greatest discretion: public officials in hot water, a frame-up, who knows? Even blackmail! In such cases the appropriate rendezvous would be some insalubrious hole in Montmartre, or in the tawdry neighborhood around the rue St. Denis, Clignancourt, Belleville or Bastille, even industrial ghettos like Pantin, Billancourt, Drancy

One would not then be thinking of expensive dinners in fashionable hangouts, banquets seasoning by vintage wines, liqueurs, sumptuous entrees and gaudy desserts, Havana cigars, digestifs All that mattered at these moments was the sizable check passed under the table between the soggy *oeuf dur mayonnaise* and the arrival of the burnt and oily *stek frites* .

L' Espace Cardin was wrong on all counts. Located on the Champs Elysées, close to the American Embassy, it is one of those vulgar places where everybody is open to public view. Ranges of tall windows fill the spacious dining-room with bright sunlight. Altogether the wrong kind of place for nepotism, bribery, corruption or any sort of secret maneuvering or intrigue.

It also isn't the sort of restaurant one would recommend for the display of conspicuous consumption or lavish ego-stroking. Neither the price, nor the decor, nor the cooking - *certainly not!* - suggest anything like *haute cuisine* . The slightest touch of class is (perhaps) insinuated into its precincts by the modern paintings on

the walls and the sculpture plunked down to the right of the entranceway.²⁸

For anywhere from 150 to 300 francs consumers were offered a choice between a buffet style self-service lunch gotten from long troughs modeled after the salad bars in Pizza Hut. One could also call for the menu, and command entrees from liveried waiters . By making a concerted effort it was possible to throw away 500 francs on a meal, yet there was little point in doing so. Nothing about the establishment justified such an expenditure.

(Needless to underline the obvious fact that *L'Espace Cardin* was many light years above *La Belle Noisette* or *La Jambe Cassée* .)

No doubt, Migraine reflected, Marcel Ricard would explain the purpose of the gathering once they were there. Although he did not foresee any risks, he informed Ricard that he was bringing along two of his confederates, Jean-Luc Fevrier and Els Dordrecht. This had sat well with Ricard, who added that the government would be only too happy to foot the entire bill.

At 2 PM, on the afternoon of Armistice Day, November 11,1988, a group composed of Inspector Guy de Migraine, Officer Jean-Luc Fevrier of the DST, and Els Dordrecht of the Rotterdam Customs Authority entered together into the main dining-room of L'Espace Cardin. Marcel Ricard, already seated at a table adjacent to the right end of the bar, stood up to greet them. Former Socialist

²⁸ At the time of the events related in this narrative an opalescent imitation black jade plastic chair, in the form of a giant upturned and outstretched palm with vertical thumb for its back, took up all of the lobby's non-functional space. The author never remarked that anyone had taken a fancy to sit in the thing, although no sign stated that it wasn't allowed.

major of Villeneuve-sur-Oise, now affiliated with the Bureau of Vital Statistics, he'd been an influential voice in the Mitterand cabinet, yet managed to keep his post with the advent of Chirac . He'd also brought along an associate: Pierre LeBouc, senior computer programmer at JUDEX , the gigantic computer center of the Gendarmerie located at Rosny-le-Bois.

Migraine and his team, who could have learned as much by digging into their files, but who rarely did their homework, had no idea that Ricard and LeBouc had been in the pay of Low Bing and the Eiffel Tower Gang for 15 years. This was but the tip of the iceberg: the entire staff at L'Espace Cardin were regular or part-time affiliates of far eastern Asian criminal gangs headquartered in Paris. More than half of them had, at one time or another, done work for the Eiffel Tower Gang.

The chief barman at L'Espace Cardin , Lee Huang Yu, was Low Bing's half-brother through a liaison of his father's. He , Ricard and LeBouc had been given instructions to see to it that Migraine's drinks were poisoned. That failing, a pound of crushed glass had been worked into the *Crème Chantilly* he would be served for dessert.

There were also backups: an elephant rifle equipped with silencer stood in the alcove just under the over-sized TV screen raised over the far left end of the bar. Nor was that all: one way or another, the Eiffel Tower Gang was determined that Guy de Migraine would not survive his *déjeuner* , courtesy of L'Espace Cardin .

While these high-ranking officials and policemen were seating themselves around the table, Low Bing's half brother, Lee Huang Yu, was standing in back of the bar counter talking to him in Taipei over the telephone . Low Bing's office was on the 3rd floor of the Eiffel Tower Gang's principal factory, a big shabby building that operated around the clock, located in a slum neighborhood on the outskirts of the city. It was here that he took the call, seated in a swivel chair behind his desk. Above the desk in full view hung half a dozen TV monitors, allowing him to monitor everything going on inside the factory and on the grounds.

Yu awaited the signal for the delivery of the bottle of poisoned wine to the Chief Inspector, to be given by Low Bing at the appropriate moment.

After being seated Migraine asked that a telephone receiver be branched in the wall socket near his table. Excusing himself momentarily from Ricard and LeBouc, Migraine established contact with Chung Wah, Chief Inspector of the Taiwan security services.

Up to this point our only information about Chung Wah has been in the form of his cryptic, somewhat baffling messages in invisible ink that he'd left - when they were not forgeries by others - on the sidings of moving rubber sidewalks in the Metro. In fact, Chung Wah had been wandering up and down the Riviera for over a year, tracking Asian smugglers and gangs. His arrest record had been impressive, and it is hardly surprising that by now his life was not worth a split nickel. Plots to assassinate him were as numerous as assholes at the Cannes Film Festival. Never fear : the

author will keep him alive as long as he is useful to the increasingly devious plot of *The Eiffel Tower Gang* and its potential sequels.

