

## SECRETS OF THE SPAN LIONS GATE RENEWED

curb: battered but beloved steed, still ready to race when this had been shot, subsequently rendered into one of the scattered clumps of sagebrush that stipple the landscape. He puts one hand on the back of the.

CHAPTER TEN. "Have you ever seen a really good dog act, Ms. Tavenall?" What a sad little crippled girl she is, with her little twisted leg and her little gnarled hand. This evening, she, your bags, walk out, find a good apartment, get a high-paying job in software design, and be tooling heartwarming story about a twinkly cute spaceship, smartly tailored alien diplomats from the Parliament. He's in a large commercial kitchen with a white-ceramic-tile floor. Banks of large ovens, cooktops, "I suppose all this seems a bit strange to you folks," Rastus noted. "But with the machines providing everything back in the days when the Founders were growing up, the idea of restricting the supply of anything never occurred to anybody. There wasn't any reason to. We've carried on that way ever since. You'll get used to it." "Better than tofu and canned peaches on a bed of bean sprouts," Leilani said as she settled in a chair. Elsewhere in the kitchen, a man screams. Maybe he's been shot. Curtis has never heard the cry made by. "Sorry to hear that." A gray-haired man in shirt-sleeves stepped forward from a group huddled outside one of the office doorways. "I am," he said, "McPherson-Communications and Datacenter Manager." After a short pause he added, "At your disposal." psychotic teeth collectors. "Well . . . yeah. Who knows? He was about to say something more when Wellington interrupted. that had stuck to her skin. cheeseburgers at the truck stop. Soon after the truck began to roll, he'd eaten one sandwich and fed the. "Is this the truth?" Bernard asked uncertainly with a strong note of suspicion in his voice. even though He's God with all His resources, realizes what He's gotten Himself into by agreeing to those. "You should think about things as well as just ask questions. Otherwise you might end up letting other people do your thinking for you instead of relying on yourself." slippery thingy, not a monster! ". Or maybe not. Do you believe in life after death? "You can't be soft with people like this," Borftein said bluntly. "Give them a yard, and they'll hate you because they want a mile. Give them nothing and clamp down hard, and later on they'll love you for giving them an inch. I've seen it all before." commit. His mother has raised him with strong values; but if he's to survive this night, he will have to steal. Curtis shudders. His fevered imagination supplies numerous chilling possibilities for what was dislodged. Leilani dared not be distracted by her mother, not with the snake possibly on the move. But Sinsemilla. Jay blinked and looked up to find Pernak watching him curiously. For an instant he felt guilty and at a loss for the explanation that seemed to be called for. "Bernard told me about it," Pernak said before Jay could offer anything. "I guess he's under a lot of pressure right now, so don't read too much into it." He stared at the box in Jay's hand. "I don't see anything--not a damn thing. Come on, Jay. Let's take a look at that loco of yours." Clutching the handrail, Sinsemilla shakily pulled herself up from the steps. She went inside, into the clock. Someone is walking beside the trailer, approaching the back where the boy kneels. Judging by the sound of it, the chopper is heading southwest, following the interstate. This is not good. To the lid of one jar, someone has affixed a strip of tape on which is printed SPARE. Curtis interprets. "Now you're in a gang with a future." Sirocco watched for a second longer, and then pulled himself together quickly, "Enjoy your vacation, Swyley?" he inquired with a note of forced sarcasm in his voice. "Failure to report for duty, absent without leave, desertion in the face of the enemy . . . the whole book, in fact. Well, consider yourselves reprimanded, and sit down. There's a lot to go over, and we're all going to need some rest today. The situation is that-" Sirocco stopped speaking and looked curiously at the figure that he hadn't noticed before. Chapter 21. "Technically you're right," Kath agreed. She raised her head to look at the pictures of her children on the wall with a faraway look in her eyes. "They might be scattered all over the planet, and the way they live might be a little strange compared to what you're used to, but it's a happy family in its own way," she murmured. "But it's still not really the same. It doesn't really feel as if any part of it has any link to anything that happened before fifty years ago. Don't you think it's . . . oh, I don't know, kind of a shame somehow?" with the thingy. Micky was flummoxed that her amateur psychology was proving to be no more successful than would. Twenty-four ha4 escaped in all; nine had already given themselves up or been killed in encounters with Chironians. Anita had not been among them. Colman counted fifteen body-bags, which meant that she had to be in one of them. Hesitantly, the intruder follows the mutt into Starship Command Center. clouded toward a more troubled shade of blue. his master's side. want to meet at night in a lonely corner of a parkin' lot. "I told her more than once. She punished me for lying. But she knew it was all true." 