

PART II: CHAPTER 3

I must say that in fact summer very soon came round again. I knew that **as soon as it began to get hot something ne was going to happen to me**. My case was down for the last session of the court of assizes and the session was due to end in June. The proceedings opened with **blazing sunshine** outside my lawyer had assured me that they wouldn't last more than two or three days. Besides,' he'd added, '**the court won't want to waste any time because yours isn't the most important case in the session**. There's a **parricide** coming on immediately afterwards.

At half past seven in the morning they came to fetch me and the prison can took me to the Law Courts. They two policemen took me into a small room which smelt of shade. We sat down and waited by a door through which we could hear people talking and shooting, chairs scrapping and a **whole commotion which reminded me of one of those local festivals** where, after the concert, they clear the room for dancing. The policemen told me that we had wait for the court to convene and one of them offered me a cigarette which I **refused**. He asked me soon afterwards if I was 'nervous'. I said no. In fact in a way **it would be interesting to watch a trial**. I'd never had the chance to see one before. 'Yes,' the other policeman said, 'but it ends up being boring.'

After a short while a little bell rang in the room. They then took off my handcuffs. They opened the door and led me into the dock. The room was full to bursting. In spite of the blinds, the **sun was filtering through in places and the air was already stifling**. They'd left the windows shut. I sat down with the policemen on either side of me. It was at that point that **I noticed a row of faces in front of me. They were all looking at me**. I realized that they were the jury. But I couldn't make any distinctions between them. I just had one impression. I was in a **tram** and all these anonymous passengers on the opposite seat were scrutinizing the new arrival to find his peculiarities. I know it was silly idea since it wasn't **peculiarities they were looking for here, but criminality**. There's not much difference though and anyway that was the idea that came to me.

I was feeling a bit dizzy too with all these people in this stuffy room. I looked at the public again and I couldn't pick out a single face. I think at first I hadn't quite realized that all these people were crowding in to see me. **Usually no one took any notice of me**. I had to make an effort to understand that I was the cause of all this excitement. I said to the policeman, 'What a lot of people!' He replied that it was because of the papers and he pointed to a group standing by a table under the jury- box. He said, 'That's them.' I asked, 'Who?' and he repeated, 'The papers.' He knew one of the journalists who noticed him at that point and came towards us. He was an elderly and pleasant-looking man, with a rather twisted grin on his face. He shook hands very warmly with the policeman I noticed at that point that everyone was meeting and welcoming everyone else and chatting away, **as if this were some sort of club where people are happy to find themselves in a familiar world**. **That was how I explained the peculiar impression that I had of being out of place, a bit like an**

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A French cour d'assises or Assize Court is a criminal trial court with original and appellate limited jurisdiction to hear cases involving defendants accused of felonies, or crimes in French. It is the only French court consisting in a jury trial.

Under French law, a crime is any criminal act punishable by over 10 years of prison, including murder and rape. (The English word "crime" is "infraction" in French legal terminology). In the past, the cour d'assises could also sentence convicted criminals to the death penalty for certain crimes, but the death penalty was abolished in France in 1981.

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Significance of Meursault's case being juxtaposed with the parricide

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why

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irony?

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Link back to the old people in chapter 1

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Why a tram

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Significance?

intruder. And yet the journalist turned to me and smiled. He told me that he hoped everything would go well for me. I thanked him and he added, 'You know, we've blown your case up a bit. The summer's the silly season for the papers. And there was only your story and the one on the parricide that were worth doing.' After that he pointed towards the group he'd just come from at a little fellow with huge, black-rimmed spectacles who looked like an overweight weasel. He told me that he was the special correspondent of one of the Paris papers. 'He didn't actually come because of you. But since he'd got to cover the parricide trial, they asked him to send a report on your case as well.' I nearly thanked him again. But I thought it would sound ridiculous. He gave me a friendly little wave and left us. We waited another few minutes.

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Effect of the juxtaposition

My lawyer arrived, in a gown, surrounded by lots of other colleagues. He went over to the journalists and shook some hands. They joked and laughed and seemed completely at ease, until the bell rang in the court. Everyone went back to his seat. My lawyer came up to me, shook hands and advised me to reply briefly to any questions I might be asked, never to take the initiative and to rely on him to do the rest.