When Chung Wah took Migraine's call he was comfortably seated on the terrace of a café on the Quai St. Pierre in the harbor area of Cannes. Directly facing him was an accumulation of the world's costliest yachts. One of them in particular had been under his close scrutiny since early that morning : the *Dallas Star* , Arthur Hodges' craft that regularly plied between Majorca and the Riviera, dropping smuggled merchandise at various locations along the Mediterranean coast. To date no-one had been able to nab him with the goods, but his luck was running out.

Despite his being stationed in one place for most of the day, Chung Wah was the focus of frenetic activity around Cannes and the Riviera: more than a dozen of his agents were out there on special missions. They reported back to him frequently, either in person , by telephone, or Fax. Some were assigned to trail Hodges himself as he made his rounds in Cannes or drove his Bugatti up and down the coast between St. Tropez and Nice. It was going to be a hectic afternoon.

Punctually every hour, at 10 minutes after the hour, his secretary returned to the café bearing a pile of communiqués faxed from Taipei police headquarters: transcriptions of Low Bing's telephone conversations , now being monitored through equipment hidden in flower delivery vans in the side streets. Chung Wah was also kept informed of the movements of a heavily armed police team staked out around Low Bing's factory. Several

dozen Taiwanese cops stood on alert, awaiting the word from Chung Wah to invade the premises.

Migraine's voice barked along the line:

"*Àllo, Àllo ! Chung? C'est toi, alors? "*

"*Vlayment, Ahspek'tor . C'est mwah! T'sah vawh? "*

"*Certainement, Chung. Attends un moment. "*

Migraine placed his hand over the receiver as he turned to apologize to Ricard: " This won't take long. I'm establishing contact with my Taiwanese counterpart. "

" Go right ahead, Inspector. Drink?"

"Ah ..er... humph ! ...*Que dalle! ... eh bien ; oui ... Marc de Bourgogne ! "* Ricard signaled to the bar.

"*Àllo , Chung? Attends . Mon numero est ... "* he dictated the telephone number, "*Quand tu a quelque-chose à me dire, rapelle-moi directe. Okay ? Bien! Chaoi ! "*

He hung up the receiver and turned to his hosts: "Now, gentlemen", he asked, " What do you want to see me about?"

Pierre LeBouc launched into a description of the project, still in the planning stages, which he and Ricard had been working on for some time. In theory, every reported infraction , from stealing a peach off a grocer's cart to a serial killing , of every human being standing on French government-administered soil, is fed into the gigantic databanks of JUDEX (*Système Judiciaire de Documentation et de l'Exploitation*) in the town of Rosny-le-Bois just outside of Paris.

JUDEX retains photo-images of stolen goods, mug shots, unpaid traffic tickets, fingerprints, licenses of stolen vehicles, lists of suspects , reports of suspicious behavior, clues, anonymous tips and stray leads, from France, Corsica, Chad, Martinique and all other French colonies. A multi-dimensional cross-referencing data structure is expected to , once again in theory, give the police the power to keep close surveillance on anything that attracts its attention.

Less than a year of operations JUDEX found itself in grave difficulties. By that time over a million acts, considered potentially criminal , had been reported. The sheer volume of evil was impeding the work of pin-pointing individual cases.

Thus : although the miscreant who tried to enter the *Chatelet Metro* by jumping the turnstile, and the equally nefarious villain who robbed the bank in Puy-le-Dome two months later, were both bald and walked with a limp; though one of them was known to have a left club foot, while the club foot on the other may have been either on the right or the left ; this did not, in and of itself, generate enough police authority to justify arresting every bald, club-footed male in France, Corsica, the Cameroons, Martinique and Chad !

"Tough", Migraine commented, without sympathy , "You haven't found a way yet to replace old pug-uglies like me, who cover the soles of their feet with blisters and cram our noses up assholes! I really feel sorry for you guys."

" Inspector", Ricard picked up , " the scope of the dilemma is vast. As I was constantly reminding Mitterand, it may well be *the*

central dilemma of 20th century man ! Society lacks cohesion ! I've been a committed Socialist these 40 years. The hardest lesson I've ever had to learn is that bureaucracy isn't enough! We must find more efficient forms of social control!

" Let us hope that the day will come when computers are big enough to cope with all the messiness of human existence. Frankly, the *Parti Socialiste* may not be around that long."

" What do you have in mind?"

Not waiting for an answer, Migraine, Dordrecht and Fevrier rose abruptly from the table and carried their plates over to the salad bar. This development was communicated over the telephone by Lee Huang Yu to Low Bing . Low Bing told the gang to find some way of cutting the telephone connection with Chung Wah. It was just at that moment that Chung Wah called back. Migraine dashed across the parquet, slopping *crudités* from his plate onto the floor, and picked up the receiver.

" *Àllo , Chung! Des nouvelles ?* "

" *Àllo , Ahnspek'tor Mi'glayn !* What news you ask? Fum Kahhn? *Oui !* Lahts! Hodge, he come back. Las' night - about - uh - too thlerty - wit six uth'uhz - all membél of gang ! They wolk - lawng taimé ! Fow ahwah, at least! Kally big bags - sacks! They load up whole yahtsh't ! Some kinna' powdah!

" We make allest tonight - no werwy -boat not leave . Hodges served summons this maw'ning : yahtsh't got leaky mufflah ! All allested tonight! "

" Good work, Chung. Keep in touch. " Migraine hung up the receiver and begin a greedy attack on the grotesque pyramid of

salads and cold cuts that overflowed his plate. His mouth crammed with food, he indicated, by a wave of his fork, that Ricard should continue his monologue.

