

# **Métro Châtelet, Brooklyn Station (Valerian) Study Guide**

**Métro Châtelet, Brooklyn Station (Valerian) by Pierre  
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# Plot Summary

Mezieres, J.C.; Christin, P.; Tranle, E. *Valerian and Laureline: Chatelet Station Destination Cassiopeia*; Cinebook, Canterbury, Kent, 1980. Kindle AZW file.

Mezieres, J.C.; Christin, P.; Tranle, E. *Valerian and Laureline: Brooklyn Line Terminus Cosmos*; Cinebook, Canterbury, Kent, 1981. Kindle AZW file.

Valerian and Laureline are two agents with the Spatio-Temporal Agency. Their assignment is to figure out why and how a series of creatures are appearing on Earth in 1980. In Earth's original history, there is no indication that the creatures existed, which makes it clear that the creatures are actually appearing from some future point in time. Valerian takes his place on Earth during 1980 when the creatures are actually appearing, while Laureline works on the case from space in a futuristic point in time.

Valerian works with an Earth agent named Albert who actually belongs and lives in 1980. Albert is something of an understated character. He is an older gentleman who is slightly overweight and always wears a jacket and tie. He is never willing to go with Valerian when Valerian is actually fighting the entities. However, he is extremely well-connected with friends all over the world who have knowledge and information that helps solve the mystery. He is an intelligent man who puts clues together to lead Valerian to be in the correct places as events are happening.

Meanwhile, Laureline is traveling to several futuristic points in space. She follows clues to the planet of Solum where a city is literally sinking into the ground. The inhabitants there constantly build new stories atop the old. Each story had a creature that is in charge of the memories of his time on top of the surface. Laureline descends 372 levels to find the story of a planet that experienced the appearance of a similar group of creatures to those who have appeared on Earth. She learns that the planet Ohuru blew up after similar creatures appeared, and that it was somehow linked to a theft on Zomuk, a planet where the entire galaxy disposes of its trash. On Zomuk, Laureline deals with horrific conditions to discover that two aliens stole the sacred treasures from a shrine. The treasures were the four elements – earth, wind, fire, and water.

Laureline tracks down the two aliens just as Valerian and Albert discover that two huge industrial firms have gathered in New York where they expect a demonstration of another creature. The firms actually want to purchase the technology from the aliens who stole it, and they hope to further their business endeavors with that technology. Valerian and the people of Earth are at a loss of how to stop or explain what is happening. However, Laureline tricks the two aliens into killing each other. Then, she destroys the four elemental items, bringing an end to the situation.

Valerian says his farewells and heads to the Statue of Liberty, where he knows there is a teleport that will take him back to his own time.



# Chatelet Station, Destination Cassiopeia, Pages 1-16

## Summary

As the novel opens, Laureline is telling Valerian about her trip up to this point, though she says he has already heard the details before. Laureline is in the Cassiopeia Constellation. She spent some time at the Planet Rubanis gathering information, but she is now traveling again. She says the area has so many people and so much traffic that she is forced to travel at “sub-light speed” in this region (4). She says there is a lot to worry about. She encountered the inhabitants of Zyp, who gave her a brief period of “inner warmth and tenderness” (5). She met up with Apominobas, known as “compulsive talkers,” and purchased a few things they had for sale (5). The Apominobas told Laureline that there are “unscrupulous merchants” who are willing to sell anything (6). Her next stop will be Solum, and she will land there soon. She asks Valerian to update her on his situation.

Valerian says he is in a bar where he is supposed to meet Albert. Albert is an Earth man living in France in 1980. Valerian says he has been waiting for hours. He begins to recount the events of recent days. He was at a different bar the previous evening, watching the people. Valerian says he does not know very much about Earth or the people of this time period, even though he is from Earth. Albert has corrected him on things such as the fact that the doormen are not military. He has also corrected Valerian's mistakes about the roles of escort ladies, crooks, and gangsters, and has taught him about the rules of the time, such as the need to pay for a meal. Valerian has thought about the fact that the people of this time are Valerian's and Laureline's ancestors.

Valerian says Albert is arriving. He reminds Laureline that he is “having a hard time,” which is an apparent reference to his difficulty staying “in phase” for them to communicate (8). Albert arrives. He is an older gentleman with white hair, a suit, and glasses. He immediately knows that Valerian has been talking to Laureline. He quickly announces that he has information. The waiter arrives and Albert orders. After they have been served wine, Albert talks about a series of events in the RER, which is the “Greater Paris Rapid Transport System” (9). Several workers claimed to have seen an unexplainable apparition at the Auber Station and the entire cleaning crew at Nation Station fainted after seeing an entity that immediately disappeared. Albert then says that a train derailed and a power line burned out at the Chatelet Station. Valerian hops to his feet but Albert reminds him to pay the bill before they leave.

The two men walk out into the rain and enter the Chatelet Station. As they walk down a hallway, someone shouts that the station ahead is closed. Albert thanks the person for the information, then hides in another hallway with Valerian until no one is watching. Albert points out that Valerian's job will likely be waiting down the closed tunnel. Albert



says he is not a “direct action” employee, but has another destination in mind (11). He goes a different way and observes two groups of men gathered nearby. They are all wearing suits.

Down in the tunnel, Valerian takes out his weapon and shoots a huge, dragon-like entity that is colored like fire. The battle is fierce, but brief. Albert moves outside as the groups of men move, and he hears some of them discussing that “something went wrong,” and that there was “nothing to see” (14). Just then, an ambulance arrives. Albert watches as Valerian is loaded into an ambulance. Albert gets a cab and goes directly to the hospital. He identifies himself as Valerian's uncle, says that Valerian is mentally challenged, and convinces them that the gun is a toy. The doctor says Valerian's injuries are not serious and releases him. Albert and Valerian go out into the rain.

## Analysis

As the novel opens, Laureline is presenting a monologue about her current situation and the recent events that brought her to this point. She seems to be talking to herself. The reader will see no visible communication device, which makes the reader first believe that Laureline is talking directly to the reader. This perspective is an interesting change from the typical communication between Laureline and Valerian, and the details are explained in a coming section of the novel. At that point, the reader will learn that Valerian and Laureline have undergone a procedure to provide them with a psychic connection so they can communicate across space and time without use of any communication device.

There is an abrupt change in the graphics on Page 7 when the reader is looking at the communication between Valerian and Laureline from Valerian's perspective. Valerian is talking about being in a bar the previous evening and how he spent his time watching the various people. The panel shows a man seated at a table to the left side of the frame, and there is a huge image of yellows and pinks that slightly resembles a stingray swimming across the frame. There are echoes of similar images all around that one. These images look just like the images that filled multiple frames when Laureline was talking about a brief encounter with the Zypanons of Zyp. Valerian says he was wondering about the various people in the same way that Laureline “pondered the mysteries of the Zypanons of Zyp” (7). Valerian then apologizes, saying he has encountered interference. There is no real explanation for this at this point, but Valerian later sees multiple scenes that Laureline has encountered, indicating that he has trouble keeping his present separate from Laureline's, apparently because of their new communication connection.

There is an important piece of foreshadowing seen on page 11 when Albert is standing at the Chatelet Station. There is a huge sign on the wall that reads, “Tomorrow; The Domesticated Atom; On to progress with Bellson and Gambler” (11). There are three men standing near the sign, and their conversation indicates that they have some sort of expectations about an upcoming event. The sign is a hint that Bellson and Gambler, which is later identified as a major industrial firm, is involved in the situation, though the



reader may not put that clue together with the men at this point. The scene seems contrived, which may be a way of distracting the reader from the significance of the sign.

## **Discussion Question 1**

Describe the initial communication between Laureline and Valerian. What does the author reveal about their recent experiences?

## **Discussion Question 2**

Who is Albert? Predict his role in the coming events.

## **Discussion Question 3**

What happens at the Chaletel Station?

## **Vocabulary**

constellation, densely, perpetual, bizarre, uncharacteristically, optimistic, tangible, nonsense, witted, intergalactic, domesticated, discreet, inconvenient, precisely



# Chatelet Station, Destination Cassiopeia, Pages 17-36

## Summary

As Valerian and Albert walk along the street, Albert apologizes for telling the hospital that Valerian was “half-witted,” but he says he wanted to avoid problems with the police, especially considering Valerian's weapon (17). Valerian says he managed to destroy the entity. They discuss it more at a restaurant. Based on the description, Albert says this entity is not related to the first, which was why Valerian was sent to 1980. Albert produces copies of newspapers with information about the first entity, that make references to “a muddy monster” (17). There is also a story with a picture of what the media is calling a “flying saucer,” that Albert says was actually an operation Galaxy executed after the first entity (18).

