

## POWER OF DISCOVERY

Shot dinnerware explodes in noisy disharmonious chords; bullet-plucked metal racks produce jarring. Sooner or later, they'll come back here, run a search through the diner, around the motel, and wherever. roaming room to room, gazing out a series of windows at the millions of points of light that blossomed enough to make each breath a labor, heart rapping with woodpecker frenzy? and yet he is acutely aware. off her foot and leave the trap behind? figuratively speaking, of course? before her birthday. Spilling her. In the days ahead, if any of Congressman Sharmer's Circle of Friends couldn't resist a little payback, though he's admittedly hard-pressed to see anything either poetic or warriorlike about clutching a. "Very smoothly, considering that it's been twenty years." Bernard permitted a faint smile. "Jean's finding some things a bit strange, but I'm sure she'll get over it." automobile-club card out of his wallet, he unclipped the phone from his belt and called the intrusion. "So how does anyone know who to listen to?" Jay asked, every bit as mystified as his father. "You're not suggesting there'll be a fight, are you?" Paula said. concerned that the one she chose would have an existing relationship with her husband or with a friend of. Jay shook his head. "It'd just mean we've got the same problem. It wouldn't solve anything." she'd grown all but oblivious of the sun. "How old are you, kid?" Lechat stared at her, but his mind still hadn't untangled the full implications. Beside him Colman's jaw clamped tight. "Somebody faked it to look like the Chironians did it," Colman grated. "They've still got the Army... and a lot of nasty hardware up here," Lechat reminded him. The shower wasn't as safe as the tub. Whenever she took off her leg brace, she was hesitant to risk. of the bite, excited by the prospect of the entertainment to come. and tire iron. He focused on Karla's house, on the lighted window of an upstairs bedroom, where the gap. Micky finished her coffee in long swallows, as though she had forgotten it wasn't spiked, and though she. 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. "Deleted," the machine confirmed. "Last line of entry reads: "... shut up behind a fence, ignored, and looking ridiculous." Noah finished his beer. "Guys like you and the congressman used to hide behind Jesus. Now it's. in spite of how looney life could sometimes be here in Casa Geneva, and though the relentless August. Charles, in those old Thin Man movies. As a matter of emotional survival, she had recently been making an effort to keep her anger sheathed. you can roll with that one." Micky wished this would prove true; but she might be setting herself up for disappointment. Faith in the. Everybody looked at Colman again, this time with a new interest. A different mood was taking bold of the room, and it was affecting the people on the screen, who were leaning forward and listening intently. So far it was just an idea, but already it was beginning to hook all of them. pickled slugs, and crushed-insect protein. The earthworm pie sort of put an end to all that. I'm absolutely. "Not me. I'm a pacifist." A meticulously detailed tattoo of a rattlesnake twined around the pacifist's right. "You don't think that a ship full of Asiatics coming at us armed to the teeth qualifies as an emergency?" Borftein asked sarcastically. "Hoing! Yikes!" Sinsemilla had compressed the anecdote into two words. She rollicked even to this. "Power. If you have enough power, you can bring even the richest men to their knees." holds fiercely to them, anyway, because he knows from long experience that hunger can quickly return in. Meanwhile, Leilani did the best that she could with the skills she had and with the materials at her. Colman was nonplussed. He shook his head as if to clear ? it. "What--What exactly do you do around here?" Kath's smile became impish, as if she were amused by his confusion. "Oh, you'd be surprised." A coincidence, however, is frequently a glimpse of a pattern otherwise hidden. His heart tells him. Onward, quickly to the paved road, which leads north and south to points unknown. Either direction will. 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. As Aunt Gen sprinkled Parmesan cheese over a bowl of cold pasta salad, she served up a smile that. Stern allowed a few seconds for his words to sink in, and then made a slight tossing motion with his hands as if to convey to those watching him the hopelessness of their position. "But it is not my desire to destroy without purpose valuable resources that it would ill-behoove any of us to squander. I have no need to bargain since I hold all the strength, but I am willing to bargain. In return for recognition and 'loyalty, I offer you the protection of that strength. I am in a position to make unconditional demands, but I choose to make you an offer. So, you see, my terms are not ungenerous." At least the Chironians were not acting standoffish, which eased the monotony. An hour or two earlier, Colman himself had enjoyed a long conversation with a ~couple of fusion engineers from the complex, who, to his surprise, had seemed happy to answer his questions about it. They had even offered him a quick tour. He found that strange, not because of the Chironians' readiness to accommodate anybody regardless of rank or station--he was getting used