

## The Battle of Algiers

1 VILLA HEADQUARTERS. INSIDE. NIGHT.

Inside a three-story villa, just built, with whitewashed walls. An elevator shaft is empty, the large cables dangle.

On every landing two apartments. The front doors are wide open. Whitewash on the floor of the halls, swirls of whitewash on the windowpanes, naked light bulbs hung from electric wires. The rooms contain hardly any furnishings.

The kitchens are still without sinks and stoves.

An agitated bustle, a rhythm of efficiency. Paratroopers go up and down the stairs, pass along the halls, enter and leave the rooms.

The sounds in the background are indecipherable.

SHOUTED ORDERS, CRIES, HOWLS.

SHOUTS, HALF-SPOKEN REMARKS, LAUGHS.

SOMEWHERE A GRAMOPHONE IS PLAYING AT FULL BLAST.

The scene is tense. No pauses.

When the paras are tired, they move to another room.

They sit down, stretch out on the floor, drink coffee or beer, and smoke cigarettes while awaiting the next shift. Suddenly, the rhythm of this routine, the timing of these images is upset. A para rushes down the stairs, and asks cheerfully while running:

MARC

The colonel. Where's the colonel?

PARAS

Why? What's happening?

MARC

We know where Ali la Pointe is. One of them "spoke" ...

His voice echoes through the corridors, on the landings, from one floor to another. The excitement is contagious. Many crowd around the door of the kitchen.

The Algerian who has "spoken" is there. He is young with a thin face and feverish eyes. The paras are all around him: they help him stand up, dry him, clean his face with a rag, give him some coffee in a thermos cover. They are full of attention, sincerely concerned. One of them tries to push away the others.

PARA

C'mon, let him breathe!

Meanwhile others who are arriving ask if it is true.

OTHER PARAS

So he spoke? Does he really know where  
Ali is?

MARC

It seems so. We'll go see. Give him a  
little coffee.

Marc is tall and husky, his eyes young and cheerful. One of the others asks him with a shade of admiration:

PARA

Hey Marc, you made him talk?

MARC

(smiling)  
Sure.

He then begins to smoke again, and moves aside to rest a bit. The Algerian is trying to drink, but his hands are trembling. Someone helps him and holds still the cover of the thermos, drawing it to his mouth:

LAGLOY

C'mon Sadek ... Drink, you'll feel better.

The Algerian drinks, but his stomach can't take it, causing him to double over and vomit again.

Colonel Mathieu enters, elegant and graceful.

MATHIEU

(smiling)  
At ease. Is it true?

MARC

I think so. Rue des Abderames three ...

The colonel turns to the para, who had gone to call him, and who is holding a pair of camouflage fatigues in his hands.

MATHIEU

Dress him.

Then he goes near the Algerian, lifts his chin, inspects him for a moment with curiosity.

MATHIEU

Chin up, it's all over. Nothing can happen to you now, you'll see. Can you stand up?

The Algerian nods yes. The colonel turns to the paras who are holding him up.

MATHIEU

Let him go.

He takes the camouflage fatigues and hands them to the Algerian.

MATHIEU

Here, put them on.

The Algerian mechanically takes the fatigues, but he doesn't understand. The colonel explains to him:

MATHIEU

We're trying to help you. We're going to the Casbah. Dressed like this, they won't be able to recognize you. Understand? We're going to see the place, then you'll be free ... and under our protection ...

The Algerian shivers from the cold. He is completely naked. He laboriously puts on the fatigues which are too big for him.

MATHIEU

Go on, give him the cap.

They give him a wide belt and buckle it. The other paras, one on either side of him, pull up his sleeves to the elbows. A third places the cap on his head and cocks it.

LAGLOY

Nationalized!

The colonel turn to him angrily:

MATHIEU

Don't be an idiot, Lagloy!

The Algerian is ready. The paras look at him repressing their laughter. The Algerian continues to tremble. His breath is short, his eyes glossy. He is crying.

CAPTAIN

Let's go.

The Algerian looks around. He breathes deeply. Then, suddenly, unexpectedly, he lets out a hoarse cry:

SADEK

No!

and tries to jerk forward toward the window.

Marc seizes him immediately, and with his right hand grabs him by the chest, almost lifting him. With his left hand he gives him two quick slaps, not very hard.

MARC

(persuadingly)

What do you think you're doing, you fool?  
Do you want us to start all over again?  
C'mon, be good. Don't make me look like  
an idiot in front of the others.

He makes a reassuring sign to the colonel. Then, he takes the Algerian by the arms, and they move off.

2 STREETS OF ALGIERS. OUTSIDE. DAWN. OCTOBER 7, 1957.

The city is gray and white, by the sea which looks like milk. The dawn outlines her features sharply.

The streets and wide avenues of the European quarters are empty. Silence, until gradually is heard ...

A HUMMING OF MOTORS.

One truck after another. Their headlights on, with an opaque glow, by now useless.

A line of trucks follow one another along the sea-front, all at the same speed.

They turn right and go up toward Place du Gouvernement.

Here, without stopping, the columns divide in two. The two lines enter each of the two roads that lead up to surround the Casbah.

In the brighter light, the Casbah appears completely white, limestone. Enclosed by the European city, it stands at a greater height and overlooks it.

Mosaic of terraces. White pavement, pavement interspersed by the black outlays of narrow alleys. Only a jump from one terrace to another ...

Agile and silent, the paras jump one by one from the trucks in a hurry.

SOUND OF TRUCKS.

They arrange themselves geometrically, their movements synchronized. They disperse and disappear in the alleys.

They reappear together, then once again scatter.

They meet without looking at one another; each one takes his own course.

In like manner without a sound, they are above, even on the terraces, in perfect geometry. Even up here, the paras tighten their grip ...

3 RUE DES ABDERAMES. COURTYARD OF HOUSE. INSIDE/OUTSIDE. DAWN.

Every three yards, there is a para, even at all four corners of an intersection.

They are also in the side streets as well as the main streets.

And also above, against the sky, many other paras appear.

Number three. The doorway is the height of a man. A squadron stands ready in a semicircle with machine guns in firing position.

Marc continues to hold up the Algerian by his arm.

The captain glances at his watch, then looks up at the terrace and gives a signal.

In a lowered voice, without turning around, he speaks to the para who is at his back:

CAPTAIN

Fire ...

The para nears the front door, his legs wide open, his machine gun, clenched at his side, and aims at the lock.

MACHINE GUN FIRE.

He moves the gun barrel in a circular direction.

Immediately the others hurl themselves against the door.

At the same time, the door of the terrace is broken down, and the paras burst into the house below.

The inner courtyard is square. In the center there is a well; above, a patch of sky; on four sides, the arcades, columns, and majolica arches. Beneath the porches, there is a door for every dwelling. And above, a balcony with railings and other doors. The doors are wide open. The paras quickly carry out their orders.

ORDERS, CURT AND BRIEF.

The people are used to all this and know how to obey. The scene takes place exactly as if it were an arranged maneuver, a practice drill.

The rooms are emptied in a few seconds. The people are crowded together in the courtyard.

Eyes wide with fright.

Men, women, and children with blankets and sheets thrown around their shoulders. By now, it is almost day. A soft light is diffused from above.

The Algerian walks with his head lowered, Marc on one side, the captain on, the other.

They climb to the first floor and go along the balcony.

The Algerian stops in front of a door.

The captain murmurs softly:

CAPTAIN

Here?

The Algerian nods yes. They enter.

#### 4 ALI'S ROOM. INSIDE. DAWN.

The room is badly lit. There is a mattress on the floor, and another on the table, a cupboard against the wall, some chairs. Nothing else. At the back of the room to the left, there is a dividing curtain hung by a cord at medium height. The curtain is drawn and a large bed with brass headboards is visible. The Algerian points in that direction; the captain signals for him to go there.

They go forward silently, and push aside the curtain. There is a small light bulb hung on the wall beneath a small shelf covered with postcards and photos.

The baseboard all around is more than three feet tall and is covered by majolica tiles.

The Algerian points to a spot in the brick structure, on the back wall, between the headboard of the bed and a corner of the room.

Marc and the captain have their machine guns ready. The captain goes near the wall, his breath drawn, and begins to examine it.

He runs the fingernail of his thumb along the wall horizontally, between one row of tiles and another.

He taps the tiles at different places until he hears the plaster in the interstices crumble. He looks at the bit of plaster that is left in his nail.

He squeezes it in his fingertips; it is soft, newly laid.

Then he bends over, places his ear to the wall, and listens.

Suddenly he smiles.

5 ALI'S HIDING PLACE. INSIDE.

There isn't enough air in the hiding place. The four are forced to breathe deeply. And in that small space their laborious breaths resound like splashes.

Ali la Pointe has his eyes fixed upon the square patch of wall that seals the hiding place. His eyes are large, black, slanted, his eyelids heavy, somewhat lowered, so that the black of the irises appears even blacker in the shadows, deeper and more sullen.

Petit Omar is with him, a boy of twelve, and Mahmoud who is eighteen. There is also Hassiba, a Kabyle girl, blond, blue-eyed, and fair skinned.

The hiding place is only five feet high, and hardly holds them. They are sitting or stretched out on the ground, close to one another.

The entrance to the hiding place is blocked by the small patch of wall which matches exactly the rest. It is held firm by a bar through an iron ring attached at the center. On the other side of the cell, above them, there is a hole for air.

They are tense and do not move. Their lips are dry, half-open, and their breasts rise and fall in a difficult attempt to breathe.

CAPTAIN

(off)

Ali la Pointe ... the house is surrounded. You haven't got a chance. Surrender. Let the child and the girl come out, then you and the other one. Leave your weapons inside. It's useless to try anything. Our machine guns are ready to fire -- you wouldn't have time. Do you understand?

Ali's face is motionless and hasn't changed its expression.

CAPTAIN

(off)

Ali, do you hear me? Listen! You are the last one. The organization is finished. All your friends are dead or in prison. Come out. You'll have a fair trial. Come out, surrender.

SOUND OF FOOTSTEPS, OTHER VOICES, CHEERFUL, INCOHERENT:

VOICES PARAS

Why are they breathing so heavily?  
Fear ...  
Air ...  
They haven't got enough air inside ...

And again the voice of the captain, clear and somewhat distant:

CAPTAIN

(off)

Make up your mind, Ali? Do you want us to wall you in, or do you prefer that we blow you to pieces? ... Alright. So much the worse for you.

Ali's expression is still firm; his stare is dark and sullen.

6 VIEWS OF THE CASBAH. OUTSIDE. DAY. NOVEMBER 1, 1954.

The Casbah: compressed humanity, swarming in the alleyways, on the steps, in the cafes, in the Arab baths, in the mosques, and in the markets; a tangle of voices, gestures, faces, veiled women, eyes. Someone is putting up a handbill, another distributes them.

SPEAKER

"National Liberation Front! Algerian brothers! The time has come to break loose at long last from the bonds of misery in which one hundred and thirty years of colonial oppression has kept us chained. The moment of struggle is near; our goal -- national independence ..."

7 VIEWS OF THE EUROPEAN CITY. OUTSIDE. DAY.

The European city: reinforced concrete, asphalt, steel, lights, shop windows, buildings, automobiles. A steady rhythm of efficiency, music, cordiality, an apéritif.

SPEAKER

"In order to avoid a fatal and bloody conflict, we propose an honorable program of discussion to the French authorities, on condition that they recognize the right of our people to self-government ..."

And the Algerians who work in the European city, the dockers, waiters, laborers, street-cleaners, farm-hands, and gardeners.

SPEAKER

"Algerians unite! Be ready for action!  
The National Liberation Front calls you to

struggle."

Unemployed, peddlers, beggars, shoeshine boys ...

8 STREET CARD GAME. OUTSIDE. DAY.

Two hands are moving; one over the other, they criss-cross with incredible speed; at the same time, they are shifting three small pieces of wood which appear to be identical. The hand movements are marked by a kind of Algerian CHANT.

From time to time, the pieces of wood are overturned for a split second so that the other sides are visible. Robust hands, thick, unusually agile for their size. The hands of Ali la Pointe, younger then, twenty-four years old.

A European quarter of Algiers. Coming and going of people, automobile traffic. On the sidewalk a small group of European and two Algerian boys.

Other passersby stop to watch. The group crowds around the stand where Ali la Pointe is playing his game.

The entranced eyes of all present are staring at the pieces of wood.

Ali's hands seem to move by themselves.

His glance, always a bit sullen, apparently distracted, indifferent, passes from one face to another, and then to the street, from one side to another.

At fifty yards, a policeman. Two Europeans, a man and a woman, are speaking to him in an excited manner, and nudging him along pointing to Ali.

WOMAN

Look! Yes, that's him!

Ali is no longer singing. His hands have stopped moving.

A POLICE SIREN IS HEARD.

Ali pushes his way through the crowd.

He breaks into a run.

The policeman also begins to run.

9 STREET. ALI'S FLIGHT. OUTSIDE. DAY.

The street is sloping. Ali flees, pursued by the policeman. He dodges passersby with agility. He gains ground. But nearby are heard ...

SIRENS

and also in front of him.

Another two policemen; they too are running.

There is an intersection. At the corner, a cafe.

GAY MUSIC.

Young Europeans leaning against a shop window stop chattering and look.

Ali reaches the corner, crosses the street, passes by the bar.

There is a blond youth, about eighteen, who seems to be a student who stretches out his foot, and pushes a chair in front of him.

Ali stumbles and falls.

The youth attempts a laugh, and at the same time moves backward.

Ali is lying face downward, but suddenly turns his head toward the youth and stares at him. Then lifting himself by his arms, he turns to look back.

The police are now twenty yards away.

Ali gets to his feet. For a split second, he hesitates. He hurls himself against the youth, headfirst.

Using his head, Ali rams into the youth's face, striking him in the nose and splurting blood everywhere.

The youth is unable to shout. He opens his mouth in the attempt, but the only result is a gurgling sound and blood. His friends intervene. Ali is surrounded. The police arrive. A mass of people jump on Ali, kicking him and striking him with their fists as long as they please. Finally the police aid Ali and disperse the crowd.

Ali is now in handcuffs and being led away.

More people have arrived. They are yelling, shouting insults, and spitting on Ali.

Ali passes in their midst protected by the police. He pays no heed to the fist blows, the shouts, the spits, but seems neither to see nor hear, as if he were already resigned to having lost the battle this time, and were preparing to wait patiently for a better chance.

He is walking with an unfaltering step. His face is emotionless, oval, swarthy. His hair black and wavy, his forehead low and wide; his eyes large and slanted with eyelids somewhat lowered, his mouth firm and proud.

SPEAKER

Omar Ali, known as "Ali la Pointe" born in Miliana, March 1, 1930. Education: Illiterate. Occupation: Manual laborer, farm hand, boxer, presently unemployed. Former convictions: 1942 -- Oran Juvenile Court, one year of reformatory school for acts of vandalism. 1944 -- Two years of reformatory school for theft. 1949 -- Court of Algiers, eight months for compulsory prostitution and resisting arrest. Habitual offender.

10 PARIS 1955. OUTSIDE. DAY.

The air is clear and springlike. A 4CV Citroen delivery van is parked in front of the Minister of the Interior warehouses. The rear door is open, the motor is running, a policeman is at the wheel. Two workers in overalls exit from the warehouses.

Each one is carrying a box, and places it inside the van. The boxes are made of seasoned wood, both of them rectangular. They are each about eight inches long; one and two yards high respectively. The two workers sit down inside the van, toward the rear. They are facing toward the exterior. Their feet are dangling and almost touch the ground.

The jolting movement of the van in motion causes them to laugh.

STREETS OF PARIS. Spring. Girls with lightweight clinging dresses. The two workers call them, whistle, gesture, and then move off in the distance.

ORLY AIRPORT. The van stops in front of a warehouse. The two workers jump to the ground, place the boxes on their shoulders, and enter the warehouse.

The boxes are moving on a mobile ramp. There is a large label on each one which says: REPUBLIC OF FRANCE. MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR. DESTINATION: BARBEROUSSE PRISON. ALGIERS.

11 ALGIERS. BARBEROUSSE PRISON. OUTSIDE. MORNING.

Barberousse prison is situated on the outskirts of the Upper Casbah. It is an ancient fortress with thick, high surrounding walls, which appear to vanish in contrast with the central building which dominates them. The whole structure is covered with limestone like the other houses of the Casbah. Only the bars on the windows and the big gate are black.

The gate opens. A covered jeep enters the prison courtyard. In the stronghold of the jeep are the two boxes sent from Paris.

Early morning. The sky is pale blue. In the prison courtyard, the workers open the two chests and assemble the guillotine. It is possible to see it from the cell windows that face the courtyard. Faces of prisoners appear between the bars of some windows.

The workers have disappeared. Only the delicate, makeshift structure of the guillotine is visible, its slender outline lengthened.

12 PRISON CELL. INSIDE. MORNING.

In one of the cells there are about twenty prisoners. The cell is huge; there are two very high windows that almost reach the ceiling.

A prisoner is standing on the urine bucket, and looks outside through the barred window. On the ground there are some mats which serve as beds. Nothing else.

About ten prisoners are in a group, seated on the ground, and they are speaking in whispers.

AD LIB DIALOGUE IN LOWERED VOICES.

Two of them are playing with some stones on a chessboard drawn in the dirt; others are speaking among themselves. One is reading a Mickey Mouse comic book and laughing to himself. But all of them, in appearance and behavior, are distinguished from those who make up the more numerous group. These solitary men are different in some way, they are not ordinary delinquents.

Ali la Pointe is alone, withdrawn from the others, seated on the ground, his shoulders propped against the wall, his knees raised. He is barefoot. On his left ankle, directly above his foot, are tattooed two words in print: TAIS-TOI. His shirt is unbuttoned and on his chest are other tattoos in a strange design.

Ali looks at the group and seems to listen to their murmured words absent-mindedly. His expression is taciturn, reserved, and indifferent.

Ali turns to the prisoner at the window.

PRISONER AT WINDOW

Look at them!

Ali jumps to his feet. Everyone moves toward the two windows.

Ali moves away two yards at a quick pace, then runs toward the window, and grabbing hold of the bars, heaves himself up to it.

The condemned man turns and looks up toward the windows. He seems to smile although his face is motionless. In a soft voice, he speaks to those faces which appear behind the bars:

CONDEMNED MAN

Tahia el Djez-air! [Long live Algeria!]

The political prisoners take up the phrase and recite it gutturally, keeping time to the steps of the condemned man.

POLITICAL PRISONERS

Tahia el Djez-air!

13 PRISON COURTYARD. OUTSIDE. MORNING.

The condemned man walks toward the guillotine accompanied by guards and a priest reading the Koran. There is also the executioner wearing a black hood. The executioner tries to appear indifferent. The priest recites his prayers. The entire ceremony seems improvised and hasty. The epilogue is reached quickly.

PRAYERS.

The condemned man bends. The executioner places his neck in the right position, adjusts it, turns his head a bit, then pushes his body forward. He releases the mechanism.

The blade falls, the head rolls. There is no longer a chorus. No one is chanting.

Ali's eyes have remained motionless.

Then from above, as the dismembered body is being carried away in a basket, as the priest, the guards, and the officer are leaving, as the workers dismantle the guillotine, from above, from the balconies of the Casbah, suddenly the "ju-jus" of the women are heard, dense like the cries of birds, shrill, metallic, angry.

WOMEN

Ju-ju ...

14 SMALL SQUARE. CASBAH. OUTSIDE. DAY. JANUARY 1956.

It is raining. The water runs along the gulleys of the narrow alleys. The white houses have turned spongy gray. The children of the Casbah are playing and spattering mud. Skinny and half-naked children with bloated bellies and hair cropped because of sores.

Their mothers call them in vain. They continue to run, play, and wallow in the mud with a despairing gaiety.

CALLS. VOICES. SHOUTS.

Petit Omar was then ten years old. He is slender, dressed in long pants and a jacket which is too large for him and torn so that he seems almost clownish. Calm and absorbed, he passes in the midst of the other children, but doesn't notice them or their games.

A small square on a sloping ascent.

In the center, a fountain. On the elevated side of the square, on a corner, there is a mosque.

SOUNDS OF CHURCH MUSIC.

Standing still at the foot of the steps is an Algerian in white cloak, and hood down to his eyes. Other people pass by. The Algerian is turned to one side so as not to be seen. Petit Omar walks toward him and nears his back. The Algerian turns; it is Ali la Pointe. He tells the boy with a tone of boredom and curtness:

ALI

Go away!

PETIT OMAR

Men have two faces: one that laughs and one that cries ...

Ali looks at him incredulously and asks:

ALI

And they sent you!

The child slips a hand under his sweater to his chest.

PETIT OMAR

Sure, something wrong with that?

Omar takes out a piece of paper folded in four, and hands it to Ali.

PETIT OMAR

Take it. Everything's written here.

He turns away and begins to run.

ALI

Wait!

Omar stops running and turns to Ali.

ALI

Come here ... Come.

Omar retraces his footsteps. Ali goes to meet him.

ALI

(in a brusque manner)  
Can you read?

PETIT OMAR

Sure ...

Ali hands back the paper.

ALI

Read it.

PETIT OMAR

Here?

Ali turns and looks around him. He squats on his heels in order to reach Omar's height.

ALI

Here.

It is still drizzling. Omar unfolds the paper and begins to read it.

