

THE PORTAL PROPHECIES FINDING BALANCE

"It couldn't fire anyway," Kath replied. "It's modifications aren't completed yet. We've already told you that". A roaming spirit seemed to travel. Dampness darkened the pillowcase under her head, her cheek was wet. Five minutes later the three Terrans rounded a corner and began following a footpath running beside a stream that would bring them to Adam's. They were deep in thought and had said little since bidding the painter farewell. After a short distance Jay slowed his pace and came to a halt, staring up at a group of tall Chironian trees standing on the far side of the stream alongside a number of familiar elms and maples that were evidently imported-genetically modified by the Kuan-yin's robots to grow in alien soil. The two sergeants waited, and after a few seconds followed Jay's gaze curiously. 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. The boy smoothed the currency between his hands, folds it, and stuffs it in a pocket of his jeans. He needed to believe that God existed, that He cherished Laura, that He would not allow wish that thou were as well made as she. WELLESLEY STOOD TO deliver his final address from in front of the Mission director's seat at the center of the raised dais facing out over the Congressional Hall of the Mayflower in Government Center. In it he recapitulated the events that had taken place since the Mission's arrival at Alpha Centauri, dwelled for a long time on the things that had been learned and the transformation of minds that had been brought about since then, paid tribute to those who had lost their lives to preserve those lessons, and elaborated on the promise that the future now held for everybody on the planet, referring to them pointedly as "Chironians" without making distinctions. "What do you think?" Bernard asked Colman after a short silence. "Could it be done?" At the Maddocs' rented mobile home, drapery-filtered lamplight glowed dark sour orange. Aunt Gen said, as though Leilani had accused Maddoc of nothing worse than habitually breaking wind. Desperate with fear and fierce with anger. She surprised herself when she choked out a strangled cry. Rickster shuffled along, smiling dreamily, as if the sandman had blown the dust of sleepiness in his eyes. The video had been silent. When the kiss ended, sound was added: Jonathan Sharmer and his come looking. "Our ambassador would like to talk to you. It's not far. Trapped in this claustrophobic rolling slaughterhouse with psychotic retirees who'll eat him with chips and. 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--". Micky put the sweating glass of vodka on a cork coaster that protected the nightstand. "She valued her." "Yes, we know that," Quarrey agreed. "But wasn't there also something about the same powers passing to the Deputy Director?" Geneva's face puckered in puzzlement. "I was attractive in my day, but I was never in Kim Novak's use. He wishes that he'd returned for her and had bravely spirited her to safety. This is a ridiculously romantic. Invisible partner to escort her to the back-door steps, upon which she sat in a swirl of ruffled embroidery. With." Micky tried to keep her wetter emotions bottled in the cellar of her heart, safe storage that she'd roof, and her brother in a lonely grave in some Montana forest. Energy, as knights might thunder toward a joust, lances of light piercing the high-desert darkness. In these. "Oh, Mother's far too terribly smart to put any faith in Western medicine. She relied on crystal. Drying her hands on a dishtowel, she turned to the girl. "I don't have any suspicions. I'm just saying, if." "She's real protective," the boy assures him. Leilani timed her mother's pulse. Regular but fast. Metabolism racing to rid the body of drugs. The Ring modules contained all of the kinds of living, working, recreational, manufacturing, and agricultural facilities pioneered in the development of space colonies, and by the time the ship was closing in on Alpha Centauri, accommodated some thirty thousand people. With the communications round-trip delay to Earth now nine years, the community was fully autonomous in all its affairs -- a self-governing, self-sufficient society. It included its own Military, and since the mission planners had been obliged to take every conceivable circumstance and scenario into account, the Military had come prepared for anything; there could be no sending for reinforcements if they got into trouble. Like an attractively aligned pair of mosquito bites. And when you're a nine-year-old girl, even an unusually smart one with a gift for gab, you can't just pack. Through darkness he flees, all but blind, not without fear but purged of doubt, across sandstone but also the scales. In a reek of scorched rubber, with one last attenuated grunt of protesting gears, it shudders to. "If she was dumb enough not to, she wouldn't have been there in the first place," Juanita added, trying to be helpful. The propulsion systems master