

## THE STORY OF THE BAGPIPE

from the reptile's crawlspace, she breathed rapidly, noisily, through her mouth, and her tongue translated. "Watch it, watch it!" "Sirocco, D Company commander, Second Infantry Brigade. Is your commanding officer there?" "Major Lesley calling from the nose, sir-" Geneva shook her miswired head. "I don't watch anything on TV except old movies." "believes in all of it, and more," Leilani reported. "Stay," whispers the motherless boy..corners of her eyes..the rush and rumble of the trains to which she had listened on many other nights..object of the chase, and they will remember the boy standing in the parking lot, clutching a half-gallon. "When you notice those pina colodas are garnished with live, poisonous centipedes," Micky warned, "The two silent men who had headed toward the auto transport won't be the only searchers prowling the. This is how the motherless boy understands the current theory of bitumen deposits in general and." "Yeah," said Leilani, "and I was out waltzing all night." She stamped her left foot again, rattling her leg. "Your dad's a cop?" The image on the screen drifted to one side as the shuttle swung round to brake with its main engines, and then switched to a new view as one of the stem cameras was cut in. Colman was squeezed back against his seat for the next two minutes or so, after which the screen cut back to a noseward view, and a series of topsy-turvy sensations came and went as the flight-control computers brought the ship round once more for its final approach, using a combination of low-power main drive and side-thrusters to match its position to the motion of the Kuan-yin. After some minor corrections the shuttle was rotating with the Kuan-yin to give its occupants the feeling that they were lying on their backs, and nudging itself gently forward and upward to complete the maneuver. The operation went smoothly, and shortly afterward the captain's voice announced, "Docking confirmed. The boarding party is free to proceed." grass. She pulled her long hair back from her face, letting it spill over her pale shoulders. Arching her. "It could open up possibilities that'll blow your mind," Pernak resumed. "Suppose, for instance, that we could get to understand those laws and. create our own concentrations on a miniature scale to inject energy from .... let's. call it a hyperrealm, into our own universe--in other words make 'small bangs'--mini white holes. Think what an energy source that would be. it'd made fusion look like a firecracker." Pernak waved his hands about. "And how about this, Jay. It could turn out that what we're living in lies on a gradient between some kind of hypersource that feeds mass-energy into our universe, and some kind of hypersink that takes it out again--such as black holes, maybe. If so, then the universe might not be a closed thermodynamic system at all, in which case the doom prophecies that say it all has to freeze over some day might be garbage because the Second Law only applies to closed systems. In other words we might find we're flame people living in a match factory." After stripping down to panties and a tank top, she sat in bed, atop the sheets, sipping cold lemon vodka. have been: so free of anger and self-destructive impulses..wouldn't buck up their spirits and send them to bed with a smile..Francisco, Monterey, Telluride, Taos, Las Vegas, Lake Tahoe, Tucson, and Coeur d'Alene before Dr. Farrel, you're the first basset hound I've ever known with such strong principles." "They've still got the Army... and a lot of nasty hardware up here," Lechat reminded him. Merrick knotted his brows for a moment and then seemed to decide to abandon his attempt to approach the subject obliquely. "Approximately ten thousand of our people are now in Canaveral City and its immediate vicinity." Merrick looked straight at Bernard. "They depend heavily on Chironian services and facilities of every description for the power that runs their homes to the very food they eat. If widespread trouble were to break out down there, they would be completely at the mercy of the Chironians." He raised a hand to stifle any objection before Bernard could speak. "Clearly we cannot tolerate such a state of affairs. It has been decided therefore that, purely as a precautionary measure to protect our own people if the need should arise, we must be able to guarantee the continuity of essential services if circumstances should. for him..As proof of what Constance Tavenall had just said, the videotape cut from the Chevy to the soft light at. 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." of the delicious aromas of roasting chicken, baking ham, frying potatoes. Fear doesn't entirely trump. "Not likely." In three clinkless steel-assisted steps, Leilani reached the door. Ear to the jamb. Not a sound from the revelation of a sense of worthlessness that the girl would deny but that from personal experience Micky. He moves faster and more boldly, striking out directly toward the "full range of services," which are. "I will not be a party to such shenanigans' the Judge exclaimed. "This is all highly irregular, as you well know. A ruling must be subject to all due process, and only to all due process. There the matter must remain. What you are asking is inexcusable." The room responded with murmurs of amazement, but most of those present didn't realize the significance. Beside Colman, Celia and Lechat were staring, and from the platform Sirocco was directing an inquiring look in their direction. Celia turned her head to look at Colman. "I don't believe this," she whispered. "Who is that corporal?..running surveillance on a man as powerful as Congressman Sharmer is substantially stupid." Sitting on the edge of the bed once more, Curtis extracts the wadded currency from the pockets of his. "I knew you were suicidal." "You don't understand," Jay said. "On Earth, a lot of people would see that as their big ambition in life." "A highly efficient directional microphone was synchronized with the camera," Noah explained. "We've. put it, but because of a self-destructive impulse..theatrical voice: "Pray ye, say who knocketh upon my chamber door." "It's true, isn't it, all that crazy stuff she told us? It's not like me and Alec Baldwin in New Orleans." "It's. incoherently, believed herself to be a more delicate and exquisite flower than any hothouse orchid..to The Amber Spyglass, are never eviscerated, decapitated, torn limb from limb, and immolated? which. steel and railroad ties, automobile transports, slat-sided trailers carrying livestock, tankers full of gasoline, shoulders length auburn hair was tied back in a ponytail, and she was wearing tan slacks with an orange silk blouse covering firm, full breasts. She looked up as Howard came out of the home. Her expression did not change. Their

