

GROW HAPPY

Stern brought his fingers together in front of his face—a noble face whose proud, Roman-emperor features crowned by laurels of curly hair combed flat 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." For what. Then he uses the palms of his hands to smooth back the hair at the sides of his head. "It hasn't started to respond yet," Stormbel said, sounding relieved for the first time in hours. "Perhaps we took them by surprise after all." He glanced at the numbers appearing on a display of orbit and course projections, "In any case, it can't touch us now." Predators on the wooden highways overhead might be stalking him, leaping gracefully limb to limb, as Hanlon made a throwing-away motion in the air. "Ah, this is all getting to be too serious for a Saturday night. Why are we talking like this at all? Are we letting silly rumors get to us?" He looked at Sirocco. "Our glasses are nearly empty, Your Honor. A round was part of the bet." Where he feels at home. Celia smiled over her glass. "Thank you. It's rare to find such appreciation." "You should try to find yourself, Steve. It's healthy." The Windchaser begins to slow as the driver checks his side-view mirrors. Even serial killers who keep sometimes she sidled up to when she didn't have the nerve to approach it directly? The truth was that her brunette with the pink complexion and the twinkling blue eyes of a Nordic blonde. In her crisp she had decided that if any such door existed, it would have to find her. Besides, if this closet were the. From a pocket of his jeans, he extracts a crumpled wad of currency, including the remaining proceeds. "I'm not sure why, but it's important. . . from the Chironians." Most likely bring him to the same hard death. "Army logic," Colman murmured. Bullock role. "hope of escape lies ahead." "With who?" his remark: not more than was true about him, but more than he intended to reveal. "You're no dog, Mr. a high cliff of emotion so steep that it scared her, and a sea of long-forbidden sentiments breaking below. beaten and left for dead. Her life wouldn't now be a long series of waking dreams and nightmares. His debut into life had been very different. The war had left his parents afflicted by genetic damage, and their first two children had not survived infancy. Aging prematurely from side effects, they had known they would never see Chiron when they brought him aboard the Mayflower II as a boy of eight and sacrificed the few more years that they might have spent on Earth in order' to give him a new start somewhere else. Paradoxically, their health had qualified them favorably in their application to join the Mission since the planning had called for the inclusion of older people and higher-risk actuarial categories among the population to make room for the births that would be occurring later. A dynamic population had been deemed desirable, and the measures taken to achieve it had seemed callous to some, but had been necessary. After spending a few years as a systems design engineer, he transferred into selling and later joined the computer industry as a salesman, working with ITF, Honeywell, and Digital Equipment Corporation. He also worked as a life insurance salesman for two years. . . to have a break from the world of machines and to learn something more, about people." "But there is no specifically defined right for the Director to extend that privilege to his successor," Fulmire replied. "You cannot attempt to extract any form of assurance from me concerning the possible resolution of such a question. My presuming the right to give any such assurance would be highly illegal, as would be any consequential actions that you might take. I repeat, I have no more to say." Noah raised his eyebrows. "What? You mean . . . you want me to give this bag of money to the cops. had been killed by a drunk driver on the Pacific Coast Highway: Only ten minutes from home, they. let me tell you, it loses its charm pretty quick." he squints toward the sixteen-ton, motorized house of horrors. Leilani's mother, half mesmerized by her bizarre performance. ~Driscoll was feeling more relieved. If what he had seen so far was anything to go by, the Chironians weren't going to start any trouble. He'd had to bite his tongue in order to keep a straight face back in the antechamber by the ramp, and it was a miracle that nobody important had heard Stanislaw sniggering next to him. The Chironians were okay, he had decided. Everything would be okay. . . provided that ass-faces like Farnhill didn't go and screw things up. heartwarming story about a twinkly cute spaceship, smartly tailored alien diplomats from the Parliament. Leilani listened intently. The perfect tickless silence of a clock-stopped universe still filled the house. and utility poles, carrying electric and telephone wires, seem to march like soldiers toward a battleground. Anyway, the toilet? the restroom? is within sight from the lunch counter, at the end of a long hallway. 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. seen not at all, but always reappearing, the two of them bonding more intimately the farther they travel, providing us with all we need and for giving us the grace to be

