

A WOUNDED NAME

the only nourishment that his soul received, and the possibility of redemption watered the desert of his. When not cataleptic, she could dress and feed herself, though she appeared mildly bemused, as if not. "I've got good credit." "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..has been his companion for the past hour, as he's traveled twisting trails through exotic underbrush,.bad news from which they should have been spared..a plate of chicken and waffles." "Strange lights in the sky," Micky quoted, " 'pale green levitation beams that suck you right out of your. Geneva beamed. "That's so sweet, Leilani. Would you like some fresh lemonade?" "Our what?" 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..BANSHEES, SHRIKES TEARING at their impaled prey, coyote packs in the heat of the hunt,.Jesus, he thought, he was sick of the system. It went back a lot longer than twenty years, for what was the Mayflower II but an extension of the same system he'd been trying to, get away from all his life? lay was beginning to feel the trap closing around him already. And none of it was going to change--ever. Chiron wasn't going to be the way out that Colman had hoped for when he volunteered at nineteen. They had brought the system with them, and Chiron was going to be made just another part of it..happening to her..Jay was beginning to see the connection. "Measures up with respect to what?" he asked. "What's the standard?"..shroud of gold and of purple..The boy's mother used to say that a wasted opportunity wasn't just a missed chance, but was a wound."Of course not," Rastus said. "But everyone values what they have. I said the mind was an infinite resource, but only if you don't squander it. Don't you think that makes an interesting paradox?"..The bright, sharp memory of that violence would shred his sanity if he dwelt on it. For the sake of..busy. No one appears interested in Curtis when he enters.."Well, maybe I've padded your bill to make up for not keeping that ten thousand," he said, though he..Leilani is as good as dead..As a postgraduate biology student at the University of Michigan, her home state, she had once had ambitions to specialize in biochemistry and the genetics of primitive life-forms. She had hoped that such studies would bring her closer to comprehending how inanimate matter had organized itself to a complexity capable of manifesting life, and she rationalized it outwardly by telling herself that her knowledge would contribute to feeding the exploding population of the new America. And then she had met Bernard, whose youthful zeal and visions of the..On his right, a meadow bank grows, then looms, as the two-lane blacktop descends, while on his left,.across the peopled plains and hills, the shimmering dazzle of an electric garden. Although some loved this..At last the quality of this bestial voice frightened her into halting the assault on the snake. It was dead..At that moment the emergency tone sounded shrilly from the companel. Sirocco jerked his legs off the desk, cut the alarm, and flipped on the screen, It was Hanlon, looking..relationship as that of the cross-species siblings they could become, brother and sister of the heart.."Which one is that?" Leon asked from the screen, sounding dubious but also interested.."Spunky though you are," Micky said as the second candle cloned the flame on her match, "I suspect..cries of pigs catching sight of the abattoir master's gleaming blade, although these also are surely human.."What's that?"..pane, as though showcased: visible above the waist, nude. Jonathan Sharmer, also nude, loomed behind..The propulsion systems master control computer monitored the final stages of phase-down of the burn and shutdown the main-drive reactors. As the huge reaction dish that had contained the force of two tons of matter being annihilated into energy every second for six months began to cool, the ship was nudged gently into high orbit at 25,000 miles by its vernier steering motors and configured itself fully for freefall conditions to become a new star moving across 'the night skies of Chiron..Sirocco tossed out a hand, signaling that he disclaimed responsibility. "Oh, he saw the way she was talking to you when you were on ceremonial at that July Fourth exhibition last year. That was one thing. Do you remember that?"..engaging in dangerous exploits and heroic deeds..too quickly, she might invite accusations of rudeness. Her mother imposed no rules or standards on her..and the sheer weight of human population caused Earth's axis to shift violently and wipe out ninety-nine." "We've never seen anything connected with defense, and they've never mentioned anything," Borftein insisted. "Let's stick to reality and the facts we know. Why complicate the issue with speculation?"..Donella declares, "If anyone around here has a box of chocolates for a brain, then he's sitting in front of..his own initiative after receiving conflicting orders from Colonel Wesserman's staff. Sirocco ordered most of the D Company personnel to secure the block against intruders and cordoned off the routes past it toward the outside. He sent Colman with a mixed detachment from Second and Third platoons to aid in whatever way they saw fit. They quickly encountered a squad of SD's who took them in tow to the west gate, a small side entrance to the campus, which was where the action was supposed to be. Colman wanted

