

Susan

New York

LITERARY NOVEL: HELIUM 3 BY MARILYN DELSON

*Summary: If you were an alien, marooned on Earth, how would you fit in? By concealment, through heroism and service, mind control, or superior technology? What if you were falling in love with the very human who could best destroy you?*

Ch.1: POLAR VORTEX

Was it cabin fever that gave me the bright idea to meet a complete stranger for afternoon coffee, or something else? After two months of hunkering down under the polar vortex, not only was my skin dry and pasty, but I had a less-than-favorable view of the male race.

Comment [s1]: I don't see how the two sentences go together. The second sentence should go along with the "something else," and this makes it sound like the "something else" is the "less than favorable view," which doesn't support it. The second sentence should be a driving factor that compels the person to want to meet the stranger.

Suddenly, the anti-lock brakes engaged on a patch of black ice at the eighth curve on Cedarvale Road. The car started to skid into a ditch, beyond which ran alongside a swiftly-flowing stream, now frozen. The icy corkscrew of blacktop, the road I fear the most but can't escape if I need to get anywhere, has exactly thirteen switchbacks. Lucky number thirteen. I was born on Friday the thirteenth. By local legend, the ghosts of its victims manifest on certain foggy nights.

Comment [s2]: Pick one – can't be swiftly-flowing (need a dif descriptor) AND frozen

Comment [s3]: Not sure if this is relevant

Comment [s4]: What's a switchback? A curve?

I jolted into survival mode, turning and turned the wheel to the left with deliberate intent, slowly, and managed to get back on the road, which eventually straightened and leveled off.

Comment [s5]: Normally, this might pull me out of the moment, but I think you can get away with it here, since this seems to lean toward humor rather than terror.

The zig-zagging wooded ravine it was built on, with its hulking evergreens leaning-in on both sides and darkening the sky, finally yielded to the uniform streets of suburbia.

Comment [s6]: confusing

Idiot, I mumbled, realizing I've succumbed, yet again, to a few emails from some guy. But at least this time, I did the choosing, from his dating service videochase.

Comment [s7]: tense. Should be "I'd" – watch your tenses

Formatted: Font: Italic

how old?

LITERARY NOVEL: HELIUM 3 BY MARILYN DELSON

I arrived at my destination shaken, feeling entitled to a large cup of coffee. It was one of the better national chains, although I wasn't pleased when it drove our Mom-and-Pop version out of business. I did a quick appearance check in the rearview mirror and thought he'd probably like what he saw, despite the over-moisturized pasty skin. Men liked full red lips, large brown eyes, prominent cheekbones, and thick eyebrows framing a woman's face, or so I was told. I wore riding boots and a mannish Harris tweed jacket because I like to dress this way and have a theory that it puts men at ease when women dress like them. I ran my fingers through my longish, dirty-blonde hair, trying to pump up its defeated lack of bounce before heading into the lion's den. The winter air was sharp as I inhaled, like breathing in tiny shards of glass mixed with idling car exhaust.

Comment [s8]: Has this person been living there for a long time? From the comment earlier about hiding out for two months, I had assumed that she hadn't been there that long.

Comment [s9]: Think of a different descriptor you used this earlier.

Comment [s10]: Be more specific. Did she read it in a magazine?

The chain was full of weekenders: pert, blond cheerleaders and gawky basketball players in post-game celebration, and along with noisy families all glad to be sprung from the all-too-familiar walls of home in deep winter. The order line was long, but I needed that mug of joe. I spied a lone, unoccupied table in the back, dirty with dishes but unoccupied, and and I sank into a chair with my coffee mug, ignoring the dirty dishes on the surface.

The first heavenly sip jolted my memory about our agreed-upon sign, and I searched for the silk rose in my tote bag. But before I could even place it on the table, he was standing next to me.

"Are you Jess?" he asked, eyeing me with an appreciative smile. His eyes were so blue, much more intense than in his video. I felt my cheeks flush, hoping he wouldn't notice.

"Yes. Jessamyn Sandman." I extended my hand to shake his. "But people call me Jess. How did you know it was me, without the flower? I wasn't wrapped up in all this winter gear when I made the video."

LITERARY NOVEL: HELIUM 3 BY MARILYN DELSON

"True. I just searched for the most interesting woman in the room and found you. I'm

Eddie, ~~by the way.~~"

*ugh, what a line*

After the ingratiating compliment, he looked me over in that universal male way, which caused me to blush again. Damn! Helium-3 Fusion 3

"How clever of you," I laughed. "And what a good liar you are. Have a seat."

"I will. Just want to get some coffee... yours smells delicious."

He scooped up the dirty dishes and trudged toward the front. ~~H-in-his boots, which~~ left a trail of melting snow across the floor. He was tall, handsome with a kind of European vibe, with thick, bluish-black hair, and eyes which seemed to take a reading of me as he spoke, kind of like an instant-read thermometer.

Comment [s11]: Use this phrase earlier, while Eddie speaks to her. That's when she'd notice his eyes.

He Eddie returned with a tray holding a mug and two cherry-filled pastries. I accepted the offering without the usual protestations about my diet. I almost slid off the road today; this pastry could be my last.

"How was your drive here?" I asked, after the dishes were settled.

Comment [s12]: implied

"I almost slid off the road a couple of times."

"Me too. We lucked out." Our eyes locked and I felt a jolt.

"Yes, living is preferable to dying. Especially when I know for a fact they don't serve pastries in Heaven," he said with a chuckle, causing those blue eyes to crinkle at the edges.

"What makes you think I'm ending up in Heaven?" I asked, blushing again.

