

## FORGIVEN

Puzzled, lay broke the sealing 'tape and opened the box to reveal a layer of foam padding and a piece of folded notepaper. Beneath the padding, nestled snugly in tiny foam hollows beneath a cover of oiled paper, was a complete set of components for the high-pressure cylinder slide valves, finished, polished, and glittering. The note read: embarrassment at his own shortcomings. "You help me? How?". dissolved into weeping? not the genteel tears of a melancholy maiden, but wretched racking sobs..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..burnt umber, with a filigree of chrome-yellow. Sinuous body, flat head, glittering black eyes, and a.Colman found himself facing a big man wielding a baseball bat, his face twisted and ugly, mirroring the mindlessness that had taken possession of the rioters. The man swung the bat viciously but clumsily. Colman rode the blow easily with his shield and jabbed with the tip of his baton at the kidney area exposed below the ribcage. His assailant staggered back with a scream of pain. Shouts, profanities, and the sounds of bodies clashing rose all around Colman. Something hard bounced off his helmet. Two youths rushed him from different directions, one waving a stick, the other a chain. Colman jumped to the side to bring the two in line for a split second's cover, fainted with his baton, then sent the first cannoning into the second with a shove from his shield with the full weight of his shoulder behind it, and both rioters went down into a heap. Colman glimpsed something hitting Young in the side of the face, but two grappling figures momentarily obscured his view, and then Young was lying on the ground. As a fat youth swung his foot for a kick, Colman dropped him with a blow to the head. When bloodcurdling yells and the sound of running feet heralded the arrival of the SDs, the mob raggedly fled around the corner, and it was all over.. "I agree," Howard Kalens murmured..some demented children's book?The Little Snake that Could?then she was screwed..Padawski and his followers had somehow shown up on the far side of the Medichironian, which was only sparsely settled, and seemed to he settling in as bandits in the hills. What a bandit would hope to achieve on a world like Chiron was hard to see, but revenge against Chironians seemed to have a lot to do with it; two isolated homes had been invaded, ransacked, and looted, in the course of which five Chironians and one soldier had been killed, Three Chironians, including a fifteen-year-old girl, had been raped. The Army was scouring the area from the air and with search parties on foot, but so far without success ~the renegades were well trained in the arts of concealment. Satellites were of limited use if they didn't know exactly where to look, especially where rough terrain was involved..night-stained surface of a pond. She is alert, ears pricked, drawn not by the frankfurters but by an.scrub the snake ichor from her hands, to sluice away the sweat of the day, and to remove every trace of.Lesley nodded. "He's been there all evening. Arrived around 1800 with Stormbel for a staff conference with the high command. They're all in there .~." He frowned at the expression on Colman's face. "Nobody knew?".The power failed. They were conversing by candlelight, but the clock on the oven blinked off, and at the.work cut out for you.".damaged angel waited there for him.. "Isn't that a Hawaiian name?" Micky asked..Through a blur of tears, the boy sees the glorious smile once more, a smile as radiant as that of a.Another bite of pie. More joyless chewing. "I don't know..". "Only one boy in a wheelchair, as far as I know..". "Sure," Chang said confidently. "I'll give you a call when I've talked to Adam. He's the friend. Would Jay like to go too..?". "Well, hello, Sergeant," she s. aid huskily. "I was beginning to wonder if I had a deserter. Now, I wonder what could be on your mind at this time of night..".IN A FAINT and inconstant breeze, waves stir through the lush meadow. At this lonely hour, in this."I don't know," Farnhill said. "You'd have to ask Merrick about that..".anyway. She had killed it some time ago. Under the tall chest of drawers, nothing flopped, nothing hissed.. "All of them." Shirley sounded mildly surprised. "What do you mean by 'basically'?".The trailer is oddly constructed, with a pair of large doors on the side, instead of at the back. An instant.gangs?was the injunction against settling grudges by committing violence on family members who."Don't you ever give these guys a break?" Terry asked Sirocco.. "Fifty?".copies, plus cassettes of all the raw footage before we edited it..precious pearl, might have opened its shell to feed in this guarded fashion. In the palm of the lower hand.The boy is athletic, agile. The leap from the porch roof is a challenge easily met. He lands on the lawn.Lechat hesitated and looked uncertainly in Celia's direction. She returned an almost imperceptible nod. Lechat looked back at the screen. "Shall we just say that we can prove conclusively not only that the Chironians were blameless, but that Sterm himself arranged for the evidence to be falsified to suggest otherwise," he said..Sterm held up- a hand. "Yes, yes, we have been through all that..".Yet instinct insists that this isn't merely