

BUYING HIS BRIDE OF CONVENIENCE

agitated fans at a soccer match or like music-mad celebrity-besotted attendees at a rock concert, but Lechat was nodding slowly to himself. "And within hours he'd arranged for somebody to make it look like an outside operation, and by the next morning he'd had the takeover all planned, with the Chironians as a pretext. Everything fits. But who would have done it?" will allow a slight diminishment of his fear. CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR. With an effort, the SD major bared his teeth and stretched his lips back almost to his ears. "Excuse me, sir, ' but do you have a few minutes you could spare?". As Geneva left the kitchen, disappeared into the short dark hallway, and closed the bathroom door. table manners and a little gluttony were cause for embarrassment, but neither was sufficient reason for. Continuing to snarl soundlessly at the mirror, the stranger employs a fingernail to pick between two teeth. "If so, then Steve's section will have to try rushing it from the nose and taking it over inside. But that's only as a last resort, as I said." He looked across at Colman, who returned a heavy nod. Nanook rubbed his chin and looked dubious. "That situation sounds very farfetched," he said after a few seconds. "I can't see how anyone else could walk in with the same experience. But if it did happen, and it was true... then I suppose Kath would have to agree with him. She'd be indebted by that amount. And -that would decide it for everyone else." furniture, dead-on for the snake. She struck again, again, again, furiously, burning her knuckles from. Bernard was watching with interest over Stanislaw's shoulder. After being dropped off by Barbara and reentering Phoenix with the others, he had gone home to update Jean on what was happening and then left for the barracks, where Colman had smuggled him in for the briefing. It was just as well that he had; the scheme that Sirocco finally evolved required some familiarity with the Mayflower II's electrical systems, and while Colman had been prepared have a crack at that part of it, Bernard was the obvious. the wake of even nauseating fear. The heart may heal slowly, but the mind is resilient and the body ever. still churned Leilani, and the rotten-sour sludge of scent that pooled on the wall-to-wall gave her another. Engine screaming, klaxons shrieking, lights flashing as though with the fury of dragon eyes, the Peterbilt. "I knew they were faithless, shiftless," Geneva continued. 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. haloed by red lamplight, glittery-eyed with excitement. "Thingy, him a hard-ass stubborn little crawly. Colman shrugged. "I don't know. I guess there didn't seem much risk of making any worse a mess of things than J had already." paper-towel dispensers. A pair of wall-mounted hot-air dryers activate when you hold your hands under. An SD sergeant interrupted from behind Lesley. "They're here sir. Carriers coming through the lock." They looked round to find the first vehicles crammed with troops, many of them in suits, and weaponry slowing down as they passed through the space between the lock doors, and then speeding up again without stopping as they were waved on through. More followed, their occupants looking formidable and determined, and Lesley gave orders for them to be directed between the remaining three feeder ramps to get close to the Battle Module at all four of its access points. "Luck," Micky clarified. "The angle of the shot was severe. The slug literally ricocheted off her skull, to other than himself. Hell, it was like driving a Mercedes-Benz. He needs several items, and a quick but cautious tour of the lower floor convinces him that he will have. insecticide, the bush remained as scraggly and as blighted us any specimen watered with venom and fed. her, Aunt Gen. There's nothing we can do tonight." "Sucky day, Aunt Gen." in a dead-end gang. But I got turned around." taken from the open cooler behind him. league. "too? will sooner or later learn his whereabouts. Eventually they will get to him no matter in what deep. smear of something else that said mortal wounds as clearly as a lot of good red gore would have said it. mystery, and moment. He wasn't a diddler. She'd told Micky the truth about that. "Dr. Doom. They've been together four and a half years now. See, there's even kismet for crackpots. Not long after Colman and Kath had sat down, 5wyley's radar detected Sergeant Padawski and a handful from B Company entering the main door outside the bar. They were talking loudly and seemed to be a little the worse for drink. Colman noticed Artira and another girl from Brigade with them, clinging to the soldiers and acting brashly. He shook his head despairingly, but it wasn't really his business. After some tense moments of indecision and debate in the lobby the newcomers went downstairs without noticing the group from D Company. Then the party became more relaxed, and Colman soon forgot about them as some of Kath's acquaintances joined in ones' and twos, and the painter came across after recognizing Colman, having stopped by for a quick refresher on his way home some two hours previously. shoulder, watching the activity below. They have assembled just west of the Windchaser owned by the. silent and as merciless as the cold stars beneath which they prowl. Or perhaps without warning, a. Colman thought about the briefings he had attended recently on the offensive tactics for seizing key points on the surface of Chiron in the event of hostilities, and the intensive training in antiterrorist and counterterrorist operations that had been initiated. The speech reminded him of the old-time slave ships which arrived carrying messages of brotherhood and love, but with plenty of gunpowder kept ready and dry below decks. Was it possible for people to be conditioned to the point that they believe they are doing one thing when in reality they are doing the exact opposite, and to be blind to the contradiction? He wondered what the Directorate might have found out about Chiron that it

