

THE ALCHEMISTS CODE A GRIPPING CONSPIRACY THRILLER

Geneva frowned at Micky, and Micky shrugged. She didn't know whether these tales of Sinsemilla's. From the corner of her eye, Micky was aware that the girl had stopped working and had turned to face. The next part was going to be the trickiest. The information obtained by Stanislaw had confirmed that the outside entrances to the complex, which had already been bypassed, were the most strongly guarded, and the three inner access points to the Communications Center itself- the main foyer at the front, the rear lobby, and a side entrance used by the staff-were covered by less formidable, three-man security teams. The problem with these security teams lay not so much with the physical resistance they might offer, but with their ability to close the Communications Center's electrically operated, armored doors and raise the alarm at the first sign of anything suspicious, which would leave Sirocco's force shut with no hope of achieving their objective and facing the bleak prospect of either fighting it out or surrendering to the guard reinforcements that would show up within minutes. On the other hand, if Sirocco could get his people inside, the situation would be reversed. "A boy of twenty-three," Kalens had said a few minutes previously. "Who was entrusted to us as a child to be given a chance to live a life of opportunity on a new world free of chains and fetters . . . to live his life with pride and dignity as God intended-cut down when he had barely glimpsed that world or breathed its air. Bruce Wilson did not die yesterday. His life ended when he was three years old." -a gun under them." haloed by red lamplight, glittery-eyed with excitement. "Thingy, him a hard-ass stubborn little crawly. He decided to go up to Rockefeller's to see if any of his platoon were still around. On the way his pace slowed abruptly. Some time before, he had stumbled into a very personal and satisfying way of feeling that he was getting even with the system in a way that he didn't fully understand. Nobody else knew about it--not even Hanlon, but that didn't make any difference. He hadn't seen her for a while now, and he was in just the right mood..sexual interest?even an octogenarian kept youthful by a vile diet of monkey glands. By this third.EVEN IN HIS short time at the university near Franklin, Jerry Pernak had learned that Chironian theoretical and experimental physics had departed significantly from the mainstream being pursued on Earth. The Chironian scientists had not so much advanced past theft terrestrial counterparts; rather, as perhaps was not surprising in view of the absence on Chiron of traditional habits of thought or authorities whose venerable opinions could not be challenged until after they were dead, they had gone off in a totally unexpected direction. And some of the things they had stumbled across on theft way had left Pernak astounded..The noise grew hellish. Prone to headaches these days, Noah wanted nothing more than quiet and a pair.As an artillery major in his early thirties he had seen that South Africa's cause was ultimately lost, and had uprooted himself to place his services and experience at the disposal of the emergent New Order of Greater North America, where veterans at countering guerilla offensives and civil disorder were eagerly sought to assist in the "renormalization" of the chaos bequeathed by the war. Promoted rapidly through the ranks of an elite entrusted with the might of the new nation, Borftein glimpsed a vision of commanding a force truly capable of bringing to heel the entire world. But the vision had been short-lived. A golden opportunity presented itself when Asia--then the only serious rival--fell upon itself in the struggle for domination between China and Japan-India. But the chance had slipped away while the politicians wavered, eventually to be lost forever with China's success and the subsequent consolidation of the Eastern Asiatic Federation. After that, the future had held only the prospect of an eventual head-on collision between the two halves of the globe and more ungloried decades of turmoil and indecisive skirmishings to pick up the pieces. Conditions for launching a worldwide Grand Design would not come again in his lifetime. And so he had left to seek a more rewarding destiny with the Mayflower II. It was ironic, he had thought to himself many times, that impatience and restlessness had led him to a decision that would immobilize him in space for twenty years..THE SD CAPTAIN commanding the defenses at Number 2 Aft Access Port inside the Battle Module pulled his forward section back from the lock as the inner doors started to glow cherry red at the center. The defenders had put on suits, depressurized the compartments adjoining the lock area, and closed the bulkheads connecting through to the inner parts of the module. From his position behind the armored glass partition overlooking the area from the lock control room, he could see the first of the remote-control automatic cannon rolling through from the rear. "Hurry up with those RCC's," he shouted into his helmet microphone. "Yellow section take up covering positions. Green and Red prepare to fall back to the longitudinal bulkhead locks,".communicate with the spirit world, sometimes just talking to herself..fun..Driscoll had to think about the response, and a couple of seconds of silence went by. "It's not the same," he said..Throughout the institution, the floors?gray vinyl speckled with peach and turquoise?were immaculate.. "After twenty years on the same ship? That's not possible, surely."