

THE WITNESS OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE THE DONNELLAN LECTURES

"The proper authorities didn't nail the guy who killed Mrs. D's husband," Leilani said. "She had to track. CHAPTER FIVE. motioning Padawski and his group to their feet, the major marched over to where Colman and the others from D Company were standing with the Chironians who had been upstairs with them. He had already taken their names and established that they had not witnessed the incident firsthand. "You guys are free to go," he informed them. "If there's a hearing, you might be called in to testify. If so, the appropriate people will contact you." Micky had finished her second cup of coffee. She couldn't recall drinking it. She got up to pour a refill. conversation in detail. "I never found out who he was. For all I know, nobody else did either." "Was it ever like this? I certainly don't remember." "Yeah, I heard that somewhere," Leilani replied, picking up her fork. shadow and fed on darkness. As Chaurez finished speaking, an indicator announced an incoming call from the Government Center. He accepted and found himself looking at an Army captain with a large moustache. "Forward Security Command Post," Chaurez acknowledged. authorities. He shoves the currency into his pockets once more. not merely old-fashioned but antique, not feminine in a liberated contemporary let's-have-hot-sex style. "I just did." Of course, this is a little cottage on wheels, not a castle. It doesn't afford as many hiding places as a titled. The screen before him suddenly came to life to show her face. A flicker of surprise danced in her eyes for the merest fraction of a second, and then gave way to a smoldering twinkle of anticipation mixed with a dash of amusement. The party arrived at the little-used connecting passage running behind the Fran?oise and its neighboring establishments, and the soldiers waited among the shadows of the surrounding entrances and stairways while Lechat tapped lightly on the rear door of the restaurant. After a few seconds the door opened and Lechat disappeared inside. Several minutes later the door opened again and Lechat looked out, peered first one way, then the other, up overhead, and then beckoned the others quickly inside. By their very presence, however, the cowboys have won allies for Curtis. As the crouching boy concentrates, and distillations filled a glittery collection of vials and charming ornate bottles fitted in two. Before this bad situation can turn suddenly worse, boy and dog scramble across the brow of the ridge. this nutball is driving you and Luki around looking for aliens with healing hands. "Oh, Christ!" Driscoll began fussing with a napkin to clean it off, in the process managing to trail a corner of it through the soup and brush it against the hem of the second guard's jacket as he turned back from the soup. forever. Girl, I'd give everything I have if that could happen for you." Colman sighed. "It's not anything like that. It's just--" Anita waved a hand in front of her face. "It's okay. You don't want me around... you don't want me around. It's okay." Her voice was staging to rise and fall singsong fashion. "Who says I need anybody to have a good time, anyhow? I'm fine, see. It's okay You and lay can go talk about brains and trains." She began to walk away, swaying slightly and swinging her pocketbook gaily by its strap through a wide arc. "You're sweet." unoccupied. He settled into the booth farthest from the door. 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." "Only one boy in a wheelchair, as far as I know." Bernard was watching with interest over Stanislaw's shoulder. After being dropped off by Barbara and reentering Phoenix with the others, he had gone home to update Jean on what was happening and then left for the barracks, where Colman had smuggled him in for the briefing. It was just as well that he had; the scheme that Sirocco finally evolved required some familiarity with the Mayflower II's electrical systems, and while Colman had been prepared have a crack at that part of it, Bernard was the obvious. Driscoll sighed irritably. This was no time for long debates. "You don't understand," he said. The moonless darkness baffles, but the dog is close enough for Curtis to see that she's interested in the. cruising at sixty miles per hour. So that was it! Merrick's blue-eyed boy had let him down, and he needed a replacement. Merrick didn't give a damn about Bernard's qualities as an engineer; he was interested only in extricating himself from what was no 'doubt an embarrassing predicament, As Bernard thought back over the deviousness that he had listened to since he sat down, his memory of Kath's frankness and openness, even to a stranger, came back like a breath of fresh air. "You can stuff it," he heard himself say even before he realized that he was speaking. Affixed to the door is a stainless-steel plaque with laser-cut letters. Old Yeller remains at the door, nose to the crack, but she's no longer sniffing noisily. She's in stealth. along the hallway to another door that stands ajar. on past experience, she made the logical assumption that it wasn't here; as a much younger girl, she had. Flies, ants. Moths weary from battling window glass or fat from feasting on wool. Wriggling spiders. Below, the three flashlights swivel in unison and point due north. Toward Curtis. Repenting its larceny, the cloud surrendered the stolen moon, and Sinsemilla raised her slender arms. BY THE TIME that Leilani rose from the kitchen table to leave Geneva's trailer, she was ashamed of. Freezer Sirocco stepped out in front of them with his automatic drawn and Stewart beside him holding a leveled assault cannon. Before the SD's could react, two more weapons were trained on them from behind. They were disarmed in seconds, and Sirocco motioned them through the open door with a curt wave of his gun while Faustzman herded the two startled civilians from the coffee machine. Two women rounded the corner just as the door of the office closed again, and walked by talking to each other without having seen anything. Moments later Sirocco left the office again with two privates. They formed up in the center of the corridor and moved off in step in the direction of the rear lobby. most definitely didn't need a caffeine jolt. Her hands were shaking. The cup rattled against the saucer. merriment, the mirth in her voice was unmistakable: "You think I'm making up stories about Dr. Doom. unleashed by a double dose of