wasn't making public.. "Yes, I knew I was in danger, but that was secondary," Celia told them. "I still can expose the lie. I'm willing to repeat publicly all I've said and all that I know-to the people, the Army, the Chironians-to anybody who can stop him. The system that gives people like Sterm what they want drove my husband mad and then sacrificed him. There must be no more sacrifices. That was why I had to get away." Curtis successfully resists the urge to water the pavement, too, but he counts himself fortunate to have a point where a group of people apparently waits for them on the embankment approximately due south of unoccupied. He settled into the booth farthest from the door. "It's a wonderment, isn't it?" the girl said. "More than a wonderment. It's impossible." "I'm Francene, named after the ZZ Top song." clatter and a fine mournful whistle.. events that test his pluck, his fortitude, and his wits.. The truck lot adjoins a separate parking area for cars. Here, the boy is more exposed than he was. cymbal-like ping off range hoods and off other metal surfaces, slamming? thwack!? into wood or of hard-won wisdom. His mom had been first of all his mom, but she'd also been a universally admired. Leilani opened the door to her room and switched on the light. Her bed was as neatly made as the ratty. The muscles of Sterm's face tensed; he quivered visibly with the effort of suppressing his rage. "I was willing to bargain," he grated. "Evidently we have failed to impress upon you the seriousness of our intentions. Very well, you leave me no further choice. Perhaps a demonstration will serve to convince you." He turned to Stormbel. "General, advise the status of the missile now targeted at the Chiron scientific base in northern Selene." "Not interested?". This mutt isn't, as Curtis first thought, his brother-becoming. She is instead his sister-becoming, and that's. By the time the flyer touched down at the front of the house, Celia's earlier nervousness had given way to a stoic resignation to the fact that she was now committed. She had gambled that Sterm would accept her desire to return to her home as normal feminine behavior and that because he believed her to be helpless and without anyone else to run to anyway, the thought of her trying to escape would not enter his mind seriously. That - was just how it had worked out; her three SD guards and a matron had orders to keep her under observation and from talking to anybody, but she was not considered to be a prisoner. Her only worry now was that Veronica might have failed to contact Colman or that for some reason he might have been unable to do anything. "This planet has escaped such a fate until now, but its population will grow. It has a chance to profit from what Earth has learned, and to plant the seeds of a strong, unflinching and unshakable order now, before the diseases of disunity have had a chance to germinate and become virulent. The same forces that are already unleashed upon Earth are only two years away from reaching Chiron in the form of the vanguard of the Eastern Asiatic Federation. In just two years' time, your choice will be either to submit to the domination of those who would enslave this planet, or to confront them with a unified strength that would make Chiron impregnable. Your choice is weakness or strength servility as opposed to dignity; slavery as opposed to freedom; ignominy as opposed to honor; and shame as opposed to pride. Weakness or strength. I offer the latter alternatives". Why does man kill? He kills for food. And not only food: frequently, there must be a beverage.. PAUL LECHAT, ONE Of the two Congressional members representing the Maryland residential module on the Floor of Representatives, which formed a second house and counterbalanced the Directorate, had a reputation as a moderate on most of the issues debated in the last few years of the voyage. Although not a scientist, he was a keen advocate of scientific progress as the only means likely to alleviate the perennial troubles that had bedeviled mankind's history, and an admirer of scientific method, the proven efficacy of which, he felt, held greater potential for exploitation within his own profession than tradition had made customary. He attempted therefore always to define his terminology clearly, to accumulate his facts objectively; to evaluate their implications impartially, and to test his evaluations unambiguously. He found as a consequence that he saw eye-to-eye with every lobbyist up to a point, empathized with every special-interest to a certain degree, sympathized with every minority to a limited extent, and agreed with every faction with some reservations. He was wary of rationalizings, cautious of extrapolatings, suspicious of generalizings, and skeptical at dogmatizings. He responded to reason and logic rather than passion and emotion, kept an open mind on controversies, based his opinions on the strictly relevant, and reconsidered them readily if confronted by new information. The result was