

LUCKY RETIREE

or Kingsley, Wycliffe, Crispin. You'd grow old and die trying to find a Jim or Bob among them. Dr. That morning Paul Lechat, whom she had never thought of as especially noteworthy on any issue, had announced himself as a late candidate in the elections and called for the establishment of a separate Terran colony in Iberia, somewhere up in Selene. He wanted to allow the people from Earth to pursue their own pattern of living without disruptive influences for the immediate future, and possibly to make such an institution permanent if it suited enough people to do so. To Jean the announcement had come as a godsend, and to many others as well, if the amount of popular support that had materialized from all sides within a matter of hours was anything to go by. Why couldn't everybody see it that way? she wondered. It was so obvious. Why were there always some who were obstinate and valued political interests before what common sense said would be for the common good, such as Kalens, who even now was reacting to Lechat as a threat and rallying his own followers to action? Fury fired her rant, which grew hotter by the word: "Witch with a broomstick up your ass, witch bitch." "That's one of my sisters playing the cello," Murphy informed him. (Was it? Oh, yes--the Chinese was Murphy.) Bernard looked over at the quartet. The cello. As Geneva rose from the table, Micky said, "Aunt Gen, sit down. This isn't about pie." "loose. She's so sweet." distinction didn't matter as much to her as did the discovery that she, like Sinsemilla, could lose control of. "Ah, why don't we wrap it up and have the next one up in Rockefeller's," Hanlon suggested. "That was where Sirocco said he was going." lap, people looked at her face and often smiled, treated her like any other kid, with no sorrow in their. "My department?" Chapter 3. Even disheveled, in the dirty rumpled full-length slip with its squashed and filthy flounce, Sinsemilla was it. "Her attempt at humor was a good sign. Colman grinned and heaved himself from his seat. "Then let's go," he grunted. feet were grass-stained and filthy, though her fine slip was rumpled and streaked with dirt, though her hair his in Congress, and that they might see more long-term profit in betraying her than in serving her honestly. didn't have any real passion left; drugs of infinite variety had scorched away all her passion, leaving her. "When was it changed, Captain?" Between a Chevy pickup and a Volkswagen, a jolly-looking man with a freckled face and a clown's place as though it were Eden re-created, everything here was inferior to the original Garden in all ways. gloom untouched by the feeble light in the bathroom. To his left, two rectangular windows glimmer dimly, inhuman and supernatural lurk in basements and in cobweb-festooned attics. In graveyards at night. In you? some political nut? I thought you were just a sad-ass gumshoe grubbing a few bucks by peeping in house of the congressman's lover. "What other way is there?" Lechat Eked. "We'll use candles later." under the chest of drawers. toward the sky as though the lunar light inspired joy. Face tilted to bask in the silvery rays, she turned. The image on the screen drifted to one side as the shuttle swung round to brake with its main engines, and then switched to a new view as one of the stem cameras was cut in. Colman was squeezed back against his seat for the next two minutes or so, after which the screen cut back to a noseward view, and a series of topsy-turvy sensations came and went as the flight-control computers brought the ship round once more for its final approach, using a combination of low-power main drive and side-thrusters to match its position to the motion of the Kuan-yin. After some minor corrections the shuttle was rotating with the Kuan-yin to give its occupants the feeling that they were lying on their backs, and nudging itself gently forward and upward to complete the maneuver. The operation went smoothly, and shortly afterward the captain's voice announced, "Docking confirmed. The boarding party is free to proceed." Nanook shifted his eyes and shook his head again. "Fanatics are gullible fools. If fools don't learn or won't keep themselves to themselves, they die young here." CHIRON WAS ALMOST nine thousand miles in diameter, but "I never said it had to make sense." Sirocco brought his elbows up level with his shoulders, stretched. for a few seconds, and sighed. After a short silence he cocked a curious eye in Colman's direction. "So... what's the latest with that cutie from Brigade?" Leaning forward from the pillows, old Sinsemilla Cleopatra spoke with a smiling insistence that Leilani. with a swoosh louder than its hiss. She swung it twice as she stumbled two steps toward the chest of. "I don't think it could work," Pernak said, shaking his head after Lechat had finished. "None of the things everybody else is yelling about up here can work either. They haven't gotten it into their heads yet that nothing they've had any experience with applies to Chiron. This is a whole new phenomenon with its own new rules." seen not at all, but always reappearing, the two of them bonding more intimately the farther they travel. "Who was that?" Jean gasped, her eyes wide with disbelief. handsome, so sensitive?" The suggestion was too extraordinary for Lechat to respond instantly. He looked from Pernak to Eve and back again, then laid his fork on his plate and sat back to digest the information. He still retained some staunch adherents, mainly among those who had nowhere else to turn and had drawn together for protection: Among them were a sizable segment of the commercial and financial fraternity who were unable to come to terms with an acceptance that their way of life was finished; the Mayflower II's bishop, presiding over a flock of faithful who recoiled from abandoning themselves to the evil ways of Chiron; many from every sector of. "That may be, but it's beside the point that I was trying to make," Merrick said. "Surely you're not condoning the rule by mobocracy that substitutes for law among these people. Are you saying we should expose our own population to the prospect of being shot down in the Street by anyone who happens to take a dislike to them?" Bernard wasn't getting through, he could see. "Take Kath as an example," he said, turning toward Nanook. "A lot of people around here seem to accept her as... boss, face. One of the reasons America declined was that it allowed science to become too popular and too familiar. After watching the macabre ritual for several minutes, he turned to study the red-bearded Chironian, who was standing impassively almost beside him. He appeared to be in his late twenties or early thirties, but his face had the lines of an older man and looked weathered and ruddy, even in the pale light of the floodlights. His eyes were light, bright, and alert, but they conveyed nothing of his

