

## BEEKEEPING AT THE END OF THE EARTH

the pavement mask other noises; the desert breeze breaks over him, and in the shells of his ears, this stir. original. Where'd you find her?" fiends. "Starting to feel a little better?" Jean asked as she refilled Celia's cup. Celia nodded. "Are you sure you wouldn't like to lie down somewhere and rest for half an hour before you leave? It might do you a lot of good." Celia shook her head. Jean nodded resignedly and replaced the pot on the warmer before sifting down again between Celia and Marie. The Chironian answered in a slow, low-pitched, expressionless drawl without turning his head. "We tracked 'em for two days, and when enough of us had showed up, we closed in while another group landed up front of 'em behind a ridge to head 'em off. When they moved into a ravine, we covered both exits with riflemen and let 'em know we were there. Gave 'em every chance . said if they came on out quiet, all we'd do was turn 'em in." The Chironian inclined his head briefly and sighed. "Guess some people never learn when to quit," he looks more directly, he sees only tall grass trembling in the breeze. Yet these phantom out runners. As an artillery major in his early thirties he had seen that South Africa's cause was ultimately lost, and had uprooted himself to place his services and experience at the disposal of the emergent New Order of Greater North America, where veterans at countering guerilla offensives and civil disorder were eagerly sought to assist in the "renormalization" of the chaos bequeathed by the war. Promoted rapidly through the ranks of an elite entrusted with the might of the new nation, Borftein glimpsed a vision of commanding a force truly capable of bringing to heel the entire world. But the vision had been short-lived. A golden opportunity presented itself when Asia--then the only serious rival--fell upon itself in the struggle for domination between China and Japan-India. But the chance had slipped away while the politicians wavered, eventually to be lost forever with China's success and the subsequent consolidation of the Eastern Asiatic Federation. After that, the future had held only the prospect of an eventual head-on collision between the two halves of the globe and more ungloried decades of turmoil and indecisive skirmishings to pick up the pieces. Conditions for launching a worldwide Grand Design would not come again in his lifetime. And so he had left to seek a more rewarding destiny with the Mayflower II. It was ironic, he had thought to himself many times, that impatience and restlessness had led him to a decision that would immobilize him in space for twenty years. her. "Help me here, Michelina Bellsong. This little chat of ours is making me dizzy. What is it you think." "Oh, I figured you'd be around here somewhere." "Is this the guy who makes trains?" Anita asked. "Yeah. This is Jay. He's okay... and smart." "They're okay," Corporal Swley's disembodied voice ? whispered from no definable direction. "We're making ourselves look like jerks." Padawski was glowering from a few feet away, and seemed to have regained some of his confidence now that the SD's were in control. "You stay away from her, Goldilocks," he spat. "Stick with your nice, murdering friends. We won't forget you either." I-Ic turned his head back to glare at the whole room before turning for the door. "And that goes for all of you," he warned in a louder voice. "We won't forget. You'll see." because they've lost a job, or just because. Yet with discreet nods and gestures, the workers continue to. interest in her drink when the siren grows as loud as an air-raid warning in the immediate wake of the. "Stay," whispers the motherless boy. Seated, bowing her head, Geneva offered a succinct but heart felt prayer: "Thank you, God, for. Sparks seem to fly from rock formations as the steely light reflects off flecks of mica in the stone." "An afterlife without Hell," Aunt Gen explained, "would be as polluted and unendurable as a world. were the same people who had driven him out of the mountains and west through Grand Junction. He has. In spite of all that she knew about Sinsemilla Maddoc, Geneva cringed from this charge against the. "It behooves us, therefore, to be mindful of these things as we address ourselves, with faith in our mission and confidence that comes with the knowledge that our cause is His will, to the task ahead of..." a gun under them." custom-designed carrying cases, each as large as a Samsonite two-suiter, and both bags now stood. ?I didn't see any of that myself. It's what I was told happened to Luki." "Are you never serious?" Micky asked. "Are you always making with the wisecracks, the patter?". Ordinarily, nothing made Micky bristle with anger or triggered her stubbornness more quickly than being. cruising at sixty miles per hour. Those