"It is a reality of French life, Inspector, that married men of sufficient income are prone to maintain a mistress together with their official spouse. The children of these mistresses, (those from the man under consideration of course) are designated as "illegitimate". There is, to date, no official governmental category of "mistress". For the bastards, yes, because of inheritance disputes.

"It is a curiosity of French law that bigamy is illegal. This may be due to the strong hold that the Catholic Church maintains over our customs, despite every effort made since the revolution of 1789 to get rid of it. One might have hoped that France's civilizing rule over the native peoples of the Polynesian islands would have led to some liberalization in our own customs; such has not been the case. Europe in general has never been favorably disposed to institutionalized polygamy.

"But, Inspector, there's a first time for everything! We want to make bigamy legal. Just imagine the opportunities for increased interference of the government into the lives of private citizens!"

"Very French", Migraine commented drily, "Go on."

"*De facto* bigamy, as we all know, already exists. Now look at what happens if its legitimized. The government will be able to set up a bureaucracy that would have been the envy by Byzantium. Through the issuing of licenses and permits designed

to regulate the status secondary and tertiary spouses, it can make a fortune!

"The revised marital code will fill an entire floor-to-ceiling shelf in the law libraries. It will be up to the politicians to enact a jungle of bigamy code infractions, to establish an agency for the purpose of periodic inspections, to levy stiff fines and institute long prison sentences. A criminal justice paradise! I don't know why no-one's ever thought of it before. We may even be able to balance the budget. "

The entrees had arrived: *tournedos* for Ricard and LeBouc, *entrecote milanese* for Migraine, *boeuf bourguignon* for Fevrier. Els was content with what she'd gathered at the salad bar. Now a second bottle of Sancerre made the rounds. No cause for alarm; Low Bing had not yet given the signal.

As he listened to Marcel Ricard, Inspector Migraine's face glowed with approval: this idea showed intelligence! : "Sounds great!" he commented, " You should think of instituting residency laws that would be difficult, even impossible, to satisfy. That will bring in lots of ready cash. I'm thinking of regulations that prohibit wife and mistress to live in the same building."

" Ah..." Le Bouc smiled, " Inspector, you don't know the half of it. We want to introduce the expression ' *femme du regime secondaire* ' for what is now called a mistress. We also anticipate that the phrase ' *sous-femme* ' will enter the public vocabulary. The laws we have in mind will not only prohibit the wife and subwife from living under the same roof, they will disallow residency in the same block, neighborhood or, depending on the

local mores, even the same town. Imagine how much we can rake in from waivers alone!

" The new incest laws will enjoin any woman too closely related to the official wife from becoming a subwife: sisters, cousins, second cousins, widows of deceased brothers and so on. You get the picture? Here's one possibility : when a married man takes his wife's sister as a mistress, we fine him 10,000 francs. If a married woman takes her husband's brother as a lover, we throw her in jail for five years."

Migraine shook his head: " Make it illegal for a married woman to take *any* kind of lover! *Mon Dieu* ! Our entire civilization would fall to pieces if wives were allowed to get away with adultery!"

LeBouc nodded in agreement: " JUDEX would go completely out of control, for one thing. No: we're assuming that the Napoleonic Code remains intact for married women."

Ricard seconded the idea : "It needs to be strengthened! This is *l'Age d' Infomatique* ! "

Migraine regarded them curiously: "What about unmarried sub-wives? Will you allow them to take other lovers?"

Pierre LeBouc heaved a smile : "That, Inspector, depends entirely on computer capacity. I call it '*Robespierre's Dream* ' .

" I don't quite follow you on that one."

" The theory and practice of rational social control in 20th century Eastern European dictatorships have already made Robespierre look like a ninny. It is now within our power to

create the perfect society, one whose functioning is governed entirely by *Reason* !"

LeBouc's eyes waxed livid with demonic enthusiasm,

" There now exists a way of *quantifying Reason* , of measuring its amount in any social program. One merely asks the question: *What does it do to the database* ?

" If hardware, software and database are powerful enough to handle the subtleties , by all means let a sub-wife take herself any number of lovers! But ; there must be a limit somewhere! Even the '*femme du regime tertiare* ' may be more than our present -day computers can handle. "

"Marcel" , Migraine replied after a moment's deliberation, " I've a suggestion to make . I find your proposal very clever. Very clever indeed. Why don't you imitate the methods of the French railways, the SNCF? It sells you first class tickets, second class tickets. It's a shame that third class was eliminated by the commies .

" A Socialist government can set up a similar system: grant permits for first-class marriages, second class marriages, sleeping car marriages, no-smoking love affairs, vacation flings, one-night stands... Just use your imagination! The important thing is that everything be accompanied by supplementary fees, taxes, fines, tips, bribes. Make everything renewable, even marriage itself. Mandate periodic check-ups, examinations, inspections. That'll give JUDEX an incredible amount of data to process!"

" Ah.... Inspector. That's just the problem. Too much data is just as bad as too little."

" No doubt you're right. So, tell me: how does the DST come into the picture? "

Sitting in his office in Taipei. Low Bing decided that the moment of truth had arrived. From his office in Taipei, Low Bing spoke to Lee Huang Yu. Yu nodded to a waiter, who reached into a cubbyhole below the counter to retrieve a bottle of arsenic-laced Sancerre. This was passed over to a busboy with instructions to deliver it to Marcel Ricard personally.

With a nod of the head and a handsome tip, Ricard picked up the bottle from the bucket of ice in which it had been placed and deposited it aggressively in front of the Inspector. He should have opened and poured it right away. Yet he'd become thoroughly wrapped up in demonstrating the cleverness of his novel bigamy code. Now he intended to keep Migraine alive long enough to elaborate further on the details. This delay of half an hour was to have fateful consequences for all concerned.