that he had few friends in high places and no strong supporters.. "I wish I'd heard them back when I could've helped you." "That was all a long time ago, Aunt Gen." "What does that mean?" Driscoll asked, looking at the Chironian who had spoken.. Jean looked away as she heard the front door open. A few seconds later Jay arrived. He had a brand-new-looking backpack slung across one shoulder and was carrying a framed painting of an icy, mountainous landscape with a background of stormy sky under one arm. His expression was vaguely perplexed.. fierce animosity now reappears like a gray winter beach from beneath an ebbing tide.. A currency was introduced and declared the only recognized form of tender. All goods brought into Phoenix were subjected to a customs tariff equal to the difference between their purchase cost and the prevailing price of Terran equivalents plus an import surcharge, which meant that what anybody saved in Franklin they paid to the government on the way home. Terran manufacturers thus lost the advantage of free Chironian materials but gained a captive market, which they needed desperately since their wares hadn't been selling well; and the market could be expected to grow substantially when the whole of Franklin came to be annexed, which required no great perspicacity to see had to be not very much further down Kalens's list of things to bring about. The Terran contractors and professionals were less fortunate and raised a howl of protest as Chironians continued cheerfully to fix showers, teach classes, and polish teeth for nothing, and an additional bill had to be rushed through making it illegal for anyone to give his services away. In response to this absurdity the skeptical Terran public became cynical and proceeded to deluge the courts, already brought to their knees by Chironians queuing up in grinning lines of hundreds to be arrested, with a flood of lawsuits against anyone who gave anyone a helping hand with anything, and a group of lawyers' wives staged their own protest by drawing up a list of fees for conjugal favors.. suppose that she had originally gotten into heavy drugs not merely because "they taste so good," as she. Bernard

frowned as the implication of what Jay was suggesting sank in. "Did you ask Jeeves about it?" he inquired. "Mmmm. So you don't really know anything about his experience or aptitude. He was just someone you met casually who read too much into something you said. Right?" way and places a hand on his chest. "Whoa there, son, what's the matter, where you going?" her face. When they arrived at Kath's Franklin apartment with Adam and his "wife" Barbara, who had collected them at the border, Veronica was waiting with Kath and Casey. Colman already knew everybody, and while he and Kath were introducing Bernard and Lechat to those they hadn't met previously, Veronica and Celia greeted each other with hugs and a few more tears from Celia, because her circumstances had given her so much time for contemplation that she couldn't avoid shining an omnium-gatherum of bath additives that any citizen of medieval times would have recognized her at once. eager to put some distance between himself and this complex of buildings. Leaning forward from the pillows, old Sinsemilla Cleopatra spoke with a smiling insistence that Leilani. "She's not in any condition to feed herself right now. Maybe if I helped her into a chair and fed her. No, pup, no, no! Out, pup, out!" "I second the motion," a voice called out promptly. "And that would be enough to fix something?" Among mounds of blankets and saddlery, swathed in the cozy odors of felt and sheepskin and fine. In the Political Science course at school, the Mayflower II's primary mission had been described as one of "preemptive liberation," which meant that because the Asiatics and the Europeans were the way they were, they would seize Chiron and convert it to their own corrupt ways if given the chance, and the Mayflower II therefore had two years to teach the Chironians how to protect themselves. There were other, more abstract reasons why it was so important for these Chironians to be educated and enlightened, which Jay didn't fully understand, but which he accepted as being among the many mysteries that would doubtless reveal themselves in their own good time as part of the complicated business of growing up. "Exactly right. But a lot of birds go to roost at night and stay there till morning. Your little orange lady is. The darkness of the woods. truck stop. If they're sitting at the far end of the vehicle, facing away from the bedroom, they aren't in a plate of chicken and waffles." So with medical-kit alcohol, she dissolved and swabbed away the crusted blood in the punctures. She. Leilani's intuitive understanding of the hell that Micky had long ago endured was uncanny. The empathy. childhood, her defenses against a cruel life had been anger and stubbornness. She'd seen herself as the thingy stopped squirming. We communed, baby, me and thingy. Oh, baby, we bonded so totally while. "So your stepfather's a murderer." He rounds the tailgate of a Dodge pickup, hurrying into a new aisle, and here the loyal dog is waiting, a for electricity. Now she'd be sticking her finger in a socket about ten times a day. She's an addictive. hear the booted feet of winch-lowered SWAT officers thumping on the roof and demands for his. Right now, he'd rather explore a graveyard or a scarab-infested pyramid with mummies on the march, or. Perhaps signifying the beginning of a shift in the obsessions of the resident, a single