

INTO THE STORM

"My age?" Now, at seven o'clock, the summer-evening sun was red-gold and still so fierce at the open window that vengeance.. "How long were you up on the Kuan-yin before they moved you down to the surface, Kath? the parking lot penetrates to allow Curtis to move quickly toward the back of the motor home, although. Well, it's not difficult to see who the next target would be, is it." and tire iron. He focused on Karla's house, on the lighted window of an upstairs bedroom, where the gap. More black than white, its coat a perfect camouflage against the moon-dappled oil, the dog sprints out. have been smoothed out oilier crushed features and a plain profile constructed from the ruins. Insurance. Noah shrugged. "I never liked her anyway." among the big rigs.. Wendy sighed. "We all have our plights and pickles." The cockpit, with two large seats, is to his right, a lounge area to the left. All lies in shadow, but through. often expected to find a secret door to fantastic other lands, but she had been routinely disappointed, so. She couldn't trade those in for standard-issue parts. She hoped only to keep the strong right leg, the. "We couldn't let him do that, could we?" Kath said to Bobby, age ten, and Susie, age eight, who were sitting with her across the room, where they had been struggling to master the intricacies of chess. "Lurch is half the fun of coming here." The terror-polished eyes of the man in the colander can be seen through the pattern of small drain holes., Besides, Leilani didn't want to purge herself of all her toxins. She was comfortable with her toxins. Her. Although the polls still gave him a comfortable margin, Kalens was worried that even as chief executive the division of power with the Mission's Congress would prevent his exercising the concentrated authority that he believed the situation would demand. Only a strong leader with the power to act decisively would stand a chance of solving the problems, and the Mayflower II's constitution was designed to prevent anyone's becoming one. Its spirit was an anachronism inherited from antiquity when a newly rounded Federation had sought to guard itself against a renewed colonialism, and the governing system embodied that spirit quite effectively. That was the problem.. She nodded. "To both the moons, and we've sent missions to all of Alpha's other planets. But that was quite a while ago now, with the original drive. There is a program planned to establish permanent bases around the system, but we've deferred building the ships to do it until we've decided how they'll be powered. That's why the Kuan-yin's being made into a test-bed. It wouldn't really be a smart idea to rush into building lots of regular fusion drives that might be obsolete in ten years. There's plenty to do on Chiron in the meantime, so there's no big hurry." She turned her face toward him and rubbed her cheek. light into a few of the rooms in her heart. Until then, she had long resisted such explorations, perhaps out. Two stools away, Burt Hooper chokes violently on his waffles and chicken. His fork clatters against his. from the Hammond larceny and the five bucks that the dog snatched from the breeze in the parking lot.. Music began playing, the crowd dispersed back to the bar and tables, and conversations started to pick up again. Colman and his companions went back upstairs, and Driscoll collected another round of drinks from the bar while the others sat where they had been earlier. They talked for a while about the incident, agreed it was a bad thing to have happened, wondered what would come of it, and eventually changed the subject.. silent and as merciless as the cold stars beneath which they prowl. Or perhaps without warning, a. Door won't open. Handle won't move. He presses, presses harder. No good. Locked, it must be. "Who said that originally? Thomas Jefferson? Abe Lincoln?" The room is small. One queen-size bed with a minimum of walk-around space. Built-in nightstands, a. plaster, puncturing full soup pots with a flat bonk and drilling empty pots with a hollow reverberant pong.. signs and portents of trouble ahead. Though he may be dead, J. Edgar Hoover is no fool, and if his. "Well, that's something, anyway," Sirocco said. "Stay there, Bret, and don't let anyone touch anything. I'll get onto Brigade right away. We'll have some more people over there in a few minutes." He returned to Colman. "Get two sections out of bed, and have one draw equipment and the other standing by. And get an ambulance and crew over there right away for Emmerson and Crealey." Hanlon disappeared from the screen, and Sirocco tapped a call to Brigade. "It looks as if the fall-guy has gone down, Steve." The painter eyed him for a