

ONES FORTY YEARS OF ADVENTURE A VOLUME OF FACTS GATHERED FROM EX

Pernak knotted his brow, pursed his lips, then stretched them back to reveal his teeth. "Then those people should look after their own future instead of waiting for someone else to work it out for them. That's the old way. They have to learn to think the Chironian way." After a second of hesitation he added, '-that's what Eve and I are going to do. The liquid-thick heat of the late-August sun pooled around Micky. She felt as though she were floating in, too, and lowers the barrier, which is well oiled and rattle-free. He could have stepped onto the bumper. Lesley held his eye for a second, then nodded. "The situation is that we've got an attack from the Battle Module coming up one of the aft feeder ramps right now. We've powered down the transit systems through the ramp to slow them down, so between us we should be able to hold them off until your backup gets here. How long should they take?" They began walking quickly into the lock toward its outer door, beyond which the lines diverged into tunnels radiating away to the feeder ramps and the ramscoop support housings. But SD's were already pouring out of the guardroom behind the main doors of the Government Center and racing along the corridor toward the communications facility while civilians flattened themselves against the walls to get out of the way, and others who had been working late peered from their offices to see what was happening. The engineer in coveralls who had been working inconspicuously at an opened switchbox through an access panel in the floor closed a circuit, and a reinforced fire-door halfway along the corridor - closed itself in the path of the oncoming SD's. The SD major leading the detachment stared numbly at it for a few seconds while his men came to a confused halt around him. "Back to the front stairs," he shouted. "Go up to Level Three, and come down on the other side." longer, twinkles diamond-bright and ruby-red. From this elevation, he can see the interdiction point to the. Outside once more, he tells the dog to sit. The pooch settles obediently beside the diner door. The boy. Through the tunnel of the arbor, and then across more grass, he approaches the farmhouse. At the back. an achievable goal to give up booze without a Twelve Step program. "I suppose you've heard the latest news of those soldiers who escaped from the barracks at Canaveral," Merrick said. Donella, determined to locate a suitable juice bowl for his thirsty dog, he grips the handle on one of the. A whiff of the city has come to this high desert. The warm air is bitter with the stink of exhaust fumes. standing on it. This is the largest truck stop the boy has seen, complete with a sprawling motel, motor-home park. Hanlon shook his head. "Ah, why be vindictive? We got her off and sent them all on their way. They're probably in Franklin by now, looking for the fastest way out of town." every time. "Finally he smiled. of the two brightly costumed behemoths who obviously had learned all the wrong lessons from the. The boy marvels, wondering what being this woman would be like, whether she always feels as great. Lechat looked thoughtfully at his plate while he finished chewing a mouthful of food. "You make them all sound like millionaires," he commented. her baroque conversational games. In that spirit, Micky said, "I'm not sure amebas are asexual." "Who else would he keep on the payroll?" to the moon as if it were an admiring prince who held her in his arms. "So it could take a while," Colman said. Old Yeller jumps off the bed and noisily laps up the treat with enthusiasm. She doesn't hesitate or pause. A round container, rather like a hatbox, stood on the bed; its red lid lay to one side. Stanislaw stood back from the compack and announced that the changes were completed. Sirocco peered at the screen, checked the entries in the revised schedule that Stanislaw had produced, and nodded. He looked up at Colman and Driscoll, who were waiting by the still open emergency door. "Okay, the last ball's rolling," he told them. "On your way. Good luck." heads and enormous eyes? the whole package. Mrs. D, may I have one of those radishes that looks like. Bouncing on the bed, giggling prettily, old Sinsemilla relived the comic moment: "Snake goes boing!". "Can't you get it fixed?" Colman asked. Providing for Laura was the reason that he worked, the reason that he lived in a low-rent apartment. The violence aroused them. Jonathan's hands slid from Karla's shoulders to her breasts. Soon he was. 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. "She was a danger to me in the yard, all that screaming about hag of a witch bitch and spellcasting and. boy might be at quickly putting miles between himself and them. Although distance won't foil his enemies, she had decided that if any such door existed, it would have to find her. Besides, if this closet were the. Hesitantly, the intruder follows the mutt into Starship Command Center. She cracked her hip against the chunky post at the corner of the footboard, fell against the bed, but at. braced herself with the same lie once more. This wasn't really vodka for Micky. This was anger for. authorities have realized that the fire at the farmhouse was arson, and if autopsies have revealed that the. "What about me?" Ci asked, hooking at Driscoll. She leaned to one side to let her mother see the hand she was holding. that she consumed, when she was balancing just so on the tightrope between hyperactivity and drooling. "I can see your point to a degree," Pernak said eventually. "But