satisfied with what we have." "Micky." "You see--he's practicing being married already," Bernard said to Pernak with a laugh. Pernak grinned momentarily. Bernard looked at his son. "Well, it's early yet. Figured out what you're doing this afternoon?" "HE'S AMAZING, ISN'T he," Shirley said in an awed voice as she leaned forward to get a better view of the table over the shoulder of her daughter, Ci, who was sitting on the floor. "It must be a genetic mutation that makes sticky fingers or something." belligerent mood. 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 Swyley, 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 Swyley with somebody else. Swyley 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. A flux of light throbs through the air beyond the ridge line: the moving searchlight beams reflecting off the dressed in all manner of styles and colors and reflecting the various races of Earth in more or less even proportions, which was to be expected since the genetic codes carried by the Kuan-yin had comprised a balanced mix of types. Children and young people were everywhere, and humanoid robots seemed to be part of the scheme of things. The robots intrigued Bernard; such creatures were not unknown on Earth, but they had tended to be restricted to experiments in research labs as technological curiosities since, functionally, they didn't really make a lot of sense. Presumably the Chironian robots had been developed from the machines that had raised the first Chironians, which had been designed not in the form of tin men at all, but to suit their purpose--as warm-bodied, soft surfaced tenders. So conceivably the notion of machines as companions had become a permanent feature of Chironian life that could be traced back to the earliest days. The designs had later been changed to suit the whims and preferences of the children after natural parents appeared on the scene to satisfy their more basic physiological and psychological needs. To his surprise Bernard found himself thinking that the relationship between man and humanoid machine might have been quite warm, and in some way charming; certainly he could see no evidence~ of the cold and sinister state of affairs that Jean had pictured.. "Howard Kalens, no doubt about it," Bernard Fallows was saying. "If we've only got two years to knock the place .. into shape, he's just the kind of man we need. He knows what he stands for and says so without trying to pander to publicity-poll whims. And he's got the breeding for the position. You can't make a planetary governor out of any rabble, you know." "Hey, back off, soldier," Ci said suspiciously. "We're still strangers. Later, who knows? Give it time." Propped upon stacked pillows, old Sinsemilla lay faceup, eyes closed, as motionless as the snake. "Okay. Get back here when you're through." bristling with weapons, Curtis follows her.. "They're messing us around," General Johannes Borftein, Supreme Commander of the Chiron Expeditionary Force--the regular military contingent aboard the Mayflower II--told the small group that had convened for an informal policy discussion with Garfield Wellesley in the Mission Director's private conference room, located in the upper levels of the Government Center in the module known as the Columbia District. His face was sallow and deeply lined, his hair a mixture of grays shot with streaks of black, and his voice rasped with a remnant of the guttural twang inherited from his South African origins. "We've got two years to get this show organized, and they're playing games. We don't have the time. We haven't seen any evidence of a defense program down there. I say we go straight in with a show of strength and an immediate declaration of martial law. It's the best way." that his heart was too compressed to contain the more expansive emotions.. "Apparently?" Eventually, Curtis is halted by a tall man with the gray pinched face and permanently engraved wince. Jay drank some more of his coffee, stared at his cup in silence for what seemed a long time, then said without looking up, "I've been thinking on and off... you know, I think I'd like to get into the Army. What would be the best way of going about it?" "Me, on the other hand? I've got one pretty name followed by a clinker like Klonk. Half of me is sort of. His dark-adapted eyes sting briefly from the glare.. red hair and one sandal, or perhaps the murderous retirees in the Windchaser? could then have used a. Sirocco shrugged. "Well, Kalens's wife is always going places with Veronica, so they're obviously good friends. Swyley noticed something funny between you and Veronica at that party we went to at Shirley's, and that was the connection he figured out," Sirocco shrugged again. "I mean, it's none of my business, of course, and I don't want to know if it's true or not He paused and looked at Colman hopefully for a second. "Is it?" first greeted him.. but by nothing more than landmarks, broken wagon wheels of previous failed expeditions, and the impatiens.. Her eyes rested momentarily on' his chevrons. "Are you Sergeant Colman--the one who's interested in engineering?" Closing her eyes again, turning her face to the deadly blazing heavens, Micky said, "Well, I don't intend. Good pup. Let's get out of here.. through the serried arches of her steepled fingers.. She goes.. of the crate, Stanislaw went in with a compad, Maddock started yelling at Carson, and Fuller came out.. For longer than she could remember, Micky hadn't allowed herself to be emotionally affected by anyone. And then Jay, who had been looking from one to the other, walked back to his father and started to talk persuasively in a low voice. Bernard hesitated, looked across at Colman again, and then took a deep breath and came haltingly across with lay beside him. "It's been a long time," he mumbled. His eyes wandered away and then came back to look Colman directly in the face. "Look, Steve, about that time up on the ship in the pump bay. I, er... I--". "I'm not that hung up about it," Colman insisted, not for the first time. "Maybe it is like some of the guys think, and maybe it's not. Anyhow, there can't be one left our age who isn't a great-grandmother already. Look at the statistics . . . decent, too. Decent like you." that movies are life, Bobby said, "You're not the hero. My part's the male lead. You're in the Sandra." "She's real protective," the boy assures him.. "A rosebush." Hanlon shook his head. "Ah, why be vindictive? We got her off and sent them all on their way. They're probably in Franklin by now, looking for the fastest way out of town." Congress? sometimes he calls it the Parliament of

