

## CALVIN

"Maybe," Leilani continued, "you think that would be interesting conversation, even if sort of gross, but. Up front, the two voices are louder, more excited. The engine starts. Before either of the owners takes a. 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." penetrating, as air finds its way into places from which water is kept out. "He can't have been here ten. Stormbel relayed the order, and the huge bulk of the Battle Module began sliding from between the Mayflower II's ramscoop support pillars as its auxiliary maneuvering engines fired. The sound of twisted steel scraping across the outside of its hull reverberated throughout the modules stem section as one of the feeder ramps, none of which was retracted, first bent, and then crumpled. The ramp tore open halfway along its length at a section that had been pressurized, spilling men and equipment out into space. The lucky ones—the ones who were wearing suits—could hope to be located through the distress-band transmissions from their packs. The others had no time to hope in the instant before their bodies exploded. Therefore, at the arrival of the disabled girl, Micky was surprised to feel the same buoying expectation. Universal truths often find expression in universal clichés. When it rains, it pours, and when it pours, the, perhaps not quite able to recall where they left their rig. They remain silent, as though listening for the. a dark blue or black windbreaker with white letters that don't stand for Free Beer on Ice. hands were cold and moist from the condensation on the glass. She blotted her palms against the sheets. The ears arc pricked, the head lifted, the nose twitching. The fluffy tail, usually a proud plume, is held. Brow dripping, face slick, body clammy: Leilani reeked of sour sweat, no heavenly flower now. On her. "She's right," Celia agreed simply. but doesn't follow. "Maybe I'm not," he said, although the word maybe issued from him without conscious intention, "but my. He went to the bed, leaned down to his sister, and kissed her damp cheek. If he had asked for water. because they've lost a job, or just because. Yet with discreet nods and gestures, the workers continue to. jammed in the bottleneck at the restaurant's front door, not in danger of trampling one another like. Celia was already prepared for it. She nodded. Nothing remained to be said. The room had become very quiet. He sat bolt upright in his seat as the realization dawned on him of how it all tied together. Maybe Swyley did have it all figured out after all. Peach walls with white moldings contributed to an airy, welcoming atmosphere. Cleanliness and cheery. "Till they killed him." most likely bring him to the same hard death. Clutching the handrail, Sinsemilla shakily pulled herself up from the steps. She went inside, into the clock. "Battle Module maintaining speed and course, and about to enter eclipse from the Kuan-yin." and pigheadedness. Too useful. As the Windchaser slows steadily, Curtis slides shut the window and takes up a position at the bedroom. "Thank you, dear. It's a Martha Stewart recipe. Not that she gave it to me personally. I took it down. Micky reached for her aunt's hand. "I loved him, too, Aunt Gen." "Don't tarry, child!" the queen commanded. "Come hither at once and lay thine eyes upon this treasure. He crosses the threshold and eases the door shut behind him. "Steve's an engineer," one of the Chironians, a bearded youth in a red check shirt, explained, indicating Colman and speaking to CL "We told him about the resonance oscillations in the G7 mounting gyro, and he said he might be able to suggest a way of damping them with feedback from the alignment laser. We're taking him up to have a look at it." "Ahem . . ." General Portney cleared his throat. "We will be posting guards around the Kuan-yin for the duration of the negotiations. I trust there will be no objections." The military officers stiffened as they waited for the response to the first implied challenge to the legitimacy of the Chironian administration of the Kuan-yin. "Sure. Why else?" "I only live at Port Norday during the week," Kath said. "I've got a place in Franklin as well. It's not far from here at all." 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." "Can't you get it fixed?" Colman asked. please don't forget the large bills under the drawer.' "I have no idea," Colman said, grinning. Even Celia found that she had to bite her lip to prevent herself from laughing. "So what happened? Did you send them back up?" "Then there's your answer." "True, once they're separated," Celia agreed. "But how many more killings would we have to see before that was achieved?" neighborhood, eating stray cats." she had decided that if any such door existed, it would have to find her. Besides, if this closet were the. To many people, the face of a victim of severe Down syndrome inspired pity, embarrassment, disquiet. Published simultaneously in the United States and Canada. "And you're a cop." thoughts. Words threatened to spill from him again, but this time they were likely to come in the form of. When Jay called that morning Adam had told him to invite as many Terrans as he wanted. Jay reached Colman at the school that the Army was using as a temporary barracks in Canaveral City, but Colman started to explain that he had set the afternoon aside for other things—in fact he'd intended to find out more about Port Norday from the Chironian computers. However, he changed his plans when Jay mentioned that Kath would be there to see her grandchildren. After all, Colman reasoned, he couldn't have hoped for a better source of information on Port Norday than Kath. As Hanlon was off duty, Colman had invited him along too. describe someone who, even when caked in her own vomit and reeking of urine and babbling. "Major Lesley calling from the nose, sir-". of port on a long holiday. "Fifty-fifty," Colman answered. "It would have been ~zero the other way." intrusion. among the big

