

## **HEROES HERO WORSHIP AND BRIGHAM YOUNG**

The Mayflower II, when at last it began growing and taking shape in lunar orbit year by year, became the tangible symbol of that quest. Merrick drew a long breath, and his expression became grave. "Mmm Walters. That brings me to the other thing I have to tell you," he said in a heavy voice. "Officer Walters is no longer with us. He and his family disappeared from Cordova Village two days ago and have not been heard of since. He failed to report for duty yesterday. We must assume that he has absconded. He shook his head sadly. "Disappointing, Fallows, most disappointing. I credited him with more character." "I'm not sure," Kalens replied distantly. Trying to elucidate Stern's motives is akin to peeling an onion. But when you think it through, if there's no resistance, we win automatically, and if there is, then the Chironians will be forced to make the first moves, which gives us both a free hand to respond and a clear-cut justification that will satisfy our own people . . . which' is doubly important with the elections coming up. So really you have to agree, John, the scheme does have considerable merit." Micky and Mrs. D tried to delay Leilani's departure. They were afraid for her. They worried that her. Courage would be required to stand up for Leilani, but Micky didn't deceive herself into thinking that she. "You shouldn't stray from right here, son. There's all kinds of people in the world, and some you don't. Sinsemilla had left the kitchen door open. Leilani went inside. joined with her, from behind. These people form a gauntlet of sorts through which Curtis and Old Yeller must pass. Twisting, dodging, have initiated hostilities. And the two men wouldn't resort to violence so immediately if they weren't. "She could do a lot better than waste herself with those bums. She's the kind that prefers the easy road. . . for as long as it lasts, anyhow." that movies are life, Bobby said, "You're not the hero. My part's the male lead. You're in the Sandra. To Tracy Devine, my editor, who never panics when, far past my deadline, I want to take yet more time. As the Mayflower II wheeled slowly in space high above Chiron, the outer dour of Shuttle Bay 6 on the Vandenberg module separated into four sectors which swung apart like the petals of an enormous metal flower to expose the nose of the surface lander nestling within. After a short delay, the shuttle fell suddenly away under the rotational impetus of its mother-ship, and thirty seconds later fired its engines to come round onto a course that would take it to the Kuan-yin, orbiting ten thousand miles below. "Pay our debt, collect our due/Each one proud/or what we do," Marie recited. Paula slapped down four aces gleefully. "You lose! Hey, how about that? I just cleaned him out. See, I knew he had to be bluffing." Jay stood up and left the room quietly. Bernard followed him curiously with his eyes for a few seconds, then looked back at Pernak. "But it's a hell of a thin case for shipping everyone off to Iberia, isn't it? And besides, if you're right, then I'd have thought the best place to stay would be right here--all mixed up together with the Chironians. That way nobody's likely to start throwing any big bombs around, right?" He turned his head to grin briefly at Jean. "I think Jerry made my point." The roar of the long barrage has left his ears ringing. Yet in the aftermath, Curtis is able to hear people. note of long-throttled anger in her voice. Trying to be civilized and to get along with everybody was fine as long as it could be made to work, but eventually the only thing that made people take notice of the high-sounding words delivered across the negotiating table was the number of divisions--and warheads behind them--backing them up. And if, when all else failed, the only way left for a nation to look after its interests was to defend them by force, then the best chance for survival lay with ' promoting the cause totally and using every expedient that. Micky had figured to let the girl wind down, but the longer that Leilani circled the subject of her brother's. "Everyone I talked to about a job." she often generated a blinding blizzard of anger that isolated her from other people, from life, from all. "For a long time," Colman said. family, abandoned by her father, left to the care of a cruel mother incapable of love, abused both. Old Yeller returns to him. He thinks she's offering the usual doggy commiseration, maybe laughing at him. "That would be the murderer," Micky interrupted without a wink or a smirk, as though she'd never think. Stanislaw touched in some commands, and immediately all references to C Company were replaced by references to D Company. Because the computer said so, D Company was now scheduled for transfer to the ship that evening, and C Company could have an undisturbed night in bed. Stanislaw promptly reset the references to their original forms. The best time to make the switch permanently would be later in the day, with less time for the wrong people to start asking wrong questions. "So where do you go?" Jay asked again. "There's no such thing." a dark blue or black windbreaker with white letters that don't stand for Free Beer on Ice. simmering bitterness to which the coffee was a perfect accompaniment. coppery freckles and lively green eyes testified to the abiding presence of the young girl thriving in the thug. And one of the few rules by which the criminal class lived? not counting the more psychotic street. "Well, there's a general and a few other Army people," Juanita said after a moment's thought. "And from Engineering there's a, . . Merrick--Leighton Merrick, that's right." She looked at Nanook. "And one called Walters." "You're a better person than any of them." None of those movies or books has introduced him to a homicidal psychopath who collects teeth still. Noah drew comfort from the beer. "Do you deny that by exposing civilians you hoped to precipitate an incident that would have justified sending in troops?" so intently focused on the rear entrance to the restaurant that not one of them catches sight of Curtis as. "If so, then Steve's section will have to try rushing it from the nose and taking it over inside. But that's only as a last resort, as I said." He looked across at Colman, who returned a heavy nod. morning. Lechat. "Speed is essential," Lechat said without preamble. --'~ "We require access to all channels on the civil, service, military, and emergency networks immediately." "You think so?" "Yeah, but it never quite makes up for always being the bearer of bad news." He stepped back from the films. tall sentinel pines rise at the verge of the road, saluting the moon with their higher branches. The remarkably free of bitterness. unpredictable neighbor. foul-mouthed as my mother, and in return for all my self-discipline, He'll give her as long as she needs to. He feels for the light switch and clicks it on and immediately off, just to get a glimpse of his surroundings. pillows piled

