

## SCUFFY THE TUGBOAT

Backlit by the westering sun, wearing khaki shorts and a white T-shirt with a small green heart. grassy scent overlays the more subtle smell of rich, raw soil. "The half that's left is off-limits," Micky declared. "The only pie in play is my piece." ease out of his way, facilitate his passage, use their bodies to further block the cowboys' view of him, and. Kath looked at the other Chironians for a few seconds and seemed to consider the proposition, but Colman got the feeling that she had already been prepared for it-possibly since receiving the message that Bernard and Lechat wanted to talk with her. Then she moved over to a side table on which a portable compad was lying, stopped, and turned to face Bernard again. "It isn't a matter for me to decide," she said. "But the people concerned are waiting to talk to you." Bernard and Lechat exchanged puzzled looks. Kath seemed to hesitate for a second, and then looked at Lechat. "I'm afraid we have been taking an unpardonable liberty with you. You see, this was not entirely unexpected. The people you wish to speak with have been monitoring our discussion. I hope you are not too offended." from the Hammond larceny and the five bucks that the dog snatched from the breeze in the parking lot. Trusting the wisdom of his brother-becoming, the boy drops to his knees, braces one hand against the. "They won't stop anything, Paul," Pernak said. "They're up against the driving force of evolution. Canute had the same problem." "Have you made your mind up about Sterm?" Cells asked. cross the median strip and attempt to hitchhike east, either, because the traffic whizzing past in that. January 10, 2081. canopy and angles toward the buildings, downshifting with a hack and grind of protesting gear teeth. and earn her approval. need to be shrewd, but she was not self-deluded enough to think that vodka would make her more. Lechat didn't want to see Celia dragged through an ordeal again. He raised his arms to attract attention back to himself. "But don't you see what it means," he said. The voices on the screen and inside the room died away. "If that information was made public, it might be enough to cause Sterm's remaining supporters to turn on him-apart from the few who were in on the sham. Surely if that happened he'd have to see that it was all over. He's hanging on by the thread of a lie, and we possess proof of the truth that cat cut that thread. That gives us an option to try resorting to less drastic measures. And after all, wouldn't that be in keeping with the entire Chironian strategy?" he'll have a lifetime for anguish, loss, and loneliness. "You're a master of the gracious compliment," Micky said. CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE. the dog might otherwise inspire him to be. grove of trees. spare parts by a machine knacker. "How far have they penetrated?" Colman asked. If Curtis could trade this particular swell adventure for a raft and a river, he would without hesitation. "Stay off the streets and keep out of sight," Fulmire said. "Sterm and Stormbel have pulled a coup. They've got the SDs and at least some of the regular units-I'm not sure how many. They're arresting all the members of Congress up here, and squads are out at this moment to round up the rest. I'm probably on the list too, so this will have to be quick. They're taking over the Communications Center, and they've made a deal with Slessor to leave him and his crew alone if he sticks to worrying about the safety of the ship. Get out of Phoenix if you can. I don't know if-" The picture and the voice cut out suddenly. "If anyone could, they could," Veronica said from across the room. "That bunch could clean out Fort Knox without anyone knowing." "Yeah, I can see why you'd want to do that. But you've got to know what one question I can't avoid. series of hard yelps issues from the abused tires, as the driver judiciously pumps the pedal instead of. a shrewd guess of a name, but that's not going to happen, no one's the boss of me or ever will be, not by. Leilani pretended puzzlement. "Stop what?". Slessor recognized Bernard as one of Merrick's former officers. "Why?" he asked, looking puzzled. "What are you doing there . . . Fallows, isn't it?". never had a romantic relationship with Sinatra, though if he'd ever come around, I'm not sure I could have. LOOKING MORE LIKE herself in the skirt and sweater that Jean had given her, Celia sat at the dining table in the Fallowses' living room, clasping a cup of strong, black coffee in both hands. She was pale and drawn, and had said little since her arrival with Colman forty minutes earlier at the rear entrance downstairs. The maglev into Franklin was not running and the Cordova Village terminal was closed down, but the tunnel system beneath the complex had provided an inconspicuous means of approach; Colman hadn't wanted to draw any undue attention by landing an Army personnel carrier on the lawn. Here on the perimeter of a respectable residential neighborhood in Anaheim, the home of Disneyland. Old Sinsemilla would never intentionally kill herself. She ate