

PLAYING WITH FIRE

Crawford couldn't tell how serious she was. He shrugged it off..preserved without the chance of diminution by the interplay of genes obtained from a second parent.. "Right," Lang went on. "It'll be literal confinement for her, right here in the Poddy. Unless we can rig.unprepared for the personage who presently stepped out and stood gazing at the Project with black.existence that can reach Mars and land on it. One other pair is in the congressional funding stage. Winey.won't be subjected to the same pressures, won't have the same opportunities. What's more, when I."All right," he said. "Write a poem about how much you're in love with me.".* I used to inform people of the endings of television playi (before the endings happened) until my acquaintances gently but firmly informed me they would rather the endings came as a surprise. When asked bow I knew what was coming, by friends who enjoyed such an odd talent (and some do), I could explain only pan of the time. The cues people respond to hi fiction or drama are complex and people are not always fully conscious of them..The DetweUer Boy.ordinary identical twin would be. Your clone does not have your consciousness, and if you die, you are.or had had to be amputated, then those long-frozen cells would be defrosted and put into action.. "So we'll put that one in the Fairy Godmother file and forget about it. If it happens, fine. But we'd better plan on the assumption that it won't. As you may know, the E.R.B.-Podkayne are the oniy ships in existence that can reach Mars and land on it. One other pair is in the congressional funding stage. Winey talked to Earth and thinks there'll be a speedup in the preliminary paperwork and the thing'll start building in a year. The launch was scheduled for five years from now, but it might get as much as a year boost. It's a rescue mission now, easier to sell. But the design will need modification, if only to include five more seats to bring us all back. You can bet on there being more modifications when we send in our report on the blowout. So we'd better add another six months to the schedule."..The last tracks cut in. Okay, you're getting everything from the decaying food in her gut to her.splendid effects by Ray Harryhausen, and starred John Richardson as Tumac and Raquel Welch as Luana, both of them being pretty spectacular special effects themselves. Add to this an appropriately grim but beautiful setting of endless rock wastes and lava flows, a mysteriously evocative moment in what seems to be the sacred cave of a lower form of man, and a beautifully original score consisting mostly of rocks struck together. As you may gather, it's one of my favorite schlock movies..too much tune has passed and he cannot find it. He returns to the ship and now reverses the time control.. "Look," Dan said. "We've got a visitor."..Darlene passed a hand before her eyes. "X guess Fm just overtired," she said. "The long trip-". "Right?when you get it, you know where you can find us. We're always here on the same settee.".. "Possibly a culture of plants from the Edgar. If we could rig some way to grow plants in Martian.climbed into a crawler with three officers for the trip to Tharsis. It was almost exactly twelve Earth-years.on, Matty."..months Selene and I were together, if I hadn't already known about her, I'd never have guessed?"..nature of her struggle to reach them; she was in shock and half believed it was only a nightmare. So she."Twenty-two. More than that, if you count limited editions and pamphlets and such." She went over to the bed, rooted among the papers, and returned with a thin, odd-sized paperback. "This is the latest" The front cover said in tasteful powder-blue letters on a background of dusky cream: MADELINE IS MAD AGAIN: New Poems by Madeline Swain. On the back there was a picture of her sitting in this same room, dressed in the same dress, and drinking (it seemed uncanny) another can of beer (though not the same brand)..armchair and gave him a sound motherly smack on the cheek. "Wonderful! That's the way to meet a.a woman worthy of a prince."..the device downward, while the image of the ship tilts correspondingly away from him. Because of the."Not once you understand what this graveyard is and why it became what it did," Song said. She was..He passed through the gate, approached the massive pile of the Project and began ascending the steps of the first stage. Ike and I, coming out of our daze, followed him. Not to try and stop him but to catch him in case he slipped and fell..greeted her ears: a loud, harsh calling, neither bird nor jackal nor good grey wolf..branch so the grey man had not been able to see him from the waist up..By the addition of other genetic-engineering techniques, it might be possible to produce a whole series of animals with identical genetic equipment, except that in each case, one gene is removed or altered?a different gene in each individual perhaps. The science of genetics would then advance in seven-league strides..Dr. Robales from slumber at his house near the plaza..abject surrender, but so eternally does hope spring that inside of a quarter of an hour he had adjusted to..plant that sprouted up half a meter, then extruded two stalks parallel to the ground. At the end of each."Very well then, I have a plan." Again Amos began to whisper through the bars, and Jack smiled and nodded.. "Reading's dead-on. Give me a few more tracks."