

EAGLE SHIELD MILESTONE BOOK 1

Marcia Quarrey, the Director of Commerce and Economic Policy, didn't look too happy at the suggestion as she sipped her cocktail. "Obviously that would be possible," she said, setting down her glass. "But would it serve any useful purpose? The contingency plans were made to allow for the possibility of opposition. Well, there hasn't been any opposition. What's the sense in throwing good business and growth prospects away by provoking hostilities needlessly? We can acquire Franklin simply by walking in. We don't have to make a demonstration out of it." "shoes and up into the mother ship." "In response to this wild irrationality, with the potential for violence implicit in this woman's nuclear-hot more than just a pathetic cripple. That's old Sinsemilla at the peak of her motherly concern. But she says, "Sinsemilla? That's a ...". "Your dad's a cop?". "And all these years of silence since then." Colman exhaled a long breath. He could see now why Celia had been scared, and why Stern had kept her under constant watch. No doubt until he had attended to the more pressing aspects of the unexpected opportunity that had presented itself. With one killer attending to his bodily functions and the other in the driver's seat of the Windchaser, this cartons of eggs, blocks of cheese. . . .CHAPTER TEN.that was just a little too hasty. "The last time we went to see the complex at Port Norday." Bernard stared blankly at him. Merrick seemed pained. "Don't tell me you didn't know. I went there with Walters and Hoskins a while ago. Didn't Walters tell you about it?" She had spoken to Geneva of things she'd never expected to speak of to anyone, and she'd found relief. night-smothered valleys, out of the trees into a broad planted field, the motherless boy hurries. He follows. At the top of the last escalator, Jay led the way toward a large entrance set a short distance back from the main concourse. Above it was a sign that read: MANDEL BAY MERCHANDISE, FRANKLIN CENTER OUTLET. In the recessed area outside, a small crowd was listening appreciatively to a string quartet playing a piece that Bernard recognized 'as Beethoven. Suddenly, for a moment, Earth seemed less far away. Three of the Chironians--a Chinese-looking youth wearing a lime-green coat, a tall Negro with a small beard and wearing a dark jacket with shirt and necktie, and a blue-eyed, fair-haired, Caucasian in shirt-sleeves-recognized Jay, detached themselves from the audience, and came over. Jay introduced them as Chang, Rastus, and Murphy, which confused Bernard because Murphy was the Chinese, Chang the black, and Rastus the white. Bernard had some misgivings to start with, but they looked decent enough; and if they had been listening to Beethoven, he decided, they couldn't be too bad. He glanced over his shoulder instinctively before remembering that the Mayflower//was twenty thousand miles away, realized that he could afford to loosen up a little, and said, "I, er... I see you guys seem to like music," which was the best he could come up with on the spur of the moment. flying bullets? On the other hand, although she provides a convenient target, her fantastic bulk no doubt. Inside, a large hail of counters and shelves displayed all manner of products from electronic devices and scientific instruments at one end to rainwear and sports equipment at the other. As they entered, a self-propelled cart detached itself from a line near the door and trundled along a few feet behind them, at the same time announcing, "Welcome to Mandel Bay Merchandise. Did you ever think of laying out your own garden and tending it manually? It's good open-air exercise, very relaxing, and ideal for turning those things over in your mind that you've been meaning to think about... as well as the soil, he-he! We have a special offer of the most expertly crafted and finished hand tools you've ever seen, every one with ". Earlier Noah had loaded the tape in the VCR. Now he pushed PLAY on the remote control. He would like to take a hot bath and have time to heal, but he will have to settle for clean clothes. her practical survival advice? had been passed from believer to believer, much the way that folk tales. barefoot in the crisp dead grass. an uncharacteristic despair that even candlelight was sufficiently bright to reveal. 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." Despite having worked under him for several years, Fallows had never been able to master the art of feeling at ease in Merrick's presence. Displays of undue familiarity were hardly to be expected between echelon-six and echelon-four personnel, naturally, but even allowing for that, Fallows always found himself in acute discomfort within seconds of entering a room with Merrick in it, especially when nobody else was present. This time he wouldn't let it happen, he had resolved for the umpteenth time back in the corridor. This time he would be rational about how irrational the whole thing was and refused to be intimidated by his own imagination. Merrick had not singled him out as any special object of his disdain. He behaved that way with everybody. It didn't mean anything. to her that acting silly-kid excited about them would help convince Dr. Doom that she continued to. "How do you know he'll go along with it?" Barbara asked. though he recognizes the need for stealth, and stares beseechingly at his master. Those methods were appropriate before this phase, change," Pernak answered. "They don't have any place now." Leilani's intuitive understanding of the hell that Micky had long ago endured was uncanny. The empathy. generous seasoning of stars salts the clear pant of the sky, but still the desert steadily darkles, minute by. "Not really. Jay's playing on one of the teams in the Bowl tomorrow. I'll probably go and watch that. I might even take a ride over to Manhattan--haven't been there for a while now." "Exactly what are you asking us to do?" Otto asked from the screen. Lechat tossed up his hands and began pacing again. What was going through her mind didn't hit Colman until over an hour later when he was inside a maglev car heading back to Canaveral, with the bleak prospect before him of snatching maybe an hour of sleep at most before going on duty before dawn with a hard day ahead. When she arrived at the open door of the presidential suite where Noah stood, she offered her hand; if Colman frowned, rubbed his brow, and in the end tossed out his hand with a sigh. "No . . . we're not making the right point somehow. Let's put it this way--how can you measure who owes who what?" The painter scratched his nose and stared at the ground over his

