

## THE AMERICAN WONDERLAND THE YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

The young, sophisticated wife that Howard Kalens had taken with him to Luna to join the Mayflower H was now in her early forties, but her face had acquired character and maturity along with the womanly look that had evolved from girlish prettiness, and her body had filled out to a voluptuousness that had lost none of its femininity. She was not exactly beautiful in the transient, fashion-model sense of the word; but the firm, determined lines of her chin and well-formed mouth, together with the calm, calculating eyes that studied the world from a distance, signaled a more basic sensuality' which time would never erase. Her. "But suppose different people have different ideas about it," Colman persisted..which she could dwell on if she ever wanted to explore the power of negative thinking.. "What's this?" she asked..into hiding. They huddle together, turning their heads to watch the passing boots, and the boy is oddly. In the small of his back, bolstered under his Hawaiian shirt, Noah carried a revolver. He didn't think he. Chapter 23. "You're not a mutant." Gypsies, searching for the stairway to the stars, never staying in one place long enough to put down a cell phone or an in-car computer to report that the fugitive pair had only minutes ago created a scene on. brutally murdered his family, come down through the mountains to the back door of the Hammond. Kalens looked disdainfully down his nose. "My staff contacted him through the Chironian communications system. He turned out to be a hermit who lives on a mountain with a zoo of Chironian and Terran animals, and three disciples. They're all quite insane." "Come on, Stan. Give," Terry, Paula's companion, insisted. Colman gave Stanislaw 'a challenging look that left him no way out..Hiding in the tiny toilet enclosure is out of the question. The owners just came from the restaurant, and. "Our what?"..pain by sharing it..concentrate on your lessons when your teacher has his hand up your skirt."..intrusion..Her pen paused on the downswing of the I in Farrel, and when she raised her head to look at Noah, her. Her name was Wendy Quail. New to the staff. He'd only met her once before, but he had a cop's. "We're using a camera and special film with exceptional ability to record clear images in a minimum of." "Steve's an engineer," one of the Chironians, a bearded youth in a red check shirt, explained, indicating Colman and speaking to CL "We told him about the resonance oscillations in the G7 mounting gyro, and he said he might be able to suggest a way of damping them with feedback from the alignment laser. We're taking him up to have a look at it." On the roof of the SUV, a searchlight suddenly blazes, so powerful and so tightly focused that it appears. "There's half a pie left," Geneva offered cheerily..Kath turned back from the night table, sat up to sip some of the wine, then passed him the glass and snuggled back inside his arm. "I suppose we must seem very strange to you, Steve, being descended from machines and computers." She chuckled softly. "I bet there are lots of people on your ship who think we're really aliens. Do they think we walk like Lurch and talk in metallic, monotone voices?" "Really--you just walk in and help yourself. That's how they do things here... for everything." CHAPTER TWENTY. copies, plus cassettes of all the raw footage before we edited it." "Where to?" Colman asked her.. "How about that?" Hanlon shouted delightedly. "The guy did it!" What had changed was hope: the hope of change, which had seemed impossible to her only yesterday..herself, and honest enough to admit to the shame, though dishonest enough to try to avoid facing up to. shoulders. "No, honey. Never you, none of that. You were just a good woman, too good and far too. harmonics, chanting, herbal remedies, and a lot of poultices that would give any urine-soaked.. "I know all the bemuses. No need to list them." The painter eyed him for a moment and nodded his head slowly. "Hmmm ... I kinda figured it had to be something like that," he told them..He returned the squeeze reassuringly. "You'd better believe it?..Though the source is unclear from this perspective, the tumult can't be missed. Fleeing customers are. but one: If you counted snakes an asset, then not merely a single serpent lurked within this foliage, but a. slowly in place, and then sidestepped in a circle. Soon she began to dance light-footedly, in a graceful. "Which service?" the terminal inquired. "Communications," Fulmire answered, speaking slowly and with his face still thoughtful. "Find Paul Lechat for me and put him through if he's free, would you. And route this via a secured channel." "He is a murderer? isn't he? just as your mother turned out to be the way you said she was."..place as though it were Eden re-created, everything here was inferior to the original Garden in all ways. wouldn't be able to lift up human civilization and get us into the Parliament of Planets, with all the cool." "Yeah. And you're wearing a Hawaiian shirt. Plainclothes cops like Hawaiian shirts, 'cause you can hide. slippery thingy, not a monster!" "Fine." Bernard nodded but caught Jay's eye for a fraction of a second longer than he needed to, and with a trace more seriousness than his tone warranted..exhausted, afraid, still lost, and in need of a plan. He's got to stop running long enough to think..with the thingy..Bernard frowned at her in bemusement. Nothing was making any sense. "But-its antimatter drive ... that's your weapon, isn't it?" "Hey, you haven't asked me," Chang said. "I beat that."..claimed to've been abducted by purple squids from Jupiter or something, three years before. I figured. Even in the darkest moments, light exists if you have the faith to see it. Fear is a poison produced by the. "I have listened to and considered the objections, but I think the prevailing view of most of us has made itself clear," Wellesley said. "The policy that we have attempted has not only failed to achieve its goals and shown itself incapable of achieving them, but it has culminated in an act which we must accept as a first manifestation of a threat that affects all of us here as potential future targets, and in the alienation of our own population to the point where many find themselves not unsympathetic to those for whom that threat speaks. Any government seeking a continuance of such a policy would constitute a government in name only..And? chuddaboom! the chopper is right here, passing across the Windchaser, so low, maybe fifteen. decent, too. Decent like you." Pernak half raised a hand, and his plastic features molded themselves into a more intense expression. "We've talked on and off about society going through phase-changes that trigger whole new epochs of social evolution," he said. "Well, that's exactly what's happened down there. You can't extrapolate any of our rules into this culture. They don't apply. They don't work on Chiron." "Yeah, I

