

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

A novel by  
Marie Françoise Lasserre  
Attorney-at-law

**Le CHAPITRE III a été mis en ligne le**  
**Vendredi 5 Octobre à 19h 31, début de l'étale de basse mer à**  
**Point à Pitre soit heure métropolitaine :**  
**22 h 31**

Translation: Claire Hendy

## Chapter III

### News...

The next morning, the damage from the high winds was more or less what the people of Nesson had expected.

After the big storm of 1999, the town had had the electrical cables moved underground, so there was nothing to worry about there.

Two fallen pines blocking the roadway were quickly cut and stacked along the shoulder, and by mid-morning traffic was flowing smoothly again.

Pine needles and broken branches had been blown in all directions, but there was no damage reported to rooves or structures, and the Mayor had the roads cleared quickly.

Little Cristelle Gallois, still in a state of shock, hadn't yet been able to give her statement to the police.

In order to safeguard people and evidence while waiting, all possible measures had been taken to prevent access to the thalassotherapy worksite, including hastily installed barriers and security tape.

Slowly, as people went back and forth checking on friends and neighbors, life in the town got back to normal.

Julien Lavaure went by Mrs. Ramier's to make sure that she was recovering from the night's events.

He was astonished when she said,

"What a night...I was finally able to sleep! Yes, a whole night's sleep...It's been so long and it did me a world of good...!"

"Well," replied Julien smiling, "you win the town sleep prize! I don't know anyone else in Nesson who was actually able to sleep last night!"

"I can imagine that it wasn't easy for the rest of you...But finally I had some peace and quiet without the noise from all those trucks!"

"But...what do you mean? The highway doesn't pass near here... And trucks aren't on the road at night!"

"Yes... you're right, there's something I should tell you... but please don't mention it to my son... he doesn't know about it and I don't want to worry him..."

"Go ahead Mrs. Ramier, I'm listening."

"My pension is quite small and, with all the bills and deductions that keep going up, it was getting difficult to make ends meet...Then the company in charge of the thalassotherapy project - Thalassosun it's called - well, you may have noticed that my property is quite long and narrow. At one end it borders their land and at the other it joins the highway..."

"...Yes, and so...?"

"And so, they offered to pay for right of passage across my property...It's simpler for transporting their materials..."

“And then?” Julien encouraged her. “Go ahead, I’m still listening...”

“The fees they pay are quite high, and it supplements my pension very nicely, so I didn’t ask many questions...But...”

“Yes, go on, what happened?”

“Well, what happened is that the trucks move at night! Always at night! Never during the day. And they’re so heavily loaded that they make a terrible noise! I haven’t been sleeping...”

“...Do you have any idea what they’re carrying?”

“...I haven’t dared to ask. And since the tarps are tied down so tightly, I haven’t been able to see a thing...

... but I know that they scare my cat...”

“...What do you mean?”

“...well, every once in a while, a bit of what they’re carrying falls on his head!”

“...a bit of what?”

“Of sand! And it wouldn’t be a problem if it was like the fine, dry sand we’re standing on. But it’s wet sand!”

As Julien Lavaure left Mrs. Ramier, he thought about the Mayor’s comments on the morning of the high winds.

He couldn’t foresee the shock that was coming next to hit both the town and the citizens of Nesson.

And for the moment, everyone was doing their best to get back to life as normal.

However, it's often in the comfort of our daily routines, thoughts and activities, that news, be it good or bad, strikes us the hardest.

At that moment Rita Merleau, who for professional reasons had changed her name from Christiane, was enjoying the prospect of an unexpected new bridal order for next August.

She sighed, smiling bravely, a hand on the latch. "Will my life always be about other people's wedding dresses?"

Then she laughed at herself, thinking "...Be sure you make a note, Madam, first fitting in November...be careful not to gain any weight between now and June!"

A few meters away, Sandy – everyone calls her Sandy because that's the name of the beauty salon where she works – has just finished with her last customer and settled comfortably into one of the beautician's chairs to read her favorite magazine...

While Doctor Damade is absent-mindedly organizing his mail between appointments at the La Source Clinic...

And as Marie Langla, the evening newspaper in her hand, stepped onto the bus...

And so it is that news, good or not, bursts into our lives, and has its effect on each of us: on our words, our gestures, our silence...

"It's impossible, I can't believe it," Rita Merleau says to Sandy as she rushes into the boutique... "...I simply can't believe it. Just yesterday I pinned her for the second fitting on a cocktail dress. In her size it was gorgeous; she has a real woman's figure after four children!... Not like my young brides... They're so skinny, I'm always afraid to poke a hole in them..."

“Yes, it’s incredible!... She made an appointment at the Salon for a braided chignon on the morning of the cocktail party... she said she wanted to look perfect for an evening out with her husband – of course, she didn’t tell me any more than that... she’s very discreet, a real lady ...

Doctor Damade actually dropped the phone back onto its cradle...

What a story...What could he possibly say to comfort his fellow physician?

What were the right words for this man who was so attentive to his beautiful wife?

What could he say?

Now seated in the bus and heading for home, Marie Langla felt the evening paper fall from hands that could no hold longer it.

“My God!... what did she tell me? She told me ...And also that... And then again... But there’s something else... But...What did she say? Can I remember?” Thoughts that ran through her mind after reading, in an article entitled “Disturbing Disappearance,” printed from left to right, the name:

Beata Daury.