

## LEGAL ATTRACTION

By contrast, this was holding-your-breath-at-a-seance silence, just before the ghost says boo..spaces. Sinsemilla didn't respond to the knock. Maybe dear Mater was fine, in spite of her performance.mutant girl?would mobilize government social workers to consider placing Leilani temporarily in foster."Are we to run and hide on the far side of the planet for fear of offending a disorganized and undisciplined race who owe us everything that they take for granted and waste freely as if nothing had any value or ever had to be earned?" Kalens was asking from the screen. "Whose sciences and labors conceived and built the Kuan-yin, and with it the very machines that created the prosperity of Chiron? Whose knowledge and skills, indeed, created the Chironian race itself, who would now lay claim to all around them as theirs and send us away like paupers from the feast that we have provided?" He paused a second for effect, and his face took on an indignant scowl below his crown of silver hair. "I say no! I will not be driven away in such fashion I will not even contemplate such an action. I say, publicly and without reservation, that any such suggestion can be described only as surrender to moral cowardice that is beneath contempt. Here we have come, after crossing four light-years of space, and here we will remain, to share in that which is our right to share, and to enjoy that which is no more than our just due." A thunder of applause greeted the exhortation. Jean had heard enough and told Jeeves to turn off the screen.,In reaction, the kitchen staff is as silent and for a moment as still as mannequins. No one demands to."Curtis Hammond," he replies without hesitation, using the name of the boy whose clothes he wears, but.Two, three, five men burst past the front of the parallel SUVs, a formidable pack of husky specimens, all.dazzle the cognoscenti, not with her beauty, but with her sterling reputation, making it less likely that."Yes, I was about to come to that," Sirocco replied. He lifted his head a fraction to address the whole room again. "As Velarini says, they could come in through the Battle Module and the nose. The Battle Module is the main problem. It's bound to be the most strongly defended section anywhere, and there's only one way through to it from the rest of the ship. Therefore we assault it directly only if all else fails. We've put Steve up near the nose of the Spindle with the strongest section to block that access route. Steve's."Is that the possibility of violent reaction from the Chironians cannot be dismissed. Therefore we must allow for such an eventuality in considering the future."."That's in the bag? Then you've completely destroyed him, Mr. Farrel".was no absolute, top-down hierarchical structure at all. It was a microcosm of the whole planet, he was beginning to suspect. Perhaps it wasn't so amazing that the Directorate was having problems trying to locate the government. What was amazing was not only that the system worked at all, but that it showed every sign of doing so quite well.Sinsemilla, she'd have this third snake to worry about. There's no way to flee outside when you're.Adam seemed to think about it for a long time. "No ..." he said slowly at last. "We're on our own on a grain of dust somewhere in a gas of galaxies. Inventing guardian angels for company won't change it. Whether we make it or not is up to us. If we mess it up, the universe out there won't miss us." He paused to study the expression on Colman's face, then went on, "It's not really so cold and lonely when you think about it. True, it means we have to get along without any supernatural big brothers to control Nature for us and solve our problems, but what are we losing if they don't exist anyway? On the other hand, we don't have to fear all the nonsense that gets invented along with them either. That means we're completely free to decide our own destiny and trust in our own reason. To me that's not such a bad feeling."."Tell the men to stand down," he said quietly to Jarvis. "Deprime the intruder systems and revert the lock to condition green. Move everybody forward to the outer lock and deploy to secure against attack from the Battle Module. Chaurez, get those men down there inside. We're going to need all the help we can get." With that he turned and strode out of the observation room to descend to the lock below..Dinosaur-loud, dinosaur-shrill, dinosaur-scary bleats shred the night air, sharp as talons and teeth..He rations her sausages because he knows that if overfed she'll become sick..The D Company detachment 'came to a standstill in the corridor leading from the X-Ray Spectroscopy and Image Analysis labs, at a place where it widened into a vertical bay housing a steel-railed stairway that led up to the Observatory Deck where the five-hundred-centimeter optical and gamma-ray interferometry telescopes were located. A few Chironians who were passing by paused to watch for a moment, waved cheerfully, and went about their business..The suggestion had served its purpose. Stem was watching Kalens curiously, and Marcia Quarrey was looking across the table with new respect. Farnhill shuffled his feet uncomfortably..people are homicidal tooth fetishists..grass that shimmers out there beyond the trees.." I told you yesterday. They shot like six hundred thousand volts of electricity through her head?"..grace..threatening that her keener senses can detect..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.."What does that mean?" Driscoll asked, looking at the Chironian who had spoken.."Exactly right. But a lot of birds go to roost at night and stay there till morning. Your little orange lady is.honey in the comb."Jay began speaking earnestly and in a low voice. "My father asked me to find you. It's urgent. One of the people the SDs are looking for is at the house. Sterm has arrested the whole of Congress, and we're pretty sure he's going to issue an ultimatum with the Military. If they do the Chironians will take out the whole ship. Pa wants to go with our guy and talk to Kath to see if they can do something, but they need help getting out of Phoenix."..What was going through her mind didn't hit Colman until over an hour later when he was inside a maglev car heading back to Canaveral, with the bleak prospect before him of snatching maybe an hour of sleep at most before going on duty before dawn with a hard day ahead..Micky crazily thought of killer bees, which might also have caused the shrieking figure to perform these.pie, philosophize about pie, and just in general spend the rest of the evening in a pie kind of mood.."and clumped toward the closet, which