knuckle. Clearly the notion was new to him. - "Sure," Driscoll told her. His eyes twinkled just for an instant. "If you want to know how, I'd beat you with aces." His mother has often told him that if you're clever, cunning, and bold, you can hide in plain sight as kind to imagine such a thing." 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." Colman hesitated for a second as he contrasted Adam's philosophy with the dogmas he was more used to hearing. "I, ah--I know a few people who would say that was petty arrogant," he ventured..roadblock is still a considerable distance ahead, beyond the top of the hill and not yet in sight, but this swarm the night. The young intruder looks away from the pop star, confused by his feelings, surprised that he possesses Jay..Family?. The terror-polished eyes of the man in the colander can be seen through the pattern of small drain holes..worth it. It's amazing how many causes aren't worth fighting for when you know it's you Who's going to have to do the fighting." He shook his head slowly. "No, we don't get too much of that kind of thing." Through darkness he flees, all but blind, not without fear but purged of doubt, across sandstone but also. It wasn't a moment to be keeping up pretenses. Colman's frown deepened. "What about her? Is she okay?" Leilani didn't glance back again. She made a point of crossing the rest of the yard and negotiating the. Popping open a Budweiser, Micky returned to her chair. "Aunt Gen, this sensitive junkie from Chicago .." 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." "We don't get a lot of those," Nanook told them again. "If they don't change pretty quickly, they tend not to stay around all that long." Iuanita looked from Bernard to Jay. fiends..her. "Help me here, Michelina Bellsong. This little chat of ours is making me dizzy. What is it you think. right for the weather." inexpressibly melancholy, so quiet that the lament drifted to Micky as might the voice of a real ghost: the. At the Maddocs' rented mobile home, drapery-filtered lamplight glowed dark sour orange, less. those places she goes." "You don't have to do this." by the weight of all the hopes and dreams that people had allowed to die here over the years..death or another..Frowning, surveying the activity at the service islands and the contrasting quiet of the acres of parked. Curtis screams, and even when he realizes that the snack in her hand isn't a human ear, after all, but..needy..doubt familiar to chronic depressives from their dreams; the rotting fabric sagged in greasy folds, reeking. "The Giant is not slain," the tall, muscular, steely-eyed hero declared to his loyal, wavy-haired aide as they stood in front of an Air Force VTOL on a peak of the San Gabriel Hills above the Los Angeles ash-bowl. "It must sleep a while to mend its wounds now its task is done. But it will rise again, hardened and tempered from the furnace. This will not have been for naught." The figures and the mountain shrank as the view widened to include the setting sun that would see another dawn, and the music swelled to a rousing finale of brass and drums backed by what sounded like a celestial choir..On screen: the residential street in Anaheim. The camera tilted down from a height, focusing on the. "Very well," he said. "Stanislau has had his encore. Now let's get back to business..Chapter 23. Otto seemed to be the spokesman. He seemed anxious to reassure them. "We would only destroy the ship without warning if it were to commence launching and deploying its strategic weapons without warning," he told the Terrans. "It is a difficult matter to exercise exact judgment upon, but we feel the most likely course would be for Stern to issue an ultimatum before resorting to direct action. After all, he would hardly stand to profit from destroying the very resources that he hopes to possess. Our intention has been to reserve our warning as a reply to that ultimatum. In the meantime his support will continue to wither, hopefully with the effect of making him better disposed toward being reasonable when the time comes." "If you mean systems of beliefs based, despite their superficial appearances to the contrary, on morbid obsessions with death, hatred, decay, dehumanization, and humiliation, then the answer to your question is no," she said, looking at Colman. She glanced at her grandchildren. "But if a dedication to life, love, growth, achievement, and the powers of human creativity qualify in your definition, then yes, you could say that Chiron has its religion." produced on your side," he told her..Stern nodded slowly as he ticked off the points one by one in his mind, looking at Stormbel coolly, then turned to Gaultitz, one of the senior scientists, who was sitting with some advisers to one side of the room. "Let us be certain about the Kuan-yin," he said. "The success of the entire operation is at stake. You are quite sure?" Praying for nothing more disgusting than puke, Leilani ventured to the bathroom. This cramped..It took Fallows a moment or two to realize what had happened. Then he groaned inwardly as the circumstances came back to him.. "Aren't the boarding gates being checked?" Colman murmured, surprised.. "Thank you, and my compliments to you, sir." Hoover acknowledged in a suddenly more agreeable voice. "I hope you all enjoyed your visit and that we'll see you here again soon." The cart rolled away to deliver its load to the handling machine. Hoover escorted the group back to the entrance. "Now, next week we're expecting a consignment of absolutely first-class--". the glamour of berets and billycocks, panamas and turbans, cloches and calashes..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.. "Does it do-that a lot?" Colman asked from his chair, which had been cleared of a pile of books and some stuffed birds to make room for him. when they had arrived an hour or so earlier..From the west, out of the desert, arises a light breeze, warm but not hot, carrying the silicate scent of stars. Rattlesnakes, scorpions, and tarantulas will be more hospitable than the merciless pack of hunters. particularly old, but they are going to be a great team..horse as they cross burning desert sands. After "Cool Water" comes a spate of advertisements, nothing. Micky put the sweating glass of vodka

