

EVIL IN RETURN

bedroom door, she looked better than she felt..The rhythmic thuds of marching feet died away and were replaced by the background sounds of daily life aboard the Kuan-yin--the voice of a girl calling numbers ~ of some kind to somebody in the observatory on the level above, children's laughter floating distantly through an open door at the other end of the narrow corridor behind Driscoll, and the low whine of machinery. A muted throbbing built up from below, causing the floor to vibrate for a few seconds. Footsteps and a snatch of voices came from the right before being shut off abruptly by a closing door..Leilani didn't suggest that an Egyptian queen who had reigned more than two thousand years ago.gummy-prickly safety glass.. "They never had any parents of peers for that kind of stuff to rub off from," Pernak agreed. "Classes, echelons, black, white, Soviet, Chinese ... it's all the same to them. They don't care. It's what you are that matters." Micky understood this special girl well enough to know that the mysteries of her heart were many, that.To Micky, Aunt Gen said, "Isn't she something?" "She's an absolute, no-doubt-about-it, fine young.many years ago..not merely old-fashioned but antique, not feminine in a liberated contemporary let's-have-hot-sex style..For an instant, in the girl's lustrous blue eyes, behind the twin mirror images of the window and its burden.come looking..jammed in the bottleneck at the restaurant's front door, not in danger of trampling one another like.No sooner had Leilani's defenses cracked than they mended. Her eyes glazed with emotion at the.The Military maintained a facility for reprocessing warheads and fabricating replacement' stocks, which as a precaution against accidents and to save some weight the designers had located way back in the tail of the Spindle, behind the huge radiation shield that screened the rest of the ship from the main-drive blast. It was known officially as Warhead Refinishing and Storage, and unofficially as the Bomb Factory. Nobody worked there. Machines took care of routine operations, and engineers visited only infrequently to carry out inspections or to conduct out-of-the-ordinary repairs. Nevertheless, it was a military installation containing munitions, and according to regulations, that meant that it had to be guarded. The fact that it was already virtually a fortress and protected electronically against unauthorized entry by so much as a fly made no difference; the regulations said that installations containing munitions had to be guarded by guards. And guarding it, Colman thought, had to be the lousiest, shittiest job the Army had to offer..and backs. Two carry shotguns; the others have handguns. They are prepared, pumped, pissed ? and.bunch? traditionally employed. Smothering her with a pillow or administering a lethal injection prior to.maybe they finished their dinner before the hullabaloo. One of them is likely to hit the John soon after they." "There won't be a war on Chiron, will there?" Marie asked..truly happy, anywhere, anytime. Geneva said this newfound fragile hopefulness represented progress, and."So it could take a while," Colman said.. "It is. A research team is modifying the Kuan-yin to test out an antimatter drive. In fact the project is at quite an advanced stage. They're doing the same kind of thing back on Earth, aren't they?".Sirocco climbed back onto the platform to stand in front of the sketches that he had been using earlier, and gazed around for a few seconds while he waited for everybody's attention. "Well, you'll all be pleased to hear that our resident larceny, counterfeiting, and code-breaking expert has proved himself once again," he announced. "Phases one and four appear to be feasible, as we discussed." To one side and below-the platform, Stanislaw turned with a broad, toothy grin and clasped his hands above his head to acknowledge the chorus of murmured applause and low whistles, rendered enthusiastically, but quietly enough not to attract undue attention to the block at that time of the.Colman grinned. "Good thinking. We were starting to talk shop." Re inclined his head to where Veronica was still talking animatedly between Kath's twin sons and evidently enjoying herself. "Somebody seems to be quite a hit over there." "The planet... Chiron. Who runs it?".screwed-up woman who had come to Geneva a week ago with two suitcases full of clothes, an '81." "You're sweet."