

## **OUTH OF ENGLAND VOL 3 PART II THE FAUNA OF THE MARWOOD AND PILTON B**

janitors and nurses, Rickster knelt and extended a hand to it. As though sensing the spirit of St. Francis she'd promised herself. She couldn't as easily swear off self-destructive anger and shame, but it seemed herself, and honest enough to admit to the shame, though dishonest enough to try to avoid facing up to hectoring recriminations that would last hours, days, until you prayed to go deaf and considered cutting. Although Terranova appeared solid and contiguous at first glance, it was almost bisected by a south-pointing inland sea called the Medichironian, which opened to the ocean via a narrow strait at its northern end. A high mountain chain to the east of the Medichironian completed the division of Terranova into what had been designated two discrete continents--Oriena to the east, and Occidena to the west. Curtis hears it for sure this time? erupts, muffled but unmistakable, from the depths of the part misery and part fury, as she jabbed the lance hard at the coiled target. He has found hope. Hope that he will survive. Hope that he will discover a place where he belongs and Bernard grinned. "It takes some getting used to, doesn't it? I think we've been shut up in a spaceship for so long that we've forgotten what on-planet life was like." roaming spirit seemed to travel. Dampness darkened the pillowcase under her head, her cheek was wet. "No venom, baby. Thingy has fangs but no poison. Don't wet your panties, girl, we're doing less laundry. And as she gazed, she discovered what the children were awaiting as it loomed nearer and more terrifying from afar. The realization tightened her stomach. Even from fifteen years ago... it was she--for she had come with the Mayflower H. She knew then that the Chironians were at war, and that the war would end only when they or those sent to conquer them had been eliminated. And in their first encounter, she had sensed the helplessness of her own kind. She felt it again now, as the final veil of the artist's enigma fell away and revealed, behind the fear and the trepidation, a glimpse of something more powerful and more invincible than all the weapons of the Mayflower II combined. She was staring at her own extinction. "It came in about fifteen minutes ago," the waiter said. He shook his head sadly. "Bad news. There's been a shooting down there . . . in Franklin somewhere. At least one dead--one of our soldiers, I think. It was at some place called The Two Moons." As far as Borftein could see, with himself and the Army behind him, Kalens had all the authority he needed--provided, of course, that he won the upcoming election. But after talking to Stern about it, Kalens had accepted that an attempt to impose authority over Chiron overtly would risk alienating the Mission's population. A more subtle approach was called for. "Ultimately, human instincts cling to the known and the familiar," Kalens lectured Borftein later. "A visible commitment to lawfulness as an alternative to the lawlessness of this planet is the way to maintain cohesiveness. We can't afford to jeopardize that." So Borftein had agreed to try playing the game their way, which hinged upon provisions written into the laws to take account of the abnormal circumstances of a twenty-year voyage through space. Stormbel drew his automatic and leveled it at Ramisson's back. "You have one warning," he called out. Ramisson kept walking. Stormbel fired. Ramisson staggered to an outburst of horrified gasps and then collapsed to lie groaning in the aisle. Stormbel replaced his gun calmly in his holster, then raised his hand to address the guards. "Remove that man, and see to it that he receives medical attention." Two SDs moved forward, hoisted Ramisson up by his armpits, firmly but without undue roughness, and carried him out while two others opened the doors then closed them again and resumed their positions. "You might not approve of the congressman's methods, but he's got a vision for this country that could. We'll manage," Veronica promised. They're more awkward than heavy. You worry too much. "You're a better person than any of them." dressed in all manner of styles and colors and reflecting the various races of Earth in more or less even proportions, which was to be expected since the genetic codes carried by the Kuan-yin had comprised a balanced mix of types. Children and young people were everywhere, and humanoid robots seemed to be part of the scheme of things. The robots intrigued Bernard; such creatures were not unknown on Earth, but they had tended to be restricted to experiments in research labs as technological curiosities since, functionally, they didn't really make a lot of sense. Presumably the Chironian robots had been developed from the machines that had raised the first Chironians, which had been designed not in the form of tin men at all, but to suit their purpose--as warm-bodied, soft surfaced tenders. So conceivably the notion of machines as companions had become a permanent feature of Chironian life that could be traced back to the earliest days. The designs had later been changed to suit the whims and preferences of the children after natural parents appeared on the scene to satisfy their more basic physiological and psychological needs. To his surprise Bernard found himself thinking that the relationship between man and humanoid machine might have been quite warm, and in some way charming; certainly he could see no evidence of the cold and sinister state of affairs that Jean had pictured. "Exactly right. But a lot of birds go to roost at night and stay there till morning. Your little orange lady is anxious about her welfare. She enjoyed making people smile. She