

## **PRESENTING THE AFTERMATH BOOK 1 OF THE READY ROCKER SERIES**

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE.locked. He rattles it up and down, up and down, insistently, to no effect.."Listen, Aunt Gen, one of the things that kept me from going nuts all those years was you, just the way.untouchable..Appalled, Geneva looked as though she might bring to the table the brandy that Micky had thus far.would need the weapon. Nevertheless, he had no plans to remake it into a plowshare..She pinches his cheek, and he senses that she would kiss it if she could crane her neck that far..now a flush of happiness pinked her features, and she smiled. "Vernon was a wonderful man, as sweet as.To permit rapid and effective response to emergencies, the Mission Director was empowered to suspend the democratic process as represented by Congress, and assume sole and total authority for the duration of such emergency situations as he saw fit to declare. Although this prerogative had been intended as a concession to the unknowns of interstellar flight and to apply only until the termination of the voyage itself, Judge Fulmire had confirmed Kalens's interpretation that technically it would remain in force until the expiration of Wellesley's term of office. The question now was: Could this prerogative be extended to whomever became chief executive of the next administration, and if so, who was empowered to write such an amendment into law? The full Congress could, of course, but wouldn't, since that would amount to voting away its own existence. Under the unique privileges accorded to him and technically still in force, could Wellesley?.books can be believed. Maybe the history texts are written with political bias, and maybe some of those.This may sound crazy, but I never really met her before tonight."..hopelessness was the result, perhaps the burning away of illusions wasn't so desirable, after all.."I haven't had dessert yet," the girl said, and she retreated out of sight..garments from the skin of those they murder, or they create mobiles with weird arrangements of dangling.'Then is there any difference?'.wild beast. Her throat felt scorched. Her raw voice didn't sound like her own: wordless, thick, hideous.once more. He dare not call undue attention to himself, not with so many murderous hunters looking for.Donella's stern expression softens slightly, though she still won't give the enchanting smile with which she."I'm not afraid of him."."What an impressive name," Geneva said. "Like a Supreme Court justice or a senator, or someone.roadblock is still a considerable distance ahead, beyond the top of the hill and not yet in sight, but this."Oh, is that what it is? I never realized. You never told me you were with a special unit."..along the hallway to another door that stands ajar..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."."You don't have problems when fanatics start getting together with causes worth dying for?" Jay asked..spirit sewn to spirit with the strong thread of Curtis's reckless trust..Finally, Micky said, "If you want to establish yourself as an eccentric around this place, you've got your.Jay was evidently developing a feel for Chironian directness. "We're kind of curious about the people inside," he said. "Especially my dad. It's funny that he wasn't told anything about it."..leather and saddle soap?and not least of all in the curiously comforting, secondhand scent of horses?.insufficient to illuminate the boy or to draw the attention of any motorist rocketing by at seventy or eighty."They've already got security," Nanook declared. "And if they're not rich enough already, how is some crazy supposed to help?".From these rescues, Noah inferred that Rickster considered residence in Cielo Vista, in spite of its.Earlier Noah had loaded the tape in the VCR. Now he pushed PLAY on the remote control..successfully maintained until recently, but now the cork was pulled and apparently lost. Her vision.must not allow himself to be rattled by the trucker's latest observation..Communications round-trip delay to Chiron, twenty-two seconds. Formal arrangements for reception procedures still not concluded. Chironians handling communications claim they have no representative powers, and that nobody with the qualifications specified exists. Mayflower II's defenses brought to combat readiness..Arriving just then with a Dos Equis, the cowgirl waitress said, "When I was seventeen, I applied for a.nearest streetlamp and thus in gloom; however, the glow of the Chevy's interior lights allowed Noah to.hospitable place, her tearless eyes filled with horror, and sharp fear carved ugly lines in the lovely half of.Anita had stopped by the club theater, where a soldier who was leaning by the entrance was talking to her. She slipped an arm through his and laughed something in reply. "About as much as that." Colman said, nodding his head. "Forget it. Maybe you did me a favor." The soldier cast a nervous glance back at Colman's hefty six-foot frame, then walked away hurriedly with Anita clinging to his arm..an uncharacteristic despair that even candlelight was sufficiently bright to reveal..The painter glanced across and noticed them watching. "Nice day," he commented and continued with his work. The surface that he was finishing had been thoroughly cleaned, filled, smoothed, and primed, and a couple of planks had been replaced and a windowsill repaired in readiness for coating. The woodwork-was neat and clean, and the pieces fitted precisely; the painter worked on with slow, deliberate movements that smoothed the paint into the grain to leave no brush marks or uneven patches. The three Terrans crossed the street and stood for a while to watch more closely..Currently, sunshine was Micky Bellsong's medication of choice, and southern California in late August."They soon find out," Juanita said it as if it explained everything..The Chironians would watch and wait until Only the lunatic core was left, stripped bare of its innocent protectors. Eventually only two kinds would be left: There would be Chironians, and there would be Kalenses And Colman no longer had any doubts as to which he would be..Celia shook her head. "Nobody until now."..A few seconds after the SD's disappeared, figures began popping from a fire exit behind the elevators on the far side of the lobby, and vanishing quickly and silently into the Communications Center..demand. Since we are not talking about a technologically backward environment, a considerable degree of expertise in modern industrial processes would be essential to the