Chapter 20

Trung Quac

At the time of these momentous events many other things were happening all around the City of Lights : a poet, comatose on LSD, sat at his table in a crummy fifth-story garret in the *Place Contrescarpe* , sticking himself with pins in the hope of dredging up some immortal Alexandrines.

A street jester performing in the *Place Beaubourg* in front of the *Centre Pompidou* was hit in the face by a burnt-out *gauchiste* from the 70's flailing Mao's little red book.

George Whitman, founder and proprietor of the deservedly famous English language bookstore, Shakespeare & Co. , on the rue de la Boucherie opposite Notre Dame , bartered the original manuscript of Henry Miller's '*Tropic of Cancer* ' for 40,000 cans of lentil soup.

A sky-diver dressed only in red, white and blue bathing shorts jumped out of a helium balloon and landed on the roof of the *Arche de Triomphe* . He was given a ticket for parking in a no-fly zone, then released.

Working in his back office at Le Mitzvah, Izzy the Litvak brushed typewriter whiteout over certain Arabic letters on page 273 of a pocket-sized edition of the Koran. The remaining letters formed a scrambled message in code. That evening it would be sent to a gang of hashish smugglers in Amman, Jordan.

Aziz, the dissipated waiter of *La Jambe Cassée* , was dead. He 'd been stabbed in the back by an Islamic zealot who hated drunkards.

All through that afternoon the concierge of the showers of the Gare de Montparnasse sat at her desk, writing her tenth letter to the DST demanding compensation.

Sitting alone over lunch in the main dining room of *La Belle Noisette* , Parisian headquarters of the Eiffel Tower Gang, the silver-haired and aging Vietnamese racketeer, Trung Quac, divided his time between lapping up a plateful of Szechuan noodles, and talking over the telephone with Jan van Klamperen, now seated in the bubble observatory atop the Blue Mill. Trung Quac's table was in a far corner of the large dining-room, away

from the windows. He sat with his back against the wall. Two Laotian guards seated across from him, their hands on their automatics, concealed his body from public scrutiny.

Not even a congress of paranoids would have suspected that beneath Trung's blasé exterior, as nondescript in public as water in a raindrop, festered the brain of one of the planet's most ruthless and dangerous criminals.

Trung Quac first saw the light of day in a back alley in Saigon in 1912 . He was a product of the raw life of the streets and of 60 years of war. Sold into slavery by his mother at the age of 7, he grew up in a milieu of prostitution, gang violence, drug trafficking and smuggling. At the time of the defeat of the French expeditionary forces at Dien Bien Phu in the 50's, Trung was universally acknowledged as the kingpin of all organized vice in Saigon. The long tenure of the American military presence magnified his empire a hundred-fold to cover all of Southeast Asia with ties to organized crime in eighty countries.

Since 1984 Trung had been living in France in a kind of semi-retirement. Given that virtually every major figure in French political life was in his pocket he was never in any danger of arrest. His billions were secure. The protection rackets he'd set up controlled all smuggling from the Far East. For each item brought into Europe , Trung received from one-tenth to one-third of a centime.

Trung's skill at cementing alliances was exceeded only by his deftness at treachery . Sooner or later anyone who worked for him

was destined for life-imprisonment or a one-way ticket to the next world.

He made millions from selling out his associates. Partnership with Trung was a kiss of death. Everyone knew this; yet even hardened professionals were readily duped into making deals. There was too much to be gained from what he had to offer while the going was good. His career was evidence that the Underworld contained an unlimited number of suckers who felt that they, and they alone, knew how to outsmart him. They were always proven wrong.

This afternoon Trung Quac was engaged in the pleasant task of ridding himself of the Eiffel Tower Gang. The conversation with J.K. was carried on in a broken Dutch patois which he'd picked up through drug-trafficking in Indonesia.

"Jan! Hello up there! Can you hear me. This is Trung!"

"Trung? Trung Quac? What a pleasant surprise! Have you persuaded the gang to give me more money?"

"No, Jan. But I may have better news for you. There's an old Oriental saying, '*Never walk in the shadow of the panther.*'"

"'*The friend of the tiger learns what a fool he's been only after he is eaten.*'"

"'*Never bet with dice made from the skull of a snake.*'"

"'*How can the scorpion withhold his sting, when Nature gave it to him?*'"

"'*The cat does not negotiate with the dog to eat the mouse!*'
So, Trung, what have you got to tell me?"

"I'll tell you in a moment, but first I have to fill you in on the details of the murder of the Russian diplomat, Sergei. It was my

operation; the Eiffel Tower Gang did the dirty work. Now the DST, the KGB , and the CIA are hot on their trail. Wisely used, this information should be worth a fortune to you!"

" Trung, I am indeed very interested. Let me call you back in 10 minutes."

J.K. hung up the receiver, Walking over to his computer, he sent a scrambled message in code to the Russian Embassy in Paris via closed circuit E-mail. His contact there over many years was a KGB agent who had once been a nuclear physicist with the Soviet weapons program. J.K, relayed Trung's information to him, In less than 5 minutes he was informed that the Soviets were prepared to offer him \$100,000 if Trung's information was reliable.

J.K. then re-connected with Trung in Paris and told him to go ahead. By pressing a button , J.K. signaled to his secretary in his office at the Eindhoven Technical University to pick up her phone and begin recording their conversation. As Trung Quac 's story unfolded, the digitized sound track was transmitted, in code, directly to the Russian Embassy over short-wave radio. The KGB hit team sent to take Trung into custody were already walking through the doors of La Belle Noisette before his conversation with J.K. was terminated.