15 RUE RANDOM. CAFE MEDJEBRI. OUTSIDE/INSIDE. DAY.

The following day at 5 p.m., rue Random. The street is fairly wide for a street in the Arab quarter and at this hour it is crowded with people. There are Algerians in traditional costumes and others in European clothes. Noisy and tumultuous background ...

VOICES, SOUNDS, WORDS -- ALL MIXED TOGETHER.

Veiled women with intent glances. Silent women who seem to float through the crowds, untouchable.

An Arab cafe filled with customers at the tables and bar. Through the large shop window, a smoky, steamy interior is visible. The cafe is located in rue Random, number 40.

OMAR

(off)

There is an Arab cafe at rue Random 40.  
The owner's name is Medjebri. He is a  
police informer ...

Medjebri is standing behind the cash register, smiling, very busy. He is wearing a traditional costume. He is very clearly visible through the shop window above the heads of the customers.

In a doorway near the cafe there is a clock hanging from a signboard in front of a store. It is five o'clock. A French policeman enters the cafe.

OMAR

(off)

Every day at 5 p.m., a French policeman goes to see him. He stops for a few minutes to get information with the excuse of drinking a cup of tea. You have

to kill the policeman ...

ALI

(off)

Not Medjebri?

Medjebri moves away from the register, still standing behind the bar, to where the policeman is seated. He greets him, and hands him a cup of tea.

OMAR

(off)

No. It says the policeman.

The policeman is leaning on the bar. He is tall and husky, and is wearing a scruffy uniform with a kepi pushed back somewhat. Now his thick lips are sipping the scalding mint tea.

ALI

(off)

Okay ...

The large clock and store signboard. Standing in front, there is a slender girl, veiled, her eyes darting in contrast with the rigid form of her motionless body. Her arms are raised to form an arch, her hands supporting the edges of a large basket balanced on her head.

OMAR

(off)

At the corner, right in front of the large clock, there will be a girl carrying a basket. When the policeman comes out, you will follow him together. At the right moment she will give you a pistol. You have only to shoot ... quickly and in the back.

Now the policeman has finished drinking his tea. He makes a sign to pay. Smiling, Medjebri refuses the money, and says good-bye.

Ali approaches the girl. They exchange glances. The girl puts down her basket which is filled with corn, and rests it by her side.

She moves slowly toward the cafe. Ali walks beside her.

The policeman is coming out of the cafe. He rudely bumps into those who are entering.

He makes his way along the sidewalk, and moves further away, balancing his heavy body at every step.

Ali and the girl are about a yard away from him. They follow him, pushed along with the many others who are crowded on the sidewalk.

Then the girl plunges her hand into the corn. In a second, she places the revolver in Ali's right hand.

He holds it under his cloak. The policeman's back is a hand's-bredth away. But Ali does not shoot.

He moves forward to pass by the policeman.

Alarmed, the girl looks at him, and tries to hold him back. She shakes her head as if to speak.

Ali smiles at her. His eyes have a hard glint.

He moves a few steps past the policeman. Suddenly Ali turns, lifts his arm as if to push his way through, and then stretches out his hand with the revolver aimed.

The policeman stops; his eyes are wide with fear. Instinctively he lifts his arms and opens his palms.

Terror paralyzes him.

Ali glances about him. Many people are moving away hastily, but others stand still in a circle and watch fascinated. Ali speaks to all of them, in a loud voice. His eyes are alight.

ALI

Don't move! Look at him. You're not giving any orders now! Your hands are up, eh! Do you see him, brothers? Our masters aren't very special, are they?

A sharp, metallic click. Ali tries a second time, presses the trigger again.

SEVERAL CLICKS. REVOLVER EMPTY.

Ali rolls the gun barrel; it is empty.

The policeman slowly lowers his hands. His right hand rushes to his holster.

Ali is ready to jump, throws away the gun, and starts to move forward.

He knocks down the policeman, who is overwhelmed, and falls backward.

The crowd moves away quickly. Ali starts to throw himself on the Frenchman lying on the ground, but stops halfway.

A thought restrains him. He turns and sees the girl who has picked up the revolver and hidden it again in her basket.

Then she moves away hurriedly.

Ali curses angrily, then, kicks the policeman's head twice, and runs after the girl.

He reaches her, grabs her shoulder so roughly that she shouts.

ALI  
(in a whisper)  
Bastard! ... Bitch!

The girl struggles free from his grip. At the same time, they hear behind them ...

POLICE WHISTLES.

The girl quickens her step.

16 SIDE ALLEY WITH FRONT DOOR. OUTSIDE/INSIDE. SUNSET.

The girl arrives at a side street, enters it, and breaks into a run.

Ali is again beside her, but unexpectedly the girl enters a front door.

She bends, places the basket on the ground, removes the revolver, and hides it in her breast beneath her shawl. She gets up again, and leaves the basket. Ali blocks her way.

ALI  
Tell me what this joke is all about.

The girl attempts to push past him toward the door.

DJAMILA  
Let's move now or they'll catch us.

Ali grabs her by the arm, shakes her, and shouts uncontrollably:

ALI  
I want to know who sent me that letter.  
What's his name?

DJAMILA  
He's waiting for you!

ALI  
Where?

DJAMILA  
We're going there ... if you don't get us  
arrested first.

The girl nods toward the street where two policemen are passing by hastily.

Ali moves backward into the shadow of the doorway. He regains control of his nerves, loosens his cloak, and lets it fall on the basket. He is dressed in European clothes, trousers and pullover.

ALI

(pushing her ahead)

Move ... go ahead. I'll follow you.

The girl takes a look outside, then goes out. Ali follows her a few steps behind. By now it is dusk.

17 TERRACE. KADER'S HOUSE. OUTSIDE. NIGHT.

It is a starry night and there are few lights visible in the windows of the Casbah. In the background, there is the triumphant neon of the European city, the sea, the ships at anchor, the shining beams of a lighthouse. Kader turns around gracefully, and goes to sit on the wall of the terrace.

KADER

You could have been a spy. We had to put you to the test.

Ali looks at him sullenly.

ALI

With an unloaded pistol?

KADER

I'll explain.

Kader is a few years older than Ali, but not so tall. He is slender with a slight yet sturdy bone structure. The shape of his face is triangular, aristocratic, his lips thin, his eyes burning with hatred, but at the same time, cunning. He continues to speak in a calm tone which has an ironic touch to it.

KADER

Let's suppose you were a spy. In prison, when the NLF contacts you, you pretend to support the revolution, and then the French help you to escape ...

ALI

Sure. By shooting at me.

KADER

Even that could be a trick. You escape, then show up at the address which the brothers in prison gave to you, and so you are able to contact me ...

ALI

I don't even know your name yet ...

KADER

My name is Kader, Ali ... Saari Kader ...  
In other words, in order to join the organization, you had to undergo a test. I could have told you to murder the barman, but he's an Algerian ... and the police would let you kill him, even though he is one of theirs. By obeying such an order, you still could have been a double agent. And that's why I told you to kill the French policeman: because the French wouldn't have let you do it. If you were with the police you wouldn't have done it.

Ali has followed Kader's logic a bit laboriously, and he is fascinated by it. But not everything is clear yet.

ALI

But I haven't shot him.

KADER

(smiling)

You weren't able to. But what's important is that you tried.

ALI

What's important for me is that you let me risk my life for nothing.

KADER

C'mon ... you're exaggerating. The orders were to shoot him in the back.

ALI

I don't do that kind of thing.

KADER

Then don't complain.

ALI

You still haven't told me why you didn't let me kill him.

KADER

Because we aren't ready yet for the French. Before attacking, we must have safe places from which to depart and find refuge. Of course, there is the Casbah. But even the Casbah isn't safe yet. There are too many drunks, pushers, whores, addicts, spies ... people who talk too

much ... people who are ready to sell themselves, undecided people. We must either convince them or eliminate them. We must think of ourselves first. We must clean out the Casbah first. Only then will we be able to deal with the French. Do you understand, Ali?

Ali doesn't answer.

Kader has come down from the wall and looks toward the Casbah. Ali too looks toward the Casbah, immersed in the night.

ALI

And how many are we?

KADER

Not enough.

18 AREAS OF CASBAH UNDERWORLD. OUTSIDE/INSIDE. DAY. MARCH 1956.

A warm spring wind, large white clouds. At the western edge of the Casbah, from the Upper to Lower Casbah, the street of the Algerian underworld descends to the brothel quarter.

SPEAKER

"National Liberation Front, bulletin number 24. Brothers of the Casbah! The colonial administration is responsible not only for our people's great misery, but also for the degrading vices of many of our brothers who have forgotten their own dignity ..."

Shady bars for gamblers and opium smokers, shops filled with tourist trinkets, merchants, fences, pimps, children with adult faces, ghastly old women, and young girls, whores standing in the doorways of their houses. The girls having their faces uncovered have put scarves on their heads, knotted at the nape.

SPEAKER

"Corruption and brutality have always been the most dangerous weapons of colonialism. The National Liberation Front calls all the people to struggle for their own physical and moral redemption -- indispensable conditions for the reconquest of independence. Therefore beginning today, the clandestine authority of the NLF prohibits the following activities: gambling, the sale and usage of all types of drugs, the sale and usage of alcoholic

beverages, prostitution and its solicitation. Transgressors will be punished. Habitual transgressors will be punished by death."

19 BAR. EUROPEAN CITY FACING CASBAH. OUTSIDE/INSIDE. SUNSET.

It is dusk. In the European city, the first lights are visible. People begin to crowd the bars for an apéritif.

An Algerian shoeshine man leaves his workbox at the entrance of the bar. He goes to the counter. He is tall and thin as a reed. He takes from his pocket a handful of change; his hands tremble slightly as he counts it.

The barman recognizes him, fills a glass of wine, and places it in front of him. The Algerian pays and takes the glass. It's probably not his first; the trembling of his hands increases. The Algerian drinks the wine in one gulp, then goes to the door. He waits patiently while some Europeans enter. He goes out, picks up his workbox, and moves away.

20 RUE MARENGO AND STEPS. OUTSIDE. SUNSET.

The Algerian is standing at the top of some steep, almost vertical steps that lead from the European quarters to the Casbah.

Now he is in rue Marengo. There is still some daylight. The street is crowded. The Algerian is unsteady on his legs. He stops and mutters something to himself. It is obvious that he is trying to hide his drunkenness.

He begins to walk, his hand against the wall for support. He stumbles.

The workbox falls, scattering brushes and cans of shoe polish on the ground. The Algerian bends down, and begins to pick up his tools. He is swearing.

Others have seen him. A peddler points him out to a child of about ten. It is Petit Omar, who nods yes, then whistles.

Another whistle answers him, then another and another.

There are other children, at every corner of the street.

They arrive in a run and gather together.

Omar points to the drunk who is now moving away, and gives the order to attack. It is evident that this is not a game for them, but a duty.

There is a chorus of brief shouting, of insults, and whistles.

The drunk sees them approaching. He is terrified.

He tries to quicken his step.

They reach him quickly and surround him. They attack him and then flee, small yet elusive. They do not laugh even once; their faces are hard and cruel.

The drunk swings around holding his workbox by its strap.

Some children are hit; some fall.

The drunk avails himself of this chance to escape, and retraces his steps to the staircase.

He begins to descend toward the European quarters. But the children are again upon him.

They are shouting more loudly now, and pushing him. He quickens his step, and staggering jumps the steps two by two.

The children trip him and he falls.

He is crying. He shields himself with his hands.

The workbox has fallen and is rolling down the steps. The children are now on top of him, like small beasts on a carrion. They smother him, push him and pull him. They are no longer shouting.

All of them are intent upon their efforts. Only the drunk is shouting despairingly.

They succeed in moving him, and hurl him down the steps. He rolls downward, trying in vain to grab something with his hands.

21 BAR CASBAH. OUTSIDE/INSIDE. DAY.

Outside the sun's light is blinding. Inside the small bar there is fresh air and shade.

A young Algerian, with lifeless eyes and an idle expression, is rolling an opium cigarette. He lights it. Two slaps cause the cigarette to fall from his lips.

Ali la Pointe is wearing a djellabah, a type of cloak without buttoning which slips on over the head. There is an opening of about eight inches at the waist.

Ali has stretched his arm through the opening to slap the opium addict, who recognizes Ali, smiles, and makes a dazed grimace.

OPIUM-ADDICT

Ali la Pointe ...

ALI

Wake up! Have you seen Hacene le Bonois?

OPIUM-ADDICT

(shaking his head)

Not today ...

Then he gets up laboriously, bends down, and looks for the cigarette that had fallen from his hand.

He doesn't reach it. Ali quickly crushes the cigarette with his foot. He is wearing a pair of sneakers. He moves away and leaves the bar.

22 STREET BAR. CASBAH. OUTSIDE. DAY.

Ali continues to scour the streets. From time to time, without lingering, he asks someone:

ALI

Seen Hacene le Bonois?

Then adds:

ALI

Tell him I'm looking for him ...

23 BROTHEL QUARTERS. OUTSIDE. DAY.

OFF LIMITS

Entrance to the brothel quarters. The street widens, the alleys branch off and seem to broaden. There are one or two Europeans, not only tourists in search of adventure, but also elements of the international criminal underworld who mingle here with the Algerians.

Almost all the buildings house a brothel or other place of ill-repute. On some doorways signs are hanging which read:

THIS IS AN HONEST HOUSE.

24 BROTHEL. INSIDE. DAY.

Ali has entered a brothel. It is morning and there are few clients. The whores are Algerian and European. Some of them are pretty.

The madam is an Algerian, dressed in European clothes. She is about forty, heavily made up. When she spots Ali, she interrupts her usual professional chant. She seems curious, yet glad.

MADAM

(shouting)

Ali la Pointe!

She stops herself, already sorry for having spoken so quickly and imprudently. Ali doesn't answer her, but approaches with a steady and serious glance.

MADAM

(changing tone)

Haven't seen you around for some time. I thought you were still in prison.

Ali leans against the counter, never once taking his eyes off her.

ALI

Is Hacene le Bonois here?

MADAM

No. He left early this morning. You know how it is with the boss ...

ALI

I want to see him. If he shows up, tell him that I'm around.

Ali moves away from the counter and turns. He leaves without a word. The woman tries to understand what has happened, and follows him with a worried glance.

25 SMALL STREET. HACENE. OUTSIDE. DAY.

HACENE

Ali, my son ... Where have you been hiding?

Ali turns suddenly, then pulls back so that his back is against the wall of the alley.

ALI

(in sharp voice)

Don't move!

Then he glances at the others.

ALI

Hands still.

The others are three young Algerians, Hacene's bodyguards. Hacene le Bonois is tall with short legs out of proportion with his enormous chest. He is somewhat corpulent. He has a wide face, a cheerful and self-confident expression. His clothing is a strange combination of Algerian and European which does not, however, appear ridiculous, but imposing. At Ali's remark, his expression changes, becomes amazed and baffled. But at the same time, his eyes give away the brain's attempt

to find an explanation and a solution.

HACENE

(astonished)

You know I never carry weapons ...

Ali keeps his arms and hands hidden under his djellabah.

ALI

I know.

Hacene laughs warmly, and stretches out his hands which are enormous, thick and rough.

HACENE

You afraid of these ...?

ALI

Don't move, Hacene.

HACENE

Why are you afraid? We've always been friends. One might even say that I brought you up ... Isn't it true, Ali?

ALI

It's true.

HACENE

What's happened to you?

ALI

The NLF has condemned you to death.

Hacene is stunned. He speaks aloud his thoughts in a soft voice.

HACENE

Ah, so its come to this ...

Then he bursts into loud laughter, and seems to turn to the three guards at his back.

HACENE

I'm dying of laughter! Ha ... ha ...  
ha ...

Ali doesn't speak. He continues to stare at Hacene. Hacene suddenly stops laughing. His tone of voice changes, becomes brusque and hurried.

HACENE

How much are they paying you?

ALI

They're not paying me anything. They've

already warned you twice; this is the last warning. Decide.

HACENE

What ... What must I decide?

ALI

You've got to change occupations, Hacene. Right away!

Hacene makes a gesture as if to emphasize what he is going to say.

HACENE

(with irony)

Okay, you convince me.

Then suddenly, unexpectedly, he lets out a SHRILL SCREAM, like fencers who before plunging their swords, try to frighten their adversaries.

Simultaneously, he hurls himself forward, head lowered and arms outstretched.

Ali steps aside, and releases a BLAST OF MACHINE-GUN FIRE.

Hacene falls flat on his face. There is movement. Some passersby approach. The three boys try to escape.

ALI

(shouting)

Stop!

The barrel of the machine gun is visible through the opening in his djellabah. Ali's voice is quivering angrily:

ALI

Look at him well! Now nobody can do whatever he wants in the Casbah. Not even Hacene ... least of all you three pieces of shit! Go away now ... go away and spread the word ... Go on!

26 WEDDING. OUTSIDE. DAY.

Summer. There is a garland of flowers strung across an alley. A front door is open, and the guests continue to arrive.

27 WEDDING HOUSE. OUTSIDE. DAY.

In the inner courtyard, there are benches and chairs arranged in rows. In front of all of them, there are two chairs separated from the rest, one next to the other. In front of them, there is a small table with a pen and inkstand on top. The people remain standing, about twenty

Algerians, of all ages. They are speaking among themselves in thick whispers. There is an expectant and ceremonious atmosphere.

BUZZING.

Mahmoud was seventeen then. He has soft down on his cheeks, his first beard. He is thin, his neck long and tense, his glance nervous. He appears to be the protagonist of what is about to take place. His hair is combed with care and covered with much hair cream. He is wearing a clean and newly bought white costume.

Many of the others come to speak with him; the younger ones are joking and trying to provoke him.

AD LIB REMARKS.

Mahmoud reacts comically with a grim frown with which he tries in vain to hide his shyness. At the same time, he glances secretly, anxiously, up to the empty balcony on the first floor. Much gay and lively chattering can be heard from an open door above.

28 WEDDING ROOM. INSIDE. DAY.

In the room, a group of girls are busy preparing trays with cups of coffee. They are little more than children, twelve or thirteen years old, with soft complexions, white teeth, and shining eyes. They seem children who are playing, but beneath that veneer of gaiety, some anxiety is noticeable, emotions in suspense. The faltering voice of an old woman calls from the adjoining room.

A girl leaves the group, lifts the dividing curtain, and nearing the bed where the old woman is lying, she kneels beside her. The old woman lifts her hand and places it on the girl's hair, caressing her tenderly. She speaks in a wavering voice, and her small yet kind eyes fill with tears.

OLD WOMAN'S SPEECH IN ARABIC.

The girl nods yes, then she gets up and goes to rejoin her companions. Passing before a mirror, she stops a minute to tidy her hair.

29 WEDDING HOUSE. OUTSIDE. DAY.

They appear on the balcony, then descend to the courtyard. The nervous glance of Mahmoud scans their faces, then rests upon that girl who, with lowered eyelids, also glances quickly at him. Meanwhile the trays are being passed among the guests.

Now the people turn to face the front door. A young man has entered carrying a briefcase under his arm. Behind him are two boys who seem to be his bodyguards, and are the only ones dressed in European clothes. Both of them have their right hands under their jackets, which are old

and torn. They seem to be armed. They close the door, and remain standing on either side of it.

The man with the briefcase walks toward the table. All present look at him respectfully. He smiles, responds to their greetings, shakes hands with all. But he refuses coffee and seems to be in a hurry.

He sits down, places his briefcase on the table, opens it, and takes out a large notebook. From the open briefcase, the metallic butt of a sub-machine gun appears.

On the cover of the notebook is written: NLF -- ALGERIAN AUTONOMOUS ZONE. CIVIL RECORDS.

He turns the pages of the notebook until he reaches the last written page. Then he glances up toward the people who, in the meantime, have taken their seats. He smiles, says a few words, then calls two names.

Mahmoud walks forward stiffly, erect, his eyes staring straight ahead of him.

The girl also walks forward, with a perplexed expression. They sit down next to each other, but without looking at each other. The ceremony consists of a few words. Finally the two youths look at each other. Mahmoud tries to smile, but he cannot.

The girl's expression softens somewhat. Her glance is tender; she lowers her face quickly. Meanwhile the others recite the verses of the Koran in low voices.

CHORUS.

30 RUE D'ISLY. OUTSIDE. DAY. JUNE 20, 1956. 8:05 A.M.

There is a French guard, no more than thirty years old. He has a blond mustache, his beard recently shaved. There are few people in the street. The guard walks slowly, glancing in the shop windows from time to time to admire his reflection. He stops, adjusts his cap, and smiles.

An Algerian appears beside him; he is also young. The guard pretends to be interested in the photographic equipment which is on display, then moves on.

The Algerian's arm springs forward and returns quickly to its place. He plunges the knife into the guard's neck.

The guard opens his mouth wide to shout, but he cannot. The blood gurgles in his gashed throat. None of the few passersby has seen what happened. The guard falls flat on his face. Someone sees him and screams.

The Algerian hurls himself on top of the soldier, opens his holster,

takes his pistol, then gets up pulling the gun with him. The gun is fastened by a leather cord. The cord gets tangled in the gashed neck of the guard.

The Algerian pulls in vain. He panics. He looks about him with terrified eyes.

People approach hurriedly. They are shouting. The Algerian pulls the cord a second time, desperately.

He regains his control, picks up the knife which is lying on the ground, and cuts the leather cord, thus freeing the pistol. The others have almost reached him and he is surrounded, but he manages to dodge them, and escapes.

