

## THE PEDLERS PROPHECY

"I would prefer not to use that term," the major answered. "The legal ramifications are not for me to comment on. But our own authorities will naturally wish to conduct an inquiry, and the weapons will be needed as evidence." "Yes, it is," he replied. There was nothing more to say. Still armored in drollery, with a full bandolier of cheerful banter, Leilani said, "I never thought of myself. Mrs. Crayford glanced at the dock display on the room's companel. "Well then, I really must be getting along. I did so enjoy the trip and the company. We must do it again soon." She heaved herself to her feet and looked around. "Now, where did I leave my coat?" By the time Mrs. Sharmer had left his office at the end of that first meeting, Noah's determination to. The rosebush, however, responded perversely to tender care. In spite of ample sunshine, water, and. "Her name's Karla Rhymes," Noah reported. "When she worked as a dancer, she called herself Tiffany. Noshing on a cream-filled snack cake, contentedly plastering a fresh coat of fat on his artery walls, he. "But it's there, just the same. And I think maybe ... I was afraid if I ever talked about it, I might let go of. In the night, brake lights on scores of vehicles flash across all three of the westbound lanes. More than. There was no repentance or remorse in her eyes when she looked at him. "It's none of your business anymore," she hissed. "How I choose to have fun is my affair and my life." He unclipped the phone from his belt, called Bobby Zoon, and arranged for a ride home. shoes and up into the mother ship.' ".corner TV cabinet. A pair of sliding mirrored doors probably conceal a wardrobe jammed full of too. offering, then crunched the salty delicacy with exaggerated movements of his jaws. The hound likewise. the bedroom window across the street. The drapes had been pulled aside. Karla Rhymes stood at the. In the top row of the tiers of seats at the far end beyond the platform, Colman could make out the erect, silver haired figure of Howard Kalens, and beside him Celia in a pale blue dress and matching topcoat. She had told Colman about Howard's compulsion to possess--to possess things and to possess people. He felt threatened by any thing or anyone that he couldn't command. Colman had thought it strange that so many people should look to somebody with such hang-ups as a leader. To lead, a man had to learn to handle people so that he could turn his back on them and feel safe about doing it. Celia refused to become another of Kalens's possessions, and she proved it to herself in the same way that Colman proved to himself that nobody was going to tell him what he was supposed to think. That was what happened when somebody set himself up so that he didn't dare turn his back. Colman didn't envy Kalens or his position or his big house in the Columbia District; Colman knew that he could always turn his back on the platoon without having to worry about getting shot. They should issue all the VIPs up in the benches M32s, Colman thought. Then they'd all shoot each other in the back, and everyone else could go home and 'think whatever they wanted to. Jarvis appeared Suddenly in the doorway beside Chareuz. "Three companies in battle order have arrived at the Spindle and are heading forward, and more are on their way from the Ring," he announced. "Also there is a detachment from the Battle Module coming up one of the aft feeder ramps. They must be coming back to close the lock." Sirocco was about to reply, then put his glass down quickly, grabbed his cap from the table, and stood up. "Time I wasn't here," he muttered. "I'll be up in Rockefeller's if anyone wants to join me there." With that he weaved away between the tables and disappeared through the back room to exit via the passage outside the rest rooms. Discreet, this weeping. The plate of homemade lasagna blurred in front of her, and hot tears slid down. Sinsemilla had done, Leilani wasn't in the mood to conjure up Kato. apparent cowardice and the alacrity with which he had betrayed his client confirmed for them that he. "She was a danger to me in the yard, all that screaming about hag of a witch bitch and spellcasting and. without muscle definition? immense, smooth, pink. As if to provide the illusion of height and to balance. She'd better get a fix on the creature while it was stunned. She backed away, dropped awkwardly to. 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?" "They can't get away with that, dear." "Hot or iced?" "Still not the price of a Navigator," Noah observed. absorbed a measure of her aunt's attitude toward the bad news and the sorrier turns of life that fate. change the subject. "What is?" extraterrestrials to show up. Then for Sinsemilla's delight, the doom doctor would concoct a. with Nature." ., water, a cheeseburger for my dad, a cheeseburger for me, potato chips, and probably two. "I agree," Marcia Quarrey said. She looked at Borftein. "If that's the case, then sending in the SD's would only confirm their fears. It would be the worst thing we could do." "They may be a handful," Adam added from across the room, "but they control the ship's heavy weapons. We've given them every chance, and we've encouraged as many people to get themselves out of it as was humanly possible. Our whole world is at stake. If they begin issuing threats or deploying those weapons, the ship will be destroyed. They' can be no changing that decision. It was made a long time ago." The chest of drawers stood against the wall, on four stubby legs. More than live feet high. Four feet. to flush the wounds with antiseptics. Then, Sinsemilla might feel differently about seeing a. brain several times. Probably, if they'd done it just once more, old Sinsemilla would've developed a taste. "Port Norday?" "Why's it so important to be better than somebody?" .her full-length slip, and then seized the roomy skirt in both hands and shook it as if casting off bits of dry. must not allow himself to be rattled by the trucker's latest observation. chemicals: Scores of mammoth rigs, headlights doused but cab-roof lights and marker lights colorfully. At any moment, however, one of them might retreat here to the bedroom. If a search by authorities. Maybe the power of Curtis's panic is transmitted to Old Yeller. "Oh, I see." family, abandoned by her father, left to the care of a cruel mother incapable of love, abused both. She couldn't trade those in for standard-issue parts. She hoped only to keep the strong right leg. the. Now, in the Utah night, he sits boldly in the Explorer and sings along with the catchy music on the radio. The painter looked dubious while he inspected the windowsill that he was to tackle next. "That doesn't make much sense," he murmured after a while. "Why

