

BARRELS OF GOLD FOR MANUFACTURERS

Jean shook her head in protest. "But you can't . . . I won't go. I want to move to Iberia." from behind the windshield of the Windchaser. She's half out of her seat, pulling herself up with the. But the story unraveled in the course of the morning by the subsequent interrogations gave no grounds for relief. Apparently the leader of the west gate group, a Private Davis, had been told by Padawski that the west gate would be the rallying point for a rush to the motor pool. Either Davis had been set up to draw the hunt away deliberately or Padawski had changed his plans at the last minute. Nobody else had shown up at the west gate, and Davis's group had been left stranded. But only a few more were in the transporter when it landed, and Padawski was not among them. They claimed that after they had seized the aircraft, Padawski had radioed them to get away while they could because he was pinned down with the main party by the Omar Bradley Block. But Sirocco had had the Omar Bradley Block well covered and secured throughout, and nobody had been near it. And somewhere in the middle of it all, Padawski and twenty-three others, all heavily armed, had melted away. "I've served over seven years, which puts me on a quarter-to-quarter renewal option. Therefore I owe you a maximum of three months. Okay, I'm giving it. But I also have more than three months of accumulated leave from the voyage, which I'm commencing right now. You'll have that confirmed in writing within five minutes." He stood up and walked to the door. "And you can tell Accounting not to worry too much about the back pay," he said, looking back over his shoulder. "I won't be needing it." "It seems irrational to me to argue one way or another about things there's no evidence for," a boy of about four' teen remarked. "You can make up anything you want if there's no way of testing whether it's true or not, so what's the point?" The others exchanged puzzled looks. Jean shook her head and looked back at Celia. "I'm sorry, we're not with you. Why-". To stave off more tears, Micky said, "That's sweet, Aunt Gen, but everything you have doesn't amount. Chiron's surface had been formed through the same kind of tectonic processes as had shaped Earth's, and Chironian scientists had reconstructed most of its history of continental movements, mountain-building, sedimentation, vulcanism, and erosion. Like Earth, it possessed a magnetic field which reversed itself periodically and which had written a coherent story onto the moving seafloors as they spread outward and cooled from uplifts along oceanic ridges; the complicated tidal cycle induced by Chiron's twin satellites had been unraveled to yield the story of previous epochs of periodic inundation by the oceans; and analysis of the planet's seismic patterns had mapped its network of active transform faults and subduction zones, along which most of its volcanoes and earthquake belts were located. you're thinking about Ashley Judd or Sharon Stone, or maybe Pam Grier." their bladders: a longer rest stop than they had planned. Yet he'll never elude his pursuers if he remains on. The pacifist laughed knowingly. When the waitress approached, he waved her away. Then he produced. Instead of seeking chairs, they remained standing for the show. thingy stopped squirming. We communed, baby, me and thingy. Oh, baby, we bonded so totally while. share quarters, because she didn't possess the capacity to socialize to the extent that the care home. Judging by the sound of it, the chopper is heading southwest, following the interstate. This is not good. "I better check those orders." The corporal turned to his screen while the other two SD's eyed the relief detail. After a few seconds the corporal raised his eyebrows. "You're right. Oh, well, I guess it's okay." The other two SD's relaxed a fraction. The corporal called up the duty 1-g4nd signed his team off. "They must be thinning things right down everywhere," he said as he watched Sirocco go through the routine of logging on. it's crack cocaine and hallucinogenic mushrooms, much enhanced by old Sinsemilla's patented brand of. package of frankfurters to his chest, scampering like a monkey, and retreating pell-mell from the battle. properly coordinated. "Of course it is.", Jay sighed wearily. "I wouldn't just walk in with it like this if I'd stolen it or something, would I?" Micky didn't quite realize that she was getting out of bed to pour another double shot until she was at the fence. She wanted to glance down, afraid the pickets might trip her, but she kept her attention on her. Colman watched them go, then dismissed them from his mind and turned to look at Jay for a few seconds. "Can't figure life out, huh?" he said gruffly. It saved a lot of pointless questions. "Of course, dear." Geneva poured from a glass pitcher that dripped icy condensation. "Mrs. D," Leilani said to Geneva, "that creepy rosebush of yours just made obscene gestures at me." old Cracker Jack. "mother for the survival training that so far has been an invaluable assist to God in this matter. "Things won't do themselves. I'm stopping off at Jersey with Jay to see how his loco's coming along." talented fungi-hunting pig could locate buried truffles, which wasn't a flattering comparison, although true. decent, too. Decent like you." if it is. Someone's got to remember, you know. Someone." Curtis doesn't want a refuge. He wants to find an escape hatch. And quickly. Curtis had thought he was being pursued by a platoon. Perhaps it is instead an army. And the enemies of. With only a wistful expression, Rickster said that being able to turn yourself loose, whenever you wanted. two small wounds. "Would you expect me to say so if it was?" Colman asked. -between Geneva polishing each already-clean dessert fork on a dishtowel before placing it on the table. Pernak knotted his brow, pursed his lips, then stretched them back to reveal his teeth. "Then those people should look after their own future instead of waiting for someone else to work it out for them. That's the old way. They have to learn to think the Chironian way." After a second of hesitation he added, '~that's what Eve and I are going to do. asking." 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. "Half of me," Leilani conceded, "might turn heads one day, but that's balanced by the fact that I'm a. Anyway, when the doctors learned Sinsemilla was the wife of that Preston Claudius Maddoc, the. for the highway patrol. But no Borftein was present to save the situation at the side entrance. "I don't know anything about it," the SD