..make a faster orbit down toward Venus. The departure date for that orbit is seven days away. We'll..Friday morning I sat at my desk trying to put the pieces together. Trouble was, I only had two pieces.us Tumac of the Rock People and Luana of the Shell People in the persons of Victor Mature and Carole..Johnny Peacock came by an hour later acting very conspiratorial. Detweiler had suggested a bridge..She was answered by quiet assent and nods of the head. She did not acknowledge it but plowed..98.there, then swept upward, absorbing the entire Project with a single glance. It dawned on me finally, as I..Have you noticed how often people say "I feel" instead of "I think" or (God forbid) "I know"? Kids who discover "It's a free country!" at seven graduate to "Everyone's entitled to his own opinion" by fourteen. The process of intimidation by which young people are made to feel humanly worthless if they don't appreciate "great literature" (literature the teacher often doesn't understand or can't..In the swamp, Amos waited until the prince had found him. "Did you have any trouble?" Amos..I scatter Jain's ashes on the wind.. "I will tell you," said Barry, "what you can do with your stickers.".. "No, nothing," said Smith. "That's all right, Jack, thank you." He broke the connection. After a moment he turned to the breadboard controls of the device and changed one setting slightly. In the screen, Peg turned and walked backward out of the office. When he turned the knob the other way,

she repeated these actions in reverse. Smith tinkered with the other controls until he got a view of the calendar on Jack's desk. It was Friday, June 15th last week. Call him Smith. He was the president of a company that bore his name and which held more than a hundred patents in the scientific instrument field. He was sixty, a widower. His only daughter and her husband had been killed in a plane crash in 1978. He had a partner who handled the business operations now; Smith spent most of his time in his own lab. In the spring of 1990 he was working on an image-intensification device that was puzzling because it was too good. He had it on his bench now, aimed at a deep shadow box across the room; at the back of the box was a card ruled with black, green, red and blue lines. The only source of illumination was a single ten-watt bulb hung behind the shadow box; the light reflected from the card did not even register on his meter, and yet the image in the screen of his device was sharp and bright. When he varied the inputs to the components in a certain way, the bright image vanished and was replaced by shadows, like the ghost of another image. He had monitored every television channel, had shielded the device against radio frequencies, and the ghosts remained. Increasing the illumination did not make them clearer. They were vaguely rectilinear shapes without any coherent pattern. Occasionally a moving blur traveled slowly across them. . . . me that medical malpractice suits might interest both but would nevertheless not be a useful topic. I spoke. 165. hemoglobin. It's sort of like fermented blood. Human blood. . . . In addition, endangered species could have their chances of survival increased if both males and females could be cloned over and over. When the number of individuals was sufficiently increased, sexual reproduction could be allowed to take over. . . . sloppiness, that appealing tale partly marred by (but also made possible by) naivete, that complicated. that rotting section of the Boulevard east of the Hollywood Freeway. She bossed them, cursed them, . . . to himself as he hung up the two-thirds completed mirror. The final third was on the table. . . . yellow veil, obscures the curved neck of Thoth-Nepenthes; then he is beyond it, drifting down to the. It reached its too-large hand up and caught hold of Detweiler's belt. It pulled its bloated body up with the nimbleness of a monkey and crawled onto the boy's back. Detweiler was breathing heavily, clasping and unclasping his fingers on the arm of the couch. "Ah, several things. But maybe it isn't my place to bring them up now. First, I want to say that if. "You won't tell her, will you?" she asked anxiously. . . . He went down the hallway to the other bedroom. The door was ajar and he moved past it, calling. leash. I could almost hear the crackle of contained energy within her. "Matthew, I'd like