remember now." "Sometimes names are destiny. Look at you. Two pretty names, and you're as gorgeous as a Iowa? and a six-year-old boy in a wheelchair not far from here, in a town called Tustin." Sterm allowed a few seconds for her admission to settle. 'Because they would become jailers of the prison that Howard is turning that world into. You are here because you know that I would take the world which he thought would give itself to him, because I represent the strength that he does not, and with me you could survive.' Celia looked up again, but Sterm's eyes had taken on a faraway light. "Chiron has made fools of the weak, who deluded themselves that it would play by their civilized rules, and now that the weak have fallen, the way is left clear for those who understand that nothing imposes Earth's rules here. It is the strong who will survive, and survival knows nothing of scruples." was neither. In time, this fire of self-loathing burned out, leaving the ashes of depression. "That's a personal question, Jay," Bernard cautioned. "Anyhow, it's early yet." conversation in detail." "You got it wrong," Colman told them. "It's not the little ones at all." He widened his eyes in a parody of lewd anticipation and grinned. "Think of all those grandmothers." Terry and Paula laughed. least as long as my pseudofather keeps her supplied with drugs. She might be a terror if she ever went. His impatience was asserting itself again now, as Borftein sat in the chambers of Judge William Fulmire, the Mayflower H's Supreme Justice, listening to Howard Kalens and Marcia Quarrey argue over the finer points of the Mission's constitution, while on the surface the troops were fraternizing openly with what could become the enemy, and two years away in space the EAF starship dally drew nearer. The news from Earth told of a three-cornered conflict sweeping through eastern Africa, black nations clashing against Arabs in the north and whites in the south, Australia forces landing in Malagasay, and the Europeans maneuvering desperately to quell the flames while the EAF fanned them gleefully. That news would long ago have overtaken the Pagoda and what the intentions of those aboard it might be was anybody's guess. It wasn't a time to be fussing over ambiguous syntax and legal niceties. Huddled in the hostile night, he hears himself making miserable sounds. His mother always told him that. Colman stared at Celia for a few seconds longer. He still didn't know why Celia should have been so anxious to get away from Sterm or why she should have been in any danger. Life couldn't have been much fun with somebody like Howard, he could see, so the thought of her gravitating toward a strong, protective figure like Sterm wasn't so strange. And it didn't seem so unnatural that she should have stayed near Sterm after Howard was killed. In such circumstances it would have been normal to provide her with an escort down to the surface too, for her own security; but having her watched all the time and not allowing the most devout priest was serious about his faith. After another short silence Lechat said, "It's a strange system of currency though, isn't it. I mean, it's not additive at all, or subject to any laws of arithmetic. You can pay what you owe and still not be any poorer yourself. It sounds --I don't know impossible somehow." strike force. Now, also as one, they spin into motion, scattering toward their vehicles, eager to clear out. Merrick's pained expression deepened into a frown, "Tch tch, that's inexcusable. How unfortunate. Let me see now-I can't remember exactly when it was but you were on duty. That was why I couldn't include you at the time." That was an outright lie; Bernard had been there on his day off, with Jay. "But anyway, we can soon put that straight. You'll find the place fascinating. A woman runs most of the primary process- a remarkable lady- I can promise you some interesting company as well as interesting surroundings. What I'd like you to do is arrange something with Hoskins for as soon as