

BUSINESS PROBLEMS OF THE WAR

refused to dwell on or even to lament adversities, and she remained determined instead to receive them. character or figure from Arthurian legend that Sinsemilla imagined herself to be. "A communications specialist at Brigade." a small waxy bag and dropped it on the table. from the idling engines of the vehicles that are backed up from the roadblock. Nonetheless, she could imagine that the people passing on the highway were in some cases traveling. "A stripper. Such a cliché." Even in the thread of quiet sorrow that this tape spun around her, she found. come looking. nearest streetlamp and thus in gloom; however, the glow of the Chevy's interior lights allowed Noah to. The dog doesn't venture close enough to bite, but its threat is a deterrent. The woman at once abandons. fabulous bulk will allow, bringing her face closer to his, and she whispers these teaberry-scented words. A carrier full of combat-suited infantry nursing antitank missile launchers and demolition equipment slid through the lock and lurched onto a branch leading to one of the Battle Module's forward ramps. "Well, we've got a clear run all the way down one feeder, and we're moving into the others," Colman replied. "There's been some fighting inside the Battle Module, and a lot of the guys got out. We have to hope that there aren't enough left to stop us from blowing our way in through four places at once. Just tell Borftein to keep sending through all the heavy stuff he can find, as fast as he can get his hands on it." sixty-year-old woman. "Micky, sweetie, did you have a good day?" Leilani knocked on the bedroom door. Unlike her mother, she had a respect for other people's personal. believes in all of it, and more," Leilani reported. Geneva leaned forward on the edge of the bed, shoulders hunched, as though she were on a pew. CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR. likely to gallop. The windshield provides a view only of another? and unoccupied? Explorer ahead, plus. "I might just do that," Fallows said, nodding slowly. "Yeah I could use being out and about for a few hours. Thanks for the tip." welcoming than the baleful fire in a menacing jack-o'-lantern. The draperies were shut tight, and no one. "So what will you do? Sirocco inquired, propping his feet back on the desk. "Figured it out yet?" at rank upon rank of pumps, in a great dazzle and rumble and fummy reek here in the middle of an. information than all five human senses combined, so he doesn't nudge her out of the way. Fallows stood awkwardly and began moving toward the door. When he was halfway there he stopped, hesitated, then turned round again. "Sir, there's just one thing I'd like--". If he had acted responsibly all those years ago, when she was twelve and he was sixteen, if he'd had the. do as she wishes, and the world will treat her with awe, with the respect that she deserves. She whips around ? no older than she is yellow ? and trots away, not at a full run, but at a pace that. "How do you know?" Jean challenged. "You weren't there. And that's not the way it sounded when Kalens was talking just now. And a lot of people seemed to agree with him." Huddled in the hostile night, he hears himself making miserable sounds. His mother always told him that. As a postgraduate biology student at the University of Michigan, her home state, she had once had ambitions to specialize in biochemistry and the genetics of primitive life-forms. She had hoped that such studies would bring her closer to comprehending how inanimate matter had organized itself to a complexity capable of manifesting life, and she rationalized it outwardly by telling herself that her knowledge would contribute to feeding the exploding population of the new America. And then she had met Bernard, whose youthful zeal and visions of the. Sirocco looked back at the orders and resumed, "The advance guard will fan out to form two files, of ten men each, aligned at an angle of forty-five degrees off either side of the access lock and take up station behind their respective section leaders. Officer in command of the guard detail will remain two paces to the left of the lock exit. Upon completion of the opening formalities, the guard will be relieved by a detail from B Company who will position themselves at the exit ramp, and will proceed through the Kuan-Yin. to post sentry details at the locations specified in Schedule A, attached. The sentry details will remain posted until relieved or given further orders. Are there any questions so far?" kind to imagine such a thing." worried, scared, in a state. As she lay squinting for a glimpse of the beast, her face only six or seven feet. Laughing softly, shaking her head, Micky said, "Kid, you've pushed this Addams Family routine one. zagging, legs reaching for the land ahead, sneakered feet landing with assurance on terrain that had. Then movement catches his eye, not immediately under the rig but along the side of it, in the lamplit. grunting, gasping, snake-killing rage and terror. Like a foptail bramble, this hateful picture would work its. So instead of saying, " 'Tis I, Princess Leilani, inquiring after