

## MABEL GRAY AND OTHER POEMS

connected scars, as intricate as lacework, decorated or disfigured her forearm, depending on your taste. Celia set her glass on the table and found that she needed a moment to reorient her thoughts, even though she had known this was coming. "I'm concerned over this latest threat to evict Chironians from Phoenix. It's not the bluff that many people think. Howard is serious." starry sky, low near the horizon, but nothing of the greater vault above, where ghost riders would be. pale blue smoke and appear to stutter on the pavement. shoulders. "No, honey. Never you, none of that. You were just a good woman, too good and far too." Because he keeps tabs on you, he's been on to me from the start, but he doesn't know that I know that. At the end of 1979, Hogan opted to write full-time. He is now living in northern California. Jarvis and Chazreuz glanced at each other. Then Jarvis looked away as a new report came up on one of the screens. "Peterson has come out for Borftein in the Government Center," he muttered over his shoulder. "I guess it's all over in the Columbia District. That has to give them the whole Ring." Paula was looking at him impishly. "Do you think you could beat mine?" she asked in a curious voice. But Celia seemed for the moment to be on the verge of collapse from nervous exhaustion. He sighed to himself, decided answers could wait for a little longer, and settled into his seat. pane, as though showcased: visible above the waist, nude. Jonathan Sharmer, also nude, loomed behind. busy. No one appears interested in Curtis when he enters. "What?" Merrick sat up rigidly in his chair, "What did you say, Fallows?" "Pay our debt, collect our due/Each one proud/or what we do," Marie recited. This baffles the boy because he's been under the impression that a Gump has no choice but to be a heart. really want to talk about? And I'm ? what? ? supposed to guess the true subject?" Colman turned on his elbow and found Swyley leaning with his arms on the bar, staring straight ahead at the bottles on the shelves behind. Colman raised his eyebrows. Had it been anyone else he would have looked more surprised, but Swyley's ability to read minds was just another of his mysterious arts that D Company took for granted. After a few seconds Swyley went on, "They're seducing all of us. That's how they're fighting the war." She had turned out to be a very shapely redhead by the name of Veronica, and she lived in an apartment in the Baltimore module. In fact her face was not unfamiliar, but before then Colman hadn't known who she was. She had seemed as intrigued by Colman as he by her when they talked by the bar earlier in the evening. "Sure, I've been there," he had told her in reply to a question that she had asked with a devilish twinkle in her eye. "There aren't many-places you don't get to visit sooner or later in twenty years." The ravages to your face from a snakebite might involve more than scar tissue. Maybe nerve damage. five-dollar bill in his mouth. Another zoom shot revealed that the man delivered by the Jaguar was Congressman Jonathan Sharmer. The girl forked up another mouthful of pie, and again she chewed with a stoic expression that suggested. The Chironian rubbed his chin dubiously. "I'm not at all sure that I could be much help. Government of what in particular?" "Look, I-I didn't mean to bust into anything," lay stammered. "I mean, if you and her are...'.damaged angel waited there for him." "I mean the bag. It's an airsickness bag." His grin faded. "What? you never saw one before?" "Someone gave it to Aunt Geneva for nothing." open to admit a draft, but the August day declined the invitation to provide a breeze. turned upon herself. get full servings of 'em on bigger plates, but your poor sweet sister, she got hers heaped high on a. An intrigued and thoughtful look came over Swyley's face as he listened. He said nothing, which meant that he didn't agree. OUTSIDE DAWN WAS creeping into the sky as Stanislaw sat before a portable communications panel in one corner of the mess hall of the Omar Bradley Block, frowning at the mnemonics appearing on the screen and returning coded commands with intermittent movements of his fingers. Sirocco was watching from below the platform that he had been using for the briefing, while the rest of D Company, many of them in flak vests and fatigue pants, sat talking in groups or just waiting among the rows of seats scattered untidily to face the platform. The doors and approaches to the building were all covered by lookouts, so there was no risk of surprise interruptions. As in Leilani's own closet, a tubular-steel pole, approximately two inches in diameter, spanned the. A hand descended on his arm and slid upward to tease the back of his neck. He turned round to find that Kath had come back. "You're starting a bachelors' party here," she said. "I have to break that up before the idea catches on." on the same guiding principle: Do the opposite of what Sinsemilla would do, and there is a better chance. girl mean bidness!" particularly old, but they are going to be a great team. Curtis successfully resists the urge to water the pavement, too, but he counts himself fortunate to have. CHAPTER NINETEEN. "That's the current story," Leilani said, "and we're sticking to it. Strange lights in the sky, pale green. 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. lousy cook." Later on, Colman thought about Anita being brought back in a body-bag because she had chosen to follow after a crazy man instead of using her own head to decide her life. The Chironians didn't watch their children being brought home in body-bags, he reflected; they didn't teach them that it was noble to die for obstinate old men who would never have to face a gun, or send them away to be slaughtered by the thousands defending other people's obsessions. The Chironians didn't fight that way. Just as he plunges into the shadows between the vehicles, he hears shouting, people running ? suddenly. candles. "Sucky," Aunt Gen said. her to suffer in the misery of absolute isolation, that He permitted Noah's voice and the meaning of his. back. With food." in the mirror again without cringing. graciousness personified, who makes every phase of the work a delight? and who will think that this." ... have strayed from the path in many ways, and we must be mindful of our Christian, as well as our patriotic, duty to lead this errant flock back into the haven of the fold. Sometimes this is not an easy task, and requires firmness and dedication as well as compassion and understanding .... "of a tire iron. take that long incline at a run. Leilani said, "She just calls him Klunk because she claims that was the noise he made if you rapped him." "I can tell," Leilani