"Pastries aside, which are plentiful in Hell by the way, I feel you are a good soul, without a shadow of a doubt. So when you shake off this mortal coil, off you'll go to paradise, but no cherry Danish." He actually winked at me.

LITERARY NOVEL: HELIUM 3 BY MARILYN DELSON

"How do you know I'm a good soul? I can be bad sometimes." I gave him a simpering smile. Why was I turning into a besotted female? This was getting scary!

Helium-3 Fusion 4

she worried abt her appearance earlier so this isn't a surprise

Comment [s13]: This coy back-and-forth is going on, too long.

Comment [s14]: Not sure why all of these markers are here?

We continued to talk ~~back and forth~~, in a flirty-silly way for a couple of hours. I can't account for how the time slipped away, except to say that his trenchant observations about life were so similar to mine, I decided I'd found a kindred spirit. Eddie suggested we go someplace quieter for an early dinner. By then, the manager was giving us a why don't they leave already look, surveying the never-ending line for tables.

"Good idea. Tables are in short supply here today and I think we've overstayed our welcome," I said, pointing to the manager. But I was adamant about following him to the restaurant in my own car. Just in case.

"I have a fusion Brazilian-Japanese place in mind," he said.

Was he joking? It sounded way too sophisticated for Polar Vortex Central and wondered why I hadn't heard of it before.

###

Brasil-Asia Grill was starkly modern, with an expanse of rosewood fronting the room-length bar. Tables for two or four were placed discretely among large potted palm trees. Every table was taken, except for a two-seater, placed behind an intricately-carved Oriental screen.

Comment [s15]: Is there a reason that they have to switch restaurants? Why not do everything in one place?

As soon as we were seated, a burly, older man with thick, black hair and matching moustache welcomed us with a smile and very white teeth. He had the same intense blue eyes that Eddie had. Senhor Edward got a bear hug, like family. A tall, slender woman with slightly Asian features ran out from the back and greeted Eddie in similar fashion. She was wearing a full-length white apron.

LITERARY NOVEL: HELIUM 3 BY MARILYN DELSON

"Jess, meet Miya and Gustavo, my friends."

Helium-3 Fusion 5

"Estimado Senhorita. We welcome you and will prepare a dinner we hope you will love,"

Gustavo said. They returned to the kitchen.

Eddie must have picked up on my fears concerning exotic food.

"Don't worry Jess. They'll bring us grilled steak and sushi, which will be the best you've ever tasted. Will you join me for a cocktail <sup>emdash</sup> a Sakeirinha? It's a Caipirinha made with sake."

I couldn't refuse such a cool invitation, although I wasn't sure about the sushi.

"What's the story with Miya and Gustavo?" I asked. "Married?"

"Happily so, for several years ~~now~~."

"How did you meet them?" I asked. Hunger pangs clutched at my stomach in response to the audible sizzle of a thick steak hitting a hot grill. I could imagine the charring and juice flowing, ~~from the sound and smell alone~~. Molecules of smoky goodness hung in the air.

"We met at work."

"Are you also a chef?"

"No. I'm a miner."

"You and Gustavo are miners?" The only mining operation in this area ~~is was~~ for salt.

"Are you at the Cayuga mine in Lansing?"

"No, not there. Helium-3," he said. Then, nothing.

"What's that? Oh wait ... don't they fill party balloons with helium?"

"Yes, but helium-3 is different."

"How so?"

Helium-3 Fusion 6

→ I think this needs to occur sooner

Comment [s16]: Watch tense

LITERARY NOVEL: HELIUM 3 BY MARILYN DELSON

"~~Right~~ It's found in the Earth's crust and mantle. It got trapped there when the Earth was formed. You know ... the Big Bang. It's also found in the atmosphere and in natural gas."

"But, what's it for?"

"Ah well, ... helium-3 power plants can generate electricity and stop the clock on global warming. That's because helium-3 is clean, compared to fossil fuels. And we'd no longer have to worry about nuclear accidents or radioactive waste disposal. Also, the power plants would be more efficient, and have lower operating costs than anything we use now."

Wow! "So, where's the mine        in the Southern Tier?" ~~Gustavo was coming with our plates.~~

Comment [s17]: Eddie mentions this so the main character doesn't have to

"Not exactly. Ah, here's Gustavo, and Marcus is bringing our drinks. We can talk about this later," he said, with more than a hint of determination. Our drinks tasted of sugar, lime and herbs, with a kick. The steaks were uniformly rare and perfectly charred on the outside.

→ what does she think here

~~I did pick up on him wanting to change the subject.~~ Eddie's hesitation threw up a red flag; well maybe just a pink flag. Investigative reporters don't get mayors to quit after uncovering their fondness for kiddie porn sites by playing nice. Fortunate for me, his scorned wife was the snitch. Nor did I cut any slack with two of our (former) city councilmen over their voter-registration scheme. On the other hand, maybe I was just being my suspicious self, fed-up with being lied to by politicians and officials in my daily work. I decided to cut him some slack, for now. Besides, not giving any slack is how I lost most of my (former) boyfriends. So, we engaged in harmless chit-chat. He even hugged me goodbye, chastely, after walking me to my car. His odd but pleasant scent, like citrus and air full of ozone after a rain, lingered on my coat collar as I drove home.

Comment [s18]: You went from the middle of dinner to nothing. You should have step-by-step on what's happening and how they act when they part-show, don't tell.

Ed

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Summary: If you were an alien, marooned on Earth, how would you fit in? By concealment, through heroism and service, mind control, or superior technology? What if you were falling in love with the very human who could best destroy you?

