

## THE UNBREAKABLE CODE

Chastened by her near-disastrous misreading of the grandfatherly man's character, Old Yeller proceeds. "Don't you want to come along?" Bernard asked Jean. "It would get you out and give you a break." The mention of antimatter reminded Colman of something. He sat back on the sofa and cast his mind back as he tried to pinpoint what. It reminded him of something Kath had said. The others stopped talking and looked at him curiously. And then it came to him. He cocked his head to one side and looked at Bernard. "Did you know that Chironians were modifying the Kuan-yin into an antimatter ship?" he asked. She shivered at the thought and got up from the sofa to find Bernard. No doubt he would be in the basement room that he and Jay had made into a workshop to supplement the village's communal facility. Bernard had been taking more interest in Jay's locomotive lately than he had on the Mayflower II. Jean suspected he was doing so to induce Jay to spend more time at home and allay some of the misgivings that she had been having. But his enthusiasm hadn't prevented Jay from going off on his own into Franklin, sometimes until late into the evening, after spending hours in the bathroom fussing with his hair, matching shirts and pants in endless combinations with a taste that Jean had never known he had, and experimenting with neckties, which he'd never bothered with before in his life unless told to. Whatever he was up to, Marie at least, mercifully, was managing to occupy herself with her own friends and to stay inside the complex..a gunshot victim. This is a hideous squeal of agony. He has heard cries like this before, too often. It's midpoint of the hall. They stare at him, and he returns their stares..Sirocco frowned and rubbed his nose. "I'm not convinced. I can't help feeling that he's been set up by somebody else as the fall-guy, and that the somebody else hasn't come out yet. I think the Chironians believe that too." "I don't know. We haven't tried it yet," Bernard answered. He raised his voice a fraction. "Anybody home? What do we have to do to get a computer in this place?" No response..locked. He rattles it up and down, up and down, insistently, to no effect..deteriorating condition causes the boy concern. The trucker seems on the brink of a medical emergency..This appears to be the truck that had been parked along the lonely county road near the Hammond.Chang laughed. "It's okay. We won't be going very high, and it'll be more walking than anything else. There won't be anything more risky than maybe a few daskrends showing up." "I don't know," Jay said. "It's a lot to go into now, but we're certain they've got the capability. It's really that urgent, Steve. When can you get over?" "Probably not much of anything," Leilani said, without a pause. "Except in having fun and getting through.No job. No prospects. No money in the bank. An '81 Camaro that still somewhat resembled a."She performed at a club called Planet Pussycat."Because of the criminal stupidity and stupid criminality of California's elected officials, the state had."He underestimated you. And I regret to admit, when I came to you, my expectations weren't terribly.The snake still coiled near the baseboard, under the window. Luminous eyes. Head weaving as if to the."Sucky day, Aunt Gen."The living room alone could have housed a Third World family of twelve, complete with livestock.."Her mother's dying too," Jay had replied dryly. Colman got Adam talking about his work and about the physical and biological environment of the planet generally. Chiron was practically the same age as Earth, Adam said, having been formed along with its parent star by the same shockwave that had precipitated the condensation from interstellar gas clouds of the Sun and its neighbors. It.net seems to have gone down," he said. "Even the standby channels."She swallowed as she traced through her thoughts and, checked herself. She was rationalizing or hiding something from herself, she knew. Howard had come home enough times angry and embittered after pressing for measures to halt the decay and being overruled. He was doing what he could~ but the influence of the planet was all pervasive. She was merely projecting into him and personifying something else--something that stemmed from deep inside her. Even as she felt the first stirring of something deep within her mind, the vision came of herself and Howard, alone and unbending, left isolated in their backwater while the river flowed on its way, unheeding and uncaring. After twenty years, nothing lay ahead but emptiness and oblivion. The cold truth behind her rage toward Howard was that her protector was as helpless as she..Wellesley frowned over the suggestion for several seconds but eventually nodded. "I suppose you should, yes."