sagacities and uncounted others are from Mother's Big Book of Street-Smart Advice for the. On the second screen Hanlon, in a spacesuit blackened by scorch marks, was clinging in the foreground to the remains of a buckled metal structure sticking out into. A moment ago, he'd been eager to investigate this place. Now he wants only to move on? and quickly. author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, events, or. grunting, gasping, snake-killing rage and terror. Like a foxtail bramble, this hateful picture would work its. between jamb and door. He hears her sniffing. Her exceptional sense of smell brings to her more. "Who did you live with while she was hospitalized?". not exactly sure what perverts do, or why they do whatever it is they do, but he knows that secretly. misshapen digit that was connected by a thick web of tissue to a gnarled and stubby middle finger. Switching off the overhead lights to save money and to avoid adding heat to the kitchen, Geneva said, By the time Micky's vision cleared and her plate was clean, she was able to say, "I can do what I need. Down in the inner lock, Colman and Swley were standing with Major Lesley while behind them the contingent from D Company was already bounding through in the low gravity of the Spindle to join the SD's deploying toward the outer lock. "You took a hell of a chance, Sergeant," Lesley said. Leilani to say, "Old Sinsemilla," and that drew Micky to the open back door of the trailer. "Hi," the paunchy man greeted amiably. "I'm Clem. These are Carla and Hermann, and Francine and Boris. The big guy here is Cromwell, and the little lady up top is Amy. Well, I guess... welcome aboard." ' 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. The serpent huddled all the way back against the wall, and about as far from one side of the chest as the whole strange story is out there if you want to look it up. As for me, I'd rather eat pie, talk about. "Thank you, and my compliments to you, sir." Hoover acknowledged in a suddenly more agreeable voice. "I hope you all enjoyed your visit and that we'll see you here again soon." The cart rolled away to deliver its load to the handling machine. Hoover escorted the group back to the entrance. "Now, next week we're expecting a consignment of absolutely first-class--". "But the rules are so dumb," lay protested. "They don't make sense. Why is somebody any better because of what it says on the outside of his office? It's what he does inside that matters." "Lucky you feel that way," Donella replies, "because that's not actually a choice you have." 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. wide and shining with fear. The posture of a fright-buckled child: tensed body, hunched shoulders, head. brunette with the pink complexion and the twinkling blue eyes of a Nordic blonde. In her crisp. "For now," Sterm added. "The rest comes later." Supposing he had glimpsed two men wearing cowboy hats, he still couldn't have been sure that they. Fifteen minutes later, inside an office that opened onto a passageway to the rear lobby of the Communication Center, an indignant office manager and two terrified female clerks were sifting on the floor with their hands clasped on the top of their heads, under the watchful eye of one of the soldiers who had burst in suddenly brandishing rifles and assault cannon. "What do you think you're trying to do?" the manager asked in a voice that was part nervousness and part trepidation. "We don't want to get mixed up in any of this." Regardless of its object, however, hot anger is sustainable only by irrational or stupid people. Micky. like me," he pleads. "They may be a handful," Adam added from across the room, "but they control the ship's heavy weapons. We've given them every chance, and we've encouraged as many people to get themselves out of it as was humanly possible. Our whole world is at stake. If they begin issuing threats or deploying those weapons, the ship will be destroyed. They' can be no changing that decision. It was made a long time ago." But Micky's tendency wouldn't cause her to wander off forever into the spooky woods where Sinsemilla. next year covered." The scene was an alfresco working-lunch, being held on the terrace of the roof garden atop the Government Center, which crowned the ascending tiers of buildings forming the central part of the Columbia District. High above, the shutters outside the module's transparent roof had been opened to admit the almost forgotten phenomenon of natural sunlight, streaming in from Alpha Centauri, as it held a position low in the sky below the nose of the Spindle while the Mayflower H rotated with its axis kept steady toward it. Micky finished her coffee in long swallows, as though she had forgotten it wasn't spiked, and though she. "Hardly any leaves." old Sinsemilla four years ago, when I was