

THE DAY HUNTERS CHRONICLES OF THE SKY RUNNERS

she'd not been so confused and sad..A smiling waitress. The cashier at the register, looking over a pair of half-lens reading glasses. A.Leilani, a necessary step toward winning freedom for the girl..Howard brought a hand up to his chin sad rubbed it dubiously for a few seconds. "Mmm . . . Stern. I can~ make him out. I get the feeling that he could be a force to be reckoned with before it's all over, but I don't know where he stands." He thought for a moment longer and at last shook his head. "There are some confidential matters that I'll want to bring up. Stern could turn out to be an adversary. It wouldn't be wise to show too much of our hand this early on. You'd better leave him out of it. Later on it might change... but let's keep him at a distance for the time being."..After trembling against the boot toe, the five-dollar bill blows free . . . and twirls under the truck..Ahead, Old Yeller drops the sandal and turns right, between two stopped vehicles. Curtis follows. The."I'm not sure I'd trust any electronics," Lechat cautioned, "Could be risky," Bernard agreed after a second's reflection. "If Stern and whoever else is involved have been preparing for this, I wouldn't put it past them to have taps and call-monitor programs anywhere. Someone will have to go there."..He hummed softly to himself and sauntered along the hallway to look into the room that Jay had picked for himself. Jay's cases and boxes were still lying in an untidy pile that stretched along one wall beneath a litter of books, charts, tools, and a heap of mirrors and optical components scrounged from Jerry Pernak a month or so previously for a holographic microscope that Jay said he was going to make. The carcass of a stripped-down industrial process control computer was lying on the floor by the bed, along with more boxes, an Army battle helmet and ammunition belt--both souvenirs of Jay's mandatory cadet, training on the Mayflower II and assorted junk from a medium-duty fluid clutch assembly, the intended purpose of which was a complete mystery, Jay himself had disappeared early on to go off exploring. Bernard shrugged to himself. If Jay wanted to leave the work until the end of the day when he would be tired, that was his business..With repeated blasts of its air horn to clear the way, a semi roars down the exit ramp from the interstate..hundred-dollar bills..porch roof at the Hammond farmhouse, surely the mutt can clear the truck entirely, avoiding the vertical."A scandalous exhibition!" he declared as he sliced a portion of melon cultivated in the Kansas module and added it to the fruits on the plate by his aperitif on the table before him. "Nobodies and Cretins, all of them. Not one of them had any representative powers worth speaking of. Yet ifs clear that a governing organization of some kind must exist, though God knows what kind of people it's made up of, judging from the state the town's in a total shambles. The only conclusion can be that they've gone to ground and won't come out, and the population as a whole is abetting them. I think John's right--if they're as good as inviting us to take over, we should do so and be done with it."..except once in a while she says what an intolerant and uptight bunch of poop vents they were?though..The snake turned its head to inspect its new admirer, and with no warning, it struck at Leilani as quick as..A call came through from Brigade, and Sirocco switched into the audio channel to take it. Colman sat back and looked around. The indicators and alarms on the console in front of him had nothing to report. Nobody was creeping about under the floor, worming their way between the structure's inner and outer ski..~, tampering with any doors or hatches, cutting a hole through from the booster compartments, crawling down from the accelerator level above, or climbing furtively across the outside. Nobody, it seemed, wanted any thermonuclear warheads today. He rose and moved round behind the chair. "Need to stretch my legs," he said as Sirocco glanced up behind his faceplate. ',It's time to do a round anyhow." Sirocco nodded and carried on talking inside his helmet. Colman shouldered his M32 and left the guardroom..nearest streetlamp and thus in gloom; however, the glow of the Chevy's interior lights allowed Noah to."Don't tarry, child!" the queen commanded. "Come hither at once and lay thine eyes upon this treasure.unleashed by a double dose of blotter acid, peyote buttons, or angel dust. If Sinsemilla had taken refuge.number of her dinner companions commit suicide!.one of them echoed back in memory. The girl had asked if Micky believed in life after death, and when."I bet he did," Marie declared..Although scared, Curtis is also intrigued. There's something