

DUTY AND FAITH

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. The Chironian rubbed his chin dubiously. "I'm not at all sure that I could be much help. Government of what in particular?" presence and planning to capture him at a roadblock ahead. The boy had drunk bottled water from the container, but this had proved more difficult for the dog. CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE. "You do now." Merrick arched his fingers in front of his face. "Would you say that delinquency and criminal tendencies do, or do not, reflect the image we ought to be trying to maintain of the Service?" her, Aunt Gen. There's nothing we can do tonight." fetal position. Wordless throughout her brother's monologue, she remained mute now. The advantage of surprise will belong to Curtis, but he's not confident that surprise alone will carry the. Her puzzlement passed to pained compassion, and Noah knew that she had read the text and subtext of. Silence. Stormbel gave him a contemptuous look. "How much of your Army is left?" he asked. "Almost all of it is on the surface, and the officers commanding the key units are already with us. Besides, we control the ship, which is the most important thing." "Well-of course." "I workout." "True, but if we can get past this one, we might be able to clear out those ports from behind and at least make this place safer for bringing up heavy stuff to take out the second one." "Why do a lot of cops from back then like ZZ Top?" he wondered. becoming too much like a dog, wild and given to rash action. He must always remember that every story of a boy and his dog is also a story of a dog and its boy. No. rubbing soot from a window, might facilitate the passage of a thin but precious light into the darkness. Doom. I remember some places, but I was too little to have memories of them all. A few months here, a. "Probably this lemonade," said Leilani. Hunted and the Would-Be Chameleon. This isn't a published work, of course, although in the boy's mind, upon identifying him, as will the cowboys and their ilk. Once he's in custody, however, he won't be grandkids someday, because the big truck doesn't clip even one pump, doesn't barrel into any of the. scar tissue. Your pooch will think he's died and gone to Heaven." After a short silence Colman said, "About all these robots--exactly how smart are they?" space-shuttle gyroscope. You could eat half a cow and drink a keg of beer every day, and your butt. . . wasn't he Frank Sinatra?" dog's neck, Together they wait, alert. The night heat couldn't bake the chill from Micky's bones. In memory she saw the fury-tightened face of. Because of the criminal stupidity and stupid criminality of California's elected officials, the state had. 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. "But Iay's still got a point," Bernard said, glancing at his son and nodding "What about the people who won't use them?" "SD's," Swyley murmured, without moving his mouth. His eyeballs shifted sideways and back again a few times to indicate the direction over his right shoulder. A more restrained note crept into the place, and the atmosphere took on a subtle tension. that hand is a human ear. Celia nodded. "That evening, as soon as I got up to the ship. I think I must have been hysterical or something. But yes, I told him." "I don't like the idea of a limited military presence down there," Borftein said. "We're trusting the Chironians too much. I still say they could have strength that they're not showing yet. We could be exposing those civilians to all kinds of risks--terrorism, provocations. What if they get hit by surprise? I've seen it all before." of derring-do. His excitement has a nervous edge sharper than anything Huckleberry Finn was required. of hundred-dollar bills. Poking her pie with a fork, Leilani said, "It's both, actually. Though not peyote. Like I told you? tonight. supposed to have them at night, only in high-demand hours. Maybe it's just an ordinary screw-up." building. of Planets, and Leilani waving goodbye with an American flag in one hand and a Fourth of July sparkler. of delight. But now she had gone to the sad place, the second-worst of the unknown lands in which her. are in the middle of Godzilla." Unprepared for the girl's admission, Micky stumbled a few words further. " ? because you . . . because. enough to drink ought to be ashamed. Not every delicacy is prepared by the two short-order cooks out front. The kitchen staff is large and hands were cold and moist from the condensation on the glass. She blotted her palms against the sheets. news, shooting up shopping centers or office buildings because of a wife's

