

THE REBEL AT LARGE

Geneva's backyard. The nylon webbing was a nausea-inducing shade of green, and it sagged, too, and Old Yeller either reacts to this serenade of bleats or to an instinctive realization that time to escape is fast. In the closet: no Mom, no puke, no blood, no hidden passageway leading to a magical kingdom where. While the others passed through into the hallway of the apartment, Kath turned back toward the screen and touched a control on the compad. All of the views vanished except that of Leon, which expanded to fill the whole screen just as Thelma moved away out of the picture to leave him on his own. "We ought to commence evacuating the Kuan-yin," Kath said. "It looks as if it could be dangerous up there very soon." PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. "But if what you've just said it true, Steve, the real threat is against the ship," Sirocco said, tugging at his moustache. "What are these weapons, and what would it take to make the Chironians use them? I've got to have more information." "And then what?" Swyley said. "You've still got to bomb your way down the feeder ramps and get into the Battle Module. Even if you ended up with any guys left by the time you reached it, there'd be plenty of time for it to get up to flight readiness before you could blow the locks." boy feels deep sympathy for this truck-driving Gump, and he regrets being so insensitive as to have. "I haven't had dessert yet," the girl said, and she retreated out of sight. unpredictable neighbor. known and those hideous cadavers. Marie walked across the room end gazed at the large screen. "Does this work?" she asked. understanding descend on you so unexpectedly that it just pivots you in a new direction, changes you. provided in a complex of structures farther back from the highway than the service islands and fuel. "That's what you want, isn't it," Jean said with a hint of accusation in her voice. "You'd like us to be the way they are. But have you really thought about what that would mean? No standards, no order to anything, no morality. . . I mean, what kind of a way would that be for Jay and Marie to grow up?". Throughout the theft of shirt, jeans, socks, and shoes, Curtis Hammond sleeps as soundly as though a pillows piled against her headboard, everything had changed, and nothing had changed. Chapter 17. As the guards started forward and the members continued to sit in paralyzed silence, Ramisson rose and walked haltingly to the center of the main aisle to face Stern. "I will not submit to such intimidation," he said in a harsh whisper. "Remove your men from that door." With that he turned about and began walking stiffly toward the main doors at the rear. "I'll remind her," Pernak promised. "Ready, lay? Let's go." stood on the cart. excited because this is a situation encountered in all the adventure stories that he loves. "M32s," the robot said. "They've the enhanced fireselectors." -. "Like what?" Nanook asked. Jay had turned pale and was sitting motionless. Colman's eyes blazed up at Padawski. Padawski's leer broadened. With odds of three-to-one and Jay in the middle, he knew Colman would sit tight and take it. Padawski peered more closely at Jay and blew a stream of beefy breath across the table. "I don't how." Amy screwed her face up and rubbed the bridge of her nose with a finger. "I suppose I'd have to be crazy." The third bomb totally destroyed a Chironian VTOL air transporter on its pad inside the shuttle base a few hours after dawn, killing, two of the Chironians working around it and injuring three more. Although the craft itself had been empty, it was to have taken off within the hour to fly a party of fifty-two Terran officials, technical specialists, and military officers on a visit to a Chironian spacecraft research and manufacturing establishment five hundred miles inland across Occidena. A smiling waitress. The cashier at the register, looking over a pair of half-lens reading glasses. A yellow-and-white uniform cap that could be easily mistaken for a resting butterfly. January 9, 2081. "Only one of you was shot in the head," Leilani said, "but you've both got scrambled wiring for the most motor home. Curtis's concern becomes her concern, too, and she watches him, ears pricked, body to sing along with. "Dry as a cracker." "Yeah, Dr. Doom," Leilani confirmed. He wasn't entirely sure why he had given the place another? and so maudlin? name by which he usually. A lopsided smile tugged at the right corner of the girl's mouth, and unmistakable merriment enlivened her. with the thingy. light. 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." of the lowest drawer. The atmosphere became more serious as Bernard and Lechat informed the Chironians that they now knew what the Kuan-yin was and what it could do. "We appreciate that you had to assume that the ship from Earth would be heavily armed and that it might have adopted an overtly hostile policy from the beginning," Lechat said, pacing about the room. "But that hasn't happened, and there are still a lot of people up there who are not a threat to anyone. The handful who are in control now are not representative, and their remaining support will surely erode before much longer. I'm anxious for whoever controls that weapon of yours to be aware of the facts of the situation. There can be no justification now for a tragedy that could have been avoided." identify a reason for this almost sweet anticipation. Defensively, she tempered it with wariness. worth it. It's amazing how many causes aren't worth fighting for when you know it's you Who's going to have to do the fighting." He shook his head slowly. "No, we don't get too much of that kind of thing." Without looking back, the boy said, "The one that's sad." door on the truck cab and jumps to the pavement. Although he was riding shotgun position beside the beauty that until now he hadn't seen the kindness in her eyes. "Could be self-pity," he said, naming his know I've ratted on him." Those sagacities and uncounted others are from Mother's Big Book of Street-Smart Advice for the. One day a would-be victim, impervious to Preston's dry charm and oily sympathy, would have a. Sirocco wrinkled his lip, showing a glimpse of his moustache. "You can't fool me, Steve. You're just keeping your options open until you've scouted out the chances on Chiron. Come on, admit it--you're just itching to get loose in the middle of all those Chironian chicks." The tint, machine-generated Chironians were the ten thousand individuals created through the ten years following the Kuan-yin's arrival, the oldest of whom would be in their late forties. According to the guidelines spelled out in the parental computers, this first generation should have commenced a limited reproduction experiment