assured her. "You don't run, you don't power walk -". Shaking her head, gentle amusement still written on her face, she returned her attention to the. With the thumb on her deformed hand, Leilani gestured toward Geneva, and said to Micky, "She's an. This isn't the smoothest socializing the boy has done to date, but the terrified worker overreacts to this. five-hundred rummy. ". "If your intention was to provoke an offensive response from the Chironians as a justification for enforcing order, then that hasn't worked either," Kalens returned coolly. "Now we must live with the damage and consider our alternatives.". Below, the three flashlights swivel in unison and point due north. Toward Curtis.. music of a charmer's flute.. fantasy and fairy lore, though always a benign version: a kindly troll or perhaps a good-hearted kobold. Currently, sunshine was Micky Bellsong's medication of choice, and southern California in late August. improvement in implant technology, my best hope is to develop good boobs. You can be a mutant and. stirring the contents of a bubbling soup pot.. especially as this was a truth that she had so long avoided contemplating.. more attitude than Schwarzenegger with a bee up his ass, although they're wanted by the FBI and surely. rattle, laughing, shiny-eyed with delight over a prank well played. "Don't be such a goof! It's just a little. were preserved through centuries by being told and retold in the glow of campfire and hearth light.. "Healed?" Micky didn't consider this girl's deformities to be a disease or a sickness. In fact, Leilani's. fun.. But they were less forthcoming about details of their administrative system, which had evidently departed far from the well-ordered pattern laid down in the guidelines they were supposed to have followed. The guidelines had specified electoral procedures to be adopted when the first generation attained puberty. The intention had been not so much to establish an active decision-making process there and then--the computers were quite capable of handling the things that mattered but to instill at an early age the notion of representative government and the principle of a ruling elite, thus laying the psychological foundations for a functioning social order that could easily be absorbed intact into the approved scheme of things at some later date. From what little the Chironians had said, it seemed that the early generations had ignored the guidelines completely and possessed no governing system worth talking about at all, which was absurd since they appeared to be managing a thriving and technically advanced society and to be doing so, if the truth were admitted, fairly effectively. In other words, they had to be covering a lot of things up.. He walked eastward, through the warm gusts of wind stirred by traffic, alert for any indication that he. What- ". "I didn't think it would, so I won't say it." .irrationality in this trailer where genteel daffiness and screwball self-delusion had heretofore been the. across the table from him. "Do you have a death wish?" .His house key was on the same ring. When he finally got home, by whatever means, he didn't want to. Sinsemilla had been shopping earlier, in the afternoon. With her, Preston was generous, providing money. "Dr. Doom. They've been together four and a half years now. See, there's even kismet for crackpots.. sex organs is generally effective.. down the detonation plunger, not on all these issues, but on enough of them to have assured an explosion. "If she was dumb enough not to, she wouldn't have been there in the first place," Juanita added, trying to be helpful.. herself under the right circumstances.. Sometimes dear Mater came complete with a mess to clean up. Leilani could handle messes. She didn't. contain a collection of severed feet.. "It's nothing personal, Paul. We think you're a great guy .... ' Pernak frowned and sighed apologetically. "I just can't see that Separatism is going to answer anything in the long run. In fact, to be honest, I can't see Congress's being around all that much longer. On that planet down there, it's a dodo already." .hanging from the rod appears to be made of human skin.. One Door Away From Heaven. Over the past year, with as much mulish resistance as the most obstinate creature ever to pull a plow,. After a few seconds of silence Lay conceded, "Okay, I can see how it might be a good way of getting rid of the odd freak here and there. But what do you do when a whole bunch of them get together?" . "I'm not sure I believe in life before death," Micky said.. "Really thirsty--so your tongue feels like wire wool and swells up in your mouth, and your skin starts cracking." . "The scabby little pervert can't even afford a real car." . a modified high-five.. "Sure they can. Even before Dr. Doom, Sinsemilla was footloose. She says we lived in Santa Fe, San. He certainly doesn't have enough money to bribe an FBI agent, and by far the most of them can't be. the wall, where the treads are less noisy.. "Does anyone else know about Howard?" Colman asked. "Veronica, for instance?'. hideous tunneling something, all teeth and appetite, will explode out of the forest floor under his feet,. him. "In that Windchaser, they keep body parts in the bedroom." . "You'd like Constance Tavenall," he said. "If you'd had a chance to grow up, I think you'd have been a." "Go away," Chang told it. "We're just looking today." The cart shut up, turned itself around, and returned dejectedly to the line to await another victim.. how to cope with that." . She has a musical voice, a dazzling smile, and she seems to take a shine to him. "Well, Curtis, my name's. blue eyes. "Now don't you wish you could see me as a mutant?" . "Yes, I know he's a bit of a barbarian, but unfortunately his support is important. And if there is trouble later, it will be essential to know we can count on him to do his job until he can be replaced." During the temporary demise of the northern part of the Western civilization, South Africa had been subjected to a series of wars of liberation waged by the black nations to the north, and had evolved into a repressive, totalitarian regime allied with Australia and New Zealand, which had also shifted in the direction of authoritarianism to combat the tide of Asiatic liberalism sweeping into Indonesia. Their methods had merit, but produced Borfteins as a by-product.. In a crouch, he crosses the roof to the brink. When he looks back again, the mutt whines beseechingly. CHAPTER THIRTY-EIGHT. generous seasoning of stars salts the clear pant of the sky, but still the desert steadily darkles, minute by. "Yes, I can, and no, there aren't. Why--getting fed up?" . "If you've never read Scrooge McDuck comic books, my literary allusion will be lost on you." . Returning to her chair, Geneva said, "So, Micky, will we all be getting together for a neighborly." "She gets eighty-six thousand a year," Noah said.. "I've been thinking about that ..." Sirocco continued to gaze across the room at Driscoll, who was recounting his experiences to Maddock and a group of others. "He's pretty good, isn't he," Sirocco said, still half to himself.. By the time the flyer touched down at the front of the house, Celia's earlier nervousness had given way to a stoic resignation to the fact that she was

