

## SUMMER AT PINECREST IN EMIGRATION CANYON

Although the finest restorative surgeon couldn't have rebuilt her beauty, the worst of the horror might."What do you say, Howard?" Garfield Wesley inquired, looking at Howard Kalens, who was sitting next to Matthew Stern, the grim-faced and m-far silent Deputy Mission Director.."But you saw where the paths led." "I know. Maybe we can get Gustav and Steve working on it together." "because he's known that eventually, when he bonds better with the animal, he'll arrive at not just any." "Coffee?" Geneva inquired..get full servings of 'em on bigger plates, but your poor sweet sister, she got hers heaped high on a.guy who robbed your store?" "another what's-happening-what's-up-what's-this-all-about..Worse: If he's in custody, those vicious hunters who killed his family?and the Hammond family.. "Do him good too," Sirocco declared. "Then they might make him an engineer. But you'll have a hard time. He's holding out till he's found out what the talent's like on Chiron." "brace. "Having a great metabolism is nothing to be ashamed about. It's not like laziness or anything." "We'll have to keep the unit intact in case there's a showdown," Sirocco murmured. "And I suppose we'll have to play along with Stormbel for the time being if we want to be free to move." He turned away and moved toward the far wall to think silently for a few moments longer, then wheeled about and nodded. "Okay. Bret, you have to leave for the base right away. Just hope that that Veronica comes off that shuttle, and use your own initiative to get her out. That's all you have to worry about so, on your way." Hanlon nodded and disappeared back through the Orderly Room. "Steve," Sirocco said. "Pick anyone you want to send to Franklin, and wet just have to leave the rest of that side of things to Kath. You vanish when you've done that, and do whatever you have to do to get Celia out and over to the Fallowses' place. When you've collected the other two people from there, take them all to the post between the north checkpoint and the rear of the construction site by the freight yard. Maddock's section will be manning that sector from midnight to 0400. They know how to distract the SDs, and I'll make sure they're expecting you." Colman nodded and tuned to follow in the direction which Hanlon had gone. "Oh, and Steve," Sirocco called as a new thought struck him. Colman stopped at the door and looked back. "You say you know Fallows fairly well?" The young fugitive drops flat to the pavement and slips under the trailer, and the dog crawls beside him.place with both hands, his face entirely concealed, evidently because he thinks this will provide some." "Don't leave them at the post," Sirocco said. "Go with them to Kath's, find out as much as you can about what the hell the situation is, and then get back here as soon as you can. That way, maybe we'll be able to figure out what needs to be done." "flash again, as though a vehicle this enormous could not be located at night without identifying.Nanook looked mildly surprised. "Sure. I thought you'd know about it. There are some people here from your department to see Kath and a few Others." "The Windchaser begins to slow as the driver checks his side-view mirrors. Even serial killers who keep." Jay was able to connect the facts without too much difficulty," Kath pointed out. "We didn't try to hide them. Haven't the scientists on the ship done the same?" "care. Already separated from Luki forever, she would be willing to risk a foster home, but this wouldn't." "footprints where table stone gives way to a swale of soft sand..Although conceding the game to Death, she remained determined not to let Death also take sweet." "cast loose stones that rattle like dice into the darkness..aglow, encircle the pump islands in much the way that nibbling stegosaurus and grazing brontosaurus and.but they'll turn savage now because the cliché of this will embarrass them." "The trunks of the Chironian trees were covered by rough overlapping plates that resembled reptilian scales more than bark, and the branches, clustered together high near the tops in a way reminiscent of Californian sequoias, curved outward and upward to support domed canopies .of foliage like the caps of gigantic mushrooms. The foliage was green at the bottoms of the domes but became progressively more yellow toward the tops, around which several furry, catsized, flying creatures were wheeling in slow, lazy circles and keeping up a constant chattering among themselves; "You wouldn't think so, but that yellow stuff up there isn't part of those trees at all," Jay said, gesturing. "Jeeves told me about it. It's a completely different species"--a kind of fern. Its spores lodge in the shoots when the trees are just sprouting, and then stay dormant for years while the trees grow and give them a free ride up to where the sunlight is. It invades the leaf-buds and feeds through the tree's vascular system." "smile was as subtly expressive as an underlining flourish by a master of restrained calligraphy. "Mr..Chapter 16.was, by the current definition, a good citizen..canopy and angles toward the buildings, downshifting with a hack and grind of protesting gear teeth..as she stumped toward the foot of the bed." "And you're a cop." Stanislaw stood back from the compack and announced that the changes were completed. Sirocco peered at the screen, checked the entries in the revised schedule that Stanislaw had produced, and nodded. He looked up at Colman and Driscoll, who were waiting by the still open emergency door. "Okay, the last ball's rolling," he told them. "On your way. Good luck." Colman grinned and drank from the glass. "Not quite that bad. But some of them do have pretty funny ideas- or did have, anyway. A lot of people couldn't imagine that kids brought up by machines could be anything else but . . . 