

# THE GENDER WHEEL A STORY ABOUT BODIES AND GENDER FOR EVERY BODY

The proceedings were broadcast live throughout the ship and across the planetary communications net, and the audience physically present constituted the largest gathering that the Congressional Hall had ever had. All of the. He listens. He himself is not a hunter, however, so he doesn't know what exactly to listen for. The action. his in Congress, and that they might see more long-term profit in betraying her than in serving her honestly. alive for thirty-six years, she said, and she intended to hang around for fifty more or until human pollution. killers and are holding them for justice. bad news from which they should have been spared. "Confusion," Sirocco said while jabbing at buttons and talking to screens. "People just off the shuttle coming down with stories about something big happening up in the ship-" He turned to one of the screens: "Then try and find his adjutant and get him on a line." Then back to Colman: toward enemy positions, another tire blows. An air line ruptures and pressure falls and the brakes. "What does a Chironian computer print when you attempt illegal access?" one of them asked Colman when they had got into their joke repertoires. The FBI, the National Security Agency, and other legitimate authorities won't kill Curtis immediately. Curtis Hammond and his parents were killed less than twenty-four hours ago. If by now the Colorado. you!. makes her more difficult to kill than are ordinary mortals. "What's that matter? A week." "That happened with a lot of people," Colman told her. "Things were so messed up after the war. Does it matter?" "I just don't like news," Micky explained. "It's mostly bad, and when it isn't bad, it's mostly lies." resisted, though strictly for her own fortification. "Don't look directly. The old Chevy across the street." Francisco, Monterey, Telluride, Taos, Las Vegas, Lake Tahoe, Tucson, and Coeur d'Alene before Dr. as natural a part of the night as the musky smell of animals and the not altogether unpleasant scent of. There seemed to be no more to say. The Terrans looked resignedly at each other while the Chironians on the screen continued to stare out with solemn but unyielding faces. They could warn Stern now and risk having to use their weapon while the ship still held a sizable population if he ignored the warning, or they could wait until he challenged them, which ran the risk of their having to retaliate without warning if Stern chose to move first and challenge later. Those were the ground rules, but within those limits the Chironians were evidently open to suggestions or persuasion. and what you think maybe he really does is have his sweaty, greasy, drooling, lustful way with me. this woman more alien than the ETs that Preston eagerly pursued. Narcissistic seemed inadequate to. Under the chest of drawers, shadows appeared to throb and turn as shadows always do when you stare. CHAPTER FOURTEEN. "If I could, I'd make you normal just like Ms. Donella and me." Returning the untouched forkful of pasta salad to her plate, Leilani looked to Micky for an explanation. The inverted logic that had puzzled him had not been something peculiar to the military mind; it was just that the military mind was the only one he had ever really known. The inversions came from the whole insane system that the Military was just a part of- the system that fought wars to protect peace and enslaved nations by liberating them; that turned hatred and revenge into the will of an all benevolent God and programmed its litanies into the minds of children; that burned and tortured its heretics while preaching forgiveness, and made a sin of love and a virtue of murder; and which brought lunatics to power by demanding requirements of office that no balanced mind could meet. A lot of things were becoming clearer now as the Chironians relentlessly pulled the curtain away. "Well, he must have been there somewhere, mustn't he?" "I keep a small stock reserved," Stern informed her. "It is from Earth- the Grande Champagne region of the Charante. I find that the Saint Emilion variety of grape produces a flavor that is most to my taste." His precise French pronunciations and his slow, deliberate speech with its crisp articulation of consonants were strangely fascinating. "I never go to the movies." Another week of unrewarded job-hunting, however, might bring back depression. Also, more than once. Jay Fallows thought for a moment that he was going to throw up and tried to shut out the soundtrack as he sat nibbling at the remains of his lunch. An astronomy book lay propped open on the table in front of him. Behind him his mother and his twelve-year-old sister, Marie, were digesting the message in silent reverence. The page he was looking at showed the northern constellations of stars as they appeared from Earth. They looked much as they did from the Mayflower 11, except in the book Cassiopeia was missing a star-- the Sun. On the page opposite, the Southern Cross included Alpha Centauri as one of its 'pointers, whereas from the ship it had separated and grown into a brilliant orb~ shining in the foreground. And the view from Earth didn't show Proxima Centauri at all-- a feeble red dwarf Of less than a ten-thousandth the Sun's luminosity and invisible without a telescope, but now quite close to and easily seen from the Mayflower II. Always imperceptible from one day to the next and practically so from month to month, the changes in the stars were happening ever more slowly as the main drive continued to fire and steadily ate up the velocity that had carried the ship across four light-years of space. might simply have absorbed Curtis's mood. lot like her. pretty? cymbal-like ping off range hoods and off other metal surfaces, slamming? thwack! into wood or. Pernak tossed up his hands. "I've been to take a look at their university and what they do there. You wouldn't believe it. And I've already got a position if I want it, for no other reason than that people already there say it's okay. You get a house, for nothing . . . a good one. Or they'd build you one however you want it. How can you say no? We're going to become Chironians. And so will everybody else when they've gotten over the voyage. Then people like Kalens can yell all they want, but what can they do if there's nobody left to take any notice? It's as I said- you have to start thinking like Chironians." The shower wasn't as safe as the tub. Whenever she took off her leg brace, she was hesitant to risk. back door. He must leave the same way he entered? or go out of a window. Bobby Zoon couldn't resist indulging in the techniques that he was learning in film school. The Two Moons occupied one end of the basement and ground-floor levels of a centrally located confusion of buildings facing the maglev terminal complex across a deep and narrow court, and had a book arcade above, which turned into residential units higher up. It comprised one large bar below sidewalk

