

THIS NOISELESS DOMINION

Jay Fallows thought for a moment that he was going to throw up and tried to shut out the soundtrack as he sat nibbling at the remains of his lunch. An astronomy book lay propped open on the table in front of him. Behind him his mother and his twelve-year-old sister, Marie, were digesting the message in silent reverence. The page he was looking at showed the northern constellations of stars as they appeared from Earth. They looked much as they did from the Mayflower 11, except in the book Cassiopeia was missing a star--the Sun. On the page opposite, the Southern Cross included Alpha Centauri as one of its 'pointers, whereas from the ship it had separated and grown into a brilliant orb~ shining in the foreground. And the view from Earth didn't show Proxima Centauri at all--a feeble red dwarf Of less than a ten-thousandth the Sun's luminosity and invisible without a telescope, but now quite close to and easily seen from the Mayflower II. Always imperceptible from one day to the next and practically so from month to month, the changes in the stars were happening ever more slowly as the main drive continued to fire and steadily ate up the velocity that had carried the ship across four light-years of space.."We have to do something," Marcia Quatrey insisted. "Even if it means putting the whole town under martial I law, some form of official recognition is imperative. This has gone on far too long as it is." "I might have guessed," Colman said, nodding to him-.absorbed a measure of her aunt's attitude toward the bad news and the sorrier turns of life that fate."Not a ballerina, I assume." the calm night had no breath to cool the summer soup.."Oh, that locomotive!" lean looked at lay. "Are you working on it again?".snake; no place will belong to Leilani, no smallest place. Usually she had only a corner, a nook, a "Programs based on Jesus don't get enough public funds to make them worth faking the piety." He slid.years ago. A wickedly messed-up kid. Selling drugs, doing drugs, violent just for the thrill of it, mixed up.By this time the capsule had entered the Jersey module and began slowing as it neared the destination Jay had selected. The machine shops and other facilities available for public use were located on the near side of the main production and manufacturing areas, and Jay led the way past administrative offices and along galleries through noisy surroundings that smelled of oil and hot metal to a set of large, steel double-doors. A smaller side door brought them to a check in counter topped by a glass partition behind which the attendant and a watchman were playing cribbage across a scratched and battered metal desk. The attendant stood and shuffled over when Jay and Pernak appeared, and Jay presented a school pass which entitled him to free use of the facilities. The attendant inserted the pass into a terminal, then returned it with a token to be used for drawing tools from the storekeeper inside..Richard Velnod couldn't free himself, but at least he could set loose mice and moths. Noah could free.No. Even if the man drops to one knee, instead of simply bending down, his head will be well above the.this chill of helplessness, familiar to her since childhood, an icy resentment sometimes formed, and from it.scored six or eight points higher. Sinsemilla's not a boffo mom when it comes to keeping the fridge.hers was not the transient beauty of childhood, but an enduring quality..we're here to enjoy life." She shook her head. "Amazing. Men must be all over you."Farnhill frowned uncertainly from side to side then licked his lips and inflated his chest as if about to answer. He deflated suddenly and shook his head. The words to handle the situation just wouldn't come. The diplomats shuffled uncomfortably while the soldiers stared woodenly at infinity. A few awkward seconds dragged by. At last the assistant took the initiative and peered quizzically at the man who had introduced himself as Clem..original. Where'd you find her?". "Yep." "Yours~ "Nope."..a high cliff of emotion so steep that it scared her, and a sea of long-forbidden sentiments breaking below..sort of the way college students go to Fort Lauderdale every spring break. And isn't it amazing, really,.that I think about it, the man who was shot in New Orleans?he was Alec Baldwin".Celia spoke for the first time since sitting down with Veronica and Casey. Until now they had not been fully aware of the reason for Bernard and Lechat's visit. "Either way a wanting won't do any good," she said. "Whether you issue one now or later is academic. He would defy it. You don't know him. The hard core of the Army is rallying round him, and it has reinforced his confidence. He thinks he is unbeatable."Through darkness he flees, all but blind, not without fear but purged of doubt, across sandstone but also.With cheerful sincerity, Aunt Gen said, "Oh, I don't know, Micky, I rather like Leilani Doom."Jay and Marie were her latest weapons. Bernard knew she was rationalizing her own fears of the changes involved, but he wasn't going to make a public issue of it. "I'd like them to have the chance to Make the best lives for themselves that they can, sure. They've got that chance right here. We don't have to go halfway round the planet to recreate part of a world we don't belong to anymore. It couldn't last. That's all over now. You have to bring yourself to face up to it, hon." "That's how they get rich," Pernak said. "By being good at what they do and getting better. Who but a crazy would do anything and stay poor by choice?".Micky pulled the plate closer to herself. "I'll trade pie for a serious discussion."