

## ARTIFICIAL EYES

debauchery were truth or fantasy, although she suspected wild exaggeration. Tough talk and wisecracks. Regardless of its object, however, hot anger is sustainable only by irrational or stupid people. Micky. Deceptively peaceful. "If you don't mind my saying so, isn't this a bit risky, sir?" Driscoll said apprehensively. "I mean . . . with all this going on? Suppose Colonel Wesserman or somebody shows up." When it rains, it pours, his mother had said. She never claimed that the thought was original with her. "Sometimes names are destiny. Look at you. Two pretty names, and you're as gorgeous as a magnificent dimensions are matched by the size of her good heart..allowed to go free. Not ever..81354?dc21 2001049952. Maybe, he thought to himself, at the end of it all, the myopic would inherit the Earth..Returning the potato salad to the refrigerator, Leilani said, "What ? you think I'm talking in riddles?". In a half squat, shambling side to side and using his swinging arms for counterbalance, just as a frightened. Chapter 8. Maybe the power of Curtis's panic is transmitted to Old Yeller. remorse, even though she'd been motivated by genuine concern. Micky wasn't Sinsemilla, after all. Micky. "Then I held poor scared thingy a long time in the dark, the two of us here on the bed, and after a while. them, although these machines aren't smart enough to withhold their heat when your hands are dry..drink..defensive tactics might be employed. -. "I'm not sure I'd trust any electronics," Lechat cautioned, "Could be risky," Bernard agreed after a second's reflection. "If Stern and whoever else is involved have been preparing for this, I wouldn't put it past them to have taps and call-monitor programs anywhere. Someone will have to go there." a modified high-five..draws a smile from him. He takes a moment to thank God for keeping him alive, and he thanks his. authorities. He shoves the currency into his pockets once more..beyond the horizon. "I can see your point to a degree," Pernak said eventually. "But people continue to accumulate possessions long after they've ceased to serve any material purpose because they satisfy recognition needs too." "Who are you?" he demanded. The formality had evaporated from his voice. "Are you in authority here? If so, what are your rank and title?" "You shouldn't make up stuff like that about your own mother." "Well, hello, Sergeant," she s. aid huskily. "I was beginning to wonder if I had a deserter. Now, I wonder what could be on your mind at this time of night." Lechat looked at them for a few seconds longer, then sat up and mustered a grin. "Well, what can I say? Good luck. The aircraft touched down softly, and a pair of double doors slid open halfway along the side nearest to the reception party. A tall, burly, red-bearded Chironian wearing a dark parka with a thick belt buckled over it jumped out, followed by another, similarly clad but more slender and catlike. More figures became visible inside when the cabin light came on. Laid out neatly along the floor behind them were two rows of plastic' bundles the size of sleeping bags.. "Definitely not. But then--" Fallows faltered as he tried to backtrack to where he had lost the thread.. Nevertheless, during the week that she'd been staying with Aunt Gen, she awakened each morning with. truck from Colorado.. "Old Yeller would be your dog?".. all around her people perished in the cold and fell through the ice that, though solid under her, was. clenched with such rage that she couldn't release the pole, she made her bid for being Quasimodo. "What's wrong? What can I do?" Micky worried, although she no longer expected a coherent reply or. Micky finished her coffee in long swallows, as though she had forgotten it wasn't spiked, and though she. "What did you mean when you said 'all bets are off'?" "\_but he was on the needle," Geneva said. "Heroin. A loser in everyone's eyes but mine. I just knew he. Even as instinct argued that she was hearing the clear ring of truth, reason insisted it was the reverberant. "Relax." Micky switched on the light above the sink. "I can handle it.".. than like a canine.. "The competition is pretty stiff," Leilani acknowledged.. appropriate of all her mother's fragrances.. reverse osmosis in a properly formulated hot bath. She traveled with such a spectacular. "Port Norday?". Jean shook her head, still refusing to contemplate the prospect. "But why does it have to be over?" She looked imploringly at Bernard. "We were happy all those years in the ship, weren't we? We had our friends, like Jerry and Eve, we had the children. There was your job. Why should this planet take it all away from us? They don't have the right. We never wanted anything from them. It's-it's all wrong.".. 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." "Well, I think there's something to be scared about," Paula said. "Suppose they turn out to be really mean and don't want to mess around with talking at all. Suppose they send a missile up at us without any warning or anything .. I mean, we'd be stuck out in space like a sitting duck, wouldn't we. Then where would we be?".. Oh, Lord, there's just one door, the sucker's magically locked, all his tricks are thwarted, and he's. inhuman and supernatural lurk in basements and in cobweb-festooned attics. In. crop of fiery red hair snares Curtis by the shirt, nearly causing him to skid off his feet. "Hey, hey, hey!. Curtis quickly feels his way past the sink, past the stacked washer and dryer, to a tall narrow door. A. nervous settlers wending westward when the interstate had been de-lined not by pavement and signposts. Outside once more, he tells the dog to sit. The pooch settles obediently beside the diner door. The boy. in daylight, they had slouched low, to avoid being seen by passing motorists who might signal the driver. Fate possessed the sharper teeth, the stronger jaws.. every time." Finally he smiled.. shame. And though she had never expected to speak to another human being about those years of ordeal. 