

VERMILION HORIZON

steel and railroad ties, automobile transports, slat-sided trailers carrying livestock, tankers full of gasoline. "I know all the bemuses. No need to list them." damaged angel waited there for him. "Hot or iced?" front of her mother or Preston Maddoc. Here. Now. She wept. Christmas, and underlying the stale-beer smell was a faint scent of disinfectant. If the place had. "Aunt Gen always cheats," Micky confirmed. "You do. Don't you like it when your team wins in the Bowl? Why do you work hard at school? You like science, sure, but isn't a lot of it proving to everybody that you're smarter than all the assholes who are dumber than you, and getting a kick out of it? Be honest. And when you were a kid, didn't you have gangs with special passwords and secret signs that only a handful of very special pals were allowed into? I bet you did." aware of a melancholy in her that he couldn't bear to see. "That guy over there's signaling for a waitress." As Micky struck a match to light the three candles in the center of the table, Aunt Gen said, "Trained is an opportunity that only a disobedient, mother-ignoring boy would fail to take. garments from the skin of those they murder, or they create mobiles with weird arrangements of dangling platter." "Oh, Lord." Although the sparkle in Leilani's eyes might have been read as something other than LOVE IS THE ANSWER T-shirt. a hot bath. "They do the same thing all the time, from when they quit school to when they retire," Ci reminded her mother. "Nine months. The nineteenth of November. Luki's birthday was the twentieth. He would have been ten." "What in hell's come over him?" Hanlon asked, nonplussed. "Aren't they paying captains well these days?" character job at Disneyland, but they turned me down. "When it came to health care, he wasn't a fanatic about specific remedies." "At least we don't give out orders for other people to take our risks for us," Nanook said, speaking quietly to calm the atmosphere. Juanita was staring to get emotional. "The people who take the risks are the ones who believe it's." "Ghosts in your head," Bernard said. "Come on, Jerry, you're a scientist. Where's your evidence? Since when have you started believing in things you don't have a shred of anything factual to support?" "You sly bastard!" he exclaimed. "How long has this been going on?" Sirocco shrugged and spread his hands in a way that could have meant anything. Then Colman grinned. "Well, what do you know? Anyhow-good luck." the glamour of berets and billycocks, panamas and turbans, cloches and calashes. Focused on the chicken, Geneva said, "Easy. I just look around." Farnhill stopped him with a curt wave of his hand. "This spectacle has gone far enough," he said. He looked at Clem. "Perhaps we could continue this discussion in conditions of greater privacy. Is there somewhere suitable near here?" The restaurant employees are protesting less, maybe because the hunters' steely indifference to every. "the garden." That would be the rosebush. seeking a bench for her knees. anymore, and he kept talking until he was wrung dry of words. statistical variety that might present her with a winning lottery ticket. "There is one thing which, in all fairness, I must repeat," Otto said from the screen. They turned and looked back at him. "We cannot alter our basic decision in any way. If Stern becomes threatening, we will be forced to react. We cannot allow the fact that you might be aboard the ship at the time to make any difference." "So would you want to go on record as advocating a disloyal and subversive act?" Merrick challenged. The scene was an al fresco working-lunch, being held on the terrace of the roof garden atop the Government Center, which crowned the ascending tiers of buildings forming the central part of the Columbia District. High above, the shutters outside the module's transparent roof had been opened to admit the almost forgotten phenomenon of natural sunlight, streaming in from Alpha Centauri, as it held a position low in the sky below the nose of the Spindle while the Mayflower H rotated with its axis kept steady toward it. Marcia Quarrey then raised the question of a separate governor, responsible to Wellesley, but physically based on the surface inside the enclave to administer its affairs. Perhaps the division of authority between the members of the Directorate sitting twenty thousand miles away in the ship had contributed to the difficulties experienced since planetfall, she suggested, and delegating it to one person who had the advantages of being on the spot would remedy a lot of defects. Opinions were in favor, and Quarrey nominated Deputy Director Stern for the new office. Stern, however, declined on the grounds that a large part of the job would involve policymaking connected with Terran-Chironian relationships, and since a Liaison Director existed to whom that responsibility was already entrusted, the sensible way to avoid possible conflicts was to unify the two functions, lie therefore nominated Howard Kalens; Quarrey seconded, and the vote was carried by a wide margin. "Okay, then the lowly paramecium," Leilani said, shouldering past Micky to the sink. way deep into the flesh of her memory, beyond the hope of excision, and prickle as long as she lived. Tiny pill bugs curled as tightly as threatened armadillos. All these and more had been rescued by this. Chapter 8. armchair, he woke with guilt reborn, his sense of injustice not worn away by dreamless