Trung Quac had at last been had. And by a rank amateur in crime!

Most of the facts about the abduction and murder of Sergei were already known to the KGB. Yet his information helped to fill in the missing parts of the picture. Among other things, they learned Trung's motive in murdering him. He'd gotten wind of

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Sergei's mission to blow up the Eiffel Tower on the bi-centennial anniversary of the storming of the Bastille. If successful, it would have put an end to the primary source of revenue for the Eiffel Tower Gang.

Sergei had been poisoned on the premises of La Belle Noisette by a large concentration of ersatz monosodium glutamate dumped into his Egg Foo Young. There being no convenient way of disposing of his corpse, it had been boiled in vegetable stock for several hours until all the meat was peeled away from the bones. Diced and mixed into a vat of pork fried rice, it was served up to the public as the next day's 52-franc special.

The bones were then taken to an MSG manufacturing factory on the Paris Canal, operating inside the former *Hotel du Nord*. It was through sheer oversight that Sergei's skull and fingerbones had fallen off a ledge and into the Canal. The rest of his skeleton was ground to a fine powder that was deposited in the barrels of MSG destined for Taiwan and China.

Chapter 21

The Poisoned Goblet

Marcel Ricard continued with the narration of his schemes:

" So you see, Inspector, the DST has been given a major role in our plans . It will be some time before other European countries adopt our bigamy legislation. France has always been the cradle of civilization, and we predict that eventually everyone will follow suit.

" In the eventuality of our new legislation being inaugurated, France will initially have to cope with a massive surge in illegal immigration. We predict that millions of bogus refugees will enter just to benefit from of our new laws. Your agency must work with the *Department d'Immigration* to deal with the crime of "...He intoned rhetorically .. "*Illegal immigration for purposes of marital opportunity* '!"

In the reflective pause that followed Ricard solemnly uncorked the new bottle of Sancerre, He went on:

" The Pope and other religious poobahs are bound to scream bloody murder. We anticipate him issuing a call for a new crusade like the one against the Albigensians in the 12th century, just to rid France of the *abomination of fornication* !" .. Laughter and a general uproar ..." You begin to sense , Inspector, the enormity of the international repercussions ?."

Pierre LeBouc took the initiative in refilling Migraine's glass. When this was done, Migraine lifted it high to propose a toast:

" To all the bastards of France! May they acquire legitimacy!"

On cue, LeBouc lifted his own goblet and cried :

" To the fourth generation of giant computers!"

Basking in the rapt attention of his host, Migraine brought the goblet in contact with his lips. Just then however he was struck by an idea for a toast that proved irresistible:

" To the victims of venereal diseases dues to the new laws!"

Fevrier was likewise inspired to rise up and cry:

" To the whores of France! May their status *never* be normalized ! "

This caused Els Dordrecht could not restrain herself in her turn. Rising up in her chair she cried :

" To the castration of all men over forty!"

Migraine heartily assented to everyone of these. As the personnel of L'Espace Cardin gazed at him in awed silence, he once more raised the goblet to his lips.

The phone rang. it was Chung Wah:

" *Âllo , My'glain !* "

Migraine lowered his glass to the table, sat down again and lifted the receiver. As he conversed with Chung Wah, he swirled its stem about in his right hand:

" *Âllo , Chung !* Anything to report?"

" Yes - telliby solly - bad news - aftel hang up telephone, six agent go on boawd Dallas Stah - want to make allest! .. Dledful mistake.. My face coveled with egg loll .. Yatsh'cht NAHT Dallas Stah ! Two weeks we watscht wong boat! Whole yatsh'cht empty! Nobahly aboawd ! Lots of bags - fill'd wid sand! "

" I'm sorry to hear that, Chung. Did you arrest Hodges at least?"

" No - lose track of him in Nice ! He fly out in helicop'tah - to Mayaw'ka! Wife, Mei Tay - she not around neither . Go on bus to Nah'pily. Interview Pavalah'di for Chinese opera magazine! One second,

My'glain - you wait? "

" Sure , Chung."

Five minutes later Chung came back on the line:

" *Allo , My'glain !* Agent come back ! He bring Fax. Very interesting news - from Taiwan ! Low Bing on telephone with Lee Huang Yu. Lee

half-blush of Bing , work at L'Espas Ca'dan! You still there?"

" Yes, Chung. I'm having lunch with a real pack of jokers from the Bureau of Vital Statistics." Without breaking the thread of his discourse Migraine lifted the wine goblet in the air, swung it around , then lowered it in front of Fevrier:

" Here, Jean-Luc : you finish it." The voice came back on the telephone:

"*Allo , My'glain !* You still there?"

" Yes . Go on , Chung?"

" Don't drink wine!"

" What's that, Chung?"

" Don't drink wine! Poison! Lee fill it with lots of arsenic !"

" Thanks, Chung. Is that all? "

" Nothing much else. Whole Espas Ca'dan try to kill you. Be careful!"

" Thanks for the advice, Chung. I'll hang up now."

" Good luck, My'glain ! See you innah month!"

Migraine put down the receiver and turned around to continue their conversation. Marcel Ricard and Pierre LeBouc faces were set in tight, sour grimaces, although not nearly so twisted, bitter or bloody as that of Jean-Luc Fevrier who, in the act of dying , had been lowered into the *Crème Chantilly* .



Chapter 22

Deus ex Machina

Inspector Guy de Migraine examined Jean-Luc Fevrier's novel posture with considerable surprise and mild curiosity. Together, he Els Dordrecht and Pierre LeBouc pushed his body back into an upright position, lifted it off the chair and lay it out face upwards on the carpet.