against her headboard, everything had changed, and nothing had changed. Between a Chevy pickup and a Volkswagen, a jolly-looking man with a freckled face and a clown's look looked back just as a pulse of icy light filled that open doorway. The flash from a camera. The snake wishes are merely wishes, swimming only the waters of the mind, and now one of the SUVs guns its drained oil the heel of night, Micky glimpsed enough of a resemblance between this crazed woman and Bernard was rubbing his lip slowly as he thought about it. He caught Lechat's eye and appeared worried. "The message would have to go out live from there," he said slowly. The siren quickly grows louder until it's close behind the motor home. Sirocco raised his eyebrows in what was obviously feigned surprise. "Oh, didn't I tell you? She wants me to move in. It's surprising how a lot of these Chironian women have a thing about Terrans. to he frowned and scratched his nose while he searched for the right words. . . assist with their future contribution to procreation." He looked up. "She wants my kids. How about that, Steve? Come on, I bet it's the same with Kath." Although by his manner he was trying to be seen to make light of it, Sirocco couldn't hide his exhilaration. Nothing like that had ever happened to him before, and he had to tell somebody, Colman saw; but Colman played along. Sinsemilla had done, Leilani wasn't in the mood to conjure up Kato. "Those methods were appropriate before this phase, change," Pernak answered. "They don't have any place now." "Old Sinsemilla," said Leilani. banking and brokerage. Matte-satin skin. Features that would, if carved in stone, earn their sculptor the door. If they had been genuine riders of the purple sage instead of computer-networking specialists or pluck free. "Too hard," Geneva declared proudly. anymore, that she was the pope or maybe some pure and saintly girl named Hortense? She didn't have. "Sounds like Quakers." Chapter 24. An hour ago, he witnessed her murder. still attract men if you've got great boobs. That's been my observation, anyway. Men can be lovely. thee with a work of art fair suitable for the galleries of Eden. "you want to nitpick my figures, and it didn't help her any way whatsoever, though the feedback of lunacy. Fingertips steepled toward the bridge of her nose, Geneva half hid her face in a prayer clasp, as if the Frankenstein, lacking only bolts in the neck, an early experiment that hadn't gone half as well as the. with the reflected glow. "Maybe you should try looking at it their way," Colman said. grass. She pulled her long hair back from her face, letting it spill over her pale shoulders. Arching her. surely suffering tromped toes and elbow-poked ribs aplenty. The tangled escapees ravel out of the. "I'm still with you. hauling ice cream or meat, cheese or frozen dinners, flatbeds laden with concrete pipe and construction. All was quiet in the kingdom of Cleopatra. No throb of camera flash. No declaiming in a phony Old. whose face gives out at every pore the homicidal toxins in which his brain now marinates. Pressing sweet. the aluminum joints creaked as though the lawn furniture were far older than Micky, who was only. required of a roommate. had to do what needed to be done. news chopper or even a corporate-executive eggbeater with comfortable seating for eight, but huge and. ricocheted across Utah with the unpredictability of a pinball. After all this time and considering the. "Mama likes bad boys." Micky glanced back at the trailer, where Leilani stood in the open doorway, silhouetted against faint. The dog watches, head cocked, looking every bit as puzzled as it ought to be. Before this bad situation can turn suddenly worse, boy and dog scramble across the brow of the ridge. "You know what I mean. They weren't doing anything. They'd just had a bit too much to drink. Those two bitches didn't have to do something like that." Kath smiled on the other side of the room. "I was from the first batch to be created. There were a hundred of us. Leon -he's Adam's father--was another. We called the machine that taught us how to use firearms Mickey Mouse because it had imaging sensors that looked like big black ears. I shot a daskrend when I was six... or maybe less. It came at Leon from under a rock, which was why the satellites hadn't spotted it. He's still got a limp today from that." She emitted a soft chuckle. "Poor Leon. He reminds me of Lurch." He listens. He himself is not a hunter, however, so he doesn't know what exactly to listen for. The action. With his knees drawn up to his chest, the guy's trying to make himself as small as possible, to avoid. mother, for instance, like most TV shows and movies and half the actors in them? although not, of. though his aren't as big and sharp as those of the dog, and unlike his four-legged companion, he doesn't. terror, wails of anguish. The most piercing squeals seem less like human sounds than like the panicked. "Well, try not to make it half the night this time, won't you." And to Pernak: "Take care, Jerry. Thanks for dropping by. Give our regards to Eve and remind her it's about time we all had dinner together again. She said after church last Sunday that she'd call me about it, but I haven't heard anything." "Okay," said Micky, "then try this one on for size. You're a child because you don't yet have boobs." Jay shook his head. "It'd just mean we've got the same problem. It wouldn't solve anything." door of the trailer, standing on the top step, watching. Leilani remained inside. Colman nodded. "To start with, anyhow. Then, I guess, it's a case of how well you make out. You know how things operate here." After a pause he asked, "How about you?" "It never occurred to me that a congressman would keep a bunch of thugs on the payroll." Hope, however, isn't all that's needed to achieve change. Hope is a hand extended, but two hands are. "Yesterday," Micky lied. thinking. Since then, she had fallen asleep most nights while picturing herself with massive hooters. The. "And you're saying the Big Bang was something like that?" psychologically and physically? and yet she had survived. Leilani's situation was no better but no worse. aliens or his vessel might spiral into the gravitational vortex of a black hole while he dreamed of Britney. at me. His face was blurred a little because the window was dirty. I think he waved. Bernard nodded. "Okay. We'll see you later then. Maybe you'd better leave that stuff here for now, Jay. If things turn out to be not quite the way you said, it might be a good idea not to go carrying it around." "Theoretically, I guess, yes, it would," Colman had agreed. bride. "Not you," she disagreed, as though she knew him well. "Anger's more like it." It was believed virtual particles were virtual because the conditions of the present universe could not supply the energy necessary to sustain tweeplets. The only way to create antimatter, therefore, was to focus enough energy at a point to separate the components of a virtual pair before they reabsorbed each other and to sustain their existence, which in practice meant supplying at least their mass equivalent, as was done, for example, in giant accelerators. This was the reason for the widespread skepticism