now committed. She had gambled that Stern would accept her desire to return to her home as normal feminine behavior and that because he believed her to be helpless and without anyone else to run to anyway, the thought of her trying to escape would not enter his mind seriously. That was just how it had worked out; her three SD guards and a matron had orders to keep her under observation and from talking to anybody, but she was not considered to be a prisoner. Her only worry now was that Veronica might have failed to contact Colman or that for some reason he might have been unable to do anything. "Where was she institutionalized?" "So you aren't just bonus points, Mrs. D. You're like this terrific prize that turned up in a box of rancid." "Okay, then the lowly paramecium," Leilani said, shouldering past Micky to the sink. Admittedly, the character of his excitement is different from what he feels when he experiences such. Pernak's contention, that the Big Bang represented not an act of absolute creation but a singularity marking a phase-change from some earlier-if that term could be applied-epoch in which the familiar laws of physics along with the very notions of space and time broke down, was representative of the general views held on Earth at that time. Indeed, although the bizarre conditions that had reigned prior to the Bang could not be described in terms of any intuitively meaningful conceptual model, a glimmer of some of their properties was beginning to emerge from the abstract symbolism of certain branches of theoretical mathematical physics. 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. Explorers opened for the boy, and he quickly slipped inside. Another missile salvo streaked in and smashed into the walls and structures inboard from the lock, wiping out half the force that had just begun to move. The survivors reeling among the wreckage began crumpling and falling under a concentrated hail of HE and cluster fire from M32s and infantry assault artillery. What was left of the covering force broke and began running back in disorder. "Get everybody out! Pull back to-" The glass partition imploded under a direct hit, and a split second later a guided bomb carrying a five-hundred-pound incendiary warhead put an end to all resistance in the vicinity of Number 2 Aft Access Port. If Preston Maddoc, alias Dr. Doom, was at home, his disinterest in his wife's extreme distress couldn't. "Oh, Jay," Jean groaned. "They were probably taking you for a ride to get a laugh out of it. At your age, you should know better." With a Grrrrrrrr, spoken and thought, Old Yeller draws Curtis's attention away from the chopper in the revealing that it wasn't locked. No spell had been cast on the mechanism, after all. Curtis's failure to open. think, What a sad little crippled girl she is, with her little twisted leg and her little gnarled hand and her other hand, if you could see me as a weird and possibly dangerous mutant, you'd tell me none of this is. resentments. The kit was a deluxe model, similar to any fisherman's plastic tackle box with a clamshell lid. Dr. Doom

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