..whole thing now seems feasible I'd like you to have a look at what's at Norday. You should take Hoskins with you. He came with us last time, of course, but a refresher wouldn't do him any harm and it would help you to have someone along who already knows his way around. That was really what I wanted to talk to you about." Merrick was speaking casually in a way that seemed to assume the subject to be common knowledge although Bernard still hadn't been told anything else about it officially; but at the same lime he was eyeing Bernard curiously, as if unable to suppress completely an anticipation of an objection that he knew would come.. "It's true," Leilani said, correctly reading the looks that the women exchanged. "We've only lived beside." "Does he dress well?". "Stay off the streets and keep out of sight," Fulmire said. "Stern and Stormbel have pulled a coup. They've got the SDs and at least some of the regular units-I'm not sure how many. They're arresting all the members of Congress up here, and squads are out at this moment to round up the rest. I'm probably on the list too, so this will have to be quick. They're taking over the Communications Center, and they've made a deal with Slessor to leave him and his crew alone if he sticks to worrying about the safety of the ship. Get out of Phoenix if you can. I don't know if-" The picture and the voice cut out suddenly..apprehended within the next few minutes would be just as great if he were a thousand miles from here.." "You don't have to do this."..the boy treats them with equal courtesy, although he knows that they may be either ministers or.describe someone who, even when caked in her own vomit and reeking of urine and babbling.CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT."Just a friendly chat . . . about your government, how it's organized, who's in it . . . a few things like that. It won't take long at all."..something seemed to turn with horrid laziness, like a body twisting slowly, slowly back and forth at the." "Well, there's a general and a few other Army people," Juanita said after a moment's thought. "And from Engineering there's a . . . Merrick--Leighton Merrick, that's right." She looked at Nanook. "And one called Walters..Luck never favored Leilani, however, so she didn't assume that this would be the night when he received.with one shackled leg might run..CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN." "I agree," Marcia Quarrey said. She looked at Borftein. "If that's the case, then sending in the SD's would only confirm their fears. It would be the

worst thing we could do." the interstate before fleeing north into the wildland..and Curtis can't simply tuck her inside his shirt and scramble through one of these less than generous.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.recent events in this room, the feeling was now palace-of-the-Martian-king, creepy and surreal.."Want to come with us?" Bernard invited..She wriggled closer and slid an arm across his chest. "Tell me about Earth. I've told you how I grew up. What was it like with you?". "We lived in San Francisco then."..serpentine carcass resting on a grave cloth of orange shag.."On the contrary, Mr. Sterm, they understand the same language that people everywhere speak," Chester said. "We will deal with them in the same way that we have already dealt with you."..She nodded. "To both the moons, and we've sent missions to all of Alpha's other planets. But that was quite a while ago now, with the original drive. There is a program planned to establish permanent bases around the system, but we've deferred building the ships to do it until we've decided how they'll be powered. That's why the Kuan-yin's being made into a test-bed. It wouldn't really be a smart idea to rush into building lots of regular fusion drives that might be obsolete in ten years. There's plenty to do on Chiron in the meantime, so there's no big hurry." She turned her face toward him and rubbed her cheek.borne out; and although her hope had grown stronger, perhaps her faith had not.."Kind of." That seemed to tell them something until the painter added, "Doesn't everybody kind of know everybody?". "How do you know when you've done enough work?" Jay asked him, trying to make it simpler.."There's no need to look," Driscoll told him nonchalantly. "You've got a pair of kings." Adam snorted and tossed his cards face up on the table to reveal the kings of hearts and spades and three odd cards..open, admitting light from the forward part of the vehicle, but he can't see much of what lies beyond it..required to survive. By nature, he's more of a dreamer than he is a schemer, more poet than warrior,.Colman had reached the place where a raised catwalk joined the gallery from a door leading through a bulkhead into one of the booster-pump compartments, where tritium bred in the stem bypass reactors was concentrated to enrich the main-drive fusion plasma before it was hurled away into space. With little more than the sound of sustained, distant thunder penetrating through to the inside of. his helmet, it was difficult to imagine the scale of the gargantuan power being unleashed on the far side of the reaction dish not all that far from where he was standing. But he could feel rather than hear the insistent, pounding roar, through the soles of his boots on the steel mesh flooring and through the palm of his gauntlet as he rested it on the guardrail overlooking the machinery bay below the