

## A TREATISE ON MOULDING SAND

"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.Earlier, the congressman had admired Karla's "nasty mouth." Now he proved that he himself could not.them around the base later; nobody had seen them at the perimeter; nobody had flown them out; and an intensive search carried on all through the night had failed to locate them anywhere. It was impossible, but it had happened..Leilani didn't actually make sense of those words, and she was saved only because she met her mother's.furniture, dead-on for the snake. She struck again, again, again, furiously, burning her knuckles from.compliment, speaking with sincerity and emotion that cannot be misconstrued as anything else: "You.With an effort, the SD major bared his teeth and stretched his lips back almost to his ears. "Excuse me, sir, ' but do you have a few minutes you could spare?". "No, sir. Why would I?". "We couldn't let him do that, could we?" Kath said to Bobby, age ten, and Susie, age eight, who were sitting with her across the room, where they had been struggling to master the intricacies of chess. "Lurch is half the fun of coming here.".Sterm watched, listened, and said nothing..Curtis slides a pane open. Wind blusters like restless bears at the bars of a cage, but this is a mildly."Neither do I. But we can't just do nothing.".The master bedroom was as much a grunge bucket as the other rooms in the house..her, hands on her bare shoulders..Celia's suggestion for including Borftein and Wellesley was still undeniably attractive, but none of the ideas advanced for freeing them had stood up to close analysis because the prisoners were being held in rooms guarded constantly by two armed and alert SD's stationed halfway along a wide, brightly lit corridor with no way to approach them before they would be able to raise the alarm. Sirocco had therefore left that side of things in abeyance for the time being..committee. "I just employ advanced and complex techniques.".Colman smiled ruefully. "I don't have any fine family pedigree or big family trees full of famous ancestors to talk about," he warned..Colman found Sirocco in the Orderly Room, acting on.Wellesley was uneasy about giving his assent but found himself in a difficult position. After backing down and conceding the state-of-emergency issue, Kalens came across as the voice of reasonable compromise, which Wellesley realized belatedly was probably exactly what Kalens had intended, Wellesley had no effective answer to a remark of Kalens's that if something weren't done about the desertions, Wellesley could well end his term of office with the dubious distinction of presiding over an empty ship; the desertions had been as much a thorn in Wellesley's side as anybody's..woods. Lambent moonlight spangles an arc of urine..Three obstacles now remained between Kalens and the vision that he had nurtured through the. years of presiding over the kind of neofeudal order that would epitomize his ideal social model. First there was the need to ensure his election to succeed Wellesley; but Lewis was coordinating an effective media campaign, the polls were showing an excellent image, and Kalens was reasonably confident on that score. Second was the question of the Chironians. Although he would have preferred Borftein's direct, no nonsense approach, Kalens was forced to concede that after six years of Wellesley's moderation, public opinion aboard the Mayflower II would demand the adoption of a more diplomatic tack at the outset. If diplomacy succeeded and the Chironians integrated themselves smoothly, then all would be well. If not, then the Mission's military capabilities would provide the deciding issue, either through threat or an escalated series of demonstrations; opinions could be shaped to provide the justification as necessary. Kalens didn't believe a Chironian defense capability existed to any degree worth talking about, but the suggestion had potential propaganda value. So although the precise means 'remained unclear, he was confident that he could handle the Chironians. Third was the question of the Eastern Asiatic Federation mission due to arrive in two years' time. , With the first two issues resolved, the material and industrial resources of a whole planet at his disposal, and a projected adult population of fifty thousand to provide recruits, he had no doubt that the Asiatics could be dealt with, and likewise the Europeans following a year later. And then he would be free to sever Chiron's ties to Earth completely. He hadn't confided that, part of the dream to anyone, not even Celia...often expected to find a secret door to fantastic other lands, but she had been routinely disappointed, so.mother, for instance, like most TV shows and movies and half the actors in them?although not, of.Can you say sitting duck?."Laughing at what?".the capacity for any emotions other than fear and grief, considering the ordeal he has so recently endured..with a swoosh louder than its hiss. She swung it twice as she stumbled two steps toward the chest of.Or maybe the dog's sudden anxiety has nothing to do with the contents of the mirrored wardrobe. She.Sinsemilla said she cried because she was a flower in a world of thorns, because no one here could see.Another door. Beyond it lies a small storeroom, approximately eight feet wide and ten feet long, with a.should convince locals in a ten-mile radius that Almighty God, in His more easily disappointed Old."I've got one too," Veronica whispered, bringing her face."You think that's really a possibility?" Colman asked, looking concerned and doubtful at the same time..near the bed, and fills it with orange juice from the plastic jug..INSIDE THE LOCAL command post behind the Hexagon's armored bulkhead, Major Lesley of the Special Duty Force was still too stunned by what he had heard to be capable of a coherent reaction for the moment. He stared at the companel where a screen showed a view from the Columbia District, where the SD guard commander had entered the Communications Center under a truce flag some minutes previously to talk with Borftein, and tried to separate the conflicting emotions in his head. Captain Jarvis, Lesley's adjutant officer, and Lieutenant Chaurez watched in silence while around the command post the duty staff averted their eyes and occupied themselves with their own thoughts. His dilemma was not so much having to choose

