

THE BETTER CITY A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF A MODERN CITY

"How do you mean?" Colman asked.. "That has to give us the rest of the ship and the surface," Swley said. "If the Army gets its act together and grabs Stern before he gets a chance to head this way, then we might not have to go in there at all." .it." .Stanislau was frowning with concentration at a compad that he was resting against the edge of the table, its miniature display crammed with lines of computer microcode mnemonics. He tapped a string of digits deftly into the touchstud array below the screen, studied the response that appeared, then rattled in a command string. A number appeared low down in a comer. Stanislau looked up triumphantly at Sirocco. "3.141592653," he announced. "It's pi to ten places." Sirocco snorted, produced a five-dollar bill from his pocket and passed it over. The bet had been that Stanislau could crash the databank security system and retrieve an item that Sirocco had stored half an hour previously in the public sector under a personal access key..Old Yeller turns her attention from Curtis to the closet. She issues a low growl..with a swoosh louder than its hiss. She swung it twice as she stumbled two steps toward the chest of."Listen, kid, you can't come around here, doing your dangerous-young-mutant act, worming your. Veronica had to bite her lip .to suppress the beginnings of a giggle.. "A Chironian." .The heat. The dark. From time to time the wet rattle of melting ice shifting in the bucket. And without..particularly old, but they are going to be a great team.."I won't be talking to him," said Geneva. "After what I've just heard, I'd as soon smack him as look at..In mid-1977 he moved from England to the United States to become a Senior Sales Training Consultant, concentrating on the applications of minicomputers in science and research for DEC.."No, no." Micky hesitated. "Well, yes, that is what I'm doing. But I meant maybe you're talking around." "Thank you, sir." It was obviously a softener. Bernard kept his face expressionless and wondered what was coming next..surefooted dog at once adapts to this abrupt change in the terrain, but because Curtis is not fully attuned.KATH STOPPED TALKING and leaned away to pour a drink from the carafe of wine on the night table by the bed, and Colman lay back in the softness of the pillows to gaze contentedly round the room while he savored a warm, pleasant feeling of relaxation that he had not known for some time. It was a cosy, cheerfully feminine room, with lots of coverlets and satiny drapes, fluffy rugs, pastel colon, and homey knickknacks arranged on the shelves and ledges. In many ways it reminded him of Veronica's apartment in the Baltimore module. On the wall opposite was a photograph of two laughing, roguish-looking boys of about twelve, whom despite their years he recognized easily as Casey and Adam, and scattered about were more pictures which he assumed were of the rest of Kath's family. The one in a frame on the vanity resembled Adam. though not Casey so much, and was of a dark-haired, bearded man of about Colman's age. It had to be Leon, he guessed, though he had felt it better not to ask, more because of the restraints of his own culture than from any fear of disturbing Kath. The painting of a twentieth-century New England farm scene-given to her by one of her friends, Kath had said when he remarked on it-interested him. Since arriving on Chiron he had seen many such reminders of ways of life on Earth that nobody from Chiron had known. On asking about them, he had learned that a feeling of nostalgia for the planet that held their origins, known only second-hand via machines, was far from uncommon among the Chironians..ON THE HIGHWAY, bound southwest toward Nevada, Curtis and Old Yeller sit on the bed, in the.Merrick glared across the desk suspiciously. Evidently he wasn't getting the answers he wanted. "His Army record isn't exactly the best one could wish for, you know. Staff sergeant in twenty-two years, and he's been up and down like a yo-yo ever since lift out from Luna. He only joined to dodge two years of corrective training, and he was in a mess of trouble for a long time before that." "Ye-es," Bernard said slowly, nodding to himself. "He'd know the situation, and he'd probably know a safe way through the border even if some trouble breaks out." He began nodding more strongly. "And we certainly know we can trust him." .The specificity of the answer was disconcerting. Leilani's words struck a bell in Micky's mind, and she."I don't like the idea of a limited military presence down there," Borftein said. "We're trusting the Chironians too much. I still say they could have strength that they're not showing yet. We could be exposing those civilians to all kinds of risks--terrorism, provocations. What if they get hit by surprise? I've seen it all before." .Although they came across as polite but frank in their Inset transmissions, they projected a coolness that was enough to arouse suspicions. They did not seem to be anxiously awaiting the arrival of their saviors from afar. And so far they had not acknowledged the Mission's claim to sovereignty over the colony on behalf of the United States of the New Order..He has no choice but to forge on.."I can remember the one that first taught me to talk," Abdul said. "It's still operating today, up there on the Kuan-yin. But the ones you see today have changed a lot." "After twenty years on the same ship? That's not possible, surely." .Bantam Books are published by Bantam Books, a division of Random House, Inc. Its trademark,.Although the serpent hadn't been poisonous, the bite looked wicked. The punctures were small. No.She had talked with her mouth full of pie. She had hogged down a second piece. All right, okay, bad."She's been blue all day," said Wendy Quail..Kath nodded. "Wally and Sam. It was only briefly, because I had to get back to Farnhill and your other people, but from what they said it seems as if you know quite a bit about MHD. Where did you study?" "But she sure does give the man major class and respectability. Now you go out there and do the right.If the Bureau knows what those two cowboys are up to, and if it understands how many others are.earlier. He isn't sure what it means, but it got him out of trouble before, so he says, "Sir, I'm not quite." "You know what I mean. They weren't doing anything. They'd just had a bit too much to drink. Those two bitches didn't have to do something like that." "That was cool back there," Bobby said as he started the engine. "Absolutely arctic." .resisted him." .Micky crazily thought of killer bees, which might also have caused the shrieking figure to perform these.halting again, and Curtis uses this distraction to open the bedroom door a crack. The lever-action handle.rassed. "If you must know, I like working cards." "You mean tricks?" Shirley seemed interested. "I can do tricks, sure." "Are you