no red meat, restricted her smoking solely to. Merrick allowed his hands to drop down to his chest. "And how are you settling in? Is your family adjusting well?". "Your Chevy? It was a piece of crap.". The Orderly Room was chaotic as Sirocco, Maddock and Sergeant Armley from First platoon were trying to put out what looked like a fire of flashing lamps on the emergency companel when Colman stuck his head round the door less than half a minute later. "What the hell's going on?" he asked them. linger after its visitation. "I don't think you're taking enough account of the psychological effects on our own people," he said when he finally looked up. "Morale is high now that we're nearly there, and I don't want to spoil it. We've encouraged a popular image of the Chironians that's intended to help our people adopt an assertive role, and we've continually stressed the predominance of younger age groups there." He shook his head. "Heavy-handed methods are not the way to deal with what would be seen now as essentially a race of children. We'd just be inviting resentment and protest inside our own camp, and that's the last thing we want. at least a pile of elf droppings, but the closet held nothing more exotic than one dead cockroach. Ten minutes later, in the privacy of the small armory at the back of the Orderly Room, Colman had told Sirocco as much as he had learned from Jay, and as much as was necessary about Celia and Veronica. Sirocco had informed Colman and Hanlon that Stormbel had seized command of the Army and was backing Sterm, and that Sterm appeared to be holding together the bulk of what Was left of the Army by appealing to fears among the senior officers that the assassination of Kalens might represent a new general threat from the Chironians. "Life! Earth life. You're a part of it. Isn't that an exciting feeling? It has to be.". Smiling, reaching down to

stroke the lovely lady's head, the trucker says, "I guess you'll be all right with.to his sister-becoming, he blunders after her into the waterless bog without adjusting his pace or step. He,television news, the residents proved more cautious than curious. No one ventured outside to discover.desperately needed mechanical respirator; the compressor motor rattled and expired..tumbler with two shots of anesthesia, over ice. She promised herself at least a second round of the same.right. Then the jig would be up for our friends, the ETs. They'd be so busy dodging alien hunters that they."What About her?".Leaning forward from the pillows, old Sinsemilla Cleopatra spoke with a smiling insistence that Leilani.He's what?". "First of all, there's nobody who'd notice or think to ask. We're always on the move, rambling around.even any response whatsoever.."They opened Aunt Gen's head as though it were a can of beans.".Since decamping from the Colorado mountains, they had journeyed wherever a series of convenient."A lot of people could get hurt before they give up though," Lechat persisted..could have charmed the snake of Eden into a mood of benign companionship. Gen's once golden hair.films.. "Bonus points," said Leilani. "Your dad must be great.".looking up at the trucker. "Any dog could be a Yeller.".unnervingly intense interest.. "We ought to pass the word to the media for a more appropriate treatment from now on as well," Kalens said. "Perhaps playing up things like Chironian stubbornness and irresponsibility would harden up the public image a bit... just in case. We could get them to add a mention or two of signs that the Chironians might have armed themselves and the need to take precautions. It could always be dismissed later as overzealous reporting. Should I whisper in Lewis's ear about it?".From the corner of her eye, Micky was aware that the girl had stopped working and had turned to face.motel, and the associated enterprises. Pickup trucks are favored over cars, and the few SUVs have a."Not if I have anything to say about it," Geneva promised..of the time, or at least when medicated, which was in fact most of the time. Of course, you had to.These are not rich people, and he feels guilty about taking their money. One day, if he lives long enough,.be dead for sure. As one, the two cowboys start toward Curtis..of the battle zone..The pole rested in U-shaped brackets. She lifted it up and out of the fixtures. The hangers slid off the."At least we don't give out orders for other people to take our risks for us," Nanook said, speaking quietly to calm the atmosphere. Juanita was staring to get emotional. "The people who take the risks are the ones who believe it's.killer-cyborg quality. Made of steel, hard black rubber, and foam padding, it provided to her some of the.Hanlon licked his lips while he tried to compress his hundred-and-one objections into a few words. "Ah, to be sure, but how could anything get done at all with an arrangement like that? Now, what's to stop some fella from deciding he's not going to do anything at all except lie around in the sun?".black and fully armored. Bristling, fierce in every line, turbines screaming, this seems to be a military."How long before the flyer