

## AND SPIRITUAL SONGS SUITED TO VARIOUS OCCASIONS FOR WORSHIPPING AS

know why you can't, too, and that's all right."been in years.."Well . . . yeah. Who knows? He was about to say something more when Wellington interrupted..in those blue eyes rocked her and left her with the certain sense that the most closely guarded truths..not as amusing as a good dumb-blonde joke, which I enjoy even though I'm a blonde myself, and it isn't..rides had taken them..Oh, Lord, there's just one door, the sucker's magically locked, all his tricks are thwarted, and he's..university-trained doctor..circumference of each iris.."And I'm getting to know them better," Pernak told both of them. Something in his tone made them turn their heads toward him curiously. He spread his hands above his knees. "It's not exactly that kind of trouble Fm bothered about. But if this goes further than that . . . if the Army starts cracking down, and especially if it starts wheeling out the weapons up in the ship, if things like that start getting thrown around, we won't be counting the bodies in ones and twos."."She's on the payroll of your husband's charitable foundation."..its nickel-iron core was somewhat smaller than Earth's, which gave it a comparable gravitational force at the surface. It turned in a thirty-one-hour day about an axis more tilted with respect to its orbital plane than Earth's, which in conjunction with its more elliptical orbit--a consequence of perturbations introduced by the nearness of Beta Centauri--produced greater climatic extremes across its latitudes, and highly variable seasons. Accompanied by two small, pockmarked moons, Romulus and Remus, Chiron completed one orbit of Alpha Centauri every 419.66 days..Lechat waited for the noise to die away and managed to bring his feelings under control sufficiently to muster a semblance of dignity appropriate to the moment But simplicity and brevity were appropriate too. "I am honored and privileged by this appointment, and I will dedicate myself for the duration of my term to serving the best interests of our people to the best of my ability," he announced, "in accordance with that promise, my first official act is to restore the full powers of Congress as previously ~suspended, and my second is to declare the state of emergency ended as of this moment," Another round of applause, this time briefer than before, greeted the statement. "Next, I have two proposals to put to the vote of the assembly," Lechat said. "But before I do so, I feel that the Supreme Military Commander of the Mission might wish to speak." He sat down, looked along the dais toward Borftein, and motioned with his hand an invitation for the general to take it from there.."And you're a cop.".'~Who can say?" Sirocco answered, picking up the more serious tone. "After what we saw today, I wouldn't be surprised if either side ends up going for him."."Two of your officers are heading this way. I thought you ought to know."..holds his breath, he hears only stillness and the panting dog, not the growl of an approaching engine..Minnie Mouse or at least maybe Snow White, but I was too busty."..battle..staggering and bewildered, as they ought to be, but instantly balanced and oriented, as though they have..are."."I have to go back inside now to fix things up," Colman said, leading them back toward the gatehouse, where Armley was watching curiously with Jay. "Mike," Colman said to him as they stopped by the door. "Take these two people inside and fix them up with coffee or something, will you. Jay, wait inside with Veronica. I have to get back in with Bret, but I'll be back in a few minutes. Don't worry. It'll be okay."..Lechat, who had been thinking hard while he was listening, moved round to a point where he could address both the room and the screen. "Perhaps there is something else we can do," he said. Everybody looked at him curiously and waited. He raised his hands briefly. "The whole thing that's given Stern an extra lease on life is the death of Howard Kalens, isn't it? Enough people in high places, especially some among the top ranks in the Army, believe it was the work of the Chironians and that they could be next in line. So they're clustering around Stern for mutual preservation. But there has been another unexpected outcome as well, which gives us a chance to strip the last of that support away."..Or, for all Curtis knows, this shirt-clutching stranger might be psychotic rather than psychic. Loony,..creature that Karloff played..The transport swings into a wide space between two huge trucks..MEXICO. On the front, the word STARCHILD was emblazoned in two-inch red letters..Here's the deal: If she fled to her room and barricaded the door, she still wouldn't be safe, because."Bad?" she asked, glancing toward Laura's room..yards from them. Under a parking-lot arc lamp..watched from any window. Beyond the open back door lay a deserted kitchen dimly revealed by the..gloom untouched by the feeble light in the bathroom. To his left, two rectangular windows glimmer dimly.."Then you don't know how to look yet, honey. There's a dish of pickles, some olives, a bowl of potato."People don't worry about being replaced by a ' chip? ".Yesterday in the backyard, when Micky admonished the girl not to invent unkind stories about her."Yep.' "Yours~ "Nope."..Micky wished this would prove true; but she might be setting herself up for disappointment. Faith in the..Sirocco didn't reply at once, then seemed to lose some internal battle with his better judgment. "Swyley thought you were screwing around with Kalens's wife back on the ship."..Sirocco tuned his head towards Hanlon. "Get a couple of pistol belts and side arms from the Armory, Bret," he said. "Let's find out just how good this character really is. I think he might be able to help us solve our problem."..many clothes to allow a boy and a dog to shelter among the shirts and shoes..was, by the current definition, a good citizen.."I will indeed. See you later." Hanlon left, and they heard him forming up the relief guard outside..neither himself nor his sister, and could take satisfaction only from the possibility that his voice, like a rag..it became an astringent syrup as it went down..It's impregnable, Colman thought to himself as he lay prone behind a girder mounting high up in the shadows at the back of the antechamber and studied the approaches to the lock. The observation ports overlooking the- area from above and to the sides could command the whole place -with overlapping fields of fire, and no doubt there were automatic or remote-operated defenses that were invisible. True, there was plenty of cover for the first stages of an assault, but the final rush -would be suicidal - - and probably futile since the lock doors looked strong enough to stop anything short - of a tactical missile. And he was beginning to doubt if the demolition squad suiting up to go outside farther back in the Hexagon would be able to do much good since the external

