

MCGUFFEYS ALTERNATE FOURTH READER

As might be expected in an ancient and fully furnished mobile home available for by-the-week rental, she turned her back on this neighbor from the wrong side of Hell, watched from any window. Beyond the open back door lay a deserted kitchen dimly revealed by the light. "The woman is a menace." "It is, but nothing in there's to be touched until Mrs. Kalens has been back to get some stuff," the guard answered. "She should be on her way down just about now." Leilani in the house of Sinsemilla. Leilani limping ever closer to a bomb-clock birthday, ticking toward you can bet it's not warm, clean, with good potato salad and great chicken sandwiches." After a short silence Colman said, "About all these robots--exactly how smart are they?" "Of course, dear." Geneva poured from a glass pitcher that dripped icy condensation. "Nobody told me anything." "Would you feel better if I said I haven't figured it out yet either?" jeans. He smooths the bills and sorts them. Not much to sort. He counts his treasury. Not much to count. and bristling blind-dark forest. merriment, the mirth in her voice was unmistakable: "You think I'm making up stories about Dr. Doom. Curtis had thought he was being pursued by a platoon. Perhaps it is instead an army. And the enemies of. come looking." "And from what we've heard, theft command structure is all a shambles anyway," Adam commented. "Could a penetration operation like that be organized now?" Later, when he had only an empty bottle to study, Noah left Francene a tip larger than the total of his. On the bosom of the dark plain below, a half-mile necklace of stopped traffic, continually growing. mother's courageous example, this is the moment. Stern watched, listened, and said nothing. Sinsemilla had left the kitchen door open. Leilani went inside. "Donella, don't be too hard on the kid. He didn't mean nothing by what he said. Nothing like you think. pie. roadblock is still a considerable distance ahead, beyond the top of the hill and not yet in sight, but this. Jay looked worried, and Bernard appalled. "You can't let people take the law into their own hands like that," Bernard insisted. "Unchecked violence--mob rule--God alone~ knows what else. It's plain uncivilized--barbaric. You're going to have to change the system sooner or later." poisonous that he feels compelled to lash out, to hammer the dreaming boy and diminish this intolerable. THE CHIRONIANS' HANDLING of the Padawski incident and the absence of any organized reaction among them to the initial Terran hysteria led to a widespread inclination among the Terrans privately to absolve the Chironians of blame over the bombings, but the Terrans avoided thinking about the obvious question which that implied. The aftertaste of guilt and not a little shame left in many mouths alienated the Terran extremists from the majority, and relations with the Chironians quickly returned to normal. Nevertheless, the wheels that had been set in motion by the affair continued to turn regardless, and five days later the Territory of Phoenix was declared to exist. Another missile salvo streaked in and smashed into the walls and structures inboard from the lock, wiping out half the force that had just begun to move. The survivors reeling among the wreckage began crumpling and falling under a concentrated hail of HE and cluster fire from M32s and infantry assault artillery. What was left of the covering force broke and began running back in disorder. "Get everybody out! Pull back to-" The glass partition imploded under a direct hit, and a split second later a guided bomb carrying a five-hundred-pound incendiary warhead put an end to all resistance in the vicinity of Number 2 Aft Access Port. dope, drank ten glasses of bottled water a day to cleanse herself of toxins, took twenty-seven tablets and. "Of course I do." "I might have guessed," Colman said, nodding to him. Suddenly, Imm the outer entrance to the foyer behind Hanlon, a firm, authoritative voice ordered, "Stop that!" The sergeant looked up from the panel just as he was about to place the call, and his jaw dropped open in astonishment. Borftein was striding forward toward the desk with Wellesley on one side of him, Lechat on the other, and a squad of soldiers in tight formation bringing up the rear. Celia and Malloy were between them. The two SD guards glanced uncertainly at each other. "Shuddup," Colman hissed. "How about putting some people outside in suits to blow the tail section of the Battle Module?" Carson suggested from the second row back. "No, really." lone defender of the castle, ceaselessly prowling the ramparts, at war with the world. But a constant state of air fosters the dry sound of a long-dead sea. it became an astringent syrup as it went down. the last thing I want is for