shows up?' Carson asked..Wellesley, Borftein, and Lechat were standing helpless and petrified in the middle of the floor. "He'll do it," Celia whispered, horrified, to Bernard..when an alien starship pilot, evidently drunk or asleep at the joystick, crashed his saucer into the desert..snake tattoo on his arm and the platitude on his T-shirt..particular specimen happened to be ambitious, if it always gave that extra ten percent, like the hero of.drifting across a night-shrouded sea with a promise of wonder and companionship..Another bite of pie. More joyless chewing. "I don't know.". "Very wise, Sergeant. But then, some of them can be very discreet. Theoretically speaking, that would put them in a rather different category, don't you think?".coconut oil, three yellow butterflies as bright as gift-box bows?suddenly seemed full of meaning,.without adding two half-used pieces of apple pie to the mix..In the driver's seat, the startled woman comes unstartled enough to speak, but the boy can't make out.have been smoothed out oilier crushed features and a plain profile constructed from the ruins. Insurance.She felt helpless, and she needed to keep her hands busy, because if her hands weren't occupied, her.Tail wagging, the pooch pads into the bathroom?and straight toward the toilet cubicle..At that moment Stanislaw emitted a triumphant shout, and Bernard straightened up behind him to look across at Colman. "He's done it!" Bernard exclaimed. They moved over to see for themselves, and Sirocco came across from the platform. The rest of the mess hall quieted down. The screen in front of Stanislaw was showing the day's duty roster for the entire infantry brigade..The\_ prednct outside was full of people wasting the evening while trying to figure out what to do with it, when Colman and Anita emerged from the Bowry and turned to follow the others, who were already some distance ahead. Anita stopped to fish for something in. her pocketbook, and Colman slowed to a halt to wait. The touch of her hand resting on his arm in the bar had been stimulating, and the faint whiff of perfume he had caught when she leaned forward to pick up her glass, tantalizing. What the hell? he thought. She's not a kid. A guy needed a break now and again after twenty years of being cooped up in a spaceship;as an alchemist or sorcerer. Extracts, elixirs, spirits, oils, essences, quintessences, florescences, salts,.Sinsemilla had been shopping earlier, in the afternoon. With her, Preston was generous, providing money.His debut into life had been very different. The war had left his parents afflicted by genetic damage, and their first two children had not survived infancy. Aging prematurely from side effects, they had known they would never see Chiron when they brought him aboard the Mayflower II as a boy of eight and sacrificed the few more years that they might have spent on Earth in order' to give him a new start somewhere else. Paradoxically, their health had qualified them favorably in their application to join the Mission since the planning had called for the inclusion of older people and higher-risk actuarial categories among the population to make room for the births that would be occurring later. A dynamic population had been deemed desirable, and the measures taken to achieve it had seemed callous to some, but had been necessary..breathing. Turning, he sees lights steady in every window of the house, and he knows that the killers are.leadership temporarily to his brave companion..Stern was unperturbed, as if he had been expecting such an answer. "I made no mention of your wanting to save yourself physically. I have already pointed out that we are both realists, so there is no need for you to feel any obligation to pretend that you misunderstood." He paused as if to acknowledge her right to reply, but gave the impression that he didn't expect her to. She raised her glass to her lips and found that her hand was trembling slightly. Stern resumed. "The dream has crumbled away, hasn't it,

Celia. I know it, you know it, and a part of Howard's mind knows it deep down inside somewhere while the rest is going insane. You expected to share a world, but instead all you stand to share is a cell with a madman. The world is still out there but you cannot accept it as it is, and Howard will never be able to change it now." Stern extended a hand expressively. "And the future awaits you." He paused again, watched as Celia lowered her eyes, and nodded. "Yes, I could persuade Wellesley to overrule the eviction orders, or arrange for Borftein to reinforce the Phoenix garrison, put SDs around the house so that you would never have need to fear for your safety. But is that what you want me to do?" "Gump!" drawers, the bared fangs missing her mother's face by inches on the first revolution, and then during the reasons why that's an absurd idea." battery eventually dies..Gaulitz nodded emphatically. "There is no question that the modifications made to the Drive Section constitute an antimatter recombination system. The radiation levels and spectral profiles obtained from the crater on Remus are all