Albert mentions that they are employed by the same organization, but he does not name the Spatio-Temporal Agency. He says he is certain they would want to minimize the impact of these events because the events are not mentioned at all in Earth's original timeline. Albert says he believes there are other people interested in “those beasties from outer space,” but he is not ready to tell Valerian that theory. At Albert's insistence, they have dessert, then leave together. Valerian mentions that he is having headaches that he believes are caused by the communication connection he has with Laureline, though she does not seem to be having trouble with it.

They part ways at Valerian's hotel. He reaches his room and contacts Laureline. She is on the planet Solum. The ground is porous, and the city continues to sink. New stories are added atop the building. There is a creature on each level, which is depicted as a huge, caterpillar-like creature with several eyes. Each can tell the history of their time. Laureline goes down many levels before she finds a creature with memories of “the war of the matter-eating beasts” (22). On another level, she learns about a planet that melted. Laureline says these are “examples of remote elemental manipulation,” but she has not yet found what links these to the events on Earth (23). Laureline stops talking when she discovers Valerian is asleep.

A telephone ring awakens Valerian. Albert says there are people outside Valerian's hotel. He believes they are watching Valerian. Valerian leaves through an already planned back entrance route. He finds Albert waiting in a taxi to take them to the train station. Albert says they are going to Marais Poitevin where there have been reports of an anomaly related to the water. Albert says it could be attributed to pollution, but people have claimed to have seen a “swamp monster” as well (26).

Valerian falls asleep, and Laureline contacts him. She has important information from level 372 of Solum. A series of entities terrified the people of the planet Ohuru. There were four creatures: a dragon-like creature colored like fire, a blue bird-like creature, a



muddy creature, and a giant rock-like creature. The planet eventually blew up. Laureline goes on to say that the entire situation is somehow linked to the planet Zomuk, which is basically the dumpsite for the entire universe. The people are horribly poor and unintelligent, but build elaborate shrines with “extraordinary offerings” (29). Something from one of those shrines was responsible for the explosion of Ohuru. Laureline is in the middle of her next thought when the connection ends.

On Earth, Valerian catches Albert up on what Laureline said. Valerian and Albert take a bus to Doere-La-Riviere where the hotel clerk says American tourists have booked the entire hotel. Albert expects to find it is the people from Bellson and Gramble, but learns that it is another huge concern, WAAM. The clerk says they are all out at the marshes, and gives them directions. Albert is interested in WAAM's presence. Valerian says he does not understand. All Albert knows at this point is that he has seen representatives of the Bellson and Gambler firm at the locations of the two previous entity sightings, but he does not know why.

They encounter a young man in a boat. He identifies himself as Jean-Rene from a nearby farm. He correctly guesses that Valerian and Albert are in the area looking for the strange entity, and says he can help them find it he can use Valerian's weapon to shoot it. He says he already tried to kill it with a traditional firearm, and did not succeed. Jean-Rene takes Valerian straight to the creature but the kick from Valerian's weapon knocks him out. The creature, which resembles a dark-colored, multi-finned whale, jumps out of the water and Valerian kills it. Jean-Rene regains consciousness and asks if he killed it. Valerian lies, saying Jean-Rene did kill it.

## Analysis

The reader garners pieces of information from conversations and events to figure out exactly what is happening. Albert reveals that the Spatio-Temporal Agency, which employs both Valerian and Albert, became involved in the 1980s when they discovered a problem with the historical timeline. In Earth's original timeline, these anomalies did not appear at all. When the first showed up, the Spatio-Temporal Agency sent agents to find out what happened. Those agents were apparently spotted, which created another change in Earth's timeline. The idea of traveling through time is complex and filled with problems for an author. It seems that the Spatio-Temporal Agency could simply figure out what is causing them, then go back to a previous time in Earth's history and eliminate them. The authors do not choose to take that route, which is how and why Albert is involved.

When Valerian finds that his hotel is being watched, he issues an expletive in French. The authors offer a translation as a footnote. The novel was originally written in French and was translated into English. It is not clear why the translators did not change that expletive to English, especially considering that they offer a translation as a footnote. This happens on multiple occasions, with footnotes as translations in each. It is left to the reader to decide the significance.





The reader who examines the images Laureline sees of the destruction of the planet Ohuru might see a pattern. The dragon-like creature is the color of fire and the panel includes the appearance of flames. The bird-like creature is flying. The muddy-colored creature is in the water and the third creature is the color and shape of rocks. The four represent, in order, fire, wind, water, and earth, which are commonly known as the four fundamental elements. These elements are only part of the mystery Valerian and Laureline are trying to solve, but they do provide clues about what the abilities and habits of each creature will be.

Jean-Rene is not seen again in the novel. He is a short-term character who has a single role in the story line, but he demonstrates an important aspect of Valerian's character. Jean-Rene is a young man from a nearby farm. Jean-Rene has already tried to kill the creature with a traditional firearm of Earth in 1980, without success. He does fire Valerian's weapon, but is not prepared for the recoil and it knocks him out immediately, leaving Valerian to kill the entity. Valerian tells Jean-Rene that Jean-Rene's shot killed the creature. There is no reason for that lie other than Valerian's desire to make Jean-Rene feel important about his role. That shows that Valerian has a kind side and that he is willing to give Jean-Rene the glory that the youngster obviously wants.

## Discussion Question 1

What problems could the authors face with having two main characters simultaneously taking actions in different time periods? How are the authors addressing these problems?

## Discussion Question 2

How does Valerian defeat the creature in the marsh? Why does he say that Jean-Rene was the one to kill the creature?

## Discussion Question 3

Describe the four creatures Laureline heard about from the memory of Solum. Predict what properties and powers each might have.

## Vocabulary

anomalies, strata, stable, accessible, immortal, incorrigible, flowery, elemental, manipulation, contemporary, vernacular, reconnoitered, picturesque, unsophisticated, serfs, manifestations



# Chatelet Station, Destination Cassiopeia, Pages 37-48

## Summary

Jean-Rene and Valerian return to the shore in their boat where Albert is waiting. Albert has overheard enough to know for certain that “bigwigs from WAAM” are in the area (37). Though he considers that another clue, he does not yet have a guess about what it all means. Valerian flags a truck driver down, and explains that they need a ride to the mental hospital because his “uncle” is “going a bit barmy” (37). Later, they are on a train headed back to Paris. Valerian apologizes for telling the truck driver that Albert was “senile” (38).

Back in the city, Albert reads a news story in which Jean-Rene says the monster story is a hoax and was never real. Albert says Valerian should keep Jean-Rene in mind if the Agency ever needs another agent. They go to Albert's house, which is cluttered with all kinds of items, including books and papers. He shows Valerian his ham radio in a closet and his carrier pigeons outside. Valerian asks if the Spatio-Temporal Agency is aware of Albert's methods of communications. Albert responds that he is not required to report anything other than results.

Albert says they have a meeting with his friend, Chatelard, who is a “great philosopher of science and myths” (39). Albert drives a car to Chatelard's house. Chatelard is an older man with a full beard. He is wearing a full apron and says he has lots of work to do because of the changing weather. He is referring to a large garden on his property, and he provides them with wine from his own vines.

They talk and Chatelard is amazed when he learns about the latest creature. Chatelard points out the previous creatures, saying that the first could have represented earth, the dragon-like creature could have represented fire, and the most recent creature in the swamp could have represented water. He cites the characteristics of each: the violence and power of earth, the heat and destruction of fire, the softness and strength of water. Following that logic, he predicts the next will be wind, and that its characteristics could be dreams and lightness, though he suggests madness might be another. Albert says Chatelard's theory is “fascinating,” but Valerian believes it to be tenuous (41).

Valerian excuses himself to look at Chatelard's garden. Albert explains that Valerian wants to be taking action all the time. Albert and Chatelard continue to talk, pondering the meaning of the industrialists' presence. Chatelard says a blond-haired woman has contacted him with questions similar to those Albert posed. He refused, though she offered payment, but was curious that the woman and Albert had similar questions at the same time. As the men are walking out of Chatelard's garden, a blond woman with glasses is driving a car.



Albert begins looking through the massive amount of paperwork he has for information about the firm of Bellson and Gambler and the firm of WAAM. Both are huge and their work centers around a vast array of concerns, including mining, power, automation, electronics, and agronomy. Albert says one of the companies is focused on heavy industry while the other is focused on “the future of business” (43).

Valerian makes contact with Laureline, who says she is on Zomuk. She says the air on the planet is putrid and she is plagued by “the nasty things that thrive on the rubbish” (44). In addition, the people of Zomuk are not prone to friendliness. She suggests they might be reticent because no one likes them, or they might be afraid of any alien being. In an effort to get information, Laureline has lived with the Zomuks, befriending them until she gained information. These are the same people who had a shrine robbed so long ago, and they now tell Laureline that same shrine has been looted again. Laureline says “the representation of the four elemental forces” were taken (46). She plans to remain on Zomuk until she can figure out who took the items.

