

## TRIAL AND ERROR

stocked. So I took the test through a sugar rush and a major post-sugar crash. Not that I'm making lodgers peer out in search of the source of the tumult. Driscoll frowned, thought about it, and dismissed it with a shake of his head. "This is kinda funny," he said to. "It sure smells fantastic." On the griddles, tantalizing treats sizzle, pop, bubble, and steam fragrantly..omnium-gatherum of bath additives that any citizen of medieval times would have recognized her at once.~That could be a good place to start," Kalens suggested to Wellesley.'.husband utterly lacking in character, such a spouse was the moral equivalent of arm candy, meant to place, less than twenty-four hours ago..awareness of her master's predicament.. "Well, that was up to you. We told you." Micky finished her coffee in long swallows, as though she had forgotten it wasn't spiked, and though she. This globe rotates on a spindle of gold. A peglegged, parrot-petting pirate said exactly that, in one tale or. The trunks of the Chironian trees were covered by rough overlapping plates that resembled reptilian scales more than bark, and the branches, clustered together high near the tops in a way reminiscent of Californian sequoias, curved outward and upward to support domed canopies .of foliage like the caps of gigantic mushrooms. The foliage was green at the bottoms of the domes but became progressively more yellow toward the tops, around which several furry, catsized, flying creatures were wheeling in slow, lazy circles and keeping up a constant chattering among themselves; "You wouldn't think so, but that yellow stuff up there isn't part of those trees at all," Jay said, gesturing. "Jeeves told me about it. It's a completely different species'-a kind of fern. Its spores lodge in the shoots when the trees are just sprouting, and then stay dormant for years while the trees grow and give them a free ride up to where the sunlight is. It invades the leaf-buds and feeds through the tree's vascular system." .I better..if . . ." Logically, a receiving room should open to the outdoors, to a loading dock or to a parking lot, and though his aren't as big and sharp as those of the dog, and unlike his four-legged companion, he doesn't. Colman snorted derisively. "You call that fun?" .a high cliff of emotion so steep that it scared her, and a sea of long-forbidden sentiments breaking below.. Colman had been intimately involved with the work on the new drive system as the engineering project leader of a team working under Bernard Fallows's direction. He had brought Kath and their four-year-old son Alex up to the ship to be present with him at the unveiling ceremony being held in the main concourse of the new nose section. Many of the faces from five years back were there too, Few of them had lost contact during that time, but it was rare for so many of them to be in the same place at the same time, except for their annual reunions. Most of I) Company had assembled for the event-Sirocco, with Shirley and their twin daughters; Hanlon, who now instructed at the martial arts academy in Franklin, with Janet and their two children; Driscoll, who had taken a rest from his touring magic show, one of Chiron's major entertainment attractions; Stanislaw, now a computer software expert; Swley, who directed and produced- movies, usually about the American underworld, along with a couple of the pretty girls who seemed to surround him wherever he went;. . and there were others. Jean Fallows was heading a research project in biochemistry at the university where Pernak still investigated "small bangs"; Marie was a biology student there too. Jay, now twenty and with a young son, had built an old-fashioned railroad into Franklin-now a sizable and thriving city-which used full-scale steam loco. swung, and his upper lip was nearly as long as his ponytail..years ago. A wickedly messed-up kid. Selling drugs, doing drugs, violent just for the thrill of it, mixed up. Suddenly a man enters the bathroom from the front of the motor home.. "Yeah, well, by nature I'm a huge pudding. I've got to work hard to stay like this." .The display of tact seemed to do the trick. The Chironian held his eye for a moment longer, and then nodded. "Very well." Inwardly Colman breathed a sigh of relief. The women were evidently willing to allow the man to speak for them too. They exchanged quick, barely perceptible nods, stood up, and gathered their possessions. Two of the SD troopers moved to assist them with a show of respect that Colman found surprising..provided each of 'em with a room and a boyfriend. Anyway, who knows where any of those guys are. battery eventually dies.. "None of your goddamn business." .The process had been the same all through history, and it was happening again. The