



(CHAPTER 7

LA BELLE ÎLE EN MÈRE

FICTION

Rawly Rawls

La Belle Île en Mer Ch. 7

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Chapter 7

Motherhood is Full of Unexpected Surprises

“He was murdered.” Roy pedaled the stationary bike hard. He watched his wife do lunges on a yoga mat a few feet away. The gym was one of the few places she wore immodest clothes. Today it was formfitting pants and a long-sleeved top in green and white. He was glad there was no one else in the gym, for her ass was truly a sight to behold. His lovely wife often distracted him, even when the topic was murder. He refocused. “Albert didn’t commit suicide.”

“He committed suicide three times by my count.” Constance looked over her shoulder at him as she continued to lunge. She was happy to find his eyes glued to her behind. She would have smiled but for the subject of their conversation.

“In which order did he do it, my beloved?” Roy cocked an eyebrow. “Did he slit his wrists, hang himself, and then run himself through with a sword like the samurai of old? No, that wouldn’t work.” Roy shook his head like he was thinking. “He must have committed hari-kari, slit his wrists, then stepped up onto the chair with the noose.”

“That’s ghastly, Roy.” Constance stopped her lunges and stared at her husband. She grabbed a towel and mopped her brow. “I can’t believe you’d say such a thing.” She dried the back of her neck with the towel, moving aside her ponytail. She felt a bit dizzy thinking of how she’d found the dead man.

“I can’t believe I’m being forced to talk about any of this.” Roy shrugged and let the pedals wind down. “But here we are in the middle of a rolling catastrophe. Saved by that pervert George Zaal, just so he can sadistically pleasure himself by killing us off one by one.”

Constance turned a shade paler. “George didn’t do this. He’s just a kid and ... he’s on an expedition with his mother.”

“He did.” Roy ticked off one finger. “He’s not a kid; he’s eighteen and plenty capable of murder.” He ticked off a second finger. “And it’s not like he’s exploring Ceres. He’s ... what ... a dozen floors up? All he had to do was wait for his mother to fall asleep, run down here, butcher Albert, and then run back up to his mother.” He ticked off another finger. “And we know he’s a peeping pervert.”



“Okay ... okay ...” Constance sorted through her thoughts. She did some deep breathing like she’d do on a changeover during a match. She found her center. “Let’s say you’re right. We’re all alone in a hotel with a murderer. What do we do?”

“We could leave. Go to another part of the hotel.” Roy knew his wife would suggest that. Best to put her arguments to bed before they rose in her mind. “But we can’t hide forever. It would be worse not knowing where he was and what he was doing. I think our best bet is to find damning evidence. With any luck, we’ll prove he murdered Albert. Then we can all vote on what to do with him.” He was certain the only sure method to deal with George was to put him on the other side of an airlock. Once he’d proved his case, he knew the others would agree. Even his parents. No one wanted to be trapped in an empty hotel with a murderer.

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“Nossy?” George blinked his eyes. And looked up at Kapnos as she slipped into her bodice.

“What did you call me?” Kapnos smiled as she wiggled into the garment.

“It’s a nickname. Nossy. Has anyone ever called you Nossy before?” It was strange thinking about all the people she’d known over a millennium. How many deep relationships had she had? He warned himself not to get jealous. She was sure to have slept with many men who were better than him in all sorts of ways. It was just a numbers game. She liked being with him now, and that’s what mattered.

“No, no one ever called me Nossy.” She giggled and pulled on her skirts. “I like it.”

“What time is it?” George rubbed sleep out of his eyes.

“About a half hour from our designated meeting time. Your mother might already be awake, so I thought it was time I slipped out.” Kapnos pulled on her shoes. “I’ll visit again tonight.” She bent over and kissed him on the lips. “Shall I be Delores again, or ...”

“Can you be anyone you ever touched?” George sat up. Despite the hours they’d spent in each other’s arms, and four orgasms, his morning wood was as hard as ever. It comically tented the sheets.

“My body doesn’t store DNA that well. It only lasts a few days before the copy starts to degrade. I might still be able to copy a few people from before the skyrmion burst, but not before that,” she said.

"Oh, I see." George worked over the implications in his mind. That's why she hadn't joined their group as someone new. That copy would degrade without updating the DNA. That got him thinking about all the people she'd been since she'd joined them. "You never told me who else you seduced."

"No time now." She winked and moved to the door. "So ... Delores again tonight?"