Albert hears Valerian's voice, and interrupts his conversation with Laureline. Valerian is angry and snaps at Albert, who is surprised by the reaction. Valerian leaves the house, saying he plans to take a walk. She slams the door on the way out and is dealing with another headache. He says he feels that no one believes he is an intelligent man. He recounts the clues that he cannot put together, including the four elemental forces, the creatures, and the industrial firms.

Valerian laments the fact that Laureline is far away in space while he is “all alone” on Earth (48). Just then, the blond woman drives up, suggesting they look over the city together. She says she is bored and that Valerian also looks bored. She goes on to say that they should find somewhere to dance. Valerian hesitates only a moment before getting into her car. An unidentified voice in the background instructs someone to follow the couple.

On the bottom of Page 48, there is a note from the authors, directing the reader to the next episode in the series for the conclusion of this adventure.

## Analysis

There is no real reason for Valerian to tell the driver of the truck that Albert is mentally ill, and there may be two explanations for that. The most likely to the casual reader will be that Valerian is trying to get even with Albert because Albert told the doctor that Valerian was mentally challenged as a way of explaining his injuries at the train station. However, there may be a more complex answer. Valerian and Albert have made comments that indicate that Valerian is having trouble figuring out exactly how to act and react to everyday situations on Earth. Just before he catches the ride with the truck, he says that “the trick with indigenous populations is to look credible and harmless” (37). It may be that Valerian believes Albert's explanation to the doctor was credible then, and he is trying to mimic that behavior now. There are several situations in which it is clear that



Valerian is out of his depth, and this may be the authors' attempt at making one of those situations humorous.

Albert talks about Jean-Rene's statements that appeared in the newspaper. Jean-Rene's age is not revealed, but he was a youngster, probably in his early teens. He is eager to be the one who kills the creature but the newspapers quote him as saying the monster never existed at all. That would be a difficult stand for a youngster to take, because his natural tendency would be to brag about his role in it.

Despite Valerian's presence and the fact that Albert is an agent of the Spatio-Temporal Agency, they are trying not to let people know about the existence of the Agency. That presents additional challenges when they face down these strange creatures and try to figure out exactly what is causing their appearance. That is why Albert was impressed with Jean-Rene's statements to the media and why he told the doctor that Valerian was mentally challenged and explained away Valerian's weapon as a toy. Albert calls on various people to help answer questions, and he keeps them in the dark as well. An example of that situation is seen when he talks to his friend, Chatelard. Valerian is sitting in the garden, apparently talking to himself, when Chatelard and Albert walk near him. He is really trying to make contact with Laureline, but that would be impossible to explain with 1980 technology, without revealing the truth about his mission. For that reason, Albert tells Chatelard that Valerian is suffering from a broken heart as a means of explaining why he seems to be talking to himself. The effort to keep all this a secret and the reasons to keep it a secret are one of the main themes of these two novels.

There is an image on page 42 that is an important piece of foreshadowing. Valerian and Albert are just leaving Chatelard's garden as a blond woman is driving a car in a seemingly random scene. Chatelard had just mentioned a blond woman who tried to hire him to offer his opinions on the same issues he and Albert were discussing. That woman appears again, from a different angle, in the final scene of this novel.

While this graphic novel has more dialogue than some, the artists' role is still to offer deeper explanations and clarity to casual wording. A major example of that is seen on page 44 when Laureline is talking about being on Zomuk. She mentions the horrible conditions on the planet and the reader would know from the dialogue that there is a lot of garbage and parasites on the planet. However, the images on page 44 bring those comments to life. The artist depends heavily on greens and blue-greens to depict decay and rot. Laureline is wearing goggles, and her suit and goggles are covered in the greens, indicating that she is covered in the revolting decay that covers the planet. In one frame, the scene is almost blotted out by swirling blue-green masses, leaving only Laureline's outline and the shapes of large discarded items in the background. This is one of many examples of the artist's role in the novel.

Readers have seen the blond woman only once before and Chatelard mentioned her during his visit with Albert and Valerian, but readers will immediately realize that she is not a random woman who simply finds Valerian attractive. Valerian's motivations are not entirely clear. Readers who know the series will know that Valerian and Laureline have had a romantic connection in the past, sometimes greeting each other with a kiss.



Valerian has used endearments to refer to Laureline, furthering the idea of a romantic connection. Just before the blond woman arrives, Valerian is lamenting the fact that Laureline is so far away, and indicates that he feels very much alone. That may have set him up as a prime target for the blond woman at that particular moment.

## **Discussion Question 1**

Who first suggests the four elements are a clue in this mystery? What are the four elements and how have they been manifested so far?

## **Discussion Question 2**

Describe Zomuk. What has Laureline discovered there and what has her assignment been like?

## **Discussion Question 3**

What are the problems Valerian is facing at this point in the story line? Does he seem to be indulging in an unwarranted bout of self-pity?

## **Vocabulary**

precisely, exploits, substantial, indigenous, credible, barmy, hotelier, sequence, alchemy, stance, oneiric, innumerable, formidable, proficiency



# Brooklyn Line Terminus Cosmos, pages 1-15

## Summary

Brooklyn Line Terminus Cosmos is the second novel covering the adventures of Valerian and Laureline as they try to solve the mystery of strange, futuristic creatures on Earth in 1980. The first page of the novel offers a brief history of what has happened up to this point. Laureline is still on the planet Zomuk, hoping to find out more about the aliens who stole the items representing the four elements: earth, fire, wind, and water. Meanwhile, Valerian is on Earth in 1980 as he tries to solve the mystery from that point in time. A Frenchman named Albert is helping Valerian. Valerian is troubled by headaches that are either caused or worsened by his telepathic communication connection with Laureline. He is feeling dejected when an apparently random woman invites him to spend the evening with her.

On Page 4, Laureline finally breaks through to wake Valerian. He raises up slightly and turns on a lamp, then raises up more to reveal the blond woman is in bed with him. Valerian says Laureline's name, apparently thinking the woman in the bed is Laureline. Laureline, via their communication, says she is not in his bed. Laureline points out that she is still working, though Valerian seems to have forgotten. He turns off the lamp and goes to the bedroom. Laureline is obviously angry that he is in bed with the blond woman. She calls him a "worthless Cassanova" and promises they will discuss it in more detail. Albert had contacted Galaxy when he could not reach Valerian for the past two days. Valerian says that the communication sessions with Laureline, which are called "phases," are difficult for him. He recounts going out drinking and dancing with the blond. He glosses over the sex, saying they "went to get some rest" (6). He refuses to tell Laureline what happened after that.

Laureline says Albert believes the blond is a WAAM agent sent to seduce Valerian. Laureline points out that means the woman was not actually interested in Valerian as a man. She says Albert believes WAAM is going to attend some sort of demonstration the following day and that Valerian needs to spy on the woman he is with to find out the details.

Valerian asks about Laureline's progress. She makes another jab at him, saying that her work does not include "trendy nightspots" (7). She heard the full story from the people of Zomuk. An elaborate spaceship had arrived with "banners flapping in the wind, heavenly music, exquisite scents covering Zomuk's usual stench" (8). Two creatures exited the ship and the people of Zomuk believed them to be gods. The people of Zomuk gave the aliens the icons representing the four elements. The people only became suspicious when the two god began to fight over the items. One of the aliens dropped a weapon and Galaxy is analyzing the dust found inside it to try to trace the aliens back to their home planet. She has a basic analysis that indicates the weapon was, at one point,



“around one of the asteroids of the belt of Elsinn.” She is currently in that area, but there are too many options and she hopes Galaxy can give her more information.

Valerian says that Laureline has done well, but she snaps at him. She then says he can go back to the bed where that “fat sow” is waiting. Valerian stops himself just as he is about to say the woman is not fat. Laureline leaves, reminding him that they will talk about the situation again.

Valerian, in the bathroom, knows that Laureline is right and that he has to do something to “get a grip” (13). He then reminds himself that it is very early and he goes back to bed where the blond, whose name is Cynthia Westerly, cuddles close to him.

The next morning, Valerian and Cynthia are having breakfast in a restaurant. A waiter announces that Cynthia has a phone call. When she leaves to take the call at a pay phone down a hall, Valerian rushes to get close enough to listen in. He hears her promise to be at “the Pompidou Centre in about an hour,” and call the caller by name – Charles (14). Cynthia then says she can easily keep “that moron busy,” and Valerian correctly assumes she is talking about him. She says also says he is clueless about the situation.

Valerian rushes back to the table as Cynthia hangs up. She rejoins him and says that her aunt has just arrived in town, and that she has to pick her up at the airport. She suggests Valerian visit a local museum while she handles the family situation, and they plan to meet again later in the day. As soon as she is gone, Valerian rushes to call Albert.