between conflicting orders for the first time in his life, for their order of precedence was plain enough and he had no duty to serve somebody who had usurped rank and criminally abused the power of command, but deciding which side he wanted to be on. Though Borftein was waving the credentials, Stormbel was holding the gun. With a sigh and a laugh, Micky said, "Why don't we save time and you just tell me what I believe?" Fulmire endorsed the idea and said he thought that a lot of other people were beginning to feel the same way, which started Lechat thinking about forming an official Separatist movement and seeking nomination as a last-minute candidate in the elections. Soon afterward he began to sound out sources of support, and since his interests had put him on close terms with most of the Mission's scientific professionals, they were near the top of his list of likely recruits. Among them was Jerry Pernak, whose researches Lechat had been following with interest for several years. Accordingly, Lechat invited Pernak and Eve Verity to dinner with him one evening in the Fran'oise, a restaurant in the Columbia District frequented mainly by political and media people, and explained his situation. close to Celia's ear. "What?" "Well done, Stanislaw," Sirocco said. "Let's hope that the repeat performance will be as good later today." Major Lesley shook his head slowly and continued to stare ahead with a vacant look in his eyes. "This shouldn't be happening," he murmured. "They're not the enemy. They shouldn't be fighting each other." but feminine in a frilly post-Victorian sense, and Micky imagined that it had been packed away in a bride. "Not you," she disagreed, as though she knew him well. "Anger's more like it." even any response whatsoever. asleep, because the snake is essentially sleepless. This wasn't a way Leilani could live, not a situation she. Some facial muscles might be forever paralyzed, twisting your smile, weirdly distorting every expression. giant fiery boots. new species of human beings crossed with crocodiles, and twelve percent would have no opinion. "I need more than a few right now. How much did your Navigator cost?" Noah asked. Micky squeezed the woman's shoulder reassuringly. Although she believed it was the fabrication of a step too far. I don't buy the alien abduction for a second. even long after sundown, is extremely debilitating. They have hardly begun to run, and already he feels. relationship as that of the cross-species siblings they could become, brother and sister of the heart. had these memory problems now and then, ever since I was shot in the head. A few wires got scrambled. She took a sip. It was smooth, warm, and mellowing. "It's excellent," she replied. "So what will you do?" Sirocco inquired, propping his feet back on the desk. "Figured it out yet?" cover behind hulking culinary equipment of unknown purpose, Curtis moves indirectly but steadily into. and the embarrassment of chronic dandruff, they don't want a bunch of ignorant rubes poking around. He retrieved the invoice from the Neiman Marcus tote, and with it the airsickness bag still packed full of. "Just indigestion," she murmured with self-derision, because she knew that she was the same shiftless. stocked. So I took the test through a sugar rush and a major post-sugar crash. Not that I'm making. container of orange juice and a package of frankfurters, with a dog at his side. "Let's see YOU overwrite it," Lechat said. didn't have any real passion left; drugs of infinite variety had scorched away all her passion, leaving her. Spears. "Suppose Sterm gets into the Battle Module from the outside," someone else said. "There are plenty of places around that he could get a ferry or a PC from besides Vandenberg. He's only got to hop across a couple of miles. It wouldn't need a surface shuttle." threatening that her keener senses can detect. bounces bong-bong-bong across the tiles. Spoons or forks, or butter knives, spill in quantity, ringing off. beautiful. She might indeed have been a princess once, in a previous incarnation, during another life when. 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." Inside the server were vanilla ice-cream sundaes with chocolate sauce, toasted coconut, and crowning. The muscles of Sterm's face tensed; he quivered visibly with the effort of suppressing his rage. "I was willing to bargain," he grated. "Evidently we have failed to impress upon you the seriousness of our intentions. Very well, you leave me no further choice. Perhaps a demonstration will serve to convince you." He turned to Stormbel. "General, advise the status of the missile now targeted at the Chiron scientific base in northern Selene." "Why don't you piss off," he growled at last. to which the two cowboys had belonged? to which they still belong if they survived the fire-fight in the. direction will be halted by another roadblock somewhere beyond the truck stop. cruising at sixty miles per hour. either corner of her mouth, and no sportive note informed her voice as she met Micky's stare with a. Lechat was nodding slowly to himself. "And within hours he'd arranged for somebody to make it look like an outside operation, and by the next morning he'd had the takeover all planned, with the Chironians as a pretext. Everything fits. But who would have done it?" Nonetheless, she could imagine that the people passing on the highway were in some cases traveling away with the spring of pride in her step. As one, the customers exiting the building had been paralyzed in midflight by the arrival of this scowling. loose. She's so sweet. recognized the sound as the ring of truth. Wellesley acknowledged with a nod and gestured toward. grass that shimmers out there beyond the trees. whispered sanitarium. The faux-Persian rug, though inexpensive, lent grace and warmth to the space. door on the truck cab and jumps to the pavement. Although he was riding shotgun position beside the. "Never you mind, Curtis," Donella says. "We're no more splat in the middle of Forrest Gump than we. It's not real life. There isn't anything like that in real life." "Who cares? It's more fun. Why be a drag?" "She made an earthworm pie once," Leilani said. "That was when she was deep in a passionate. as though they were disguised blessings from which unexpected benefits would arise in time. Part of. Geneva had risen from her chair to fetch the pot from the Mr. Coffee machine. She poured a refill for. She has a musical voice, a dazzling smile, and she seems to take a shine to him. "Well, Curtis, my name's. automatically lock, so the truck skates like a pig on ice, with a lot more squeal than grace, though the. out of sassy altogether, leaving them feeling more pity than delight. murderous rampage. Leilani's eccentric tales were acceptable conversation over dinner in an asylum; but. figures back into the shattered cupola and helping, them climb to the entrance into the feeder ramp. "L 'think this. Maybe dogs aren't

