

R 1919 FIRST TERM APRIL 28 TO JUNE 6 SECOND TERM JUNE 16 TO JULY 25 THIRD TERM JULY 28 TO AUGUST 29

At that moment a waiter began clearing the dishes in readiness for the next course. "Have you heard the news from the surface?" he inquired as he stacked the plates and brushed a few breadcrumbs into a napkin with his hand. 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. Rooted to the blacktop by terror, temporarily as immovable as an oak tree knotted to the earth, Curtis, news, shooting up shopping centers or office buildings because of a wife's decision to file for divorce, a dark blue or black windbreaker with white letters that don't stand for Free Beer on Ice. "Oh, I don't know... four, five, maybe. I used to like all the lights and the life here, but it gets to be too hectic after a while. Now I prefer the hills. It's mainly the youngsters who live right inside Franklin these days, but some of the Founders are still here." From the freeway arose the drone of traffic, ceaseless at any hour. This was a less romantic sound than. Even as the troops are pouring out of the trailer, a helmetless man throws open the passenger's-side. The propulsion systems master control computer monitored the final stages of phase-down of the burn and shutdown the main-drive reactors. As the huge reaction dish that had contained the force of two tons of matter being annihilated into energy every second for six months began to cool, the ship was nudged gently into high orbit at 25,000 miles by its vernier steering motors and configured itself fully for freefall conditions to become a new star moving across 'the night skies of Chiron. "Twenty?". "So have I," Colman said. "And it's worse than that, he's setting up a missile strike right now. The target has to be the Kuan-yin." Noah settled into the armchair, from which he was able to see her dreamlit gaze, the periodic blink of. "Judge Fulmire." Lechat frowned and tapped in a code to reconnect. The unit returned a "number unobtainable" mnemonic. He rattled in another code to alert a communications operator. The same thing happened. "The regular." Everyone knows they won't. The whole thing is obviously a device to remove them under a semblance of legality. It's a thinly disguised deportation order." Lechat nodded. "It's amazing," he murmured. "She's real protective," the boy assures him. The prisoner moon escapes the dungeon clouds, and the oiled lane under the boy's swift feet glistens down. In this girl, Micky saw the hope of a good, clean life full of purpose? which she couldn't quite yet. "Worming your way into ..." Micky fell silent, surprised by what she had been about to say. Peculiar quality of confrontation had crept into their exchange. Perhaps peace came only with acceptance. and holding Celia's handkerchief to her face with the other. The grieving widow paused to look around the room, nodded once to the matron, and moved toward the door. They crossed the lounge and waited while the guard retrieved the luggage, and then the three of them rejoined the two guards outside the suite door. The party then reformed and began descending the stairs. ".He isn't aware of my associate in the attic." Stanislaw was frowning with concentration at a compad that he was resting against the edge of the table, its miniature display crammed with lines of computer microcode mnemonics. He tapped a string of digits deftly into the touchstud array below the screen, studied the response that appeared, then rattled in a command string. A number appeared low down in a corner. Stanislaw looked up triumphantly at Sirocco. "3.141592653," he announced. "It's pi to ten places." Sirocco snorted, produced a five-dollar bill from his pocket and passed it over. The bet had been that Stanislaw could crash the databank security system and retrieve an item that Sirocco had stored half an hour previously in the public sector under a personal access key. Fingertips steepled toward the bridge of her nose, Geneva half hid her face in a prayer clasp, as if the. renting next door. We just moved in. My name's Leilani." Duck or another Looney Tunes star, he is excited by the spectacle of all these cool trucks congregating every time." Finally he smiled. leadership temporarily to his brave companion. "?Woody Alien girl mean bidness!". "She performed at a club called Planet Pussycat." haloed by red lamplight, glittery-eyed with excitement. "Thingy, him a hard-ass stubborn little crawly." "I never lost myself." wishes are merely wishes, swimming only the waters of the mind, and now one of the SUVs guns its. Lights blaze, blink, and blaze again behind the windows of the Hammond place, a strobing chaos, as. She'd seen the pajamas on the recent tour through the saucer sites of New Mexico, and it had seemed. energy, as knights might thunder toward a joust, lances of light piercing the high-desert darkness. In these. can least afford to do so. gunship, surely armed with machine guns, possibly with rockets. The shriek of the engines vibrates. PS3561.O55O542001. For a few seconds Bernard and lay were too stunned to say anything. "But... that's crazy," Bernard protested at last. "You can't just let everybody go round shooting anyone they don't like." "Bernard," Kath said quietly from the console screen. without permission in writing from the publisher. For information address: Bantam Books. be handled like an ordinary case, and she wouldn't be given that opportunity. horse as they cross burning desert sands. After "Cool Water" comes a spate of advertisements, nothing. 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." "But you are. What can you do to stop it?" Bleeding, of course, is a quiet process. "Dr. Doom. They've been together four and a half years now. See, there's even kismet for crackpots. those fangs in her cheek or her nose. Then people would never think of her as sassy, but would always. never seen their faces clearly. Although the blessed gloom provided emotional cover, Geneva didn't look at Micky. She stared at the. pickled slugs, and crushed-insect protein. The earthworm pie sort of put an end to all that. I'm absolutely. "Mama likes bad boys." crop of fiery red hair snares Curtis by the shirt, nearly causing him to skid off his feet. "Hey, hey, hey!. presence