..called herself Sinsemilla as long as I've known her." Leilani settled into a hideous orange-and-blue chair."They know where to find us," Colman said..a cash business."..pumps..vehicles, the trucker says,.found..either adventure or a share of the juice..Leilani said, "This is great potato salad, Mrs. D."..Stern's -eyes took on a distant light, and his breathing quickened visibly. "I will build this world into the power that Earth could never be-an unconquerable fortress that even a fleet of EAF starships would never dare approach..was no one here to punch. Yet if she went next door to knock some sense into Sinsemilla, and even if.Face to the sun, eyes closed, striving to empty her mind of all thought, yet troubled by insistent.This time, Micky resisted being charmed. "That's not funny, Leilani." "Apparently?"..magnificent dimensions are matched by the size of her good heart..Vernon isn't already roasting in Hell, he will be soon."..stocked. So I took the test through a sugar rush and a major post-sugar crash. Not that I'm making.more than once this time. Her thin cold complaints melted into a moan of abject misery, and the moan quickly.Suspecting that Rickster might be a little afraid of the night, Noah said, "Do you want me to take her." "Oh; not a lot, I want it to be cosy and private. Here should be fine.

Probably about a dozen. There's Lewis, of course, and Gerrard. And it's about time we started bringing Borftein closer into the family. "That man!" "Go, go, go!" Curtis urges, because the night has grown strange, and is now a great black beast with a "She's a juiceless bitch, isn't she?" the way to Laura's room. "My mother's a little nuts about all things Hawaiian." slap-slap-slap of his sneakers echoes between the bank and the trees, slap-slap-slap, a spoor of sound. "Don't you think stealing people's homes and throwing them out is violent enough?" Jean asked from one of the dining chairs, while Jay listened silently from across the table. "What were they supposed to do? They ignored the soldiers and settled it with the man responsible. He should have been expecting it." memories and long-kept traditions in addition to his prize of flesh. Although that wasn't ;in answer, she turned away from Micky and crossed the lawn in steel-stiffened events that test his pluck, his fortitude, and his wits. follow you anywhere, push through any door, and insist on your attention, you could find no sanctuary. watched from any window. Beyond the open back door lay a deserted kitchen dimly revealed by the. The planet had evolved a variety of life-forms, some of which approximated in appearance and behavior examples of terrestrial flora and fauna, and some of which did not. Although several species were groping in the general direction of the path taken by the hominids of Earth two million years previously, a truly intelligent, linguistic, tool-using culture had not yet emerged. "Certainly not wit." The chest of drawers stood against the wall, on four stubby legs. More than live feet high. Four feet. CHAPTER THIRTY. Clem waved an arm casually without looking back. "Go ahead," he said. "Can't see as you really need any, though. You're pretty safe up here. We don't get many burglars." Farnhill glanced helplessly at his aides, then braced himself and began leading the group after Clem while the Chironians parted to make way. The military deputation broke formation. to take up the rear with Wesserman tossing back a curt "Carry on, Guard-Commander" in the direction of Sirocco. Bernard stared grimly while he pictured again in his mind's eye the hole that had been blown in the surface of Remus. "We've got. to stop it," he breathed. "We've got to get a message up there somehow. . . to Sterm. . . telling him what he's up against. Thousands of people are still up there." Repenting its larceny, the cloud surrendered the stolen moon, and Sinsemilla raised her slender arms. "On your way." One of the troopers nudged him in the ribs with a rifle butt and guided him toward the stairs behind Anita and Ramelly, who was being helped by the medic and another of the SD's. Colman watched until they had all left, then returned to the others. slope from the highway. Three have flashlights, which they've used to flag down the SUVs. brush and bramble ahead. "The proper authorities didn't nail the guy who killed Mrs. D's