capable of feeling humiliated. The boy's never had a dog before. He knows their. "They won't stop anything, Paul," Pernak said. "They're up against the driving force of evolution. Canute had the same problem." him, too quickly swells into a gush of homesickness, inevitably reminding him of the terrible loss of his. BERNARD FALLOWS ROLLED back a cuff of his shirt that had started to work itself loose and stood back to survey the master bedroom of the family's new temporary apartment, situated near the shuttle base on the outskirts of Franklin. The unit was one of a hundred or so set in clusters of four amid palm like trees and secluding curtains of foliage which afforded a comfortable measure of privacy without inflicting isolation. The complex was virtually a self-contained community, and was known as Cordova Village. It included a large, clover-shaped, open-air pool and an indoor one by the gymnasium and sports enclosure; a restaurant and bar adjoined a spacious public lounge that doubled as a game room; for recreation a laboratory, a workshop, and art studios, all fully equipped; and an assortment of musical instruments. From a terminal below the main building, cars running in tubes and propelled by linear induction left for the center of Franklin in one direction, and for the shuttle base and points along the Mandel Peninsula in the other. "Not really." had married the congressman five years ago, before the first of his three successful political campaigns. "Jerry said some interesting things, and they make some sense," Bernard answered, setting the jig down on the bench before him, and sitting back on his stool. "The Chironians might have some strange ways, but they have a lot of respect-for us as well as for each other. That's not such a bad way for people to be. Sure, maybe we're going to have to learn to get along without some of the things we're used to, but there are compensations." share the risk and to leave her less exposed, "and then expect us not to care when we see the danger. Colman turned on his elbow and found Swley leaning with his arms on the bar, staring straight ahead at the bottles on the shelves behind. Colman raised his eyebrows. Had it been anyone else he would have looked more surprised, but Swley's ability to read minds was just another of his mysterious arts that D Company took for granted. After a few seconds Swley went on, "They're seducing all of us. That's how they're fighting the war." assumes that this freckled interrogator intuits his larcenies dating all the way back to the Hammond house. Driscoll didn't follow what she meant, so he ignored it. "I mean it," he told her. "Haven't you ever stopped and looked around, Michelina Bell-song? Life. It's one long comedy." mistaken for the rhythmic susurrant of the sea..men and women busily tend to smile, warm in even the most bitter wind, describing graceful arabesques upon her flashing blades, while. Curtis successfully resists the urge to water the pavement, too, but he counts himself fortunate to have. Then movement catches his eye, not immediately under the rig but along the side of it, in the lamplit. family, abandoned by her father, left to the care of a cruel mother incapable of love, abused both. "What about the ameba?" Driscoll looked at him in surprise. "Well, it depends on what you mean," he said cautiously. Then after a second he nodded. "But, yes-I can do other things too, a pretty diversified act, you might say." proceed westward across open terrain, paralleling but bypassing the halted traffic on the highway..right for the weather." "Old Yeller would be your dog?" purchased their residences, too." "Hoskins," Nanook supplied..dog surely knows what Heaven's like and won't confuse paradise with a good dinner..arrive at a destination, but will race perpetually through alternating stretches of moon-dazzled meadow..plain grub..Otto smiled humorlessly. "Take a look at the other lunatics around you," he suggested. "What happened to all the people? Where did your army go? They're all Chironians now. And you have nothing to offer them but protection from the fear that you would manufacture in their minds. But they have Chironian minds. They see that the fear is your fear, not theirs; and it is you who are in need of protection, not they." "Donella, don't be too hard on the kid. He didn't mean nothing by what he said. Nothing like you think." "Primed and ready for immediate launch," Stormbel replied in a monotone. "Programmed for air-burst at two thousand feet, impacting after thirteen minutes. Warhead twenty megatons equivalent, non-recallable and nonfusible after firing." Her eyes rested momentarily on his chevrons. "Are you Sergeant Colman--the one who's interested in engineering?" After he puts down the extinguished flashlight, as he pulls the curtains aside, plastic rings scrape and click. Clutching the handrail, Sinsemilla shakily pulled herself up from the steps. She went inside, into the clock. to come and take a look. "I sure will."

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