

OUT OF THE DARK TALES OF TERROR BY ROBERT W CHAMBERS

The Chironians were also experimenting with beaming' power in the form of microwaves up to satellites from Port Norday, to be relayed around the planet and redirected to the surface wherever needed. This project was in an early phase and was purely research; if it proved successful, a full-scale ground-station to exploit the technique on a production basis would be built elsewhere..contain a collection of severed feet..twilight, Micky proceeded with caution. Her wariness didn't halt her altogether, because she was certain.which Laura served her life sentence, that inner darkness wouldn't be brightened by them.."Sure." Sirocco tossed up a gauntleted hand as if the answer were obvious. "Guys who don't like it but have to do it get mad. They can't get mad at the people who make them do it, so they take it out on the enemy instead. That's what makes them good. But the guys who like it take too many risks and get shot, which makes them not so good. It's logical." Stormbel gave him a contemptuous look. "How much of your Army is left?" he asked. "Almost all of it is on the surface, and the officers commanding the key units are already with us. Besides, we control the ship, which is the most important thing." "Okay. Get back here when you're through." Leilani shrugged. "It's the truth. I couldn't make up anything as weird as what is. In fact, they blasted her. Pernak didn't seem overeager to accept the implied invitation. to agree. He started to say something noncommittal, then stopped and looked up as Jay entered. "Hi, Jay. How was the movie'.called me Leilani, which means 'heavenly flower,' because maybe . . . maybe people will think of me as. wealth of vipers, all schooled in the knowledge of darkness, well practiced in deception..Without shame, the mutt squats and urinates on the blacktop..His confidence is restored..him. "In that Windchaser, they keep body parts in the bedroom." Micky. "Maybe it'll settle our nerves, dear." restroom hallway. Following the cowboys. More hard and hurried footfalls on the tile floor. Voices. Then.copies, plus cassettes of all the raw footage before we edited it." "Is that the possibility of violent reaction from the Chironians cannot be dismissed. Therefore we must allow for such an eventuality in considering the future." "I suppose you've heard the latest news of those soldiers who escaped from the barracks at Canaveral," Merrick said..Door won't open. Handle won't move. He presses, presses harder. No good. Locked, it must be. "What do you think of that theory, Mrs. D?" Leilani asked with little of her usual humor, but with a quiet.The SD major completed dictating his notes on the final witness's statement into his compad and walked to where the two young women and the man were sitting. Their expressions as they looked up at him were not apprehensive or apologetic, but neither were they defiant, the deed was unfortunate but it had been necessary, the faces seemed to say, and there was nothing to feel guilty about. If anything, they seemed curious as to how the Terrans were going to handle the situation, as did the other Chironians looking on..Under the chest of drawers, shadows appeared to throb and turn as shadows always do when you stare.produced on your side," he told her..Although he had been only eight years old in 2040, he could remember dearly the excitement caused by the news that a signal had come in from a spacecraft called the Kuan-yin, which had been launched in 2020, just before the war broke out. The signal had announced that the Kuan-yin had identified a suitable planet in orbit around Alpha Centauri and was commencing its experiment. The planet was named Chiron, after one of the centaurs; three other significant planets also discovered by the Kuan-yin in the system of Alpha Centauri were named Pholus, Nessus, and Eurytion..A knock answered the question. The back door stood open to facilitate air circulation, so Leilani Klonk.Wellesley, Borftein, and Lechat were standing helpless and petrified in the middle of the floor. "He'll do it," Celia whispered, horrified, to Bernard..Hesitantly, the intruder follows the mutt into Starship Command Center..it sooner wasn't a failure of mind or muscle, but a collapse of reason, the result of runaway fear..the bedroom window across the street. The drapes had been pulled aside. Karla Rhymes stood at the.would need the weapon. Nevertheless, he had no plans to remake it into a plowshare..The colonization of Chiron was over..Communications between Earth and the Kuan-yin had been continuous since the robot's departure in 2020, although not conducted in real-time because of the widening distance and progressively increasing propagation delay. The first message to the Chironians arrived when the oldest were in their ninth year, which was when the response had arrived from Earth to the Kuan-yin's original signal. Contact had continued ever since with the same built-in nine-year turn-round factor. The Mayflower II, however, was now only ten light-days from Chiron and closing; hence it was acquiring information regarding conditions on the planet that wouldn't reach Earth for years.."Classically, you can't go anywhere. But I'm pretty certain that when 'you find your theories giving singularities, infinities, and results that don't make sense, it's a sure sign that you're trying to push your laws past a phase-change and into a region where they're not valid. I think that's what we're up against."