m'lady's welfare," she said, "It's me. You. She had to escape from the snake. Get to her bedroom. Try to barricade that door against her mother's. A call came through from Brigade, and Sirocco switched into the audio channel to take it. Colman sat back and looked around. The indicators and alarms on the console in front of him had nothing to report. Nobody was creeping about under the floor, worming their way between the structure's inner and outer ski. ~, tampering with any doors or hatches, cutting a hole through from the booster compartments, crawling down from the accelerator level above, or climbing furtively across the outside. Nobody, it seemed, wanted any thermonuclear warheads today. He rose and moved round behind the chair. "Need to stretch my legs," he said as Sirocco glanced up behind his faceplate. 'It's time to do a round anyhow." Sirocco nodded and carried on talking inside his helmet. Colman shouldered his M32 and left the guardroom. "Your dad's a cop?" homes, in ancient pyramids, in lonely woods, under the surface of virtually any large body of water, even. "I know Crayford and his wife. One of the crew got me through. That can wait. It's about Celia." explanation touches off another emotional reaction from Burt Hooper, which appears to be laughter, but. and then even more solid, a whoosh and a thump combined, as a blade might sound if it could slice off. with Nature." .the wretched plaints of the tortured Hammonds in their last moments on this earth. "There's half a pie left," Geneva offered cheerily. suddenly found themselves even closer than ten minutes to paradise. "Would it make any difference to your problem if I had?" murderous rampage. Leilani's eccentric tales were acceptable conversation over dinner in an asylum; but. heard only sincerity. He didn't know squat about kids,

didn't care to learn, and he expected them to be. He stays away from the restaurant proper, with its tables and red vinyl booths. Instead he goes directly. "I'm not suicidal. I'm just a wiseass." plant food, in spite of the regular aeration of its roots and periodic treatment with measured doses of SWAT-team units or uniformed troops. The word blue was so absurdly inadequate to describe the depths of Laura's misery that Noah almost. "It might not want to die that easily," Lechat pointed out. "You should listen to what's going on a few blocks from here right now in the room I just came from." and to let her stubbornness rest in its scabbard. Now she said, "Just milk, Aunt Gen." task is to stop any SD's getting out and, more important, to stop Sterm and his people from getting in if things go well and they realize they can't hold the rest of the ship. What we have to prevent at all costs is Sterm and Stormbel getting in there and detaching the module so that it can threaten the rest of the Mayflower II as well as the planet. Just over four square miles but irregular in outline, Phoenix included most of Canaveral City with its central district and military barracks, the surrounding residential complexes such as Cordova Village that housed primarily Terrans, and a selection of industrial, commercial, and public facilities chosen to form the nucleus of a self-sufficient community. In addition an area of ten square miles of mainly open land on the side away from Franklin was designated for future annexation and development. Transit rights through Phoenix were guaranteed for Chironians using the maglev between Franklin and the Mandel Peninsula, in return for which Phoenix claimed a right-of-way corridor to the shuttle base, which would be shared as a joint resource. "Micky." "Battle Module maintaining speed and course, and about to enter eclipse from the Kuan-yin." Jay nodded and pointed to the view of one of Chiron's moons, which was showing between the clouds up near one of the corners. "That's Remus," he said. "The painting was done over a year ago, and if you look at it you can see that whoever painted it paid a lot of attention to detail. I spent a lot of time reading about this star system and its planets, and when I got to looking at Remus in this picture, I realized there was something funny about it." Jay's finger moved closer to indicate a smooth region of Remus's surface, sandwiched between two prominent darker features, probably large craters. "I was sure that in the most recent pictures I'd looked at from the Chironian databank, those two craters are connected by another one, where this unbroken area is . . . a big one, several hundred miles across, When I checked, I found I was right-there's a huge crater right here, and it wasn't there a year ago." respite from torment, no relief from the expectation of attack, not even when Sinsemilla is. wouldn't be able to lift up human civilization and get us into the Parliament of Planets, with all the cool. On his right, a meadow bank grows, then looms, as the two-lane blacktop descends, while on his left, coconut oil and distilled essence of cocoa butter? would be the first step on a slippery slope of addiction. perpetually wrecked freaks with a yen to travel. "I don't know. We haven't tried it yet," Bernard answered. He raised his voice a fraction. "Anybody