..survival, he must forget, at least for now, that particular terror, that unbearable loss.."Rickets. I know. But you can get vitamin D in tuna, eggs, and dairy products. That's better than too.laugh that might make this earnest little nurse want to jump off a bridge, so he held it back and simply."You think so?"PAUL LECHAT, ONE Of the two Congressional members representing the Maryland residential module on the Floor of Representatives, which formed a second house and counterbalanced the Directorate, had a reputation as a moderate on most of the issues debated in the last few years of the voyage. Although not a scientist, he was a keen advocate of scientific progress as the only means likely to alleviate the perennial troubles that had bedeviled mankind's history, and an admirer of scientific method, the proven efficacy of which, he felt, held greater potential for exploitation within his own profession than tradition had made customary. He attempted therefore always to define his terminology clearly, to accumulate his facts objectively; to evaluate their implications impartially, and to test his evaluations unambiguously. He found as a consequence that he saw eye-to-eye with every lobbyist up to a point, empathized with every special-interest to a certain degree, sympathized with every minority to a limited extent, and agreed with every faction with some reservations. He was wary of rationalizings, cautious of extrapolatings, suspicious of generalizings, and 'skeptical at dogmatizings. He responded to reason and logic rather than passion and emotion, kept an open mind on controversies, based his opinions on the strictly relevant, and reconsidered them readily if confronted by new information. The result was that he had few friends in high places and no strong supporters.."The Director alone has the prerogative to decide that," Fulmire told him coldly.."He wasn't dead then," Geneva assured the girl. "He hadn't even begun to lose his hair yet." "Got a name??.maintenance ladders, and catwalks. There was no other way through or round the bulkhead. The only route forward from the Hexagon was through the lock.."Amazing," the

robot replied in a neutral voice..such relationship can be a success without respect..If warehouse decor favored red light, as reputed, then this atmosphere was holier suited to a prostitute.and swung over the gate, but his four-legged friend wouldn't have been able to climb after him..Chicago once. . . ." Aunt Gen," Micky cautioned..Disconcerted, the stranger drops his restraining hand, and his wince lines cut deeper into his lean face as.doubt familiar to chronic depressives from their dreams; the rotting fabric sagged in greasy folds, reeking.merriment, the mirth in her voice was unmistakable: "You think I'm making up stories about Dr. Doom."I don't know yet. We haven't heard anything.'."Not exactly like," the driving machine disagrees. "Old Yeller was a male. This lovely black-and-white."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?"The camera tilted up, panned right: A silver Jaguar approached through the early twilight. The car."Of course not," Rastus said. "But everyone values what they have. I said the mind was an infinite resource, but only if you don't squander it. Don't you think that makes an interesting paradox?".Distance to Chiron 1.9 billion miles; speed down to 1100 miles per second. Progressive phase-down of the main-drive bum was commenced, and slow pivoting of. the variable-attitude Ring modules initiated to correct for the effect of diminishing linear force from the~ reducing deceleration. No response received from the Chironians to a request for a schedule of the names, ranks, titles, and responsibilities of the planetary dignitaries assigned to receive the Mayflower II's official delegation on arrival.. "Oh, little mouse, what's wrong with me that I let the child go back there?". "From what Jerry Pernak told us it must have to do with antimatter," Jay said. "The Chironians are into a whole new world of particle theory. That means they can produce lots of antimatter economically. With that they could make matter-antimatter annihilation bombs, superintense radiation sources, guided antimatter beams, maybe who knows? But it has to be something like that..". "A city called Chicago, originally. Heard of it?".smear of something else that said mortal wounds as clearly as a lot of good red gore would have said it..She threw off Micky's hand and scooted backward in the grass. A last sob clogged her throat, and."It's okay, Driscoll," Sirocco called ahead as the party came into sight around a bend in the wall. "Forget the pantomime. We're back in the Bomb Factory." Driscoll relaxed his pose and sent a puzzled look along the corridor.. "At least I didn't catch you playing with yourself. Let's get out of here..".With a whimper, the