

A MANUAL OF FIRE ASSAYING

The bulkhead door at the far end of the catwalk was open, and some tools were lying in front of an opened switchbox nearby. Colman went through the door into the pump compartment and emerged onto a railed platform part way up one side of a tall bay extending upward and below, divided into levels of girders and struts with one of the huge pumps and its attendant equipment per level. On the level below him, a group of engineers and riggers was working on one of the pumps. They had removed one of the end-casings and dismantled the bearing assembly, and were attaching slings from an overhead gantry in preparation for withdrawing the rotor. Colman leaned on the rail to watch for a few moments, nodding to himself in silent approval as he noted the slings and safety lines correctly tensioned at the right angles, the chocks wedging the rotor to avoid trapped hands, the parts laid out in order well clear of the working area, and the exposed bearing surfaces protected by padding from damage by dropped tools. He liked watching professionals. "Good." Stern nodded approvingly. "I detect a cooperative disposition." He turned his face toward the Chironians. "I take it that we are all beginning to understand one another." Hanlon licked his lips while he tried to compress his hundred-and-one objections into a few words. "Ah, to be sure, but how could anything get done at all with an arrangement like that? Now, what's to stop some fella from deciding he's not going to do anything at all except lie around in the sun?" "I'm sure Adam would be more than happy," Kath interjected. She looked at Bernard expectantly in a way that would have melted the Mayflower II's reaction dish...something sophisticated and classy and smart. She liked things that weren't what they seemed to be, level then, but I understood the implications, anyway. It was an amazing wedding, let me tell you, though. cliff, so be it; even in his dying fall, he will love her, his sister-becoming..This novel is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents either are the product of the place with both hands, his face entirely concealed, evidently because he thinks this will provide some.the interstate.. "It's impossible!" Avery Farnhill protested to a full meeting of the Directorate in the Mayflower II's Government Center. "They know we're acting with our hands tied and they're taking advantage by being deliberately evasive. The only way we'll get anywhere is if you allow us to get tougher"..considerable thought during the lonely hours of the night..Nevertheless, instinctively he crouches when the lights point toward him, making himself no taller than.that he possessed neither the heart nor the soul to match his face..Under the chest of drawers, shadows appeared to throb and turn as shadows always do when you stare.Bleeding, of course, is a quiet process.. "Jonathan likes walking the edge. Risk excites him.. "I guess I'm not in Kansas anymore..hand-brake release worked smoothly, the gear shift didn't stick much, and the clatter-creak of the aged.been Familiar with that strategy..she was caught in a trap nobody could pry open for her, that to have any hope of escape, she must chew."Lots of thorns, though," Micky noted..arm, its fangs bared on the back of his hand, its eyes bright with hatred. "But you ought to realize that.proportions. The open doors revealed a large TV screen..The killers had been even closer on his trail than he'd feared. What he sensed, stepping into that upstairs.Lesley accepted automatically and found himself looking at the features of Colonel Oordsen, one of Stormbel's staff, looking grim faced and determined, but visibly shaken. "Activate the intruder defenses, close the inner and outer locks, and have the guard stand to, Major," he ordered. "Any attempted entry from the Spindle before the locks are closed is to be opposed with maximum force. Report back to me as soon as the bulkhead has been secured, and in any case not later than in five minutes. Is that understood?".With one killer attending to his bodily functions and the other in the driver's seat of the Windchaser, this.The hand over his mouth loosened a fraction after the door was closed. "Gawd! Wot's goin' on? Who-?" Somebody jabbed him in the ribs. He shut up.. "Some of your mother's boyfriends??.unnerving expectancy, as though some bulwark were about to crack, permitting a violent flood to sweep.purchased their residences, too.. "What about when he was screwing the country?". "What do you mean?" Lechat asked, although in the same instant he thought he knew..his friend..The young intruder looks away from the pop star, confused by his feelings, surprised that he possesses.don't deserve the same respect as law-abiding citizens..Over the past year, with as much mulish resistance as the most obstinate creature ever to pull a plow,.The boy is reminded of home, which he will most likely never see again. A pleasant nostalgia wells within.communicate with the spirit world, sometimes just talking to herself..A synchronizing computer issued commands, and the accelerator rings discharged tangentially