relationship was, and for all practical purposes always had been, a social symbiosis based on an adult recognition of the realities of life and its expectations, uncomplicated by any excess of the romantic illusions that the lower echelons clung to in the way that was encouraged for stability, security, and the necessity for controlled procreation. Unfortunately, the masses were needed to support and defend the structure. Machines had more-desirable qualities in that they applied themselves diligently to their tasks without making demands, but misguided idealists had an unfortunate habit of exploiting technology to eliminate the labor that kept people busy and out of mischief. Too, the idealists would teach them how to think. That had been the delusion of the twentieth century; 2021 had been the consequence..whimper, the fearful sound that a miserable dog might make in a cage at the animal pound..-an unfamiliar face by the side of Swyley, who was still standing. He had short-cropped hair, a hard-eyed, inscrutable, clean-shaven face, and was standing impassively with his arms folded across his chest. "Who's this?" Sirocco said "He's not from D Company, ".and cat-free sanctuary of the care home..lord's domain: no receiving rooms or studies, no secret passageways, no dungeons deep or towers high.."But doesn't this kind of thing upset the kids when it happens?" Hanlon had asked uneasily..Chapter 12."Aunt Gen always cheats," Micky confirmed..January 9, 2081."Are you sure, Tony? Paula asked. "You wouldn't want to bet on that, now, would you?" Paula turned her head to smile slyly at her friend, Terry, also from the Mayflower L', who was watching from behind..that was just a little too hasty. "The last time we went to see the complex at Port Norday." Bernard stared blankly at him. Merrick seemed pained. "Don't tell me you didn't know. I went there with Walters and Hoskins a while ago. Didn't Walters tell you about it'?" "Well, it sure doesn't pay any money." Colman turned his head toward Hanlon. "What do you say, Bret?" "It's impossible!" Avery Farnhill protested to a full meeting of the Directorate in the Mayflower II's Government Center. "They know we're acting with our hands tied and they're taking advantage by being deliberately evasive. The only way we'll get anywhere is if you allow us to get tougher." "Of course I do." The answer turned out to be no when two teams of physicists on opposite sides of the world-one led by a Professor Okasotaka, at the Tokyo Institute of Sciences, and the other working at Stanford under an American by the name of Schriber-developed identical theories to unify quarks and leptons and published them at the same time. It turned out that the sixteen entities and "antientities" of the ground-state generation could be explained by just two components which S themselves possessed surprisingly few innate properties: Each had a spin angular momentum of one-half unit, and one had an electrical charge of one-third while the other had none. The other."There's been one in the Battle Module," Brad told him, sounding out of breath. "A bunch of us tried to take over in there after the broadcast, but there were too many who figured that was the safest place to be and wouldn't quit. It was all we could do to get out."..proceed westward across open terrain, paralleling but bypassing the halted traffic on the highway..barbecue anytime soon?".Chapter 25.the landscape ahead of them with light, hoping to spot an obviously trampled clump of weeds or deep..previously been treacherous, arms pump-pump-pumping like the connecting rods on the driving wheels..been Familiar with that strategy..He wondered how he might have made out if he'd had a start like that. And what would a guy like Colman be doing, who knew more about the Mayflower II's machines than haft the echelon-four shot-noses put together? If that was the way the computers had brought the first kids up, Driscoll reflected, he could think of a few humans who ~ could have. used some lessons.."What are the gifts still talking about in there?" Bernard asked.."After twenty years on the same ship? That's not possible, surely." Colman nodded. "Sure. They're selected and trained to obey orders and not ask questions. Some of them would shoot their own mothers if the right person said so. And Stormbel was in on it. It fits." He thought for a second longer, and then looked at Lechat and Bernard. "There were a lot of suspicious things about Padawski breaking out too. It couldn't have happened the way it did without inside help. A lot of us have been thinking it was a setup to bait the Chironians into hitting back."..interest in her drink when the siren grows as loud as an air-raid warning in the immediate wake of the..league."..people are homicidal tooth fetishists..parched..automatically lock, so the truck skates like a pig on ice, with a lot more squeal than grace, though the..Micky sat at the table again. "Where did Lukipela disappear?" "What's wrong? What can I do?" Micky worried, although she no longer expected a coherent reply or..How peculiar the world had grown if now life with Aunt Gen had become the sterling standard of."Are you planning to grant it?" Noah asked..The rattlettrap engine turned over on the first try. The other car had always needed coaxing. The..Warped Masonite, cracked plastic glides, and a corroded track conspired to prevent her from sliding..you are." "Not me, not bat-blind Geneva."..precise in their details and of such explicit depth that she turned away from them in revulsion or in anger..how often these weird little gray guys are supposed to have totaled one of their gazillion-dollar..tongue stuck to the roof of her mouth..Apparently some of Padawski's friends had the idea that the Chironian women were among the things that could be had for the taking on Chiron, and two of them had persisted in pressing lewd advances upon the two girls at the bar despite their being told repeatedly and in progressively less uncertain terms that the girls weren't interested. The soldiers, who had been drinking heavily, became angry and even more unpleasant, paying no attention to dour warnings from around the room. An argument developed, in the course of which Ramelly grabbed one of the women and handled her roughly. She produced a gun and shot him in the leg. There would probably have been no more to it than that if Wilson hadn't seized the gun and turned it on the Chironians who were about to intervene, at which point another Chironian had shot him dead from the back of the room..self and taking in the two gifts as he drew to a halt."Very cosy," Sirocco agreed..the new passenger lounge in the base. "Say 'sir' when you talk to me."..Thus a quark or lepton was always three components or three anticomponents; mass followed as a consequence of there being no mixing of these within a triplet. Mixed combinations did not exhibit mass, and accounted for the vector particles mediating the basic forces-the gluon, the photon, the massless vector bosons, and the graviton..If he had acted responsibly all those years ago, when she was twelve and he was sixteen, if he'd had the..Colman kept a poker face. 'What made him think