good?" Micky didn't press for further details. She needed to know what came next, but she didn't entirely want to dart beneath the surface of their conversation, though it eluded her net..fracturing it, and furrowed through her scalp."his pathetic wieners..best. . . maybe a midwife. I'd be beyond amazed if our births were ever registered anywhere."cashier when you leave."customer paying his check..the tattoo snake. "At least take a look at his peace offering.".. Jean took the boots and turned them over in her hands. Then she picked up the parks, unfolded it, and studied it in silence for a couple of seconds. "But . . . these are good, Jay," she said. A concerned expression spread over her face. "Where . . . how did you get them? I mean... what's all this going to cost?"..approaching by a different route..her knees. Lying prone, head turned to one side, she pressed her right cheek to the greasy shag.."I might have guessed," Colman said, nodding to him-.always ends badly with junkies."..Across hard-packed earth and fields of sandstone, they race into a dry slough of soft sand. The."Perhaps not quite, but that was twenty years ago, remember. Times change, I guess."..still pursue him..Bernard shrugged helplessly. "I know. It's a chance-but what else is there?"..say?".. "Laughing at what?".. "Then I held poor scared thingy a long time in the dark, the two of us here on the bed, and after a while..when he worked at the university, but I can't rely on him to educate me now, because it's impossible to..it sooner wasn't a failure of mind or muscle, but a collapse of reason, the result of runaway fear..A boy and his dog can form astonishing, profound connections. He knows this to be true not entirely..Pernak rose from the desk at which he had been working, and moved over to the window to gaze down at the lawns between the two arms that formed the front wings of the building. A lot of staff and students were beginning to appear, some lounging and relaxing in the sun and others playing games in groups here and there as the midday break approached. He was used to living among people who expressed feelings of insignificance and fear of a universe which they perceived as cold and empty, dominated by forces of disintegration, decay, and ultimately death-a universe in which the fragile oddity called life could cling precariously and only for a fleeting moment to a freak existence that had no rightful place within the scheme of things. Science had probed to the beginnings of all there was to know, and such was the bleak answer that had been found written..jars, each four inches in diameter and three inches tall. Though small, either of these will be suitable as a."Dr. Doom isn't his real name, of course. It's what I call him behind his back. Sometimes at dinner, he..needed to learn by example and an innocence that could not be corrupted, which required that his."Cool? You idiot, I liked that car."..him, and had wounded Noah himself?once in the left shoulder, once in the right thigh?when he was..Leilani glanced toward Geneva's place to determine whether this performance had been well received,..about his stowaways.."The woman is either nuts or higher than a Navajo shaman with a one-pound-a-day peyote habit."..tumbler with two shots of anesthesia, over ice. She promised herself at least a second round of the same..they would come for Noah, not for his sister. Jonathan Sharmer was a thug wrapped in the robes of..The dog had continued to be an instinctive conspirator, huddling quietly with his master, below the."Why would anybody be interested?'.got to allow me a little literary license."..Bernard nodded grimly, but his expression did not contain the dismay that it might have. Evidently he had been half-prepared for the news. "Borftein's been checking on that possibility," he said. "It'll be forty minutes before the Kuan-yin goes behind the rim. Stern won't launch before then."..hamburger patties, eggs, and mounds of crispy hash browns glistening with oil..folks, but it's a warm bath for others. You'll find work, sweetie."..spine, rolling her head, spreading her arms, the woman stretched as languorously as a sleeper waking..To avoid brooding too much about her impotence in the matter of Leilani Klonk, Micky loaded the."Good pup," he tells Old Yeller, meaning to encourage her and prepare her for what might be coming.."I know, but I figured rd go take a 16ok at the place anyhow out of curiosity. That can't do any harm. Later on, well... maybe anything could happen.".. "Our orders are to precede the Ambassador's party through the docking lock to form an honorary guard in the forward antechamber of the Kuan-yin, where the formalities will take place," Sirocco read aloud to-the D Company personnel assigned as escorts at the briefing held early that morning. "Punctilious attention to discipline and order will prevail at all times, and the personnel taking part will be made mindful of the importance of maintaining a decorum appropriate to 'the dignity of a unique historic occasion.' That means no ventriloquized comments to relieve the boredom, Swley, and the best parade ground turnout you ever managed, all of you. 'Since provocative actions on the part of the Chironians are considered improbable, number-one ceremonial uniforms will be Worn, with weapons carried loaded for precautionary purposes only. As a contingency against emergencies, a reserve of Special Duty troopers at full combat readiness will remain in the shuttle and subject to such orders as the senior general accompanying the boarding party should see fit to issue at his discretion.'".. "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?"..frame and body wasn't loud enough to interfere with conversation, supposing that he'd had anyone to talk..shallow closet. It's apparently packed as full and chaotically as a maniac's mind, and as he senses and..position to see any light that might leak under or around the door..without adding two half-used pieces of apple pie to the mix.."What about me?" Ci asked, hooking at Driscoll. She leaned to one side to let her mother see the hand she was holding..her. "Help me here, Michelina Bellsong. This little chat of ours is making me dizzy. What is it you think..is a concentration of energy--energy density--like at the tip of a match. Hence the Bang and everything that came after it could turn out to be the result of an energy concentration that occurred for whatever reason in a regime governed by qualitatively different laws that we're only beginning to suspect. And that's what my line of research is concerned with.".. "SD's," Swley murmured, without moving his mouth. His eyeballs shifted sideways and back again a few times to indicate the direction over his right shoulder. A more restrained note crept into the place, and the atmosphere took on a subtle tension..rides had taken them..like switched-off TV screens with a lingering phosphorescence, though the tint is faintly yellow..exceptional strength matched the congressman's weakness. She didn't have to be coddled. "Karla..Stanislaw stood back from the compack and announced that the changes were completed. Sirocco

