

## IN THE OLD MEETING HOUSE HINGHAM SEPTEMBER 18 1881 ALSO SERVICES A

The second went off shortly afterward near the main gate of the Army barracks. No one was killed, but two sentries were injured, neither of them seriously. On the threshold, gripping the doorknob, she glanced back to see if the snake pursued her. It remained. After a while, Leilani shifted her gaze from November in Montana and met Micky's stare. "I knew then. Micky pulled the plate closer to herself. "I'll trade pie for a serious discussion." Driscoll stared at her. "Three queens, and I could beat it," he said. Ci and Shirley exchanged baffled looks. She might remain in this state for five or six hours, in rare cases even as long as eight or ten. He had been less generous with the small bag of potato chips. They were crisp and so delicious that he. companionship, he turns left, south, because a hill lies to the north. He doesn't think he has the stamina to. to save herself, and this impotence suggested that she might never find the wit, the courage, and the. "I wouldn't feel clean with his money in my pocket. I'll be satisfied with payment of that invoice." Leilani opened the door to her room and switched on the light. Her bed was as neatly made as the ratty. "So you aren't just bonus points, Mrs. D. You're like this terrific prize that turned up in a box of rancid. the field here, which now seems likely, and possibly the CIA, as well? those guys won't sell out their. the key to escape, to freedom, and to being Curtis Hammond. "Go, go, go!" embroidered on the left breast, Leilani entered in a rattle and clatter of steely leg brace, though she had. When he'd met her two weeks ago, Noah Farrel had disliked this woman on first sight, strictly as a. 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. HOWARD KALENS SAT at the desk in the study of his villa style home, set amid manicured shrubs and screens of greenery in the Columbia District's top-echelon residential sector, and contemplated the porcelain bottle that he was turning slowly between his hands. It was Korean, from the thirteenth-century Koryo dynasty, and about fourteen inches high with a long neck that flowed into a bulbous body of celadon glaze delicately inlaid with mishima depicting a willow tree and symmetrical floral designs contained between decorative bands of a repeated foliose motif encircling the stem and base. His desk was a solid-walnut example of early nineteenth-century French rococo revival and the chair in which he was sitting, a matching piece by the same cabinetmaker. The books aligned on the shelves behind him included first editions by Henry James, Scott Fitzgerald, and Norman Mailer; the Matisse on the wall opposite was a print from an original preserved in the Mayflower II's vaults, and the lithographs beside it were by Rico Lebrun. And as Kalen's eyes feasted on the fine balance of detail and contrasts of hues, and his fingers traced the textures of the bottle's surface, he savored the feeling of a tiny fraction of a time and place that were long ago and far away coming back to life to be uniquely his for that brief, fleeting moment. Anita held on to Colman's finger, and he read her action as a silent invitation. He had slept with her a few times, many months ago now, and enjoyed it. However much he had found himself becoming aroused by her attention through the evening, the conversation about pairings and the imminence of planetfall introduced a risk of misinterpretation that hadn't applied before. Being able to look forward to making a stable and permanent domestic start on Chiron could well be what lurked at the back of Anita's mind. When he got the chance, he decided, he would have to whisper the word to Hanlon to help him out if the need arose as the evening wore on. hollow note in this confined space. Colman and Hanlon frowned at each other. Obviously they weren't going to get anywhere without being more direct. Hanlon wiped his palms on his hips. "We, ah... we don't mean to be nosy or anything, but out of curiosity, salad, a tray of cheese, and other stuff in the fridge. Would you put everything on the table?" "Love. I thought you would say love is the answer." Her sweet gamine face wasn't designed for ironic. millions in government grants, so they're in violation of numerous other federal statutes." "He's been all over television," Leilani said. Hesitantly, he eases open the driver's door and slips out of the SUV. onto the bed of the transport. companies, however, decline to pay for expensive plastic-surgery when the patient also suffers serious. Outside, an upwash of urban glow overlaid a yellow stain on the blackness of the lower sky. High. But she saw no blood, no ichor, no snake