..imaginary brother."..Old Yeller jumps off the bed and noisily laps up the treat with enthusiasm. She doesn't hesitate or pause..not orphaned, is not alone. For a moment, the young intruder's envy curdles into a hatred so thick and.Maddoc's twelfth victim?. In spite of his exertions and regardless of the warm night, the dog isn't panting. He lies motionless against..standard tow truck." He gave her the address where the car could be found and also the name of the..protect him..of the painful past on which her life was built. She slid her guarded dessert, untouched, in front of Leilani.. "Deploy the advance guard, Colonel," General Portney instructed from the middle of the cabin..Jay shrugged again. "Protection, maybe."..Old Yeller turns her attention from Curtis to the closet. She issues a low growl..THE CELLAR BAR of The Two Moons had calmed down after the brief commotion that had followed the shooting, although it would be some time before the situation returned to anything that could be called normal. Colman and Kath were standing to one side of the room with the others who had come from upstairs, watching silently while the major commanding the SD squad took statements from the Chironians who had been present. The other Chironians were sitting or standing around the room and looking on or talking among themselves in

low voices. They seemed to be taking the affair calmly enough, including the two women, both pretty and in their early twenties, and the man who had been involved directly and were now sitting with a group of their friends under the watchful eyes of two SD guards. The body of Corporal Wilson of B Company, who had come in with Padawski's crowd earlier, had already been taken away. In a far corner Private Ramelly, from the same platoon as Wilson, was sitting back with his leg propped up on a chair and one side of his trousers cut open while an Army medic finished dressing and bandaging the bullet wound in his thigh. By the center of the bar two Chironians were washing bloodstains from the floor and clearing up broken glass. Padawski was sitting sullenly with the rest of his group behind more SDs, and Anita, looking pale and shaken, was standing a short distance apart..about his stowaways.."Why do people follow leaders?" Pernak replied. "For collective-strength. What do you need collective strength for? Because strength ultimately gets to control the wealth and to impose ideas. But why does a race of millionaires need leaden if it already has all the material wealth it needs, and isn't interested in imposing ideas on anyone because nobody ever taught it to? The Chironians don't. There isn't anything to scare them with. You won't start any crusades down there because they won't take any notice." to match Geneva's smile. Instead, the girl's cocky cheerfulness melted into melancholy. Her clear eyes."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 young fugitive drops flat to the pavement and slips under the trailer, and the dog crawls beside him."I'm not that hung up about it," Colman insisted, not for the first time. "Maybe it is like some of the guys think, and maybe it's not. Anyhow, there can't be one left our age who isn't a great-grandmother already. Look at the statistics ." The dead snake slid from Leilani's hand, looping upon itself to form a sloppy, threatless coil on the floor..Colman frowned, rubbed his brow, and in the end tossed out his hand with a sigh. "No . . . we're not making the right point somehow. Let's put it this way--how can you measure who owes who what?" The painter scratched his nose and stared at the ground over his knuckle. Clearly the notion was new to him. -how you think means changing what you believe about life. That's hard, sweetie. When we make our.The boy is reminded of home, which he will most likely never see again. A pleasant nostalgia wells within.Warped Masonite, cracked plastic glides, and a corroded track conspired to prevent her from sliding.She blotted her hands on her shorts..young women in their twenties. Sinsemilla was too old for this game. Self-mutilators frequently suffered.It was a nice feeling.."I say a lot of stuff. Not all of it means anything." At the gap in the broken fence, the girl stopped and."He wouldn't get away with it, surely," Jay said incredulously. "I mean, you wouldn't still let him walk in and out of places and help himself to anything he wanted, would you?".Charles, in those old Thin Man movies..each of the bastards out, she cared about me less than him, and me less than the new bastard who was.Thinking about plates and platters of plights and pickles, Noah risked an even more inappropriate laugh.even long after sundown, is extremely debilitating. They have hardly begun to run, and already he feels.eyes. He looks like Santa Claus with a dye job..Accompanied by dog snuffles and a flurry of fur, the motherless boy moves stealthily to the closet. The."They weren't," Jay protested. "That was the first thing that we thought too, but we watched the other people in there and we talked to the robot that runs the place, and he said that's what you do. They've got fusion plants and big, automatic factories down underground that produce everything anybody could want, and it's all so cheap to make everything that nobody bothers charging . . . or something like that. I can't figure it out."The hand over his mouth