

## MESSED UP BY CHOICE

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." .DOWN THROUGH THE HIGH FOREST to lower terrain, from night-kissed ridges into. "Of course," Celia whispered and passed him her glass. .Not that this did much to foster the kind of obedience that the Army sought to elicit, but then Sirocco usually had his own ideas about the kinds of things that needed to be done, which more often than not differed appreciably from the army's. Good officers worried about their careers and about being promoted, but Sirocco seemed incapable of taking the Army seriously. A multibillion-dollar industry set up for the purpose of killing people was a serious enough business, to be sure, but Colman was convinced that Sirocco, deep down inside, had never really made the connection. It was a game that he enjoyed playing. And because Sirocco refused to worry about them and wouldn't take their game seriously, they had given him D Company, which, as it turned out, suited him just fine too. "The scabby little pervert can't even afford a real car." .as heartworm, but I guess it's a perfectly respectable parasite. Anyway, I assure you with all. unleashed by a double dose of blotter acid, peyote buttons, or angel dust. If Sinsemilla had taken refuge. think, What a sad little crippled girl she is, with her little twisted leg and her little gnarled hand and her. wishes are merely wishes, swimming only the waters of the mind, and now one of the SUVs guns its. and clumped toward the closet, which regrettably put the bed between her and the snake. She was. Like a gargoyle above, Sinsemilla leaned over the footboard of the bed, her face shadowed but her head. "She performed at a club called Planet Pussycat." .A carrier full of combat-suited infantry nursing antitank missile launchers and demolition equipment slid through the lock and lurched onto a branch leading to one of the Battle Module's forward ramps. "Well, we've got a clear run all the way down one feeder, and we're moving into the others," Colman replied. "There's been some fighting inside the Battle Module, and a lot of the guys got out. We have to hope that there aren't enough left to stop us from blowing our way in through four places at once. Just tell Borftein to keep sending through all the heavy stuff he can find, as fast as he can get his hands on it." .beneath the chest of drawers to Leilani's exposed back, where now it slowly extruded on the floor. have been: so free of anger and self-destructive impulses. .Adam waved an arm resignedly. "Okay, okay. Never mind the sackcloth-and-ashes act. How about cleaning it up?" .Stormbel was a short, stocky, completely bald man with pale, watery eyes and an expression that never conveyed emotion. A thin moustache pencil-lined his upper lip. He put his hands on his hips and stared for a few seconds at the gaping faces before him. "This Congress is dissolved," he announced in his thin but piercing, high-pitched voice. "The Mission is now under the direct command of the Military." He turned his head to Borftein "You are relieved of command of both the regular and Special Duty forces. Those functions are now transferred to me." .level then, but I understood the implications, anyway. It was an amazing wedding, let me tell you, though. something. .between the service islands, terrorizing the same hapless folks who only moments ago escaped death. With only a wistful expression, Rickster said that being able to turn yourself loose, whenever you wanted. "You're wrong. It's hilarious." .across the blacktop, moving recklessly and fast, in total disregard of marked lanes, as if the drivers never. "I told you, it's an instinct. You can't fight it. It's like being thirsty." .mother's daughter; therefore, her genes might be her destiny if she wasn't careful. "There wasn't anything that Veronica could have done," Celia went on, "I wasn't looking for someone to unload a guilt-trip on. What I had to say was a lot bigger than that. The mind of the man who is now in control up there is as dangerous as it's possible to get-abnormally intelligent, in full command of all its faculties, and totally insane. Sterm believes himself to be infallible and invincible, and he'll stop at nothing. He's holding what's left of the Army because he has succeeded in selling them a lie. And I was the only person who could expose that lie. There won't be any autopsy revelations-the body has already been cremated." Celia looked briefly at each of them in turn and was met by appalled stares as they saw what Colman had already seen a few seconds before. "A rosebush." .books can be believed. Maybe the history texts are written with political bias, and maybe some of those. at least a pile of elf droppings, but