dog squats and pees..Leilani would have preferred a shovel. A garden hoe. But this length of tubular steel was better than bare."You don't think that a ship full of Asiatics coming at us armed to the teeth qualifies as an emergency?" Borftein asked sarcastically..Adam threw up his hands again. "The kids won't let me! They say it wouldn't be the same any other way. What can you do?".Pointing to the small bag as Noah tucked the cash into it once more, the pacifist said, "Don't you realize.the next growth of trees..On the second screen Hanlon, in a spacesuit blackened by scorch marks, was clinging in the foreground to the remains of a buckled metal structure sticking out into.Welcome Wagon gifts and valuable discount coupons that come with membership. Sinsemilla also buys.should convince locals in a ten-mile radius that Almighty God, in His more easily disappointed Old.gained only by respecting her, by accepting her highly ornamental eccentricities, which included playing."Your comparison is quite invalid," a girl who was with the boy pointed out. "There are ample reasons, verified by universally corroborated experimental results, for postulating that entities possessing the properties ascribed to atoms do indeed exist. Whether or not they are detectable by the senses directly is immaterial. Where are your comparable data?".Considering that this had just now become incontestably clear to Constance, her composure was.voice was even more consoling than her embrace: "Little mouse, you were so quick, so bright, so sweet..At last Kath looked around for a way of relieving the heaviness in the air. "How will you get them up to the ship?" she asked Colman.. "All right then," Cromwell challenged. "Now what do you think would make you walk like that when people shouted at you?".The boy almost corrects her on two counts. First, Old Yeller in this case is a she, not a he. Second, the."I never said it had to make sense." Sirocco brought his elbows up level with his shoulders, stretched. for a few seconds, and sighed. After a short silence he cocked a curious eye in Colman's direction. "So... what's the latest with that cutie from Brigade?". "Was that why those guys took off?" Jay asked, by now having regained most of his color. "It probably had something to do with it," Colman said, grinning. "That's the kind of trash you have to deal with. Still interested?". "I've seen your mother go through a lot of men over the years. She's always been so ... restless. I knew."I'd love a piece, thanks," Leilani said..What had changed was hope: the hope of change, which had seemed impossible to her only yesterday..empty hand and lift a named number of cards off a deck eight times out of ten. Swyley had been his guinea pig, for he had discovered that if Swyley couldn't spot a false move, nobody could, and in the years since, he had perfected his technique to the degree that Swyley now owed him \$1,343,859.20, including interest..between Geneva polishing each already-clean dessert fork on a dishtowel before placing it on the table.university-trained doctor..Now, in the Utah night, he sits boldly in the Explorer and sings along with the catchy music on the radio..As Leon spoke, Colman looked curiously at Kath to see if he could detect any reaction, but the remained impassive..-an unfamiliar face by the side of Swyley, who was still standing. He had short-cropped hair, a hard-eyed, inscrutable, clean-shaven face, and was standing impassively with his arms folded across his chest. "Who's this?" Sirocco said "He's not from D Company,".cell phone or an in-car computer to report that the fugitive pair had only minutes ago created a scene on.came at hand; half measures were fatal. The shorter-term price to be paid was regrettable, but when had Nature ever offered free lunches? And in the longer term, what did it mean anyway? The Soviets had taken twenty million casualties in World War II and emerged to fight World War III three-quarters of a century

later. And in that conflict the U.S. had lost an estimated hundred million, yet had restored itself as a major power in less than half the time. At best the sentimentalities of politicians and misguided idealists underestimated the resilience of the race, and at worst, by tempting aggressors with the lure of easy pickings, precipitated the very wars that they deplored. Would Hitler have rampaged so blithely across Europe if Chamberlain had gone to Munich with ten wings of heavy bombers standing behind him across the English Channel? And when all the hackneyed words were played and spent, hadn't everything worthwhile in history been gained in the end by its generals? Now, boldly identified as a starchild, virtually daring the ETs to come and get her, she picked up the. "Yes, I was about to come to that," Sirocco replied. He lifted his head a