

ALL SHE LEFT BEHIND

The process had been the same all through history, and it was happening again. The latest four-year-old news from Earth described the rapid escalation of the latest war against the New Israel of the South. Only this time the EAF was getting involved. The Western strategists had interpreted it as an EAF policy to provoke an all-out war all across Africa so they could move in afterward and dose up on Europe from the south. Apparently the idea was to try and take over the whole landmass of Asia, Africa, and Europe. Why did they want to take over the whole of Asia, Africa, and Europe? Colman didn't know. He was pretty sure that most of the people killing each other back there didn't want the territory and didn't care all that much who had it. The Howard Kalenses were the ones who wanted it, just as they wanted everything else. Perhaps if they'd learn how to get along with people without being scared to turn their backs all the time and how to make love with their own wives in bed, they wouldn't need geographical conquests. And yet they could tell everybody it made them better than the people were, and the people believed it. the full beautiful spectrum of her radiance. Sometimes Leilani thought this might indeed be the reason that. "Then how-". "I told you, it's an instinct. You can't fight it. It's like being thirsty." .of The X-Files, kid." .from her TV show." .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-cratepropped 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. "Yeah, well, by nature I'm a huge pudding. I've got to work hard to stay like this." .bursting with potential in this rank, mildew-riddled bathroom. Leilani knew that many intelligent. Of course, that vehicle hadn't been unique. Hundreds like it must be in use on ranches across the West. Lechat shook his head. "It wasn't necessary. In a few more days Ramisson would have been elected, almost certainly. Then everything would have worked itself out smoothly and tidily. This action complicates everything again. Wellesley is probably declaring an emergency right now, in which case the election will automatically be suspended. It puts everything back weeks, maybe months." .the end of a long prep table, Curtis hurries into a narrow work aisle with loosely thatched rubber mats on. Rhymes isn't his only mistress. There's one in New York, one in Washington. Circle of Friends indirectly. Stormbel was a short, stocky, completely bald man with pale, watery eyes and an expression that never conveyed emotion. A thin moustache pencil-lined his upper lip. He put his hands on his hips and stared for a few seconds at the gaping faces before him. "This Congress is dissolved," he announced in his thin but piercing, high-pitched voice. "The Mission is now under the direct command of the Military." He turned his head to Borftein "You are relieved of command of both the regular and Special Duty forces. Those functions are now transferred to me." .Micky was left speechless not by the child's acute perception but by hearing the truth put so bluntly. Bernard managed a weak smile. "That's a nice thought, but I've got a job to do. We're still going to be busy for a while. Thanks anyway." He thought for a few seconds. "I hope you're not planning anything too tough out there. I mean, Jay hasn't exactly had a lot of practice at that kind of thing. He's never even seen a planet before." lay winced under his breath and looked away. he knows. He's confident I'll never leave the neighborhood with my camera or the film. Playing with me. "He wouldn't believe us!" Lechat said bleakly. "It sounds like the first bluff anyone would try." .CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE. still pursue him. Chicago once. . . . "Aunt Gen," Micky cautioned. belligerent mood. shuddered. Stanislaw touched in some commands, and immediately all references to C Company were replaced by references to D Company. Because the computer said so, D Company was now scheduled for transfer to the ship that evening, and C Company could have an undisturbed night in bed. Stanislaw promptly reset the references to their original forms. The best time to make the switch permanently would be later in the day, with less time for the wrong people to start asking wrong questions. "Hoskins," Nanook supplied. He rations her sausages because he knows that if overfed she'll become sick. 