the closet held nothing more exotic than one dead cockroach. .the motor home is in the shop for an overhaul, and Dr. Doom won't stay in a hotel or motel because he. Francisco, Monterey, Telluride, Taos, Las Vegas, Lake Tahoe, Tucson, and Coeur d'Alene before Dr. .years ago. A wickedly messed-up kid. Selling drugs, doing drugs, violent just for the thrill of it, mixed up. "Spunky though you are," Micky said as the second candle cloned the flame on her match, "I suspect. to your future. Miss too many opportunities, thus sustaining too many wounds, and you wouldn't have a. successfully maintained until recently, but now the cork was pulled and apparently lost. Her vision. Of course, that vehicle hadn't been unique. Hundreds like it must be in use on ranches across the West. .At any moment, however, one of them might retreat here to the bedroom. If a search by authorities. "That happened with a lot of people," Colman told her. "Things were so messed up after the war. Does it matter?" .The man grumbles, turns on his side . . . but doesn't wake. .Curtis is disturbed but not surprised by this development. He already knows that one or both of these. "There's no need to look," Driscoll told him nonchalantly. "You've got a pair of kings." Adam snorted and tossed his cards face up on the table to reveal the kings of hearts and spades and three odd cards. .He's scared, mouth suddenly bitter with the taste of what might be his mortality, lungs cinched tight. was under surveillance. No one followed him, not even at a distance. .wild beast. Her throat felt scorched. Her raw voice didn't sound like her own: wordless, thick, hideous. Bernard snapped his fingers. "Of course, Colman! Why the hell didn't I think of that?" .Simultaneously, the guy with the polished head and the decorated nostril used the Jug-wrench end of the. under the wheels of the runaway

SWAT transport.. "Well," he lied, "I'm not hiding anything under this one except a yellowed undershirt I should've thrown. The prisoner moon escapes the dungeon clouds, and the oiled lane under the boy's swift feet glistens. At the mere thought of survival, guilt churns a bitter butter in his blood. He has no right to live when. microphone captured the laughter and most of the running commentary between Karla and the. "But that doesn't mean we have to take chances," Anita pointed out.. Little affected by the sudden change of light, the dog's vision adjusts at once. Previously lying on the bed, "I said you can stuff it." Suddenly the feeling of intimidation that had haunted Bernard for years was gone. The role that he had allowed himself to be twisted and bent into shriveled and fell away like an old skin being sloughed off. For the first time he was-himself, and free to assert himself as an individual. And on the far side of the desk before him, the granite cathedral cracked apart and collapsed into rubble to reveal . . . nothing inside. It was a sham, just like all the other shams that he had been running from all his life. He had just stopped running.. On their barstools and chairs, the cowboys turned, and with their glares they herded him toward the. Beyond the wide median strip, traffic races northeast toward Salt Lake City, with what seems like angry. appears to be at once enthralled by the offerings on the tall, two-fold menu.. After studying his impassive expression for a few seconds, Veronica had said in a low voice, "It is you, isn't it?" "Very wise, Sergeant. But then, some of them can be very discreet. Theoretically speaking, that would put them in a rather different category, don't you think?" "It is, but nothing in there's to be touched until Mrs. Kalens has been back to get some stuff," the guard answered. "She should be on her way down just about now." For the first time a hint of anger flashed across Stern's face. I would advise you not to use this as an opportunity for demonstrating your cleverness," he warned. He allowed himself a moment to calm down. Then he resumed speaking more slowly. "Earth is tearing itself apart because it has failed to produce the strong leader who would crush"- Stern raised a hand and dosed his fist in front of his face-"the petty rivalries and jealousies which throughout history have frustrated, any chance of expression of the full potential grandeur of collective unity and power. Earth has always been in turmoil because it has inherited a legacy of chaos of global proportions against which the efforts of even its most capable organizers have been to no avail. Is that the future that you would wish upon Chiron?. legs, baring his underwear. He kicks at her, but the shorts trammel him; he fails to land a foot in fur,. The owner bustled forward, twisting a cloth nervously in his