

The Sparrow Study Guide

The Sparrow by Mary Doria Russell

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Plot Summary

A group of friends is brought together by the discovery of an extraterrestrial transmission from a foreign planet. The planet is called Rakhat and the find is a catalyst for exciting and tragic events that follow. Emilio Sandoz, the central character, is a priest of the Society of Jesus. After escaping a shady past of drugs and violence through priesthood, he becomes a skilled linguist. His path with the Society of Jesus leads him to cross paths with everyone who later makes up the mission crew to the planet Rakhat. The journey to Rakhat begins in Puerto Rico, Sandoz's home. An astronomer and friend of Sandoz, Jimmy Quinn, picks up on a musical radio transmission from another planet. Emilio Sandoz is the first to suggest that a mission be arranged to find the source of the alien transmission. He hopes to serve as a linguist to interpret the alien language or forms of communication. The Society of Jesus supports the idea, spiritually and financially and helps arrange the crew. Sandoz knows that the skills of his friends would serve well on the trip and their fates are therefore bound together. The mission crew is made up of four priests; Emilio Sandoz, his superior D.W. Yarbrough, musician Alan Pace, and Marc Robichaux; young astronomer, Jimmy Quinn; an artificial intelligence expert, Sofia Mendes and husband and wife engineer and doctor, George and Anne Edwards.

The crew and the Jesuit Society believes the mission to be God's will and the phrase 'deus vult' meaning 'God wills it' becomes a coin phrase for the expedition. The group shares a genuine camaraderie, and the trip brings each of them to their own relationship with God and offers new perspective on life. Unfortunately, traveling to a foreign planet proves to have obstacles that no one foresees, even for a group on a mission for God. The plot unfolds through the recollection of Emilio Sandoz, after he returns from the mission alone. The Society of Jesus demands that he give a report on everything that happened but the process is more difficult than imagined. The crew meets two cultures on the planet, the Runa and the Jana'ata. The Runa befriend them immediately but the culture of the Jana'ata, the leading species on the planet, becomes their downfall. The Jana'ata society is a crude, intense, almost hedonistic version of human society on Earth and the differences cause a crucial gap in communication.

The mission gives them invaluable insight into a new planet and its culture and according to his peers marks Sandoz' transition into sainthood. However, aside from Emilio Sandoz, every member of the crew dies, some brutally. Emilio must now find a way to renew his love for God and find meaning in the existence of the Rakhat culture and the loss of his friends.



Rome: December 2059, Arecibo Radio Telescope, Puerto Rico: February 2019

Rome: December 2059, Arecibo Radio Telescope, Puerto Rico: February 2019 Summary

Rome: December 2059

On December 7, 2059, Father Emilio Sandoz is released to the Jesuit Residence near the Vatican from the Salvador Mundi Hospital following an unsuccessful Jesuit mission to a foreign planet, Rakhat. The next morning, the Jesuit spokesman speaks to the gathered crowd, thanking the U.N., the Contact Consortium, and the Asteroid Mining Division of the Ohbayshi Corporation for helping to return Sandoz.

The Father General of the Jesuit Society, Vincenzo Giuliani, hopes to learn more about Sandoz. His private secretary, Johannes Voelker is among the critics who believes that Sandoz is guilty of wrongdoing while on Rakhat. As required, Voelker seeks out Austrian Father John Candotti to assist with Sandoz' case.

Sandoz refuses to talk about what happened at Rakhat and says he plans to withdraw from the Society of Jesus. Candotti disagrees with this choice, and says he will be back in a few days.

Arecibo Radio Telescope, Puerto Rico: February 2019

Jimmy Quinn, a worker at the Arecibo dish, is about to be replaced by artificial intelligence. He is having a debate over it with Peggy Soong, who is frustrated with Jimmy's peacemaker attitude, thinking his hope of finding a solution that will benefit all parties naive and implausible. Unhappy about losing his job, Jimmy still has had a good education and good parents, and is happy he had eight months working in astronomy for Arecibo. He met George Edwards at Arecibo, a retired engineer working as a volunteer. Through George, Jimmy becomes close with his wife Anne, a doctor at a Jesuit clinic, and Emilio Sandoz, a Puerto Rican Jesuit.

Jimmy meets Sandoz for a drink in the La Perla area. Jimmy asks Emilio Sandoz if knows anything about "vultures". To Jimmy's surprise, the priest not only knows what a 'vulture' is but has had direct experience with one; her name is Sofia Mendes. Jimmy reflects on how much Sandoz' life's story renewed his faith. Father Sandoz is a Puerto Rican native who has a doctorate in linguistics. After a few random assignments, the Jesuit society gave him an assignment to meet with the 'vulture' Sofia Mendes at John Carroll University. He was to cooperate as she translated his method of learning languages into artificial intelligence. This became a turning point in Sandoz's life.



Rome: December 2059, Arecibo Radio Telescope, Puerto Rico: February 2019 Analysis

Rome: December 2059

Everyone has formulated their opinions of Father Emilio Sandoz. The public wants to crucify him and even some of the members of his trusted society share the tainted view. However, due to Giuliani's view of him, it can be gathered that he was once revered. The story begins after events on a planet called Rakhat and the reader can assess that details for these events will be filled in as the story develops. It is clear that there will be various opinions about the mission to Rakhat and about Father, but setting the story in this order helps the reader formulate an individual opinion. The framework of the Jesuit Society is also already outlined. There are those in the group who are most concerned with making sure the society looks good in the media's eyes. Then men like Johannes Voelker, buy easily into the media's portrayal of his own society without having faith in their brotherhood. Finally, Vincenzo Giuliani represents what appears to be the heart of the society; his beliefs primarily reflect his pledge to God. In turn, he carries a sense of humanity that hasn't been necessarily felt through the other characters so far.

Arecibo Radio Telescope, Puerto Rico: February 2019

The reader gets the first idea of the order in which the novel may be organized. We are introduced to Emilio Sandoz in the first chapter only in the context of the mission to Rakhat. This chapter offers a new perspective of the priest, starting not at the beginning of his life but at a turning point. This turning point has something to do with Jimmy Quinn. Jimmy's character appears at first to lack power; the chapter opens with Jimmy getting reprimanded by a young woman. Within the first moments of their conversation, this woman, Peggy Soong, notes that she recently threw Jimmy out of her home. This action further establishes Peggy's authority over Jimmy. However, even with Jimmy's role of complacency established, there is still significant foreshadowing that he will be the catalyst of major actions in the novel. "I just heard they assigned you a vulture...and the first step toward the mission to Rakhat was taken." (13) Somehow, Jimmy's interaction with this 'vulture' will lead to this key mission. The concept of the vulture is also sparked, only revealing the obvious connotations; that a vulture will pick from its target. The vulture becomes even more significant when Father Sandoz concludes that his assignment with a 'vulture' brought on the despair that he would later face.



Rome: January 2060, Arecibo, Puerto Rico: March 2019

Rome: January 2060, Arecibo, Puerto Rico: March 2019 Summary

Rome: January 2060

John Candotti returns to visit Father Sandoz. Even if Sandoz refuses to reveal the events of the Rahkat mission, there were records of the story that others wouldn't hesitate to share. The topic of interstellar travel was a controversial one; even one of the backers of the mission, The Contact Consortium, had fed the drama in exchange for attention and money. It isn't until Sandoz is found that all of the backers scramble to avoid the scandal. The media has grabbed the story, investigating the mission members like D.W. Yarbrough, Marc Robichaux, Sofia Mendes, and Emilio Sandoz. No one recalls how beloved and respected Sandoz once was. At his meeting with Candotti, Sandoz again insists he won't speak of the matter but will instead withdraw from the Jesuit society.

Sandoz is still recovering and is tired and weak, but attempts to eat toast on the day Candotti is scheduled. He is a little unnerved when Johannes Voelker comes to see him. Voelker is antagonizing Sandoz when Candotti arrives. Candotti asks him to leave, reassuring Father Sandoz to ignore the insolent man. Candotti is an ally to Sandoz, opening a door to communication.

Arecibo, Puerto Rico: March 2019

Jimmy Quinn has come up with a resolution about retaining his employment. Although he has a Master's degree from Cornell University, Jimmy had accepted a low priority job at Arecibo. Jimmy's job is one that can be automated, and is therefore one that his boss, Masao Yanoguchi, will cut to bring down costs at the facility.

Jimmy meets with Yanoguchi and presents his proposition to extend his time at Arecibo through a potential project, hoping to make the project his thesis so he can receive his PhD. He would study one or several AI programs and the human worker that each program is based on. He lays out the parameters of the study, including getting a grant for the thesis. Through the project, he might be able to prove that human intelligence is more reliable than artificial, thereby saving many jobs. Yanoguchi will consider it.

Rome: January 2060, Arecibo, Puerto Rico: March 2019 Analysis

Rome: January 2060



The corruption behind the trip to Rahkat is revealed. Previously it seemed that Sandoz was the only negative element that surrounded the mission. Now, it becomes clear that the voyagers may have been used by the sponsors of the trip, who exploit the trip as a whole, even when they learn that lives have been lost. It is now easier for the reader to understand why Candotti may want to help Sandoz. There is no dispute that something went wrong on Rahkat but Sandoz may not have been completely to blame. Father Sandoz is also given a human presence for the first time. He is starting to recover and the reader can sympathize with the pain and discomfort that he is going through in the process. Some of the other characters sympathize as well; made clear with Candotti's offering of gloves to help keep Sandoz' fingers or ligaments tighter. Brother Edwards also treats Sandoz well and with respect. He is obviously monitoring Sandoz' progress and is happy to see that the priest's mind is clear enough to complete a sentence in English. Sandoz is a linguist so this is also important to the reader as a clear sign that he is on his way back to the version of Sandoz introduced in the previous chapter.

Arecibo, Puerto Rico: March 2019

Jimmy has placed himself in the center of change at the Arecibo Radio Telescope. He has a simplicity that is unmistakable, but it may help him hold on to his job. Jimmy's proposition begins to display why he was previously identified as the catalyst to the Rahkat events. Jimmy has more knowledge than his job requires and is interested in going a step further with his education in order to save some jobs at the telescope. With Jimmy's character, the reader is being led to the conclusion that clearly, artificial intelligence could never be as perceptive as human intelligence.



Cleveland, Ohio: August 2014-May 2015, Rome and Naples: March-April 2060

Cleveland, Ohio: August 2014-May 2015, Rome and Naples: March-April 2060 Summary

Cleveland, Ohio: August 2014-May 2015

Emilio Sandoz meets with Sofia Mendes for the first time in August 2014 on the campus of John Carroll University. As she greets Sandoz, the two exchange the only small talk they would have for the next few months.

They have sessions three times a week, with the sessions having an almost hostile manner. Sandoz also teaches a beginners course in Latin, where he finds a good friend in his star pupil, Anne Edwards. Sandoz confides in Anne about Sofia—he is intrigued by her but completely baffled about the root of her hostility. Anne realizes that the answer may be in their heritage—she believes Sofia to be a Jew of Spanish ancestry. In which case the ancestors of Sandoz's background persecuted her people and threw them out of Spain in 1492.

At Sandoz and Sofia's last meeting, he learns a disheartening truth about her: she is bound to a working contract by a broker for paying her tuition. Her next assignment is at the U.S. Army War College.

Rome and Naples: March-April 2060

A few determined reporters still attempt to sneak into Sandoz's room, further upsetting him. Because Sandoz will not completely recover, he is fitted with prosthetic technology intended to help him function, which made him feel worse mentally. Father Giuliani meets with Father Candotti, Edwards, and his assistant Voelker, and they agree to send Sandoz to Naples, accompanied by Father Candotti and Father Edwards.

Sandoz and Candotti escape to Naples undetected. Candotti hopes that Sandoz will open up to him about the Rahkat mission, but instead, Sandoz asks him, "Do you experience God?" Candotti indicates that he knows God through service due to all that God has provided for man. Sandoz replies by saying that God will break one's heart.

Sandoz finds a memo in his room. It is signed -V and speaks of new teachings that have been adopted while Sandoz was on Rahkat, referring to a reconsideration of Mary Magdalene. The memo angers and sickens Sandoz and he vomits.



