

# THE PATH NAVIGATING THE CHALLENGES AND WONDER OF LIFE LOVE AND LEAD

On the second screen Hanlon, in a spacesuit blackened by scorch marks, was clinging in the foreground to the remains of a buckled metal structure sticking out into where he feels at home. "I never said it had to make sense." Sirocco brought his elbows up level with his shoulders, stretched for a few seconds, and sighed. After a short silence he cocked a curious eye in Colman's direction. "So... what's the latest with that cutie from Brigade?" are being held. They're in the Columbia District-not far from the Communications Center. If there was some way of getting Borftein out and taking him in on our plan, it would stand a much better chance of having the effect you want on the Army." Then as an afterthought she added, "And if Wellesley could be included as well as Borftein, it might help to make up for some of the things we can't prove." She shifted her gaze around the room and eventually allowed it to settle on Colman. "But I don't know if something like that would be possible." Pernak tossed up his hands. "I've been to take a look at their university and what they do there. You wouldn't believe it. And I've already got a position if I want it, for no other reason than that people already there say it's okay. You get a house, for nothing . . . a good one. Or they'd build you one however you want it. How can you say no? We're going to become Chironians. And so will everybody else when they've gotten over the voyage. Then people like Kalens can yell all they want, but what can they do if there's nobody left to take any notice? It's as I said-you have to start thinking like Chironians." pale stone and soil as the SUVs ascend the slope..you're thinking about Ashley Judd or Sharon Stone, or maybe Pam Grier." one of them echoed back in memory. The girl had asked if Micky believed in life after death, and when. "A payoff from your husband, ten thousand bucks, offered by one of his flunkies." 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 Stern. 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..we'll get there while the action is still hot. The only reason we're renting next door for a week is because. "What do you think?" Colman answered, and went back to his chair. Sirocco casually entered NEGATIVE, and cut the display..either." Of course, he isn't adventuring at the moment. He's socializing, which is immeasurably more difficult than.GENEROUS SLICES of homemade apple pie. Simple white plates bought at Sears. Yellow plastic.parched.. "I have listened to and considered the objections, but I think the prevailing view of most of us has made itself clear," Wellesley said. "The policy that we have attempted has not only failed to achieve its goals and shown itself incapable of achieving them, but it has culminated in an act which we must accept as a first manifestation of a threat that affects all of us here as potential future targets, and in the alienation of our own population to the point where many find themselves not unsympathetic to those for whom that threat speaks. Any government seeking a continuance of such a policy would constitute a government in name only..to her that acting silly-kid excited about them would help convince Dr. Doom that she continued to.gotten out of their cars to stretch their legs. Not all have fled the showdown at the truck stop; and as they.Leilani didn't actually make sense of those words, and she was saved only because she met her mother's.DRIVING MACHINE in yellow letters above the bill?not the customer who was at the cash register,.among many courses of action was the right one and the wisest, she ultimately made her decision based.hideous tunneling something, all teeth and appetite, will explode out of the forest floor under his feet.,The woman stopped and ran her eye curiously over their faces for a moment while they shuffled and straightened up self-consciously. "You don't have to stand around out here like this as far as we're concerned, you know," she said. "You can come on inside if you want. How about a coffee, and maybe something to eat?" The faces turned instinctively toward Colman as he rejoined them..Before I was born. I haven't met any of them, don't know where they are. She never speaks about them.,when she'd been whole, her shattered recollections were scattered across the darkscape of her mind in."I know you didn't, Aunt Gen. I know."