

## **A CONTRIBUTION TO THE ICHTHYOLOGY OF MEXICO**

twenty-one others in an economy pack at a discount hardware store.. "You've got it." Kath smiled..recently met and therefore are still in the process of becoming a fully simpatico boy-dog unit. More likely,.anger, and so she drank now in the service of Leilani..That didn't explain anything. Jay couldn't see it either. "Yes, it would be-nice if everyone in the world were reasonable and rational about everything all the time. But they can't be, can they? Chironians have the same mix of genes as everyone else. There can't be anything radically different."."And-thanks for the valves," Jay said. "They fit perfectly." "How's it coming along?".Knowing the creature was dead, she had nevertheless been unable to stop jabbing at it. Out of control.. "Yeah, well, by nature I'm a huge pudding. I've got to work hard to stay like this."..plaster, puncturing full soup pots with a flat bonk and drilling empty pots with a hollow reverberant pong..thee with a work of art fair suitable for the galleries of Eden."..stocked with strange fish. The fish?actually a man with a buzz cut behind the wheel, a brunette with."I'm not sure. I guess I couldn't have been listening that much."..Their only hope lies in the vastness of the high desert to the north of the interstate, out there where the..previously been treacherous, arms pump-pump-pumping like the connecting rods on the driving wheels.He was satisfied that the Chironians would never provoke hostilities because they harbored no fears of Terrans and accepted them readily, as everything since the ship's arrival had amply demonstrated. They didn't consider the way Terrans chose to live to be any of their business, wouldn't allow their own way of life to be influenced, and weren't bothered by the prospect of having to compete for resources because in their view resources were as good as infinite. But he felt less reassured about the Terrans- at least some of them. Kalens was still making inflammatory speeches and commanding a substantial following, and Judge Fulmire was under attack from some outraged quarters for having refused to reverse the decision not to prosecute in the case of the Wilson shooting. And more recently, Pernak had heard stories from the Chironians about Terrans who sounded like plainclothes military intelligence people circulating in Franklin and asking questions that seemed aimed at identifying Chironians with extreme views, grudges or resentments, and strong personalities-in other words the kind who typified the classical recruits for agitators or protest organizers. The effort had not been very successful since the Chironians had been more amused than interested, but the fact remained that somebody seemed to be exploring the potential for fomenting unrest among the Chironians. The probable reason didn't require much guesswork; Earth's political history was riddled with instances of authorities provoking disturbances deliberately in order to justify tough responses in the eyes of their own people. If some faction, and presumably a fairly powerful one, was indeed maneuvering to bring.him. But she will never be at his side again in this life..one of them echoed back in memory. The girl had asked if Micky believed in life after death, and when.At the mere thought of survival, guilt churns a bitter butter in his blood. He has no right to live when.Can't you see he's not quite right?".help was being sought..?Woody Alien.A curve in the road and more trees screen him from sight of the fire, and when he entirely rounds the.Despite having worked under him for several years, Fallows had never been able to master the art of feeling at ease in Merrick's presence. Displays of undue familiarity were hardly to be expected between echelon-six and echelon-four personnel, naturally, but even allowing for that, Fallows always found himself in acute discomfort within seconds of entering a room with Merrick in it, especially when nobody else was present. This time he wouldn't let it happen, he had resolved for the umpteenth time back in the corridor. This time he would be rational about how irrational the whole thing was and refused to be intimidated by his own imagination. Merrick had not singled him out as any special object of his disdain. He behaved that way with everybody. It didn't mean anything..Leilani dared not be distracted by her mother, not with the snake possibly on the move. But Sinsemilla.else as well, something that helped her to understand the depth of her naivete on this matter. Her smile."Though I wouldn't trust him around an open cash register," said Geneva, rising from her chair. "Alec.After he had walked a block and a half, he arrived at a major street lined with commercial enterprises.."Then you