Cleveland, Ohio: August 2014-May 2015, Rome and Naples: March-April 2060 Analysis

Cleveland, Ohio: August 2014-May 2015

Sofia Mendes gives the reader first insight to the entity previously described at the "vulture." By definition, a vulture can be a person or thing that preys, greedily or unscrupulously. Until the ending of the chapter, there was no reason for the reader to believe that Sofia Mendes' character veered from this description. Her cold attitude cut across everyone and everything surrounding her. The comment that Sandoz mentions as their exchange of small talk is for her to compare the college students milling around them as "a vaseful of cut flowers." She views them as temporarily beautiful, perhaps falsely so because it is only a matter of time before this beauty dies. Her cynicism and her purpose, to automate a human being, unmistakably meet the definition of a vulture. It appears to be fate of some sort that binds them presently and again in the mission to Rahkat. It is this priest who Sofia refuses to call "Father" who manages to find vulnerability in her.

Rome and Naples: March-April 2060

The description of Sandoz throughout this chapter can be described as defeated. Examining his concluding words to Candotti answers why he has chosen to remove himself from the Jesuit society rather than tell his story. He is a priest who has lost his faith. At the same time, the choice to detail the specifics of Sandoz' rehabilitation directly contrasts the fall of his relationship with God. Ironically, although he doesn't seem to trust God, who he has based his life on trusting, he still has a will to live. The reader is given painfully vivid details of Sandoz using the prosthetic hands but he battles with them anyway, even when Brother Edward gives him graceful opportunities to bow out. Even as Sandoz words show a lack of faith, his heart may still be with God.



Cleveland and San Juan: 2015-2019, Arecibo: May 2019

Cleveland and San Juan: 2015-2019, Arecibo: May 2019 Summary

Cleveland and San Juan: 2015-2019

Once Emilio Sandoz's assignment with Sofia Mendes had been completed, he puts in a request to be sent home to La Perla, Puerto Rico. Although encouraged by Dalton Wesley Yarbrough D.W., a Texas native, to take a linguistics position, he has some unfinished business back home.

Once in La Perla, Sandoz encourages his friends Anne and George to join him there. Sandoz starts shaping up the mission, recruiting neighborhood kids, taking a special interest in one named Felipe Reyes. Anne opens a medical clinic and George tutors kids in math and technology.

Late one night Anne finds Sandoz in the clinic, injured, saying only that he had been beaten by his own brother. As Anne tends to his wounds she realizes her attraction for the young priest.

Arecibo: May 2019

Jimmy Quinn's proposal is approved and Sofia Mendes is brought in to work with him. The assignment is a potential ticket to freedom from her broker. Mendes is Sephardic, someone born a Jew in Spain, a people who were persecuted and run out of Spain when the Catholic regime took over in 1492, taking refuge in the Ottoman Empire. The group was made up of bankers, merchants, astronomers, mathematicians, and more. However, because of the Second Kurdish War, Sofia's mother was killed and her dad disappeared, and Sofia turned to prostitution to survive. She met Jean-Claude Jaubert, the man who owns her contract, on the streets. He picked her up a few times and eventually offered her contracted life.

Sofia meets George Edwards and Jimmy, who gives her a brief description of his job, which is mainly searching for Extraterrestrial signals. Later, she goes to dinner at the Edwards' and meets Anne. Anne observes the combination of beauty and sharp intelligence that has attracted Sandoz, Jimmy and even George.

Cleveland and San Juan: 2015-2019, Arecibo: May 2019 Analysis

Cleveland and San Juan: 2015-2019



Another associate of Sandoz is introduced; D.W. Yarbrough. Like everyone else, he is fond of the man and like everyone else, he alludes to a mystery surrounding Sandoz. "D.W. had always felt about half responsible for the way things had turned out, good and bad. That was arrogant; Emilio had made his own decisions. However, D.W. had seen the potential in the boy and hadn't hesitated a minute when he'd gotten a chance to pull the kid out of La Perla. Emilio had more than lived up to his expectations; still there'd been a price to pay." There is an impression left once again, that there is a lot more to find out about Emilio Sandoz.

The mystery begins to play out as he moves back home to Puerto Rico. Anne Edwards is the first to notice that Sandoz past goes curiously unmentioned and that certain members in his hometown appear bothered by his return. Even Sandoz describes his return as putting 'ghosts' to rest. Here is a glimpse of a community who may feel comparable to the post Rahkat community about Father Sandoz. Sandoz' own brother tries to kill him by beating him incessantly. His friends Anne and George want to know more, but are afraid that what they find may change their view of Sandoz. The reader, given the same information, is encouraged to feel the same-leading the question 'is Sandoz good or bad?'

Arecibo: May 2019

Sofia Mendes' character is given depth and significance. She has now graced the lives of every main character previously introduced. As hinted in her interaction with Sandoz, Sofia has a softer side that she keeps guarded. The contrast of the cold character introduced in the interview with Sandoz against this secretly vulnerable character resembles the contrast that continues to unfold about Sandoz. It is clear when Anne illuminates that Sandoz is a mutual acquaintance also supports that Sofia and Sandoz characters will continue to be pivotal to the plot.

Again, Jimmy is the catalyst; his proposal is what brings Sofia back into the storyline, bonding her more permanently with his attraction to her. There is more to be told of Sofia so it is unmistakable to the reader that she will continue to appear through other chapters.



Naples 2060, San Juan Puerto Rico, August 3, 2019

Naples 2060, San Juan Puerto Rico, August 3, 2019 Summary

Naples 2060

John Candotti is told by Brother Edward that Sandoz is nowhere to be found. Candotti finds him standing at the shore. He offers Sandoz a coat, but is met with hostility. Sandoz repeatedly attempts to throw stones into the water, suffering his injured hands and the freezing cold for hours until he gets the stones the desired distance. He walks past Edward and Candotti speaking the words "Not Magdalene, Lazarus".

Vincenzo Giuliani spies on the episode from a balcony in the Naples house. Given Sandoz's reaction to the note Guilliani snuck into his room, he believes Sandoz to be guilty of the wrongdoing that took place on Rahkat. He confronts Sandoz, ordering him to his office.

Giuliani tells Sandoz he is unimpressed by Sandoz's self-pity; that others have broken their vows too. Giuliani orders Sandoz to take his recovery seriously, treat his body with respect, and to meet with Giuliani and his superiors in two months to tell what happened during the mission. He tells Sandoz to let go of the blame and move on.

San Juan Puerto Rico

Sofia is aware of Jimmy's attraction to her is attracted back, although there is not place in her life for romance. Sofia now getting a better idea of Jimmy's job.

Anne and George arrange a dinner party, with Sandoz, Jimmy Quin, and Sofia Mendes as the guests. The dinner party goes well, with Sofia feeling warmth and safety in the Edwards' home. Jimmy sings a love song clearly directed at her, then Sofia plays the piano. Her choice, a S-Sephardic and Spanish mix, pulls Sandoz in, and he harmonizes with Sofia. Jimmy is notably jealous of the clear connection between the two and makes leaves.

Later that night, unable to get Sofia and Sandoz' beautiful song out of his head, Jimmy decides to work. Listening, he hears something in space, and calls Anne to share his revelation.

August 3, 2019

Jimmy has discovered Extraterrestrial music. Its source is only four light years away, near Alpha Centauri. Jimmy, Anne, George, Sandoz, and Sofia meet at the Arecibo dish



and replay the sound sequence, trying to break down each sound and tone and identify the being creating it.

As a group, they decide to go to the planet, with Sandoz suggesting he approach the Society of Jesus to accept the mission as a religious one and finance the trip. He would add to the request for Sofia's contract with Jaubert to be bought out. The round trip would take about thirty-four years. but if they were able to travel close to the speed of light, the crew members would feel like they took a six or seven month trip. The only down side would be that thirty-four years would have passed on earth by the time of their return.

Naples 2060, San Juan Puerto Rico, August 3, 2019 Analysis

Naples 2060

Giuliani has been used to help unravel the mystery of Emilio Sandoz a little more. He has also put a time line on when the truth will be revealed about the events on Rakhat. The use of Giuliani's character in this manner was unpredictable. The reader is led to believe, just as Sandoz does, that Johannes Voelker is the clear choice for underhanded and despicable actions. The significance of the memo seems to lie in its content. Mary Magdalene is a biblical character, a prostitute known most for her repentance at Jesus' feet. Giuliani refers to her as a comparison to Sandoz' alleged actions. Magdalene's mention implies that Voelker, the assumed author of the memo, is aware of Sandoz' indiscretions on Rakhat and is threatening him to repent. Sandoz responds in disgust and anger that his weaknesses as a priest are apparent to the awful man. Sandoz pushes himself to the point of breaking, in order to get the rocks in the water where he wants them. After his success, he makes a comment correcting the reference in the memo. He believes himself to be compared to Lazarus, a biblical character who fell ill and died but after four days was brought back from the dead by Jesus. Sandoz is in a clear battle with his faith and Giuliani knows that he has to move on from the Rakhat incident if he will ever redeem himself.

San Juan Puerto Rico

The connection between all of the characters has started coming together. For the first time, Sandoz, Sofia, Anne, George and Jimmy are in the same room at the same time. The connection between Sandoz and Sofia, that had only previously been implied, comes to the surface and Jimmy's newfound attraction to her is crushed. The chapter opens noting that Anne would have changed that night if she could so it is clear that the significance of each character will be identified now that everyone has come together. The outcome of this dinner party somehow leads to negative events on Rakhat. As the depth of each character is revealed, the reader gets closer to the mystery of the Rakhat mission and the suspense is abundant. Again, Jimmy is identified as the catalyst. He goes home, alone, and makes a discovery that, as the quote states "he alone in all his world knows." The author identifies 'his' world implying that someone or something in



another world may already have this knowledge. Jimmy's job is to search for Extraterrestrial signals and he has thus far been unsuccessful, perhaps until now.

August 3, 2019

This chapter is a major turning point in the plot, and the reader's first indication is the sequence. This is the first chapter to follow the previous in sequence and location. Using this strategy marks this chapter in the reader's mind as well as allows uninterrupted flow of these key plot points. All of the potential in each character, only implied before, now takes shape. Jimmy, George and Sofia are the brains of the potential mission; Sandoz would represent the financier and with Anne provide support. The reason they have been brought together is now understood and the possible disaster of the mission, previously touched upon, becomes more personal. Now questions are raised about each person and their fate.



Earth: August 3-4, 2019, Earth: August-September 2019, Naples: May 2060

Earth: August 3-4, 2019, Earth: August-September 2019, Naples: May 2060 Summary

Earth: August 3-4, 2019

Masao Yanoguchi makes phone calls to confirm Jimmy's discovery. Sandoz discusses the matter with D.W. Yarbrough. The Japanese ambassador of the United States arrives that afternoon. A worldwide news broadcast occurs, after which kids break into Jimmy's apartment and steals a copy of the code needed to reproduce the ET music. A debate occurs over possession of the transmission. Anne is adamant about staying clear of the mission.

Jimmy receives a promotion, and will now be in charge of staff of five who will research anything they can find about the transmission and its source.

Sandoz lies alone in his apartment, unable to sleep, thinking about his youth and how he'd originally planned to take D.W. Yarbrough's offer to get the charges he faced dropped and lie low until he turned eighteen. However, he began to show academic potential in the Jesuit high school. He falls asleep, dreaming about being alone in a dark, small place that had a door that opened to reveal light. It is a dream that haunts him for a long time after.

Earth: August-September 2019

Sandoz speaks with Ann, continuing to grapple with the concept of the mission, what it means to human life, and to him as a priest. He asks Anne if she believes in God. He claims that the mission to find The Singers would be safe, and suggests that he may go and George may be offered a position on the crew.

Jimmy moves through his days following the discovery. Interest slows when no further transmissions from the Singers are detected. The Father General of the Society of Jesus, Father Tomas da Silva, listens to his skeptical secretary, Peter Lynam, question their investment in the search for the Singers, but the second transmission from the Singers is detected.

Anne changes her stance on the mission.

Jean-Claude Jaubert receives and accepts an offer from an unknown source to buy Sofia Mendes' contract. Sofia is stunned to realize her contract has been terminated; she's a free agent now.



Sandoz's friend D.W. Yarbrough arrives and gets along well with the Edwards' over dinner, which was actually his interview for them to take part in the mission to find the Extraterrestrial singers. Hired by the Jesuit society to help get the mission off the ground, Sofia contacts Ian Sekizawa, vice president of the Asteroid Mining Division of Ohbayashi Corporation to find an asteroid for the use of transporting them. Sofia decides that her first trip as a free woman is to Israel, and there she reacquaints herself with her Jewish culture and finally puts to rest the past that has haunted her. The Society of Jesus secretly begins to acquire funds for the trip and the mission starts coming together.