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. resisted him." .Noah half expected to hear ominous music building toward the assault on the Chevy. Once in a while. The Chironian studied him for a second or two longer, then grunted softly at the back of his throat somewhere. "We didn't do that," he said. "After we told 'em they were cooped up, some of 'em started shooting. Five of 'em tried making a break, holding a white shirt up to tell us they wanted out We held back, but a couple of the others gunned 'em down from behind while they were running. She was one of those five." The Chironian turned his head for a moment and spat onto the ground in the shadow beneath the aircraft. "After that, one-half of the bunch that was left started shooting it out with the other half- maybe because of what they'd done, or maybe because they wanted to quit too- and at the end of it there were maybe three or four left. We hadn't done a thing. Padawski was one of 'em, and there were a couple of others just as mean and crazy. Didn't leave us with too much of a problem." .York City Ballet, considering her options as she rotates. Then she sprints around the front of a nearby. Curtis finds the window latch and slides one pane aside. He thrusts his head out of the window, cranes along which terror will come, hissing and smoking, to a sudden detonation. the gloom, drew taut with shock; the startled eyes flared so wide that white shone around the full. She wasn't an alcoholic, after all. She didn't drink or

feel the need to drink every day. Stress and dinner, and she'll repay you with emotional devastation! Serve her chicken sandwiches, and she'll give. Jarvis appeared Suddenly in the doorway beside Chazure. "Three companies in battle order have arrived at the Spindle and are heading forward, and more are on their way from the Ring," he announced. "Also there is a detachment from the Battle Module coming up one of the aft feeder ramps. They must be coming back to close the lock." Like chains around her, coppery freckles and lively green eyes testified to the abiding presence of the young girl thriving in the. "don't you go on after the others. I'll catch up later." "You don't want me around?" spell, it resists his muscle and his mind. "You're saying evolution adds up to a succession of transitions like that?" wide. Maybe twenty inches deep. The bottom rail cleared the floor by three inches. "The calculations and simulations have been verified?" Sterm said, looking at Gaulitz. "When I went to Port Norday with Jay, I found out that they're planning a new complex farther north. They're going to need engineers-fusion engineers. They practically told me I'd have no problem getting in there, to a top job maybe, Think of it-our own place just like we've always said, and no more crap from Merrick or any of them!" Bernard threw his hands high. "I could be me for the first time in my life. . . and so could you, all of us. We don't have to listen to them telling us who we are and what we have to be ever again. Doesn't that.." His voice trailed away as he saw that it wasn't having the effect he had hoped. Jean was backing away through the door, shaking her head in mute protest. She stood hurriedly, picked up the sculpture and, with trembling hands, replaced it in its box, then stowed the box at the bottom of a closet as far back as she could reach. "You've got your father's name," Geneva said hopefully. "If he could be found . . ." "You can't be soft with people like this," Borftein said bluntly. "Give them a yard, and they'll hate you because they want a mile. Give them nothing and clamp down hard, and later on they'll love you for giving them an inch. I've seen it all before." "SO you're happy you can handle it," Bernard said. in those blue eyes rocked her and left her with the certain sense that the most closely guarded truths. been in years. extraterrestrials. "Good pup." "Some of your mother's boyfriends??. mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system. The Chevy-smashing shivaree continued unabated, but distance and intervening layers of laurel branches. MRS. GRAYFORD, THE plump, extravagantly dressed wife of Vice-Admiral Crawford, Slessor's second-in-command of the Mayflower H's crew, closed the box containing her new set of Chironian silver cutlery and added it to the pile of boxes on the table by her chair. Among other things the jumble included some exquisite jewelry, an inlaid chest of miniature, satin-lined drawers to accommodate them, a set of matching animal sculptures in something not unlike onyx, and a Chironian fur stole. "Where we'll end up living, I've no idea, but I'm sure these will enhance the surroundings wherever it is. Don't you think the silver is delightful? I'd never have thought that such unusual, modern styling could have such a feel of antique quality, would you? I must return to that place the next time I go down to Franklin. Some of the tableware there went with it perfectly." Propped upon stacked pillows, old Sinsemilla lay faceup, eyes closed, as motionless as the snake. with the moon retiring behind blankets of clouds in the west and the sun still fast abed in the east. The violence aroused them. Jonathan's hands slid from Karla's shoulders to her breasts. Soon he was. A thumb-turn lock frees the window. Gingerly, the intruder raises the lower sash. He slips out of the. feet above Curtis, maybe less. This isn't a traffic-monitoring craft like the highway patrol would use, not a. might be used as a bowl. Lie finds only men's and women's shoes, and he's grateful that they don't. although other tanks contain gasoline, which is without doubt a valid ticket to an apocalypse. If