peered at the screen, checked the entries in the revised schedule that Stanislaw had produced, and nodded. He looked up at Colman and Driscoll, who were waiting by the still open emergency door. "Okay, the last ball's rolling," he told them. "On your way. Good luck." appears entirely normal. Pudgy, about sixty, with a full head of thick white hair, he might play a. 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." possibility of capture or snakebite, frisky with the prospect of new terrain and greater excitement, tail. "Then there is no reason for us to allow unseemly haste to lower the quality of the evening," Sterm said, sitting forward and reaching with a leisurely movement of his hand for the decanter. "A little time ripens more than just fine cognac. Will you join me in a refill?". The Military maintained a facility for reprocessing warheads and fabricating replacement' stocks, which as a precaution against accidents and to save some weight the designers had located way back in the tail of the Spindle, behind the huge radiation shield that screened the rest of the ship from the main-drive blast. It was known officially as Warhead Refinishing and Storage, and unofficially as the Bomb Factory. Nobody worked there. Machines took care of routine operations, and engineers visited only infrequently to carry out inspections or to conduct out-of-the-ordinary repairs. Nevertheless, it was a military installation containing munitions, and according to regulations, that meant that it had to be guarded. The fact that it was already virtually a fortress and protected electronically against unauthorized entry by so much as a fly made no difference; the regulations said that installations containing munitions had to be guarded by guards. And guarding it, Colman thought, had to be the lousiest, shittiest job the Army had to offer.. "You look as if you might know something about it," Lesley said to Colman. "Is there something down on the surface that hasn't been made public knowledge?". "One of our people has been killed, and there are set procedures that we have to follow," the major announced. "My orders require me to take you three back with us. It would make things a lot easier for everybody if you complied. I'm sorry, but I don't have any choice..". "That was unfortunate, but it was beyond our control," Leon said. "I hope you do not believe that we were responsible." Bernard shook his head.. "Well, I'm pleased to hear that at least one Terran thinks so," Bobby said. "That man who was talking in town the other day about invisible somethings in the sky, saying it was wrong to have babies didn't seem to. He said we'd suffer forever after we were dead. How can he know? He's never been dead, It was ridiculous..". "So your stepfather's a murderer..". "Aunt Gen, you're thinking of The Man with the Golden Arm. Frank Sinatra, Kim Novak. It hit theaters." Serial killers," Curtis gasps, pointing toward the motor home, which is more than twenty vehicles behind. Another door. Beyond it lies a small storeroom, approximately eight feet wide and ten feet long, with a. in the warm darkness.. Sirocco looked worried. "Look, there is a force on its way forward to occupy the nose. We want to avoid any senseless bloodshed. Those locks must be kept open. I have General Borftein, who wishes to speak directly to whoever is in charge there..". The preacher seemed taken aback for a split second, but recovered quickly. "The world around us," he bellowed, throwing his arms wide. "Is it not there? Do I not see it? Who created it? Tell us. Is that not evidence enough?". * * *. bottom of the trailer. He won't inadvertently get a glimpse of a boy-shape-dog-shape cowering in the. "Classically, you can't go anywhere. But I'm pretty certain that when 'you find your theories giving singularities, infinities, and results that don't make sense, it's a sure sign that you're trying to push your laws past a phase-change and into a region where they're not valid. I think that's what we're up against."

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