For a certainty it took more than a few guts just to look at Fevrier's face. It was not a pretty sight. The ground-glass in the *Crème Chantilly* had cross-hatched it's flesh with furrows deep as the flounder's gills, giving it the texture of *viande hachée* .

" *Eh bien?* " Migraine grumbled , " *C'est deguellase , non?* "

With the little finger on his right hand he reamed out the dregs of tobacco in the bowl of his Meerschaum pipe. Refilled and lit, the aureole of fumes that engulfed his face emphasized the tough outlines of the professional investigator determined to get to the bottom of some hideous outrage to public order.

Marcel Ricard had leaned over the table and buried his face in his Socialist bureaucrat's hands, whereon not a callous indicated so much as a day's work. Tremors alternating horror with disgust shook his corpulent frame, as a bowl of Jello on the dinner table will shake from the rumble of an approaching truck. This was not his kind of game.

" Our man's dead, I'm afraid." Migraine swore volubly: " Jean-Luc was the best of the force, an honor to his uniform. Ah...well.." he sighed,

" I'll put in a good word for him to make sure his widow gets a special bonus on his pension." He turned to Els Dordrecht : "You've studied toxicology. What do you think did him in?"

With a handkerchief, Els wiped off the slobber from his lips and dropped it into a bag for later inspection at the forensic. She inserted a flashlight into the upper eyelid and examined the coloration of his earlobes. "Arsenic" she said, raising herself to a standing position, " The symptoms suggest arsenic poisoning."

" Of course!" Migraine struck another match, relighting his pipe. " So *that's* what Chung was jabbering about! He's a damn good cop , but I can never understand a word he says. He ought to stick to invisible ink." Sitting down once again, he turned to Els and said : " Go call an ambulance, will you? I'd like to finish hearing what Marcel has to say about his pending legislation. There's plenty of time left to re-open a new investigation."

Migraine wanted the line to Chung Wah kept open, so Els went into the lobby to use the pay telephone. Then he commandeered another double Scotch from the bar. Lee Huang Yu poured the drink, and gave it to a waiter to bring it to him. As Migraine threw back his neck to guzzle it down, Yu lifted the elephant gun reclining in the alcove below the television set, and aimed its barrel at the Inspector's right temple.

The gun went off with a deafening roar. It happened however that, just seconds before, the corner of Migraine's right eye sighted some object lying beneath the table on the rug. As the bullet sped

past him, grazing a few hairs still remaining on his scalp, he dropped to the floor on all fours .

" A clue!" he shouted. Removing a tweezers from his jacket pocket he shoveled a sliver of Chinese water chestnut into an small envelope.

The bullet continuing on to burrow deep into Pierre LeBouc's chest, killing him outright.

Migraine stood up, brushing the dust off his trench coat. In his right hand he gleefully held aloft the sealed envelope.

" There are smugglers in this restaurant!", he announced, his voice strident with command "*Everybody is under arrest!* "

As he uttered these words 3 kitchen workers, a Chinese, a Thai and a Vietnamese, pushed open the swinging doors leading to the kitchen, grabbed him by the arms and pinned his body to the floor. Shortly afterwards Lee Huang Yu came from behind the bar, stalked over to his prostrate body and put his left shoe on the Inspector's neck. In both hands, like a Catholic priest holding aloft the ciborium, he held level and gyrated a wok filled with nitric acid.

" You not like this, Inspect'l But not take long!" As he steadied the wok in anticipation of dumping its liquid he emitted an insinuating laugh: ²⁹

Suddenly the 3 TV monitors in the dining room of L'Espace Cardin were turned on spontaneously. This astounding development was reproduced on the TV sets in Low Bing's office

²⁹ As to what it was, exactly, that was being insinuated it is hard to say, but it was not pleasant.

in Taipei, on the TVs in the cafe where Chung Wah was hanging out in Cannes, and in a dozen other places around the globe.

Every screen held an identical image: the gloating face of Jan van Klamperen, addressing the world from his laboratory atop the Blue Mill in Nuenen.

The blast of static preceding the eruption of this *deus ex machina*³⁰ threw Lee Huang Yu off-balance, causing him to stumble against Migraine's immobilized body. As he keeled over onto the floor his head sank into the nitric acid bath filling the wok. To the accompaniment of steaming clouds, a nauseous stench and horrible snake-like hissing, all the flesh on his skull was eaten away in a few minutes.

This left only Marcel Ricard in charge.

On a signal from him Migraine was released. This lifelong politician knew that the time had come for palavers, not action. Migraine's help would be essential in dealing with the present crisis. Els returned from the lobby to say that a limousine from the Morgue, and several carloads of police were on their way.

At special locations around the world everyone took to their seats, to listen to the barely intelligible noises rising from the tobacco-scared throat of Jan van Klamperen.

³⁰The author intends no less.

Chapter 23

Ultimatum

J.K. sat before a camera which he manipulated by remote control. At his back stood a floor to ceiling display of instrumentation terrifying to behold. To his right stood an table holding more specialized equipment of the sort that is used in small scale high-energy physics research.

His radio was on. He'd turned it down for this transmission, yet one could clearly make out the strain of *Brunhilde's Immolation* from *Die Götterdämmerung* , the legendary recording by the London Philharmonic under the direction of Leopold Stokowski .

Perspiration accumulated on his brow; the heat generated from his equipment was intense. Lips and what was left of his teeth were jaundiced by years of compulsive chain-smoking of Dutch rolling tobacco. As he spoke his left hand, afflicted by a nervous spasm descending from his shoulder, manipulated a hand-operated cigarette rolling machine. His right hand was swaddled in bandages, attesting to a recent lab accident. A pale, wrinkled face indicated a long struggle with insomnia, accompanied by deep mental anguish and emotional stress.

