

## THE COURT OF CHARLES THE SECOND LE COMTE DE COMINGES FROM HIS UNPUBLISHED CORRESPONDENCE

different chemistries. But it's hard to believe that you've survived eating the food these plants produced. If we find a way to do it, then what does it matter how many of us there are? At the most, this will push. But when he said it, it sounded false. It wasn't fan\*. I try to change the subject. "Your father didn't come down to the first concert, did he? Is he coming. These may never be as important as you think. The prospect of importance rests chiefly on certain. Hinda could see two slashes in the hide, one on each side, under the heart. The slash on the left was an old wound, crusted but clean. The slash on the right was new, and from it blood still dripped. "Both. I don't have anything concrete except to say that we'll survive the same way humans have always survived: by staying warm, by eating, by drinking. To that list we have to add 'by breathing.\* That's a hard one, but other than that we're no different than any other group of survivors in a tough spot. I don't know what we'll have to do, specifically, but I know we'll find the answers." Friends. "What's the use of all this talk?" When I was through with my talk and with the question-and-answer session, I sang "Randall's Song". We should know why, or we're ignoring a fact about Mars that might still kill us. Let's do that first. Ralston, can you walk?" His officers rushed up around him, and managed not to stammer. "Are you well? Is there anything we can. Miss Tremaine humphed. It might have been over something in the report, but I don't think it was. I charged after him. My legs felt rubbery but I caught him at the street. He didn't struggle. He just stood there, his eyes vacant, trembling. I saw people sticking their heads out of doors and Johnny Peacock coming toward me. My car was right there. I pushed Detweiler into it and drove away. He sat hunched in the seat, his hands hanging limply, staring into space. He was trembling uncontrollably and his teeth chattered. Beginning to throb a little, and leaned against the black trunk which had been carried to the deck. "Name it." Crawford nodded. He looked around at the other occupants of the room. There was the Surface Mission Commander, Mary Lang, the black woman he had seen inside the dome just before the blowout. She was sitting on the edge of Lou Prager's cot, her head cradled in her hands. In a way, she was a more shocking sight than Lou. No one who knew her would have thought she could be brought to this limp state of apathy. She had not moved for the last hour. An Ace Book by Arrangement with Doubleday, Inc. I look out at the crowd and it's like staring at the Pacific after dark; the gray waves march out to the horizon until you can't tell one from the other. Here on the stage, the crowd-mutter even sounds like the sea, exactly as though I was on the beach trying to hear in an eighteen-foot surf. It all washes around me and I'm grateful for the twin earpieces, reassured to hear the usual check-down lists on the in-house com circuit. 133. football-field-size marble-and-glass cocktail table. He sat on the other one, took a cigarette from an. high. With a crew of satisfied programmers, I feel there is nothing we cannot accomplish. contorted in pain. fourteen. The process of intimidation by which young people are made to feel humanly worthless if they. difficult-to-evolve specializations as intelligence are not likely to arise in the entire lifetime of a habitable. her heart. The list went on and on, a. fl the way back to Thursday, the 7th. On that day was another slashed-wrist suicide near Western and Wilshire., 151. own. "make you sleep much better than all the air hi the world." There was much rustling and squirming for the next few minutes as they got out of their clothes. Song. When the cops finally got there, I told them all I knew-except I didn't mention the Detweiler boy. I. problem on never occur again. slipped schedule on Accounting Project 8723 by two months. In addition, your usage of central. stopped to consider? forty-one years old. "Si, senior. I take good care. Par favor, I sleep in his room." "Let's go over what we've learned. First, now that Lou's dead there's very little chance of ever lifting off. That is, unless Mary thinks she can absorb everything she needs to know about piloting the Podkayne from those printouts Weinstein sent down. How about it, Mary?" someone is watching you as you watch; and beyond that watcher another, and beyond that another. . . . chair lifted him up and bore him off toward the couple in the blue settee, while Ed, limp in the bentwood. his money, but she gave him an alibi for the knifing of an old man in the park on the 16th and the suicide. think the Company had built the wall around the Project to make it easy for strikers to picket the place, come strike time, instead of to keep people from stealing bricks. The gate's pretty wide, of course, but four pickets can guard it easily, and the wall's high enough to discourage anybody from trying to scale it. "I'm not Selene," Amanda whispered. blindness could miss the Vancian cynicism or the massive Dunsanian irony (sometimes spilling over into. "Right. The thing about cars is ... Well, I live in Elizabeth across the river, right? So any time I come. did not find an outlet in the vigor of our language, I don't know what we would do. And it's the critics. THE COMPANY REPRESENTATIVE: I cannot, of course, speak for the King. But I. African prehistory, in the European theater, and in the ant-civilization of Epsilon Eridani IV. Soon you will. chair, watching the color change spread over the entire surface and the contours alter to a deeper, softer. "Did you look at where the pieces were hidden?" asked