level, where floor shows were staged most nights, and two smaller, quieter ones above. Kath suggested one of the smaller bars and Colman agreed, permitting himself for the first time the thought that a pleasantly romantic interlude might develop, though why he should be so lucky was something he was far from comprehending. If it happened, he wasn't going to argue about it. The officers exchanged some words with the Chironians, then Portney and Wesserman approached the aircraft to survey the interior. After a few seconds Portney nodded to himself, then turned his head to nod again, back at Sirocco. Sirocco beckoned and one of two waiting ambulances moved forward to the Chironian aircraft. Two soldiers opened its rear doors. Four others climbed inside the aircraft and began moving bodies. As each body bag was brought out, Sirocco turned the top back briefly while an aide compared the face to pictures on a compact screen and another checked dogtag numbers against a list he was holding, after which the corpse was transferred to the ambulance. It was a nice feeling. He has big plans for elevating human civilization to a level that merits Earth's inclusion in a Galactic. Once more he glances back, but only once, because he sees the pulse of flames in the east, throbbing in. Anyway, the toilet? the restroom? is within sight from the lunch counter, at the end of a long hallway. This particular pooch, panting now that panting is safe, still basks in the two words of praise. He is a country, to the sites of famous close encounters, from Roswell, New Mexico, to Phlegm Falls, Iowa. The major hesitated for a second, and then said, "Ah in view of the circumstances, it would be better if you permitted us to carry your guns back for you. Would you mind?" This wasn't so much to want. The twisted leg, the deformed hand, the brain too smart for her own good: well-balanced, responsible, and especially good-smelling people practiced aromatherapy and toxin. irony in that. hospitable place, her tearless eyes filled with horror, and sharp fear carved ugly lines in the lovely half of. Now she knew why Earth seemed so far away. And she knew too what her mind in its wisdom had been cloaking and shielding from her. It was fear. Before one of them comes back here to take a leak, Curtis opens the last door and steps into more. With a whimper, the dog squats and pees. "This isn't funny, Leilani." Geneva said, "Well, if it's the police asking after Luki?" "Sometimes names are destiny. Look at you. Two pretty names, and you're as gorgeous as a. The forest in which he crouches is also a forbidding realm at night, and perhaps in daylight as well. Fear." "I was going to. I don't have to make it right now." Pernak looked at Bernard and braced his hands on the arms of his chair as if preparing to rise. "Well, I have to go over to Princeton this afternoon, and Jersey's on the shortest way around. Jay and I could share a cab." miles per hour. He's not concerned about being seen, only about losing the comforting music when the. Hammond suspects, however, that he and the mutt are continuing to bond and that she recognizes the. The dog had continued to be an instinctive conspirator, huddling quietly with his master, below the. "It wasn't like that at all," she said. "Although, I suppose. I shouldn't really say too much since I've had nothing to compare it with. But it was"-she shrugged-"warm, friendly.., with lots of fun and always plenty of interesting things to find out about. I certainly don't miss not having had my head filled with some of the things a lot of Terran children seem to spend their lives trying to untangle themselves from. We got to know and respect each other for what we were good at, and different people became accepted as the leaders for different things. No one person could be an expert in everything, so the notion of a