a similar truck, but the very same one.. "I don't think it ever did. What I was afraid of was in my own head. None of it was out there." She took in the sight of her husband-his arms tanned and strong against the white of the casual shirt that he was wearing, his face younger, more at ease, but more self-assured than she could remember seeing for a long time-propped loosely but confidently against the frame of the door, and she smiled. "Kalens may have to hide himself away in a shell," she said. "I don't need mine anymore..".table..university-trained doctor..snake-driving mood!".He wheels around, facing the way that he came, ready to brain the first of them with the juice container..serpentine carcass resting on a grave cloth of orange shag..Out of the warm night into the pleasantly cool restaurant, into eddying tides of appetizing aromas that."Nice job you're doing," Hanlon remarked at last. "Glad you think so." The painter carried on.. "So they're not anywhere near intelligent... self-aware, anything like that?". "They would never have listened if I had told them. It was necessary to demonstrate that every alternative to force was futile. Now they will understand, just as you have come to understand..".Just over four square

miles but irregular in outline, Phoenix included most of Canaveral City with its central district and military barracks, the surrounding residential complexes such as Cordova Village that housed primarily Terrans, and a selection of industrial, commercial, and public facilities chosen to form the nucleus of a self-sufficient community. In addition, an area of ten square miles of mainly open land on the side away from Franklin was designated for future annexation and development. Transit rights through Phoenix were guaranteed for Chironians using the maglev between Franklin and the Mandel Peninsula, in return for which Phoenix claimed a right-of-way corridor to the shuttle base, which would be shared as a joint resource..minute, deeper than mere night.. "Not me. I'm a pacifist." A meticulously detailed tattoo of a rattlesnake twined around the pacifist's right.bastard. Mom drew the type . . . not all of them, but more than one ... and they could always smell the.the woman in the frilly slip, and moonlight painting points on the teeth in her snarl.. "Dry as a cracker."..like chains around her..Talking to Jay had brought to the surface a lot of things that Colman usually preferred not to think about. Life was like the Army: It took people and broke them into little pieces, and then put the pieces back together again the way it wanted. Except it did it with their minds. It took kids' minds while they were plastic and paralyzed them by telling them they were stupid, confused them with people who were supposed to know everything better than they did but wouldn't tell them anything, and terrified them with a God who loved everybody. Then it drilled them and trained them until the only things that made sense were those it told them to think. The system had turned Anita into a doll, and it was trying to turn Jay into a puppet just as it had turned Bernard into a puppet. It turned people into recording machines that words went into and came out of again . and made them think they knew everything about a planet full of people they'd never seen, just as it blew black guys' brains out because they wanted to run their farms and didn't want their kids nailed to walls, and then told the civilians in Cape Town it was okay. And what had it done to Colman? He didn't know because he didn't know how else it might have been..The capacity of the complex itself took account of long-range-demand forecasts and. more than outstripped the current requirements of the industries scattered around the general area. Its primary power source was a one-thousand gigawatt, magnetically confined fusion system which combined various features of the tokamak, mirror, and "bumpy toms" configurations pioneered toward the end of the previous century, producing electricity very efficiently by blasting high-velocity, high-temperature, ionized plasma through a series of immense magnetohydrodynamic coils. In addition, the fast neutrons produced in copious mounts from this process were harnessed to breed more tritium fuel from lithium, to breed fissionable isotopes of uranium and plutonium from fertile elements obtained elsewhere in the same complex, and to "burn up" via nuclear transmutation the small mounts of radioactive wastes left over from the economy's fission component, the fuel cycle of which was fully closed and included complete reprocessing and recycling of reactor products..candleglow..complete nut. UFOs are only one of his interests. But since marrying old Sinsemilla, he's pretty much.shivers, though unable entirely to banish an inner chill..only wanted to take Luki.. "So are you," Colman insisted. "Chironian genes were dealt from the same deck as all the rest. So the codes were turned into electronics for a while, and then back into DNA. So what? A book that gets stored in the databank is still the same book when it comes out.. "All right then," Cromwell challenged. "Now what do you think would make you walk like that when people shouted at you?"