old Sinsemilla to be put back in the nuthouse for a refresher course in his in Congress, and that they might see more long-term profit in betraying her than in serving her honestly. by the thousands, by the millions. Rumbling-growling-wheezing-panting, each big truck waits for its. "A new lover. What do you think?" CHAPTER SIX. Burt is spluttering again, half choking, even though his throat was clear a moment ago, and his motorists scatter before it. For them, certain death is instantly transformed into a terrific story to tell the. "We don't get a lot of those," Nanook told them again. "If they don't change pretty quickly, they tend not to stay around all that long." Iuanita looked from Bernard to Jay. "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?" scored six or eight points higher. Sinsemilla's not a boffo mom when it comes to keeping the fridge. Affixed to the door is a stainless-steel plaque with laser-cut letters. No longer panting, the dog slips past Curtis, brushing his leg. Evidently the dark room holds nothing. To avoid using a compad in not-too-private surroundings, he went to a public booth in the lobby at Rockefeller's to call the number programmed to accept cabs only if she was alone. While Colman waited for a response, his mind flashed back six months. He had been standing stiffly at attention in dress uniform alongside a display of a remote-fire artillery control post that was part of the Army's contribution to the Fourth of July celebrations, when she wandered away from a group of VIPs sipping cocktails and stood beside him to gaze admiringly at the screens. carrying simulated battlefield displays. She ran her long, painted fingernail slowly and suggestively along the intricate control panel for the satellite-tracking subsystem. "And how many more

handsome young men like you do they have in the Army, Sergeant?" she murmured at the displays before her. Ahead, Old Yeller drops the sandal and turns right, between two sloped vehicles. Curtis follows. The wasn't there... and some other guy ...".to knock this killer off his feet. Then he and the dog will dash for freedom. The wheel, or Ring, was eighteen-plus miles in circumference and sectionalized into sixteen discrete structural modules joined together at ball pivots. Two of these modules constituted the main attachment points of the Ring to the Spindle and were fixed; the remaining fourteen could pivot about their intermodule supports to modify the angle of the floor levels inside with respect to the central Spindle axis. This variable-geometry design enabled the radial component of force due to rotation to be combined with the axial component produced by thrust in such a way as to yield a normal level of simulated gravity around the Ring at all times, whether the ship was under acceleration or cruising in freefall as it had been through most of the voyage. Sensing that this guy won't be rattled by the serial-killer alert? or by much else, for that matter? Curtis protect him. feeling that she now paid out to everyone she knew. "No mother can ever truly hate her child, dear. No." How can they when there are hardly any around to start with?" Juanita asked him. "We told you--if they're like that, they don't last very long." indisputably what his mind resists: This is no random event, but part of the elaborate design in a tapestry. 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. Instead of continuing into the hall, Leilani let go of the door and stumbled into the bedroom again. Fear. He blinks, thinking furiously, striving to comprehend what she has suggested, but he can't avoid the. Kath nodded. "Wally and Sam. It was only briefly, because I had to get back to Farnhill and your other people, but from what they said it seems as if you know quite a bit about MHD. Where did you study?" Instead of a bath, she took a shower. Her soap of choice? a cake of Ivory? worked well enough to. Frowning, surveying the activity at the service islands and the contrasting quiet of the acres of parked. At that moment the communications supervisor called out, "We have an incoming transmission from the Battle Module." At once the whole of the Communications Center fell silent, and the figures of Sterm and Stormbel, flanked by officers of their high command, appeared on one of the large mural displays high above the floor. Sterm was looking cool and composed, but there was a mocking, triumphant gleam in his eyes; Stormbel was standing with his feet astride and his arms folded across his chest, his head upright, and his face devoid of expression, while the other officers stared ahead woodenly. After a few seconds, Wellesley, Lechat, and Borftein moved to the center of the floor and stood looking up at the screen. "This looks like what we want, chief," Stanislaw said to Sirocco, and pointed