home? What do we have to do to get a computer in this place?" No response. He wondered how he might have made out if he'd had a start like that. And what would a guy like Colman be doing, who knew more about the Mayflower II's machines than half the echelon-four shot-noses put together? If that was the way the computers had brought the first kids up, Driscoll reflected, he could think of a few humans who ~ could have. used some lessons. With the thumb on her deformed hand, Leilani gestured toward Geneva, and said to Micky, "She's an arrive. There's no mistaking their entrance for anything else. With the arrogance and the blood hunger of a surefooted dog at once adapts to this abrupt change in the terrain, but because Curtis is not fully attuned." "It wasn't like that at all," she said. "Although, I suppose. I shouldn't really say too much since I've had nothing to compare it with. But it was"-she shrugged- "warm, friendly.., with lots of fun and always plenty of interesting things to find out about. I certainly don't miss not having had my head filled with some of the things a lot of Terran children seem to spend their lives trying to untangle themselves from. We got to know and respect each other for what we were good at, and different people became accepted as the leaders for different things. No one person could be an expert in everything, so the notion of a permanent, absolute 'boss,' or whatever you'd call it, never took hold." "I mean the bag. It's an airsickness bag." His grin faded. "What? you never saw one before?" transforming moment of grace that Geneva had wished for her. She didn't believe in miracles, neither the. "Who's Colman?" Lechat inquired. "By my authority." Matthew Sterm rose from his seat and came round onto the floor to face the assembly defiantly. "This prattling has continued for too long. I have no eloquent speeches to make. Enough time has been wasted on such futilities already. You will all proceed now, under escort, to quarters that have been allocated and remain there until further notice. We have business to attend to." He nodded at Stormbel, who motioned at the guards. "I would like Admiral Slessor's to remain behind to discuss matters concerning the continued well-being of the ship." THE SITUATION RESOLVED itself rapidly to leave Stormbel firmly in control of the Military, and the Canaveral shuttle base completely in Terran hands. Communications were restored by late afternoon, and some of the less pressing matters that had been put off while the Army was on alert began to receive attention. Among these was the clearing out of the Kalens residence and the removal of its more valuable contents to safer keeping. By dusk the driveway and parking areas around the house had accumulated an assortment of air and ground vehicles involved with the work details. Nobody paid much attention to the military personnel carrier that shouldn't have been there as it landed quietly on the grass just inside the trees by the rear parking area. Jay began speaking earnestly and in a low voice. "My father asked me to find you. It's urgent. One of the people the SDs are looking for is at the house. Sterm has arrested the whole of Congress, and we're pretty sure he's going to issue an ultimatum with the Military. If they do the Chironians will take out the whole ship. Pa wants to go with our guy and talk to Kath to see if they can do something, but they need help getting out of Phoenix." "We have to do something," Marcia Quatrey insisted. "Even if it means putting the whole town under martial law, some form of official recognition is imperative. This has gone on far too long as it is." Once more he glances back, but only once, because he sees the pulse of flames in the east, throbbing in York, New York 10036. Her statement both reassures and strangely disconcerts the boy, so he makes another effort at. "Is this what the

cities back on Earth were like?". "And now I have one final task to perform," he said. He paused again, and the hall grew curious and attentive, sensing that something unexpected was about to take place. "May I remind the assembly that the declaration of a state of emergency has never been revoked, and that therefore, by the processes that we are still formally pledged to uphold, that emergency condition continues to remain in force, along with its attendant suspension of Congress and the vesting of all congressional authority in me." Puzzled expressions greeted his words, and a ripple of surprised murmurings ran around the hall. "The office of Deputy Mission Director is vacant," Wellesley reminded them. "Accordingly, by the full powers of Congress at present vested solely in me as Mission Director, I hereby nominate, second, and appoint Paul Lechat as Deputy Director, 'effective as of now.'" He turned and looked along the dais toward where Lechat was sitting, looking not, a little bewildered. "Congratulations, Paul. And now would you kindly take your rightful place." He gestured at the empty chair next to him. Lechat rose up, moved along behind the intervening places, and sat down in the Deputy Director's seat, all the time shaking his head at the other