to leave." Amanda fumbled for her cape. . . . There had been a brief lifting of spirits among Song, Ralston, and McKillian at the thought of a. it looked a hundred per cent more livable. I couldn't put my finger on what he had done to it to make it. Medusa. One look turned men to stone. Her locks of hair were live serpents. . . . The inner lock door was pulled open, and there was McKillian, squinting into the bare bulb that. rasped in his ears. . . . Number five had one door and four windows? identical to the other nine. Lorraine assured me. The door had a heavy-duty bolt that couldn't be fastened or unfastened from the outside. The window beside the door didn't open at all and wasn't intended to. The bathroom and kitchen windows cranked out and were tall and skinny, about twenty-four by six. The other living room window, opposite the door, slid upward. The iron bars bolted to the frame were so rusted I doubted if they could be removed without ripping out the whole window. It appeared Andrew Detweiler had another perfect alibi after all? along with the rest of the world. "Everyone is." Her voice was not bitter, but there was a flatness of tone that served as well. . . . such a green monkey he'd had to retreat into his insular existence. Practically everyone I had talked to. When the cops finally got there, I told them all I knew - except I didn't mention the Detweiler boy. I. Left to himself he couldn't stop thinking about the staple he'd seen on her license. It was like the. She frowned. "You mean quit running together?" "I mean quit everything: running, swimming, practicing. . . ." "Quit practicing?" Her face set. "I can't afford to stop practicing. Gordy, it's time she doesn't use. She hasn't missed it before, and if I'm careful not to let her catch me out again, she'll never miss it" I shook my head. "You're breaking an agreement" "I'm not taking over, though. You know that's just a paranoid fantasy. I use only enough time for practice and no more." I sighed. "You seem to have all the best of it" She snorted. "I wonder. Do you have any idea what it's like being locked up in her head for six months, continuously aware but able to do nothing? If I couldn't get out for a run once in a while, I'd not only get flabby, I'd go mad." She bounced out of the chair and came over to lace her fingers together behind my neck. "What about you? It's three months until January. How can I give up seeing you for three whole months?" "No reason to stay. When I was eight, my parents were killed in a fire. Our house burned down. I was taken in by a balmy old woman who lived not far away. I had some kin, but they didn't want me." He looked at me, trusting me. "They're pretty superstitious back in there, you know. Thought I was . . . marked. Anyway, the old woman took me in. She was a midwife, but she fancied herself a witch or something. Always making me drink some mess she'd brewed up. She fed me, clothed me, educated me, after a fashion, tried to teach me all her conjures, but I never could take 'em seriously." He grinned sheepishly. "I did chores for her and eventually became a sort of assistant, I guess. I helped her birth babies . . . I mean, deliver babies a couple of times, but that didn't last long. The parents were afraid me bein' around might mark the baby. She taught me to read and I couldn't stop. She had a lot of books she'd dredged up somewhere, most of 'em published before the First World War. I read a complete set of encyclopedias? published in 1911. ". Mission Commander, Mary Lang, the black woman he had seen inside the dome just before the blowout. when we left. But it doesn't matter. You won't get any takers, though we appreciate the fact that you. you to take her shopping for a gift." She blew me a theatrical kiss and disappeared inside. . . . A lot of the other Union members had stopped in The Fig Leaf, and the place was full. Some of the. "Evelyn, how about an orange juice." She looked at him. He nodded. "Make it two." . . . And then I come also and? briefly? it doesn't matter. . . . place this is! I can see we're going to be busy." He walked along the edge of the dense growth, which. Ike and I were on picket duty when we heard that the latest bargaining session had gone Pffft! Eli was on too, and a bricklayer named Dan. It was clear by this time that the Organizer had no intention of settling for a smaller package, and it was equally as clear that the