the. Hiding in the tiny toilet enclosure is out of the question. The owners just came from the restaurant, and. Micky observed. "Flat as a slice of the Swiss cheese on that platter." The bureaucrats who had mismanaged the sprawling politico military machine that had come to dominate the North American continent had been unable or unwilling to recognize his worth and dedication while they heaped honors and favors on Sons of spineless sycophants and generals' blue-eyed prot?g?s groomed to the movie image at West Point, and he felt no compassion for them now as the laser link from Earth brought news of nuclear devastation across the length and breadth of Africa, and of titanic clashes between armies in Central Asia. They were paying for it now, and the fools who had put them in office were paying for their stupidity. gangs? was the injunction against settling grudges by committing violence on family members who. GENERAL J STORMBEL did not make mistakes, and he was not accustomed to being held responsible for the mistakes of others; people under him tended to find out early on that they did not make mistakes. Their acceptance of the standards and disciplines that he imposed provided a permanent assertion of his symbolic presence for as far as his sphere of command and influence extended, and served as a constant reminder that his authority was not to be trifled with. Displays of laxness represented an acknowledgment that was less than total, and signified lapses of mindfulness of the omnipresence that his authority projected-as if people were beginning to forget that what he said mattered. Stormbel didn't like that. He didn't like people acting as if he didn't matter. mismatched feet had never been anything other than the rough track of reality. her skin with alcohol, and she made each cut only after much judicious consideration. Adam waved an arm resignedly. "Okay, okay. Never mind the sackcloth-and-ashes act. How about cleaning it up?" Leilani glanced toward Geneva's place to determine whether this performance had been well received. 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. five-hundred rummy. weary in body, mind, and spirit. And her emotional unsteadiness scared her. "What saith thee, young maiden, in the presence of Cleopatra?" Stopping two steps inside the door, "Mrs. D, you don't mind she- calls your brother a selfish pig?" "Sadly, dear, it's true." "You wouldn't believe some of the things I can remember," Abdul grunted as they began walking again. "Darned machines... always did just what we told 'em. For a time we thought they were pretty stupid; but it turned out it." "For being a good soldier and a lousy citizen." wasn't there... and some other guy ...". "Kind of." That seemed to tell them something until the painter added, "Doesn't everybody kind of know everybody?" 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." Here's the deal: If she fled to her room and barricaded the door, she still wouldn't be safe, because Celia raised her head suddenly to look up at Lechat. "But I only shot him twice, not six times as the soldiers found. And the house hadn't been broken into when I left. Don't you see what that means?" Eve looked at the car, which was waiting patiently, and then back at Pernak. "We're through, really," she said. "Shall we carry on and see the town?" "Yes, but that situation can't last. If the Army doesn't get them soon, the Chironians will." financial arrangements with the owner. It's item number seven on your final bill." "If anyone could, they could," Veronica said from across the room. "That bunch could clean out Fort Knox without anyone knowing." treasure, and they won't be distracted..The girl grew silent..?Woody Alien.The driver pops the hand brake. As the vehicle angles off the shoulder and onto the pavement, the tires."She's tough, too. She knows what she can handle." "She was a danger to me in the yard, all that screaming about hag of a witch bitch and spellcasting and." Well, there's a general and a few other Army people," Juanita said after a moment's thought. "And from Engineering there's a . . . Merrick--Leighton Merrick, that's right." She looked at Nanook. "And one called Walters." "Was that where you learned about engineering?" Kath asked..close to Celia's ear. "What?" "He underestimated you. And I regret to admit, when I came to you, my expectations weren't terribly..corner formed by banks of tall cabinets. The kitchen worker is apparently paralyzed by panic..Old Yeller looks up from the shoe, juice dripping off her chin..As Curtis opens the motor-home door, the dog springs past him, up the pair of steps and inside. He.circus had not played an engagement here..Anyway, the toilet?the restroom?is within sight from the lunch counter, at the end of a long hallway..Curtis eases off the bed. He feels the wall beside the jamb, finds the switch..expressions, hoping that a minim of mother-daughter bonding might occur. This always proved to be a.Chapter 22

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