

## **KNIGHT IN TARNISHED ARMOR**

In thirteen minutes the firefight was all over. Colman stood on the gravel bank of the stream and watched as a bewildered major was led from the enemy bunker, followed by his numb staff, who joined the gaggle of disarmed defenders being herded together under the watchful eyes of smirking Third Platoon guards. The primary objective had been to take prisoners and obtain intelligence, and the crop had yielded two captains in addition to the major, a first and a second lieutenant, a chief warrant officer, a sergeant major, two sergeants, and over a dozen enlisted men. Moreover, the call-sign lists and maps had been seized intact, along with invaluable communications and weapons-control equipment. Not a bad haul at all, Colman reflected with satisfaction. The assumption here is that matters not subject to cut-and-dried "hard" proof don't bear any relation to evidence, experience, or reason at all and are, therefore, completely arbitrary. There is considerable indirect evidence one can bring against this view. For one thing, the people who advance it don't stick to it in their own lives; they make decisions based on indirect evidence all the time and strongly resist any imputation that such decisions are arbitrary. For another, if it were possible to do criticism according to hard-and-fast, totally objective rules, the editor could hire anyone to do it and pay a lot less than he has to do now for people with special ability and training (low though that pay necessarily is). It's true that the apparatus by which critics judge books is subjective in the sense of being inside the critic and not outside, unique, and based on the intangibles of training, talent, and experience. But that doesn't per se make it arbitrary. What can make it seem arbitrary is that the whole preliminary process of judgment, if you trace it through all its stages, is coextensive with the critic's entire education. So critics tend to suppress it in reviews (with time and training most of it becomes automatic, anyway). Besides, much critical thinking consists in gestalt thinking, or the recognition of patterns, which does occur instantaneously in the critic's head, although without memory, experience, and the constant checking of novel objects against templates-in-the-head (which are constantly being revised in the light of new experience), it could not occur at all.\* Hence angry readers can make the objection above, or add: My mother told me once she was sorry I wasn't handsome enough to get by without working. Listen. Now, months later, I remember it and my skin again goes warm. "Get out of here," I say to the lads. Subject: Schedule Compliance in Programming Services Bill, Old Buddy, I think you have problems. isfy their curiosity in here where we can watch them, she reasoned, than have them messing things up outside. killed? Birdie let me take a look at his room, but I didn't find a thing, not even an abandoned paperclip. Sue" (a Nebula award winner), and the gripping story you are about to read. He also wrote a.79. slip it in while I was taking the exam, only it never seemed quite natural. Have you ever noticed that you. "They would weigh me down," said Amos, "and I could not be back for lunch. No, I need a suit of. worry about where their next breath was coming from." "Then what are the treasures?" Amos asked, full of curiosity. pretty nice package: a fifteen-percent across-the-board hourly rate increase; full-paid hospitalization: "No, you can't! The baby?" STEVEN UTLEY. "But will it work even if the grey man is already in the garden of violent colors and rich perfumes, walking past the pink marble fountains where the black butterflies glisten on their rims?" asked Jack. She went to her desk and returned a moment later with a second poem: "Sure, when I was really young." I repeat by long-remembered rote: "Rock breaks scissors, scissors. from the bottom of the luminous pool." "Til certainly try it," Barry promised. "But how do I get to be a member?" "Hey?" Jason grabbed Barry's hand and gave it an earnest squeeze. "Don't forget, if you do get.3. Then your opinion is purely subjective. The penthouse seemed to have gone to Lang and Crawford as an unasked-for prerogative. It just. Critics seem to find it necessary, at least once in a career, to write a statement defending criticism per se. Shaw, Pauline Kael, Eric Bent-ley, and James Blish have all done it. That I'm doing it too, doesn't prove I'm in the same league, but it does indicate the persistence of the issues involved and that they occur outside, as well as inside, science fiction..54. permit these things to grow by ingesting sand and rock and turning it into plastic-like materials. So we. to see how well I had learned my lessons, asked me three questions. I answered all three, and these. grey man would blend completely in with the scenery and never get out again. Up this one is a mountain. over Jain's shoulder. "Which?" "Yes, Tom?" Zorphwar we had yesterday, and I most commend yon on how weU you handled the forces of Zorph. It was a challenge all the way, and if I had not been on my toes, your final desperate tactic of launching an twelve thousand of your doomsday torpedoes would have destroyed me. However, when you made your attack, I was safely docked at a base star and thus protected by its powerful energy screens. Your attack succeeded only in wiping out the remnants of your own forces. likes to suck the country-girl image for all it's worth. way from my Air Force days. So if you have any objections you might as well tell me up front". She was answered by quiet assent and nods of the head. She did not acknowledge it but plowed. images bloom and expire, ten every second: the tracer is following each queen back to the egg, men the. order to make it possible to build up a great army of cannon fodder that despots will use for world. keyboard on Nagami's synthesizer. species. some of the most beautiful photography that has ever graced a science fiction film. sunlight and not have them killed by the ultraviolet. . . . "Over there," said Amos pointing back out the door, "is that end. And over there is this end," and he pointed out the front window, "and right here is the other end." He looked at me sharply, fear creeping back. "Please. No!". in return for a favor he did me a million years past, for it was he who made this cave for me by artful and. "For Earth, maybe. Here it was a torrential rainfall. It reached seeds or spores in the ground and triggered them to start growing. We're going to have to watch it when we use anything containing plastic. What does that include?" "No, nothing," said Smith. "That's all right, Jack, thank you." He broke the connection. After a moment he turned to the breadboard controls of the device and changed one setting slightly. In the screen, Peg turned and walked backward out of the office. When he turned the knob the other way, she repeated these actions in reverse. Smith tinkered with the other controls until he got a view

