

The Ghosts of Inverloch, The Wrath of Hypsis, On the Frontiers (Valerian) Study Guide

The Ghosts of Inverloch, The Wrath of Hypsis, On the Frontiers (Valerian)

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Plot Summary

This study guide specifically refers to the following trilogy:

Mezieres, J.C.; Christin, P.; Tranle, E. *Valerian and Laureline: The Ghosts of Inverloch*; Cinebook, Canterbury, Kent, 1984. Kindle AZW file.

Mezieres, J.C.; Christin, P.; Tranle, E. *Valerian and Laureline: The Wrath of Hypsis*; Cinebook, Canterbury, Kent, 1985. Kindle AZW file.

Mezieres, J.C.; Christin, P.; Tranle, E. *Valerian and Laureline: On the Frontiers*; Cinebook, Canterbury, Kent, 1988. Kindle AZW file.

Valerian and Laureline, agents for the Spatio-Temporal Agency, are trying to save the future of Earth after a series of events erase all signs of the Earth of the future and the Spatio-Temporal Agency.

In the first novel of this three-part series, *The Ghosts of Inverloch*, Valerian is on the planet Glapum't. He knows that he is supposed to capture one of the planet's inhabitants, a Glapum'tian, but he does not know why. He has had no contact with Galaxy, which concerns him. He uses several methods before finally capturing the Glapum'tian, later identified as Ralph. Valerian picks up Ralph and heads for Earth in the 1980s.

Meanwhile, the Spatio-Temporal Superintendent is in Galaxy, a future city of Earth, while the entire city is fading away. He remains to consider the situation, then leaves. Laureline is on Earth in the 1980s. She is a guest of Lady Charlotte and Lord Basil Seal. Lord Seal meets with CIA agents and learns that virtually everyone who has a connection to their nuclear programs has become insane. Everyone of those people has one of three ordinary objects nearby.

Lord Basil returns home just as Lady Charlotte gathers a group of people, including Valerian, Laureline, Ralph, an Earth agent named Albert, and three aliens called Shingouz. Lady Charlotte announces that they are to witness the arrival of the ghost who haunts Castle Inverloch. and she takes them to a deserted part of the castle where they see the Superintendent arrive via a portal.

In the second novel of this three-part series, *The Wrath of Hypsis*, the Superintendent tells Valerian and Laureline that there are problems on Galaxy. Because they are from the future, Valerian, Laureline, and the Superintendent know that a nuclear disaster will almost destroy Earth in 1986. The group sets out for the polar region where Albert has identified four ships that might be involved in the pending nuclear disaster. Using Ralph's telepathic abilities and his conversations with a pod of killer whales, the group zeroes in on a ship called the Hvaxdet. When they get near the ship, it takes off in flight, making Valerian's group certain they need to follow it.



They soon chase the ship to ground on a planet called Hypsis, where they find three entities. There is a father, a son, and a machine referred to as the ghost, which Albert and Lord Seal soon identify as the Christian Trinity. The Dad reveals that they own the solar system that contains Earth. According to Dad, the other rulers of Hypsis are not happy that Galaxy has constantly interfered in actions across the galaxy. Dad has destroyed Galaxy but calls a halt to his plan to destroy Earth, which Albert points out was the original catalyst for forming Galaxy.

On the Frontiers is the final novel of this three-part series. It begins as Valerian meets another Spatio-Temporal agent, Jal, who was on a distant galaxy when Galaxy disappeared. That galaxy protected him from the fate of everyone else who is from Galaxy. Jal survived, but the woman he loved did not. Jal is trying to set the Earth back on its former course toward the devastating nuclear event so that Galaxy will return, bringing his woman back with it. Jal struggles with the ethics of his actions and finally gives in to his need for solitude, remaining alone while Valerian and Laureline continue their journey without him.



Valerian and Laureline: The Ghosts of Inverloch (Pages 1-25)

Summary

Valerian and Laureline: The Ghosts of Inverloch (Pages 1-25) opens with a narrative that reads, “Northern Scotland, Inverloch Castle, 7 A.M. GMT on the dot” (3). Laureline, an agent with the Spatio-Temporal Agency from the future, is dressed in a riding habit. She goes outside a castle and meets Lady Charlotte Seal. The two greet each other and mount their horses, then go for a ride across the countryside. Lady Charlotte commends Laureline on her riding ability, though she says Laureline is “a tad manly” (5). Laureline says she has learned to ride an array of animals, and Lady Charlotte assures her that the comment was not meant to be an insult. She can tell that Laureline is worried. Laureline says she feels she is imposing on Lady Charlotte, but Lady Charlotte says her family has always welcomed anyone who arrives at the castle “via the you-know-what” (6). Laureline is also struggling because she has received no orders and does not know what she is supposed to be doing.

The scene shifts to Valerian, at “Glampum't, 14th Eclipse, 26th Moon, Warm Decade, Rising Tide, Dusk” (7). Valerian is trying to catch a native of the planet, a Glapum'tian. He has tried everything. The creature, who later identifies himself as Ralph, is elusive. Valerian now hopes to present the Glapum'tian with food that the creature will consider a delicacy. The food will have a hidden tranquilizer inside it. Valerian swims close enough to Ralph's hiding spot that he can throw the food near. Then, Valerian returns to the shore and waits. He reflects on not even knowing why he has been assigned this task.

Valerian has been plagued with nightmares and has even begun to question whether he is still an agent for the Spatio-Temporal Agency. His last communication from the Agency instructed him to catch this creature alive, and then to go to Earth in the 20th Century. He has not heard anything else from the Agency and he misses Laureline. He continues to watch as the creature eats the food Valerian left nearby, then falls asleep. Valerian boards his shuttle craft, picks up the creature, and goes to his spaceship. As he prepares for his journey back in time, he notes that he usually hears from the Spatio-Temporal Agency on a regular basis and that the “silence is inconceivable” (13).

The scene shifts to “London, not far from King's Cross, but running a little late” (14). A man named Albert, who actually lives on Earth in the 1980s, is standing in front of a mirror. He is rushing to get shaved and dressed, and is upset that no one woke him on time. He goes down stairs and rings a bell on the hotel lobby desk. Albert tells the clerk he wants to pay his bill, but the clerk says that “all the staff are on strike,” takes a seat, and refuses to take Albert's money (15). Albert says he cannot wait and leaves his card, saying someone can send him a bill.



Outside, Albert finds picketers and discovers that the cab drivers are also on strike. He begins to run toward the train station, noting that he had been relegated to a train because the airlines are also on “lockout” (16). The train station is almost deserted. A man directs Albert to a train headed north, and Albert goes to that platform. He boards the train and finds two ladies who confirm the train is going to Edinburgh. They say the train has a “driver,” but all the staff members are refusing to work (17). The ladies, named Gladys and Priscilla, cite the case of a train that ended up at the wrong destination the previous day, but say they are willing to take the chance. They have brought their own refreshments, knowing they would not have anyone offering to serve them on this trip. Albert steps out of the car to smoke a cigarette and thinks about his situation. He says he hopes he will be able to do his part to “give that future a bit of a boost” (18).

The scene shifts again. This time it is “Rubanis, local time, more or less at the same instant as everywhere else, in fact ...” (18). An alien named Colonel Tlocq is talking with three other aliens who are Shingouz. The Shingouz are offering to sell Colonel Tlocq information, but he either has it already or does not care.

The Shingouz then show him an image on the computer screen, and tell him that it is his “recent full scannography,” which includes an image of “the incurable scunindar virus” (21). Colonel Tlocq says the medical service is the only department that is “not corrupted on this blasted planet,” and he mentions the “euthanasic laws” (21). The Shingouz say the medical service will kill Colonel Tlocq to avoid any possibility that he will spread the virus. They say the team charged with eliminating Colonel Tlocq “should be here any minute” (21).

Colonel Tlocq sits back, defeated. The Shingouz say Orq-the-healer can cure the virus. Colonel Tlocq believes them, but says no one knows where to find this healer. The Shingouz say they can tell him. In exchange, Colonel Tlocq agrees to give the Shingouz information they need.

Colonel Tlocq says the inhabitants of the planet Hypsis is threatening Earth (22). He says “the Hysians are currently taking over certain key sectors of that world in an era they are interested in,” and that he does not know their reasoning (22). There are some Hysians hiding on Earth, but they do not appear in their normal form. No one has been able to find the planet because they can “change star systems at will” (23). He has two clues about the planet’s location. An agent said “it was near Zuben-El-Akrab” at one point, and was “in artificial orbit, posing as the fourth moon of the gas giant Anubil” (23). The Shingouz hand over a device that they say will lead Colonel Tlocq to the healer. They tell him he does not have a lot of time and he rushes out as a team of robots crash through the window.

The Shingouz make their way out of that room, discussing the fact that working for Earth is “a pretty cushy job, and it pays well enough” (24). They are soon griping about their situation, including the fact that they are surrounded by dubious people. Then, one reminds the others that they would likely be starving if they were still on their home planet.

Analysis

The novel opens with a note from the author that indicates this three-novel series is technically a stand-alone edition. Readers do not have to have information from previous novels of the series to understand this set. However, readers who have read previous novels will have a deeper understanding of the characters and events. For example, Valerian says it is very unusual for him to be sent back in time to 20th Century Earth. The authors explain what happens in the first novel of the series. A cataclysmic event occurs during that time frame that sets the events in motion to eventually develop the Earth of the future and the Spatio-Temporal Agency that employs Valerian and Laureline. For the purpose of clarity in this guide, vital information will be related from previous novels to explain major events.

One of the first literary devices seen in the novel is contrast. The opening page includes narration at the top of the first panel that reads, “Northern Scotland, Inverloch Castle, 7 A.M. GMT on the dot ...” (3). That panel shows Laureline riding a horse with another woman. The first scene that shows Valerian includes a narration that reads, “Glapum’t, 14th Eclipse, 26th Moon, Warm Decade, Rising Tide, Dusk” (7). The first panel with Albert includes narration that reads, “London, not far from King’s Cross, but running a little late” (14). The first panel that shows the Shingouz includes narration that reads, “Rubanis, local time, more or less at the same instant as everywhere else, in fact” (18). The use of the exact time for Laureline’s action indicates an aspect of her nature that tends toward an attention to detail. Valerian’s narration indicates that he is on another planet where the time is different. The fact that Albert is a “little late” indicates his exact nature and the fact that he would be concerned about being late. The final example of this literary device indicates that the Shingouz are anything but exact, and that they tend to try to fit in to every situations in order to gain whatever they can from that.

Lady Charlotte says her family lives in a special castle and that they have always welcomed anyone who arrives there “via the you-know-what,” but she does not explain what that is (6). Her wording makes it clear that she is talking about something that is not meant to be public knowledge. The reader who is familiar with the series will know that Laureline and Valerian are from the future. The reader who does not know the characters will spend some time catching up on the background to fully understand the characters.

