

LOCKED WITHIN

"Yeah, Dr. Doom," Leilani confirmed..she asked, "So why're you there? And why isn't your operation bigger? ".* * *.Sterm shrugged. "So, why do you care about a few Chironians having to find somewhere else to live? They have an entire planet, most of which is empty. They will hardly starve." Jay shrugged. "Maybe he figures he's got a better than even chance of outshooting them. Maybe he's just crazy." Merrick drew a long breath, and his expression became grave. "Mmm Walters. That brings me to the other thing I have to tell you," he said in a heavy voice. "Officer Walters is no longer with us. He and his family disappeared from Cordova Village two days ago and have not been heard of since. He failed to report for duty yesterday. We must assume that he has absconded. He shook his head sadly. "Disappointing, Fallows, most disappointing. I credited him with more character." treasure, Curtis scuttles past the cook, bound for freedom and a makeshift dinner, surprised by the arrival. "Though I wouldn't trust him around an open cash register," said Geneva, rising from her chair. "Alec when, as she lay sleepless in another time and place, they had rolled past in the night with a rhythmic. To permit rapid and effective response to emergencies, the Mission Director was empowered to suspend the democratic process as represented by Congress, and assume sole and total authority for the duration of such emergency situations as he saw fit to declare. Although this prerogative had been intended as a concession to the unknowns of interstellar flight and to apply only until the termination of the voyage itself, Judge Fulmire had confirmed Kalens's interpretation that technically it would remain in force until the expiration of Wellesley's term of office. The question now was: Could this prerogative be extended to whomever became chief executive of the next administration, and if so, who was empowered to write such an amendment into law? The full Congress could, of course, but wouldn't, since that would amount to voting away its own existence. Under the unique privileges accorded to him and technically still in force, could Wellesley?. This was a private establishment with a dedicated, friendly staff. Noah appreciated their professionalism., evening. She must have left before it happened." Beside Sirocco, Colman breathed an audible sigh of relief.. Bernard felt the color rising at the back of his neck. The pathos that she was trying to project was touching a raw nerve. He refilled his glass with a slow, deliberate movement while he brought his feelings under control. "What makes you so sure I found it all that wonderful?" he asked. "Aren't you assuming the same right to tell me what I ought to want?" He put the bottle down on the table with a thud and looked up. "Well, I didn't think it was so wonderful, and I don't want any more of it. Today I told Merrick to stuff his lob up his ass." contention.. Colman grinned and drank from the glass. "Not quite that bad. But some of them do have pretty funny ideas- or did have, anyway. A lot of people couldn't imagine that kids brought up by machines could be anything else but . . . 'inhuman,' I guess you'd call it-cold, that kind of thing." The girl stamped her left foot on the ground, causing the leg brace to rattle softly. She raised her left. with them, eating it in the name of a boy with a wickedly malformed pelvis and Tinkertoy hips, a boy who. Driscoll couldn't buy that. "You mean they'd be just as happy doing what our people told them to?" he said.. would be crumpled wrappers from weird and unknown brands of candy discarded by traveling trolls or. "You're very pretty," Micky assured her.. "I better check those orders." The corporal turned to his screen while the other two SD's eyed the relief detail. After a few seconds the corporal raised his eyebrows. "You're right. Oh, well, I guess it's okay." The other two SD's relaxed a fraction. The corporal called up the duty l~g4nd signed his team off. "They must be thinning things right down everywhere," he said as he watched Sirocco go through the routine of logging on.. he'd lost her. Until then, she'd been a radiance, the one brightness in a family that otherwise lived in. She didn't seem to be in physical pain, after all. She might have been working off excess energy in a. describe someone who, even when caked in her own vomit and reeking of urine and babbling. Colman sighed. "So I kept running away and getting into all kinds of stupid trouble, and in the end did most of my growing-up in centers for problem kids that the State ran. Sometimes they tried moving me in with families in different places, but it never worked out. The last ones tried pretty hard. They adopted me legally, and that's how I got my name. Later we moved to Pennsylvania . . . my stepfather was an MHD engineer, which was probably what, got me interested . . . but there was some trouble, and I wound up in the Army." Although he had been only eight years old in 2040, he could remember dearly the excitement caused by the news that a signal had come in from a spacecraft called the Kuan-yin, which had been launched in 2020, just before the war broke out. The signal had announced that the Kuan-yin had identified a suitable planet in orbit around Alpha Centauri and was commencing its experiment. The planet was named Chiron, after one of the centaurs; three other significant planets also discovered by the Kuan-yin in the system of Alpha Centauri were named Pholus, Nessus, and Eurytion.. "When I was a little kid, I saw a fantastic performing-dog act. This golden retriever did all these. roars through an empty service bay, between islands of pumps. Station attendants, truckers, and on-foot. brand in the refrigerator, and if no one drank it, she periodically replaced it with new stock when its. part misery and part fury, as she jabbed the lance hard at the coiled target.. "When he has to explain where Luki's gone, what'll he say?" Geneva wondered.. Spears.. "They're controlled by sophisticated, self-adapting learn programs running on the computers distributed through the net, that's all. I wouldn't imagine the techniques are so different from what you're used to." mother-daughter moment. It didn't matter that their roles were reversed, that the daughter was providing. Sirocco gave a short laugh. "You should find out more about this ship before you start worrying about things like that. We'll probably put out a screen of interceptors and make the final approach behind them. They'll stop anything before it gets within ten thousand miles. You have to give the company some credit." "Till they killed him." anger might overwhelm her. She wanted to lash out at someone on Leilani's behalf, take a hard satisfying. "Yep." "Yours~ "Nope." "Aha!" The preacher made an appealing gesture to the audience. "Is there any difference, my friends? Can we see atoms? Is this not arrogant insolence?" He looked back at the boy and jabbed an

accusing finger at him. 'Do you claim to have seen atoms? Tell us that you have, and I will say that you lie/' Another appealing flourish. "And is this therefore not faith any the less, and yet this person proclaimed to have no need of faith. Does he not, therefore, contradict himself before us?".country, to the sites of famous close encounters, from Roswell, New Mexico, to Phlegm Falls, Iowa,.of respectable magnitude..hope of escape lies ahead..Sensing that this guy won't be rattled by the serial-killer alert?or by much else, for that matter?Curtis.Fulmire endorsed the idea and said he thought that a lot of other people were beginning to feel the same way, which started Lechat thinking about forming an official Separatist movement and seeking nomination as a last-minute candidate in the elections. Soon afterward he began to sound out sources of support, and since his interests had put him on close terms with most of the Mission's scientific professionals, they were near the top of his list of likely recruits. Among them was Jerry Pernak, whose researches Lechat had been following with interest for several years. Accordingly, Lechat invited Pernak and Eve Verity to dinner with him one evening in the Fran?oise, a restaurant in the Columbia District frequented mainly by political and media people, and explained his situation..Movement gives him confidence, and confidence is essential to maintaining a successful disguise..body or pop me into a brand-new body identical to this one but with no imperfections. Anyway, that's.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..slowly in place, and then sidestepped in a circle. Soon she began to dance light-footedly, in a graceful."I was going to. I don't have to make it right now." Pernak looked at Bernard and braced his hands on the arms of his chair as if preparing to rise. "Well, I have to go over to Princeton this afternoon, and Jersey's on the shortest way around. Jay and I could share a cab.".Colman groaned to himself. Just as he was about to reply, he noticed the woman standing on the far side of the entrance, across from the gatehouse. She was wearing a beret and a light-colored raincoat with the collar turned up, and seemed to be trying to attract his attention without making herself too conspicuous. "Oh, Jesus-" He looked at the two. "Look, I need a few minutes. Jay, stay right there." He walked across to the woman and was almost face to face with her before he recognized Veronica, for once looking neither impish nor mischievous..sight of them reminds the boy how much time has passed since he ate a cold cheeseburger in the."RAPE" Ha-ha, hah-hah.prepared for minor injuries while on the road. And because Leilani understood her mother's penchant for.the mothering. Only the normality mattered. The peace. Here, now, Leilani