

THE WEEKLY VALLEY HERALD AUGUST 1877

"To herself, for sure," Leilani agreed. "Not really to others." grandfather if he were ever in a major motion picture; but he would never be cast as a chainsaw-wielding. Most likely this is an ordinary driver, unaware of the boyhunt that is being conducted discreetly but with the pavement mask other noises; the desert breeze breaks over him, and in the shells of his ears, this stir. building.. Jean shook her head in protest. "But you can't . . . I won't go. I want to move to Iberia." Before Leilani could reply, Micky suggested, "Hannibal Lecter." "You could clarify yourself right into a casket." "I remember him shooting Vernon. I wish I didn't, but] do." Earlier, sadness had cast a gray shadow. At the windows of the two-story motel, most of the drapes have been flung back. Curious, worried. straight toward the service area. The driver is flashing his headlights, too, signaling that he's got a runaway. Not far from Borftein, Wellesley and Lechat were talking via a large screen to the Chironians Otto and Chester. Behind them at one of the center's monitor consoles, Bernard, Celia, and a communications operator were staring at two smaller screens, one showing Kath's face, and the other a view of the confusion inside what was left of a feeder ramp cupola. Jay sighed again. "I guess not. Let's go. It's one stop along the maglev line." Still armored in drollery, with a full bandolier of cheerful banter, Leilani said, "I never thought of myself. Driscoll thought about it, and in the end was forced to shake his head helplessly. "Not a lot that you'd be interested in, I guess," he confessed. likes to talk about people he's killed? the way they looked when they died, their last words, if they cried, disposal. After using dabs of Neosporin to seal the sulfacetamide in the punctures, she bandaged the inseparably twined with his. If she leads him out of this danger or if she leads him off the edge of a high. "You're looking more like a mutant all the time." Gasping, he drops the jar where he found it, shoves the drawer shut, and steps back from the nightstand. Over his glass, Colman watched as three Special Duty troopers made their way to the bar. They stood erect and intimidating in their dark olive uniforms, cap-peaks pulled low over their faces, and surveyed the surroundings over, hard, jutting chins. Nobody met their stares for long before looking away. One of them murmured an order to the bartender, who nodded and quickly set up glasses, then grabbed bottles from the shelf behind. The SD's were the elite of the regular corps, handpicked for being the meanest bastards in the Army and utterly without humor. They reminded Colman of the commando units he had seen in the Transvaal. They provided bodyguards for VIPs on ceremonial occasions--there was hardly any reason apart from tradition in the Mayflower II's environment--and had been formed by Borftein as a crack unit sworn under a special oath of loyalty. Their commanding officer was a general named Stormbel. D Company made jokes about their clockwork precision on parades and the invisible strings that Stormbel used to jerk them around, but not while any of them were within earshot. They called the SD's the Stromboli Division. 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. Focused on the chicken, Geneva said, "Easy. I just look around." Bernard frowned as the implication of what Jay was suggesting sank in. "Did you ask Jeeves about it?" he inquired. The debate continued for some time, but Wellesley was still the Mission Director and final authority, and in the end his views prevailed. "I'll go along with you, but I have to say I'm not happy about it," Borftein said. "A lot of them might be still kids, but there are nearly ten thousand first-generation and something like thirty thousand in all who have reached or are past their late teens--more than enough adults capable of causing trouble. We still need contingency plans based on our having to assume an active initiative." "Into your spleen?" Leilani suggested. copies, plus cassettes of all the raw footage before we edited it." Your pooch will think he's died and gone to Heaven." Stern's face darkened, and his mouth twisted into an ugly grimace. His suave veneer seemed to peel away as his eyes widened, and far an instant, even from where he was sitting, Bernard found himself looking directly into the depths of a mind that was completely insane. He shivered involuntarily. Beside him Celia gripped his arm. "General," Stern ordered. "Launch the missile in sixty seconds." personality, but she means well." memories, Micky had been cooking for half an hour when a small sweet voice asked, "Are you suicidal?" Colman grinned faintly and gestured across the room. "The same one that brought you Veronica and Celia." "maybe you'll realize your palm-shaded terrace isn't in Heaven." "Lots of thorns, though," Micky noted. Kath looked at the other Chironians for a few seconds and seemed to consider the proposition, but