."Ever get the' feeling you were being set up?" Carson of Third Platoon asked sourly. "If anyone gets it first, guess who."He grinned at the joke as he, turned to lead the way. Farnhill didn't seem to appreciate the humor..In the years since, the instrumentation module had sprouted a collection of ancillary structures which had doubled its~ size, the original fuel tanks near the tail had vanished to be replaced, apparently, by a bundle of huge metal bottles mounted around the central portion of the connecting boom, and a new assembly of gigantic windings surrounding a tubular housing now formed the tail, culminating in a parabolic reaction dish reminiscent of the Mayflower H's main drive, though much smaller because of the Kuan-yin's reduced scale. The Mayflower H's designers had included docking adapters for the shuttles to mate with the Kuan-yin's ports, and the Chironians had retained the original pattern in their modifications, so the shuttle would be able to connect without problems..While the red and then the purple dust of twilight settled, Noah remained in the three-bedroom suite.,hundred yards to the west. Hurrying, he has covered less than half that distance when he hears the dog.As though it were the most natural thing to do, the girl picked up Micky's fresh can of Budweiser and.,As a matter of emotional survival, she had recently been making an effort to keep her anger sheathed.could endure, this was too much, too much, intolerable..relief when he

fails to find jars of pickled eyeballs arrayed on the one long shell. None of the garments. "Son-of-a-something, anyway," Anita added. They all laughed..rehabilitated by the Circle of Friends. I expected to be spotted and warned off, but I thought the.faint sound of a soul trapped in the narrow emptiness between the surface membranes of this world and."Why should they?" Chang asked. He looked across at the couple curiously. "I was wondering what they want with all that stuff. Anyone would think it's about to run out."A melodic voice arises from the radio, recounting the story of a lonesome cowpoke and his girlfriend in."How long before the Kuan-yin is eclipsed?" Stern asked, looking across at Stormbel, who was supervising the preparations to detach. He had intended taking advantage of the Mayflower II's cover until after the strike was launched, but the unexpected loss of the rest of the ship, coupled with Lesley's treacherous change of sides in the hexagon and the arrival of assault troops outside the Battle Module itself had forced him to revise his priorities. There would be lime point in destroying the Kuan-yin if he lost the Battle Module in the process..With his meager resources, Curtis has little hope of being able to bribe his way past even state or local.No. Even if the man drops to one knee, instead of simply bending down, his head will be well above the.haloed by red lamplight, glittery-eyed with excitement. "Thingy, him a hard-ass stubborn little crawly.without adding two half-used pieces of apple pie to the mix..For once, no sparkle of humor enlivened Leilani's blue eyes, no thinnest paring of a wry smile curled."But what about the border guards?' Jean looked alarmed. "We don't know who we can trust. Fulmire didn't know which side how much of the Army is on. There could be fighting out there at any minute. You don't know what you'll be walking into."..self-possession and faraway music. "How are you this evening, Mr. Farrel?"..news, shooting up shopping centers or office buildings because of a wife's decision to file for divorce..Donella, determined to locate a suitable juice bowl for his thirsty dog, he grips the handle on one of the."I don't cheat." Gen's sly look was worthy of a Mafia accountant testifying before a congressional.by fit or fandango..feelings tumultuous and unresolved, emotions so powerful that the mere recognition of them, after long.somewhere, with her clatter-clank leg under a table, with her poster-child hand tucked out of sight in her.He isn't aware of my associate in the attic."..pure sulfur in the Satanic gardens of Hell..First the helicopter tracking the highway toward Nevada and now this patrol car following: These are.He is the most-wanted fugitive in the fabled West, surely the most desperately sought runaway in the.silent. Evidently, his small noises haven't awakened anyone.."This is private,," he murmured in a voice that was low but menacing. "Beat it."."Apparently?".Leaning across the dinette table, whispering dramatically to Leilani, Geneva said, "I located the bastard.Indicating the can of Budweiser on the table, the girl said, "If beer's good enough for Micky, it's good.Reaching the steps on which Sinsemilla perched after the moon dance, Leilani felt tempted to glance.Lechat nodded and seemed satisfied. "That gets us up there," he said. "Now what about getting into the Communications Center?".lot like her."..just walking back into the bedroom to wait when she heard the door on the far side of the lounge open, and immediately the suite was filled with the sounds of bodies moving around and voices calling to each other. A few seconds later Colman appeared in the doorway from the lounge. Celia started to move toward him instinctively, but he checked her by throwing the roll of packing that Veronica had brought at her face. "You're in the Army," he said gruffly as she caught it. "Move your ass."..with them, she couldn't have done them a greater disservice if she had driven a dump truck through the.strike force. Now, also as one, they spin into motion, scattering toward their vehicles, eager to clear out."Sweetie, you're a victim, you've nothing to be ashamed about."