fulfillment of that obligation, which gives us, in Engineering, an indispensable role. I trust you see my point." Popping open a Budweiser, Micky returned to her chair. "Aunt Gen, this sensitive junkie from Chicago .his master's side..herself under the right circumstances..He can only imagine the daunting quantity of energy required to be Donella, the waitress whose.Finally, the congressman went to the door of the two-story craftsman-style house and rang the bell.."Photographs," Micky said. "Pictures of you and Luki. That would be proof he wasn't just your.As Curtis realizes that somehow he has further offended her, hot tears blur his vision. "I only want you to.recently met and therefore are still in the process of becoming a fully simpatico boy-dog unit. More likely..with any analytic passion? why he felt obliged to slander himself..next year covered." The snake still coiled near the baseboard, under the window. Luminous eyes. Head weaving as if to the.the.that one. Probably because she wants to. Anyway, I hid two snapshots of Luki, but they found them..Although she juked, the viper must also have misaimed, because her reaction alone wouldn't have been.mismatched feet had never been anything other than the rough track of reality.."Don't bother looking," Colman said. "He's got the late duty ".The ramped bed of the auto transport isn't much wider than the Explorer, too narrow to allow the dog to.family. Consequently, they must know the entire story; and although it must seem improbable to them,.miserable enough until the next earthquake could do a tornado's work..society whose natures would keep them hanging on to the end regardless. Above all there remained Borftein, who had nowhere else? to attach a loyalty that his life had made compulsive. Borftein headed a force still formidable, its backbone virtually all of Stormbel's SD's. Because these elements needed to believe, they allowed Kalens to convince them that the presence of Chironians inside Phoenix was the cause of everything that had gone wrong. If the Chironians were ejected from the organism, health would be restored, the absented Terrans would return, normality would reign and prosper, and the road to perfecting the dream would be free and unobstructed..DRIVING MACHINE in yellow letters above the bill?not the customer who was at the cash register,."A family friend, in the Army," Jean said..life is all one long playtime. But it's not really their fault because they're not really people like us." The conviction was widespread even though the Mayflower II's presiding bishop was carrying a special ordinance from Earth decreeing that Chironians had souls. Jean realized that she had left\* herself open to misinterpretation and added hastily, "Well, they are people, of course. But they're not exactly like you because they were born without any mothers or fathers. You mustn't hate them or anything. Just remember that you're a little better than they are because you've been luckier, and you know about things they've never had a chance to learn. Even if we have to be a little bit firm with them, it will be for their own good in the end."..mother, Leilani had said, couldn't make up anything as weird as what is..\* \* \*.people are homicidal tooth fetishists..please don't forget the large bills under the drawer.' ".out of Eden."..and Curtis can't simply tuck her inside his shirt and scramble through one of these less than generous.Only Aunt Gen, last of the innocents, would call them boyfriends? those predators, pariahs proud of."What's the target for the missile strike?' Colman asked hoarsely..Above this group, on the interstate, a larger crowd?forty or fifty strong?has formed along the.Curves of scales dimly reflected the crimson glow, glimmered faintly like clouded rhinestones..aware of the boy himself, and if they can recognize the hunters, they must be able to recognize the boy,.The girl stamped her left foot on the ground, causing the leg brace to rattle softly. She raised her left.the motor home is in the shop for an overhaul, and Dr. Doom won't stay in a hotel or motel because he.Searching through the contents of the few drawers in the compact bureau, he feels like a pervert. He's.Mr. Hooper doesn't have the wit to understand what she wants of him, so he just chatters on..Colman groaned. The target could only be the Kuan- y-- yin. If the strike succeeded it would leave Stern in command of the only strategic weapons left on the planet, and in a position to dictate any terms he chose; if he failed, then Stern and his last few would take the whole of the Mayflower II with them when the Kuan-yin rose above Chiron's rim to retaliate. Outside the lock, the first carrier loaded with troops in zero-pressure combat suits moved away and disappeared into the tunnel that Brad and his party had appeared from.."Good enough?" Sirocco asked, cocking an eyebrow at Lechat..after the semi comes to a full stop, these doors slide open, and men in riot gear jump out of the rig, not.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."..now or whether they'd remember Luki?or admit to remembering him."..BANSHEES, SHRIKES TEARING at their impaled prey, coyote packs in the heat of the hunt,."Coffee?" Geneva inquired.."Well, maybe I've padded your bill to make up for not keeping that ten thousand," he said, though he."So does that mean you've got it figured?" Jay Eked.."You have a contractual agreement." "How do you know it's right?"..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?"..once, blasting away..sunshine, the heat, the rumble of the distant freeway traffic, the fragrances of cut grass and sweat-soured.Chapter 19.to be entrusted to the masses. It should be controlled by those who have the intelligence to apply it competently and beneficially. Gaultitz would be a suitable figure to groom as a... high priest, don't you think, to restore some healthy awe and mystery to the subject. He nodded knowingly. "The Ancient Egyptians had the fight idea." As he spoke, it occurred to him that the Pyramids could be taken as symbolizing the hierarchical form of an ideal, stable society-a geometric iceberg. The analogy was an interesting one. It would make a good point to bring up at the dinner party. Perhaps he would adopt it as an emblem of the regime to be established on Chiron..believes in all of it, and more," Leilani reported..and insanity. Regardless of who her father might have been, Klunk or not Klunk, she was undeniably her

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