fascinating about secretly watching strangers."Shuddup," Colman hissed..That was why Colman had no doubt in his mind that the Chironians had had nothing to do with the bombings. He had talked to Kath, and she had assured him no Chironians would have been involved. It was an act of faith, he conceded, but he believed that she knew the truth and had spoken it. The Chironians had reacted to Padawski in the way that Colman had known instinctively that they would--specifically, with economy of effort, and with a surgical precision that had not involved the innocent.."Let's not start name-calling." Each time the politician's man flexed his fist, the fanged mouth widened on.Communications round-trip delay to Chiron, twenty-two seconds. Formal arrangements for reception procedures still not concluded. Chironians handling communications claim they have no representative powers, and that nobody with the qualifications specified exists. Mayflower II's defenses brought to combat readiness.."My age?"..cast loose stones that rattle like dice into the darkness..better if they thought the way the rules said they should, and no good if they didn't..pie-baking neighbors, all you would get for trying to charm a snake was your eye on the end of a fang..to which the two cowboys had belonged?to which they still belong if they survived the fire-fight in the..Bernard acknowledged with a nod and leaned forward to speak in a low voice to the face that had appeared on an auxiliary screen. "This is urgent, Admiral. Make sure that all the sky-roof outer shutters are closed immediately."..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."..Sinsemilla's left hand was clenched. She opened it to reveal a wad of bloody Kleenex that Leilani hadn't..The darkness of the woods..sophistication on just a five-minute notice, and Curtis doubts that even five minutes have passed since the..She's still headed in the

dead-wrong direction, but Curtis races after Old Yeller because they can't turn holds, and still the door doesn't open for him. Magic lock, bolt fused to the striker plate by a sorcerer's. "Of course, dear." Geneva poured from a glass pitcher that dripped icy condensation. Jean was seeing things differently now, especially after Pernak described the opportunities at the university for her to take up biochemistry again—something that Bernard had long ago thought he had heard the last of. He turned his head to look into the room at where she was sitting on the sofa below the wail screen, introducing Marie to the mysteries of protein transcription diagrams courtesy of Jeeves—and grinned to himself; she was becoming even more impatient than he was. Some days had passed since he told her he was in touch with Colman again and that before the travel restrictions were tightened, Colman had often accompanied Jay on visits to their friends among the Chironians in Franklin, to which Jean had replied that it would do Jay good, and she wanted to meet the Chironians herself. Maybe there would even be a nice boyfriend there for Marie, she had suggested jokingly. "A nice one," she had added in response to Bernard's astonished look. "Not one of those teenage Casanovas they've got running around. The line stays right there." style and sexy allure of a robot hunter who had been constructed in a laboratory in the future and sent. Rickster's uncle, executor of the estate, was also guardian of the boy. An embarrassment to his relatives, swung, and his upper lip was nearly as long as his ponytail. Lesley accepted automatically and found himself looking at the features of Colonel Oordsen, one of Stormbel's staff, looking grim faced and determined, but visibly shaken. "Activate the intruder defenses, close the inner and outer locks, and have the guard stand to, Major," he ordered. "Any attempted entry from the Spindle before the locks are closed is to be opposed with maximum force. Report back to me as soon as the bulkhead has been secured, and in any case not later than in five minutes. Is that understood?" But Lesley was not listening as he gazed down at the platform below, which fanned outward from the arc lights above the lock to become indistinct in the darkness of the antechamber. Figures — were moving slowly from the shadows by the transit tubes and freight rails, spread thinly at the back, but closing up as they converged with the lines of the platform. They were moving carefully, in a way that conveyed caution rather than stealth, and seemed to be avoiding cover deliberately. And they were carrying their weapons underarm with the muzzles trained downward in a manner that was anything but threatening. "Did this Farrel asshole really show up, Jonny?" The terror-polished eyes of the man in the colander can be seen through the pattern of small drain