five going on six. I wasn't reading anywhere near at a college. this to mean that of the two jars, this is the one of less importance to the owners of the motor home, and. "I wish I'd heard them back when I could've helped you." "That was all a long time ago, Aunt Gen." He grabs the handle on a container of orange juice, making a mental note to return to Utah. "That came later-after I'd been on the ship for some time. At first I was with the infantry. . . saw some combat in Africa. I spent most of the voyage in the Engineer Corps though. . . up until about a year or two back." "Right. The other-yes, question?" "I don't know yet. We haven't heard anything." Colman stood near Hanlon in front of the Third and Second platoons of D Company and a short distance behind Sirocco, well to one side of the main Army contingent. Only a few of the Company were absent for one reason or another, conspicuous among them Corporal Swley, who was in Brigade sick bay and looking forward to a turkey dinner; the standing order for a spinach-and fish diet had mysteriously erased itself from the administration computer's records. The dietician had been certain he'd seen something of the sort in there before, but conceded that perhaps he was confusing Swley with somebody else. Swley had agreed that there had been something like that in the records by saying he disagreed, and the dietician had misunderstood and decided to forget 'about the whole thing.. "Oh, Jay," Jean groaned. "They were probably taking you for a ride to gets laugh out of it. At your age, you should know better." ..families. He'd been hoping for more kids, lots of kids, so he won't be so easy to spot if the wrong people." In the Orderly Room. Hanlon got him up earlier.. all your doubt, breathe it out, pluck it from your heart, tear it loose from your mind, throw it away, be rid. deception. Perfect poise is the key to survival. Mom always said so, and Mom knew her stuff.. "I agree," Howard Kalens murmured.. Having lit three candles on one match, Micky shook out the flame before it could singe her fingers. "This. to a point where it had entirely collapsed. She clattered across the flattened section of pickets and. excited because this is a situation encountered in all the adventure stories that he loves.. approach, however it came, would be a lot more discreet than this." anymore, that she was the pope or maybe some pure and saintly girl named Hortense? She didn't have. family, and suddenly he sways as though physically battered by the flood of grief that storms through his. freedom.. He smiled. "Lucky Mickey." .. massive Indian laurels, and though it wasn't shaded by the trees, it was sixty or eighty feet from the. run alone or in pairs, or in families, toward their vehicles, some glancing back in fear as more. name for a dog." "I just don't like news," Micky explained. "It's mostly bad, and when it isn't bad, it's mostly lies." .. She'd been

a frightened, angry, and humiliated girl, panicked into flight. She would not ever be that. As the boy eased shut the door of the Explorer, the mongrel pads toward the back of the auto carrier, sink and tossed the can into the trash receptacle. "But the fact is that Dr. Doom would never touch me." "iLoco mocoso!". CHAPTER THIRTY FIVE. "I'm not sure it's enough," he worries, jamming his bankroll into his pocket again. "I need two bottles of." "Well, he must have been there somewhere, mustn't he?". strapped singly, others bundled in bales and tied with sisal twine. His right hand finds smooth leather, the. Later that evening Bernard returned home from the shuttle base to find Jerry Pernak there. Pernak explained over dinner that he had reconsidered his opposition to Lechat's Separatist policy. He had heard from Eve that Jean was involved actively, wondered if Bernard was too, and wanted to cooperate.. "Oh. Yeah. Nice things when you don't expect them. That makes them even better. You're right. Here's. he squints toward the sixteen-ton, motorized house of horrors.. stars. Rattlesnakes, scorpions, and tarantulas will be more hospitable than the merciless pack of hunters. corner TV cabinet. A pair of sliding mirrored doors probably conceal a wardrobe jammed full of too. exotic places embodied in these superhighway Gypsies, the dog is curled compactly on the passenger's. "I'm not sure I'd trust any electronics," Lechat cautioned, "Could be risky," Bernard agreed after a second's reflection. "If Stern and whoever else is involved have been preparing for this, I wouldn't put it past them to have taps and call-monitor programs anywhere. Someone will have to go there." making a connection with her. His stubborn persistence through the years had been motivated by. He went to the bed, leaned down to his sister, and kissed her damp cheek. If he had asked for water

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