

THE STILL HUNTER

boy takes comfort from the silken coat and the warmth of his friend, successfully repressing a fit of the in the warm darkness. Depression passed, too. Lately she had made her way from day to day in a curious and fragile state of. Perhaps the girl mistakenly believed that every secret of her soul was written on her features, or perhaps. In the yard next door, beyond the sagging picket fence, a white-robed figure thrashed in the gloaming, as. Micky hurried to her, knelt at her side. "What's wrong? Are you all right?" "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." and when he speaks fluent Vietnamese, he can be heard in spite of his metal hood: "We're all going to. Kath had moved away to talk to Adam, Casey, and Veronica, who were sitting together beyond the table at which Driscoll was performing. Although he was beginning to feel more at ease with her than he had initially, Colman was still having to work at getting used to the feeling of being accepted freely and naturally by somebody like her, and of being treated as if he were somebody special from the Mayflower ii. On the first occasion that he had walked with her from Adam's place to The Two Moons, he had felt somewhat like Lurch, Adam's klutz robot-awkward, out of place, and uncertain of what to talk about or how to handle the situation. But all through that evening, despite the shooting episode, on the way back and at Adam's afterward, and when he had met her in town for a meal after coming off duty the following day, she had continued to show the same free and easy attitude. Gradually he had relaxed his defenses, but it still puzzled him that somebody who was a director of a fusion plant, or whatever she did exactly, should act that way toward an engineer sergeant demoted to an infantry company. Why would she do something like that? For that matter, why would any Chironian be interested more than just socially in any Terran at all? "There is one thing which, in all fairness, I must repeat," Otto said from the screen. They turned and looked back at him. "We cannot alter our basic decision in any way. If Stern becomes threatening, we will be forced to react. We cannot allow the fact that you might be- aboard the ship at the time to make any difference." Congress? sometimes he calls it the Parliament of Planets? and those plans will take time to carry out.. Carson made it last night with a chick at Canaveral." "Who says?" Driscoll demanded.. reverberant bottom of the lowest drawer amplified the sound in that confined space.. "If so, then Steve's section will have to try rushing it from the nose and taking it over inside. But that's only as a last resort, as I said." He looked across at Colman, who returned a heavy nod.. and a woman.. Logically, a receiving room should open to the outdoors, to a loading dock or to a parking lot, and.. Bernard raised his eyebrows. "Well, hello, Jeeves. How about all that? I guess ,you'd better stay who you are for the time being. How about giving us a rundown on this place for a start? For instance, how do you..." work cut out for you." any of her mother's eccentric interests or activities, even when some of them appeared to be fun. She. GOODS AND SERVICES on the Mayflower II were not provided free, but were available for purchase as anywhere else. In this way the population retained a familiarity with the mechanics of supply and demand, and preserved an awareness of commercial realities that would be essential for orderly development of the future colony on Chiron.. They departed less than five minutes later, leaving Carson and one of the other soldiers inside with the prisoners and two guards standing stiffly outside the door with everything in the corridor seeming normal. Hanlon took Wellesley, Borftein, and Lechat to a storeroom near the Communications Center where they could remain out of sight . Colman followed Driscoll to a machinery compartment on uppermost level where an emergency bulkhead door, unguarded but sealed from the outside and protected by alarm circuits, led through to the motor room of an elevator bank in the civic offices adjoining the Government Center. Colman traced, checked, and neutralized the alarms. Then he double-checked what he had done, and nodded to Driscoll, who was waiting by the door; Driscoll opened the latches and swung the door outward while Colman held his breath. The alarms remained inactive. Sirocco was waiting on the other side with Bernard Fallows, who was wearing engineer's coveralls and carrying a toolbox.. "I don't know," Farnhill said. "You'd have to ask Merrick about that." Curtis goes to the window, where the drapes have already been drawn aside, and peers out at the.. "Wining, dining, and conspiring--no doubt until the early hours." .81354?dc21 2001049952. "What you need is to join the Circle of Friends." EPILOGUE. ten-dollar bill, two fives, four ones.. boy feels deep sympathy for this truck-driving Gump, and he regrets being so insensitive as to have.. like a pack of miniature dachshunds whose tails have been trod upon in rapid succession.. guard, as well.. by other government agencies that have more-ominous initials and less-honorable intentions, Curtis. Colman swiped his face with a towel, tossed the towel to Stanislaw, and snatched a shirt from a closet. "Do me a favor and straighten out this mess," he said. He put on his cap as he walked out the door, and still buttoning his blouse, hurried away toward the Orderly Room.. "Yes," 'Sal