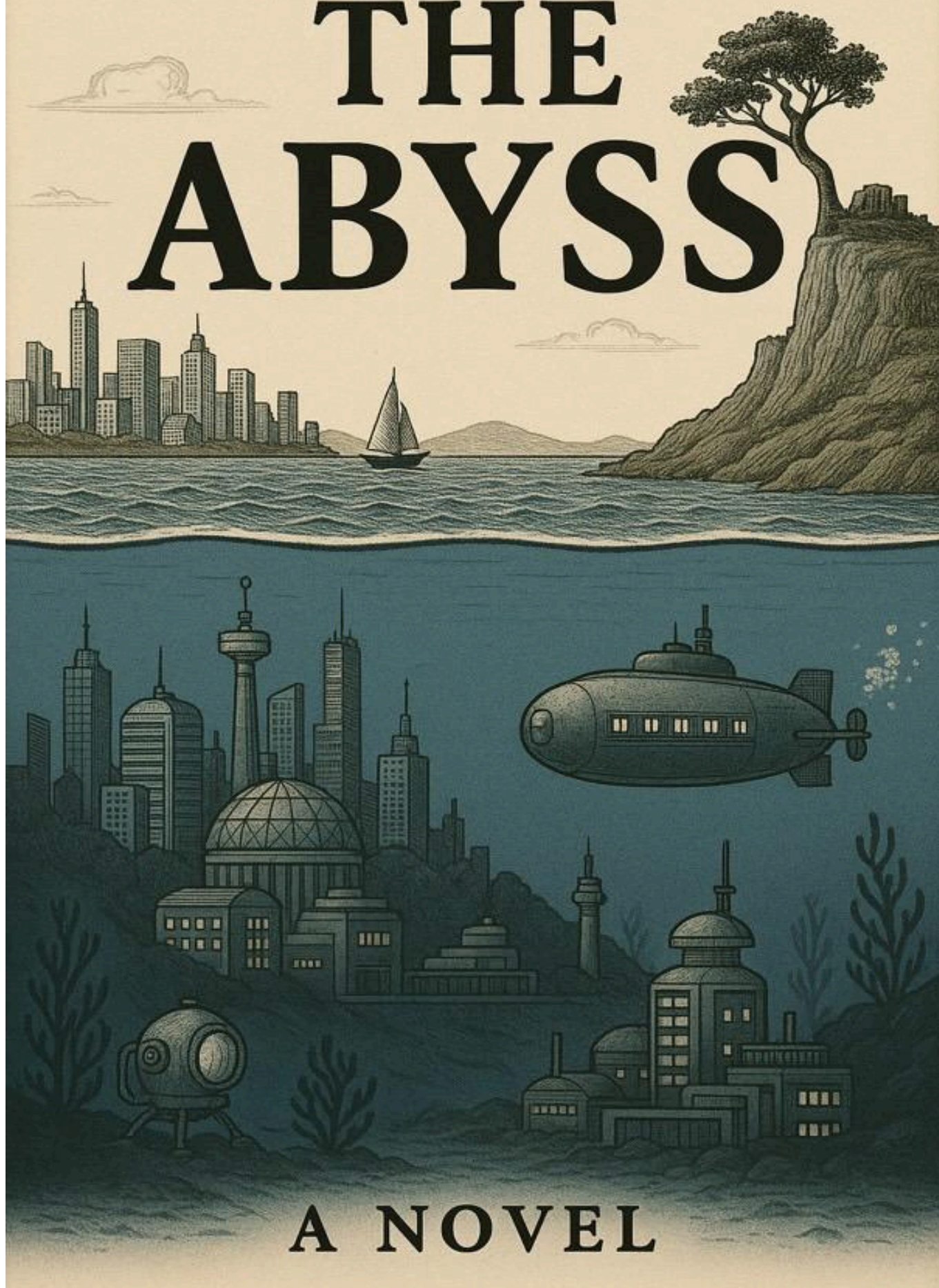


# THE ABYSS



A NOVEL



# **THE ABYSS**

*Lara Tamasini, Gontran Dang Van, Ilan Ben Ali, Augustin Fixel, Camille Roux, Andrei Boriskevitch*

## Prologue

It all began when a comet called Nyx-47 was seen in the sky by scientists. They quickly realized it was going to hit Earth. But it was too late to stop it.

The comet crashed into the South Pole, in the Antarctic ice. The impact melted a huge amount of ice at once. This fresh water changed the oceans: their salt level, currents, and temperature.