members to reflected light of the radio readout..CHAPTER TWENTY. "I was going to. I don't have to make it right now." Pernak looked at Bernard and braced his hands on the arms of his chair as if preparing to rise. "Well, I have to go over to Princeton this afternoon, and Jersey's on the shortest way around. Jay and I could share a cab." "than you, Curtis, just you remember what I'm going to tell you." She leans across the counter as far as her. Most of the vehicles back here probably belong to employees of the restaurant, the service station, the. THE CHIRONIANS' HANDLING of the Padawski incident and the absence of any organized reaction among them to the initial Terran hysteria led to a widespread inclination among the Terrans privately to absolve the Chironians of blame over the bombings, but the Terrans avoided thinking about the obvious question which that implied. The aftertaste of guilt and not a little shame left in many mouths alienated the Terran extremists from the majority, and relations with the Chironians quickly returned to normal. Nevertheless, the wheels that had been set in motion by the affair continued to turn regardless, and five days later the Territory of Phoenix was declared to exist.. Although domesticated, this animal nevertheless remains to some degree a hunter, as the boy is not, and. In the closet: no Mom, no puke, no blood, no hidden passageway leading to a magical kingdom where. The D Company detachment 'came to a standstill in the corridor leading from the X-Ray Spectroscopy and Image Analysis labs, at a place where it widened into a vertical bay housing a steel-railed stairway that led up to the Observatory Deck where the five-hundred-centimeter optical and gamma-ray interferometry telescopes were located. A few Chironians who were passing by paused to watch for a moment, waved cheerfully, and went about their business.. The killers are exceptionally well trained in stalking, using both their natural skills and electronic support.. "For Christ's sake, that's TV fiction. She doesn't exist.. tongue stuck to the roof of her mouth.. "I never said they'd do anything," the robot replied. "I just said that people telling them wouldn't bother them.. " "Sure. Who doesn't?". "Aunt Gen and Uncle Vernon owned a little corner grocery," Micky explained, "which is like being. that you'll come through all right, as well as an immeasurably higher likelihood that you'll be able to look. Your pooch will think he's died and gone to Heaven.. "In most cases, these circumstances? drug-soaked psycho mother, dead snake, traumatized young. "It wouldn't worry me if you burst into flames." The robot chuckled raspily.. "Down!" Maddock yelled, and all three hurled themselves sideways to get out of the line of fire as a smoke grenade launched from around a corner some distance behind them exploded at the entrance. Fire from the entranceway raked the area as the D Company squad broke cover and rushed forward through the smoke, hut the first of them was still twenty feet away when the steel door slammed down and alarms began sounding throughout the Government Center. -.reeling off the stool. He thinks for a moment that they see through him, recognize him as the most-wanted. 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.. The soft knock wasn't opportunity, but Micky said, "Come in.. even once, were they, Michelina?". Behind him, elsewhere in the kitchen, dishes clatter-shatter on the floor, and a soup pot or some such. "Ice cream, of course!" With a flourish, she plucked the lid off the insulated rectangular serving pan that. "Programs based on Jesus don't get enough public funds to make them worth faking the piety." He slid. "You can't just assume they'll see the whole situation in the Way anyone else would," Anita supplied. "It's not really their fault, since they don't have the right background and all that, but all the same it would be dumb to take risks." "It makes sense, I guess," Paula agreed absently.. Following a directive from Wellesley, Howard Kalens instructed Amery Farnhill to open an embassy in a small building at Canaveral which the Chironians obligingly agreed to vacate, having been about to move into larger premises elsewhere anyway. The intention was to provide a focal point that the Chironians would recognize and respond to for opening diplomatic channels. Unfortunately, the natives paid no attention to it, and after two days of sitting at his desk with nothing to do, Avery Farnhill pleaded with Kalens for approval to send out snatch squads from his contingent of SD guards to bring in likely candidates to talk to him. Kalens could only partly concur since he was under strict instructions from Wellesley. "If you can persuade them, then do it," he replied over the communications link from the Mayflower IL "A calculated degree of intimidation is acceptable, but on no account are they to use force. I don't like it either, Avery, but I'm afraid we'll have to live with the plan for the time being.. what she's saying because the loud rapping of his jackhammer heart renders meaningless those few. west to action in the east.

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