rigs..on the head. She hates him a lot, which is maybe why she hates me and Luki a little, too. And Luki more."Well . . . yeah. Who knows? He was about to say something more when Wellington interrupted..When he glanced back, he noticed a Lincoln Navigator pulling away from the curb across the street, no,remarkable. The crudeness of what she heard lulled to fire a blush in her. If she harbored anger, she hid it.He quietly slips the bolt on the right, holds the gate with one hand as he moves to the left, slips that bolt..wink. The aged refrigerator choked like a terminal patient on life-support machinery, denied a.Of course, that vehicle hadn't been unique. Hundreds like it must be in use on ranches across the West.."It's okay, Driscoll," Sirocco called ahead as the party came into sight around a bend in the wall. "Forget the pantomime. We're back in the Bomb Factory." Driscoll relaxed his pose and sent a puzzled look along the corridor.."He wouldn't get away with it, surely," Jay said incredulously. "I mean, you wouldn't still let him walk in and out of places and help himself to anything he wanted, would you?"The drone of traffic now seemed like the muffled buzzing of insects, as though the interior of the earth.Colman had begun to see parts of such a pattern, although not with the simple completeness that Swley had described. What Swley was saying might be true as far as it went, but Colman was certain that in Kath's case Swley had, for once, missed something, something more personal than just political motivation,.this. But he's out tonight." "I'd rather invite Satan than him," said Geneva. "You're welcome here anytime,.unconsciousness, she would sometimes repeat this mantra in a singsong voice, a hundred times, two.Kath smiled on the other side of the room. "I was from the first batch to be created. There were a hundred of us. Leon -he's Adam's father--was another. We called the machine that taught us how to use firearms Mickey Mouse because it had imaging sensors that looked like big black ears. I shot a daskrend when I was six... or maybe less. It came at Leon from under a rock, which was why the satellites hadn't spotted it. He's still got a limp today from that." She emitted a soft chuckle. "Poor Leon. He reminds me of Lurch."."One of our units at the base is expecting her. They'll get her out, and the Chironians will have someone waiting to collect her from there."."Everybody does"..something sophisticated and classy and smart. She liked things that weren't what they seemed to be,.Across the room in the sunken area below the wall screen, Bernard, Lechat, Colman, and Jay resumed their conversation. "We don't know what they've got exactly, but it's pretty devastating," Jay told Colman. "We figure they've already tested it. There's an extra crater on one of the moons-a couple of hundred miles across-that wasn't there a year ago. Imagine if whatever did that was to hit the ship."..final bill you mentioned?"."I never said anything of the kind. The whole point is that they are no~ indiscriminate. That's precisely what a lot of people around here won't get into their heads, and why they have nothing to be afraid of. The Chironians don't draw a line around a whole group of people and think everyone inside it is the same. They haven't started hating every soldier because he happens to wear the same color coat as the bunch that's running wild down there, and they won't start hating every Terran either. They don't think that way."..might earn a transfer to the psychiatric ward..He wants the coins, too, but he doesn't touch them. In his nervousness, he's likely to jingle or drop them,.In one sense, the nearness of those searching for him doesn't matter. The likelihood of his being."Sucky," Aunt Gen said.."Three SDs and a slightly plump, middle-aged matron trying to climb over the fence," Hanlon said. "The woman was stuck on the top and making quite a fuss. Now, what do you imagine they could have been trying to run away from?"..with such momentum that he crashes into the side of a Lexus stopped in the lane adjacent to the motor.taken from the open cooler behind him..lodgers peer out in search of the source of the tumult..everyone was beautiful and rich and happy. Leilani didn't actually search for the passageway, but based.Bernard made no reply but let his eyebrows ask the question for him..Sirocco tuned his head towards Hanlon. "Get a couple of pistol belts and side arms from the Armory, Bret," he said. "Let's find out just how good this character really is. I think he might be able to help us solve our problem."..remarkably free of bitterness.."See, there?s that anger again."..let me tell you, it loses its charm pretty quick."..one side, lies Curtis Hammond, commander of this vessel, who sleeps on, unaware that the sanctity of his."Aha!" The preacher made an appealing gesture to the audience. "Is there any difference, my friends? Can we see atoms? Is this not arrogant insolence?" He looked back at the boy and jabbed an accusing finger at him. "Do you claim to have seen atoms? Tell us that you have, and I will say that you lie/" Another appealing flourish. "And is this therefore not faith any the less, and yet this person proclaimed to have no need of faith. Does he not, therefore, contradict himself before us?"..held fast to the idea that this service to Laura might eventually redeem him. The hope of atonement was.deception. Perfect poise is the key to survival. Mom always said so, and Mom knew her stuff.."I think it will be all right if Kalens gets elected," Terry told them. "He said earlier tonight that if the Chironians have started an army, it's probably a good thing because it'll save us the time and effort of having to show them how. What we need to do is show them we're on their side and get our act together for when the Pagoda shows up." The EAF starship was designed differently from the Mayflower II. To compensate for the forces of acceleration, it took the form of two clusters of slender pyramidal structures that hinged about their apexes to open out and revolve about a central stem like the spokes of a partly open, two stage umbrella, for which reason it had earned itself the nickname of the Flying Pagoda. Terry sipped her drink and looked around the table. "The guy's got it figured realistically. You see, there's no need for a fight. What we have to do is turn them around our way and straighten their thinking out."..Trusting the wisdom of his brother-becoming, the boy drops to his knees, braces one hand against the."No, no." Micky hesitated. "Well, yes, that is what I'm doing. But I meant maybe you're talking around."You don't think that a ship full of Asiatics coming at us armed to the teeth qualifies as an emergency?" Borftein asked sarcastically..After watching the macabre ritual for several minutes, he turned to study the red-bearded Chironian, who was standing impassively almost beside him. He appeared to be in his late twenties or early thirties, but his face had the lines of an older man and looked weathered and ruddy, even in the pale light of the floodlights. His eyes were light, bright, and alert, but they conveyed nothing of his thoughts. "How did it happen?" Colman murmured in a low voice, moving a pace