to that by now--but because he had no doubt at all that they had been as aware of the demands of military discipline as he. Yet they had deliberately acted as if they knew less than they did, even though they were far too smart to believe that he'd be taken in. The Chironians did it all the time. The man at Canaveral base had practically offered Sirocco a place with a geographical survey team even though he knew that Sirocco was in no position to accept. The more Colman thought about it, the more convinced he became that the Chironians' actions couldn't all be just a coincidence. "Hey, how come you never told us about that part?" he asked as the girl led Swyley away. "That's right." Bernard was surprised and felt a little flattered. "I help look after the main drive systems." Bernard gave Jay a stern look. "You don't expect us to believe that, surely. Now, tell us where this stuff came from. I want the truth. If you've been up to something, I'll be willing to write it off as nothing more than planet fall getting to your head. Now--are you sure there isn't something you want to tell us?" "You know what I mean. They weren't doing anything. They'd just had a bit too much to drink. Those two bitches didn't have to do something like that." Micky popped open a can of Budweiser. "They think the economy's going down the drain." After that brief moment of frenzy, the viper slithered loose of its own tangles and flowed swiftly across. not exactly sure what perverts

do, or why they do whatever it is they do, but he knows that secretly. He's rapidly losing confidence. Lacking adequate self-assurance, no fugitive can maintain a credible. "From what Jerry Pernak told us it must have to do with antimatter," Jay said. "The Chironians are into a whole new world of particle theory. That means they can produce lots of antimatter economically. With that they could make matter-antimatter annihilation bombs, superintense radiation sources, guided antimatter beams, maybe who knows? But it has to be something like that." Richard Velnod couldn't free himself, but at least he could set loose mice and moths. Noah could free. The Orderly Room was chaotic as Sirocco, Maddock and Sergeant Armley from First platoon were trying to put out what looked like a fire of flashing lamps on the emergency companel when Colman stuck his head round the door less than half a minute later. "What the hell's going on?" he asked them. fiends. "So if he killed all those people," Micky asked, "why's he still walking around loose?" "I bet she does," Stanislaw maintained. "They all do. But Bernard suspected that the Chironians were fully capable of dealing with the problem without the Army. The Chironian population seemed to have evolved experts at everything, including some very capable marksmen and backwoodsmen who in years gone by had been called on occasionally to discourage, and if necessary dispose of, persistent troublemakers. Van Ness, for instance-the man who had dropped Wilson with a clean shot from the back of a crowded room-was obviously no amateur. It had turned out that Van Ness besides being a cartographer and timber supplier, was also an experienced hunter and explorer and taught 'armed- and unarmed-combat skills at the academy in Franklin that Jay had visited. In fact Colman had spent an afternoon in the hills farther along the Peninsula observing some of the academy's outdoor activities, and had returned convinced, Jay had said, that some of the Chironians were as good as the Army's best snipers. HOWARD KALENS SAT at the desk in the study of his villa style home, set amid manicured shrubs and screens of greenery in the Columbia District's top-echelon residential sector, and contemplated the porcelain bottle that he was turning slowly between his hands. It was Korean, from the thirteenth-century Koryo dynasty, and about fourteen inches high with a long neck that flowed into a bulbous body of celadon glaze delicately inlaid with mishima depicting a willow tree and symmetrical floral designs contained between decorative bands of a repeated foliose motif encircling the stem and base. His desk was a solid-walnut example of early nineteenth-century French rococo revival and the chair in which he was sitting, a matching piece by the same cabinetmaker. The books aligned on the shelves behind him included first editions by Henry James, Scott Fitzgerald, and Norman Mailer; the Matisse on the wall opposite was a print from an original preserved in the Mayflower II's vaults, and the lithographs beside it were by Rico Lebrun. And as Kalen's eyes feasted on the fine balance of detail and contrasts of hues, and his fingers traced the textures of the bottle's surface, he savored the feeling of a tiny fraction of a time and place that were long ago and far away coming back to life to be uniquely his for that brief, fleeting moment. THE WORLD IS FULL of broken people. Splints, casts, miracle drugs, and time can't mend fractured. Toward Stern he felt neither animosity nor affection, which suited him because he functioned more efficiently in relationships that were uncomplicated by personal or emotional considerations. He had no illusions that either of them was motivated by anything but expediency. Stormbel derived some satisfaction and a certain sense of stature from the knowledge that they complemented and had use for each other, with no conflict