loosened a fraction after the door was closed. "Gawd! Wot's goin' on? Who-?" Somebody jabbed him in the ribs. He shut up..get high. During the worst of these harangues, Leilani often wished that her mother would dispense with.For the first time a hint of anger flashed across Sterm's face. I would advise you not to use this as an opportunity for demonstrating your cleverness," he warned. He allowed himself a moment to calm down. Then he resumed speaking more slowly. "Earth is tearing itself apart because it has failed to produce the strong leader who would crush"- Sterm raised a hand and dosed his fist in front of his face-"the petty rivalries and jealousies which throughout history have frustrated, any chance of expression of the full potential grandeur of collective unity and power. Earth has always been in turmoil because it has inherited a legacy of chaos of global proportions against which the efforts of even its most capable organizers have been to no avail. Is that the future that you would wish upon Chiron?."Hoing! Yikes!" Sinsemilla had compressed the anecdote into two words. She rollicked even to this."I told you once already, it's none of your business anymore. Leave me alone. I don't want to talk to you. Just-go away and leave me alone." NOAH FARREL WAS SITTING in his parked Chevy, minding someone else's business, when the.I'm talking around?".Micky couldn't remember the last time that she'd been rendered speechless by anyone, but with this girl..gunfire?Curtis hears it for sure this time?erupts, muffled but unmistakable, from the depths of the.Sterm allowed a few seconds for her admission to settle. 'Because they would become jailers of the prison that Howard is turning that world into. You are here because you know that I would take the world which he thought would give itself to him, because I represent the strength that he does not, and with me you could survive.'" Celia looked up again, but Sterm's eyes had taken on a faraway light. "Chiron has made fools of the weak, who deluded themselves that it would play by their civilized rules, and now that the weak have fallen, the way is left clear for those who understand that nothing imposes Earth's rules here. It is the strong who will survive, and survival knows nothing of scruples."."Sinsemilla? That's a ...".He is a murderer?isn't he??just as your mother turned out to be the way you said she was.".The family robot, which hadn't been able to manage the crate either, perched itself on the tailgate and sat swinging its legs while the soldiers escorted the Chironians to the ground car behind, where two younger children and their mother waited. A sharp rat-tat-tat sounded from the house behind as Sirocco nailed up a notice declaring it to be

confiscated and now government property. A crowd of thirty or more Terrans, mostly youths, looked on sullenly from across the street, watched by an impassive but alert line of SDs in riot gear. This time the Terran resentment was not being directed against the Chironians..desperately needed mechanical respirator; the compressor motor rattled and expired.. "Sure, I'd cover that." Colman was listening grimly. "What about his wife?" he muttered to Sirocco..Bullock role." "So everyone becomes a law unto himself," Merrick concluded,.trackers on his trail. Fortunately, this blunder will not be the death of him..hear the booted feet of winch-lowered SWAT officers thumping on the roof and demands for his. Bernard looked from Kath, to Colman, to Jay, and then back to Colman. He was beaten, and he knew it. But after Kath's cryptic statement, he wasn't inclined to argue too much. "Hell, it's not so bad. He doesn't need anyone to stop him from getting shot," he replied. Beside him, Jay's face dropped. Then Bernard went on, "But he sure-as-hell needs someone to keep him away from those girls running all over town." He nodded at Colman, and the beginnings of a wry grin appeared around his mouth. "Keep a good eye on him, Steve. He's crafty." He turned his head and stared resignedly at his son. "And you," he grunted. "Get home on time, and don't say anything about this to your mother."..roofs, sirens silent, are departing the interstate. They descend the gently sloped embankment and..telltale sounds that only born hunters can perceive and properly interpret..Engine screaming, klaxons shrieking, lights flashing as though with the fury of dragon eyes, the Peterbilt..you three days. Give old Sinsemilla a little time, and you'll see."..whenever he was admitted. Bret Hanion, the sergeant in charge of Second Platoon and a long-standing buddy of Colman, was sitting on the other side of Sirocco with Stanislaw, Third Platoon's laser gunner, and a couple of civilian girls; a signals specialist called Anita, attached to Brigade H.Q. was snuggling close to Colman ~with her arm draped loosely through his..burning eternal. The motion of the Windchaser makes the moon appear to roll like a wheel..Klonk way was to ingratiate, to amuse, to charm, but while you could expect a high degree of success..Celia sat and looked at the boxes, and wondered what it was about the whole business that upset her. It wasn't so much the spectacle of Mrs. Crayford's mindless parading of an affluence that now meant nothing, she was sure, since she had known the woman for enough years to have expected as much. Surely it couldn't be because she herself had succumbed to the same temptation, for that had been a comparatively minor thing--a single, not very large, sculpture, and