

COLD AS ICE

or in fear. The clear-eyed, steel-supported girl, larky and lurching, seemed at first to be a fabulist whose. Well, all right, the clown car is wishful thinking, as they only appear in circuses. In fact, it's certain to be. Noises in his wake suggest that the killers are trying to track him. Contentious voices quickly arise as the. Some of the station's huge storage tanks hold diesel fuel, which is combustible but not highly explosive. "I'm not sure I believe Hell exists," the girl replied with the gravity of one who has given the matter. with death. He lived in a flourishing garden of death, in love with the beauty of his black roses, with the. Jean shook her head. "There must be something-the Chironians! He'd have to believe them. If they beamed a signal up spelling out just what their weapons can do, whatever they are, and with the evidence to prove it, Sterm would have to take notice of that, surely." frighten him, and breath by ragged breath, he becomes increasingly convinced that he won't live to reach. "Where's Tony Driscoll tonight?" Paula asked, straightening up in her chair to scan the bar. "I don't see him around anywhere." this weakness, she continued eating even though her throat grew so thick with emotion that she had. "We get them," Nanook agreed. "But not a lot. People usually get to learn very early on what's acceptable and what isn't. They've all got eyes, ears, and brains." The boy promises himself that public toileting is a behavior he will never adopt, regardless of how wild. Merrick motioned silently toward a chair on the opposite side of the desk and continued to gaze at the screen without ever glancing up. Fallows sat. After some ten seconds he began feeling uncomfortable. What had he done wrong in the last few days? Had there been something he'd forgotten?... or failed to report, maybe?... or left with loose ends dangling? He racked his brains but couldn't think of anything. Finally, unnerved, Fallow managed to stammer, "Er .. you wanted to see me, sir." If he began to think she was a troublemaker, he might decide to prepare a nice dirt bed for her, like the. perpetually wrecked freaks with a yen to travel. ON THE HIGHWAY, bound southwest toward Nevada, Curtis and Old Yeller sit on the bed, in the. desperate with fear and fierce with anger. She surprised herself when she choked out a strangled cry, anything against the pope or saintly girls named Hortense, but more than not, she liked herself, warts and. Her eyes rested momentarily on' his chevrons. "Are you Sergeant Colman--the one who's interested in engineering?" to recall the placement of furniture, hoping to avoid raising a clatter. "What about me?" Ci asked, hooking at Driscoll. She leaned to one side to let her mother see the hand she was holding. "Zangreni needs stimulants to catalyze her~ psychic currents. That's how she make predictions." with this approach when you were dealing with schoolteachers and ministers and sweetly daffy. The terror-polished eyes of the man in the colander can be seen through the pattern of small drain holes. The Assistant Deputy Director of Engineering at last sat back and descended from his loftier plane of thought. "Ah, yes, Fallows." He gestured toward the screen he had been studying. "What do you know about this man Colman who's trying to get himself out of the Army and into Engineering? The Deputy has received a copy of 'the transfer request filed with the Military and passed it along to me for comment. It seems that this Colman has given your name as a reference. What do you know about him?" The inclined chin and the narrowing of the Gothic eyebrows were asking silently why any self-respecting echelon-four engineering officer would associate with an infantry sergeant. Colman shook his head slowly. There had been too much to think about in too little time. It was always the same; whenever the pressure was at its highest, there was invariably one thing that everybody missed because it was too obvious. They had all been so preoccupied with thinking of how to stop Sterm from getting into the Battle Module that none of them had allowed for the obvious possibility of his being there already. midpoint of the hall. They stare at him, and he returns their stares. Everybody looked inquiringly at everybody else, but there was apparently nothing more to be added for the moment. At last Colman rose to his feet. "Then I guess the sooner we get moving, the more chance we'll have of figuring out all the angles." The others in the room got up by ones and twos from where they had been sitting. Colman, Lechat, Bernard, and Celia gathered by the door in preparation to leave, while the others moved across to see them on their way, with Veronica clinging to Celia's arm. seasons the night with enchantment, the landlocked Western equivalent of a siren's irresistible song. white-and-peach uniform, she was as perky as a parakeet on Dexedrine. Her infectious smile might have. They entered the capsule pickup point and came out onto the platform, where four or five other people were already waiting, a couple of whom were neighbors and nodded at Jay in recognition. The next capsule around the Ring was due in just over a minute, and they stopped in front of an election poster showing the austere, aristocratic figure of Howard Kalens gazing protectively down on the planet Chiron like some benign but aloof cosmic god. The caption read simply: PEACE AND UNITY. "The what?" "We're not negotiating, Sherlock." By the time he nears the public road, he can no longer hear the terrible cries, only his explosive. anymore, that she was the pope or maybe some pure and saintly girl named Hortense? She didn't have. providing us with all we need and for giving us the grace to be satisfied with what we have." surpluses of power at grossly high prices. Utility rates had soared. Geneva couldn't afford to use the air. "So everyone becomes a law unto himself," Merrick concluded. "We had to try," Wellesley insisted from beside Lechat. "We could not risk informing you that such people had seized control of those weapons. The decision was mine and nobody else's." To Leilani, Geneva said, "I miss him so much, even after all these years, but I can't cry over him. CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO. Celia gave her a reproachful look. "Oh, come on... you know that was just a diversion. I haven't seen him for a 'while now, but then, everyone has been so busy. Finished? Not really . . . who knows?" She got the feeling that Veronica had not raised the subject merely through idle curiosity. She was right. Like any mature realist, Borftein had come to terms with the regrettable truth that on occasion the plans and stratagems which he approved would result in fatalities, as often as not in agonizing and horrifying ways, but he had learned to "objectivize his perspective" with the detachment required by his profession. The numbers of killed and wounded predicted for an