Despite this accumulation of symptoms J. K.'s manner was triumphant, even swaggering. He looked, and clearly felt like a man who knows that the world is pissing on his, and has just devised a way of converting urine into high-octane gasoline.

" Aha!" His gloating voice rasped like the rusted machines in a condemned chemical factory sinking relentlessly into a bog:

" You will all please come to attention! Do you have the impression that I've got you all where I want you? You must all be wondering how I was able to perform such an incredible miracle like right now when I turned on 20, and exactly 20 TV monitors simultaneously at different locations around the globe?

"I did it with klamps! With my klamp beams! With the phenomenon which I , and I alone, discovered and which will give me the Nobel Prize. How did I do it? A good question!

"First I used klamps carrying certain signature atomic force fields to track the whereabouts of Inspector Guy de Migraine of the DST, and that obnoxious thug I once worked for, ! - Mr. Low Bing - who tried to cheat me . Me! - of the infamous Eiffel Tower Gang. I did not forget that odious Chinaman, Chung Wah, soaking up sunlight like a roast pig on the Riviera....and a dozen other persons all over the world, whose names I won't tell you... because you don't want to know them...

"Then, using the latest discoveries in low level topological quantum field theory, (together with certain approximating algorithms from Information Theory, notably those that make use of so-called Hamming Ball techniques) , I directed my computers to orient a bank of klamp lasers to the closet TV monitors

" Now you know why I will soon be getting the Nobel Prize! Which I will refuse! Why? You ask again? Because I find the pornographic movies of the Swedes disgusting! Yes, I am xenophobe - and proud of it!

"It appears, does it not, that I am the new power broker ! You don't know how happy that makes me! Yes, like the mother

of the beamish boy, after he has slain the Jabberwock : *I chortle with glee !!* " His nicotine-ravaged frame shook merrily as if in imitation of his novel interpretation of the word ' chortle' :

" And now!" A siege of violent coughing interrupted his discourse for an interminable 5 minutes , "You will listen. And I will dictate the terms. The dormouse is playing ! While the Cheshire cat takes his nap!

"Mr. Low Bing : your worthless $\text{COOH}(\text{CH}_2)_2\text{CH}(\text{NH}_2)\text{COONa}$ ", each letter of the chemical name was drawn out with evident relish, " production is finished. Trung Quac has just told me, after which I told the KGB, all that we needed to know . In a very short time , unless they kill each other off first, the KGB and the DST will mount an assault on your factory in the *Hotel du Nord !*"

No sooner were these words uttered than a violent altercation broke out on in the kitchen of L'Espace Cardin. Furniture banged against the swinging doors and spilled out into the dining-room. One could hear pans, cauldrons, trays, grills . carts and other items ricocheting against the walls. Shrieks, groans and cries erupted in a dozen Oriental languages.

Soon afterwards a stream of kitchen personnel began running out of the kitchen, through the dining-room and lobby and out into the streets. Too late. As they opened the doors onto the Champs-Elysées, they were confronted by the police reinforcements that had been called in by Els Dordrecht. Gunfights erupted in the parks and down the rue de Rivoli as far down as the department stores on the *rue Sébastopol* .

Apart from the small number of remaining customers who were hiding under the tables, Migraine Els, and Ricard remained alone with the corpses of their associates. In company with Low Bing, Chung Wah, and nameless others around the world, they went back to sitting in front of the televisions to receive the ultimatums of J.K.:

"Gentlemen, these are my conditions. Marcel Ricard and Inspector Guy de Migraine are ordered to carry my demand for 5 billion francs to the French government. If it is not paid within 3 days into an account, whose number will appear on the upper left hand corner of page 3 of tomorrow's New York Times, within 2 days, a klamp beam will be directed onto the JUDEX computer center in Rosny-le-Bois and melt it down.

"Mr. Low Bing! Hello boss! Aren't you happy the tables are turned? Here are your instructions: raise another billion dollars for me by the end of next week. Otherwise an anti-matter klamp beam is poised to hit the Eiffel Tower itself and reduce it to scrap metal! By the way, Low, I advise you to leave your factory immediately: the Taiwanese police are getting ready to storm it. Directions for delivering the money to me will appear in an ad placed in the Personals section of the next Thursday's Singapore Times."

Low Bing sprang up from his seat and ran out the door. He was able to escape through a door at the back of the factory seconds before dozens of armed police swarmed through all its entrances, smashing equipment with their truncheons and arresting everyone in sight.

Suddenly Els Dordrecht gasped: " I know that man's face!" She picked up the Amsterdam newspaper she'd brought with her to the luncheon. J.K.'s photograph was on the 5th page. The accompanying story gave his name, degrees, and his affiliation with the Eindhoven Technical University, and revealed that he had been among the persons nominated to receive the Nobel Prize in particle physics for that year.

Els unhooked her two-way radio from a shoulder strap. She dialed to a radio frequency that put her in touch with the Eindhoven police department . Within minutes a dozen squad cars were on their way to the Blue Mill.