After that, the polar glaciers started to break apart. The Arctic and even the glaciers of the Himalayas melted. The sea level rose slowly but constantly. Every week, coastal cities like Miami, Kolkata, and Venice were drowned.

Humans tried to adapt. They built dikes, moved populations, and looked for higher lands. But the sea kept rising.

In the end, humanity had to choose between two options.

The first: change to live underwater. Scientists modified the human body to breathe and survive in the ocean. Those who accepted this change became the Submerg

The second: stay human and live at high altitude. Those who refused the transformation moved to the mountains and high plains. They created a new, simple society based on farming. They are called the Terrestrials.

For two hundred years, these two groups lived apart.

# Chapter One

## — Underwater —

At the end of the 23rd century, a man named Akros lived deep under the sea, near a large underwater city called Thalassea. His skin was pale, and he breathed through slits on his neck. He looked at the dome that protected the city — a large, almost transparent organic roof.

Thalassea was a living city, made of modified corals and algae. The buildings moved slightly with the currents, and the transports looked like jellyfish or sharks. Everything seemed calm and stable.

But Akros knew the city was in danger. The machines that controlled the pressure inside the domes were starting to fail. The walls were showing signs of weakness. The ecosystems, carefully grown for years, were no longer working properly. Every day brought new alarms, new leaks. Akros gathered the Abyssal Council, a group of twelve former scientists.

Akros said:

— *The city is dying. We can't pretend anymore.*

An old member of the council replied:

— *We survived where the Terrestrials gave up. We changed our bodies to live here. Why would we go back to the surface?*

Akros answered:

— *Because we can't stay here anymore. It's no longer a refuge. It's a prison.*

A young council member asked:

— *What if they don't want us up there?*

Akros looked away.

— *They don't recognize us anymore. But it's time to show them that we're still human. We also deserve land.*

For the first time in two hundred years, he said a forgotten word:

— *Reconquest.*

That word stirred everyone.

## — On land —

Meanwhile, far in the mountains, a young woman named Lysa was collecting roots. She lived in a Terrestrial village, high in the hills. Lysa had never seen the sea. For her, it was a dangerous place.

Life here was hard but simple. People farmed, hunted very little. Tools were basic, machines rare, and everything was shared.

But there was a problem: the phones. They were no longer used to talk, but to control emotions. Everyone had to wear one on their wrist. They measured feelings and gave small chemical doses to calm or focus people. A chemical peace — with no desire, no rebellion.

Lysa refused to wear one. Her father had disconnected her secretly when she was a child. He died soon after in an “accident.” Since then, she had lived between two worlds.

That morning, Lysa received a coded message, on a forgotten frequency.

A woman’s voice, coming from deep in the sea:

*If you hear this message... listen to us. We don't want war. We just want to breathe. Time is up.  
The domes are cracking. The children are suffering.*

Lysa stepped back, shocked.

The Submerged were still alive. And they were asking for help.

In the following days, the signs increased. Drones flew over the Iona islands. Cyber-fish swam up the rivers. The Surface Council called an emergency meeting.

For the first time in two hundred years, the two peoples spoke to each other.

## Chapter Two

Lysa walked through the tall grasses of the Emparis plateau, breaking through the morning frost. The message she had received kept turning over in her head. An unknown voice, full of fear. And above all, a truth that had always been hidden from her: the Submerged really did exist.

The Terrestrial Council quickly gathered in the great hall of the Wind Library, a wooden building set into the cliff. The oldest members, with wrinkled faces, sat at a round table. Lysa, summoned for intercepting the message, stood with her arms crossed.

Elorn, one of the elders, said to her:

*- You shouldn't have picked up that signal. It comes from a forgotten network. And for a good reason.*

Lysa replied:

*- So you knew all along.*

A heavy silence fell. An old woman, Lady Aléa, spoke up:

*- We never denied they existed. But we chose to forget, to survive. To open this file is like to reopen an old wound.*

*- They're asking for help, not war, says Lysa.*

Elorn raised his voice:

*- And when they want our mountains, our forests, our land? Do you think they'll just live in peace?*

### — Underwater —

Underwater, Akros was talking to Sira, a biologist.

*- Did you get the message? asked Sira.*

*- Yes. But no official reply. The Terrestrials pretend not to hear.*

*- So they're scared.*

Akros sighed. He felt that his diplomatic efforts were no longer convincing anyone. The people were becoming impatient. In the depths, a group was stirring, the person responsible: Varian.