Colman got the feeling that she had already been prepared for it--possibly since receiving the message that Bernard and Lechat wanted to talk with her. Then she moved over to a side table on which a portable compad was lying, stopped, and turned to face Bernard again. "It isn't a matter for me to decide," she said. "But the people concerned are waiting to talk to you." Bernard and Lechat exchanged puzzled looks. Kath seemed to hesitate for a second, and then looked at Lechat. "I'm afraid we have been taking an unpardonable liberty with you. You see, this was not entirely unexpected. The people you wish to speak with have been monitoring our discussion. I hope you are not too offended." equivalent of a bus station between California and a glorious domain of fun-loving wizards, surely there. "You never asked me," Swley answered over his shoulder. instead of drinking from it, rolled it back and forth across her brow, cooling her forehead. The terror-polished eyes of the man in the colander can be seen through the pattern of small drain holes. Geneva's voice wavered on God and broke on fool: "Oh, God, what a blind stupid worthless fool I. While Alan Jackson filled the jukebox with a melancholy lament about loneliness, Noah fished the. Colman stood near Hanlon in front of-the Third and Second platoons of D

Company and a short distance behind Sirocco, well to one side of the main Army contingent Only a few of the Company were absent for one reason or another, conspicuous among them Corporal Swyley, who was in Brigade sick bay and looking forward to a turkey dinner; the standing order for a spinach-and fish diet had mysteriously erased itself from the administration computer's records. The dietician had been certain he'd seen something of the sort in there before, but conceded that perhaps he was confusing Swyley with somebody else. Swyley had agreed that there had been something like that in the records by saying he disagreed, and the dietician had misunderstood and decided to forget 'about the whole thing.. "Anything to publicize what we've said . . . broadcast the facts at Phoenix and up at the Mayflower II over Chironian communications beams. At least some of the population would hear it . . . the word would soon be spread. . . , I don't know . . . whatever would bring word to the mod people in the shortest time for greatest effect."levitation beams that suck you right out of your shoes and up into the mother ship, little gray men with big."If we're going to want a suite at the Francoise' again, I'd better reserve it now," Celia answered. "Any idea how many people we're talking about?" Red blouses still draped the lamps. The scarlet light no longer fostered a brothel atmosphere; in view of."That's you, Mr. Hooper," Curtis observes. Then he understands. "Oh." The trucker's tears of laughter."They've already got security," Nanook declared. "And if they're not rich enough already, how is some crazy supposed to help?".apparent cowardice and the alacrity with which he had betrayed his client confirmed for them that he."It seems to be. How about Borftein and Wellesley?" Behind Sirocco, Celia came through the doorway, escorted by Malloy and Fuller. Stanislaw was behind, carrying a field compack..Celia sank back into her seat and closed her eyes with a nod and a sigh of relief. One of the figures in the darkness wanted to know how come somebody called Stanislaw knew how to fly something like this; Another voice replied that his father used to steal them from the government."Well, I--I can't pretend to know anything about that side of things, sir."."What do you do best?" Ci asked him. "I mean . . . apart from holding people's walls up for them. That can't be much of a life."."It's nothing personal, Paul. We think you're a great guy ' Pernak frowned and sighed apologetically. "I just can't see that Separatism is going to answer anything in the long run. In fact, to be honest, I can't see Congress's being around all that much longer. On that planet down there, it's a dodo already."Inside the room, the captives looked around in surprise as muffled thuds sounded just outside the door. The steward who had just brought in the evening meal opened the door, and soldiers in battledress poured in. Wellesley gasped as he saw Lechat with them. "Paul!" he exclaimed. "Where have you been hiding? You're the only one they didn't pick up. What-".At one time, she'd been proud of her beauty. Now she wondered why she had taken so much pride in.Geneva shook her miswired head. "I don't watch anything on TV except old movies."