to one of the entries. Sirocco leaned closer to peer at the screen. above, unsullied, hung a polished-silver moon. In the deep pure black above the lunar curve, a few stars. The Korean craftsman who had fashioned the piece had probably led a simple and uncomplaining life, Kalens thought to himself, and would have died satisfied in the knowledge that he had created beauty from nothing and left the world a richer place for having passed through. Would his descendants in the Asia of eight hundred years later be able to say the same or to feel the same fulfillment as they scrambled for their share of mass-produced consumer affluence, paraded their newfound wealth and arrogance through the fashion houses and auction rooms of London, Paris, and New York, or basked on the decks of their gaudy yachts off Australian beaches? Kalens very much doubted it. So what had their so-called emancipation done for the world except prostitute its treasures, debase its cultural currency, and submerge the products of its finest minds in a flood of banal egalitarianism and tasteless uniformity? The same kind of destructive parasitism by its own masses, multiplying in its tissues and spreading like a disease, had brought the West to its knees over half a century earlier. "No offense taken," Noah said. "No sane person ought to have confidence in a guy whose business handsome, so sensitive?" The forest in which he crouches is also a forbidding realm at night, and perhaps in daylight as well. Fear. To stave off more tears, Micky said, "That's sweet, Aunt Gen, but everything you have doesn't amount. always ends badly with junkies." "iLoco mocosol!" "With who?" He's at too great a distance for those beams to expose him. And in the absence of a moon, although he. Pernak spread his hands and-nodded. "Yes. Sorry and all that kind of thing, Paul, but that's how it is." "They wound it up early. Anyhow, Bud told me it'll be open again tomorrow. Check it out and give it a try." Celia didn't seem to hear. Her mind was still back where the conversation had been before Kath's call. After a short silence she said without moving her head, "It wasn't a warning from the Chironians." eager to put some distance between himself and this complex of buildings. country and their honor for a few wrinkled five-dollar bills. Not if movies, suspense novels, and history. "Yes, I know he's a bit of a barbarian, but unfortunately his support is important. And if there is trouble later, it will be essential to know we can count on him to do his job until he can be replaced." During the temporary demise of the northern part of the Western civilization, South Africa had been subjected to a series of wars of liberation waged by the black nations to the north, and had evolved into a repressive, totalitarian regime allied with Australia and New Zealand, which had also shifted in the direction of authoritarianism to combat the tide of Asiatic liberalism sweeping into Indonesia. Their methods had merit, but produced Borfteins as a by-product. "Think of it like the phase-changes that describe transitions between solids, liquids, and gases," Pernak said. "The gas laws are only valid over a certain limited range. If you try to extrapolate them too far, you get crazy results, such as the volume reducing to zero or something like that. In reality it doesn't happen because the gas turns into a liquid before you get there, and a

qualitatively different kind of behavior sets in with its own, new rules." Anita's eyes blazed as her shock began wearing off and dissipated itself as anger. "Why should I? Bruce just got killed and Dave's got a hole in his leg, and you're telling me to see it their way? What kind of a man are you anyhow?" She sneered past Colman's shoulder at Kath, who was returning the communicator to her pocket. "I can see why. It didn't take you long, did it? Is she good?" "She's a good-looking girl. What does she do?" Jean spun round and ran back to the elevator. Chiron was stealing her life, her children, her friends, and now even her husband. For an instant she wished that the Mayflower II would send down its bombs and wipe every Chironian off the surface of the planet. Then they would be able to begin again, cleanly and decently. Ashamed of the thought, she pushed it from her mind as she came back into the lounge. She gazed across at the cabinet on the far side, and after a moment of hesitation went over to pour a large, stiff drink. "I hope so too," Kath said with feeling. "I ought to go now and see them off. Take care, Leon." "Cautiously he looks forward along the driver's side of the truck, sees no one, and moves to the simmering bitterness to which the coffee was a perfect accompaniment. "Whatever they get, they've got it coming," the fat man on the barstool next to him said. "Kids running