Ch.1: POLAR VORTEX

Was it cabin fever that gave me the bright idea of meeting to meet a complete stranger for afternoon coffee? Or was it something else? After two months of hunkering down under the polar vortex, not only was my skin dry and pasty, but I had a less-than-favorable view of the male race.

Comment [ED1]: Overall: I like the light and comic tone. Please slow down and expand each scene and give them the time and room they need.

Suddenly, the anti-lock brakes engaged on a patch of black ice at the eighth curve on Cedarvale Road. The car started to skid into a ditch, that which ran alongside a swiftly-flowing stream, now frozen. The icy corkscrew of blacktop, the road I fear the most, but can't escape if I need to get anywhere, has exactly thirteen switchbacks. Lucky number thirteen. I was born on Friday the thirteenth. By local legend, the ghosts of its victims manifest on certain foggy nights.

Comment [ED2]: Why?
Comment [ED3]: Are males a race?
Comment [ED4]: Okay, s/he's driving

I jolted into survival mode and turned the wheel to the left, slowly, and managed to get back on the road, which eventually straightened and leveled off. The zig-zagging wooded ravine it was built on, with its hulking evergreens leaning in on both sides and darkening the sky, finally yielded to the uniform streets of suburbia.

Comment [ED5]: Packing a lot into this paragraph:
1. skid
2. topography
3. road layout
4. special numbers
5. birthdate
6. local lore
Kinda takes away from the emergency. Do you want that?

Idiot, I mumbled, realizing I'dve succumbed, yet again, to a few emails from some guy. But, at least, this time, I did the choosing, from his dating service video.

Comment [ED6]: What about the other 5 switchbacks?
Comment [ED7]: The road?
Comment [ED8]: The ravine?
Comment [ED9]: Another packed paragraph:
1. anticlimactic resolution to the skid
2. more geography
3. scenery
Comment [ED10]: I'm seeing a pattern here. Lots of stuff jammed in together. Please: slow down, take your time. We aren't going anywhere.



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I arrived at my destination shaken, feeling entitled to a large cup of coffee. It was one of the better national chains, although I wasn't pleased when it drove our Mom-and-Pop version out of business.

Comment [ED11]: Careful: lots of sentences starting with I. It's a problem with first person.

Comment [ED12]: Still don't know where that is

Comment [ED13]: Coffee? Cup? Destination?

Comment [ED14]: Chains of what?

I did a quick appearance check in the rearview mirror and thought he'd probably like what he saw, despite the over-moisturized pasty skin. Men liked full red lips, large brown eyes, prominent cheekbones, and thick eyebrows framing a woman's face, or so I'd been told.

Comment [ED15]: How is this possible?

Comment [ED16]: Some do, some don't

I wore riding boots and a mannish Harris tweed jacket, because I like to dress this way, and I have a theory that it puts men at ease when women dress like them. I ran my fingers through my longish, dirty-blond hair, trying to pump up its defeated lack of bounce before heading into the lion's den. The winter air was sharp as I inhaled, like breathing in tiny shards of glass mixed with idling car exhaust.

Comment [ED17]: Is this author or character talking?

Comment [ED18]: Still don't know where she's going

The chain was full of weekenders: pert, blond cheerleaders and gawky basketball players in post-game celebration, and noisy families, glad to be sprung from the all-too-familiar walls of home in deep winter. The order line was long, but I needed that mug of joe. I spied a lone table in the back, dirty with dishes but unoccupied, and I sank into a chair with my coffee mug.

Comment [ED19]: ? coffee shop?

The first heavenly sip jolted my memory about our agreed-upon sign, and I searched for the silk rose in my tote bag. But before I could even place it on the table, he was standing next to me.

"Are you Jess?" he asked, eyeing me with an appreciative smile. His eyes were so blue, much more intense than in his video. I felt my cheeks flush, hoping he wouldn't notice.

"Yes. Jessamyn Sandman." I extended my hand to shake his. "But people call me Jess. How did you know it was me, without the flower? I wasn't wrapped up in all this winter gear when I made the video."



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"True. I just searched for the most interesting woman in the room and found you. I'm Eddie, by the way."

Comment [ED20]: I like him immediately ;)

After the ingratiating compliment, he looked me over in that universal male way, which caused me to blush again. Damn! Helium 3 Fusion 3

Comment [ED21]: Why?

Comment [ED22]: He would have done this before speaking, not after

Comment [ED23]: Is this a heading?

"How clever of you," I laughed. "And what a good liar you are. Have a seat."

"I will. Just want to get some coffee... yours smells delicious."

He scooped up the dirty dishes and trudged toward the front in his boots, which left a trail of melting snow. He was tall, handsome with a kind of European vibe, with thick, bluish-black hair, and eyes that which seemed to take a reading of me as he spoke, kind of like an instant-read thermometer.

Comment [ED24]: Brownie points?

Comment [ED25]: Word choice

He returned with a tray holding a mug and two cherry-filled pastries. I accepted the offering without the usual protestations about my diet. I almost slid off the road today; this pastry could be my last.

"How was your drive here?" I asked, after the dishes were settled.

"I almost slid off the road a couple of times."

Comment [ED26]:

"Me too. We lucked out." Our eyes locked and I felt a jolt.

"Yes, living is preferable to dying. Especially when I know for a fact they don't serve pastries in Heaven," he said with a chuckle, causing those blue eyes to crinkle at the edges.

Comment [ED27]:

"What makes you think I'm ending up in Heaven?" I asked, blushing again.

"Pastries aside, which are plentiful in Hell, by the way, I feel you are a good soul, without a shadow of a doubt. So when you shake off this mortal coil, off you'll go to paradise. But no cherry Danish." He actually winked at me.