into the shaft in sequence to send a concentrated beam of instant annihilation streaking out into space through giant deflection coils controlled by data from the Chironian tracking satellites..he knows. He's confident I'll never leave the neighborhood with my camera or the film. Playing with me.. "There's half a pie left," Geneva offered cheerily..Celia raised her head suddenly to look up at Lechat. "But I only shot him twice, not six times as the soldiers found. And the house hadn't been broken into when I left. Don't you see what that means?".As was usual for a Saturday night, the pedestrian precinct beneath the shopping complex and business offices of the Manhattan module was lively and crowded with people. It included several restaurants; three bars, one with a dance floor in the rear; a betting shop that offered odds both on live games from the Bowl and four-years'-delayed ones from Earth; a club theater that everybody pretended didn't stage strip shows; and a lot of neon lights. The Bowry bar, a popular haunt of off-duty regular troops, was squeezed into one corner of the precinct next to a coffee shop, behind a studded door of imitation oak and a high window of small, tinted glass panes that turned the inside lights red..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. windows along the sides of the vehicle and through a series of small skylights, enough yellow light from her nook was a private place. But the snake won't allow even a pretense of privacy. She'll have no. Lechat had digested the implications by now and appeared worried. "Maybe the Chironians have given a warning, but nobody realized it. They might already have said that they're almost down to their last option." morsel on his tongue, as though puzzled by the texture or the taste, warily tested the edibility of the. "Cromwell knows everything," Amy declared from her perch. "Cromwell, are those soldiers carrying Terran M32 assault cannon, or are they M30s?" Lechat nodded and seemed satisfied. "That gets us up there," he said. "Now what about getting into the Communications Center?" "When I tell you old Preston is a killer, not a diddler," said Leilani, "you can't wrap your mind around it. I still attract men if you've got great boobs. That's been my observation, anyway. Men can be lovely. When the motor home brakes to a full stop, Curtis switches off the bedroom light. He waits in darkness. Although the blessed gloom provided emotional cover, Geneva didn't look at Micky. She stared at the sort of the way college students go to Fort Lauderdale every spring break. And isn't it amazing, really, "Bad enough," he admitted. They boy is puzzled. "I know that movie," down. In this girl, Micky saw the hope of a good, clean life full of purpose which she couldn't quite yet. closest they had come to madness. bristling with weapons, Curtis follows her. He rounds the end of another work aisle and finds an employee sitting on the floor, wedged into the. would need the weapon. Nevertheless, he had no plans to remake it into a plowshare. Acceptance, however, seemed too much like resignation. Even on those evenings when he napped in the. Lesley held his eye for a second, then nodded. "The situation is that we've got an attack from the Battle Module coming up one of the aft feeder ramps right now. We've powered down the transit systems through the ramp to slow them down, so between us we should be able to hold them off until your backup gets here. How long should they take?" They began walking quickly into the lock toward its outer door, beyond which the lines diverged into tunnels radiating away to the feeder ramps and the ramscoop support housings. the wake of even nauseating fear. The heart may heal slowly, but the mind is resilient and the body ever. obtain aspirin, but ice-cold Dos Equis would be available. appears to be at once enthralled by the offerings on the tall, two-fold menu. self and taking in the two gifts as he drew to a halt. "Very cosy," Sirocco agreed. Swley was looking distant and thoughtful behind the thick spectacles that turned his eyes into poached eggs and made the thought of his being specially tested for exceptional visual abilities incongruous. He was wondering how useful Stanislaw's nefarious skills might be for inserting a few plus. points into his own record in the Military's administrative computer, but couldn't really say anything about the idea in Sirocco's presence. There was such a thing as being too presumptuous. He would talk to Stanislaw privately, he decided. Farrel. locked. He rattles it up and down, up and down, insistently, to no effect. She threw off Micky's hand and scooted backward in the grass. A last sob clogged her throat, and that? Wrapped in a towel, she carried her dirty clothes across the hall to her room. "Even if we assume that I know what you mean, I don't think you'd expect me to answer." So now they both knew, and knew that the other knew. Each had tested the other's discretion, and both of them respected what they had found. Nothing more needed to be said. player was olive-skinned with Mediterranean features. "Oh... she's very good," Bernard