## Analysis

The artist chooses varying layouts for the panels. These different layouts bring an added level of variety to the novels. On the second page of graphics, the artist chose three tall, narrow panels. The first is completely dark except some stars, a distant view of Laureline's spaceship, and a vague outline of the interior of a bedroom. In the next panel, the top is still dark and the spaceship slightly larger, but Valerian raises up in bed and turns on a lamp. In the third panel, the top is still dark and the spaceship is even larger. In the bottom half of the panel, Valerian raises up more so the reader can see the blond woman in bed beside him. The only other graphic on this page is a round inset panel, depicting Laureline on the spaceship. She is calling Valerian's name, which is why he woke up. The inset is in the center of the page, leaving stars visible above and slightly below. The artist is showing the vast space and time between Valerian and Laureline, though their communication makes that distance insignificant in most ways. However, when Valerian reveals that he is in bed with the woman, that distance becomes very significant. Valerian turns toward the blond woman and says, “Laureline?” (4). His word hints that he is not entirely certain how he got here and that he would expect to be sleeping with Laureline.



The icons stolen by the two aliens are an important part of the culture of the Zomuk people. These people are the poorest race known. They literally have opened up their planet to be a garbage dump because they have no other way to make a living. They live in squalor with no hope of improving their lives on this planet. However, they have built a shrine and they pray to some unnamed god, in the hope that some higher power will somehow save them. That makes the shrine and the icon precious to them, which makes the thieves' actions even more reprehensible.

The author has a limited amount of time in each novel to develop characters, which means readers who know Valerian and Laureline from previous novels of the series will have a different idea of their relationship. In previous novels, the two have shown signs that they are attracted to each other or that they have expectations about their relationship. However, in another novel, Valerian has sex with a woman in order to repopulate a planet. Laureline was angry after that situation, similar to her anger when she discovers Valerian is in bed with another woman in this novel. Even with full knowledge of the previous novels of the series, the exact nature of the relationship between Valerian and Laureline is unclear. Readers who are not familiar with the series, or with information from only a few of the previous novels, will not take away the same ideas as the reader who is fully versed in the two characters.

With the exception of Valerian and Laureline, characters typically appear only for a single episode of the series and often make only brief appearances. In most cases, other characters serve to drive the action and create conflict. Albert has not appeared in previous episodes. The authors fully introduce the subtleties of his character, but only through dialogue and actions. For example, he declines to be involved when Valerian is actually fighting one of the creatures, and he makes it clear that he is remaining out of the way because that is not in his job description. The reader might expect that Albert is an ineffective agent because of that, but he is extremely intelligent and has made an extensive set of connections. He has made those connections without letting anyone know that he is an agent. Some readers may expect the authors to present Albert as a fighting hero by the end of the novel, but that does not happen.

## Discussion Question 1

Give a brief synopsis of what has brought Valerian and Laureline to their current situations.

## Discussion Question 2

What is Laureline's reaction when she discovers Valerian is in bed with another woman? What is Valerian's first reaction when Laureline wakes him? What do their reactions to these events indicate about their relationship?





## Discussion Question 3

What image do you have of Valerian? What details have combined to create that image? Be specific.

## Vocabulary

abnormal, fabulous, archaic, discreetly, celestial, trendy, pacifists, lamented, manifestation, encounters, elemental, precaution, demonstration, infinite, breathable, exploits



# Brooklyn Line Terminus Cosmos, pages 16-31

## Summary

In a telephone conversation, Valerian urges Albert to get down to business. He relates what he overheard during Cynthia's phone call. Albert begins to tell Valerian that he will soon be leaving France, but Valerian cuts him off before he can explain.

Valerian watches Cynthia leave and rushes outside to follow. There are two men in a car outside, and their conversation makes it clear that they are watching both Valerian and Cynthia. It seems that they are undecided about which to follow. The man driving the car has the other man lie down in the seat, and he covers him with a blanket. He then asks Valerian if he needs a chauffeur. Valerian hesitates only a moment before getting into the backseat of the car. He instructs the driver to follow Cynthia's yellow car, and they drive through traffic to the Pompidou Centre. When they arrive, Valerian offers to pay the man, but he suggests he should wait for Valerian's return instead. Valerian accepts the offer and leaves the car. The man under the blanket emerges. He will follow Valerian and instructs the driver to notify the office.

Valerian takes an escalator to an upper level of the center. The place is teeming with people. Some are gathered around musicians. The blond woman is clearly visible in the crowd as she greets two men, calling them Lenny and Charles. One says their New York office notified them about the "demonstration," and they say they hope it will not be a repeat of the non-event in the swamp (19). They mill through the crowd, not certain what they are looking for. Albert catches up with Valerian, who says he does not believe Cynthia and her group know what to expect. Albert points out that Bellson and Gambler's agents are also present. Valerian wonders how they knew about the event.

Albert spots a woman with a bird, and he and Valerian immediately realize it is the next manifestation. It symbolizes the wind. Valerian laments the fact that he does not have his weapon, but Albert reveals that he is carrying it in his case. The woman appears to be a homeless beggar. Cynthia and her group reach the lady first and begin making offers to buy the bird. Valerian arrives and pushes his way into the conversation. The woman and one of the agents are haggling over the price when Valerian grabs the bird and runs away.

Valerian reaches a huge building nearby just as a guard opens the doors to the public. He rushes in and finds a secluded place to destroy the bird. He apologizes as he fires, but says the bird does not belong in this time. The bird "soaks up neutrons," attacking Valerian back even as Valerian is firing his weapon. The bird becomes huge and wraps a giant talon around Valerian's head. A shaft of light goes into Valerian's mouth and out both ears. The bird breaks free of the building and almost escapes before Valerian kills it.



The police arrive and arrest some people. One is the woman who had the bird. A police officer has his hand on Cynthia's shoulder, indicating she might be arrested as well. Some boys who were nearby but not involved are also arrested. Valerian has a splotch of red on his face, indicating an injury. He calls out to Laureline for help, calling her "sweetie" and saying he is in pain (25). Before he can tell her what happened, Albert arrives.

They head for the parking garage, and Valerian finds the car that brought him there. He holds his gun on the driver. Albert says they need to go to the airport where they will travel to New York. Valerian literally begins to glow. He has a brief contact with Laureline, but can only say that he is feeling confused. He sees images that he explains as things he has "never seen" and "things I will see someday" (26). Valerian believes he is having visions while he is really on the plane, but then realizes that he is not actually on the plane though he has no memory of passing through customs.

A Hassidic Jew named Schlomo Meilshem meets them at the airport. He is another in Albert's vast list of contacts. Schlomo is not shocked to see that Valerian is glowing, and says they will see what can be done to help him. Schlomo drives through icy conditions. He is a "well-informed man" of some renown, and Bellson and Gambler officials have called on him to help explain the creatures. He is invited to the next demonstration, which is why Albert and Valerian are in town.

They arrive at Schlomo's home and his wife has a rare skill set that is seldom required, and she sets to work, trying to heal Valerian's wounds. Valerian makes contact with Laureline again, trying to explain what has been happening to him since they last talked. During the conversation, he sees rocks and hears loud noises that he cannot explain. He says that Bellson and Gambler officials received an invitation to demonstrations through their computer, but have no idea who sent it. They were promised new energy technologies. Valerian goes on to say that the officials from WAAM and from Bellson and Gambler are trying to figure out how to capitalize on this technology, and how to keep the other away. Valerian sees an image of some dog in the middle of his explanation, but he pushes on, saying he is having difficulty maintaining the connection.

Valerian mentions that the company officials at WAAM have been busy hiring "Ph.D.-laden young go-getters or specialists," but he drops the thought with Cythia's image pops up as one of those recruits (30). Valerian says he is not certain how he knows all this and he cannot keep track of even his current location, let alone figure out details of how he came into the information. He does not try to find the answer, but moves on. He says Bellson and Gambler have been hiring "every crazy guru in America, and that there are a lot of them (30). The scene changes, showing Schlomo and Albert talking and it is clear that the men have just shared all the information that Valerian related to Laureline.

Schlomo says he played along when company officials came to him for answers about this situation. He did it only because it means Albert and Valerian can be at the demonstration.



The three men are in the car, headed for the demonstration site. Valerian asks for their location, and one of the men says they are in Brooklyn. One of the men, apparently Albert, says that this is a “foretaste of the end of the world,” and another, apparently Valerian, says he “may be more right than you know” (31).

## Analysis

At this point in the novel, the reader will be in the dark about many things, including how the two industrial firms are involved and how they know where to expect these demonstrations. It will later be revealed that the information about the demonstrations shows up on computers in their offices, without the companies knowing how or who sent them. Agents from the two companies are constantly watching each other, meaning they follow each other every time there is a demonstration designed for one of them. Albert refers to “industrial espionage,” which is very real among major corporations. An important aspect of this competition is seen at the end of the novel, when the leaders of these companies begin to talk about cooperating instead of battling. That cooperation is one of the underlying tones of the novel.