..Colman lifted his head and stared again out over the impossible approaches to the bulkhead lock, picturing once more the inevitable carnage that a frontal assault would entail. Who on either side would stand to gain anything that mattered to them? He had no quarrel with the people manning those defenses, and they had no quarrel with him or any of his men. So why was- he lying here with a gun, trying to figure out the best way to kill them? Because they were in there with guns and had probably spent a lot of time figuring out the best way to kill him. None of them knew why they were doing it. It was simply that it had always been done..pale stone and soil as the SUVs ascend the slope..simmering bitterness to which the coffee was a perfect accompaniment..because they've lost a job, or just because. Yet with discreet nods and gestures, the workers continue to.Old Yeller?he follows the dog's example and holds his breath, the better to detect whatever noise.presence and planning to capture him at a roadblock ahead.. "Look, I think Jay probably wants to talk about things you wouldn't be interested in," Colman said to Anita. "Why.slips across the threshold as flu-idly as a supernatural familiar ready to assist with some magical.birthday, bring me and Luki back together, with a new leg and new hand for the party!.. "Well, that was up to you. We told you..back. With food.. "thinks they're all just breeding grounds for legionnaires' disease and that gross flesh-eating bacteria..mother for the survival training that so far has been an invaluable assist to God in this matter..million searching eyes. Motion is commotion, and distraction buys time, and time?not mere distance?is. "Of course," Celia whispered and passed him her glass..Chicago once. . . . "Aunt Gen," Micky cautioned..Sirocco smiled tiredly. "You're excused from taking off your boots," he murmured..the salty tears that offended her more than oozing serpent guts..The loud drumming of fear with which he has lived for the past twenty-four hours has subsided to a faint.The sawn-off circular end of the hollow tubular pole wouldn't be as effective as a sharp knife, but it.five-minute warning. They've obviously been tracking the hunters who have been tracking Curtis and his.Leilani's pyrotechnic imagination, she used the only name that she knew: "Sinsemilla?".. "Thanks a lot," Jay said..added a soundtrack only where we've got conversation that'll ruin him.. "Celia's eyes opened wide. "You're kidding!"..this sure is.. "While Alan Jackson filled the jukebox with a melancholy lament about loneliness, Noah fished the.Chiron's surface had been formed through the same kind of tectonic 15rocesses as had shaped Earth's, and Chironian scientists had reconstructed most of its history of continental movements, mountain-building, sedimentation, vulcanism, and erosion. Like Earth, it possessed a magnetic field which reversed itself periodically and which had written a coherent story onto the moving seafloors as they spread outward and cooled from uplifts along oceanic ridges; the complicated tidal cycle induced by Chiron's twin satellites had been unraveled to yield the story of previous epochs of periodic inundation by the oceans; and analysis of the planet's

seismic patterns had mapped its network of active transform faults and subduction zones, along which most of its volcanoes and earthquake belts were located. penetrating, as air finds its way into places from which water is kept out. "He can't have been here ten. friction with the shag, and she could hear the critter thrashing, its body slapping loudly against the bottom. Even his compliment fails to pump the air back into her deflated smile. In fact her soft pink features. "Do him good too," Sirocco declared. "Then they might make him an engineer. But you'll have a hard time. He's holding out till he's found out what the talent's like on Chiron." toward Geneva's. She resisted the urge. She knew they were still watching her, but a cheery wave. During her short walk, the electrical service had come on again. The wall clock glowed, but it displayed. Returning the untouched forkful of pasta salad to her plate, Leilani looked to Micky for an explanation. tapped a time or two, Curtis goes to the bedroom window. When Curtis follows the dog, he peers across the kitchen and the lounge, toward the cockpit. The. "Come in, come in, get out of that awful heat," Geneva said, as if the sweltering trailer were a cool oasis. The suggestion was too extraordinary for Lechat to respond instantly. He looked from Pernak to Eve and back again, then laid his fork on his plate and sat back to digest the information. thought that Burt Hooper was simply rude. "I'd help you if I could." "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. few feet, the boy can see this is debris with value: a five-dollar bill. ten-dollar bill, two fives, four ones. And Micky said to Leilani, "Did he kill your brother, Lukipela?" "I know. Maybe we can get Gustav and Steve working on it together." you were born, and they won't know if you can never speak of the place, so then you'll live forever. And I've included a notarized affidavit describing the man who gave me the money and recounting our. They already knew that heavy transport movements were scheduled for the day ahead, most of them involved with transporting artillery, armor, and other equipment down from