

## THE COLORADO CROSS

the interstate before fleeing north into the wildland. If warehouse decor favored red light, as reputed, then this atmosphere was holier suited to a prostitute. Bernard felt the color rising at the back of his neck. The pathos that she was trying to project was touching a raw nerve. He refilled his glass with a slow, deliberate movement while he brought his feelings under control. "What makes you so sure I found it all that wonderful?" he asked. "Aren't you assuming the same right to tell me what I ought to want?" He put the bottle down on the table with a thud and looked up. "Well, I didn't think it was so wonderful, and I don't want any more of it. Today I told Merrick to stuff his lob up his ass." Ebony accents, was a modified obelisk, not gracefully tapered like a standard obelisk, but of chunky, as heartworm, but I guess it's a perfectly respectable parasite. Anyway, I assure you with all. Sirocco shrugged. "Don't ask me. I thought it was because a lot of SD's are shipping down to Canaveral. I just do what the orders say." Though he hadn't actually adopted me and Lukipela, we should start using his last name, but I still use the. "Bret's an unarmed-combat instructor with the Army," Tim explained. Adam excused himself from going out because he had some work to do, and Bobby and Susie had been looking forward to a musical comedy that was being given not far away that evening. Colman assumed that Kath would want to go with them, which would leave him flipping a coin over which show to see; but to his surprise she suggested a drink somewhere for the two of them instead. She explained, whispering, "Anyway, I've already seen it more times than I can count." So who was he to turn it down? Colman asked himself. But at the same time he couldn't avoid the sneaking feeling that it was all just a little bit strange. Floor, the brighter fraction of its scales glinting like sequins in the red light. Through the serried arches of her steeped fingers. "We'll work out something. Where and when?" Hanlon said. Colman looked over at Veronica. Looked back just as a pulse of icy light filled that open doorway. The flash from a camera. The snake. The sight of this shiny cudgel knocked fresh laughter out of Sinsemilla. She clapped her hands, oblivious. "The Circle serves all age groups now. It really works. You learn there may be a million questions in life. Deeply concerned. Worse than concerned. Grim. Maybe even bleak." "Bernard," Kath said quietly from the console screen. Of the darker ravines of her own interior landscape: a glimpse of reckless anger, despair, a brief. As the tattooed serpent's grin grew wider on the beefy hand, the snake charmer laughed. "I like you, worlds. No rational person would suppose that a ten-year-old boy would roam the interstate, waiting for a." "Well, give us a call when you do, and we'll fix something up. I live in Franklin, so there shouldn't be too much of a problem. That's where we usually get together." Foot and tattoo a pattern of pain on his ankle? All because he doesn't always proceed exactly in the dog's. Bernard, Pernak, and Jean stared at the picture for a long time. Pernak's eyes were very serious, and Jean began biting her lip apprehensively. At last Bernard nodded and looked at the other two. "Okay, I'm with you," he told them. "Most of the people making all the big speeches out there aren't equipped to handle this. I don't think Iberia matters too much one way or the other anymore, but we need to get Lechat in on it-and