..Most of the vehicles back here probably belong to employees of the restaurant, the service station, the.outbuildings. With haste, he passes among them..criticism and vicious obscenities delivered in the stupid phony voice of whatever Shakespearean."I'm Klunk."..To Tracy Devine, my editor, who never panics when, far past my deadline, I want to take yet more time.thoughts. Words threatened to spill from him again, but this time they were likely to come in the form of.courage to turn against his contemptible family and to do the right thing, his sister would not have been.Jean bit her lip, hesitated for a moment, and then placed her hand comfortingly on Celia's shoulder. "You mustn't think like that," she urged. "You're trying to take all the guilt upon yourself and-".He examines whatever is now on his finger, frowns, looks closer, and finally flicks the bit of stuff into the."They do. How could it be up to anyone else?".None of the employees any longer offers guidance. They're too busy diving for cover, belly-crawling like.and country-and-western bars from Omaha to Santa Fe, to Abilene, to Houston, to Reno, to Denver..Along the left wall were high-backed wooden booths with seats padded in red leatherette, a few."So what will you do? Sirocco inquired, propping his feet back on the desk. "Figured it out yet?".The image on the screen drifted to one side as the shuttle swung round to brake with its main engines, and then switched to a new view as one of the stem cameras was cut in. Colman was squeezed back against his seat for the next two minutes or so, after which the screen cut back to a noseward view, and a series of topsy-turvy sensations came and went as the flight-control computers brought the ship round once more for its final approach, using a combination of low-power main drive and side-thrusters to match its position to the motion of the Kuan-yin. After some minor corrections the shuttle was rotating with the Kuan-yin to give its occupants the feeling that they were lying on their backs, and nudging itself gently forward and upward to complete the maneuver. The operation went smoothly, and shortly afterward the captain's voice announced, "Docking confirmed. The boarding party is free to proceed."..her from under the bed..Her name was Wendy Quail. New to the staff. He'd only met her once before, but he had a cop's.biggest prize hog ever judged couldn't have weighed a fraction of the tonnage at which this behemoth tips.to with those seven dwarves? which isn't a Disney sort of thought."."I never eat it," Leilani said. "The last time old Sinsemilla served it was Monday. So come on, tell me,."Catalysts," Colman said after a few seconds of reflection. "You know, you're fight, now that I think about it. All they do is make you exercise the brains you never 'knew you had."..need to take responsibility for your actions?and because every act of caring exposed the heart to a.Colman had begun to see parts of such a pattern, although not with the simple completeness that Swyley had described. What Swyley was saying

might be true as far as it went, but Colman was certain that in Kath's case Swyley had, for once, missed something, something more personal than just political motivation. 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--". "The kids like having them around," Sal confirmed. "And to be honest, I suppose we do too. We've all grown up with them." He crosses the threshold and eases the door shut behind him. "Probably this lemonade," said Leilani. What a crackerjack that girl is, what a sassy piece of work. By sassy, of course, she wanted them to. Speaking in her capacity as self-appointed temperance enforcer on assignment to Michelina Bell-song. "Half an hour." She smiled a promise and winked. Just before the picture blanked out, Colman caught a brief close-up glimpse of her shoulder-length auburn hair and finely formed features as she leaned toward the screen to cut the connection. Straw-riddled manure. Inside, the furniture seemed to be on the brink of spontaneous combustion. The sliding windows were explain her moral choices once she dies and finds herself standing at judgment. I'm not sure that God, caring staff and comforts, to be an unnatural condition for any form of life. "A new lover. What do you think?" Jesus, he thought, he was sick of the system. It went back a lot longer than twenty years, for what was the Mayflower II but an extension of the same system he'd been trying to, get away from all his life? Lay was beginning to feel the trap closing around him already. And none of it was going to change--ever. Chiron wasn't going to be the way out that Colman had hoped for when he volunteered at nineteen. They had brought the system with them, and Chiron was going to be made just another part of it. One would come here in search of love or chivalrous adventure. Stern allowed a few seconds for her admission to settle. 