Comment [ED28]:

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"How do you know I'm a good soul? I can be bad sometimes." I gave him a simpering smile. Why was I turning into a besotted female? This was getting scary.

Helium 3 Fusion 4

We continued to talk ~~back and forth~~ in a flirty-silly way for a couple of hours. I can't account for how the time slipped away, except to say that his trenchant observations about life were so similar to mine, I decided I'd found a kindred spirit.

Comment [ED29]: I want more of their conversation!

Comment [ED30]: Perfect!

Eddie suggested we go someplace quieter for an early dinner. By then, the manager was giving us a ~~why-don't-they-leave-already~~ look, surveying the never-ending line for tables.

"Good idea. Tables are in short supply here today and I think we've overstayed our welcome," I said, pointing to the manager. But I was adamant about following him to the restaurant in my own car. Just in case.

"I have a fusion Brazilian-Japanese place in mind," he said.

Was he joking? It sounded way too sophisticated for Polar Vortex Central and I wondered why I hadn't heard of it before.

###

Brasil-Asia Grill was starkly modern, with an expanse of rosewood fronting the room-length bar. Tables for two or four were placed ~~discretely~~ *discreetly* among large potted palm trees. Every table was taken, except for a two-seater, placed behind an intricately-carved Oriental screen.

As soon as we were seated, a burly older man with thick, black hair and matching moustache welcomed us with a smile and very white teeth. He had the same intense blue eyes that Eddie had. Senhor Edward got a bear hug, like family. A tall, slender woman with slightly Asian features ran out from the back and greeted Eddie in similar fashion. She was wearing a full-length white apron.

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"Jess, meet Miya and Gustavo, my friends."

Helium 3 Fusion 5

"Estimado sSenhorita. We welcome you and will prepare a dinner we hope you will love," Gustavo said. They returned to the kitchen.

Eddie must have picked up on my fears concerning exotic food.

"Don't worry, Jess. They'll bring us grilled steak and sushi, which will be the best you've ever tasted. Will you join me for a cocktail - a Sakeirinha? It's a Caipirinha made with sake."

I couldn't refuse such a cool invitation, although I wasn't sure about the sushi.

"What's the story with Miya and Gustavo? Married?"

"Happily so, for several years now."

"How did you meet them?" I asked. Hunger pangs clutched at my stomach in response to the audible sizzle of a thick steak hitting a hot grill. I could imagine the charring and juice flowing, from the sound and smell alone. Molecules of smoky goodness hung in the air.

"We met at work."

"Are you also a chef?"

"No. I'm a miner."

"You and Gustavo are miners?" The only mining operation in this area was for salt. "Are you at the Cayuga mine in Lansing?"

"No, not there. Helium-3," he said. Then, nothing.

"What's that? Oh wait ... don't they fill party balloons with helium?"

"Yes, but helium-3 is different."

"How so?"

Helium 3 Fusion 6

Comment [ED31]: In what sense does he "mine" helium-3?

LITERARY NOVEL: HELIUM 3 BY MARILYN DELSON

"Right. It's found in the Earth's crust and mantle. It got trapped there when the Earth was formed. You know ... the Big Bang! It's also found in the atmosphere and in natural gas."

Comment [ED32]: Sorry: the Earth wasn't formed in the Big Bang.

"But, what's it for?"

"Ah, well, ... helium-3 power plants can generate electricity and stop the clock on global warming. That's because helium-3 is clean, compared to fossil fuels. And we'd no longer have to worry about nuclear accidents or radioactive waste disposal. Also, the power plants would be more efficient, and have lower operating costs than anything we use now."

Comment [ED33]: So, I happen to have a physics background. He talks as if such plants already exist, but the don't.

"So, where's the mine - in the Southern Tier?" Gustavo was coming with our plates.

"Not exactly. Ah, here's Gustavo, and Marcus is bringing our drinks. We can talk about this later," he said, with more than a hint of determination.

Our drinks tasted of sugar, lime, and herbs, with a kick. The steaks were uniformly rare and perfectly charred on the outside.

I did pick up on him wanting to change the subject. Eddie's hesitation threw up a red flag. ~~Well,~~ maybe just a pink flag.

Comment [ED34]:

Investigative reporters like me don't get mayors to quit after uncovering their fondness for kiddie porn sites by playing nice. Fortunate for me, ~~the mayor's~~ ~~his~~ scorned wife ~~had been~~ ~~was~~ the snitch. Nor did I cut any slack with two of our (former) city councilmen over their voter-registration scheme.

On the other hand, maybe I was just being my suspicious self, fed-up with being lied to by politicians and officials in my daily work. I decided to cut him some slack, for now.

Besides, not giving any slack is how I lost most of my (former) boyfriends.

**LITERARY NOVEL: HELIUM 3 BY MARILYN DELSON**

So, we engaged in harmless chit-chat. He even hugged me goodbye, chastely, after walking me to my car. His odd but pleasant scent, like citrus and air full of ozone after a rain, lingered on my coat collar as I drove home.

**Comment [ED35]:** This reminds me weirdly of a story idea I once had. I think your version is much better.

# Jenni's Comments

I love the character's voice.

*Summary: If you were an alien, marooned on Earth, how would you fit in? By concealment, through heroism and service, mind control, or superior technology? What if you were falling in love with the very human who could best destroy you?*

## Ch.1: POLAR VORTEX

Was it cabin fever that gave me the bright idea to meet a complete stranger for afternoon coffee, or something else? After two months of hunkering down under the polar vortex, not only was my skin dry and pasty, but I had a less-than-favorable **opinion+view** of the male **face**.

