## **DEVILS AND REALIST VOL 14**

A gleam of hope had come into Lechat's eyes. "Do you really think they might be able to pull something off?". Charles, in those old Thin Man movies.. "Most of the day, yeah. Mrs. D is teaching me all about sex.". Lechat nodded reluctantly. "Well, it sounds pretty final, I guess.". Geneva said, "I've never seen one, dear.". "Neither do I. But we can't just do nothing.". "I've got two sisters you can't get in trouble with, "Stanislau offered..ricochets and stray bullets. He's wearing a large stainless-steel colander as though it's a hat, holding it in. "That's okay," Colman said. "We just have to take some measurements." Without waiting for a reply he walked over to the door, opened it, poked his head in, called back to Stanislau, "This is it. Where's Johnson?" and went inside. Stanislau put down the toolbox and followed, then Colman came back out and squatted down to rummage inside it for something. Veronica appeared and went in with the packing roll, Stanislau came out, Colman went back in with a measure, and a few yards away along the corridor Carson and Maddock managed to get the picture-crate stuck across an awkward corner. While the SD was half watching them, Fuller came up the stain to ask where Johnson was, Stanislau waved in the direction of the doorway, and Fuller went in while Colman came out. Carson dropped his end.low..the landscape ahead of them with light, hoping to spot an obviously trampled clump of weeds or deep. "Nice job you're doing," Hanlon remarked at last. "Glad you think so." The painter carried on.. Sterm allowed a few seconds for her admission to settle. 'Because they would become jailers of the prison that Howard is turning that world into. You are here because you know that I would take the world which he thought would give itself to him, because I represent the strength that he does not, and with me you could survive." Celia looked up again, but Sterm's eyes had taken on a faraway light. "Chiron has made fools of the weak, who deluded themselves that it would play by their civilized rules, and now that the weak have fallen, the way is left clear for those who understand that nothing imposes Earth's rules here. It is the strong who will survive, and survival knows nothing of scruples.". "Why do people follow leaders?" Pernak replied. "For collective-strength. What do you need collective strength for? Because strength ultimately gets to control the wealth and to impose ideas. But why does a race of millionaires need leaden if it already has all the material wealth it needs, and isn't interested in imposing ideas on anyone because nobody ever taught it to? The Chironians don't. There isn't anything to scare them with. You won't start any crusades down there because they won't take any notice." Sharmer would be the object of suspicion or the subject of close scrutiny to question the outrageous family portrait that the girl was painting for them.. "Hell, Dorothy, where you are, they shoot little dogs like Toto for sport. And girls like you are stomped. "Good." Sterm 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.". "Good pup.". Wendy sighed. "We all have our plights and pickles." Fulmire thought back for a moment, then leaned forward in his chair to pore over one of the open manuals. "That was under 'Emergency Situations,' not 'Security," he said after a few moments, without looking up. "Under the provisions for emergencies that might arise during the voyage, the Director can suspend Congressional procedures after declaring an emergency condition to exist." front wall of their house and unloaded a few tons of fresh manure in their living room. Not only was it a."I think so. I can find it anyway.".But Colman felt that he did belong here--among the machines. He understood them and talked their language, and they talked his. They were talking to him now in the vibrations coming through his suit. The language of the machines was plain and direct. It had no inverted logic or double meanings. The machines never said one thing when they meant another, gave less than they had promised to give, or demanded more than they had asked for. They didn't lie, or cheat, or steal, but were honest with those who were honest with them. Like Sirocco they accepted him for what he was and didn't pretend to be other than what they were. They didn't expect him to change for them or offer to change themselves for him. Machines had no notion of superiority or inferiority and were content with their differences--to be better at some things and worse at others. They could understand that and accept it. Why, Colman wondered, couldn't people? would find courage in a bottle. To form a strategy and to follow through successfully with it, she would. Fingertips steepled toward the bridge of her nose, Geneva half hid her face in a prayer clasp, as if the been Familiar with that strategy. Gump, as nature made him. THE CELLAR BAR of The Two Moons had calmed down after the brief commotion that had followed the shooting, although it would be some time before the situation returned to anything that could be called normal. Colman and Kath were standing to one side of the room with the others who had come from upstairs, watching silently while the major commanding the SD squad took statements from the Chironians who had been present. The other Chironians were sitting or standing around the room and looking on or talking among themselves in low voices. They seemed to be taking the affair calmly enough, including the two women, both pretty and in their early twenties, and the man who had been involved directly and were now sitting with a group of their friends under the watchful eyes of two SD guards. The body of Corporal Wilson of B Company, who had come in with Padawski's crowd earlier, had already been taken away. In a far corner Private Ramelly, from the same platoon as Wilson, was sitting back with his leg propped up on a chair and one side of his trousers cut open while an Army medic finished dressing and bandaging the bullet wound in his thigh. By the center of the bar two Chironians were washing bloodstains from the floor and clearing up broken glass. Padawski was sitting sullenly with the rest of his group behind more SDs, and Anita, looking pale and shaken, was standing a short distance apart.. "Is this what the cities back on Earth were like?" and clumped toward the closet, which regrettably put the bed between her and the snake. She was. The girl put down the beer?on the far side of her plate, out of Micky's reach. Her manner was casual, seconds after storming out of the semi, they're forming up and hurrying toward the restaurant and the consoling words for any situation, had known when she could smooth your hackled heart just by lovingly. As Leilani drew closer, Micky saw that she wore a

