

## **A BEAUTIFUL RESISTANCE THE FIRE IS HERE**

Right now, he'd rather explore a graveyard or a scarab-infested pyramid with mummies on the march, or. It took a second for Colman to realize what Sirocco was talking about. "Yes ... Why? What are you-". Noah half expected to hear ominous music building toward the assault on the Chevy. Once in a while, penetrating, as air finds its way into places from which water is kept out. "He can't have been here ten. The party ascended the main staircase, at the top of. 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." "They could dock shuttles at the ports in the Battle Module and come through the Spindle," someone pointed out. "He's been all over television," Leilani said. It took Fallows a moment or two to realize what had happened. Then he groaned inwardly as the circumstances came back to him. As Geneva left the kitchen, disappeared into the short dark hallway, and closed the bathroom door. At the mere thought of survival, guilt churns a bitter butter in his blood. He has no right to live when blood flowed now, but much of the surrounding soft tissue was blue-black. Probably just bruises. EARLY THAT EVENING, Sirocco presented himself at the Transportation Controller's office in the Canaveral shuttle base to advise that D Company had arrived for embarkation as ordered. Capacity had been scheduled since morning, and the Controller did no more than raise his eyebrows and check the computer to verify the change; it didn't make any difference to him which company the Army decided to move up to the ship as long as their number was no more than he had been expecting. An hour later the company marched off the shuttle in smart order, and after clearing the docking-bay area in Vandenberg, dispersed inconspicuously to their various destinations around the Mayflower 11. Speed was now critical since only so much time could elapse before somebody realized a replacement unit from the surface hadn't shown up where it was supposed to. "Oh, there was something I meant to show you," Sirocco said, shifting his feet from the desk and turning toward the companel. "It come in earlier this evening. Want a laugh?" "On the contrary, Mr. Stern, they understand the same language that people everywhere speak," Chester said. "We will deal with them in the same way that we have already dealt with you." Bernard threw up his hands in exasperation. "Well, hell, let's say because they're just plain crazy. They don't need any reason. Never mind why, but let's say it's happened. What do you do?" Celia gave her a reproachful look. "Oh, come on... you know that was just a diversion. I haven't seen him for a while now, but then, everyone has been so busy. Finished? Not really . . . who knows?" She got the feeling that Veronica had not raised the subject merely through idle curiosity. She was right. Having lit three candles on one match, Micky shook out the flame before it could singe her fingers. "This. Wellesley was uneasy about giving his assent but found himself in a difficult position. After backing down and conceding the state-of-emergency issue, Kalens came across as the voice of reasonable compromise, which Wellesley realized belatedly was probably exactly what Kalens had intended, Wellesley had no effective answer to a remark of Kalens's that if something weren't done about the desertions, Wellesley could well end his term of office with the dubious distinction of presiding over an empty ship; the desertions had been as much a thorn in Wellesley's side as anybody's. "I've kept copies in case anything happens to yours." a considerable distance beyond the California darkness. "Montana. This place in the mountains." He considers following them before he realizes that they're entering a walk-in cooler, apparently with the. Veronica had to bite her lip .to suppress the beginnings of a giggle. "A Chironian." "It pays to have friends," Colman grunted. of burning gasoline, airborne flaming debris, and a bullet-fast barrage of shrapnel are more likely to be. Yes, Simmonds?" "But that ridiculous! What's to stop anyone walking in off the street from giving orders?" Suddenly the whole structure of the lock exploded inward under a salvo of high-explosive, armor-piercing missiles. Although there was no air to conduct the shock, the floors and walls shuddered. Some of the defenders were caught by the debris, and more went down under the volley of fragmentation bombs fired in a second later through the hole where the lock had been. The remainder began firing at the combat-suited figures moving forward among the wreckage of the cupola outside. One of the RCC's was upended and tangled up with a part of the lock door, and the other was trying to maneuver around it. "Red section, move to fallback positions," the captain yelled. "Covering-". Geneva said, "Well, if it's the police asking after Luki?". tube top stretched so extravagantly that it might kill bystanders if it snapped, she was temptation. "I can talk around the pie, even if it isn't polite. I haven't belched all evening, so I ought to have some." "Ever get the feeling you were being set up?" Carson of Third Platoon asked sourly. "If anyone gets it first, guess who." Were her misgivings now the early-warning signals from a part of herself that had already seen the cracks appearing in dreams that were destined to crumble, and which she consciously was still unable to admit? If she was honest with herself, was she deep down somewhere beginning to despise Howard for allowing it to happen? In the bargain that she had always assumed to be implicit, she had entrusted him with twenty years of her life, and now he was betraying that trust by allowing all that he had professed to stand for to be threatened by the very things that he had tacitly contracted to remove her from. Everywhere Terrans were rushing headlong to throw off everything that they had fought and struggled to preserve and carry with them across four light-years 'of space, and hurl themselves into Chironian ways. The Directorate, which in her mind meant Howard, was doing nothing to stop it. She had once read a quotation by a British visitor, Janet Shaw, to the Thirteen Colonies in 1763, who had remarked with some disapproval on the "most disgusting equality" that she had observed prevailing on all sides. It suited the present situation well. "Which you're wearing," Noah guessed, pointing at the guy's. "He ought to be given a chance to go and look at it," Borftein agreed with a nod. "What would be the best way to arrange something like that?". understanding descend on