**Suddenly,** the anti-lock brakes engaged on a patch of black ice at the eighth curve on Cedarvale Road. The car ~~started to skid~~ **skidd** <sup>toward</sup> into a ditch, which ran alongside a **swiftly-flowing** stream, now frozen. The icy corkscrew of blacktop, the road I fear the most but can't escape if I need to get anywhere, has exactly thirteen switchbacks. Lucky number thirteen. I was born on Friday the thirteenth. By local legend, the ghosts of **its** victims manifest on certain foggy nights.

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I arrived at my destination shaken, feeling entitled to a large cup of coffee. It was one of the better national chains, although I wasn't pleased when it drove our Mom-and-Pop version out

Is this a real thing or is she being sarcastic about the brutal winter.

Is the road so important next to this paragraph in the page.

Comment [PHS IS1]: Male isn't a race.

Comment [PHS IS2]: No hyphen with adverb

Comment [PHS IS3]: I had to read this sentence several times.

Comment [PHS IS4]: Whose victims?

Comment [PHS IS5]: I had to read this several times too.

### LITERARY NOVEL: HELIUM 3 BY MARILYN DELSON

of business. I did a quick appearance check in the rearview mirror and thought he'd probably like what he saw, despite the over-moisturized pasty skin. Men liked full red lips, large brown eyes, prominent cheekbones, and thick eyebrows framing a woman's face, or so I was told. I wore riding boots and a mannish Harris tweed jacket because I like to dress this way and have a theory that it puts men at ease when women dress like them. I ran my fingers through my longish, dirty-blonde hair, trying to pump up its defeated lack of bounce before heading into the lion's den. The winter air was sharp as I inhaled, like breathing in tiny shards of glass mixed with idling car exhaust.

Comment [PHS 156]: nice

The chain was full of weekenders: pert, blonde cheerleaders, and gawky basketball players in post-game celebration, and noisy families. All glad to be sprung from the all-too-familiar walls of home in deep winter. The order line was long, but I needed that mug of joe. I spied a lone table in the back, dirty with dishes but unoccupied, and I sank into a chair with my coffee mug.

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"True. I just searched for the most interesting woman in the room and found you. I'm Eddie, by the way."



## LITERARY NOVEL: HELIUM 3 BY MARILYN DELSON

After the ingratiating compliment, he looked me over in that universal male way, which caused me to blush again. Damn! Helium-3 Fusion 3

Comment [PHS 157]: huh?

"How clever of you," I laughed. "And what a good liar you are. Have a seat."

"I will. Just want to get some coffee. ~~Y~~ours smells delicious."

He scooped up the dirty dishes and trudged toward the front in his boots, which left a trail of melting snow. He was tall, handsome with a kind of European vibe, with thick, bluish-black hair, and eyes which seemed to take a reading of measure me as he spoke, kind of like an instant-read thermometer.

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"Pastries aside, which are plentiful in Hell by the way, I feel you are a good soul, without a shadow of a doubt. So when you shake off this mortal coil, off you'll go to paradise, but no cherry Danish." He actually winked at me.

"How do you know I'm a good soul? I can be bad sometimes." I gave him a simpering smile. Why was I turning into a besotted female? This was getting scary.

Helium-3 Fusion 4

Comment [PHS 158]: Okay so I think she's keeping some kind of score here but why did the numbers start at 3?

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As soon as we were seated, a burly, older man with thick, black hair and matching moustache welcomed us with a smile and very white teeth. He had the same intense blue eyes that Eddie had. ~~Senhor~~~~Senor~~ Edward got a bear hug, like family. A tall, slender woman with slightly Asian features ran out from the back and greeted Eddie in a similar fashion. She was wearing a full-length white apron.

"Jess, meet Miya and Gustavo, my friends."

Helium-3 Fusion S

is this the name of the town?

Comment [PHS 159]: No hyphen with adverb

Comment [PHS 1510]: Why does meeting his friends give Fusion another point? I like this writing device, I just don't understand it.

## LITERARY NOVEL: HELIUM 3 BY MARILYN DELSON

"Estimado Senhorita. We welcome you and will prepare a dinner we hope you will love," Gustavo said. They returned to the kitchen.

Eddie must have picked up on my fears concerning exotic food.

"Don't worry, Jess. They'll bring us grilled steak and sushi, which will be the best you've ever tasted. Will you join me for a cocktail — a Sakeirinha? It's a Caipirinha made with sake."

I couldn't refuse such a cool invitation, although I wasn't sure about the sushi.

"What's the story with Miya and Gustavo? Married?"

"Happily so, for several years now."

"How did you meet them?" I asked. Hunger pangs clutched at my stomach in response to the audible sizzle of a thick steak hitting a hot grill. I could imagine the charring and juice flowing, from the sound and smell alone. Molecules of smoky goodness hung in the air.

"We met at work."

"Are you also a chef?"

"No. I'm a miner."

"You and Gustavo are miners?" The only mining operation in this area is for salt. "Are you at the Cayuga mine in Lansing?"

"No, not there. Helium-3," he said. Then, nothing.

"What's that? Oh wait, — don't they fill party balloons with helium?"

"Yes, but Helium-3 is different."

"How so?"

### Helium-3 Fusion 6

"Right. It's found in the Earth's crust and mantle. It got trapped there when the Earth was formed. You know ... the Big Bang. It's also found in the atmosphere and in natural gas."

LITERARY NOVEL: HELIUM 3 BY MARILYN DELSON

"But, what's it for?"