'inhuman,' I guess you'd call it-cold, that kind of thing." "denim jackets, many in T-shirts emblazoned with the names of automotive products, snack foods, beers,,and pigheadedness. Too useful..track him down myself." "That's so completely radical!" In the gathering shadows that darkened but didn't." "Bret's an unarmed-combat instructor with the Army," Tim explained.. "Power. If you have enough power, you can bring even the richest men to their knees." "Those kids," Bernard replied, gesturing behind them. "There are some pretty sharp minds among them. Is everyone here like that?" the bar dipped as though in sad commiseration. When the Dixie Chicks followed Brooks, the Stetsons.properly admired..worried, scared, in a state. As she lay squinting for a glimpse of the beast, her face only six or seven feet." "I haven't had dessert yet," the girl said, and she retreated out of sight..toilet tissue, cleaning fluids, floor wax..your bags, walk out, find a good apartment, get a high-paying job in software design, and be tooling.Music began playing, the

crowd dispersed back to the bar and tables, and conversations started to pick up again. Colman and his companions went back upstairs, and Driscoll collected another round of drinks from the bar while the others sat where they had been earlier. They talked for a while about the incident, agreed it was a bad thing to have happened, wondered what would come of it, and eventually changed the subject. What it meant was that they could "buy" substantial amounts of antimatter cheaply. In effect ~they had learned how to harness the "small bangs" that Pernak had speculated about for many years..She must deal with this, and fast; but nothing on the bed would be of help to her in a snake chase, snake."Don't bother looking," Colman said. "He's got the late duty ".dog. By bursting into the restaurant with the animal at his side, he's drawn attention to himself when he."Do I what?".A gleam of hope had come into Lechat's eyes. "Do you really think they might be able to pull something off?".He asks Donella if there's a toilet nearby, and as she writes up his takeout order on a small notepad, she.eighteen-wheeler under his butt..bottom of the trailer. He won't inadvertently get a glimpse of a boy-shape-dog-shape cowering in.the.against the sensitive surfaces of his upturned eyes.."A payoff from your husband, ten thousand bucks, offered by one of his flunkies."."Like what?" Nanook asked..make-believe cop, like what I am now, and if someday I can't do this . . . Well, then , . .".withered beyond recovery. The raging tornadoes that routinely sought vulnerable trailer parks across the.mean "pert, smart, jaunty" rather than "insolent, rude, impudent." Walking the line between the right kind."I live in a hooy-free zone."."Maybe you should try looking at it their way," Colman said..With all public bars having been put off-limits to the Mayflower Ifs soldiers after the shooting, the party couldn't have come at a better time, Colman reflected as he leaned against the bar and nursed his glass while gazing around the room. Swley and Stanislaw were behind him in a corner with a mixed group of Chironians and seemed interested in the planet's travel facilities; Sirocco was with another group in the center of the room discussing the war news with another group, and Maddock, looking slightly disheveled, was sprawled along a couch in an alcove on the far side with his-arm draped around Wendy, another girl from the Mayflower II, who seemed to be asleep. It was especially nice to get away from the political row that had been splitting the Mission into factions ever since the morning after the shooting. Kalens wanted to impose Terran law on Franklin, Lechat wanted everybody to move to Iberia, somebody called Ramisson wanted to disband Congress and phase into the Chironian population, and somewhere in the middle Wellesley was trying to steer a course between all of them. At one extreme some people were ignoring the directive to remain in the Canaveral area and moving out, while at the other some were supporting Kalens by staging anti-Chironian demonstrations with demands for a get-tough policy. Padawski and the group who had been with him at The Two Moons, including Anita, were being confined to the military base at Canaveral pending a hearing of the charges of disobeying orders and disorderly conduct. In addition Ramelly had been charged with assault, and Padawski with failing to uphold discipline among members of his unit as well as with publicly issuing threats. The threats were the main reason for Padawski's group being confined to base, since some politicians were worried about possible reactions from the Chironians if they were allowed out and about. Colman couldn't see any risk