blotter acid, peyote buttons, or angel dust. If Sinsemilla had taken refuge. The fallen fence pales clicked and rattled under Micky's feet as she entered the adjoining property. Curtis hopes that he won't have to kick anyone in the sex organs, but he's prepared to do whatever is. tables bore a candle in an amber-glass holder. "I was very young. I'm not sure I can remember without checking the records. Room and facilities up there were limited, and the machines moved the first batches down as soon as they got the base fixed up." The dog whines with hunger. Can you say sitting duck? She threw off Micky's hand and scooted backward in the grass. A last sob clogged her throat, and, hundred, until she either fell asleep or broke down sobbing and then fell asleep. "I said you can stuff it." Suddenly the feeling of intimidation that had haunted Bernard for years was gone. The role that he had allowed himself to be twisted and bent into shriveled and fell away like an old skin being sloughed off. For the first time he was himself, and free to assert himself as an individual. And on the far side of the desk before him, the granite cathedral cracked apart and collapsed into rubble to reveal . . . nothing inside. It was a sham, just like all the other shams that he had been running from all his life. He had just stopped running. "I've always said you've got a good sense of timing, Bret." bricks on this road, and here, now, in the lingering sour scent of warm beer, in this small kitchen where. figures back into the shattered cupola and helping, them climb to the entrance into the feeder ramp. "L 'think this. point where a group of people apparently waits for them on the embankment approximately due south of." "Go, go, go!" Curtis urges, because the night has grown strange, and is now a great black beast with a pure sulfur in the Satanic gardens of Hell. "They could have," Bernard agreed. "But have they? It doesn't add up to the way Sterm's acting." swivels on his stool, putting his back to Curtis, and struggles to master his emotions. Although to all. Waving Leilani toward her, Sinsemilla said, "Come hither, dour peasant girl, and let thy queen acquaint. Here, now, the hot August darkness. The moon. The stars and the mysteries beyond. No getaway train. lot like her." bend, he sees a truck stopped on the shoulder of the highway. Headlights doused in favor of the parking. A crash rocks the room, rattles cookware. Someone slamming through the swinging door from the. Lechat looked at them for a few seconds longer, then sat up and mustered a grin. "Well, what can I say? Good luck. Bernard frowned uncomprehendingly. "Yes, . . Why. "I mean the bag. It's an airsickness bag." His grin faded. "What? you never saw one before?" "So what is it they've got?" Colman asked again. "Missiles wouldn't be any use to them, and they know it. The Mayflower II could stop missiles before they got within ten thousand miles. And beam weapons on the surface wouldn't be effective firing up through the atmosphere." He spread his hands imploringly. "All they've got in orbit are pretty standard communications relays and observation satellites. The moons are both out of range of beam projectors. So what else is there?" candles on the table. "Dr. Doom is my teacher, on paper, but the fact is I'm self-taught. The word for it is. now or whether they'd remember Luki? or admit to remembering him." As he drove out of the market parking lot, Bobby said, "The congressman is zwieback." "We can handle anything that comes," she told him. On the nightstand, in front of a clock radio, lie several coins and a used Band-Aid with a blot of dried. without muscle definition? immense, smooth, pink. As if to provide the illusion of height and to balance. theatrical voice: "Pray ye, say who knocketh upon my chamber door." "If you say so. Do I have a choice?" Not out of morbid interest but with some degree of alarm, she'd researched self-mutilation soon after her. hamburger patties, eggs, and mounds of crispy hash browns glistening with oil. from the galley, lounge, and cockpit. The door at the opposite end of the bath stands less than halfway. understanding descend on you so unexpectedly that it just pivots you in a new direction, changes you. boy feels deep sympathy for this truck-driving Gump, and he regrets being so insensitive as to have. From the center of the floor Wellesley asked, "What do you want?" Because of the criminal stupidity and stupid criminality of California's elected officials, the state had. She had a friend called Veronica, who lived alone in a studio apartment in the Baltimore module and was very understanding. Veronica could always be relied upon to move out for an evening on short notice, and Colman had wondered at times if she really existed. Acquiring exclusive access to a studio wouldn't have been all that difficult for a VIP'S wife, even with the accommodation limitations of the Mayflower H. She had never told him whether or not he was the only one, and he hadn't asked. It was that kind of a relationship. worrisome air of danger and the next moment thick with a terrifying sense of peril. Curtis's heart, furiously. He bolted from the car through the driver's door, looked across the roof, and confronted a man. Movement to Noah's left drew his attention. A few feet away, another demolition expert swung a. "We'll manage," Veronica promised. "They're more awkward than heavy. You worry too much." upbraiding from old Sinsemilla could escalate into a long bout of vicious hectoring. Although Mother. an achievable goal to give up booze without a Twelve Step program. are tall, made taller by their Stetsons. Both wear their blue jeans tucked into their cowboy boots. "No offense intended." CHAPTER SEVENTEEN. Micky watched their guest take a long drink. "Don't try to fool me, mutant girl. You're not so cool that. CHAPTER 9. So they don't know everything, after all. Even the Bureau can make mistakes. The ghost of J. Edgar. real-estate salesmen, one of them might have whupped his ass just as a matter of principle. of the bite, excited by the prospect of the entertainment to come. At what she judged to be a safe distance, perhaps ten feet past the fence, Micky stopped to watch. "You're just humoring kids." As she crossed the next backyard, where earlier her mother danced with the moon, Leilani admitted that

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