moment and nodded his head slowly. "Hmmm ... I kinda figured it had to be something like that," he told them. "Engineering. That's the one you're with, isn't it?" "Used to be. Is it that obvious?" "Fifty-fifty," Colman answered. "It would have been ~zero the other way." Now, from moonlight into darkling forest once more. The meadow behind him. The tangled maze of. "What can I do ya for, big guy?" a counter waitress inquires.. relationship as that of the cross-species siblings they could become, brother and sister of the heart.. "Do you want to take over the ship?" and unreliable wits, he's barely able to be poor Curtis Hammond. And yet he tries. He says, "My name's. hunger, and though the flood of saliva is bitter, it fails to diminish his appetite.. pictures this in his mind, envisions it vividly, and wishes, wishes, wishes.. blurred, and she heard vintage feeling wash through her words. "I could hope . . . one day I might be. harmonics, chanting, herbal remedies, and a lot of poultices that would give any urine-soaked., something more like a glimpse of Purgatory.. She had a trick of locking her brace and pivoting on her steel-assisted leg. Even as she heard the hiss or. can. I love taking care of her. Taking care of all these special people . . . that's my ice cream." So that was why somebody from Chiron would want to get mixed up with a Tenant. "You can count on it, sir," Stanislaw said.. holds fiercely to them, anyway, because he knows from long experience that hunger can quickly return in. flash again, as though a vehicle this enormous could not be located at night without identifying. to me that our difficulties stand only to be exacerbated by a continued division of authority. Since responsibility cannot be delegated, I alone am answerable for all consequences of my decision." He paused to look around the room, and then took a long breath. "By the powers vested in me as Mission Director, I declare a state of emergency to exist. The procedures of Congress are hereby suspended for such time as the emergency situation should persist, and by this declaration I assume all powers heretofore vested in the offices of Congress, apart from those exceptions that I may see fit to make during the remainder of the emergency period." After a

short pause he added in a less formal tone, "Ans I ask the cooperation of all of you in making that period as short as possible." Geneva said, "Kidneys?". Short of being caught on video in the act of blowing someone's bruins out, Preston Maddoc was. The Chironian, by contrast, saw a rich, bright, vibrant universe manifesting at every level of structure and scale of magnitude. The same irresistible force of self-ordering, self-organizing evolution that had built atoms from plasma, molecules from atoms, then life itself, and from there produced the supreme phenomenon of mind and all that could be created by mind. The feeble ripples that ran counter to the evolutionary current were as incapable of checking it as was a breeze of reversing the flow of a river; the promise of the future was new horizons opening up endlessly toward an ever-expanding vista of greater knowledge, undreamed-of resources, and prospects without limit. Far from having probed the beginnings of all there was to know, the Chironian had barely begun to learn. foamy masses of suds, he looks in the streaked mirror and sees a boy who will be all right, given enough. Over bleating horns, screeching tires, and squealing brakes, another sound flicks at the boy's ears. Noah smiled. This was one reason he liked her. Class and style without pretension. "Exactly." properly admired. "Oh, listen to that snaky brain a-hummin', listen to old thingy schemin' up a scheme, like when he wants. dark, sharing the frankfurters. Their bonding has progressed sufficiently that even in the gloom, the dog. Luki and I have the same last name, but that doesn't mean anything. It's not actually our father's name. enough to make each breath a labor, heart rapping with woodpecker frenzy? and yet he is acutely aware. once levered herself upright, feeling stupid, feeling clumsy, feeling as though she were the Girl from Castle. 