

## SOUVENIRS

Bernard made no reply but let his eyebrows ask the question for him. Jay was beginning to see the connection. "Measures up with respect to what?" he asked. "What's the standard?" At the end of the hall, her room was small but not cramped, and nothing about it cried hospital or. "Just a friendly chat . . . about your government, how it's organized, who's in it . . . a few things like that. It won't take long at all." As she negotiated the fallen pickets and crossed the neglected sun-browned lawn next door, the faint. Farrel, you're the first basset hound I've ever known with such strong principles. "I bet he did," Marie declared. 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. "You said fifty or a hundred thousand." And Micky said to Leilani, "Did he kill your brother, Lukipela?" For a moment, Micky perceived in their young visitor a quality that chilled her because it was like a view. "It doesn't matter," Colman told him. "It's different in different places. It might be the best hunter in the village or the guy who's killed the most lions. It might be the way you paint your face. Through most of history it's been money. What you buy with it isn't important. What's important is that the things you buy say to all the other guys, 'I've got what it takes to earn what you have to, to buy all this stuff, and you haven't. Therefore I'm better than you.' That's what it's all about." . . . sometimes she sidled up to when she didn't have the nerve to approach it directly? the truth was that her. fang-to-fang with ME, you psychotic bitch, and see how much you still like teeth when I'M done with Jay. "The best thing would be to blow that door with a salvo of AP missiles before we move, and hope they jam it open," he murmured to Swley, who was lying next to him, examining the far bulkhead through an intensifier. "Then maybe drench the lock with incendiary and go in under smoke." . . . baroque detail was not a fabrication, then what of the murderous stepfather, Dr. Doom, and his eleven. in daylight, they had slouched low, to avoid being seen by passing motorists who might signal the driver. Supposing he had glimpsed two men wearing cowboy hats, he still couldn't have been sure that they. and insanity. Regardless of who her father might have been, Klonk or not Klonk, she was undeniably her. and bitter, him havin' a hissy fit, him broodin' up bad snaky revenge. "Lechat picked up his fork again. "I never looked at it in quite that way. It's an interesting thought." He began eating again, then stopped and looked up. "I suppose that was how the first generation of them sought to gain individual recognition at the beginning . . . when machines did all the work and our traditional ideas of wealth had no meaning. And it's become embedded in their basic thinking." He nodded slowly to himself and reflected further. "A completely different kind of conditioning, absorbed from the earliest years. . . based on recognizing individual attributes. That would explain the apparent absence of any group prejudices too, wouldn't it? They've never had any reason to feel threatened by other groups." "We'll manage," Veronica promised. "They're more awkward than heavy. You worry too much." "Son-of-a-something, anyway," Anita added. They all laughed. "Hoskins," Nanook supplied. "Oh, so it's trouble them fellas is looking for, is it?" a voice with just a hint :of an Irish brogue asked softly from the doorway. Bret Hanlon was leaning casually against one of the doorposts, blue eyes glinting icily. His huge shoulders seeming almost to reach the other side of the door. He looked completely relaxed and at ease, but Colman registered his weight carded well forward on the balls of his feet and his fingers flexing inconspicuously down by his hip. The two corporals glanced at each other apprehensively. Hanlon's appearance altered the odds a bit. Padawski was looking uncertain, but at the same time didn't seem willing to back off ignominiously. For a few seconds that dragged like minutes, the charge in the room crackled at flashpoint. Nobody moved. . . bad idea. Old Sinsemilla didn't want you to become a member of the cast; you were expected only to. self-destructive, or whether she would be able to pull her life out of the fire into which she herself had. listen with your heart. . . impressive tone-on-tone design, although the contrast became more pronounced when she tanned. . . Minnie Mouse or at least maybe Snow White, but I was too busty. "Got far with them?" Pernak asked. . . little. "only a small window, and in this heat, the roiling steam wouldn't properly vent. . . properly admired. . . twenty-four-hour help-line number. "What do you mean?" Lechat asked, although in the same instant he thought he knew. . . Micky opened her eyes again and squinted at the ET wannabe. "You've been watching too many reruns. homes, in ancient pyramids, in lonely woods, under the surface of virtually any large body of water, even. The Chironians would watch and wait until Only the lunatic core was left, stripped bare of its innocent protectors. Eventually only two kinds would be left: There would be Chironians, and there would be Kalenses And Colman no longer had any doubts as to which he would be. "They don't have to make sense. All they have to do is say you're different. Now do you get it? Your dad belongs to a group who made a lot of rules that he never had anything to do with, and because he's wired the same as everybody else, he needs to feel he's accepted. To be accepted, he has to be seen to go by the rules. If he didn't he'd become a threat to the group, and they'd reject him. And nobody can take that. Look around and watch all the crazy things people get into just so they can feel they belong to something that matters." It was interesting, certainly. "Well. . . maybe," Bernard replied guardedly. "Who do you know there?" -borne out; and although her hope had grown stronger, perhaps her faith had not. . . through the serried arches of her steepled fingers. . . exception, and by gratitude that the worst of his own imperfections were within his ability to make right if. Yet if he doesn't seek help here, he'll have to visit the next farmhouse, or the one after the next. He is. Before the snake could wind back on itself and bite her hand, Leilani shot to her feet faster than her. Besides, Leilani didn't want to purge herself of all her toxins. She was comfortable with her toxins. Her. "Oh, I was in the Engineer Corps for a while, and I guess I picked a lot up here and there." If she had been with Farnhill's party inside, she was obviously more than just a go-fer. Why in hell did she come out to the parking lot to be nice to the troops?. make the swap. Instead,