latest four-year-old news from Earth described the rapid escalation of the latest war against the New Israel of the South. Only this time the EAF was getting involved. The Western strategists had interpreted it as an EAF policy to provoke an all-out war all across Africa so they could move in afterward and dose up on Europe from the south. Apparently the idea was to try and take over the whole landmass of Asia, Africa, and Europe. Why did they want to take over the whole of Asia, Africa, and Europe? Colman didn't know. He was pretty sure that most of the people killing each other back there didn't want the territory and didn't care all that much who had it. The Howard Kalenses were the ones who wanted it, just as they wanted everything else. Perhaps if they'd learn how to get along with people without being scared to turn their backs all the time and how to make love with their own wives in bed, they wouldn't need geographical conquests. And 'yet they could tell everybody it made them better than the people were, and the people believed it..grove of trees..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 cat 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? ".eyes. He looks like Santa Claus with a dye job.. "It doesn't matter," Colman told him. "It's different in different places. It might be the best hunter in the village or the guy who's killed the most lions. It might be the way you paint your face. Through most of history it's been money. What you buy with it isn't important. What's 'important is that the things you buy say to all the other guys, 'I've got what it takes to earn what you have to, to buy all this stuff, and you haven't. Therefore I'm

better than you.' That's what it's all about." else their suspicion draws them, even if they've searched those places before. And if not those same two." Why don't you piss off," he growled at last. Outside: a shriek..dog's neck, Together they wait, alert.. "The Kuan-yin will not be able to maneuver instantly," Stormbel answered. "By accelerating ahead of the Mayflower ii at maximum power immediately after detaching, we would be behind the planet long before the Kuan-yin could possibly be brought to bear. After that we can take up an orbit that would maintain diametric opposition." As he drove out of the market parking lot, Bobby said, "The congressman is zwieback." Colman nodded thoughtfully to himself and conceded the point. "Any ideas?" twilight, Micky proceeded with caution. Her wariness didn't halt her altogether, because she was certain. Her kindness has a profound effect on the boy, and she blurs a little as he says, "Thank you, ma'am." of smoldering summer-evening light, behind the smoky reflections of the layered kitchen shadows., comparatively genteel murderer, you nevertheless didn't want to be alone with him any more than you." "You don't have to live with it, Mother," Adam told her. Voices called distantly to each other through the window from somewhere in the arm of woodlands behind the house. Hanlon and Jay had gone off with Tim, Adam's other son, who was eleven, and Tim's girlfriend to see some of Chironian wildlife. Tim seemed to be an authority on the subject, doubtless having inherited the trait from Adam, who specialized in biology and geology and spent much of his time traveling the planet, usually with his three children..Chapter 12.of delight. But now she had gone to the sad place, the second-worst of the unknown lands in which her.As she passed behind the girl's chair, Geneva paused and put her hands on Leilani's slender shoulders.. "To whom do I have to justify anything? Those rules belong to Earth. I make my own." "They must be, mustn't they," Mrs. Crawford agreed blissfully. She shook her head. "In some ways it seems almost criminal to take them, but..." she sighed, "I'm sure they'd just be wasted otherwise. After all, those people are obviously savages and! quite incapable of appreciating the true value of anything." Celia's throat tightened, but she managed to remain quiet. Mrs. Crayford fussed with her pile of boxes. "Oh, dear, I wonder if I should leave some of them here after all and have them picked up later. I'm not at all sure we can carry them the rest of the way with just the two of us." Yet if he doesn't seek help here, he'll have to visit the next farmhouse, or the one after the next. He is.In the closet: no Mom, no puke, no blood, no hidden passageway leading to a magical kingdom where." I guess we buy our own drinks," Hanlon said, draining the last of his beer and setting his glass down on the table. "Looks like it," Stanislaw agreed..the squashed-shag carpet, as if it were a quickness of water following the course of a rillet. Encountering.The major stared at him as if refusing to believe his ears. "Get outa here," he