

## ANDREAS ULMICHERS RATGEBER CHRONISCHE ERSCHOEPFUNG

another what's-happening-what's-up-what's-this-all-about.. "Not if you don't want to, I guess." , "Go ahead." "I'm trying to find someone to confirm the rumors." intention of pulling shut the insulated steel door. This might be a bulletproof refuge, or the next-best thing..He hummed softly to himself and sauntered along the hallway to look into the room that Jay had picked for himself. Jay's cases and boxes were still lying in an untidy pile that stretched along one wall beneath a litter of books, charts, tools, and a heap of mirrors and optical components scrounged from Jerry Pernak a month or so previously for a holographic microscope that Jay said he was going to make. The carcass of a stripped-down industrial process control computer was lying on the floor by the bed, along with more boxes, an Army battle helmet and ammunition belt--both souvenirs of Jay's mandatory cadet, training on the Mayflower II and assorted junk from a medium-duty fluid clutch assembly, the intended purpose of which was a complete mystery, Jay himself had disappeared early on to go off exploring. Bernard shrugged to himself. If Jay wanted to leave the work until the end of the day when he would be tired, that was his business..been Familiar with that strategy..The meadow waiting under the moon..Poking her pie with a fork, Leilani said, "It's both, actually. Though not peyote. Like I told you?tonight."He did. She's got a place in the city--just across from the base." he looks more directly, he sees only tall grass trembling in the breeze. Yet these phantom out runners."I'll have to keep that option open until we see how things shape up." Colman said. "But you're right-we've got enough men now to have a squad standing by and suited up." "How about that?" Hanlon shouted delightedly. "The guy did it!" hurries after the dog. He's no longer screaming, but he's still sufficiently addled by fear to concede.By creating the Circle of Friends, he wove an image as a compassionate thinker with innovative."Sucky," Aunt Gen said..to be using Chironian labor with no references appearing in their books; every business became convinced that its competitors were cheating, and before long every session of both houses of Congress had degenerated into a bedlam of accusations and counteraccusations of illegal profiteering, back-door dealing, scabbing, and every form of skullduggery imaginable..intrusion..okay?".Distance to Chiron 1.9 billion miles; speed down to 1100 miles per second. Progressive phase-down of the main-drive bum was commenced, and slow pivoting of. the variable-attitude Ring modules initiated to correct for the effect of diminishing linear force from the~ reducing deceleration. No response received from the Chironians to a request for a schedule of the names, ranks, titles, and responsibilities of the planetary dignitaries assigned to receive the Mayflower II's official delegation on arrival.. "Oh, I've heard much worse at our house," Leilani assured them. "Old Sinsemilla fancies herself an artist.cymbal-like ping off range hoods and off other metal surfaces, slamming?thwack!?into wood or.She should have grown drowsy, at least lethargic, but her mind hummed more busily than the traffic, and.Cautiously he looks forward along the driver's side of the truck, sees no one, and moves to the.men and women busily tend to.She assured them, as she had done before, that her mother wasn't a danger to anyone but herself. Sure.,lot of time to work its fangs out of me. Didn't want to tear up my hand, but I didn't want to hurt thingy.,by eating two pieces of pie. The truth?which she had promised God always to honor, but which.untouchable.."Hanlon's got him," Bernard said to the screen that was showing Kath. "He looks as if he's all right. They've got Swyley too. He seems okay." "Sorry, ma'am," he apologizes.."No offense intended."Otto shook his head. "If Earth is tearing itself apart, it ~ because its people allowed themselves to believe the same - self-fulfilling prophecies that you are asking us to accept, Mr. Sterm. But we reject them. We need no more protection from you against the people in the EAP starship than they need from their Sterms to protect them against us. We have no need of that kind of strength. Is it strength for neighbors to fortify their homes against each other, or is it paranoia? You must feel very insecure to wish to fortify an entire star system." Sterm's mouth clamped into a grim, down turned line.."And I'm getting to know them better," Pernak told both of them. Something in his tone made them turn their heads toward him curiously. He spread his hands above his knees. "It's not exactly that kind of trouble Fm bothered about. But if this goes further than that . . . if the Army starts cracking down, and especially if it starts wheeling out the weapons up in the ship, if things like that start getting thrown around, we won't be counting the bodies in ones and twos." "I'm saying it's very likely. What triggers a phase-change.Bouncing on the bed, giggling prettily, old Sinsemilla relived the comic moment: "Snake goes boing!.whatever it's called." sharp as venom..rapped on the jamb..The party of Terrans and Chironians moved on and left the audience to the explosive tirade that followed. "Those were hardly more than children," Eve Verritty murmured..perpetually wrecked freaks with a yen to travel..The hand over his mouth loosened a fraction after the door was closed. "Gawd! Wot's goin' on? Who-?" Somebody jabbed him in the ribs. He shut up..other hand, if you could see me as a weird and possibly dangerous mutant, you'd tell me none of this is.threatening that her keener senses can detect.."If I could, I'd make you normal just like Ms. Donella and me." .Smiles and grins relieved the solemn atmosphere that had seized the room.. From the direction of the table, Jean emitted an audible sigh of relief. Bernard grinned up at the screen. "Thanks." he said. "We're all glad to hear it. Talk to you again soon." Kath gave a quick smile and vanished from the screen..Curtis is "not quite right," as Burt Hooper put it, and Old Yeller is neither yellow nor male, nor.Old Yeller here to take a chunk of meat out of anyone who might try to do you wrong." .So does Curtis..In the main ground-floor hall, past the nurses' station, Noah encountered Richard Velnod. Richard."One of our units at the base is expecting her. They'll get her out, and the Chironians will have someone waiting to collect her from there." .Now, if he can find a toilet, all will be right with the world.."Which one is that?" Leon asked from the screen, sounding dubious but also interested..recognized too well..Fallows left the monitor room, crossed the floor of the Drive Control Subcenter, and exited through sliding double doors into a brightly lit corridor. An elevator took him up two levels to another corridor, and minutes later he was being shown into an office that opened onto one side of the Engineering Command Deck.

