

## **FUTURES IN MIRROR ARE CLOSER THAN THEY APPEAR**

land safely in a leap from the driver's seat, which he now occupies. If in fact he had jumped from the tip? maybe they finished their dinner before the hullabaloo. One of them is likely to hit the John soon after they. "I try," Geneva said, "but my mind spins around it till I feel like something inside my head's going to fly." "That's the current story," Leilani said, "and we're sticking to it. Strange lights in the sky, pale green. his neck, looking for the source of the sound, as a slipstream of warm desert air cuffs his face and tosses. the boy can match. Trusting her sharper senses, assuming she won't lead them straight into any associates. Micky crazily thought of killer bees, which might also have caused the shrieking figure to perform these. Once, when an outlaw mouse scurried from room to room and along hallways, eluding a comic posse of. there's no doubt one present? and that they will hassle even properly documented workers if they're in a. confidence, confidence above all else, because self-consciousness and self-doubt fade the disguise. He. makes her more difficult to kill than are ordinary mortals. Bernard Fallows had been surprised enough when Chang had called to confirm that his friend Adam's mother, Kath, had agreed to arrange a visit. He had been even more surprised when Kath turned out to be not a junior technician or mundane worker around the place, but responsible for the operation of a large portion of the main fusion process, though exactly how she fitted in and who gave her directions were obscure. And even more surprising still had been her readiness to receive him and Jay personally and devote an hour of her time to them. The comparable prospect of Leighton Merrick showing Chang and friends round the main-drive section of the Mayflower H was unthinkable. A party of Chironians was due to go up to the ship for a guided tour of some sections, it was true, but that was following an official invitation extended to professionals; it didn't include fathers and sons who wanted to do some personal Sightseeing. Perhaps his position as an engineering officer specializing in fusion techniques had had something to do with his special treatment, Bernard conjectured. The prisoner moon escapes the dungeon clouds, and the oiled lane under the boy's swift feet glistens. 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. "Why?" a girl in a pink jacket asked. short-sleeved top. On the back of the shirt, a cool yellow-and-red logo said ROSWELL, NEW. dog's neck, Together they wait, alert. "No, Curtis. I just think you're too sweet for this world." vengeance. He isn't aware of my associate in the attic." again, executing as fast a double take as ever did Asta the dog and his master, the detective Nick. Besides, he's got Old Yeller to think about. Good pup. I'm coming, pup. displeased audience at a symphony of talentless musicians; and perhaps he's able to call forth his poetic. At once their faces split into broad smiles, and they walked over. The redhead shook his hand warmly. "I see you've already met Wellington. I'm Shirley. This is my daughter, Ci." midpoint of the hall. They stare at him, and he returns their stares. 11 as a kid by an uncle who had died fifteen years into the voyage from a heart condition, but that was about all. wink. The aged refrigerator choked like a terminal patient on life-support machinery, denied a. He wondered how he might have made out if he'd had a start like that. And what would a guy like Colman be doing, who knew more about the Mayflower II's machines than haft the echelon-four shot-noses put together? If that was the way the computers had brought the first kids up, Driscoll reflected, he could think of a few humans who ~ could have used some lessons. men gathered alongside the craft. At this distance, it's impossible to discern whether these are additional. Yeah, but maybe she was in trouble. Maybe this was one of those limes when knowing CPR proved. "Classified information," Colman murmured. Then he squeezed her arm one more time and turned to follow after the others. As Chaurez finished speaking, an indicator announced an incoming call from the Government Center. He accepted and found himself looking at an Army captain with a large moustache. "Forward Security Command Post," Chaurez acknowledged. and had been given vinegar, it couldn't have tasted more bitter than her slow steady tears. In afterthought, the ladybug liberator called to him: "Laura's not here a lot today. Gone off in one of. An alligator of tread strips away from one wheel and lashes across the pavement, snapping like a. "The competition is pretty stiff," Leilani acknowledged. "Now," says Donella, "before I take your order, honey, are you sure you've got the money to pay?" '~That could be a good place to start," Kalens suggested to Wellesley. hearts, wounded minds, torn spirits. Kath laughed and rolled back to stare up at the ceiling. "You're just like us, aren't you," she said. "You don't know where you came from either." penetrating, as air finds its way into places from which water is kept out. "He can't have been here ten. Bernard shrugged. "What the hell? It's done now. We needed the exercise." When he visited Laura, he talked to her at length. Whether in a trance like this or more alert, she never. "If you want to put it that way." Noah settled into the armchair, from which he was able to see her dreamlit gaze, the periodic blink of. "How long before the flyer shows up?" Carson asked. The scent of recently mown grass saturated the still air: the intoxicating essence of summer. porch, brick steps lead up to a weathered plank floor. He creaks and scrapes to the door, which opens. something. league. "Tell the men to stand down," he said quietly to Jarvis. "Deprieme 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. "I said you were in too much of a hurry," Jean said to Bernard. "Just think, all that work for nothing. We should have waited a bit longer for those Chironians to get round to us." Jay shook his head. "It'd just mean we've got the same problem. It wouldn't solve anything." Shirley turned to look at Ci. "Say, wouldn't he be great to have at our next party? I love things like that." She looked at Driscoll again. "When are you coming down to Chiron?" In spite of a free-spirited tendency to be unrestrained in all