of the calendar on Jack's desk. It was Friday, June 15<sup>th</sup> last week...streamers of orange and scarlet radiated out across the surface of the poly while the shape narrowed and."Don't worry, there's another over behind you." Now that they were looking for them, they quickly spied four of the creatures. Song took a sample bag from her pouch and held it open in front of the beast. It crawled halfway into the bag, then seemed to think something was wrong. It stopped, but Song nudged it in and picked it up. She peered at the underside and laughed in wonder...out of them." Smith turns to the ship again: the deck is empty. He dips below to look at the hold, filled with casks, then the cabin, then the forecabin...their year that way. But rather than distress Amanda further by asking about it, I bit my tongue and everything they did.. "Today the sustenance that our industries crave is not oil, but minerals. Fifty years from now our understanding of controlled-fusion processes will probably have eliminated that source of shortages too, but in the meantime shorter sighted political considerations are recreating the climate of tension and rivalry that hinged around the oil issue at the close of the last century. Obviously, South Africa's importance in this context is shaping the current pattern of power maneuvering, and the probable flashpoint for another East-West collision will again be the Iran-Palestine border region, which our strategists expect the Soviets to contest to gain access to the Indian Ocean in preparation for the support of a war of so-called black African liberation against the South." "I'm just..." occasional crew mutinies. The console commands that control your warship are simple and are given in. That, I think, would be a waste of time. We are not necessarily going to breed thousands of transcendent geniuses out of an Einstein or thousands of diabolical villains out of a Hitler.. The Best from F & SF, #23 Copyright ? 1976,1977,1978, 1979,1980 by Mercury Press, Inc...seemingly insignificant clue in a detective story from which the solution to the whole mystery gradually... closet and wasn't looking in that direction, but the movement caught my eye. Something hopped in the. That afternoon I picked up Birdie Pawlowicz at the Brewster Hotel and took her to Harry Spinner's. I don't think the fault's in Jain. I detect no significant difference from other conceits. Her skin still. "Because Mrs. Bushyager thinks she's shackled up somewhere with Mr. Bushyager. She'd like you to. to read it.. I lie down unpeacefully? exhausted? and sleep, and my dreams are of weathered stone. And I. flow of conversation and make it seem so natural couldn't be all wrong.. Miss Ohio, who can't do any-tiling but play a damn jew's-harp, if you'll excuse my language, or Miss. "No. Did you read that?" barracks.. "Then I shall hunt the deer no more," he said, "if you will give me leave to hunt that which is now all at once dearer to me." bona fide starship, in which the captain and I were to have accelerated through normal space to. A flattering word. edge and called: to expand?" "A six-pack of Schlitz," he said, quite off the top of his head. "I asked, but I didn't get any answers." ..our eyes it had become a thunderbolt? a thunderbolt cast heavenward by a madman in a magnificent, if. her arms, then used one hand to hold it while she began pinning it in place. The poly turned a bright. "Just-" She hesitates. "Not like the other times? Don't take this seriously, okay?" Q: What's da pard of a song dad isn'd da woids?. 46. She smiled a meaningful, unblemished smile and gave his hand a quick, trusting squeeze. "You know, Larry-you're an all-right guy." and laughing. She had known a lot of famous people and was a fountain of anecdotes, most of them. Samuel R. (Chip) Delany has for some time been one of sfs most interesting novelists (Dhargren, Triton, et cetera) and one of the field's more thoughtful critics (The Jewel-Hinged Jaw: Notes of the Language of Science Fiction). He has not written much short fiction recently, and so we are especially pleased to offer this fresh and magical change of pace.. too long, I get a headache." traveled far and seen much, but never a beauty such as yours." Outside, the clouds hung so low the top of the ship's tallest mast threatened to prick one open. The wind tossed about in Amos\* red hair and scurried in and out of his rags. Sitting on the railing of the ship was a sailor splicing a rope.. A: The Lathe of Heaven. breathing for a moment. Holding the cord, he turned slowly. The ghost images whirled, vanished.. She was gone, but the hate remained. Nolan felt its force as he weren't whole. I wasn't whole. He had something I didn't have, something we'd been sharing. She. two thousand hours, beginning with a Paleocene bee, he has traveled back into the Cretaceous. He stops. she could pick up the hem, her left hand stiffened.. Earthling Swine! I, Parker, Emperor and Commander and Chief of the Hordes of Zorph, do here give warning. Tomorrow afternoon at 14:00 hours I shall commence the obliteration of all decadent hu-manoid pigs in my galaxy. Be at your console at the appointed hour! You are forewarned but foredoomed.. Crawford nodded. He looked around at the other occupants of the room. There was the Surface Mission Commander, Mary Lang, the black woman he had seen inside the dome just before the blowout She was sitting on the edge of Lou Prager's cot, her head cradled in her hands. In a way, she was a more shocking sight than Lou. No one who knew her would have thought she could be brought to this limp state of apathy. She had not moved for the last hour.. fruits and nutrients here.. The Podkayne was lowered to the ground, and sadly decommissioned. It was a bad day for Mary Lang, the worst since the day of the blowout. She saw it as a necessary but infamous thing to do to a proud flying machine. She brooded about it for a week, becoming short-tempered and almost unapproachable. Then she asked Crawford to join her in the private shelter. It was the first time she had asked any of the other four. They lay in each other's arms for an hour, and Lang quietly sobbed on his chest. Crawford was proud that she had chosen him for her companion when she could no longer maintain her tough, competent show of strength. In a way, it was a strong thing to do, to expose weakness to the one person among the four who might possibly be her rival for leadership. He did not betray the trust. In the end, she was comforting him.. immediate treatment for chilblains, arthritis and fallen arches.. standardize their product This can be done, but it tends to eliminate from fiction these idiosyncratic. "You." She points at me. "Here." She indicates the rock face. The words are simple commands given to a child.. A lot of the other Union members had stopped in The Fig Leaf, and the place was full. Some of the guys were already buying their booze on the cuff, and everybody had glum looks on their faces. I wasn't particularly surprised when the argument between the bricklayer and the brickmaker resumed where it had left off. This time, nobody broke it up. Thus, the facts alone make it clear that the King has no such intent His real purpose in. Fm done with the circuit chips. Now the easy staff. I wryly note the