"What happened with my sister at the pool?" George wouldn't be able to talk to her all day. The questions were bubbling out of him.

"I'll tell you tonight." Kapnos put her hands on her hips and gave him a mock stern expression. "Tell me who to be, or I'll show up as Roy Haversham!" She couldn't help but giggle at the thought.

"Delores is great." George nodded.

She needed to say it outright. "I want to make you happy, George. I can be your mother again."

"That's ... really nice of you. But it wouldn't be right." His cock lurched under the sheet, and he could tell she saw it.

"There's nothing wrong with wanting your mother. I've been countless mothers to countless sons over the years, and almost as many sons to mothers." Kapnos gave him an encouraging smile.

"Thank you, Nossy. But I don't want to pretend." His cock lurched again, his little head making its argument against his more rational big one.

"You know ..." Her smile turned devilish. "I have helped many sons bed their real mothers. I could do the same for you."

"I don't want you sleeping with my mother." His body stiffened.

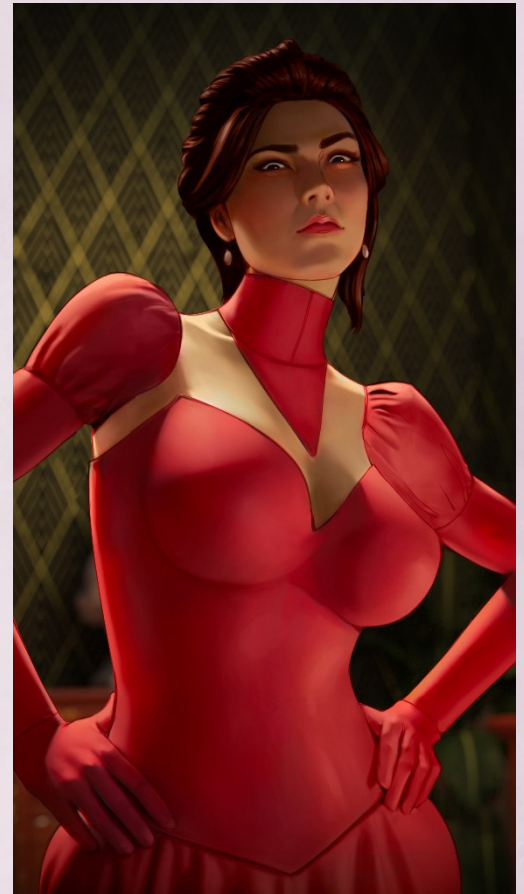
"I didn't mean that I would seduce her as a copy of you. I meant I could teach you how to seduce her yourself." She nodded earnestly. She could see him relaxing. She could tell from his joyful expression that he would eventually say yes.

"She'd never go for it." George tried to imagine being intimate with his mother, their bare fingers intertwined. "She's ... Anna Zaal, perfect in every way. She would never cheat on my father. I wouldn't want her to."

"Very well." Kapnos smiled and opened the door. She didn't want to press him. She *would* lead him to his happiness. He had earned his reward.

"I guess ... I'll see you soon." He waved.

"You will indeed." Kapnos waved back and left the room. As she closed his door, she caught movement out of the corner of her eye. She glanced down the long hall and saw a shadow turn onto the stairway and disappear. She shivered. The shadow had been anthropomorphic, but hadn't moved like a robot, Alternate, or human. She waited, but saw nothing more. She was tired and itching to ditch the copy of Delores. It wasn't unheard of for her mind to play games on her when she was exhausted. She shrugged and went to Delores's room.



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"I found one," Anna called to the other two members of her search team. This was the third terminal they'd found that day. The first two had been password protected. She looked around the spartan office. There was a picture of a smiling family on the desk. She winced and wondered how many of them had died in the skyrmion burst.

George exited the room he was in and ran into Kapnos in the hall.

"Compliment her ... profusely." Kapnos appearing as Delores, whispered to George before they entered the office.

"She knows how great she is," George whispered back to her.

"She doesn't get much affirmation at this stage of her life. Tell her what you think she already knows. A little goes a long way, trust me." Kapnos leaned in closer. "I like compliments, too."

"You're the funniest and sexiest alien I've ever met, Nossy." He kissed her on the cheek and entered the room, finding his mother rifling through the drawers of a desk.

Kapnos took a breath, ditched her smile, and followed him into the room. "What did you find, Mrs. Zaal?"

