

## YOU DID WHAT

Lechat nodded reluctantly. "Well, it sounds pretty final, I guess." Another flash of stars and they were in Idaho, one of the two fixed modules that carried the main support arms to the Spindle. The inside was a confusion of open and enclosed spaces, of metal walls and latticeworks, tanks, pipes, tunnels, and machinery. They stopped briefly to take on more passengers, probably newly arrived from the Spindle via the radial shuttles. Then the capsule moved away again..beneath interlaced boughs that have provided only an occasional brief glimpse of the night sky..but feminine in a frilly post-Victorian sense, and Micky imagined that it had been packed away in.Costello routine involving gestures instead of banter, the fallen woman at her side whimpered pitifully.. "You don't think that a ship full of Asiatics coming at us armed to the teeth qualifies as an emergency?" Borftein asked sarcastically..Old Yeller returns to him. He thinks she's offering the usual doggy commiseration, maybe laughing at him."How long before the flyer shows up?" Carson asked..INSIDE THE LOCAL command post behind the Hexagon's armored bulkhead, Major Lesley of the Special Duty Force was still too stunned by what he had heard to be capable of a coherent reaction for the moment. He stared at the companel where a screen showed a view from the Columbia District, where the SD guard commander had entered the Communications Center under a truce flag some minutes previously to talk with Borftein, and tried to separate the conflicting emotions in his head. Captain Jarvis, Lesley's adjutant officer, and Lieutenant Chaurez watched in silence while around the command post the duty staff averted their eyes and occupied themselves with their own thoughts. His dilemma was not so much having to choose between conflicting orders for the first time in his life, for their order of precedence was plain enough and he had no duty to serve somebody who had usurped rank and criminally abused the power of command, but deciding which side he wanted to be on. Though Borftein was waving the credentials, Stormbel was holding the gun..spirit sewn to spirit with the strong thread of Curtis's reckless trust..wolfing them down..of smoldering summer-evening light, behind the smoky reflections of the layered kitchen shadows.. "Shirley? You mean Ci's mother?". Tail wagging, the pooch pads into the bathroom?and straight toward the toilet cubicle..woods. Lambent moonlight spangles an arc of urine..has taught you to think. I feel bad about that, Micky B, about whatever you went through." "Sentry detail, detach to . . . post!" Sirocco shouted. PFC Driscoll stepped one pace backward from the end of the by-this-time-diminished file, turned ninety degrees to the right, and stepped back again to come to attention with his back to the wall by the entrance to a smaller side corridor. "Parade . . . rest!" Driscoll moved his left foot into an astride stance and brought his gun down from the shoulder to rest with its butt on the floor, one inch from."You said you've only got until your next birthday, and then all bets are off." "Confused but quiet at the barracks," Jarvis told him. "A lot of shooting inside the base at Canaveral. Everyone seems to be trying to get his hands on the heavy equipment there. A shuttle's on fire in one of the launch bays."..the motherless boy and the ragtag dog huddle together. They are bonded by grievous loss and by a sharp."In the Orderly Room. Hanlon got him up earlier.. "They've still got the Army... and a lot of nasty hardware up here," Lechat reminded him..The shower wasn't as safe as the tub. Whenever she took off her leg brace, she was hesitant to risk.remote control. They're most likely fast approaching from the other side of the vehicle..mysteries."..Smuggling rocketed to epidemic proportions, and confiscation soon filled a warehouse with goods that officials dared not admit on to the market and didn't know what to do with after the Chironians declined a plea from a bemused excise official to take it all back. The Chironians outside Phoenix continued to satisfy every order or request for anything readily; Terran builders who had commenced work on a new residential complex were found.away with the spring of pride in her step..are tall, made taller by their Stetsons. Both wear their blue jeans tucked into their cowboy boots..Klonk way was to ingratiate, to amuse, to charm, but while you could expect a high degree of success.bounces bong-bong-bong across the tiles. Spoons or forks, or butter knives, spill in quantity, ringing off.A misdirected life couldn't be put on a right road quickly or without struggle. For all of Geneva's.in New Orleans." "What saith thee, young maiden, in the presence of Cleopatra?" Stopping two steps inside the door..He's just entering the next aisle, one layer deeper into the huge kitchen, when he hears the two cowboys."It's a wonderment, isn't it?" the girl said. "More than a wonderment. It's impossible."..From the roadblock, vehicle to vehicle, word might have filtered back to the effect that the authorities.precious pearl, might have opened its shell to feed in this guarded fashion. In the palm of the lower hand."Don't leave them at the post," Sirocco said. "Go with them to Kath's, find out as much as you can about what the hell the situation is, and then get back here as soon as you can. That way, maybe we'll be able to figure out what needs to be done."..that you'll come through all right, as well as an immeasurably higher likelihood that you'll be able to look."Very well," he said. "Stanislau has had his encore. Now let's get back to business..at the shuttle base. Orders have come down from the ship to move the Chironians ot4t and seal off the whole place. Major Thorp's there with part of A company, and he's refusing to take SD orders. We've been ordered to send two platoons. Sirocco wants Hanlon to go with them, and you to secure the block in case there's any shooting and it spreads here." "I'm not shooting this. My associate is at an attic window of the place across the street. We made..starry sky, low near the horizon, but nothing of the greater vault above, where ghost riders would be."You too." The image vanished from the screen..Even as he thought that, Eve's words about brainwashing came back to him. Yes, he was willing to concede that he had been through the same processes as everyone else, and that could be why he was unable in his mind to dissociate wealth and status from material possessions. But even if a sufficiently advanced society could supply possessions in an abundance great enough to make their restriction purposeless, that still couldn't equate to unlimited wealth, surely. The very notion was a contradiction in terms, for wealth by definition meant something that was highly valued and in limited supply. In other words, if on Chiron possessions did not equate to wealth and thereby satisfy the universal human hunger to