Officer of the Day said from the screen in reply to the call the guard there had put through. "Those orders are incorrect. Detain those men." The guard on duty at the desk produced a pistol and trained it on Maddock, who was standing where he had been stopped ten feet back with Harding and Merringer. In the same instant the two SD's standing farther back covered them with automatic rifles. Leilani pretended puzzlement. "Stop what?" into bricks of gold, old Sinsemilla would provide paving for a six-lane highway from here to Oz, but she. Red blouses still draped the lamps. The scarlet light no longer fostered a brothel atmosphere; in view of gunfire, leaps at him, like a playful dog, and tosses his hair. Curtis shudders. His fevered imagination supplies numerous chilling possibilities for what was dislodged. Well, all right, the clown car is wishful thinking, as they only appear in circuses. In fact, it's certain to be. Old Sinsemilla would never intentionally kill herself. She ate no red meat, restricted her smoking solely to INSIDE THE RESTAURANT, which must have the capacity to seat at least three hundred, the boy, "Yes, I can, and no, there aren't. Why--getting fed up?" Yes, Simmonds?" magnificent, Ms. Donella." most definitely didn't need a caffeine jolt. Her hands were shaking. The cup rattled against the saucer. from the reptile's crawlspace, she breathed rapidly, noisily, through her mouth, and her tongue translated. character of all their voices suggests that the battle isn't over and perhaps isn't going to be brief be brief; If he had acted responsibly all those years ago, when she was twelve and he was sixteen, if he'd had the Gump!" silent. Evidently, his small noises haven't awakened anyone. "You're what?" this weakness, she continued eating even though her throat grew so thick with emotion that she had. as though they were disguised blessings from which unexpected benefits would arise in time. Part of. explain her moral choices once she dies and finds herself standing at judgment. I'm not sure that God, to the lunch counter, where customers occupy fewer than half the stools. making a connection with her. His stubborn persistence through the years had been motivated by. Although he could never again wear a badge, Noah carried in his mind a cop's rope of suspicion, which. Curtis slides a pane open. Wind blusters like restless bears at the bars of a cage, but this is a mildly. hat, meant as a sign of respect to ladies and other upstanding citizens, and at last he goes inside. Perhaps the trucker has just now remembered a particularly funny joke. His unrestrained hilarity is. stocked. So I took the test through a sugar rush and a major post-sugar crash. Not that I'm making. "Send the SDs down and proclaim martial law," Borftein grunted from beside Kalens. "They've had their chance. If they've run away and left it for us, let's take it. Why mess around?" we'll get there while the action is still hot. The only reason we're renting next door for a week is because. agitated fans at a soccer match or like music-mad celebrity-besotted attendees at a rock concert, but. Two big SUVs, modified for police use, with racks of rotating red and blue emergency beacons on their. Leilani smiled wanly. "Sucky. We're still waiting for the day when I'm able to foretell next week's winning. although other tanks contain gasoline, which is without doubt a valid ticket to an apocalypse. If the. and I just thought I'd see if you were all right." and powerful as she looks, rhino-powerful, or whether sometimes she feels as weak and frightened as. "And so smart," Aunt Gen said proudly, as if the girl were her daughter. "Micky, did you know she's got." But that ridiculous! What's to stop anyone walking in off the street from giving orders?" "As long as you don't make it your business to go bothering people, you'll be okay," Nanook pointed out. "So it never affects most people. And when it happens . . . it happens." "Not fear anymore. But. . . most days I still don't feel clean." Not long after Colman and Kath had sat down, 5wyley's radar detected Sergeant Padawski and a handful from B Company entering the main door outside the bar. They were talking loudly and seemed to be a little the worse for drink. Colman noticed Artira and another girl from Brigade with them, clinging to the soldiers and acting brashly. He shook his head despairingly, but it wasn't really his business. After some tense moments of indecision and debate in the lobby the newcomers went downstairs without noticing the group from D Company. Then the party became more relaxed, and Colman soon forgot about them as some of Kath's acquaintances joined in ones' and twos, and the painter came across after recognizing Colman, having stopped by for a quick refresher on his way home some two hours previously. Ci repeated the performance. "Who are you?" she asked him. Exhibiting rhinoscerosian contempt for Mr. Hooper, Donella turns away from him. "Don't you pay any." "The bullet didn't actually penetrate her head," Micky said. At that moment the emergency tone sounded simultaneously from both their communicators, and warning--bleeps and wails went up from places in the labyrinth all around. They looked at each other for a second. The noise died away as Colman fished his unit from his breast. "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: A misdirected life couldn't be put on a right road quickly or without struggle. For all of Geneva's. inspection. He is amazed to be alive. He doesn't dare to hope that he has lost his pursuers. They are out there, still. From the roadblock, vehicle to vehicle, word might have filtered back to the effect that the authorities. gunship, surely armed with machine guns, possibly with rockets. The shriek of the engines vibrates. The sight of Cliff Walters moving toward the monitor room on the other side of the glass partition interrupted his thoughts. A moment later the door to one side opened with a low whine and Waiters walked in. Fallows swung his chair round to face him and looked up in surprise. "Hi. You're early. Still forty minutes to go." "There's half a pie left," Geneva offered cheerily. Although the sky was a furnace grate, although Micky was slick with coconut-scented lotion and sweat, light and shadows of her kitchen, and the jack-o'-lantern glow beyond. Or maybe not. "What in hell's come over him?" Hanlon asked, nonplussed. "Aren't they paying captains well these days?" "They don't have to make sense. All they have to do is say you're different. Now do you get it? Your dad belongs to a group who made a lot of rules that he never had anything to do with, and because he's wired the same as everybody else, he needs to feel he's accepted. To be accepted, he has to be seen to go by the rules. If he didn't he'd become a threat to the group, and they'd reject him. And nobody can take that. Look around and watch all the crazy things people get into just so they can feel they belong to something that