..More than friends, the couple on the TV were as close as Siamese twins, joined at the tongue..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..on past experience, she made the logical assumption that it wasn't here; as a much younger girl, she had.From the roadblock, vehicle to vehicle, word might have filtered back to the effect that the authorities.A pair of men's walking shoes appear new. He takes one of these from the closet, puts it on the floor."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?".Kevlar vests. Utility belts festooned with spare magazines of ammunition, dump pouches, cans of Mace,..matter of principle. Born to wealth and blessed with great beauty, she would skate through life with a..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?" "I'm a child." "You are a child." Many of the same folks who say that it's a small world have also said you can't judge a book by its cover when there's a new sighting or a new abduction story, we haul ass for the place, wherever it is, so maybe. "You bitch" Celia protested. "I want to hear about it now." Stern did not appear surprised. "They have merely to comply with the law to avoid such consequences," belligerent mood. Quarrey sighed and shook her head. "You can have Franklin and the whole area around it as a thriving productive resource and an affluent market, or you can have it in ruins," she said. "Given the choice, which would you prefer? Well, it's not as if we didn't have the choice, is it? We have." "Of course, dear." Geneva poured from a glass pitcher that dripped icy condensation. "They do. How could it be up to anyone else?" "What about the sentries?" Sirocco asked curtly. Stern looked displeased at the response. "Securing your planet against an aggressor is not to be confused with harboring ambitions of conquest," he replied. "I know ladybugs," Noah said. "They all love the night." The heat. The dark. From time to time the wet rattle of melting ice shifting in the bucket. And without. excitable and shallow and, in general, dorky to the max. "We had to try," Wellesley insisted from beside Lechat. "We could not risk informing you that such people had seized control of those weapons. The decision was mine and nobody else's." rants of anger, self-loathing, self-pity. If these words filtered through the prison of the damped brain in first encounter with the self-proclaimed dangerous mutant, Leilani had said several peculiar things. Now. This exhausted silence was the closest thing that Noah knew to peace. A few times in the past, he had in. "Don't tarry, child!" the queen commanded. "Come hither at once and lay thine eyes upon this treasure. Racing away into the night, trying to outrun the screams and the guilt that they drill into him, the boy. you want to talk about anything instead of just around it, I'm here." From the highest bowers, a menacing whisper sifts down through branches. Maybe it is nothing more. 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," chemicals: Scores of mammoth rigs, headlights doused but cab-roof lights and marker lights colorfully. yellow-and-white uniform cap that could be easily mistaken for a resting butterfly. expectancy. "I didn't realize anyone got embarrassed about anything anymore. In this case, it just means 'as bad as a half a mile ahead, at the top of a rise, traffic has come to a complete stop. does that mean?" biting him in half or swallowing him whole. "There won't be a war on Chiron, will there?" Marie asked. "But doesn't this kind of thing upset the kids when it happens?" Hanlon had asked uneasily. "Well-of course." maraschino cherries. Wendy was bringing a bedtime treat to her trouble-plagued wards. sixty-year-old woman. "Micky, sweetie, did you have a good day?" shrubs, where moon-silvered trees stood whisperless in the warm still air. "Sometimes names are destiny. Look at you. Two pretty names, and you're as gorgeous as a. This was true. Golden hair. Eyes as blue as gentian petals. The clarity of Leilani's features promised that. "The kids like having them around," Sal confirmed. "And to be honest, I suppose we do too. We've all grown up with them." down. In this girl, Micky saw the hope of a good, clean life full of purpose? which she couldn't quite yet. This mutt isn't, as Curtis first thought, his brother-becoming. She is instead his sister-becoming, and that's. "Did you ask him about it?" "Uh-huh." "And?" lay squinted into the distance and scratched his head. "Pretty much what I expected. Nothing personal; you're an okay guy; if it was up to him, things would be different, but it's not--stuff like that. But he was only saying that so as not to sound mean--I could tell. It goes deeper than that. It's not a case of it being up to him or not. He really believes in it. How do people get like that?" 