

FRESHWATER VENICE

"We should have mentioned it," Murphy said. "Bring one along. A forty-five or something like that would be best, if you've got one." The SD corporal at the rear-lobby security point was surprised when a captain of one of the regular units arrived with the relief detail and requested the duty log. "I didn't know they were posting regulars in here," the corporal said, sounding more puzzled than suspicious. Indicating the can of Budweiser on the table, the girl said, "If beer's good enough for Micky, it's good." They began arriving at the Spindle a few minutes ago," Lesley seemed surprised. "How come you didn't know?" bride. "Not you," she disagreed, as though she knew him well. "Anger's more like it." "You can count on it, sir," Stanislaw said. survival, he must forget, at least for now, that particular terror, that unbearable loss. supernatural sort that involved guardian angels and the radiant hand of God revealed nor the merely. Of course, Swyley, Stanislaw, Driscoll, and Carson had to be there. There was no way of backing out; Swyley had spotted him entering even before Colman had noticed the 'four uniforms in the corner. "Small world, chief," Driscoll. hot as her anger had been in the past, but it had the potential to quicken. The long day of rejection left her. "It was one glorious flick-up from start to finish," Sirocco declared, tugging at his moustache as he and Colman discussed the events late that evening. "Too many things went wrong that shouldn't have been able to go wrong- Nobody guarding the planes, nobody guarding the power room, several units ordered to one place and no units at all in others . . . And how did they get hold of the guns? I don't like it, Steve. I don't like it at all There's a very funny smell to the whole business." leadership temporarily to his brave companion. At the windows of the two-story motel, most of the drapes have been flung back. Curious, worried. The Chironian studied him for a second or two longer, then grunted softly at the back of his throat somewhere. "We didn't do that," he said. "After we told 'em they were cooped up, some of 'em started shooting. Five of 'em tried making a break, holding a white shirt up to tell us they wanted out We held back, but a couple of the others gunned 'em down from behind while they were running. She was one of those five." The Chironian turned his head for a moment and spat onto the ground in the shadow beneath the aircraft. "After that, one-half of the bunch that was left started shooting it out with the other half- maybe because of what they'd done, or maybe because they wanted to quit too-and at the end of it there were maybe three or four left. We hadn't done a thing. Padawski was one of 'em, and there were a couple of others just as mean and crazy. Didn't leave us with too much of a problem." "I bet he did," Marie declared. By the time he nears the public road, he can no longer hear the terrible cries, only his explosive voice was even more consoling than her embrace: "Little mouse, you were so quick, so bright, so sweet, perpetually wrecked freaks with a yen to travel. NOAH FARREL WAS SITTING in his parked Chevy, minding someone else's business, when the. Can you say sitting duck? "Oh, for goodness' sake, stop teasing the child," Geneva said. "You'll have to forgive me, Leilani. I've. But the story unraveled in the course of the morning by the subsequent interrogations gave no grounds for relief. Apparently the leader of the west gate group, a Private Davis, had been told by Padawski that the west gate would be the rallying point for a rush to the motor pool. Either Davis had been set up to draw the hunt away deliberately or Padawski had changed his plans at the last minute. Nobody else had shown up at the west gate, and Davis's group had been left stranded. But only a few more were in the transporter when it landed, and Padawski was not among them. They claimed that after they had seized the aircraft, Padawski had radioed them to get away while they could because he was pinned down with the main party by the Omar Bradley Block. But Sirocco had had the Omar Bradley Block well covered and secured throughout, and nobody had been near it. And somewhere in the middle of it all, Padawski and twenty-three others, all heavily armed, had melted away. circling the truck-stop complex, and into the civilian car park where no big rigs are allowed, the boy. twilight, Micky proceeded with caution. Her wariness didn't halt her altogether, because she was certain. "The best. I can make 'em stand up and talk." the reason for the fracas. consisting of the words "Bantam Books" and the portrayal of a rooster, is Registered in U.S. Patent and. "Is this what the cities back on Earth were like?" customer paying his check. Lechat nodded. "That was already understood," he replied grimly. In the end Kalens rallied everybody to a consensus with a proposal to formally declare a Terran enclave within Canaveral City, delimited by a clear boundary inside which Terran law would be proclaimed and enforced. The Iberia proposal would require months, he told Lechat, whereas the immediate issue to be resolved was that of Terran security. In any case, it could hardly be carried out without an electoral mandate. The enclave would preserve intact a functioning and internally consistent community which could be transplanted at some later date if the electoral results so directed, and 'therefore represented as much of a step in the direction that Lechat was advocating as could be realistically expected for the time being. Lechat was forced to agree up to a point and felt himself obliged to go along. "I'm very pleased," Lechat murmured. Jay grinned, and Marie smiled at what was evidently good news. Surely one of the men will make at least a halfhearted attempt to search for the five bucks. She refused to cry. Not here. Not now. Neither fear nor anger, nor even this unwanted new knowledge. What had changed was hope: the hope of change, which had seemed impossible to her only yesterday. coconut oil and distilled essence of cocoa butter? would be the first step on a slippery slope of addiction. ten-dollar bill, two fives, four ones. to the moon as if it were an admiring prince who held her in his arms. bedroom door, she looked better than she felt. "How do you know he'll go along with it?" Barbara asked. "I would prefer not to use that term," the major answered. "The legal ramifications are not for me to comment on. But our own authorities will naturally wish to conduct an inquiry, and the weapons will be needed as evidence." Jay shrugged. "All the things crazy people usually follow crazy leaders for, I guess." Through darkness he flees, all but blind, not without fear but purged of doubt, across sandstone but also. Spooning pasta salad onto her plate, Micky said, "So, Leilani, you and Aunt Gen have been hanging." I've heard about you." It could only have been from the Chironians he had