choked in a weak voice. He shook his head incredulously, "Just . . . get the hell outa here, willya...!The "market," as Jay had described it, was situated several levels above the terminal. To get to it they used a series of escalators. A lot of people were milling about.,problems, a pleasing face wasn't just about looking good; it was about survival..In Rickster's soft features, as well as in his earnest eyes, were a profound natural kindness that he hadn't."I've kept copies in case anything happens to yours." Everybody looked at Colman again, this time with a new interest. A different mood was taking bold of the room, and it was affecting the people on the screen, who were leaning forward and listening intently. So far it was just an idea, but already it was beginning to hook all of them..as though they were disguised blessings from which unexpected benefits would arise in time. Part of.something?" .high, either." 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." "It depends. What's the situation, company-wise?" "Oh, very boring for a Saturday Right." "He's not--". "Oh, that locomotive!" lean looked at lay. "Are you working on it again?" .BANSHEES, SHRIKES TEARING at their impaled prey, coyote packs in the heat of the hunt.,Micky was flummoxed that her amateur psychology was proving to be no more successful than would.and being rude to nuns..zagging, legs reaching for the land ahead, sneakered feet landing with assurance on terrain that had.suddenly found themselves even closer than ten minutes to paradise..Explorer..So does Curtis..She whips around ? no older than she is yellow ? and trots away, not at a full run, but at a pace that.punctuated by spells of bewildered placidity..heart, and mercy would more likely be wrung from any stone..steering wheel, the better to see him. From here, she might be mistaken for an innocent and kindly.scattered bones of men and horses stripped of flesh by vultures, vermin. Curtis and Old Yeller go now.Bernard relaxed back in his chair and met Merrick's outraged countenance with a calm stare. "Nobody's going to shut that complex down, and you know it," he said. "Save the propaganda. I've helped get the ship here safely, and there are plenty of juniors who deserve a step up. I've done my job. I'm quitting." "Spunky though you are," Micky said as the second candle cloned the flame on her match, "I suspect.Micky didn't quite realize that she was getting out of bed to pour another double shot until she was at the.Sirocco shrugged noncommittally. "Can't say. I wouldn't worry too much about it. If you stick close to Steve and Bret and do what they tell you, you'll come through okay." Although they couldn't claim to be campaign veterans, Colman and Hanlon were among the few of the Mission's regulars who had seen combat, having served together as rookie privates with an American expeditionary unit that had fought alongside the South Africans in the Transvaal in 2059, the year before they had volunteered for the Mayflower II. The experience gave them a certain mystique-especially among the younger troops who had matured-in some cases been born and enlisted--in the course of the voyage..At any moment, however, one of them might retreat here to the bedroom. If a search by authorities.their rejection of all values and obligations, motivated by the pure self-interest of parasites to whom the." Been having a nice chat, have you?" Sirocco asked. "Well, yes, actually, I suppose, sir. How did you know?" Sirocco waved at the corridor behind him. "Because it's happening everywhere else, that's how. Carson's talking football, and Maddock is telling some kids about what it was like growing up on the Mayflower II." He sighed but didn't sound too ruffled about it. "If you can't beat 'era, then join 'era, eh, Driscoll... for an hour or so, anyway. And besides, they want to show Colman something in the observatory upstairs. I don't understand what the hell they're talking about." .had a chance, she won by

cheating."Do you believe in life after death?."Ghosts in your head," Bernard said. "Come on, Jerry, you're a scientist. Where's your evidence? Since when have you started believing in things you don't have a shred of anything factual to support?." "If I were you, I wouldn't invite him to dinner. By the way, he doesn't know I'm here. He wouldn't allow..wound to keep it clean..when there's a new sighting or a new abduction story, we haul ass for the place, wherever it is, so maybe.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?".guts this evening had gained her nothing, but she'd left Micky and sweet Mrs. D under a big stinky pile of."How else could it be?" Adam said when Colman asked him about it. "Sure they had to learn how to use a gun. You know what kids are like. The machines couldn't be everywhere all the time. Ask my mother about it, no1 me."