Laureline and Valerian are agents with the Spatio-Temporal Agency, an organization located on a future version of Earth that is something of a policing agency. Laureline and Valerian are strong, intelligent, resourceful characters.

As a graphic novel, the reader will have to pay attention to the graphics for deeper understanding of many situations, people, and events. The artist also depends on graphic elements to set tone and convey meaning. On Page 6, Laureline is riding with Lady Charlotte. The second panel of the page is a large, square panel without a traditional frame. The main image is a blue circular shape sticking up above a waterline with a vast expanse of dark sky and stars behind it. To the left of that shape, the artist



has a small inset panel, complete with a frame, depicting Laureline and Lady Charlotte on their ride. Laureline is explaining that her “partner is doing menial work in some forsaken dump” (6). A matching inset appears on the right side of the panel. This one shows Valerian saying, “It’s now or never” (6).

Valerian makes it clear that he is in an unusual situation. The Agency does not typically send agents back in time to the 20th Century without a compelling reason. In addition, Valerian has not been in contact with the Agency, which is also unusual. These are meant to be foreshadowing that there are problems that will be revealed in coming scenes.

The reader who is familiar with the novel will understand that Valerian is typically an honorable person. He has been in many situations in which he is responsible for other people – usually aliens – and he is the kind of person who believes in the sanctity of human life. That is an important point as he is working to capture the Glapum'tian named Ralph. Valerian says he is not certain why he is capturing Ralph and whether it is even ethical to catch him and take him away from his home planet, but he then dismisses the thought, saying he is a man of action rather than thought. The authors have to depend on these brief scenes to develop the characters because of the nature of these novels.

There is an over-sized graphic on Page 18 showing a futuristic city that is apparently located in space. There are high walls along what appears to be a street, windows and balconies along one of the walls, and some large items that could be construction equipment on the top of some of the walls. There are spaceships flying along the walls and the upper part of the scene is yellow and gold, fading to blue and black on the lower part of the scene, indicating a light source from above, such as a sun. The details are such that the reader gets the impression of a large city.

The Shingouz are a group of three small aliens. They have wings and trunks, and they vaguely resemble anteaters. They have been seen in a previous novel of the series.

The artist uses speech bubbles to show which character is talking, but the artist uses some interesting choices with regard to the shape of the various speech bubbles. For example, the bubbles have protruding, rounded corners when the Shingouz are speaking. The shape roughly resembles that of a cartoon dog bone. The fact that the Shingouz speech bubbles have their own shape could indicate that there is something different about their speech. It could be that they have a distinctive sound, and the reader may mentally assign a tone or type of voice to their words. The different shapes are also vital when the speaker's image is not in the frame. For example, on Page 22, the Shingouz are talking with Colonel Tlocq. The perspective pans out so that the reader sees only the window to the room where the conversation is being held. The fact that the artist uses those specific shapes for the speech bubbles means the reader can tell that it is the Shingouz talking, even though they are not visible to the reader.

The items found near where all the leaders went crazy are described as ordinary. The use of the E.T. statue is likely an effort at humor, since this is a time-travel, futuristic



novel. These items are not defined in this novel of the series and are actually never fully explained. They are from the planet Hypsis. That planet's role in the events is detailed later in this three-part series.

Discussion Question 1

Describe Valerian's capture of the Glapum'tian. What is the dilemma he faces?

Discussion Question 2

Who are the Shingouz? What is their business?

Discussion Question 3

What is Laureline's situation as the novel opens? What does Lady Charlotte seem to imply when she says that everyone who arrives "via the you-know-what" are welcome (6)?

Vocabulary

menial, godforsaken, hospitality, extended, eternal, harmony, breach, coordinates, ruminating, cargo, preposterous, essence, bastions, orbit, posing, assumed, snoops, method



Valerian and Laureline: The Ghosts of Inverloch (Pages 25-48)

Summary

The scene changes to “West Virginia ... An extremely quiet valley in the Appalachians, noon Eastern time ...” (25). Several men arrive at an old farmhouse. One of them is Lord Basil Seal. Several of the men are apparently agents for the CIA. An agent named Gene is standing on his head, leaning against a wall. Another man says that Gene has been acting like that all day. And indicates that Gene is not the only person exhibiting bizarre behavior.

Lord Seal asks for an update. Two agents, Jack and Frankie, say the situation defies explanation. Jack says that “anyone who, in one capacity or another, had their finger close to the big red kaboom button” has experienced a breakdown (27). Frankie says those in better shape are showing bizarre behavior, such as that shown by Gene. The men show pictures of the aftermath of an explosion at an underground nuclear facility in Nevada. The commander blew up himself and the facility. The next picture shows a wrecked ballistic missile submarine. The captain experienced a “nasty case of claustrophobia” and “scuttled his boat” (28). Jack and Frankie say there have been many issues recently, including hacked communications and destroyed systems. Another agent gives information about the situation in other countries. He cites the situation in Russia and China.

Lord Seal is the chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee in England, and he says the agents have confirmed the information he had already gathered. His next question is whether there is a link between all these events. Frankie says they have only one tenuous piece of information. There was an object found near each person who lost control. Jack says the objects seem “mundane,” and he shows Lord Seal a model of a Pershing Missile, another model of Snoopy on top of his doghouse, and another of E.T. (29). Jack says the items then morph into a small orb. He displays the orb and says no lab has yet been able to identify what it is made of.

Another agent calls out, saying he found something in Gene's jacket pocket. The agent hits a button but Lord Seal stops him and Frankie says it is “another scrambler” (31).

As Lord Seal prepares to leave, one of the agents asks about Lord Seal's wife, Lady Charlotte. Lord Seal says she is fine, and that, as a “member of the Clan McCullough, nothing fazes her” (31). Frankie says he has had “strange stuff about Clan McCullough,” but Jack tells him stop. Lord Seal leaves. Frankie instructs the others to load up their equipment, and to remember to load up Gene as well.

Lord Seal leaves, arrives at a U.S. Air Force base, dons gear that includes a parachute and helmet, and flies away.



The scene changes to “Galaxy, Spatio-Temporal Service, In Earth's future, exact time doesn't matter” (32). A bald man in a futuristic suit, including glasses, is the only person visible. He is later identified as Valerian's boss, known as the Superintendent. The Superintendent says that he was once “master” of “space-time,” and that everything is now fading away (32). He looks out over a city that he says is usually a busy place but that now is “eroded by a grey, early oblivion” (32). There are mists swirling around the Boss's feet and he knows he has to leave. He reveals that he set a series of events in motion that is now erasing the city and everything in it. He believes he still has a duty to perform and he goes to another room where a large cylinder-shape fills the middle of the room.

The scene changes back to Inverloch Castle. Laureline and Lady Charlotte are at a window looking over the lawn. She says it take a lot of upkeep. Just then, an object flies through the sky, bumps several times on the lawn, and comes to a crashing stop, tearing up the lawn as it does. Lady Charlotte informs the butler, James, that he should welcome their visitors and offer refreshments. The Shingouz emerge from the craft, each checking to see if the others are alright. Laureline and James rush to the site. Laureline and the Shingouz have met before and she is not surprised to find them offering to sell her information. They remind her that they are all now working for Earth. James invites them to the house and the Shingouz accept, pointing out that their ship is going to explode just seconds before it does.

When everyone is inside, a plane flies over and Lord Seal parachutes to the lawn. James goes to help Lord Seal put his equipment away and Laureline thinks about the damages being done to the lawn. Lord Seal and James go to examine the greenhouse on the property, and Lord Seal says the greenhouse is in perfect condition.

Everyone goes inside and the Shingouz immediately begin picking up items. One drinks the lamp oil and declares that it is delicious. James says the lamp oil has a different use. The Shingouz are disappointed but agree to abide by the “local customs” (38). Laureline and Lord Seal talk, and Lord Seal predicts they do not have long to wait, just as they hear a horn. They go outside to discover darkness has fallen with a thick fog. Albert's driver becomes disoriented. Albert point out when he sees the light of the house and the driver discovers that he has driven across the lawn. Laureline calls out and she and Albert greet each other. Lord Seal greets Albert in the house, saying he has heard of him but never met him before. Lady Charlotte invites Albert to take a seat, saying they still have to wait for Valerian.

Valerian does not have the exact coordinates to Inverloch Castle and he is lost in the fog. In his spacesuit, he leaves the ship and walks through the fog to a road sign, then into a pub where he interrupts a game of darts to ask for directions. The locals barely give him a second glance as they provide the information. When he is gone, they laugh about the tourists who let a little fog upset them so much.

Back in the castle, everyone hears Valerian arrive. Lord Seal says Laureline should instruct Valerian to hide his ship in the greenhouse. Lady Charlotte asks Lord Seal to instruct Valerian to stay off the lawn, but he says it it already too late as Laureline



rushes to the ship. Valerian and Laureline share a passionate kiss in greeting. James goes outside and provides direction to help Valerian get the spaceship in the greenhouse. Lord Seal asks Valerian if he managed to arrive unnoticed. He says he has traveled to many worlds, but the people on this one were completely indifferent to him. Valerian, Laureline, and Lord Seal join Lady Charlotte and Albert for a drink. James, meanwhile, joins the Shingouz who are arranging to make a trade for the “name of the wining horse” in an upcoming event (43).

Lady Charlotte calls for attention. She says “the ghost of Inverloch” is due to arrive soon in the castle’s North Tower (43). She says that everyone gathered has some interest in the situation, and invites them all to join her. She explains a little about this ghost. She says he is responsible for her family’s “fortune and glory,” and that her ancestors have been greeting the ghost for centuries (44).

Others are talking among themselves. Lord Seal says the ghost has helped him during his career in the intelligence field. Valerian is more interested in the fact that he cannot contact the Spatio-Temporal Agency in Galaxy. Their conversations are interrupted when the Glapum’tian announces his presence. Valerian had forgotten about the creature. Ralph introduces himself as Laureline prompts Valerian to introduce the others. Ralph is eating orchids he picked from the greenhouse.

They all go together to the appointed room. A huge apparatus rises from the floor. Laureline says this is how she arrived at the castle a well. Albert says it was brilliant to create a folk tale around the castle, which is home to a temporal relay that allows time and space travel. Valerian and Laureline are surprised when their boss, the bald man from the earlier scenes, enters the room. Valerian says the Superintendent’s presence goes against Galaxy’s charter and his role in the Spatio-Temporal Agency. The Superintendent reminds Valerian of historical information, such as New York in 1986 and Valerian’s mission there. He then says that Galaxy could literally disappear, making ghosts of all the Terrans, or people of the future Earth. The Superintendent says Valerian’s new mission could be his last. At Lady Charlotte’s invitation, they all go back toward the main house. This concludes the first novel of this three-novel series.