male and female plugs Fm connecting. Jain. . . .At the bottom of the pool is a piece of mirror. Can you be back by lunch?"From across the room Billy Belay tried to make a sign for Amos to be quiet, but the grey man turned. ever since then she's been dreading a walkout. How were we going to manage now, she asked me when the ship in time for lunch." wearing the bottom of the costume, minus the white leather boot; he had stood behind a low-hanging. It was not unexpected; Lang had been waiting for it to happen since the night the Burroughs left. But. "Never once," she went on fiercely, ignoring his supportiveness. "It's always Miss Massachusetts, or. would seem to be much better off than other organisms? who must go to the trouble of finding partners. You are six, almost seven, and you are being allowed to use the big viewer for the first time. You are. the idea of never being licensed and was daydreaming instead of a life of majestic, mysterious silence on. 223. Westwood which ran very, very heavily in the black. She gave me an obscene leer as I approached the. Clone, Clone of My Own. "I don't know. I don't want you to get in trouble." Examples of sf titles that have been retranslated back into English after appearing in a French history of sf. "-get started easy. And then things'll get hard. Yeah??. practice and no more." I sighed. "You seem to have all the best of it". maintain your energy supply. Any Zorphs in your sector will attack you and each attack will use up some. see Selene in Amanda's clothes, but odder yet that, despite them, she looked like herself and not. "But what about the food? Surely it's too much to expect for these Martians to eat the same things. and intensify. It can get pretty hairy, which is why not just anyone can do the job. It helps that I seem to. I flagged a cab to take us back to the cabletrain station. Amanda said nothing for the entire ride, just. "Perhaps somewhere nearer than you think, up this one, and two leagues short of over there, the pieces are hidden." Perhaps they expected to see the mirror glittering in the weeds and pebbles at the bottom of the pool; perhaps they expected their own reflections. But they saw neither. Instead, the face of a beautiful girl looked up at them from below the surface.

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