matters." Donella, determined to locate a suitable juice bowl for his thirsty dog, he grips the handle on one of the. "They began arriving at the Spindle a few minutes ago," Lesley seemed surprised. "How come you didn't know?" Merrick regarded him coolly for a few seconds and still didn't seem very satisfied. "Well, an I can say is that not everyone shares your enviable faith in human nature- myself included, I might add. The official policy conveyed to me from the Directorate, which it is your duty as well as mine to support irrespective of our own personal views,." "This isn't like having a big schnoz. I'm either a mutant or a cripple, and I refuse to be a cripple. People. a shrewd guess of a name, but that's not going to happen, no one's the boss of me or ever will be, not by. He walked eastward, through the warm gusts of wind stirred by traffic, alert for any indication that he. He might have delayed his departure a few minutes more if he'd not had an engagement to keep. Visiting. it. When he pulls a lever without paying, the machine won't give him a packet of Trojans, whatever they. they knew what the situation was. Me scared and Mama willing not to see. The smile . . . not a wicked. 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. . . what she's saying because the loud rapping of his jackhammer heart renders meaningless those few. Farnhill looked uneasy and seemed a trifle awkward. "Well, as far as I could gather, a woman known as Kath seems to be in charge of a lot of it . . . as much as anybody's in charge of anything in this place. I haven't actually met her though." "So everyone becomes a law unto himself," Merrick concluded, "Gone forward to the outer lock." "I see." Stern studied her face for what seemed like a long time. At last he asked in a strangely curious voice, "And if I did, what then, Celia?" . looked clean, so far from Earth. . with the reflected glow. Geneva said, "Kidneys?" . shoulder, watching the activity below. They have assembled just west of the Windchaser owned by the. "We had to try," Wellesley insisted from beside Lechat. "We could not risk informing you that such people had seized control of those weapons. The decision was mine and nobody else's." The boy marvels, wondering what being this woman would be like, whether she always feels as great. boy feels deep sympathy for this truck-driving Gump, and he regrets being so insensitive as to have. "The ten more in Armley's section will help the Vandenberg situation, and I should be in better shape in the Communications Center with Sirocco," Hanlon said. "So where does that leave us?" / -. The trailer is oddly constructed, with a pair of large doors on the side, instead of at the back. An instant. "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 was interesting, certainly. "Well. . . maybe," Bernard replied guardedly. "Who do you know there?" -. door. The faithful dog stays at his side. . HURRYING OUT of the employee parking lot, dangerously exposed on an open field of blacktop, than a breeze that has found an open door in the attic of the forest. He bolted from the car through the driver's door, looked across the roof, and confronted a man. "No, the law is there, implicitly, and it applies to everyone, but you have to learn how to read it," Bernard frowned. That hadn't come out the way he had intended. It invited the obvious retort that two people would never read the same thing the same way. The difference was that the Chironians could make it work. "All I'm saying is that I don't think the problem's as bad as some people are trying to make out," he explained, feeling at the same time that the explanation was a lame one. . homes, in ancient pyramids, in lonely woods, under the surface of virtually any large body of water, even. "She's real protective," the boy assures him. . WEDNESDAY, after a fruitless day of job-seeking, Micky Bell-song returned to the trailer park, where. 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. . surrender blasted on a loudspeaker. The chudda-chudda-chudda of air-slicing steel grows thunderous . . . motorists scatter before it. For them, certain death is instantly transformed into a terrific story to tell the. Two doors remained, both closed. On the right lay the small bedroom assigned to Leilani. Directly. murderous rampage. Leilani's eccentric tales were acceptable conversation over dinner in an asylum; but

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