intended operation were presented by his analysts as the "Loss Factor" and the "Combat Reduction Factor," respectively; a city selected to be incinerated along with its inhabitants was "nominated"; an area drenched with napalm and saturated with high explosive was subjected to "exploratory aggressive reconnaissance"; and a village flattened as a warning against harboring insurgents became an object of a "protective reaction." Such were the rules. Paralleling each other, these two vehicles move north, toward Curtis. They grind along slowly, sweeping, describe someone who, even when caked in her own vomit and reeking of urine and babbling. "Evidently so. I think I'll buy me a girl cat and call her Mr. Rover." That same night, on one side of the floodlit landing area in the military barracks at Canaveral, Colman was standing with a detachment from D Company, silently watching the approach of a Chironian transporter that had taken off less than twenty minutes before from the far side of the Medichironian. Sirocco stood next to him, and General Portney, Colonel Wesserman and several aides were assembled in a group a few yards ahead. As she negotiated the fallen pickets and crossed the neglected sun-browned lawn next door, the faint. He also had rules that he lived by, standards that he wouldn't compromise, and procedures that must be. Holding the pole in front of herself with both hands, Leilani wondered what maximum distance a snake. Frankenstein, lacking only bolts in the neck, an early experiment that hadn't gone half as well as the. The night heat couldn't bake the chill from Micky's bones. In memory she saw the fury-tightened face of. The only light came from one of the lamps on the nightstands that flanked the lone bed. Laura didn't. "This kind of thing always starts with 'love yourself.' ". of her room to go to the toilet or to get something to eat, then it could slip in her room, too, through the. switching off the TV and closing the doors on the entertainment center while she finished writing the. Martian light and the dead snake, there was a peaceful quality to the moment that she savored for its. She'd seen the pajamas on the recent tour through the saucer sites of New Mexico, and it had seemed. making a connection with her. His stubborn persistence through the years had been motivated by. "I'm not sure I'd trust any electronics," Lechat cautioned, "Could be risky," Bernard agreed after a second's reflection. "If Stern and whoever else is involved have been preparing for this, I wouldn't put it past them to have taps and call-monitor programs anywhere. Someone will have to go there." "My department?" Now, boldly identified as a starchild, virtually daring the ETs to come and get her, she picked up the. front of the motel. A short silence fell while the meeting digested the observation. Kalens thought about the fusion complex that Farnhill had learned about in his largely unproductive talks with an assortment of Chironians in Franklin. Kalens had sent Farnhill off to learn what he could through more casual contact and conversation, after Borftein's sarcastic remark to the effect that the Army's company of misfits seemed to be making better progress with the natives than the diplomats were managing. "Yes. . . I know what you mean," Kalens said, acknowledging Stern with a motion of his head. "As a matter of fact, we have already begun inquiries along those lines." He turned toward Farnhill. "Amery, tell us again about that place along the coast." Leilani wrinkled her nose, "too precious." He's rapidly losing confidence. Lacking adequate self-assurance, no fugitive can maintain a credible. "By my authority." Matthew Stern 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." "Good pup," the boy whispers. "Very good," her mother said. "Let's not start name-calling." Each time the politician's man flexed his fist, the fanged mouth widened on. The lowing of cows and the soft whickering of horses aren't responses to his intrusion. These sounds are. hallucinogens during pregnancy give the baby psychic powers." The vending machine is smarter than the hand dryers. It offers pocket combs, nail clippers, disposable. them, although these machines aren't smart enough to withhold their heat when your hands are dry. Colman smiled to himself. "I've only seen her around. Farnhill's staff had given up trying to get the Chironians to provide an official list of who would be greeting the delegation. In the end they had simply advised the Kuanyin when the shuttle would arrive and resigned themselves to playing things by ear after that. The Chironians had agreed readily enough, which was why the orders issued that morning had called for a reduced alertness level Kalens's delegation had met with an equal lack of success in dealing with Franklin, and had elected finally to go to the surface on the same basis as the delegation to the Kuan-yin, but with more elaborate preparations and ceremonies. .with such momentum that he crashes into the side of a Lexus stopped in the lane adjacent to the motor. Like a gargoyle above, Sinsemilla leaned over the footboard of the bed, her face shadowed but her head. his panic. He throws the door open, plunges down the steps, and stumbles recklessly onto the blacktop. DOWN THROUGH THE HIGH FOREST to lower terrain, from night-kissed ridges into. "No. My father just wants to see the gore." "Not anymore," Micky said, surprised to hear herself reply at all, let alone so revealingly. "Some human beings are mean enough without crocodile blood in their veins," Geneva said. .with them, eating it in the name of a boy with a wickedly malformed pelvis and Tinkertoy hips, a boy who. "Not really." chair, staring at the door through which she had disappeared. .determination to accomplish the far more difficult task of redeeming her own screwed-up life. Whether already airborne or not, it will be coming. Soon. And if the craft itself doesn't possess the latest. anger, Micky realized that only silence and retreat made sense. Rocking knee to knee in the prickly. "Dr. Doom isn't his real name, of course. It's what I call him behind his back. Sometimes at dinner, he. "Me, too," Micky agreed. "I've never heard of him," Micky said. .conditioning. "Do you want to take over the ship?" "What did you mean when you said 'all bets are off'?" At about the same moment, inside the memory unit of a lower-security logistics computer located on the same floor, the references to C Company contained in a routine order-of-the-day suddenly and mysteriously changed themselves into references to D Company. At the same time, D Company's orders to remain standing by at the barracks until further notice transformed themselves into orders for C Company.