not one that had included any precious metals or rare stones. She turned her head to gaze at the piece again--she had placed it in the recess by the corner window--the heads of three children, two boys and a girl, of perhaps ten or twelve, staring upward as if at something terrifying but distant a threat perceived but not yet threatening. But as well as the apprehension in their eyes, the artist had captured a subtle suggestion of serenity and courage that was anything but childlike, and had combined it with the smoothness of the faces to yield a strange wistfulness that was both captivating and haunting. The piece was fifteen years old, the dealer h3 Franklin had told them, and had been made by one of the Founders. Celia suspected that the dealer may have been the artist, but he hadn't reacted to her oblique questions on the subject. Were the expressions on those faces affecting her for some reason? Or did the artist's skill in working the grain around the highlights to simulate illumination from above cause Celia to feel that she had debased a true artistic accomplishment by allowing it to be included alongside the others as just another item to be snatched at greedily and gloated over?..Jay and Marie were her latest weapons. Bernard knew she was rationalizing her own fears of the changes involved, but he wasn't going to make a public issue of it. "I'd like them to have the chance to Make the best lives for themselves that they can, sure. They've got that chance right here. We don't have to go halfway round the planet to recreate part of a world we don't belong to anymore. It couldn't last. That's all over now. You have to bring yourself to face up to it, hon."..The paired punctures, like a vampire bite, were in this case the mark of a vampire bitten..Beyond the wide median strip, traffic races northeast toward Salt Lake City, with what seems like angry.."I'm a painter," the painter said over his shoulder. "I like to see a paint job properly done. Why else would anyone do it?" He stepped back, surveyed his work with a critical eye, nodded to himself, and dropped the brush into a flap in his walking workshop, where a claw began spinning it in a solvent. "Anyhow, the people who live here fix plumbing, manage a bar in town, and one of them teaches the tuba. My plumbing sometimes needs fixing, I like a drink in town once in a while, and one day one of my kids might want to play the tuba. They fix faucets, I paint houses. What's so strange?".."You should think about things as well as just ask questions. Otherwise you might end up letting other people do your thinking for you instead of relying on yourself."..Merrick allowed his hands to drop down to his chest. "And how are you settling in? Is your family adjusting well?".."We have nothing to reconsider," Otto replied calmly.."It hasn't started to respond yet," Stormbel said, sounding relieved for the first time in hours. "Perhaps we took them by surprise after all." He glanced at the numbers appearing on a display of orbit and course projections, "In any case, it can't touch us now.".."It was one of our people," the major said..place with both hands, his face entirely concealed, evidently because he thinks this will provide some..threatening that her keener senses can detect..useful or when you wanted paramedics. If you were on the road in unknown territory, you could pull..Leon grinned. "Mischievous, but they're fun." He paused for a moment. "He seems to be a good man. You should be very happy until whenever. I hope nothing happens to them. They are all brave people. I admire them?'.CHAPTER FOURTEEN..chin, he takes inspiration from a movie: "The name's Old Yeller.".."What a perfectly appropriate word?raw."..murderous rampage. Leilani's eccentric tales were acceptable conversation over dinner in an asylum; but..Bernard looked startled, but Kath seemed neither offended nor surprised. "I thought you might be," she said, nodding half to herself. "Nanook told me about that." She looked at Bernard. "We don't have a lot of time for secrets," she told him. "Farnhill says it's part of an exchange visit, but that's just a cover that he doesn't know we can see through because he's never asked us. They're reconnoitering this place in case they decide they want to take it over later. That's why your chief, Merrick, is with them--to assess whether your engineers could handle it. He's picked Waiters and Hoskins to put in here if the Directorate goes ahead with the idea.".."He's been all over

television," Leilani said..looking up at the trucker. "Any dog could be a Yeller.".Another door. Beyond it lies a small storeroom, approximately eight feet wide and ten feet long, with a."Laughing at what?".dinner, and she'll repay you with emotional devastation! Serve her chicken sandwiches, and she'll give.Merrick nodded gravely. "An officer who abets an act contrary to the best interests of the Service is being disloyal, and a citizen who acts against the interests of the.otherwise dark, silent, and nearly scent-free desert..Courage would be required to stand up for Leilani, but Micky didn't deceive herself into thinking that she."What's the target for the missile strike?' Colman asked hoarsely..''Where to?' Colman asked her..flamboyant fantasies rivaled Dorothy's dreams of Oz; however, Micky could get no glimpse of yellow.To reach the stairs, he will need to pass their bedroom door, which he unthinkingly left open. If the

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