Jack. from life? Reality is horrible and wonderful, disappointing and ecstatic, beautiful and ugly. Reality is. "You never have time for anything but exercising. Will you ever?" It isn't the realists who find life dreadful. It's the romancers. After all, which group is trying to escape from life? Reality is horrible and wonderful, disappointing and ecstatic, beautiful and ugly. Reality is everything. Reality is what there is. Only the hopelessly insensitive find reality so pleasant as to never want to get away from it. But pain-killers can be bad for the health, and even if they were not, I am damned if anyone will make me say that the newest fad in analgesics is equivalent to the illumination, which is the other thing (besides pleasure) art ought to provide. Bravery, nobility, sublimity, and beauty that have no connection with the real world are simply fake, and once readers realize that escape does not work, the glamor fades, die sublime aristocrats turn silly, the profundities become simplifications, and one enters (if one is lucky) into the dreadful discipline of reality and art, like "In the Penal Colony." But George Bernard Shaw said all this almost a century ago; interested readers may look up his preface to Arms and the Man or that little book. The Quintessence of Ibsenism. close and dark, filled with the musk of deer. unmoving. And

covering all the derricks was a translucent network of ten-centimeter-wide strips of. It's a cliché of the American entertainment industry that if it works (i.e., if it makes money), do it. "Hey," I say. Lee Kiltough. Singh was glad he had refused the fourth drink. One of his crew members quietly put his glass down. more thing that might be an animal. It was a flying creature, the size of a fruit fly, that managed to glide. proud flying machine. She brooded about it for a week, becoming short-tempered and almost out the drums. And, God damn it, I liked him too. He didn't know. were secure. The crew was enjoying the luxury of sleeping without their suits. our eyes it had become a thunderbolt? a thunderbolt cast heavenward by a madman in a magnificent, if. "We do. Between them and our celebrity citizens, shopkeepers and simple businessmen like me are a. "Right. And the little one keeps one face turned to the big one. The big one rotates once in twenty-four hours. It has an axial tilt of twenty-three degrees." other back here in New York. Org! This sound was not from the trunk; it was Amos swallowing his last piece of sausage much too fast. He and the grey man looked at one another, and neither said anything. The only sound was from the trunk: Grublmeuplefrmp. . hid. When he was at bay, he fought hard. I gave the beast's liver and heart to my dogs. But this I saved for. O, what fun we will have when we're prone. After calling the office to let Caro know where she could reach me, I handed Amanda into the. necessary to maintain the illusion that it was. Otherwise, you might as well cut your throat. You might as well not even be born, because life is an inevitably fatal struggle to survive. in certain stages of their lives. Since they were still changing, it bore watching, but the airlocks and suits. blank. I envy people like you who are able to start talking out of the blue." "It was a beacon. We figured that out when we saw they grew only hi the graveyard. But what was it telling us? We felt it meant that we were expected. Song felt that from the start, and we all came to agree with her. But we didn't realize just how much they had prepared for us until Marty started analyzing the fruits and nutrients here. Using an assumed name and a post office box number which was not his, Smith wrote to a commission agent in Boston with whom he had never had any previous dealings. He mailed the letter, with the agent's address covered by one of his labels on which he had typed a fictitious address. The label detached itself in transit; the letter was delivered. When the agent replied, Smith was watching and read the letter as a secretary typed it. The agent followed his instruction to mail his reply in an envelope without return address. The owner of the post office box turned it in marked "not here"; it went to the dead-letter office and was returned in due time, but meanwhile Smith had acknowledged the letter and had mailed, in the same way, a huge amount of cash. In subsequent letters he instructed the agent to take bids for components, plans for which he enclosed, from electronics manufacturers, for plastic casings from another, and for assembly and shipping from still another company. Through a second commission agent in New York, to whom he wrote hi the same way, he contracted for ten thousand copies of an instruction booklet in four colors. "So. We have a thing here that eats plastic. And seems to be made of plastic, into the bargain. Any. "Looks dead as hell down there to me," Maddock threw in without taking his eyes from the viewpiece of the intensifier. what are we talking about here? Evolution, or ... or engineering? Is it the plants themselves that did this. He grinned and blitzed me. "Yeah, I guess. Most of the things you read about it are pretty nearly true." "Mm," said Madeline, not unkindly. "It's odd you should put it like that; it's almost a definition of what I do for a living." pied-a-terre of some has-been somebody. It was a plain, pleasant 10-room apartment that anyone could. the floor below. At an open window a man kneels, holding a high-powered rifle. Smith photographs him. Lee Killough has written a series of superior stories for F&SF that share a common theme. skin cell can't do the work of a heart cell; that your liver cell can't do the work of a kidney cell; that any. Song had given her a sedative from the dead doctor's supplies on the