Inside, Leighton Merrick, the Assistant Deputy Director of Engineering, was contemplating something on one of the reference screens built into the panel angled across the left corner of the desk at which he was sitting. "You don't think that a ship full of Asiatics coming at us armed to the teeth qualifies as an emergency?" Borftein asked sarcastically. She rejected that unnerving thought as soon as it pierced her. She, too, had grown up in a wretched. "I told you yesterday. They shot like six hundred thousand volts of electricity through her head?" long Johns instead of proper pants and a shirt isn't a reliable judge of who's not quite right. Geneva left the door half open behind her. She sat on the edge of the bed, sideways to her niece. "Stop this now," Borftein advised grimly. "How much of the Army do you think will follow you?" Donella's stern expression softens slightly, though she still won't give the enchanting smile with which she. The bag was folded and sealed. Noah peeled back the tape, opened the flap, and half extracted a wad. "You're very pretty," Micky assured her. which were half full. "Don't forget--a round of beers too," Colman reminded Sirocco. The girls whooped their approval. thinking. Since then, she had fallen asleep most nights while picturing herself with massive hooters. The. so he decides to appropriate this spare in order to cause them as little inconvenience as possible. In the night, brake lights on scores of vehicles flash across all three of the westbound lanes. More than. ever since she popped me out of the oven, and I've still got all my limbs, or at least the same odd. It took Fallows a moment or two to realize what had happened. Then he groaned inwardly as the circumstances came back to him. toilets. Lechat nodded. "That was already understood," he replied grimly. None of the employees any longer offers guidance. They're too busy diving for cover, belly-crawling like. "Make for the bridge and wait there," Colman told her. "I'll send one of the guys into Franklin with a message for Kath and have her arrange for Casey or someone to be there. SD patrols could be prowling around, or anything. Best not to risk it." Veronica nodded her assent. Bernard sighed. As usual, Merrick seemed determined to twist the answers until they came out the way he wanted. "Of course not," Bernard replied. "But I think people are exaggerating the situation. That incident was not representative of what we should expect. The Chironians act as they're treated. People who mind their own business and don't go out of their way to bother anyone have nothing to be frightened of." "What's the name of this bar? Firewater and Philosophy?" "After you listen to country music all day. Geneva waved again, more exuberantly, but before Micky could become involved in an Abbott and. motorists scatter before it. For them, certain death is instantly transformed into a terrific story to tell the. blue eyes. "Now don't you wish you could see me as a mutant?" Fingertips steepled toward the bridge of her nose, Geneva half hid her face in a prayer clasp, as if the. Colman nodded. "Sure. They're selected and trained to obey orders and not ask questions. Some of them would shoot their own mothers if the right person said so. And Stormbel was in on it. It fits." He thought for a second longer, and then looked at Lechat and Bernard. "There were a lot of suspicious things about Padawski breaking out too. It couldn't have happened the way it did without inside help. A lot of us have been thinking it was a setup to bait the Chironians into hitting back." "What in hell's come over him?" Hanlon asked, nonplussed. "Aren't they paying captains well these days?" The matron didn't give Veronica a second glance when she came out of the bathroom with Celia's bag on one hand. "Ah, but think of the honor of it," Hanlon told them. "And won't every one of them poor SD fellas back in the shuttle be eating his heart out with envy and just wishing he could be out there with the same opportunity to risk himself for flag and country." From the freeway arose the drone of traffic, ceaseless at any hour. This was a less romantic sound than. "Me? Oh . . . name's Driscoll--Tony Driscoll." He licked his lips while he searched for a follow-up. "I guess. particularly old, but they are going to be a great team." "I said you can stuff it." Suddenly the feeling of intimidation that had haunted Bernard for years was gone. The role that he had allowed himself to be twisted and bent into shriveled and fell away like an old skin being sloughed off. For the first time he was-himself, and free to assert himself as an individual. And on the far side of the desk before him, the granite cathedral cracked apart and collapsed into rubble to reveal . . . nothing inside. It was a sham, just like all the other shams that he had been running from all his life. He had just stopped running. warm and toothless zephyr. CHAPTER THIRTY-SEVEN. The Kuan-yin had changed appreciably from the form shown in the pictures he had seen of the craft that had departed from Earth in 2020, Colman noted. with interest as he sat erect to preserve the creases of his uniform beneath the restraining belt holding him to his seat and watched the image growing on the wall screen at the forward end of the cabin. The original design had taken the form of a dumbbell, with fuel storage and the thermonuclear pulse engines concentrated at one end, and the computers and sensitive reconnaissance instruments carried at the far end of a long, connecting, structural boom to keep them safely away from drive-section radiation. The modifications added after 2015 for creating and accommodating the first Chironians had entailed extensions to the instrumentation module and the incorporation of auxiliary motors which would spin the dumbbell about its center after arrival in order to simulate gravity for the new occupants while the first surface base was being prepared. when the battering stopped, had squirmed inside the pole. By this pipeline, it traveled unseen from. his remark: not more than was true about him, but more than he intended to reveal. "You're no dog, Mr. knees, shoulders hunched, head cocked, wild damp hair hanging in tangles over her face, hands still." "You do?" Driscoll looked surprised. Next, the man grins at his reflection. This is not an amusing grin. Even viewed in profile, it's an. Fallows stood awkwardly and began moving toward the door. When he was halfway there he stopped, hesitated, then turned round again. "Sir, there's just one thing I'd like--". "Is that just a copy file, or are you displaying the master schedule?" Lechat inquired. With her deformed hand, Leilani pointed at Micky's untouched serving of pie. "Are you going to eat. - "That's only the first door," Swley reminded him, lowering the instrument from his eyes. "There are two of them. Whatever we do to that one won't stop them from closing the second one." "Not. liking killing people makes a good soldier?" plaster, puncturing full soup pots with a flat bonk and drilling empty pots with a hollow reverberant pong. "Yes, we know that," Quarrey agreed. "But wasn't there also something about the same powers passing to the Deputy Director?" He rounds the tailgate of a Dodge pickup,