31 BOULEVARD BRU. OUTSIDE. DAY. 8:40 A.M.

A group of zouaves on patrol, three soldiers and an officer. The street is sloping; on the right there is a high fence covered with advertising signs and cinematographic posters, all of them torn and full of holes; the emptiness on the other side is visible through the holes.

The soldiers are chatting among themselves and looking at the posters.

A soldier stops because he sees something moving on the other side of the fence.

He points to it and shouts, but not in time.

MACHINE-GUN FIRE INTERRUPTED BY SINGLE SHOTS.

The soldier falls, the others remain motionless, unbelieving. They begin to run and scatter and look for cover.

An Algerian appears on top of the fence. He moves like a cat, and jumps from the other side.

His invisible companions continue to shoot. He is unarmed, and runs to the dead soldier. He grabs the machine gun and retraces his steps. The action takes place in a second.

By now the soldiers too are shooting, but it is too late.

32 POLICE STATION. CHEMIN AIN-ZEBOUDJA. OUTSIDE/INSIDE. DAY. 9:10 A.M.

A police station in the Casbah, a small prefabricated one-story building.

At the main door there is a police guard. A group of five Algerians is approaching. They are talking among themselves, and gesticulating.

BUZZING.

The policeman enjoys watching them, then asks what it's about. All five of them answer him at once, trying to outdo one another.

The policeman has to shout to make them keep quiet. Then, assuming a very humble behavior, they enter silently. The oldest among them speaks in a mournful voice. He seems to be crying and asks the sergeant something.

The policeman calls a colleague, and tells him to accompany the Algerians. Four of them go with the policeman, while another remains in the waiting room, saying that it is better because he is afraid of losing his control.

Then he begins to explain the reasons for the quarrel: it concerns a will. The old man is his grandfather, but he has recently remarried. Then from inside is heard ...

MACHINE-GUN FIRE.

The policeman reacts quickly and tries to draw his gun. But the Algerian is faster and fires point-blank.

The four reappear. One of them is wounded. All of them are armed with revolvers, and carry at their sides a machine gun and two sub-machine guns that they have taken from the armory. Other cries and shots are heard behind them.

All five of them run out in haste.

33 RUE MARENGO. OUTSIDE. DAY. 9:45 A.M.

Another police station. Two policemen are chatting in front of the entrance.

A black Renault is passing by at a walking speed, then slows down almost to the point of halting completely.

The right door opens and there is a burst of machine-gun fire. One of the policemen has been hit, and grabs the other so as not to fall.

Another burst of ...

MACHINE-GUN FIRE.

The two policemen fall down together. The car motor is accelerated, the tires screech and the Renault shoots forward.

A military jeep arrives from the opposite direction, crashes into the car and blocks its escape.

An Algerian flees and is pursued. Another descends from the auto with his hands raised.

The soldiers shoot and kill him.

34 AVENUE DU 8 NOVEMBRE. OUTSIDE. DAY. 1:10 P.M.

A large garage with workshop and filling station. In front are some automobiles and a military truck.

A scooter with two Algerian boys passes by, rumbling noisily along the road. Then at full speed, it makes a sharp turn, retraces its steps and turns again. The boys seem to be showing off for fun.

Meanwhile, the employees of the garage are leaving their work since it is lunchtime. The attendant at the gasoline pumps is left alone.

The scooter stops in front of the high-test gasoline pump. The attendant is a European, an elderly man, who approaches them holding in one hand some bread he has just unwrapped. He detaches the pump handle of high-test, and asks how many gallons.

One of the Algerians points a revolver at the attendant, and tells him to pour out the gasoline on the ground all around. The other, meanwhile, goes to the other two gasoline pumps, detaches the handles, and fastens them in an open position in order to empty them of gasoline. He uses two pieces of iron that he has brought with him to clamp the handles open. He stretches the pump hoses as far as they can go toward the garage and the parked cars.

The gasoline flows all over the large square. The two youths are again on the scooter; they tell the European to move away. They have soaked a rag in gasoline and they light it.

The gasoline continues to flow from the two open pumps. The European is by now far away, the scooter is already moving away, and at the same time, the boys hurl the lit rag into the square. It immediately bursts into flames.

35 COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE. INSIDE. NIGHT.

The night of the same day, in an office of the police commissioner's headquarters. On the desk, photos of the day's terroristic attempts are piled in a heap. An employee is in front of his typewriter.

The Assistant Commissioner is about forty years old, very robust. His face is somewhat wide, ordinary, and with heavy features. He leafs through the photos while speaking on the telephone. It is a very warm night, and the window of the office is open. From outside is heard the SOUND OF TRAFFIC.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER

(on telephone)

Yes, sir, but they haven't received a

search-warrant yet. Rue d'Isly? We followed them for a while, but then we lost track ... Yes, sir, but it is in another precinct. No, it wasn't in theirs ... There are some suspects for rue Marengo ... No ... the judge hasn't given permission yet. He is requesting a formal investigation first. Yes, sir, yes ... Yes, sir, yes -- But we haven't enough men. Of course, I understand ... If it were possible, sir, you should ... but the Commissioner can't ... in ... But couldn't you ... Alright, sir ... We'll let them cut our throats then!

He slams the receiver angrily and begins to dictate his report. His voice is harsh, filled with rancor.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER

Time: 3 P.M. Attempt at homicide against a Patrol of the 3rd B.P.C. Place: Luciani street at El Biar. Weapon: Revolver 7.75. Victim: A soldier wounded in the right leg and groin. Hospitalized. Assailants: Unknown. ... Time: 3:35 P.M. Homicide. Place: Chopin Street, opposite number 20. Weapon: P.M. 38. Victim: Private second-class Dare Jackie, born March 12, 1931. Deceased. Assailant: A moslem. Height: five feet and seven/eights inches. Light colored clothing. Probably escaped in Simca. License plates unknown. Time: Four minutes past 4 P.M. Homicide and attempt at homicide against patrol of border guards. Place: Intersection between Consular Street and General Laquiere ... Wait a minute ...

The officer stops speaking, takes a glass from his desk, and goes near the window. On the ledge, there is a bottle of beer, left there evidently to keep it a bit cool. He takes it, fills his glass and drinks.

Then he speaks in a lowered voice, while looking outside, without even giving any directions to the employee who waits with his hands poised about the keyboard of his typewriter.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER

I want to see the newspapers tomorrow. If they're still talking about pacification of our Moslem brothers!

He returns to his desk.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER

Where were we?

EMPLOYEE

Intersection, between Consular Street and  
General Laquiere Avenue ...

36 VARIED FLASHES. POLICE STATIONS. OUTSIDE. DAY.

In front of police stations: Ain-Zeboudja ... rue Marengo ... and all the others ... in the Casbah ... in the European quarters ... sandbag entrenchments are being prepared, barbed wire is being stretched, metallic lookout turrets are being set up. It is very hot. Workers and policemen work in silence. There is an oppressive atmosphere.

SPEAKER

"Ordinance of the Prefecture of Algiers:  
All police stations in Algiers, without  
exception and until further notice, are  
required to prepare and maintain external  
protection devices. The shifting of guards  
outside must continue uninterrupted  
twenty-four hours a day. Sentinels must  
be equipped with automatic weapons ..."

37 EUROPEAN AND CASBAH PHARMACIES. MUSTAPHA HOSPITAL. OUTSIDE/INSIDE. DAY.

View of pharmacies in the European quarters and in the Casbah.

The shelves, medicines; people who are buying. The Mustapha hospital,  
reserved for Algerians. The wards: hospitalized Algerians.

SPEAKER

"The Governor-General of Algiers decrees:  
Article No. 1 -- The sale of medicinal  
and pharmaceutical products, effective  
for the cures of gunshot wounds, can be  
made only to those who present written  
authorization from the Commissioner of  
Police.

Article No. 2 -- Directors of all  
hospitals and clinics must produce to the  
police authorities an immediate listing  
of all patients admitted to their  
institutions for the care and treatment  
of gunshot wounds."

38 CASBAH ROAD BLOCKS. OUTSIDE. DAY.

The Casbah is being closed off. Every point of entrance, every alley,

every street that joins the Casbah and the European quarters has been blocked off with wooden horses and with barbed wire nine feet high.

There are also workers, policemen, and soldiers who are working at the barricades.

Beyond them, on the other side of the barbed wire, the Algerians seem to be engaged.

SPEAKER

"The Prefecture of Algiers states: In the course of these last few days, dozens of assaults have been committed in this city. We have reason to believe that the assailants originate in the Casbah, and that they have always found a speedy and easy refuge in the alleys of the Arab quarters. As a result, and in order to alleviate without delay the insecurity that now reigns in the city, the Prefecture of Algiers has decided that entrance to the Casbah can only be permitted at those points in the blockade under military control, where citizens in transit must exhibit their documents at request, and submit to eventual searches."

The Casbah is imprisoned, like a huge concentration camp. Only five streets have been left open, the widest streets. There are five exits where the wooden horses serve to restrict passage, and where some wooden posts for the guards are being built.

Every exit is marked by a sign with large lettering.

39 BLOCKADE MARENGO. OUTSIDE. DAY. AUGUST 10, 1956.

At each blockade, there are two ramps, an entrance and an exit to the Casbah. The Algerians and some Europeans crowd around in both directions. The soldiers are wearing fatigues with helmets and machine guns. The Europeans are not requested to show identity papers.

The Algerians are often frisked, and accept this fact silently, patiently, without any sign of intolerance. But if the soldiers attempt to search a woman, then, it is different.

A woman begins to shout, while waving her arms wildly, and pushes away the soldier who had tried to search her. A stream of incoherent words.

Other Algerians intervene; they push forward threateningly. The soldier is young; he is timid and frightened. He looks over his back for help.

A police officer approaches. He has a different tone, and a very self-assured manner. He shouts at the Algerians to calm down.

OFFICER

Are you mad, touching one of their women?  
Go on, go on, alright ... Go ahead, keep  
moving!

The woman passes the blockade, but still continues her protest with a  
shrill and unbearable voice.

40 RUE PHILIPPE. OUTSIDE. DAY. 8:35 A.M.

An Algerian woman walks along the sidewalk. She is elderly, fat, and is  
wearing a traditional costume with her face veiled. She walks slowly  
toward a bar, which has its tables outside, and already some customers.

Near the bar, leaning against a wall, there is an Algerian who now  
begins to move and goes to meet the old woman. They greet one another  
with much warmth, like a mother and son who haven't seen each other for  
a long time.

They embrace, and the man searches at her breast among the folds of her  
veil. He finds a revolver which is hung by a cord, and grabs it. They  
are at ten or twelve feet distance from the bar. At a table, there is a  
French soldier having coffee with cream, croissant, and an open  
newspaper.

The Algerian continues to embrace the old woman, and aims from above  
her shoulders. Only one shot; the newspaper rips, the soldier tries to  
get up again, his face full of blood. Then he collapses on the table.

The Algerian has hidden the revolver in the woman's veil. The two  
separate from their embrace. They seem terrified and surprised, and  
move away from each other in different directions while the people are  
rushing about and SHOUTING.

41 DE LA LYRE MARKET. OUTSIDE. DAY. 9:10 A.M.

The cries of the peddlers are loud and incoherent. An Algerian is  
squatting on his heels in front of his wares scattered on the ground:  
clusters of aromatic herbs, jars of spices. A youth is in front of him,  
and from time to time, he looks around him. He seems to be waiting.

Now he bends down and begins to rummage through the herbs. He selects a  
bunch of mint, weighs it in his hand, and argues the price with the  
peddler.

A policeman in the market passes nearby and watches. The youth waits a  
second, then turns toward the back of the policeman, and stretches out  
his arm.

He has in his hand the bunch of mint; a revolver is hidden among the  
greens. He shoots twice.

The French policeman falls down. The youth drops the mint with the revolver among the other herbs, and moves away in the midst of the crowd.

42 RUE DE BAR-EL-QUED. OUTSIDE. DAY. 10:15 A.M.

In front of the police station there are sandbags and a police guard at duty with helmet and machine gun. The policeman jumps to attention and salutes. An officer has come out of the station and returns his salute. He moves away and walks along the sidewalk.

There are few people. An Algerian seems to appear from nowhere, and walks behind him. He is very young, is wearing a short-sleeved shirt and blue jeans.

The officer turns at the first corner. Further on, there is a row of cars and a metallic sign which warns that the parking space is reserved for police vehicles only.

The officer hears the steps of the boy behind him, and summons him in a brusque manner.

OFFICER

What are you doing here? Where are you going?

The boy shrugs his thin, shoulders and lowers his head.

BOY

(in servile tone)

I'm going for a swim; my friends are waiting for me.

The officer curses under his breath and proceeds. He stops in front of a Dyna-Panhard, parked not too far away.

The boy moves on a few yards past the automobile until he reaches a metallic wastebasket which is fastened to the pole of a street lamp. He stops there, then glances around.

The officer is not far behind him; he has taken his car keys from his pocket, and is about to open the car door. The boy plunges his hand into the basket, rummages among the torn papers, then suddenly turns, points a revolver at the officer's back, and shoots.

The man tries to clutch something, but slips and falls down. The boy shoots again at the man on the ground, then plunges his hand again into the wastebasket, drops the revolver, and glances around him. He breaks into a run.

The policemen come out of the police station hurriedly.

WHISTLES, ORDERS, EXCITED CRIES.

They turn the corner. Some rush to the man lying on the ground. Others jump into a jeep. Four of them jump on motorcycles that are lined up in the rack. They move off in two directions.

At the same time, wails of police sirens moving nearer are heard in the distance. The street is deserted. There is no trace of the boy.

People are seen at their windows. The officer is lifted by his arms.

An ambulance arrives and stops, its siren at full blast, its doors wide open. The officer is placed inside.

The motorcycles are racing through the sidestreets. The jeep converges on them, then reverses its direction, moving while balanced on two wheels.

Passersby stop to watch, all of them Europeans. The siren's wail is at a high pitch.

43 ADJACENT STREETS. OUTSIDE. DAY.

A deserted street, recently covered with wet asphalt.

A Moslem road worker is sitting on the ground next to a steamroller. He is eating his lunch. The combined sounds of the siren's wail and the rumbling of the motorcycles are heard approaching.

Two motorcyclists appear in the street, passing by the road worker.

One of them stops and turns around.

The road worker moves backward to the street corner. He breaks into a run. His eyes are burning with fear, his face is anxious, undecided.

From the windows, the people point to him, and shout after him.

A jeep appears in the street in front of him.

The motorcyclist approaches from the opposite direction.

The Algerian stops running; he doesn't know what to do.

From the windows, continuous SHOUTING.

The Algerian leans against the wall, watches the scene, and begins to cry. The policemen jump down from the jeep and leap at him. The Algerian isn't able to speak, but only shakes his head.

44 POLICE STATION. INSIDE. DAY.

A room inside the police station. The Algerian's face is beaten from right and left by a series of slaps.

The room is filled with policemen. All of them are practically on top of the Algerian; all of them are shouting. In the confusion can be heard SHOUTS.

VARIED VOICES

Do you know he's dead, you bastard? Do you know you killed him?

They try to reach him, pushing against one another in order to get closer and hit him. The Algerian is crying and speaks in broken-off phrases, half Arabic and half French. His continual efforts to repeat certain words are heard:

ALGERIAN

No, no, no, no, ... me no ... Viva France ...

An officer arrives making his way.

OFFICER

Get out, go on, outside ... Get out of the way! Go away ...

They make way for him; he reaches the Algerian who tries to smile at him, continually shaking his head:

ALGERIAN

Sir ... sir ... sir ...

OFFICER

What's your name?

The Algerian's mouth is dry; he tries to swallow.

ALGERIAN

Sir ... sir ... sir ...

OFFICER

What's your name?

ALGERIAN

(straining, still trying to swallow)  
Lardjane Boualem, sir ...

45 COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE. INSIDE. NIGHT.

In the Commissioner's office, the Assistant Commissioner dictates:

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER

Guilty: Lardjane Boualem, manual worker, married with three children. Resident in rue de Thèbes, number eight ... So? How many today?

The employee removes the copies from the typewriter and begins to put them in order.

EMPLOYEE

Seven assaults, three dead.

Then he moves to the desk, and hands over the various copies for signature.

EMPLOYEE

Here, one for the Commissioner ... the press offices ... the archives ... and one for you, sir.

The Assistant Commissioner signs.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER

Good, thank you, Corbiere... . See you tomorrow.

EMPLOYEE

Good evening, sir.

The employee salutes, then moves toward the door. He is about to go out when the Assistant Commissioner stops him.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER

Tell me ... Where is this rue de Thèbes?

EMPLOYEE

Rue de Thèbes? In the Upper Casbah, I think ...

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER

All right. See you tomorrow, Corbiere.

EMPLOYEE

Good evening, sir.

The employee leaves and closes the door. The Assistant Commissioner crosses the room to the large map of Algiers which covers the entire wall. He moves his finger along the Casbah zone; as he moves it, he follows it with his glance in that tangle of streets.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER

(to himself)

Rue de Thèbes ... de Thèbes ...

He has found it. He observes it for a minute, then moves his finger

along the road leading to the European quarters. He finds the right route, then concentrates in order to memorize it.

He returns to the desk, lifts the receiver, and dials a number.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER

(on the phone)

Hello, Engineer Henry Amaid, please ...  
He's already left? Alright, yes, yes,  
alright ... I have the number.

He clicks the receiver, then dials another number. At the other end of the line, a feminine voice is heard. The Assistant Commissioner abandons his usual peremptory tone.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER

Hello, Bernadette...Yes, right away. I'm  
going to change my clothes first, and I'll  
be right there. My wife is already there,  
right? No, it's not important. But call  
Henry for me. Just for a minute ...  
Alright ... thanks ...

He places the receiver on the desk, then puts on his jacket which is on the back of his chair. He straightens his tie. Now from the receiver a muffled voice is heard; the Assistant Commissioner picks up the receiver.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER

Hello, Henry? ... Everything's okay.  
Good. What are we going to tell our  
wives? The club? Good idea, yes. I'll be  
there right away. Just give me time to  
change my clothes ... Ah, I've found the  
address. No, it's better to talk in  
person. Yes, it's the right place ...  
Okay. Bye.

He puts down the receiver, then goes to the coat-hanger and takes his beret. He goes out after glancing again at the photos of the day's assaults.

46 HENRY ARNAUD'S HOME. INSIDE. NIGHT.

Two small children are kneeling in front of their beds.

CHILDREN

Notre Père, dans le ciel ...

Two children, five or six years old, blond, charming, but not affected. They seem to be twins, and are wearing identical pajamas.

At the same time, a servant is preparing their beds for the night. She

is about fifty years old, her apron clean and ironed; she has gray hair, her face that of a good woman. She is Algerian. When the children falter in their prayers, she helps them. When they have finished she says with an Algerian accent:

SERVANT

Now, let's go to say good night.

In the dining room, there is a large open window. The beach, the sea, and the sound of the surf are outside, not too distant. It is a starry night. At a table, there are four men and four women, all of them well dressed and tanned. It is the home of Henry and Bernadette Arnaud. The Assistant Commissioner is in plain clothes. He and his wife seem ill at ease, somewhat out of place.

The maid and children have entered the room.

BERNADETTE

Come here, children. Say hello ...

CHILDREN

Good evening ...

The others smile. The servant accompanies the children to their parents.

CHILDREN

Good night, daddy. Good night, mommy.

BERNADETTE

Good night, dear.

They kiss. At the same time the women make the usual delighted exclamations. One of the men attracts the Assistant Commissioner's attention, points to his watch, and makes a sign.

The Assistant Commissioner nods his head affirmatively.

47 ALGERIAN STREETS. OUTSIDE. NIGHT.

A DS Citroen is crossing the city at high speed.

The four men are inside. Arnaud is at the wheel. The Assistant Commissioner is sitting in the back seat.

48 CASBAH ENTRANCE. OUTSIDE. NIGHT.

The automobile arrives at Place du Gouvernement, takes a turn around the square, then turns toward the blockade, and slows down.

One of the soldiers moves to the center of the ramp, and raises the phosphorescent flag. The car lowers its headlights and stops.

The soldier goes to the driver's window. In his right hand, he is holding a machine gun which hangs from his shoulders. He greets them.

He bends to window level:

SOLDIER

Good evening ...

Arnaud responds in an innocent, cheerful tone:

ARNAUD

Good evening ... Can we pass?

SOLDIER

It's too late. No one is allowed to enter the Casbah at this hour. It's impossible.

ARNAUD

But it's not even midnight yet!

SOLDIER

It's ten minutes past midnight. Curfew begins at midnight.

ARNAUD

Please, we just want to take a short ride. A friend of mine has never seen the Casbah.

SOLDIER

I'm sorry. Tomorrow. Tonight is out of the question.

The Assistant Commissioner intervenes with the self-assured and somewhat arrogant tone common to all policemen. He stretches his arm toward the window and hands the soldier a card.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER

It's alright, they're with me.

The soldier examines the card by the glare of the headlights, hands it back, and bringing his hand to his visor, he salutes.

SOLDIER

Okay, sir. Go ahead.

The Assistant Commissioner salutes with his hand.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER

Let's go, Henry.

ARNAUD

(he changes gears)

Thank you. Good evening.

The soldier steps aside, and salutes again.

The automobile begins to move, steadily increasing its speed.

49 CASBAH STREET. OUTSIDE. NIGHT.

The streets of the Casbah are deserted, almost completely blackened. Some cats are frightened by the headlights and run close to the walls.