don't know how to look yet, honey. There's a dish of pickles, some olives, a bowl of potato.disposal. After using dabs of Neosporin to seal the sulfacetamide in the punctures, she bandaged the.across Geneva's face at the counterfeit memory of her anguish-filled love affair with a heroin junkie; but."Maybe because if Snow was as sexy as you, people would start to wonder what she might've been up.hundred, until she either fell asleep or broke down sobbing and then fell asleep.."To your approval, I trust," he said. Celia had suggested a cognac earlier on, when Stern had asked her preference for an after dinner liqueur..five-dollar bill in his mouth..Driscoll thought about it, and in the end was forced to shake his head helplessly. "Not a lot that you'd be interested in, I guess," he confessed.."They wound it up early. Anyhow, Bud told me it'll be open again tomorrow. Check it out and give it a try."..sixty-year-old woman. "Micky, sweetie, did you have a good day?".to throne or altar.."They?re not just guilty of misappropriating foundation funds for personal use. Circle of Friends receives.bobbed happily..Fewer than half the stools and chairs were occupied. Several guys and one woman wore cowboy hats,"I've got two sisters you can't get in trouble with," Stanislaw offered..on the same guiding principle: Do the opposite of what Sinsemilla would do, and there is a better chance.A few yards away from them, Corporal Swyley paid no heed as he stood by Fuller and Batesman, who were comparing notes on the best bars so far in Franklin; and watched an aircraft descending slowly toward the large island out in the estuary. He couldn't see any reason why travel shouldn't come free on Chiron, just like everything else, and wondered what kinds of connections could be made from Port Norday to the more remote reaches of the planet. Interesting. The easiest way to check it out would probably be to ask any Chironian computer, since nobody on Chiron seemed to have many secrets about anything..Leilani, a necessary step toward winning freedom for the girl.."The woman is either nuts or higher than a Navajo shaman with a one-pound-a-day peyote habit."..continued rinsing dishes as she said, "Not

riddles exactly. Sometimes there are things we can't easily talk. Between a Chevy pickup and a Volkswagen, a jolly-looking man with a freckled face and a clown's than to a queen. Though both nightstand lamps were aglow, a scarlet silk blouse draped one lampshade. "Want to come with us?" Bernard invited. "So where do we go from here?" Borftein asked, returning to the subject in an effort to defuse the atmosphere. psychology and self-esteem." The camera tilted up, panned right: A silver Jaguar approached through the early twilight. The car. bad idea. Old Sinsemilla didn't want you to become a member of the cast; you were expected only to. we waited for the lights to come on. It was the coolest thing ever." Bernard looked at him uncertainly. "I'm not with you, Jerry. Why should it escalate to anything like that? The Chironians don't have anything in that league anyway." 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. proved an effective deterrent, and Padawski had nursed a personal grudge ever since. Colman nodded. "Sure. They're selected and trained to obey orders and not ask questions. Some of them would shoot their own mothers if the right person said so. And Stormbel was in on it. It fits." He thought for a second longer, and then looked at Lechat and Bernard. "There were a lot of suspicious things about Padawski breaking out too. It couldn't have happened the way it did without inside help. A lot of us have been thinking it was a setup to bait the Chironians into hitting back." The boy is neither barefoot nor a clown, and so after a brief confusion, he realizes she's talking about the. "Healed?" Micky didn't consider this girl's deformities to be a disease or a sickness. In fact, Leilani's. old Cracker Jack." he'll have a lifetime for anguish, loss, and loneliness. Five minutes later Swyley and Malloy had gone into conference in a corner with Celia and Lechat, and Colman stood apart with Sirocco and Hanlon, discussing tactical details. "We might have enough now to put a demolition squad outside to take out the Battle Module drive section like Carson suggested," Hanlon said. "Even if Sterm gets in there it would give more protection to the rest of the ship." income tax on it." Jay told us you're an engineering officer on the Mayflower 11," Chang said, sounding interested. "A specialist in fusion processes." Leave the house. Sleep in the yard. Let Dr. Doom deal with the mess if there is one. "In fact," Leilani continued, "old Sinsemilla? that's my mother? is a little nuts, period." Plights and pickles. Troubles. Some of us get 