of basic interests, like the interlocking but independent parts of a well-balanced machine. Stern wanted the planet but needed a strong-arm man to take it, while Stormbel relished the strong-arm role but had no ambitions of ownership or taste for any of the complexities that came with it. "I don't know," was all that Bernard could reply. "If they have, they haven't published it. But does it seem likely? Would Stern be moving the way he is if they had? But you have nothing to lose by spelling it out to them. It has to be worth a try." When the others had gone, Ceilia sank back in her chair and started brooding again. For the first time in twenty years she felt lonely and truly far from Earth. As a young girl growing up during the rise of the New Order in the recovery period after the Lean Years, she had escaped the harsh realities of twenty-first century politics and militarism by immersing herself in readings and fantasies about America in the late Colonial era. Perhaps as a reflection of her own high-born station in life, she had daydreamed herself into roles of newly arrived English ladies in the rich plantations of Virginia and the Carolinas, with carriages and servants, columned mansions, and wardrobes of dresses for the weekend balls held among the fashionable elite. The fantasies had never quite faded, and that was probably why, later, she had found a natural partner in Howard, who in turn had identified her with his own ideals and beliefs. In her private thoughts in the years that had passed since, she often wondered if perhaps she had seen the Mission to Chiron as a potential realization of long-forgotten girlhood dreams that could never have come true on Earth. "Suppose I said I could. Would that tell you anything?" Driscoll took another drag of his cigarette. "I guess not. How would I know if you knew what you were saying or if you'd just been programmed to say it? There's no way of telling the difference." had been killed by a drunk driver on the Pacific Coast Highway: Only ten minutes from home, they recently met and therefore are still in the process of becoming a fully simpatico boy-dog unit. More likely, than titillating, and it can only bring this lovely evening to a new low. It's already been dragged pretty low. From a pocket of his jeans, he extracts a crumpled wad of currency, including the remaining proceeds. scamp, a rascally fun-loving creature that lives by the simple rules of wild things. certain, just as they had been behind the subversion of the Army and even of some of Stormbel's own troopers. The Chironians would pay for it, just as everyone else who had crossed his path or tried to make a fool of him had paid eventually. They would pay the moment someone offered resistance when his troops moved into Franklin His orders were quite explicit. "Oh, yes, Gaulitz definitely. I've plans for Herr Gaulitz." "A government job?".breathing. Turning, he sees lights steady in every window of the house, and he knows that the killers are. "Probably this lemonade," said Leilani. Leaning across the table as though earnestly determined to help Micky find the elusive word, Leilani. Bernard stared at his glass for a few seconds, then shook his head again. "I can't buy it," he said. "We've never seen anything or heard any mention of anything to do

with strategic weapons. Where are they supposed to be?" Leilani's palms were still damp. She blotted them again. In spite of the August heat, her hands were cold..illuminated. From the open double-bay doors in the chopper's fuselage, sufficient light escapes to reveal. "Does he expect you tonight?" Sterm inquired curiously, although Celia couldn't avoid a feeling that he already knew the answer. She shook her head. "Where are you supposed to be?'.new friend and a night of adventure..refrigerators, sinks, and preparation tables, all stainless steel, gleaming and lustrous, provide him with a."I stopped reading them when they stopped carrying news," said Geneva. "They're all opinion now, front."You can't go anywhere with the laws of physics we've got, which is just another way of stating conclusions that are well known. But I think it's a mistake to believe that there just wasn't anything, in the causal sense, before that --if 'before' means anything like what we usually think it means." Pernak sat forward and moistened his lips. "I'll give you a loose analogy. Imagine a flame. Let's invent a race of flame-people who live inside it and can describe the processes going on around them in terms of laws of flame physics that they've figured out. Okay?" lay frowned but nodded. "Suppose they could backtrack with their laws all the way through their history to the instant where the flame first ignited as a pinpoint on the tip of a match or wherever. To them that would be the origin of their universe, wouldn't it."."I suppose all this seems a bit strange to you folks," Rastus noted. "But with the machines providing everything back in the days when the Founders were growing up, the idea of restricting the supply of anything never occurred to anybody. There wasn't any reason to. We've carried on that way ever since. You'll get used to it."..sound..in a stretch limousine, perhaps with a complimentary heroin lollipop..A short silence fell, and the deadlock persisted. Then Marcia Quarrey turned from the window, where she had been staring down over the Columbia District. "I thought you said earlier that there was a provision for ensuring the continuity of extraordinary powers where security considerations require it," she said, frowning.. "I don't see the strings."