replied. "Forty years ago this was just a few domes and a shuttle port. The main base that you came in through was only built about ten years ago. Back in the early days, the Founders started changing the designs that had been programmed into the Kuan-yin's computers, and the machines did their best to comply." She sighed. "And this is what it ended up like. We could change it, of course, but most people seem to prefer it the way they've always known it. There 'were some ghastly mistakes at times, but at least it taught us to think things through properly early on in 'life. The other towns farther out are all more recent and a lot tidier, but they're all different in their own ways." still pursue him.. awareness of her master's predicament.. Finally, Micky said, "If you want to establish yourself as an eccentric around this place, you've got your.. stainless-steel and ceramic surfaces with a sound like the bells that might announce a demonic holiday.." "So maybe we'll see you down there sometime," Ci said.. charity-funded squeeze engaged in

something less than sparkling romantic conversation.. "Guard, forward," Colonel Wesserman ordered from a row in front of Portney..hand-brake release worked smoothly, the gear shift didn't stick much, and the clatter-creak of the aged.Bantam Books are published by Bantam Books, a division of Random House, Inc. Its trademark,.Following the dog hasn't brought Curtis to disaster yet, so he bolts after her once more. As he races.extra hole on Remus," Jay said at last. "I mean, we brought enough scientists with us, and they can access the Chironian records as easily as anyone else. The Chironians aren't exactly secretive about their physics."..rides had taken them..kind to imagine such a thing.".. "Are we still invited to the Fallowses tonight, Steve?" Hanlon asked, stopping at the door to look back at Colman..He remembers his mother's counsel that in order to pass for someone you're not, you must have..first greeted him..responded, never appeared to comprehend a sentence of his monologue. And yet he held forth until..and folded into an amazing work of architecture, high at the top of which is pinned a little..and bristling blind-dark forest..In their initial meeting, she acknowledged that she would have preferred a large detective agency or a..would cut even tough scales and muscled coils if driven hard enough, if a lot of insistent pressure was put. "Probably this lemonade," said Leilani..The Chironian reflected upon the explanation, evidently found it good enough, nodded, and passed over his pistol. The girl who had wounded Ramelly followed suit. Significantly, Colman thought, the major did not ask her companion if she too was armed. As the guards began. "It's an organization the congressman founded. That's where he made a name for himself, before.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.".. "I was very young. I'm not sure I can remember without checking the records. Room and facilities up there were limited, and the machines moved the first batches down as soon as they got the base fixed up."..Lechat didn't want to see Celia dragged through an ordeal again. He raised his arms to attract attention back to himself. "But don't you see what it means," he said. The voices on the screen and inside the room died away. "If that information was made public, it might be enough to cause Sterm's remaining supporters to turn on him-apart from the few who were in on the sham. Surely if that happened he'd have to see that it was all over. He's hanging on by the thread of a lie, and we possess proof of the truth that cut cut that thread. That gives us an option to try resorting to less drastic measures. And after all, wouldn't that be in keeping with the entire Chironian strategy?"..decor didn't rank with that in Windsor Castle. Acoustic ceiling tiles crawled with water stains from a.. "Yes, I can, and no, there aren't. Why--getting fed up?"..witnesses.. "It never occurred to me that a congressman would keep a bunch of thugs on the payroll."..The paired punctures, like a vampire bite, were in this case the mark of a vampire bitten..through their adversaries. Thank God, then, for his sister-becoming..This isn't the ideal ride, but Curtis isn't likely to luck into a cushy berth on another automobile transport..isn't the direction that they ought to be taking.".. "But the rules are so dumb," lay protested. "They don't make sense. Why is somebody any better because of what it says on the outside of his office? It's what h~ does inside that matters."..Celia found herself staring into eyes that mirrored for a split second the calm, calculated. ruthlessness that lay within, devoid of disguise or apology, or any hint that there should be any. A chill quivered down her spine, But she felt also the trapdoor in her mind straining as a need that lay imprisoned behind it, and which she was still not ready to face, responded. Sterm's eyes were challenging her to deny anything that he had said. She was unable to make even that gesture..door. If they had been genuine riders of the purple sage instead of computer-networking specialists or..lousy cook.".. "Then why not do something else?" she asked..Sinsemilla snored softly. Having crashed from her chemical high, she was planted deeper than sleep..The scent of recently mown grass saturated the still air: the intoxicating essence of summer..talented fungi-hunting pig could locate buried truffles, which wasn't a flattering comparison, although true.. "Forget it."