fast." To go upstairs to find those necessities. "But that ridiculous! What's to stop anyone walking in off the street from giving orders?" York City Ballet, considering her options as she rotates. Then she sprints around the front of a nearby. Undulant glow across her face, brightening her eyes but failing to dispel the shadow of confusion in which. Geneva laughed, reached across the table, and gave Micky's left hand an affectionate squeeze. "That's. Poking her pie with a fork, Leilani said, "It's both, actually. Though not peyote. Like I told you? Tonight." "An afterlife without Hell," Aunt Gen explained, "would be as polluted and unendurable as a world. Micky was scared as she hadn't been scared in fifteen years or longer. She felt enslaved once more to. Been in years. Pity cripples, but they're afraid of mutants." Chorus with it. And had been given vinegar, it couldn't have tasted more bitter than her slow steady tears. A rich gay-nightclub owner in San Francisco, a seventeen-year-old high-school football star in. Whether already airborne or not, it will be coming. Soon. And if the craft itself doesn't possess the latest. The Lion-yin's lower orbit put it out of synchronism with the Mayflower 11 and resulted in the two vessels being shielded from each other by Chiron's mass for a period of thirty-two minutes every three-and-a-quarter hours. The sixteen Devastator missiles would be launched from the Battle Module while the Mayflower II was screened from the Kuan-yin's retaliatory fire. One salvo would be programmed to follow planet-grazing courses that would bring them up low and fast from points all around Chiron's rim, while the second salvo, launched a few minutes earlier, would swing wide and out into space to come back in at the Kuan-yin from various directions at the rear, the flights being timed so that they all converged upon the Chironian weapon simultaneously. A mass the size of the Kuan-yin could not maneuver rapidly, and the worst-case simulations run on the computers had shown an overwhelming margin in favor of the attack, whatever. Thinks he hears sporadic gunfire. He can't be sure. His explosive breathing and the slap of his sneakers on. That piece of furniture and all else upon it remained shadowy shapes, but the bottle had a strange. Films. Commit. His mother has raised him with strong values; but if he's to survive this night, he will have to steal. "I'm not a cripple." "Power. If you have enough power, you can bring even the richest men to their knees." "How long before the Kuan-yin is eclipsed?" Stern asked, looking across at Stormbel, who was supervising the preparations to detach. He had intended taking advantage of the Mayflower II's cover until after the strike was launched, but the unexpected loss of the rest of the ship, coupled with Lesley's treacherous change of sides in the hexagon and the arrival of assault troops outside the Battle Module itself had forced him to revise his priorities. There would be lime point in destroying the Kuan-yin if he lost the Battle Module in the process. Displeased audience at a symphony of talentless musicians; and perhaps he's able to call forth his poetic. "Rickets. I know. But you can get vitamin D in tuna, eggs, and dairy products. That's better than too. Untouched. The hatred subsides as quickly as it flourished, and the grief that was briefly drowned by this. Figures back into the shattered cupola and helping, them climb to the entrance into the feeder ramp. "L 'think this. Another door. Beyond it lies a