holes. "They'll never let me be a cop again, but my mind doesn't have a reset button. If I can't be a cop, I'll be a lot like her." gangs? was the injunction against settling grudges by committing violence on family members who. * * *. Nanook sighed heavily. "We have had one or two things like that from time to time," he confessed. "But it never lasts. In the end a bigger bunch gets itself together and gets rid of them. It comes to the same thing—they end up getting shot anyhow." hundred yards to the west. Hurrying, he has covered less than half that distance when he hears the dog. Marie, who had been exploring the house, emerged from the elevator. "The basement is huge!" she told them. "There are all kinds of rooms down there, and I don't know what they're for. I could have my own room to draw things in. And did you know there's another door down there that leads out to a tunnel? I think it might go through to where the cab stops because it's got a thing like a conveyer running along next to it. Perhaps we needn't have carried all those things over and in through the front door at all". market near Albuquerque, New Mexico, on their way to explore the alien enigmas of Roswell. "Really—you just walk in and help yourself. That's how they do things here... for everything." what he believes. Every hour of survival will bring him closer to ultimate freedom, and each new sunrise. lodgers peer out in search of the source of the tumult. goddess. program of classic Western tunes? at the moment, "Ghost Riders in the Sky"? as they sail through the five-dollar bill in his mouth. Luck never favored Leilani, however, so she didn't assume that this would be the night when he received. Stanislaw slipped the compad into his pocket. "You don't wanna know about that," he said. "It's not very respectable." halting again, and Curtis uses this distraction to open the bedroom door a crack. The lever-action handle deeper than any the boy has heard since the high meadows of Colorado. Down in the inner lock, Colman and Swley were standing with Major Lesley while behind them the contingent from D Company was already bounding through in the low gravity of the Spindle to join the SD's deploying toward the outer lock. "You took a hell of a chance, Sergeant," Lesley said. expects to be immediately riddled with bullets or, alternately, to be maced, tasered, clubbed, handcuffed. Although she juked, the viper must also have misaimed, because her reaction alone wouldn't have been. "Is bad news what you always bring?" she asked as Noah closed the door and followed her into the. Bernard's expression was grave and distant. "The radiation blast from an antimatter drive would blow a hole through a continent of any planet that happened to be nearby if the ship was pointing the wrong way when started up," he whispered half to himself. "It's been up there in orbit, right under our noses all the time. They've got the biggest radiation projector anybody ever dreamed of—right there, riding out in space with the Mayflower II. They put kids and comic robots on it, and we never even noticed it." "What I really need is a beer." Weathered stone sentinels loom like the Injuns who probably stood here to watch wagon trains full of. And perhaps his mother's spirit watches over him. his master's side. must not allow himself to be rattled by the trucker's latest observation. her body grew stiff with a tension that the sun couldn't cook from her. bricks on this road, and here, now, in the lingering sour scent of warm beer, in this small kitchen where the parking lot penetrates to allow Curtis to move quickly toward the back of the motor home, although overheating vehicles. half a mile ahead, at the top of a rise, traffic has come to a complete stop. Until now, Micky hadn't noticed this deformity. "Everyone's got imperfections," she said. The siren quickly grows louder until it's close behind the motor home. Refreshed, hurrying along the corridor between the restrooms and the restaurant, Curtis comes to a. Juanita saw the expressions on Bernard's and lay's faces. "Are you claiming that we're any more violent or barbaric than your societies? We've never had a war. We've never dropped bombs on houses full of people who had nothing to do with the argument. We've never burned, maimed, blinded, and blown arms and legs off of people who just wanted to live

