

## **What the Eyes of Beata Daury Saw**

A novel by  
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When Chapter 4 was put online, it was 10:46 am on Friday, October 12<sup>th</sup> in Fort de France, Martinique. It was the start of low tide slack water, when the tidal stream is most calm. In metropolitan France the time was 5:46 pm.

Translation: Claire Hendy

## Chapter IV

### Red and Blue

No news had come from the La Source Police Department, where, as the station responsible for keeping the peace in Nesson, an inquiry had been opened into the attack on young Cristelle Gallois.

Nevertheless, when she was well enough to do so, Cristelle recounted the whole story to her parents, as well as to her younger brother who was a student at the Nesson elementary school.

And so there were two sources of information.

On the one hand, Cristelle's parents talked to their friends and neighbors in Nesson. These last were so shocked by the events happening in their town that they didn't even think to enhance the story, as so often happens when news passes from one person to the next, each one wanting to impress his or her audience.

From the information given by Cristelle's parents, it came out that their daughter had found herself in what seemed like a fortress.

The surprisingly high walls surrounded a deep, circular basin that held a pyramid made of sand, and only of sand.

Encircling this basin and its pyramid was a road, along which trucks were parked.

Some of these were loaded and covered with tarps.

Others were empty.

Cristelle had also described a wide gateway, and a very large mechanism – a bit like a canal lock, she said – that made a dull, thudding sound. As soon as she'd taken her photograph the sound had stopped, and after that she couldn't remember a thing.

On the other hand, the children at school who heard the story from Cristelle's younger brother didn't hesitate to exaggerate the details in order to make themselves feel important. And so the children's story told of the high wall and the pyramid of sand being encrusted with diamonds.

Given that at the root of the children's chain of information there was mention of shiny fragments, we can note that the wall and the pyramid of sand it surrounded seemed to sparkle in many places.

The town was equally concerned for Doctor Daury.

Here a curious phenomenon came into play, in which the living quickly form a group, and those a little less alive find themselves distanced by the various attitudes of the first group.

And regarding the worrisome disappearance that had happened a few days earlier, it was with the words used to discuss it that this distance was quickly established.

Thus, even though it would have been just as easy to mention "Mrs. Daury" or "her" or "she,"

everyone seemed to describe her in more detail than usual:

“... What could have happened to Doctor Daury’s wife?”

“...I wish they’d give us some news about Doctor Daury’s spouse...”

And then, to quickly change the subject,

“...Look at how well Doctor Daury is holding up, he’s so brave... never says a word about it... never a slip in his prescriptions...”

In fact, Doctor Daury was very concentrated on each circumstance, every element, any information which could in any way help the investigation into his wife’s disappearance.

To that end, he rushed to finish his last appointment of the afternoon in order to be on time for his meeting with the police. They had asked that it take place at his home.

Paul Rivois was the policeman on duty that afternoon, and Doctor Daury was soon greeting him at the door.

“You understand, Doctor, that we’re obliged to question anyone who could give us a possible lead in the case... We’ve spoken to Mrs. Sancia... your housecleaner...”

“Yes, and so...?”

“She tells us that your wife is regularly absent on Tuesday afternoons...and that she returns only after picking up your youngest son at hockey practice in La Source...  
... Is that correct?”

“...I suppose so ... the house is a bit empty since the three older children left... Tuesday afternoons must seem very long for my wife... but I didn't know she was gone all afternoon, that day...”

“...In any case, we've confirmed the facts and she does pick up your son from hockey practice every Tuesday in the late afternoon. ...But before that...before she picks up your son at hockey... do you know, Doctor, how your wife spends her afternoon?... Can you fill in that information for us? Mrs. Sancia has confirmed that she always left by car...”

“...I don't know what to tell you... I imagine my wife had various errands to do for the house or for herself... she's very particular about her appearance, you know...”

“...Alright, thank you Doctor... unfortunately that doesn't help much... I'd better be going ...”

As he was leaving he pointed with his finger,

“Oh, do you draw Doctor?”

“Me... no.”

“Does anyone else in the house?”

“Not any more... except that... yes... my wife recently started drawing...”

“What do you mean, recently? Why recently?”

“...Well, because one of these drawings is done using a thick pencil with two very large, colored leads, one red and one blue... it's not a common type of pencil, but it's very practical for marking things that interest me in the different journals I

have to read... I came across them quite by accident during a business trip just two weeks ago... it seems she must have borrowed one from my desk... So, you see... it's very recent..."

"And... does your wife use anything other than this pencil?"

"Yes, I noticed that she's also used chalk, plain lead pencil, ink, too, I think... and the subject of her drawings is always the same..."

"Always the same?"

"...Yes, that's right... the same subject, always the same... but using different techniques..."

"Okay... I need to go now... Starting in October the days get shorter fast..." Then he exclaimed, "one of the headlights on the van isn't working well and it doesn't set a very good example for the townsfolk!"

"But before I go, may I have your permission to take this portfolio of drawings with me, so I can give them a look?"

"Yes, yes... as long as they'll be returned to me, of course."

"Of course.  
They'll be returned to you."