"A terminal," Anna said without looking up.

"Hey, Mom?" George brought up the interface and met password protection. "Drat."

"Password again? I'm looking to see if the person at this desk might have written it down anywhere." Anna found hardly any paper. The desk seemed to be mostly empty.

"I just wanted to say how amazing you are, Mom. This has been so difficult, but you're guiding us all through this. You're smart and brave. Being around you gives me the confidence to do just about anything." George tried a few things but couldn't get around the password. He waved the interface away.

"Aw. Thank you, Georgie." Anna straightened up and smiled at her son. "I needed to hear that. I won't lie. I'm no stranger to self-doubt." She pushed a strand of hair behind her ear where it had loosened from her hairpin. "I feel like such a mess."



"You're the most beautiful woman in the solar system." George glanced at Delores, who subtly nodded encouragement.

Anna's cheeks grew hot. "Thank you for saying so, sunshine." She glanced at Delores. Of course, Anna had noticed the way her son had gazed longingly at the widow all day. And Delores seemed to be basking in the attention. Anna wasn't the most beautiful woman in the solar system, she wasn't even the most beautiful woman in the room. And that was as it should be. When they returned home, she would make sure he found himself a girlfriend and ventured out from under her wing.

"Since your husband wasn't strong enough to come on this trip, I bet you're relieved to have such a smart, strong son to take his place." Kapnos casually investigated the other desk in the office. There was nothing useful. Centuries ago, there would have been helpful documents all over the place. But now, humans trusted their computers with everything, even their secrets. Especially their secrets. "You must be so proud of George. Relish your closeness, Mrs. Zaal. It can all be taken away in a flash, like with my poor Carlos." Kapnos stopped rummaging through the desk and turned to Anna with tears in her eyes.

"Oh ... yes." Anna nodded. She moved over and patted the widow on the back. "I'm so very sorry for your loss."

"One moment, we were in each other's arms, so to speak. I was closer to him than any other man, like you and your son. The next, he was gone, and I am left with ... emptiness." Kapnos started to sob.



"There ... there ..." Anna pulled the other woman into a gentle embrace.

George watched them closely. He wasn't sure exactly what was going on, but he could tell that Kapnos had already begun helping him with his mother. For a brief moment he allowed himself to believe it could actually happen. Then he remembered who his mother was, and his hopes were dashed. He turned from them and waited while Kapnos pretended to be comforted by his mother.

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"Mr. Zaal?" Roy knocked on Ernest's door. "We'd like to ask you a few questions about your son." There was no answer. Roy and Constance had already searched Albert's room but found no clues. Océane had cleaned the place thoroughly. Albert's stuff was all neatly ordered, like he might come back any moment. Even the sword had been cleaned and leaned in the corner. There was no other sign of the murder in Albert's room. Which is why Roy had turned his attention to Ernest. "Mr. Zaal. Are you there?"

"He's probably sleeping." Constance frowned at her husband. "Don't you push that door open." She watched her husband apprehensively. "Remember what happened the last time we peeked into a room? I cannot handle finding another suicide."

"Another murder." Roy pushed the door open gently. He half expected to find Ernest's corpse, but the room was empty. "Huh, he's not here. I thought the man spent most of the time sleeping."

"He has to eat sometimes, honey. He's probably out at a restaurant." Constance pulled the door closed before her husband got the urge to search Ernest's room. "We can talk to him later."

"I suppose." Roy frowned, thinking things over.

"I love when you make that pensive face." She gave him a motherly kiss on the cheek. "Are you thinking about homework, sweetie? It's good to take a break sometimes." She lowered her lips to his ear. "Mommy knows how to take your mind off things. Would you like to come with Mommy?" She looked around to make sure no one was about and pulled off her



glove. She took his hand in hers and pulled him back toward their room. She could feel his palm getting clammy. "You can do your homework later, can't you?"

"Yes, Mommy." Roy let her pull him down the mirrored hallway. For a brief second, he thought he saw a black figure step in from a perpendicular hall and then retreat. He figured it was probably Ernest. He thought about chasing the man down, but he couldn't say no to Constance. He put Ernest out of his mind and looked up at his wife's motherly smile as she gazed back at him over his shoulder. Her height has always been a turn-on for Roy. "I want Mommy to take my mind off things."