Inside the car the four men are silent. They keep their eyes fixed straight ahead of them, their faces concentrating, taut.

ARNAUD

This way?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER

Yes, it's the first intersection ... or the second.

50 RUE DE THÈBES. OUTSIDE. NIGHT.

The automobile slows down at the first intersection. Arnaud leans out the window and looks. There is an enamel nameplate -- RUE DE THÈBES.

ARNAUD

Right or left?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER

Try going to the right.

The car turns right, moving slowly.

On one side of the street, the even numbers are getting higher: 26 ... 28 ... 30 ...

ARNAUD

What number is it?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER

Eight.

The man next to the Assistant Commissioner says:

FRIEND

Let's park here. It doesn't matter.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER

(in sharp tone)

It does matter. Go back, Henry. Let's go to number eight.

Arnaud puts the gears in reverse; the car moves back quickly and passes the intersection: 16 ... 14 ... 12 ... 10 ... 8... it stops.

Arnaud puts it in neutral. With the motor still running, he presses the cigarette lighter on the dashboard.

The Assistant Commissioner takes a large package that he is holding under his legs on the car floor. It is wrapped in pieces of newspaper. He lifts it forward. The man who is next to Arnaud takes it, leans it against the back of his seat, touches it until he finds the right spot, unwraps it from that part, and straightens a small plastic tube which appears at the opening. It is a fuse.

ARNAUD

How long do you want the timing device?

FRIEND

Five minutes. Give me a match ...

Arnaud takes the cigarette lighter from the dashboard.

The other man has opened the car door. He takes the lighter and touches it to the fuse which ignites immediately. The door of number eight is very near, almost directly opposite the car door.

The man places the package in a shady area and returns to the car in a run. Arnaud has already changed gears, releases the clutch, and the automobile shoots forward.

51 RUE DE THÈBES. EXPLOSION. OUTSIDE. NIGHT. AUGUST 11, 1956. 12:20 A.M.

The explosion is very violent. The fronts of buildings number eight, ten, and twelve explode and collapse.

EXPLOSION.

The echo of the explosion has ended. There is a long pause, only some isolated noises resound. They are stressed, recognizable: a burning beam, the thud of falling debris, broken glass ...

Then suddenly and almost simultaneously with the other sounds, after the shock, the human voices, the shouts and weeping are heard.

VOICES, SHOUTS, WEEPING.

52 RUE DE THÈBES. OUTSIDE. DAWN.

The dawn's light is clear and white. It dispels every shadow and designs precisely every outline. Here and there, in the middle of the sky, there are numerous clouds of dust, strangely motionless. In the light, the human figures seem black. Seen from a distance, they seem to

be ants upon heaps of debris. There are women, motionless, weeping softly, their voices similar to prayer. From time to time, there is a sudden scream, a despairing sob, someone running.

Another corpse is pulled out from the rubble, bodies mutilated or still intact -- they are all dead.

The people continue to rummage through the debris and to wait around pitifully.

53 CASBAH STREETS. OUTSIDE. DAY.

But there is no pity in the other streets and alleys of the Casbah, or at the top of the steps. There is anger and hatred. The people are running and shouting.

They are shouting from their windows and balconies:

JU-JU.

They smother every other sound. The excitement increases. They run where there is more shouting, more people. They don't know what to do yet, but want to be together. Until there is a voice stronger and clearer than the others which gives them a goal and direction.

Ali la Pointe points below beyond the slopes of the alleys and stairways. There below are the European quarters which widen near the sea.

The crowd is shouting, pushing, rushing forward with him, like a raging stream, tumultuous and unrestrainable. Ali is together with his men, five boys, one of them older than twenty. All of them are armed. The crowd forces them to quicken their step to a run.

Petit Omar is furthest in the rear. He is wearing a pair of short pants, his chest bare; he is barefoot. He calls Ali with all his might, but in vain.

He tries to join Ali, to make his way through the legs of the others; he runs, clinging to the others, pushes, passes near the walls; then, turning into a side-street, he rushes into an alleyway, and finally arrives in front. He runs to Ali, almost out of breath.

PETIT OMAR

(shouting)

Kader says to stop them! He says we've got to stop them!

Ali slows down as much as he can with the crowd pushing him from behind.

ALI

Where's Kader?

PETIT OMAR

With the others. They are trying to stop  
the people.

ALI

Go away.

Their voices can hardly be heard or understood amid the loud noises.

PETIT OMAR

But he says that if we go on like this,  
we're playing their game, and they'll  
murder everyone ... Stop, Ali!

Ali continues to run. His face is sullen, frowning, as always when he must choose between instinct and reason. Omar calls him again. His voice is hysterical, repeating again to stop. He is hanging on one of Ali's arms. Ali jerks himself free violently; he strikes the child. Omar sways and falls against the wall.

With this movement, Ali seems to release his anger at not being able to carry out his actions.

He slows down, speaks to his men, a few words in Arabic, his voice cold and bitter.

Ali extends his arm and the others imitate him. Each man grabs another by the arm, forming a chain. They check the flow behind them and hold back the crowd that is pressing forward.

54 KADER'S HOUSE. INSIDE. DAY. SEPTEMBER 30, 1956.

Djamila, the girl who in January, in rue Random, gave the revolver to Ali la Pointe, is now standing in front of a large mirror. She removes the veil from her face. Her glance is hard and intense; her face is expressionless. The mirror reflects a large part of the room: it is a bedroom. There are three other girls.

There is Zohra, who is about the same age as Djamila. She undresses, removing her traditional costume, and is wearing a slip ...

There is Hassiba who is pouring a bottle of peroxide into a basin. She dips her long black hair into the water to dye it blond.

Every action is performed precisely and carefully. They are like three actresses preparing for the stage. But there is no gaiety; no one is speaking. Only silence emphasizes the detailed rhythm of their transformation ...

Djamila's lightweight European dress of printed silk ...

Zohra's blouse and short skirt to her knees ... make-up, lipstick,

high-heeled shoes, silk stockings ...

Hassiba has wrapped her hair in a towel to dry it ... a pair of blue jeans, a striped clinging tee-shirt ...

Her blond hair is now dry. She ties it behind in a ponytail. Hassiba has a young, slim figure. She seems to be a young European girl who is preparing to go to the beach.

Continual silence. Djamila and Zohra have finished their preparations and sit down to wait. Hassiba is still barefoot. She is putting on her sandals, when someone knocks at the door.

Djamila gets up and goes to open it.

It is Kader.

A quick attentive glance; Djamila ... Zohra ... Hassiba ...

Hassiba responds to his look with a gay and somewhat coquettish expression; she says, stressing her French:

HASSIBA

Ça va, monsieur?

Kader smiles for a second, without any gaiety, but to please her. Then he speaks briefly and harshly in Arabic. And turning one at a time to each of the three, he gives them three addresses.

KADER

(to Djamila)

Number three rue de Chêne.

(to Zohra)

Number fourteen rue Monseigneur Leynaud.

(to Hassiba)

Number twenty-one rue de l'Hydre.

Each one of the girls repeats, in turn, the address which he has given her. Each one of the three responds emotionally. The atmosphere is tense. Kader bids them farewell according to the Algerian custom, first bringing his right hand over his heart. Then he embraces them.

They look at him for a moment; they are embarrassed. Kader tries to ease their discomfort, smiles, and answers Hassiba's previous remark.

KADER

Ça va ... Et bonnes chances!

55 RUE DE L'HYDRE. OUTSIDE/INSIDE. DAY. 5:45 P.M.

At number twenty-one rue de l'Hydre, there is a bread store. Hassiba has again covered her face with a veil, and is also wearing a white cloak which covers her whole body.

She enters the store. There are other women who are buying bread. Hassiba waits for them to leave, then says in Arabic to the shopkeeper:

HASSIBA

I've come to take the package ...

The shopkeeper empties half a basket of bread; at the bottom, there is a beach bag with a shoulder-strap, and he gives it to Hassiba.

Hassiba hides it under her cloak, bends her head in a sign of farewell, and leaves.

56 RUE MONS. LEYNAUD. INSIDE. DAY. 5:45 P.M.

At number fourteen rue Monseigneur Leynaud, there is a tailor shop and clothing store. Zohra is also wearing the veil and white cloak. She enters.

ZOHRA

I've come to take the package ...

The tailor accompanies her to the back of the shop, where there is a workroom and young girls who are sewing. He rummages in a closet, takes out an Air France utility bag and gives it to Zohra who hides it under her cloak, greets him, and leaves.

57 RUE DU CHÊNE. INSIDE. DAY.

Inside number three rue du Chêne, an Algerian craftsman is working in filigree. Djamila takes a small leather cosmetic case.

Djamila hides it, greets the man, and leaves.

58 ALLEY AND BLOCKADE. RUE MARENGO. INSIDE/OUTSIDE. DAY. 6:05 P.M.

At an intersection of rue Marengo, an alley, Hassiba enters a large door, and shuts it. In a second, she has removed her veil and cloak. Her face is made up; she is wearing pants and a jersey top. She places the strap of her bag on her shoulder.

Inside the bag, a towel and bathing suit are visible.

Hassiba goes out the door, proceeds down the alley until she reaches rue Marengo. She approaches the blockade.

It is Saturday evening; there is a hurried bustle of Algerians and Europeans. Soldiers and policemen, are very busy with their usual requests for documents.

Hassiba's arrival is quickly noticed for she is very pretty and

attracts much attention. Some soldiers whistle.

An elderly Algerian woman looks at her with dislike. Hassiba is indifferent and waits her turn. A French soldier approaches her.

SOLDIER

I'd like to search you, Miss ...

For an instant, Hassiba is dismayed; then, she glances down at her clinging shirt and pants.

HASSIBA

(innocently)

Where?

The boy is young, handsome, and cheeky.

SOLDIER

Not here. There's too many people.

HASSIBA

But you don't understand. I was saying that there's nothing to search.

SOLDIER

That's what you think!

Some Europeans laugh, the Algerians seem not to see or hear, but it is evident that they are scornful.

SECOND SOLDIER

Are you going for a swim, Miss ... all by yourself?

HASSIBA

No, with some friends.

At the same time, she passes the blockade.

SECOND SOLDIER

Lucky them. Next Sunday I'm free .... Shall we go together?

Hassiba shrugs her shoulders, smiles again, and moves away.

59 BLOCKADE RUE DU DIVAN. OUTSIDE. DAY.

At the rue du Divan blockade, Zohra too is dressed like a European, and seems to be calm.

There are not too many people. A soldier makes a sign for her to pass in a hurried manner, and the girl passes.

60 BLOCKADE RUE DE LA LYRE. OUTSIDE. DAY.

Djamila is tense, pale, her features are strained. Her eyes seem even larger with make-up. Now, at the blockade at rue de la Lyre, the Casbah exit is blocked. An Algerian has been discovered without documents. He argues, shouts, and says that he wants to go back.

INCOHERENT VOICES.

The soldiers try to catch him, he struggles to get free.

Meanwhile the people push forward in protest. Two soldiers catch the Algerian, and drag him bodily into the guard posts. The flow of people continues.

Djamila steps forward, holding the cosmetic-case with both of her hands. She doesn't know how to carry it, and from time to time she changes her position. She realizes that she looks awkward.

It's now her turn. The soldiers' tone is arrogant. The previous scene has made them nervous. An officer signals her to pass, then points to the cosmetic-case.

OFFICER

What's inside?

Instinctively, Djamila lifts the case and looks at it; she feels herself failing, but makes an effort to answer.

DJAMILA

Here?

OFFICER

There ...

Djamila uses all her strength to smile and she succeeds. Her eyes light up defiantly.

DJAMILA

(provocatively)

Nothing.

The officer signals her to pass.

61 FISH-MARKET. INSIDE. DAY. 6:15 P.M.

A large warehouse in the fish-market. There are enormous iceboxes with cartons of frozen fish and tubs with running water and live fish. The three girls are next to one another.

The three bags are on top of the counter, a few steps away. With them is a thin Algerian about twenty-five years old. He has thick black

hair, straight and combed neatly. He is wearing glasses. With his rough and nervous hands, he pulls out the towel and bathing suit from Hassiba's bag, then delicately and carefully, a square wooden box. He opens it, and turning to the girl, signals her to move away a bit. The girl steps back. In the box, there is a huge iron tube, sealed at both ends by two clock dials. Inside the tube, two batteries with wires are attached to the dials. The youth glances at his wristwatch, then adjusts the hands of the dials to six forty-five. He puts the bomb back into the box, closes it, and places it in the bag. He replaces the towel and bathing suit, then hands the bag to Hassiba. He is smiling slightly.

Hassiba takes the bag and goes away.

The box fits perfectly into Djamila's cosmetic-case. The youth opens it without removing it from the case, adjusts the two dials to six fifty, puts everything back in its place, and hands the case to Djamila. He smiles at her and she moves away. In the Air France bag, there are newspapers and magazines on top, and the same box. The youth adjusts the bomb to six fifty-five, arranges it again inside the bag, closes the zipper, and hands the bag to Zohra. He smiles at her. His smile is more genuine, less mechanical. There is less tension than before.

The youth smiles at the girl and says in Arabic:

ALGERIAN

May Allah protect you.

Zohra thanks him in a whisper, bends her head, and moves away. The youth takes a cigarette from his shirt pocket, places it between his lips, and lights it. His hand is trembling a little.

62 CAFETERIA RUE MICHELET. INSIDE. DAY. 6:30 P.M.

Cafeteria, rue Michelet 1. The club is very crowded. There are two rooms; one at the entrance with an American-style bar, and one at the back with tables. It is Saturday, and at this hour many European families go out to have an ice cream. There is not too much confusion or uproar. The people are calm, they take their places at the bar and small tables, and eat their ice cream while chatting quietly.

Hassiba enters, glances at the large clock above the cash register. It is half past six. She goes to the register and waits her turn. The different orders mingle; she orders a Coca-Cola. They give her the check. She pays.

She goes to the bar; all the seats are taken. She gives her order and the ticket to the waiter.

A man moves aside, looks at her, then steps down from his stool and offers it to her.

Hassiba tells him that it doesn't matter, but the man insists. Hassiba

thanks him and sits down. The man is about fifty, well groomed. He smiles again, and turns to chat with some friends.

Hassiba settles herself more comfortably on the seat, then removes the bag from her shoulder. Holding it by the strap, she places it on the floor below the counter behind the brass railing used to lean one's feet.

The waiter has brought her the drink. Hassiba drinks slowly, from time to time glancing at the clock. She finishes drinking. The bag is in a vertical position.

Moving her feet slowly and carefully, Hassiba lets the bag slip on its side.

She gets down from the seat, and points it out to the man who is standing next to her.

HASSIBA

I'm giving your seat back.

MAN

Are you already leaving, Miss?

Hassiba smiles, nods yes.

HASSIBA

Good evening ...

The man sits down.

MAN

Good evening ...

63 MILK BAR. RUE D'ISLY. OUTSIDE/INSIDE. DAY.

Milk Bar, rue d'Isly, at the corner of Place Bugeand. The jukebox is playing full blast. It is a bar for young people. There is much bustle and confusion, much laughter. The girls are making plans for Sunday.

Djamila enters and moves to the jukebox which is in the corner near the door. There are playbills for various theater performances hanging on the wall. Djamila stops to look at them and reads the bottom lines. She places the cosmetic-case on the floor. Rising again she looks around her, and pushes the case behind the jukebox with her foot ...

64 AIR FRANCE. IMMEUBLE MAURETANIA. INSIDE. DAY.

Maison Blanche, Immeuble Mauretania. The entire ground floor is filled with ticket counters and a waiting room for the airlines. There are some employees, stewardesses and some travelers.

Zohra passes through the large glass door at the entrance, goes to the Air France counter, takes a time schedule, then goes to sit down on a sofa which runs along the opposite wall. She sits down and places the airline bag on the ground in front of her, and begins to leaf through the timetable, from time to time glancing around. Using her heels, she pushes the bag under the sofa.

She looks at the large electric clock which is hanging in the center of the room; it is forty minutes past six.

65 CAFETERIA RUE MICHELET. INSIDE. DAY.

It is six forty-four by the cafeteria clock. The second hand is moving. There are more or less the same people. The old man is still seated on the barstool, and continues to chat.

Hassiba's bag is still at his feet; the second hand is racing. A five-year-old child hands a coin to the waiter:

CHILD

Ice cream ...

The father and mother are watching him, delighted. The waiter smiles at the child and points to the cash register. He speaks to the child in the usual tone of a grownup when speaking to children:

WAITER

You have to go there first ... and then come back to me.

The second hand reaches twenty-five, then thirty. The child goes to the cashier and pays. The cashier smiles at him and gives him the check.

CASHIER

What a good boy ...

The child returns to the counter. The waiter has already prepared the ice cream for him, and hands it to him. The child is standing on tiptoes.

66 CAFETERIA MICHELET. EXPLOSION. INSIDE. DAY.

The second hand, the explosion: bodies flung into the air, arms, legs, white smoke, screams.

Bodies thrown outside, the doors unhinged, the windows broken, empty.

The people watch from their windows, the passersby move closer, they bend down to look at those who are writhing on the ground.

Astonished and incredulous faces. No one speaks. Only screams and weeping. Sirens which are drawing nearer. Firemen and police

arriving ...

67 MILK BAR. RUE D'ISLY. OUTSIDE. DAY.

The ambulance sirens on rue d'Isly, one car after another.

At the Milk Bar, the people go to the doors to look at the ambulances which are racing toward Place Bugeand. The sirens fade in the distance and move away. The jukebox is again loud: "Brigitte Bardot, Bardot ..."

The people re-enter the bar, chattering, to have their apéritifs. It is six fifty: the explosion.

68 MILK BAR. EXPLOSION. OUTSIDE. DAY.

The jukebox is flung into the middle of the street. There is blood, strips of flesh, material, the same scene as at the Cafeteria; the white smoke and shouts, weeping, hysterical girls' screams. One of them no longer has an arm and runs around, howling despairingly; it is impossible to control her. The sound of sirens is heard again. The crowd of people, the firemen, police, ambulances all rush to the scene from Place Bugeand.

The ambulances arrive at rue Michelet.

They are already loaded with dead and wounded. The relatives of the wounded are forced to get out. The father of the child who was buying ice cream seems to be in a daze: he doesn't understand.

They pull him down by force. The child remains there, his blond head a clot of blood.

The policemen try to bring order to the chaos, are forced to shout, push, threaten. The wounded swarm around the ambulances. A Commissioner sends off the first one.

COMMISSIONER

What time is it?

POLICEMAN

A quarter to seven.

The Commissioner goes to the second ambulance, pulls down a man who is trying to enter by force, slams the door, and shouts to the driver. His face is pale and drawn; the veins of his neck are swollen.

COMMISSIONER

Go away, for God's sake!

The auto leaves and now, the third explosion resounds in the distance. It is heard clearly and violently from the Mauretania section.

The Commissioner stops midway in his last gesture, and likewise, all the others, who are paralyzed with fright, incapable of taking action again, of accepting such reality for a third time.

In Place Bugeand, there also, the people are motionless. All of them are looking in the same direction. Their faces are alike in their terror, alike in their sense of impotence, alike in their deep sadness.

69 STREET. EUROPEAN CITY. OUTSIDE. DAY.

The sun appears, then hides behind black clouds. There is a cool wind. It is ten in the morning, and the European city has its usual rapid and efficient rhythm of every day at this hour, only there is terror written on the face of every person. That same terror has remained, and suspicion, and despairing impotence.

Patrols of soldiers and policemen move around the city, search Algerians and some Europeans, stop automobiles, trucks, buses, and trams that they block at both doors.

At the entrance to every shop, the owner searches every customer before letting him enter.

He does so politely with a drawn smile, and methodically rummages through every handbag, every package.

So too in the bars, in the offices, in workshops ... And now that it is already late afternoon, also outside the brothels, the cinemas, the theaters.

70 LEMONS STREET. OUTSIDE. SUNSET.

A young Algerian boy thirteen or fourteen years old, wearing sandals without socks, trousers that reach to his ankles, walks quickly carrying a cardboard box tied with a cord. It is dusk.

A European woman sees him pass in front of her, looks at him, and follows him with her glance.

On the sidewalk there are some youths. The woman points to the Algerian boy, says something. The traffic is heavy. Her words are unclear. One youth calls to the boy who is by now thirty feet away:

YOUTH

Hey, little rat ...

The boy turns around for a second, his face frightened, and quickens his step. The youths follow behind him and the boy begins to run. The youths too begin to run and others join them, people who are passing. They form a small mob and are shouting. The boy shoots into a sidestreet, drops his box, and races ahead.

While some chase the boy, others stop around the box, make way, look for a policeman, a soldier, an officer. A circle continues to form around the box. A patrol arrives. One of the soldiers has a Geiger counter. He moves near the box, carefully placing the counter above it, then ceasing to be prudent, he takes his bayonette, cuts the cord, and tears open the box: lemons.

71 STREET CORNER. OUTSIDE. SUNSET.

The boy has been cornered, surrounded, pinned down, kicked, hit with umbrellas, until he is exhausted and can no longer defend himself. He is no longer moving. He is lying on the ground, dead. The air is gray now, and slowly all the colors unite to form gray. Lights are lit in the city and contrast with the whiteness of the Casbah high above. The sky is still clear, the black profiles of the mountains, the straight coasts on the sea, the sea itself that seems to be land until it reaches the horizon where the moon rises between the clouds.