was overcome with a pleasant."Now you're in a gang with a future.".Appalled, Geneva looked as though she might bring to the table the brandy that Micky had thus far.her, Aunt Gen. There's nothing we can do tonight.".door to let her enter..As was usual for a Saturday night, the pedestrian precinct beneath the shopping complex and business offices of the Manhattan module was lively and crowded with people. It included several restaurants; three bars, one with a dance floor in the rear; a betting shop that offered odds both on live games from the Bowl and four-years'-delayed ones from Earth; a club theater that everybody pretended didn't stage strip shows; and a lot of neon lights. The Bowry bar, a popular haunt of off-duty regular troops, was squeezed into one corner of the precinct next to a coffee shop, behind a studded door of imitation oak and a high window of small, tinted glass panes that turned the inside lights red..Bernard sat back and drew a long breath. He was just about to say something when Jeeves interrupted to announce an incoming call on the Chironian net. It was Kath, calling from her place in Franklin. "I've heard from Casey," she said when Bernard accepted. "He's collected his package with Adam, and they're on their way home with it. I just thought you'd like to know.".peers between two towers of dishes, and sees one of his pursuers about fifteen feet away..she often generated a blinding blizzard of anger that isolated her from other people, from life, from all."I'm not sure," Kalens replied distantly. Trying to elucidate Sterm's motives is akin to peeling an onion. But when you think it through, if there's no resistance, we win automatically, and if there is, then the Chironians will be forced to make the first moves, which gives us both a free hand to respond and a clear-cut justification that will satisfy our own people . . . which' is doubly important with the elections coming up. So really you have to agree, John, the scheme does have considerable merit.". "You don't know where you were born?" .plains states were unknown here in southern California, but summer heat made these blighted streets."Yeah, well, by nature I'm a huge pudding. I've got to work hard to stay like this.".The scene was an alfresco 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..Sirocco smiled tiredly. "'You're excused from taking off your boots," he murmured..creature that Karloff played..something sophisticated and classy and smart. She liked things that weren't what they seemed to be,.and folded into an amazing work of architecture, high at the top of which is pinned a little.though he recognizes the need for stealth, and stares beseechingly at his master..before she had been able to return here. She hadn't been Leilani Klonk when she hurried from this room..The other two followed his gaze to a Chironian wearing coveralls and a green hat with a red feather in it, painting the lower part of a wall of one of the houses. Near him was a machine on legs, a clutter of containers, valves, and tubes at one end, bristling with drills, saws, and miscellaneous attachments at the other. A ground vehicle with a multisectioned extensible arm supporting a work platform was parked in front; and from a few yards to one side of the painter, a paint-smeared robot, looking very much like an inexperienced apprentice, watched him studiously. The Chironian was as old as any that Colman had seen, with a brown, weathered face, but what intrigued Colman even more was the

house itself, which was built after the pattern of dwellings on Earth a hundred years earlier--constructed from real wood, and coated with paint. It was not the first such anachronism that he had seen in Franklin, where designs three centuries old coexisted quite happily alongside maglev cars and genetically modified plants, but he hadn't had an opportunity to stop and study one before. In spite of all that she knew about Sinsemilla Maddoc, Geneva cringed from this charge against the touch any more than she had reacted to Micky's questions. Tremors quaked through her. A dish for the dog; he will simply refill it with juice as often as the pooch requires. He returns quietly to the open bedroom door, the dog remaining by his side. Sirocco shrugged. "Well, Kalens's wife is always going places with Veronica, so they're obviously good friends. Swyley noticed something funny between you and Veronica at that party we went to at Shirley's, and that was the connection he figured out," Sirocco shrugged again. "I mean, it's none of my business, of course, and I don't want to know if it's true or not. He paused and looked at Colman hopefully for a second. "Is it?" A private security firm with nationwide reach. She suspected, however, that all those operations did. We weren't born into this universe to doubt. We were born to hope, to love, to live, to learn, to. "Will Laura want a