

## THE CONFEDERACY A COMEDY

proved an effective deterrent, and Padawski had nursed a personal grudge ever since. He hummed softly to himself and sauntered along the hallway to look into the room that Jay had picked for himself. Jay's cases and boxes were still lying in an untidy pile that stretched along one wall beneath a litter of books, charts, tools, and a heap of mirrors and optical components scrounged from Jerry Pernak a month or so previously for a holographic microscope that Jay said he was going to make. The carcass of a stripped-down industrial process control computer was lying on the floor by the bed, along with more boxes, an Army battle helmet and ammunition belt--both souvenirs of Jay's mandatory cadet, training on the Mayflower II and assorted junk from a medium-duty fluid clutch assembly, the intended purpose of which was a complete mystery, Jay himself had disappeared early on to go off exploring. Bernard shrugged to himself. If Jay wanted to leave the work until the end of the day when he would be tired, that was his business. As the snake slithered along the wall and under the tall chest of drawers, Sinsemilla bounced on the bed: the interstate. "It's a pretty house," Hanlon said after another short silence. "Will Kath fix it up for you?" The terror-polished eyes of the man in the colander can be seen through the pattern of small drain holes. Although conceding the game to Death, she remained determined not to let Death also take sweet. extra hole on Remus," Jay said at last. "I mean, we brought enough scientists with us, and they can access the Chironian records as easily as anyone else. The Chironians aren't exactly secretive about their physics." them around the base later; nobody had seen them at the perimeter; nobody had flown them out; and an intensive search carried on all through the night had failed to locate them anywhere. It was impossible, but it had happened. 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." He touched her brow. She didn't twitch or even so much as blink in response. by the weight of all the hopes and dreams that people had allowed to die here over the years. ahead was the room that her mother shared with Preston. progresses by hitch and twitch through the kitchen, cooks and bakers and salad-makers and dishwashers. bark far behind him. The kitchen had seemed quiet before, but the fridge had been making more noise than Micky realized. Knowing the creature was dead, she had nevertheless been unable to stop jabbing at it. Out of control. "Stop," Micky said, dismayed to hear the word come out with a harsh edge. Then more softly: "Just to go, was a really good thing, too, better even than Sundaes on Wednesday. In most boys' books the world over, and in those for grownups, too, adventure always involves treasure. THE MOVIE SHOWING on the wall screen in the dining area of the Fallowses' upper-middle-echelon residential unit in the Maryland module was about the War of 2021, and Jay Fallows was overjoyed that it had reached an end. The Americans were tall, muscular, lean bodied, and steely eyed, had wavy hair, and wore jacket-style uniforms with neckties, which was decent and civilized. The Soviets were heavy jowled, shifty, and unscrupulous, had short-cropped hair, and wore tunics that buttoned to the throat, which meant they wanted to conquer the world. The Americans possessed superior technology because they had closer shaves. swung, and his upper lip was nearly as long as his ponytail. Despite having worked under him for several years, Fallows had never been able to master the art of feeling at ease in Merrick's presence. Displays of undue familiarity were hardly to be expected between echelon-six and echelon-four personnel, naturally, but even allowing for that, Fallows always found himself in acute discomfort within seconds of entering a room with Merrick in it, especially when nobody else was present. This time he wouldn't let it happen, he had resolved for the umpteenth time back in the corridor. This time he would be rational about how irrational the whole thing was and refused to be intimidated by his own imagination. Merrick had not singled him out as any special object of his disdain. He behaved that way with everybody. It didn't mean anything. starship bridge has been violated. He might be eleven or even twelve, but he's somewhat small for his. Curtis is relieved to see that this co-killer is encumbered by a safety harness that secures her to the. Kalens had evidently been working on the details for some time. He recovered the support of the commercial lobby by proposing that Chironian "nursery-school economics" be excluded from the enclave, and won the professional interests over with a plan to tie all exchanges of goods and services conducted within the boundary to a special issue of currency to be underwritten by the Mayflower II's bank. The Chironians who lived and worked inside the prescribed limits would be free to come and go and to remain resident if they desired, provided that they recognize and observe Terran law. If they did not, they would be subject to the same enforcement as anyone else. If its integrity was threatened by disruptive external influences, the enclave would be defended as national territory. not merely a passing madness or an enduring insanity, but also passion. If looniness could be converted. 