syrup of any kind. work cut out for you." Stormbel drew his automatic and leveled it at Ramisson's back. "You have one warning," he called out. Ramisson kept walking. Stormbel fired. Ramisson staggered to an outburst of horrified gasps and then collapsed to lie groaning in the aisle. Stormbel replaced his gun calmly in his holster, then raised his hand to address the guards. "Remove that man, and see to it that he receives medical attention." Two SDs moved forward, hoisted Ramisson up by his armpits, firmly but without undue roughness, and carried him out while two others opened the doors then closed them again and resumed their positions. Sinsemilla had been struck mute by either the unexpected outcome or the spectacle. suspected that she'd crossed the line between the wrong and the right kinds of sassy, and in fact walked. "Hey, don't get too excited about this," Colman cautioned. "I only said I'd be interested in seeing it. The Army might have different ideas about me getting involved. Don't bet your life savings on it." "That's right. I don't own a gun." Geneva's sudden smile was more radiant than the candlelight. "Now. Bret Hanlon held up a hand protectively. It was a pinkish, meaty hand with a thin mat of golden hair on the back, the kind that looked as if it could crush coconuts, and matched the solid, stocky build, ruddy complexion, and piercing blue eyes that came with his Irish ancestry. "Don't look at me," he said. "I'm contracted now, all nice and respectable. That's the fella you should be making eyes at." He nodded toward Colman and grinned mischievously. When Noah got into the front passenger's seat, Bobby? twenty, skinny, with a scraggly chin beard and. million searching eyes. Motion is commotion, and distraction buys time, and time? not mere distance? is. "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 wants the coins, too, but he doesn't touch them. In his nervousness, he's likely to jingle or drop them." "I've never heard of him," Micky

said. "Probably not much of anything," Leilani said, without a pause. "Except in having fun and getting through. compliment, speaking with sincerity and emotion that cannot be misconstrued as anything else: "You. forward lounge, and a gray wash of secondhand light spills all the way to Curtis. real-estate salesman, one of them might have whupped his ass just as a matter of principle. A smiling waitress. The cashier at the register, looking over a pair of half-lens reading glasses. A smile was as subtly expressive as an underlining flourish by a master of restrained calligraphy. "Mr.. We'll manage," Veronica promised. "They're more awkward than heavy. You worry too much." contortion. He teeters but keeps his balance and puts his shaggy burden down on the floor of the. "Sinsemilla says the Fates can't find you to snip your thread and end your life if they don't know where. pillow, was the phantom-of-the-opera hemisphere, its battered bone structure held together by cords of. Instead, she was reduced to the directness that she had been striving to avoid. "Does he?" she asked. what the coroner will certify as the cause of his death. A month ago, she had read a magazine article about enlarging your breasts through the power of positive. treasure, Curtis scuttles past the cook, bound for freedom and a makeshift dinner, surprised by the arrival. risk of being flattened by the speeding truck, because it would have to plow through too many. still. Bernard couldn't see why Pernak had changed his mind. "I thought you and Eve had things all figured out before you took off," he said as they continued talking over after dinner drinks around the sunken area of floor on one side of the lounge. "Look what's happening-you've left, other people are leaving all over. You were right. Just leave the situation alone and let it straighten itself out." "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. transport. Fallows stood up and stepped aside, and Waiters eased himself into the 'subcenter supervisor's chair. "You're off." "They've still got the Army... and a lot of nasty hardware up here," Lechat reminded him. small, though it isn't beyond the realm of possibility. The officers exchanged some words with the Chironians, then Portney and Wesserman approached the aircraft to survey the interior. After a few seconds Portney nodded to himself, then turned his head to nod again, back at Sirocco. Sirocco beckoned and one of two waiting ambulances moved forward to the Chironian aircraft Two soldiers opened its rear doors. Four others climbed inside the aircraft and began? moving bodies. As each body bag was brought out, Sirocco turned the top back briefly while an aide compared the face to pictures on a compact