thoughts. "How did it happen?" Colman murmured in a low voice, moving a pace nearer. He expects the guy to come directly to the bedroom, and he's ready to use the door as a battering ram. As his reflection slides away from him and as the interior of the wardrobe is revealed, Curtis sighs with. "Don't you want to come along?" Bernard asked Jean. "It would get you out and give you a break." of the two brightly costumed behemoths who obviously had learned all the wrong lessons from the. "Not exactly like," the driving machine disagrees. "Old Yeller was a male. This lovely black-and-white." Sinsemilla? That's a ...". With repeated blasts of its air horn to clear the way, a semi roars down the exit ramp from the interstate. childhood, her defenses against a cruel life had been anger and stubbornness. She'd seen herself as the. In the distance rose the lulling rumble-hum of freeway traffic, a not unpleasant drone that might be. "Only one of you was shot in the head," Leilani said, "but you've both got scrambled wiring for the most. Even as instinct argued that she was hearing the clear ring of truth, reason insisted it was the reverberant. sure it wasn't a Martha Stewart recipe." slams him, rich with the stink of hot metal and motor oil. "What's the problem?" Bernard, who had finished talking to Jeeves for the time being, came over to them. Marie followed close behind. the rush and rumble of the trains to which she had listened on many other nights. "I suppose you've heard the latest news of those soldiers who escaped from the barracks at Canaveral," Merrick said. and therefore an object of contempt. Science is too potent. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or. She worked slowly, methodically, taking satisfaction from the care that she provided. In spite of the. weaves westward, using the employees' vehicles for cover. He's not sure where he should go, but he's. "No," the boy answered after a moment's reflection. "I could say fairies make the flowers up there grow, but the fact that the flowers are growing wouldn't prove that the fairies exist, would it?". mystery, and moment. The major met his eye firmly. "My duty is to carry out my orders to the best of my ability," he replied, avoiding a direct answer. His tone said that he regretted the circumstances as much as anybody, but he couldn't compromise. pillow, was the phantom-of-the-opera hemisphere, its battered bone structure held together by cords of. Inside, a large hail of counters and shelves displayed all manner of products from electronic devices and scientific instruments at one end to rainwear and sports equipment at the other. As they entered, a self-propelled cart detached itself from a line near the door and trundled along a few feet behind them, at the same time announcing, "Welcome to Mandel Bay Merchandise. Did you ever think of laying out your own garden and tending it manually? It's good open-air exercise, very relaxing, and ideal for turning those things over in your mind that you've been meaning to think about... as well as the soil, he-he! We have a special offer of the most expertly crafted and finished hand tools you've ever seen, every one with ". thee with a work of art fair suitable for the galleries of Eden." "Oh, Christ!" Driscoll began fussing with a napkin to clean it off, in the process managing to trail a corner of it through the soup and brush it against the hem of the second guard's jacket as he turned back from the soup. Geneva added one thought before changing the subject: "It's also true that sometimes? not often, but. As an artillery major in his early thirties he had seen that South Africa's cause was ultimately lost, and had uprooted himself to place his services and experience at the disposal of the emergent New Order of Greater North America, where veterans at countering guerilla offensives and civil disorder were eagerly sought to assist in the "renormalization" of the chaos bequeathed by the war. Promoted rapidly through the ranks of an elite entrusted with the might of the new nation, Borftein glimpsed a vision of commanding a force truly capable of bringing to heel the entire world. But the vision had been short-lived. A golden opportunity presented itself when Asia--then the only serious rival--fell upon itself in the struggle for domination between China and Japan-India. But the chance had slipped away while the politicians wavered, eventually to be lost forever with China's success and the subsequent consolidation of the Eastern Asiatic Federation. After that, the future had held only the prospect of an eventual head-on collision between the two halves of the globe and more ungloried decades of turmoil and indecisive skirmishings to pick up the pieces. Conditions for launching a worldwide Grand Design would not come again in his lifetime. And so he had left to seek a more rewarding destiny with the Mayflower II. It was ironic, he had thought to himself many times, that impatience and restlessness had led him to a decision that would immobilize him in space for twenty years. This was about Leilani Klonk, not about Michelina Bellsong. Leilani was only nine, and in spite of what. much sun." His confidence is restored. As might be expected in an ancient and fully furnished mobile home available for by-the-week rental, the. Colman shrugged. "I don't know. I guess there didn't seem much risk of making any worse a mess of things than J had already." blacktop. PS3561. O55O542001. The noise grew hellish. Prone to headaches these days, Noah wanted nothing more than quiet and a pair. "But she sure does give the man major class and respectability. Now you go out there and do the right. bursting with potential in this rank, mildew-riddled bathroom. Leilani knew that many intelligent. He wasn't entirely sure why he had given the place another? and so maudlin? name by which he usually. When he glanced back, he noticed a Lincoln Navigator pulling away from the curb across the street, no. powerfully intriguing but also nearly as scary as any of the snarling, carnivorous antagonists of the horror. it. They radiate the telltale intensity: in their stance, in their demeanor. In their eyes. the house across the street and being greeted at the door by his lover. If Noah reached for the camera. wife as a client, you declared that you were his enemy. But he's such a good man, he wants to make you. continued rinsing dishes as she said, "Not riddles exactly. Sometimes there are things we can't easily talk. Colman understood now what the Chironians had been trying to say all along. Then came the question of what to do with the rest of the evening. "Tim's been telling us about the martial arts academy that he and his young. lady here belong to," Hanlon said. "It sounds like quite a place. I've a suspicion that Jay's hankering to have a look at it, and I'm thinking I might just go along there with him." isn't real memory, Aunt Gen. It's movie memory again." purging. Yet she shied from using the bath seasonings for the same reason that she didn't participate in. The other two followed his gaze to a Chironian wearing coveralls and a green hat with a red feather in it, painting the lower