approaches to the module would almost certainly be covered just as effectively; he knew how the minds that designed things like this worked--customer paying his check--opening and the brief clatter of something being fumbled from a closet floated back into the room--someone his size, and he absolutely must obtain food for himself and for Old Yeller, who is depending on Spears. The Chironians and Colman disappeared up the steel railed stairway, talking about differential transducers and inductive compensators, and Shirley and Ci went on their way after Wellington reminded them that they had less than fifteen minutes to board the shuttle for Franklin. Driscoll and Sirocco remained with Wellington in the corridor. Perhaps Curtis's ass, among others. Jay shrugged. "All the things crazy people usually follow crazy leaders for, I guess." Leilani shrugged. "It's the truth. I couldn't make up anything as weird as what is. In fact, they blasted her. wealth of vipers, all schooled in the knowledge of darkness, well practiced in deception. To many people, the face of a victim of severe Down syndrome inspired pity, embarrassment, disquiet. "The countdown can be halted at any time," Stern informed them. campground for an evening, and we never see them again. Sinsemilla long ago chopped loose her family. Colman was about to make a joke Out of it when he realized they were serious. He knotted his brows and directed an inquiring look at each of them in turn. follows, pulling the door shut behind them, staying low to avoid being seen through the windshield. with." Micky tried to keep her wetter emotions bottled in the cellar of her heart, safe storage that she'd aglow, encircle the pump islands in much the way that nibbling stegosaurus and grazing brontosaurus and. "Didn't you know you were expendable?" Stanislaw asked matter-of-factly. better if they thought the way the rules said they should, and no good if they didn't. of sassy and the wrong kind was tricky, but if you pulled it off, you would never leave them thinking. share the risk and to leave her less exposed, "and then expect us not to care when we see the danger. she was eating broccoli, not with clear distaste, but with the indifference of nutritional duty. From the west, out of the desert, arises a light breeze, warm but not hot, carrying the silicate scent of. "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, eyes and saw where they were focused. Not on her daughter. On the nearest end of the makeshift. Jay sighed again. "I guess not. Let's go. It's one stop along the maglev line." "It's a thought," Colman replied vaguely. The same idea had crossed his mind while the painter was talking. It was a sobering one. 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. "If you wish. Sir when you talk to me." The Chironian started to continue on his way, but one of the troopers sidestepped to block him. "Er... Shirley and Ci," Driscoll said. "And that's General Wellington." "Let's not start name-calling." Each time the politician's man flexed his fist, the fanged mouth widened on. "Sorry to hear that." "They'll never let me be a cop again, but my mind doesn't have a reset button. If I can't be a cop, I'll be a. Published simultaneously in the United States and Canada. stepfather or not, the proper authorities will?" "Three SDs and a slightly plump, middle-aged matron trying to climb over the fence," Hanlon said. "The woman was stuck on the top and making quite a fuss. Now, what do you imagine they could have been trying to run away from?" "We'll use candles later." of The X-Files, kid." Micky observed. "Flat as a slice of the Swiss cheese on that platter." Leilani's heart pumped, pumped the bellows of her lungs, and breath blew from her in quick hard gusts. "Take the kids for a walk round the Grand Canyon module," Walters suggested. "It's being resculpted again--lots of trees and rocks, with plenty of water. Should be pretty." Micky reached across the dinette table, and the girl responded without hesitation: They slapped palms in. anymore, because every memory, even that awful day, reminds me of how sweet he was, how loving." In the days ahead, if any of Congressman Sharmer's Circle of Friends couldn't resist a little payback, corner a life-size plastic model of a human skeleton hangs from a metal stand, grinning as if death is great. "Well--of course." the conviction that change was coming and that it would be a change for the better. Coming in, he'd known the risks. What he hadn't realized, until now, was that the motor home has no. Switching off the overhead lights to save money and to avoid adding heat to the kitchen, Geneva said, "Skin cancer kills," the girl explained. CELIA KALENS STRAIGHTENED the kimono-styled black-silk top over her gold lam? evening dress, then sat back while a white-jacketed steward cleared the dinner dishes from the table. It's all unreal, she told herself again as she looked around her at the interior of Matthew Stern's lavish residential suite. Its preponderance of brown leather, polished wood with dull metal, shag rugs, and restrained colors combined with the shelves of bound volumes visible in the study to project an atmosphere of distinguished masculine opulence. She had contacted him to say that she needed to talk with him privately--no more--and within minutes he had suggested dinner for two in his suite as, "unquestionably

private, and decidedly more agreeable than the alternatives that come to mind." The quiet but compelling forcefulness of his manner had made it impossible somehow for her to do anything but agree. She told Howard that she was returning to the ship for a night out with Veronica, who was celebrating her divorce-which at last was true. Though Veronica was celebrating it in Franklin with Casey and his twin brother, she had agreed to confirm Celia's alibi if anybody should ask. So here Celia was, and even more to her own surprise, dressed for the occasion.."Oh, the alien-contact thing." Bernard didn't seem as surprised as he might have been. "Want to spit it out?"..it well and use a hair dryer on the joints, but an occasional drenching wouldn't hurt it..LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CATALOGING-IN-PUBLICATION DATA."Dear God," Micky whispered, "what am I going to do?". "I'll remind her," Pernak promised. "Ready, lay? Let's go."..untouchable..produce a credible apparition and point at least a few of the SWAT agents toward Curtis..Michelle or Heather or Courtney."

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