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Irony?

To my left I heard the sound of chair being pulled and I saw a tall, thin man, dressed in red and wearing a pince-nez, carefully folding his gown about him as he sat down. This was the prosecutor. An usher asked everyone to rise. At the same moment two huge fans started whirring round. Three judges, two in black, the third in red, came in carrying files and walked briskly up onto the platform which dominated the room. The man in the red gown sat down on the chair in the middle, placed his cap in front of him, wiped his little bald head with a handkerchief and announced that the court was in session.

The journalists already had their pens poised. They were all wearing the same indifferent and rather sardonic expression. And yet one of them, a much younger man in grey flannels and a blue tie, had left his pen lying in front of him and was looking at me. All I could see in his rather lop-sided face were his two very bright eyes, which were examining me carefully, without betraying any definable emotion. And I had the peculiar impression of being watched by myself. It may have been for that reason, and also because I was unfamiliar with all the procedures, that I didn't quite follow everything that happened after that, the drawing of lots by the jury, the questions put by the presiding judge to the lawyer, the prosecutor and the jury (each time, their heads would all turn at once towards the bench) a hurried reading of the indictment during which I recognized names of people and places and some more questions to my lawyer.

But the judge said he was going to move on to the calling of witnesses. The usher read out some names which caught my attention. Standing up one by one amidst what had previously been a shapeless mass of people, only to disappear again through a side door, I saw the warden and the caretaker from the home, old Thomas Perez, Raymond, Masson, Salamano and Marie, who gave me an anxious little wave.

I was still feeling surprised that I hadn't noticed them before, when the last name was called and Celeste stood up. I recognized the little woman from the restaurant sitting next to him with her jacket and her precise and purposeful manner. She was staring at me intently. But I didn't have time to think because the judge started speaking. He said that he didn't think he need remind the public to stay quiet. According to him, he was there to direct the proceedings impartially and to judge the case objectively. The verdict returned by the jury would be accepted in a spirit of justice and, whatever happened, he would have the court cleared if there was the slightest disturbance.

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comment

It was getting hotter and I could see people in the court fanning themselves with newspapers, which made a continuous little rustling sound. At a signal from the presiding judge, the usher brought in three straw fans which the three judges started using immediately.

My examination began at once. The presiding judge questioned me calmly and even, I thought, with a hint of friendliness. Once again I was asked to give my personal particulars, and although it irritated me, I realized that it was quite natural, because there would be nothing worse than trying the wrong man. Then the judge started recounting what I'd done again, turning to me every couple of sentences, 'Is that correct?' Each time, I answered, 'Yes, Your Honour,' following my lawyer's instructions. It took a long time because the judge went into minute detail in his account. All this time the journalists were writing away. I was conscious of being watched by the little robot-woman. Everyone on the tram was turned towards the judge, who coughed, leafed through a file and turned to me, still fanning himself.

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meaning?

He told me that he now had to touch upon certain matters which might seem foreign to my case, but which could in fact be highly relevant to it. I realized that he was going to talk about mother again and at the same time I could feel how much it annoyed me. He asked me why I'd sent mother to a home. I replied that it was because I didn't have enough money to have her looked after by a nurse. He asked me whether it had been a personal sacrifice for me and I replied that neither mother nor I expected anything more of each other, or in fact of anyone else, and that we'd both got used to our new lives. The judge then said that he didn't want to press the point and asked the prosecutor if he could think of any other questions to ask me.

The prosecutor had his back half turned to me and, without looking at me, he announced that with the judge's permission he'd like to know whether I'd gone back to the spring with the intention of killing the Arab. 'No,' I said. 'In that case, why was he armed and why return to precisely that spot?' I said it was by chance. And the prosecutor remarked in a malicious tone. 'That will be all for the present.' After that things were a bit confused, at least for me. But after a certain amount of conferring, the judge announced that the hearing was adjourned and would resume in the afternoon when the witnesses would be heard.