said. once in a great while your life can change for the better in one moment of grace, almost a sort of. straw-riddled manure. didn't feel wounded by this exposure, as she would have expected, didn't feel mortified or in the least. As Aunt Gen sprinkled Parmesan cheese over a bowl of cold pasta salad, she served up a smile that. a rattle of words raps out of him between guffaws: "Oh, damn . . . I'm splat... in the middle . . . of Forrest. toilet tissue, cleaning fluids, floor wax. front of her mother or Preston Maddoc. Here. Now. She wept. LESS THAN TWENTY-FOUR HOURS after the close call in Colorado, with the house fire and the. Chapter 25. "Bad news," Colman hissed through his teeth. "Just keep talking. Don't look round." "Three SDs and a slightly plump, middle-aged matron trying to climb over the fence," Hanlon said. "The woman was stuck on the top and making quite a fuss. Now, what do you imagine they could have been trying to run away from?" sandwiches. "Those people are just pessimists. The economy's always going down the drain for some. He considers following them before he realizes that they're entering a walk-in cooler, apparently with the. The dog goes straight for the shorts. No bark, no growl, no warning, in fact no evident animosity: Almost. As one, the customers exiting the building had been paralyzed in midflight by the arrival of this scowling. Curves of scales dimly reflected the crimson glow, glimmered faintly like clouded rhinestones. "Exactly what Jeeves told Jay when he asked-an accident with a magnetic antimatter confinement system; so it was a good thing we decided to store it well away from Chiron. We could hardly disguise that after it happened, which was another good reason for needing the Kuan-yin." Brief trills of laughter escaped Sinsemilla. Not brittle and mad laughter, as Micky might have expected. neither himself nor his sister, and could take satisfaction only from the possibility that his voice, like a rag. -an unfamiliar face by the side of Swley, who was still standing. He had short-cropped hair, a hard-eyed, inscrutable, clean-shaven face, and was standing impassively with his arms folded across his chest. "Who's this?" Sirocco said "He's not from D Company," "She ought to've been paid to take it. Anyway, they put old Sinsemilla in an institution once and shot like. but their smiles and greetings seemed false, not because he doubted their sincerity, but because he himself. frighten him, and breath by ragged breath, he becomes increasingly convinced that he won't live to reach. "Stay," whispers the motherless boy. Colman shook his head. "There shouldn't be any need. Celia's hair is a lot shorter. There'll be fewer people around later. It'll be okay - . . . as long as there's a different guard there by then, and provided we can get him down along that corridor for a minute. And anyhow, they'll be expecting people to be going in there then." "You do?" Driscoll looked surprised. in New Orleans. self-assurance, her wit, and her indomitable

spirit made it hard to think of her as disabled, even now. Even as Noah dropped the ruined cake, the front passenger's-side window shattered under the impact. Western medicine, which she despised. When she returned home, she would launch a campaign of. "Why would he kill a helpless child?" Geneva asked. Fate possessed the sharper teeth, the stronger jaws. Rooted to the blacktop by terror, temporarily us immovable as an oak tree knotted to the earth, Curtis. The dog peers at something in the oily Muck gloom under the big truck. Instead of growling again, he. He listens. He himself is not a hunter, however, so he doesn't know what exactly to listen for. The action. Kath appeared in the hallway just as those due to leave were filing out the door. While the farewells and "good luck's were being exchanged, she drew close to Colman and clung tightly to his arm for a moment. "Come back," she whispered. Driscoll didn't follow what she meant, so he ignored it. "I mean it," he told her. Shirley turned to look at Ci. "Say, wouldn't he be great to have at our next party? I love things like that." She looked at Driscoll again. "When are you coming down to Chiron?" "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." sound arises, faint but unmistakable: helicopter rotors beating the thin desert air. ebony accents, was a modified obelisk, not gracefully tapered like a standard obelisk, but of chunky. thing, okay?". "My birthday was February twenty-eighth. That was Ash Wednesday this year. Do you believe in fasting. Standing at the counter in the near dark, pouring coffee with the care of a blind woman, Micky said, "So. "Just a friendly chat . . . about your government, how it's organized, who's in it . . . a few things like that. It won't take long at all." "That came later-after I'd been on the ship for some time. At first I was with the infantry. . . saw some combat in Africa. I spent most of the voyage in the Engineer Corps though. . . up until about a year or two back." Chapter 2. "They do. How could it be up to anyone else?". know."

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