Chapter 24

The Hotel du Nord

Demoralizing rain in thick sheets swept the east bank of the Canal St. Martin on the morning of November 12, 1988. Pitch-black clouds roiled in all the nooks and crevices of its cobweb of cobblestoned street corners . In this district, where residences worth a prince's ransom stand in full view of grim hovels on the other side of the quais, the bleak stew of mist, drizzle and gloom that one finds everywhere in the world's most glamorous city at this time of year, concentrates with a fierce intensity.³¹

For over an hour two KGB lieutenants had been seated at the tiny lunch counter of the *Love Burger* restaurant, (a derivative imitation of an American fast-food concession) , on the *rue de la Grange aux Belles* . Now a fleet of 6 black Renault vans, each holding around a dozen agents, pulled up beside the restaurant and disembarked their crews. The two lieutenants walked out to confer with the drivers before putting themselves at the head of a squadron of helmeted and armed men in black trench coats, that surged its menace through the grim downpour towards the intersection of the *Quai des Jemmapes* . Taking up the rear, solemn as a funeral cortege, it was followed by the 6 Renault vans.

As they rounded the corner to go north to the rue Bichat they encountered a barricade. Furniture and props from the 40's, left over from Marcel Carné 's production of the film '*Hotel du Nord* ',

³¹ Imagine the infected matter in an abscessed tooth, as it might appear on X-ray plates, made in wartime by a dentist stoned on ether.

had been piled up to straddle the street between the sidewalk and the *Pont Tournant* , the bridge over the Canal.

Crouched on the other side were officers of the DST and the DSGE, who, upon seeing them, immediately opened fire. It was a desperate gamble, an attempt to gain precious minutes while the Gendarmerie tried to tears off locks, chains and clap-boards around the front doors of the hotel to storm the building.

The KGB ran for cover behind their fleet of vans. Casualties mounted on both sides. Pavel Lukash was among the first to fall, mortally wounded on the second volley. In his lifelong battle with the Russian oppressor he'd lost the final skirmish .

From the upper story windows of the abandoned hotel a rain of glass exploded over the heads of the police, as members of the Eiffel Tower Gang poured down the contents of large vats of boiling oil.

In this desperate situation a reshuffling of alliances was dictated. The French Secret Services and the KGB quickly called a truce so that they could join forces to overpower the gang and take possession of the building. Within an hour it was theirs. A handful of the members of the Eiffel Tower Gang were captured. The majority managed to escape through side exits and the basement.

Once the fighting was over French and Russian police representatives went to a cafe across the street for some pressing negotiations. The owner and customers having fled so they helped themselves to whatever they want to eat.

The Russians agreed to scrap their plans to sabotage the upcoming Bi-Centennial celebrations. In exchange they were allowed

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to confiscate the 2000 barrels of ersatz MSG found on the premises. Shipped to Russia they were used to tenderize meat in Moscow's butcher shops through the month of December, thereby advancing history another few inches down the road to Glasnost.

Now both of the arms of the Eiffel Tower Gang had been broken off at the elbows.



Chapter 25

Endgame and Finale

The Dutch police waited for reinforcements, then closed in on the Blue Mill. Even as they banged on the door, Jan van Klamperen was able to escape with his bicycle via a hidden passageway that began in the basement and continued on for 3 miles out to the highway. From there he pedaled 2 miles to his car, jumped in, and sped towards Estonia. His wife and children were already there to begin, with considerable help from Russia, their journey to Australia.

Realizing that he'd gone, the cops hurried over to the external shed and its computers. Indefatigably the Dutch police had been decoding J.K.'s passwords for the past 3 months, from the day that he'd thoughtlessness left an annotated copy of Alice in Wonderland lying around in his university office.

Surrounded by his subalterns, the police chief sat down at the computer's keyboard, booted up the appropriate software, and entered the day's password. The explosion incinerated the Blue Mill, all the outbuildings on the property, and all of the cops in the neighborhood.

van Klamperen's family made it to Australia by going across Asia via the Trans-Siberian railroad. A position was already waiting for him on the physics faculty of a small but distinguished university in Darwin. In the next 15 years he rose steadily in the Australian academic establishment, and he will retire in 2004 with

many honors. By that time his wife will be dead and his children dispersed.

The French and Dutch governments will concur that the amount of good he'd done for them far outweighed the harm. Provided he does not attempt to return to Europe, they will arrange with the Eindhoven Technical University to forward him a substantial pension. With the money he will build himself a stone cottage in the Outback, near the town of Milparinka, with the intention of disappearing from society. Only once will he come out of his self-imposed obscurity. In 2010 he will send a stinging letter to the Nobel Prize committee, rejecting the prize in physics .

Trung Quac, no less wily for his 8 decades, bribed his way out of the hands of the Russians . He lay low for a few years until Gorbachev dissolved the KGB. Then he resumed his activities as crime overlord emeritus. Stanley Cobb and Olga Glazunova went underground. After many adventures they settled in Jamaica and took up a boring middle-class existence .

Chung Wah decided that he liked the Riviera. In 1999 he became embroiled in some weird shenanigans surrounding the Cannes Film Festival. These may form the basis for another novel.

Pending an investigation, Marcel Ricard was forced to resign from the Bureau of Vital Statistics. Later he stood trial for embezzlement. Despite 13 scabrous articles in *Le Canard Enchaîné* , he has been able to survive the shifts in the political winds and will be returned to his post by the Green Party in the elections of March, 2005. Danny Cohn-Bendit will declare himself in full

sympathy with Ricard's bigamy platform and will schedule a vote in the *Chambre des Deputés* sometime in December.

Migraine took charge of the mopping-up operations that cleared the premises of L'Espace Cardin of its accumulation of mobster slime. To

celebrate a job well done, he poured himself an enormous cognac at the bar. Almost immediately he collapsed from liver failure and had to be rushed to a hospital.

A two year battle with cirrhosis, heart disease and other complications, including a brain tumor, was followed by a complete recovery. His creator judges him ready for many more wild escapades, delirious adventures, forays into corruption and extended bouts of indiscriminate drinking. These will be detailed in future novels, if there are any.

The End

Roy Lisker

September 27, 2001