I didn't have time to think. I was taken out, put into the van and taken to the prison where I had something to eat. After a very short time, just long enough for me to

realize that I was tired, they came back to fetch me; it all started again and I found myself in the same room, confronted by the same faces. Only it was much hotter and as if by a miracle each of the jurymen, the prosecutor, my lawyer and some of the journalists had also been provided with straw fans. The young journalist and the little woman were still there. But they weren't fanning themselves, they were just watching me as before in silence.

I wiped the sweat from my face and only vaguely remembered where I was and what I was doing there when I heard them **call the warden** of the home. He was asked whether mother used to complain about me and he said yes but that his inmates had rather a habit of complaining about their relatives. **The judge asked him to specify whether she used to reproach me for having sent her to a home and the warden again said yes.** But this time he didn't add anything. **To another question he replied that he'd been surprised by my calmness of the day of the funeral.** He was asked **what he meant by calmness.** The warden then looked down at his boots and **said that I hadn't wanted to see mother, I hadn't cried once and I'd left straight after the funeral without paying my respects at her grave.** And another thing had surprised him: **one of the undertaker's men had told him that I didn't know how old mother was.** There was a moment's silence and the judge asked him whether he had in fact been referring to me. The warden didn't understand the question, so the judge told him, 'It is the law.' Then he asked the **Public Prosecutor whether he had any questions to put to the witness and the prosecutor exclaimed, 'Oh! No, that's quite sufficient,' in such a resounding voice and with such a triumphant glance in my direction, that for the first time in years, I stupidly felt like crying because I could tell how much all these people hated me.**

After asking the jury and my lawyer whether they had any questions, the judge heard the **caretaker's** evidence. He too had to go through the same ceremony as all the others. When he stepped up, the caretaker glanced at me and then looked away. He answered the questions that were put to him. **He said that I hadn't wanted to see mother, that I'd smoked, I'd slept and I'd had some white coffee. And I felt something stirring up the whole room; for the first time I realized that I was guilty.** The caretaker was asked to repeat the story of the white coffee and the cigarette. The Public Prosecutor looked at me with an ironic gleam in his eye. At that point my lawyer asked the caretaker if he hadn't had a cigarette too. But the prosecutor protested violently against this question: 'Who is the criminal in this court and what is the meaning of casting aspersions on the witnesses for the prosecution in an attempt to detract from what is nothing less than damning **evidence!**' in spite of all this, the judge asked the caretaker to answer the question. The old man looked embarrassed and said, 'I know it was wrong. But I didn't dare refuse when the gentleman offered me a cigarette.' **Finally I was asked if I had anything to add. 'Nothing,' I answered, 'except that the witness is right.** It's true I offered him a cigarette.' The caretaker then gave me a rather surprised look as if he were somehow grateful. He hesitated and then said that it was he who had offered me the white coffee the white coffee. **My lawyer was exultant and announced in a loud voice that the jury would take note.** But the prosecutor's voice boomed out over our heads and he said, 'Yes, the

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Guilty of what?

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Comment on the elements of satire

gentlemen of the jury will take note. And they will conclude that a stranger may offer a cup of coffee, but that a son must refuse it beside the body of the one who brought him into the world.' The caretaker went back to his seat.

When it came to Thomas Perez, an usher had to help him over to the witness box. Perez said that he'd really been a friend of my mother's and had only seen me once, and that was on the day of the funeral. He was asked how I'd behaved that day and he answered, 'Well, you see, I was really too upset. So I didn't notice anything. I was too upset to notice things. Because it was extremely upsetting for me. In fact I even fainted. So I didn't really notice the gentleman at all.' The Public Prosecutor asked whether at least he'd noticed me cry. Perez answered no. This time it was the prosecutor's turn to say, 'The gentlemen of the jury will take note.' But my lawyer lost his temper. He asked Perez in what seemed to me an exaggerated tone of voice whether he'd noticed me 'not crying'. Perez said, 'No.' The public laughed. And my lawyer rolled back one of his sleeves and announced peremptorily, 'Here we have the epitome of this trial. Everything is true and yet nothing is true!' The prosecutor's face was impassive and he was busy stabbing a pencil into the headings on his files.