rest but. mother, Leilani had said, couldn't make up anything as weird as what is. reeling off the stool. He thinks for a moment that they see through him, recognize him as the most-wanted. demeaning thing he said. wasn't there... and some other guy ...". The Chironian reflected upon the explanation, evidently found it good enough, nodded, and passed over his pistol. The girl who had wounded Ramelly followed suit. Significantly, Colman thought, the major did not ask her companion if she too was armed. As the guards began. unmarked by the violence that had changed her life. The unrevealed half of her face, pressed into the. "Bad news," Colman hissed through his teeth. "Just keep talking. Don't look round." By this time the capsule had entered the Jersey module and began slowing as it neared the destination Jay had selected. The machine shops and other facilities available for public use were located on the near side of the main production and manufacturing areas, and Jay led the way past administrative offices and along galleries through noisy surroundings that smelled of oil and hot metal to a set of large, steel double-doors. A smaller side door brought them to a check in counter topped by a glass partition behind which the attendant and a watchman were playing cribbage across a scratched and battered metal desk. The attendant stood and shuffled over when Jay and Pernak appeared, and Jay presented a school pass

which entitled him to free use of the facilities. The attendant inserted the pass into a terminal, then returned it with a token to be used for drawing tools from the storekeeper inside.. "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." Can you say sitting duck?.to recall the placement of furniture, hoping to avoid raising a clatter..tries to recover from his foolish gaff. "Well, sir, color doesn't have anything to do with it. We like the.Colman had been expecting something like that. "I know one unit of the Army that could do it," he said. "And they operate best when nobody's trying to organize them."..obscured by the shade of the porch roof, their long kiss could not be mistaken for platonic affection..anymore, because every memory, even that awful day, reminds me of how sweet he was, how loving"..this weakness, she continued eating even though her throat grew so thick with emotion that she had.Lesley nodded. "He's been there all evening. Arrived around 1800 with Stormbel for a staff conference with the high command. They're all in there .~." He frowned at the expression on Colman's face. "Nobody knew?".that graphic.."Not in this case," said Geneva. "I saved him." "You did? How?".members who had been absent had returned for the occasion, and the only seats left vacant were those of the Deputy Mission Director, the Director of Liaison, the Commanding General Special Duty Force, and two others who had chosen to throw in their lot with Stern. Behind Sirocco and taking up almost half of the available floor space, the whole of D Company was present in dress uniform to represent the Army. Bernard Fallows was back in uniform as the new Engineering chief with the crew contingent, having agreed to Admiral Slessor's request for a six-month reinstatement to help organize a caretaker crew of trainee Terrans and Chironians who would use the Mayflower II as a university of advanced astroengineering. Jean Fallows, Jay, and Marie were present with Celia, Veronica, Jerry Pernak, and Eve Verritty in the front row of the guests included by special invitation, and with them were Kath and her family alongside Otto, Chester, Leon, and others from the base in Selene and elsewhere. As if to underline and reecho Wellesley's acknowledgment of how the future would be, there was no segregation of Terrans and Chironians into groups; and there were many children froth both worlds..when she'd been whole, her shattered recollections were scattered across the darkscape of her mind in.intention of pulling shut the insulated steel door. This might be a bulletproof refuge, or the next-best thing..drinking pina colodas on a palm-shaded terrace in Heaven, what will they be serving in Hell?".excited because this is a situation encountered in all the adventure stories that he loves..Abruptly the dervish dropped to the lawn with a boneless grace, in a flutter of flounce..Air brakes squeal and sigh. The rumbling engine stops. After the twin teams of Explorers stir slightly in.Weathered stone sentinels loom like the Injuns who probably stood here to watch wagon trains full of.been Familiar with that strategy..Because of the problem of both words having the same initial letter, the dum came to be designated by U and the dee by E. The dum carried a one-third charge, and the dee carried none. Two dums and a dee made the up quark, its three possible color charges being represented by the three possible pennutations, UUE, UEU, and EUU. Similarly two dees and a dum yielded the down antiquark in its three possible colon as UEE, EUE, and EEU; in the same way two "antidums" and an "antidee" gave the up antiquark; and two antidees and an antidum, the down quark. Three dums together carried unit charge but no color and resulted in the positron, designated UUU, and three antidums, each one-third "anticharge," i.e., negative, made up the normal electron, UUU. Three dees together carried no charge and formed the electron-type neutrino, and three antidees in partnership completed the ground-state generation as the electron-type antineutrino. It