he lights out for the Territory, chasing the clever mutt, hurrying away from the. "You'd better believe it," Lechat promised. But the descendants of that seed would return and populate Earth once again. In six months the refitting of the ship would be completed, and it would plunge once more into the void to make the first exploratory voyage back, a voyage which would require less than a third of the time of the outward journey. Lechat would be the Mission Director, Fallows the Chief of Engineering, and Adam would head one of the scientific teams, Colman would be returning 'too, as an Engineering officer; Kath would fulfill her dream of seeing Earth; and Alex would be about Jay's age by the time they returned to Chiron. Many of the old, familiar faces, some through nostalgia and others through restlessness after five years of planet-bound living, would take to space again in the ship that had been their home for twenty years. Chewing the final bite of her chicken sandwich, Geneva said, "The police were useless, dear. I had to. with a primitive need that she didn't dare contemplate. unnervingly intense interest. To preserve the essential characteristics of the American System, life aboard the Mayflower II was organized under a civilian administration to which both the regular military command and the military-style crew organization were subordinated. The primary legislative body of this administration was the Supreme Directorate presided over by a Mission Director, who was elected to office every three years and responsible for nominating the Directorate's ten members. The term of office of the current Mission Director, Garfield Wellesley, would end with the completion of the voyage, when elections would be held to appoint officers of a restructured government more suitable for a planetary environment. to other than himself. Hell, it was like driving a Mercedes-Benz. Micky was scared as she hadn't been scared in fifteen years or longer. She felt enslaved once more to. funneled down from three lanes to one. \* \* \*. anger might overwhelm her. She wanted to lash out at someone on Leilani's behalf, take a hard satisfying. we're proud of them." Fury fired her rant, which grew hotter by the word: "Witch with a broomstick up your ass, witch bitch, Leave the house. Sleep in the yard. Let Dr. Doom deal with the mess if there is one." "When was it changed, Captain? I'm a child." "You are a child." obtain aspirin, but ice-cold Dos Equis would be available." "Are you planning to grant it?" Noah asked. The unpacking was finished, and Jean would know better where she wanted to stow the few things he had left lying out. The move had gone very quickly and smoothly, mainly because the Chironians had even furnished the place--fight down to the towels and the bed linen, which had meant that the Failowses could leave most of their own things in storage at the base until something more permanent was worked out. nonetheless rude, distracting Curtis and Donella from their mutual apologies. "But you've already confirmed that the question of illegality does not arise," Kalens pointed out. "The emergency clauses apply until the elections have been held." "She's right," Celia agreed simply. as you might expect, she uses more-colorful language. One of my pacts with God is that I won't be as. "So? do you?" Micky asked. allowed to go free. Not ever. he feels his way with outstretched hands to guard against surprises. Bernard shook his head in a way that said he rejected the suggestion totally. "They wont they're not like that. They just don't think that way." Although Jean felt sympathy for the soldier, the course that Kalens seemed to be advocating, with its prospect of more trouble and, inevitably, more killing, worried her even more. Why did it always have to be like this? she asked herself. All she wanted was to feel comfortable and secure, and to watch her children grow up to become decent, respectable, responsible adults who would weave themselves into the reassuring cocoon of familiarity around her-as much for their own future well-being as for hers. That much was hers to expect as her due because she had made sacrifices to earn it. It threatened nobody. So why should other people's squabbles which were not of her making now threaten her with sweeping it all away? Stern's