Pages 19 and 20 show some scenes from the Pompidou Centre, meant to show the reader the depth and tone of the situation. There are street performers and musicians, all showing off their talents and skills and hoping for donations from the audience. That is why the lady with the bird does not immediately capture Valerian's attention. She seems to be just another performer, showing off the bird in return for tips from those who look at it. On page 20, the reader gets a birds' eye view of the scene. There are hundreds of people, shown only as indistinct images from this height. The sheer number of people makes it difficult for Valerian and Albert to figure out what they need to do, and it makes it difficult to find a way to discreetly destroy the bird once they do find it.

The novel was originally written in French and has been translated to English. The translators use some modern-day American slang which could be direct translations or could be used to make the dialogue seem more realistic. For example, Laureline asks Valerian what is wrong, and he responds, “dunno” (25). Similar phrases and words are seen in other parts of the novel.

The artist's role in the novel is seen again on page 26 when Valerian is communicating with Laureline. There is a single panel that stretches across the page, but it is broken into three sections. At the left, Valerian and Albert are in the car headed for the airport. A circular image of Laureline appears in the middle of the panel, separating the image of Valerian in the car from the final image of the panel, which shows Valerian's silhouette, up-side-down, with a polka-dotted background. He complains about his head and says he is “all mixed up” (26). The background resembles bubbles and may prompt the reader to think of Valerian's state as something akin to a hangover.

The first image of Valerian glowing is seen in the car on the way to the airport. Valerian seems to be shaking and the reader may think the yellow coloring around him signifies that movement. It is only later that the authors explain more fully, making it clear that the



yellow light is a glow. This is one negative of the heavy dependence on graphic image. Some meanings are immediately and clearly evident, while others are subtle or unclear and need additional explanation.

When Valerian is bringing Laureline up to date on the situation, the artist presents new and repeated images to offer more explanation. The newspaper account of the flying saucer landing is shown in more detail, including a truck with “Bellson and Gamble” on the side. The next panel shows Cynthia Westerly talking to a police officer. She tries to argue, saying that “everyone saw” the bird, but the officer says only that he is taking her to jail. Valerian explains that the person responsible for all this chose to begin in France because the people have a “deep-seated rationalistic mindset” (29).

The final panels of this section of the novel are an example of the changing perspective with regard to graphics. The reader sees Valerian, Schlomo, and Albert all in the car. They are talking as they drive to the location of the demonstration. Then the perspective pulls away so that the reader can only see the car. The speech bubbles in the final two panels are attributed to the car, but the reader has to make assumptions about who is speaking. It can be assumed that Albert makes the “end of the world” comment, and Valerian responds (31). Valerian's response may be referring to the events in another novel of the series in which he arrives in a futuristic New York to find it completely flooded because of a bomb detonation that melted icecaps.

## Discussion Question 1

Describe Valerian's situation at this point in the novel. Predict how he will act and react when the climax occurs over the next few pages.

## Discussion Question 2

At this point, Valerian describes to Laureline the role of the two big corporations. What is his explanation for their involvement? Considering how large companies work, does this seem reasonable?

## Discussion Question 3

Who is Schlomo? How does he become involved in this situation?

## Vocabulary

jest, trio, geared, dovetails, espionage, chaos, impression, plumage, temporal, continuity, impersonating, baffles, paranormal, technocrats, materialistic, dispelling, misconceptions, balm



# Brooklyn Line Terminus Cosmos, pages 32-48

## Summary

Schlomo pulls his car into a large, open space that has cars parked around the edges with headlights pointed inward. Albert has donned a fake beard in order to pass for Schlomo's Jewish friend who is consulting with Schlomo. Valerian is to pose as Albert's assistant, which is why he does not have a similar disguise.

While WAAM has recruited a lot of people with advanced degrees, Bellson and Gambler have turned to less traditional people. There are preachers, a shaman, an alchemist, a parapsychologist, a urologist, and a numerologist. There are also people claiming a connection to George Ivanovich Guardjieff and Jiddu Krishnamurti. Schlomo describes each in scathing terms, making it clear that he does not believe any of them are as they claim.

Schlomo then points out an expensive-looking car, saying Jeremiah Bellson is present. The other partner in the firm, Gambler, is dead. Bellson has someone in the car with him and Schlomo says it will be the former Sarah Friedlander. She was a member of the Jewish community and Schlomo described her beauty as she followed the tradition for married women to dance behind a screen. After her husband died, she “seduced Jeremiah Bellson during a charity event” (34). She changed her name to Priscilla Bellson, dyes her hair, and drinks excessively.

Schlomo knocks on the car window and Sarah introduces Jeremiah to Schlomo, who introduces Albert and Valerian only as a fellow expert on the Zohar and his assistant. The Zohar is a fundamental book of the Jewish faith that deals with mysticism. Bellson invites them into the car and makes it clear he had not expected the people of WAAM to be present for the demonstration. As he hands over binoculars for Valerian to look at WAAM's collection of experts, Bellson says the cost of personnel is the biggest expense for both corporations, and they have spent a lot of money hiring all these people. He points out that WAAM's people include a futurologist, economists, “megalomaniac nuclear physicists,” and “lecherous snitches” (35). Cynthia is pictured below the “snitch” description. Bellson says they are “all being scammed” (35). Valerian excuses himself and leaves the car, walking away in the snow.

Laureline appears as she and Valerian connect to communicate. Laureline says she has been trying to contact Valerian for a long time. Valerian complains that he cannot focus. Laureline says she is still in the Elsin Belt, and that it has been a dangerous mission for her. She describes being hunted by a cult that tries to destroy anything female, then being rocked by “a gang of thugs who have a rather aggressive use for the teleportation of sharp rocks” (37). While she was working outside the spaceship on repairs, she was almost “eaten alive by some disgusting void hounds” (37).



Laureline says Valerian needs to look around, and predicts that he is about to see something that makes all the clues come together. Just then, there are a series of loud noises at Valerian's location. The dragon-like creature and the rock-like creature emerge. The rock creature is holding a huge boulder over his head while the dragon blows flames into the air. The bird becomes visible as well.

Valerian shouts at Laureline, and asks if he should shoot at them. Laureline tells him to wait, saying she is going to resolve the situation herself. She says Galaxy has ordered that this should be resolved in a "smooth, subtle, even delicate" manner, which is why she is taking over (39).

Valerian and Laureline continue their communication link as Laureline goes to her quarters. She points out the things she purchased from traders, saying she has made the room nicer. She has been cloaked and observing the two alien who stole the icons from the Zomuk temple. Laureline takes off her clothes as she continues to talk. She says the two aliens, named Crocbattler and Rackalust, are constantly bickering over the icons. Laureline got the clue that finally led her to the two aliens from a brothel, where the two spend a lot of time. She describes how Crocbattler and Rackalust got their hands on the icons. She continues to talk as she puts on high-heeled boots and a skimpy dress, then adds makeup and puts her hair up.

Laureline says they chose Earth as a place to sell their technology because it is the "only planet in the universe both advanced enough and crazy enough to play with technologies well beyond its control" (42). Laureline says she believes aliens on the planet Hypsis is helping Crocbattler and Rackalust communicate with the 1980 people of Earth, which is another problem Galaxy will have to deal with. Laureline then says that Crocbattler and Rackalust are in the future Brooklyn while Valerian and the corporate people are in 1980 Brooklyn. Crocbattler and Rackalust have gone crazy, thinking about all the prostitutes they can buy once they conclude their sale.

While Laureline is talking, several of the humans in 1980 are trying various things to either control or dispel the creatures, all with no success. Valerian asks for details about Laureline's plan, then asks why she is dressed so seductively and why she has multiple weapons. Laureline says she has "figured out how the males of every species work," and plans to use that against Crocbattler and Rackalust (43). Laureline then says she expects Valerian to make his own way home immediately after the situation is resolved, and that she expects explanations. She talks about "horrible whores," which is yet another indication that she is still angry because Valerian had sex with Cynthia (43). Valerian asks who ordered him back, and Laureline answered that the orders come from Galaxy and from her.

Laureline walks away, announcing that she has landed, and she greets Crocbattler and Rackalust. She flaunts her body, which is meant to ramp up the emotions of the two aliens even more than they already are. Laureline says they should stop yelling insults at each other and "fight for real," promising that she will remain with the winner (44). Laureline hands each a gun and directs them to pace away from each other and to fire on her command. When she yells "fire," the two aliens discharge their weapons and kill



each other (45). Laureline retrieves one of the guns and admits that she increased the power. She then walks to the icons, which are small cubes.

In 1980 Brooklyn, everyone sees a huge framed image depicting the silhouette of Laureline as she shoots the cubes. Laureline briefly considers that the people of Zomuk are going to have to create new icons because she destroyed those, but says Galaxy ordered their destruction.