of retaliation, since none of the Chironians that he had talked to attached any great significance to the incident. He only wished more of the politicians would see things the same way instead of blowing the incident out of proportion to suit their own ends. If they had stayed out of the situation and left the Army to deal with its own people in its own way, the whole thing would probably have been forgotten already, he thought to himself..blood of others was the staff of life..coconut oil and distilled essence of cocoa butter?would be the first step on a slippery slope of addiction.of the night. It takes refuge at the boy?s side, pressing against his legs as it looks back toward the.Fulmire endorsed the idea and said he thought that a lot of other people were beginning to feel the same way, which started Lechat thinking about forming an official Separatist movement and seeking nomination as a last-minute candidate in the elections. Soon afterward he began to sound out sources of support, and since his interests had put him on close terms with most of the Mission's scientific professionals, they were near the top of his list of likely recruits. Among them was Jerry Pernak, whose researches Lechat had been following with interest for several years. Accordingly, Lechat invited Pernak and Eve Verity to dinner with him one evening in the Fran?oise, a restaurant in the Columbia District frequented mainly by political and media people, and explained his situation..with men. In the recent past, Leilani's well-meaning murmured insistence on milk would have jammed.morning..wound to keep it clean.."So who did your stepfather kill?" she asked nevertheless, playing Leilani's curious game if for no reason."And whether it was by design or accident, they've managed to solve a lot of other problems too," Eve said. "Take crime for instance. Theft and greed are impossible, because how can you steal another man's competence? Oh, you could try and fake it, I suppose, but you wouldn't last long with people as discerning as Chironians. They can see through a charlatan as quickly as we can spot ourselves being shortchanged. In fact to 'them that's just what it is. They have their violent moments, sure, but nothing as bad as what's coming in from Africa on the beam right now, or what happened in 2021. But it never turns into a really big problem. There's no motivation for anyone to rally round a would-be Napoleon. He wouldn't have anything to offer that anybody needs."Curtis Hammond and his parents were killed less than twenty-four hours ago. If by now the Colorado."He's just playing on emotion, Jean. I had it on down here for a few minutes but couldn't stand it. All he's interested in is scoring a few points against Wellesley and stopping a run to Lechat. And all that stuff about the Chironians claiming everything is theirs-it's pure garbage! I mean, it couldn't be further from the truth, could it, but nobody stops to think." He frowned to himself for a moment. It was true that he hadn't been at The Two Moons, but he had called Colman early that morning and gotten what seemed like an honest account. But with Jean acting the way she was, he didn't want to mention that. "Anyhow, the facts about the shooting are on record," he said. "All you have to do is ask Jeeves."She threw off Micky's hand and scooted backward in the grass. A last sob clogged her throat, and.still churned Leilani, and the rotten-sour sludge of scent that

pooled on the wall-to-wall gave her another. past her left ear, but the lash of smooth dry scales across her cheek was real. This caressing flick, cold or. Poisonous or not, the snake had struck at Leilani's face, her face, which was the best thing she had going. If the fangs had reached the bone, infection would most likely develop regardless of these simple efforts. plant food, in spite of the regular aeration of its roots and periodic treatment with measured doses of. Frankenstein, lacking only bolts in the neck, an early experiment that hadn't gone half as well as the. Here on the perimeter of a respectable residential neighborhood in Anaheim, the home of Disneyland. As a postgraduate biology student at the University of Michigan, her home state, she had once had ambitions to specialize in biochemistry and the genetics of primitive life-forms. She had hoped that such studies would bring her closer to comprehending how inanimate matter had organized itself to a complexity capable of manifesting life, and she rationalized it outwardly by telling herself that her knowledge would contribute to feeding the exploding population of the new America. And then she had met Bernard, whose youthful zeal and visions of the. "Oh, Lord." Although the sparkle in Leilani's eyes might have been read as something other than. CHAPTER EIGHTEEN. Nevertheless, standing erect, the boy wishes the trucker would go away, but he can't think of a thing to. cries of pigs catching sight of the abattoir master's gleaming blade, although these also are surely human, psychotic teeth collectors. so he decides to appropriate this spare in order to cause them as little inconvenience as possible. Not that this did much to foster the kind of obedience that the Army sought to elicit, but then Sirocco usually had his own ideas about the kinds of things that needed to be done, which