"Ah well, ... Helium-3 power plants can generate electricity and stop the clock on global warming. That's because Helium-3 is clean, compared to fossil fuels. ~~And we wouldn't do no longer~~ have to worry about nuclear accidents or radioactive waste disposal. Also, the power plants would be more efficient, and have lower operating costs than anything we use now."

"So, where's the mine — in the Southern Tier?"

Gustavo was coming with our plates.

"Not exactly. Ah, here's Gustavo, and Marcus is bringing our drinks. We can talk about this later," he said, with more than a hint of determination. Our drinks tasted of sugar, lime and herbs, with a kick. The steaks were uniformly rare and perfectly charred on the outside.

I did pick up on him wanting to change the subject. Eddie's hesitation threw up a red flag, — well maybe just a pink flag. Investigative reporters don't get mayors to quit after uncovering their fondness for kiddie porn sites by playing nice. Fortunate for me, his scorned wife was the snitch. Nor did I cut any slack with two of our (former) city councilmen over their voter-registration scheme. On the other hand, maybe I was just being my suspicious self, fed-up with being lied to by politicians and officials in my daily work. I decided to cut him some slack, for now. Besides, not giving any slack is how I lost most of my (former) boyfriends. So, we engaged in harmless chit-chat. He even hugged me goodbye, chastely, after walking me to my car. His odd but pleasant scent — like citrus and air full of ozone after a rain — lingered on my coat collar as I drove home.

nic

Comment [PHS IS11]: This comes out of nowhere. Maybe put it somewhere else.

JULIE

LITERARY NOVEL: HELIUM 3 BY MARILYN DELSON

How did she come to be marooned on Earth?  
How long was she expecting to stay?  
How does she know how to fit in.

Intriguing premise.

Summary: If you were an alien, marooned on Earth, how would you fit in? By concealment, through heroism and service, mind control, or superior technology? What if you were falling in love with the very human who could best destroy you?

Where and when does the story take place?  
"the state/country they call"

Ch.1: POLAR VORTEX

Elaborate with whom? where? what did she do to pass the time?

Parallel construction not only... but also just so... so not because... but more to... than to...

↳ too human! ↓

Was it cabin fever that gave me the bright idea to meet a complete stranger for afternoon coffee, or something else? After two months of hunkering down under the polar vortex, not only was my skin dry and pasty but I had a less-than-favorable view of the male race.

SEVERE Explain that criticism took over weather conditions.

Suddenly, the anti-lock brakes engaged on a patch of black ice at the eighth curve on Cedarvale Road. The car started to skid into a ditch, which ran alongside a swiftly-flowing stream, now frozen. The icy corkscrew of blacktop, the road I fear the most but can't escape if I need to get anywhere, has exactly thirteen switchbacks. Lucky number thirteen. I was born on Friday the thirteenth. By local legend, the ghosts of its victims manifest on certain foggy nights.

Like Lombard Street in San Francisco?

How so?

I jolted into survival mode and turned the wheel to the left, slowly, and managed to get back on the road, which eventually straightened and leveled off. The zig-zagging wooded ravine it was built on, with its hulking evergreens leaning in on both sides and darkening the sky, finally yielded to the uniform streets of suburbia. Idiot, I mumbled, realizing I've succumbed, yet again, to a few emails from some guy. But at least this time, I did the choosing, from his dating service video.

stay on?

Aliens like coffee? Compared to preferred beverage - motor oil or \_\_\_\_\_?

I arrived at my destination shaken, feeling entitled to a large cup of coffee. It was one of the better national chains, although I wasn't pleased when it drove our Mom-and-Pop version out

whose?

JULIE

LITERARY NOVEL: HELIUM 3 BY MARILYN DELSON

of business. I did a quick appearance check in the rearview mirror and thought he'd probably like what he saw, despite the over-moisturized pasty skin. Men liked full red lips, large brown eyes, prominent cheekbones, and thick eyebrows framing a woman's face, or so I was told. I wore riding boots and a mannish Harris tweed jacket because I like to dress this way and have a theory that it puts men at ease when women dress like them. I ran my fingers through my longish, dirty-blonde hair, trying to pump up its defeated lack of bounce before heading into the lion's den. The winter air was sharp as I inhaled, like breathing in tiny shards of glass mixed with idling car exhaust.

The chain was full of weekenders: pert, blond cheerleaders and gawky basketball players in post-game celebration, and noisy families, glad to be sprung from the all-too-familiar walls of home in deep winter. The order line was long, but I finally got that mug of joe. I spied a lone table in the back, dirty with dishes but unoccupied, and I sank into a chair with my coffee mug.

The first heavenly sip jolted my memory about our agreed-upon sign, and I searched for the silk rose in my tote bag. But before I could even place it on the table, he was standing next to me.

"Are you Jess?" he asked, eyeing me with an appreciative smile. His eyes were so blue, much more intense than in his video. I felt my cheeks flush, hoping he wouldn't notice.

"Yes. Jessamyn Sandman." I extended my hand to shake his. "But people call me Jess. How did you know it was me, without the flower? I wasn't wrapped up in all this winter gear when I made the video."

"True. I just searched for the most interesting woman in the room and found you. I'm Eddie, by the way."

If said so in the manual

What eyes?

How old is she?

too human

marked intro

After the ingratiating compliment, he looked me over in that universal male way, which caused me to blush again. Damn! Helium-3 Fusion 3

"How clever of you," I laughed. "And what a good liar you are. Have a seat."

"I will. Just want to get some coffee... yours smells delicious."

He scooped up the dirty dishes and trudged toward the front in his boots, which left a trail of melting snow. He was tall, handsome with a kind of European vibe, with thick, bluish-black hair, and eyes which seemed to take a reading of me as he spoke, kind of like an instant-read thermometer.