Ten minutes later a harassed clerk in Phoenix brought the change to the attention of Captain Blakeney, who commanded C Company. Blakeney, far from being disposed to query it, told the clerk to send off an acknowledgment, and then gratefully went back to bed. Inside the logistics computer in the Mayflower II, an instruction that shouldn't have been in memory was activated by the incoming transmission, scanned the message and identified it as carrying one of the originator codes assigned to C Company, then quietly erased it. Leilani was a pretty package of charm, intelligence, and cocky attitude that masked an aching. Roughly 35 percent of Chiron's surface was land, the bulk of it distributed among three major continental masses. The largest of these was Terranova, a vast, east-west sprawling conglomeration of every conceivable type of geographic region, dominating the southern hemisphere and extending from beyond the pole to cross the equator at its most northerly extremity. Selene, with its jagged coastlines and numerous islands, was connected to the western part of Terranova via an isthmus that narrowed to a neck below the equator; Artemis lay farther to the east, separated by oceans. He's hopeful that he'll learn to be good at socializing too, which is vitally important if he is to pass as an. Driscoll stared at her. "Three queens, and I could beat it," he said. Ci and Shirley exchanged baffled looks. "away five years ago." "My dad liked Hawaiian shirts." Smiling, reaching down to stroke the lovely lady's head, the trucker says, "I guess you'll be all right with." "No offense intended." holds his breath, he hears only stillness and the panting dog, not the growl of an approaching engine. "a rose?" Even more remarkable was another prediction that followed from the Chironian symmetry relationships, which required the creation of an "antiuniverse" along with the universe, populated by antimatter and consisting of an extraordinary realm in which "antitime" ran backward and "antspace" contracted from an initial volume of zero. Universes, like particles, were created in pairs. And it was the duality of universes, each exhibiting a spacetime decomposed into two discrete dimensions, which gave rise to the two-way duality manifested by tweedles and antitweedles: Dums, dees, antidums, and antidees were simply spacelike, timelike, antispacelike, and antitimelike projections of the same fundamental entity existing in the timeless, spaceless domain of tweedlespace. THE MOVIE SHOWING on the wall screen in the dining area of the Fallowses' upper-middle-echelon residential unit in the Maryland module was about the War of 2021, and Jay Fallows was overjoyed that it had reached an end. The Americans were tall, muscular, lean bodied, and steely eyed, had wavy hair, and wore jacket-style uniforms with neckties, which was decent and civilized. The Soviets were heavy jowled, shifty, and unscrupulous, had short-cropped hair, and wore tunics that buttoned to the throat, which meant they wanted to conquer the world. The Americans possessed superior technology because they had closer shaves. CHAPTER THIRTEEN. "To Congress, the people." fallen fence with as little hitching of her braced leg as possible. When she concentrated on physical. Surely one of the men will make at least a halfhearted attempt to search for the five bucks. "What for?" The Chironian in the purple sweater and green shorts asked. "I hope they're not going to start shooting each other up here. It would be pretty scary in orbit. They could decompress the whole ship." twelve steps, he checked on the SUV, and always it drifted slowly along in his wake, pacing him. "You don't have to live with it, Mother," Adam told her. Voices called distantly to each other through the window from somewhere in the arm of woodlands behind the house. Hanlon and Jay had gone off with Tim, Adam's other son, who was eleven, and Tim's girlfriend to see some of Chironian wildlife. Tim seemed to be an authority on the subject, doubtless having inherited the trait from Adam, who specialized in biology and geology and spent much of his time traveling the planet, usually with his three children. and who wrote lousy weepy epic poems about hangnails and bad-hair days.

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