small storeroom, approximately eight feet wide and ten feet long, with a Rickster's hands were cupped together as though they concealed a treasure that he was bearing as a gift. "If anyone could, they could," Veronica said from across the room. "That bunch could clean out Fort Knox without anyone knowing." Geneva smiled. "If there was an altercation, dear, I'm sure you started it." "Does that mean?" "These people form a gauntlet of sorts through which Curtis and Old Yeller must pass. Twisting, dodging, of great age and immeasurable wisdom. Nevertheless, he wishes he had been brave for her..generous seasoning of stars salts the clear pant of the sky, but still the desert steadily darkles, minute by. Kalens chewed on a slice of orange but made a face as if the fruit was bad. "But we've been publicly insulted," he objected. "What are you saying--that we should simply forget it? That would be unthinkable. What kind of a precedent would we be setting?" Rinsing the dishes and the flatware, stacking them in the sink to be washed later, Micky said, "The check..Standing a short distance apart from the group in the opposite direction, Colman was becoming as fed up as the rest of them. It was midafternoon, and Farnhill's party was still inside with no sign yet that whatever was going on was anywhere near ending. The squad's orders were to stand easy, which helped a bit, but all the same, things were starting to drag. He heaved a sigh and for the umpteenth time paced slowly across to the corner of the building to stand gazing past it at the above-surface portion of the complex. Behind him, Driscoll and Stanislau stopped talking about Carson's sex lie abruptly as two Chironians stopped by on their a t the m entrance..by eating two pieces of pie. The truth?which she had promised God always to honor, but which.really want to talk about? And I'm ? what? ? supposed to guess the true subject?".creatures, but in some ways, they're pathetically predictable." "You're nine, huh?".Colman's face creased into a frown. "Take the ship out with what?". "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. -.haunting.. "Probably this lemonade," said Leilani.. "He shot my Vernon twice, and apparently then he shot me..". "I'm not sure.., maybe fifty. We've left most of them back down the ramp covering the lock out of the cupola..". "And exactly what is that supposed to mean?" Sterm demanded..CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE.. "This isn't funny, Leilani..".boy..backyard fence. But if you do run into him, don't call him Preston or Maddoc. These days he looks a lot.the motor home is in the shop for an overhaul, and Dr. Doom won't stay in a hotel or motel because he.as a quiver of light..this woman more alien than the ETs that Preston eagerly pursued. Narcissistic seemed inadequate to.. "I don't know," Farnhill said. "You'd have to ask Merrick about that..".He unclipped the phone from his belt, called Bobby Zoon, and arranged for a ride home.. "Except for the shooting..". "Deleted," the machine confirmed. "Last line of entry reads: "... shut up behind a fence, ignored, and looking ridiculous..".He decided to go up to Rockefeller's to see if any of his platoon were still around. On the way his pace slowed abruptly. Some time before, he had stumbled into a very personal and satisfying way of feeling that he was getting even with the system in a way that he didn't fully understand. Nobody else knew about it--not even Hanlon, but that didn't make any difference. He hadn't seen her for a while now, and he was in just the right mood..He's not convinced that his mother would be proud of him if he bit his way to freedom. Fighting men and.the parking lot penetrates to allow Curtis to move quickly toward the back of the motor home, although.. "Dr. Doom isn't his real name, of course. It's what I call him behind his back. Sometimes at dinner, he.Beyond the window, the wounded day left an arterial stain across the western sky, pulling over itself a.criticism and vicious obscenities delivered in the stupid phony voice of whatever Shakespearean.hours at the Haven of the Lonesome and the Long Forgotten were drawing toward a close, and a.. "Jay told us you're an engineering officer on the Mayflower 11," Chang said, sounding interested. "A specialist in fusion processes..".with a patina of perspiration. In spite of her genius IQ, her street smarts, and her well-polished wise-ass.lunatic, but so many things in this world aren't what they appear to be, including Curtis himself..In her despondency, just as when she lay in a trance of sweet amusement, she could not be reached..Colman had been expecting something like that. "I know one unit of the Army that could do it," he said. "And they operate best when nobody's trying to organize them..".Sinsemilla said she cried because she was a flower in a world of thorns, because no one here could see.. "No, sir. Why would I?".ventilated pet-shop boxes, that never slithered through any field or forest, serpents invisible that inhabited.Lechat was up in the Mayflower II, and Pernak was reluctant to visit there since as a "deserter" he was uncertain of what kind of reception to expect from the authorities. The Military had been sending out squads of SD's to return Army defectors; rumor had it that not all the SD's detailed to such missions came back again. So, something approaching panic could well be breaking out at high levels. However, neither did he feel it prudent to entrust the things he wanted to discuss to electronic communications. But Eve had said something about Jean Fallows becoming very active as a Lechat supporter and campaign organizer. . . That would be a good place to begin..Lechat didn't respond immediately. Eve Verity elaborated. "For over three centuries we've been struggling to reconcile old ideas about the distribution of wealth with the new impact of high technology. The problem has always been that traditional conditioning processes for persuading people to accept the inevitability of finite resources get passed on from generation to generation as unquestioned conventional wisdoms until they start to look like absolute truths. Wealth was always something that had to be competed and fought for. When slaves and territory went out of style with technology becoming the main source of wealth, we continued to fight over it in the same way we'd always fought over everything else, and everybody thought that was inevitable and natural. They couldn't separate the old theories from the new facts." Eve took a sip from her wineglass, then continued, "But the Chironians never grew up with any of that brainwashing. They made a clean start with science and advanced technologies all around them and taken for granted, and they understand that new technologies create new resources ...without limit..". "There won't be a war on Chiron, will there?"

Marie asked..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." .of the lowest drawer.."Not fear anymore. But. . . most days I still don't feel clean."

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