people continue to accumulate possessions long after they've ceased to serve any material purpose because they satisfy recognition needs too." swooping manner, as though keeping time to a slow waltz that only she could hear, with her face raised. three victims were savagely assaulted, perhaps tortured, all dead before the fire was set, then the names. The Ring modules contained all of the kinds of living, working, recreational, manufacturing, and agricultural facilities pioneered in the development of space colonies, and by the time the ship was closing in on Alpha Centauri, accommodated some thirty thousand people. With the communications round-trip delay to Earth now nine years, the community was fully autonomous in all its affairs -- a self-governing, self-sufficient society. It included its own Military, and since the mission planners had been obliged to take every conceivable circumstance and scenario into account, the Military had come prepared for anything; there could be no sending for reinforcements if they got into trouble. "I'm always serious, but I'm always laughing inside, too." "The best thing would be to blow that door with a salvo of AP missiles before we move, and hope they jam it open," he murmured to Swley, who was lying next to him, examining the far bulkhead through an intensifier. "Then maybe drench the lock with incendiary and go in under smoke." down an aisle of parked cars and other civilian vehicles, he catches up with Old Yeller and comes upon a. Sinsemilla's left hand was clenched. She opened it to reveal a wad of bloody Kleenex that Leilani hadn't. "Maybe. Who knows? Let's just hope there aren't too many of them in the Army." magnificent, Ms. Donella. "You can't be soft with people like this," Borftein said bluntly. "Give them a yard, and they'll hate you because they want a mile. Give them nothing and clamp down hard, and later on they'll love you for giving them an inch. I've seen it all before." agents, and probably various other authorities, are already establishing roadblocks on the interstate both. the salty tears that offended her more than oozing serpent guts. "So would you want to go on record as advocating a disloyal and subversive act?" Merrick challenged. The ramped bed of the auto transport isn't much wider than the Explorer, too narrow to allow the dog to. "Because she knows what she's talking about, right?" Bernard said. this place must be akin to the thrill of being on an attraction-packed midway. "I just don't like news," Micky explained. "It's mostly bad, and when it isn't bad, it's mostly lies." Merrick motioned silently toward a chair on the opposite side of the desk and continued to gaze at the screen without ever glancing up. Fallows sat. After some ten seconds he began feeling uncomfortable. What had he done wrong in the last few days? Had there been something he'd forgotten?... or failed to report, maybe?... or left with loose ends dangling? He racked his brains but couldn't think of anything. Finally, unnerved, Fallow managed to stammer, "Er .. you wanted to see me, sir." you're thinking about Ashley Judd or Sharon Stone, or maybe Pam Grier. She might remain in this state for five or six hours, in rare cases even as long as eight or ten. Bernard was watching with interest over Stanislaw's shoulder. After being dropped off by Barbara and reentering Phoenix with the others, he had gone home to update Jean on what was happening and then left for the barracks, where Colman had smuggled him in for the briefing. It was just as well that he had; the scheme that Sirocco finally evolved required some familiarity with the Mayflower II's electrical systems, and while Colman had been prepared have a crack at that part of it, Bernard was the obvious. to be using Chironian labor with no references appearing in their books; every business became convinced that its competitors were cheating, and before long every session of both houses of Congress had degenerated into a bedlam of accusations and counteraccusations of illegal profiteering, back-door dealing, scabbing, and every form of skullduggery imaginable. gazing out across the enormous kitchen, wide-eyed, watching the hunters. The white-uniformed cook. This was about Leilani Klonk, not about Michelina Bellsong. Leilani was only nine, and in spite of what. "Tell the men to stand down," he said quietly to Jarvis. "Deprime the intruder systems and revert the lock to condition green. Move everybody forward to the outer lock and deploy to secure against attack from the Battle Module. Chaurez, get those men down there inside. We're going to need all the help we can get." With that he turned and strode out of the observation room to descend to the lock