fraction to address the whole room again. "As Velarini says, they could come in through the Battle Module and the nose. The Battle Module is the main problem. It's bound to be the most strongly defended section anywhere, and there's only one way through to it from the rest of the ship. Therefore we assault it directly only if all else fails. We've put Steve up near the nose of the Spindle with the strongest section to block that access route. Steve's. With his meager resources, Curtis has little hope of being able to bribe his way past even state or local. This time, Micky resisted being charmed. "That's not funny, Leilani." First the helicopter tracking the highway toward Nevada and now this patrol car following: These are. Jerry Lewis. Sirocco shrugged noncommittally. "Can't say. I wouldn't worry too much about it. If you stick close to Steve and Bret and do what they tell you, you'll come through okay." Although they couldn't claim to be campaign veterans, Colman and Hanlon were among the few of the Mission's regulars who had seen combat, having served together as rookie privates with an American expeditionary unit that had fought alongside the South Africans in the Transvaal in 2059, the year before they had volunteered for the Mayflower II. The experience gave them a certain mystique-especially among the younger troops who had matured-in some cases been born and enlisted--in the course of the voyage. He's just entering the next aisle, one layer deeper into the huge kitchen, when he hears the two cowboys. "They began arriving at the Spindle a few minutes ago," Lesley seemed surprised. "How come you didn't know?" "Sometimes," Shirley answered. "Ci teaches English mainly, but mostly down on the surface. That is, when she's not working with electronics or installing plant wiring underground somewhere. I'm not all that technical. I grow olives and vines out on the Peninsula, and design interiors. That's what brought me up here--Clem wants the crew quarters and mess deck refitted and decorated. But yes, I teach tailoring sometimes, but not a lot." watched from any window. Beyond the open back door lay a deserted kitchen dimly revealed by the attitude, the girl retained some of the gullibility of a child. "But how'd you do what the cops couldn't?" in these matters. The smooth, almost shiny, scar tissue glowed whiter than the surrounding skin, an the door and the rear fence. The grass flourished because Geneva watered it regularly with a hose. What had surprised him even more was the quality of everything they had provided. The closets, drawers, and vanity that formed one wall of the room by the entrance to the bathroom were old-fashioned in style, but built from real, fine-grained wood, expertly carved. The doors and drawers fitted perfectly and moved to the touch of a finger. The fabrics and drapes were soft and intricately woven rather than having been patterned by laser impregnation; the carpets were of an organic self-cleaning, self regenerating fiber that felt like twentieth-century Wilton or Axminster; the bathroom fittings were molded from a metallic glazed crystal that glowed with a faint internal fluorescence; the heating and environmental system were noiseless. On Earth the place would have cost a hundred thousand at least, he reflected. He wasn't sure if the Chironians still owned the complex and had leased it to the Mission for some period, or what, but the letter from Merrick assigning him to quarters allocated on the surface hadn't mentioned rental payments. In his eagerness to get down from the Mayflower II, Fallows, after some moments of hesitation, had decided not to ask. He turned back to find her holding a phial of capsules. She popped one into her mouth and smiled impishly as she offered the phial to Colman. "It's Saturday, why not live it up a little?" He scowled and shook his head. Anita pouted. "They're good. Shrinks say they relieve repressions and allow the consciousness to expand. We should get to know ourselves." minute, deeper than mere night. "When did you see a shoddy piece of workmanship on Chiron a door that didn't fit, or a motor that wouldn't start?" Eve asked him. "Have you ever come across anything like that anywhere there? It makes what we're used to look like junk. I was at a trade show yesterday that some of our companies put on in Franklin to do some market research. The Chironians thought it was a joke. You should have seen the kids down there. They thought our ideas of design and manufacturing were hilarious. Our guys had to give it up as a dead loss." front wall of their house and unloaded a few tons of fresh manure in their living room. Not only was it a. Leilani didn't actually make sense of those words, and she was saved only because she met her mother's

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