Naples: May 2060

Sandoz is met by a man who is in fact the young boy who Sandoz took under his wing in La Perla, Felipe Reyes.

Felipe is now a priest and teacher, giving all credit to Sandoz for the life change. Sandoz finds out that his brother died not long after he left because of drugs. Felipe shows Sandoz his own prosthetic hands, created by the same man who makes Sandoz' braces. Felipe was a victim of a letter bombing, but before he could fully tell his story Sandoz' defenses go up. Giuliani who has sent Felipe, who's purpose is to show Sandoz that some have it worse than him, a means of preparing Sandoz for the hearings. Feeling betrayed, Sandoz leaves.

John Candotti joins Sandoz on the beach. Sandoz informs Candotti that he is the only one who had to live through the events of Rakhat and will hold on to the horrible experience as long as he can. Suicide is an option, but he is holding on to life because of pride.

Earth: August 3-4, 2019, Earth: August-September 2019, Naples: May 2060 Analysis

Earth: August 3-4, 2019

Again, this chapter follows the previous, in sequence. Now it has also been clarified that portions of the storyline will occur on another planet by identifying the location as 'Earth' rather than a city or country. Every person and event becomes key, and each piece of the story unfolds with detail. The site of each character is stated in relation to time and one another. For example, as the story is released, Jimmy's apartment is robbed and someone who should have caught the transmission resigns from his position and begins a drinking binge that leads to a near death hangover. Many are affected by Jimmy's discovery and as we know from the result of the Rakhat mission, this is only a small glimpse of the changes.

The unearthing of extraterrestrial life is big for the Catholic faith and for Sandoz as a priest. He wraps his mind around the possibility that earth creatures are not God's only children. The thought takes him back to his choice of priesthood. He marks that he has



always been a rational thinker, even when possessing full faith in God and his vows. This may be the first indicator, marking how the young Sandoz he reminisces of, becomes the Sandoz the reader meets 40 years later.

Sandoz' past and present forge when he is visited by Felipe Reyes. Previously, the characters summed up what it would mean to spend forty years away and it only feel like months, but the description was only in theory. Sandoz comes face to face with a man, comparable to his own age, who in his mind was a teenager less than two years prior. This is the first character to bring Sandoz and the reader into this realm of reality. All of Sandoz associates who were not on the trip to Rahkat were dead, but Reyes is young enough to have crossed through both stages of Sandoz' life. The significance of their lives converging this way is the direction that it takes the storyline. Now that two worlds are crossing in the story, the mission to Rahkat is at the center and the reader will finally be let in on what happened there. Candotti confirms this inevitability when he finally confronts Sandoz head on. "He thinks the truth is too ugly for us, John had thought, coming down the stairs after a hurried conference with Brother Edward and Father Reyes. Ed thought perhaps that Sandoz didn't realize how much of his story had been made public. 'Emilio, we know about the child...and we know about the brothel...everybody knows, Emilio...how long do you think you can hold all this in? How long do you plan to carry it all yourself?'"

Earth: August-September 2019

Each character transitions through separate circumstances, but again, all situations unfold for the purpose of the mission to the Extraterrestrial singers. This chapter continues in the sequence of time and it is now about a month since the discovery. September marks milestones for each character making this chapter another key point in the storyline. Its importance is also indicated by the length of the chapter. Previously, each chapter was brief in length and subtle in content. Each chapter became a fragment of the complete picture. Until now, the story is set up in flashbacks and flash forwards so it is as if the true story line actually begins here.

A theme of freedom for life's choices is explored in depth here as well when it was previously veiled in plot snippets and facts. Each character involved in this mission has the free will to choose to be there. It is here that the idea of fate also enters. D.W. Yarbrough makes the statement, "Kinda spooky ain't it. Hell of a lot of coincidences. Like we say back home, when you find a turtle settin' on top a fencepost, you can be pretty damn sure he didn't get there on his own...Tomas da Silva, the General his own self, he thinks maybe God's been goin' around puttin' turtles on fenceposts...I hadta admit, this's kept me up on some long nights, thinking." Fate seemed to bring all of these characters lives together and they are starting to believe that this is the purpose for that union.

Naples: May 2060



Solar System: 2021 The Stella Maris: 2021-2022 Earth Relative, The Stella Maris: 2031 Earth-Relative, Naples: June 2060

Solar System: 2021 The Stella Maris: 2021-2022 Earth Relative, The Stella Maris: 2031 Earth-Relative, Naples: June 2060 Summary

Solar System: 2021 The Stella Maris: 2021-2022 Earth Relative

George fills Anne in on the Stella Maris, the asteroid-made vehicle, dispelling many of her reservations. When the Stella Maris launches, with Anne in it, and she begins to float, Anne has a moment of true belief, feeling certainty that God is real.

The crew is made up of D.W. Yarbrough, Sofia Mendes, Marc Robichaux, a naturalist and watercolorist of the Jesuit Society, James Connor Quinn, now designated mission specialist, Alan Pace, musicologist, and Anne and George Edwards. Their first days are spent in high spirits; Sandoz making jokes, Anne and George exploring sexual intercourse at zero gravity, everyone getting adjusted to the nausea, and finally D.W. organizes what their schedule will be.

The Stella Maris: 2031 Earth-Relative

It is five months into the mission according to the time passing on the ship, and about ten years have passed on earth. Sexually frustrated, Jimmy turns to Sandoz and learns that Sandoz has been celibate for twenty-five years. Sandoz continued his own journey with celibacy, one where the purpose started out fuzzy but became clearer in the days aboard the Stella Maris.

Naples: June 2060

Johannes Voelker enters Father Giuliani's office feeling disdain toward Sandoz, thinking him guilty. Giuliani reminds the priest that the inquisition is not a trial and their purpose is to gather the necessary information about the Rahkat mission, not to vilify Sandoz.

Giuliani informs Sandoz that after the Stella Maris departed; Sofia's contact Ian Sekizawa went public with his speculation that the Society of Jesus sponsored a mission to find the ET Singers. As a result, plans immediately went into motion for others to take the same voyage. Other ships followed, including the Magellan. Giuliani asks Sandoz about what happened after Earth lost contact with the Stella Maris, but receives no response. He offers Sandoz transcripts of allegations brought out against



him twelve years prior, telling of the Magellan crew's experience upon arriving on the planet Rakhat. They were met by a group of angry natives, the Runa, who were very angry and agitated. A child named Askama spoke to them in English, telling them that the other foreigners were gone but Sandoz remained in the city. She took the men to the city of Gayjur where the natives were called Jana'ata and they met Supaari VaGayjur, who also addressed them in English. Wu Xing-Ren and Trevor Isley found out that Sandoz was living in a house of prostitution where he was employed. Askama had led the crew of the Magellan to Sandoz and upon their arrival, he kills her. Erratic and unable to answer clearly for his actions, Wu and Isley arrange with the Jana'ata for Sandoz's release. There is clear unrest between the two natives of the planet that was somehow caused by the crew of the Stella Maris. In turn, Wu and Isley send Sandoz home on the Stella Maris and proceed to help repair the damage done. They were never heard from again.

Sandoz's silence sends Voelker into frenzy. Sandoz manages to tell them "It's all true, I suppose, but it's all wrong." He is carried out by Brother Edward, and later finds Giuliani in his room, who apologizes for blindsiding Sandoz with the transcripts from the Magellan.

Solar System: 2021 The Stella Maris: 2021-2022 Earth Relative, The Stella Maris: 2031 Earth-Relative, Naples: June 2060 Analysis

Solar System: 2021 The Stella Maris: 2021-2022 Earth Relative

The mission that started as a joke and a dream has finally begun. A few key points are highlighted with insinuation to more detail in the future. First, the thought of death on the trip is introduced through George's preparation for the mission. They have covered all bases for a flight to the system and back, even if key characters lose their lives. Anne is surprised to hear the thought now that she is on board having been convinced that everything was safe. The presence of death as a theme makes Sandoz' guilt seem more of a possibility. When everyone brushed off the thought of death as impossibility, the thought of Sandoz as the last living survivor and maybe a murderer was brushed off with it. Now a likelihood of this reality exists, making the reader more anxious to arrive at the true occurrences of this trip. The contrast of the happy crew on the first days of the trip and the bleak image of Sandoz, the lone survivor also indicates that there is a lot more of the story to unfold. The plot now has to fill in how this group of people moves from the first extreme to the last.

The Stella Maris: 2031 Earth-Relative

The theme of sex is clearly a major one, repeated throughout the chapter. Beyond the simple idea of sex is Sandoz' celibacy and what drives it. The reader and one of the characters learn that Sandoz has been celibate for twenty-five years. For all of those years he didn't feel God pushing the need for celibacy. Sandoz joined the priesthood



and celibacy came along with it. He resists his physical urges through masturbation while continually seeking a resistance against the mental urges. Ironically, meeting Sofia marks the first time his vows of celibacy have truly been challenged and it is also the first time that God's plan for him has become apparent. "Who could speak of such things? Not Emilio Sandoz who, for all his facility with many languages, remained tongue-tied and inarticulate about the center of his soul. For he could not feel God or approach God as a friend...and yet, as he had grown older, the path he had started down almost in ignorance had begun to seem clearer to him. It became more apparent to him that he was truly called to walk this strange and difficult, this unnatural and unutterable path to God, which required not poetry or piety but simple endurance and patience."

Naples: June 2060

Introducing the crew and mission of the Magellan offers a brand new perspective. Previously the storyline was told through the experience of the characters now on the Stella Maris, or through the inquisition of the Jesuit Society. Now here is another group that has a point of view on the occurrences on Rahkat and their account shows that even the natives of the planet have an assessment of the Stella Maris crew. The Stella Maris and the Magellan are meant to be contrasting. Their mission is birthed from a race to be the first to experience this alien culture while the first mission is rooted in the unveiling of God's plan in the universe. The Magellan is named for Ferdinand Magellan, an explorer who led the first sea voyage around the world. The Stella Maris translates to Star of the Sea and references a title for the Virgin Mary. Seamen of naval voyages would pray to the Stella Maris for guidance and protection while out on the sea.

Another parallel is Sandoz before and after. The author closes the previous chapter with Sandoz at the beginning of a revelation. He finally sees the doors opening to a true relationship with God. In this chapter he is described by Brother Edward as "a soul...looking for God." At some point during the mission to Rahkat, Sandoz misses his mark and this point will be a clear climax in the storyline.



The Stella Maris: September 2039, Earth Relative, Landfall, Rakhat: October 13, 2039, Earth Relative, Naples: June 2060

The Stella Maris: September 2039, Earth Relative, Landfall, Rakhat: October 13, 2039, Earth Relative, Naples: June 2060 Summary

The Stella Maris: September 2039, Earth Relative

Jimmy has found a planet. It's in orbit with two moons, a definite indication that the planet can sustain life. Everyone rejoices at the news and Sandoz faints. D.W. is also visibly shaken.

Sandoz confide in Anne his fears about loving God. Through his entire priesthood, before now, he was always knowledgeable about God but the significance was never internal. Sandoz started feeling something because of the trip, and the feeling frightens him. Anne uses the analogy of love, pointing out that in loving someone, you are completely vulnerable, and must trust the one who loves you back not to hurt you. Sandoz is amazed at how well it describes his newfound feelings for God.

The discovery of the planet changes the atmosphere on the ship. D.W.'s demeanor changes to that of a leader. They decide to dock and land with supplies in an uninhabited area to prepare their bodies and minds for meeting the planet's inhabitants.

Landfall, Rakhat: October 13, 2039, Earth Relative

Because of Anne's suggestion, D.W. has Sandoz be the first one to touch the foreign soil. The moment he steps out he is overjoyed in his love for God.

The crew spends days cataloguing species of plants and animals, discovering differences between Earth and this planet, and identifying edible foods. However, Alan dies of undiagnosed conditions, which pushes Anne over the edge, and she mocks the priests' belief in God. Over Alan's burial, Marc speaks of Anne's challenge, noting that God dances when His children challenge him and use their minds. Demanding God reveal his answers could lead humans to come closer to God.