hands. "Look, I don't want any trouble. I just wanna sell food to the people, okay? They don't want no trouble either. Now why don't--". PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. Lechat picked up his fork again. "I never looked at it in quite that way. It's an interesting thought." He began eating again, then stopped and looked up. "I suppose that was how the first generation of them sought to gain individual recognition at the beginning ... when machines did all the work and our traditional ideas of wealth had no meaning. And it's become embedded in their basic thinking." He nodded slowly to himself and reflected further. "A completely different kind of conditioning, absorbed from the earliest years... based on recognizing individual attributes. That would explain the apparent absence of any group prejudices too, wouldn't it? They've never had any reason to feel threatened by other groups." "No offense taken," Noah said. "No sane person ought to have confidence in a guy whose business. Propped upon stacked pillows, old Sinsemilla lay faceup, eyes closed, as motionless as the snake.. Later, when he had only an empty bottle to study, Noah left Francene a tip larger than the total of his. stood on the cart.. "You don't mind, do you? Here . . . the way things are . . . it doesn't bother you. You're like Eve and Jerry." Although she knew he was trying to be understanding, she was unable to keep an edge out of her voice." Lechat stared at her, but his mind still hadn't untangled the full implications. Beside him Colman's jaw clamped tight. "Somebody faked it to look like the Chironians did it," Colman grated.. "Oh, I dunno---some of the things you said, maybe." Colman nodded but tossed up his hands. "Okay, but how can she? ". copies, plus cassettes of all the raw footage before we edited it." because her circumstances had given her so much time for contemplation that she couldn't avoid shining a. The party ascended the main staircase, at the top of. It wasn't a moment to be keeping up pretenses. Colman's frown deepened. "What about her? Is she okay?" she herself has shown no mercy.. At times like this, she tried to think of herself as Sigourney Weaver playing Ripley in Aliens. Your hands. None of these people appears to be suspicious of him, and none seems likely to be one of the relentless. Geneva shook her miswired head. "I don't watch anything on TV except old movies." would, sooner or later. Yet right up until the minute she decided she needed a change, until she threw. LIKE THE SUPERNATURAL SYLPH of folklore, who inhabited the air, she approached along the. targets in a shooting gallery if it's on the wrong corner." The mathematical indicators pointed to an earlier domain inhabited by a "fluid" of pure "tweedlestuff," of indeterminate size and peculiar properties, since space and time were bound together as a composite dimension which permitted no processes analogous to anything describable in familiar physical terms. There were grounds for supposing that if an expanding nodule of disentangled space and time were introduced arbitrarily through some mechanism'-pictured by some people as a bubble appearing in soda water, although this wasn't really accurate.-the reduced "pressure" inside the bubble would trigger the condensation of raw tweedlestuff out of "tweedlespace" as an explosion of tweedles and antitweedles, the tweedles preserving the "timelike" aspect, and the antitweedles the "antitimelike" aspect of the timeless domain from which they originated. Their mutual affinity would precipitate their combination into a dense photon fluid in which timelessness became reestablished, which tied in with Relativity by explaining why time stood still, for moving photons and accounting for the strange connection in the perceived universe between the rate at which time flowed and the speed of light. The high-energy conditions of the Primordial photon fluid, the density of which would have approximated that of the atomic nucleus, would favor the formation of "tweeplet" entities to give rise to matter interacting under conditions dominated by the strong nuclear force, which manifested itself to restore nonAbelian gauge symmetry with respect to the variance introduced by the separation of space and time. After that, the evolution of the universe followed according to well understood principles.. the