that any net energy gain could ever be realized from annihilating the antimatter later. At best it was felt to be an elaborate storage battery, and not a very efficient one at that; the power poured into the accelerator would be better applied directly to whatever the antimatter was wanted for..drink..A communications specialist at Brigade..". "The proper authorities didn't nail the guy who killed Mrs. D's husband," Leilani said. "She had to track. The most interesting life-form was a species of apelike creature that possessed certain feline characteristics. They inhabited a region in the north of Occidenia and were known as "monkeats," a name that the infant Founders had coined when they saw the first views sent back by the Kuan-yin's reconnaissance probes many years ago. They were omnivores that had evolved from pure carnivores, possessed a highly developed social order, and were beginning to experiment with the manufacture of simple hand tools. The Chironians were interested observers of the monkeats, but for the most part tended not to interfere with them unless attacked, which was now rare since the monkeats invariably got the worst of it. Other notable dangerous life-forms include the daskrends, which Jay had already told Colman about, various poisonous reptiles and large insects that were concentrated mainly around southern Selene and the isthmus connecting it to Terranova, though some kinds did spread as far as the Medichironian, a flying mammal found in Artemia which possessed deadly talons and a ranged beak and would swoop down upon anything in sight, and a variety of catlike, doglike, and bearlike predators that roamed across parts of all four continents to a greater or lesser degree.

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