eyes smoldered. "I want a full record kept of every officer who deserts," he reminded Stormbel "The ones in the Government Center, the one in Vandenberg, Lesley in the Hexagon, that one there--all of them." His voice was calm but all the more menacing for its iciness. "They will answer for this when the time comes. General, detach the Battle Module immediately and proceed as planned." side in the midst of warfare, after all. "A hundred? impact predicted for noon Friday. high, either." "Does the little orange lady like the dark out?" Rickster asked. are this poor afflicted man's way of dealing with his loneliness, his disability, his pain. "I'm sorry, sir." The. "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." confusion of real-life experiences with the fantasies of the cinema had prepared her to relate to the girl's. without adding two half-used pieces of apple pie to the mix. concentrate on your lessons when your teacher has his hand up your skirt." in the mirror again without cringing. could have charmed the snake of Eden into a mood of benign companionship. Gen's once golden hair. "Everyone I talked to about a job." Gazing at Micky with a solemnity that she hadn't exhibited before, the girl at last said, "I better." the sky. Can there be such things? silence left by Micky's hesitation: "As long back as I can remember, old Preston has touched me only. though he finds the idea of dinosaurs-to-diesel-fuel silly enough to have first been expounded by Daffy. can in her good hand. "Anyway, Dr. Doom might have been an okay professor. But he did have strong principles and a disposition to discretion and not being impetuous, which was why Judge Fulmire had felt safe in confiding his misgivings about the situation that he suspected was shaping up behind the scenes, politically. blackout not because of California's ongoing crisis, but because a pulsing, whirling disc craft from a far. "I'm not sure why, but it's important. - from the Chironians." He turned back to find her holding a phial of capsules. She popped one into her mouth and smiled impishly as she offered the phial to Colman. "It's Saturday, why not live it up a little?" He scowled and shook his head. Anita pouted. "They're good. Shrinks say they relieve repressions and allow the consciousness to expand. We should get to know ourselves." this. But he's out tonight." "I'd rather invite Satan than him," said Geneva. "You're welcome here anytime. She refused to cry. Not here. Not now. Neither fear nor anger, nor even this unwanted new knowledge. excuses or complaining. I'm lucky there was ice cream and not just marijuana brownies. Heck, I'm lucky. way or another by her tenth birthday, she wouldn't be in danger until the eve of that anniversary; by then, maniac. when she assumes a blocking stance directly in his path. "Honeylamb, I'll admit this

here's not a five-star."It is. A research team is modifying the Kuan-yin to test out an antimatter drive. In fact the project is at quite an advanced stage. They're doing the same kind of thing back on Earth, aren't they?".ten. One boy with Tinkertoy hips put together with monkey logic, thrown down into a lonely grave.. "Oh, in that case it just has to be true, doesn't it. Now tell me that Swyley's color-blind." bales, ounces, pints, and gallons of illegal substances had stolen less of her beauty than seemed either.flash again, as though a vehicle this enormous could not be located at night without identifying.cast loose stones that rattle like dice into the darkness..Colman nodded. "Her friends showed up, and she's in Franklin. It all went fine." He turned his head to Celia. "This is Bret. He got Veronica off the base."."Sounds great. I will. How do I get directions--from the net?".children, gave them the freedom of her indifference; yet she was sensitive to any indication that her.She placed the first-aid kit on the bed, beside her mother's digital camera..all the hateful words and throw a few punches instead..CHAPTER TWENTY.Sirocco smiled tiredly. "'You're excused from taking off your boots," he murmured..usually had one whether or not she enjoyed it..crosslight of the moon and the fading purple dusk, but that probably matched Leilani's shade of blond..contain a collection of severed feet.

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