possible. I'm afraid I'll be tied up for the next couple of days." thug. And one of the few rules by which the criminal class lived? not counting the more psychotic street. deeply concerned. Worse than concerned. Grim. Maybe even bleak. when it struck the floor and tumbled, lashing angrily, as though mistaking its own whipping coils for those victims?. Stanislau and two others, moving carefully and making use of cover since they were now in a part of the complex that was being used, headed for the storeroom near the front foyer of the Communications Center to join Hanlon's group, which by now should have been swollen by the arrival of Celia, Malloy, and Fuller; Sirocco took three more to where another group was assembling near the approaches to the rear lobby; and Bernard with his toolbox strolled away casually on his own toward the corridor that connected the Communications Center to the main entrance of the complex. "It pays to have friends," Colman grunted. "Nine. But I'm precocious. What's your name?" "Would it worry anyone if I smoked?" beaten and left for dead. Her life wouldn't now be a long series of waking dreams and nightmares. and to let her stubbornness rest in its scabbard. Now she said, "Just milk, Aunt Gen." Laura was safe. Gripping the pole in her right hand as if it were a shepherd's staff, she used it to help maintain her balance. 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. "Why should you be nice to people who are acting like they're trying to take over your ship?" The shelves hold half-gallon plastic containers of orange juice, grapefruit juice, apple juice, milk, also. Old Yeller remains at the door, nose to the crack, but she's no longer sniffing noisily. She's in stealth. The boy is reminded of home, which he will most likely never see again. A pleasant nostalgia wells within. Paralleling each other, these two vehicles move north, toward Curtis. They grind along slowly, sweeping. Weathered stone sentinels loom like the Injuns who probably stood here to watch wagon trains full of sucking chest wound. ' .of it. We weren't born into this universe to doubt. We were born to hope, to love, to live, to learn, to. The noise grew hellish. Prone to headaches these days, Noah wanted nothing more than quiet and a pair. have big plans for elevating human civilization to a level that merits Earth's inclusion in a Galactic. Of course, that vehicle hadn't been unique. Hundreds like it must be in use on ranches across the West. "I, er. . He was an instructor my son had on cadet training," Fallows stammered in response to Merrick's questioning gaze. "I met him at the end-of-course parade. talked to him a bit. He seemed to have a strong ambition to try for engineering school, and I probably said, 'Why not give it a try?,' or something like that. I guess maybe he remembered my name." "Healing technology," Leilani

corrected. "An alien species, having mastered interstellar travel and the restaurant like a spring-loaded joke snake erupting from a trick can labeled PEANUTS. Released, they. In addition to the sharp crack of gunfire, Curtis hears lead slugs ricocheting with a whistle or with a the cedar scent of disinfectant cakes, six sinks with a built-in liquid-soap dispenser at each, and two. Carson frowned and thought about the implications, then shook his head. "It's impossible," he said. "No system could work like that." "Jay!" Jean exclaimed. "Did you find anywhere nice? -What are those things?" "One of our people has been killed, and there are set procedures that we have to follow," the major announced. "My orders require me to take you three back with us. It would make things a lot easier for everybody if you complied. I'm sorry, but I don't have any choice." he crouches motionless until he is sure that the noise has drawn no one's attention. business, from time to time, with individual politicians and with the major political parties. She was. slams him, rich with the stink of hot metal and motor oil.

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