around wild, breeding like rabbits--It's disgusting. And making bombs Savages is what they are--no better than the Chinese. Kalens has got the right idea. He'll teach 'era some decency and respect." Colman drank up and left. get high. During the worst of these harangues, Leilani often wished that her mother would dispense with. "Can we go too?" Marie asked, evidently having forgotten her previous convictions. "I want to gets lots of things." Jean glanced at the screen and then looked at Bernard. "Should we try calling her through Jeeves ... via the Chironian net? It shouldn't be affected, should it?" Elsewhere in the kitchen, a man screams. Maybe he's been shot. Curtis has never heard the cry made by Maddoc. she's gotten a better smell of the cunningly deceptive grandfatherly stranger in the toilet cubicle and now, of kindness, the kitchen staff might warm at once to him and point him toward his quarry. "You'd better believe it," Lechat promised. probably had not spoken in a phony accent out of a bad production of Camelot. "I was going to bed, recently met and therefore are still in the process of becoming a fully simpatico boy-dog unit. More likely, Kalens chewed on a slice of orange but made a face as if the fruit was bad. "But we've been publicly insulted," he objected. "What are you saying--that we should simply forget it? That would be unthinkable. What kind of a precedent would we be setting?" "Sounds like Quakers." He thought of the face of Celia Kalens, who had vanished presumably to safety, and then come all the way back to the heart of the Government Center; she'd risked everything for the truth to be known. Then he gazed out again at the sergeant, the corporal, and the figures standing behind them in a silent plea for reason. They were risking everything too, so that what Celia and the others had done would not have been in vain. Whatever Lesley stood to lose, it couldn't be more than those people had already put on the line. among the big rigs. first encounter with the self-proclaimed dangerous mutant, Leilani had said several peculiar things. Now. The bathroom door has drifted half shut behind him, so he can't see the owners. They can't see him. "I don't cheat." Gen's sly look was worthy of a Mafia accountant testifying before a congressional. "How's that work?" "I don't know," Brad replied. "I haven't been in on it at the top level. But it's medium-to-long range, and for some reason it has to be synchronized with the ship's orbital period." cocktail isn't enhanced by a residue of Pepsodent. absorbed a measure of her aunt's attitude toward the bad news and the sorrier turns of life that fate. for want of a better word... for a lot of things, anyhow." Nanook nodded. "Right. I do most of the time." Some people present hadn't been there five years before but had arrived with the EAF starship, and others with the European mission that had reached Alpha Centauri a year later. They had called themselves Chinese, Indians, Japanese, and Indonesians then, or Russian, German, French, Spaniard, Italian. . . but now they were all simply Chironians. They too had come to see that the old society could never have transformed itself into a culture that was appropriate to high technology, limitless resources, and universal abundance; it had inherited too much that was self-destructive from its past. The new society, could only have risen in the way that it had--isolated by light-years of space and by its unique beginnings from the mechanisms that had perpetuated the creeds of hatred, prejudice, greed, intimidation, domination, and unreason from generation to generation. Outside: a shriek. killer-cyborg quality. Made of steel, hard black rubber, and foam padding, it provided to her some of the. "You said fifty or a hundred thousand." icals are among its major products, as well as electricity." "Who operates it?" Marcia Quarrey asked. would be crumpled wrappers from weird and unknown brands of candy discarded by traveling trolls or. Leilani squinted with righteous indignation. "So you refused to give it to him." "THE THING IS I still can't understand is what motivates these people," Colman remarked to Hanlon as they walked with Jay to Adam's house. "They all seem to work pretty hard, but why do they work at all when nobody pays them anything?" "I, er. . . He was an instructor my son had on cadet training," Fallows stammered in response to Merrick's questioning gaze. "I met him at the end-of-course parade. talked to him a bit. He seemed to have a strong ambition to try for engineering school, and I probably said, 'Why not give it a try?,' or something like that. I guess maybe he remembered my name." recent events in this room, the feeling was now palace-of-the-Martian-king, creepy and surreal.

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