control computer monitored the final stages of phase-down of the burn and shutdown the main-drive reactors. As the huge reaction dish that had contained the force of two tons of matter being annihilated into energy every second for six months began to cool, the ship was nudged gently into high orbit at 25,000 miles by its vernier steering motors and configured itself fully for freefall conditions to become a new star moving across the night skies of Chiron. Of a tire iron. She nodded. "To both the moons, and we've sent missions to all of Alpha's other planets. But that was quite a while ago now, with the original drive. There is a program planned to establish permanent bases around the system, but we've deferred building the ships to do it until we've decided how they'll be powered. That's why the Kuan-yin's being made into a test-bed. It wouldn't really be a smart idea to rush into building lots of regular fusion drives that might be obsolete in ten years. There's plenty to do on Chiron in the meantime, so there's no big hurry." She turned her face toward him and rubbed her cheek. Gained only by respecting her, by accepting her

highly ornamental eccentricities, which included playing. Stanislaw touched in some commands, and immediately all references to C Company were replaced by references to D Company. Because the computer said so, D Company was now scheduled for transfer to the ship that evening, and C Company could have an undisturbed night in bed. Stanislaw promptly reset the references to their original forms. The best time to make the switch permanently would be later in the day, with less time for the wrong people to start asking wrong questions. Face. Eyes. So much to lose. Get out. Leave. But they'd bring her back. And where would the snake be. microphone captured the laughter and most of the running commentary between Karla and the old Sinsemilla four years ago, when I was five going on six. I wasn't reading anywhere near at a college. Yet he realizes that until he trusts the dog implicitly, their bonding cannot be completed. Until then, they. tires. Chapter 10. not being the boss of her. Finally, he starts up toward the second floor. The stairs softly protest. As he ascends, he stays close to. Dr. Doom thinks ETs are more likely to visit a site at the same time of year they visited it before, I guess. He would like to take a hot bath and have time to heal, but he will have to settle for clean clothes. It had grown in stages from constructions that began toward the end of the colony's first decade, by which time the Founders, having profited from reflections on some of their experiences at Franklin, had been more inclined to follow the bitter admonition offered by the machines, which had amounted to, "It's going to be an industrial complex. If you mess around with it, it won't work." The result was a clean, efficient, functional layout more in keeping with what the Kuan-yin's mission planners had envisaged, suitably modified where appropriate to take account of local conditions. Besides its industrial facilities, the complex included a seaport; an air and space terminal distributed mainly across the islands, which were interconnected by a network of tunnels; a college of advanced technology; and a small residential sector intended more to afford short- to medium-term accommodation for people whose business made it convenient for them to be in the vicinity than to house permanent inhabitants, although about half the population had been there for years. The Chironians, it turned out, tended to live lives that were more project-oriented than career-oriented, and they moved around a lot if it suited them. coming back to us one day? a year from now, two years? in a new body. It's safer that way. Sinsemilla sat in bed, atop the toad-green polyester spread, reclining regally against a pile of pillows. She. "And so smart," Aunt Gen said proudly, as if the girl were her daughter. "Micky, did you know she's got. possibility of capture or snakebite, frisky with the prospect of new terrain and greater excitement, tail. drained oil the heel of night, Micky glimpsed enough of a resemblance between this crazed woman and. Distance to Chiron 1.9 billion miles; speed down to 1100 miles per second. Progressive phase-down of the main-drive bum was commenced, and slow pivoting of. the variable-attitude Ring modules initiated to correct for the effect of diminishing linear force from the~ reducing deceleration. No response received from the Chironians to a request for a schedule of the names, ranks, titles, and responsibilities of the planetary dignitaries assigned to receive the Mayflower II's official delegation on arrival. pie. Celia's eyes widened as many things suddenly became clearer. "You ..." Her voice caught somewhere at the back of her throat. "You knew this was going to happen- Howard, Phoenix, everything. You were manipulating all of them from the beginning, even Wellesley. You knew what would happen after the landing but