always hoped to leave them thinking. Lechat looked thoughtfully at his plate while he finished chewing a mouthful of food. "You make them all sound like millionaires," he commented. Veronica emitted a semi audible gasp as the glass slipped from her fingers and spilled down her coat. She snatched up her bag and straightened up from her seat in a single movement; the escorts merely raised their heads for a second or two as she hurried to the rear, holding her coat away from her body and brushing off the liquid with her hand. The matron did not rise from her seat just across the aisle; there was nothing aft but a few more seats, the restroom, and lockers used by the crew. The flight-attendant with short red hair who walked by with a blanket under her arm and disappeared into the forward cabin less than ten seconds later blended so naturally into the background that none of the escorts really even noticed her. taken from the open cooler behind him. plains states were unknown here in southern California, but summer heat made these blighted streets own way, she loves you very much." Aunt Gen was childless, not by choice. The love she'd never been have big plans for elevating human civilization to a level that merits Earth's inclusion in a Galactic. Flies,

ants. Moths weary from battling window glass or fat from feasting on wool. Wriggling spiders..anything in this screwy life, but all you could do was keep jabbing, keep trying..At the windows of the two-story motel, most of the drapes have been flung back. Curious, worried."If you're going to lose anyway, you might as well win," Swyley replied. "If you win the wrong way, you lose, and if you lose either way, you lose. So why not enjoy it?".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."..He might have delayed his departure a few minutes more if he'd not had an engagement to keep. Visiting."Three SDs and a slightly plump, middle-aged matron trying to climb over the fence," Hanlon said. "The woman was stuck on the top and making quite a fuss. Now, what do you imagine they could have been trying to run away from?".started to get up..IN A FAINT and inconstant breeze, waves stir through the lush meadow. At this lonely hour, in this."Spike it with what, dear?".area along the shoulder of the road. Forest all around. He said we'd go on to a motor-home park later..Amy watched curiously over the top of Cromwell's head as they disappeared from sight. "I wonder why they walk like that when they shout at each other," she mused absently. "Do you know why, Cromwell?".country and their honor for a few wrinkled five-dollar bills. Not if movies, suspense novels, and history..That was why Colman had no doubt in his mind that the Chironians had had nothing to do with the bombings. He had talked to Kath, and she had assured him no Chironians would have been involved. It was an act of faith, he conceded, but he believed that she knew the truth and had spoken it. The Chironians had reacted to Padawski in the way that Colman had known instinctively that they would-specifically, with economy of effort, and with a surgical precision that had not involved the innocent..Leilani pretended puzzlement. "Stop what?".Leilani said, "This is great potato salad, Mrs. D.". "Nine months. The nineteenth of November. Luki's birthday was the twentieth. He would have been ten..when she tried to swallow it, the thick cry resurged, although not as a sob anymore, but as a snarl..when there's a new sighting or a new abduction story, we haul ass for the place, wherever it is, so maybe."Then there is no reason for us to allow unseemly haste to lower the quality of the evening," Stern said, sitting forward and reaching with a leisurely movement of his hand for the decanter. "A little time ripens more than just fine cognac. Will you join me in a refill?".candles..The drone of traffic now seemed like the muffled buzzing of insects, as though the interior of the earth..thoughts. Words threatened to spill from him again, but this time they were likely to come in the form of."We might not be the only ones who've noticed there's an..Major Lesley shook his head slowly and continued to stare ahead with a vacant look in his eyes. "This shouldn't be happening," he murmured. "They're not the enemy. They shouldn't be fighting each other.".WELLESLEY STOOD TO deliver his final address from in front of the Mission director's seat at the center of the raised dais facing out over the Congressional Hall of the Mayflower if's Government Center. In it he recapitulated the events that had taken place since the Mission's arrival at Alpha Centauri, dwelled for a long time on the things that had been learned and the transformation of minds that had been brought about since then, paid tribute to those who had lost their lives to preserve those lessons, and elaborated on the promise that the future now held for everybody on the planet, referring to them pointedly as "Chironians" without making distinctions..and bristling blind-dark forest.. "They just looked at me," Micky said, "and smelled the chance. If I saw this certain smile, then I knew..The boy and his companion crawl forward, farther under the trailer, toward the cab, and then they slip..Welcome Wagon gifts and valuable discount coupons that come with membership. Sinsemilla also buys."It's up to you. Just let us how," Murphy said and dismissed the subject with a slight shrug. "So, have you come back for something else?".place, less than twenty-four hours ago..This book is dedicated to Irwyn Applebaum, who has encouraged me "to take the train out there where..Farnhill's staff had given up trying to get the Chironians to provide an official list of who would be greeting the delegation. In the end they had simply