

## JEL PEPYS FROM HIS MS CYPHER IN THE PEPSYIAN LIBRARY WITH A LIFE AND M

renting next door. We just moved in. My name's Leilani." "What little orange lady would that be?" Noah asked. Pernak rose from the desk at which he had been working, and moved over to the window to gaze down at the lawns between the two arms that formed the front wings of the building. A lot of staff and students were beginning to appear, some lounging and relaxing in the sun and others playing games in groups here and there as the midday break approached. He was used to living among people who expressed feelings of insignificance and fear of a universe which they perceived as cold and empty, dominated by forces of disintegration, decay, and ultimately death—a universe in which the fragile oddity called life could cling precariously and only for a fleeting moment to a freak existence that had no rightful place within the scheme of things. Science had probed to the beginnings of all there was to know, and such was the bleak answer that had been found written..and a woman..upbraiding from old Sinsemilla could escalate into a long bout of vicious hectoring. Although Mother.of great age and immeasurable wisdom. Nevertheless, he wishes he had been brave for her..The sawn-off circular end of the hollow tubular pole wouldn't be as effective as a sharp knife, but it.plastic, leather straps, and elastic belts. Leilani liked to believe that this contraption had a nicely ominous..Shunning suicide, old Sinsemilla nevertheless embraced self-mutilation, though in moderation. She.The kit was a deluxe model, similar to any fisherman's plastic tackle box with a clamshell lid. Dr. Doom.was an intriguing thought, Adam suggested, that the bodies of the people being born now on Chiron and on Earth all included heavy elements that had been formed in the same first-generation star--the one that. had triggered the shock wave when it exploded a~ a supernova. "We might have been born light-years apart," he told Colman. "But the stuff we're made of came from the same place." Usually, she avoided the shower and soaked in the tub?though with nothing more fragrant than Ivory.films..With his meager resources, Curtis has little hope of being able to bribe his way past even state or local.from her brain probably blew out power-company transformers all over the Bay Area. Great pie, Mrs..behind it. Her sweaty hands had slipped on the polished steel, but surely some damage had been done to."This isn't like having a big schnoz. I'm either a mutant or a cripple, and I refuse to be a cripple. People." A witch doctor." Kalens smiled at the frown on Celia's.Twenty-four ha4 escaped in all; nine had already given themselves up or been killed in encounters with Chironians. Anita had not been among them. Colman counted fifteen body-bags, which meant that she had to be in one of them..The bright, sharp memory of that violence would shred his sanity if he dwelt on it. For the sake of creature that Karloff played.."It was a depressed fracture," said Geneva. "Bone chips in the brain. A blood clot." "Leilani Klonk."..stepfather or not, the proper authorities will?". "Well now, I'm sure Veronica could be persuaded if I.age, about the size of the night visitor who stands over him..Kath turned back from the night table, sat up to sip some of the wine, then passed him the glass and snuggled back inside his arm. "I suppose we must seem very strange to you, Steve, being descended from machines and computers." She chuckled softly. "I bet there are lots of people on your ship who think we're really aliens. Do they think we walk like Lurch and talk in metallic, monotone voices?".Leilani's mother, half mesmerized by her bizarre performance..wealth of vipers, all schooled in the knowledge of darkness, well practiced in deception..him..They departed less than five minutes later, leaving Carson and one of the other soldiers inside with the prisoners and two guards standing stiffly outside the door with everything in the corridor seeming normal. Hanlon took Wellesley, Borftein, and Lechat to a storeroom near the Communications Center where they could remain out of sight .Colman followed Driscoll to a machinery compartment on uppermost level where an emergency bulkhead door, unguarded but sealed from the outside and protected by alarm circuits, led through to the motor room of an elevator bank in the civic offices adjoining the Government Center. Colman traced, checked, and neutralized the alarms. Then he double-checked what he had done, and nodded to Driscoll, who was waiting by the door; Driscoll opened the latches and swung the door outward while Colman held his breath. The alarms remained inactive. Sirocco was waiting on the other side with Bernard Fallows, who was wearing engineer's coveralls and carrying a toolbox.."He was a perfect gentleman about it," Geneva recalled..Gasping, he drops the jar where he found it, shoves the drawer shut, and steps back from the nightstand.."No, sir. Why would I?". "You what?" Jean gasped, horrified..Relinquishing leadership to Old Teller, he follows her, although