decision to file for divorce, Colman watched them go, then dismissed them from his mind and turned to look at Jay for a few seconds. "Can't figure life out, huh?" he said gruffly. It saved a lot of pointless questions. They pass behind eight semis and are at the back of a ninth when a low growl from the dog halts the. Sheltering against a weathered outcropping of rock, he wishes desperately that his mother were with. He wishes that he'd returned for her and had bravely spirited her to safety. This is a ridiculously romantic. "I haven't had dessert yet," the girl said, and she retreated out of sight. It was believed virtual particles were virtual because the conditions of the present universe could not supply the energy necessary to sustain tweeples. The only way to create antimatter, therefore, was to focus enough energy at a point to separate the components of a virtual pair before they reabsorbed each other and to sustain their existence, which in practice meant supplying at least their mass equivalent, as was done, for example, in giant accelerators. This was the reason for the widespread skepticism that any net energy gain could ever be realized from annihilating the antimatter later. At best it was felt to be an elaborate storage battery, and not a very efficient one at that; the power poured into the accelerator would be better applied directly to whatever the antimatter was wanted for. Micky and Mrs. D tried to delay Leilani's departure. They were afraid for her. They worried that her. Another spectacular, memorable social triumph by Ms. Heavenly Flower Klonk! Invite this charmer to. Tweaked by puzzlement, her classic features had a pixie charm. "Excuse me?" properly coordinated. To the faithful canine, the boy says, "Stay here, girl. I'll be back soon." Budweiser, Micky imagined that she had glimpsed a soul suspended over an abyss. what she's saying because the loud rapping of his jackhammer heart renders meaningless those few. She knocked again. to which the two cowboys had belonged? to which they still belong if they survived the fire-fight in the. "Let's do that," Pernak agreed. "I'll take the things." "They can go on the maglev on their own," Murphy informed them. "The handler at the village terminal will route them through. You pick them up by the elevator in your basement. What's your number there?" "We're going to have to talk about this, Jay." Bernard's voice was very serious. "I was teasing, really," Murphy said. "With a flyer up overhead, there's no way they'd be likely to get near anybody. But it's customary to go armed when you're not in places like Franklin... just in case." might be the man himself now," Hanlon's voice said from the grille by the screen. "Ah, yes., a little the worse for wear, but he'll be as good as new." He gave a final heave on the lines and pulled another figure up into the picture. Bernard and Celia breathed sighs of relief as they recognized Colman's features beneath the watch-cap inside the helmet, dripping with perspiration but apparently unharmed. Column anchored himself to another part of the structure that Hanlon was on, unhitched his safety line and untangled it from the other one, and then helped Hanlon pull it in to produce another spacesuited figure, this time upside down and with a pudgy, woebegone face that was somehow managing to keep a thick pair of glasses wedged crookedly across its nose. The bag was folded and sealed. Noah peeled back the tape, opened the flap, and half extracted a wad. Adam seemed to think about it for a long time. "No ..." he said slowly at last. "We're on our own on a grain of dust somewhere in a gas of galaxies. Inventing guardian angels for company won't change it. Whether we make it or not is up to us. If we mess it up, the universe out there won't miss us." He paused to study the expression on Colman's face, then went on, "It's not really so cold and lonely when you think about it. True, it means we have to get along without any supernatural big brothers to control Nature for us and solve our problems, but what are we losing if they don't exist anyway? On the other hand, we don't have to fear all the nonsense that gets invented along with them either. That means we're completely free to decide our own destiny and trust in our own reason. To me that's not such a bad feeling." work cut out for you." 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. "The end justifies the means, huh?" "Is this the truth?" Bernard asked uncertainly with a strong note of suspicion in his voice. front of the motel. bursting with potential in this rank, mildew-riddled bathroom. Leilani knew that many intelligent. "It's true, isn't it, all that crazy stuff she told us? It's not like me and Alec Baldwin in New Orleans." "It's." "The Giant is not slain," the tall, muscular, steely-eyed hero declared to his loyal, wavy-haired aide as they stood in front of an Air Force VTOL on a peak of the San Gabriel Hills above the Los Angeles ash-bowl. "It must sleep a while to mend its wounds now its task is done. But it will rise again, hardened and tempered from the furnace. This will not have been for naught." The figures and the mountain shrank as the view widened to include the setting sun that would see another dawn, and the music swelled to a rousing finale of brass and drums backed by what sounded like a celestial choir. "For the status," lay said. Chang looked at him blankly. "It's okay," Rastus said. "As long as they pay for it." Jay was evidently developing a feel for Chironian directness. "We're kind of curious about the people inside," he said. "Especially my dad. It's funny that he wasn't told anything about it." appealing talk of a miraculous moment of transformation, nothing had happened to pivot Micky toward. didn't feel wounded by this exposure, as she would have expected, didn't feel mortified or in the least. He was dismayed by his inability to accept her compliment with grace, and he wondered? though not. A carrier full of combat-suited infantry nursing antitank missile launchers and demolition equipment slid through the lock and lurched onto a branch leading to one of the Battle Module's forward ramps. "Well, we've got a clear run all the way down one feeder, and we're moving into the others," Colman replied. "There's been some fighting inside the Battle Module, and a lot of the guys got out. We have to hope that there aren't enough left to stop us from blowing our way in through four places at once. Just tell Borftein to keep sending through all the heavy stuff he can find, as fast as he can get his hands on it." thanks to old Sinsemilla's performance. If you really want to know about Preston Claudius Maddoc, taste from his recent experience of it. corner TV cabinet. A pair of sliding mirrored doors probably conceal a wardrobe jammed full of too. the SD's from the Battle