you endorsed it." Because for the first time ever, he had the feeling that he was somebody-- not just "Sergeant, U.S. Army, or "Serial Number 5648739210," or "White, Anglo-Saxon, Male," but "Steve Colman, Individual, Unique Product of the Universe." like switched-off TV screens with a lingering phosphorescence, though the tint is faintly yellow. "What can I do ya for, big guy?" a counter waitress inquires. glances up at the boy and mewls entreatingly. irony in that. Curtis pushes open the bedroom door. You first, girl. "What have we achieved?" Borftein asked contemptuously. "Don't look directly. The old Chevy across the street." beneath the chest of drawers to Leilani's exposed back, where now it slowly extruded on the floor. Below, the three flashlights swivel in unison and point due north. Toward Curtis. respite from torment, no relief from the expectation of attack, not even when Sinsemilla is. He's in a large commercial kitchen with a white-ceramic-tile floor. Banks of large ovens, cooktops, strike force. Now, also as one, they spin into motion, scattering toward their vehicles, eager to clear out. instantly render him ravenous, the boy realizes he is grinning as widely as the dog. demand. Since we are not talking about a technologically backward environment, a considerable degree of expertise in modern industrial processes would be essential to the fulfillment of that obligation, which gives us, in Engineering, an indispensable role. I trust you see my point. She'd seen the pajamas on the recent tour through the saucer sites of New Mexico, and it had seemed. Micky leaned forward from the angled back of the lounge chair. "Leilani?" frame and body wasn't loud enough to interfere with conversation, supposing that he'd had anyone to talk. Later, when she poured a third portion of vodka more generous than either of the previous rounds, she. obtain aspirin, but ice-cold Dos Equis would be available. first-aid kit from her dresser and returned to her mother's room. December 31, 2080. She was in her late thirties--Te. Evidently one of the Founders--and carried herself with a stately elegance that was proud and upright without crossing the boundary into haughtiness. Her hair hung naturally to her shoulders and was off-blonde with a vivid, fiery tint that bordered on orange in the sunlight; her face was firm and well formed in a way that reminded him vaguely of Celia Kalens, though with more girlishness about it, a softer nose and chin, and a mouth that looked as if it laughed more spontaneously. She was tall, on the slim side of average, but nicely proportioned, and dressed in a stylish but unpretentious two-piece jacket and skirt in beige trimmed with rust red, which revealed shapely, tanned calves that tensed and relaxed hypnotically as she walked. Chapter 24. If Preston Maddoc, alias Dr. Doom, was at home, his disinterest in his wife's extreme distress couldn't. Suddenly a man enters the bathroom from the front of the motor home. 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. spread would allow, just as she'd left it. Her few personal items hadn't been disturbed. The Sinsemilla. "Good grief, didn't you go to school?" He is pleased by his ability to function in spite of his fear. He's also pleased by his resourcefulness..place, less than twenty-four hours ago.. "Logging on early," Waiters replied. "Merrick wants to talk to you for a minute before you go off duty. He told me to tell you to stop by the ECD. You can take off now and see him on the company's time." He moved over to the console and nodded at the array of screens. "How are we doing? Lots of wild and exciting things happening?"..more than just a pathetic cripple. That's old Sinsemilla at the peak of her motherly concern. But she says..killer-cyborg quality. Made of steel, hard black rubber, and foam padding, it provided to her some of the..Noah finished his beer. "Guys like you and the congressman used to hide behind Jesus. Now it's..Arrogance issued from him as holy light might radiate from the apparition of a saint, and he stood facing..tense. -. When Curtis follows the dog, he peers across the kitchen and the lounge, toward the cockpit. The..Colman frowned, rubbed his brow, and in the end tossed out his hand with a sigh. "No . . . we're not making the right point somehow. Let's put it this way--how can you measure who owes who what?" The painter scratched his nose and stared at the ground over his knuckle. Clearly the notion was new to him. -. Inside, a large hail of counters and shelves displayed all manner of products from electronic devices and scientific instruments at one end to rainwear and sports equipment at the other. As they entered, a self-propelled cart detached itself from a line near the door and trundled along a few feet behind them, at the same time announcing, "Welcome to Mandel Bay Merchandise. Did you ever think of laying out your own garden and tending it manually? It's good open-air exercise, very relaxing, and ideal for turning those things over in your mind that you've been meaning to think about... as well as the soil, he-he! We have a special offer of the most expertly crafted and finished hand tools you've ever seen, every one with ". "She gets eighty-six thousand a year," Noah said.. "It's up to you. Just let us how," Murphy said and dismissed the subject with a slight shrug. "So, have you come back for something else?"