Varian, once a researcher, had become the leader of a radical group called Aequor. For him, The Terrestrials were no longer brothers, but enemies. He wanted reconquest by force.

One evening, as Akros was leaving the official quarters, a hologram lit up on the way.

Varian appeared:

*- Akros, you're going down a blind alley. They don't want to hear us. We'll make them listen.*

*- By war? asked Akros.*

*- By necessity. We don't have time to wait any longer. Every second here is killing us.*

Akros remained calm:

*- You're hastening the end. We're not invaders.*

*- We're not invaders. We're survivors. And they condemn us.*

The hologram disappeared.

### **—- On land —-**

Back in Emparis, Lysa joined a secret group of young rebels called the Shards. They wanted to deactivate the chemical control of telephones and reawaken free thought.

In a cave converted into a lab, she met Joen, a sharp-eyed hacker.

*- Have you spoken to a Submerged? he asked.*

*- No, not directly. I've received a message.*

*- So we can't back out now. If the elders refuse to listen, we'll force a dialogue.*

*- Without violence?*

*- With the truth. Sometimes that's worse than weapons.*

That evening, Lysa climbed to the heights alone. She switched on her old long-wave radio and sent a simple message. In the depths, a light went on. Someone, somewhere, had answered her message.



## Chapter Three

—— underwater ——

In the depths of Thalasséa, far from the controlled zones, a small group of Submerged had gathered. Varian, a respected but radical leader, stood in the center of a dark room. Around him, a dozen fighters were listening. All had bodies modified to survive in the most extreme environments. They were nearly unrecognizable: thick skin, fins, eyes adapted to the dark. This was the Aequor group, the armed wing of the revolt.

— *“The Surface-dwellers don’t want to see us. So we’ll make them look,” said Varian. “In three cycles, we’ll rise through the Strait. We’ll reach their shores. Not to dominate. To survive.”*

— *“And Akros?” asked a female fighter, her arms covered in hard spikes.*

— *“He hesitates. He still thinks we can talk. But he’ll have to face the truth.”*

Standing a bit apart, Néol, a young Submerged, was watching silently. He had joined Aequor in hopes of finding a way to save his sister, who was sick and dependent on breathing assistance. But what he saw now frightened him.

—— on land ——

On the surface, Lysa and her group, the Shards, were launching their first operation against the system: they wanted to disable an antenna that was broadcasting chemicals to regulate citizens’ emotions. It was located in an old abandoned bunker near Orsay.

The entrance was protected by an electromagnetic field and automated drones. Joen, one of the Shards, was working on a moss-covered interface.

A sharp sound the field dropped. The drones became useless and drifted away slowly.

Inside, they found hundreds of small capsules. On each one, there was an inscription:

“Cognitive Stabilization – Level 3.”

Lysa stared, shocked.

— *“They were drugging us. To keep us calm.”*

— *“It’s always the same,” said Joen. “They call it peace, but it’s just control.”*

They retrieved the data and destroyed the systems. The next day, several residents of Kael began to have strange reactions: bursts of laughter, sudden fits of anger, tears for no reason. Emotions, long held back, were returning.

—— underwater ——

Underwater, Akros discovered that Varian was preparing a military operation: transport capsules, special suits, organic weapons... everything was ready. Akros was furious. He went to confront Varian.

— *“You’re going to doom us.”*

— *“No,” Varian replied. “I’m giving our people a chance.”*

— *“You’re going to destroy it.”*

Varian stepped closer, calm but firm.

— *“You think we can keep waiting? That things will get better? Meanwhile, our children are suffocating.”*

Akros realized he couldn’t make him change his mind. He would have to find another solution.

More and more troubled, Néol went alone to the Archives. He found an old visual journal from the early days of genetic modification. He saw scenes from the surface: children laughing, people around a fire, happy families.

Then he saw the operations too: the transformations, the separations, the pain. That night, he decided to leave Aequor. He sent a secret message to Akros:

*“I can help you. But we have to act quickly. They’re rising soon. And they will show no mercy.”*

On the surface, the Terrestrial Council learned of the Shards' attack. They declared a state of alert. Soldiers were sent to the coasts, ports were closed, and old weapons were pulled out of the bunkers.

During a Council meeting, the elders became agitated:

— *“They’re coming. Those creatures from the deep. We have to defend ourselves.”*

That same evening, Lysa received a new message. A boy's voice, hesitant :

*“My name is Néol. I come from Thalasséa. I'm like you.*

*I want to prevent a war. Help me. Help us.”*

## Chapter four

### — *underwater* —

The water was darkening, the city was afraid. Varian had launched the attack.