After a five-minute adjournment during which my lawyer told me that everything was going well, we heard Celeste who was called by the defence. The defence meant me. Celeste was revolving a Panama hat in his hands and every now and then he'd throw a glance in my direction. He was wearing the new suit he sometimes used to put on Sundays to come to the races with me. But I don't think he'd been able to get his collar on because he only had a brass stud holding his shirt together. He was asked whether I was one of his customers and he said, 'Yes, but a friend as well'; and what he thought of me and he replied that I was a man of the world; and what he understood by that and he announced that everyone knew what he meant and whether he'd noticed that I was withdrawn and he simply remarked that I only spoke when I had something to say. The Public Prosecutor asked him whether I paid my board regularly. Celeste laughed and said, 'Things like that were just details between him and me.' Then he was asked what he thought of my crime. At that he placed his hands on the edge of the box and you could see he'd prepared something. He said, 'I think it was a mishap. A mishap, everyone knows what it is. You can't guard against that. So there you are! I think it was a mishap. He was going to go on, but the judge told him that that would be all and thanked him. Celeste was left rather dumbfounded. But he announced that he wanted to say something else. He was asked to be brief. He again repeated that it was a mishap. And the judge said, 'Yes, all right. But we are here to judge such mishaps. Thank you.' And as if all his knowledge and all his goodwill could avail him no further, Celeste turned towards me. I thought I could see his eyes glistening and his lips trembling. He seemed to be asking me what more he could do. I didn't say anything, I didn't even move, but it was the first time in my life that I'd ever wanted to kiss a man. The judge again instructed him to stand down. Celeste went back to his seat among the public. He sat there throughout the rest of the hearing, leaning slightly forwards, with his elbows on his knees and the Panama hat in his hands, listening to every word that was said. Marie came in. She was wearing a hat and she still looked beautiful. But I

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Why is this a significant issue?

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Note the satire

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why

Commented [17]:
peremptory
pə'rem(p)it(ə)ri, 'pɛrɪm-/
adjective
adjective: peremptory
insisting on immediate attention or obedience,
especially in a brusquely imperious way.

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Paradox

It is a statement that appears to be self-contradictory or silly but may include a latent truth. It is also used to illustrate an opinion or statement contrary to accepted traditional ideas. A paradox is often used to make a reader think over an idea in innovative way.

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Note the pattern

preferred her with her hair loose. From where I was sitting I could just make out the slight swell of her breasts and the familiar little pout of her lower lip. She seemed very nervous. Straight away she was asked how long she'd known me. She mentioned the date. The prosecutor remarked indifferently that it appeared to be the date after mother's death. Then in a slightly ironic tone, she said that he didn't wish to dwell on such a delicate matter and that he fully understood Marie's scruples, but (and here his voice suddenly became harder) that his duty obliged him to rise above the level of proprieties. He therefore asked Marie to describe the day on which I'd had intercourse with her. Marie didn't want to, but when the prosecutor insisted, she said how we'd swum and been to the pictures and then gone back to my place. The Public Prosecutor said that as a result of the statements made by Marie before the examining magistrate, he'd looked at the programmes for that day. He added that Marie herself would tell the court what film was showing. In an almost toneless voice, Marie indeed stated that it was a Fernandel film. There was complete silence in the court by the time she'd finished. The prosecutor then rose, looking very grave and in a voice which I thought sounded truly emotional, and with a finger pointed in my direction, he slowly pronounced, 'Gentlemen of the jury, on the day after the death of his mother, this man was swimming in the sea, entering into an irregular liaison and laughing at a Fernandel film. I have nothing more to say to you.' He sat down, still amid silence. But all of a sudden Marie burst into tears and said that it wasn't like that, there was something else and she was being made to say the opposite of what she thought, she knew me and I hadn't done anything wrong. But at a signal from the judge, the usher took her away and the hearing continued.

After that people hardly listened to Masson who announced that I was an honest chap, 'and what's more, a decent chap.' People hardly listened to Salamano either when he recalled how I'd been kind to his dog and when he replied to a question about me and my mother by saying that I'd run out of things to say to her and that was why I'd sent her to a home. 'You have to understand,' Salamano kept saying, 'you have to understand.' But no one seemed to understand. He was taken away.