Analysis

The artist does not always use rows of square panels as the layout. Instead, there are various shapes and sizes, often arranged in nontraditional ways. Page 28 is one of the more typical for this artist. The top left side of the page has two smaller frames with one slightly wider than the other. Directly under that is a single frame that is the same width as the two top frames. To the right side of the page, the artist drew a larger frame that equals the same size as the three frames on the right. The action begins with the first two frames in the top row, then goes to the large frame on the right, then goes clockwise back to the larger frame on the left. The artist uses this layout multiple times, and sometimes uses small arrows to direct the reader. There are no arrows in this layout and the reader who naturally reads everyone on the left before moving to the larger frame on the right might be confused.



There are several scenes that seem to be little more than placeholders. For example, Valerian does not have the exact coordinates for the Inverloch Castle and he is not able to find it in the fog. He says that it is time to him to engage in some “low-tech” methods, and he leaves his spaceship to check out road signs (40). He then enters a pub and interrupts a game of darts to ask for directions. He is still wearing his spacesuit and seems indifferent to any affect that might have on the local people from a time when space travel is limited and time travel is science fiction. The men barely seem to notice that he is wearing a spacesuit and the give him directions without question. Their reaction seems unbelievable and Valerian seems indifferent when he later brushes off Lord Seal's question about any encounter with the local people.

The Glapum'tian is a very large creature with a body that resembles a helmet and legs that looks like those of an octopus. When it appears in the room where Valerian and the others are gathered, it looks very much out of place. The reader might expect that the creature would be angry or violent, but that is not the case at all. Its manners rival those of Lord Seal and Lady Charlotte, and the authors undoubtedly offer a bit of humor by naming the creature Ralph instead of providing some strange name in keeping with the creatures home planet and its appearance. These surprises are one of the literary tools seen throughout the novel.

The authors include some humor in the novels, often based on the alien creatures. The authors also depend on understatement as a literary device to show humor. James seems to be the typical English butler. He is unflappable and does not even hesitate when directed to greet the Shingouz who land on the lawn in a spaceship. The Shingouz are ridiculous in appearance, which makes them better at gathering information. They are small and seem incapable of being dangerous. The Shingouz and James come together for some humorous panels in the latter part of the novel. For example, the Shingouz drink lamp oil. James merely tells them that the oil has another purpose and they talk about the need to fit in with the local traditions, indicating they would rather drink the oil. The Shingouz and James also get together to make a trade, with the Shingouz offering to give James the name of the winning horse in an upcoming race.

There are some pieces of historical information that are important to fully understanding Valerian's reaction to the Superintendent's appearance. First, Valerian and the Superintendent are from Galaxy, which is Earth's future name, and they know that a cataclysmic event is going to happen on Earth in the 1980s. In the first novel of this series, Valerian goes back to Earth during the time right after the event. An explosion caused the Earth of the 1980s to change dramatically, and those changes set things in motion for the Galaxy of the future. Additional information is revealed in the remaining novels of this three-part series.

The novel ends abruptly, but it resumes from this point in the next novel of the series, *The Wrath of Hypsis*. *The Ghosts of Inverloch*, *The Wrath of Hypsis*, and *On the Frontiers*, are billed by the authors as a three-part series. The reader who realizes that will likely not be expecting a true conclusion at the end of either of the first two novels, but will expect that Valerian and Laureline will successfully bring the situation to a close



before the end of the third. That is not the case and Earth's future actually does come to an end. The authors may have been trying to tie the novels together more closely in an effort to gain a following for the serialized series rather than presenting novels that truly stood alone, as had been the case up to this point.

Discussion Question 1

Who is the Superintendent? What does his presence in this time mean?

Discussion Question 2

What does Albert mean when he says it was smart to spread rumors of a haunted castle to cover the fact that a space-time portal is in the castle?

Discussion Question 3

Describe the arrival of the various people and creatures at Inverloch Castle. How do Lady Charlotte, Lord Seal, and James react to these arrivals?

Vocabulary

inconvenient, improvised, faltering, capacity, hierarchy, reliable, strategic, sabbatical, inkling, exiled, mundane, gizmo, analysis, oblivion, ambiguous, arbitrary, empires, unjustly, descendant, manifestation, specter



Valerian and Laureline: The Wrath of the Hypsis (Pages 1-23)

Summary

The Wrath of the Hypsis picks up a few hours after The Ghosts of Inverlock comes to an end. Everyone is still at Inverloch Castle, and the action opens at 7 o'clock the morning after Valerian, Albert, the Superintendent, and the Shingouz convened at Inverloch Castle. Laureline is stretched out on a bed, dressed, and apparently hugging Valerian while telling him they have to get going. They arrive at breakfast where everyone else is already at the table. The Shingouz are suffering from a hangover and Ralph asks if he can eat the roses from the centerpiece. James says they are not for breakfast but Lord Seal says it does not matter. Ralph eats them a moment later and complains about the thorns, prompting James to apologize. The Superintendent asks for tea only.

Lord Seal says he had a “sleepless night” from worrying about the “impending nuclear disaster that would all but wipe out civilisation” (4). His comment prompts Lady Charlotte to say that James is “too sensitive” (4). Lord Seal's communication with London that morning indicates more objects have been found. He hesitates over the name of the planet and the Shingouz supply the word “Hypsis” (4). Lord Seal says the objective is to “disrupt the minds of military decision makers” around the planet (4). The Superintendent confirms that the nuclear disaster in Earth's future happens near the Polar Circle, and Albert points out that travel to those areas will be difficult. He has the names of several ships they might use for their search.

The Superintendent says they need Ralph to locate Hypsis. Ralph says it was not fair that they kidnapped him. The Superintendent says they will return Ralph to his home, “if they succeed” in their mission (5). Valerian questions the fact that they might fail, and the Superintendent says he does not know. He says “some disruption devices have caused damage” on Galaxy, just as they have on 1980s Earth. The Superintendent says “something regrettably froze in our future” (5). He believes the situation can still be changed, but only from 1980s Earth where “the situation is still fluid” (6).

They set out where Lord Seal has a ship waiting. The Shingouz take time to make a trade with the stable hands, trading the name of the winning horse for horse liniment, which they drink. Most go in cars but Lady Charlotte, Valerian, and Laureline go on horseback. Laureline is surprised when Lady Charlotte rides across the lawn. She says the state of the lawn is no longer important.

The three on horseback arrive at the cove first and find Lieutenant Commander Patrick Fitzgerald Merrywhistle waiting for them with his weather ship, the Crosswinds. The others arrive. Lord Bail says he cannot go with them, but will monitor the radio on Valerian's spaceship. Ralph takes a brief swim in the ocean, then everyone loads onto



the rowboat that will take them to the Crosswinds. After they are gone, several of the men, including James, discover the Shingouz traded the same tip to all of them.

The scene changes to “a little later and several nautical miles further” (12). Laureline wakes Valerian from a nightmare. The images from his dream center around flooding with people trampling each other to reach high ground and Valerian trying to save Laureline. Valerian tells Laureline about the dream, and that he has the feeling that both he and Galaxy no longer exist. Laureline says the inactivity is probably part of the problem and they set out to find the Superintendent, mainly as something to do. On deck, they find the Shingouz are throwing up over the side of the ship, which Laureline finds funny.

At the window of the Superintendent's cabin, Valerian points out that the Superintendent has an object very much like the one the CIA agents showed Lord Seal. They decide to talk to Albert but see Ralph hanging over the front of the ship and stop to talk. Valerian apologizes for taking him from his home, but Ralph dismisses the apology. He can sense “friendly presences” nearby, and asks for privacy to concentrate on that (15).

Albert and the commander, Patrick, are discussing the situation. They are probably looking for a ship, but Albert says all the major military forces have been hit by the problems, which means he does not believe any of them are involved. He says they should focus their attention on civilian ships instead. Patrick agrees. Albert has identified four ships of interest. Two claim to be carrying hardwood, but they agree that the Eskimos are not likely to be in the market to buy shiploads of hardwood. The third ship is supposedly a hunting vessel, but is more likely carrying pirates. The final ship is the Hvexdet, which is supposed to be a training ship from Albania. Albert says he can find nothing about the ship's past and that the crew did not disembark when the ship stopped in ports. They agree to check out the ships as discreetly as possible.

A few days later, Valerian has posed as a weatherman and been aboard the first three ships with nothing more than illegal alcohol transportation to report. Ralph has been spending a lot of time in the water and he announces that he has met those friendly presences he felt earlier, which are actually killer whales.

The Shingouz are feeling better and have been gambling with members of the crew. Laureline says they have won one of the Crosswinds' engines, along with other equipment from the ship.

Ralph looks at a picture of the Hvexdet, and says he believes he has found it. He plans to go back into the water and Valerian puts on a wet suit to join him. Laureline is worried that the whales will attack Valerian. Albert asks if Valerian talked to the Superintendent about this plan, but Valerian says he has stopped talking to his boss about anything at all. Valerian literally rides Ralph's back as they swim with the killer whales. Ralph says the whales indicated that “there was nothing human about” the Hvexdet (22). The whales gave Ralph the general direction of the ship. Ralph is able to detect the Hvexdet's communication with “a very distant point in the sky,” and says he can pinpoint the ship's location based on that communication (22).



Valerian tells Patrick to set a new course and Valerian is excited to have a lead based on something more than guesses. The Superintendent stands at the front of the boat as they set out. They are soon close enough to see the Hvexdet in their binoculars.

Analysis

The very nature of the graphic novel means the artist depends on graphic elements. The reader must evaluate those images. Page 12 is a full-page panel that shows Valerian's nightmare. At the top of the page, the artist includes the word "no" in oversized, bold font in a ragged speech bubble. The placement and size of the word indicates that Valerian shouts it, which is why Laureline wakes him. At the bottom of the page, the artist includes a smaller graphic of Laureline with her arms around Valerian as she urges him to wake up and he says that he was having a nightmare. The remainder of the page is divided roughly into three tall images, separated by gutter lines that fade into a scene at the bottom. The images include tall buildings that represent New York City, people scrambling to try to reach high ground, and flood waters. There is also an image of Valerian trying to save Laureline from the rising water. These dreams may represent Valerian's fear of the situation he and Laureline face, but it may also represent his fear that he cannot save her. Valerian typically feels in control of situations and seldom shows any fear that he might not be fully capable of dealing with what is happening, but this time he is not in control and does not even know for certain what he is trying to accomplish.

Theoretically, the Superintendent should be very active and involved in the mission. His life and future depend on a successful conclusion as much as Valerian's. However, he spends a great deal of time alone in his cabin. Valerian is more than willing to ignore the Superintendent and make decisions for himself, as seen when he decides to get in the water with Ralph and the killer whales. The authors use a brief encounter between the Superintendent and Patrick to expand on the character development of both. Patrick notes that they have an unusual cast of characters aboard his ship. The Superintendent demands that Patrick keep his crew from gossiping about the various people aboard, including the aliens. Patrick responds that he has a strong, capable crew, who will do anything except take orders from a "landlubber" (18). Laureline notes that the captain has put the Superintendent in his place.

The fact that Valerian never gets around to telling anyone about the object he saw in the Superintendent's cabin is one of many examples of foreshadowing. The reader will fully expect to see that object again. Though that does not happen, the Trinity of Hysis later explains that they gave the object to Galaxy as part of the destruction of that place.