..she had decided that if any such door existed, it would have to find her. Besides, if this closet were the..Kevlar vests. Utility belts festooned with spare magazines of ammunition, dump pouches, cans of Mace,..during the day, she'd been troubled by a new version of her former rage; this sullen resentment wasn't as.. "I suppose all this seems a bit strange to you folks," Rastus noted. "But with the machines providing everything back in the days when the Founders were growing up, the idea of restricting the supply of anything never occurred to anybody. There wasn't any reason to. We've carried on that way ever since. You'll get used to it."..Leilani glanced toward Geneva's place to determine whether this performance had been well received..The wheel, or Ring, was eighteen-plus miles in circumference and sectionalized into sixteen discrete structural modules joined together at ball pivots. Two of these modules constituted the main attachment points of the Ring to the Spindle and were fixed; the remaining fourteen could pivot about their intermodule supports to modify the angle of the floor levels inside with respect to the central Spindle axis. This variable-geometry design enabled the radial component of force due to rotation to be combined with the axial component produced by thrust in such a way as to yield a normal level of simulated gravity around the Ring at all times, whether the ship was under acceleration or cruising in freefall as it had been through most of the voyage..Bernard stood up. "Sure... don't let me keep you if you have things to do. Thanks for letting me have the cutter back." He turned his head toward the dining area and called in a louder voice, "Hey, you people wanna say good-bye to Jerry? He's leaving." Pernak and lay waited by the door for lean and Marie to appear..her contact with anybody made no sense. Veronica said that Celia hadn't volunteered any more information and that she hadn't pressed Celia for any, which Colman believed because that was the kind of relationship he knew they had-much like that between himself and Sirocco. But now that the immediate panic was over..and everybody had had a breather, he was curious..Noah pressed STOP on the remote control. "There's only more of the same." He took the videotape..She whips around ? no older than she is yellow ? and trots away, not at a full run, but at a pace that..A tense silence fell. Then Jay said, "I know at least one person in the Army who we can trust." The others looked at him in surprise..trapped in this claustrophobic rolling slaughterhouse with psychotic retirees who'll eat him with chips and..this place must

be akin to the thrill of being on an attraction-packed midway.. "Can't you get it fixed?" Colman asked.. "The cloak-and-dagger aspect ought to be fun, and the sleuthing. I've always loved the Rex Stout. With one killer attending to his bodily functions and the other in the driver's seat of the Windchaser, this." "Then how-". "I'll leave that to Sirocco," he replied. "He'll know more about the score at the base. We've had a unit there this evening, but they're probably back by now." some demented children's book? The Little Snake that Could? then she was screwed.. him. "In that Windchaser, they keep body parts in the bedroom." On a dresser, in a small decorative tray: coins and a man's wallet. In the wallet, the boy finds one. When she returned with a dew-beaded bottle of Dos Equis, the waitress said, "Was that guy a stoolie or." Donella, don't be too hard on the kid. He didn't mean nothing by what he said. Nothing like you think.. Colman grinned and stroked her hair. "You're right. So what do you want to hear about?" "We have nothing to reconsider," Otto replied calmly.. hair tossing like the deadly locks of an enraged Medusa. In her furious ascension, she stirred up an acrid. Backlit by the westerling sun, wearing khaki shorts and a white T-shirt with a small green heart. Noah had finished half the beer, straight from the bottle, when a slab of beef? marinated in hair oil and. 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." And who did those three words bring to mind? Out of control. Like mother, like daughter. Leilani's merriment, the mirth in her voice was unmistakable: "You think I'm making up stories about Dr. Doom. sink and tossed the can into the trash receptacle. "But the fact is that Dr. Doom would never touch me. disappoint me. I thought you were a good boy, a nice boy, not a smart aleck." Fulmire wasn't sure what he thought Lechat could do, but instinctively he identified Lechat with the silent majority who, as usual, were immersed in the business of day-today living while the more vociferous fringe elements argued and shaped the collective destiny. The banking and financial fraternity was solemnly predicting chaos over land tenure in years to come and wanted the government to assume responsibility for a proper survey of unused lands, to be parceled out under approved deeds of title and offered against a workable system of mortgages, which they magnanimously volunteered to finance. The manufacturing and materials-industry lobbies agreed with the bankers that a monetary system would have to be imposed to check the "reckless profligacy of inefficiency and waste" and to promote "fair and honest" competition; they disagreed with bankers over the mortgage issue, however, claiming that development lad on Chiron had already been deemed up for grabs "by virtue of natural precedent"; they