Then it was Raymond's turn, as the last witness. Raymond gave me a little wave and immediately said that I was innocent. But the judge announced that he wasn't being asked for value judgements, but for facts. He requested him to wait until he was questioned before speaking. He was asked to specify his relations with the victim. Raymond took this opportunity to say that he was the one that the victim hated because he'd beaten up his sister. The judge asked him nevertheless whether the victim didn't have reason to hate me. Raymond said that it was quite by chance that I happened to be at the beach. The prosecutor then asked him how it was that the letter which lay behind this intrigue had been written by me. Raymond replied that it was by chance. The prosecutor retorted that chance already had a number of misdemeanours on its conscience in this affair. He wanted to know if it was by chance that I hadn't intervened when Raymond had beaten up his mistress, by chance that I'd acted as a witness at the police station, and also by chance that the statements I'd made on that occasion had proved to be so thoroughly accommodating. Finally he asked Raymond what his means of livelihood were, and

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scruple
'skru:p(ə)/
noun
plural noun: scruples
1.
a feeling of doubt or hesitation with regard to the morality or propriety of a course of action.

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propriety

/prə'prɪəti/

noun

conformity to conventionally accepted standards of behaviour or morals.
"he always behaved with the utmost propriety"

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Note the pattern in how the witnesses are treated

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Why not?

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Why not?

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What is the role of chance or fate?

when Raymond replied that he was a 'warehouseman,' the prosecutor announced to the jury that it was common knowledge that the witness earned his living as a procurer. I was his friend and accomplice. In fact the whole affair was of the most sordid description and what rendered it all the more iniquitous was the fact that they were dealing with an immoral monster. Raymond wanted to stand up for himself and my lawyer protested, but they were told that they must let the prosecutor finish. He said, 'I have little to add. Was he your friend?' he asked Raymond. 'Yes, Raymond said, 'he was my mate.' The Public Prosecutor then asked me the same question. I met Raymond's eye and he didn't look away. I answered, 'Yes.' The prosecutor then turned to the jury and announced, 'Not only did this man indulge in the most shameful debauchery on the day after his mother's death, but he needlessly killed a man in order to resolve an intrigue of unconscionable immorality.'

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Why is this significant?

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iniquitous
ɪˈniːkwɪtəs/
adjective
adjective: iniquitous
grossly unfair and morally wrong.

He then sat down. But my lawyer was out of patience and, raising his arm so high that his sleeves fell back to reveal the folds of his starched shirt, he exclaimed, 'But after all, is he being accused of burying his mother or of killing a man?' The public laughed. But the prosecutor rose to his feet again, wrapped his gown about him and announced that only someone as naïve as the honourable counsel for defence could fail to appreciate that between two such actions there existed a profound, tragic and vital relationship. 'Yes,' he exclaimed vehemently, 'I accuse this man of burying like a heartless criminal.' This pronouncement seemed to have a considerable effect on the public. My lawyer shrugged his shoulders and wiped the sweat from his brow. But he looked shaken and I realized that things weren't going well for me.

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unconscionable
/ʌnˈkɒnʃ(ə)nəb(ə)l/
adjective: unconscionable
not right or reasonable.

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Note the exaggerated dramatic scene.

The hearing was adjourned. For a few brief moments, as I left the Law Courts on my way to the wan, I recognized the familiar smells and colours of a summer evening. In the darkness of my mobile prison I rediscovered one by one, as if rising from the depths of my fatigue, all the familiar sounds of a town that I loved and of a certain time of day when I sometimes used to feel happy. The cries of the newspaper sellers in the languid evening air, the last few birds in the square, the shouts of the sandwich sellers, the moaning of the trams high in the winding streets of the town and the murmuring of the sky before darkness spills over onto the port, all these sounds marked out an invisible route which I knew so well before going into prison. Yes, this was the time of the day when, long ago, I used to feel happy. What always awaited me when was a night of easy, dreamless sleep. And yet something had changed, for with the prospect of the coming day, it was to my cell that I returned. As if a familiar journey under a summer sky could as easily end in prison as in innocent sleep.

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Juxtaposed with the parricide

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Significance of this last paragraph?