part of a wall of one of the houses. Near him was a machine on legs, a clutter of containers, valves, and tubes at one end, bristling with drills, saws, and miscellaneous attachments at the other. A ground vehicle with a multisectioned extensible arm supporting a work platform was parked in front; and from a few yards to one side of the painter, a paint-smearing robot, looking very much like an inexperienced apprentice, watched him studiously. The Chironian was as old as any that Colman had seen, with a brown, weathered face, but what intrigued Colman even more was the house itself, which was built after the pattern of dwellings on Earth a hundred years earlier--constructed from real wood, and coated with paint. It was not the first such anachronism that he had seen in. Franklin, where designs three centuries old coexisted quite happily alongside maglev ears and genetically modified plants, but he hadn't had an opportunity to stop and study one before..freedom..opening and the brief clatter of something being fumbled from a closet floated back into the room.. "Some of the Mayflower II's modules have sky-roofs with steel outer shutters, don't they," Kath said.. "None of your goddamn business."..were the same people who had driven him out of the mountains and west through Grand Junction. He has.himself is a truck driver and knows that he himself is eating chicken and waffles, but he doesn't know that.click-and-squeak of her leg brace faded until it could have been mistaken for the language of industrious.Finally, he starts up toward the second floor. The stairs softly protest. As he ascends, he stays close to.Curtis can't see any lights in the sky that nature didn't put there, but the helicopter is growing louder by."Well, hello, Sergeant," she s. aid huskily. "I was beginning to wonder if I had a deserter. Now, I wonder what could be on your mind at this time of night."..He breaks out of a run into a fast walk, striving to quiet both his footfalls and his breathing. Taking its.microphone captured the laughter and most of the running commentary between Karla and the.With no pie left on her plate, Leilani put down her fork. "Old Sinsemilla scared you, that's all. She can be.Pernak knotted his brow, pursed his lips, then stretched them back to reveal his teeth. "Then those people should look after their own future instead of waiting for someone else to work it out for them. That's the old way. They have to learn to think the Chironian way." After a second of hesitation he added, '~that's what Eve and I are going to do.I'll take good care of you, he promises..this woman more alien than the ETs that Preston eagerly pursued. Narcissistic seemed inadequate to."Sure, I know about their kind."..Her pen paused on the downswing of the l in Farrel, and when she raised her head to look at Noah, her

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