Naples: June 2060

Father General Giuliani and Father Reyes go sailing, talking about Sandoz. Reyes tells Giuliani how much the kids in La Perla loved Sandoz and the things he did to help the community. Reyes also reveals that Sandoz was central to the drug trade out of Mexico and into Haiti and his grandfather, father and brother were all killed because of this



lifestyle and business. Giuliani his family is comparative to the mafia in Naples and basically run the area, finding it ironic that he and Sandoz's grandfathers were in the same line of work.

Sandoz and Candotti have become closer, with Sandoz telling about how the Jana'ata had mutated their hands to make them dependent on one another. He is sickened to remember that his colleague Marc Robichaux apparently died from the practice.

Giuliani gives Brother Edward a night off and when Sandoz realizes that it is Giuliani tending to him he is bitter. He tries to anger the Father General with his words, but in the end, asks him to stay.

The Stella Maris: September 2039, Earth Relative, Landfall, Rakhat: October 13, 2039, Earth Relative, Naples: June 2060 Analysis

The Stella Maris: September 2039, Earth Relative

The reality of the mission strikes and the concept is illuminated by physical reactions in the characters. Before them is a planet with a comparable orbit to earth. They are the closest they have been to experiencing an alien planet and culture. The thought is overwhelming. God's hand in it is too much to bear for Sandoz, and he loses consciousness. His superior, D.W. is the first to notice because he too is shaken by what God has put before them. They are the first of their society to be met with this challenge-a culmination of their life's work. Sandoz' confession to Anne further softens the reader in regard to his character and moves Sandoz one step further from the man introduced in Rome and Naples.

Landfall, Rakhat: October 13, 2039, Earth Relative

Touching land on another planet has brought perspective to the crew and the novel. First, Sandoz finally feels the purpose of the mission the minute he touches the soil on the foreign planet. In his mind, there is no question that he loves God and this time he feels the love returned, hence the usage of the word "consummate." The others are also moved spiritually, even the self-proclaimed atheists of the group. They all conclude that they have made the right choice by joining the mission. "For Sofia Mendes, a way to make peace with what, even now, she could only think of as 'the days before Jaubert.' For Jimmy Quinn, the end of worry that he was wrong to leave his mother, and right to claim his life as his own. For Marc Robichaux and Alan Pace there was a sense that they had lived their lives the right way and confidence that God had recognized their artistry as the prayer they had always meant the work to be...For Anne and George Edwards, for D.W. Yarbrough and Emilio Sandoz, this voyage had given meaning to random acts...to all their decisions, whether carefully thought out or ill considered. I would do it all again each of them thought." It is only pages later that all of their thoughts and feelings are challenged. They face their first tragedy and the author places it in



direct contrast with the beauty and discovery of new life. The reader can now see the door opening to the weight that Sandoz carries forty years later.

Naples: June 2060

Father General Giuliani and Emilio Sandoz are in direct comparison and contrast in this chapter. It is already clear that Giuliani will do whatever it takes to get Sandoz to reveal the details of the Rahkat mission. In this chapter Giuliani is humanized for the first time, he is given a past and he is humanized in the present. His human side is first shown by when his love for sailing is revealed. His colleague, Reyes, is even surprised by this passion. Giuliani's conversation with Reyes serves as a way to parallel Sandoz and Giuliani's pasts. They were in school together and Giuliani was amongst those who would mock Sandoz for his perfectionist nature; calling him 'God's favorite.' At this stage, they were comparable in age but still apart. Sandoz grew up in the slums of La Perla, Puerto Rico, a member of a drug lord's family. Sandoz followed the same path as the other men in his family until D.W. Yarbrough led him to God and priesthood. Giuliani's family was also involved in drugs, just on a more discreet level and Giuliani also made the choice as a teenager to take the route that led to God and priesthood. Both of these characters have hidden depths. The final scene shows that their commonalities may bring them to an understanding in the end.



Rakhat: Month Two, Contact, Naples: June 2060, City of Gayjur: Second Na'alpa Village of Kashan: Seven Weeks After Contact

Rakhat: Month Two, Contact, Naples: June 2060, City of Gayjur: Second Na'alpa Village of Kashan: Seven Weeks After Contact Summary

Rakhat: Month Two, Contact

D.W. talks to Anne, both apologizing for their behavior after Alan's death and telling her that he wants George to co-pilot his trip back to the Stella Maris for fuel. Anne is nervous but is used to George's daredevil choices. After a successful return, George is excited about his role in piloting the plane and the others are relieved to have him in one piece as well as the plane—their only means off the planet.

D.W. and Marc come back from a scouting mission with the exciting news that they spotted a village. As it was deserted, they proceed with caution. It is camouflaged into the rocks and mountains and they are baffled as to where the inhabitants could be. Items in the homes look comparable to homes on Earth, but without images or photographs. After Jimmy radios that someone is coming, Sandoz heads in the direction of the natives with the group following behind him.

Sandoz begins picking up bright colored rocks, leaves and flowers along the way. The two groups meet and attempt to communicate. The natives are large in stature with "large mobile ears, erect...carried high on the sides of the head. Gorgeous eyes, large and densely lashed...the nose was convex, broad at the tip, curving smoothly off to meet the muzzle...The villagers were covered with smooth dense coats of hair, lying flat to muscular bodies. They were as sleek as Siamese cats: buff colored with lovely dark brown markings around the eyes." They send forward one of the smaller beings in the group and Sandoz meets her by kneeling to her height. She greets Sandoz in her language, and he returns the greeting. As they begin to understand one another, introductions are made. The child's name is Askama. Sandoz performs a few magic tricks with the flowers and rocks he picked up previously. The gesture fascinates the remaining children in the group and puts both sets of beings at ease, with Askama sitting on Sandoz's lap.

Naples: June 2060



The inquisition continues and Sandoz explains to the other priests the social structure of the Runa villagers-the first beings encountered on Rahkat. Because the Runa live mainly by trade, they need to know many languages. Their children learn languages quicker and easier than adults and are raised as the translators and linguists. Askama, the first child to approach Sandoz, was assigned to him to learn his language and to teach Sandoz theirs. Sandoz speaks of Askama with the love of a parent, both proud and exasperated. Sandoz explains to the group of priests how the Runa language works, and how they don't have names for objects, rather for the space the object consumes.

Sandoz struggles with his arm braces, hating pity. As Father Reyes and Sandoz exchange insults in their native tongue, Giuliani steps in and asks the room to be cleared to speak to Sandoz alone.

Giuliani discusses the arm braces, then moves the subject to the transcripts received from D.W. Yarbrough during the mission, who refers to Sandoz as perhaps being a saint. Sandoz stops Giuliani, overcome with pain at the memories. Giuliani understands that Sandoz is being judged by men who had never been tested as had he. Giuliani removes the tension in the room and offers to buy Sandoz a beer.

City of Gayjur: Second Na'alpa Village of Kashan: Seven Weeks After Contact

Supaari VaGayjur notices a woman, Chaypas, from the Kashan village, with bright ribbons around her head. He sends his assistant to purchase all of the same type of ribbon he can find. Most Runa from Kashan don't see Supaari like the rest of his Jana'ata kind, as he relates to the Runa culture, a characteristic often frowned upon by the Jana'ata culture. Chaypas tells him of the foreign visitors, who are small like children except for one. They are both very pleased that Askama is serving as their translator.

Back in the village, Sandoz wearily tries to make Sofia understand the concept that the Runa language is based around. Sofia eventually gets the idea and they start bouncing new ideas off one another. Askama sleeps in Sandoz' arms through the entire lesson.

Anne and D.W. watch Sofia and Sandoz from a distance, with Anne pointing out what everyone in the group has already concluded: that they would make a great couple. D.W. confides in Anne that he was gay before taking a vow as a priest. It is a fact that Anne and Sofia have already concluded. D.W. believes Sandoz to be the key to the success of the mission thus far.

Later that evening, the group discusses their assessment of the Runa over the past seven weeks. They are clearly not advanced enough to be directly related to the musical transmissions picked up on Earth. In fact, the Runa became very upset when the humans were singing during a Mass. They discuss if it's time to explore another part of the planet, to go in search of the city of Gayjur. Sandoz notices that D.W. isn't well.



Rakhat: Month Two, Contact, Naples: June 2060, City of Gayjur: Second Na'alpa Village of Kashan: Seven Weeks After Contact Analysis

Rakhat: Month Two, Contact

The crew of the *Stella Maris* has finally made contact with life on the foreign planet. First, they have to literally leave behind their deceased comrade and the safety that they've known since they arrived on the planet. Symbolically they each look at Allan's grave and the flowers left before moving on to the unknown that awaits them in the village. In their hesitation, there is a hint that something bad awaits them in the village but by the end of the chapter the characters and the reader is at ease with the natives.

The creatures they meet appear kind and soft-natured reassuring Sandoz' feeling that he is on the right path. The reader is brought back to the dream that Sandoz had before he leaves Earth on the mission to the foreign planet. He dreams that he is doing magic tricks for the alien culture and the being isn't satisfied with his abilities. The response to his magic is the exact opposite in this scene. The magic breaks the barrier between the two groups and warms them to one another. At the same time, the reader has to note that the author mentioned that the dream had significance so there remains a sign of something negative to come.

Naples: June 2060

Giuliani's role as mediator continues to reveal itself as he slowly becomes and ally for Sandoz. The two men address each other by their first names and have established some respect in their interaction beyond fallen priest and superior. Giuliani doesn't allow Sandoz to wallow in his pain, forcing him to speak it aloud. It can't just be understood that the braces hurt Sandoz, he has to purge himself of the burden by speaking it and Giuliani accepts nothing less. Sandoz tries to preserve his 'Latino pride' but breaks down to the Father General despite himself. "From where I was then to where I am now—I don't know what to do with what happened to me, Vince! ...Do you know what the worst of it is? I loved God." For Giuliani Sandoz' case has been a great challenge in his beliefs and his work. He didn't believe Yarbrough's assessment, dubbing Sandoz a saint but he does finally believe that Sandoz' love for God during the mission was honest. Giuliani and Sandoz are in the place of the reader, unable to understand where it all went wrong. Did Sandoz do something to betray God? Did God abandon him? "Patience,' Giuliani thought. An old sailor's virtue. First one tack and then another."

City of Gayjur: Second Na'alpa Village of Kashan: Seven Weeks After Contact

First, the reader is spoken to through the perspective of the foreign planet's natives. We hear directly from a Jana'ata male and a Runa female. The female has encountered the humans and there is an interesting contrast between how the natives see the humans and how they are seen by the humans. It also highlights that although Sandoz and the



others are making progress with the language there is a clear communication barrier that may not be overcome.

This chapter is also filled with insinuation; openings where the reader can speculate where the wrong turn of the mission to Rahkat will take place. D.W. has shared with Marc and Anne the power of the connection between Sandoz and God. In order for the outcome of the mission to be so devastating, it is implied that somehow that connection may have been compromised. From their time on Earth, everyone watched Sofia's relationship with Sandoz and the possibility immediately arises that she will be the one to break Sandoz' vow of celibacy. However, D.W. counters that thought, he feels strongly that Sandoz will ultimately choose God and now the reader has to see if his faith is ill-placed. There is a lot of emphasis put on the fact that the mission has gone so smoothly and as they continue to take one step at a time, everything falls into place. The few in the group who want to break that pattern may very well bring on the demise of the mission.



Village of Kashan and City of Gayjur: Third-Fifth Na'alpa, Naples: 2060

Village of Kashan and City of Gayjur: Third-Fifth Na'alpa, Naples: 2060 Summary

Village of Kashan and City of Gayjur: Third-Fifth Na'alpa

D.W.'s illness is very serious and everyone scrambles to try and figure out the best way to proceed. The Runa only know of sickness of the heart; wanting something that you cannot have. D.W. makes it through the night, and the humans plan to send Sofia and Marc to the lander for supplies after the Runa villagers leave for a harvest of pik root. As always, Anne voices her skepticism about taking the trip.

Supaari VaGayjur passes through a vibrant city, bustling with activity. He thinks about how, in his position as a third-born, he is excluded from certain rights in society, most importantly, child rearing. His only way around this rule is to be declared Founder, by Hlavin Kitheri. Hlavin Kitheri, a poet and also a third-born, carries the title of Reshtar, who were trained to versatility. Hlavin is beyond words when he receives a beautiful crystal flask with aromatic kernels from Supaari. He makes up his mind that he must know more about their origin.