things, Sinsemilla had thus far restricted her freedom..Speed 300 miles per second; distance to destination, 493 million miles. Course-correction effected to bring the ship round onto its final approach..wide. Maybe twenty inches deep. The bottom rail cleared the floor by three inches..guts this evening had gained her nothing, but she'd left Micky and sweet Mrs. D under a big stinky pile of.Smiling, reaching down to stroke the lovely lady's head, the trucker says, "I guess you'll be all right with."Not really..however, were the bashing of the side window, Noah's eruption from the Chevy, and the gleeful capering.Some of the station's huge storage tanks hold diesel fuel, which is combustible but not highly explosive.,with a primitive need that she didn't dare contemplate..Huddled in the hostile night, he hears himself making miserable sounds. His mother always told him that.so resourceful and cunning that they are likely to track down their quarry no matter how successful the.Bernard's eyes narrowed a fraction. It tied in with what Kath had said at the fusion complex, if the rationalizations were stripped away. So what was Merrick doing- increasing the intended overseeing force because the Directorate had decided to go ahead with the plan, using Padawski as an excuse? "I'm not sure that I do," he replied. "It sounds as if you're talking about taking over some of the key Chironian facilities. Wouldn't that only make any trouble worse?'.are tall, made taller by their Stetsons. Both wear their blue jeans tucked into their cowboy boots..Noah smiled. This was one reason he liked her. Class and style without pretension. "Exactly..diner, gift shop, and according to one highway sign glimpsed earlier, a "full range of services," whatever.But the descendants of that seed would return and populate Earth once again. In six months the refitting of the ship would be completed, and it would plunge once more into the void to make the first exploratory voyage back, a voyage which would require less than a third of the time of the outward journey. Lechat would be the Mission Director, Fallows the Chief of Engineering, and Adam would head one of the scientific teams, Colman would be returning 'too, as an Engineering officer; Kath would fulfill her dream of seeing Earth; and Alex would be about Jay's age by the time they returned to Chiron. Many of the old, familiar faces, some through nostalgia and others through restlessness after five years of planet-bound living, would take to space again in the ship that had been their home for twenty years..third swing, the serpent met the furniture with a crack of skull that took all the wriggle out of it forever..only the previous evening, over dinner. . . ."They opened Aunt Gen's head as though it were a can of beans..Perhaps Curtis's ass, among others.. "What're you doin' here, boy? ".Western medicine, which she despised. When she returned home, she would launch a campaign of.Doggedly returning to her initial question, Leilani asked, "So the guy who killed Mr. D?was he caught?".Closing her eyes again, turning her face to the deadly blazing heavens, Micky said, "Well, I don't intend.could have charmed the snake of Eden into a mood of benign companionship. Gen's once golden hair.use..Lechat cut him off with a wave of his hand. "Don't make any noise," he said to the whole group, who were crowding around in astonishment. "Everything is okay.' He signaled Borftein over with another wave of his hand. Over by the door the soldiers had dragged in two unconscious guards, and two of them were already putting on the SD uniforms while the steward handed them two automatics, which he produced from inside the napkin he was carrying. "There isn't a lot of time," Lechat advised Wellesley and Borftein. "We have-to get you downstairs and into the Communications Center. Now listen, and I'll give you a quick rundown on the situation. ..nebula was hovering over Geneva's motor home, casting a power pall just like alien ships always did in.a fraction as hilarious as a highly convincing puddle of plastic vomit, and there's no chance whatsoever I'd.of the most serene bronze Buddha.. "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?'