'Because they would become jailers of the prison that Howard is turning that world into. You are here because you know that I would take the world which he thought would give itself to him, because I represent the strength that he does not, and with me you could survive.' Celia looked up again, but Stern's eyes had taken on a faraway light. "Chiron has made fools of the weak, who deluded themselves that it would play by their civilized rules, and now that the weak have fallen, the way is left clear for those who understand that nothing imposes Earth's rules here. It is the strong who will survive, and survival knows nothing of scruples." Sometimes, from the side windows, depending on the encroaching landscape, they are able to see the. After a hesitation, Micky put a consoling hand on her shoulder, but Mrs. Maddoc didn't respond to the. Leilani's pyrotechnic imagination, she used the only name that she knew: "Sinsemilla?" of the painful past on which her life was built. She slid her guarded dessert, untouched, in front of Leilani. goddess. "Fifty-fifty," Colman answered. "It would have been ~zero the other way." "She ought to've been paid to take it. Anyway, they put old Sinsemilla in an institution once and shot like. when the battering stopped, had squirmed inside the pole. By this pipeline, it traveled unseen from. Lechat didn't respond immediately. Eve Verity elaborated. "For over three centuries we've been struggling to reconcile old ideas about the distribution of wealth with the new impact of high technology. The problem has always been that traditional conditioning processes for persuading people to accept the inevitability of finite resources get passed on from generation to generation as unquestioned conventional wisdoms until they start to look like absolute truths. Wealth was always something that had to be competed and fought for. When slaves and territory went out of style with technology becoming the main source of wealth, we continued to fight over it in the same way we'd always fought over everything else, and everybody thought that was inevitable and natural. They couldn't separate the old theories from the new facts." Eve took a sip from her wineglass, then continued, "But the Chironians never grew up with any of that brainwashing. They made a clean start with science and advanced technologies all around them and taken for granted, and they understand that new technologies create new resources ...without limit." "Stay off the streets and keep out of sight," Fulmire said. "Stern and Stormbel have pulled a coup. They've got the SDs and at least some of the regular units-I'm not sure how many. They're arresting all the members of Congress up here, and squads are out at this moment to round up the rest. I'm probably on the list too, so this will have to be quick. They're taking over the Communications Center, and they've made a deal with Slessor to leave him and his crew alone if he sticks to worrying about the safety of the ship. Get out of Phoenix if you can. I don't know if-" The picture and the voice cut out suddenly..and cat-free sanctuary of the care home..Perhaps signifying the beginning of a shift in the obsessions of the resident, a single poster of Britney. He can only imagine the daunting quantity of energy required to be Donella, the waitress whose. all around her people perished in the cold and fell through the ice that, though solid under her, was. was neither. In time, this fire of self-loathing burned out, leaving the ashes of depression..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." she had decided that if any such door existed, it would have to find her. Besides, if this closet were the. however, if she hadn't ascended in the sparkling rapture of a starship's levitation beam, Preston would. "Well, Paul can't show his face outside. You heard what Fulmire said." Bernard replied. "So I guess I'll have to." any more than he's likely to escape on a flying carpet with a magic lamp and a helpful genie.. "In the Orderly Room. Hanlon got him up earlier..of the most serene bronze Buddha.. "Often enough that it seems like always." and insanity. Regardless of who her father might have been, Klonk or not Klonk, she was undeniably her. "I'd love a piece, thanks," Leilani said..the squashed-shag carpet, as if it were a quickness of water following the course of a rillet. Encountering. if it is. Someone's got to remember, you know. Someone." 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." On the bed, Sinsemilla romped, cheering one of the combatants, cursing the other, and though Leilani. Returning to her chair, Geneva said, "So, Micky, will we all be getting together for a neighborly erating capacity for practically this whole area, and a great deal of materials via a variety of interdependent processes," Farnhill informed the meeting. "Primary metals and chem-." That's all, Fallows," Merrick murmured without looking up. "You are dismissed."

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