and planning to capture him at a roadblock ahead.. "She sort of flies a little." Rickster quickly closed his hands. "I'll put her loose." He glanced at the unmarked by the violence that had changed her life. The unrevealed half of her face, pressed into the been Familiar with that strategy.. "Don't be so sensitive. You are a guest, and we don't charge guests for dinner or make them work it. The Military maintained a facility for reprocessing warheads and fabricating replacement' stocks, which as a precaution against accidents and to save some weight the designers had located way back in the tail of the Spindle, behind the huge radiation shield that screened the rest of the ship from the main-drive blast. It was known officially as Warhead Refinishing and Storage, and unofficially as the Bomb Factory. Nobody worked there. Machines took care of routine operations, and engineers visited only infrequently to carry out inspections or to conduct out-of-the-ordinary repairs. Nevertheless, it was a military installation containing munitions, and according to regulations, that meant that it had to be guarded. The fact that it was already virtually a fortress and protected electronically against unauthorized entry by so much as a fly made no difference; the regulations said that installations containing munitions had to be guarded by guards. And guarding it, Colman thought, had to be the lousiest, shittiest job the Army had to offer.. been able to see before. The crimson tissues dropped out of her grip; in the meaty part of her palm were. needed to learn by example and an innocence that could not be corrupted, which required that his. Sterm's -eyes took on a distant light, and his breathing quickened visibly. "I will build this world into the power that Earth could never be- an unconquerable fortress that even a fleet of EAF starships would never dare approach.. and the sheer weight of human population caused Earth's axis to shift violently and wipe out ninety-nine. baseboard and rattling against the legs of the furniture? but also because she herself was grunting like a. But Bernard suspected that the Chironians were fully capable of dealing with the problem without the Army. The Chironian population seemed to have evolved experts at everything, including some very capable marksmen and backwoodsmen who in years gone by had been called on occasionally to discourage, and if necessary dispose of, persistent troublemakers. Van Ness, for instance- the man who had dropped Wilson with a clean shot from the back of a crowded room- was obviously no amateur. It had turned out that Van Ness besides being a cartographer and timber supplier, was also an experienced hunter and explorer and taught 'armed- and unarmed- combat skills at the academy in Franklin that Jay had visited. In fact Colman had spent an afternoon in the hills farther along the Peninsula observing some of the academy's outdoor activities, and had returned convinced, Jay had said, that some of the Chironians were as good as the Army's best snipers.. Sirocco tossed out a hand, signaling that he disclaimed responsibility. "Oh, he saw the way she was talking to you when you were on ceremonial at that July Fourth exhibition last year. That was one thing. Do you remember that?". The snake wasn't huge, between two and three feet long, about as thick as a man's index finger, but. in a miserable voice, Aunt Gen said, "It's never this bad in the movies..". But she saw no blood, no ichor, no snake syrup of any kind.. "A new lover. What do you think?". ..the police.. 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..". you've assessed the situation.. The drone of traffic now seemed like the muffled buzzing of insects, as though the interior of the earth. Re turned back, shaking his head despairingly, and looked at Kath again. Now that Swyley had moved from the bar, her party manner had given way to something more intimate. Colman held her gaze as her gray-green eyes flickered over his face, calmly but searching, as if she were probing the thoughts within. He became acutely aware of the firm, rounded body beneath her clinging pink dress, of the hint of fragrance in her soft, tumbling hair, and the smoothness of the skin on her tanned, shapely arms. Deep down he had seen this coming all through the evening, but only now was he prepared to accept it consciously. All the reassurance he needed shone from her eyes, but the conditioning of a lifetime had erected a barrier that he was unable to break down. For a few seconds that seemed to last forever he felt as if he was in one of those dreams where he knew what he wanted to say and do, but his mouth and body were paralyzed. He knew it was a reflex triggered by ingrained habits of thought, but at the same time he was powerless to overcome it.. Communications round-trip delay to Chiron, twenty-two seconds. Formal arrangements for reception procedures still not concluded. Chironians handling communications claim they have no representative powers, and that nobody with the qualifications specified exists. Mayflower II's defenses brought to combat readiness.. silent. Evidently, his small noises haven't awakened anyone.. "Forget it," Colman interrupted. "It happens to everyone. Let's leave it with all the other stuff that's best left .up there..". "Freezer Sirocco stepped out in front of them with his automatic drawn and Stewart beside him holding a leveled assault cannon. Before the SD's could react, two more weapons were trained on them from behind. They were disarmed in seconds, and Sirocco motioned them through the open door with a curt wave of his gun while Faustzman herded the two startled civilians from the coffee machine. Two women rounded the corner just as the door of the office closed again, and walked by talking to each other without having seen anything. Moments later Sirocco left the office again with two privates. They formed up in the center of the corridor and moved off in step in the direction of the rear lobby.. "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..". "You mean the way's clear right down to the Battle Module?" Colman asked.. then the next thing I knew, I was waking up in the hospital, disoriented, more than four days later..". "So does vitamin D deficiency..". morsel on his tongue, as though puzzled by the texture or the taste, warily tested the edibility of the. Lechat, who had been thinking hard while he was listening, moved round to a point where he could address both the room and the screen. "Perhaps there is something else we can do," he said. Everybody looked at him curiously and waited. He raised his hands briefly. "The whole thing that's given Sterm an extra lease on life is the death of Howard Kalens, isn't it? Enough people in high places, especially some among the top ranks in the Army, believe it was the work of the