Ralph's role in the novel has never been completely detailed, but it is now revealed that he can communicate with all kinds of lifeforms. He uses that to talk to the killer whales, which is how he knows the general area where the Hvexdet is. Ralph is also able to tap into the communication from the Hvexdet, which allows the group to get near the ship so quickly.



The artist has a chance to show some depth and detail on Pages 21 and 22 when Valerian and Ralph are swimming with the killer whales. There are also some alternative layouts on those pages that make the scenes interesting. The bottom two-thirds of Page 21 show an underwater scene with two square insets at the upper right and upper left of that panel. Those insets show Valerian and Ralph diving off the ship and swimming in the water. The top center of that panel shows Valerian and Ralph near the surface, while the lower part of that panel show them swimming toward a pod of whales. The top two panels of Page 22 are also underwater. They show Valerian and Ralph swimming with the whales. The top panel has an inset that shows a closeup of Valerian's face.

The perspective of the final frame on Page 23 is created as if someone is looking through a pair of binoculars. That shows the Hvxedet in the distance, indicating that the Crosswinds is still some distance away.

Discussion Question 1

Describe the Crosswinds and its commanding officer.

Discussion Question 2

Describe how Valerian and his group narrow their search.

Discussion Question 3

Who is Ralph? What does he learn from the Killer Whales?

Vocabulary

alleviate, deterrence, disrupted, perimeter, vulgar, vessel, presume, momentarily, spitfire, dawdling, familiarity, aquatic, ravaging, humanity, impromptu, hypotheses, abundant, convenience, itinerary, manifest, opaque, prestige, divination, fettle



Valerian and Laureline: The Wrath of the Hypsis (Pages 24-48)

Summary

Members of the group gather in the ship's cabin, but their efforts at talking to the Hvexdet are met with silence. Patrick is not pleased about Valerian's plan, saying his reputation is on the line. However, he has orders from Lord Seal, and prepares to set the plan in motion. A crew member interrupts. He has a whispered conversation with Patrick, who then begins to shout in anger that the crew has gambled away vital parts of the ship to the Shingouz. The captain is furious and points out that they are technically on "English soil," but the Shingouz says that they actually own the ship now (25). Laureline threatens to leave them on a iceberg unless they set the situation right. They agree to "delay payment" and Patrick sets the boat moving toward the Hvexdet (26).

Ralph says the ship does not have a normal motion. He says "I foresee," but does not have time to finish the thought before the Hvexdet rises into the air (26). The Superintendent says he has been waiting for that to happen and he asks Ralph to track them. The Crosswinds begins to sink. Valerian says he should have kept his spaceship but the Superintendent says the Hvexdet would never have allowed them to get close in a spaceship. He says they now can follow the Hvexdet.

The crew members begin passing out life jackets and preparing the lifeboats. The Superintendent instructs Patrick to notify Lord Seal, and to include the message that "all is well" (28). Patrick objects to that message, pointing out that they are all in lifeboats, meaning that everything is no alright. The Shingouz point out that they actually owned the ship that is now sinking, meaning they suffered a big loss.

Valerian, Laureline, Albert, the Superintendent, and the Shingouz get into a lifeboat with Ralph swimming alongside. Valerian contacts Lord Seal and begins to give him instruction on flying the joystick. At one point his response makes it clear that Lord Seal has caused more damage to the front lawn at Inverloch Castle. Valerian's group goes some distance away and he instructs Lord Seal on picking them up as a crew member of the Crosswinds says a couple of nearby ships are on the way to pick up the crew.

Aboard the spaceship, Lord Seal is at the controls and Valerian is giving him instructions. Lord Seal says, not for the first time, that the ship is very much like "my beloved Spitfire," but then adds that the spaceship is "infinitely more advanced" (30). Lord Seal says their route make no sense. Ralph is tracking the Hvexdet but tells Laureline that he does not understand their "confused movements and haphazard spatio-temporal jumps" (31). Laureline expected the Hvexdet to be headed toward their home planet of Hypsis. She expected them to go in the direction where Hypsis was last known to be, but the inhabitants can move their entire planet at will, meaning there is no way to be certain of its location. Ralph points out that the Hvexdet might be making



random movements to make Valerian's group lax, and that there is no way to be certain they haven't already sent another ship to Earth.

Inside the spaceship, Albert and the Shingouz are playing a game but Albert is winning to the point that the Shingouz are demanding a new deck of cards. Valerian calls a meeting and suggests that they connect Ralph's mind to the computerization of the spaceship with the hope of being able to intercept the Hvexdet. Ralph expects the Hvexdet to jump next into the Climphus Globular Cluster, which is so filled with planets that they will have to navigate more carefully, increasing the possibility of interception. The Superintendent approves of the plan with little discussion. Laureline insists that they cannot subject Ralph to the procedure without his approval. He says he is excited at the possibility of finding Hypsis, and agrees. Laureline then says that Lord Seal and Albert might not be up to the series of space jumps, but they both say they are ready. The Shingouz say they do not approve of the plan and begin to argue. Laureline is furious but the Superintendent offers them a raise and they stop arguing.

Laureline connects Ralph to their spaceship. The chase becomes heated and the Hvexdet turns more in the direction Laureline and Valerian expected. They believe they are about to capture the Hvexdet, then the Superintendent arrives and says he is no longer certain of their mission. He demands that Valerian decide whether to continue. Valerian has an image of Galaxy and says that he is "so troubled (36). They remain in that situation until Laureline says she will make the choice. She says she "wasn't born in Galaxy – and I've no intention of dying there" (37). She takes the controls and makes another space-time jump, arriving at Hypsis. The Hvexdet crashes onto the planet's surface. Valerian and Laureline rush to the site of the crash to find the ship was manned by robots. In the ship's hold, they find "enough nuclear warheads to do some serious damage to Earth's polar ice cap" and Valerian says it is also "enough to start the 1986 final cataclysm, too, by triggering planet-wide retaliation" (39).

Valerian and Laureline go next to the tower where a guard refuses to allow them entrance. Other people who are entering are in trouble for failure to pay taxes. When the guards become pushy, Valerian gets angry, but the Shingouz point out gun pointed at them. The Shingouz then make a deal with a guard and discover that a different Hypsis tower controls Earth's solar system, and that the guards of this tower do not have much respect for that other tower.

As the group sets out toward the other tower, Laureline asks the Shingouz what they traded for the information. They show her a centerfold, saying they won several similar pictures while gambling with the crew of the Crosswinds. Laureline laughs and says she approves, and the Shingouz are immediately enamored.

They reach the correct tower and note that it looks "shabby" (41). They discover a contraption that looks like a freight elevator, and take it up the tower. Suddenly, a voice yells out, "For the love of me, com on in!!" (42). The voice, which belongs to a man who resembles a gangster, warns that they should not plan to use their weapons. He holds up a lightning bolt, saying he can destroy them all. He yells some more and throws a bolt at one of the Shingouz. A younger man with curly hair peeks over the back of the



gangster's chair. The younger man calls the gangster "Dad," and urges him to stop yelling and to "demonstrate your divine power" (43). (The older man is referred to as Dad from this point.) Dad slaps a machine that he calls "the faulty ghost," saying the Hvaxdet failed (43). Dad then says that this is the first time Earthlings have shown up, and he predicts they are going to "start nagging" (43).

Albert and Lord Seal quietly confer, agreeing that these three beings are the Christian Trinity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. They continue to discuss the situation with Ralph, who has no concept of the religious ideals. The Superintendent asks the trinity for more information. Dad says his family has owned the solar system of Earth forever, and that he got tired of waiting for something to happen, which is why he created a couple of humans. He says that went wrong almost immediately, and Dad had to go to Earth "in person to sort it all out" (44). Dad cites other appearances on Earth, including "trekking over Mount Sinai," but Son breaks in, saying that he lived there for 33 years, "and there was nothing fun about it" (44). He holds up his right hand, which has a large perforation.

The Son says he has recently been to California where he sold lots of the figurines of the missile, Snoopy, and E.T. The Son says he also provided a Galaxy agent with the sphere that the Superintendent now has. All those things were aimed at setting a nuclear event in motion. Dad says those steps were "enough to deal with the problem in your super-centralised system" (45). He goes on to say that Galaxy has been erased. The Superintendent confirms that Galaxy has disappeared. Valerian asks why and Dad says the other people of Hypsis have complained that Galaxy has tampered with all sorts of things in the galaxy, and has never offered any money Hypsis.

Laureline points out that Dad has been arranging for a world-wide disaster in 1986 on Earth that will kill millions. Dad says he created the people, and has a right to do what he wants. Albert points out that Galaxy was born out of the disaster that is due to take place in 1986. If that disaster take place again this time, as is Dad's plan, people will probably establish Galaxy all over. Even though Trinity has erased it from the distant future, the events in the near future will probably cause it to be created again. The Machine admits it did not think of that. Dad smacks the Machine and calls it a "nitwit" (46).

Laureline proposes the Dad stop the current chain of events and see if his creation eventually pays off. Lord Seal proposes making arrangement for payments from Earth. The Son says he is only interested in miracles and leaves the "big-picture" to Dad (47). He asks the Shingouz for some "doses" of a product he discovered in California, and they assure him that their horse liniment is worth more than any opiate (47). They make a trade, apparently for the right to keep Valerian's spaceship.

Back in the main gathering, Laureline objects when Valerian says he wants to return to the non-existent Galaxy with the Superintendent. The Superintendent insists that Dad has the ability to send him to Galaxy, regardless of where it is. Ralph says he is also ready to go home. Lord Seal, Albert, Dad, and the Machine work out details for a contract.



The next scene reverts to Inverloch Castle. Laureline finds Valerian in the greenhouse, looking at his spaceship. Valerian says it seems strange that the Shingouz worked out the details for him to keep the spaceship, and Laureline says they did it so that she and Valerian could be together. Albert, Lady Charlotte, Lord Seal, Valerian, and Laureline gather in the garden for a game of croquet. The second novel of this series comes to an end.

Analysis

Valerian's plan for getting near the Hvexdet requires some careful piloting, and someone on board says that the arrival course to the ship is "worse than the approaches of Alflolol" (24). That refers to volume four of the series, which is about a planet that is surrounded by a layer of debris that requires a portal for entrance. This is one of several references to past events. The speech bubble merely points toward the ship and the comment is not attributed to anyone, but Laureline and Valerian are the only two who might have mentioned that planet, and it seems likely that Laureline is the speaker.

The Shingouz are, by nature, traders who deal in information. The situation involving the boat is not fully explained. The crew member who tells Patrick that the Shingouz now own the ship due to gambling debts seems to imply that they cannot continue their journey because the Shingouz actually have possession of the ship's engine and other parts, but that is not the case. The Shingouz talk about the fact that "gambling debts are sacred," which seems to imply that they have only convinced the crew that they own the ship (26). When Laureline demands that they fix the situation, they agree to "delay payment," and the ship gets underway, which indicates that they had not actually dismantled anything to take possession of it, and had only staked a claim on the ship as a whole (25).