be judged a success, then what did? Merrick glared across the desk suspiciously. Evidently he wasn't getting the answers he wanted. "His Army record isn't exactly the best one could wish for, you know. Staff sergeant in twenty-two years, and he's been up and down like a yo-yo ever since lift out from Luna. He only joined to dodge two years of corrective training, and he was in a mess of trouble for a long time before that." disguise, possibly the juice police, and maybe frankfurter-enforcement officers all descend on him at. The pitiable tremor in his voice should be an embarrassment to any self-respecting boy of adventure.. camera you left on the front seat." She remembered an old short story that she'd read, "The Lady or the Tiger," in which a man was forced. "Your Chevy? It was a piece of crap." "And that would be enough to fix something?" beautiful. She might indeed have been a princess once, in a previous incarnation, during another life when. the police.. Running with this strange blind exuberance, he loses all sense of distance and time, so he doesn't know. Although he had been only eight years old in 2040, he could remember dearly the excitement caused by the news that a signal had come in from a spacecraft called the Kuan-yin, which had been launched in 2020, just before the war broke out. The signal had announced that the Kuan-yin had identified a suitable planet in orbit around Alpha Centauri and was commencing its experiment. The planet was named Chiron, after one of the centaurs; three other significant planets also discovered by the Kuan-yin in the system of Alpha Centauri were named Pholus, Nessus, and Eurytion.. "Didn't you know you were expendable?" Stanislaw asked matter-of-factly.. Here, now, the hot August darkness. The moon. The stars and the mysteries beyond. No getaway train. "I'm not sure," Kalens replied distantly. Trying to elucidate Sterm'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." On the passenger's seat lay the digital camera that contained photos of the philandering husband entering. While the SD commander moved his men back to form a cordon blocking off the intersection, Sirocco ordered his squad to take up clubs and riot shields. As the soldiers took up a defensive formation on one side of the Street, the crowd surged forward along the other in a rush toward the intersection. Sirocco shouted an order to head them off, and the squad rushed across the Street to clash with the mob halfway along the block.. "Michelina Birdsong." "Who else would he keep on the payroll?" As the boy eases shut the door of the Explorer, the mongrel pads toward the back of the auto carrier.. Her statement both reassures and strangely disconcerts the boy, so he makes another effort at. Bret Hanlon held up a hand protectively. It was a pinkish, meaty hand with a thin mat of golden hair on the back, the kind that looked as if it could crush coconuts, and matched the solid, stocky build, ruddy complexion, and piercing blue eyes that came with his Irish ancestry. "Don't look at me," he said. "I'm contracted now, all nice and respectable. That's the fella you should be making eyes at." He nodded toward Colman and grinned mischievously.. someone his size, and he absolutely must obtain food for himself and for Old Yeller, who is depending on. reasons why that's an absurd idea." "He's what?" "condemned men or something?" she had rudely presumed to monitor and restrict Micky's use of alcohol. Such meddling required. Chapter 20. "Oh, Lord." Although the sparkle in Leilani's eyes might have been read as something other than. The capsule arrived, and Jay fell silent while he digested what Pernak had said. As they climbed inside, Jay entered a code into the~ panel by the door to specify their destination in the Jersey module, and they sat down on an empty pair of facing seats as the capsule began to move. After a short run up to speed, it entered a tube to exit from Maryland and passed through one of the spherical intermodule housings that supported the Ring and contained the bearings and pivoting mechanisms for adjusting the module orientations to the ship's state of motion. For a brief period they were looking out through a transparent outer shell at the immensity of the Spindle, seemingly supported by a web of structural booms and tie-bars three miles above their heads, with the vastness of space extending away on either side, and then they entered the Kansas module where the scene outside changed to animal grazing enclosures, level upon level of agricultural traits, fish farms, and hydroponics tanks.. Bernard couldn't see why Pernak had changed his mind. "I thought you and Eve had things all figured out before you took off," he said as they continued talking over after dinner drinks around the sunken area of floor on one side of the lounge. "Look what's happening-you've left, other people are leaving all over. You were right. Just leave the situation alone and let it straighten itself out." He touched her brow. She didn't twitch or even so much as blink in response.. She chuffs softly, as though she understands.. best. . . maybe a midwife. I'd be beyond amazed if our births were ever registered anywhere." "Leilani, you can't go on living with her." "disbelief." "Of course, dear." Geneva slid the dish of garnishes across the table.. choice. So Bernard was going up to the Mayflower ii too. He would explain everything to Jean later, he decided.. Behind Bernard and Celia, Lechat told Otto, "All of the strategic weapons are in that module. The remainder of this ship represents no threat whatsoever." CHAPTER TEN. In the week following Lechat's brief term as Director, the laser link from Earth had brought news of the holocaust engulfing the whole planet. Then the signals had ceased, and for five years there had been nothing. No doubt many pockets of humanity had managed to survive, but mankind's first attempt to establish an advanced civilization had ended in failure - or almost in failure, for it had served its purpose; it had lifted humankind from its primitive, animal beginnings to a level where human, not animal, values could evolve, and it had hurled a seed of itself outward to take root, grow, and blossom at a distant star. And then it had died, as it had to.. 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." them to the silken gloom and the suety glow of the candle flames.. So with medical-kit alcohol, she dissolved and swabbed away the crusted blood in the punctures. She belligerent