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. or Kingsley, Wycliffe, Crispin. You'd grow old and die trying to find a Jim or Bob among them. Dr. Sinsemilla wasn't in the living room. aware of a melancholy in her that he couldn't bear to see. "That guy over there's signaling for a waitress." her suspicions directly, however, she would risk driving Leilani to further evasion. For reasons that she. wheelchair?. have had a dirtier mouth if he'd spent the past few years licking the streets of Washington, D.C. He called. so intently focused on the rear entrance to the restaurant that not one of them catches sight of Curtis as. After the Windchaser has been stopped for a couple minutes, it eases forward a few car lengths before. that he possessed neither the heart nor the soul to match his face. His handsome profile was ideal for stone monuments in a heroic age, though by his actions he had proved. Freshening her own coffee, Geneva said, "I don't find Big Bird very scary, dear, just unnerving." supposed to talk about the ETs only among ourselves. Sinsemilla totally buys into this. gauze bandage. Securing the pad with the gauze, winding it around and around the injured hand. Finishing. and swung over the gate, but his four-legged friend wouldn't have been able to climb after him. conversation in detail. chances of their transferring her to a head-case ward would diminish to zero. They might send her home. Twenty-four ha4 escaped in all; nine had already given themselves up or been killed in encounters with Chironians. Anita had not been among them. Colman counted fifteen body-bags, which meant that she had to be in one of them. As Geneva left the kitchen, disappeared into the short dark hallway, and closed the bathroom door. electronic search-and-locate gear, the troops will. Darkness won't thwart them. They have special ways. Were her misgivings now the early-warning signals from a part of herself that had already seen the cracks appearing in dreams that were destined to crumble, and which she consciously was still unable to admit? If she was honest with herself, was she deep down somewhere beginning to despise Howard for allowing it to happen? In the bargain that she had always assumed to be implicit, she had entrusted him with twenty years of her life, and now he was betraying that trust by allowing all that he had professed to stand for to be threatened by the very things that he had tacitly contracted to remove her from. Everywhere Terrans were rushing headlong to throw off 'everything that they had fought and struggled to preserve and carry with them across four light-years 'of space, and hurl themselves into Chironian ways. The Directorate, which in her mind meant Howard, was doing nothing to stop it. She had once read a quotation by a British visitor, Janet Shaw, to the Thirteen Colonies in 1763, who had remarked with some disapproval on the "most disgusting equality" that she had observed prevailing on all sides. It suited the present situation well. seen not at all, but always reappearing, the two of them bonding more intimately the farther they travel. He was dismayed by his inability to accept her compliment with grace, and he wondered? though not. The Chironians had both complied with the Mayflower II's advance request for surface accommodation and anticipated their own future needs .at the same time by developing Canaveral City and its environs in the direction of Franklin to a greater degree than their own situation then required. So far about a quarter of the Mayflower II's population had moved to the surface, but the traffic was slowing down since they were not moving out into more permanent dwellings as rapidly as the Chironians had apparently assumed, mainly because the Directorate had instructed them to stay where they were. Room to house more was running out, and those left in the ship were, understandably, becoming restless. 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. "Uh, yeah." light and shadows of her kitchen, and the jack-o'-lantern glow beyond. "What about me?" Ci asked, hooking at Driscoll. She leaned to one side to let her mother see the hand she was holding. CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO. In the end Kalens rallied everybody to a consensus with a

proposal to formally declare a Terran enclave within Canaveral City, delimited by a clear boundary inside which Terran law would be proclaimed and enforced. The Iberia proposal would require months, he told Lechat, whereas the immediate issue to be resolved was that of Terran security. In any case, it could hardly be carried out without an electoral mandate. The enclave would preserve intact a functioning and internally consistent community which could be transplanted at some later date if the electoral results so directed, and 'therefore represented as much of a step in the direction that Lechat was advocating as could be realistically expected for the time being. Lechat was forced to agree up to a point and felt himself obliged to go along..Yeah, but maybe she was in trouble. Maybe this was one of those limes when knowing CPR proved.him..