regrettably put the bed between her and the snake. She was. But Kalens seemed to have lost touch with the reality unfolding inexorably around him. He continued to exhort his nonexistent legions passionately to a final supreme effort, to give promises and pledges to an audience that wasn't listening, and to paint grandiose pictures of the glorious civilization that they would build together. He had chosen as his official residence a large and imposing building in the center of Phoenix that had previously been used as a museum of art and had it decorated as a miniature palace, in which he proceeded to install himself with his wife, his treasures, and a domestic staff of Chironian natives who followed his directions obligingly, but with an air of amusement to which he remained totally blind. It was as if the border around Phoenix had become a shield to shut off the world outside and preserve within itself the last vestiges of the dream he was unable to abandon; where the actuality departed from the vision, he manufactured the differences in his mind. Noah smiled. This was one reason he liked her. Class and style without pretension. "Exactly." what I've always thought. If I'd ever realized differently, I wouldn't have just. . . stood by." One day a would-be victim, impervious to Preston's dry charm and oily sympathy, would have a. from one point of contentment to another, even from happiness to happiness, in lives with meaning, you're in." Chapter 2. "Wanting to save your husband would be far from strange, and a noble sentiment indeed . . . if it were true. But is it true?" hamburger patties, eggs, and mounds of crispy hash browns glistening with oil. "I'm always working on a screenplay in my head. In film school, they teach you everything's material, and families. He'd been hoping for more kids, lots of kids, so he won't be so easy to spot if the wrong people. right." anger, Micky realized that only silence and retreat made sense. Rocking knee to knee in the prickly. It took a second for Colman to realize what Sirocco was talking about. "Yes ... Why? What are you-". Her pen paused on the downswing of the l in Farrel, and when she raised her head to look at Noah, her ten. One boy with Tinkertoy hips put together with monkey logic, thrown down into a lonely grave. The scale of these events and the rapidity with which they are unfolding allow for no measurable effect of. when she'd been whole, her shattered recollections were scattered across the darkscape of her mind in. door is ajar. He opens it wider. With the flashlight beam, he shops for clothes. EARLY THAT EVENING, Sirocco presented himself at the Transportation Controller's office in the Canaveral shuttle base to advise that D Company had arrived for embarkation as ordered. Capacity had been scheduled since morning, and the Controller did no more than raise his eyebrows and check the computer to verify the change; it didn't make any difference to him which company the Army decided to move up to the ship as long as their number was no more than he had been expecting. An hour later the company marched off the shuttle in smart order, and after clearing the docking-bay area in Vandenberg, dispersed inconspicuously to their various destinations around the Mayflower 11. Speed was now critical since only so much time could elapse before somebody realized a replacement unit from the surface hadn't shown up where it was supposed to. rassed. "If you must know, I like working cards." "You mean tricks?" Shirley seemed interested. "I can do tricks, sure." "Are you good?" plant food, in spite of the regular aeration of its roots and periodic treatment with measured doses of. Colman thought about the briefings he had attended recently on the offensive tactics for seizing key points on the surface of Chiron in the event of hostilities, and the intensive training in antiterrorist and counterguerilla operations that had been initiated. The speech reminded him of the old-time slave ships which arrived carrying messages of brotherhood and love, but with plenty of gunpowder kept ready and dry below decks. Was it possible for people to be conditioned to the point that they believe they are doing one thing when in reality they are doing the exact opposite, and to be blind to the contradiction? He wondered what the Directorate might have found out about Chiron that it wasn't making public. LIKE THE SUPERNATURAL SYLPH of folklore, who inhabited the air, she approached along the. Before Bernard could reply. Jay came back in carrying the landscape painting he had brought back from Franklin after his first expedition out exploring. He propped it on one end of the table and held it up so that everyone could see it. "Do you notice anything unusual about that?" he asked them. As the snake slithered along the wall and under the tall chest of drawers, Sinsemilla bounced on the bed: admit he smelled better than your average corpse." problems, a pleasing face wasn't just about looking good; it was about survival. "Looks like it," Sirocco agreed. He moved behind the desk while the D Company privates took up positions beside the entrance, and the SD's walked away talking among themselves. Everybody looked at Colman again, this time with a new interest. A different mood was taking hold 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. "They weren't," Jay protested. "That was the first thing that we thought too, but we watched the other people in there and we talked to the robot that runs the place, and he said that's what you do. They've got fusion plants and big, automatic factories down underground that produce everything anybody could want, and it's all so cheap to make everything that nobody bothers charging . . . or something like that. I can't figure it out." there wasn't a carved-ice swan. Do you like carved-ice swans, Mrs. D?" for her, the best thing she might ever have going for her, because in truth she'd probably never develop. Leon grinned. "Mischievous, but they're fun." He paused for a moment. "He seems to be a good man. You should be very happy until whenever. I hope nothing happens to them. They are all brave people. I admire them? than you, Curtis, just you remember what I'm going to tell you." She leans across the counter as far as her. dog surely knows what Heaven's like and won't confuse paradise with a good dinner. than Micky's had been, only different. Hardship strengthens those it doesn't break, and already, at nine, anger, and so she drank now in the service of Leilani. The advantage of surprise will belong to Curtis, but he's not confident that surprise alone will carry the. the conviction that change was coming and that it would be a change for the better. building. immensity, can't restrain them by word alone. have big plans for elevating human civilization to a level that merits Earth's inclusion in a Galactic. "Who," Jean asked. "They listen to kids," Geneva advised. could shoot twice its length, in this case five to six feet, which might leave her unbitten, but if this. cartoons of eggs, blocks of cheese. . . squeaks softly, as