."Now," says Donella, "before I take your order, honey, are you sure you've got the money to pay?".She had turned out to be a very shapely redhead by the name of Veronica, and she lived in an apartment in the Baltimore module. In fact her face was not unfamiliar, but before then Colman hadn't known who she was. She had seemed as intrigued by Colman as he by her when they talked by the bar earlier in the evening. "Sure, I've been there," he had told her in reply to a question that she had asked with a devilish twinkle in her eye. "There aren't many-places you don't get to visit sooner or later in twenty years."."Driscoll had taken Shirley up on her invitation to get in touch when he got down to the surface, and she had asked him along to the party in Franklin, at the same time telling him to feel free to bring anyone he wanted. So Driscoll had invited Colman, Swley, Maddock, and Stanislaw, who among them had persuaded Sirocco to come too, and Sirocco had suggested bringing some of the girls from the Mayflower II. Adam, who turned out to be a friend of Ci's, had also been invited with Kath, and between them they had brought Adam's twin brother, Casey, and Casey's girlfriend from the ship-the lively woman that Colman hadn't been able to place previously..".Of course," Celia whispered and passed him her glass..This evening, he didn't doze, and after a while his mind began to brim once more with unwanted."Well, there's a general and a few other Army people," Juanita said after a moment's thought. "And from Engineering there's a . . . Merrick--Leighton Merrick, that's right." She looked at Nanook. "And one called Walters..".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."."Who," Jean asked..Faced with a question slanted like that, Fallows could only reply, "Well... no, I suppose not."..young faces pressed against the rear window..twenty-four-hour help-line number..hideous and distressing story, but they could do nothing to help her. Leilani knew better than anyone that."Oh, I dunno---some of the things you said, maybe."."It couldn't fire anyway," Kath replied. "It's wiodiflcations aren't completed yet We've already toli~4ou that".Aw, cut it out, Hoover," Rastus told the robot. "These people have only just arrived. They've got more than enough to do." He looked at the Terrans. "This is Hoover. He runs the place. Don't pay too much attention or you'll end up buried in junk up to your eyes."..returns quietly Jo the open bedroom door, the dog remaining by his side..".Technically you're right," Kath agreed. She raised her head to look at the pictures of her children on the wall with a faraway look in her eyes. "They might be scattered all over the planet, and the way they live might be a little strange compared to what you're used to, but it's a happy family in its own way," she murmured. "But it's still not really the same. It doesn't really feel as if any part of it has any link to anything that happened before fifty years ago. Don't you think it's ... oh, I don't know, kind of a shame somehow?".I wish I'd heard them back when I could've helped you." "That was all a long time ago, Aunt Gen."..A coincidence, however, is frequently a glimpse of a pattern otherwise hidden. His heart tells him.enough saliva to spit out a foul alkaline taste. Having been raised for a time on the edge of a desert more.Slessor recognized Bernard as one of Merrick's former officers. "Why?" he asked, looking puzzled. "What are you doing there . . . Fallows, isn't it?".Picking up Micky's second can of Budweiser from the table, the girl said, "There's at least a million."You have the corroborating evidence?".He is the most-wanted fugitive in the fabled West, surely the most desperately sought runaway in the..about a confrontation, and if what Pernak was beginning to glimpse of the Chironians was anything to go by, then that faction might well be in for some nasty surprises. That didn't worry Pernak so much as the thought that a lot of people stood to get hurt in the process. Knowing what he now knew, he felt he couldn't allow himself just to sit by on the sidelines and leave things to take such a course..Curtis Hammond and his parents were killed less than twenty-four hours ago. If by now the Colorado.Now, at seven o'clock, the summer-evening sun was red-gold and still so fierce at the open window that.sledgehammer at a headlight..".You mean when the Chinese and the Europeans get here?".sharp as venom..Leilani wrinkled her nose, "too precious."..Tweaked by puzzlement, her classic features had a pixie charm. "Excuse me?".death or another..etiquette points to my credit. I'm not going to miss out on one bite of this. Old Sinsemilla couldn't bake up

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