SPEAKER

"Following a lengthy discussion, the General Assembly of the United Nations has decided its agenda for the forthcoming debates:

- (1) re-unification of Korea
- (2) disarmament
- (3) the Algerian question.

Colombia has proposed that only the first two points be discussed for the day. However, the Afro-Asian nations opposed, underlining the importance they attribute to the Algerian question ..."

72 SEA-FRONT. OUTSIDE. DAY. JANUARY 10, 1957.

The European crowd applauds, their eyes aglow, their mouths wide open, shouting and yelling, their teeth flashing in the sun. Clapping of applause on the sea-front of Algiers. Children, are held up to see, waving small flags. The paratroopers of the Tenth Division march past.

SPEAKER

"Mr. Raymond Lefevre, Inspector General of the Administration, has presided over a meeting in which important decisions have been taken with the aim of securing public order and the protection of persons and their property. In particular, it has been decided to recall the 'Tenth' Division of paratroopers to Algiers that, until now, has been employed in the antiguerrilla operations on the Cabiro

plateau. The Commander General of the Tenth Division will assume responsibility for the maintenance of order in Algiers, and will have at his disposal in order to achieve this goal, all civil and military means provided for the defense of the zone."

Massu and the authorities are standing on the balconies of the Prefecture building.

The paras are marching, their sleeves rolled up, their faces sunburned. Machine guns, bazookas, crew-cuts, the eyes of singing boys, silent steps, one battalion after another.

The dragon "black berets" pass by ...

The "red berets" of the 2nd Regiment of colonial paratroopers ...

"Les casquettes" of the 3rd Regiment parade by; "les hommes-peints," Mathieu's paras.

Colonel Mathieu is at the head of the regiment. He is tall, slender, over fifty. He has thinning gray hair, a lean face, blue eyes, and a wide forehead. His face is lined with many wrinkles. Were it not for the uniform, the weapons, his tanned skin, his manner of walking, and his energetic voice when giving orders, he wouldn't seem a soldier, but an intellectual.

The 3rd Regiment colonial paratroopers are now before the Commissioner. Mathieu turns his head slightly and:

MATHIEU

3rd Regiment! Attention à droite ...  
Droite!

SPEAKER

Family name: Mathieu; Name: Philippe;  
Born in Rennes May 3, 1906; Rank:  
Lieutenant Colonel; Schooling:  
Polytechnique-degree in Engineering;  
Campaigns: Second World War, Anti-Nazi  
Resistance Movement, Italian Campaign,  
Indochinese War, Algerian War ...

73 VILLA HEADQUARTERS. INSIDE. DAY.

In a villa in the military headquarters, a reception room is visible through a large window on the first floor. There are about twenty officers seated in rows of chairs as if for a lecture. Mathieu is in front of them and he is speaking while standing next to a desk. At his back there is a blackboard, and near it, a large map with pyramid graphs, cells, arrows, crossmarks, and, above them, the title:

STRUCTURE NLF AUTONOMOUS ZONE OF ALGIERS.

Mathieu's voice has nothing of the military and traditional. His tone is neither harsh nor cold, but rather kind and pleasing; from it emanates a superior authority imposed by reason and not by position.

MATHIEU

The result is that in the last two months, they have reached an average of 4.2 assaults per day, including aggression against individuals, and the explosions. Of course, the conditions of the problem are as usual: first, the adversary; second, the method to destroy him ... There are 80,000 Arabs in the Casbah. Are they all against us? We know they are not. In reality, it is only a small minority that dominates with terror and violence. This minority is our adversary and we must isolate and destroy it ...

While speaking, he goes to the window, and pulls down the shade. He interrupts his speech, points to the rest of the window:

MATHIEU

Draw it down there too ...

Two or three officers stand up to perform the task. At the back of the room there is a movie projector.

Next to it there is a para who is preparing to operate it.

The other shades are drawn, and gradually the room is darkened.

Mathieu, meanwhile, has resumed speaking:

MATHIEU

He is an adversary who shifts his position above and below the surface with highly commendable revolutionary methods and original tactics. ... He is an anonymous and unrecognizable enemy who mingles with thousands of others who resemble him. We find him everywhere: in the alleys of the Casbah; in the streets of the European city, and in working places.

Mathieu interrupts himself again and makes a signal to the back of the room which is completely darkened.

MATHIEU

Go ahead, Martin.

Martin turns on the projector. On the white wall next to the map and graph appear pictures of the Casbah. There are the blockades, the barbed wire, the metal screens, the Algerians who exit and enter, the policemen and soldiers who examine documents and frisk someone. From time to time, close-ups of the pictures are shown, enlarged to the minutest details, close-ups of faces, motionless images that last only for a few seconds.

MATHIEU

Here is some film taken by the police. The cameras were hidden at the Casbah exits. They thought these films might be useful, and in fact they are useful in demonstrating the usefulness of certain methods. Or, at least, their inadequacy.

Hassiba is now seen and the soldiers who are wooing her, while she laughs, jokes, flirts in a provocative manner, and passes the blockade.

MATHIEU

I chose these films because they were shot in the hours preceding some recent terroristic assaults. And so, among all these Arabs, men and women, there are the ones responsible. But which ones are they? How can we recognize them? Controlling documents is ridiculous: one who has everything in order is most likely to be the terrorist.

An Algerian is being dragged away while protesting, kicking, and trying to free himself. And then the scene changes. There is another Casbah exit, and an Algerian who is being searched.

MATHIEU

(smiling)

Note the intuition of the cameraman. He realized that in that box, there had to be something of interest, and he paused to focus it.

The picture is enlarged. The small box which the Algerian is carrying on his shoulder is seen in detail. It is opened. The box is swarming with snakes; the soldier who had wanted to examine it jumps backward.

The officers in the room burst into laughter.

MATHIEU

(laughing)

Maybe the bomb was hidden right there, in a double bottom. Who knows? We'll never know.

Using the barrel of his machine gun, a soldier has closed the box. A snake has managed to jump out, and fallen to the ground. The people are terrified and move away. Others laugh, among them, Petit Omar, who seems to be an ordinary child enjoying himself.

MATHIEU

That's enough, Martin ...

The lights are again switched on in the room. Mathieu is again next to the desk, and waits a second until the buzz of comments subsides.

MATHIEU

We must start again from scratch. The only information that we have concerns the structure of the organization. And we shall begin from that ...

He takes a wooden pointer from the desk in order to illustrate the graph, while he speaks with the tone and precision of a university professor.

MATHIEU

It is a pyramid-like organization divided into a series of sectors. At the top of the pyramid is their General Staff.

He has moved near the blackboard, and taken some chalk, and slowly as he speaks, he illustrates his speech.

MATHIEU

The military commander responsible for the executive body finds the right man and nominates him to responsibility for a sector: number one. Number one in his turn, chooses another two: number two and number three ... And so they form the first triangle.

He has written high on the board a number one and below it, with some space between them, the numbers two and three. He unites the three numbers with lines and forms a triangle.

MATHIEU

Now number two and number three choose, in their turn, two men each ... number four and five, and so on ...

Mathieu writes the new numbers, spacing them on the next line. Then he unites two to four and five, and three to six and seven, forming two new triangles.

Mathieu has written other numbers and unites them to those of the preceding line and thus forms other triangles. Now the blackboard is covered by a series of triangles that form a large pyramid.

MATHIEU

The reason for this geometry is so that every militant will know only three members in the entire organization: his commander who has chosen him, and the two members that he himself has chosen ... Contacts take place only by written instructions ... That is why we do not know our adversaries: because, in practice, they do not even know each other.

Mathieu leaves the blackboard and moves near the officers. The tone of his voice changes. The explanation is now finished. He gives directions ...

MATHIEU

To know them means to eliminate them. Consequently, the military aspect is secondary to the police method. I know we are not fond of this word, but it is the only word that indicates exactly the type of work that we must perform. We must make the necessary investigations in order to proceed from one vertex to another in the entire pyramid. The reason for this work is information. The method is interrogation. And interrogation becomes a method when conducted in a manner so as to always obtain a result, or rather, an answer. In practice, demonstrating a false humanitarianism only leads to the ridiculous and to impotence. I am certain that all the units will understand and react accordingly. However, success does not depend solely on us. We need to have the Casbah at our disposal. We must sift through it ... and interrogate everyone. And here is where we find ourselves hindered by a conspiracy of laws and regulations that continue to be operative, as if Algiers were a holiday resort and not a battleground. We have requested a carte blanche. But it is very difficult to obtain. Therefore, it is necessary to find an excuse to legitimize our intervention, and make it possible. It is necessary to create it ourselves -- this excuse. Unless our adversaries will think of it themselves, which seems to be what they are doing.

74 ALLEY UPPER CASBAH. OUTSIDE. DAY.

It is not a song, but a type of spoken chorus, an assembly of young voices, words whispered from the throat, both high and low, and sudden silent pauses. It is monotonous; but it is just such a repetition, always with the same pattern of tones -- high, low, then, silent -- that manages to transform itself into a motif, reach an excited pitch, and acquire breadth and solemnity. The sound fills the alleys, rises toward the long rectangle of sky, and moves farther away as if it were meant to be heard by all.

The alley is narrow and sloping, with crumbling walls, tufts of grass, and refuse. It is located at the outer periphery of the Casbah -- the countryside is in the background. An Algerian is walking with large steps; a five-year-old child is behind him, moving quickly, stumbling from time to time on the pavement; although he does not cry, occasionally he calls to his father, who proceeds forward, and does not turn around. The chorus arises from behind them. It is incoherent. They stop in front of a door; they have arrived. The door gives way and they enter.

75 KORAN SCHOOL. INSIDE. DAY.

A large room, like a shop or stable. Here too, on the ground and pavement, there are tufts of grass. It is cold. The walls are unplastered, the windows boarded. The roof is in sight, but not the beams. The roof is made of tiles and covered with a coat of whitewash.

There are about twenty children, five to eight years old, seated on the floor. The teacher is in front of them; he too is seated. He is prompting the verses in a low voice, almost in a whisper, and the chorus repeats it.

The Koran School: a bare, wobbling place.

The Algerian who has entered takes the child by his hand, and accompanies him to the teacher who is now standing; the chorus continues; the other children, do not look at the two who have just entered.

The Algerian and the teacher greet each other, bringing their hands to their hearts, and then to their mouths. At the same time, the teacher takes an envelope from under his tunic, and hands it over to the other.

SPEAKER

"To all militants! After two years of hard struggle in the mountains and city, the Algerian people have obtained a great victory. The UN Assembly has placed the Algerian question in its forthcoming agenda. The discussion will begin on

Monday, January 28. Starting Monday, for a duration of eight days, the NLF is calling a general strike. For the duration of this period, all forms of armed action or attempts at such are suspended. We are requesting that all militants mobilize for the strike's organization and success."

The Algerian has hidden the envelope inside his tunic, then presents the child to the teacher, who makes him sit down with the other children. The teacher also returns to his place and sits down, and suggests a new phrase; the chorus continues. The Algerian leaves the school.

76 ALLEY UPPER CASBAH. OUTSIDE. DAY.

Having passed through the door, he again moves along the alley, this time descending, with hurried steps. The chorus continues, again heard from without, but its echo is now different.

77 VARIOUS VIEWS CASBAH. OUTSIDE/INSIDE. DAY.

Bars, stores, market stalls, "Arab baths." Typewritten pieces of paper are used to wrap purchases, or slipped inside bags, or used on the blank side to add up bills and then handed to the customers.

78 VARIOUS VIEWS EUROPEAN CITY. OUTSIDE/INSIDE. DAY.

In the European city the Algerian workers: at the docks, the central gas company; on the trams; the waiters in the restaurants, in the bars; the shoeshine men

SPEAKER

"Algerian brothers! A great hope has arisen for us. The world is watching us. The next few days may be decisive for our future and our freedom. The colonial powers will attempt to demonstrate to the UN that the NLF does not represent the will of our people. Our response will be unanimous support of the general strike."

79 SEA-FRONT. OUTSIDE. DAY.

At the sea-front, there is a newspaper boy, about twelve years old, barefoot. His voice is shrill yet cheerful. He is smiling.

NEWSBOY

Le Monde! Le Monde! General strike! ...

Strike!

Some Europeans buy the newspaper, half-heartedly, grumbling disagreeably. The boy remains cheerful, places the change inside the bag strapped to his shoulder, thanks them.

Now he passes in front of a beggar, an elderly Algerian who is leaning against a railing.

The boy winks at him, while he continues to shout:

NEWSBOY

Strike!

SPEAKER

"During the eight days of the strike, do not frequent the European city, or leave the Casbah. Provide lodgings in your homes for the poor, the beggars, the brothers who do not have homes. Store provisions of food and water for eight days!"

80 CASBAH STREETS AND SHOPS. INSIDE/OUTSIDE. DAY.

There is a strange atmosphere in the Casbah. People are greeting each other in the streets; a thick buzz of voices, a festive mood, a sense of brotherhood, and the children, who are taking advantage of the situation and play and run everywhere.

The shops are unusually crowded. The people enter and exit, loaded with supplies. In the shops too, there is the same festive mood, almost as if the supplies were for a trip to the country. The shopkeepers are also cheerful.

And the poor customers, instead of paying, hand over a ticket stamped NLF.

81 CASBAH BLOCKADE. OUTSIDE. DAY. SUNSET. SUNDAY. JANUARY 27, 1957.

Late afternoon, at the blockades of rue de la Lyre, rue du Divan, and rue Marengo. The Casbah exit ramps are deserted, while the entrance ramps are overflowing with people. Here too, there is an intangible air of gaiety, witty remarks, laughter, ironic glances toward the soldiers and policemen with cold faces, immobile -- helmets and machine guns -- who stand at the entrances without intervening.

The image is shortened and focused through the lenses of binoculars.

82 GOVERNMENT PALACE. OUTSIDE/INSIDE. SUNSET.

A paratrooper officer looks at the blockades of rue du Divan from a Government Palace balcony. Mathieu is beside him.

MATHIEU

No one is leaving, eh?

The officer hands him the binoculars.

OFFICER

No. They continue to enter, the rats.

Mathieu looks through the binoculars, and comments in a low voice, smiling:

MATHIEU

Rats in a trap, we hope ...

OFFICER

But do you believe that the strike will be widespread?

MATHIEU

Without a doubt.

Behind the two officers, through a large open window, a room is visible. There is a large table, and around it, other high officers of the various armed forces, and some important officials in plainclothes.

A general, who has his back to the balcony, turns and calls Mathieu:

GENERAL

Mathieu! Mathieu, a name ...

MATHIEU

A name?

GENERAL

Yes, a name for the operation.

Mathieu moves the binoculars from the blockades and turns slowly around the Government square, until he reaches an advertising sign for a brand of champagne which now, in the dusk, lights up with a sporadic rhythm: CORDON ... ROUGE.

Mathieu pauses then turns toward the room, and enters smiling:

MATHIEU

Champagne ... All right?

The general repeats absent-mindedly:

GENERAL

Champagne ... Champagne.  
(then, in a convinced voice)

Operation Champagne, yes, alright.

83 RUE DU DIVAN BLOCKADE. OUTSIDE. EVENING.

At the rue du Divan blockade, there is an incoherent, monotonous, and irritating chant. There is a blind beggar. He is light-complexioned, tall and thin, his beard long, his arms stretched out, a cane in his hand. He arrives at last at the entrance ramp, tries to find the way, but cannot. He tries again and again with his cane, continually repeating his sorrowful chant, until a policeman takes him by his free hand, placing the hand roughly on the metal screen.

POLICEMAN

Go on! Go on!

The beggar protests and waves his cane in a way that the policeman has to duck to prevent himself from being hit. The policeman curses, spitefully, coarsely.

A soldier starts to laugh. The old man takes up his chant again, and moves forward leaning on the metal screen. On the other side of the blockade, behind the square, there is a group of veiled girls who have seen the old man, and seem to be waiting for him.

Two of them go to meet him, and each one takes one of his arms. At the touch of their hands, the old man is again infuriated. Even the girls laugh. Then, one of them speaks to him slowly in a loud voice.

It seems that the old man has understood. He is convinced. He mumbles something kindly and lets them accompany him.

84 CASBAH ALLEY. FRONT DOOR. OUTSIDE. NIGHT.

A poorly lit alley. A group of unemployed men and beggars are standing in front of a door.

One of the three companions consults a list, then points to two in the group. He signals them to enter.

85 KADER'S HOUSE. INSIDE. NIGHT.

Inner courtyard.

In the inner courtyard, there is an elderly man who awaits them and receives them kindly.

They greet each other in the customary Algerian manner.

Courtyard and balcony.

On the terrace also, someone is looking toward the courtyard. Kader is

on the terrace together with a man about forty years old, dressed in European clothes, he has narrow shoulders and a sunken chest. His face is sensitive, his forehead high, and his hair and eyes black. His eyes are kind and thoughtful and twinkle with irony.

He is Ben M'Hidi, one of the four members of the CCE, the Central Executive Committee.

KADER

(to him)

They are beggars and unemployed, homeless. We have organized things in such a way that during the strike they will be guests of other families who have homes and will provide shelter in the event of possible reprisals ... But I didn't know that they would be brought to this house too. It is a mistake.

BEN M'HIDI

Why?

KADER

Because you are here too. It would be better for you to move to another house.

Ben M'Hidi moves away from the parapet.

BEN M'HIDI

All right ... You're the one who must decide.

Kader follows him along the terrace.

KADER

No, if I were the one to decide, you wouldn't be in Algiers now.

Ben M'Hidi looks at him, smiling.

BEN M'HIDI

Why? Isn't it wise?

Kader smiles too, and repeats:

KADER

It isn't wise.

At the end of the terrace, there is a construction raised to a level with the stairs that lead to the floor below. There is a large room; through the open door, the lighted interior is visible. The walls have high brick baseboards, and at the bottom of one of the four walls there is a square opening that leads into a hiding place. The closure of the hiding place, a square of very thick wall, is placed to one side. Ali

la Pointe is covering it with bricks.

On the other side of the room next to the door, there are some cement wash-basins, and a shed for rain water. Kader appears at the door.

KADER

Ali, you must accompany Ben M'Hidi to the Maison des Arbres.

Ali doesn't answer immediately. He finishes placing the last brick then turns to Kader.

ALI

Why? Isn't he sleeping here?

KADER

No, it's better if he doesn't. The house is filled with new people.

Ali gets up, wipes his hands on his trousers, at the same time inspecting the work that he has just completed.

ALI

Here's another one ready. What a hideout! It really looks like a wall. I'll dirty it a bit, and it's perfect. Want to give a look inside?

Kader has taken a machine gun from one of the basins, and he tosses it to Ali, who catches it.

KADER

No, go now. It's already late.

They go out on the terrace. Ali releases the catch of his machine gun so that the bullet slips into the barrel.

KADER

(to Ben M'Hidi)

They are a family of militants from way back. Everything will work out well, you'll see ... C'mon, Ali, hurry up.

BEN M'HIDI

Alright. See you tomorrow.

They say good-bye, embracing one another. Ali has already climbed over the terrace wall, and has jumped to the next one.

Ben M'Hidi follows him; he is less agile and moves with a bit of trouble.

From the parapet, Kader says to him:

KADER

Passing along the terraces only takes  
five minutes ... and with Ali la Pointe,  
you'll be safe ...

While jumping, Ben M'Hidi loses his balance, and has to grab on to Ali  
to prevent himself from falling.

BEN M'HIDI

But it's he who won't be safe with me ...

The two figures move away from terrace to terrace, and disappear in the  
dark.

86 CASBAH VIEWS AND TERRACES. OUTSIDE. NIGHT.

In the dark in front of them, a metallic reflection is visible and the  
sharp and aggressive sound of an Algerian voice is heard.

Ali responds to the password.

A youth steps out from the shadows. He too is carrying a machine gun,  
recognizes Ali, and greets him. Ali and Ben M'Hidi continue ...

87 MAISON DES ARBRES, TERRACE. OUTSIDE. NIGHT.

Until they arrive at a terrace which is separated from the next one by  
an alley about ten feet wide.

ALI

Here it is ... we've arrived ...

Ben M'Hidi glances at the emptiness beneath them, looks at Ali, and  
takes a deep breath.

BEN M'HIDI

Not yet ...

Ali has climbed onto the parapet, looks around him concentrating  
attentively for a moment, and then jumps into the void, reaching the  
opposite side. He bends, searches for something in the dark, and lifts  
a type of gangplank.

He hands it over to Ben M'Hidi, and together they place it between the  
two terraces.

ALI

Be careful now. Unless you know how it  
works, it's better if you sit on the plank  
and move forward like this ...

BEN M'HIDI

Let's try ...

He tries to stand up on the gangplank, but he lacks the necessary steadiness. He can't hold his balance. He does as Ali has advised him; he sits astride on the plank, and using the force of his arms, he pushes himself forward. He stops halfway to rest for a minute.

BEN M'HIDI

It's good nobody is following us ...

ALI

It's a question of habit ...

And when Ben M'Hidi is closer, Ali helps him to get down to the terrace.

ALI

It's better if I go first, to make sure everything's okay ...

Without waiting for an answer, he moves toward the stairway that leads to the floor below; his movements are silent and graceful.

Ben M'Hidi leans out from the terrace, and looks toward the European city and the sea. At the port, two searchlights are lit, and their long bright rays move slowly toward the Casbah ...

When Ali la Pointe returns, Ben M'Hidi is still leaning on the railing. He seems not to hear the sound of Ali's footsteps, or his voice.