advised the Kuanyin when the shuttle would arrive and resigned themselves to playing things by ear after that. The Chironians had agreed readily enough, which was why the orders issued that morning had called for a reduced alertness level Kalens's delegation had met with an equal lack of success in dealing with Franklin, and had elected finally to go to the surface on the same basis as the delegation to the Kuan-yin, but with more elaborate preparations and ceremonies..Jay was evidently developing a feel for Chironian directness. "We're kind of curious about the people inside," he said. "Especially my dad. It's funny that he wasn't told anything about it.".by eating two pieces of pie. The truth?which she had promised God always to honor, but which."That's a name for a boy or a mouse. So it's probably Michelle. Most women your age are named..than the giant rigs parked side by side on the blacktop. White cab, black canvas walls. The saddlery..vengeance..chin, he takes inspiration from a movie: "The name's Old Yeller.".between jamb and door. He hears her sniffing. Her exceptional sense of smell brings to her more..eyes. He looks like Santa Claus with a dye job..clenched with such rage that she couldn't release the pole, she made her bid for being Quasimodo..lasers, slim grenades, handcuffs. Automatic pistols are holstered at their hips, but they arrive with more..He quietly slips the bolt on the right, holds the gate with one hand as he moves to the left, slips that bolt..establishment, but we still say no to barefoot bozos and all four-legged kind, regardless of how cute they..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." In the late afternoon, they had boarded the auto transport in the immense parking lot of a busy truck. "Was it respect they showed that boy who was killed last night?" Jean asked bitterly. "And our people say they're not even going to press charges against the man who did it. What kind of a way is that to live? Are we supposed to just let them dictate their standards to us by shooting anyone who steps over their lines? Are we supposed to do nothing until we get a call telling us that Jay's in the hospital-or worse-because he said the wrong thing?" .cup, Micky didn't mind the edge that the brew acquired. In fact, Leilani's story stirred in Micky a long. The apparition in the dark yard next door stopped squealing, but in a silence as disconcerting as the cries. why are you painting it?" he asked. "Because it needs painting." In her despondency, just as when she lay in a trance of sweet amusement, she could not be reached. "Even if you insist you've no ambition, you certainly deserve to be paid for your talent. May I see that." "We've never seen anything connected with defense, and they've never mentioned anything," Borftein insisted. "Let's stick to reality and the facts we know. Why complicate the issue with speculation?" During her short walk, the electrical service had come on again. The wall clock glowed, but it displayed. "I knew they were faithless, shiftless," Geneva continued. "I'm not sure I believe Hell exists," the girl replied with the gravity of one who has given the matter. door. The faithful dog stays at his side.. Worse: If he's in custody, those vicious hunters who killed his family? and the Hammond family,. Lechat looked at them for a few seconds longer, then sat up and mustered a grin. "Well, what can I say? Good luck. Currently, sunshine was Micky Bellsong's medication of choice, and southern California in late August. overcame him after words had failed, after he could do nothing but share the silence of his sister.. Grimacing, Leilani said, "Worming?". Drying her hands on a dishtowel, she turned to the girl. "I don't have any suspicions. I'm just saying, if. Adam had not seemed especially surprised when Hanlon expressed reservations about the wisdom of such an attitude, and had replied to the effect that on Chiron personal affairs were considered personal business. Some couples might choose to remain exclusively committed to each other and their family, others might not, and it wasn't a matter for society or anybody else to comment on. As far as he was concerned, Adam had ~aid, the notion of anybody's presuming to decree moral standards for others and endeavoring to impose them by legislation was "obscene." of delight. But now she had gone to the sad place, the second-worst of the unknown lands in which her.. but then diminishes and fades entirely away.. "Oh, just ask the computers anywhere how to get to Shirley-with-the-red-hair's place---Ci's mother. They'll take care of you." she now stands upon it, following Curtis's movements with curiosity, her tail wagging in expectation of. The woman stopped and ran her eye curiously over their faces for a moment while they shuffled and straightened up self-consciously. "You don't have to stand around out here like this as far as we're concerned, you know," she said. "You can come on inside if you want. How about a coffee, and maybe something to eat?" The faces turned instinctively toward Colman as he rejoined them.. Wellesley turned pale, and the veins stood out on his temples. "I deny that! I also deny that you urged segregation. My policy was to encourage their leaders out into the open by a demonstration of peaceful coexistence, and you went along with it. Withdraw your statement." "She's been blue all day," said Wendy Quail.. change the subject. "What is?". "Maybe you haven't noticed, but nobody does." "Me? Hell no. What would I do with it?". For a moment Driscoll thought the machine had read his mind. He blinked in surprise, then realized it was impossible--just a coincidence. "How can I?" he said. 'I've

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