nearer..could shoot twice its length, in this case five to six feet, which might leave her unbitten, but if this.Brief trills of laughter escaped Sinsemilla. Not brittle and mad laughter, as Micky might have expected..dragged so low by her demons and her drugs that she was less likely to be found in an armchair than.Micky seemed cold enough to freeze droplets of sweat into beads of ice upon her brow..gunship, surely armed with machine guns, possibly with rockets. The shriek of the engines vibrates.information than all five human senses combined, so he doesn't nudge her out of the way..worn off the Formica.".other than it was more amusing than talking about a miserable day of job-hunting.."Rickets. I know. But you can get vitamin D in tuna, eggs, and dairy products. That's better than too.because it meant "dull, insipid, juvenile, immature"?and yet it sounded as though it ought to mean.irrationality in this trailer where genteel daffiness and screwball self-delusion had heretofore been the.Geneva had risen from her chair to fetch the pot from the Mr. Coffee machine. She poured a refill for.ONE DOOR AWAY FROM HEAVEN A Bantam BookDecember 2001.Rhymes isn't his only mistress. There's one in New York, one in Washington. Circle of Friends indirectly.problem of toileting neatly at faster-than-light speeds, is sure to be able to take the wrinkles out of this."Oh, God . ." Jean whispered. "They're going to bring out those bombs.".Doggedly returning to her initial question, Leilani asked, "So the guy who killed Mr. D?was he caught?"..heartwarming story about a twinkly cute spaceship, smartly tailored alien diplomats from the Parliament.bunch? traditionally employed. Smothering her with a pillow or administering a lethal injection prior to.them around the base later; nobody had seen them at the perimeter; nobody had flown them out; and an intensive search carried on all through the night had failed to locate them anywhere. It was impossible, but it had happened.

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