"Well then, that's what I'll do." The second she was inside their room, she began undressing. Later, he could return to his murder mystery. She knew he liked to keep occupied. It was all well and good so long as she had *him*. And she did.

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Edith lost herself in the melodrama she was watching on the feed. When she heard the thumping through the wall, she knew the Havershams were back at it again. She could have picked a room anywhere in that giant hotel. Why did it have to be next to a couple that behaved like newlyweds? Edith turned up the volume and tried to ignore them.

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Lillian stood in front of the mirror in her bathroom, wearing the tiara and necklace. She still didn't understand what had happened to put them in her possession. Her brother said he hadn't been at the pool, but clearly, he had. Was it some sort of game he was playing with her?



It had to be. She hated him for it. Her humiliation had to be George's goal. It was disgusting the way she'd danced naked for him. But then she remembered the tenderness and passion in his kiss. That hadn't been contrived. Had it? She hated him for that, too. They weren't supposed to kiss. Francis was her lover and future. Not her stupid brother.

"Hello. Hello." Lillian gave her reflection a regal wave. The jewels glittered as she moved her shoulders. They looked so fine on her. She'd worn her most elegant bodice for this bit of dress-up, and she had to admit she looked very much like a princess. "How do you do?" She curtsied to her left. "How do you do?" She curtsied to her right.

George had done *something* right. The jewelry belonged on her. She looked resplendent. With a sigh, she took the tiara off and placed it on the bathroom counter. She removed the necklace and set it down, too. It was time to go check on her father.

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Floor one hundred forty-two was mostly guest rooms. They searched thoroughly anyway. Maybe they would find an unexpected terminal. Maybe they would find something unexpectedly helpful.

Anna stepped back into the hall and found Delores and George whispering to each other. She judged their body language as strangely intimate. "I'm exhausted. Perhaps we should end our search for the day. We passed that restaurant two floors back. Should we eat there and find some rooms for the night?" George and Delores stopped talking when they heard her, and both of their eyes lit up when she mentioned "rooms for the night." *Is there ... something going on between them? Delores might seek comfort in another man's arms if she came to accept that Carlos was gone. And clearly, George is smitten.* Anna didn't know whether she should pry. She sighed. If something was happening, it was her duty as his mother to put a stop to it.

"Sure, Mom." George nodded and smiled. He walked over to the backpack where he'd left it in the hall and hoisted it onto his shoulders. "Great job on the search plan today. I know we didn't find anything useful, but we covered a lot of ground."

"Thank you, sunshine." Anna gave him an exhausted smile.

"I love that bodice on you, by the way. The blue compliments your pretty eyes." George started walking back to the stairway.

"He's right, Mrs. Zaal. You look fantastic." Kapnos nodded her head. She retrieved her bag and slung it over her shoulder. Without waiting for Anna, she fell in next to George.



Anna rubbed her chin, watching them walk. Why were they both complimenting her so much? Were they buttering her up for something? They both had a giddy energy she wouldn't have expected from this grueling and fruitless search. She walked behind them, watching their interactions closely as they all trekked to the restaurant.

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“That’s good ... George ... that’s good.” Kapnos and her newest paramour were both naked in her temporary room. She rode him on the bed with long, lunging bounces. Her breasts made countervailing circles, large dark nipples almost crashing together each time her breasts met.

“Uuuuggghhhh ... Nossy ... I’m going to ... cum again.” George watched the orbital movement of her heavy breasts with a wide grin on his face. He clutched the sheets on either side of his hips. Kapnos was a dynamo. She had a sense for what he liked, and when to change things up to maximize the moment. And ... right on cue, she moved from bouncing to grinding, placing a bare finger in his mouth. His grin faded as his pleasure increased. “Nossy ... Nossy ...” He chanted around her finger.

“I’m going to ... cum ... too ... Georgie. Ooooohhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh.” Her undulating hips sped up. “Delores’s clit loves ... to rub ... like this. Ooohhhhhhhhhhh.”

Outside the room, Anna pressed her ear to the door. She could hear lovemaking. Her eyes widened, and her mouth hung open. It was one thing to have your suspicions, it was another to have them confirmed by such lurid noises. She couldn't hear what they were saying. Anna continued to listen. It would have been obvious to anybody that saw her in the hall that she was eavesdropping, but there was nobody else there. What a strange turn of events, listening to her son in that vast empty hallway. The décor on this floor was oddly themed. The murals on the walls depicted suits of armor, wood paneling, and dour oil paintings.