."I'm always working on a screenplay in my head. In film school, they teach you everything's material, and.black shape splashed with a few whorls of white, like tossed-off scarves of moonlight floating on the.Trying to be civilized and to get along with everybody was fine as long as it could be made to work, but eventually the only thing that made people take notice of the high-sounding words delivered across the negotiating table was the number of divisions--and warheads behind them--backing them up. And if, when all else failed, the only way left for a nation to look after its interests was to defend them by force, then the best chance for survival lay with ' promoting the cause totally and using every expedient that.Micky knew from experience that this was not reliably the case. "Anyway," she said, "whether they.surprise ready for the doctor. Not much physical strength was required to pull a trigger..Jay looked uncomfortable and massaged the top of his forehead with his fingers. "I know you're not going to believe this, Ms," he said. "But they're not going to cost anything. Nothing seems to cost anything. I don't understand it either, but--". "Yep.' "Yours~ "Nope."."Yeah, well, one day I'll be so top-heavy I'll have to carry a sack of cement on my back for balance."..a rich gay-nightclub owner in San Francisco, a seventeen-year-old high-school football star in.Leadng with her good leg, dragging her left, long-practiced grace abandoned, hard-won dignity lost,.fragments so minuscule that she could no more easily piece them together than she could gather from the."Just clarifying," Noah assured him.. "D Company's resident miracle worker," Colman answered, but his voice was distant as he fitted the new piece~ into the picture in his head. He made a sign to Sirocco to get Swyley up to the front of the room, and to a chorus of groans1 Sirocco turned back and suspended the briefing once again..Then Colman's communicator started bleeping. Bernard Fallows was calling from the Communications Center. "I guess you did it," he said. "But it's not over yet. We've found out where Sterm is."..which were half full..The hand over his mouth loosened a fraction after the door was closed. "Gawd! Wot's goin' on? Who-?" Somebody jabbed him in the ribs. He shut up..a gun under them."..LIKE THE SUPERNATURAL SYLPH of folklore, who inhabited the air, she approached along the.He hadn't noticed this gathering of tiny figures before: Eight or ten motorists have descended part of the.chapel of her cupped hands..author of the article was probably full of beans, but Leilani figured she'd sleep better if she dozed off.With all public bars having been put off-limits to the Mayflower Ifs soldiers after the shooting, the party couldn't have come at a better time, Colman reflected as he leaned against the bar and nursed his glass while gazing around the room. Swyley and Stanislaw were behind him in a corner with a mixed group of Chironians and seemed interested in the planet's travel facilities; Sirocco was with another group in the center of the room discussing the war news with another group, and Maddock, looking slightly disheveled, was sprawled along a couch in an alcove on the far side with his-arm draped around Wendy, another girl from the Mayflower II, who seemed to be asleep. It was especially nice to get away from the political row that had been splitting the Mission into factions ever since the morning after the shooting. Kalens wanted to impose Terran law on Franklin, Lechat wanted everybody to move to Iberia, somebody called Ramisson wanted to disband Congress and phase into the Chironian population, and somewhere in the middle Wellesley was trying to steer a course between all of them. At one extreme some people were ignoring the directive to remain in the Canaveral area and moving out, while at the other some were supporting Kalens by staging anti-Chironian

demonstrations with demands for a get-tough policy. Padawski and the group who had been with him at The Two Moons, including Anita, were being confined to the military base at Canaveral pending a hearing of the charges of disobeying orders and disorderly conduct. In addition Ramelley had been charged with assault, and Padawski with failing to uphold discipline among members of his unit as well as with publicly issuing threats. The threats were the main reason for Padawski's group being confined to base, since some politicians were worried about possible reactions from the Chironians if they were allowed out and about. Colman couldn't see any risk of retaliation, since none of the Chironians that he had talked to attached any great significance to the incident. He only wished more of the politicians would see things the same way instead of blowing the incident out of proportion to suit their own ends. If they had stayed out of the situation and left the Army to deal with its own people in its own way, the whole thing would probably have been forgotten already, he thought to himself..Maybe, he thought to himself, at the end of it all, the myopic would inherit the Earth..would want to be alone with Charles Manson and a chain saw..the tattoo snake. "At least take a look at his peace offering." "Start taking off the jacket and the vest," the Irish sergeant ordered. "And while you're doing it, you can tell us the routine." Howard brought a hand up to his chin sad rubbed it dubiously for a few seconds. "Mmm . . . Sterm. 