Characters:

The aristocrats

Of all the social classes, Proust has the most disdain for this group.

The aristocrats have “the passion for minutiae of people whose lives are purposeless.” —*The Fugitive* 5: 786

Charlus

. . . as representative of how homosexuals read love poems:

M. de Charlus, who usually gave a more masculine style to his love-making, also had his tender moments. Moreover, during his childhood, in order to be able to feel and understand the words of the poets, he had been obliged to imagine them as being addressed not to faithless beauties but to young men. —*The Fugitive* 5: 809

Gilberte’s denial of her father

Thus a girl having one day asked her out of tactlessness or malice what the name of her real . . . father was, in her confusion and as though to euphemize the name a little, instead of pronouncing it “Souann” she said “Svann,” a change, as she soon realized, for the worse, since it made this name of English origin a German patronymic. —*The Fugitive* 5: 790-91

Marcel

This passage contains a reference to two of Proust’s own artistic passions, *The Arabian Nights* and Dutch paintings. We see throughout the novel the use *The Arabian Nights* for thematic motifs. In *Time Regained*, we will see Marcel compare himself to another famous storyteller, Sheherazade.
After dinner, I went out alone, into the heart of the enchanted city where I found myself in the middle of strange purlieus like a character in the *Arabian Nights*. It was very seldom that, in the course of my wanderings, I did not come across some strange and spacious *piazza* of which no guidebook, no tourist had ever told me. I had plunged into a network of little alleys, or *calli*. [...] Moreover, the extreme proximity of the houses made of every casement a frame from which a day-dreaming cook gazed out, or in which a seated girl was having her hair combed by an old woman whose face in the dark looked like a witch’s—made of each humble quiet house, so close because of the narrowness of the *calli*, a display of a hundred Dutch paintings placed side by side. —*The Fugitive 5*: 881

**Themes:**

**Dead forever?**

No one believes in the afterlife. —*The Fugitive 5*: 836

**Dream and Reality**

The next day, I set out in quest of my beautiful nocturnal *piazza*, following *calle* after *calle* which were exactly like one another and refused to give me the smallest piece of information, except such as would lead me further astray. [He becomes lost in the labyrinth of narrow streets.] At that moment, some evil genie which had assumed the form of a new *calle* made me unwittingly retrace my steps, and I found myself suddenly brought back to the Grand Canal. And as there is no great difference between the memory of a dream and the memory of a reality, I finally wondered whether it was not during my sleep that there had occurred, in a dark patch of Venetian crystallization, that strange mirage which offered a vast *piazza* surrounded by romantic palaces to the meditative eye of the moon. —*The Fugitive 5*: 882-83

**Jealousy**

Jealousy and the role of suffering. This will be amplified in *Time Regained*. 
Wherefore the mediocre woman whom we are astonished to see them loving enriches the universe for them [sensitive and intellectual persons] far more than an intelligent woman would have done. Behind each of her words, they feel that a lie is lurking, behind each house to which she says that she has gone, another house, behind each action, each person, another action, another person. Of course they do not know what or whom, they do not have the energy, would not perhaps find it possible to discover. A lying woman, by an extremely simple trick, can beguile, without taking the trouble to change her method, any number of people, and, what is more, the very person who ought to have discovered the trick. All this confronts the sensitive intellectual with a universe full of depths which his jealousy longs to plumb and which are not without interest to his intelligence. —*The Fugitive* 5: 836

**Life is a perpetual error.**

This perpetual error, which is precisely “life,” does not bestow its countless forms merely upon the visible and the audible universe, but upon the social universe, the sentimental universe, the historical universe, and so forth. [. . .] We have of the universe only inchoate, fragmentary visions, which we complement by arbitrary associations of ideas, creative of dangerous illusions. —*The Fugitive* 5: 775

**Multiples Selves**

But one is no more distressed at having become another person, after a lapse of years and in the natural sequence of time, than one is at any given moment by the fact of being, one after the other, the incompatible persons, malicious, sensitive, refined, caddish, disinterested, ambitious which one can be, in turn, every day of one’s life. And the reason why one is not distressed is the same, namely that the self which has been eclipsed—momentarily in this latter case and when it is a question of character, permanently in the former case and when the passions are involved—is not there to deplore the other, the other which is for the moment, or from then onwards, one’s whole self; the caddish self laughs at his caddishness because one is the cad, and the forgetful self does not grieve about his forgetfulness precisely because one has forgotten. —*The Fugitive* 5: 8

**Reading**
At times the reading of a novel that was at all sad carried me suddenly back, for certain novels are like great but temporary bereavements, abolishing habit, bringing us back into contact with the reality of life, but for a few hours only, like a nightmare, since the force of habit, the oblivion it creates, the gaiety it restores through the powerlessness of the brain to fight against it and to re-create the truth, infinitely outweigh the almost hypnotic suggestion of a good book which, like all such influences, has very transient effects.

—The Fugitive 5: 757-58

**Time and Forgetfulness**

. . . it remains true that it is time that gradually brings forgetfulness, forgetfulness in its turn does not fail to alter profoundly our notion of time. There are optical errors in time as there are in space. —The Fugitive 5: 802