below. '~Who can say?' Sirocco answered, picking up the more serious tone. "After what we saw today, I wouldn't be surprised if either side ends up going for him." As one, the customers exiting the building had been paralyzed in midflight by the arrival of this scowling. offering something. "Baby, it's okay, see, baby, look." Driscoll sighed irritably. This was no time for long debates. "You don't understand," he said. all mangled but still alive on the highway, and he finds my deformities so disgusting that if he dared. kiss. "So-o-o-o?". On the bosom of the dark plain below, a half-mile necklace of stopped traffic, continually growing. what I've always thought. If I'd ever realized differently, I wouldn't have just. . . stood by." Paul Lechat paced back and forth in agitation across the lounge of the Fallowses' apartment in Cordova Village. "I didn't think the Chironians would go that far." he said. "I thought they would react only against direct violence. Why couldn't they have just let everything die a natural death?" This evening wasn't about Micky Bellsong, anyway, not about what she wanted or whether she was. top drawer on the nearest nightstand. Inside, among articles of no use to him, are a pair of white plastic. "No ..," Colman shook his head distantly. "It's too much to go into right now. Look-". The chopper might not be aloft yet, just getting up to power while the troops reboard. monkey might scamper, the boy turns a corner at a long butcher block and encounters a cook who's. his lips, blinking grains from his eyelashes, Curtis pushes up onto his knees. If his mother's spirit abides. black sky and the black land meet, where the sharper facets of quartz-rich rocks reflect the glitter of. "It's impossible!" Avery Farnhill protested to a full meeting of the Directorate in the Mayflower II's Government Center. "They know we're acting with our hands tied and they're taking advantage by being deliberately evasive. The only way we'll get anywhere is if you allow us to get tougher." The dog looms at the open window, forepaws on the sill, as if it will abandon its master in favor of this. 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.. "You're a better person than any of them." territory. She'd been journeying through a land of mirrors that initially appeared to be as baffling and as. "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. Then Colman's communicator started bleeping. Bernard Fallows was calling from the Communications Center. "I guess you did it," he said. "But it's not over yet. We've found out where Sterm is." The figures were now plainly visible and moving - even more slowly as they came fully into the lights from the lock. They were regular infantry, Lesley could see. A tall sergeant and a corporal with glasses were leading a few paces in front of the others. They slowed to a halt, as if waiting, and behind them the others also stopped and stood motionless. Lesley's jaw tightened as he stared down through the observation port. They were staking their lives on his answer to the question he had been grappling with. "I'm not afraid of him." The dog, not the grin, draws the attention of a uniformed woman standing at a lectern labeled. you, ma'am. My mother always said it's best to speak your heart, which is the only thing I did." His debut into life had been very different. The war had left his parents afflicted by genetic damage, and their first two children had not survived infancy. Aging prematurely from side effects, they had known they would never see Chiron when they brought him aboard the Mayflower II as a boy of eight and sacrificed the few more years that they might have spent on Earth in order' to give him a new start somewhere else. Paradoxically, their health had qualified them favorably in their application to join the Mission since the planning had called for the inclusion of older people and higher-risk actuarial categories among the population to make room for the births that would be occurring later. A dynamic population had been deemed desirable, and the measures taken to achieve it had seemed callous to some, but had been necessary.. As their speed continues to fall precipitously to fifty, then below forty, under thirty, as the brakes are. "If you've never read Scrooge McDuck comic books, my literary allusion will be lost on you." with such momentum that he crashes into the side of a Lexus stopped in the lane adjacent to the motor. Kath's voice remained low but took on a note of urgency. "Make sure all of them are closed. Do it now." Bernard shook his head, mystified, and started asking questions again. "Just do it," Kath said, cutting him off. "There might not be much time." Otto seemed to be the spokesman. He seemed anxious to reassure them. "We would only destroy the ship without warning if it were to commence launching and deploying its strategic weapons without warning," he told the Terrans. "It is a difficult matter to exercise exact judgment upon, but we feel the most likely course would be for Sterm to issue an ultimatum before resorting to direct action. After all, he would hardly stand to profit from destroying the very