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. Sterm 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." "Oh, Jay, don't be silly. Come on now--tell me where all this came from." dedication is too effusive and in need of cutting. Well, this time she's wrong..Because of the problem of both words having the same initial letter, the dum came to be designated by U and the dee by E. The dum carried a one-third charge, and the dee carried none. Two dums and a dee made the up quark, its three possible color charges being represented by the three possible pennutations, UUE, UEU, and EUU. Similarly two dees and a dum yielded the down antiquark in its three possible colon as UEE, EUE, and EEU; in the same way two "antidums" and an "antidee" gave the up antiquark; and two antidees and an antidum, the down quark. Three dums together carried unit charge but no color and resulted in the positron, designated UUU, and three antidums, each one-third "anticharge," i.e., negative, made up the normal electron, UUU. Three dees together carried no charge and formed the electron-type neutrino, and three antidees in partnership completed the ground-state generation as the electron-type antineutrino. It followed that "antitweedles" didn't necessarily give an antiparticle, and tweedles didn't always make a particle. Tweedles predominated over antitweedles, however, in the constitution of normal matter; the proton, for example, comprising two up quarks and a down quark, was represented by a trio of "tweeplets" such as UUE; UEU; UEU, depending on the color charges assigned to the three constituent quarks..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." "Detail... halt!".Waving Leilani toward her, Sinsemilla said, "Come hither, dour peasant girl, and let thy queen acquaint.sunshine, the heat, the rumble of the distant freeway traffic, the fragrances of cut grass and sweat-soured.Coming in, he'd known the risks. What he hadn't realized, until now, was that the motor home has no.Curtis doesn't want a refuge. He wants to find an escape hatch. And quickly..night..COLMAN LEFT THE Fallows house shortly before midnight with Bernard. Lechat, and Celia. There were more people about in Phoenix than he had anticipated, and the pasty reached the post that Sirocco had specified without need for elaborate precautions..Leilani to be convinced against her will that they were mother and daughter..MEXICO. On the front, the word STARCHILD was emblazoned in two-inch red letters..Bernard frowned suddenly. "Yes, it is. And I didn't know about it." His concern intensified as the implications sank in. "Who are they?". "Have you made your mind up about Sterm?" Cells asked.."I never eat it," Leilani said. "The last time old Sinsemilla served it was Monday. So come on, tell me..Her eyes rested momentarily on' his chevrons. "Are you Sergeant Colman--the one who's interested in engineering?".trapped in this claustrophobic rolling slaughterhouse with psychotic retirees who'll eat him with chips and.ever-dwindling but not yet eradicated capacity for romanticism..Bernard nodded and seemed relieved, but his expression was still far from happy as he turned toward Kath, who had moved away from the others, and was watching curiously. Bernard seemed to want to say something that he didn't know how to begin..Alerted by Curtis's warning as he'd fled the motor home, maybe other motorists investigated the.certain that these Bureau agents know them for who they really are..Chapter 17.his leg stiff, rolling his hips in that funny way he did. And then ... as they drove away. . . Luki looked back.Micky said, "Some of your brother's problems ... It sounds like surgery could have helped at least a.Colman groaned. The target could only be the Kuan- y~~ yin. If the strike succeeded it would leave Sterm in command of the only strategic weapons left on the planet, and in a position to dictate any terms he chose; if he failed, then Sterm and his last few would take the whole of the Mayflower II with them when the Kuan-yin rose above Chiron's rim to retaliate. Outside the lock, the first carrier loaded with troops in zero-pressure combat suits moved away and disappeared into the tunnel that Brad and his party had appeared from..The camera tilted up, panned right: A silver Jaguar approached through the early twilight. The car.Her puzzlement passed to pained compassion, and Noah knew that she had read the text and subtext of."Don't you think stealing people's homes and throwing them out is violent enough?" Jean asked from one of the dining chairs, while Jay listened silently from across the table. "What were they supposed to do? They ignored the soldiers and settled it with the man responsible. He should have been expecting it." lottery numbers, start fires with the power of my mind, and teleport to Paris for lunch." 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.. "Yeah, well, by nature I'm a huge pudding. I've got to work hard to stay like this."

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