'em served one at a time on a little plate, and some of us. The theories currently favored on Earth attributed the domination of matter, as opposed to antimatter, in the universe to a one-part-per-billion imbalance in 'the reactions occurring in the earliest phase of the Bang, in which the energy available produced copious numbers of exotic particles not found in the present universe, whose decay patterns violated baryon-number conservation. In the present universe they appeared rarely, only as transient "virtual particles" and were responsible for the almost immeasurable, but measured, 10<sup>21</sup>-year mean lifetime of the proton. playful, she bounds forward, snatches a muzzleful of plaid, and jerks the stranger off his feet. The man. Flushed with embarrassment, unable to look at Old Yeller, the boy turns from the bureau and tries the. As in Leilani's own closet, a tubular-steel pole, approximately two inches in diameter, spanned the. Leaving Colonel Oordsen peering out of the screen, Lesley rose and walked through the door in the steel wall. "She could do a lot better than waste herself with those bums. She's the kind that prefers the easy road. . . for as long as it lasts, anyhow." dividing the command post from the observation room and looked down through one of the ports at the approaches to the lock below. Chazure watched from the doorway, ignoring Oordsen's indignant voice as it floated through from behind. "Major Lesley, you have not been dismissed. Come back at once. What in hell's going on there? What are those alarms? Lesley, do you hear me?" must not allow himself to be rattled by the trucker's latest observation. grunting, gasping, snake-killing rage and terror. Like a foxtail bramble, this hateful picture would work its. Continuing to snarl soundlessly at the mirror, the stranger employs a fingernail to pick between two teeth. "Why should they?" Chang asked. He looked across at the couple curiously. "I was wondering what they want with all that stuff. Anyone would think it's about to run out." Raising his face out of its concave image, snorting sand out of his nostrils, blowing a silicate frosting off. Chicago once. . . ." "Aunt Gen," Micky cautioned. How peculiar the world had grown if now life with Aunt Gen had become the sterling standard of. The driver doesn't apply the brakes, but allows the Windchaser's speed to fall steadily. Not good, not. In truth, he has less to fear from wild creatures than from his mother's killers. He has no doubt that they. stands on the ridge line, the sky is too dark to reveal him in silhouette. "Really. It's a rosebush." After the door swung shut behind the pacifist, Noah ordered another beer from the never-was Minnie. Throughout the institution, the floors? gray vinyl speckled with peach and turquoise? were immaculate. such potent snakes of fear and anger, or that her heart could be inflamed and set racing by their sudden. Whether the serpent moved slowly because it was hurt or because it was being cautious to deceive, bride. "Not you," she disagreed, as though she knew him well. "Anger's more like it." "I've kept copies in case anything happens to yours." The advantage of surprise will belong to Curtis, but he's not confident that surprise alone will carry the. know who these brash intruders are, or makes a clatter of pots that might draw attention, probably. This evening, he didn't doze, and after a while his mind began to brim once more with unwanted. "Oh, Mother's far too terribly smart to put any faith in Western medicine. She relied on crystal. Interstate 15, on which they speed southwest, isn't deserted even at this hour, but neither is it busy. The vending machine is smarter than the hand dryers. It offers pocket combs, nail clippers, disposable. Sinsemilla, she'd have this third snake to worry about. There's no way to flee outside when you're. equivalent of a bus station between California and a glorious domain of fun-loving wizards,

surely there. The aircraft touched down softly, and a pair of double doors slid open halfway along the side nearest to the reception party. A tall, burly, red-bearded Chironian wearing a dark parka with a thick belt buckled over it jumped out, followed by another, similarly clad but more slender and catlike. More figures became visible inside when the cabin light came on. Laid out neatly along the floor behind them were two rows of plastic bundles the size of sleeping bags. . . continue westward, along the base of the highway embankment, until they reach the helicopter. He in those blue eyes rocked her and left her with the certain sense that the most closely guarded truths. "And I am on early duty tomorrow," Colman said. He grinned again, and she smiled back impishly, "So why are we still here?" they asked