4. Problem families? Fiction. "No ..," Colman shook his head distantly. "It's too much to go into right now. Look-" .we're proud of them." .thinking. Since then, she had fallen asleep most nights while picturing herself with massive hooters. The Micky was flummoxed that her amateur psychology was proving to be no more successful than would. denial, knocked the breath out of her. "Aunt Gen, you're thinking of The Man with the Golden Arm. Frank Sinatra, Kim Novak. It hit theaters. He didn't think too much about things like that anymore; his visions of being a great leader and achiever in bringing the Word to Chiron had faded over the years. And instead . . . what? Now that the ship was almost there, he found he had no clear idea of what he wanted to do . . . nothing apart from continuing to live the kind of life that he had long ago settled down to as routine, but in different surroundings. "I'm just a kid." Better move. The farmhouse is silent, and the finger-filtered beam of the flashlight reveals no one in the upstairs hall. "It's a wonderment, isn't it?" the girl said. "More than a wonderment. It's impossible." Yesterday, in this yard, as Micky had broiled on the lounge chair, amused and a little disoriented by her. From his flight through the woods and fields, he is

scratched, thorn-prickled, and spattered with mud..Half the Army seemed to have converged on the west gate, where a group of escapees had been run to ground and were shooting it out. When the confusion was at its peak, a series of thunderous explosions blanketed the Detention Wing and the depot with smoke. When the smoke cleared, one of the transporters was gone. No one had been guarding the motor pool..her full-length slip, and then seized the roomy skirt in both hands and shook it as if casting off bits of dry. Quickly glancing around as he moves, he notices only a few children here and there, all with their..final bill you mentioned?".of an out-of-control machine, after all, but as a drunk or a lunatic. The tires suddenly churn up clouds of..complete nut. UFOs are only one of his interests. But since marrying old Sinsemilla, he's pretty much."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."..something sophisticated and classy and smart. She liked things that weren't what they seemed to be.. "Your comparison is quite invalid," a girl who was with the boy pointed out. "There are ample reasons, verified by universally corroborated experimental results, for postulating that entities possessing the properties ascribed to atoms do indeed exist. Whether or not they are detectable by the senses directly is immaterial. Where are your comparable data?"..sixteen, thereby squelching any affection he might have felt toward her..years, alcohol had become a reliable part of her arsenal, as useful for keeping life at bay as were anger..a fraction as hilarious as a highly convincing puddle of plastic vomit, and there's no chance whatsoever I'd.No. Even if the man drops to one knee, instead of simply bending down, his head will be well above the..Sirocco shrugged noncommittally. "Can't say. I wouldn't worry too much about it. If you stick close to Steve and Bret and do what they tell you, you'll come through okay." Although they couldn't claim to be campaign veterans, Colman and Hanlon were among the few of the Mission's regulars who had seen combat, having served together as rookie privates with an American expeditionary unit that had fought alongside the South Africans in the Transvaal in 2059, the year before they had volunteered for the Mayflower II. The experience gave them a certain mystique-especially among the younger troops who had matured-in some cases been born and enlisted--in the course of the voyage..With his knees drawn up to his chest, the guy's trying to make himself as small as possible, to avoid..could travel through the air when it flung itself out of a tight coil. She thought maybe she'd read that it.LOVE IS THE ANSWER T-shirt.."Hanlon wants me at the gate for something," Colman said. "Talk to you in a few minutes." "You're saying evolution adds up to a succession of transitions like that?"..hope..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?" "And all these years of silence since then."..dragged so low by her demons and her drugs that she was less likely to be found in an armchair than..At the end of 1979, Hogan opted to write full-time. He is now living in northern California..Bernard fell silent for a few seconds. "Kath has to know something about it, or at least she must know people who do," he said. "After all, there aren't billions of people on Chiron. And Jerry said that she has a lot to do with the people working on the antimatter project at the university. Let's start with her."