.happened , . Howard learned about it, Celia closed her eyes as if she were trying to shut out a memory that she was seeing again. "He lost control of himself completely there was a fight, and.. " She left the rest unsaid. After a few seconds she opened her eyes and stared blankly ahead again. "Maybe I wanted him to find out-provoked him to it. You see, after all that time, maybe I knew deep down that I couldn't just walk away and leave him like that either.' What other way was there?" Her eyes brimmed with tears suddenly, and she brought her handkerchief to her face..her nook was a private place. But the snake won't allow even a pretense of privacy. She'll have no.many years ago..for the highway patrol..Maddoc..black and fully armored. Bristling, fierce in every line, turbines screaming, this seems to be a military.In mid-1977 he moved from England to the United States to become a Senior Sales Training Consultant, concentrating on the applications of minicomputers in science and research for DEC..They're dead serious about it. He says if we tell anyone about them, they'll never bring Luki back. They."We all have to pay our debts," Nanook said unhelpfully.."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.fifty or a hundred thousand volts of electricity through her brain, but it didn't help..Sinsemilla had been struck mute by either the unexpected outcome or the spectacle.. "Then I held poor scared thingy a long time in the dark, the two of us here on the bed, and after a while."And that bothers you? ".He decided to go up to Rockefeller's to see if any of his platoon were still around. On the way his pace slowed abruptly. Some time before, he had stumbled into a very personal and satisfying way of feeling that he was getting even with the system in a way that he didn't fully understand. Nobody else knew about it--not even Hanlon, but that didn't make any difference. He hadn't seen her for a while now, and he was in just the right mood..flourish..possibility of capture or snakebite, frisky with the prospect of new terrain and greater excitement, tail.If she retreated to the yard, however, she would be shirking her responsibilities. Which was exactly what.It was a nice feeling..STARSHIP COMMAND CENTER, CAPTAIN CURTIS HAMMOND..safer in the dark..denim jackets, many in T-shirts emblazoned with the names of automotive products, snack foods, beers.,convey that he was as confused about what Wellesley was doing as they were. Wellesley looked slowly around the hall one last time. "And now, by virtue of those same powers, I both tender and accept my resignation on the grounds of retirement. It has been an honor and a privilege to serve you all. Thank you." And with that, he stepped down from the dais and walked away to sit down in an

empty chair to one side..Jay shrugged. "All the things crazy people usually follow crazy leaders for, I guess.".fang-to-fang with ME, you psychotic bitch, and see how much you still like teeth when I?M done with.bricks on this road, and here, now, in the lingering sour scent of warm beer, in this small kitchen where.Now they are gone into the night, either unaware that they have passed within feet of him?or alert to his.sixteen, thereby squelching any affection he might have felt toward her..Yeller will understand this to be an admonition against eating the sausages..and who wrote lousy weepy epic poems about hangnails and bad-hair days..Sinsemilla said she cried because she was a flower in a world of thorns, because no one here could see

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