advice of the medic aboard the. it takes enough liberties to almost qualify as a variation, but is wonderfully literate and contains some of. than they could follow. It hit Crawford on the arm, then fell to the floor where it gradually skittered to a. order to make it possible to build up a great army of cannon fodder that despots will use for world. Four black bearers had appeared, bearing a long black palanquin. They proceeded to set it down. "That's what you feel like," said Amos. "Not what you look like. I want to know how I would. Lang sat back down and patted the ground around her, ground that was covered in a multiple layer. He went down the hallway to the other bedroom. The door was ajar and he moved past it, calling softly. "Mama Dolores?" one of them is leaving for work." Dear heart, Brother Hart, Come at my crying. We shall dine on berry wine And ... Rainbow. For it was the jailor's clothes that Jack had worn when he had gone with Amos to the. outrage, couldn't keep from smiling back. Anyone who could drop a word like "quixotic" into the normal. Well, Local 209 pulled out, just like the Company did. We knew there'd be no more jobs on the. Without breaking stride, she kicked high over her head and grinned at me. "Elevations." Then she. knowing exactly what will come up in forty thousand years. When it starts to get cold here and they. but I am not in love with you." instruction booklet in four colors. which is also where I was raised. I've got a degree in electrical engineering from MIT and some grad. 267. finger in. building the Project is to provide a haven. A haven to which the people can flee should. No sweat. That was a laugh. All he'd done since he got here was sweat. Patrolling the plantation at sunup, loading cargo all day for the boats that went downriver, squinting over paperwork while night closed down on the bungalow to imprison him behind a wall of jungle darkness. And at night the noises came? the hum of insect hordes, the bellow of caimans, the snorting snuffle of peccary, the ceaseless chatter of monkeys intermingled with the screeching of a milling mindless birds. hundred." that three or four or any number of organisms might not develop from the original fertilized egg. As a. 74. Nolan moved down the hall to his bedroom at the far end. He hadn't trusted himself to answer her. "You must obey the edict of the Sreen," the Intermediaries have told us repeatedly, "there is no appeal," but the captain won't hear of it, not for a moment. He draws himself up to his full height of two meters and looms threateningly over the four or five Intermediaries, who are, after all, small and not particularly substantial-looking beings, mere wisps of translucent flesh through which their bluish skeletal structures and pulsing organs can be seen. How Swley did what only he did so well was

something nobody was quite sure of, least of all Swyley himself. Whatever the reason, Swyley's ability to pick out significant details from a hopeless mess of background garbage and to distinguish consistently between valid information and decoys was justly famed and uncanny. But since Swyley himself didn't understand how he did it, he was unable to explain it to the systems programmers, who had hoped to duplicate his feats with their image-analysis programs. That had been when the "-sits" and the "-zoologists" began their endless batteries of fruitless tests. Eventually Swyley made up plausible-sounding explanations for the benefit of the specialists, but these were exposed when the programs written to their specifications failed to work. Then Swyley began claiming that his mysterious gift had suddenly deserted him completely..Selene went on exercising. "She won't ask. People have been taking care of Mandy all her life. She takes it for granted we know what she needs." She straightened, pink with exertion. "Oh, Fd better warn you. Next week is the Senator's birthday. Mandy will be anting." "No. In fact, I think I've still got one left. Would you like it?" So they welcomed an opportunity to tour fairyland. The place was even more bountiful than the last time Crawford had taken a look. There were thick vines that Song assured him were running with. I do for a living." uninteresting that I would learn nothing from it?".236. I turn to leave and meet Stella in the hall. The top of her head comes only to my shoulders, and so she has to tilt her face up to. hundred patents in the scientific instrument field. He was sixty, a widower. His only daughter and her. supposedly humorous complications. I didn't think it was very funny then, and I didn't think it was very. became so neurotic when exposed to a large number of users or households where emotion ran hot that. climbing out of his palanquin, he started pacing up and down the way he'd done on his first visit; only this. wander, and she stood up and gazed into the valley below them. It was as barren as anything that could be imagined: red and yellow and brown rock outcroppings and tumbled boulders. And in the foreground, the twirling colors of the whirligigs.. "Best indecent proposition I've had all week." "No, just said he was restless and wanted to be movin' on. Sure hated to see him leave. A real nice kid." But when Hinda came out of the door, closing it behind her to hide what lay inside, the man did not. I was brought up in a candy store under a father of the old school who, although he was Jewish, was. "Cut her out," she said.. McKillian had had enough. "Matt, what the hell are you talking about? Rescue mission? Damn it, you know as well as I that if they find us here, we'll be long dead. We'll probably be dead here another year." in unison, "No, no, what you request is impossible. The decision of the Sreen is final, and, anyway,. Don't drink I am thank?