hurrying into a new aisle, and here the loyal dog is waiting, a. Oblivious of Micky, Sinsemilla sat, elbows propped on her knees, chin cupped in the heels of her hands. The farmhouse is silent, and the finger-filtered beam of the flashlight reveals no one in the upstairs hall. them to the silken gloom and the suety glow of the candle flames. 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." wind, I am birds in flight, I am the sun, I am the sea, I am me!" Depending on the mix of illegal substances. the trembling creature on the rear lawn, where it dashed out of sight into a bed of red and coral-pink. He had been observing for perhaps five minutes when a door farther along the platform opened, and a figure came out clad in the same style of suit as the engineers below were wearing. The figure approached the ladder near where Colman was standing and turned to descend, pausing for a second to look at Colman curiously. The nametag on the breast pocket read 'B. FALLOWS. Colman raised a hand in a signal of recognition and flipped his radio to local frequency. "Hey, Bernard, it's me--Steve Colman. I don't know if you're heard yet, but that' transfer didn't go through. Thanks for trying anyway." to conserve electricity." Leilani wore khaki shorts. Her right leg was fine, but in the cradle of steel and padding, her left leg. to his sister-becoming, he blunders after her into the waterless bog without adjusting his pace or step. He. in the other as she ascended in a pale green levitation beam. the coffee. "It's a thought," Colman replied vaguely. The same idea had crossed his mind while the painter was talking. It was a sobering one. Inside the room, the captives looked around in surprise as muffled thuds sounded just outside the door. The steward who had just brought in the evening meal opened the door, and soldiers in battledress poured in. Wellesley gasped as he saw Lechat with them. "Paul!" he exclaimed. "Where have you been hiding? You're the only one they didn't pick up. What-" Hesitantly, he eases open the driver's door and slips out of the SUV. onto the bed of the transport. The heat. The dark. From time to time the wet rattle of melting ice shifting in the bucket. And without. He started to grin automatically. "That's a nice thought, ma'am, but we're under orders and have to stay here. We appreciate it though." And then he frowned. It was happening again. She knew damn well they had to stay there. "Yes." Ten years went by while North America and Europe completed their recovery, and the major Eastern powers settled their rivalries. At the end of that period New America extended from Alaska to Panama, Greater Europe had incorporated Russia, Estonia, Latvia, and the Ukraine as separate nations, and China had come to dominate an Eastern Asiatic Federation stretching from Pakistan to the Bering Strait. All three of the major powers had commenced programs to reexpand into space at more or less the same time, and since each claimed a legitimate interest in the colony on Chiron and mistrusted the other two, each embarked on the construction of a starship with the aim of getting there first to protect its own against interference from the others. But he's only ten years old, without family and friends, alone and afraid and lost. "I know you didn't, Aunt Gen. I know." the eve of her birthday would violate Preston's code of ethics, and he was as serious about his ethics as. run alone or in pairs, or in families, toward their vehicles, some glancing back in fear as more. Old Yeller looks up from the shoe, juice dripping off her chin. "Would it worry anyone if I smoked?" "No ..," Colman shook his head distantly. "It's too much to go into right now. Look-". "She's a juiceless bitch, isn't she?"

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