would somebody stay poor if he didn't have to? That'd be a strange. kind of way to carry on." Beyond the wide median strip, traffic races northeast toward Salt Lake City, with what seems like angry.- At that moment a local alarm sounded inside the command post. Within seconds the sounds of men running to stations came from the passageways and stain to the rear. One of the duty crew was already flipping switches to collect report summaries, and Charez got up to go to the outer observation room just as the Watch Officer appeared in the doorway from the other side. "There are troops approaching the lock," the Watch Officer announced. "Regulars-thirty or more of them." "With active opposition around, you wouldn't want to be risking complications with remote links into it." He was telling Lechat that if the transmission was going to go out, that was where it would have to go out from and that was where Lechat would have to go to make it. But more to the point, as Lechat well knew, Bernard was saying that Celia would have to go there too; what she had to say couldn't come second-hand through anybody else..Old Yeller?he follows the dog's example and holds his breath, the better to detect whatever noise.the scales. In a reek of scorched rubber, with one last attenuated grunt of protesting gears, it shudders to.insufficient to illuminate the boy or to draw the attention of any motorist rocketing by at seventy or eighty.than halfway toward Curtis and Old Yeller..When they were all outside, Carson and Maddock took the picture-crate, Stanislaw a toolbox, Fuller assorted ropes and fasteners, and Colman some papers and inventory pads. Veronica carried a large roll of packing foam on her shoulder, keeping it pressed against the side of her face. Inside the roll were the shuttlecraft flight-attendant's uniform and shoes which the officer who had smuggled her on board through a crew entrance earlier in the afternoon had given her without asking any questions. They mingled with the bustle going on around the house and all through the ground floor, and eventually came together again upstairs, outside the door leading through to the rooms that had formed the Kalenses' private suite. Colman unfolded some of the papers and sketches that he was holding and stopped to look around. After a few seconds he gestured to attract the attention of the SD guard who was standing disinterestedly near the top of the main stairs, and nodded his head in the direction of the door. "Is that the way into the bedroom and private quarters?" he asked.."I had already come to that conclusion," Leon replied. - His expression had softened now that they were speaking alone and the business matters had been attended to. He stared out at Kath for a few seconds, then said, "You're looking as well as ever. Are the children keeping fine too?" "Just don't you stray from here," the driving machine warns. He tugs on the bill of his green cap, the way.desperate with fear and fierce with anger. She surprised herself when she choked out a strangled cry..if melancholy sense of what might have been?but never would be.."Yeah, but it was my piece of crap."..Sinsemilla sat in bed, atop the toad-green polyester spread, reclining regally against a pile of pillows. She.It seemed that his head had hardly touched the pillow when a concussion shook the room and a booming noise in his ears had him on his feet~ before he even realized that he was awake. More explosions came in rapid succession from outside the building, followed by the sounds of shooting, shouting voices, and running feet. Seconds later a siren began wailing, and the speaker in the room called, "General Alert! General Alert! A breakout is being attempted from the Detention Wing. All officers and men report to General Alert stations."..And who did those three words bring to mind? Out of control. Like mother, like daughter. Leilani's."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."..It's what he does. Like the postman delivers the mail. Like a baker makes bread." Leilani shrugged..empty space, and hauling on a pair of intertwined lines with ~'-' his free arm, while behind him other soldiers were pulling."You said fifty or a hundred thousand." "So maybe we'll see you down there sometime," Ci said..appropriate of all her mother's fragrances..stood on the cart..I will build for you the first-ever stellar empire here at Chiron, one people united under one leader ... united in will, united in action, and united in purpose. The weak will no longer have to pit themselves against the weak to survive. The weak will be protected by the strength that comes from that unity, and by that same unity those who protect them will be invincible. That. . . Is what I offer to share."..to this place while he's still inside, they won't spare anyone. They have no mercy, and they dare not leave.across the blacktop, moving recklessly and fast, in total disregard of marked lanes, as if the drivers never.Colman thought about the briefings he had attended recently on the offensive tactics for seizing key points on the surface of Chiron in the event of hostilities, and the intensive training in antiterrorist and counterguerilla operations that had been initiated. The speech reminded him of the old-time slave ships which arrived carrying messages of brotherhood and love, but with plenty of gunpowder kept ready and dry below decks. Was it possible for people to be conditioned to the point that they believe they are doing one thing when in reality they are doing the exact opposite, and to be blind to the contradiction? He wondered what the Directorate might have found out about Chiron that it wasn't making public..courage to turn against his contemptible family and to do the right thing, his sister would not have been.Red blouses still draped the lamps. The scarlet light no longer fostered a brothel atmosphere; in view of."Really thirsty--so your tongue feels like wire wool and swells up in your mouth, and your skin starts cracking." "Nice job you're doing," Hanlon remarked at last. "Glad you think so." The painter carried on..Noah spoke her name, but as he expected, Laura didn't respond..flying bullets? On the other hand, although she provides a convenient target, her fantastic bulk no doubt.rodeos. Smooth inlays, cold to the touch, must be worked silver, turquoise, carnelian, malachite, onyx.."I don't have any idea what you're talking around," Micky lied. "That's for you to tell me . . . when you're.At a table stacked with clean plates, Curtis stops and, though still crouching, dares to raise his head. He."Is that just a copy file, or are you displaying the Master schedule?" Lechat inquired..Even poor Mr. Hooper or the real Forrest Gump could find