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. No longer panting, the dog slips past Curtis, brushing his leg. Evidently the dark room holds nothing. SWAT squad, but more accurately a SWAT platoon. Shiny black riot helmets. Shatterproof acrylic face. Now she knew why Earth seemed so far away. And she knew too what her mind in its wisdom had been cloaking and shielding from her. It was fear. "Shall we be getting back to the party then?" Hanlon asked as they descended a broad flight of steps in the intermediate Level plaza after Jay had departed for the Maryland module. Bernard shook his head and gestured in the direction of the couple from the Mayflower H, who were glancing furtively around them while a handling machine by the exit unloaded their carts onto a conveyer that looked as if it fed down to the level below. "But look what's happening," he said. "How long can you keep up with that kind of thing? What happens when everyone starts acting like that?". After a few seconds of silence Jay conceded, "Okay, I can see how it might be a good way of getting rid of the odd freak here and there. But what do you do when a whole bunch of them get together?". Such potent snakes of fear and anger, or that her heart could be inflamed and set racing by their sudden. Only a small window, and in this heat, the roiling steam wouldn't properly vent. If Curtis could trade this particular swell adventure for a raft and a river, he would without hesitation. Bernard acknowledged with a nod and leaned forward to speak in a low voice to the face that had appeared on an auxiliary screen. "This is urgent, Admiral. Make sure that all the sky-roof outer shutters are closed immediately." Jay frowned and looked mildly uncomfortable. "Sex?" he hazarded. A gong of sheer fantasy. If warehouse decor favored red light, as reputed, then this atmosphere was holier suited to a prostitute. Those sagacities and uncounted others are from Mother's Big Book of Street-Smart Advice for the. Wendy sighed. "We all have our plights and pickles." More saddles are braced among the blankets, some as smooth as the first, but others enhanced with. "Are you planning to grant it?" Noah asked. "What about alligators?" Micky asked her aunt. "Yes, but that situation can't last. If the Army doesn't get them soon, the Chironians will." You can throw them away, little mouse. Only you. "When we were discussing the Continuity of Office clause," Kalens prompted. At least a pile of elf droppings, but the closet held nothing more exotic than one dead cockroach. Jay looked worried, and Bernard appalled. "You can't let people take the law into their own hands like that," Bernard insisted. "Unchecked violence--mob rule--God alone~ knows what else. It's plain uncivilized--barbaric. You're going to have to change the system sooner or later." Battle Module maintaining speed and course, and about to enter eclipse from the Kuan-yin. With all public bars having been put off-limits to the Mayflower Ifs soldiers after the shooting, the party couldn't have come at a better time, Colman reflected as he leaned against the bar and nursed his glass while gazing around the room. Swley and Stanislaw were behind him in a corner with a mixed group of Chironians and seemed interested in the planet's travel facilities; Sirocco was with another group in the center of the room discussing the war news with another group, and Maddock, looking slightly disheveled, was sprawled along a couch in an alcove on the far side with his arm draped around Wendy, another girl from the Mayflower II, who seemed to be asleep. It was especially nice to get away from the political row that had been splitting the Mission into factions ever since the morning after the shooting. Kalens wanted to impose Terran law on Franklin, Lechat wanted everybody to move to Iberia, somebody called Ramisson wanted to disband Congress and phase into the Chironian population, and somewhere in the middle Wellesley was trying to steer a course between all of them. At one extreme some people were ignoring the directive to remain in the Canaveral area and moving out, while at the other some were supporting Kalens by staging anti-Chironian demonstrations with demands for a get-tough policy. Padawski and the group who had been with him at The Two Moons, including Anita, were being confined to the military base at Canaveral pending a hearing of the charges of disobeying orders and disorderly conduct. In addition Ramelly had been charged with assault, and Padawski with failing to uphold discipline among members of his unit as well as with publicly issuing threats. The threats were the main reason for Padawski's group being confined to base, since some politicians were worried about possible reactions from the Chironians if they were allowed out and about. Colman couldn't see any risk of retaliation, since none of the Chironians that he had talked to attached any great significance to the incident. He only wished more of the politicians would see things the same way instead of blowing the incident out of proportion to suit their own ends. If they had stayed out of the situation and left the Army to deal with its own people in its own way, the whole thing would probably have been forgotten already, he thought to himself. Behind her, Leilani and Micky stared at each other across the dinette table. For languid seconds in the. Luck never favored Leilani, however, so she didn't assume that this would be the night when he received. In Rickster's soft features, as well as in his earnest eyes, were a profound natural kindness that he hadn't. Behind it. Her sweaty hands had slipped on the polished steel, but surely some damage had been done to. Squinching her face, Leilani said, "I bet it pulls up its roots late at night and creeps around the." With great satisfaction, Geneva noted, raising her coffee cup as if in a toast to the liberating power of. A crash rocks the room, rattles cookware. Someone slamming through the swinging door from the. Monkey might scamper, the boy turns a corner at a long butcher block and encounters a cook who's. Five-hundred rummy. Intention of pulling shut the insulated steel door. This might be a bulletproof refuge, or the next-best thing. And then answered to her name, although usually she appeared not to know who she was? or to care. Locales is entirely coincidental. "So now," said Micky, "in addition to your perpetually wasted tofu-peaches-bean-sprouts mother and. As the snake slithered along the wall and under the tall chest of drawers, Sinsemilla bounced on the bed. To consider the taste? As though she has drunk orange juice before. Bernard looked at Lechat. Lechat frowned and seemed about to object. Then he thought some more about it and, in the end, sighed, showed his empty palms, and nodded. Bernard turned back to Jay. "Okay, see what you can do. If you do find him, ask him to get over here as soon as he can make it." Toward enemy positions, another tire blows. An air line ruptures and pressure falls and the brakes. "Isn't that a Hawaiian name?" Micky asked. Of the cowboys who might be? Surely are? in the vicinity, or into another posse of FBI agents. On TV? That show, America's Funniest Home

Videos." would actually tighten up a notch." "That's my whole point," Bernard told them. "They're

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