sundae?" she asked. The way to Laura's room. Most Terrans had no doubts that the Chironians would take no notice whatsoever, but they couldn't see Kalens enforcing the threat. It had to be a bluff--a final, desperate gamble by a clique who thought they could sleep forever, trying to hold together the last few fragments of a dream that was dissolving in the light of the new dawn. "He should have learned about evolution," Jerry Pernak commented to Eve as they listened to the news over breakfast. "The mammals are here, and he thinks he can legislate them back to dinosaurs." Sirocco tuned his head towards Hanlon. "Get a couple of pistol belts and side arms from the Armory, Bret," he said. "Let's find out just how good this character really is. I think he might be able to help us solve our problem." Two stools away, Burt Hooper chokes violently on his waffles and chicken. His fork clatters against his original. Where'd you find her? Jean raised her hands in an imploring gesture. "Doesn't what Paul Lechat was saying this morning make a lot of sense to you? Isn't it the only way? Well, he's going to need help to do it. I expected you to get on the line right away and find out if there was something we could do. Skulking among the trucks, staying as much as possible out of the open lanes of the parking lot, the alert. "Sinsemilla? That's a ...".out? ".Sterm did not appear surprised. "They have merely to comply with the law to avoid such consequences,". "Deleted," the machine confirmed. "Last line of entry reads: "... shut up behind a fence, ignored, and looking ridiculous." The snake still coiled near the baseboard, under the window. Luminous eyes. Head weaving as if to the parched..little." "With great satisfaction," Geneva noted, raising her coffee cup as if in a toast to the liberating power of. "What makes you imagine that I could?". None of the employees any longer offers guidance. They're too busy diving for cover, belly-crawling like. "Start taking off the jacket and the vest," the Irish sergeant ordered. "And while you're doing it, you can tell us the routine." authorities have realized that the fire at the farmhouse was arson, and if autopsies have revealed that the. with nothing but dreary need.. "They'll say he never existed, that I'm just disturbed and invented him, like an imaginary playmate." "Is Sirocco around?" Colman moved over to the washbasin to rinse his face..blacktop.. Bernard stood up. "Sure... don't let me keep you if you have things to do. Thanks for letting me have the cutter back." He turned his head toward the dining area and called in a louder voice, "Hey, you people wanna say good-bye to Jerry? He's leaving." Pernak and lay waited by the door for lean and Marie to appear. Driscoll grinned and began feeling more confident. '~You see, Wellington," he said. "They're not all as bad as you think." the chambers of any spaceship, instead of the closet in these serial killers' motor home. He's not in an. The party arrived at the little-used connecting passage running behind the Fran'oise and its neighboring establishments, and the soldiers waited among the shadows of the surrounding entrances and stairways while Lechat tapped lightly on the rear door of the restaurant. After a few seconds the door opened and Lechat disappeared inside. Several minutes later the door opened again and Lechat looked out, peered first one way, then the other, up overhead, and then beckoned the others quickly inside.. Leilani had no clue to the meaning of her mother's words. From experience she knew that purposefully..freedom..stop." Celia's suggestion for including Borftein and Wellesley was still undeniably attractive, but none of the ideas advanced for freeing them had stood up to close analysis because the prisoners were being held in rooms guarded constantly by two armed and alert SD's stationed halfway along a wide, brightly lit corridor with no way to approach them before they would be able to raise the alarm. Sirocco had therefore left that side of things in abeyance for the time being..admit he smelled better than your average corpse." Colman nodded. "Sure. They're selected and trained to obey orders and not ask questions. Some of them would shoot their own mothers if the right person said so. And Stormbel was in on it. It fits." He thought for a second longer, and then looked at Lechat and Bernard. "There were a lot of suspicious things about Padawski breaking out too. It couldn't have happened the way it did without inside help. A lot of us have been thinking it was a setup to bait the Chironians into hitting back." used the restroom only a short while ago.. "What?" Merrick sat up rigidly in his chair, "What did you say, Fallows?". beneath the chest of drawers to Leilani's exposed back, where now it slowly extruded on the floor. "Mrs. D, you don't mind she- calls your brother a selfish pig?" "Sadly, dear, it's true."