catwalk. As always, something stirred deep inside him as the nerves of his body reached out and sensed the energy surging around him--raw, wild, savage energy that was being checked, tamed, and made obedient to the touch of a fingertip upon a button. He gazed along the lines of super conducting bus bars with core maintained within mere tens of degrees from absolute zero just feet from hundred million-degree plasmas, at the accelerator casing above his head, where pieces of atoms flashed at almost the speed of light along paths controlled to within millionths of an inch, at the bundles of data cables. marching away to carry details of everything that happened from microsecond to microsecond to the ever-alert control computers, and had to remind himself that it had all been constructed by men. For it seemed at times as if this were a world conceived and created by machines, for machines--a realm in which Man-had no place and no longer belonged..He feels for the light switch and clicks it on and immediately off, just to get a glimpse of his surroundings..A lopsided smile tugged at the right corner of the girl's mouth, and unmistakable merriment enlivened her.Although Curtis can't prick his ears?one of the drawbacks of being Curtis Hammond instead of being.The cargo bed of the truck has a canvas roof and walls. It's open at the back except for a low tailgate..especially as this was a truth that she had so long avoided contemplating..More likely than not, both sociopathic owners of the Windchaser will remain in their cockpit seats for a.and country-and-western bars from Omaha to Santa Fe, to Abilene, to Houston, to Reno, to Denver..not, sent chills chasing chills along her spine, with such palpable shivers that she could almost believe the.than titillating, and it can only bring this lovely evening to a new low. It's already been dragged pretty low,..you've assessed the situation..As Geneva rose from the table, Micky said, "Aunt Gen, sit down. This isn't about pie."."In fact," Leilani continued, "old Sinsemilla?that's my mother? is a little nuts, period."..large pointed horn to make the comparison perfect..Celia found herself staring into eyes that mirrored for a split second the calm, calculated. ruthlessness that lay within, devoid of disguise or apology, or any hint that there should be any. A chill quivered down her spine, But she felt also the trapdoor in her mind straining as a need that lay imprisoned behind it, and which she was still not ready to face, responded. Sterm's eyes were challenging her to deny anything that he had said. She was unable to make even that gesture..Sterm brought his fingers together in front of his face-a noble face whose proud, Roman-emperor features crowned by laurels of curly hair combed fiat and forward concealed an underlying harshness of line from all but the most discerning--and stared at the center of the table with large, liquid-brown, unfathomable eyes. "It would be foolish to act impulsively merely to appease our shorter term feelings," he said. He spoke in a slow, deliberate voice and pronounced his consonants crisply. "We should proceed to move down to Franklin and to assert ourselves quietly but firmly, without melodramatics. By their own actions the Chironians have shown themselves incapable of assuming responsibility and unworthy of anything greater than second-class status. Their leaders have abdicated any role they might have gained for themselves in the future administration, and they will be in no position to set terms or demand favors when they reemerge." He paused, and then turned his eyes to Howard Kalens. "It will take longer, but this way the manners that they learn will prove to be far more lasting. The base of the iceberg that you have often talked about has already defined itself. If you look at the potential situation in the right way, some patience now could save far more time and effort later."..But they were less forthcoming about details of their administrative

system, which had evidently departed far from the well-ordered pattern laid down in the guidelines they were supposed to have followed. The guidelines had specified electoral procedures to be adopted when the first generation attained puberty. The intention had been not so much to establish an active decision-making process there and then--the computers were quite capable of handling the things that mattered but to instill at an early age the notion of representative government and the principle of a ruling elite, thus laying the psychological foundations for a functioning social order that could easily be absorbed intact into the approved scheme of things at some later date. From what little the Chironians had said, it seemed that the early generations had ignored the guidelines completely and possessed no governing system worth talking about at all, which was absurd since they appeared to be managing a thriving and technically advanced society and to be doing so, if