together. . . At about the same moment, inside the memory unit of a lower-security logistics computer located on the same floor, the references to C Company contained in a routine order-of-the-day suddenly and mysteriously changed themselves into references to D Company. At the same time, D Company's orders to remain standing by at the barracks until further notice transformed themselves into orders for C Company. Ten minutes later a harassed clerk in Phoenix brought the change to the attention of Captain Blakeney, who commanded C Company. Blakeney, far from being disposed to query it, told the clerk to send off an acknowledgment, and then gratefully went back to bed. Inside the logistics computer in the Mayflower II, an instruction that shouldn't have been in memory was activated by the incoming transmission, scanned the message and identified it as carrying one of the originator codes assigned to C Company, then quietly erased it. . . something when you tell these tall tales about Dr. Doom murdering boys in wheelchairs. "For that was how they fought. They had watched while their opponents grew weaker by ones and twos, and they had waited for the remnants to turn upon one another and wear themselves down. Then the Chironians had moved. . . He beams, for he and the waitress are clearly connecting now. "That's exactly right. . . communion with the nozzle, feeding on two hundred million years of bog distillations. . . sand and the faint alkaline fragrance of the hardy plants that grow in parched lands. . . Across the room in the sunken area below the wall screen, Bernard, Lechat, Colman, and Jay resumed their conversation. "We don't know what they've got exactly, but it's pretty devastating," Jay told Colman. "We figure they've already tested it. There's an extra crater on one of the moons—a couple of hundred miles across—that wasn't there a year ago. Imagine if whatever did that was to hit the ship. . . But he did have strong principles and a disposition to discretion and not being impetuous, which was why Judge Fulmire had felt safe in confiding his misgivings about the situation that he suspected was shaping up behind the scenes, politically. . . The major hesitated for a second, and then said, "Ah in view of the circumstances, it would be better if you permitted us to carry your guns back for you. Would you mind? ". No meanness is evident in this tall, somewhat portly man, no suspicion or calculation in his twinkling blue. "I'm trying to find someone to confirm the rumors. . . wish that thou were as well made as she. . . let me tell you, it loses its charm pretty quick. . . No rational person would suppose that a ten-year-old boy would roam the interstate, waiting for a stocked. So I took the test through a sugar rush and a major post-sugar crash. Not that I'm making. . . of air fosters the dry sound of a long-dead sea. WEDNESDAY, after a fruitless day of job-seeking, Micky Bell-song returned to the trailer park, where. . . following the ramped bed. He is waiting immediately behind the truck when his master arrives. . . To avoid using a compad in not-too-private surroundings, he went to a public booth in the lobby at Rockefeller's to call the number programmed to accept cabs only if she was alone. While Colman waited for a response, his mind flashed back six months. He had been standing stiffly at attention in dress uniform alongside a display of a remote-fire artillery control post that was part of the Army's contribution to the Fourth of July celebrations, when she wandered away from a group of VIPs sipping cocktails and stood beside him to gaze admiringly at the screens. carrying simulated battlefield displays. She ran her long, painted fingernail slowly and suggestively along the intricate control panel for the satellite-tracking subsystem. "And how many more handsome young men like you do they have in the Army, Sergeant?" she murmured at the displays before her. . . Two hundred thousand miles away on the rugged, pockmarked surface of Chiron's other moon, Romulus, two enormous covers, whose outer surfaces matched the surrounding terrain, swung slowly aside to uncover the mouth of a two-hundred-foot-diameter shaft extending two miles vertically through the solid rock. The battery of accelerator rings in the chambers surrounding the base of the shaft was already charged with dense antimatter streams circulating at almost the speed of light. "I'm not in fourth grade," Leilani said, pouring the warm beer into the sink. "We're twenty-first-century. own misery, we sometimes cling to it even when we want so bad to change, because the misery is. believe his cockamamie story about Luki being levitated to the mother ship. The aliens sometimes abduct

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