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. sink and tossed the can into the trash receptacle. "But the fact is that Dr. Doom would never touch me. Earlier Noah had loaded the tape in the VCR. Now he pushed PLAY on the remote control. The Battle Module was a mile-long concentration of megadeath and mass destruction that sat on a base formed by the blunt nose of the Spindle, straddled by two pillars that extended forward to support the ramscoop cone and its field generators, and which contained the ducts to carry back to the midships processing reactors the hydrogen force-fed out of space when the ship was - at ramspeed. Sleek, stark, - menacing, and bristling with missile pods, defensive radiation projectors, and ports for deploying orbital and remote-operating weapons systems, it contained all of the Mayflower II's strategic armaments, and could detach if need be to function as an independent, fully self-contained warship. His house key was on the same ring. When he finally got home, by whatever means, he didn't want to. you a tale of woe that might wring pity even from the chicken she's eating, were the poor fowl still alive! "And that would be enough to fix something?" "I might just do

that," Fallows said, nodding slowly. "Yeah .... I could use being out and about for a few hours. Thanks for the tip." own way, she loves you very much." Aunt Gen was childless, not by choice. The love she'd never been.<sup>3</sup> Missing children? Fiction.. "Sure. It's on the lakes." "He underestimated you. And I regret to admit, when I came to you, my expectations weren't terribly. A thumb-turn lock frees the window. Gingerly, the intruder raises the lower sash. He slips out of the. Short of being caught on video in the act of blowing someone's bruins out, Preston Maddoc was. "You seem surprised," Rastus said to Bernard.. information than all five human senses combined, so he doesn't nudge her out of the way.. hit the road.. pluck free.. Jay looked worried, and Bernard appalled. "You can't let people take the law into their own hands like that," Bernard insisted. "Unchecked violence-mob rule--God alone~ knows what else. It's plain uncivilized--barbaric. You're going to have to change the system sooner or later." He was dismayed by his inability to accept her compliment with grace, and he wondered? though not.. him to a table. Fortunately, he is seated with his back toward the entrance. With his cap still on, he.. half a mile ahead, at the top of a rise, traffic has come to a complete stop.. Faced with a question slanted like that, Fallows could only reply, "Well... no, I suppose not." "Pay our debt, collect our due/Each one proud/or what we do," Marie recited.. "How else could it be?" Adam said when Colman asked him about it. "Sure they had to learn how to use a gun. You know what kids are like. The machines couldn't be everywhere all the time. Ask my mother about it, no I me." for what. Then he uses the palms of his hands to smooth back the hair at the sides of his head.. gazing out across the enormous kitchen, wide-eyed, watching the hunters. The white-uniformed cook. "Think of it like the phase-changes that describe transitions between solids, liquids, and gases," Pernak said. "The gas laws are only valid over a certain limited range. If you try to extrapolate them too far, you get crazy results, such as the volume reducing to zero or something like that. In reality it doesn't happen because the gas turns into a liquid before you get there, and a qualitatively different kind of behavior sets in with its own, new rules." When the police cruiser sweeps past and rockets away into the night, the motor home gains speed once. "And exactly what is that supposed to mean?" Sterm demanded.. but another who's on his way into the restaurant. "That's sure a fine tailwagger you have there," the. "I wish I felt as confident as you sound. It seems risky." "Not when you've got the best outfit that the Army ever.. the tattoo snake. "At least take a look at his peace offering." least as long as my pseudofather keeps her supplied with drugs. She might be a terror if she ever went.. In the closet: no Mom, no puke, no blood, no hidden passageway leading to a magical kingdom where.. Because any hesitation would lead to the complete collapse of Leilani's will, she had to act while.. He breaks out of a run into a fast walk, striving to quiet both his footfalls and his breathing. Taking its.. seat, lightly dozing.. Your pooch will think he's died and gone to Heaven.".. container of orange juice and a package of frankfurters, with a dog at his side.. In their initial meeting, she acknowledged that she would have preferred a large detective agency or a.. Chapter 20. "Forget it," Colman interrupted. "It happens to everyone. Let's leave it with all the other stuff that's best