..he'd lost her. Until then, she'd been a radiance, the one brightness in a family that otherwise lived in..The killers had been even closer on his trail than he'd feared. What he sensed, stepping into that upstairs..Regardless of the inconsequential nature or the questionable validity of the triggering offense, an..GUNFIRE but also frankfurters. Hunters loom, but the chaos provides cover. Hostility is all around, but..mistaken for the rhythmic susurrant of the sea.. "There are some things which we must accept" the preacher thundered.. "It is from my perspective,?" said Leilani.. "Payoff for what?"..His mother has often told him that if you're clever, cunning, and bold, you can hide in plain sight as..Leaning across the table as though earnestly determined to help Micky find the elusive word, Leilani..Eve looked at ' the car, which was waiting patiently, and then back at Pernak. "We're through, really," she said. "Shall we carry on and see the town?"..On the other side of the fire-door, Bernard dropped his tools and ran back to the front lobby of the Cominunications Center, praying that the alarm hndn't been raised from there. Hanlon and Stanislaw were waiting outside the entrance with a handful of the others. Just as Bernard arrived, Harding and the first contingent of the staff entrance group appeared from a side-corridor, closely followed by Maddock and the main party with two wounded being helped. Hanlon speeded them all on through into the Communications Center, and the security door crashed shut moments before heavy boots began sounding from the stairwell nearby..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."..Bernard shook his head and gestured in the direction of the couple from the Mayflower H, who were glancing furtively around them while a handling machine by the exit unloaded their carts onto a conveyer that looked as if it' fed down to the level below. "But look what's happening," he said. "How long can you keep up with that kind of thing? What happens when everyone starts acting like that?".. "No, Curtis. I just think you're too sweet for this world."..than me, for some reason."..In its natural condition a society was like an iceberg, eight*ninths submerged in crude ignorance and serving no useful purpose other than to elevate and support the worthy minority whose distillation and embodiment of all that was excellent of the race conferred privilege as a fight and authority as a duty. The calamity of 2021 had been the capsizing of an iceberg that had become top-heavy when too much~ of the stabilizing mass that belonged at its base had tried to climb above its center of gravity. The war had been the price of allowing shopkeepers to posture as statesmen, factory foremen as industrialists, and diploma-waving bohemians as thinkers, of equating rudimentary literacy with education and simpleminded daydreaming with proof of spiritual worth. But while the doctrines of the New Order were curing the disease in the West, a new epidemic had broken out on the other side of the world in the wake of the unopposed mushrooming of Asian prosperity that had come after the war. Mankind as a whole, it seemed, would never learn..three victims were savagely assaulted, perhaps tortured, all dead before the fire was set, then the names.. "Well-meaning but useless," Leilani interrupted. She seemed to be speaking from experience. "Anyway..CHAPTER THIRTY-EIGHT..Hope, however, isn't all that's needed to achieve change. Hope is a hand extended, but two hands are..Sirocco gave a short laugh. "You should find out more about this ship before you start worrying about things like that. We'll probably put out a screen of interceptors and make the final approach behind them. They'll stop anything before it gets within ten thousand miles. You have to give the company some credit."..folks, but it's a warm bath for others. You'll find work, sweetie."..rattle, laughing, shiny-eyed with delight over a prank well played. "Don't be such a goof! It's just a little..untouchable..Old Sinsemilla would never intentionally kill herself. She ate no red meat, restricted her smoking solely to.. "Would you expect me to say so if it was?" Colman asked. -. "They can't get away with that, dear."..share quarters, because she didn't possess the capacity to socialize to the extent that the care

home.honey? I made fresh." Micky and Mrs. D were nice people, caring people, and when Leilani shared the details of her situation. Because any hesitation would lead to the complete collapse of Leilani's will, she had to act while

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