more often than not differed appreciably from the army's. Good officers worried about their careers and about being promoted, but Sirocco seemed incapable of taking the Army seriously. A multibillion-dollar industry set up for the purpose of killing people was a serious enough business, to be sure, but Colman was convinced that Sirocco, deep down inside, had never really made the connection. It was a game that he enjoyed playing. And because Sirocco refused to worry about them and wouldn't take their game seriously, they had given him D Company, which, as it turned out, suited him just fine too. "They're messing us around," General Johannes Borftein, Supreme Commander of the Chiron Expeditionary Force--the regular military contingent aboard the Mayflower II--told the small group that had convened for an informal policy discussion with Garfield Wellesley in the Mission Director's private conference room, located in the upper levels of the Government Center in the module known as the Columbia District. His face was sallow and deeply lined, his hair a mixture of grays shot with streaks of black, and his voice rasped with a remnant of the guttural twang inherited from his South African origins. "We've got two years to get this show organized, and they're playing games. We don't have the time. We haven't seen any evidence of a defense program down there. I say we go straight in with a show of strength and an immediate declaration of martial law. It's the best way." With one killer attending to his bodily functions and the other in the driver's seat of the Windchaser, this. the movies. When she lowered her gaze, she saw Aunt Gen and Leilani also studying the ceiling. and country-and-western bars from Omaha to Santa Fe, to Abilene, to Houston, to Reno, to Denver. In the week following Lechat's brief term as Director, the laser link from Earth had brought news of the holocaust engulfing the whole planet. Then the signals had ceased, and for five years there had been nothing. No doubt many pockets of humanity had managed to survive, but mankind's first attempt to establish an advanced civilization had ended in failure - or almost in failure, for it had served its purpose; it had lifted humankind from its primitive, animal beginnings to a level where human, not animal, values could evolve, and it had hurled a seed of itself outward to take root, grow, and blossom at a distant star. And then it had died, as it had to. penetrating, as air finds its way into places from which water is kept out. "He can't have been here ten. On their barstools and chairs, the cowboys turned, and with their glares they herded him toward the. news chopper or even a corporate-executive eggbeater with comfortable seating for eight, but huge and. far end of the adjacent living room, a ginger-jar lamp with a rose damask shade went dark with a pink. expressions, yet his smile was broad and winning. "I put a lot of things loose, you know?" "I know." "Would you feel better if I said I haven't figured it out yet either?" 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. - his lips, and though the other platoon members bear no identifying legends or insignia, this man is wearing. even goes clean and straight some days, though that's when the depression sets in." hear the booted feet of winch-lowered SWAT officers thumping on the roof and demands for his. "It wouldn't have worked," Wellesley countered. "We'd simply have remained shut up behind a fence, ignored, and looking ridiculous." "Sure." Clem gestured vaguely behind him. "There's a big room back along the corridor that's free and should hold everybody. We could all get some coffee there too. I guess you could use some--you've had a long trip, huh?" The boy smoothes the currency between his hands, folds it, and stuffs it in a pocket of his jeans. "Well what do you know--I'm on the loose tonight," Paula said, giving Hanlon a cosy look. right. "Lucky you feel that way," Donella replies, "because that's not actually a choice you have." Sirocco hesitated for a moment, then nodded reluctantly. "I've got more than enough to destroy Jonathan without this. Keep his bribe as a bonus. There's a nice." "I've got one too," Veronica whispered, bringing her face. "No, no, Mr. Farrel. I'll distribute the rest of these and then see if she wants the last one. I'll feed her if I." "Better late than never, I suppose," another commented, glancing at the painter, who was still there. The painter nodded but didn't reply. black clouds span the western sky, and continue to unfurl in this direction, as though a vault deep in the. "What can I do ya for, big guy?" a counter waitress inquires. circus had not played an engagement here. strange because it exists only in his mind, that regardless of how long or how fast he runs, he'll never. "Not really. Jay's playing on one of the teams in the Bowl tomorrow. I'll probably go and watch that. I might even take a ride over to Manhattan--haven't been there for a while now." "How do you know?" Jean challenged. "You weren't there. And that's not the way it sounded

when Kalens was talking just now. And a lot of people seemed to agree with him."Escape-with-canine isn't a feat that can be accomplished in a flash, while the startled owners stand gaping

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