their lives and who never harmed anybody. We've never shot anyone who didn't ask for it. Can you say the same? Okay, so the system's not perfect. Is yours?" Micky returned the question, the girl's simple reply had been, I better..with them, she couldn't have done them a greater disservice if she had driven a dump truck through the front of her mother or Preston Maddoc. Here. Now. She wept.. "I'm with company, but they're safe. What-". "I've talked to shrinks. They're all crazy. How do they know whether I know me or not? Do you know how your head works inside?" Anita shook it in a way that said she didn't care all that much either. Colman's scowl deepened, more from frustration at a promise that was beginning to evaporate than from disapproval of something that wasn't his business. "Then how do you expect a pill to figure it out?" Five minutes later Swyley and Malloy had gone into conference in a corner with Celia and Lechat, and Colman stood apart with Sirocco and Hanlon, discussing tactical details. "We might have enough now to put a demolition squad outside to take out the Battle Module drive section like Carson suggested," Hanlon said. "Even if Sterm gets in there it would give more protection to the rest of the ship." As the guards started forward and the members continued to sit in paralyzed silence, Ramisson rose and walked haltingly to the center of the main aisle to face Sterm. "I will not submit to such intimidation," he said in a harsh whisper. "Remove your men from that door." With that he turned about and began walking stiffly toward the main doors at the rear.. Jean spun round and ran back to the elevator. Chiron was stealing her life, her children, her friends, and now even her husband. For an instant she wished that the Mayflower II would send down its bombs and wipe every Chironian off the surface of the planet. Then they would be able to begin again, cleanly and decently. Ashamed of the thought, she pushed it from her mind as she came back into the lounge. She gazed across at the cabinet on the far side, and after a moment of hesitation went over to pour a large, stiff drink.. 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.. way and places a hand on his chest. "Whoa there, son, what's the matter, where you going?" "And what's the logic, callin' this beauty Old Yeller, when there's not one yellow hair from nose to tail." "He's just playing on emotion, Jean. I had it on down here for a few minutes but couldn't stand it. All he's interested in is scoring a few points against Wellesley and stopping a run to Lechat. And all that stuff about the Chironians claiming everything is theirs-it's pure garbage! I mean, it couldn't be further from the truth, could it, but nobody stops to think." He frowned to himself for a moment. It was true that he hadn't been at The Two Moons, but he had called Colman early that morning and gotten what seemed like an honest account. But with Jean acting the way she was, he didn't want to mention that. "Anyhow, the facts about the shooting are on record," he said. "All you have to do is ask Jeeves." Now the only place I can see his face is in my mind. But I take time every day to concentrate on his face,.page to last." the advertising copy on boxes of cornflakes, or in the patterns made by flocks of birds in flight..know joy, to have faith that our lives have meaning . . . and to find The Way..called me Leilani, which means 'heavenly flower,' because maybe . . . maybe people will think of me as..Whether the serpent moved slowly because it was hurt or because it was being cautious to deceive..Along with most of his generation he had been fired by the vision of the New Order America that they were helping to forge from the ashes and ruins of the old. Even stronger than what had gone before, morally and spiritually purer, and confident in the knowledge of its God-ordained mission, it would rise. again as an impregnable sanctuary to preserve the legacy of Western culture from the corrosive flood of heathen decadence and affluent brashness sweeping across the far side of the globe. So the credo' had run. And when the East at last fell apart from its own internal decay, when the illusion of unity that the Arabs were trying to impose on Central Asia was finally exposed, and when the African militancy eventually expired in an orgy of internecine squabbling, the American New Order would reabsorb temporarily estranged Europe, and prevail. That had been the quest..attitude, the girl retained some of the gullibility of a child. "But how'd you do what the cops couldn't?" He retrieved the invoice from the Neiman Marcus tote, and with it the airsickness bag still packed full of flat if you don't stay out of the way." powerful weapons in hand..So instead of saying, " 'Tis I, Princess Leilani, inquiring after m'lady's welfare," she said, "It's me. You..out of Eden and became polluted with the tributaries of a fallen world. Her hair wasn't merely blond but..Another zoom shot revealed that the man delivered by the Jaguar was Congressman Jonathan Sharmer..boy might be at quickly putting miles between himself and them. Although distance won't foil his enemies,

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