Schlomo and Albert help Valerian to his feet and explain that everyone left after the creatures and images disappeared. However, Bellson and the head of WAAM are driving around together, discussing how to become cooperative for their mutual benefit. Valerian declines an offer to spend some time with Schlomo and Albert. They offer to take him wherever he needs to go, but he says he can make his own way. In the car, Albert says he might have “underestimated” Valerian. Schlomo asks if Valerian's statement that he could make his way back to the future had some metaphorical meaning. Albert believes Valerian meant it literally.

Valerian uses public transportation before boarding a boat bound for the Statue of Liberty. There, he enters a room that has a computer control panel. The final frame of the novel is the symbol that indicates he has made a jump through time and space.

## Analysis

There is a piece of foreshadowing seen in the first conversation Valerian has with Jeremiah Bellson. Bellson points out all the people WAAM has hired to try to explain what is happening, and it is already clear how many people Bellson has hired. He then says that the cost of people is the biggest expense for both companies, and hints that he believes all the people they have hired is a waste of money. After the demonstration is another non-event, Bellson and the head of WAAM will discuss finding a way to cooperate to avoid similar expenses in the future. That cooperation is one of the novel's themes.

While Laureline is describing her recent problems, including being attacked by hounds and stoned with oversized rocks, the reader will recognize that these are the same images from Valerian's visions during the trip from Paris to New York. That seems to indicate that he was not completely separate from Laureline during that time. There is no doubt that he is having trouble functioning, and that he has not been especially effective during this mission.

Laureline makes a comment to Valerian that she has “figured out how the males of every species work” (43). While she is saying this, she is dressed up in clothing she borrowed from a prostitute and her image is definitely meant to exude sex. Laureline's comment is a pointed remark meant to remind Valerian of his own indiscretion just a short time ago. This is yet another hint about their relationship, which is one of the novel's themes.





There is a footnote on the panel when Valerian says that he knows how to get home from New York that indicates the reader should see a previous novel of the series. Valerian has been to New York before and discovered that a portal for space and time jumps is in the Statue of Liberty. In that novel, the city was flooded and Valerian almost drowned upon his arrival.

## **Discussion Question 1**

How does Laureline bring the situation to an end?

## **Discussion Question 2**

What do the heads of the two major corporations do after the demonstration ends without either getting the technology?

## **Discussion Question 3**

Why does Laureline say the aliens chose to sell the technology to Earth during this specific time frame?

## **Vocabulary**

hallucinogenic, shamans, astrologists, alchemists, parapsychologist, ufologists, numerology, biorhythm, bogus, fortified, futurists, squabbling, loot, cahoots



# Characters

## Valerian

Valerian is an agent with the Spatio-Temporal Agency. He is Laureline's partner, but he is not the typical hero in this episode of the series. Valerian and Laureline have become linked together so they can communicate in a telepathic manner. The connection is apparently giving Valerian trouble, such as headaches that make him unable to function well. He is struggling to keep the connection with Laureline open, but he is unable to fully grasp what is happening at some given points in time. With these problems, he is unable to put clues together as quickly as usual, and some readers may find him ineffective and not likeable.

Valerian is depicted as a handsome man. He has dark hair and a strong profile. Though he is unable to function fully during this episode of the series, he is usually an intelligent, capable agent.

Readers who are familiar with the series will understand that Valerian and Laureline have a close relationship, though that relationship has been rocky in previous episodes. In some cases, Valerian and Laureline kiss or hug when they are reunited, which makes the reader believe that Valerian might have feelings for Laureline. However, he winds up in the bed of an industrial spy in this set of novels. He never voices an opinion on what he feels for Laureline, but he does spend a lot of time trying to apologize for sleeping with the spy.

## Laureline

Laureline is an agent with the Spatio-Temporal Agency, which is a futuristic Earth organization. She and Valerian usually work together on missions. However, on this mission, they are working on the same problem from different times and places. While Valerian is on Earth in 1980, Laureline is in space in a futuristic time setting.

Laureline is depicted as a beautiful, voluptuous young woman who is intelligent and resourceful. She and Valerian are connected by some sort of self-induced link. Laureline is able to easily make and maintain the connection whenever Valerian is able. Because this is a team effort, Laureline is unable to make or maintain the connections as often as she likes.

Laureline is devoted to her mission. She winds up on Zomuk, a planet that is literally the universe's garbage dump. The conditions are horrible with parasites and a horrible stench plaguing the inhabitants. Laureline ingratiates herself with the natives in order to get information. She complains about the conditions to Valerian, but continues to do the work. She is also flexible and resourceful. When she discovers Mr. Rackalust and Mr. Crocbattler have been creating the apparitions to sell to the highest bidder, she dresses up in a sexy outfit and provokes them into killing each other.



Laureline clearly has feelings for Valerian and she is angry when she finds him in bed with another woman. She seems to taunt him when she tells him the woman is a corporate spy who has no real romantic interest in him. Laureline goes on to tell Valerian that the woman wants to use him.

## **Mr. Albert**

Mr. Albert is an inhabitant of Earth, specifically France, in 1980. He is an older, refined gentleman who has a huge network of connections that he uses to find clues and make connections as he and Valerian work on the situation from Earth. Mr. Albert is technically an agent of the Spatio-Temporal Agency, but he remains in 1980 and only works on cases that the agency brings to him. He does not participate in space or time travel, and he does not know everything there is to know about the agency or Valerian.

## **Chatelard**

Chatelard is one of Albert's friends. He is an older man who is growing a large garden. He gives Valerian and Albert wine bottled from his vineyard. Chatelard is the first to suggest that the four elements might be playing a role in the situation. He also reveals that a blond woman asked him to offer opinions on the creatures and the overall situation, which became very curious to him once Albert also asked for advice.

## **Cynthia Westerly**

Cynthia is the blonde spy/agent for WAAM. She seduces Valerian as a means of trying to get information from him about the new technology. Valerian does not realize she is a corporate employee until after he spends a night with her. She is the blond woman Chatelard mentions to Albert. She is pictured with the typical appearance of the 1980s, including fluffy hair and oversized glasses. She is arrested at the Pompidou Centre after Valerian kills the bird.

## **Schlomo Meilshem**

Schlomo is the Hassidic Jew who greets Albert and Valerian upon their arrival in New York City. He is shorter than Valerian and has the appearance of a traditional Jewish man, including a beard. Officials from Bellson and Gambler have asked him to serve as a consultant during the demonstration they believe will happen in New York City. Though Schlomo has no inclination to work with them, he pretends to in order to give Albert and Valerian access to the event.



## **Mr. Rackalust and Mr. Crocbattler**

Mr. Rackalust and Mr. Crocbattler are the two futuristic aliens who are trying to sell the technology that they say will provide Earth with a new energy source. They hope to become rich when they complete the sale. Their greed motivates them.

## **Charles and Lenny**

Charles and Lenny are the two officials from WAAM who meet Cynthia at the Pomdipou Centre. They are seen several times in the novels, as they follow Valerian and officials from Bellson and Gambler. They wear suits, and the reader might mistake them for criminals until they are introduced.

## **The Homeless Woman**

There is a woman who seems to be a beggar who has possession of the bird-like creature at the Pomdipou Centre. She does not explain where she got the bird and haggles over the price when Cynthia's group tries to buy it. The homeless woman is arrested by police during the disturbance.

## **Sarah Friedlander/Pricilla Bellson**

Sarah is a Jewish woman who seduced Jeremiah Bellson into a marriage proposal, which changed her life and prompted her to change her name. He is the wealthy owner of the Bellson and Gambler. Sarah is the woman who contacted Schlomo. She appears only briefly, but her interaction with Schlomo is vital for driving the action of the novel.

Note: For the purpose of clarity, she is referred to a Sarah throughout this study guide.



# Symbols and Symbolism

## Bellson and Gambler

Bellson and Gambler symbolizes big business that is willing to do anything to be at the cutting edge of technology and to make money. This is one of two oversized industrial firms intent on buying the energy technology from Mr. Rackalust and Mr. Crocbattler. They spend a lot of time, money, and energy trying to be first to get the technology and to keep WAAM from getting it.

## WAAM

WAAM also symbolizes big business that is willing to do anything to be at the cutting edge of technology. Cynthia Westerly is an agent of WAAM. They work hard trying to gain control of the technology and to keep ahead of Bellson and Gambler.

## The Dragon-like Creature

This is the creature Valerian kills in a train tunnel, and it symbolizes fire, one of the four elements. Mr. Rackalust and Mr. Crocbattler manifest the creature after stealing the four icons from Zomuk. They hope to sell the technology to the highest bidder on Earth in 1980.

## The Bird-like Creature

This is the creature Valerian finds at the Pompidou Centre. It symbolizes the wind, one of the four elements. Mr. Rackalust and Mr. Crocbattler manifest this creature after stealing the four icons from Zomuk. They hope to sell the technology to the highest bidder on Earth in 1980. Chatelard suggests that the bird could have properties of dreams and madness. The bird strikes Valerian, which makes him even more confused and ineffective.