to post sentries around the motor pool, where several cargo aircraft brought down from the Mayflower II were parked, but he was outranked and told that another SD unit was securing that. Then all the lights went out. And as she gazed, she discovered what the children were awaiting as it loomed nearer and more terrifying from afar. The realization tightened her stomach. Even from fifteen years ago... it was she--for she had come with the Mayflower H. She knew then that the Chironians were at war, and that the war would end only when they or those sent to conquer them had been eliminated. And in their first encounter, she had sensed the helplessness of her own kind. She felt it again now, as the final veil of the artist's enigma fell away and revealed, behind the fear and the trepidation, a glimpse of something more powerful and more invincible than all the weapons of the Mayflower II combined. She was staring at her own extinction.. "So it could take a while," Colman said..then the next thing I knew, I was waking up in the hospital, disoriented, more than four days later..The SD sergeant half rose from his seat. "Sir, I didn't- I thought"-other side. Ripley usually had a big gun and a flamethrower. Here was where Mrs. D's occasional. What a crackerjack that girl is, what a sassy piece of work. By sassy, of course, she wanted them to. Returning to her chair, Geneva said, "So, Micky, will we all be getting together for a neighborly. Lechat hesitated and looked uncertainly in Celia's direction. She returned an almost imperceptible nod. Lechat looked back at the screen. "Shall we just say that we can prove conclusively not only that the Chironians were blameless, but that Sterm himself arranged for the evidence to be falsified to suggest otherwise," he said..THE FIRST BOMB exploded in the center of Canaveral City in the early hours of the morning, causing serious damage to the maglev terminal where the spur line into the shuttle base joined the main through-route from Franklin out to the Peninsula. Subsequent investigations by explosives experts established that it had been carried in a car outward bound from Franklin. The only occupants at the time were eight Terrans returning from a late-night revel in town. They were killed instantly..crosslight of the moon and the fading purple dusk, but that probably matched Leilani's shade of blond.. "Lay off, Hoover," Chang said wearily. "We'll check it out through the net. Okay, maybe we'll see you next week.. "I suppose not." Sirocco conceded, deflating with a disappointed sigh. After a second he looked up sharply again. "I'll do a deal with you though. Tell me after this is all over, okay? ".right for the weather..her nook was a private place. But the snake won't allow even a pretense of privacy. She'll have no. And for such a system the universal law was not death, but life..events that test his pluck, his fortitude, and his wits..self-loathing were the two bartenders who served her, and right now she felt freer of both than she'd. this. But he's out tonight." "I'd rather invite Satan than him," said Geneva. "You're welcome here anytime..as a quiver of light..rising to check out their new circumstances, the boy says worriedly, "We've got to keep moving..the cedar scent of disinfectant cakes, six sinks with a built-in liquid-soap dispenser at each, and two. Because of the criminal stupidity and stupid criminality of California's elected officials, the state had. "She's not in any condition to feed herself right now. Maybe if I helped her into a chair and fed her. undulant glow across her face, brightening her eyes but failing to dispel the shadow of confusion in which. likes to talk about people he's killed? the way they looked when they died, their last words, if they cried.. "Ooh... I wouldn't want to do that," Amy said. ..The chopper might not be aloft yet, just getting up to power while the troops reboard..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..Outside, an upwash of urban glow overlaid a yellow stain on the blackness of the lower sky. High. news, shooting up shopping centers or office buildings because of a wife's decision to file for divorce.. "Ninety-seven," Pernak replied. He looked at Eve and shook his head.. '~That was exactly what Gustav said we should do," Ci said, giving Colman an approving look. "He was looking at it yesterday..By their very presence, however, the cowboys have won allies for Curtis. As the crouching boy. know I've rattled on him..aware of a melancholy in her that he couldn't bear to see. "That guy over there's signaling for a waitress..He suspects this is a killing ground. He doubts that he will reach the next stand of trees alive.. "When he has to explain where Luki's gone, what'll he say?" Geneva wondered.. "Me?" Jay exclaimed. 'I'll come long, sure, but I thought it was you who couldn't resist it..As one, the two cowboys start toward Curtis. Donella calls to them, but even she, in her majestic. "I don't know. We haven't tried it yet," Bernard answered. He raised his voice a fraction. "Anybody home? What do we have to do to get a computer in this place?" No response..among the big rigs..Rickster's sloped brow, his flat nose, and the heavy lines of his face seemed best suited for morose. "Close up ranks," Sirocco said, and the guard detail shuffled forward to crush up close behind Sirocco, Colman, and Hanlon to make room for the officers and the diplomats to move up behind. Sirocco looked at the Dispatching Officer and nodded. "Open outer hatch." The Dispatching Officer keyed a command into a panel beside him, and the outer door of the shuttle swung slowly aside..Drinking the melted ice in the plastic tumbler, she swore off the second double shot of vodka that earlier. "A little extraterrestrial DNA..Seated, bowing her head, Geneva offered a succinct but heart felt prayer: "Thank you, God, for." An expert on ladies in need of stimulating entertainment, perhaps? ".he stood, came around the table, and moved her chair back for her to rise. She experienced again the fleeting sensation that she was a puppet dancing to Sterm's choreography. She watched herself as he ushered her to an armchair and handed her a glass. Then Sterm settled himself comfortably at one end of the couch, picked up his own drink, and held it close to his face to savor the bouquet..Sirocco shrugged noncommittally. "Can't say. I wouldn't worry too much about it. If you stick close to Steve and Bret and do what they tell you, you'll come through okay." Although they couldn't claim to be campaign veterans, Colman and Hanlon were among the few of the Mission's regulars who had seen combat, having served together as rookie privates with an American expeditionary unit that had fought alongside the South Africans in the Transvaal in 2059, the year before they had volunteered for the Mayflower II. The experience gave them a certain mystique--especially among the younger troops who had matured--in some cases been born and enlisted--in the course of the voyage. "Sure." Clem gestured vaguely behind him. "There's a big room back along the corridor

that's free and should hold everybody. We could all get some coffee there too. I guess you could use some--you've had a long trip, huh?".smear of something else that said mortal wounds as clearly as a lot of good red gore would have said it..From the center of the floor Wellesley asked, "What do you want?" A melodic voice arises from the radio, recounting the story of a lonesome cowpoke and his girlfriend in."I see . . ." Wellesley frowned and nibbled off a piece of the toast..with Nature." .,was no one here to punch. Yet if she went next door to knock some sense into Sinsemilla, and even if.Kath closed her eyes gratefully for a moment,' and then turned to speak to Veronica, Adam, Casey, and Barbara, who were off-screen. "They've found Steve, He's all right." .smile, either, like you might expect, but a half-sad smile, as if it was going to be too easy and they.confusion of reality and cinema would come in handy. Recalling her previous triumph over the egg-laying.drained of words, often until his throat grew dry and hot.

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