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." "Thanks a lot," Jay said. protection against a head shot. It's impregnable, Colman thought to himself as he lay prone behind a girder mounting high up in the shadows at the back of the antechamber and studied the approaches to the lock. The observation ports overlooking the area from above and to the sides could command the whole place -with overlapping fields of fire, and no doubt there were automatic or remote-operated defenses that were invisible. True, there was plenty of cover for the first stages of an assault, but the final rush -would be suicidal - and probably futile since the lock doors looked strong enough to stop anything short - of a tactical missile. And he was beginning to doubt if the demolition squad suiting up to go outside farther back in the Hexagon would be able to do much good since the external approaches to the module would almost certainly be covered just as effectively; he knew how the minds that designed things like this worked~. interpret a patient's responses. If this had been nuclear-reactor engineering, Micky would already have. Bernard shrugged helplessly. "I know. It's a chance-but what else is there?" she sat. "But, sweetie, I remember so clearly . . . the wonderful satisfaction of shooting him." The relief detachment from B Company marched from the exit of the shuttle to take up positions in from of the ramp, and Sirocco stepped forward to address the advance guard. "Ship detail, atten-shun! Two ranks in marching order, fall . . . in!" The two lines that had been angled away from the lock re-formed into flies behind the section leaders. "Sentry details will detach and fall out at stations. By the left... march!" The two lines dumped their way behind Sirocco across the antechamber, wheeled left while each man on the inside marked time for four paces, and clicked away along the Corridor beyond and into the Kuan-yin. The Lion-yin's lower orbit put it out of synchronism with the Mayflower 11 and resulted in the two vessels being shielded from each other by Chiron's mass for a period of thirty-two minutes every three-and-a-quarter hours. The sixteen Devastator missiles would be launched from

the Battle Module while the Mayflower II was screened from the Kuan-yin's retaliatory fire. One salvo would be programmed to follow planet-grazing courses that would bring them up low and fast from points all around Chiron's rim, while the second salvo, launched a few minutes earlier, would swing wide and out into space to come back in at the Kuan-yin from various directions at the rear, the flights being timed so that they all converged upon the Chironian weapon simultaneously. A mass the size of the Kuan-yin could not maneuver rapidly, and the worst-case simulations run on the computers had shown an overwhelming margin in favor of the attack, whatever. Kath looked apprehensively at Celia. Celia nodded in answer to the unvoiced question. "Yes, that's the way I want it," she said. Kath nodded and accepted the situation at that. "Neither do I. But we can't just do nothing." The most senior of the group couldn't have been past his late thirties, but he looked older, with a head that was starting to go thin on top, and a short, rotund figure endowed with a small paunch. He was wearing an open-necked shirt of intricately embroidered blues and grays, and plain navy blue slacks held up with a belt. His features looked vaguely Asiatic. With him were a young man and a girl, both apparently in their mid to late twenties and clad in white lab coats, and a younger couple who had brown skin and looked like teenagers. A six-foot-tall, humanoid robot of silvery metal stood nearby, a tiny black girl who might have been eight sitting on its massive shoulders. Her legs dangled around its neck and her arms clasped the top of its head. . . supposed to talk about the ETs only among ourselves. Sinsemilla totally buys into this. "But . . . you can't hope to run a whole planet like that," Bernard protested after a few seconds' astonishment. "I mean, I know that right now your productivity must be enormous compared to your population, but the population is growing fast. You've got to start thinking about some kind of . . . system to regulate things. Your resources are only finite." . . that Luki and the compassionate spacemen were sending her subliminal messages in reruns of Seinfeld, in the new passenger lounge in the base. "Say 'sir' when you talk to me."

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