upon reaching their twenties, and the same again with the second generation-to bring the planned population up to something like twelve thousand. But the Chironians seemed to have had their own ideas, since the population was in fact over one hundred thousand and soaring, and already into its fourth generation. The possible implications were intriguing..complete nut. UFOs are only one of his interests. But since marrying old Sinsemilla, he's pretty much part in a nice way." 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." "That's the current story," Leilani said, "and we're sticking to it. Strange lights in the sky, pale green die." Leilani said, "One reason I know she haes Luki more than me is the name she gave him. She says she. He's in a large commercial kitchen with a white-ceramic-tile floor. Banks of large ovens, cooktops, As the Chironian and his son climbed into the ground car on the street side, the woman's eyes met Colman's for an instant. There was no malice in them. "I know," she said through the window. "You've got a job that you have to do for a little while longer. Don't worry about it. We can use the vacation We'll be back." Colman managed the shadow of a grin. Seconds later the truck moved away, the robot sitting in the rear, and the groundcar followed, two wistful. Kath touched a code into the compad, and at once the large screen at one end of the room came to life to reveal head-and-shoulder views of six people. The screen was divided conference-style into quarters, with a pair of figures in two of the boxes and a single person in each of the other two, implying that the views were coming from different locations. Kath noticed the concerned look that flashed across Bernard's face. "It's all right," she told him. "The channels are quite secure.." "So does that mean you've got it figured?" Jay Eked..self-assurance, her wit, and her indomitable spirit made it hard to think of her as disabled, even now. "I'm glad I wasn't alive then," Marie said from behind him. "I can't imagine whole cities burning. It must have been horrible." He was dismayed by his inability to accept her compliment with grace, and he wondered? though not. "Hey, you. Stop." The major in command of the four SD troopers sent to scout out the center of Canaveral City --a residential and commercial suburb situated outside the base and merging into one side of Franklin--addressed the Chironian whom they had followed from the restaurant a few yards back around the corner. He was well-dressed, in his midthirties, and carrying an attach6 case. The Chironian ignored them and kept walking. Whereupon the major marched ahead to plant himself firmly in the man's path. The Chironian walked round him and eventually halted when the troopers formed themselves into an impassable barrier on three sides. "You're coming to talk to the ambassador," the major informed him.. "If Lukipela isn't on an alien planet, then he's somewhere else, and wherever that somewhere might be," Scared shitless," Leilani agreed..bursting with potential in this rank, mildew-riddled bathroom. Leilani knew that many intelligent, Colman hesitated for a second as he contrasted Adam's philosophy with the dogmas he was more used to hearing. "I, ah--I know a few people who would say that was petty arrogant," he ventured..mention of her brother, but now they focused. Her gaze rose from her deformed hand to smiling Geneva, 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..Borftein thought about the remark for a few seconds. "Do you think that could be what Sterm's hoping for?" His tone betrayed that the thought hadn't registered fully until then.. "There wasn't anything that Veronica could have done," Celia went on, "I wasn't looking for someone to unload a guilt-trip on. What I had to say was a lot bigger than that. The mind of the man who is now in control up there is as dangerous as it's possible to get-abnormally intelligent, in full command of all its faculties, and totally insane. Sterm believes himself to be infallible and invincible, and he'll stop at nothing. He's holding what's left of the Army because he has succeeded in selling them a lie. And I was the only person who could expose that lie. There won't be any autopsy revelations-the body has already been cremated." Celia looked briefly at each of them in turn and was met by appalled stares as they saw what Colman had already seen a few seconds before..She worked slowly, methodically, taking satisfaction from the care that she provided. In spite of the.CHAPTER NINETEEN.puke-covered wino competition for the worst smell outside of a Calcutta sewer..For a while after listening to Lechat, she had -entertained a brief hope that his announcement might precipitate a landslide of opinion that would force a more enlightened official policy, but the hope had faded a mere two hours later when Eve and Jerry stopped by for a brief farewell before moving out to take up the Chironian way of living. Apparently many people were doing the same thing, and there were even rumors of desertions from the Army; Jean had been unable to avoid feeling that Eve and Jerry were somehow deserting her too, but she had managed to keep a pleasant face and wish them well. It was as if Chiron were conspiring against her personally to tear down her, world and destroy every facet of the life she had known..loose. She's so sweet." The pacifist laughed knowingly. When the waitress approached, he waved her away. Then he produced.- "That's only the first door," Swyley reminded him, lowering the instrument from his eyes. "There are two of them. Whatever we do to that one won't stop them from closing the second one."..we'll get there while the action is still hot. The only reason we're renting next door for a week is because..he himself is a total Forrest Gump, good-hearted but a Gump nonetheless. Well-meaning, Mr. Hooper.Chapter 22.the police.."Sure. What could be crazier than the Army?"..out of sassy altogether, leaving them feeling more pity than delight..tall sentinel pines rise at the verge of the road, saluting the moon with their higher branches. The."Oh, that's sad. You resorted to an arbitrary number. That reveals a shallow capacity for independent.right."..ever-dwindling but not yet eradicated capacity for romanticism..But they were less forthcoming about details of their administrative system, which had evidently departed far from the well-ordered pattern laid down in the guidelines they were supposed to have followed. The guidelines had specified electoral procedures to be adopted when the first generation attained puberty. The intention had been not so

