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I worked hard all week. Raymond stopped by and told me he'd sent the letter. I went to the movies twice with Emmanuel, who doesn't always understand what's going on on the screen. So you have to explain things to him. Yesterday was Saturday, and Marie came over as we'd planned. I wanted her so bad when I saw her in that pretty red-and-white striped dress and leather sandals. You could make out the shape of her firm breasts, and her tan made her face look like a flower. We caught a bus and went a few kilometers outside Algiers, to a beach with rocks at either end, bordered by shore grass on the land side. The four o'clock sun wasn't too hot, but the water was warm, with slow, gently lapping waves. Marie taught me a game. As you swam, you had to skim off the foam from the crest of the waves with your mouth, hold it there, then roll over on your back and spout it out toward the sky. This made a delicate froth which disappeared into the air or fell back in a warm spray over my face. But after a while my mouth was stinging with the salty bitterness. Then Marie swam over to me and pressed herself against me in the water.

She put her lips on mine. Her tongue cooled my lips and we tumbled in the waves for a moment.

When we'd gotten dressed again on the beach, Marie looked at me with her eyes sparkling. I kissed her. We didn't say anything more from that point on. I held her to me and we hurried to catch a bus, get back, go to my place, and throw ourselves onto my bed. I'd left my window open, and the summer night air flowing over our brown bodies felt good.

That morning Marie stayed and I told her that we would have lunch together. I went downstairs to buy some meat. On my way back upstairs I heard a woman's voice in Raymond's room. A little later old Salamano growled at his dog; we heard the sound of footsteps and claws on the wooden stairs and then "Lousy, stinking bastard" and they went down into the street. I told Marie all about the old man and she laughed. She was wearing a pair of my pajamas with the sleeves rolled up. When she laughed I wanted her again. A minute later she asked me if I loved her. I told her it didn't mean anything but that I didn't think so. She looked sad. But as we were fixing lunch, and for no apparent reason, she laughed in such a way that I kissed her. It was then that we heard what sounded like a fight break out in Raymond's room.

First we heard a woman's shrill voice and then Raymond saying, "You used me, you used me. I'll teach you to use me." There were some thuds and the woman screamed, but in such a terrifying way that the landing

immediately filled with people. Marie and I went to see, too. The woman was still shrieking and Raymond was still hitting her. Marie said it was terrible and I didn't say anything. She asked me to go find a policeman, but I told her I didn't like cops. One showed up anyway with the tenant from the third floor, who's a plumber. The cop knocked on the door and we couldn't hear anything anymore. He knocked harder and after a minute the woman started crying and Raymond opened the door. He had a cigarette in his mouth and an innocent look on his face. The girl rushed to the door and told the policeman that Raymond had hit her. "What's your name?" the cop said. Raymond told him. "Take that cigarette out of your mouth when you're talking to me," the cop said. Raymond hesitated, looked at me, and took a drag on his cigarette. Right then the cop slapped him—a thick, heavy smack right across the face. The cigarette went flying across the landing. The look on Raymond's face changed, but he didn't say anything for a minute, and then he asked, in a meek voice, if he could pick up his cigarette. The cop said to go ahead and added, "Next time you'll know better than to clown around with a policeman." Meanwhile the girl was crying and she repeated, "He beat me up! He's a pimp!" "Officer," Raymond asked, "is that legal, calling a man a pimp like that?" But the cop ordered him to shut his trap. Then Raymond turned to the girl and said, "You just wait, sweetheart—we're not through yet." The cop told him to knock it off and said that the girl was to go and he was to stay in his room and wait to be summoned to the

police station. He also said that Raymond ought to be ashamed to be so drunk that he'd have the shakes like that. Then Raymond explained, "I'm not drunk, officer. It's just that I'm here, and you're there, and I'm shaking, I can't help it." He shut his door and everybody went away. Marie and I finished fixing lunch. But she wasn't hungry; I ate almost everything. She left at one o'clock and I slept awhile.

Around three o'clock there was a knock on my door and Raymond came in. I didn't get up. He sat down on the edge of my bed. He didn't say anything for a minute and I asked him how it had all gone. He told me that he'd done what he wanted to do but that she'd slapped him and so he'd beaten her up. I'd seen the rest. I told him it seemed to me that she'd gotten her punishment now and he ought to be happy. He thought so too, and he pointed out that the cop could do anything he wanted, it wouldn't change the fact that she'd gotten her beating. He added that he knew all about cops and how to handle them. Then he asked me if I'd expected him to hit the cop back. I said I wasn't expecting anything, and besides I didn't like cops. Raymond seemed pretty happy. He asked me if I wanted to go for a walk with him. I got up and started combing my hair. He told me that I'd have to act as a witness for him. It didn't matter to me, but I didn't know what I was supposed to say. According to Raymond, all I had to do was to state that the girl had cheated on him. I agreed to act as a witness for him.

We went out and Raymond bought me a brandy.

Then he wanted to shoot a game of pool, and I just barely lost. Afterwards he wanted to go to a whorehouse, but I said no, because I don't like that. So we took our time getting back, him telling me how glad he was that he'd been able to give the woman what she deserved. I found him very friendly with me and I thought it was a nice moment.

From a distance I noticed old Salamano standing on the doorstep. He looked flustered. When we got closer, I saw that he didn't have his dog. He was looking all over the place, turning around, peering into the darkness of the entryway, muttering incoherently, and then he started searching the street again with his little red eyes. When Raymond asked him what was wrong, he didn't answer right away. I barely heard him mumble "Stinking bastard," and he went on fidgeting around. I asked him where his dog was. He snapped at me and said he was gone. And then all of a sudden the words came pouring out: "I took him to the Parade Ground, like always. There were lots of people around the booths at the fair. I stopped to watch 'The King of the Escape Artists.' And when I was ready to go, he wasn't there. Sure, I've been meaning to get him a smaller collar for a long time. But I never thought the bastard would take off like that."

Then Raymond pointed out to him that the dog might have gotten lost and that he would come back. He gave examples of dogs that had walked dozens of kilometers to get back to their masters. Nevertheless, the

old man looked even more flustered. "But they'll take him away from me, don't you see? If only somebody would take him in. But that's impossible—everybody's disgusted by his scabs. The police'll get him for sure." So I told him he should go to the pound and they'd give the dog back to him after he paid a fee. He asked me if it was a big fee. I didn't know. Then he got mad: "Pay money for that bastard—ha! He can damn well die!" And he started cursing the dog. Raymond laughed and went inside. I followed him and we parted upstairs on the landing. A minute later I heard the old man's footsteps and he knocked on my door. When I opened it, he stood in the doorway for a minute and said, "Excuse me, excuse me." I asked him to come in, but he refused. He was looking down at the tips of his shoes and his scabby hands were trembling. Without looking up at me he asked, "They're not going to take him away from me, are they, Monsieur Meursault? They'll give him back to me. Otherwise, what's going to happen to me?" I told him that the pound kept dogs for three days so that their owners could come and claim them and that after that they did with them as they saw fit. He looked at me in silence. Then he said, "Good night." He shut his door and I heard him pacing back and forth. His bed creaked. And from the peculiar little noise coming through the partition, I realized he was crying. For some reason I thought of Maman. But I had to get up early the next morning. I wasn't hungry, and I went to bed without any dinner.