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Subject: Re: Home is Where the Heart Is  
Posted by [Lillehafrue](#) on Sun, 29 Jul 2012 14:36:35 GMT  
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From: Tikatu Sent: 8/5/2006 7:39 PM

Tuesday, July 24, 2068, 8:15 p.m., Paris, France (6:15 a.m., Wednesday, July 25 on Tracy Island)

Brains had dinner at The Calais that night, meeting Professor Borrender in the lobby and escorting him to the hotel's restaurant. The talk at first was personal, each catching up with the other's life, then -- as the meal came - the two men began to talk more earnestly.

Behind Brains, at a table where the occupants could see their target yet hopefully not be noticed, a young woman with dark brown hair and attractive spectacles sat with an older man, his curly black hair shot through with the occasional silver strand. They were speaking French, and had ordered wine to drink.

"The wine is excellent, Jean-Claude, though I would much prefer my usual Pernod," the woman said quietly to her companion, her accent perfect. She glanced at the table. "Do you think they will dare strike while he is with someone?"

"I do not know," Jean-Claude replied with a sigh. He toyed with his goblet. "Is your chauffeur in place?"

"Yes," she replied, taking a sip of her drink. "He is watching the bar to see that nothing untoward is added to the drinks on that end."

"But if something is added to the food?" Jean-Claude asked. "What do we do then?"

"We must let our actions be guided by circumstances," she responded. She glanced at Brains and his companion out of the corner of one eye. "They seem to be enjoying themselves."

Indeed, Brains seemed far more animated than she'd seen him for a while. He seemed to be telling Professor Borrender a funny tale, one that had the older man laughing... discreetly, of course.

Suddenly, a slight beeping in her handbag caught her attention. Jean-Claude looked at her with a puzzled expression as she picked up her bag and pulled out her powder compact and lipstick. She opened the compact, hating it that people thought she was primping at the table, but remembering that she wasn't Lady Penelope Creighton-Ward at that moment, but a French woman, and one with rather poor taste at that. Opening the compact, she used her lipstick to send a silent, coded signal to Parker. "What news?"

"Summat's 'appening, Milady." Parker's voice sounded in her ears via her earrings. "One o' the waiter blokes was takin' a pair o' drinks out. Ay 'eard the number 'vent-doo'" - Penelope quickly translated that mangled pronunciation to "Vingt-deux"... twenty-two. - "which is Mr. Brains's table. He was stopped by a man 'oo asked 'im a question an' Ay'm sure Ay saw the lady wiv 'im drop

summat inter one o' the drinks."

Penelope nodded slowly, her signal that she'd received the message, then she closed the compact and put away both it and the lipstick. She motioned her head in the direction of the waiter, who was coming up on the scientists' table. He had two drinks on a tray -- one was a bottle of fine German lager, meant for Dr. Borrender, and the other was a martini, a drink that surprised Penelope as she saw it placed by Brains's plate. The older man looked up and thanked the waiter verbally as his beer was poured for him, while Brains gave the server a bare nod, continuing, single-minded, with his story.

The waiter left, and Penelope kept her eye on Brains without really seeming to do so, while bringing her companion up to speed.

"What do we do?" Jean-Claude murmured. "If we make a disturbance, the enemy will know we are here."

"We will have to wait and see what happens," Penny said softly. "If he drinks it, the effects should not take long to become evident, and we can step in then."

However, Brains took care of the matter himself, unawares. His story was reaching a climax, it seemed, and as it did, he flung out both arms... and knocked his martini to the floor, breaking the glass.

The crash brought the attention of the whole room to the scholarly pair, and conversation stilled as Brains, red-faced, began to pick up the larger pieces of glass. The waiter returned, bringing a dustpan to collect the shards, waving aside Brains's proffered help, and accepting with a smile the scientist's abject apologies. Conversation began to pick up again, as people realized there was really nothing to see, and Professor Borrender had a quick word with the waiter before he left. The server nodded, and returned moments later with two more bottles of beer and one glass; a refill for the professor, and a new, tamper proof drink for his younger companion.

"That was a close one," Penelope breathed, suddenly relaxing. "I doubt very much that our mysterious adversaries will try that trick again... at least, not this evening."