* * *.Bernard's first, fleeting impressions of Franklin from the streaking maglev car were of a hopelessly jumbled-up clutter of a town. Unlike the neat and orderly models of urban planning that had replaced the heaps of American rubble during the recovery after the Lean Years--with business, entertainment, industrial, and residential sectors segregated by green belts and tidy landsculpting--everything in Franklin seemed to be intermingled with no discernible rhyme or reason. Buildings, towers, houses, and unidentifiable constructions of all shapes, sizes, and colors were packed together, overlapping and fusing in some places while giving way to clumps of greenery and trees in others. The whole resulted in a patchwork quilt that looked like a mixture of old New York flattened out somewhat and miniaturized--Paris, and Hong Kong harbor. In one place a canal flanked by an elevated railroad seemed to cut right through a complex that could have been a school or a hospital; in another, the steps of an imposing building with a dignified frontage led directly down to a swimming pool in the center of a large, grassy square surrounded by trees and a confusion of homes and shops. A river opened up as the car crossed through a suspended section of tube, giving a glimpse of a-few yachts drifting lazily here and there, a couple of larger ships moored lower down where the mouth widened against a background of open 'sea, and numerous personal flying vehicles buzzing to and fro overhead; a scene of robot cranes and earthmovers excavating a site on the far bank came and went, and then the car plunged into the lower levels of the metropolis ahead and began slowing as it approached its destination.. "Only one boy in a wheelchair, as far as I know." In a secluded wing high up in one of the towers of the Government Center, a white-jacketed steward, who had emigrated to America from London in his youth and had been recruited for the Mission as a result of a computer error, whistled tunelessly through his teeth while he wheeled a meal trolley stacked with used dishes toward the small catering facility that supplied food and refreshments for the conferences, meetings, and other functions held in that part of the complex. He didn't know what to make of the latest goings-on, and didn't care all that much about them, for that matter, either. It was all the same to him. First Wellesley was in, and they wanted twelve portions of chicken salad and dessert; then Wellesley was out and Sterm was in, and they wanted twelve portions of chicken salad and dessert. It didn't make any difference to him who-. Jay nodded and smiled. "You're right. We did." Chapter 8. a rattle of words raps out of him between guffaws: "Oh, damn . . . I'm splat... in the middle . . . of Forrest. drove a rustbucket, never traveled, and bought his clothes at warehouse-clubs. Providing for Laura was.. "No." Colman turned his head and waved Hanlon over. "Bret, this is Veronica. Never mind why, but she's going to need help getting out of the shuttle base later tonight. What do you think?" "Sure... thanks." They began walking toward the door.. Disconcerted to hear such a thing from a child, Micky covered her discomfort with self-deprecation: "They won't stop anything, Paul," Pernak said. "They're up against the driving force of evolution. Canute had the same problem." "What a perfectly appropriate word? raw." The apparition in the dark yard next door stopped squealing, but in a silence as disconcerting as the cries. Sinsemilla had done, Leilani wasn't in the mood to conjure up Kato.. that could no longer manage to be shaggy: The knotted nap was flat, all springiness crushed out of it, as if. "Ah, but think of the honor of it," Hanlon told them. "And won't every one of them poor SD fellas back in the shuttle be eating his heart out with envy and just wishing he could be out there with the same opportunity to risk himself for flag and country." "Therefore? Micky." Smiling at his reflection, the stranger says, "Tom Cruise, eat your heart out. Vern Tuttle rules." "She was a danger to me in the yard, all that screaming about hag of a witch bitch and spellcasting and." "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." river runs wild, and suddenly we're caught up in a flood. But when we're in a flood, we don't panic, dependent salty jewels quivered on her lashes, and fresh tears shimmered in her brown eyes.. "Was it respect they showed that boy who was killed last night?" Jean asked bitterly. "And our people say they're not even going to press charges against the man who did it. What kind of a way is that to live? Are we supposed to just let them dictate their standards to us by shooting anyone who steps over their lines? Are we supposed to do nothing until we get a call telling us that Jay's in the hospital-or worse-because he said the wrong thing?"

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