left .. up there." "Sometimes," Shirley answered. "Ci teaches English mainly, but mostly down on the surface. That is, when she's not working with electronics or installing plant wiring underground somewhere. I'm not all that technical. I grow olives and vines out on the Peninsula, and design interiors. That's what brought me up here--Clem wants the crew quarters and mess deck refitted and decorated. But yes, I teach tailoring sometimes, but not a lot." "No. My father just wants to see the gore.".. Wanting to justify his mother's pride in him, he struggles to regain control of himself. Later, if he lives.. At least thirty men, dressed in black, debark from the trailer: not merely a SWAT team, not even a.. cover, meaning people as well as books, and now they are proved right again.. the motherless boy and the ragtag dog huddle together. They are bonded by grievous loss and by a sharp.. The colonization of Chiron was over.. Micky. "Maybe it'll settle our nerves, dear.".. followed seemed to be charged with some supernatural energy, as the aura of an elemental spirit might.. out of Eden and became polluted with the tributaries of a fallen world. Her hair wasn't merely blond but.. Celia gave her a reproachful look. "Oh, come on... you know that was just a diversion. I haven't seen him for a 'while now, but then, everyone has been so busy. Finished? Not really . . . who knows?" She got the feeling that Veronica had not raised the subject merely through idle curiosity. She was right.. Squinching her face, Leilani said, "I bet it pulls up its roots late at night and creeps around the.. in a dead-end gang. But I got turned around.".. The only thing trickier than an amateur using a psychologist's techniques was an amateur trying to. "What about human beings crossed with wildly poisonous vipers?" Micky proposed.. "Arrogant?" Adam smiled to himself. "They're the ones who are so sure they 'know,' not me. I'm just making the best interpretation I can of the facts I've got." He thought for a moment longer. "Anyhow, arrogance and pride are not the same thing. I'm proud to be a human being, sure.".. Leilani said, "He comes from a family of Ivy League academic snots. Nobody in that crowd has a.. The party of Terrans and Chironians moved on and left the audience to the explosive tirade that followed. "Those were hardly more than children," Eve Verritty murmured.. "Been having a nice chat, have you?" Sirocco asked. "Well, yes, actually, I suppose, sir. How did you know?" Sirocco waved at the corridor behind him. "Because it's happening everywhere else, that's how. Carson's talking football, and Maddock is telling some kids about what it was like growing up on the Mayflower II." He sighed but didn't sound too ruffled about it. "If you can't beat 'era, then join 'era, eh, Driscoll... for an hour or so, anyway. And besides, they want to show Colman something in the observatory upstairs. I don't understand what the hell they're talking about." "Like what?" Nanook asked.. He retreats into the bedroom where Britney and monsters watch from the walls, all ravenous. Switches.. Another bite of pie. More joyless chewing. "I don't know.".. allowed to go free. Not ever.. Carson made it last night with a chick at Canaveral." "Who says?" Driscoll demanded.. Big sky, black and wide. The brassy glare from sodium arc lamps under inverted-wok shades. Stars.. With all public bars having been put off-limits to the Mayflower Ifs soldiers after the shooting, the party couldn't have come at a better time, Colman reflected as he leaned against the bar and nursed his glass while gazing around the room. Swley and Stanislaw were behind him in a corner with a mixed group of Chironians and seemed interested in the planet's travel facilities; Sirocco

was with another group in the center of the room discussing the war news with another group, and Maddock, looking slightly disheveled, was sprawled along a couch in an alcove on the far side with his arm draped around Wendy, another girl from the Mayflower II, who seemed to be asleep. It was especially nice to get away from the political row that had been splitting the Mission into factions ever since the morning after the shooting. Kalens wanted to impose Terran law on Franklin, Lechat wanted everybody to move to Iberia, somebody called Ramisson wanted to disband Congress and phase into the Chironian population, and somewhere in the middle Wellesley was trying to steer a course between all of them. At one extreme some people were ignoring the directive to remain in the Canaveral area and moving out, while at the other some were supporting Kalens by staging anti-Chironian demonstrations with demands for a get-tough policy. Padawski and the group who had been with him at The Two Moons, including Anita, were being confined to the military base at Canaveral pending a hearing of the charges of disobeying orders and disorderly conduct. In addition Ramelly had been charged with assault, and Padawski with failing to uphold discipline among members of his unit as well as with publicly issuing threats. The threats were the main reason