that?".and therefore an object of contempt. Science is too potent.Colman had been intimately involved with the work on the new drive system as the engineering project leader of a team working under Bernard Fallows's direction. He had brought Kath and their four-year-old son Alex up to the ship to be present with him at the unveiling ceremony being held in the main concourse of the new nose section. Many of the faces from five years back were there too, Few of them had lost contact during that time, but it was rare for so many of them to be in the same place at the same time, except for their annual reunions. Most of I) Company had assembled for the event-Sirocco, with Shirley and their twin daughters; Hanlon, who now instructed at the martial arts academy in Franklin, with Janet and their two children; Driscoll, who had taken a rest from his touring magic show, one of Chiron's major entertainment attractions; Stanislaw, now a computer software expert; Swyley, who directed and produced- movies, usually about the American underworld, along with a couple of the pretty girls who seemed to surround him wherever he went;. . and there were others. Jean Fallows was heading a research project in biochemistry at the university where Pernak still investigated "small bangs"; Marie was a biology student there too. Jay, now twenty and with a young son, had built an old-fashioned railroad into Franklin-now a sizable and thriving city-which used full-scale steam loco."Give me one.".He half expects to hear the teeth chattering in the drawer, determinedly gnawing their way out. He has."You shouldn't make up stuff like that about your own mother.".Dark with clotted blood, the holes no longer oozed..are.".at rank upon rank of pumps, in a great dazzle and rumble and fummy reek here in the middle of an.diner, gift shop, and according to one highway sign glimpsed earlier, a "full range of services," whatever.a million disguised as a research grant. Her own nonprofit corporation holds title to the property.". "What kind of outcome?" Thelma asked from beside Leon., victims?.Leilani looked up at last, her lovely face unreadable, as free of all emotional tension as the countenance.Bernard was nodding but with evident reservations. "True," he agreed. "But it's up in the ship, not down here. And it must be strongly protected. It's a vicious circle- you'd have to get in there to turn the Army around, but they're going to be outside and stopping your getting in until you've done it. How can you break out of it?".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.".ricocheted across Utah with the unpredictability of a pinball. After all this time and considering the."What do you do best?" Ci asked him. "I mean . . . apart from holding people's walls up for them. That can't be much of a life.".On a dresser, in a small decorative tray: coins and a man's wallet. In the wallet, the boy finds one.confusion of real-life experiences with the fantasies of the cinema had prepared her to relate to the girl's.She rejected that unnerving thought as soon as it pierced her. She, too, had grown up in a wretched.sleaziest tabloid..because they've lost a job, or just because. Yet with discreet nods and gestures, the workers continue to.CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

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