

MAUDE MOLD

#13

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WHO KNOWS, WHO DECIDES, AND WHO DECIDES WHO DECIDES

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2 October. Early.

Spiro let himself in and dropped his backpack on the living room floor. It had been a long walk home. He noticed the mess, of course, and at first he found himself reflexively stomping on the heavy metals and plastics, thinking there had been another impromptu invasion of cockroaches. Never fear, it was only more of Mom's junk. Regardless, he'd still have to clean it all up. At least this would necessitate mandatory time off from the beige box, analytics be damned. He fetched the broom and pan from the utility closet and swept the pretty gore into the trash.

He decided against touching anything in the kitchen. Mom was going to be mad, but you had to draw the line somewhere, and his was drawn right in front of the pantsless man staring out the window at the transit of Phobos.

Heading down the hallway to his room he could hear her talking to someone via remote telepresence. Maybe his dad?

"I can come over there, but not every single day. When I *am* there you don't want to hear anything I have to say. I feel like I'm in the way. Why are you even paying me? Anyway, I've heard Lockheed has poisoned the well."

He could see through the crack in her door that she was fiddling with her glove, trying to get the thing off, but, leveraging its monopoly on decision power, it wasn't budging. He saw her set down her cigarette and take her ungloved hand and give the finger to her gloved hand. Shortly afterward her conversation seemed to terminate. Played to extinction, the glove finally released its previously consensual grip and slid onto its charger, which she promptly kicked off the dresser onto the floor.

Spiro moved quickly down the hall to his room.

He had survived his birthday, only just.