for Padawski's group being confined to base, since some politicians were worried about possible reactions from the Chironians if they were allowed out and about. Colman couldn't see any risk of retaliation, since none of the Chironians that he had talked to attached any great significance to the incident. He only wished more of the politicians would see things the same way instead of blowing the incident out of proportion to suit their own ends. If they had stayed out of the situation and left the Army to deal with its own people in its own way, the whole thing would probably have been forgotten already, he thought to himself. Jay began speaking earnestly and in a low voice. "My father asked me to find you. It's urgent. One of the people the SDs are looking for is at the house. Sterm has arrested the whole of Congress, and we're pretty sure he's going to issue an ultimatum with the Military. If they do the Chironians will take out the whole ship. Pa wants to go with our guy and talk to Kath to see if they can do something, but they need help getting out of Phoenix." treacherously thin for them. The aircraft touched down softly, and a pair of double doors slid open halfway along the side nearest to the reception party. A tall, burly, red-bearded Chironian wearing a dark parka with a thick belt buckled over it jumped out, followed by another, similarly clad but more slender and catlike. More figures became visible inside when the cabin light came on. Laid out neatly along the floor behind them were two rows of plastic bundles the size of sleeping bags. In the Mayflower II's Communications Center, Borftein, Wellesley, and the others who had been coordinating activities all over the ship and down on the surface watched and listened tensely as pandemonium poured from the screens around them, Spacesuited figures were cartwheeling away from the mangled remains of one feeder ramp, and the exposed interiors of the cupolas at the ends of the others; all showed battle damage and one of them was partly blown away. They were disgorging weapons, debris, and equipment in all directions while soldiers in suits hung everywhere in helpless tangles of safety lines. "Launch every personnel carrier, service pod, ferry, and anything else that's ready to go," Borftein snapped to one of his staff. "Get them from Vandenberg or anywhere else you have to. I want every one of those men picked up. Peterson, tell Admiral Slessor to have every available shuttle brought up to flight readiness in case we have to evacuate the ship. And find out how many more we can get up here from Canaveral." to squat. "You do now." Merrick arched his fingers in front of his face. "Would you say that delinquency and criminal tendencies do, or do not, reflect the image we ought to be trying to maintain of the Service?" rhythmic and crisp, faint at first, then suddenly rhythmic and solid, like the whoosh of a sword cutting air; used the restroom only a short while ago. stocked with a plastic tumbler and an ice bucket. In the bottom drawer of her small dresser, she kept a. rants of anger, self-loathing, self-pity. If these words filtered through the prison of the damped brain in. because too much in life was exactly what it seemed to be: dull, insipid, juvenile, and immature. Like her. "You don't think that a ship full of Asiatics coming at us armed to the teeth qualifies as an emergency?" Borftein asked sarcastically. .them everything about Sinsemilla, about Preston and the aliens, about Lukipela murdered and probably. broom to the blacktop, sweeping along puffs of dust, spidery twists of dry desert grass, and scraps of. His mother has often told him that if you're clever, cunning, and bold, you can hide in plain sight as. By contrast, this was holding-your-breath-at-a-seance silence, just before the ghost says boo. --just inside the base. "What about?". the second, no longer slicing the air but chopping it with hard blows that sound like an ax splitting. Five minutes later Swyley and Malloy had gone into conference in a corner with Celia and Lechat, and Colman stood apart with Sirocco and Hanlon, discussing tactical details. "We might have enough now to put a demolition squad outside to take out the Battle Module drive section like Carson suggested," Hanlon said. "Even if Sterm gets in there it would give more protection to the rest of the ship." \* \* \*. plains states were unknown here in southern California, but summer heat made these blighted streets. this weakness, she continued eating even though her throat grew so thick with emotion that she had. roof, and her brother in a lonely grave in some Montana forest. Geneva smiled. "If there was an altercation, dear, I'm sure you started it." At that moment Sirocco turned back another flap; Colman saw Anita's face inside the bag. It was white, like marble, and waxy. He swallowed and stared woodenly. The Chironian's eyes flickered briefly across his face. "Someone you knew?". about. What we're dealing with here is Darth Vader with lots of Larry, Curly, and Moe blood in his

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