Lord Seal constantly points out that Valerian's spaceship is very much like "my beloved Spitfire," which was an airplane used decades before the 1980s and which would now be considered a very basic airplane (30). These comparisons are only accurate in Lord Seal's mind, and are symbolic of his past. This is the first time the authors have introduced Lord Seal and Lady Charlotte, and there is not a lot of time for character development in graphic novels, meaning the authors and artist have to use subtle methods to give the reader greater understanding. Lord Seal is apparently a former military man. While he is still active and strong, he seems to be a bit of a braggart until he says, during one of his comparisons, that the spaceship is "infinitely more advanced" (30). The fact that he can actually fly the spaceship with only some instruction from Valerian indicates that he actually does have the knowledge and ability that he has hinted at.

Lady Charlotte's lawn is a minor piece of symbolism that is also used for character development and humor. Early in the first novel of this three-novel series, Lady Charlotte was being careful not to ride her horse across the immaculate front lawn. She pointed out that it takes a lot of care and maintenance, and that she is the one who



really cares about it. Over the coming scenes, spaceships land on the lawn, cars drive on the lawn, and Lord Seal parachutes onto the lawn, all causing varying degrees of damage. Soon after that, Lady Charlotte rides her horse across the lawn, saying it no longer really matters. The fact that she has been so particular about the lawn is a way of showing that she believes appearances are important. She is a regal woman in all regards, and the lawn is symbolic of that. However, she is also adaptable. Her willingness to just ride across the lawn when it had become damaged shows her ability to adapt to new situations. The fact that Lord Seal mentions the lawn again as he is taking off in Valerian's spaceship is an effort at humor. By this point, everyone is aware of Lady Charlotte's attitude about the lawn, and it is only her regal attitude that keeps her from griping at the people who have ruined the lawn.

The conflict the Superintendent and Valerian face is whether to stop the nuclear event that almost destroys the Earth and that leads to the creation of Galaxy. If they stop the event, the Earth will not be almost destroyed in 1986. That destruction is the event that actually leads to the creation of Galaxy. Valerian and the Superintendent lived and worked on Galaxy, so they are forced to decide whether to let the destruction occur, thereby killing millions of Earth people of 1986, or to stop it with the understanding that Galaxy will not be created. In addition, Albert later points out that same scenario to the Machine, which makes Dad come to the conclusion that he should not allow the nuclear event after all.

The Hysis government is revealed over a series of scenes in convoluted tidbits of information. Basically, the Hysis planet consists of a lot of towers and each has control of one or more planets. Those planets pay taxes to Hysis but, over time, Galaxy has interfered to the point that some towers from Hysis are not getting their payments. This is why they have destroyed Galaxy.

The first clue about the presence of the three individuals in the tower of Hysis is seen when Valerian's group reaches the upper level of the tower and the voice yells, "For the love of me" (42). That was undoubtedly the older man of the three beings in the tower, who is symbolic of the Christian God. Christians might be offended at this representation of God the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit as an overweight gangster, his hippie son, and a machine. For the purpose of clarity in this guide, the three entities are referred to as Dad, Son, and Machine.

The reader is left to connect pieces of information and to make inferences on his own throughout this novel, which may lead to some unanswered questions. For example, the Shingouz make a trade with Son, giving him some horse liniment in exchange for some unknown thing. Later, Valerian says he has the Shingouz to thank for his possession of the spaceship. It seems likely that the spaceship would have disappeared, like everything and everyone else from Galaxy, if not for the Shingouz's deal. The presentation of information means the reader has to remember pieces of information that is sometimes not explained until several scenes later.



Discussion Question 1

Name the things the Shingouz have accomplished up to this point.

Discussion Question 2

Who are the three people Valerian's group encounters in the tower?

Discussion Question 3

What are the Trinity planning to do to Earth? What are the problems with their plan? What impact will these plans have on Valerian, Laureline, the Superintendent, Albert, and Lord Seal?

Vocabulary

convoluted, bookish, maneuvering, deliberate, runty, mutant, dubious, moratorium, prodigious, queue, infinitely, haphazard, wreaking, havoc, strategic, proposal, formidable, myriads, evasive, abducted, potentially, concentric, reckon, aeon, stipulated



Valerian and Laureline: On the Frontiers (Pages 1-30)

Summary

The last novel in the trilogy, *On the Frontiers* (Pages 1-30), opens with a space scene of a huge luxury spaceship. On the second page of graphics, a speech bubble indicates that someone is inviting someone to “the open deck” (4). On the next page, two alien beings are talking. Their names are Jal and Kistna, and they look like male and female versions of the same species. Both have helmets that completely cover their faces and an armor-like suit. Kistna is talking about the view but Jal interrupts. Kistna says that she and Jal are more highly evolved than most, but that Jal does not seem interested in the ability to “partake in this pleasure” (5). Kistna says there are very few of their kind, and that she was surprised to meet Jal on the cruise. She hints at their past, saying they have been “spread out to the four corners of the galaxy because of our too-long history, condemned to solitude by our too-short lifespan” (6). Kistna then mentions their child, which has yet to be conceived. A different species of child throws a toy and strikes Jal. Kistna retaliates with her power, which encircles all three members of that family with an unexplained blue aura. Kistna also mentions their “fragility” (8).

Jal suggests they go to the casino on the cruise ship. Kistna says she has a “different game” in mind, and Jal promises they will get to that soon (8). Kistna says they are “ordained” to have sex to procreate (9). Another alien at the table thinks that it is strange that Jal does not seem happy about the situation. A manager says Jal is not allowed to play because of the ability of his race to influence the outcome of events. Jal and Kistna separate with Jal eventually finding a game the management will allow him to play.

Later, at the captain's table, Jal confirms to Kistna that he lost. The captain thanks Jal for not taking advantage of his power. They talk for awhile with the Captain, discussing where they are and where they are going. Jal invites Kistna to dance. She is happy with his attention. He tells her that “the time has come,” which also makes her happy (13).

In the room, Kistna says that their child will be a prince among their race. She removes the helmet that covers her face, and Jal does the same, revealing that he is actually human. The scene becomes chaotic with Kistna shouting that she is going to die, and that she knows his only goal is to take her power. Jal puts his suit back on. As he looks at himself in the mirror, he says, “you’re scum, pal” (15).

Jal dresses in the helmet and suit that makes him look like Kistna. He then goes to the ship's control center where the Captain is expecting him. The Captain says they are near the solar system that Jal has shown interest in. Jal uses the power he stole from Kistna and throws a blue aura around all the people on the deck. Jal demands that the Captain give Jal a skiff and send him to Earth. The Captain initially refuses, but Jal threatens to damage the ship and the Captain orders transportation.



The scene changes to Earth. Laureline is in a barren landscape, covered with snow with only a little vegetation. On the next page, Valerian is in his spacesuit and everyone else is wearing radiation suits, complete with gas masks. They are at an industrial site that is apparently an industrial facility. Valerian says that the “accident was deliberately caused” (22). One man speaks a foreign language, talking about “imperialism, spies, and the CIA,” but another man, who serves as interpreter, puts it down to “bigotry” (23). The interpreter tells Valerian that no one can ever know that the incident was a deliberate act. Valerian notes that the man keeps his face hidden so that Valerian cannot identify him. The interpreter provides skis and leads Valerian away from the plant and to a lake that he identifies as the Finnish border. He leaves Valerian by the lake, saying someone will pick him up soon.

A man arrives with a boat. Valerian questions the reason he has no protective gear. The man says his people are tough, and that they have eaten reindeer that ate the grass from Chernobyl. Valerian provides the man with a pill that is an antidote to the nuclear fallout from the power plant, and the man takes it with vodka. Valerian has some vodka as well, as they arrive on the shore where Laureline is waiting. Just to be certain he is not carrying any radiation, Valerian goes into the freezing water. He is naked when he gets out, and hugs Laureline, asking her to “warm me up” (27). Albert arrives with a blanket and a snake. They all get into Albert’s car where Laureline has clothing for Valerian.

As they drive, they discuss their situation, including that they are headed for Norway “in case something goes wrong” (28). Albert points out that this area of Europe is “of immense strategic importance” (28). He goes on to say that both the East and the West might be willing to ignore a disaster in Siberia, but they will not ignore an incident in “next door’s garden” (28). Valerian says the biggest question is who would stand to gain from the incident he has just investigated. With Laureline driving, they pass through a border outpost without a problem. They arrive at a predetermined point and leave the car to board a seaplane.

The scene changes to a city with a group of men in an elaborate room. One of the men says that “all the parts have been brought across the border,” and another says “the commando is ready to move” (30). Jal is one of the men. Another man indicates that Jal has been helpful in their endeavor. Jal brushes away the gratitude, suggesting that they play a game of bridge.

Analysis

The scene that takes place on Page 15 is chaotic and unclear, but it seems that Jal must have raped Kistna. They both remove their helmets, which is the first time the reader and Kistna realize that Jal is human. There is a frame in which the reader sees a table with several unidentifiable items. The next frame has an image of Kistna, on her back, with a pained look on her face, accusing Jal of trying to take her power. The next image is of Jal. He appears to be kneeling over Kistna, and says that his action is



“horrible” (15). In the next frame, he is looking under the blanket, and he is apparently nude.

An important look at Jal's character is seen in his reaction immediately after he raped and killed Kistna. He calls himself “scum,” which indicates that he is not happy with his action (15). The pain that drove him to this level is revealed in the coming scenes.

The first twenty pages of this novel depend more heavily than usual on graphics. This novel is longer than most of the series, and it seems that is mostly because of the full pages of graphic elements that are used mainly to create settings and tone. For example, page three is the first page of graphics, and is divided into two panels. The upper is slightly smaller, and shows a space scene with planets, stars, and a single spaceship which turns out to be the cruise spaceship that Jal and Kistna are on. The lower frame of that page is a closer view of the ship, which very much resembles a typical cruise ship from modern-day Earth. Page four has three images showing various views of the ship. Pages eight and nine show the casino of the ship. On page eight, the reader sees the scene from a balcony. Only Jal and Kistna are clearly visible but the scene below indicates many people and lots of activity. On page nine, the reader gets a closer view of the action on the casino floor, with many unidentified aliens playing games and moving around. Pages 18 and 19 show the events in the moments leading up to Jal leaving the ship, then shows the launching of the skiff with Jal removing his disguise. On page 20, the artist includes two panels of roughly equal sizes. The upper shows a closeup of Jal's transportation, which looks very much like a modern-day car. The lower panel shows a huge expanse of open space with stars in the distance and the contrail of Jal's ship. All these graphic are used in traditional ways instead of narration, and they are effective means of communications.

As in the previous novels of this series, the authors and artist give hints and pieces of information that do not fully make sense until the end of the novel. Jal's need for the power he stole from Kistna is one example of the foreshadowing that readers will remember, but some pieces of the foreshadowing seem so innocuous that some readers will have trouble remembering everything until the end of the novel. Casual readers may not care to put all the clues together.