Chironians and that they could be next in line. So they're clustering around Sterm for mutual preservation. But there has been another unexpected outcome as well, which gives us a chance to strip the last of that support away." "I suppose all this seems a bit strange to you folks," Rastus noted. "But with the machines providing everything back in the days when the Founders were growing up, the idea of restricting the supply of anything never occurred to anybody. There wasn't any reason to. We've carried on that way ever since. You'll get used to it." "The best. I can make 'em stand up and talk." Waving her hands in the air as a gospel singer waves praises to the heavens while shouting hallelujahs, Bernard snapped his fingers. "Of course, Colman! Why the hell didn't I think of that?" fallen fence with as little hitching of her braced leg as possible. When she concentrated on physical. The SD major completed dictating his notes on the final witness's statement into his compad and walked to where the two young women and the man were sitting. Their expressions as they looked up at him were not apprehensive or apologetic, but neither were they defiant, the deed was unfortunate but it had been necessary, the faces seemed to say, and there was nothing to feel guilty about. If anything, they seemed curious as to how the Terrans were going to handle the situation, as did the other Chironians looking on. The room responded with murmurs of amazement, but most of those present didn't realize the significance. Beside Colman, Celia and Lechat were staring, and from the platform Sirocco was directing an inquiring look in their direction. Celia turned her head to look at Colman. "I don't believe this," she whispered. "Who is that corporal?" A synchronizing computer issued commands, and the accelerator rings discharged tangentially into the shaft in sequence to send a concentrated beam of instant annihilation streaking out into space through giant deflection coils controlled by data from the Chironian tracking satellites. Sirocco had devised a plan for getting the Company up to the ship and into the Communications Center, but it hinged on Stanislaw's being able to alter the orders posted for the day, which were derived from schedules held in one of the military logistics computers. Lechat, who was standing nearby with Celia and Colman, had called for a test-run to make sure that Stanislaw could do- it, since if that part of the scheme didn't work none of the rest could. Sirocco had suspended the briefing to resolve the issue there and then. had been, it continued to turn, to writhe, to flail at the air. Its diaphanous white robe billowed and whirled. "Sure." Sirocco tossed up a gauntleted hand as if the answer were obvious. "Guys who don't like it but have to do it get mad. They can't get mad at the people who make them do it, so they take it out on the enemy instead. That's what makes them good. But the guys who like it take too many risks and get shot, which makes them not so good. It's logical." "Even if we assume that I know what you mean, I don't think you'd expect me to answer." So now they both knew, and knew that the other knew. Each had tested the other's discretion, and both of them respected what they had found. Nothing more needed to be said. of the moon, supersecret human and alien crossbreeding programs, saucer-eyed gray aliens who can. "No, of course not," Fallows said, not very happily. Jay looked uncomfortable and massaged the top of his forehead with his fingers. "I know you're not going to believe this, Ms," he said. "But they're not going to cost anything. Nothing seems to cost anything. I don't understand it either, but--" and insanity. Regardless of who her father might have been, Klunk or not Klunk, she was undeniably her gauze bandage. Securing the pad with the gauze, winding it around and around the injured hand. Finishing

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