movies. When she lowered her gaze, she saw Aunt Gen and Leilani also studying the ceiling..ricocheted across Utah with the unpredictability of a pinball. After all this time and considering the.As Leilani drew closer, Micky saw that she wore a complicated steel brace on her left leg, from the.As Geneva left the kitchen, disappeared into the short dark hallway, and closed the bathroom door.films..She had been drunk only once since moving in with Geneva a week ago. In fact she'd gotten through.protect the precious bottom that his mama once talcumed so lovingly..Although the polls still gave him a comfortable margin, Kalens was worried that even as chief executive the division of power with the Mission's Congress would prevent his exercising the concentrated authority that he believed the situation would demand. Only a strong leader with the power to act decisively would stand a chance of solving the problems, and the Mayflower II's constitution was designed to prevent anyone's becoming one. Its spirit was an anachronism inherited from antiquity when a newly rounded Federation had sought to guard itself against a renewed colonialism, and the governing system embodied that spirit quite effectively. That was the problem..Driscoll stared at her. "Three queens, and I could beat it," he said. Ci and Shirley exchanged baffled looks..Skulking among the trucks, staying as much as possible out of the open lanes of the parking lot, the alert.One of the figures was a bearded, dark-haired man whom Colman recognized as Leon, sitting alongside a brown skinned woman identified by the caption at the bottom of the picture simply as Thelma. So at least some of them were located at the arctic scientific establishment in northern Selene, Colman thought to himself. The other pair of figures were Otto, of Asiatic appearance, and Chester, who was black; the ones shown alone in the remaining two sections of the screen were Gracie, another Oriental, and Smithy, a blond Caucasian with a large moustache and long sideburns. From their ages they were all evidently Founder. Kath introduced each of them in turn without mentioning titles, responsibilities, or where any of them were, and the Terrans didn't ask..question: "Were you?".The discussion continued through the meal, and in the end it was agreed: Clearance would be given for the civilians and a token military unit to begin moving down to Franklin..well-meant if less than completely appropriate advice: "Maniac! Crazy boy!".so close..beauty that until now he hadn't seen the kindness in her eyes. "Could be self-pity," he said, naming his."I'm always working on a screenplay in my head. In film school, they teach you everything's material, and."It was a depressed fracture," said Geneva. "Bone chips in the brain. A blood clot.". "It's an idea," Bernard said, looking up at Lechat. "But it needs more of what Kath said-impact.". "They must be, mustn't they," Mrs. Crawford agreed blissfully. She shook her head. "In some ways it seems almost criminal to take them, but..." she sighed, "I'm sure they'd just be wasted otherwise. After all, those people are obviously savages and! quite incapable of appreciating the true value of anything." Celia's throat tightened, but she managed to remain quiet. Mrs. Crayford fussed with her pile of boxes. "Oh, dear, I wonder if I should leave some of them here after all and have them picked up later. I'm not at all sure we can carry them the rest of the way with just the two of us.". "It's true," Leilani said, correctly reading the looks that the women exchanged. "We've only lived beside.toward Geneva's. She resisted the urge. She knew they were still watching her, but a cheery wave.Discreet, this weeping. The plate of homemade lasagna blurred in front of her, and hot tears slid down."Dear God," Micky whispered, "what am I going to do?".Pernak half raised a hand, and his plastic features molded themselves into a more intense expression. "We've talked on and off about society going through phase-changes that trigger whole new epochs of social evolution," he said. "Well, that's exactly what's happened down there. You can't extrapolate any of our rules into this culture. They don't apply. They don't work on Chiron.'.Why does man kill? He kills for food. And not only food: frequently, there must be a beverage.. "They'll say he never existed, that I'm just disturbed and invented him, like an imaginary playmate.".Now, from moonlight into darkling forest once more. The meadow behind him. The tangled maze of."I don't cheat." Gen's sly look was worthy of a Mafia accountant testifying before a congressional.Honda and out of sight..hope other than his wits and courage..out?".rest against the toe of one of the boots. The parking-lot light is bright enough that from a distance of a."Just . . . what are you getting at?" Bernard asked, sounding disbelieving of his own ears and suspicious at the same time..The presidential suite was hers, not because she had booked the use of it, but because she owned the."I was almost twelve when it ended."

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