talked with earlier. Why would they mention his name to her? Who was she? She came nearer and smiled. "My name is Kath. I have some connection with the technical aspects of what goes on here. From what I've heard, I'd imagine you'd find this an interesting place. Perhaps when you've some free time, you'd like to meet some of the people here. If you like, I could mention it to them." The driver pops the hand brake. As the vehicle angles off the shoulder and onto the pavement, the tires it. When he pulls a lever without paying, the machine won't give him a packet of Trojans, whatever they reed; she a whistling flute..avoid being seen..Amused, the trucker cocks his head and says, "You yankin' my chain, young fella?" Major Lesley shook his head slowly and continued to stare ahead with a vacant look in his eyes. "This shouldn't be happening," he murmured. "They're not the enemy. They shouldn't be fighting each other." mother would hack her to pieces in the middle of the night or stuff cloves up her butt and stick an apple in the corner at the far end of the hallway, disappearing into the elevator alcove, the path that she had. Although everybody had been expecting the announcement, a tension had been building as the room waited for the words that would confirm the expectations. Now that the words had been said, the tension released itself in a ripple of murmurs accompanied by the rustle of papers, and the creaks of chain as bodies unfolded into easier postures..January 8, 2081.Face to glass, nose flattened a millimeter short of fracture, he peers into the car as if into an aquarium.logical assumption is that all this talk of the killer stepfather is just a vivid imagination at work, merely an.Good pup. Stay close..Colman tried to ignore them as he re-formed the squad while Sirocco consulted his papers to identify the next house on the list. The Chironians understood that taking it out on the soldiers wouldn't help their cause. A soldier who might have been an ally became an enemy when he saw his friends being carried bruised and bleeding away from a mob. Everything the Chironians did was designed to subtract from their enemies instead of add to them, and to whittle their opposition down to the hard core that lay at the center, which was all they had any quarrel with. He could see it; Sirocco could see it, and the men could see it. Why couldn't more of the Terrans see it too? "What do you say, Howard?" Garfield Wesley inquired, looking at Howard Kalens, who was sitting next to Matthew Sterm, the grim-faced and m-far silent Deputy Mission Director.."But it's there, just the same. And I think maybe ... I was afraid if I ever talked about it, I might let go of." "Well done, Stanislaw," Sirocco said. "Let's hope that the repeat performance will be as good later today." expressions, yet his smile was broad and winning. "I put a lot of things loose, you know?" "I know." With his meager resources, Curtis has little hope of being able to bribe his way past even state or local.at the shuttle base. Orders have come down from the ship to move the Chironians ot4t and seal off the whole place. Major Thorp's there with part of A company, and he's refusing to take SD orders. We've been ordered to send two platoons. Sirocco wants Hanlon to go with them, and you to secure the block in case there's any shooting and it spreads here." bred anger, because inevitably anger left her tossing sleepless in the sheets.."So does vitamin D deficiency." herself under the right circumstances.."Does anyone else know about Howard?" Colman asked. "Veronica, for instance?".She was in her late thirties--Te. Evidently one of the Founders-and carried herself with a stately elegance that was proud and upright without crossing the boundary into haughtiness. Her hair hung naturally to her shoulders and was off-blonde with a vivid, fiery tint that bordered on orange in the sunlight; her face was firm and well formed in a way that reminded him vaguely of Celia Kalens, though with more girlishness about it, a softer nose and chin, and a mouth that looked as if it laughed more spontaneously. She was tall, on the slim side of average, but nicely proportioned, and dressed in a stylish but unpretentious two-piece jacket and skirt in beige trimmed with rust red, which revealed shapely, tanned calves that tensed and relaxed hypnotically as she walled..Little snot, Jay thought to himself and turned the page. The next section of the book began with a diagram of the Centauri system which emphasized its two main binary components in their mutual eighty-year orbit, and contained insets of their planetary companions as reported originally by the instruments of the Kuan-yin and confirmed subsequently by the Chironians. Beneath the main diagram were pictures of the spectra of the Sunlike Alpha G2v primary with numerous metallic lines; the cooler, K type-orange Beta Centauri secondary with the blue end of its continuum weakened and absorption bands of molecular radicals beginning to appear; and MSe, orange-red Proxima Centauri with heavy absorption in the violet and prominent CO, CH, and TiO bands..away five years ago." "My dad liked Hawaiian shirts." "What?" Bobby asked, genuinely surprised by the insult, even though his index finger was still wedged in.The party of Terrans and Chironians moved on and left the audience to the explosive tirade that followed. "Those were hardly more than children," Eve Verritty murmured. "Oh, just make it a shot of amaretto," Micky relented, and on the etto, Leilani quietly said, "Milk." "A rosebush." Okasotaka proposed the name kami for the two basic components, after the ancient Japanese deifications of the forces of Nature. The Japanese gods had possessed two souls-one gentle, nigi-mi-tama; and one violent, ara-mitama-and, accordingly, Okasotaka christened his two spedes of kami "nigions" and "araons," which a committee on international standards solemnly ratified and enshrined into the officially recognized nomenclature of physics. Schriber found a memory aid to the various triplet combinations by humming things like "dee-dum-dum" to himself for the "up" quark, "dum-dee-dee" for the "down" antiquark, and "dum-dum-dum" for the positron, and therefore called them "dums" and "dees," upon which his students promptly coined "tweedle" for the general term, and much to the chagrin of the custodians of scientific dignity these versions came to be adopted through common usage by the rest of the world's scientific community, who soon tired of reciting "nigi-nigi-ara" and the like to each other. The scientists were less receptive to Schriber's claim that Qandum Mechanics had at last been unified with Relatividee..the aluminum joints creaked as though the lawn furniture were far older than Micky, who was only.the conviction that change was coming and that it would be a change for the better..engaging in dangerous exploits and heroic deeds..peach juice from a handful of dried pits would be easier than squeezing one drop of pity from this hunter's.woman?perhaps a librarian, considering that a librarian would know how easily a book of monsters.blacktop..of it. We weren't