ALI

Everything's okay ... They're waiting for you ...

Ali moves near him, and Ben M'Hidi turns and looks at him.

BEN M'HIDI

What do you think of the strike, Ali?

ALI

I think it'll be a success ...

BEN M'HIDI

Yes, I think so too ... It's been organized well ... But what will the French do?

Both the question, and the answer seem obvious to Ali.

ALI

(shrugging)

It's clear. They'll do everything possible to make it fail.

BEN M'HIDI

No, they'll do even more. We've given them the opportunity to do a lot more ... Do you understand what I mean? Starting tomorrow, they won't be groping in the dark any more; every shop and every worker who strikes will be a known enemy, a self-confessed criminal ... And they will be able to pass to the offensive. Have you thought of this?

Ali has listened attentively. The effort with which he is trying to ask himself the meaning of these words is visible on his face.

ALI

(shaking his head)

No ...

BEN M'HIDI

But Kader told me that you weren't in favor of the strike.

ALI

No, and neither were my men.

BEN M'HIDI

Why?

ALI

Because they told us that we mustn't use weapons, now, when the time is right.

BEN M'HIDI

That's true ... Wars aren't won with terrorism, neither wars nor revolutions. Terrorism is a beginning but afterward, all the people must act ... This is the reason for the strike, and its necessity: to mobilize all Algerians, count them and measure their strength ...

ALI

To show them to the UN, right?

BEN M'HIDI

(smiling slightly)

Yes ... yes. The problem also involves the UN. I don't know what it's worth, but this way, we'll give the UN the possibility of evaluating our strength.

Ali breathes deeply, instinctively, unrestrainedly, Ben M'Hidi watches him, smiles, and says:

BEN M'HIDI

Do you know something Ali? Starting a revolution is hard, and it's even harder to continue it. Winning is hardest of all. But only afterward, when we have won, will the real hardships begin.

He pats Ali's back fondly with his hand and continues, smiling:

BEN M'HIDI

Anyway, there's still a lot to be done ... you aren't already tired, Ali, are you?

Ali looks at him, and without reacting to his irony:

ALI

(with conviction)

No!

88 VARIOUS HOUSES. CASBAH. OUTSIDE. DAWN. JANUARY 28, 1957.

It is gray and smoky dawn, a slow reabsorption of the night, an opaque light which is diffused, sprayed, frozen, to transparency, and rediscovers its outlines and perspectives; and finally, the sun, golden light, awakens all Algiers. To the north, the sea. To the south, the mountains and the Casbah, situated halfway along the coast. The Casbah, still, inert, expectant, on this first day of the strike ...

The paratroopers are already at their places, one after another, at equal distances like links of a very long chain, strung through every alley, spreading to every sidestreet, twisting through the squares, climbing up the stairways, dividing, joining, and lengthening again. The silence is perfect; the camouflaged immobile forms seem to be part of the landscape.

Then a brief and sharp hiss, a hundred whistles together.

A signal releases the still forms: the attack begins.

Doors are beaten down, shots, screams, rifle fire, machine gun fire; the doors opened or broken down; the courtyards, the houses, the rooms, invaded; the men who are trying to escape and who protest and try to save themselves.

VOICES

Of course ... I was just going to work ...

89 BEN M'HIDI'S HIDING PLACE. INSIDE. DAWN.

Ben M'Hidi is inside the hiding place. From outside, an old man helps him to place the square piece of wall over the entrance, and then, in the spaces between the bricks, he adds a paste of plaster mixed with

coal dust. When the paras arrive, everything is in order.

Still men are being seized, beaten, dragged; a cache of weapons; men pushed down the stairs:

SOLDIERS

Go on, go on, you little rats! Get to work!

90 CASBAH. STREETS. OUTSIDE. MORNING.

Women are clinging together after the beatings.

Someone is fleeing toward the terraces. We hear the deafening whirl of the helicopters flying against the wind, their cabin doors open, paras sitting on both sides with their legs dangling out, their machine guns on their knees, a loudspeaker for every helicopter, microphones turned on in such a way that the din of the motors is multiplied a hundred times.

The helicopters fly low again, they skirt the terraces.

The Algerians are fleeing in terror, the uproar begins to fade away, is less intense; microphones are turned on, and off. The terraces are emptied, men seized, beaten, dragged; all the men are forced outside in the alleys, the streets, the squares, every man is forced to face the wall, his hands up.

91 SHOPS. DOORS UNHINGED. OUTSIDE. MORNING.

A truck in reverse, a rope fastened to the hub of the wheels, its other end to a door-latch. The motor is accelerated, clouds of exhaust fumes ...

Door latches pried open like lids of sardine cans, shop windows smashed with machine-gun butts, the counters, the shelves, flung into the air, the merchandise thrown into the streets; a game, a frenzied excitement ...

The Algerians watch, but can not intervene. Some shopkeepers rush to the scene, crying despairingly, while others are dragged away forcibly, tossed about, slapped, pushed, forced to open their shops.

92 CANDY SHOP. INSIDE. MORNING.

A shopkeeper is pushed behind the counter; he gets up, trembling with fear.

A para asks him for a bag of candy, pays politely, smiles, pats his bald head, and asks him sweetly:

PARA

And the strike, my friend?

Then he distributes the candy among the children who are outside.

93 CANDY SHOP. OUTSIDE. MORNING.

The children take the candy silently, without thanking him, then eat the candies slowly, their faces unfriendly and cold ...

94 PLACE DU GOUVERNEMENT. OUTSIDE. MORNING.

The black sky, the trees, the advertising signs ... Cordon Rouge ...  
... an equestrian statue, a car radio, a loudspeaker.

LOUDSPEAKER

"Attention, people of the Casbah! The NLF wants to stop you from working. The NLF forces you to close your shops. Inhabitants of the Casbah, rebel against their orders. France is your country. France has given you civilization and prosperity: schools, streets, hospitals. People of the Casbah, show your love for your mother country, by disobeying the terrorists' orders. Algerians, return to work!"

And then Algerian music, a cheerful and rhythmical melody; the Algerians are forced out of the Casbah in columns, and are pushed toward the military trucks which clutter the southern side of the square, and continue to arrive and depart.

95 CASBAH. EXIT. OUTSIDE. MORNING.

Meanwhile the paras of the psychological divisions make their first selection, randomly, or else deliberately, basing them on the slightest suspicions. They evaluate each man by his appearance or behavior. They block the Algerians from the exit ramp, and assault them with a battery of questions:

PARA'S VOICES

Who are you? What's your name? Occupation?  
Where do you work? Why did you strike?  
They forced you, eh? ... No ... Tell the truth! You promised them, right? Then you're the one who wants to strike. Do you belong to the NLF? C'mon, answer me! Are you afraid to say it? Never mind, it doesn't matter.

The Algerian does not answer, but stares into the para's eyes. The para turns to his companions and shouts:

PARA

Jacques! ... Jacques! ... Another one to headquarters!

The Algerian is seized, and pushed toward the truck.

LOUDSPEAKER

"Attention, Algerians! The NLF wants to stop you from working. The NLF forces you to close your shops. The NLF wants to starve you and condemn you to misery. Algerians, return to work ... !"

96 THE PORT. OUTSIDE. DAY.

The port is deserted, the cranes still. A loaded ship sways lazily at her moorings, the fork-lifts are filled with supplies ...

The limestone is dried out, the bridges empty, dangling cables swing slowly from the pulleys. There is silence in the docks ...

Then, the sound of motors approaching, clouds of dust, Arabs pushed out of the trucks, into the shipyard.

97 STREETS OF ALGIERS. OUTSIDE. DAY.

In the streets of the European city, there is an atmosphere of fear and doubt. The shop windows have their shutters lowered halfway, the shopkeepers are standing in the doorways, ready to close.

The front doors of houses are shut. There are a few hurried passersby but no automobiles; the trams are not running; on the sidewalks the garbage is piled high, nearby the long brooms of the Algerian street cleaners.

PARAS

(yelling)

Sweep, mes enfants, sweep.

An Algerian with a very refined expression, a gentle appearance, says, while excusing himself:

ALGERIAN

I don't know how, sir, I'm sorry ...

They shove the broom into his hands, and shout to him:

PARA

Learn!

LOUDSPEAKER

"French citizens! Europeans of Algiers!  
The strike called by the NLF is a failure.  
Do not be afraid. Return to your jobs.  
General Massu guarantees your safety.  
The Army will protect you!"

98 STREETS OF ALGIERS. OUTSIDE. DAY.

A jeep with loudspeaker precedes a row of military trucks loaded with Algerians.

In every truck there are two paras carrying machine guns by their sides. The Algerians are standing crowded together one against the other. Some of them are holding banners and signs:

I AM GOING TO WORK BECAUSE I AM FREE.

WE ARE FREE.

ARMY-POPULATION-PEACE.

THE ARMY PROTECTS OUR RIGHTS.

The trucks turn a corner, a youth jumps from the last truck, falls, gets up again, and breaks into a run.

The paras shout to him to stop, their voices mix with that of the loudspeaker.

The Algerian continues to run.

A burst of machine-gun fire, then another.

The Algerian jerks forward, his back curved, his arms raised.

He falls down.

99 COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE. PRESS ROOM AND STAIRWAY. INSIDE. DAY.

Noise, confusion in the Commissioner's office press room, ticking of the teletype machines, throngs of journalists in the telephone room. They are trying to transmit the first news.

VARIED VOICES.

Shouting in every language is heard.

A JOURNALIST

We are now in the fourth day and the strike continues, with total support by

the Arab population. The city is very calm. However -- Calm ... Are you deaf? The city is peaceful. In the Moslem quarters, in the outskirts of the city, in the Casbah ... Bye, will call again, I'm busy.

Through the open door, Mathieu can be seen passing, accompanied by another officer. Some journalists see him, and rush behind him. Some others follow, four or five in all, trying to stop him.

JOURNALISTS

Colonel, colonel ... Excuse me, colonel, a statement ... We don't know anything ... You promised us a press conference ... Now there is a meeting with the Commissioner.

FIRST JOURNALIST

Will you tell us what is happening?

MATHIEU

Nothing. Absolutely nothing. We are still weighing the situation.

They move to the landing and begin to ascend the stairway that leads to the second floor. The journalists have difficulty keeping up with Mathieu.

MATHIEU

Look around. I've put everything at your disposal. Go take a look with your own eyes.

2ND JOURNALIST

The strike is a success; but ...

MATHIEU

No. It has failed in its objective.

1ST JOURNALIST

Insurrection?

MATHIEU

Insurrection.

2ND JOURNALIST

But the NLF has always spoken of a strike as a demonstration ...

MATHIEU

And you believe the NLF?

2ND JOURNALIST

They seemed to be plausible this time. A general strike is a good argument for the UN.

MATHIEU

The UN is far away, dear sir. It is easier to make oneself heard with bombs. If I were in their place, I would use bombs.

1ST JOURNALIST

Armed insurrection ... but what is it exactly?

OFFICER

It is an armed insurrection ...

They have arrived at the second-floor landing, hurry along, and stop in front of a large door, where there is a written sign: PREFECT. Mathieu, at the same time, has continued speaking.

MATHIEU

It is an inevitable stage in revolutionary war; from terrorism, one passes to insurrection ... as from open guerrilla warfare one passes to real war, the latter being the determining factor ...

3RD JOURNALIST

Dien Bien Phu?

MATHIEU

Exactly.

Mathieu glances at the journalist, as if to see if there were any irony in his remark, but the journalist's face is expressionless.

MATHIEU

In Indochina, they won.

3RD JOURNALIST

And here?

MATHIEU

It depends on you.

4TH JOURNALIST

On us? You aren't thinking of drafting us by any chance, are you, colonel?

Mathieu leans his hand on the door handle and smiles at the journalists.

MATHIEU

No! We have enough fighters. You have

only to write, and well, if possible.

1ST JOURNALIST

What's the problem then?

MATHIEU

Political support. Sometimes it's there, sometimes not ... sometimes, it's not enough. What were they saying in Paris yesterday?

5TH JOURNALIST

Nothing ... Sartre has written another article ...

Mathieu gestures and makes an expression as if to say: "see what I mean?" At the same time, he opens the door. But before entering, he turns again to the journalists.

MATHIEU

Will you kindly explain to me why all the Sartres are always born on the other side?

5TH JOURNALIST

Then you like Sartre, colonel ...

MATHIEU

Not really, but he's even less appealing as an enemy.

100 PLACE DU GOUVERNEMENT AND RUE DU DIVAN BLOCKADE. OUTSIDE. SUNSET.

Place du Gouvernement, dusk, the other side of the blockade is silent, only the uncovered eyes of the Algerian women who await their men.

The trucks continue to arrive: the men are forced to descend and allowed to enter the Casbah. There is an atmosphere of sadness, for not all the men have returned. The women look at them, scrutinize their faces, from the first to the last in one glance, then slowly ... one face at a time. Some women recognize their husbands, or their brothers or their sons, and run to meet them ...

But others continue to ask for news in lowered, sorrowful voices.

AD-LIB VOICES

Have you seen Mohamed? Where? When? Why hasn't he returned?

A steady hum of voices in Arabic; then the monotonous voice of a policeman who speaks in the microphone of the loudspeaker.

LOUDSPEAKER

"The NLF wants to stop you from working.

The NLF forces you to close your shops, inhabitants of the Casbah, disobey their orders. France has given you civilization and prosperity: schools, streets, hospitals. People of the Casbah! Show your love for your mother country by disobeying the terrorists' orders."

The loudspeaker is attached to one of the blockade posts, and from it a long wire for the microphone is hanging. The policeman has a raspy and bored voice; he stops speaking and leans the microphone on the table in front of him. He gets up, lights a cigarette, and moves away a few steps.

Two children are among the women and behind the wooden horses barricades. They were waiting for this moment.

They bend, seem to be playing, but one of them lifts the barbed wire as high as he can, from the ground. Petit Omar passes a wire underneath, its farthest end bent in the form of a hook. He moves it toward the microphone cord which is lying coiled on the ground. He succeeds in clasping it and pulls it toward him slowly. The cord unwinds, lengthens, stretches, until the microphone on the table begins to move, until it reaches the edge of the table, and falls ...

The noise re-echoes in the loudspeaker, but no one pays any attention to it.

Petit Omar waits a second, then begins to pull again.

The microphone is dragged along the ground -- a humming sound -- it moves nearer, inch by inch, forward, under the barbed wire, until the children are able to take it, and disappear with it behind the women.

LOUDSPEAKER

"Algerians! Brothers! Do not be afraid!  
Algeria will be free. Be courageous,  
brothers! Resist! Do not listen to what  
they are telling you ... Algeria will be  
free ..."

The voice is not violent, but gentle, somewhat breathless and hurried. It extends to the whole square, so that all can hear it well: the people stop what they are doing to listen. They are emotional, proud, or angry, and look toward the sky where the voice seems to be diffused, as if those words should be written up above.

The officer is slow to realize what has happened, looks at the loudspeaker, the cord, and now grabs it, cursing. He pulls and tugs it; the wire yields, and he wrenches it from the microphone.

LOUDSPEAKER

"Brothers--"

The voice is no longer heard, nothing more, silence.

Silence, only that something is changed in the women's eyes. The veils that cover the lower half of their faces suddenly begin to tremble, sway as if shaken by a breath, a light wind. There is no longer an atmosphere of sadness, or silence.

JU-JU.

The ju-jus attack the air, invade it, shake it, make it vibrate as if they were electric charges, or the sound produced by the wind on a field of dry reeds, or the sound produced by a hundred, a thousand fingernails that are scratching a window pane ...

101 HEADQUARTERS. PARA. OUTSIDE. DAY.

PARA

One, two, three, four ... Inside! C'mon!

The five Algerians indicated are forced to get up, taken, pushed, and brought inside a large deserted house which is the paras' headquarters.

The other Algerians, about a hundred of them, are sitting on the ground, in the clearing in front of the house, and the paras of the first regiment continue to guard them with pointed machine guns ...

Suddenly from the villa, the music of a French song comes forth at full blast.

The Algerians look at each other nervously. Even a young para seems to be upset.

1ST PARA

(turning to other para)

What are they doing?

2ND PARA

(smiling)

Dancing inside ...

102 HEADQUARTERS. VILLA. INSIDE. DAY.

A para rushes through a corridor carrying a tape recorder, enters a room where there are some sergeants and an Algerian.

The adjoining room with white tiled walls and a sink is visible through an open door. Two paras are sitting on the floor, smoking and chatting between themselves in whispers.

The para places the tape recorder on the table. The Algerian is naked to the waist. Signs of torture are visible. His face is swollen and wet. The sergeant places the chair near him, and helps him to sit down,

then starts the tape recorder. He says to the Algerian who is trembling:

SERGEANT

Go ahead! C'mon ... Repeat everything from the beginning, and then we'll let you go. Name ...

ALGERIAN

Sid Ahmed.

SERGEANT

Second name.

ALGERIAN

Sail.

SERGEANT

Which "district" do you belong to?

ALGERIAN

Second district ...

SERGEANT

Second district ... Explain better ...

ALGERIAN

Second district, Casbah, West Algiers.

SERGEANT

What "group"?

ALGERIAN

Third group.

SERGEANT

Third group. What's your assignment?

ALGERIAN

Uh ... responsible for the sixth section.

103 VILLA. HEADQUARTERS. INSIDE. DAY.

In a room on the ground floor, a captain is bent over a large map with graphs, and is writing the name Sid Ahmed Sail in one of the blocks at the bottom of the pyramid ...

At the same time, paras are seen through the large window, bringing other Algerians to the villa, and immediately afterward, the music and song are heard again very loudly.

104 CASBAH ALLEY. OUTSIDE. NIGHT.

Night, darkness, locked doors. The Casbah is silent. The paras tread noiselessly on their rubber soles. Patrols.

A flashlight searches for the number of a door, then stops. A para knocks discreetly.

NOISES INSIDE. VOICES.

ALGERIAN VOICE

Who is it?

PARA

Sid Ahmed ... Sid Ahmed Sail.

The door is opened, the paras break in.

105 ANOTHER ALLEY. CASBAH. OUTSIDE. NIGHT.

Another alley in the Casbah, other paras.

Another door forced open, broken into.

Algerians are crowded together in a courtyard which is illuminated with electric flares.

They are being interrogated.

106 CASBAH STREET. OUTSIDE. DAY. RAIN.

A cloudy day, a light drizzle, a sloping street, Algerian music. A company of zouaves walk two by two in the Casbah, through the alleys, stop, play their music, and move on again, alternating Algerian music and a French song.

Behind them, a line of donkeys with baskets full of packages and bags, and cheerful paras who are joking, as they distribute the supplies to the starving women and children, who stand ashamed in front of their houses, their eyes lowered, their gestures too brusque, and hesitant.

SPEAKER

"At the General Assembly of the United Nations, none of the motions presented in the course of the debate has obtained the necessary majority. At last an agreement has been reached on a resolution that excludes any form of direct intervention by the UN in the Algerian question. The Assembly of the United Nations has limited itself to expressing the hope that in a spirit of cooperation, a peaceful, democratic, and just solution will be

found, that conforms to the principles of the United Nations Charter ..."

The monotony of the last words is drowned out and lost. It is raining more heavily now. The water has begun to run along the sloping alleys. The walls are gray, wet; the doors of the cafes and shops are barred with signs nailed upon them.

THIS SHOP HAS SUPPORTED THE NLF STRIKE.  
THE PREFECT HAS ORDERED ITS CLOSING UNTIL  
FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS.

The band of zouaves has stopped again, and now they are playing "La vie en rose."

107 VILLA HEADQUARTERS. INSIDE. DAWN.

In some parts of the villa a gramophone is playing "La vie en rose."

In the room on the first floor, through the large window, the whiteness of the dawn is visible. The desk is cluttered with beer cans and thermos. Mathieu and other officers have their eyes fixed on the graph, where the captain is marking other small crosses at the bottom of the pyramid. The scene is motionless; their expressions are dull. Everyone seems to be incapable of movement, overcome by the dull apathy that always follows a sleepless night.

Until Mathieu breaks the stillness of the scene.

MATHIEU

Good ... Good work ... Now we can all go to sleep.

And moving together with the others, he continues.

MATHIEU

The end of the strike doesn't change anything. The directives remain the same. Give your men the usual shifts. We must remain in the Casbah: twenty-four hours a day!

He turns and points to the graph.

MATHIEU

We must cling to it, and work fast!

Then he turns to the officers and smiling, says in another tone of voice:

MATHIEU

Have any of you ever had a tapeworm?

The officers say "no" and laugh.

MATHIEU

The tapeworm is a worm that can grow to infinity. There are thousands of segments. You can destroy all of them; but as long as the head remains, it reproduces itself immediately. It is the same thing with the NLF. The head is the General Staff, four persons. Until we are able to eliminate them, we must always start again from the beginning.

While he is speaking, Mathieu takes his wallet from his back pocket, opens it, takes out four photos.

MATHIEU

I found these in the police archives. They are old shots, but I made some close-ups. Ramel ... Si Mourad ... Kader ... Ali la Pointe. We must print a thousand copies and distribute them to the men.

Meanwhile, the photos are passed around.

There are photos taken from identification cards, or blown up from some group shots, figures somewhat blurred, faded, smiling, peaceful ...

108 NLF LEADERS' HIDING PLACE. INSIDE. DAY.

In the dim light, the four faces are barely illuminated. The shadows tone down their expressions: Kader, Ali la Pointe, Ramel, Si Mourad. They are crowded into the hiding place, sitting on the floor, motionless, their eyes staring straight ahead, their breathing heavy. From outside, noises, voices that are fading in the distance. Silence.