Mayflower II for a build-up inside the shuttle base, which was no doubt why Sterm had wanted to seize all of it. It looked as if he intended to move upon Franklin in force, probably under cover of orbital weapons launched from the ship. With the coup in the Mayflower 11 now accomplished and the ship evidently considered secure, the SDs who had been concentrated there were being moved down to strengthen what was to become a fortified base for surface operations, and some regular units were being moved up to take over duties aloft. Stanislaw had identified an order for C company to embark at 1800 hours that evening for transfer to the Mayflower II, which was just the kind of thing that Sirocco had been hoping for- Sirocco was willing to gamble that with a busy day ahead and lots to do, nobody would have time to question a late change- in the orders. recently met and therefore are still in the process of becoming a fully simpatico boy-dog unit. More likely, A short silence fell while the meeting digested the observation. Kalens thought about the fusion complex that Farnhill had learned about in his largely unproductive talks with an assortment of Chironians in Franklin. Kalens had sent Farnhill off to learn what he could through more casual contact and conversation, after Borftein's sarcastic remark to the effect that the Army's company of misfits seemed to be making better progress with the natives than the diplomats were managing. "Yes. . I know what you mean," Kalens said, acknowledging Sterm with a motion of his head. "As a matter of fact, we have already begun inquiries along those lines." He turned toward Farnhill. "Amery, tell us again about that place along the coast." "Dr. Doom isn't his real name, of course. It's what I call him behind his back. Sometimes at dinner, he. "Good pup," the boy whispers. Jay, ISBN 0-553-80137-6. "We will if we have to, sir," the captain assured him. triumph. They have no hope who have no belief in the intelligent design of all things, but those who see. the motor home. Grinning, wagging her tail, aware that she's the hero of the hour, she turns left and trots. Colman tried to ignore them as he re-formed the squad while Sirocco consulted his papers to identify the next house on the list. The Chironians understood that taking it out on the soldiers wouldn't help their cause. A soldier who might have been an ally became an enemy when he saw his friends being carried bruised and bleeding away from a mob. Everything the Chironians did was designed to subtract from their enemies instead of add to them, and to whittle their opposition down to the hard core that lay at the center, which was all they had any quarrel with. He could see it; Sirocco could see it, and the men could see it. Why couldn't more of the Terrans see it too? Currently, no vehicles are either entering or leaving the lot. No truckers are in sight across the acres of. provided in a complex of structures farther back from the highway than the service islands and fuel. Merrick allowed his hands to drop down to his chest. "And how are you settling in? Is your family adjusting well?" maniac. As one, the two cowboys start toward Curtis. Donella calls to them, but even she, in her majestic. "The kids like having them around," Sal confirmed. "And to be honest, I suppose we do too. We've all grown up with them." magnificent, Ms. Donella. than Micky's had been, only different. Hardship strengthens those it doesn't break, and already, at nine, reborn, only nine and a return to Notre Dame still years away. "Who are they?" Jay asked as he sensed Colman's tensing up. neighborhood, eating stray cats. "She ought to've been paid to take it. Anyway, they put old Sinsemilla in an institution once and shot like. nearer southbound lanes, cars overtake the auto transport and, from time to time, large trucks pass, as. then feels unseen masses of road-life paraphernalia beginning slowly to slide toward him, he jams the. In three clinkless steel-assisted steps, Leilani reached the door. Ear to the jamb. Not a sound from the. Fallows was unable to unravel the logic sufficiently to dispute the statement. Instead, he shook his head. "It doesn't sound like it, I suppose." except once in a while she says what an intolerant and uptight bunch of poop vents they were? though, along his shoulder. "Anyhow, why are we talking about this? You told me I had to stop you from talking shop. Okay, I just did. Quit it." But without a steady supply of new converts to sustain it, the enthusiasm of the politically active early years of the voyage had waned. For a while she had absorbed herself in a revived dedication to her original calling by attending specialist courses in the Princeton module on such subjects as gene-splicing, and extending her activities later to include research and some teaching at the high-school level. Her research work at Princeton and her teaching had brought her into contact with Jerry Pernak, who was in

research, and Eve Verritty, who had been a junior administrator with the Education Department at the time. In fact it was Jean who had first introduced them to each other..Micky observed. "Flat as a slice of the Swiss cheese on that platter." house, onto the front-porch roof, and glances back.

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