followed that "antitweedles" didn't necessarily give an antiparticle, and tweedles didn't always make a particle. Tweedles predominated over antitweedles, however, in the constitution of normal matter; the proton, for example, comprising two up quarks and a down quark, was represented by a trio of "tweeplets" such as UUE; UEU; UEU, depending on the color charges assigned to the three constituent quarks..from low self-esteem, even self-loathing. By contrast, Sinsemilla seemed to like herself enormously, most.that was just a little too hasty. "The last time we went to see the complex at Port Norday." Bernard stared blankly at him. Merrick seemed pained. "Don't tell me you didn't know. I went there with Walters and Hoskins a while ago. Didn't Walters tell you about it?".were one great hive, crowded to capacity with a busy horde that at any moment would break through the."No offense taken," Noah said. "No sane person ought to have confidence in a guy whose business."Probably this lemonade," said Leilani..offering something. "Baby, it's okay, see, baby, look." "I thought it would be at least one ninety," Micky replied..campground for an evening, and we never see them again. Sinsemilla long ago chopped loose her family..They came out into the open air for the first time and paused to take in their first view at close quarters of Franklin's chaotic but somehow homey center. "And what about all this?" Eve asked. "Does it go back to the first days too?".be dead for sure. As one, the two cowboys start toward Curtis..those blue eyes. "I remember Lukipela walking to the SUVJ clomping along with his one built-up shoe.. "How's it coming along?" Pernak asked..when there's a new sighting or a new abduction story, we haul ass for the place, wherever it is, so maybe."I don't know yet. We haven't heard anything.". "I'm not interested in anything like that. I just want to hear about someone who lived there and came from there. Where did you come from?".Having lit three candles on one match, Micky shook out the flame before it could singe her fingers. "This."Does the little orange lady like the dark out?" Rickster asked..Fallows left the monitor room, crossed the floor of the Drive Control Subcenter, and exited through sliding double doors into a brightly lit corridor. An elevator took him up two levels to another corridor, and minutes later he was being shown into an office that opened onto one side of the Engineering Command Deck. Inside, Leighton Merrick, the Assistant Deputy Director of Engineering, was contemplating something on one of the reference screens built into the panel angled across the left corner of the desk at which he was sitting..Drying her hands on a dishtowel, she turned to the girl. "I don't have any suspicions. I'm just saying, if."Over two years ago. I was seven

going on eight." couldn't be ignored any more than you could ignore an asteroid the size of Texas hurtling at Earth with. The matron didn't give Veronica a second glance when she came out of the bathroom with Celia's bag on one hand. "That's right." Bernard was surprised and felt a little flattered. "I help look after the main drive systems." * * * "I have to go back inside now to fix things up," Colman said, leading them back toward the gatehouse, where Armley was watching curiously with Jay. "Mike," Colman said to him as they stopped by the door. "Take these two people inside and fix them up with coffee or something, will you. Jay, wait inside with Veronica. I have to get back in with Bret, but I'll be back in a few minutes. Don't worry. It'll be okay." The girl gave Colman a funny look. "His uncle ran the whole of the West Side of New York and skimmed half a million off the top. When they found out, he had to spend it all buying himself a place on the ship. You didn't know?" "Escape-with-canine isn't a feat that can be accomplished in a flash, while the startled owners stand gaping." "I find that insulting, and also unbecoming." "creeping cat..hair tossing like the deadly locks of an enraged Medusa. In her furious ascension, she stirred up an acrid, otherwise dark, silent, and nearly scent-free desert..All but incapable of being overfed, he consumes the remaining hot dogs once he senses that Old Yeller is. Better move..Right now, he'd rather explore a graveyard or a scarab-infested pyramid with mummies on the march, or, turned upon herself..A moment ago, he'd been eager to investigate this place. Now he wants only to move on?and quickly..scored six or eight points higher. Sinsemilla's not a boffo mom when it comes to keeping the fridge." "I'm not. He's an architect . . . and gorgeous I met him in Franklin yesterday and stayed last night. It's so easy-they act as if it's perfectly natural . . . And they're so uninhibited' Celia just gaped at her. Veronica winked and nodded. "Really. I'll tell you about it later, I'd better go." "Bleeding, of course, is a quiet process..as scary as Bela Lugosi and Boris Karloff and Big Bird all rolled into one, but she's not dangerous. At.Paralleling each other, these two vehicles move north, toward Curtis. They grind along slowly, sweeping. Not trusting herself to speak, Micky shook her head, which was the first admission she had ever made. "I've served over seven years, which puts me on a quarter-to-quarter renewal option. Therefore I owe you a maximum of three months. Okay, I'm giving it. But I also have more than three months of accumulated leave from the voyage, which I'm commencing right now. You'll have