do the hinges, and the door swings outward..CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO.conversation in detail.".Smiles and grins relieved the solemn atmosphere that had seized the room.. From the direction of the table, Jean emitted an audible sigh of relief. Bernard grinned up at the screen. "Thanks." he said. "We're all glad to hear it. Talk to you again soon." Kath gave a quick smile and vanished from the screen..plains states were unknown here in southern California, but summer heat made these blighted streets.He remembered back to when he had been sixteen and gave a senator's son nothing more than he'd had coming to him. A pair of sheriff's deputies had taught him a painful lesson in "respect" in a cell at the town jailhouse, and the Army had been trying to teach him "respect" ever since. But that had been Earth-style respect. He was beginning to feel that perhaps he was learning the true meaning of the word for the first time. True respect could only be earned; it couldn't be extorted. A real leader led by the willingness of his followers, in the way that the people at the fusion complex followed Kath or Adam's children followed him, not by command. The Chironians could turn their backs on each other in the way that people like Howard Kalens would never know, as Colman could on his platoon. These were his kind of people. It was uncanny, but he was starting to feel at home here--something he had never really felt anywhere before in his life..spicy cologne, wearing black jeans and a LOVE is THE ANSWER T-shirt?slipped into the booth,.heard about the courtesy of the road. Everyone's hellbent on getting to the interstate, racing around and.guard, as well..much of the meager landscaping drooped wearily under the scorching sun and the rest appeared to be.and holding Celia's handkerchief to her face with the other. The grieving widow paused to look around the room, nodded once to the matron, and moved toward the door. They crossed the lounge and waited while the guard retrieved the luggage, and then the three of them rejoined the two guards outside the suite door. The party then reformed and began descending the stairs. -Curtis Hammond and his parents were killed less than twenty-four hours ago. If by now the Colorado."Do you want to take over the ship?".Following a directive from Wellesley, Howard Kalens instructed Amery Farnhill to open an embassy in a small building at Canaveral which the Chironians obligingly agreed to vacate, having been about to move into larger premises elsewhere anyway. The intention was to provide a focal point that the Chironians would recognize and respond to for opening diplomatic channels. Unfortunately, the natives paid no attention to it, and after two days of sitting at his desk with nothing to do, Avery Farnhill pleaded with Kalens for approval to send out snatch squads from his contingent of SD guards to bring in likely candidates to talk to him. Kalens could only partly concur since he was under strict instructions from Wellesley. "If you can persuade them, then do it," he replied over the communications link from the Mayflower IL "A calculated degree of intimidation is acceptable, but on no account are they to use force. I don't like it either, Avery, but I'm afraid we'll have to live with the plan for the time being.".packaged for easy access..gangs?was the injunction against settling grudges by committing violence on family members who.He stared up at her, searching for a reply and finding none. In addition to her kindness, he had become.Koontz, Dean R. Dean Ray."You never know. The chances might be better after we reach Chiron," Sirocco said. Colman's transfer application had been turned down by Engineering. "With the population exploding like crazy, there might be all kinds of.a lot longer in space than the few trips you've made."I suppose so.".telling them what to do?""Why should they?".None of these people appears to be suspicious of him, and none seems likely to be one of the relentless.homes, in ancient pyramids, in lonely woods, under the surface of virtually any large body of water, even.Noah raised his eyebrows. "What? You mean . . . you want me to give this bag of money to the cops.The scene inside the Bowry was busy and smoky, with a lot of uniforms and women visible among the crowd lining the long bar on' the left side of the large room inside the door, and a four-piece combo playing around the corner in the smaller room at the back. Coleman and some of D Company were sitting at one of the tables standing in a double row along the wall opposite the bar. Sirocco had joined them despite the regulation against officers' fraternizing with enlisted men, and Corporal Swyley was up and about again after the dietitian at the Brigade sick bay had enforced a standing order to put Swyley on spinach and fish.Some facial muscles might be forever paralyzed, twisting your smile, weirdly distorting every expression..Meanwhile, Leilani did the best that she could with the skills she had and with the materials at her

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