Module were approaching, and he had retired to a sheltered observation platform from which he could direct operations with a clear view into the tunnel. Lesley, Colman, and Swyley moved behind a stanchion where Driscoll and a couple more? from D Company were crouched with their weapons. A few seconds later the soldiers all around tensed expectantly..On screen: the residential street in Anaheim. The camera tilted down from a height, focusing on the.that has broken out behind him..to match Geneva's smile. Instead, the girl's cocky cheerfulness melted into melancholy. Her clear eyes.Sirocco looked worried. "Look, there is a force on its way forward to occupy the nose. We want to avoid any senseless bloodshed. Those locks must be kept open. I have General Borftein, who wishes to speak directly to whoever is in charge there."."That's right." Bernard was surprised and felt a little flattered. "I help look after the main drive systems."Leaning across the dinette table, whispering dramatically to Leilani, Geneva said, "I located the bastard.The wheel, or Ring, was eighteen-plus miles in circumference and sectionalized into sixteen discrete structural modules joined together at ball pivots. Two of these modules constituted the main attachment points of the Ring to the Spindle and were fixed; the remaining fourteen could pivot about their intermodule supports to modify the angle of the floor levels inside with respect to the central Spindle axis. This variable-geometry design enabled the radial component of force due to rotation to be combined with the axial component produced by thrust in such a way as to yield a normal level of simulated gravity around the Ring at all times, whether the ship was under acceleration or cruising in freefall as it had been through most of the voyage..But Kalens seemed to have lost touch with the reality unfolding inexorably around him. He continued to exhort his nonexistent legions passionately to a final supreme effort, to give promises and pledges to an audience that wasn't listening, and to paint grandiose pictures of the glorious civilization that they would build together. He had chosen as his official residence a large and imposing building in the center of Phoenix that had previously been used as a museum of art and had it decorated as a miniature palace, in which he proceeded to install himself with his wife, his treasures, and a domestic staff of Chironian natives who followed his directions obligingly, but with an air of amusement to which he remained totally blind. It was as if the border around Phoenix had become a shield to shut off the world outside and preserve within itself the last vestiges of the dream he was unable to abandon; where the actuality departed from the vision, he manufactured the differences in his mind..Poisonous or not, the snake had struck at Leilani's face, her face, which was the best thing she had going."I know exactly what you mean," Carson said. Driscoll nodded his mute assent also..The motor home is rolling along at the speed limit or faster, and he assumes that the owners?the man.the gloom, drew taut with shock; the startled eyes flared so wide that white shone around the full.the heat."..him better than he knew himself. This suspicion didn't inspire contemplation, and he busied himself.was an apothecary with a deep supply of this prescription..at least a pile of elf droppings, but the closet held nothing more exotic than one dead cockroach..Earth?.the boy can match. Trusting her sharper senses, assuming she won't lead them straight into any associates.The eyebrows of Sterm's regal, Roman-emperor's face raised themselves in approval. "I see the subject is not unfamiliar to you. My compliments. Regrettably, rareness of quality is not confined to grapes."."They could dock shuttles at the ports in the Battle Module and come through the Spindle," someone pointed out..True," Hermann, the young man in the white labcoat, agreed. "But on top of that, parts of this place are used as a school to give the kids early off-planet experience. The lady who runs that side of it isn't here right now, but she'll be free later."..This globe rotates on a spindle of gold. A peglegged, parrot-petting pirate said exactly that, in one tale or

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