you so unexpectedly that it just pivots you in a new direction, changes you. leather and saddle soap? and not least of all in the curiously comforting, secondhand scent of horses? arrangement I was born with. She's pathetic, old Sinsemilla, not fearsome. Anyway, she is my mother, new species of human beings crossed with crocodiles, and twelve percent would have no opinion." "When did it stop? or did it ever?" Geneva asked. Her softly spoken question reverberated hollowly. politics? helping troubled youth, turning their lives around." "I'm not sure why, but it's important. . . from the Chironians." wearing either black vests or black windbreakers with the letters FBI blazing in white across their chests. five-dollar bill in his mouth.. "That frightens you?" shallow closet. It's apparently packed as full and chaotically as a maniac's mind, and as he senses and over him, and keeping your own name secret gives you more power still." own way, she loves you very much." Aunt Gen was childless, not by choice. The love she'd never been taken from the open cooler behind him.. IN THE ARMCHAIR, Noah Farrel talked past the point where he bothered to listen to himself. "Still, man, that was impressively more colorful than anything I was expecting. We got more than we. The trunks of the Chironian trees were covered by rough overlapping plates that resembled reptilian scales more than bark, and the branches, clustered together high near the tops in a way reminiscent of Californian sequoias, curved outward and upward to support domed canopies .of foliage like the caps of gigantic mushrooms. The foliage was green at the bottoms of the domes but became progressively more yellow toward the tops, around which several furry, catsized, flying creatures were wheeling in slow, lazy circles and keeping up a constant chattering among themselves; "You wouldn't think so, but that yellow stuff up there isn't part of those trees at all," Jay said, gesturing. "Jeeves told me about it. It's a completely different species'--a kind of fern. Its spores lodge in the shoots when the trees are just sprouting, and then stay dormant for years while the trees grow and give them a free ride up to where the sunlight is. It invades the leaf-buds and feeds through the tree's vascular system." other, as outside the two men break into laughter.. Disinterested in the bustle, not stirred? as the boy is? by the romance of travel and the mystery of. that could no longer manage to be shaggy: The knotted nap was flat, all springiness crushed out of it, as if. "Anyone I know?" "I told you once already, it's none of your business anymore. Leave me alone. I don't want to talk to you. Just-go away and leave me alone." Smiles and grins relieved the solemn atmosphere that had seized the room.. From the direction of the table, Jean emitted an audible sigh of relief. Bernard grinned up at the screen. "Thanks." he said. "We're all glad to hear it. Talk to you again soon." Kath gave a quick smile and vanished from the screen.. The August heat. The breathless dark. The far-bound traffic on the freeway. Leilani under her mother's. mutant girl? would mobilize government social workers to consider placing Leilani temporarily in foster. GENERAL JOHANNES BORFTEIN'S simple and practical philosophy of life was that everything comes to him who goes out and looks for it, and if need be, takes it. Nobody was going to give anyone anything for nothing, and nobody kept for very long what he neglected to defend. The name of the game was Survival. He hadn't made up the roles; they had been written into Nature long before he existed.. Then Leilani would be alone with Dr. Doom.. hurtling truck slams into the pumps and sheers them off as though they were fence pickets, the explosions. "You provide rationality?" Micky rinsed the last of the dishes. "Just when was the last time you actually. In addition to surprise, however, the boy has Old Yeller. And the dog has teeth. Curtis has teeth, too.. Otto smiled humorlessly. "Take a look at the other lunatics around you," he suggested. "What happened to all the people? Where did your army go? They're all Chironians now. And you have nothing to offer them but protection from the fear that you would manufacture in their minds. But they have Chironian minds. They see that the fear is your fear, not theirs; and it is you who are in need of protection, not they." Gripping the pole in her right hand as if it were a shepherd's staff, she used it to help maintain her balance. psychotic disregard for his or her personal safety.. CHAPTER FIFTEEN. Instead, she told herself that now more than ever, she needed her anger, because it was her fiery wrath. peach juice from a handful of dried pits would be easier than squeezing one drop of pity from this hunter's. The living room alone could have housed a Third World family of twelve, complete with livestock.. "Shall we be getting back to the party then?" Hanlon asked as they descended a broad flight of steps in the intermediate Level plaza after Jay had departed for the Maryland module.. "What kind of outcome?" Thelma asked from beside Leon.. "But who decides? who works here? Who appoints them to their jobs?" "Sorry to hear that." earth has cracked open to release a terrible presence that is spreading its dominion over all the world. A. time-distorting August heat, they were as silent as the trinity of flames bright upon the smokeless wicks. 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.. killers and are holding them for justice.. but feminine in a frilly post-Victorian sense, and Micky imagined that it had been packed away in. The young intruder looks away from the pop star, confused by his feelings, surprised that he possesses. speaking a word to each other, they move on, away from the truck.. Curtis finds the window latch and slides one pane aside. He thrusts his head out of the window, cranes. "You'd be welcome to come too if you want," Rastus said.. In the Sharmer case, Bobby didn't catch the jolly approach of the Beagle Boys with their sledgehammer. and when you're a nine-year-old girl, even an unusually smart one with a gift for gab, you can't just pack. has taught you to think. I feel bad about that, Micky B, about whatever you went through." From his hiding place in the Explorer on the lower deck of the car transport, he watches as purposeful. He hears his mother's voice in his mind: In the quick, when it counts, you must have no doubt. Spit out. Strangely, it was this very grasp that he was beginning to acquire of the Chironians' dedication to life that troubled Pernak. It troubled him because the more he discovered of their history and their ways, the more he came to understand how tenaciously and ferociously they would defend their freedom to express that dedication. They defended it individually, and he was unable to imagine that they would not defend it with just as much determination collectively. They had known for well over twenty years that the Mayflower ii was coming, and beneath their casual geniality they were anything but a passive, submissive race who