Then, a discreet knock, a remark in Arabic.

The four breathe deeply, look at each other, then smile a little.

Ali unslips the beam which, placed through an iron ring, is holding shut the door of the hiding place. Using the soles of his feet, he pushes against the square of wall: the light enters violently. It is not electric light, but daylight.

Kader blinks his eyes to accustom them to the light, then goes out on all fours; after him, Ramel, and then the others. They leave the hiding place that Ali built in the wash-house on the terrace.

109 COMPLEX OF KADER'S HOUSE. OUTSIDE. DAY.

All of them have machine guns. Ramel is very tall and robust, about thirty years old.

Si Mourad is slightly older than Ramel. His movements are slow and precise; his glance expresses patience and authority. Djamila is waiting for them.

DJAMILA

You can come out. Thank God. There were so many this time, about ten.

Ali recloses the hiding place.

KADER

Paratroopers?

DJAMILA

Yes.

KADER

What do you think? Did they come here on purpose or by accident?

DJAMILA

No. By accident. They asked some questions, but they didn't touch anyone.

Ali has come out of the wash-house. The sun is high, and helicopters are seen passing one another in the sky. On some faraway terraces, bivouacs of paras are visible. They are guarding the Casbah from above.

The rumble of motors and the voice of the loudspeaker are heard more clearly as they near the house.

LOUDSPEAKER

"Attention! Attention! Inhabitants of the Casbah! The terrorist Ben Amin has been executed this morning. Qrara Normendine has been arrested. Boussalem Ali has been arrested. Bel Kasel Maussa has been arrested. Inhabitants of the Casbah! The NFL has been defeated. Rebel against the remaining terrorists who want to force you to continue a bloody and futile struggle. People of the Casbah, the terrorist Ben Amin has been executed. Help us to build a free and peaceful Algeria. Inhabitants of the Casbah, the NLF has been defeated. Rebel against the remaining terrorists who want to force you to continue a bloody and futile struggle. Attention! Attention! Inhabitants of the Casbah! The terrorist Ben Amin has been executed this morning.

Qrara Normendine has been arrested.  
Boussalem Ali has been arrested. Bel  
Kasem Moussa has been arrested.  
Inhabitants of the Casbah -- the NLF has  
been defeated ..."

The voice fades away and is no longer heard. At the same time, a woman has come up from the floor below, carrying a tray of cups and a teapot.

Ali looks at her quickly, but then watching her more closely, he sees that she is crying. When she passes near him, he stops her, places his hand kindly on her shoulder, and asks her in Arabic why she is crying.

DIALOGUE IN ARABIC BETWEEN ALI AND WOMAN.

The woman shakes her head, tries to smile, but says nothing. Then she enters the wash-house silently and begins to serve the tea.

KADER

It's better to split up, to increase our chances. We must change hiding places, and change them continually ... In the meantime, we must make new contacts, replace our arrested brothers, reorganize our sections--

ALI

(interrupting him)  
Yes, but we must also show them that we still exist.

KADER

Of course. As soon as possible.

ALI

No, immediately. The people are demoralized. Leave this to me ...

KADER

No. Not you, or any one of us. As long as we are free, the NLF continues to exist in the Casbah. If they manage to take us too, there won't be anything left ... And from nothing comes nothing ...

RAMEL

(intervening)  
But it's also necessary to do something ...

KADER

And we will do something, don't worry. As soon as we have reestablished contacts ...

MOURAD

And our movements?

KADER

For this too we've got to change methods.

110 MUNICIPAL STADIUM. OUTSIDE. DAY. FEBRUARY 10, 1957.

The municipal stadium is crowded with people. There is a football game between two European teams. It is almost the end of the first half. From above to the right of the guest box, there is a very loud explosion.

Strips of flesh are hurled into the air. Thick, white smoke ... There are screams of terror. The people try to move away in haste. They are shoving, pushing, bumping into one another ... Then, calm returns. The sirens of the ambulances are heard.

The stretcher, the dead carried away, scores of wounded.

111 PREFECT'S OFFICE. PRESS HALL. INSIDE. DAY. FEBRUARY 25.

Ben M'Hidi is standing in front of the journalists with handcuffs on his wrists and ankles. He is without a tie. He is smiling a little, his glance ironical. There are two paras behind him with machine guns ready. The picture is still for an instant; Ben M'Hidi's smile is steady, so too his eyes, his entire face. Flashes, clicking of cameras.

1ST JOURNALIST

Mr. Ben M'Hidi ... Don't you think it is a bit cowardly to use your women's baskets and handbags to carry explosive devices that kill so many innocent people?

Ben M'Hidi shrugs his shoulders in his usual manner and smiles a little.

BEN M'HIDI

And doesn't it seem to you even more cowardly to drop napalm bombs on unarmed villages, so that there are a thousand times more innocent victims? Of course, if we had your airplanes it would be a lot easier for us. Give us your bombers, and you can have our baskets.

2ND JOURNALIST

Mr. Ben M'Hidi ... in your opinion, has the NLF any chance to beat the French army?

BEN M'HIDI

In my opinion, the NLF has more chances

of beating the French army than the French have to stop history.

The press hall in the prefect's office is crowded with journalists of every nationality. At the side and central aisles there are photographers and cameramen.

Ben M'Hidi is opposite them, standing on a low wooden platform. Mathieu is next to him, seated behind a small desk. Mathieu now gets up, and signals to two paratroopers. Another journalist simultaneously has asked another question:

3RD JOURNALIST

Mr. Ben M'Hidi, Colonel Mathieu has said that you have been arrested by accident, practically by mistake. In fact, it seems that the paratroopers were looking for someone much less important than yourself. Can you tell us why you were in that apartment at rue Debussy last night?

The two paras have moved forward and they take Ben M'Hidi by the arms. At the same time, he answers.

BEN M'HIDI

I can only tell you that it would have been better if I had never been there ...

MATHIEU

(intervening)

That's enough, gentlemen. It's late, and we all have a lot of work ...

Ben M'Hidi glances at him ironically.

BEN M'HIDI

Is the show already over?

MATHIEU

(smiling)

Yes, it's over ... before it becomes self-defeating.

The paras lead Ben M'Hidi away. He moves away with short steps, as much as he can with the irons that are tightened around his ankles. Mathieu has turned to the journalists and smiles again.

112 PREFECT'S OFFICE. PRESS HALL. INSIDE. DAY. MARCH 4.

Colonel Mathieu is standing. On his face is a brief smile, motionless, his eyes attentive, but half-closed somewhat, due to the camera flashes.

1ST JOURNALIST

Colonel Mathieu ... the spokesman for the residing minister, Mr. Gorlin, has stated that "Larbi Ben M'Hidi committed suicide in his own cell, hanging himself with pieces of his shirt, that he had used to make a rope, and then attached to the bars of his cell window." In a preceding statement, the same spokesman had specified that: "... due to the intention already expressed by the prisoner Ben M'Hidi to escape at the first opportunity, it has been necessary to keep his hands and feet bound continually." In your opinion, colonel, in such conditions, is a man capable of tearing his shirt, making a rope from it, and attaching it to a bar of the window to hang himself?

MATHIEU

You should address that question to the minister's spokesman. I'm not the one who made those statements ... On my part, I will say that I had the opportunity to admire the moral strength, intelligence, and unwavering idealism demonstrated by Ben M'Hidi. For these reasons, although remembering the danger he represented, I do not hesitate to pay homage to his memory.

2ND JOURNALIST

Colonel Mathieu ... Much has been said lately not only of the successes obtained by the paratroopers, but also of the methods that they have employed ... Can you tell us something about this?

MATHIEU

The successes obtained are the results of those methods. One presupposes the other and vice versa.

3RD JOURNALIST

Excuse me, colonel. I have the impression that perhaps due to excessive prudence ... my colleagues continue to ask the same allusive questions, to which you can only respond in an allusive manner. I think it would be better to call things by their right names; if one means torture, then one should call it torture.

MATHIEU

I understand. What's your question?

3RD JOURNALIST

The questions have already been asked. I would only like some precise answers, that's all ...

MATHIEU

Let's try to be precise then. The word "torture" does not appear in our orders. We have always spoken of interrogation as the only valid method in a police operation directed against unknown enemies. As for the NLF, they request that their members, in the event of capture, should maintain silence for twenty-four hours, and then, they may talk. Thus, the organization has already had the time necessary to render useless any information furnished ... What type of interrogation should we choose? ... the one the courts use for a crime of homicide which drags on for months?

3RD JOURNALIST

The law is often inconvenient, colonel ...

MATHIEU

And those who explode bombs in public places, do they perhaps respect the law? When you asked that question to Ben M'Hidi, remember what he said? No, gentlemen, believe me, it is a vicious circle. And we could discuss the problem for hours without reaching any conclusions. Because the problem does not lie here. The problem is: the NLF wants us to leave Algeria and we want to remain. Now, it seems to me that, despite varying shades of opinion, you all agree that we must remain. When the rebellion first began, there were not even shades of opinion. All the newspapers, even the left-wing ones wanted the rebellion suppressed. And we were sent here for this very reason. And we are neither madmen nor sadists, gentlemen. Those who call us fascists today, forget the contribution that many of us made to the Resistance. Those who call us Nazis, do not know that among us there are survivors of Dachau and Buchenwald. We are soldiers and our only duty is to win. Therefore, to be precise, I would

now like to ask you a question: Should France remain in Algeria? If you answer "yes," then you must accept all the necessary consequences.

113 CASBAH HOUSES. TORTURE SEQUENCE. INSIDE. DAY.

Casbah, bedrooms, kitchens, bathrooms.

Sharp, white light; motionless faces, figures paused midway in gestures.

Women, children ... glassy eyes ...

Background motionless like in a landscape.

Algerians ... wild eyes ... animals being led to slaughter.

Paras, their every gesture measured exactly, perfection achieved.

An Algerian is lying down on the table, his arms and ankles bound with belts.

An Algerian, in the form of a wheel, an iron bar in the curvature of his knees, his ankles tied to his wrists.

Electrical wires wrenched from their outlets, a generator with crank, extended pliers with their prongs open wide, the tops of the wires held between two prongs, the pliers applied to a naked body, the most sensitive parts: lips, tongue, ears, nipples, heart, sexual organs ...

Faucets, tubing, buckets, funnels, a mouth forced open, held open, with a wooden wedge, tubing in the mouth, rags scattered around, water, a belly that is swelling . . . The torture is precise in every detail, and every detail points to a technique that is taken apart and reassembled.

114 UPPER CASBAH ALLEY. OUTSIDE. DAY.

The chorus of the Koran school like ceaseless wailing, like a stubborn will to survive that seems to be spreading through the Casbah.

Petit Omar looks up instinctively, his small face hardened and taciturn, like that of an adult, then enters the school.

115 KORAN SCHOOL. INSIDE. DAY.

The children are sitting on the mats, motionless; only their lips are moving. There is an oblique light, the teacher is in the shadow.

RELIGIOUS CHORUS.

Petit Omar approaches the teacher who shakes his head in denial. Omar goes out.

116 CASBAH STREETS. PATROLS. OUTSIDE. DAY.

The Casbah is patrolled by paratroopers; helmets, machine guns, portable radios, police dogs ...

Paratroopers are erecting loudspeakers at every street corner. Paratroopers with brushes and buckets of paint are marking the doors of the Casbah with large numbers. From time to time, machine-gun fire is heard in the distance.

Algerians are standing against the wall, their hands up. There is a dead man a few feet away, an Algerian youth. The paratroopers turn him over and search him. A child with terrified eyes turns around a little.

A para transmits the dead man's name into the portable radio.

117 CASBAH. OTHER STREETS. OUTSIDE. DAY.

A car radio receives and transmits the same name; and then the name is repeated by the loudspeakers scattered throughout the Casbah.

LOUDSPEAKER

"Inhabitants of the Casbah! The rebellion gets weaker every day. The terrorist Ben Amin has been executed. Kasem Moussa has been arrested. He was commander of the 2nd Sector NLF. Inhabitants of the Casbah! The terrorists are not your true brothers. Leave them to their fate. Rely on the protection of the French army. Denounce the terrorists and agitators. Cooperate with us to reestablish peace and prosperity in Algeria ..."

118 FOUR WOMEN. STREET. OUTSIDE. DAY.

Four women, their faces veiled, meet a patrol of paras in a small street.

Two of the paras stop the last woman, and lift her dress, uncovering her feet and ankles -- those of a man. They tear away her veil.

The man is Ali. At the same time, there is ...

MACHINE-GUN FIRE.

The two paras fall to the ground. Ali grasps his weapon, visible through the opening of his cloak. The other paras fling themselves to

the ground.

The other three women flee, while Ali continues to shoot, then runs away.

The four flee through the narrow streets and alleys, climb a stairway, and leap from one terrace to another. Behind them, shouts, whistles, and machine-gun fire are heard. And moving nearer ...

BARKING OF DOGS.

119 COURTYARD WITH WELL. OUTSIDE. DAY.

The four enter a courtyard. Ali's three companions have also lifted their veils. They are Kader, Mourad, and Ramel.

A woman rushes to shut the door while a man leads the four toward an opening hidden by some boxes.

The others who are in the courtyard, women and children, are also busy helping, silently, hurriedly, in a tense atmosphere of solidarity with the four fugitives.

Very near are heard ...

BARKING OF DOGS AND PARAS' HURRIED FOOTSTEPS.

A woman runs toward the door and throws some large handfuls of pepper under the cracks.

120 STREET COURTYARD WITH WELL. OUTSIDE. DAY.

The group of pursuers -- paras who are holding police dogs by leashes -- slow down in front of the door.

BARKING DOGS.

The animals sniff the ground, then move on together with the paras.

121 ARAB BATH. INSIDE. DAY.

Petit Omar enters the large steamy room. He moves near the manager and hands him an envelope. The manager slips it quickly under the counter.

SPEAKER

"To all NLF militants! Reorganize! Replace your fallen and arrested brothers. Make new contacts! This is a grave moment. Resist brothers! The General Staff leaves you free to take any and all necessary offensives ...

122 CASBAH HOUSE. INSIDE. DAY.

All the inhabitants of a house. The men are in a row on the balcony of the first floor, their hands crossed behind their heads, their backs to the wall, while paras guard them with pointed machine guns.

Two paratroopers lead an Algerian girl forward: she seems to be exhausted, and can barely walk, her eyes half-closed.

They stop in front of the first man and ask her:

PARAS

Is this one?

SPEAKER

"Our hearts are breaking before such outrages, our houses invaded, our families massacred. Brothers, rebel! Bring terror to the European city!"

123 ALGERIAN STREETS. OUTSIDE. EVENING.

The European city, evening, houses are being lit. People have finished working. They are going to the bars, cinemas, or for walks, or crowding the bus stops ...

The wail of a siren at full blast, an ambulance, driven at frightening speed.

The people move aside, jump to the sidewalks. The cars squeeze to the right, stop.

The ambulance door is opened, a corpse is thrown out, falls, rolls into the street.

The people rush to it. It is a hospital attendant's in white uniform with a knife stuck in his throat.

The sound of the siren decreases in intensity; the ambulance is by now far away.

124 AMBULANCE. OUTSIDE/INSIDE. EVENING.

In the driver's cab, there are two Algerian boys. Their hair is curly, their shirts old and torn. They are sweating; their eyes wide open, staring.

The one who is driving barely reaches the height of the steering wheel. He clutches it desperately. The other has a machine gun. He makes a remark in Arabic shouting to be heard above the siren.

The driver takes a hand off the steering wheel, places it on the dashboard, and tries all the switches until he finds the one for the headlights. The high beams.

The other, meanwhile, is now on his knees on the seat. He is leaning out the open window to his waist, and he begins to shoot.

125 ROUTE OF AMBULANCE. OUTSIDE. EVENING.

The pictures succeed one another in a dizzy rhythm; surprise, terror, someone falls.

SHOTS. SIREN.

126 AMBULANCE. OUTSIDE/INSIDE. EVENING.

There is no more ammunition. The machine gun is thrown in the back of the ambulance. The siren is still at full blast. The auto races ahead at terrifying speed. The two boys don't know any more what to do, where to go, and the one who is driving has his eyes almost closed, as if he were dizzy.

They reach a square.

SIREN.

The other points ahead to the left.

127 BUS SHELTER. OUTSIDE. EVENING.

The people are crowded in a bus shelter. The one who is driving doesn't understand or doesn't want to.

The other shouts to him again and again, the same phrase, then flings himself on the steering wheel, and turns it in that direction.

The bus shelter is nearer and nearer.

The people are paralyzed. They have no time to move. They are run down, rammed into. The ambulance crashes into a pillar.

On the ground, all about, the bodies of dead and wounded. The boys' bodies remain motionless, their foreheads resting on the smashed windshield.

But the sound of the siren does not stop, and is heard, mournful and full of anguish.

128 RAMEL'S HOUSE. IMPASSE ST. VINCENT DE PAUL.

OUTSIDE/INSIDE. DAY. AUGUST 26.

Impasse St. Vincent-de-Paul, noon. There are helicopters in the sky, and paras fill the alley.

Their faces are pale and tense, their eyes wide open, their hands clutch their machine guns. There is a strange silence. Then a movement at the back of the alley, a voice, a brief greeting. Mathieu has arrived and he is saying to an officer:

MATHIEU

Now is not the time for heroes. Give me the megaphone.

Mathieu takes the megaphone in his hands and approaches an open door. Through the doorway the inner courtyard of the house is visible where the corpses of four paras are strewn about.

Ramel and Si Mourad are on the first-floor balcony, lying in wait behind the railings, so they are able to watch the door, courtyard, and the stairway that leads from the balcony to the terrace.

On the terrace there are other paras who are facing the balcony. From time to time they release a burst of machine gun fire.

The voice of Mathieu is heard over the loudspeaker.

MATHIEU

Ramel ... Si Mourad ... use your heads. If you go on like this, I wouldn't want to be in your place when you are captured ... Because you will be captured in the end, and you know it too. Surrender! If you do it immediately, I promise that you will not be harmed and you will have a fair trial. Can you hear me?

Ramel and Si Mourad look at each other.

MOURAD

Who is speaking?

MATHIEU

Mathieu. Colonel Mathieu.

MOURAD

We don't trust you, colonel. Come forward, show yourself.

A moment of silence.

MATHIEU

I don't trust you either. First stand up so I can see you, and keep your hands

still and well in sight.

Mourad hesitates an instant, glances at Ramel, then:

MOURAD

Okay. But we want your promise for a fair trial in writing. Give us a written statement, Mathieu, and then we'll surrender.

MATHIEU

How can I give you this statement?

MOURAD

We'll lower a basket from the window ...

MATHIEU

Okay, I'll make the statement in writing ...

Mourad shows his companion the two large time-bombs that are on the floor in front of him. He takes one, begins to prepare it, and regulates the mechanism.

At the same time, he tells Ramel in Arabic to go find the basket.

Ramel crawls past the doors which are all closed, and asks for a basket.

A door opens and an old woman appears. She hands him a basket with its cord rolled up.

MOURAD

(without turning around)

A newspaper too, or a piece of paper ...

Ramel brings him the basket and newspaper. Mourad has loaded the time-bomb mechanism, and the tic-toc sound is sharp and clear.

Now he has to move the second hand. Mourad's hands do not tremble, his glance is attentive, concentrating. Ramel watches him without saying a word; his fear is obvious.

Without moving, his eyes glued to the bomb dial:

MOURAD

(loudly)

Are you ready, colonel?

MATHIEU

Yes ... But let me first see you.

Mourad moves one of the clock hands to precede the other one by a minute. Immediately afterward he places the flat and rectangular bomb in the bottom of the basket.

The basket seems to be empty. The piece of newspaper protects its bottom. Mourad tells Ramel to get up, and he too gets up. Their machine guns are lying on the ground. Meanwhile, Mourad has begun to count to himself silently, his lips moving: one, two, three, four ...

From the terrace, the paras can see Ramel and Mourad standing up not very far away, their empty hands resting near the basket on the railing.

A para shouts:

PARA

We see them. You can come.

Mourad begins to lower the basket very slowly.

MOURAD

(counting)

60, 59, 58, 57, 56, 55, 54, 53 ...

Mathieu enters the courtyard together with an officer and other paras. He looks up toward the balcony, smiles, and shows them a folded piece of paper.

MATHIEU

Here it is ... you know that when I give my word, I keep it ...

Mourad does not answer, but looks at Mathieu as if to calculate the distance and time, and slows down even more the basket's descent.

Mathieu moves forward a few steps, as if to go for the basket that is hanging on the other side of the courtyard, but suddenly he seems perplexed for a second, and then changes his mind. He turns to the nearest para, and gives him the note.

MATHIEU

You go ...

Mourad's face has remained motionless. In his expression there is a shade of disappointment. He sees Mathieu retrace his steps toward the door, and is now surrounded by a group of paratroopers ...

MOURAD

(counting)

25, 24, 23, 22, 21, 20, 19 ...

The basket has stopped moving two yards from the ground. In order to reach it, the para has to step over the corpses of his dead companions, his face hardens, he reaches the basket, and extending his arm, he throws in the note. The basket does not move; the para looks up.

PARA

(muttering)

Hurry up, black bastard!

Mourad smiles at him, and mumbles something in Arabic, a phrase that he doesn't manage to finish, for now is heard -- the explosion.