Aequor's soldiers were emerging from the hangars. They were speeding toward the surface through the bubble columns. Beside them swam weird war machines, half living, half metallic, ready to attack. But not everyone was following.

Akros, with Neol and a few others, had moved away. They had another plan. Secretly, they wanted to turn off the energy heart of Thalassea: the Core. It was an enormous power plant, fueled by the heat of the depths. If they succeeded, the city would stop. And with it, the war.

"If we shut everything down, Thalassea will collapse" said Neol.

"I know" replied Akros.

They were advancing through underwater tunnels. In a large, dark room, in the center of the Core, Akros stopped. He looked at the faces around him.

"If we do this, there's no going back" he said.

No one wanted to take responsibility for the fate of the entire Submerged. But someone had to, for the survival of the entire race.

Neol connected his brain chip to the core of the city of Thalassea. The artificial intelligence gave him instructions.

"We have to move quickly. Bring me the antimatter charges" said Neol.

"You know what that means" replied Akros.

Indeed, it's a new high-tech gadget that can reduce an entire area to dust without any trace of explosion or noise, creating an area inaccessible to all life forms.

- *"Quick, hurry, someone will see us!"* said Neol.

They activated the antimatter charges and quickly escaped thanks to the new plasma-powered BioTech fins.

As soon as they were activated, the city began to die. The walls were cracking. Water was slowly seeping in. The corridors were filling up. The houses were engulfed. It was an apocalypse for all the inhabitants of Thalassea.

Varian, in his command pod, felt the shock. Communications stopped. The electricity went out. Structures fell one after the other.

Akros, before being submerged, activated a beacon. It slowly rose to the surface.

*We have no enemies. Only brothers.*

*Save what can be saved.*

Then Thalassea disappeared, and a large part of its population with it.

## Chapter Five

-- on land --

On land, the message sent by Akros reached Lysa. She made the Council listen to it. Even Elorn, usually so tough, had nothing to say. They weren't monsters.

But the real fight was just beginning.

In the cities, the mind-control system was breaking down. Without doses of neurodopamine, people were on their own. Some screamed in the streets. Others stayed home, terrified.

Lysa watched this lost humanity. Joen said:

- *They're panicking. They don't know how to think for themselves anymore.*

- *So we have to teach them again, she replied.*

With the Shards, she set up new things. Talking circles, where people spoke freely. Shared gardens, where they learned to grow their own food. Stays in the forest, away from screens, to rediscover silence.

People rediscovered simple things: reading a real book, listening to stories around a fire, feeling tired after a day of manual labor. Little by little, something was coming back. Something alive.

But the old world resisted. The old networks tried to return. People raised their voices:

- *Put the injectors back in. At least we felt good.*

Lysa could hear them. She understood. The fear, the loneliness, the emptiness... it was harder than she'd expected.

She looked at the faces around her, tired but free.

- *They want their prison back, she whispered.*

Then she understood: freeing everyone isn't enough.

They also have to learn to love freedom.

## Chapter Six

Some of the Submerged had survived the fall of Thalasséa.

Carried by the currents, hiding in natural rifts, they eventually surfaced near the old Yucatán coast, where the sea had receded. Among them was Néol.

He was thin, shaking but alive. A group of Terrestrials found him. He didn't fight. He breathed.

In a sanctuary near Kael, Lysa finally met him.

Their first conversation was silent. Outstretched hands. Eyes meeting.

Then came the words. He spoke of the depths. Lysa told him about the mental chains. Together, they built a bridge.

Others followed. Refugee Submerged. Curious Terrestrials.

They built a meeting camp half aquatic, half forested.

There, people talked, exchanged, relearned how to be human in a different way.

The two humanities were rediscovering each other slowly...

## Epilogue

Terrestrial society changed. Technology didn't disappear, but its role shifted. People built smart tools but without screens. Quiet, precise agricultural robots freed humans from exhausting labor. Cities turned into inhabited forests.

Children were taught philosophy before even learning to read. They learned how to question, to create, to listen.

The Submerged, now called Abyssians, founded coastal villages, adapting their way of life to the tides. Their mutations remained, but they were no longer seen as monsters.

Lysa, now a guide for the new Council, often spoke of Marx, whom she had read about in the ruins of an old library:

*— A society without exploitation, without alienation, where humans no longer work against themselves but to fulfill themselves... That's the direction we're heading.*