## The Water Creature

This creature resembles a whale. It is the symbol for the elemental force, water. A young boy named Jean-Rene helps Valerian find the creature and he shoots at it, but Valerian is the one who actually kills it.



## **The Rock Creature**

This is the creature that symbolizes the elemental force, earth. The creature resembles a huge, strong man.

## **The Graphic for the Space/Time Jump**

There is a graphic that appears in the novel whenever Valerian or Laureline jumps through space or time. The graphic is not explained. It is simply a symbol for that change in space and time. The graphic appears as a frame filled with static with the spaceship in the center and with several white circles at varying points around the spaceship.

## **The Statue of Liberty**

The Statue of Liberty is where Valerian knows he can make a space/time jump back to his own time. The statue is a symbol of freedom for America and can be considered a symbol of continuity through time for the time travelers.

## **Valerian's Headaches**

Valerian's headaches are a symbol of how difficult it is for him to maintain his connection with Laureline. The headaches also symbolize his struggles to remain in control of his situation.

## **The People hired by WAAM and Bellson and Gambler**

The two corporate giants have hired a lot of people they hope can explain what they are seeing. Those people symbolize a huge expense that Jeremiah Bellson sees as a waste of money. This prompts Bellson to seek out the head of WAAM in an effort to come to some cooperative agreement that will eliminate this kind of competition in the future.



# Settings

## Earth, 1980

Earth is the overall setting for more than half the events in this book, and the events all take place in 1980. The majority of the events take place either in Paris or in New York. Earth is presented the same as it was during that time period and the reader should remember that this two-novel story was written in 1980 and 1981.

## Solum

Solum is a planet where Laureline finds some information about what they are facing. The surface of the planet is spongy, and the building continues to sink. The inhabitants continue to add levels to the top of the building, and the lower levels each have memories about their time.

## Zomuk

This is the planet where everyone in the universe dumps their trash. The conditions on the planet are horrible. Laureline says there is a horrible stench all the time and there are parasites and insects that live among all the garbage. Zomuk's people are reticent, and it takes time for Laureline to gain their trust to the point that she can get the information she needs. This is where the temple is located that housed the icons of the four elements.

## The Pompidou Centre

This is where Valerian, Albert, and agents of WAAM and Bellson and Gambler find the manifestation of the creature that represents wind. The center is crowded with people, typical of an event on Earth during this time and place. There is a large building which is a part of the centre and that is where Valerian goes to destroy the creature.

## Laureline's Spaceship

Laureline spends some of her time on other planets, but she also spends time on the spaceship. The ship seems typical of traditional, futuristic ideas. Laureline has also added some feminine touches with items purchased from a merchant.

# Themes and Motifs

## Greed

Currency is an important part of most societies, and many people have a desire to have more money and possessions. That same kind of greed is what drives the story line in this novel, with two broad examples. The anger and fighting between Crocbattler and Rackalust is second only to the greed of the two major corporate firms that fight over the technology they hope will make them rich.

Crocbattler and Rackalust have stolen some items that were precious and holy to a race of people with little hope. The two disguise themselves as gods and steal the icons from the Zomuk shrine. That shrine is vital to the people of Zomuk because they are living in squalor. Their only hope for a better life is that a god will somehow save them. That means that the actions of Crocbattler and Rackalust are the equivalent of stealing from any civilization's holiest place.

Laureline discovers a historical account of another time when the elements were used on a planet, and that planet exploded. The explosion was literal and the planet was destroyed, along with everyone on it. It seems reasonable to assume that Crocbattler and Rackalust know the elements are dangerous and that the people of Earth do not have the ability to control the power, but they are interested only in getting paid. Another example of their greed is seen as Laureline teases them into killing each other. Both could be rich if they only focused on the sale of their technology, but they are so caught up in the idea of possessing Laureline that they shoot each other.

The corporate greed is seen in the extent the two giant firms go to in an attempt to gain the technology. Both have hired dozens of people, and Jeremiah Bellson says that none of those people will actually succeed at what they were hired to do. He is able to see the bigger picture by the time they are all gathered in New York, but he is either unwilling or unable to stop it. His lack of action signifies his willingness to continue to fight for the technology and the potential financial gain it represents.

## Valerian's State of Mind

Valerian, as one of the main characters in the novel, naturally drives a great deal of the story line. His altered state of mind in this episode is an important aspect of his role in the action. Readers who are familiar with the series will know that Valerian is usually a self-confident man who sometimes falters but is seldom in a situation that he cannot control. That is not the case in this two-part novel.

There are a number of things that contribute to Valerian's state of mind. One of the most important is that he is struggling with the communication connection he has with Laureline. He has headaches after each communication phase. He struggles to focus and maintain the connection, while Laureline seems to put forth little effort without





experiencing negative side effects. The authors enhance that contrast as one of several literary techniques used in the novel.

It could be that the headaches, exhaustion, and disorientation caused by the communication connections are the main reason for Valerian's situation. However, he becomes more deeply troubled after his encounter with the bird-like creature that represents the wind. Chaterlard suggests that the bird's properties could include madness and dreams, which can explain why Valerian has trouble keeping track of where he is and differentiating between his visions and reality. Valerian continues to deal with the effects of that encounter until after he meets Schlomo's wife. Though she tends his wounds, he continues to struggle over the coming scenes.

Another aspect of this theme could be explained by Valerian's sexual needs. He laments the fact that Laureline is so far away just before he meets Cynthia Westerly for the first time. His evening with Cynthia is not described except with Valerian's explanation to Laureline, but he likely believes that Cynthia is attracted to him. Valerian winds up in bed with Cynthia. Laureline is the one who tells him that Cynthia is really a corporate spy. Laureline's frankness probably hurt Valerian's ego. He gets a bigger jolt when he hears Cynthia's phone conversation, during which she calls him a "moron" (14).

A final example of this theme is seen in the fact that Valerian is far out of his element. He is from the future. He is confused by Earth's customs, such as paying for their meal in a restaurant. He typically spends his time in futuristic situations, traveling around the universe in a spaceship with Laureline, who is always available for direction and support. While Valerian is typically the leader and hero of the duo, his dependence on Laureline becomes clear when they are separated.

## Cooperative Collaboration

Cooperative collaborations are a natural part of life. There are several examples in this novel that are vital to the successful conclusion of the mystery. One of the most powerful examples is seen in the communication between Valerian and Laureline. The connection is never fully explained, other than the fact that it is man-made and that this is a new situation between them. Valerian and Laureline link up to talk, but the connection is only as strong as the weakest link. In this case, that is Valerian and he struggles constantly to stay connected to Laureline and to focus on what she is saying. He is often unavailable to her and she says at one point that she has been trying to reach him for days.

Another example is seen in the fact that Albert is an agent of the Spatio-Temporal Agency. Albert is a human man who lives on Earth in 1980. He is intelligent and able to find connections that lead him to the various places where Valerian kills the creatures. He has a network of people who give him advice and information, all without knowing the truth about his work. That shows a deep level of trust, which is vital to a cooperative



relationship. Albert also works with Valerian, though Valerian is a difficult man to deal with as he struggles through headaches and fatigue.

There are two corporate firms trying to get control of the technology being offered up for sale. WAAM and Bellson and Gambler are giant companies with an array of business interests, and each would benefit from the technology. Even though they do not understand what they are trying to control, they battle to get that control. By the time they are all gathered in New York, Jeremiah Bellson has come to the conclusion that both companies have wasted a lot of time and money. That leads him to propose a cooperative relationship with WAAM, and the heads of the two companies are driving around, considering that possibility, as Valerian leaves New York.

Crocattler and Rackalust are also examples of this theme, though they have a relationship that is the opposite of the cooperative collaboration of most teams. They fight constantly and are even willing to shoot each other in order to satisfy their lust and greed.

## Sex

Sex is sometimes a show of love or lust. It can also be used as a weapon. Sex shows up at two crucial points in this novel. The first and most obvious example is seen in the fact that Crocattler and Rackalust spend a lot of time in brothels. Laureline gets information about the two thieving aliens from a woman in one of the brothels the two visit. That woman tells Laureline about the habits of Crocattler and Rackalust, which prompts Laureline to come up with a plan to eliminate the two thieves, clearing the path for her to destroy the element icons. She dresses up as a prostitute and convinces the two aliens that they should fight over her, promising to remain with the one who wins the fight. They shoot and kill each other. Laureline was able to track their locations and find their weakness through their sexual encounters at a brothel. Their desire for Laureline led them to the fight without considering the consequences.

Valerian's encounter with Cynthia is another example of this theme. Valerian is confused for a moment when he wakes up in bed with Cynthia, and Laureline is furious. This hints at a sexual relationship between Valerian and Laureline. Valerian believes that the mutual desire for sex prompted his sexual encounter with Cynthia. However, Laureline reveals that Cynthia is a corporate spy. This means that she was willing to use sex as a tool to find out what Valerian knows.