He returned with a tray holding a mug and two cherry-filled pastries. I accepted the offering without the usual protestations about my diet. I almost slid off the road today; this pastry could be my last.

"How was your drive here?" I asked, after the dishes were settled.

"I almost slid off the road a couple of times."

"Me too. We lucked out." Our eyes locked and I felt a jolt.

"Yes, living is preferable to dying. Especially when I know for a fact they don't serve pastries in Heaven," he said with a chuckle, causing those blue eyes to crinkle at the edges.

"What makes you think I'm ending up in Heaven?" I asked, blushing again.

"Pastries aside, which are plentiful in Hell by the way, I feel you are a good soul, without a shadow of a doubt. So when you shake off this mortal coil, off you'll go to paradise, but no cherry Danish." He actually winked at me.

"How do you know I'm a good soul? I can be bad sometimes." I gave him a simpering smile. Why was I turning into a besotted female? This was getting scary.

Helium-3 Fusion 4



LITERARY NOVEL: HELIUM 3 BY MARILYN DELSON

JULIE  
Include conversation  
show. Don't tell

We continued to talk back-and-forth, in a flirty-silly way for a couple of hours. I can't account for how the time slipped away, except to say that his trenchant observations about life were so similar to mine, I decided I'd found a kindred spirit. Eddie suggested we go someplace quieter for an early dinner. By then, the manager was giving us a why don't they leave already look, surveying the never-ending line for tables.

Wouldn't manager have done that sooner?

"Good idea. Tables are in short supply here today and I think we've overstayed our welcome," I said, pointing to the manager. But I was adamant about following him to the restaurant in my own car. Just in case.

"I have a fusion Brazilian-Japanese place in mind," he said.

Was he joking? It sounded way too sophisticated for Polar Vortex Central and wondered why I hadn't heard of it before.

?

###

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word choice facing?

As soon as we were seated, a burly, older man with thick, black hair and matching moustache welcomed us with a smile and very white teeth. He had the same intense blue eyes that Eddie had. Senior Edward got a bear hug, like family. A tall, slender woman with slightly Asian features ran out from the back and greeted Eddie in similar fashion. She was wearing a full-length white apron.

Senior

"Jess, meet Miya and Gustavo, my friends."

Helium-3 Fusion 5

?

JULIE

LITERARY NOVEL: HELIUM 3 BY MARILYN DELSON

Señorita

"Estimado Señorita. We welcome you and will prepare a dinner we hope you will love,"

Gustavo said. They returned to the kitchen.

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"Don't worry, Jess. They'll bring us grilled steak and sushi, which will be the best you've ever tasted. Will you join me for a cocktail - a Sakeirinha? It's a Caipirinha made with sake."

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"What's that? Oh wait ... don't they fill party balloons with helium?"

"Yes, but helium-3 is different."

"How so?"

**Helium-3 Fusion 6**

"Right. It's found in the Earth's crust and mantle. It got trapped there when the Earth was formed. You know ... the Big Bang. It's also found in the atmosphere and in natural gas."

What is right?

In response to

JULIE

LITERARY NOVEL: HELIUM 3 BY MARILYN DELSON

"But, what's it for?"

"Ah well, ... helium-3 power plants can generate electricity and stop the clock on global warming. That's because helium-3 is clean, compared to fossil fuels. And we'd no longer have to worry about nuclear accidents or radioactive waste disposal. Also, the power plants would be more efficient, and have lower operating costs than anything we use now."

"So, where's the mine - in the Southern Tier?" Gustavo was coming with our plates.

"Not exactly. Ah, here's Gustavo, and Marcus is bringing our drinks. We can talk about this later," he said, with more than a hint of determination. Our drinks tasted of sugar, lime and herbs, with a kick. The steaks were uniformly rare and perfectly charred on the outside.

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redundant

Does she like them rare like that?

HOW DOES THE READER KNOW SHE'S AN ALIEN?  
HOW LONG HAS SHE BEEN ON EARTH?  
SHE SEEMS TOO HUMAN.  
DOES EDDIE HAVE ANY INKLING THAT SHE'S NOT?  
GIVE HER SOME ALIEN QUALITIES: REACTIONS, TASTES.  
DOES SHE SHAPE-SHIFT BACK TO HER ALIEN FORM WHEN NOT ON DATE?  
HAVE HER OBSERVE AND COMPARE THIS CIVILIZATION TO HERS.  
IS THIS A DATE OR AN INVESTIGATION?  
IS THERE A REQUEST FOR ANOTHER DATE?  
DOES SHE NEED TO GET PHYSICAL TO GAIN TRUST?  
HOW OFTEN DOES SHE USE DATING SITE?

## LITERARY NOVEL: HELIUM 3 BY MARILYN DELSON

Marilyn-

*We find Jess on her way to a date with someone she met on line. She's grumping about the weather, about males, the coffee place, and the people inside. The date shows up and is pleasurable to look at, but she must remind herself to go lightly while questioning him.*

*We find out about helium 3 and its advantages as a source of energy.*

*They talk for two hours and then go to a unique restaurant. She has a good but measured time.*

*He hugs her. She goes home.*

*There's no hint that the summary has anything to do with the story. She sounds very human. So does he. The reader needs something to hold onto showing that this has a sci-fi element.*

*The summary sounds more interesting than the first five pages. Might be a problem.*

Dave

**Summary: If you were an alien, marooned on Earth, how would you fit in? By concealment, through heroism and service, mind control, or superior technology? What if you were falling in love with the very human who could best destroy you?**

The story flows well. I would want to read about the alien perspective - good start