screen and another checked dogtag numbers against a list he was holding, after which the corpse was transferred to the ambulance. Borftein halted and stood upright and erect before the desk. "Whatever you thought was mistaken. I am still the Supreme Military Commander of this Mission, and you obey my orders before any others. Stand aside." Outside the Haven of the Lonesome and the Long Forgotten, under trellises draped with bougainvillea, notches above plain grub." that you'll come through all right, as well as an immeasurably higher likelihood that you'll be able to look. "Great work, Steve," Sirocco muttered, stepping inside while stealthy figures slipped through one by one from the shadows behind him. "How did the Amazing Driscoll go over?" the capacity for any emotions other than fear and grief, considering the ordeal he has so recently endured. "Bernie, this is too much!" Jean's voice came up from the lounge area below. "I'm never going to get used to this." Bernard smiled to himself and left Jay's room to enter the open elevator cubicle by the top of the curving stairway. Seconds later he walked out again and into the lounge. John was standing in the center of the floor between the dining room and the area of sunken floor before the king-size wall screen that formed a comfortable enclave surrounded by a sofa, two large armchairs, and a revolving case of shelves half recessed into the wall; a coffee table of dark-tinted glass formed its centerpiece. She gestured helplessly. "What are we ever going to do with all this space? You know, I'm really beginning to think I might end up developing agoraphobia." "He was a perfect gentleman about it," Geneva recalled. "I don't think you're taking enough account of the psychological effects on our own people," he said when he finally looked up. "Morale is high now that we're nearly there, and I don't want to spoil it. We've encouraged a popular image of the Chironians that's intended to help our people adopt an assertive role, and we've continually stressed the predominance of younger age groups there." He shook his head. "Heavy-handed methods are not the way to deal with what would be seen now as essentially a race of children. We'd just be inviting resentment and protest inside our own camp, and that's the last thing we want. you're in." the trains don't usually go," and whose character as both a publisher and a man has restored my lost faith. wasn't in view, but that didn't mean she wasn't present. By this hour, old Sinsemilla would have been. this bed. "A lot of people could get hurt before they give up though," Lechat persisted. "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." properly coordinated. "Was it ever like this? I certainly don't remember." Cutting her serving of apple pie with the side of her fork, Leilani said, "What a pair, huh?" at least a pile of elf droppings, but the closet held nothing more exotic than one dead cockroach. She shivered at the thought and got up from the sofa to find Bernard. No doubt he would be in the basement room that he and Jay had made into a workshop to supplement the village's communal facility. Bernard had been taking more interest in Jay's locomotive lately than he had on the Mayflower II. Jean suspected he was doing so to induce Jay to spend more time at home and allay some of the misgivings that she had been having. But his enthusiasm hadn't prevented Jay from going off on his own into Franklin, sometimes until late into the evening, after spending hours in the bathroom fussing with his hair, matching shirts and pants in endless combinations with a taste that Jean had never known he had, and experimenting with neckties, which he'd never bothered with before in his life unless told to. Whatever he was up to, Marie at least, mercifully, was

managing to occupy herself with her own friends and to stay inside the complex..driver, he's the only member of this contingent who's not carrying either a pistol-grip 12-gauge or an Uzi..might be an angel, considering that he holds a plastic-wrapped bundle of hot dogs, which he has just.Juanita saw the expressions on Bernard's and lay's faces. "Are you claiming that we're any more violent or barbaric than your societies? We've never had a war. We've never dropped bombs on-houses full of people who had nothing to do with the argument. We've never burned, maimed, blinded, and blown arms and legs off of people who just wanted to live their lives and who never harmed anybody. We've never shot anyone who didn't ask for it. Can you say the same? Okay, so the system's not perfect. Is yours?".doesn't once mistake boy fingers for a permissible part of dinner.. "The congressman has a nice sense of humor." .hadn't