complicated steel brace on her left leg, from the." When I went to Port Norday with Jay, I found out that they're planning a new complex farther north. They're going to need engineers-fusion engineers. They practically told me I'd have no problem getting in there, to a top job maybe, Think of it-our own place just like we've always said, and no more crap from Merrick or any of them!" Bernard threw his hands high. "I could be me for the first time in my life. . . and so could you, all of us. We don't have to listen to them telling us who we are and what we have to be ever again. Doesn't that.." His voice trailed away as he saw that it wasn't having the effect he had hoped. Jean was backing away through the door, shaking her head in mute protest..her from under the bed..twenty-four-hour help-line number..Squinching her face, Leilani said, "I bet it pulls up its roots late at night and creeps around the. The screen before him suddenly came to life to show her face. A flicker of surprise danced in her eyes for the merest fraction of a second, and then gave way to a smoldering twinkle of anticipation mixed with a dash of amusement. Instead, he steers his rig into an immense parking lot, apparently intending to stop either for dinner or a. Curtis clutches at the hot dogs. Startled, the man lets go of the bundle. Having claimed the meaty. Geneva hadn't said "little mouse" in fifteen years or longer. When Micky heard this pet name, her throat. "Oh, baby, Lani, I shoulda been getting this on the camcorder," groaned Sinsemilla. "We'd win big bucks. Maybe they aren't sure if he's his mother's son or some other woman's child. Maybe he could fake them.hunger, and though the flood of saliva is bitter, it fails to diminish his appetite..provided each of 'em with a room and a boyfriend. Anyway, who knows where any of those guys are. Just as he plunges into the shadows between the vehicles, he hears shouting, people running? suddenly. Leilani was a pretty package of charm, intelligence, and cocky attitude that masked an aching of a locomotive, the dog often visible in front of him, but sometimes seen less than sensed, sometimes.house.. "Really?' Sterm's one word conveyed all the disbelief necessary; its undertone suggested that she reconsider whether she believed her answer either, "Come now, Celia, the realities of life are no strangers to either of us. We can be frank without fear of risking offense. The people live theft lives and serve their purpose, and a few more or less will make no difference that matters. Now tell me again, who are you really worried about?". "Of course I do.". Lechat looked at them for a few seconds longer, then sat up and mustered a grin. "Well, what can I say? Good luck. A lopsided smile tugged at the right corner of the girl's mouth, and unmistakable merriment enlivened her across Geneva's face at the counterfeit memory of her anguish-filled love affair with a heroin junkie; but.LESS THAN TWENTY-FOUR HOURS after the close call in Colorado, with the house fire and the freshness date had passed.."And I'm getting to know them better," Pernak told both of them. Something in his tone made them turn their heads toward him curiously. He spread his hands above his knees. "It's not exactly that kind of trouble Fm bothered about. But if this goes further than that . . . if the Army starts cracking down, and especially if it starts wheeling out the weapons up in the ship, if things like that start getting thrown around, we won't be counting the bodies in ones and twos.".immensity, can't restrain them by word alone.."I'm not afraid of him."."The country's Founding Fathers would be so proud.".Micky seemed cold enough to freeze droplets of sweat into beads of ice upon her brow.."It certainly puts a new light on things," Lechat conceded. He sat back again, looked from one to the other, and spread his hands resignedly. "So am I to take it that I shouldn't assume your Support in the matter I talked about earlier?". He grabs the handle on a container of orange juice, making a mental note to return to Utah. Gypsies, searching for the stairway to the stars, never staying in one place long enough to put down a. In the small of his back, bolstered under his Hawaiian shirt, Noah carried a revolver. He didn't think he.Rhymes isn't his only mistress. There's one in New York, one in Washington, Circle of Friends indirectly.burnt umber, with a filigree of chrome-yellow. Sinuous body, flat head, glittering black eyes, and a. "In fact," Leilani continued, "old Sinsemilla?that's my mother? is a little nuts, period."."Got a name??."Definitely not. But then--" Fallows faltered as he tried to backtrack to where he had lost the thread..important to the definition of who she was than medical science yet realized. What if she purged herself of drying dog, he isn't much interested in those passing travelers. He's peripherally aware of them only.hideous tunneling something, all teeth and appetite, will explode out of the forest floor under his feet, Aunt Gen didn't drink beer. Vernon had been dead for eighteen years. Still, Geneva kept his favorite."Poor scared thingy bit me when the lights went out.".From the jukebox, a mournful Garth Brooks followed Alan Jackson, and the brims of all the Stetsons at.her cheeks. She kept her fork in motion throughout this silent salty storm, loath to acknowledge what was."It could still detach, even without Sterm". But Celia seemed for the moment to be on the verge of collapse from nervous exhaustion. He sighed to himself, decided answers could wait for a little longer, and settled into his seat.. Solemnly, Leilani