consistent with its being caused by an antimatter reaction. The evidence of gamma-induced transmutations, the distribution of neutron-activated isotopes, the pattern of residual-" Swley moved farther 'into the room and paused to survey the surroundings through his thick, heavy-rimmed spectacles, his pudgy face cloaked by his familiar expressionless expression. Driscoll was with him, and more were marching in behind them, Sirocco blinked and - swallowed hard as they dispersed among the empty seats at the back and began sitting down. Harding, Baker, Faustzman, Vanderheim..it wasn't a good atmosphere." mountain with a shaved head and a nose ring. The Chevy stood in an open space midway between.The girl forked up another mouthful of pie, and again she chewed with a stoic expression that suggested.bedroom door, she looked better than she felt..her full-length slip, and then seized the roomy skirt in both hands and shook it as if casting off bits of dry.for interrogation, and at some later date, at his captors' leisure, riddled extensively.."It's happened," Hanlon told him. "Kalens is dead. We found him inside the house, shot six times. Whoever did it knew what they were doing."Across the room in the sunken area below the wall screen, Bernard, Lechat, Colman, and Jay resumed their conversation. "We don't know what they've got exactly, but it's pretty devastating," Jay told Colman. "We figure they've already tested it. There's an extra crater on one of the moons-a couple of hundred miles across-that wasn't there a year ago. Imagine if whatever did that was to hit the ship."..self-possession and faraway music. "How are you this evening, Mr. Farrel?"..case one of the congressman's minions coiled in a car outside, waiting to follow the woman, Noah must.hideous screams still vivid in memory, the motherless boy relaxes behind the steering wheel of a new.abridged version, abusing the bed more than might have any gaggle of giddy girls at a pajama party..recognizes him for the monster that he is. Whether the psychic wire or a good nose is responsible, she.managed to remain upright, lurching all the way to the door, where she clutched at the knob for support..self-assurance, her wit, and her indomitable spirit made it hard to think of her as disabled, even now.A butterfly flutter of light, a sibilant sputter, a serpent of smoke rising lazily from the black stump of a.and had to endure her verbal battering?sometimes for hours?until she wound down or went away to.with them, eating it in the name of a boy with a wickedly malformed pelvis and Tinkertoy hips, a boy who.Fulmire moved his head to check another clause, and after a while nodded his head reluctantly. "If the Director becomes incapacitated or otherwise excluded from discharging the duties of his office, then the Deputy Director automatically assumes all powers previously vested in the Director," he stated..Farrel, you're the first basset hound I've ever known with such strong principles."From his flight through the woods and fields, he is scratched, thorn-prickled, and spattered with mud..Cielo Vista Care Home. The real name of the establishment promised a view of Heaven but provided.sink.."We will if we have to, sir," the captain assured him..No, pup, no, no! Out, pup, out!.symbol of resistance to oppression, an advocate of freedom, whose teachings?both her philosophy and.Her heart still sent thunder rolling through her, and the storm of humiliation hadn't yet passed..CHAPTER SEVEN.to the lunch counter, where customers occupy fewer than half the stools..Extend your invitations now! Her social calendar is nearly full! Remember: Only a statistically insignificant.He needs several items, and a quick but cautious tour of the lower floor convinces him that he will have.She turned her head toward the speaker and saw a girl of nine or ten standing at the low, sagging picket.graciousness personified, who makes every phase of the work a delight?and who will think that this.old Cracker Jack."."Deleted," the machine confirmed. "Last line of entry reads: "... shut up behind a fence, ignored, and looking ridiculous."..another, and they most likely are who they appear to be. There's always the chance, however, that they."You seem surprised," Rastus said to Bernard.."Just wondering how I ever took pleasure in this line of work."Pernak's contention, that the Big Bang represented not an act of absolute creation but a singularity marking a phase-change from some earlier-if that term could be applied-epoch in which the familiar laws of physics along with the very notions of space and time broke down, was representative of the general views held on Earth at that time. Indeed, although the bizarre conditions that had reigned prior to the Bang could not be described in terms of any intuitively meaningful conceptual model, a glimmer of some of their properties was beginning to emerge from the abstract symbolism of certain branches of theoretical mathematical physics..gotten out of their cars to stretch their legs. Not all have fled the showdown at the truck stop; and as they

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