Naples: 2060

Sandoz has just found out from Candotti that all of the works that the crew of the Stella Maris sent home for publication were never published. He can't understand why sound scientific data would ever be stifled. The other crewmembers lost their lives for the information they passed on to Earth it should be shared. Giuliani informs Sandoz that Sofia was a child prostitute, and that along with the scandal of the mission would have affected the credibility of the documents. Giuliani quiets Sandoz by reminding him that the data doesn't belong to him, and has always been the property of the Jesuit Society.

Giuliani talks to Sandoz about the reports from D.W that recognize Sandoz's connection to God. Panic overtakes Sandoz and he leaves the room. Brother Edward follows Sandoz and talks to him. When Sandoz leaves Edward, he asks about God's refusal of Cain's good faith sacrifice in the Bible.

Village of Kashan and City of Gayjur: Third-Fifth Na'alpa, Naples: 2060 Analysis

Village of Kashan and City of Gayjur: Third-Fifth Na'alpa



The humans feel more vulnerable as another of their crew is not well. They feel more exposed and unstable and yet are completely unaware that their world is merging with that of two Jana'ata hierarchs. The author portrays the fuse first by placing the occurrence of D.W.'s illness in the same chapter as Hlavin and Supaari's use of what now appears to be coffee beans. There is insinuation that Supaari is completely unhappy with his position and Hlavin is completely bored with his. Somehow, the human presence on the foreign planet will change their situation. Hope in their world is translated as sickness and possible death to the humans. With D.W. ill, the reader is brought back to the reality that the mission will take a tragic turn and it has become clearer that the two Jana'ata males will have a key role in the events.

Naples: 2060

Sandoz' final question in this chapter; "Have you ever wondered about the story of Cain, Ed? He made his sacrifice in good faith. Why did God refuse it?" His question supports the previous assessment that Sandoz began a journey with God and somewhere it went wrong. Through life, Sandoz made enormous sacrifices in order to love God to the fullest extent. By comparing his life's work to that of Cain, he now feels that he sacrificed in vain. The fact that he still questions 'why' and still encourages the other priests to also ask 'why' shows that he is still searching for answers. He may not want to hear anyone call him a saint because that would mean that he might never make sense of what happened on the planet Rahkat. The chapter is short and therefore clearly brings all of Sandoz' emotions to the forefront.



Village of Kashan and Great Southern Forest: Eight Weeks After Contact, Village of Kashan: Seventh Na'alpa—Fifth Partan, Naples: August 2060

Village of Kashan and Great Southern Forest: Eight Weeks After Contact, Village of Kashan: Seventh Na'alpa—Fifth Partan, Naples: August 2060 Summary

Village of Kashan and Great Southern Forest: Eight Weeks After Contact

Anne awakes in the middle of the night and finds Sandoz. They talk about how he handles having so many languages in his mind at once and about God. Anne has difficulty believing in God because he gets all the credit but never the blame. Sandoz says she can blame God for things she feels is necessary, if that will help her believe.

On the other side of the village, the Ultra Light crashes with Marc and Sofia inside, rendering them both unconscious. Marc is the first to wake up and attempts to ascertain Sofia's injuries. She regains consciousness and they decide to wait out a storm in the lander. They decide to fly the lander back to the Kashan village the following morning. They are unable to let the others know they will be returning in the lander.

As soon as D.W. hears the thunder of the lander engine, his heart drops. The rest of the group is so happy that Sofia and Marc are alive that they don't grasp that they used the remainder of the fuel in the lander to get to Kashan. The crew of the Stella Maris no longer has a means of leaving planet Rakhat.

Village of Kashan: Seventh Na'alpa—Fifth Partan

George takes the news that they are stuck on Rakhat the hardest, trying to engineer a way to get them back home. As the days pass, a change occurs in Jimmy and Sofia's relationship. Jimmy is the most attentive to Sofia as she recovers and she begins to reciprocate his affection. Sandoz feels that he has lost something, knowing that his and Sofia's love is more impossible than ever. Even more so, he realized that he was also giving up the hope of ever becoming a father. However, Sandoz makes the choice to follow his vows to God.

Sandoz suggests a cookout and it is in the middle of their party that they notice a stranger approaching. Because the Runa had been peaceful, they don't feel alarmed or threatened until the being almost decapitates Sandoz, who manages to pin the being to the ground. Speaking in Ruanja, Sandoz learns that his attacker is Supaari, and gets his



agreement to not attack again. They introduce D.W. as their elder. Anne, who noticed first that his long claws must make him a carnivore, asks him to stay for dinner.

Naples: August 2060

With new braces on his hands, Emilio has almost miraculously changed. Candotti finds him in the laundry and works with him, hanging out the loads of laundry. The two men chat about baseball and Emilio asks how the San Juan team is doing, his first inquiry of current events since his return from Rakhat. Emilio talks about all the places he's lived, and confesses that he is no longer curious, that the slow process of doing laundry suits him now.

Before Giuliani resumes the hearings, he meets with Father Reyes, Candotti, Behr, and Voelker and tells them to approach Sandoz respectfully in the hearings because he's convinced of Sandoz's sincere relationship with God. In their first meeting, Sandoz breaks down the sexuality of the Runa and Jana'ata culture. The Runa are used as concubines and prostitutes by third born Jana'ata due to the fact that intercourse between the two species doesn't lead to reproduction. To the Jana'ata, the Runa are just a breeding species.

Village of Kashan and Great Southern Forest: Eight Weeks After Contact, Village of Kashan: Seventh Na'alpa—Fifth Partan, Naples: August 2060 Analysis

Village of Kashan and Great Southern Forest: Eight Weeks After Contact

The relief from D.W. surviving through his illness becomes obsolete by the many misfortunes of this chapter. The reader is meant to feel as unstable as the crew on this mission; as quickly as they experience hope, despair can easily follow. The reader can feel the negative tension build from the intensity of the language used. The chapter opens with Anne startled out of her sleep because of a bad feeling that she can't pinpoint. She thinks that death has struck their group again. The 'rollercoaster' begins here; Anne finds D.W. still alive and her night peaks when Sandoz gives her hope that there is a God and he's working in their favor. The peak continues when the reader learns that although Marc and Sofia did crash, they are in good shape and will make it back to the camp. The entire group then realizes that they in fact have crashed when D.W. delivers the disappointing news. D.W. closes the chapter speaking to God and shares that regardless of their fate, he is proud of the entire group of friends. These words reiterate his position as Father Superior through his comfort with God and his fatherly love for all in the group. His demeanor fits the foreshadowing that he may be the next character to lose his life.

Village of Kashan: Seventh Na'alpa—Fifth Partan

he cultures of two worlds that are both opposing and the same have finally met. It becomes clear that the link in human nature and Jana'ata nature is where this mission



will go wrong. The Jana'ata appear to be humans in their rawest form. Indulgences exist for both but for the Jana'ata, the nature is heightened. Just as Supaari follows his instinct when tries to kill Sandoz, the same instinct leads Sandoz defended himself physically and without question. The Runa of the Kashan village now represent a safe comfort that the Jana'ata existence has infiltrated. When Supaari is in the distance, he looks like on the Runa and they are not threatened. Within seconds of the realization that he is another being, all of their lives are again hanging in the balance. The Runa are removed from this chapter when the humans meet the first Jana'ata so that there is no buffer and a direct parallel can be made. The language also jumps from both the point of view of the humans to that of Supaari. Supaari calls Sandoz a 'monster' and each human had to have had the same thought of Supaari as he tries to kill one of their group without a second thought. Their views of one another intertwine, each cautious but curious. Neither knows that they had separately planned to use the other for their own needs. Unfortunately for the humans, they are visitors in the world of the Jana'ata and will ultimately never have the upper hand.

Naples: August 2060

Father Sandoz continues to show signs of progress, mentally and physically. He is healing from the torture of his first set of hand braces and he has become more independent. He no longer allows anyone in his room to tend to him and he has taken on laundry duties for the household. His progress moves forward at the same speed of his mental release. The more that Sandoz is able to get off his chest about the mission to Rakhat the better he seems. The change is obvious to Giuliani who has begun to place faith in Sandoz where there was previous mistrust in his motives. The mood and language of the chapter is used to help the reader relate to the change in Sandoz. When he is speaking with Candotti, they joke with one another, quoting from movies of our current time.

The reader is also given a closer look at the culture on Rakhat, a view that in previous chapters is more difficult when placed in the point of view of the natives or the inexperienced mission crew. Now Sandoz speaks on matters of the Rakhat culture with authority. The reader can see, just as it was hinted; that the Jana'ata are humans in their crudest most pleasure-seeking form. The more that is seen of the Runa, they seem less like the dim culture they were first believed to be. They may have been closer to any form of spirituality than the Jana'ata but did not have a formal way of expressing it. Sandoz expresses this concept when asked about the conflict that eventually arose between Runa and Jana'ata. There was no record of unrest between the two groups in the past, but as Sandoz points out the lack of recorded history doesn't make something non-existent. Much of human history was never formally recorded but we still accept that it occurred.

The Sparrow

Summary

Analysis

T



Village of Kashan: Year Two, Village of Kashan and City of Gayjur: Year Three

Village of Kashan: Year Two, Village of Kashan and City of Gayjur: Year Three Summary

Village of Kashan: Year Two

Anne become close to Supaari, who understands humor and irony and has an honest perspective of the Jana'ata and Runa culture that no one in either group could evoke. Through him, the Stella Maris crew begins learning the Jana'ata language, K'shan. They show Supaari more about human culture, including Marc's drawings, which fascinate Supaari considerably. After Supaari leaves to return to Gayjur, Anne tells all that she has learned from him, including how the humans had mixed up the gender roles in the Runa village, as the males in their culture take care of the children and are smaller in physical stature than the women. The women are large, comparable in size to the Jana'ata male, and they go out to deal with trade and commercial ventures for the village. The father of a child may not be a birth father. Pregnancy and childbirth is not very eventful or sentimental for the Runa culture. During Supaari's visit he also helps the Runa understand the human's need for privacy and for the first time they are given their own apartments. Supaari also explains why the Runa are frightened by music: there are activities that the Jana'ata mark with singing, and due to the nature of the activities, songs frighten the Runa villagers.

Supaari also gives permission to start a garden, but the foods from the gardens increases hormone levels, and the Runa villagers start to reproduce at a rapid pace. A love affair between Jimmy and Sofia also blossoms, to the delight of their Runa hosts. Eventually, Jimmy and Sofia wed, and Sofia confides in Jimmy the secret of her past.

Village of Kashan and City of Gayjur: Year Three

D.W.'s declining health baffles Anne. One day, he and Anne go for a walk and talk about how he wants Marc to be appointed Father Superior in his place, and Jimmy to be appointed leader of the group. He leaves out a few things that he wanted to tell her before he passed, including a warning not to trust Supaari.

Meanwhile Jimmy, George and Marc have finally been permitted to join Supaari in the village of Gayjur, although they must remain hidden until the red sunrise when the Jana'ata sleep. The group tours the busy city for hours, taking in the foreign sights and scents. They notice how, although a class distinction existed, unlike on Earth, the difference between rich and poor was not so great. On their sixth and final day in Gayjur, Jimmy and George meet with a chemist to discuss fuel for the lander. Supaari and Marc aren't interested so Supaari disguises Marc and takes him out among the Jana'ata, where Marc witnesses a strange Jana'ata ritual with colors, swaying and



chanting that leaves him feeling drugged, and a public execution of three Runa by Jana'ata, who use their heavy claws to humanely slice open their necks.

The next day, they head home and are met with grim news. Both D.W. and Anne have been murdered. Supaari informs them that they were killed by wild Jana'ata; rogue killers who have no real home and conform to no rules or systems. The murders are therefore random, brutal, and could have just as easily have been one of the Runa or anyone else out alone that night.

Village of Kashan: Year Two, Village of Kashan and City of Gayjur: Year Three Analysis

Village of Kashan: Year Two

The overall feeling in this chapter is vibrant and bright. The mission crew may have finally found their link to the music that brought them to Rakhat in the first place. Supaari offers the humans a taste of home and human culture. With his arrival, they are able to have the privacy of their own homes. They understand the Runa culture more than they had in the years they already spent there, so he gives them purpose. They have endless amounts of information to share with the Jesuit Society back on Earth and the mission has meaning again. More importantly, Supaari brings the hope of traveling to a more technically advanced city, where they may find a fuel supply for their journey back to the Stella Maris. With all of the happiness that Supaari's visit sparks, the negative hints inserted are hard to miss. George and D.W. don't trust Supaari completely and the one person who may have given more insight into his social agenda, died long before. The chapter is so positive that the reader now knows that the story will make a sharp turn at this point. At the same time, it also gives the reader a sense of closure for these characters because they were able to feel a sense of true bliss before the mission turns to misfortune.