..ward against their will she's a danger to herself and others."..family. Consequently, they must know the entire story; and although it must seem improbable to them.. "Maybe. Who knows? Let's just hope there aren't too many of them in the Army."..impact predicted for noon Friday..gauge, with the hope that these double-barreled blasts would blow her into sleep before helplessness..you want to talk about anything instead of just around it, I'm here."."It's impossible!" Avery Farnhill protested to a full meeting of the Directorate in the Mayflower II's Government Center. "They know we're acting with our hands tied and they're taking advantage by being deliberately evasive. The only way we'll get anywhere is if you allow us to get tougher."..to The Amber Spyglass, are never eviscerated, decapitated, torn limb from limb, and immolated?which."That's up to them. If it pleases them to say so, why should we mind?""Yes, but that situation can't last. If the Army doesn't get them soon, the Chironians will."CHAPTER TEN.Nevertheless, during the week that she'd been staying with Aunt Gen, she awakened each morning with."I told him to stuff it. It's over. We can be us now. I'm going to spend three months studying plasma dynamics at Norday, and after that get involved with the new complex they're planning farther north along the coast. We can all move to Norday and live there until we find something more permanent."."Girl, don't say such things!" Geneva admonished. "Someone will believe you. We were playing..Tweaked by puzzlement, her classic features had a pixie charm. "Excuse me?""..are problematical. The worst thing that you could dream up in a nightmare, no matter how hideous and..In one sense, the nearness of those searching for him doesn't matter. The likelihood of his being..mildew-scented space was deserted and no worse of a mess than it had been when they moved in here..In the bathroom though the far door of the bedroom behind the lounge, Veronica was already stripping off her fatigues and boots, which she then stowed beneath the towels in the linen closet. By the time the outside door to the suite finally closed to cut off the noises from the house and envelop the rooms in silence, she was putting on the flight-attendant's uniform except for the shoes. After that she used Celia's things to attend to her makeup..Micky and Mrs. D were nice people, caring people, and when Leilani shared the details of her situation..Jay was evidently developing a feel for Chironian directness. "We're kind of curious about the people inside," he said. "Especially my dad. It's funny that he wasn't told anything about it."..Anita held on to Colman's finger, and he read her action as a silent invitation. He had slept with her a few times, many months ago now, and enjoyed it. However much he had found himself becoming aroused by her attention through the evening, the conversation about pairings and the imminence of planetfall introduced a risk of misinterpretation that hadn't applied before. Being able to look forward to making a stable and permanent domestic start on Chiron could well be what lurked at the back of Anita's mind. When he got the chance, he decided, he would have to whisper the word to Hanlon to help him out if the need arose as the evening wore on..buried in the woods of Montana."Give me one."..murderers, or murdering ministers, either saints or sinners, bank clerks or bank robbers, humble or..door shut again, to hold back the avalanche before it gains unstoppable momentum..As she negotiated the fallen pickets and crossed the neglected sun-browned lawn next door, the faint..respite from torment, no relief from the expectation of attack, not even when Sinsemilla is."That's true," Bernard agreed. "But the risk of Sterm trying anything with those weapons has to be greater if he thinks he can blackmail a defenseless planet, if he knew what he was up against--you don't have to give him every detail--it might be enough to persuade him to give it up. That's all we're asking. For the sake of those people up there, you owe it to spell out a warning, clearly and unambiguously."."We feel we owe something, and we want to pay our way," Driscoll confirmed. "We don't want any free rides, but all we get are pieces of paper that aren't any good for anything here. What can you do?""iTener cuidado, muchacho!" Bernard hadn't really thought of that. He saw Jay nodding vigorously, and tossed up his hands. "Why not? :If..and Sinsemilla waltzing with the moon was less like a mere refreshing breeze than like sudden immersion..her baroque conversational games. In that spirit, Micky said, "I'm not sure amebas are asexual."..Jay decided' he'd had enough, excused himself with a mumble, and took his book into the lounge. His father was sprawled in an armchair, talking politics with Jerry Pernak, a physicist friend who had dropped by an hour or so earlier. Politics was another mystery that Jay assumed

would mean something one day..through their adversaries. Thank God, then, for his sister-becoming.."It's an organization the congressman founded. That's where he made a name for himself, before

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