descended into the more disturbing realm where she sometimes became lost. In that even less. "You bitch" Celia protested. "I want to hear about it now.'For that was how they fought. They had watched while their opponents grew weaker by ones and twos, and they had waited for the remnants to turn upon one another and wear themselves down. Then the Chironians had moved..Returning to her chair, Geneva said, "So, Micky, will we all be getting together for a neighborly.most likely bring him to the same hard death..Ridiculous. They aren't the type to play games. They're vicious and efficient. If they were here now, he'd.This book is dedicated to Irwyn Applebaum, who has encouraged me "to take the train out there where.Curtis finds the window latch and slides one pane aside. He thrusts his head out of the window, cranes.please don't forget the large bills under the drawer.' ".irony in that.".Well dressed, soft-spoken. He says, 'I'd be really grateful if you'd give me the money in the register, and.required to be pulled out of a deep hole. The second hand was faith?the faith that her hope would be.maze of work aisles along which a stooping-crouching-scuttling boy might be able to escape..None of those movies or books has introduced him to a homicidal psychopath who collects teeth still.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."."She made an earthworm pie once," Leilani said. "That was when she was deep in a passionate.empty space, and hauling on a pair of intertwined lines with ~'-" his free arm, while behind him other soldiers were pulling.switching off the TV and closing the doors on the entertainment center while she finished writing the.His-impatience was asserting itself again now, as Borftein sat in the chambers of Judge William Fulmire, the Mayflower H's Supreme Justice, listening to Howard Kalens and Marcia Quarrey argue over the finer points of the Mission's constitution, while on the surface the troops were fraternizing openly with what could become the enemy, and two years away in space the EAF starship dally drew nearer. The news from Earth told of a three-cornered conflict sweeping through eastern Africa, black nations clashing against Arabs in the north and whites in the south, Australia forces landing in Malagasay, and the Europeans maneuvering desperately to quell the flames while the EAF fanned them gleefully. That news would long ago have overtaken the Pagoda and what the intentions of those aboard it might be was anybody's guess. It wasn't a time to be fussing over ambiguous syntax and legal niceties..Trying to regain control of his emotions, but still blubbling a little, he says, "I don't know why I offended.Next, the man grins at his reflection. This is not an amusing grin. Even viewed in profile, it's an.the mothering. Only the normality mattered. The peace. Here, now, Leilani was overcome with a pleasant.expects to be immediately riddled with bullets or, alternately, to be maced, tasered, clubbed, handcuffed.Jean looked at him with a worried face. "Jay's come back with all these things, and he's trying to say he got them all for nothing. He's claiming that anyone can just help themselves. I've never heard such nonsense."..members who had been absent had returned for the occasion, and the only seats left vacant were those of the Deputy Mission Director, the Director of Liaison, the Commanding General Special Duty Force, and two others who had chosen to throw in their lot with Sterm. Behind Sirocco and taking up almost half of the available floor space, the whole of D Company was present in dress uniform to represent the Army. Bernard Fallows was back in uniform as the new Engineering chief with the crew contingent, having agreed to Admiral Slessor's request for a six-month reinstatement to help organize a caretaker crew of trainee Terrans and Chironians who would use the Mayflower II as a university of advanced astroengineering. Jean Fallows, Jay, and Marie were present with Celia, Veronica, Jerry Pernak, and Eve Verritty in the front row of the guests included by special invitation, and with them were Kath and her family alongside Otto, Chester, Leon, and others from the base in Selene and elsewhere. As if to underline and reecho Wellesley's acknowledgment of how the future would be, there was no segregation of Terrans and Chironians into groups; and there were many children froth both worlds..the corner at the far end of the hallway, disappearing into the elevator alcove, the path that she had.shrubs, where moon-silvered trees stood whisperless in the warm still air..transforming moment of grace that Geneva had wished for her. She didn't believe in miracles, neither the

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