The young people certainly sounded like they were enjoying themselves. Anna could hear them joyously calling out their pleasure to one another and moaning. She now understood why Delores had taken a room some distance down the hall from Anna and George's rooms. As the shock wore off, Anna chewed on her bottom lip. *What to do? I wanted him to court a lady, but I thought he would know better than to bed a woman before marriage. We've talked about this more than once.* The affair was indecent and unseemly, but they all found themselves in strained circumstances far beyond the constraints of their normal lives. Maybe she should leave them be? It certainly sounded like they both needed this outlet.

Does George have a condom? The thought tensed Anna's shoulders. He was only eighteen, and Delores was beautiful. He might not even think of safety. She took a deep breath. She had to interrupt them. Her cheeks flushed deeply. She was about to do something no mother wants to do. She had pretended for a while that George hadn't blossomed into a man in *those* ways. She had ignored his crusty socks and locked doors. Just a month ago, she had even found one of her own gloves tucked away in his room when cleaning. She couldn't ignore this side of him any longer.

"I'm sorry I have to do this, Georgie. I hope you'll forgive me the embarrassment I cause all of us," Anna whispered to herself. She turned the handle and opened the door. The smell was the first thing to hit her. This ... this is what sex had smelled like decades ago. The scent brought her back to her courtship with Ernest. She smelled the pungency of sweat, the tanginess of a woman's arousal, and ... *Oh, gods ... I smell George's sperm!*

The pair were in bed, the short, tan woman riding George, grinding her hips into his. She had a very full butt, and Anna got an eyeful of it. Their rhythmic movements, animalistic sounds, and scents made Anna lightheaded. Unexpectedly, she found her own body responding with arousal. Her vagina grew warm and tingly. Her nipples became erect. She looked down and saw them poking through bodice and bra.



"Mom!" George saw his mother first. Without thinking, he lifted Kapnos off his dick and put her next to him on the bed. That made matters worse. Now, his mother was staring at his hard cock, covered as it was in a frothy mess of comingled cum. He was on top of the sheet and couldn't immediately find anything to cover himself.



"Oh ... my." Anna stared at the penis before her. She had never seen a large penis before. It was so different than what she was used to: not just quantitatively, but qualitatively. The veins were pronounced, and the head was dark in color and bulbous. "Cover yourself ... please." She forced herself to look away for a moment. When she looked back, her son held a pillow over his nethers in an odd echo of what Ernest had done when Albert had said those awful things.

"I'm sorry, Mrs. Zaal." Kapnos pulled the sheet from where it was tucked under the mattress, but the other half was under George, so she was trapped so long as she wanted to keep herself covered. "Your son was there for me in my time of need. And he's so handsome, smart, and gentle. I couldn't help myself. I am so ashamed." Her cheeks turned bright crimson, but she was not in the least ashamed.

"Not now, Mrs. Salazar." Anna paused. George really had given this woman what she needed. That was abundantly clear. Anna had always known she'd raised a special man, but she was seeing it now in new ways. "George, return to your room! I understand the situation, and that Mrs. Salazar is a ... special woman. But you cannot continue this ... relationship. It's not right. And ... no condom. I am ... deeply disappointed in you."

"I'm so sorry, Mom." George got up from bed and dressed. Both women averted their eyes as decorum would dictate. "I just ... I don't think you fully understand the situation."

"If you would like to explain something, you can do it later. After we've slept on it. In our separate rooms." Anna sighed. *What a mess.*

"You won't understand if I try to explain it to you." He looked at Kapnos. "Show her, Nossy." George slowly knotted his tie in a half-Windsor.

Kapnos shook her head. "You want me to show your mother my body? I could never." She pulled the sheet tighter around her. She doubted Anna would take her secret in stride as George had.

"George. There is nothing about Mrs. Salazar's body that I need to see more of." Anna grabbed him by the tie and pulled him out of the room. "That was a very rude remark," she hissed in his ear. She closed the door after them and marched him back to his room, dragging him by the collar.



"Mom ... she's not Delores. I can't explain without her. If you could ..." George let her lead him into his room. She shoved him inside and slammed the door. He stood staring at his door for a while. "That went terribly."