..GENERAL J STORMBEL did not make mistakes, and he was not accustomed to being held responsible for the mistakes of others; people under him tended to find out early on that they did not make mistakes. Their acceptance of the standards and disciplines that he imposed provided a permanent assertion of his symbolic presence for as far as his sphere of command and influence extended, and served as a constant reminder that his authority was not to be trifled with. Displays of laxness represented an acknowledgment that was less than total, and signified lapses of mindfulness of the omnipresence that his authority projected-as if people were beginning to forget that what he said mattered. Stormbel didn't like that. He didn't like people acting as if he didn't matter..nearest streetlamp and thus in gloom; however, the glow of the Chevy's interior lights allowed Noah to..belligerent mood..at the moment it seemed to hang by a gossamer thread; she didn't have a thousand stupid choices to live."Who?" Driscoll asked automatically, tossing his cigarette butt into the incinerator and snatching up his gun. A cover in the top of Wellington's chest slid aside to reveal a small display screen on which the figures of Sirocco and Colman appeared, viewed from above. They were walking at a leisurely pace, along a corridor, talking to a handful of Chironians who were walking with them. Driscoll resumed his former posture, and moments later footsteps and voices sounded from along the wider corridor leading off to the right, and grew louder.."Opposed," Geneva responded with firm resolve.."I agree," Howard Kalens murmured..The noise grew hellish. Prone to headaches these days, Noah wanted nothing more than quiet and a pair..He nodded to himself. That was what he would do. He would call Jean and then go over to Cordova Village to talk to her and Bernard about it..Little affected by the sudden change of light, the dog's vision adjusts at once. Previously lying on the bed.."cure" her more speedily and with a lot fewer dazzling special effects than extraterrestrials?a theatrical..television news, the residents proved more cautious than curious. No one ventured outside to discover..Jerked up and jammed down, the lever handle doesn't release the latch, but pulled inward, it works.."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."..ate tofu and canned peaches on a bed of bean sprouts?" "Easy, easy now," Micky counseled, still on her knees, making placating gestures with her hands..Putting the pasta salad in the fridge, Leilani said, "Is that what you're doing? Talking around what you..Jean shook her head in protest. "But you can't . . I won't go. I want to move to Iberia."..the new passenger lounge in the base. "Say 'sir' when you talk to me."..Chapter 2..A flux of light throbs through the air beyond the ridge line: the moving searchlight beams reflecting off the."I wish I'd heard them back when I could've helped you." "That was all a long time ago, Aunt Gen."..the dark, and he knows that the Hammond place has been set ablaze. Reduced to blackened bones and..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." fantastic and unlikely, might be waiting for you in a closet..Sirocco tossed out a hand, signaling that he disclaimed responsibility. "Oh, he saw the way she was talking to you when you were on ceremonial at that July Fourth exhibition last year. That was one thing. Do you remember that?".Family?.the bedroom window across the street. The drapes had been pulled aside. Karla Rhymes stood at the.even once, were they, Michelina?". "Sirocco, D Company commander, Second Infantry Brigade. Is your commanding officer there?'.There's some kind of trouble at Brigade-something about Portney being kicked out and Wesserman locking up some SDs at gunpoint.".Curtis successfully resists the urge to water the pavement, too, but he counts himself fortunate to have."You said you've only got until your next birthday, and then all bets are off.".was shoved away roughly. "Get off, you clumsy asshole," the guard growled. Panic-stricken, Driscoll grabbed the handle of the trolley, and fled in through the doorway.. "My pleasure.".Closing her eyes again, turning her face to the deadly blazing heavens, Micky said, "Well, I don't intend.Unprepared for the girl's admission, Micky stumbled a few words further. " ? because you . . . because.The Chironians and Colman disappeared up the steel railed stairway, talking about differential transducers and inductive compensators, and Shirley and Ci went on their way after Wellington reminded them that they had less than fifteen minutes to board the shuttle for Franklin. Driscoll and Sirocco remained with Wellington in the corridor..We should handle the situation firmly, yes, but flexibly and with moderation until we've more to go on. Our forces should be alert for surprises but kept on a low-visibility profile unless our' hand is forced. That's my formula, gentlemen--firm, low-key, but flexible.".No, pup, no, no! Out, pup, out!.Their meager financial resources won't carry them far, and they can't expect to find money in the wind."Then you lose out to the system. It's like playing against Driscoll-the system makes it's own aces."

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