Ch. 1: POLAR VORTEX

Was it cabin fever that gave me the bright idea to meet a complete stranger for afternoon coffee, or something else? After two months of hunkering down under the polar vortex, *(Maybe I need a definition of the polar vortex. In the following paragraph, the character is driving on a road and skidding into a ditch. Where is the vortex? Polar's signals a completely different image. Is the reference to the extreme cold snaps that we've grown accustomed to?)* not only was my skin dry and pasty but I had a less-than-favorable view of the male race. *(Male is not a race. Why would a cold snap give her 'a less than favorable view of the male race'?)*

Suddenly, the anti-lock brakes engaged on a patch of black ice at the eighth curve on Cedarvale Road. The car started to skid into a ditch, which ran alongside a *(usually?)* swiftly-flowing stream, now frozen. The icy corkscrew of blacktop, the road I fear the most but can't

LITERARY NOVEL: HELIUM 3 BY MARILYN DELSON

*born on Friday the thirteenth. By local legend, the ghosts of its victims manifest on certain foggy nights. (All of the above brings the reader out of the story.)*

I jolted into survival mode and turned the wheel to the left, slowly, and managed to get back on the road, which eventually straightened and leveled off. The zig-zagging wooded ravine it was built on, with its hulking evergreens leaning-in on both sides and darkening the sky, finally yielded to the uniform streets of suburbia. *Idiot, I mumbled, realizing I've succumbed, yet again, to a few emails from some guy. But at least this time, I did the choosing, from his dating service video. (This has no reference. The comment seems out of place.)*

I arrived at my destination shaken, feeling entitled to a large cup of coffee. It was one of the better national chains, although I wasn't pleased when it drove our Mom-and-Pop version out of business. I did a quick appearance check in the rearview mirror and thought he'd probably like what he saw, despite the over-moisturized pasty skin. Men liked full red lips, large brown eyes, prominent cheekbones, and thick eyebrows framing a woman's face, or so I was told. I wore riding boots and a mannish Harris tweed jacket because I like to dress this way and have a theory that it puts men at ease when women dress like them. I ran my fingers through my longish, dirty-blonde hair, trying to pump up its defeated lack of bounce before heading into the lion's den. The winter air was sharp as I inhaled, like breathing in tiny shards of glass mixed with idling car exhaust.

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LITERARY NOVEL: HELIUM 3 BY MARILYN DELSON

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"Yes. Jessamyn Sandman." I extended my hand to shake his. "But people call me Jess. How did you know it was me, without the flower? I wasn't wrapped up in all this winter gear when I made the video."

"True. I just searched for the most interesting woman in the room and found you. I'm Eddie, by the way." *(Ugh!)*

After the ingratiating compliment, he looked me over in that universal male way, which caused me to blush again. Damn! **Helium-3 Fusion 3**

"How clever of you," I laughed. "And what a good liar you are. Have a seat."

"I will. Just want to get some coffee... yours smells delicious."

He scooped up the dirty dishes and trudged toward the front in his boots, which left a trail of melting snow. He was tall, handsome with a kind of European vibe, with thick, bluish-black hair, and eyes which seemed to take a reading of me as he spoke, kind of like an instant-read thermometer.

He returned with a tray holding a mug and two cherry-filled pastries. I accepted the offering without the usual protestations about my diet. *I almost slid off the road today; this pastry could be my last. (Delete. You handle the action with dialogue that follows.)*

"How was your drive here?" I asked, after the dishes were settled.

*"I almost slid off the road a couple of times." (Repeat of a line just previous.)*

LITERARY NOVEL: HELIUM 3 BY MARILYN DELSON

"Me too. We lucked out." Our eyes locked and I felt a jolt.

"Yes, living is preferable to dying. Especially when I know for a fact they don't serve pastries in Heaven," he said with a chuckle, causing those blue eyes to crinkle at the edges.

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Helium-3 Fusion 4

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"Good idea. *Tables are in short supply here today and I think we've overstayed our welcome, (Again. This is a repeat of a line just previous.)* I said, pointing to the manager. But I was adamant about following him to the restaurant in my own car. Just in case.

"I have a fusion Brazilian-Japanese place in mind," he said.

Was he joking? It sounded way too sophisticated for Polar Vortex Central and wondered why I hadn't heard of it before.

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Helium-3 Fusion 5

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LITERARY NOVEL: HELIUM 3 BY MARILYN DELSON

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Helium-3 Fusion 6

"Right. It's found in the Earth's crust and mantle. It got trapped there when the Earth was formed. You know ... the Big Bang. It's also found in the atmosphere and in natural gas."

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*(Delete: You handle the action with the following dialogue.)*

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I did pick up on him wanting to change the subject. Eddie's hesitation threw up a red flag; well maybe just a pink flag. Investigative reporters *(She's an investigative reporter? That's*

LITERARY NOVEL: HELIUM 3 BY MARILYN DELSON

*news we should be aware of long before she considers digging into her date.)* don't get mayors to quit after uncovering their fondness for kiddie porn sites by playing nice. Fortunate for me, his scorned wife was the snitch. Nor did I cut any slack with two of our (former) city councilmen over their voter-registration scheme. On the other hand, maybe I was just being my suspicious self, fed-up with being lied to by politicians and officials in my daily work. I decided to cut him some slack, for now. Besides, not giving any slack is how I lost most of my (former) boyfriends. *(And, I'd assume, most of her ex-friends, too.)* So, we engaged in harmless chit-chat. He even hugged me goodbye, chastely, after walking me to my car. His odd but pleasant scent, like citrus and air full of ozone after a rain, lingered on my coat collar as I drove home.