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Anna's Diary August 20, 2197

Motherhood is full of unexpected surprises. I thought we were simply fighting for our survival, but George had to go and find a way to complicate the *apocalypse*. I'll have to have a talk with him before we start today's search. How can I talk sense into him? When I knock on his door in the morning, will I confront a hormonal teenager or my thoughtful, rational Georgie? I could really use some sleep, but these questions won't let me rest. And I can't stop seeing his large, manly thing. What a sight for a mother! I don't know how to process what I beheld in Delores's room. Gods help me, I pray for some clarity.

Ernest might know what to do with George, but we can't go back yet. I can't return without bringing hope to the other survivors. Certainly, I can't heap more problems on poor Ernest, who is so fragile after his ill-fated search. As a wife and mother, I can do the dirty work in the trenches when I need to. I will do my best to talk things out with George and soldier on.



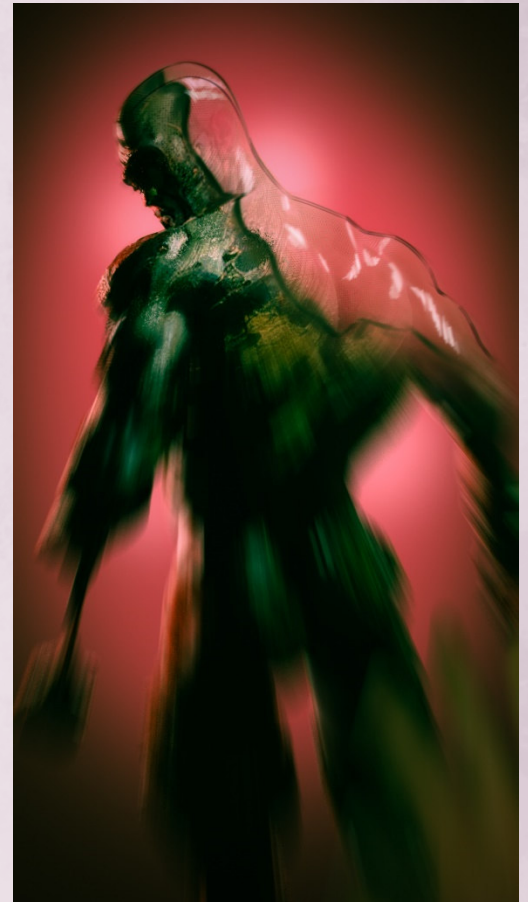
Ernest's Diary August 21, 2197

I followed one for ten minutes before it saw me and slipped away. They shouldn't be here. They should be at the bottom of the well. Or maybe the top. Those two words mean the same thing here. We're trapped in the middle with it ... falling ... always falling.

What would I do if I caught one? I don't know. Scouts ... mapping the breadth of a new colony. The end isn't here, but I see it on the horizon.

Lillian's Diary August 20, 2197

I'm basically fucking alone now. Edith and Delores don't leave their rooms except for food. Constance and Roy won't talk to me. And Dad is suddenly never around. He's supposed to be resting in his room, that's what Mom said. And I was supposed to check in on him. But he's constantly off doing who knows what. He won't tell me. He just says that walking clears his mind. He talks with a weird, distant look in his eyes. I hardly recognize him. I hardly recognize myself. I'm ready to go home. I hope Mom and George get back soon with good news.



George's Diary August 21, 2197

It's my private diary, so I can swear. If there ever was a time for it ... holy fuckballs. Mom caught me and Kapnos going at it. And Mom was pissed. I don't know what I'll say when I see her again. "Sorry, Mom, I'm in love with an alien." I don't think that's going to fly. I'll probably just stick to the "sorry" part.

Kapnos and I are going to have to be a lot sneakier. And I have to apologize to her, too. I shouldn't have asked Nossy to reveal herself to Mom like that. I wasn't thinking straight. It's been a restless night. I have no idea how I'm going to right the ship with both of them tomorrow, but I know I will. Because I have to.

Kapnos's Diary August 21, 2197

That was unexpected. I/We thought Anna would keep to her regimented sleep schedule. Since I/we first arrived, I/we have always loved puzzling out these sorts of situations. Humans are so much more fluid than they themselves assume. There are so many more paths than what they see. Tonight's interruption may on the face seem like a setback, but it is an opportunity. Il faut battre le fer pendant qu'il est chaud!

I/We wonder if George has already figured out that this brings him closer to his lofty dreams. He is very smart, I/We have no doubt he is already carefully planning what happens next. I/We look forward to talking with him when I/we wake.