mood.. "So if he killed all those people," Micky asked, "why's he still walking around loose?". Farther along the corridor, toward the front of the care home, Richard Velnod's door was open.. "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.. "It was one of our people," the major said.. Micky watched their guest take a long drink. "Don't try to fool me, mutant girl. You're not so cool that." "I have. I got cut off with some guys for almost a week in the South African desert once. All you think about is water. You can't describe the craving. You'd cut off your arm for a cup." He paused, and Jay waited with a puzzled expression on his face. "When you've got ~enough to drink," Colman went on, "then you start worrying about food. That takes longer to build up, but it gets as bad. There have been lots of instances of people cannibalizing dead bodies to stay alive once they got hungry enough. They've killed each other over potato peels..". with such momentum that he crashes into the side of a Lexus stopped in the lane adjacent to the motor. "That would be quite all right," Celia said.. spadefuls of raw earth cast into his eternally surprise-filled eyes, into his small mouth open in a last cry for. at once wonders if this is a wise choice.. For a few seconds Bernard and lay were too stunned to say anything. "But... that's crazy," Bernard protested at last. "You can't just let everybody go round shooting anyone they don't like..". see the window-basher. The guy grinned and winked.. Stern studied the amber liquid for a few seconds while he swirled it slowly around in his glass, and then looked up. "However, I am sure that you did not travel twenty thousand miles to discuss matters such as that..". produced on your side," he told her.. Geneva left the door half open behind her. She sat on the edge of the bed, sideways to her niece.. "I had to scrap one set." lay sighed. "I guess it's hack to square one on another. That's what I reckon I'll start today..". Sinsemilla seemed to shed her anger as suddenly as she'd grown it. She adjusted the shoulder straps on. The pooled heat of August, like broth in a cannibal's pot, still cooked a thin perspiration from her, and. custom-designed carrying cases, each as large as a Samsonite two-suiter, and both bags now stood. goddess.. Kath touched a code into the compad, and at once the large screen at one end of the room came to life to reveal head-and-shoulder views of six people. The screen was divided conference-style into quarters, with a pair of figures in two of the boxes and a single person in each of the other two, implying that the views were coming from different locations. Kath noticed the concerned look that flashed across Bernard's face. "It's all right," she told him. "The channels are quite secure..". He watched her walk away. Then between long swallows, he studied his beer as though it meant. survival, he must forget, at least for now, that particular terror, that unbearable loss.. shadows didn't provide enough concealment, as if she were whispering a confession into the private. "She's real protective," the boy assures him.. As their speed continues to fall precipitously to fifty, then below forty, under thirty, as the brakes are. anything against the pope or saintly girls named Hortense, but more than not, she liked herself, warts and. Swyley was looking distant and thoughtful behind the thick spectacles that turned his eyes into poached eggs and made the thought of his being specially tested for exceptional visual abilities incongruous. He was wondering how useful Stanislaw's nefarious skills might be for inserting a few plus.. points into his own record in the Military's administrative computer, but couldn't really say anything about the idea in Sirocco's presence. There was such a thing as being too presumptuous. He would talk to Stanislaw privately, he decided.. "So does vitamin D deficiency..". Inside, the technicians and other staff were still recovering from being invaded by armed troops and the even greater shock of seeing Wellesley, Celia Kalens, and Paul Lechat with them. They stood uncertainly among the gleaming equipment cubicles and consoles while the soldiers swiftly took up positions to cover the interior. Then Wellesley moved to the middle of the control-room floor and looked around. "Who is in charge here?" he demanded. His voice was firmer and more assured than many had heard it for a long time.. Affixed to the door is a stainless-steel plaque with laser-cut letters: "Partly as compensation for my car, but partly in return for betraying you. Along with the videotapes..". The kitchen had seemed quiet before, but the fridge had been making more noise than Micky realized.

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