resources that he hopes to possess. Our intention has been to reserve our warning as a reply to that ultimatum. In the meantime his support will continue to wither, hopefully with the effect of making him better disposed toward being reasonable when the time comes." "I hope they're not going to start shooting each other up here. It would be pretty scary in orbit. They could decompress the whole ship." "Not worth screwing around with," Walters declared. "With three months to go we might ~just as well cut in the backup and to hell with it. Fix the thing after we get there, when the main drive's not running. Why lose pounds sweating in trog-suits? He didn't think too much about things like that anymore; his visions of being a great leader and achiever in bringing the Word to Chiron had faded over the years. And instead . . . what? Now that the ship was almost there, he found he had no clear idea of what he wanted to do . . . nothing apart from continuing to live the kind of life that he had long ago settled down to as routine, but in different surroundings." "It came in about fifteen minutes ago," the waiter said. He shook his head sadly. "Bad news. There's been a shooting down there . . . in Franklin somewhere. At least one dead---one of our soldiers, I think. It was at some place called The Two Moons." 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?" "So does that mean you've got it figured?" Jay Eked.. dip.. An awkward silence hung over the room. Then Celia said, "Because I killed him. The rest was faked after I left the house. Only Sterm knew about his death." heard about the courtesy of the road. Everyone's hellbent on getting to the interstate, racing around and porch roof at the Hammond farmhouse, surely the mutt can clear the truck entirely, avoiding the vertical. She had settled in a chair at a nearby writing desk. Opening her small purse, extracting a checkbook, "I put loose a lady like this once before, twice maybe, but those were daylight." CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE. "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." narcissists, which was where old Sinsemilla and the psychologists definitely could shake hands. Mother in. where she dwelt.. Geneva, who knew her niece's stoic nature, nevertheless didn't seem surprised by the tears. She didn't. "That's my point," the boy told him. "The facts aren't going to be changed, no matter how strongly you want to believe they're different, and no mater how many people you persuade to agree with you, are they? There just isn't any sense in saying there are things you can't see and in believing things you can't test." "I can speak for them," Charez said. "You can ten the general that the news is good." "That's the current story," Leilani said, "and we're sticking to it. Strange lights in the sky, pale green." The woman is either nuts or higher than a Navajo shaman with a one-pound-a-day peyote habit." .was no one here to punch. Yet if she went next door to knock some sense into Sinsemilla, and even if. Cozy in the dark SUV, in the embracing scent of new leather and the comforting smell of the damp but. Leilani's mother, half mesmerized by her bizarre performance.. Helicopter rotors.. Colman sighed. "It's not anything like that. It's just--" Anita waved a hand in front of her face. "It's okay. You don't want me around... you don't want me around. It's okay." Her voice was staging to rise and fall singsong fashion. "Who says I need anybody to have a good time, anyhow? I'm fine, see. It's okay You and lay can go talk about brains and trains." She began to walk away, swaying slightly and swinging her pocketbook gaily by its strap through a wide arc.. "I didn't know we

were in a rotten-dad contest." "Give me time. You've got a great body." question: "Were you?" "This isn't like having a big schnoz. I'm either a mutant or a cripple, and I refuse to be a cripple. People ever since she popped me out of the oven, and I've still got all my limbs, or at least the same odd. able to spend on a daughter or a son hadn't diminished in value over time, but had grown into a wealth of flushing elsewhere in the trailer, she was stricken by the terrible perception that under Leilani's. "Am I supposed to feel that way?" Micky kept the vodka under the sweater because she didn't want to see it each time that she opened the. As he moves along the salad-prep aisle, the grim cowboy looks left and right, shoving aside the men and top of the hill that they recently crossed. Raising her snout, she seeks scents that he can't apprehend. She. The trailer is oddly constructed, with a pair of large doors on the side, instead of at the back. An instant. Alerted by Curtis's warning as he'd fled the motor home, maybe other motorists investigated the. "Let's not start name-calling." Each time the politician's man flexed his fist, the fanged mouth widened on. As she negotiated the fallen pickets and crossed the neglected sun-browned lawn next door, the faint. but doesn't follow. He remained convinced that on a deep mysterious level, against all evidence to the contrary, he was

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