Village of Kashan and City of Gayjur: Year Three

Anne and D.W. share what become their final moments together. The first break in the chapter ends with the reader assuming that D.W.'s sickness has just caught up with him sooner than expected. It is the same thought that all of the characters have prepared for as well. The realization that both Anne and D.W. have been murdered brings the element of tragedy into the storyline. The reader knew it was coming and the author still manages to make the idea fresh and real. The reader completely empathizes with the shock that the members of the group in Gayjur face on their return. Again, their security on the planet has become fragile.

Now, the reader can understand how Sandoz became the only survivor. Even in their safest place, the Kashan village, their lack of communication with the villagers cost them lives. For the natives, the Runa and Supaari, the deaths are not surprising. Supaari even nonchalantly recommends killing the wild Jana'ata if the humans ever cross paths with him. The Runa had warned the humans about traveling alone and

outside of the pack, but the humans never understood why. The other warnings that were made were always frivolous, so this one was written off as well. The occurrence sheds more light on Sandoz' present state of mind, after the mission. He went on the mission as a key communicator and already two lives are lost due to a barrier in language and cultural exchange. Sandoz blames himself for all of the lives lost.

The Sparrow

Summary

Analysis



Naples: August 2060

Naples: August 2060 Summary

Due to the deaths, the Kashan villagers keep close to humans, feeling like the humans are like children and need to be watched over in case the hunter, VaHaptaa, decides to return. He and the others are brought out of their depression however, by the children. It is Askama first, who stays by Sandoz' side and one day asks when he will be happy again. The Runa begin to bear all of the children that were conceived during the harvest of the human's garden. All of the new babies keep their mind off of their loss, but Sandoz describes this to the priests as 'the fatal error.'

The first indication the humans have that something is wrong is when they hear approaching singing. The sound came from a group of Jana'ata patrolmen, arriving to take the Runa babies away. According to Sandoz, Runa culture is shaped for breeding. They work and trade to add to their accounts in order to receive extra food. Otherwise, their food is rationed at a minimum and mates are chosen for them to prevent the female hormones from peaking. This way there is no sexual desire amongst them, and they breed only when the Jana'ata need them to. When the humans started the garden trend, the Jana'ata rules were broken and upset the order. In actuality, the Runa are bred to produce meat for the Jana'ata feeding. The humans realize that they have come to take the extra babies to be butchered for this purpose. When the patrol starts killing the babies on site, Sofia is the first to understand and she resists. She grabs one of the babies and calls for the Runa to do the same, reminding them that they are greater in number than the Jana'ata. 'We are many. They are few.' is what the Runa begin chanting. The Jana'ata patrol fights back and Jimmy, Sofia, and George along with a third of the Kashan villagers are killed. Chaypas is killed defending Askama, who escapes death by being shielded by her father, Manuzhai, and Sandoz.

Marc and Sandoz are taken prisoner. They are taken with the patrol through each Runa village as the gardens are burned and the babies are slaughtered. Marc refuses to eat when he realizes that they are being fed the meat of the murdered children. The priests in the hearing are in shock at what they have heard and Sandoz becomes too sick to continue. Sandoz is able to continue two days later.

Sandoz and Marc marched with the patrol for about two weeks, until Supaari catches up with the group. By then the two men are weak and desperate. Supaari takes them back to his household, and believing them to be his responsibility, has the hasta'akala performed on each of them. Marc dies, however. The priests try to convince Sandoz that Marc's death was not his fault, but Sandoz only wants to know where God was when it all happened.

Supaari is unsure of what to do with Sandoz. In the end, he decides to have Sandoz teach him the English language, in case others arrived from planet Earth.



The priests all assume that the wars between Jana'ata and Runa reported by the Magellan must have escalated outside of Sandoz's knowledge during his stay with Supaari. One day, a group of Jana'ata takes him from the compound to what he later understands is Galatna Palace. Sandoz takes in his gaudy surroundings and as he is disrobed and fit with a jeweled collar, he assumes that he will be part of a zoo. He is in captivity with various breeds of Jana'ata and Runa, but they don't respond to his attempts to communicate.

Supaari has sold him to the Reshtar of Galatna, Hlavin Kitheri, the planet's poet, and the author of the songs that Sandoz and the members of the Stella Maris heard from Earth. Sandoz thinks that he has found his purpose; the reason God put him through the mission and challenges faced thus far — to meet this man, someone who might know God. It is this thought that leads to the biggest betrayal of Sandoz' life: the Reshtar, instead of connecting him to God, is a rapist, who brutally rapes Sandoz and shares him with his friends. The violent sexual acts prompt the Jana'ata to sing, and the beauty of the music becomes sickening for Sandoz as he finds out that the songs are a form of pornography rather than poetry or prayer. The admission of Sandoz's experience fills him with emotion and anger. After raging, the others leave, but he requests that Candotti remain to hear the completion of his story.

After being forced into prostitution by the Reshtar, Sandoz' spirit is beaten and he makes up his mind to defend himself at any cost. He declares in his mind that the next being to enter his cage will be attacked. As his unfortunate fate would have it, the next person to visit him is his beloved Askama, bringing the crew of the Magellan to him. Sandoz slams into her, crushing her body as she whispers her accomplishment and final words, "Your family came for you. I found you for them."

Sandoz is exhausted from sharing these horrible details, and sleeps. When he awakens, he speaks with Father Giuliani, who asks him if he is willing to help the Society. They have plans to send another group of priests to the planet of Rakhat and Giuliani hopes that Sandoz will help them grasp the language. Sandoz declines

Naples: August 2060 Analysis

At the beginning of the chapter, Sandoz sets the precedence with the words 'fatal error.' He is correct; in an instant, one innocent action spirals into the murder of the remainder of Sandoz' friends and innocent Kashan villagers. Again, the reader expected the turn of events as little as the priests who sit listening to Sandoz' story. In the end, the Runa are merely cattle to the Jana'ata and the puzzle pieces are finally placed together. When Anne and George died, the Runa and Supaari where not emotionally moved because death and slaughter were a norm for them. Again, the raw brutality of the Jana'ata surfaces and yet they can still be compared to humans in an extreme form. The Jana'ata become the epitome of cruel in the eyes of the human visitors, and the reader because they work alongside the Runa almost as peers but use them as feed. The humans never understood this key point and never anticipated where something as simple as growing a garden could lead to tragedy and death. They were indulging in the



joy of life, growing food, bearing children but this doesn't fit into the Jana'ata way of thinking. There are no indulgences for the Runa, the prey, while the dominant species indulges far beyond need. The reader is left to wonder if Marc made his final confession, but he did speak the words that have been repeated by all of the Stella Maris crew throughout the mission; 'deus vult' God wills it.

Sandoz culminates the novel with the sad conclusion of his story. All of the questions and have been summed up and the reader's faith in Sandoz as a respectable person has been restored. In the storyline, his biggest skeptic, Voelker even has to apologize for his misgivings and his behavior toward Sandoz. The reader is left with the uncertainty, asking the same question that Sandoz has repeated; "Why?" At the same time there is closure in Sandoz' new optimism that he will find his way. Even the priests surrounding Sandoz now see him in his truest form. "He's the genuine article, Reyes. He has been all along. He is still held fast in formless stone, but he is closer to God right now than I have ever been in my life."

The Sparrow

Summary

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Characters

Emilio Sandoz

Emilio is the main character. He was born and raised in La Perla, Puerto Rico to an abusive father. The violence he met from his father made him learn to protect himself early in life. His surroundings lead him to a life of crime like his brother, father and grandfather, until his mentor, D.W. Yarbrough puts him on the path to becoming a priest. As a priest, Emilio masters every language he encounters and becomes a skilled linguist. When Emilio is introduced in the novel, he is fluent in Spanish, English, Greek, Latin, French, Italian and Portuguese. It is Emilio's skill as a linguist that leads him to the remainder of the characters in the book and the interplanetary mission.

Emilio takes an assignment from the Society of Jesus to a university in Ohio. He is scheduled to work with Sofia Mendes, an artificial intelligence specialist who has been hired to make an AI linguist program utilizing Emilio's skill in language and translation. In the end, Emilio finds himself in love with both Sofia and God but chooses to let Sofia go. During his stay in Ohio he also teaches a Latin course at the university where he meets Anne Edwards, his most promising student and her husband George. The three become very close friends and Emilio looks at her as a mother.

After leaving Ohio, Emilio asks the Jesuit Society to allow him to return home to La Perla and he encourages Anne and George to join him. It is in Puerto Rico that he meets Jimmy Quinn, the character whose discovery opens the door for the Rakhat mission. The possibility of the mission itself is Emilio's idea, and he makes the calls that set everything in motion. As everything falls into place to make the mission a reality, he believes that God created him for the purpose of bringing all of the crew together and making the trip to Rakhat. For the first time in his entire priesthood, Emilio feels real love for God when he steps foot onto the foreign planet. Numerous horrible events leave Emilio Sandoz as the only survivor of the mission to Rakhat. He is forced to rethink his entire journey with God and at the same time forced to relive the ordeal to a Jesuit inquisition upon his return. His journey to Rakhat is equally complicated as reliving it for the Jesuit Society. In the end, sharing his story becomes his ultimate confession and he is purged. The reader parts with Emilio with the possibility that he will make his way to God again.

Vincenzo Giuliani

Vincenzo Giuliani is the Father General of the Society of Jesus in 2059 when Emilio Sandoz returns from the mission to Rakhat. He was once a classmate of Emilio Sandoz and was among the group of teens who would make fun of Emilio. They were annoyed by Emilio's perfectionist nature and would call him 'God's Favorite.' The ridicule is an action that Vince looks upon after meeting Emilio after the mission and regrets.



Vincenzo joined the Society of Jesus when he found out that his family was involved in drug trafficking in Naples, his hometown. He made a choice when he was fourteen to remove himself from the line of work that entrapped his entire family. He loves the freedom and challenges of sailing and welcomes the same feelings in his life. It is with this attitude that he takes on the mystery of Emilio Sandoz. Vincenzo's character is used to parallel that of Emilio Sandoz. He is the exact opposite and yet the same. Emilio Sandoz is Vincenzo Giuliani on a more beaten path, and it is this comparison that allows them to find mutual ground in the end. Due to the lapse in the time for the mission Vincenzo is Sandoz' senior by many years and is now in charge of the inquisition to the truth about the Rakhat mission. He starts the inquisition with the hearings set up with Emilio Sandoz and includes a few other priests as witnesses and to aid his strategy. The first is Felipe Reyes who Emilio took under his wing and introduced to the church when he was a young street teen in La Perla. Reyes was still a teen when Emilio left for Rakhat but he gives Vince information on Emilio as a priest before the mission. The remaining priests do not know Emilio personally before the mission but Emilio reacts to each of them differently and Vince uses them as gauges for the hearings. He uses his obnoxious assistant Voelker to hit Emilio's pressure points and uses Edward Behr and John Candotti to befriend Emilio so he knows he has allies after losing everything and everyone he loved.

Vincenzo approaches the situation from a completely objective point of view; he is firm, unwavering with Emilio when he needs to be, and forgiving with the same ease. This approach pulls Sandoz out of his guilt-ridden silence and onto a road of recovery and possibly a road back to God. In the end, he has to admit to himself that Emilio has experienced closeness with God that even he has never known. Vincenzo's duties and journey with God go beyond Emilio Sandoz and he is a part of the decision to send more priests to the planet Rakhat.

Jimmy Quinn

Jimmy Quinn is a young astronomer working at the Arecibo Radio Telescope in Arecibo Puerto Rico. He is underpaid and overqualified for his position there until he discovers a radio transmission from an alien planet. His discovery leads to the mission to the planet Rakhat. Due to his size, the natives on the planet believe him to be the elder of the group and before their leader D.W. dies, he appoints Jimmy to head the group. On Rakhat, he falls in love and weds Sofia Mendes. They are expecting a child when they are killed.