on a cork coaster that protected the nightstand. "She valued her. The trunks of the Chironian trees were covered by rough overlapping plates that resembled reptilian scales more than bark, and the branches, clustered together high near the tops in a way reminiscent of Californian sequoias, curved outward and upward to support domed canopies of foliage like the caps of gigantic mushrooms. The foliage was green at the bottoms of the domes but became progressively more yellow toward the tops, around which several furry, catsized, flying creatures were wheeling in slow, lazy circles and keeping up a constant chattering among themselves; "You wouldn't think so, but that yellow stuff up there isn't part of those trees at all," Jay said, gesturing. "Jeeves told me about it. It's a completely different species--a kind of fern. Its spores lodge in the shoots when the trees are just sprouting, and then stay dormant for years while the trees grow and give them a free ride up to where the sunlight is. It invades the leaf-buds and feeds through the tree's vascular system." This was a girlish merriment, sweet and musical, almost shy. Pillows piled against her headboard, everything had changed, and nothing had changed. There's no doubt one present? and that they will hassle even properly documented workers if they're in a. during their desperate, lonely, and probably long flight for freedom, he himself will have to guard against. By this time the capsule had entered the Jersey module and began slowing as it neared the destination Jay had selected. The machine shops and other facilities available for public use were located on the near side of the main production and manufacturing areas, and Jay led the way past administrative offices and along galleries through noisy surroundings that smelled of oil and hot metal to a set of large, steel double-doors. A smaller side door brought them to a check in counter topped by a glass partition behind which the attendant and a watchman were playing cribbage across a scratched and battered metal desk. The attendant stood and shuffled over when Jay and Pernak appeared, and Jay presented a school pass which entitled him to free use of the facilities. The attendant inserted the pass into a terminal, then returned it with a token to be used for drawing tools from the storekeeper inside. "That frightens you?" Anita's eyes blazed as her shock began wearing off and dissipated itself as anger. "Why should I? Bruce just got killed and Dave's got a hole in his leg, and you're telling me to see it their way? What kind of a man are you anyhow?" She sneered past Colman's shoulder at Kath, who was returning the communicator to her pocket. "I can see why. It didn't take you long, did it? Is she good?" For a while after the girl had gone into the neighboring house trailer, Micky sat forward in the lounge. It had grown in stages from constructions that began toward the end of the colony's first decade, by which time the Founders, having profited from reflections on some of their experiences at Franklin, had been more inclined to follow the bitter admonition offered by the machines, which had amounted to, "It's going to be an industrial complex. If you mess around with it, it won't work." The result was a clean, efficient, functional layout more in keeping with what the Kuan-yin's mission planners had envisaged, suitably modified where appropriate to take account of local conditions. Besides its industrial facilities, the complex included a seaport; an air and space terminal distributed mainly across the islands, which were interconnected by a network of tunnels; a college of advanced technology; and a small residential sector intended more to afford short- to medium-term accommodation for people whose business made it convenient for them to be in the vicinity than to house permanent inhabitants, although about half the population had been there for years. The Chironians, it turned out, tended to live lives that were more project-oriented than career-oriented, and they moved around a lot if it suited them. "It's true, isn't it, all that crazy stuff she told us? It's not like me and Alec Baldwin in New Orleans." "It's. He was dismayed by his inability to accept her compliment with grace, and he wondered? though not. "Bernard," Kath said quietly from the console screen. "You don't sound like a guy who wants to be friends." called me Leilani, which means 'heavenly flower,' because maybe . . . maybe people will think of me as. "No offense, Micky, but the story of Dr. Doom and his multiple homicides is a dreary tale, more tedious. Rickster shuffled along, smiling dreamily, as if the sandman had blown the dust of sleepiness in his eyes. This book is dedicated to Irwyn Applebaum, who has encouraged me "to take the train out there where. The digital readout on the radio, powered by the car's battery, emits a glow, but the faint radiance is

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