129 RUE CATON 4. FATHIA'S HOUSE. INSIDE. NIGHT. SEPTEMBER 2.

Rue Caton number four. It is 11 p.m. A large, badly lit room is filled with paratroopers and one of them is now being carried away on a stretcher. Another three or four wounded are seated on the opposite side of the room and are waiting their turn to be carried away.

Two paras are by the door. They look out from time to time, and are attentive, ready, with machine guns clutched by their sides.

On the other side of the room opposite the door, the Algerians who live in the house are standing against the wall. Mathieu is in front of them, and he is asking a group of women:

MATHIEU

Which one of you is Fathia?

A woman about forty years old raises her eyes toward him.

MATHIEU

Is it you?

The woman nods yes.

MATHIEU

Go up the stairs, and tell Kader that if they don't surrender, we'll blow up everything ... Do you understand?

The woman again nods yes, and without waiting for more words, she moves toward the door, taciturn, silent. Mathieu follows her, he pushes past her.

MATHIEU

Try to convince him, if you care about your house ... Wait a minute ... Do you want to get killed?

He leans out the door and says loudly:

MATHIEU

Kader, look. Fathia is coming ... I wouldn't shoot ...

Then he steps aside and lets the woman pass.

MATHIEU

Go on ...

Outside the door, there is a small landing, then a steep stairway, and at the top, a corridor. Fathia climbs the stairs that are cluttered with empty magazines, with cartridge boxes. The walls are chipped from the shooting. The ceiling is parallel to the stairway at the same inclination, for part of its distance. But for the last few yards, it straightens out and lowers to become horizontal.

The floor of the hiding place is open. Inside are Zohra and Kader.

Fathia repeats to them in Arabic what Mathieu has said to her.

Kader listens to her then answers, he too in Arabic. Then he smiles.

KADER

Okay ... You can tell the colonel to blow up whatever he likes. Go on, now.

Fathia goes down the stairs, and reenters the room.

FATHIA

(to Mathieu)

He said that you can blow up whatever you like ...

She, then, rejoins the other women.

Mathieu seems to be tired, he has lost weight, he is nervous. He turns to his men, and slowly as he gives the orders, the paras begin to move.

MATHIEU

Return to where the others are. Prepare the plastic. It should be placed on the ceiling of the stairway under the hiding place ... a long fuse rolled up ... Take cover ... keep shooting while you are working. Quickly! Clear the house ... Bring them outside, then check the rooms again ... Hurry up!

Kader gives Zohra a box of matches. She goes to the back of the hiding place where there is a bundle of papers. She lights them, then returns near to Kader who is inspecting the magazine of his machine gun.

There are only two shots left. The other empty magazines are scattered around. Kader turns to Zohra, and starts to speak, but suddenly his words are blurred by the sound of shots.

Kader and Zohra have to step back a little, because the shells are flashing at the edge of the opening.

The shooting stops. From the stairway, one end of a long fuse is thrown into the corridor. The other end is inserted into a plastic

charge fastened to the ceiling of the stairway, under the hiding place.

Kader and Zohra can see two or three yards in front of them, below, into the corridor, where the end of the fuse is glowing and burning.

Kader too has lost weight, his beard is long. He looks at the fuse, then at Zohra. A second passes in silence. Now Zohra too looks at him, and Kader says calmly in his usual voice:

KADER

It doesn't do any good to die like this ...  
it doesn't help anybody ...

He leans out from the hiding place.

KADER

(shouting)

Mathieu! If you give your word that you  
won't touch any of the other people in  
the house, we'll come out.

130 MILITARY CAR. INSIDE. NIGHT.

Inside a military automobile.

In the back seat, Mathieu is sitting next to Kader who is handcuffed.

Zohra is in the front seat, between the driver and a para who has in his hand a large regulation pistol. The interior is lighted by the headlights of a jeep which is following directly behind the auto a few yards. Silence. Mathieu looks hastily at Kader, who is staring straight in front of him, and appears to be sullen and downcast.

Then Mathieu speaks in a pleasant tone, as if in friendly conversation.

MATHIEU

If you had let me blow you up, you would  
have disappointed me ...

Kader turns to him, and replies, trying to maintain his own voice at the same level of indifference:

KADER

Why?

MATHIEU

For many months, I've had your photo on  
my desk together with a dozen or so  
reports on you ... And naturally, I am  
under the illusion that I know you  
somewhat. You never seemed the type,  
Kader, inclined to performing useless  
actions.

Kader doesn't answer right away, then speaks slowly as if expressing the results of his doubts, a new point of view ...

KADER

You seem to be very satisfied to have taken me alive ...

MATHIEU

Of course I am.

KADER

That proves that I was wrong. Evidently I credited you with an advantage greater than I should have.

MATHIEU

No. Let's just say that you've given me the satisfaction to have guessed correctly. But from the technical point of view, it isn't possible to speak of advantages. By now the game is over. The NLF has been defeated.

Zohra has turned around suddenly. She is crying and speaks hastily in Arabic, violently, harshly.

Mathieu doesn't understand, and turns to Kader to ask him politely, although with a bit of irony:

MATHIEU

What is she saying?

KADER

She says that Ali is still in the Casbah.

131 CROWDED BEACH. OUTSIDE. DAY.

Ali la Pointe's glance is sullen, heavy, motionless. He moves his head slowly in such a way so that his glance also moves in a semicircle.

White beach, fine sand, transparent sea, bodies stretched out in the sun, golden skin of girls; girls in bikinis, sensual, smiling, young men with narrow hips, with muscles well cared for, cheerful youth, naturally happy, enviable. The children are building sand castles near the water's edge; the beach is shaped like a half-moon with rocky reefs at both ends ...

A September Sunday, warm and calm. Ali is leaning on the wall. He is wearing a white wool cloak. Only his eyes are visible ... the eyes of a hungry tiger perched above a path, on the lookout for innocent prey. Eyes that now gleam, cruel eyes, tension dilating the pupils ... Then again the calm, a gloomy calm, a gratifying tension. The place is

right, and the victims couldn't be better ones.

Ali moves, leaves the wall, crosses the street to a large city sanitation truck, one of those metallic trucks with no visible openings.

A young Algerian is at the steering wheel, a street cleaner. He is leaning his thin face on the wheel. His hands are dirty, by now unwashable from years of work.

Ali has climbed into the cab. The truck is in motion and leaves.

132 SANITATION TRUCK. INSIDE. DAY.

The name of the street cleaner is Sadek. He seems frightened. He looks around, hesitates before speaking.

SADEK

Then the beach is okay, Ali.

Silence. Sadek looks at him again, waiting, but Ali does not respond.

Ali looks straight ahead at the street bathed in sunlight, the tar that seems to be liquid, the villas that surround Algiers, the lemon trees, the oleanders ... Then he speaks, but without turning to Sadek. He speaks in a whisper, his eyes continually staring straight ahead.

ALI

We need two more, the biggest ones.

SADEK

And the others?

ALI

The others ... let's wait and see.

Sadek remains silent for a while.

SADEK

I've looked, Ali, even where I work. Nothing. The ones who have not been arrested have left Algiers and gone into the mountains ... And the others don't want to hear any more about it ... they're afraid ...

Ali doesn't answer him. Silence.

ALI

Can't you go any faster?

SADEK

Yes, sure ... here.

Sadek puts the truck in third gear, accelerates the motor, then shifts back again into fourth gear. The truck increases its speed. The road is straight, the outskirts of Algiers are visible.

SADEK

If we don't find any others ... should we call it off?

Ali turns suddenly to look at him but says nothing. Sadek can feel those eyes on him, and tries to justify himself.

SADEK

We can't plant all of them by ourselves ...

Ali speaks to him in a dry and indifferent voice.

ALI

You don't have to plant anything. You only have to carry them, that's all.

133 RUE DES ABDERAMES. ALI'S HOUSE. OUTSIDE/INSIDE. NIGHT.

Night. At number three rue des Abderames, on the first-floor balcony, the stove fires are glowing. The women are cooking outside on their stoves built from tin containers. They are cooking in front of the doors of their homes. The doorways are lit up.

Ali passes along the balcony, passes by Mahmoud and his wife who are speaking in whispers by themselves and leaning on the railing. It is a warm and starry night. Mahmoud says some more words to his wife, still speaking in whispers, tenderly. Then he follows Ali who has stopped in front of the door.

134 ALI'S ROOM. INSIDE. NIGHT.

In the room, there is Petit Omar who is cutting out some pictures from a comic book.

As soon as he sees Ali at the door, he stops, closes his book, puts the scissors in his pocket. He seems to be embarrassed at being caught in his childish game.

In the center of the room, there is a dividing curtain, pulled halfway to the side. On the other side, Hassiba is typing. Behind Hassiba, next to the bed, the hiding place is open. Ali enters. He seems tired, sweating. He removes his cloak, tosses it on the chair, and puts his machine gun on the table.

ALI

(turning to Petit Omar)

C'mon, hurry. Go to sleep. Tomorrow we four have a lot of work to do: Mahmoud, Hassiba, you and I.

Mahmoud has remained motionless at the door. Hassiba has stopped typing and approaches them. Omar says nothing, but there is a satisfied look in his eyes. He can't help stretching out his hand to touch the machine gun.

Ali sits down, at the table, moves the machine gun away from Omar, and continues to speak, still talking to Omar.

ALI

Because we can't find anyone else, Sadek will bring us there in the truck. You get out first and plant the bomb where I tell you ... then return here quickly. But be careful that no one is following you. Then Hassiba will get out, and after her, Mahmoud. Then I will plant the ones that are left. They'll know that we're still strong ... you can be sure of that.

135 ALI'S ROOM. INSIDE. DAWN. OCTOBER 7, 1957.

The room is badly lit by a small lamp which is on the other side of the curtain. There is a mattress on the table and Petit Omar is lying on top, asleep.

Ali is lying on a mattress on the ground, fully dressed, with his machine gun by his side. His eyes are open, and he is listening to the far-away sound of a motor. He looks at his watch, gets up, and goes to open the door. Outside there is the first gray light of dawn. The sound is heard more clearly and seems to be moving nearer.

Ali returns to Petit Omar, stays a minute looking at him, then shakes him roughly. The child gets up immediately. He is trembling, as if he had slept with taut nerves, and jumps down quickly from the table. His eyes are open, but he is still sleepy.

Ali smiles for a moment, and runs his fingers through Omar's hair.

ALI

Omar, Omar. C'mon, wake up. Hurry, little one. Today you're going to see fireworks.

The child also smiles and his face relaxes, then brightens up. At the same time, he extends his hand and pats Ali's side. Mahmoud enters the room from the balcony. He is carrying a tray with four cups of coffee.

MAHMOUD

It's almost time, isn't it?

ALI

Yes.

Then Ali turns to the curtain and calls:

ALI

Hassiba ...

HASSIBA

I'm ready.

Ali sits down and puts on a pair of sneakers. Petit Omar has finished dressing.

The curtain is drawn, Hassiba appears, already dressed.

MAHMOUD

I heard the sound of a truck before ...

ALI

Me too. But I don't think it was Sadek.  
Otherwise he'd be here by now.

Hassiba is dressed in European clothes, a skirt and blouse. She nears the table and takes a cup of coffee.

HASSIBA

(smiling)

How is your wife now?

Mahmoud's face is expressionless. He shakes his head.

MAHMOUD

So-so ...

Ali has finished putting on his shoes. He takes a cup of coffee. In the same moment, outside the door is heard:

MACHINE-GUN FIRE.

The four are startled.

ALI

(shouting)

Inside! Inside!

Simultaneously, all of them move toward the hiding place.

Mahmoud's wife appears at the door. Her face is despairing, but she moves carefully, quickly, precisely. She closes the door. She puts the coffee cups back on the tray, and hides everything in the sink.

She goes to the other side of the curtain. Ali is entering the hiding place. The other three are already inside. Ali pushes the movable piece

of wall toward him, and the woman helps him.

Then, she takes a can from the night table; it is full of plaster mixed with coal dust. The woman spreads the paste in the joints between the bricks of the wall and the closure of the hiding place. At the same time, shouting, shots, and the footsteps of paras are heard.

As soon as she has finished, the woman slips into bed under the sheets.

The paratroopers break into the room shouting, and make the woman get up. They drag her outside on the balcony.

136 ABDERAMES COURTYARD. OUTSIDE. DAWN.

They drag Mahmoud's wife down from the balcony to the center of the courtyard, where now all the inhabitants of the building are standing -- men, women, children -- all of them with their hands to the wall, in full sight of the paras who are guarding them.

Sadek's head is lowered. He passes along the balcony between Marc and the captain. He stops in front of the door.

CAPTAIN

(mumbling softly)

Here?

The Algerian nods yes. They enter.

137 ALI'S ROOM. INSIDE. DAWN.

Sadek points toward the curtain. The captain signals him to go there. The Algerian points to a spot in the brick baseboard.

The captain examines it and with his thumb, he tests the fresh plaster. He bends down and leans his ear to the wall. He smiles as he listens to the ...

HEAVY BREATHING.

It is the same breathing that soon after Mathieu hears, bent in the same position as the captain. The colonel gets up and looks around him.

Four paras are ready with their machine guns aimed at the hiding place. Others are arranging plastic charges along the wall, all of them connected to a single fuse.

In a corner, Sadek, wearing his cap and army camouflage fatigues, is sitting on a chair.

He is watching the scene with his eyes wide open. He is trembling. His body is slouched forward. He seems to be lifeless, without nerves. If it weren't for his face, he would seem to be a heap of rags.

MATHIEU  
(to the captain)  
Everything ready?

CAPTAIN  
Yes, sir.

MATHIEU  
He hasn't answered?

CAPTAIN  
No, sir. Total silence.

MATHIEU  
I thought so. It was obvious.

Mathieu bends down again and leans his ear against the bricks. He gets up again. He remains a minute in this position, lost in thought.

MATHIEU  
(loudly and markedly)  
Ali ... Ali la Pointe ... You're going to be blown up. Let the others come out, at least the child. We'll let him off with reformatory school ... Why do you want to make him die?

Mathieu stops, and shakes his head. He turns to the captain:

MATHIEU  
Let's go ...

A paratrooper is unrolling a large bundle of fuse.

CAPTAIN  
Bring it down there, till it reaches outside ...

PARA  
Yes, sir ...

Mathieu has stopped in front of Sadek. He looks at him.

MATHIEU  
Is this one still here? ... Take him away.

Two paratroopers grab the street cleaner by the armpits and almost lifting him completely, they lead him away. Mathieu is about to go out, then turns and takes the megaphone from the captain's hands, and places it to his mouth.

MATHIEU  
Ali! Ali la Pointe! I am giving you

another thirty seconds. What do you hope to gain? You've lost anyway. Thirty seconds, Ali, starting now.

138 ALI'S HIDING PLACE. INSIDE. DAWN.

Ali la Pointe's eyes are staring at the square piece of wall that seals the hiding place. His glance is taciturn, gloomy. The others are watching Ali. Their lips are half-open, their breasts rise and fall in laborious breathing.

ALI

(in deep, resigned voice)  
Who wants to leave?

Petit Omar presses against Ali's arm; he looks like a son with his father.

Mahmoud takes his head in his hands and squeezes it.

HASSIBA

What are you going to do?

ALI

I don't deal with them.

139 ALI'S ROOM. INSIDE. DAWN.

Mathieu checks his watch; thirty seconds have passed. He moves to go out. The four paras with machine guns are still in the room.

CAPTAIN

(to another paratrooper)  
You stay here by the door to signal the others. When I call you, all of you come down ...

140 RUE DES ABDERAMES. OUTSIDE. MORNING.

The sun has risen to the height of the terraces.

The terraces are swarming with people.

The alley is empty and only the fuse is visible; it reaches to a small clearing full of paratroopers. Two more colonels and a general have arrived.

There is a paratrooper with an "Arriflex" ready to film the explosion.

The atmosphere is that of a show. Two paratroopers are connecting the ends of the fuse to the electric contact.

On the terraces, there are Algerian women, children, and old people.

Their eyes are motionless; someone is praying. There is an atmosphere of suspense.

There is also the wife of Mahmoud; her eyes seem blank.

Five paras come out of the house quickly, and pass along the alley toward the clearing.

The captain signals, and the para begins to lower the contact switch slowly.

The eyes of all are motionless. The camera is ready. But the explosion does not occur.

The paratrooper swears; he examines the wires.

CAPTAIN

Stand back! Ready, Pierre?

Pierre responds by mumbling something, and at the same time his hands are moving frenziedly around the wires.

141 ALI'S HIDING PLACE. INSIDE. MORNING.

Ali la Pointe bends over Petit Omar as if to cover him. Hassiba has stopped breathing, her eyes wide open; Mahmoud is crying ...

A single image, a second and now:

THE EXPLOSION.

142 RUE DES ABDERAMES. OUTSIDE. MORNING.

The house collapses in a white cloud, as if its foundations had suddenly been removed.

Mathieu and the other officers move away. Behind them the echo of the explosion continues to resound, then shouts, orders, and isolated ju-ju.

Mathieu's face is weary but his expression is relieved. He is smiling.

GENERAL

And so the tapeworm no longer has a head.  
Are you satisfied, Mathieu? In Algiers  
everything should be over.

MATHIEU

Yes, I believe there won't be any more

talk of the NLF for some time.

GENERAL

Let's hope forever.

Another colonel intervenes:

1ST COLONEL

At heart they are good people. We've had good relations with them for a hundred and thirty years ... I don't see why we shouldn't continue that way.

2ND COLONEL

Yes, but Algiers is not the only city in Algeria.

MATHIEU

(smiling)

Bah, for that matter, Algeria isn't the only country in the world ...

GENERAL

(smiling)

Why, yes, of course ... But for the moment, let's be satisfied with Algiers! In the mountains our work is always easier.

Gradually the officers move away down the slanting street toward their jeeps, and their remarks fade away and are lost.

143 CASBAH STREETS. DEMONSTRATIONS. OUTSIDE. DAY. DECEMBER 1960.

Like the cries of birds, of thousands of wild birds, the ju-jus invade and shake the black sky.

JU-JU-JU ...

And below, in the Casbah the white cloaks of the Algerians are like streams, floods; through the alleys, down the stairways, through the streets and the squares, they flow toward the European city.

144 PRESS HALL. PREFECT'S OFFICE. INSIDE. DAY.

In the press hall, the journalists are taking the telephones by force, shouting at the top of their voices. An English journalist:

JOURNALIST

No one knows what could have been the pretext. The fact is that they seem to be unleashed without warning ... I telephoned

Lausanne ... yes, Lausanne. I spoke with an NLF leader in exile. They don't know anything there.

145 ALGIERS STREETS. DEMONSTRATION. OUTSIDE. DAY/NIGHT.

In front, the adolescents, very young boys and girls, their mouths wide open, their eyes burning, laughing, their arms stretched above them, raised and lowered to mark the rhythm.

VOICES

Algerie!

Mu-sul-mane!

Algerie Musulmane!

The paratroopers jump down from the trucks, and rush forward.

The policemen rush forward, soldiers, zouaves, the CRS ...

Deployed in cordons, in a wedge, in turtle-like formations, in order to divide, to scatter, to hold back ...

But the demonstrators will not move back, or divide. They continue to press forward, pushing against the troops, face to face.

VOICES

Free Ben-Bel-la!

Free Ben-Bel-la!

The Europeans are closing their doors, lowering shutters. They too, the younger ones, the more decisive, are grouping together, trying to confront the Algerians. They are less numerous, but armed ...

The first revolver shots resound in the streets, from the windows. Some Algerians fall, but the others continue to advance. They are running now, scattering.

VOICES

Ta-hia Et-thou-ar!

[Long live the partisans!]

The jeeps, the trucks, the sirens, the tear-gas bombs, machine gun fire.

And then the tanks. The turrets move slowly in a semi-circle. The machine gunner fires the first burst at point-blank.

VOICES

Ta-hia el-Djez-air!

Ta-hia el-Djez-air!

Meanwhile the sun has set, and shadows of night are visible.

VOICE OF  
ENGLISH  
JOURNALIST

(off)

Today the situation is tenses. In spite of pressure from the more intolerant colonialist group it seems that the Government has given strict orders not to use arms except in emergency situations. But this afternoon there were attempts to enter the European city by force: as a result, the first casualties ... Now calm has returned, although from the Casbah continue to be heard those cries ... incoherent, rhythmic, nightmarish cries ...

And then, from time to time, in the by now dark night, the shrill and angry ju-jus.

JU-JU-JU ...

146 ALGERIAN STREETS. FLAGS. OUTSIDE. DAY.

Those cries continued until the following day.

The following day is sunny; the scene begins again like the day before. Only that ...

VOICE OF  
ENGLISH  
JOURNALIST

(off)

This morning for the first time, the people appeared with their flags -- green and white with half moon and star. Thousands of flags. They must have sewn them overnight. Flags so to speak. Many are strips of sheets, shirts, ribbons, rags ... but anyway they are flags.

Thousands of flags. All are carrying flags, tied to poles or sticks, or waving in their hands like handkerchiefs. Waving in the sullen faces of the paratroopers, on the black helmets of the soldiers.

SPEAKER

"Another two years had to pass and infinite losses on both sides; and then July 2, 1962 independence was obtained -- the Algerian Nation was born."

VOICES

Ta-hia el-Djez-air!

Ta-hia el-Djez-air!  
Ta-hia el-Djez-air!

THE END

Screenplay by Franco Solinas