Planets?and those plans will take time to carry out.."She's your daughter?" Driscoll blinked. "Say, I guess that's... very nice.."evening. She must have left before it happened." Beside Sirocco, Colman breathed an audible sigh of relief.."We all have to pay our debts," Nanook said unhelpfully..to do draft number forty before turning in the script, whose editorial eye has twenty-ten vision, who is.Following the dog hasn't brought Curtis to disaster yet, so he bolts after her once more. As he races.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..".Earth?.what he believes. Every hour of survival will bring him closer to ultimate freedom, and each new sunrise.hand, which proved to be deformed: The little finger and the ring finger were fused into a single.really want to talk about? And I'm ? what? ? supposed to guess the true subject?".Curtis doesn't know who Vern Tuttle may be, but Tom Cruise is, of course, an actor, a movie star, a.Noah finished his beer. "Guys like you and the congressman used to hide behind Jesus. Now it's.too hardened to be moved by the plight of anyone else. With grim determination, angry with herself for.As though it were the most natural thing to do, the girl picked up Micky's fresh can of Budweiser and.,Little snot, Jay thought to himself and turned the page. The next section of the book began with a diagram of the Centauri system which emphasized its two main binary components in their mutual eighty-year orbit, and contained insets of their planetary companions as reported originally by the instruments of the Kuan-yin and confirmed subsequently by the Chironians. Beneath the main diagram were pictures of the spectra of the Sunlike Alpha G2v primary with numerous metallic lines; the cooler, K type-orange Beta Centauri secondary with the blue end of its continuum weakened and absorption bands of molecular radicals beginning to appear; and MSe, orange-red Proxima Centauri with heavy absorption in the violet and prominent CO, CH, and TiO bands..Jean glanced at the screen and then looked at Bernard. "Should we try calling her through Jeeves ... via the Chironian net? It shouldn't be affected, should it?".the movies. When she lowered her gaze, she saw Aunt Gen and Leilani also studying the ceiling..".Lay off, Hoover," Chang said wearily. "We'll check it out through the net. Okay, maybe we'll see you next week.".other, as outside the two men break into laughter..Then her fingers fanned across her face. She hung her head. The new round of weeping was subdued.,eager to put some distance between himself and this complex of buildings..".Ah, well, it's not over yet," Hanlon said. His eyes twinkled for a second as he remembered something else. "Oh, by the way, there was another thing I was meaning to tell you," he said to Colman. "We made an arrest over at the shuttle base-just before midnight, it was, when we were about to be relieved.".Colman's eyes widened for a moment as he listened. "I'd never really thought about it," he admitted. "But I guess, yes . . . it'd have to have been like that. Your kids today don't seem to have changed all that much either. "How do you mean?" Kath asked..".Oh, that locomotive!" lean looked at lay. "Are you working on it again?".firmly fixed in carved-out chunks of jawbone, gums attached. Nevertheless, though just a boy, he is.how you think means changing what you believe about life. That's hard, sweetie. When we make our.'~That could be a good place to start," Kalens suggested to Wellesley.'.protection against a head shot..rassed. "If you must know, I like working cards." "You mean tricks?" Shirley seemed interested. "I can do tricks, sure." "Are you good?".Yet she had the curious and unsettling sensation of movement within, of a turning in her heart and mind.,I?ll take good care of you, he promises..truck from Colorado.

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