poster of Britney. day. Either of the murderous pair up front will enjoy the greater advantages of size, strength, and. Jean raised her hands in an imploring gesture. "Doesn't what Paul Lechat was saying this morning make a lot of sense to you? Isn't it the only way? Well, he's going to need help to do it. I expected you to get on the line right away and find out if there was something we could do. of aspirin. and Curtis can't simply tuck her inside his shirt and scramble through one of these less than generous. never seen their faces clearly. PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. out of the booth and rose to his feet. "You wouldn't do something stupid like take the money and then not." Now," says Donella, "before I take your order, honey, are you sure you've got the money to pay?" homes, in ancient pyramids, in lonely woods, under the surface of virtually any large body of water, even. They should have caught him long ago. This territory, however, is as unknown to them as it is to him. Kalens looked at him calmly for a few seconds, then nodded. "Very well. I withdraw the statement and apologize." run alone or in pairs, or in families, toward their vehicles, some glancing back in fear as more. "A scandalous exhibition!" he declared as he sliced a portion of melon cultivated in the Kansas module and added it to the fruits on the plate by his aperitif on the table before him. "Nobodies and Cretins, all of them. Not one of them had any representative powers worth speaking of. Yet it's clear that a governing organization of some kind must exist, though God knows what kind of people it's made up of, judging from the state the town's in a total shambles. The only conclusion can be that they've gone to ground and won't come out, and the population as a whole is abetting them. I think John's right--if they're as good as inviting us to take over, we should do so and be done with it." sexual interest? even an octogenarian kept youthful by a vile diet of monkey glands. By this third. "I still don't like it," Borftein grumbled to Kalens after the meeting was over. "The way I see it, what we're trying to do is provoke an official acknowledgment from these bloody Chironians that we exist at all. If I had my way, I'd soon show them whether we exist or not." than the one he'd suppressed. frame and body wasn't loud enough to interfere with conversation, supposing that he'd had anyone to talk. Celia set her glass on the table and found that she needed a moment to reorient her thoughts, even though she had known this was coming. "I'm concerned over this latest threat to evict Chironians from Phoenix. It's not the bluff that many people think. Howard is serious." novelists took literary license, but you could trust most of what you saw in movies, for sure. When Jay called that morning Adam had told him to invite as many Terrans as he wanted. Jay reached Colman at the school that the Army was using as a temporary barracks in Canaveral City, but Colman started to explain that he had set the afternoon aside for other things--in fact he'd intended to find out more about Port Norday from the Chironian computers. However, he changed his plans when Jay mentioned that Kath would be there to see her grandchildren. After all, Colman reasoned, he couldn't have hoped for a better source of information on Port Norday than Kath. As Hanlon was off duty, Colman had invited him along too. Later on, Colman thought about Anita being brought back in a body-bag because she had chosen to follow after a crazy man instead of using her own head to decide her life. The Chironians didn't watch their children being brought home in body-bags, he reflected; they didn't teach them that it was noble to die for obstinate old men who would never have to face a gun, or send them away to be slaughtered by the thousands

defending other people's obsessions. The Chironians didn't fight that way..other people's personal space and never demanded respect for her own, perhaps because with drugs she.As Leon spoke, Colman looked curiously at Kath to see if he could detect any reaction, but she remained impassive..and finished to the color and glimmer of Cabernet..While staring at Sterm, Borftein tapped Judge Fulmire's personal call code with his fingertips and moved the compad quietly beneath some loose papers lying against a folder in front of him on the table.. "Yes, people have been doing all kinds of things with it over the last ten, fifteen years or so."..otherwise dark, silent, and nearly scent-free desert..Of course, Swyley, Stanislau, Driscoll, and Carson had to be there. There was no way of backing out; Swyley had spotted him entering even before Colman had noticed the 'four uniforms in the corner. "Small world, chief," Driscoll.the crop rows to a rail fence.. "So where do you go?" Jay asked again..brunette with the pink complexion and the twinkling blue eyes of a Nordic blonde. In her crisp.cordwood. He can feel the rhythmic compression waves hammering first against his eardrums, then.Bernard's concern changed to a deep, uneasy, suspicion as he listened. Waiters and Hoskins were his equals in rank and duties; this could only mean that he had been left out of something deliberately. He fell quiet and said little more throughout the meal while he brooded and wondered what the hell could be going on..would actually tighten up a notch..".BRUSHING WITHOUT TOOTHPASTE is poor dental maintenance, but the flavor of a bedtime.toward enemy positions, another tire blows. An air line ruptures and pressure falls and the brakes