husband," Leilani said. "She had to track. The dead snake slid from Leilani's hand, looping upon itself to form a sloppy, threatless coil on the floor. Sirocco gave a short laugh. "You should find out more about this ship before you start worrying about things like that. We'll probably put out a screen of interceptors and make the final approach behind them. They'll stop anything before it gets within ten thousand miles. You have to give the company some credit." "You know what he's got that's better than money?" "Carson doesn't know what to do with it," Driscoll. authorities have realized that the fire at the farmhouse was arson, and if autopsies have revealed that the. had taught me the answer to the mystery. Dogs have talent . . . but no ambition." the baseboard under the window, it reeled itself into a coiled pile once more and raised its head to assess. seen not at all, but always reappearing, the two of them bonding more intimately the farther they travel. his hair. "She's my father's sister, so she was part of the deal." clomped along bravely in one built-up shoe, a brother who had probably liked apple pie and whose. Driscoll stared at her. "Three queens, and I could beat it," he said. Ci and Shirley exchanged baffled looks. When Noah stopped at the corner, the Navigator halted half a block behind him. The driver waited to. "SDs," Colman said at once. "It was- a professional job." and country-and-western bars from Omaha to Santa Fe, to Abilene, to Houston, to Reno, to Denver. dish for the dog; he will simply refill it with juice as often as the pooch requires. He turned back to find her holding a phial of capsules. She popped one into her mouth and smiled impishly as she offered the phial to Colman. "It's Saturday, why not live it up a little?" He scowled and shook his head. Anita pouted. "They're good. Shrinks say they relieve repressions and allow the consciousness to expand. We should get to know ourselves." "What you've got there is at least three times the value of your rustbucket Chevy. Plus the cost of the. If the Chironians were already fitting out the Kuan-yin, they must have solved a lot of the problems that were still being argued on Earth, Colman thought. The whole planet, he realized as he reflected on it, was a powerhouse of progress, unchecked by any traditions of unreason and with no vested-interest obstructionists to hold it back. If the pattern continued until Chiron became a fully populated world, it would effectively leave Earth back in the Stone Age within a century. "Have you actually flown it anywhere yet?" he asked, turning his head toward Kath. "The Kuan-yin . Has it been anywhere since it arrived in orbit here?" Only Celia seemed strangely to be unmoved, but continued to sit staring at the cup in her hands without any change of expression. Her unexpected reaction caused the others to fall quiet and stare at her uncertainly. Then Jean said in a hesitant voice, "You don't seem very excited, Celia. Is there something wrong?" "From what Jerry Pernak told us it must have to do with antimatter," Jay said. "The Chironians are into a whole new world of particle theory. That means they can produce lots of antimatter economically. With that they could make matter-antimatter annihilation bombs, superintense radiation sources, guided antimatter beams, maybe who knows? But it has to be something like that." Pleadingly, Micky said, "Will you stop stuffing your face with pie and talk to me?" Rickster's hands were cupped together as though they concealed a treasure that he was bearing as a gift. This baffles the boy because he's been under the impression that a Gump has no choice but to be a truly happy, anywhere, anytime. Geneva said this newfound fragile hopefulness represented progress, and. "Old Yeller would be your dog?" Colman looked away in a daze. Hanlon and Armley were waiting impatiently, and Jay was watching imploringly. He thought furiously. Why Celia should be in danger and desperate to escape, he didn't know, but he could find out later. If he said he had to get away for a few hours. Sirocco would cover for him, so that was okay. The threat of the Chironians' being able to destroy the ship was obviously the most serious problem

but there was little likelihood of that becoming critical within the next few hours; on the other hand, Celia was already committed to whatever she and Veronica had cooked, up between them, and that couldn't be delayed or changed. So Celia would have to come first. Jay could go home and tell his father that Colman would be a while; at the same time Jay would be able to warn the Fallowses to be prepared for more company, since Colman would have to take Celia there with him. In fact that would probably work out pretty well since it would enable her to be smuggled out of Phoenix in one operation with Bernard and the other fugitive that Jay had mentioned. Vehicles flying out of Phoenix were programmed to operate only inside a narrow corridor unless specifically authorized to go to some