Discussion Question 1

Describe what happens between Jal and Kistna.

Discussion Question 2

What does Valerian discover at the nuclear facility?



Discussion Question 3

Considering the previous two novels of this series, what is the significance of the problems at the nuclear facility?

Vocabulary

inescapable, consummating, assured, ordained, irreparable, barge, discreetly, deliberately, bigots, ambient, massive, havoc, infiltrating, precisely, strategic, immense, perforce, repercussions, equanimity



Valerian and Laureline: On the Frontiers (Pages 31-64)

Summary

The scene reverts to a tropical place. Laureline, Valerian, and Albert are seated at a table drinking iced beverages. They are talking about the oppressive heat in the Tunisian Sahara, especially compared to the freezing temperatures of a short time earlier. Albert confirms that he does not know who has been hiring them or why they are in this location now. Albert points out that Galaxy of the future has disappeared, meaning they are all technically “unemployed,” though an unknown person is now assigning them tasks and paying them. (31). Valerian says he cannot figure out the connection between the nuclear power plant problem in Russia and their current location, which seems utterly peaceful. Laureline points out that she has seen many men wearing burnous, and that they are all leading pack animals or carrying items away from the marketplace. Their waiter says there is no market today.

Valerian and Laureline decide to go toward a palm grove where all the traffic has gone while Albert remains behind to make contact with their employers and to keep an eye on their vehicle. Valerian puts on a ridiculous hat and Laureline takes out a piece of equipment that looks like a camera, all to promote their image as tourists. Valerian made the item from parts from their spaceship, but he says those options are limited if they want to be able to leave Earth of the 1980s. Laureline sees radiation through the viewfinder, but cannot identify the source, which seems to be coming from a dilapidated mosque. They go closer, but someone stops them, saying the mosque is not open to tourists.

Valerian and Laureline go to get their vehicle. Albert goes to make a phone call to their current employers. Valerian has an item he picked up from an alien planet. He calls it “a moroniser” and begins whirling it overhead (36). Everyone nearby who is not directly under the whirling object is rendered incapable of thoughtful movement or action. Valerian and Laureline continue into the building and discover a nuclear mine. Laureline finds a man who does not look like the natives. She disarms the mine. Men chase them as they rejoin Albert, who says they are to meet their next ride on the way to the Libyan border.

They find a group of men and a helicopter waiting for them. One, who seems to be in command, ushers Valerian, Laureline, and Albert onto the helicopter and orders his men to “take care of the infiltrators” (39). The pilot takes them over the border and shows them a camp filled with older equipment. The pilot points out that all that equipment could become horrible if those people use “nuclear projectiles” instead of traditional bullets (40). Valerian, Laureline, Albert, and the pilot discuss the situation and reveal that the Libyans had hoped to explode the mine back in the palm grove, which would



prompt global retaliation and would give the Libyans freedom to use their own nuclear weapons.

Albert says the plan is “a formidable cocktail” involving “Islamism, terrorism, and globalization,” with a “nuclear spark to blow everything to smithereens” (41). The pilot does not know who would be behind the idea. He declines to say who hired Valerian, Laureline, and Albert, but says they chose Valerian's group because they feared someone would blow up the nuclear mine if they saw the military arriving.

They transfer to a plane. When they land, two men meet them, identified as J.D. Elklund, professor at the University of California at Los Angeles, and Marshall Ivan, “Grigorian of the Red Army, in charge of monitoring nuclear disarmament operations” (42). J.D. Says they are two members of a group interested in nuclear safety. Marshall says Valerian's group is one of several, but none with the skills of Valerian's group. The two men relate the location of a convoy that is supposedly carrying plutonium, but the convoy blows up. They knew the convoy was going to be attacked, so they actually put the plutonium on a train instead. While they are talking, they learn the train has been hijacked. Valerian says he does not have the ability to contain the contamination. The group that has the train demands a submarine in exchange for releasing the train.

J.D. and Marshall say they have clues that have lead them to a next step, and they need Laureline for the next stage of the mission. On Page 45, she is dressed in an elaborate evening gown and at a casino. Laureline discovers that the casino managers have ended the playing because someone won so much. She goes for a look and sees Jal, though she does not know who he is. He is talking to an Asian man who insists he should have a chance to win some money back. The manager does not have an objection to a private game and the two go to another room and Laureline uses a telephone to catch Valerian up on the situation. Valerian asks if Jal was cheating. Laureline says no one is certain. Albert suggests he might be using the money to “finance international nuclear terrorism” (46). Valerian says Laureline should go forward with the plan.

Laureline puts a “tumtum” in her hair, which is a small creature from another planet. She gains admittance to the room where Jal is playing. Jal immediately confront Laureline, jerks the tumtum from her hair, and slams it into the wall. He then uses his power against his opponent and drags Laureline away. The waiter retrieved the tumtum and later gives it to Valerian.

The scene reverts to a house at the edge of water and a swampy looking area. Laureline is on the deck. Jal arrives and asks where she got the tumtum. He wants to know if she is from another world, or from the future. Laureline denies both, but Jal says he will make certain she reveals what she knows. Just then, a servant tells Jal he has news about the submarine. Jal tells the servant to leave Laureline alone, saying she has no way to escape. Once Jal is gone, Laureline rehydrates a tshung and sets it free, hoping it will leave Valerian to her.



Valerian and Albert are in the greenhouse at Inverloch Castle. Valerian is looking at the final images recorded in the retina of the tumtum, and recognizes Jal. Albert asks why Jal did not disappear, “like everything else” when Galaxy disappeared (51). Valerian does not have an answer, but does know that Jal was in the “mysterious Neferfalen Nebula” when Galaxy vanished, and that many strange things happen there (51). The tshung arrives and Valerian calculates where it originated, knowing that will lead him to Laureline. He finds it was in China. Valerian prepares to go to China, leaving Albert behind.

Valerian arrives and Jal shoots at him before he realizes it is Valerian. Valerian says they are still agents of the Spatio-Temporal Agency. Jal says he will “do everything in my power to force today’s Earth into a nuclear cataclysm” (55). Jal says the nuclear event is necessary to ensure that Galaxy is created. He says he has already killed to ensure that it happens.

Jal reveals that he did not disappear when Galaxy vanished, but that the woman he loved “disappeared in my stead” (56). Jal believes that returning to Galaxy will help him make sense of the world. Laureline hits Jal and Valerian gets away with her. They come up with a plan, based on the fact that Jal’s powers are faltering, and they are soon on board the ship. Jal is angry. Valerian and Laureline say they have a plan and Jal agrees to go with them to Point Central, a man-made place where hundreds of civilizations have built their own cells into a huge place that is very much like a planet. When they arrive, they find there is no sign of Earth’s dock so they land on another dock and make their way through Point Central.

They encounter the Shingouz. Valerian has some money from their recent work and Laureline pays the Shingouz for information. The Shingouz leave and later, Laureline receives a note directing them to another place on Point Central, and a small creature who will lead them. While they are walking, Jal says he now realizes that he cannot try to “rewrite the past,” but has to “trust in the future” (63). Later, Laureline and Valerian leave Jal in the cell that once belonged to Earth. They agree that they are going to have to find other frames.

Analysis

There is a graphic scene on Page 50 when Jal is talking to Laureline. Jal says that he does not torture people, then changes it to say that he does not want to. He is standing on the deck with Laureline, but he is imagining the scene in which he killed Kistna. That panel stretches the entire width of the page. On the left, Jal and Laureline are sharp images. The remaining part of the panel is a series of three images, and they are presented in a collage with no distinct separation between the images. Jal images a frontal view of Kistna, then her face, horrified as she is dying, and then Jal looking under the blanket. The images are a contrast to Jal’s words, that he does not torture people.

On Page 55, Jal appears in a panel that has an interesting background. He has a white area around his image, which makes it appear that he is superimposed over the



background image. The background is images of buildings, perhaps from Galaxy, but the images are fuzzy as if seen through a level of static. There are white and yellow orbs over them, making it clear that the images are from Jal's memories or imagination.

Each place that Valerian, Laureline, and Albert visit is referred to as a frontier. These frontiers are symbolic of new places to explore, and are minor themes in the novel.

Point Central is a scene from another novel in this series. The setting is barely explained in this novel, but some readers will remember the details from the previous novel. A group of aliens began the Point Central by building a single cell, then allowing other races to build their own cells on it.

Jal's change of heart is largely an epitome. There is nothing dramatic that happens to make him change, but he suddenly realizes that he is going to have to accept where he is. The novel ends without bringing any significant closure. Valerian and Laureline are leaving Point Central without having resolved the resurrection of Galaxy, and Jal simply stays at Point Central without knowing what is going to happen, other than accepting the situation without his continued interference.

Discussion Question 1

Who is Jal? What is his role in the novel?

Discussion Question 2

What are Laureline and Valerian doing in the scenes that involve nuclear devices?

Discussion Question 3

How do Valerian and Laureline change Jal's mind?

Vocabulary

expertise, gizmo, cannibalizing, infiltrators, arsenal, worrisome, vexation, taboo, formidable, cocktail, smithereens, ambiguity, stateless, smugglers, provocateurs, presume, ordnance, contamination, henchman, hazy, doubtful, waning, denigrate, exiled



Characters

Valerian

Valerian is an agent of the Spatio-Temporal Agency and is on a mission on an alien planet when Galaxy disappears. He is a strong, capable character. Over the course of the series so far, Valerian has shown that he is sometimes self-centered and overly confident. However, in this series of adventures, he is fully aware that his actions impact the lives of others. For example, when he is on the planet Glapum't and is literally kidnapping the Glapum'tian named Ralph, Valerian stops and considers whether he has the right to make this decision. He does not know what his mission is or why he needs the Glapum'tian, but he does think – at least briefly – about the life of the Glapum'tian he is kidnapping. That indicates a sense of compassion that he does not always exhibit. He does, however, take the Glapum'tian captive, which shows his natural tendency to follow orders, even when he does not understand the reason behind them.

Valerian's compassion is also seen in the nightmares he has while they are on the ship, the Crosswinds. In those dreams, Valerian imagines all the people who will die when the cataclysmic event occurs, and he feels both fear for the people who die and fear that he might lose Laureline. That fear indicates his compassion for others and his relationship with Laureline, which moves to an openly new level in this episode.

Though Valerian is a hero, he is also human. When he is faced with making the decision about ending the cataclysmic event at the polar ice cap, he hesitates. He has the power to prevent the event, but that would mean that he ensures that Galaxy is never formed. Ultimately, he cannot decide and Laureline takes over, making the decision for him.

Laureline

Laureline is an agent of the Spatio-Temporal Agency, and is Valerian's partner. She has an emotional relationship with Valerian in addition to their professional relationship. She is a strong, capable person who is willing to stand up for others and to fight against injustice. An example of that is seen when she insists that Valerian consider others before making the decision to connect Ralph to their spaceship's computer system, which would create a series of space-time jumps. She wants to be certain that Ralph is willing to accept the risks he would face, and that Albert and Lord Seal are willing to endure the discomforts of space-time jumps. That shows that she has compassion for others, which is a key component seen in several scenes in this three-novel series.