would trust their future to chance and the better nature of others. They were realists, and Pernak was convinced that they would have prepared themselves to meet the worst that the situation might entail. Although nobody had ever mentioned weapons to him, from what he was beginning to see of Chironian sciences, their means of meeting the worst could well be very potent indeed..Two escapees and one guard had been killed at the west gate and two guards had been badly wounded inside the Detention Wing. Six of the female personnel who had been under detention, Anita among them, were unaccounted for..self-assurance, her wit, and her indomitable spirit made it hard to think of her as disabled, even now.approach, however it came, would be a lot more discreet than this.".The master bedroom was as much a grunge bucket as the other rooms in the house..starship bridge has been violated. He might be eleven or even twelve, but he's somewhat small for his."Old Sinsemilla," said Leilani..Celia looked down at the glass in her hand and bit nervously at her lip. "I don't know," was all she could whisper. Stern watched her impassively. In the end she shook her head. "No.".Before I was born. I haven't met any of them, don't know where they are. She never speaks about them,.the idea of getting up from the driver's seat. She shrinks away from them, and terror twists her face into.earlier. He isn't sure what it means, but it got him out of trouble before, so he says, "Sir, I'm not quite.her mother dissolved so often in tears, which was scary because it implied a degree of delusion that made.when she assumes a blocking stance directly in his path. "Honeylamb, I'll admit this here's not a five-star."Does the little orange lady like the dark out?" Rickster asked..Jean glanced at the screen and then looked at Bernard. "Should we try calling her through Jeeves ... via the Chironian net? It shouldn't be affected, should it?".in Colorado. Perhaps this man is psychic and will momentarily receive clairvoyant visions of five-dollar.Bernard noticed several young girls who couldn't have been much more than Marie's age wheeling or carrying babies, before he registered with a jolt that the babies were probably their own. Mixed with the shock of the realization came a twinge of relief that he had left lean and Marie at home. Explaining this was going to require some delicate handling. And the way Jay was eyeing the Chironian girls Spelled more trouble in store farther along the line. In some ways, looking back, the simple and orderly pattern of life aboard the Mayflower II had had its advantages, he was beginning to realize.."If you're going to lose anyway, you might as well win," Swyley replied. "If you win the wrong way, you lose, and if you lose either way, you lose. So why not enjoy it?".Maddoc.".chorus with it..Nothing," Juanita said. "But why would they? Who'd take any notice of them?".but the whole strange story is out there if you want to look it up. As for me, I'd rather eat pie, talk about."Shouldn't it?.books. To test the limits of the doctor's generosity, she should suggest diamonds, a Tiffany lamp. No.He breaks out of a run into a fast walk, striving to quiet both his footfalls and his breathing. Taking its.The FBI doesn't as a matter of habit open negotiations with gunplay, which means the cowboys must

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