Johannes Voelker

Father Johannes Voelker is Father General Vincenzo Giuliani's assistant. He is against Emilio Sandoz from the minute he arrives under their care in Rome. Voelker is very obnoxious and gets in constant arguments with John Candotti. In the end, Voelker has to humble himself when he realizes the severity of what Sandoz experienced on Rakhat.



John Candotti

Candotti is the priest assigned to work with Emilio Sandoz when he returns from Rakhat. The task is difficult but Candotti makes up his mind to befriend the bitter priest after their first meeting. He knows that Sandoz needs an ally and, in the end, Candotti becomes his strongest.

Sofia Mendes

Sofia Mendes is a beautiful Spanish woman considered a Sepharic due to her Jewish background. Her family was persecuted and her parents killed in the turmoil of the time. With no family or support system, Sofia is forced to prostitute at age fourteen. Through this means, she meets Jaubert who offers her the security of an education in exchange for her contracted labor. Through Jaubert, Sofia becomes an artificial intelligence specialist. This path leads her to Emilio Sandoz, her first love, Jimmy Quinn and the other members of the Stella Maris.

Dalton Wesley Yarbrough

D.W. is a Texas born priest who before he took his priesthood vows was gay. His physical attributes are described as unattractive but he has a large friendly personality, and no one focuses on his looks once they speak to him. He is the Father Superior on the mission to Rakhat mission and is Emilio's mentor. He is the second or third member of the crew to die on Rakhat.

Edward Behr

Edward Behr is a brother with the Society of Jesus. He is a widower who is assigned to aid Emilio Sandoz and help nurse him back to health. Behr is the first to realize that despite the rumors, Sandoz did not become corrupted on Rakhat, he merely lost his way to God. Behr and Candotti are the first to form a friendship with Sandoz.

Anne & George Edwards

Anne and George are a happily married couple living in Ohio when they meet Emilio Sandoz. Anne is a doctor who takes Sandoz' Latin course at John Carroll University. George is a retired engineer and the three become close friends very quickly. When Sandoz moves back to La Perla, he encourages them to make the move as well. Shortly after, the couple relocates to Puerto Rico where George volunteers at the Arecibo Satellite and Anne runs a clinic. Until Sofia and Jimmy marry, they are the only married couple among the mission crew.



Supaari VaGayjur

Supaari is a Jana'ata species, the native and sentient being on planet Rakhat. He is a rich and successful trader and the third born in his family. According to the Jana'ata tradition as a third born, Supaari is not allowed to reproduce unless given special permission or under special circumstances. He has become bored with his wealth and starts searching for a way to get permission to start a family. Supaari is the first Jana'ata to encounter the humans due to his close relationships with the Runa species.

One of his Runa traders brings him coffee beans from the humans and not only is he able to make large sums of money selling the beans, but he decides to use the beans and the humans to somehow buy permission to breed. Supaari is startled by how different the humans look from his own kind and tries to kill Emilio Sandoz during their first encounter. Once he gets over his initial shock, he becomes close with Anne but after she dies, he feels no real allegiance to the group. His indifference leads to the death of Marc Robichaux, Emilio Sandoz being sold into prostitution and the end of hope for the Stella Maris mission to Rakhat.



Objects/Places

Arecibo Radio Telescope

Arecibo Radio Telescope is the satellite where George and Jimmy work. It is here that Jimmy meets Sofia, and the group comes up with the idea for the mission to Rakhat.

Rome

The story opens in Rome. Emilio Sandoz is brought to Rome, to the Jesuit residence, upon his return to Earth.

Space Lander

The space lander is the plane used by the crew to travel from the Stella Maris asteroid to the planet Rakhat. It was large enough to hold the crew along with a month's worth of supplies.

Naples

When Sandoz is bombarded by reporters, the Father General relocated him to a Jesuit house in Naples. Naples is Father Giuliani's hometown, and he knows Sandoz will be protected there.

Earth

Earth becomes relative, once the story moves to the planet Rakhat.

Stella Maris

The Stella Mars is an asteroid ship used to transport Emilio Sandoz and his friends to Rakhat.

Rakhat

Rakhat is the foreign planet that the crew of the Stella Maris explores following radio transmissions picked up on Earth.



La Perla

La Perla is the slum town in Puerto Rico where Anne, George and Emilio live. Emilio's Mission and Anne's clinic is here. It is Emilio's hometown; the place where D.W. Yarbrough first meets Emilio and pulls him from a life of crime.

Anne & George Edwards Home-Ohio

Ohio is first place that Emilio feels at home. Anne invites him there. She is a student in Emilio's Latin class and opens her home to him immediately.

Anne & George Edwards' Home-La Perla

The Edward's La Perla residence is said to have a slightly different look to their Ohio home but is equally warm. It is here that Sofia feels at home for the first time since her parent's death.

Galatna Palace

Galatna Palace is the palace central to Gayjur city and where the Reshtar lives. He is the one who sparks the events of the entire novel with his singing transmissions. It's within this palace that Sandoz loses his love for God.

Kashan Village

Kashan Village is the first village that the crew of the Stella Maris reside in. It is one of the Runa villages, very comfortable and made up of open apartments built into a mountainside.



Themes

Comedy vs. Tragedy

Comedy and tragedy are repeating concepts through every chapter of this novel. Through Emilio Sandoz and this varied group of people selected for the Rakhat mission, the novel presents comedy and tragedy congruently. One does not exist without the other, either serving as catalyst or outcome. The main character, Emilio Sandoz is known in his early life for his sense of humor. It is this that makes everyone gravitate to him, thus sparking the friendships that lead to the Rakhat mission. Before Sandoz meets most of the main characters in the novel, he has been placed in yet another job that unrelated to his gift as a linguist.

It is here that the reader is introduced to comedy within tragedy in Sandoz' world. "Sandoz was asked to report to John Carroll University...not to take up a post as a professor of linguistics, but to cooperate with an expert in artificial intelligence who would codify and computerize Sandoz's method of learning languages in the field so that future missionaries would benefit from his wide experience, for the glory of God." As Sandoz finds himself laughing uncontrollably he tells his colleague, "I'm sorry...it's too hard to explain...It's the punchline to a three-year joke." "As many as thirty or as few as ten years later...it would occur to Emilio Sandoz to wonder if perhaps that day in Sudan was really only part of the setup for a punchline a lifetime in the making." (21) This chapter sets the precedence for similar mention of tragedy and comedy as one. Speaking to Giuliani, Sandoz asks; "what was it you bastards used to call me? God's favorite! Isn't that what they used to call the king's mistress? There was an ugly laugh. My life has a certain amusing symmetry, if viewed with sufficient detachment." (214)

The crew of the Stella Maris is a jovial bunch, always making jokes and always laughing and sadly, they all meet a tragic end. Their happiest times are always followed by a heartbreaking loss. Giuliani asks Sandoz constantly whether he takes his experience on Rakhat as comedy or tragedy and Sandoz is unable to answer. It is in the end that Sandoz identifies the two as one in the same. "Not comedy. Not tragedy...then he laughed, a feral sound, devoid of humor. Perhaps farce?" (384)

Finding God

The major plot line of the story surrounds a Jesuit sponsored mission to a foreign planet. The existence and presence of God is unquestionably a central theme. Most of the main characters go through their own evolution in their relationship with God throughout the book. Anne, a once believer turned cynic, finds that she can relate to God and allows room to see His works on the mission.

Sofia is Jewish and reignites her relationship with God before leaving for Rakhat with a visit to Israel. The three Jesuit priests, Marc, Alan and D.W. have a strong faith in God.



They believe that they have followed God's will in their lives and are willing to state this publicly and privately. Emilio Sandoz has the most complex relationship with God out of all characters. He joined the Society of Jesus mainly because he met D.W., who for him was a great role model. When D.W. helps him escape his life of crime to join the society, Emilio does so with diligence. However, although he is able to master the requirements of a priest, he doesn't feel God in his heart as he has heard his fellow priests tell it. When the mission to Rakhat starts coming together, Emilio starts to feel the love that he has been looking for in his relationship with God. He believes that it is fate that he be a part of the mission to find another species of God's children. Like the others, it was hard for Emilio to deny God's hand in the Rakhat mission. "In their own ways, they all gave themselves up to God's will and trusted that whatever happened now was meant to be. At least for the moment, they all fell in love with God...But Emilio Sandoz fell hardest of all...after a long courtship, he felt the void fill and believed with all his heart that his love affair with God had been consummated." (189)

As Anne points out, it is hard to point the finger at God when things are terribly wrong and this is Sandoz' final challenge in his walk with God. He has faced with life after losing everyone he has ever loved. According to Father General Giuliani, it is at this point that Sandoz has truly found God and in his heart, he is the saint that many believed him to be.

Alien vs. Human

A few general definitions of alien are; unlike one's own, strange, not belonging to one, adverse, hostile or opposed. The definitions for the word human contrast those of alien; sympathetic, humane, merciful, kind. The theme of alien vs. human is explored in a new and exciting way through the plight of the mission to Rakhat. The easy point of view is to observe the crew from Earth as human and the Jana'ata and Runa as alien. The interesting twist is that each species sees themselves as humane and the other alien.

The opinion that each culture has of one another is displayed best when Supaari and the humans meet. This is the first time the humans have met one of the Jana'ata and the first that one of the Jana'ata has interacted with the humans. Both species revert to raw instinct and attack, first Supaari then Emilio Sandoz. However, in their thinking lies each of their definition of alien. "Supaari, meantime, was trying desperately to adjust to a far deeper shock than Emilio Sandoz was dealing with. Sandoz, at least, had traveled to Rakhat expecting to meet aliens. Supaari VaGayjur had travelled to Kashan to meet a new trade delegation...he'd assumed the foreigners were from some unexplored region of Kashan." (313) When introduced to D.W. as the elder of the group "Supaari saw only a middle-sized monster..." (313) For Supaari and the other Rakhat natives, the humans are vile and alien. They believe their way and their culture to be refined and organized.

The 'humanity' that the crew of the Stella Maris brings to Rakhat disrupts the way of living that the Jana'ata and Runa are accustomed. In a human point of view, 'alien' is 'other.' The crew of the Stella Maris notes the Jana'ata and Runa appearance, nature, and culture and decides that they are alien. The Jana'ata point of view is the same; but

they react in the manner that humans may have if the Jana'ata landed on the planet earth. The comparison of tactics like the butchering of the Runa to humans butchering cows shows that 'human' is not a guaranteed concept by nature. By highlighting the impressions left of each of these cultures on one another, the author shows that the concepts of alien and human are in fact relative.



Style

Point of View

The novel is told from the third person point of view. This allows the author to clearly relay most of the story through Emilio Sandoz' flashback without confusion. Emilio Sandoz has already experienced the Rakhat trip in the present, 2059. The reader is told of his present experience and recovery in Rome and Naples. At the same time, the author starts the story of how the group of friends meets and mission plans come together. Eventually, Sandoz begins to relay his story to the priest inquisition and his flashbacks cross, blend and then merge with the voice of the author to tell the story of the time on the planet Rakhat. This method also helps to keep the characters and their views objective for the reader. There are a number of characters so an objective voice is also necessary for the reader to relate with each character and place themselves in the situations faced as the moral and physical challenges emerge.

Setting

The story is split between Earth and Planet Rakhat. The time on Earth is spent mainly in Puerto Rico, Rome and Naples. Puerto Rico is the setting for Emilio Sandoz past and the start of his future. He leaves Puerto Rico to join the Society of Jesus, but his heart brings him back. He wants to change the slums of La Perla through God. La Perla is a small rundown village but he finds a comfortable residence and so do Anne and George. Also in Puerto Rico is the large Arecibo Satellite. Sofia is surprised by how immense the satellite is when she arrives there. Puerto Rico is the stage for the birth of the Rakhat mission. From Puerto Rico, the characters travel to Rakhat a planet surrounded by two moons and three suns. The planet's animal and plant life are more vivid in color than those of Earth. The sunrises and sunsets are more colorful, with one period of time that there is only light from the red sun. Earth and Rakhat have similarities in that they have plant life, animal life, bodies of water and dominant species. The planet Rakhat offers a parallel to the crew's Earth home and presents a place where new life can be discovered. A setting on a fictional, foreign planet gives the author room to creatively explore more possibilities for the characters as well as the plot. The constraints of the world familiar to the reader have been removed.