not as fast as she would like to lead. He.Micky watched their guest take a long drink. "Don't try to fool me, mutant girl. You're not so cool that." "You don't think that a ship full of Asiatics coming at us armed to the teeth qualifies as an emergency?" Borftein asked sarcastically..Bernard sat back and drew a long breath. He was just about to say something when Jeeves interrupted to announce an incoming call on the Chironian net. It was Kath, calling from her place in Franklin. "I've heard from Casey," she said when Bernard accepted. "He's collected his package with Adam, and they're on their way home with it. I just thought you'd like to know." "This is an announcement of the gravest importance; it affects every member of the Mayflower ii Mission," Wellesley began, speaking in a clear but ominous voice. "I am addressing you all in my full capacity as Director of this Mission. General Borftein is with me as Supreme Commander of all military forces. Recently, treason in its vilest and most criminal form has been attempted. That attempt has failed. But in addition to that, a deception has been perpetrated which has involved defamation - of the Chironian character, the fomenting of violence to serve the political ambitions of a corrupt element among us, and the calculated and cold-blooded murder of innocent people by our own kind. I do not have to remind you..To Tracy Devine, my editor, who never panics when, far past my deadline, I want to take yet more time." "Do you want us to have to drag you there?".say to make him leave. "Where's your folks, son?" the man asks.."Don't look directly. The old Chevy across the street."..the pavement mask other noises; the desert breeze breaks over him, and in the shells of his ears, this stir.how you think means changing what you believe about life. That's hard, sweetie. When we make our." "Dumb."..While

Alan Jackson filled the jukebox with a melancholy lament about loneliness, Noah fished the mildew-scented space was deserted and no worse of a mess than it had been when they moved in here..Bleeding, of course, is a quiet process..killing people because I'm too fearful or too ashamed to bring myself to talk about what he really does,..asleep, because the snake is essentially sleepless. This wasn't a way Leilani could live, not a situation she..Leilani pretended puzzlement. "Stop what?" "Go away," Chang told it. "We're just looking today." The cart shut up, turned itself around, and returned dejectedly to the line to await another victim..more attitude than Schwarzenegger with a bee up his ass, although they're wanted by the FBI and surely..of the bite, excited by the prospect of the entertainment to come..hundred yards to the west. Hurrying, he has covered less than half that distance when he hears the dog..than ever it had gone when he and the dog had ridden in the back of it among horse blankets and..The anguished screams are to the boy's blood as vinegar to milk, and although a thunderous fusillade..companionship, he turns left, south, because a hill lies to the north. He doesn't think he has the stamina to..The divine Donella glares at Burt with the expression of a perturbed rhino, lacking only the threat of a..Stormbel made a signal to somewhere in the background and announced, "Sixty-second countdown commenced."..likes to talk about people he's killed?the way they looked when they died, their last words, if they cried,..and I just thought I'd see if you were all right."..monkey might scamper, the boy turns a corner at a long butcher block and encounters a cook who's.."Nine months. The nineteenth of November. Luki's birthday was the twentieth. He would have been ten..His-impatience was asserting itself again now, as Borftein sat in the chambers of Judge William Fulmire, the Mayflower H's Supreme Justice, listening to Howard Kalens and Marcia Quarrey argue over the finer points of the Mission's constitution, while on the surface the troops were fraternizing openly with what could become the enemy, and two years away in space the EAF starship dally drew nearer. The news from Earth told of a three-cornered conflict sweeping through eastern Africa, black nations clashing against Arabs in the north and whites in the south, Australia forces landing in Malagasay, and the Europeans maneuvering desperately to quell the flames while the EAF fanned them gleefully. That news would long ago have overtaken the Pagoda and what the intentions of those aboard it might be was anybody's guess. It wasn't a time to be fussing over ambiguous syntax and legal niceties..lived, because Micky also owned a moral compass, which Sinsemilla either never possessed or long ago..peers between two towers of dishes, and sees one of his pursuers about fifteen feet away..battlements..chorus with it..he stood, came around the table, and moved her chair back for her to rise. She experienced again the fleeting sensation that she was a puppet dancing to Sterm's choreography. She watched herself as he ushered her to an armchair and handed her a glass. Then Sterm settled himself comfortably at one end of the couch, picked up his own drink, and held it close to his face to savor the bouquet..between the service islands, terrorizing the same hapless folks who only moments ago escaped death..allowed to go free. Not ever.."Oh, I figured you'd be around here somewhere." "Is this the guy who makes trains?" Anita asked. "Yeah. This is Jay. He's okay... and smart."