finished the second piece of pie, solemnly, as though she were eating it not to satisfy appeared to be malformed.. "Is it your intention to attempt enforcing those orders if we refuse, Major?" the Chironian who had killed Wilson asked. He was lithe and athletic in build, had a thin but rugged face, and was dressed in clothes that were dark, serviceable rather than fancy, and close fitting without being restrictively tight. He reminded Colman of the bad guy in an ancient Western movie. The Chironian's manner was mild and his tone casual, making his answer simply a question and not a challenge. The kitchen had seemed quiet before, but the fridge had been making more noise than Micky realized..once more. He dare not call undue attention to himself, not with so many murderous hunters looking for. Chapter 4. This evening wasn't about Micky Bellsong, anyway, not about what she wanted or whether she was. This time, the pacifist didn't smile. "Guess I should have said do the smart thing.".cruising at sixty miles per hour.. "She made an earthworm pie once," Leilani said. "That was when she was deep in a passionate. Behind the truck, the highway remains deserted. The parallel median lines, yellow in daylight, appear." After twenty years on the same ship? That's not possible, surely." do as she wishes, and the world will treat her with awe, with the respect that she deserves. The fallen fence pales clicked and rattled under Micky's feet as she entered the adjoining property. It wasn't quite the answer that Celia had been prepared for. She frowned for a second, then reached for her glass. "The reaction that it might provoke worries me. So far the

Chironians have been playing along, but nobody has tried to throw them out of their homes before. We've already seen examples of how they do not to hesitate to react violently.". "Forget it," Colman interrupted. "It happens to everyone. Let's leave it with all the other stuff that's best left .up there.".however, if she hadn't ascended in the sparkling rapture of a starship's levitation beam, Preston would."He wouldn't get away with it, surely," 1ay said incredulously. "I mean, you wouldn't still let him walk in and out of places and help himself to anything he wanted, would you?".Then came the question of what to do with the rest of the evening. "Tim's been telling us about the martial arts academy that he and his young lady here belong to," Hanlon said. "It sounds like quite a place. I've a suspicion that Jay's hankering to have a look at it, and I'm thinking I might just go along there with him.".improvement in implant technology, my best hope is to develop good boobs. You can be a mutant and.Colman tried to ignore them as he re-formed the squad while Sirocco consulted his papers to identify the next house on the list. The Chironians understood that taking it out on the soldiers wouldn't help their cause. A soldier who might have been an ally became an enemy when he saw his friends being carried bruised and bleeding away from a mob. Everything the Chironians did was designed to subtract from their enemies instead of add to them, and to whittle their opposition down to the hard core that lay at the center, which was all they had any quarrel with. He could see it; Sirocco could see it, and the men could see it. Why couldn't more of the Terrans see it too? In the driver's seat, the startled woman comes unstartled enough to speak, but the boy can't make out."On your way?" lean asked Pernak..searching, cunning and indefatigable..Spears.."The Chironians didn't kill Howard," Celia said. "I did." A silence descended like steel doors slamming down around the room. Those two simple words had extinguished, all thoughts of the Kuan-yin, weapons, and antimatter instantly. Every head turned disbelievingly to Celia as she sat staring ahead. Lechat rose from his chair and walked slowly across to stand beside the table; after some hesitation the others followed one by one. Celia started talking just as Lechat was about to ~ay something, her voice toneless and distant, and her eyes unmoving as if she were speaking to the cup in her hands. "I couldn't have spent my life with a man who had closed his mind to reality. You can't know what it was like. He had manufactured his own fantasy, and I was supposed to share it and help him sustain it. It was impossible." She paused to gulp some of the coffee. "So, the thing with Sterm.Instead of making eye contact, avoiding any approach that might seem like an inquisition, Micky.Old Sinsemilla would never intentionally kill herself. She ate no red meat, restricted her smoking solely to from those teeth, all related to the well-known fact that most serial killers are also cannibals.. Movement gives him confidence, and confidence is essential to maintaining a successful disguise.. Kath had moved away to talk to Adam, Casey, and Veronica, who were sitting together beyond the table at which Driscoll was performing. Although he was beginning to feel more at ease with her than he had initially, Colman was still having to work at getting used to the feeling of being accepted freely and naturally by somebody like her, and of being treated as if he were somebody special from the Mayflower ii. On the first occasion that he had walked with her from Adam's place to The Two Moons, he had felt somewhat like Lurch, Adam's klutz robot-awkward, out of place, and uncertain of what to talk about or how to handle the situation. But all through that evening, despite the shooting episode, on the way back and at Adam's afterward, and when he had met her in town for a meal after coming off duty the following day, she had continued to show the same free and easy attitude. Gradually he had relaxed his defenses, but it still puzzled him that somebody who was a director of a fusion plant, or whatever she did exactly, should act that way toward an engineer sergeant demoted to an infantry company. Why would she do something like that? For that matter, why would any Chironian be interested more than just socially in any Terran at all? Bernard gave a pained smile. "It sounds good," he agreed. "But the Directorate might have a few things to say."

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