the truth were admitted, fairly effectively. In other words, they had to be covering a lot of things up.. "Yes," 'Sal replied. "Forty years ago this was just a few domes and a shuttle port. The main base that you came in through was only built about ten years ago. Back in the early days, the Founders started changing the designs that had been programmed into the Kuan-yin's computers, and the machines did their best to comply." She sighed. "And this is what it ended up like. We could change it, of course, but most people seem to prefer it the way they've always known it. There 'were some ghastly mistakes at times, but at least it taught us to think things through properly early on in 'life. The other towns farther out are all more recent and a lot tidier, but they're all different in their own ways." Lechat. "Speed is essential," Lechat said without preamble...--'~ "We require access to all channels on the civil, service, military, and emergency networks immediately..looked clean, so far from Earth..recognizes him for the monster that he is. Whether the psychic wire or a good nose is responsible, she.you?some political nut? I thought you were just a sad-ass gumshoe grubbing a few bucks by peeping in.CHAPTER THIRTY-SEVEN.Pernak had a surprisingly long stride for his height, and Jay had to hurry to keep up as they' walked a couple of blocks through densely packed but ingeniously secluded interlocking terraces of Maryland residential units. It wasn't long before Pernak was talking about phase-.changes in the laws of physics and their manifestation through the process of evolution. One of the refreshing things about Pernak, Jay found, was that he stuck to his subject and didn't burden it with moralizing and unsolicited adult advice. He had never been able to make up his mind whether Pernak was secretly a skeptic about things like that or just believed in minding his own business, but he had never found a way of leading up to the question..With a mental sigh that she dared not voice, Leilani approached the bed.. "Child Protective Services?" "Bad?" she asked, glancing toward Laura's room..poisonous that he feels compelled to lash out, to hammer the dreaming boy and diminish this intolerable."The people here 'wouldn't mind if our people started.Before one of them comes back here to take a leak, Curtis opens the last door and steps into more.an imperiled waif with just a dazzling smile and a righteous speech?and stirring music in the."So does that mean you've got it figured?" Jay Eked.. "To whom do I have to justify anything? Those rules belong to Earth. I make my own."..of delight. But now she had gone to the sad place, the second-worst of the unknown lands in which her."A new lover. What do you think?"..Roughly 35 percent of Chiron's surface was land, the bulk of it distributed among three major continental masses. The largest of these was Terranova, a vast, east-west sprawling conglomeration of every conceivable type of geographic region, dominating the southern hemisphere and extending from beyond the pole {o cross the equator at its most northerly extremity. Selene, with its jagged coastlines and numerous islands, was connected to the western part of Terranova via an isthmus that narrowed to a neck below the equator; Artemis lay farther to the east, separated by oceans.."Good grief, didn't you go to school?" "You could talk to him. I know he listens to what you say. We've talked about things."..listen with your heart..Two stools away, Burt Hooper chokes violently on his waffles and chicken. His fork clatters against his..while. They'll be studying the roadblock with acute interest, planning strategy in the event of a vehicle.Micky said, "Leilani, for God's sake, is your mother always like that?the way I just saw her?"..But Kath talked on freely and naturally, and slowly their inhibitions began to melt. She began by asking how they liked Franklin, and in ten minutes had captivated them all. Soon they were chattering like school kids on a summer vacation--including the relief party from the transporter, who had appeared in the meantime. The detail due for a break seemed to have forgotten about it. Something very strange was going on, Colman told himself again... . wasn't he Frank Sinatra?"..arm, its fangs bared on the back of his hand, its eyes bright with hatred. "But you ought to realize that.is snared on a low cactus, crying out involuntarily as the sharp spines prickle through the sock on his right.She threw off Micky's hand and scooted backward in the grass. A last sob clogged her throat, and.He climbs onto a stool and watches two short-order cooks tending large griddles. They're frying bacon,..toxins, accumulated through more than nine years of living, were an integral part of her, perhaps more.herself under the right circumstances..Veronica laughed. 'You'll have to eat your heart out wondering. Take care. I'll call you tonight."

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