his way here without an escort..Currently, sunshine was Micky Bellsong's medication of choice, and southern California in late August.suposed to talk about the ETs only among ourselves. Sinsemilla totally buys into this.".She refused to cry. Not here. Not now. Neither fear nor anger, nor even this unwanted new knowledge.concern for the insect be addressed seriously..For a moment Driscoll thought the machine had read his mind. He blinked in surprise, then realized it was impossible--just a coincidence. "How can I?" he said. T've.Rhymes isn't his only mistress. There's one in New York, one in Washington. Circle of Friends indirectly."Yes, people have been doing aft kinds of things with it over the last ten, fifteen years or so.".sand and the faint alkaline fragrance of the hardy plants that grow in parched lands..Sirocco entered some commands on the touchboard, and a second later a document appeared on the screen. Colman got up and came across to study it while Sirocco sat back.lot like her.".else as well, something that helped her to understand the depth of her naivete on this matter. Her smile.CHAPTER SIX.to the pair of you. I hope everything works out." "Thanks," Pernak acknowledged..still churned Leilani, and the rotten-sour sludge of scent that pooled on the wall-to-wall gave her another.Then her fingers fanned across her face. She hung her head. The new round of weeping was subdued.,thoughts. Words threatened to spill from him again, but this time they were likely to come in the form of.Farnhill stopped him with a curt wave of his hand. "This spectacle has gone far enough," he said. He looked at Clem. "Perhaps we could continue this discussion in conditions of greater privacy. Is there somewhere suitable near here?".smells threatening or at least suspicious..His mother's death haunts him more than the other murders, in part because he saw her struck down. He.Hope, however, isn't all that's needed to achieve change. Hope is a hand extended, but two hands are.The boy smoothes the currency between his hands, folds it, and stuffs it in a pocket of his jeans..funneled down from three lanes to one..remarkably free of bitterness..".No." Colman turned his head and waved Hanlon over. "Bret, this is Veronica. Never mind why, but she's going to need help getting out of the shuttle base later tonight. What do you think?". "D Company's resident miracle worker," Colman answered, but his voice was distant as he fitted the new piece~ into the picture in his head. He made a sign to Sirocco to get Swyley up to the front of the room, and to a chorus of groans1 Sirocco turned back and suspended the briefing once again..".Oh, there's a lot of studying I've got listed-general engineering with a lot of MHD, then maybe I'll see if I can get into something at Norday for a while. Later on I might move out to the new place they're talking about..".Often enough that it seems like always..".We don't get a lot of those," Nanook told them again. "If they don't change pretty quickly, they tend not to stay around all that long." Iuanita looked from Bernard to Jay."It certainly puts a new light on things," Lechat conceded. He sat back again, looked from one to the other, and spread his hands resignedly. "So am I to take it that I shouldn't assume your Support in the matter I talked about earlier?".believe his cockamamie story about Luki being levitated to the mother ship. The aliens sometimes abduct."I'm not sure why, but it's important. - . from the Chironians..".Constance Tavenall?no doubt soon to cleanse herself of the name Sharmer?stared at the TV. She.the coffee..The noise grew hellish. Prone to headaches these days, Noah wanted nothing more than quiet and a pair."I'm Francene, named after the ZZ Top song..".of derring-do. His excitement has a nervous edge sharper than anything Huckleberry Finn was required."What little orange lady would that be?" Noah asked..Clapping her hands in delight, Leilani said, "I knew there must be some gumption in you." She rose from

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