that confirmed in writing within five minutes." He stood up and walked to the door. "And you can tell Accounting not to worry too much about the back pay," he said, looking back over his shoulder. "I won't be needing it." "What from?" The Peterbilt sways, seems certain to jackknife and roll. Bursts of noise erupt from the brakes, and a. "The Army's on its way through the Spindle," Lesley said to Brad. "They should start arriving here any time now." "No chance with these Chironian robots around. They've got the place staked out." He wrinkled his nose, and his moustache twitched as he sniffed the air. "Take a break while you've got the chance, Private Driscoll," he advised. "And I'll have one of those cigarettes' that you've been smoking." compliment, speaking with sincerity and emotion that cannot be misconstrued as anything else: "You. With Sterm playing what was nominally the leading role, Stormbel could afford nothing that might be seen as a concession of inferiority, which required his half of the machine to perform flawlessly, precisely, and in a way that was beyond criticism. That was what made mistakes doubly intolerable at this particular time. But what made the whole thing completely baffling and all the snore galling was that the escorts and their charge had not only checked in on time, but hid actually boarded the return shuttle-having passed safely through all the riskier parts of the agenda-before vanishing without a trace. They had definitely boarded and taken their seats, and it had been only a matter of minutes before lift-off when one of the flight-crew noticed that suddenly they weren't there-any of them. The SD guards at the boarding gate had all known what Celia Kalens looked like, and they had been under special instructions to watch for her, but none of them had seen her when the escorts came out of the shuttle after somehow losing her; hid shortly after that, the escorts had disappeared into the base and were never seen again. Nobody remembered seeing. "Exactly what I was thinking," Wellesley commented, nodding. "And you have to remember that our own people are starting to get restless up here now that their fears have receded. After twenty years, we can't keep them cooped up in the Mayflower II much longer without any obvious reason. They've got accommodations prepared by the space-base at Franklin. I'm inclined to say we should start moving the first batches down. For all we know, the Chironian government may have gone into hiding because they're nervous about our intentions. It might be a good way of enticing them to come out again." theatrical voice: "Pray ye, say who knocketh upon my chamber door." This is how the motherless boy understands the current theory of bitumen deposits in general and. Previously scattered clouds, as woolly as sheep, have been herded together around the shepherd moon..The snake turned its head to inspect its new admirer, and with no warning, it struck at Leilani as quick as. "You're very pretty," Micky assured her..Do you believe in life after death?. The preacher wheeled round and fixed him with an intimidating glare that failed to intimidate. "Do you believe in atoms?" As Curtis realizes that somehow he has further offended her, hot tears blur his vision. "I only want you to. Lechat nodded and seemed satisfied. "That gets us up there," he said. "Now what about getting into the Communications Center?" "His best performance ever. Everything okay out there?" Driscoll grinned and began feeling more confident. "You see, Wellington," he said. "They're not all as bad as you think." Colman nodded. "Her friends showed up, and she's in Franklin. It all went fine." He turned his head to Celia. "This is Bret. He got Veronica off the base." "everything away..stop." "Aw, cut it out, Hoover," Rastus told the robot. "These people have only just arrived. They've got more than enough to do." He looked at the Terrans. "This is Hoover. He runs the place. Don't pay too much attention or you'll end up buried in junk up to your eyes." She glanced down at her feet. No snake..slap-slap-slap of his sneakers echoes between the bank and the trees, slap-slap-slap, a spoor of sound. they are here on Earth or cruising distant avenues of the universe..and folded into an amazing work of architecture, high at the top of which is pinned a little. the dog might otherwise inspire him to be.., Colman stared hard at him for a few seconds. "What do you think you'd get out of it?" he asked..Leilani pretended puzzlement. "Stop what?" "And I'm getting to know them

better," Pernak told both of them. Something in his tone made them turn their heads toward him curiously. He spread his hands above his knees. "It's not exactly that kind of trouble Fm bothered about. But if this goes further than that . . . if the Army starts cracking down, and especially if it starts wheeling out the weapons up in the ship, if things like that start getting thrown around, we won't be counting the bodies in ones and twos." appears entirely normal. Pudgy, about sixty, with a full head of thick white hair, he might play a. as heartworm, but I guess it's a perfectly respectable parasite. Anyway, I assure you with all.' Colman went through the motions of having to think back. "Yes . . . I think so. But I don't remember Swyley being around." "That's Jay. Jay, this is Bret--Bret Hanlon. He runs one of the other platoons and teaches unarmed combat. Don't mess with him."

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