Laureline is depicted as a beautiful, young woman who is able to fit into any situation. For example, she is equally at home on a horse as in a spaceship, and facing the hardships of life at sea or seated at Lady Charlotte's elegant dining table.

Laureline's capability is seen when the Superintendent and Valerian hesitate over whether to stop the cataclysmic event at the polar ice cap. Laureline can see that both



men are overly invested in the decision, each with something personal to lose, and she steps in to make the decision for them. She also berates Dad when they meet on Hysis, pointing out that it is wrong for him to kill so many innocent people on Earth.

Albert

Albert is an Englishman who lives on Earth in the 1980s. He is an agent of the Spatio-Temporal Agency. He is intelligent and resourceful, and he accepts the aliens and the agents of the future without question. Albert appears in the two novels previous to this set, and he appears in all three novels of this three-part series.

Lord Basil Seal

Lord Basil is the chairman of the British Intelligence Agency and works with various other agencies and officials around the world and in the future Earth. He is a gentleman who never appears anything less than impeccably dressed, even when he has just parachuted onto his lawn from a jet. He is well connected, intelligent, and resourceful. He appears in the first two novels of this three-part series.

Lady Charlotte Seal

Lady Charlotte is Lord Basil's wife and the mistress of Inverloch Castle. She is the epitome of an English Lady. She is not fazed by the appearance of aliens. She has apparently been in contact with people from the future most of her life. She appears in the first two novels of this three-part series.

Lieutenant Commander Patrick Merrywhistle

Patrick is the commander of the weather ship Crosswinds. He is a tough man who knows his business. He is willing to do his duty, but he is also willing to stand up for himself. He provides support for the mission, but he also helps whenever he can to further the work toward a successful conclusion. He appears in the second novel of this three-part series.

Ralph

Ralph is a Glapum'tian from the planet Glapum't. He has telepathic powers and Valerian captured him in order to help track the ship from Hysis. Ralph is able to talk with the killer whales, which helps them locate the Hysis ship while it is still on Earth and about to cause the event that leads to the near destruction of Earth in 1986. He then helps track the ship directly to the elusive planet Hysis. He appears in the first two novels of this three-part series.



Jal

Jal is an agent of the Spatio-Temporal Agency. He was on a distant planet when Galaxy disappeared, and he did not disappear like the other people and items from Galaxy. The woman he loves does disappear, and Jal sets out to ensure that the Earth enters into the nuclear event that will lead to the cataclysm that eventually leads to the establishment of Galaxy. As the novel comes to a close, Jal realizes he has to accept the situation rather than continuing to fight against it.

The Shingouz

There are three of these creatures in this novel, and they operate as a single unit with regard to their character. They are known for being able and willing to sell information and are not especially honorable. They are prone to sudden bouts of infatuation, as seen in their dealings with Laureline.

Dad

Dad is one of three entities on the planet Hypsis who is actually God. Dad is a heavysset gangster, who is in control of Earth's solar system and who is angry about the fact that Galaxy has interfered in so many events of the universe.



Symbols and Symbolism

The Spatio-Temporal Agency

The Spatio-Temporal Agency is symbolic of the future. The symbolism is indicative of the tenuous nature of Valerian's future. Several of the characters of this three-novel episode work for the Agency.

The Crosswinds

This is the name of the weather ship that Lord Basil commandeers for the mission. It symbolizes the British effort to help avert the crisis. In addition to the normal crew, Valerian, Laureline, Albert, the Superintendent, the Shingouz, and Ralph are all on board.

The Hvexdet

This is the ship Valerian and the others are hunting. It symbolizes the next clue in their effort to avert the crisis. The ship is not a normal Earth ship and is not manned by Earth people of the 1980s.

Hypsis

Hypsis is a planet that can move about at the will of its inhabitants. It is symbolic of Heaven and is the home of the three entities that represent the Christian Trinity.

Lady Charlotte's Lawn

The lawn is symbolic of Lady Charlotte's regal attitude. The fact that she gracefully gives in to the damage from spaceships, cars, and all the people traveling over it is also a symbol of her regal attitude, which would never allow her to become angry.

Dad, Son, and Machine

These are the three entities who symbolize the Christian Trinity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. (Editor's Note: They are not called by name in the novel, and these three names are chosen based on what they call each other.)



The Graphic for the Space/Time Jump

There is a symbol that appears as a screen filled with static that indicates someone is about to engage in a space-time jump. In the first novel of this three-part series, that symbol is used to show that the Superintendent is about to make the jump from Galaxy, which is the Earth of the future, to the Earth of the 1980s. The symbol is typically used to show that Valerian is making a space-time jump in his spaceship.

Frontiers

Valerian and Laureline go to a series of locations to deal with nuclear issues, and these locations symbolize new missions for Valerian and Laureline. As the novel comes to an end, Valerian and Laureline discuss the frontiers they are going to see in their future travels.

Valerian's Spaceship

Valerian's spaceship is symbolic of his connection with Galaxy. The Shingouz negotiate with Dad to allow Valerian to keep the ship.

Nuclear Weapons

Nuclear weapons symbolize the destruction of Earth and the creation of Galaxy. Valerian and Laureline prompt an end to the destruction, which means that Galaxy is not formed.



Settings

Inverloch Castle

Inverloch Castle is the home of Lady Charlotte and Lord Basil Seal. Laureline is staying there as the story opens. Valerian and others arrive here.

Inverloch Castle is the main setting of the early part of the three-novel series. The castle is huge and elaborate, with an unused wing where the head of the Spatio-Temporal Agency enters the castle.

The Polar Region

Much of the action of the second novel of this three-part series takes place in the Polar Circle. The weather ship, the Crosswinds, travels through the region with Valerian and the others on board as they search for the Hvexdet. As expected, there is a lot of ice. They encounter a pod of killer whales during their travels.

Point Central

Point Central is the man-made conglomerate where Valerian, Laureline, and Jal go with the hope of finding something related to Galaxy. Point Central is a huge place that began with a single cell. Other races built cells onto that original cell, including the people from Galaxy. Valerian and Laureline discover that there is nothing left of Galaxy except an empty cell. Jal elects to remain there.

The Palm Grove

The palm grove is a rural region located in the Tunisian Sahara. It is where Valerian and Laureline find and disable a nuclear device. As such, it is the second nuclear situation that the two encounter. When Valerian and Laureline find the nuclear device in the palm grove, they become certain that the nuclear mine is connected to the problem at the facility in Russia. However, it takes time for them to figure out the details of how and why those situations are related.

Hypsis

Hypsis is a planet that is home to the three entities known in this study guide as Dad, Son, and Machine. The entities represent the Christian Trinity. They are in charge of the solar system that contains Earth. Hypsis is able to move about at will, making it almost impossible for Valerian's group to find it. It is home to other entities that oversee other solar systems.



Themes and Motifs

Survival

Humans have a natural tendency to try to survive, and several characters of this series of novels have to decide between trying to survive an immediate disaster or working toward the survival of their world. That conflict is one of the literary devices seen in this novel, and it is used to create suspense.

Valerian and the Superintendent are from Galaxy, where the Spatio-Temporal Agency is based. As Galaxy begins to disappear, so do everyone and everything that they know. Based on the historical documents that exist in their normal lifetimes, far in Earth's future, they know that a nuclear event in the polar region killed millions of people and prompted the creation of Galaxy and the Spatio-Temporal Agency. When they find themselves in the polar region with the nuclear disaster about to happen, they are faced with a horrible decision. They can choose to allow the nuclear incident to occur, which will kill millions of people but will mean that there will be no reason for Galaxy and the Spatio-Temporal Agency to ever be formed. They are literally giving up everyone and everything they know and love in order to save the millions of lives on Earth in the 1980s. Both the Superintendent and Valerian find themselves unable to make that decision. Laureline, who does not come from Galaxy and has much less to lose, makes the decision to stop the nuclear event.

Valerian's nightmares are also an example of this theme. He has horrible dreams about the destruction of the Earth, including a scene in which he and Laureline are in danger. Those nightmares show that he is afraid of dying and afraid of losing Laureline.

On a different level, Jal is also an example of this theme. The woman he loved disappeared along with everything and everyone else from Galaxy. He sets out to recreate the nuclear event that leads to Galaxy's creation. In Jal's case, he is not overly worried about his own survival, but wants Galaxy to survive because that is the only thing he feels he has left.

Kistna's reaction to her pending death is another example of this theme. She realizes that Jal is going to kill her in order to take her powers, but is unable to do anything to stop her own death. Her reaction is fearful and understandable, and Jal hates himself for taking that step, but his desire to recreate Galaxy overcomes everything else at that moment.

The Power of a Deity

Some people believe in God and embrace the idea that someone is in control of everything, and that idea is seen in the second of these novels, *Wrath of the Hypsis*. Valerian and his group manage to find Hypsis, a planet that can move about the universe at will. They discover that there are a series of towers, each in control of a



specific solar system. The tower that is in charge of Earth's solar system is inhabited by three entities. They are a Dad, a Son, and a machine. The entities represent the Christian Trinity that consists of God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

The three-person entity on Hypsis claims to have control over everyone and everything on Earth. The Dad explains that the property has been in his family for many years and that he gave people a jump start by creating a couple of people. He cites other instances of taking action on Earth, and those references match up with the Christian Bible. The Son cites his own time on Earth and his more recent time there. In the more recent visits, he is manipulating the human race to do what he wants them to do. The Machine is also manipulating people when it sets up the Hvexdet to lead Valerian's group all over the galaxy before they finally find Hypsis.

Dad insists that he has full power over the Earth and has the right to do what he wants with it. Laureline argues with him, pointing out that millions of innocent people will die if he causes the Earth to flood. Ultimately, Dad decides not to follow through with this plan, apparently swayed by the fact that Lord Basil Seal offers to guarantee some sort of regular payment from Earth.

The Relationship between Valerian and Laureline

Laureline and Valerian have had an ongoing relationship since the beginning of the series, but that relationship is outlined more clearly and takes on a more stable role in this three-novel series than in any other novel up to this point.

Readers who are familiar with all the novels up to these three know that Valerian and Laureline have hinted at an emotional or sexual connection, but they have not clearly defined that relationship. In at least one instance, Laureline gave Valerian a passionate kiss after they had been separated for a period of time. Each has also called the other by nicknames that indicated affection. These clues hint at a personal relationship that is more than just two people who are partnered for their job.

However, Valerian has had sex on at least two occasions with other women. In one novel, he mated with a woman called the Great Mother as a means of repopulating that planet. In another novel, he was struggling with headaches and confusion caused by a telepathic connection with Laureline, and he ended up in bed with a corporate spy who was trying to keep an eye on him. In both of these instances, Laureline knew what happened, and she was angry over the situations.