# Styles

## Point of View

The novel is written from a third-person perspective with a focus on Valerian and Laureline. There are some minor exceptions to that focus, as seen when Albert goes into the train station to listen in as corporate employees talk about the demonstration. The authors keep the focus mainly on Valerian in order to retain the ability to make surprises and twists in the story line. For example, Laureline has already figured out who stole the element cubes and how to defeat them by the time she is talking to Valerian in New York. The reader, however, only learns what Laureline knows through her dialogue with Valerian. That information needed to be a surprise. It is revealed as Laureline is preparing to kill Crocbattler and Rackalust.

The graphic perspective is typically omniscient, but it is also focused on Valerian and Laureline with more time spent on Valerian. The graphic focus sometimes changes to be closer to the subjects or farther away. These changes provide additional information and foreshadowing, or can sometimes be a way of explaining the dialogue. An example is seen as Laureline wakes Valerian when he is in bed with Cynthia. The first image shows darkness and an outline of a bedroom. The next shows Valerian turning on a light. The next shows Valerian rising up a little more so that the reader can see Cynthia in the bed with him.

## Language and Meaning

The novel was originally written in French and has been translated into English. It often uses European English spellings instead of traditional American English. For example, Mr. Albert uses the word “minimise” instead of minimize and Valerian says materialize, which is spelled “materialise” (19). There are also places and phrases that show the original language, such as the first set of Earth scenes that are in Paris and Valerian's tendency to curse in French.

The overall tone of the novel is one of mystery and intrigue. There are a few curse words and multiple sex scenes that may make the novel unsuitable for younger readers. At one point, Valerian is in the bed with Cynthia, and it seems clear that both are nude. When Laureline is changing into the sexy outfit she wears to meet Crocbattler and Rackalust, the artist shows her entire nude body from the back.

Many of the places, races of people, and names are meant to convey futuristic ideas and meanings. An example is seen in the names of the two aliens who steal the element cubes. They are named Crocbattler and Rackalust. Both hint at words that could be used in sexual connotations. Another example is seen in the planet Zomuk. The final syllable of this name makes the reader think about the word “muck,” which is an English term for garbage. The entire universe throws its garbage on Zomuk. It is not

clear whether these terms held the same sounds in French or if this is a product of the translation.

## Structure

The novel is presented as a graphic novel. It is divided between narrative, dialogue, and graphic elements. In this two-part novel, the majority is dialogue and graphics, with little narration other than footnote explanations and a single page overview at the beginning of the second novel. That page is obviously aimed at anyone who did not read the first novel, or who read it some time ago and has forgotten what happened.

As a comic book or graphic novel, the artist depends on colors and placement to set the tone and impart more information. For example, Laureline is shown in a hazy image as she describes the horrific conditions on Zomuk. There is also an interesting panel on Page 45 of *Brooklyn Line Terminal Cosmos* when Laureline tricks the two aliens into killing each other. There is an alien on each side of the panel, which stretches the entire width of the page. The aliens are looking at each other. In the center of the panel, the word “fire” appears in a ragged, red speech bubble, indicating that Laureline yelled the word. The use of the red color there makes the word stand out even more. The word “swosh” appears by each of the aliens and there is a huge red, orange, and yellow blob where their heads should be, indicating that each fired when Laureline shouted the command, and that both died.

Another interesting set of panels is seen on Page 38 of *Brooklyn Line Terminal Cosmos*. Each of the four element creatures is manifesting in New York where Valerian, Albert, and the corporate men are gathered with their advisers. There are four frames that span the width of the page. Each has a sound presented in large graphic letters. The first is blue and the sound is “kraak.” The second is brown, and the sound is “chta.” The third and fourth run together, with “kab” on the third frame and “aoom” on the fourth. Each of the graphics is meant to convey the intense sound. The author also uses colors to hint at what will appear behind each sound.



## Quotes

Because earlier today, an empty metro train derailed at Chatelet, and a power line burned out shortly afterwards.”

-- Albert (chapter 1 paragraph Frame six)

**Importance:** Albert tells Valerian that this is their first “tangible” lead, and this is why they go to the Chatelet Station where Valerian encounters the dragon-like creature. This is an example of Albert's ability to put things together, such as combining some nearby sightings with this information so that he knows where to find the creature.

He's a nice boy, but a little half-witted . He loves science fiction toys – astronaut costumes and all that non-sense.”

-- Albert (chapter 1 paragraph Frame four)

**Importance:** Albert is offering this explanation at the hospital after Valerian's injuries. He is trying to avoid police intervention by using it as a means of explaining the weapon Valerian was carrying. Albert apologizes for his method, and Valerian later uses the same ruse in an apparent effort to get back at Albert.

And I understand our ... er ... employers' pressing desire to minimise the damage to a historical timeline that never mentioned such anomalies.”

-- Albert (chapter 1 paragraph Frame two)

**Importance:** Albert and Valerian are recounting what they know in an effort to decide what to do next. Albert's comment is the first time the reader really knows why Valerian is involved and that Albert is technically an employee of the Spatio-Temporal Agency, just like Valerian. Albert's explanation shows that the creatures are coming from a future place, because Earth's original timeline does not mention the creatures. The Agency is trying to keep the changes to a minimum.

The seventh planet of Ohuru, ravaged by uncontrollable forces, eventually blew up.

-- Laureline (chapter 1 paragraph Frame two)

**Importance:** Laureline is explaining what she knows about a similar situation on another planet. Her information is from the memory of Solum. Valerian sees many of the same images he has seen in 1980 on Earth. It is possible that Earth will also explode if they do not manage to stop the situation.

A ritual logic, my young friend, because these seem to be apparitions linked to the old mythical elemental figures ... the first one in Eastern France was earth: violence, heaviness power.

-- Chatelard (chapter 1 paragraph Frame two)

**Importance:** This is the first time the idea of the four elements – earth, wind, fire, and water – have been clearly outlined in connection with the beings. Chatelard goes on to



define the fire and water elements that Valerian destroyed, and to predict the third will be wind.

And why am I here like an idiot, all alone on this damned planet with a damned headache?

-- Valerian (chapter 1 paragraph Frame two)

**Importance:** Valerian is lamenting everything that is wrong for him at this moment, including that Laureline is far away while he is trying to put all the clues together on Earth. He is feeling sorry for himself as Cynthia Westerly drives up, which makes him in a perfect mindset to accept her offer and to go with her.

We'll discuss it later, you worthless Casanova .. I've been trying to reach you for two Earth days, so has Galaxy's on-station agent in Paris."

-- Laureline (chapter 1 paragraph Frame five)

**Importance:** Laureline has just awakened Valerian and discovered that he is in bed with Cynthia. Laureline informs him that the woman is a corporate spy and makes it clear that she is not happy with his actions.

I'll find a way to keep that moron busy. If you want my opinion, by the way, he doesn't have a clue."

-- Cynthia Westerly (chapter 1 paragraph Frame 10)

**Importance:** Cynthia is on the phone and Valerian is listening in. This is bound to be a blow to Valerian's ego because he probably thought Cynthia picked him up because he was handsome. Now he knows that she is a corporate spy and that she thinks he's stupid. All these things contribute to Valerian's state of mind.

You will watch yourself here, won't you? If you start impersonating a Christmas light again, we'll be deported for sure ..."

-- Albert (chapter 1 paragraph Frame six)

**Importance:** Albert and Valerian have landed in New York and are making their way through the airport. Albert is referring to the fact that Valerian has been glowing ever since his encounter with the creature that resembled a bird. This is one of several examples of Albert's dry humor.

Go ahead, young man, and gaze upon that collection of useless fools they paid fortunes to hire – when the main problem we all face ... yes, all of us, as I always say, is reducing personnel expenses."

-- Jeremiah Bellson (chapter 1 paragraph Frames one and two)

**Importance:** Bellson hands Valerian the binoculars as he says these words. He makes it clear that he believes he has wasted his money on the people he has hired to try to explain what they are seeing. He also believes that WAAM has also wasted money on the people they hired. His attitude puts him in the mindset to work with the head of



WAAM a short time later to try to reach a new level of cooperation that will benefit both of them.

Horrible whores don't just ply their trade in the ships of ill repute of Cassiopeia ...  
hmmm?!

-- Laureline (chapter 1 paragraph Frame seven)

**Importance:** Laureline has dressed up in a sexy, revealing outfit as she prepares to trick Crocbattler and Rackaluster into killing each other. Her comment makes it clear that she considers Cynthia Westerly is a whore.

It's not like me to philosophise like this, but between my phases, that bird, and who knows what else ... I'm not entirely myself any more.

-- Valerian (chapter 1 paragraph Frame eight)

**Importance:** Valerian is talking to Schlomo and Albert as he is about to leave 1980. The fact that he knows he is struggling is making his life even more difficult. All these situations have combined to make things different for Valerian during this novel.