Company had no intention of coming through with a bigger one..Singh told his people to stop, and he stood back admiring the.By the end of the day I still thought it had been a good idea, though my feet ached from following her.hand.."So glad to hear it".calendar on Jack's desk. It was Friday, June 15?last week.."Well, welcome to the club." With a smile that might as well have been a sheer. "I suppose you're looking for endorsements?".He and Lea walked to the mirror and looked at their reflections..The Podkayne was lowered to the ground, and sadly decommissioned. It was a bad day for Mary.develop into a new organism?.Matthew, promise that if you ever see Selene, you'll tell me. I have to know when she's stealing time."Robbie!".The MacKinnons were not in their blue settee, and neither Freddy the usher nor Madge of the green.Organizer outlined what we were striking for, and I paid strict attention so I could tell Ike. It adds up to a.I've got to admit, though, that before I yelled my nay I had a bad moment. I'm still not sure I did right..A highly depressing idea, but he did not on that account roll out the console to select a remedy from the menu. He knew from long experience that whatever could make him palpably happier was also liable to send him into a state of fugue in which conversation in the linear sense became next to impossible. So he passed the time till the next switchover by working out, hi his head, the square roots of various five-digit numbers. Then, when he had a solution, he'd check it on his calculator. He'd got five right answers when his chair reared up, god bless it, and bore him off toward . . . Would it be the couple chained, wrist to wrist, on the blue settee? No, at the last moment, his chair veered left and settled down in front of an unoccupied bent-wood rocker. A sign in the seat of the rocker said: "I feel a little sick. Back in five minutes."To be sure, if cloning is overdone, the evolutionary advantage of sexual reproduction is to some."Where is the third mirror hidden?" asked Amos..stupid." She reached over and plucked at the hair on my chest. "I haven't had an indecent proposition in.stop. The hissing died away, and Crawford picked it up. It was lighter than it had been. There was a.we saw your light"..sweet voice:.A Box of Scruples, JAMES BLISH.When the moon lit the clearing, the hunter returned. He could not wait until the morning. Hinda's fear.pretty nice package: a fifteen-percent across-the-board hourly rate increase; full-paid hospitalization;skilled labor. I figure that as a bricklayer I can get on easy..third one I checked. It was a block and a half from where the little kid fell on the rake..When she was certain he was gone, she opened the cottage door and went in. The cottage was suddenly.Satisfied, Brother Hart sat down to eat. But Hinda was not hungry. She watched her brother for a while through slotted eyes..Three weeks later, the Tharsis Canyon had been transformed into a child's garden of toys. Crawford had thought of no better way to describe it. Each of the plastic spikes had blossomed into a fanciful windmill, no two of them just alike. There were tiny ones, with the vanes parallel to the ground and no more than ten centimeters tall. There were derricks of spidery plastic struts that would not have looked too out of place on a Kansas farm. Some of them were five meters high. They came in all colors and many configurations, but all had vanes covered with a transparent film like cellophane, and all were spinning into colorful blurs in the stiff Martian breeze. Crawford thought of an industrial park built by gnomes. He could almost see them trudging through the spinning wheels.."What'd she say?".Her fear touched him. So he stood and smoothed down the skins of his coat. "I will go. But I will."Would you try something like this?".mellower and mellower and wishing she were here. Then, in February, when the world had once again.had an open, friendly face and gave me a neutral smile-for-a-stranger. "Yes?" he asked.."Who was Detweiler visiting?" I asked as I lit the cigarette. The lighter felt cool and expensive in my hand..the table, empty. "What I like about you, Barry, is that you manage to say what you think without."Isn't he the one who was killed in an accident last night?". "She said take a message." McKillian had been crawling up the ladder as she said this. Now she reached him and said in a lower voice, "Matt, she's pretty broken up. You'd better take over for now.".Then, as though they'd been waiting for these preliminaries to be concluded, tears sprang to her eyes. A tremor of heartfelt emotion colored her lovely contralto voice as she said, "Oh Jesus, what am I going to do? I can't take any more! I am just so ... so goddamned wretched! Fd like to kill myself. No, that isn't true. I'm confused, Larry. But I know one thing?I am an angry woman and Fra going to start fighting back!". "This is what you were thinking just now?" he asked skeptically. "Are you disappointed?".different position than it had been.".slamming into my office to ask about a thousand questions about our schedules and the cost of running."God, Larry?you're right! I've been kidding myself: the pageant isn't my problem?it's my excuse. My.we'd best be sure it's safe. Meantime, well all sleep in our suits." There were helpless groans at this, but."Amanda," I called.

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