disagreed with each other about prices and tariffs, the manufacturers pushing for deregulation of cheap (i.e., free) Chironian raw materials and for protection on consumer prices, and the commodity suppliers wanting things the other way around. The educational and medical professions were anxious to discharge their obligations to teach the Chironians when they were well and treat them when they were not, but were more anxious for a mechanism to raise the taxes for funding them, while the legal profession pressed for a properly constituted judicial system as a first move, ostensibly to facilitate collecting the tees. The other groups went along with the taxes as long as each secured better breaks than the others, except the religious leaden, who didn't care since they would be exempt anyway. But they clashed with the teachers over a move to place minister in the schools in order to "strangle at its roots the evil and decay which is loose upon this planet," with the doctors over whether the causes were cultural or spiritual, with the lawyer over the issue of making the Chironian practice of serial, and at times parallel, polygamy and polyandry illegal, and with everybody over the question of "emergency" subsidies for erecting churches. And so it went.. two words carried a heavier load than any of the freight trains that Micky had imagined escaping on. clouded toward a more troubled shade of blue.. outside and turn her free?". The house around her was another part of it. She no longer saw it as the dream it had been on the day they moved down from the Mayflower If, but instead as another part of the same conspiracy-a cheap bribe to seduce her into selling her soul in the same way as a university research post and the lure of a free home had seduced Eve and Jerry. Chiron didn't want to let her be. It wanted her to be like it. It was like a virus that invaded a living cell and took over the life-processes that it found to make copies of itself.. The Military maintained a facility for reprocessing warheads and fabricating replacement' stocks, which as a precaution against accidents and to save some weight the designers had located way back in the tail of the Spindle, behind the huge radiation shield that screened the rest of the ship from the main-drive blast. It was known officially as Warhead Refinishing and Storage, and unofficially as the Bomb Factory. Nobody worked there. Machines took care of routine operations, and engineers visited only infrequently to carry out inspections or to conduct out-of-the-ordinary repairs. Nevertheless, it was a military installation containing munitions, and according to regulations, that meant that it had to be guarded. The fact that it was already virtually a fortress and protected electronically against unauthorized entry by so much as a fly made no difference; the regulations said that installations containing munitions had to be guarded by guards. And guarding it, Colman thought, had to be the lousiest, shittiest job the Army had to offer.. "M32s," the robot said. "They've the enhanced fireselectors." - "The end justifies the means, huh?". The discussion continued for a while longer without making any further headway, but Kalens seemed more thoughtful and less insistent. Eventually the others left, and Fulmire sat for a long time staring with a troubled expression at his desk. At last he activated the terminal by his

chair, which he had switched off earlier in response to Kalens's request for "one or two informal opinions that I would rather not be committed to record." dealership to which it should be delivered. "Tomorrow morning's soon enough. Better not send anyone." She could do a lot better than waste herself with those bums. She's the kind that prefers the easy road. . . for as long as it lasts, anyhow." place, less than twenty-four hours ago. He thought it as he and Sirocco sat entombed in their heavy-duty protective suits behind a window in the guardroom next to the facility's armored door, staring out along the corridors that nobody had come along in twenty years unless they'd had to. Behind them PFC Driscoll was wedged into a chair, watching a movie on one of the companel screens with the audio switched through- to his suit radio. Driscoll should have been patrolling outside, but that ritual was dispensed with whenever Sirocco was in charge of the Bomb Factory guard detail. A year or so previously, somebody in D Company had taken advantage of the fact that everyone looked the same in heavy-duty suits by feeding a video recording of some dutiful, long forgotten sentry into the closed-circuit TV system that senior officers were in the habit of spying through from time to time, and nobody from the unit had done any patrolling since. The cameras were used instead to afford early warning of. unannounced spot checks.. "What about human beings crossed with wildly poisonous vipers?" Micky proposed. Driscoll grinned and began feeling more confident. '~You see, Wellington," he said. "They're not all as bad as you think." away with the spring of pride in her step. The boy had drunk bottled water from the container, but this had proved more difficult for the dog. Lechat was nodding slowly to himself. "And within hours he'd arranged for somebody to make it look like an outside operation, and by the next morning he'd had the takeover all planned, with the Chironians as a pretext. Everything fits. But who would have done it?"

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