In this novel, Laureline and Valerian are clearly together as a couple. They hold hands and seem to have shared a bedroom in Inverloch Castle. Valerian washes himself in a frigid lake near the Finnish border, trying to ensure that he was free from any nuclear elements. He is nude as he runs from the water and rushes to hug Laureline. There are several other scenes that indicate they have a deep, personal connection that remains stable throughout these three novels.



Acceptance

When a character is forced into a situation, they can choose to accept that situation or to fight against it. In this novel, some characters initially fight against a situation only to come to a point of acceptance later.

Jal and the Superintendent are two of the most important examples of this theme. Jal is on a distant planet when Galaxy vanishes, and there are some strange properties on that planet that keep him from vanishing. However, the woman he loves does disappear, and that makes Jal so angry that he sets out on a highly destructive path, trying to make Galaxy reappear so that he will not feel so alone. He feels that he desperately needs to get Galaxy back in order to have something stable in his life. It is only after Valerian and Laureline take him to Point Central that Jal begins to look more closely at his life, his decisions, and what his determination has cost. When he carefully analyzes all that, he is able to accept that he cannot recreate Galaxy, nor should it be up to him to do so.

The Superintendent is at Galaxy when he realizes what is happening. He travels to Inverloch Castle, and there he sets out with Valerian on a mission, though it is not clear whether he plans to stop the nuclear crisis or to make certain that it happens. When the moment of truth happens, the Superintendent falters and finds he cannot make a decision. When the group winds up on Hysis, the Superintendent accepts that Galaxy has already been changed from its previous form, and he asks only that he be allowed to go wherever Galaxy is located. This level of acceptance is different from Jal's because the Superintendent is willing to die if that is what it takes to be at Galaxy.

There are some other situations that serve as minor examples of this theme. Valerian, Laureline, and Albert set out to work as freelance agents after Galaxy has disappeared, which shows a level of acceptance and adaptability. Lady Charlotte and Lord Basil Seal each accept the craziness that happens in their lives as the aliens arrive. Lady Charlotte stops worrying about the state of her lawn, which was immaculate before the Shingouz crashed a spaceship there, Valerian landed his spaceship there, and Albert's driver drove the car across the grass. Lord Seal decided it was not worth the argument when Ralph wanted to eat the flowers from the centerpiece on the dining table.

Styles

Point of View

The novel is presented in third person from various perspectives. The authors and artist use the third-person perspective and the limited perspective as a means of presenting and withholding information.

The varying perspectives are necessary for building suspense. For example, Valerian, Laureline, and Albert are traveling around Earth in a series of missions involving nuclear weapons. They do not know who is hiring them or what is causing the events. The limited perspective makes it possible for the author to keep Jal's identity and involvement a secret until the moment Valerian meets him. Keeping that piece of information as a secret makes it possible for the authors to build suspense. The use of suspense is not vital to the novel, but it does add a level of interest that would not otherwise exist.

Another example of this limited perspective is seen in the interaction between Kistna and Jal. They both talk about the lives of their species, and Jal seems to react to Kistna's plans for the future. It is not until the moment before he kills her that the reader sees his true identity. In that case, the perspective is not presented from a specific character, but from the perspective of the reader.

In some cases, the perspective becomes focused on specific people, as seen in the Superintendent's scene in the Ghosts of Inverloch. He talks about leaving Galaxy and he prepares to leave, then the focus shifts to the people at Inverloch Castle. The group sees that the "ghost" is actually the Superintendent, and that is when the reader learns the identity of this ghost and the connection to the scene at Galaxy.

Language and Meaning

The novel is divided into dialogue, narrative, and graphics. The basis of the story line is that people from the future know that a nuclear event on Earth in the 1980s will almost destroy the Earth and most of the people on the planet. The people from the future have the chance to stop that disaster, but doing so will ensure that their future home will never be created.

The fact that there are settings and characters from the future naturally alters the language. There are references to events that will happen in specific timelines, and references to the impact current events will have on the future. In addition, there are words and phrases that are specific to the futuristic nature of the storyline. For example, Laureline has a tumtum with her when Jal takes her captive, which is how Jal recognizes her as someone from the future or from another world, and is how Valerian finds out that Jal is involved. The tumtum does not actually exist. It is only a figment of the authors' imaginations. There are many other cases like this, including names of

planets and races of people that do not exist in modern-day human vocabulary. These are necessary for the tone of the novel, and are acceptable for the story line.

There is a very limited amount of narrative. Each narrative is presented at the top of the panels and are only used to provide information about settings and times. This is necessary because of the changing settings, but also because of the changing times. For example, the Superintendent is at the “Spatio-Temporal Service, in Earth's future, exact time does not matter” (The Ghosts of Inverloch, Page 32). The reason the time does not matter is that this is set far in the future. Other narratives define the exact times and places of other events.

Structure

The novel is presented as a graphic novel. As such, the authors depend equally on dialogue and graphics. The artist does not use the traditional three- or four-panel rows or the three or four rows per page. The alternative layouts are appealing and give the artist leeway to make more dramatic statements and sets deeper tones. For example, Page 6 of The Ghosts of Inverloch is an introduction to Valerian and Laureline. The first panel of the page is a narrow frame of Laureline on a horse. The next panel does not have a frame. The sky at the top of the page is a black, star-filled sky that simply fades away. The bottom of the page is the ocean scene where Valerian kidnaps Ralph. On the left of that panel, there is a small, square inset with an image of Laureline and Lady Charlotte riding horses. Laureline is talking about Valerian. There is a matching inset frame on the right side of the panel. This one shows Valerian making his decision to hurry his current project along.

Another example of the important graphic element is seen on Page 30 of The Wrath of Hypsis. The center panel of that page stretches entirely across the page. That image shows Valerian's spaceship. The background is black, streaked with orange. The reader can imagine that the orange streaks are stars that the ship is passing very quickly. The use of these kinds of graphics in unusual shapes provides an additional level of interest and depth.

The artist also depends on color to set tone and create impressions. For example, the scene is very white and blue in the scenes that occur in Russia at and near the nuclear facility that was sabotaged in “On the Frontiers.” In that same novel, the artist uses a lot of yellows and oranges to show the action aboard the cruise ship when Kistna and Jal meet.



Quotes

My family has always lived in this somewhat ... hmm ... special castle ... And Scottish hospitality is extended to all those who come to it vial the you-know-what ..."

-- Lady Charlotte Seal (The Ghosts of Inverloch paragraph Frame three)

Importance: Lady Charlotte is talking about the fact that visitors from the future have arrived at Inverloch Castle for years. The visitors are not mere people. Her comment also indicates that these people arrive by less-than-conventional means. Later, it is apparent that one of those people is the Superintendent of the Spatio-Temporal Agency.

This silence is inconceivable!"

-- Valerian (The Ghosts of Inverloch paragraph Frame six)

Importance: Valerian is on an alien planet and is concerned because he has not been able to reach the Spatio-Temporal Agency and has not heard anything from his agency. This foreshadows that there is something seriously wrong at Galaxy.

Everything is already fading, blurring as if it had never existed."

-- The Superintendent (The Ghosts of Inverloch paragraph Frame five)

Importance: The Superintendent is at the Spatio-Temporal Agency headquarters at Galaxy, and is explaining what he sees happening. This is another piece of foreshadowing that there is something horrible happening at Galaxy.

And if I tell you that our own world, Galaxy, could disappear? Turning us, last of the Terrans, into mere ghosts without any real existence, like the wretched spectres who supposedly haunt this land?

-- The Superintendent (The Ghosts of Inverloch paragraph Frame one)

Importance: The Superintendent is explaining what they can expect, considering that Galaxy might be about to disappear. This is yet another example of foreshadowing.

All nuclear deterrence networks are getting increasingly disrupted and we've uncovered new objects that may come from that planet."

-- Lord Basil Seal (The Wrath of Hypsis paragraph Frame four)

Importance: The group is gathered around the breakfast table discussing the situation, and Lord Seal is talking about the connection that seems to lead back to the planet Hypsis. This is one of many clues that leads the group to Hypsis.

Oh, it's those horrible nightmares again!

-- Valerian (The Wrath of Hypsis paragraph Frame one)

Importance: Valerian is talking about the nightmares in which the Earth in 1986 is being flooded due to the nuclear disaster. One of his fears is that he and Laureline are



drowning. This foreshadows the decision that will face him soon. He will need to decide whether to let the nuclear disaster kill millions of people, which leads to the creation of Galaxy, or to prevent the disaster. Preventing the disaster could mean that Galaxy will never be created.

We had it easy here, gazing at the scenery ... not rich but comfortable .. and after trailing that blasted tub, Earthlings now show up in our little paradise for the first time, ready to star nagging."

-- Dad (The Wrath of Hysis paragraph Frames five and six)

Importance: This is the character that represents God, who is in control of everything on Earth. Dad is lamenting the fact that he was not able to prevent the Earthlings from finding Hysis. He is a pushy, angry character who claims responsibility for humans on Earth and claims the power to determine whether to set off a nuclear disaster to kill off the majority of the people.

I could have a word with some high-ranking people! Staggered payments .. in kind if you so desire ... indexed on the dollar ..."

-- Lord Basil Seal (Wrath of the Hysis paragraph Frame two)

Importance: Lord Seal is negotiating with Dad, who represents God. He is asking Dad to forego the near-total destruction of Earth. The negotiations, including Albert's logical arguments against the disaster, are successful.

I want you to launch a skiff for Earth - with me inside!

-- Jal (On the Frontiers paragraph Frame five)

Importance: Jal is talking to the captain of the cruise ship, demanding that he be sent to Earth. This is the first clue that Jal has an interest in Earth and that he is connected to the issues occurring in both the present and future Earths.

Some people must have heard about our combined talents... Like your highly advanced technological equipment, Valerian, even it is isn't all-powerful, and our dear Laureline's cleverness."

-- Albert (On the Frontiers paragraph Frames two and three)

Importance: Albert, Valerian, and Laureline are trying to figure out who hired them and why. The authors actually build up some suspense over who hired them, and the answer is somewhat anti-climatic. It is a group of people who are only concerned about the nuclear issues that Jal is causing.

What twisted mind thought up such a strategy? None of the major nuclear powers stand to gain by it!"

-- Laureline (On the Frontiers paragraph Frame two)

Importance: Laureline, Valerian, Albert, and a pilot are discussing the situation, including who could be behind the nuclear events. The answer is that none of the



nuclear powers would benefit and Jal is actually behind these events. Jal is paying for it with his winnings from the casinos where he is using the power he stole from Kistna.

Galaxy is my only obsession now, place of my birth and my death! I must return there so that everything makes sense again! Galaxy must exist."

-- Jal (On the Frontiers paragraph Frame four)

Importance: Jal is explaining why he set out to create the nuclear events that will destroy the Earth. From the perspective of the future, Galaxy is created after the nuclear event, and Jal wants to set off the nuclear event in the belief that Galaxy will be created again.