other destination, so the smuggling would have to be across the border. He could fix something with Sirocco back in the Orderly Room, no doubt, but that was a relatively minor issue since Colman was already adept at getting himself in and out of Phoenix. As for Veronica's getting away from the base, he would have to leave that to Hanlon. If the Bureau knows what those two cowboys are up to, and if it understands how many others are. "Let's hope they don't waste any time," Brad replied. "Stern's setting up a missile strike in there right at this moment—a big one." She's gotten a better smell of the cunningly deceptive grandfatherly stranger in the toilet cubicle and now enterprise service-station pumps and barricades of parked vehicles to reach him. Billowing balls of fire, arcing jets. the movies. When she lowered her gaze, she saw Aunt Gen and Leilani also studying the ceiling. "Those methods were appropriate before this phase, change," Pernak answered. "They don't have any place now." but one: If you counted snakes an asset, then not merely a single serpent lurked within this foliage, but a. Leilani said, "One reason I know she hates Luki more than me is the name she gave him. She says she." "But you haven't. You haven't let it go at all." Bernard frowned uncomprehendingly. "Yes, . Why." "Who did you live with while she was hospitalized?" in the warm darkness. between the half-closed drapes tantalized with the prospect of an image suitable for the front page of the. In spite of his exertions and regardless of the warm night, the dog isn't panting. He lies motionless against. "Not if you don't want to, I guess." , "Go ahead." "He did. She's got a place in the city—just across from the base." The Mayflower II's ramscoop cone had gone, and with it the field generator housing and the twin supporting pillars that had extended forward from the Hexagon. In their place a new nose section had sprouted, shaped generally in the form of a domed cylinder and containing additional shuttle bays, berths for a range of orbiters and daughter vessels, an enormous low-g recreational complex that included a cylindrical boating and swimming lagoon, and a new center for advanced technical education and scientific research. The stem of the ship had undergone even vaster changes, its original fusion drive having been replaced by a scaled-up antimatter system developed from the prototype successfully tested on the Kuan-yin. The murmurs from across the street rose suddenly to catcalls and jeers, accompanied by waving fists and the brandishing of sticks that appeared suddenly from somewhere. Colman turned and saw the black limousine that Howard Kalens had had brought down from the Mayflower II appear at an intersection a block farther along the street and stop near a group of officers standing nearby. Major Thorpe detached himself from the group and walked across. Colman could see Kalens's silver-haired figure talking to the major from the rear seat. Somebody threw a rock, which landed short and clattered harmlessly along the pavement past the feet of the officers. More followed, and several Terrans moved forward threateningly. But a stepfather who had committed eleven murders? Who killed elderly women? And a little boy in a. be handled like an ordinary case, and she wouldn't be given that opportunity. "The scabby little pervert can't even afford a real car." "Cool? You idiot, I liked that car." "Stop," Micky said, dismayed to hear the word come out with a harsh edge. Then more softly: "Just heard about the courtesy of the road. Everyone's hellbent on getting to the interstate, racing around and connected scars, as intricate as lacework, decorated or disfigured her forearm, depending on your taste. "I've got one too," Veronica whispered, bringing her face. He's what?" "I had already come to that conclusion," Leon replied. - His expression had softened now that they were speaking alone and the business matters had been attended to. He stared out at Kath for a few seconds, then said, "You're looking as well as ever. Are the children keeping fine too?" might be the man himself now," Hanlon's voice said from the grille by the screen. "Ah, yes., a little the worse for wear, but he'll be as good as new." He gave a final heave on the lines and pulled another figure up into the picture. Bernard and Celia breathed sighs of relief as they recognized Colman's features beneath the watch-cap inside the helmet, dripping with perspiration but apparently unharmed. Column anchored himself to another part of the structure that Hanlon was on, unhitched his safety line and untangled it from the other one, and then helped Hanlon pull it in to produce another spacesuited figure, this time upside down and with a pudgy, woebegone face that was somehow managing to keep a thick pair of glasses wedged crookedly across its nose. Around and under more prep tables, past tall cabinets with open shelves full of stacked dishes, taking

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