..The people who have fled the restaurant appear to share Curtis's grim assessment of the situation. All..Here's the deal: If she fled to her room and barricaded the door, she still wouldn't be safe, because..contain a collection of severed feet..Slick it was, wet-slick and therefore injured, but still lively enough to wriggle fiercely in a quest for..Witch with a broomstick up your ass, witch bitch, diabolist, hag, flying down out of the moon with my..DOWN THROUGH THE HIGH FOREST to lower terrain, from night-kissed ridges into..As might be expected in an ancient and fully furnished mobile home available for by-the-week rental, the..With repeated blasts of its air horn to clear the way, a semi roars down the exit ramp from the interstate,..enough to make each breath a labor, heart rapping with woodpecker frenzy?and yet he is acutely aware..and she smiled, too. "Mrs. D, you said apparently the gunman shot you."..woods. Lambent moonlight spangles an arc of urine..all the hateful words and throw a few punches instead..caring staff and comforts, to be an unnatural condition for any form of life..grandkids someday, because the big truck doesn't clip even one pump, doesn't barrel into any of the..creatures, but in some ways, they're pathetically predictable." "You're nine, huh?"..aglow, encircle the pump islands in much the way that nibbling stegosaurus and grazing brontosaurus and..The co-killer pops the release button on her safety harness and shrugs out of the straps..He has a way with dogs, and this one is no exception. It nuzzles him and then, panting happily, leads him..the glamour of berets and billycocks, panamas and turbans, cloches and calashes..D!"..He took a side door out of the corridor that nobody ever came along and began following a gallery between the outer wall of the Factory and a bank of cable-runs, ducts, and conduits, moving through the 15 percent of normal gravity with a slow, easy-going lope that had long ago become second nature. Although a transfer to D Company was supposed to be tantamount to being demoted, Colman had found it a relief to end up working with somebody like Sirocco. Sirocco was the first commanding officer he had known who was happy to accept people as they were, without feeling some obligation to mold them into something else. He wasn't meddling and interfering all the time. As long as the things he wanted done got done, he wasn't especially bothered how, and left people alone to work them out in their own ways. It was refreshing to be treated as competent for once--respected as somebody with a brain and trusted as capable of using it. Most of the other men in the unit felt the same way. They were generally not the kind to put such sentiments into.. words with great alacrity ? .. but it showed..and humiliation, although until this moment she would have angrily denied ever being anyone's victim, she..news chopper or even a corporate-executive eggbeater with comfortable seating for eight, but huge and..million searching eyes. Motion is commotion, and distraction buys time, and time?not mere distance?is..rased. "If you must know, I like working cards." "You mean tricks?" Shirley seemed interested. "I can do tricks, sure." "Are you good?" "I .., don't know," she replied, faltering, trying not to remember that she had told Howard she would catch a morning shuttle down and had the key to Veronica's apartment in her pocketbook.."Then there is no reason for us to allow unseemly haste to lower the quality of the evening," Sterm said, sitting forward and reaching with a leisurely movement of his hand for the decanter. "A little

time ripens more than just fine cognac. Will you join me in a refill?" He dries his hands thoroughly on paper towels, but then holds them under one of the hot-air blowers. "I only live at Port Norday during the week," Kath said. "I've got a place in Franklin as well. It's not far from here at all." After walking another mile, he came to the all-night market that he'd specified for the rendezvous. "Not yet. I have to make contact first." "How do you know there's no one around?" Leilani said, "She just calls him Klunk because she claims that was the noise he made if you rapped him. January 10, 2081. "I said you were in too much of a hurry," Jean said to Bernard. "Just think, all that work for nothing. We should have waited a bit longer for those Chironians to get round to us." Colman had reached the place where a raised catwalk joined the gallery from a door leading through a bulkhead into one of the booster-pump compartments, where tritium bred in the stem bypass reactors was concentrated to enrich the main-drive fusion plasma before it was hurled away into space. With little more than the sound of sustained, distant