

PART 1: CHAPTER 2

When I woke up, I understood why my boss seemed unhappy when I asked him for my two days off: today's a Saturday. I'd sort of forgotten, but as I was getting up, it occurred to me. My boss, Quite naturally, thought that I'd be getting four days' holiday including my Sunday and he couldn't have been very pleased about that. But for one thing, **it isn't my fault if they buried mother yesterday instead of today and for another**, I'd have had my Saturday and Sunday off in any case. Of course, I can still understand my boss's point of view.

Commented [1]:
Note his attitude

I had trouble getting up because I was tired from the day before. While I was shaving, I wondered what to do with myself and I decided to go for a swim. I caught the tram down to the bathing station at the port. I dived straight into the narrows. It was full of young people. In the water I met Marie Cordona, who used to be a typist at the office. I'd fancied her at the time, and I think she fancied me too. But she left soon afterwards and nothing came of it. I helped her onto a buoy and as I did so, I brushed against her breasts. I was still in the water and she was already lying flat on her stomach on the buoy. She turned round towards me. She had her hair in her eyes and she was laughing. I hoisted myself onto the buoy beside her. It was good and as if for fun, I let my head sink back onto her stomach. She didn't say anything and I left it there. I had the whole sky in my eyes and it was all blur and gold. I could feel Marie's stomach throbbing gently under the back of my neck. We lay on the buoy for a long time, half asleep. When the sun got too hot, she dived off and I followed. I caught her up, put my arm round her waist and we swam together. She was still laughing. On the quayside, while we were drying ourselves, she said, 'I'm browner than you.' I asked her if she wanted to come to the cinema that evening. She laughed again and said there was a Fernandel film she'd like to see. When we'd got dressed again, she seemed very surprised to see me in a black tie and she asked me if I was in mourning. I told her that mother had died. She wanted to know when, so I said, 'Yesterday.' She recoiled slightly, but made no remark. I **felt like telling her that it wasn't my fault**, but I stopped myself because I remembered that I'd already said that to my boss. **It didn't mean anything.** In any case, **you're always partly to blame.**

Commented [2]:
Contrast to the earlier scene at the vigil – full of old people. Death in Chapter 1, fun and frolic in Ch 2.

Commented [3]:
'My physical needs often distort my emotions.'

Commented [4]:
Note the contrast in colours (ch 1 & ch 2)

Commented [5]:
Their skin colour is different from the French in France/Paris.

Commented [6]:
Comedy genre

Commented [7]:
Why did she recoil?

Commented [8]:
His attitude

Commented [9]:
How is this seen throughout the novel?

That evening Marie had forgotten all about it. The film was funny in parts but otherwise really pretty stupid. She had her leg against mine, and I was fondling her breasts. Towards the end of the show I kissed her, but badly. Afterwards she came back to my place.

When I woke up, Marie had gone. She'd explained to me that she had to go and see her aunt. I remembered that **it was Sunday and that annoyed me: I don't like Sundays.**

Commented [10]:
Why?

So I turned over in bed and tried to find the salty smell of Marie's hair in the bolster and I slept till ten. Then I stayed in bed and smoked a few cigarettes till noon. I didn't want to have lunch at Celeste's as usual because I knew they'd ask me questions and I don't like that. I cooked myself some eggs and ate them out of the pen, without any bread because I'd run out and I didn't feel like going down to buy some.

Commented [11]:
Why?

Commented [12]:
He does what is convenient for him.

After lunch I was a bit bored and I wandered around the flat. It was just right when mother was here. But now it's too big for me and I've had to move the dining-room table into my bedroom. I live in just this one room now, with some rather saggy cane chairs, a wardrobe with a mirror that's gone yellow, a dressing table and a brass bed. The rest is in a mess. A bit later, for want of something to do, I picked up an old newspaper and read it. I cut out an advertisement for Kruschen Salts that amuse me in the papers. I also washed my hands and finally sat out on the balcony.

Commented [13]:

Is he bothered that mother is not there anymore or is the space bothering him?