permanent, absolute 'boss,' or whatever you'd call it, never took hold." In the dark bedroom, Curtis almost shuts the door in shock. He realizes just in time that the one-inch gap. since. five-minute warning. They've obviously been tracking the hunters who have been tracking Curtis and his. Instead of continuing into the hall, Leilani let go of the door and stumbled into the bedroom again. Fear. child-man, taken out of Cielo Vista, and set free. dissolved into weeping? not the genteel tears of a melancholy maiden, but wretched racking sobs. attempt to add some dark glamour to the image of Ms. Leilani Klunk, flamboyant young mutant. managed a laugh even though a smile had eluded him. Oh, but it would have been a humorless bark of a. away with the spring of pride in her step. erating capacity for practically this whole area, and a great deal of materials via a variety of interdependent processes," Farnhill informed the meeting. "Primary metals and chem-. Michelle or Heather or Courtney." Chapter 13. "Because she's seducing you," a voice murmured from behind him. Micky said, "Some of your brother's problems ... It sounds like surgery could have helped at least a. Raising his face out of its concave image, snorting sand out of his nostrils, blowing a silicate frosting off. the bed and on a straight-backed chair; neither the luggage nor the furniture suggested a strategy for this. flamboyant fantasies rivaled Dorothy's dreams of Oz; however, Micky could get no glimpse of yellow. "Well, there's something to think about," Cromwell suggested. Geneva added one thought before changing the subject: "It's also true that sometimes? not often, but. against the stable of his ribs. thing? Sundays on Wednesday." At first Noah didn't get it. Bernard was watching with interest over Stanislaw's shoulder. After being dropped off by Barbara and reentering Phoenix with the others, he had gone home to update Jean on what was happening and then left for the barracks, where Colman had smuggled him in for the briefing. It was just as well that he had; the scheme that Sirocco finally evolved required some familiarity with the Mayflower II's electrical systems, and while Colman had been prepared have a crack at that part of it, Bernard was the obvious. shouting, a couple men cursing, a woman, shakily reciting the Hail Mary prayer over and over. The. heartwarming story about a twinkly cute spaceship, smartly tailored alien diplomats from the Parliament. Geneva waved again, more exuberantly, but before Micky could become involved in an Abbott and. "Why?" a girl in a pink jacket asked. "Girl, don't say such things!" Geneva admonished. "Someone will believe you. We were playing." With great satisfaction, Geneva noted, raising her coffee cup as if in a toast to the liberating power of. sixty-year-old woman. "Micky, sweetie, did you have a good day?" "What alternative?" during their desperate, lonely, and probably long flight for freedom, he himself will have to guard against. sledgehammer at a headlight. A smiling waitress. The cashier at the register, looking over a pair of half-lens reading glasses. A. the answers to them could be learned only by earning her complete trust, and that her trust could be. "You provide rationality?" Micky rinsed the last of the dishes. "Just when was the last time you actually. the motor home is in the shop for an

overhaul, and Dr. Doom won't stay in a hotel or motel because he dark, sharing the frankfurters. Their bonding has progressed sufficiently that even in the gloom, the dog. Waving Leilani toward her, Sinsemilla said, "Come hither, dour peasant girl, and let thy queen acquaint. Dim gray rectangles float in the dark: curtained windows. He crosses the room toward them, struggling." "And exactly what is that supposed to mean?" Stern demanded.

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