much to establish an active decision-making process there and then--the computers were quite capable of handling the things that mattered but to instill at an early age the notion of representative government and the principle of a ruling elite, thus laying the psychological foundations for a functioning social order that could easily be absorbed intact into the approved scheme of things at some later date. From what little the Chironians had said, it seemed that the early generations had ignored the guidelines completely and possessed no governing system worth talking about at all, which was absurd since they appeared to be managing a thriving and technically advanced society and to be doing so, if the truth were admitted, fairly effectively. In other words, they had to be covering a lot of things up..families. He'd been hoping for more kids, lots of kids, so he won't be so easy to spot if the wrong people.little gravy. We'll put it in a takeout dish, and give it to you for nothing because we just love doggies..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. -. "Hardly. If the Chironians are outside, and Phoenix has a fully equipped army to keep them there, covered from orbit by the ship, what could they do? Leaving them where they are would constitute a greater risk by far, I would have thought." Pernak remained unsmiling, "What about that ship sitting twenty thousand miles out in space?" he said..Inside, Stanislaw shut down the flight-control systems, then walked into the passenger compartment without turning on the cabin lights to join Colman, Maddock, Fuller, and Carson, who were sitting with a large picture-crate propped between them, and a pile of cartons, tools, and packing materials around their feet. Veronica was with them, wearing Army fatigue dress under a combat blouse, her once long and wavy head of red hair cut short beneath her cap and shorn to regulation length at the back. Maddock climbed over the litter to open the door, and then climbed out with Carson and Fuller; Stanislaw stayed inside to help in the unloading. Colman looked at Veronica's face, shadowy in the subdued light coming from outside. "Feel okay?" he asked..every time." Finally he smiled..Another flash of stars and they were in Idaho, one of the two fixed modules that carried the main support arms to the Spindle. The inside was a confusion of open and enclosed spaces, of metal walls and latticeworks, tanks, pipes, tunnels, and machinery. They stopped briefly to take on more passengers, probably newly arrived from the Spindle via the radial shuttles. Then the capsule moved away again..The SD sergeant half rose from his seat. "Sir, I didn't- I thought-". "Of course they are. It's all a mess up there." bedroom door, she looked better than she felt..the bar dipped as though in sad commiseration. When the Dixie Chicks followed Brooks, the Stetsons."You can count on it, sir," Stanislaw said..well-meant if less than completely appropriate advice: "Maniac! Crazy boy!". Outside the Haven of the Lonesome and the Long Forgotten, under trellises draped with bougainvillea, something that required no effort, no slightest sacrifice.. "No doubt," Noah said, "they were once troubled youths rescued from a life of mischief, and anything against the pope or saintly girls named Hortense, but more than not, she liked herself, warts and all..once they were on the road again, old Sinsemilla might set the motor home on fire while cooking up rock..cloud of dust and a powder of dead grass pulverized by a summer of hammering sun..down an aisle of parked cars and other civilian vehicles, he catches up with Old Yeller and comes upon a." "Not likely."..After a mintless scrubbing of her teeth, Micky retreated to her tiny bedroom, which she'd already..hauling ice cream or meat, cheese or frozen dinners, flatbeds laden with concrete pipe and construction..Into the meadow now, without further delay, risking dangers unknown but surely countless. A ripe..fallen fence with as little hitching of her braced leg as possible. When she concentrated on physical." "Why would anybody be interested?". "Well, I know he shot me, of course, but I have no memory of it. I remember him shooting Vernon, and..Book design by Virginia Norey..ON THE DAY officially designated December 28, 2080, in the chronological system that would apply until the ship switched over to the Chironian calendar, the Mayflower 11 entered the planetary system of Alpha Centauri at a speed of 2837 miles per second, reducing, with its main drive still firing at maximum power. The propagation time for communications to and from Chiron had by that time fallen to well under four hours. A signal from the planet continued that accommodations for the ship's occupants had been prepared in the outskirts of Franklin as had been requested.. "Thank you, and my compliments to you, sir." Hoover acknowledged in a suddenly more agreeable voice. "I hope you all enjoyed your visit and that we'll see you here again soon." The cart rolled away to deliver its load to the handling machine. Hoover escorted the group back to the entrance. "Now, next week we're expecting a consignment of absolutely first-class-". "Was that why those guys took off?" Jay asked, by now having regained most of his color. "It probably had something to do with it," Colman said, grinning. "That's the kind of trash you have to deal with. Still interested?". age, about the size of the night visitor who stands over him.

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