My room looks out onto the main streets of the suburb. It was a beautiful afternoon. And yet the pavements were grimy, and the few people that were about were all in a hurry. First of all it was families out for a walk, two little boys in sailor suits, with the trousers below their knees, looking a bit cramped in their stiff clothes, and a little girl with a big pink bow and black patent leather shoes. Behind them the mother, an enormous woman in a brown silk dress, and the father, a small, rather frail man whom I know by sight. He was wearing a straw hat and a bow tie and carrying a walking stick. Seeing him with his wife, I understood why local people said he was distinguished. A bit later the local lads went by, hair greased back, red ties, tight-fitting jackets with embroidered handkerchiefs in their top pockets and square-toed shoes. I thought they must be heading for the cinemas in the town centre. That was why they were leaving so early and hurrying to catch a tram, laughing noisily as they went.

Commented [14]:

Washing hands..in chapter 3, this is featured again. Why?

After that the street gradually became deserted. The shows had all started, I suppose. Only the shopkeepers and the cats remained. The sky was clear but dull above the fig trees which line the street. The tobacconist opposite brought a chair out onto the pavement, placed it in front of his door and sat astride it, with his arms resting on the back. The trams, which had been cram-full a few minutes before, were not almost empty. In the little café, Chez Pierrot, next door to the tobacconist's, the waiter was sweeping up the sawdust and the place was deserted. A typical Sunday.

Commented [15]:

Why he is giving such a detailed narration. Is he part of the action?

I turned my chair round like the tobacconist's because I found it more comfortable that way. I smoked a couple of cigarettes, went inside to get some chocolate and came back to the window to eat it. Soon after that, the sky clouded over and I thought we were going to have a summer storm. It gradually cleared again though. But the passing clouds had left a sort of threat of rain hanging over the street which made it more gloomy. I watched the sky for a long time.

Commented [16]:

What does 'a typical Sunday' mean?

At five o'clock there was a lot of noise as some trams arrived. They were coming back from the local football-ground with bunches of spectators perched on the steps and hanging from the guardrails. The next few trams brought back the players; I recognized them by their little suitcases. They were yelling and singing at the tops of their voices that their team would never die. Several of them waved to me. One of them even shouted to me, 'We thrashed them.' I nodded as if to say, 'Yes.' From that point on the street began to fill with cars.

Commented [17]:

Why?

The day advanced a bit more. Above the roofs the sky began to redden and with evening approaching, the streets came to life. People were gradually returning from

Commented [18]:

Note the use of time in this chapter

their walks. I recognised the distinguished gentleman in the crowd. The children were either crying or trailing behind. Almost immediately, the local cinemas pouted their audiences out in a great flood onto the street. The young men among them were making more decisive gestures than usual and I thought they must have seen an adventure film. Those who'd been to the cinemas in town came back a bit later. They looked more serious. They were still laughing, but only occasionally, and they seemed tired and thoughtful. They hung about in the street, wandering up and down the pavement opposite. The local girls, with their hair down, were walking arm in arm. The young men had positioned themselves so that the girls would pass by them and they'd throw out witty comments which would make the girls giggle and turn their heads away. I knew several of the girls and they waved to me.

The street lamps suddenly came on just then and they made the first few stars that were appearing in the night sky look quite pale. I could feel my eyes getting tired watching the street like this with its mass of people and lights. The street lamp were making reflections on the wet pavements, and the trams, passing at regular intervals, would light up a smile or some shiny hair or a silver bracelet. Soon afterwards, as the trams became fewer and the sky blackened above the trees and the lamps, the people gradually disappeared, until the street was deserted again and the first cat walked slowly across it. I thought maybe I ought to have some dinner. I had a bit of a neck-ache from leaning on the back of my chair for so long. I went down to buy some bread and some pasta. I did my own cooking and I ate standing up. I wanted to smoke a cigarette at the window, but it had turned chilly and I felt a bit cold. So I closed my windows and as I was coming back inside I saw reflected in the mirror a corner of my table where my spirit-lamp was standing beside some pieces of bread. I realized that I'd managed to get through another Sunday, that mother was now buried, that I was going to go back to work and that, after all, nothing had changed.

Commented [19]:

Again, he describes his physical ailments.

Commented [20]:

What is your impression of Meursault?