Language and Meaning

There are a few languages quoted in this novel. English is the dominant language with Latin inserted by the Jesuit priests. They have been required to know Latin and insert it smoothly into their conversations. Latin is presented to the reader in italics but isn't always immediately translated. This technique supports the idea that Latin is a comfortable language for the priests. Some of the characters speak Spanish, however, the language is only mentioned and not quoted throughout the novel. The author will



mention that a particular character offered a response in Spanish but does not quote the response directly. The reader is clearly not intended to focus on this language. Spanish is merely a background used to show history and placement of the characters. On the planet Rakhat, the humans learn Ruanja and K'shan. These are the primary languages spoken on Rakhat by the Runa and Jana'ata population. As the humans try to mesh with the Rakhat cultures, they learn the two languages. They are the most fluent in Ruanja and the terminologies are quoted often. There is no direct translation in Ruanja for many English words so the author quotes the words themselves. Both the Ruanja and K'shan languages are based on a spatial system rather than an objective one. The Rakhat natives don't focus on the presence of an object or person, but rather the space the object possesses. This contrast between the two languages makes the reader immediately compare and contrast the two cultures, an analysis that becomes important in forming a complete analysis of the Rakhat culture and the Jesuit mission.

Structure

The novel is made up of thirty-two chapters and four hundred and five pages. Each chapter is identified by the location and time in which the chapter takes place. There are a few exceptions to this formula, and these are the chapters that the author wants to make most pertinent and significant. Each chapter varies in length; the longest chapters include simultaneous story lines and character focuses. A key transition is at the start of Chapter 12 when the chapter headings no longer specify the city, date, and begin to note the planet on which the chapter takes place. The headings also become very significant to keep track of Sandoz' flashbacks and the time lost in light speed travel to and from Rakhat. Identifying time and location makes the fictional story appear to be a real account of events.



Quotes

"If you're not for us, you're against us...If nobody cooperates, they can't fire us all."

"I just heard they assigned you a vulture...and the first step toward the mission to Rakhat was taken." (13)

"he'd been loved by good parents and well taught by good teachers, and those two facts accounted for the habit of obedience that mystified and enraged Peggy Soong." (15)

"When he tried to leaven the sessions with jokes or asides or funny stories, she stared at him, unamused, until he gave up and answered her question." (35)

"Do you experience God?" (49)

"D.W. had always felt about half responsible for the way things had turned out, good and bad. That was arrogant; Emilio had made his own decisions. But D.W. had seen the potential in the boy and hadn't hesitated a minute when he'd gotten a chance to pull the kid out of La Perla. Emilio had more than lived up to his expectations; still there'd been a price to pay." (51)

"it was Sofia herself who negotiated the clause allowing her to buy Jaubert out if she were able to earn his backers' investment, plus four percent over projected inflation, compounded annually over the life, in less than twenty years." (64)

"If you come near me, you'll bleed for it."

"Not Magdalene, Lazarus" (76)

"Really Emilio, why not stumble again in case someone missed the symbolism. I'll see you in my office in fifteen minutes..." (78)

"Did you think you were the only one? Is it possible that you are so arrogant? Did you honestly believe that you alone, of all those who have gone, were the single man to lose God?" (79)

"At 3:57 A.M. on Sunday, August 3, 2019, James Connor Quinn pulled off his headset and sat back in his chair, sweating and sucking air, sure now, but hardly able to believe what he alone in all his world knew." (88)

"Sofia, who was knowledgeable and brilliant and who seemed to think there was no insurmountable economic or technical difficulty in launching a mission. Jimmy, who was already working out the astronomical problems. George whom she loved and trusted in, and who thought they should be a part of this. Emilio. Who spoke of God...there was a



part of her that wanted to believe as Emilio seemed to believe, that God was in the universe, making sense of things." (99-100)

"he was sitting in the dark, in a small place. He was alone and it was very quiet and he could hear himself breathing, the blood singing in his ears. Then a door he had not suspected was there began to open: and he could see a flare of light beyond it." (108)

"What the hell...It's gotta be better than not quite dying in a bus wreck on vacation." (115)

"Kinda spooky ain't it. Hell of a lot of coincidences. Like we say back home, when you find a turtle settin' on top a fencepost, you can be pretty damn sure he didn't get there on his own...Tomas da Silva, the General his own self, he thinks maybe God's been goin' around puttin' turtles on fenceposts...I hadta admit, this's kept me up on some long nights, thinking." (122)

"I'd have foe it months ago but I'm afraid I still have enough pride to deny God the punchline for whatever sick joke I am playing out now. That's what's keeping me alive, John. A little bit of pride is all I've got left."

"He thinks the truth is too ugly for us, John had thought, coming down the stairs after a hurried conference with Brother Edward and Father Reyes. Ed thought perhaps that Sandoz didn't realize how much of his story had been made public. 'Emilio, we know about the child...and we know about the brothel...everybody knows, Emilio...how long do you think you can hold all this in? How long do you plan to carry it all yourself?'" (137)

"Anne still played Official Skeptic, but the past eighteen months had worked a surprising internal change in her. Time after time, it looked as though the entire mission would be scrubbed; each time, Anne marveled as Jesuit industry and Jesuit prayer were brought to bear on the problems." (140)

"Who could speak of such things? Not Emilio Sandoz who, for all his facility with many languages, remained tongue-tied and inarticulate about the center of his soul. For he could not feel God or approach God as a friend...and yet, as he had grown older, the path he had started down almost in ignorance had begun to seem clearer to him. It became more apparent to him that he was truly called to walk this strange and difficult, this unnatural and unutterable path to God, which required not poetry or piety but simple endurance and patience." (160)

"It's all true, I suppose, but it's all wrong." (165)

"Other living arrangements had been made for the Foreigner Sandoz that were 'more suited to his nature.'" (167)



"I am surprised, that you were surprised...this whole thing was your idea. I thought you had some kind of direct line to God about this." (176)

"You know what's the most terrifying thing about admitting that you're in love? You are just naked. You put yourself in harm's way and you lay down all your defenses. No clothes, no weapons. Nowhere to hide. Completely vulnerable. The only thing that makes it tolerable is to believe the other person loves you back and that you can trust him not to hurt you." (179)

"...It seemed only natural that he [Sandoz] should move into the airlock and open the hatch and step out alone, into the sunlight of stars he'd never noticed while on Earth, and fill his lungs with the exhalation of unknown plants and fall to his knees weeping with the joy of it...after a long courtship he...believed with all his heart that his love affair with God had been consummated....Those who saw his face...stood witness to a soul's transcendence and would remember that moment for the rest of their lives." (189)

"The Jewish sages also tell us that God dances when His children defeat Him in argument, when they stand on their feet and use their minds. So questions like Anne's are worth asking. To ask them is a very fine kind of human behavior. If we keep demanding that God yield up His answers, perhaps some day we will understand them. And then we will be something more than clever apes, and we shall dance with God." (201)

"For Sofia Mendes, a way to make peace with what, even now, she could only think of as 'the days before Jaubert.' For Jimmy Quinn, the end of worry that he was wrong to leave his mother, and right to claim his life as his own. For Marc Robichaux and Alan Pace there was a sense that they had lived their lives the right way and confidence that God had recognized their artistry as the prayer they had always meant the work to be...For Anne and George Edwards, for D.W. Yarbrough and Emilio Sandoz, this voyage had given meaning to random acts...to all their decisions, whether carefully thought out or ill considered. I would do it all again each of them thought." (189)

"'he was a good priest. Very likeable guy. Young. Great sense of humor. Athletic.' Hard to believe it was the same man. All the warmth and fun gone. Not surprising, under the circumstances." (204)

"large mobile ears, erect...carried high on the sides of the head. Gorgeous eyes, large and densely lashed...the nose was convex, broad at the tip, curving smoothly off to meet the muzzle...The villagers were covered with smooth dense coats of hair, lying flat to muscular bodies. The were as sleek as Siamese cats: buff colored with lovely dark brown markings around the eyes." (225)

"God, I was born for this!" (229)



"I believe that he was inspired by the Holy Spirit. Today I may have looked upon the face of a saint." (237)

"From where I was then to where I am now—I don't know what to do with what happened to me, Vince! ...Do you know what the worst of it is? I loved God." (238)

"From where I was then to where I am now—I don't know what to do with what happened to me, Vince! ...Do you know what the worst of it is? I loved God." For Giuliani Sandoz' case has been a great challenge in his beliefs and his work. He didn't believe Yarbrough's assessment, dubbing Sandoz a saint but he does finally believe that Sandoz' love for God during the mission was honest. Giuliani and Sandoz are in the place of the reader, unable to understand where it all went wrong. Did Sandoz do something to betray God? Did God abandon him? "'Patience,' Giuliani thought. An old sailor's virtue. First one tack and then another." (239)

"It seems to me that sainthood, like genius, is rooted in a sort of inspired persistence. It's a consistent willing of one thing. It's that kind of consistency and focus I see at work in Emilio...and...I'm real concerned about Mendes in all of this, too...she's all guts and brains on the outside, God love her, but there's broken glass inside that child. If he's gotta choose, Milio's gonna choose God, and I hate to think how Sofia would take that." (251)

"Reshtari were trained therefore to versatility, prepared equally for war or for governance; either or neither could be their fate."

"Thus the princely thirds of Rakhat were the volatile elements, the free radicals of Jana'ata high culture, just as bourgeois thirds like Supaari VaGayjur formed the striving bustling commercial element of Jana'ata society. The crushing restriction of their lives was like the pressure that turns coal to diamond. Most were lost to it, ground to powder; some emerged, brilliant and of great value." (274-275)

"Have you ever wondered about the story of Cain, Ed? He made his sacrifice in good faith. Why did God refuse it?" (285)

"Engineers don't go to confession when they screw up; they find a fix. So Anne watched George deal with his own fear and guilt by starting an engineer's rosary: a series of calculations involving the lander's weight, drag, lift, thrust, the prevailing winds, their altitude above sea level, the rotational boost they'd get from their latitude on Rakhat, the distance to the Stella Maris...she knew this was his way of apologizing to the others, of begging pardon for his sin." (300)

"In the past fifteen years or so, I...have lived in...thirty different places? Four continents, two islands. Two planets! An asteroid! Seven or eight ecosystems, from desert to tundra. Dormitories, huts, caves, tents, shacks, hampiy...I have been required to function in over a dozen foreign languages, often three at a time. I have contended with thousands of strangers, in cultures involving three sentient species and perhaps twenty



nationalities. I am sorry to disappoint you but my capacity for curiosity is tapped out...if I had it my way, nothing new or interesting would happen to me ever again as long as I live. Laundry is just about my speed. No quick movements, no sudden noises, no intellectual demands." (320)

"the city was not crowded in the way the teeming ports of Earth were. There were no beggars, no limbless cripples, no emaciated loners picking through the garbage...There was an increasingly noticeable contrast between the rich and the poor...but it did not disturb the humans as they might have been disturbed in Rio or Calcutta or Lima or New York. Here, one had the impression that prosperity was attainable, that people were competent and confident and with on their way up or content to be where they were." (358)

"the Jana'ata executioners...stood behind them and drew their heavy claws across their victims' throats as cleanly and humanely as kosher butchers." (360)

"Suddenly everything made sense to him, and the joy of the moment took his breath away. He had been brought here, step by step to meet this man...a poet—perhaps even a prophet—who of all his kind might know the God who Emilio Sandoz served." (390)

"you see Meelo? Your family came for you. I found you for them." (398)

"It's too soon Vince. I can't think about that. It's too soon." (405)

"He's the genuine article, Reyes. He has been all along. He is still held fast in formless stone, but he is closer to God right now than I have ever been in my life." (400)

Topics for Discussion

Identify Emilio Sandoz' journey with God. Where were the peaks and falls in relation to the events in his life?

Compare and contrast Earth and Rakhat. Are there any true parallels? How does the author identify the distinctions and differences?

Explore the 'animal' themes in the Runa, Jana'ata and Human cultures. Who is made out to have the animal nature as opposed to the 'civilized' tendencies of each group.

Is the Bible presented with a cynical view or is the reader meant to explore the biblical references genuinely? How do the biblical references contribute to the plot? Which characters identify with these references the most?

How and why does the author continually transition between past and present? At what points do the past and present become blurred? What is the significance of this technique?

Time is outlined in every chapter. How does the time changes make the characters relate or separate from one another? Does Sandoz successfully move from the past version of the Earth into the new?

Foreshadowing is key to unraveling the plot of the novel. Identify key foreshadowing points and explain their significance.