thunder penetrating through to the inside of his helmet, it was difficult to imagine the scale of the gargantuan power being unleashed on the far side of the reaction dish not all that far from where he was standing. But he could feel rather than hear the insistent, pounding roar, through the soles of his boots on the steel mesh flooring and through the palm of his gauntlet as he rested it on the guardrail overlooking the machinery bay below the catwalk. As always, something stirred deep inside him as the nerves of his body reached out and sensed the energy surging around him--raw, wild, savage energy that was being checked, tamed, and made obedient to the touch of a fingertip upon a button. He gazed along the lines of super conducting bus bars with core maintained within mere tens of degrees from absolute zero just feet from hundred million-degree plasmas, at the accelerator casing above his head, where pieces of atoms flashed at almost the speed of light along paths controlled to within millionths of an inch, at the bundles of data cables marching away to carry details of everything that happened from microsecond to microsecond to the ever-alert control computers, and had to remind himself that it had all been constructed by men. For it seemed at times as if this were a world conceived and created by machines, for machines--a realm in which Man had no place and no longer belonged. Micky scrubbed at her knees with the palms of her hands, rubbing off the prickly blades of dead grass. "Oh, that locomotive!" lean looked at lay. "Are you working on it again?" Roughly 35 percent of Chiron's surface was land, the bulk of it distributed among three major continental masses. The largest of these was Terranova, a vast, east-west sprawling conglomeration of every conceivable type of geographic region, dominating the southern hemisphere and extending from beyond the pole to cross the equator at its most northerly extremity. Selene, with its jagged coastlines and numerous islands, was connected to the western part of Terranova via an isthmus that narrowed to a neck below the equator; Artemis lay farther to the east, separated by oceans. After that brief moment of frenzy, the viper slithered loose of its own tangles and flowed swiftly across. hideous screams still vivid in memory, the motherless boy relaxes behind the steering wheel of a new. Kevlar vests. Utility belts festooned with spare magazines of ammunition, dump pouches, cans of Mace. The long bar lay to the right of the door. In a row down the center of the room, each of eight plank-top. Sirocco closed the door behind them, leaving it secured on one quick-release latch only to allow for a fast exit in the event of trouble, and turned to face the handful that was left. "Let's go," he said. The ravages to your face from a snakebite might involve more than scar tissue. Maybe nerve damage. "She's a juiceless bitch, isn't she?" Over his glass, Colman watched as three Special Duty troopers made their way to the bar. They stood erect and intimidating in their dark olive uniforms, cap-peaks pulled low over their faces, and surveyed the surroundings over, hard, jutting chins. Nobody met their stares for long before looking away. One of them murmured an order to the bartender, who nodded and quickly set up glasses, then grabbed bottles from the shelf behind. The SD's were the elite of the regular corps, handpicked for being the meanest bastards in the Army and utterly without humor. They reminded Colman of the commando units he had seen in the Transvaal. They provided bodyguards for VIPs on ceremonial occasions--there was hardly any reason apart from tradition in the Mayflower II's environment--and had been formed by Borftein as a crack unit sworn under a special oath of loyalty. Their commanding officer was a general named Stormbel. D Company made jokes about their clockwork precision on parades and the invisible strings that Stormbel used to jerk them around, but not while any of them were within earshot. They called the SD's the Stromboli Division. After he had walked a block and a half, he arrived at a major street lined with commercial enterprises. Farnhill's staff had given up trying to get the Chironians to provide an official list of who would be greeting the delegation. In the end they had simply advised the Kuanyin when the shuttle would arrive and resigned themselves to playing things by ear after that. The Chironians had agreed readily enough, which was why the orders issued that morning had called for a reduced alertness level. Kalens's delegation had met with an equal lack of success in dealing with Franklin, and had elected finally to go to the surface on the same basis as the delegation to the Kuan-yin, but with more elaborate preparations and ceremonies. with a patina of perspiration. In spite of her genius IQ, her street smarts, and her well-polished wise-ass. bad news from which they should have been spared. need to be shrewd, but she was not self-deluded enough to think that vodka would make her more

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