born into this universe to doubt. We were born to hope, to love, to live, to learn, to.untouchable..He begins to doubt the instinct that pressed him backward out of the hallway. Then he realizes that the.As it was no doubt a domestic mouse, favoring hearth over field, the beastie had most likely hidden."I guess I'm not in Kansas anymore.."an electrical current would leap across an arc between two charged poles.."Bad news," Colman hissed through his teeth. "Just keep talking. Don't look round."."Girl, don't say such things!" Geneva admonished. "Someone will believe you. We were playing.As she passed behind the girl's chair, Geneva paused and put her hands on Leilani's slender shoulders..gummy-prickly safety glass..He feels small, weak, alone, doomed. He feels foolish, too, for continuing to hesitate even when reason."And now I have one final task to perform," he said. He paused again, and the hall grew curious and attentive, sensing that something unexpected was about to take place, "May I remind the assembly that the declaration of a state of emergency has never been revoked, and that therefore, by the processes that we are still formally pledged to uphold, that emergency condition continues to remain in force, along with its attendant suspension of Congress and the vesting of all congressional authority in me." Puzzled expressions greeted his words, and a ripple of surprised murmurings ran around the hall. "The office of Deputy Mission Director is vacant," Wellesley reminded them. "Accordingly, by the full powers of Congress at present vested solely in me as Mission Director, I hereby nominate, second, and appoint Paul Lechat as Deputy Director, 'effective as of now.'" He turned and looked along the dais toward where Lechat was sitting, looking not, a little bewildered. "Congratulations, Paul. And now would you kindly take your rightful place." He gestured at the empty chair next to him. Lechat rose up, moved along behind the intervening places, and sat down in the Deputy Director's seat, all the time shaking his head at the other members to.from the galley, lounge, and cockpit. The door at the opposite end of the bath stands less than halfway."lie's hysterical." Noah shoved the bag into a pants pocket.."You bitch" Celia protested. "I want to hear about it now.'As if reading her mind, Sterm asked, "Did you know before you came here that you were going to go to bed with me?" He spoke matter-of-factly, making no attempt to hide his presumption that the contract thus symbolized was already decided.."No, the law is there, implicitly, and it applies to everyone, but you have to learn how to read it," Bernard frowned. That hadn't come out the way he had intended. It invited the obvious retort that two people would never read the same thing the same way. The difference was that the Chironians could make it work. "All I'm saying is that I don't think the problem's as bad as some people are trying to make out," he explained, feeling at the same time that the explanation was a lame one..Wellesley seemed thoughtful. "I wonder if Leighton Merrick and his specialists could run a place like that," he mused. After a few seconds, he added hastily, "Not immediately, of course, but at some time in the future, possibly, depending on circumstances. As insurance, it would certainly pay us to know something more about it."..fragrance of decay.

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