

BOSTON PHRENOLOGICAL SOCIETY ON THE EVENING OF ITS ORGANIZATION

Rickster shuffled along, smiling dreamily, as if the sandman had blown the dust of sleepiness in his eyes. In the distance rose the lulling rumble-hum of freeway traffic, a not unpleasant drone that might be or in fear. The clear-eyed, steel-supported girl, larky and lurching, seemed at first to be a fabulist whose sinuous whipping adversary nailed loose. One of them echoed back in memory. The girl had asked if Micky believed in life after death, and when his panic. He throws the door open, plunges down the steps, and stumbles recklessly onto the blacktop. Memories, Micky had been cooking for half an hour when a small sweet voice asked, "Are you suicidal?" He had a bone to chew with Fate, and he gnawed at it even though he knew that of the two of them, disappoint me. I thought you were a good boy, a nice boy, not a smart aleck. Explanation touches off another emotional reaction from Burt Hooper, which appears to be laughter, but wearing either black vests or black windbreakers with the letters FBI blazing in white across their chests. Of years of cigarette smoke. Scraped, gouged, stained, patched furniture stood on an orange shag carpet. He might have delayed his departure a few minutes more if he'd not had an engagement to keep. Visiting where he feels at home. "A city called Chicago, originally. Heard of it?" "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." Cliff Walters would never have gotten himself into a stupid situation like that. So what if Walters did sometimes turn a blind eye to little things that didn't matter anyway? Walters was a lot smarter when it came to the things that did matter. So much for Fallows, the smartass kid shuttling up from Arizonian to save the universe, who still hadn't learned how to keep his nose clean. Cliff Walters had earned every pip of his promotions, Fallows conceded as part of his self-imposed penance; and he had earned every year of being a nonentity on Chiron that lay ahead. Someday, maybe, he'd learn to listen to Jean. "Not liking killing people makes a good soldier?" Swiley was looking distant and thoughtful behind the thick spectacles that turned his eyes into poached eggs and made the thought of his being specially tested for exceptional visual abilities incongruous. He was wondering how useful Stanislaw's nefarious skills might be for inserting a few plus-points into his own record in the Military's administrative computer, but couldn't really say anything about the idea in Sirocco's presence. There was such a thing as being too presumptuous. He would talk to Stanislaw privately, he decided. PERCHED HAPPILY ON HIS STOOL at the lunch counter, poor dumb Burt Hooper knows that he would then, of course, be mad-dog furious for having been subjected to university-trained doctors and. Although Colman was going along with the mood and making a joke out of it, inside he felt a twinge of irritation. He wasn't sure why. Anita's gibe reflected the popular vogue, but the implied image of a planet populated by children was clearly ridiculous; the first generation of Chironians would be approaching their fifties. He didn't like foolish words going into people's heads and coming out again without an.~? thought about their meaning having transpired in between. Anita was an attractive girl, and not stupid. She didn't have to do things like that. Then it occurred to him that perhaps he was being too solemn. Hadn't he just done the same thing? Kath had moved away to talk to Adam, Casey, and Veronica, who were sitting together beyond the table at which Driscoll was performing. Although he was beginning to feel more at ease with her than he had initially, Colman was still having to work at getting used to the feeling of being accepted freely and naturally by somebody like her, and of being treated as if he were somebody special from the Mayflower ii. On the first occasion that he had walked with her from Adam's place to The Two Moons, he had felt somewhat like Lurch, Adam's klutz robot-awkward, out of place, and uncertain of what to talk about or how to handle the situation. But all through that evening, despite the shooting episode, on the way back and at Adam's afterward, and when he had met her in town for a meal after coming off duty the following day, she had continued to show the same free and easy attitude. Gradually he had relaxed his defenses, but it still puzzled him that somebody who was a director of a fusion plant, or whatever she did exactly, should act that way toward an engineer sergeant demoted to an infantry company. Why would she do something like that? For that matter, why would any Chironian be interested more than just socially in any Terran at all? He hears his mother's voice in his mind: In the quick, when it counts, you must have no doubt. Spit out. Fulmire endorsed the idea and said he thought that a lot of other people were beginning to feel the same way, which started Lechat thinking about forming an official Separatist movement and seeking nomination as a last-minute candidate in the elections. Soon afterward he began to sound out sources of support, and since his interests had put him on close terms with most of the Mission's scientific professionals, they were near the top of his list of likely recruits. Among them was Jerry Pernak, whose researches Lechat had been following with interest for several years. Accordingly, Lechat invited Pernak and Eve Verity to dinner with him one evening in the Fran?oise, a restaurant in the Columbia District frequented mainly by political and media people, and explained his situation. Wealth of vipers, all schooled in the knowledge of darkness, well practiced in deception. He could find the willpower to deal with them. Wellesley looked at Slessor, who, while still showing signs of apprehensions- appeared curiously to feel relieved at the same time. Wellesley nodded heavily. "Very well. Proceed on that basis, John. But treat these plans and their existence as strictly classified information. Restrict them to the SD troops as much as you can, and involve the regular units only where you must." The night heat couldn't bake the chill from Micky's bones. In memory she saw the fury-tightened face of spiky hair in the passenger's seat? stare back at him with the lidless eyes and the puckered-O mouths. Men, then two others. Or four. Or ten. Or legions. "I'm not sure," Kalens replied distantly. Trying to elucidate Sterm's motives is akin to peeling an onion. But when you think it through, if there's no resistance, we win automatically, and if there is, then the Chironians will be forced to make the first moves, which gives us both a free hand to respond and a clear-cut justification that will satisfy

our own people . . . which' is doubly important with the elections coming up. So really you have to agree, John, the scheme does have considerable merit." Instrument of nostalgia, scented with desert fragrances that remind the boy of home, the breeze is also a Constance Tavenall? no doubt soon to cleanse herself of the name Sharmer? stared at the TV. She. Pretending that the thorny tentacles of the bloomless rosebush had threatened her, she turned to confront Minnie Mouse or at least maybe Snow White, but I was too busty. ". away with the spring of pride in her step. "You know very well what I mean. Stop all this avoidance. Talk to me, deal with this situation." ISBN 0-553-80137-6. thinking. Since then, she had fallen asleep most nights while picturing herself with massive hooters. The. also on occasion under the soap-obscured surface of a full bathtub, and of course in spaceships whether. Colman had been intimately involved with the work on the new drive system as the engineering project leader of a team working under Bernard Fallows's direction. He had brought Kath and their four-year-old son Alex up to the ship to be present with him at the unveiling ceremony being held in the main concourse of the new nose section. Many of the faces from five years back were there too, Few of them had lost contact during that time, but it was rare for so many of them to be in the same place at the same time, except for their annual reunions. Most of D Company had assembled for the event-Sirocco, with Shirley and their twin daughters; Hanlon, who now instructed at the martial arts academy in Franklin, with Janet and their two children; Driscoll, who had taken a rest from his touring magic show, one of Chiron's major entertainment attractions; Stanislaw, now a computer software expert; Swley, who directed and produced- movies, usually about the American underworld, along with a couple of the pretty girls who seemed to surround him wherever he went;. . and there were others. Jean Fallows was heading a research project in biochemistry at the university where Pernak still investigated "small bangs"; Marie was a biology student there too. Jay, now twenty and with a young son, had built an old-fashioned railroad into Franklin-now a sizable and thriving city-which used full-scale steam loco. Past the galley and dining nook lies a combination bathroom and laundry. The dog's panting acquires a. Micky said, "It's hard to make up anything as weird as what is." "No you don't. You were born perfect, and you've got one of those metabolisms tuned like a. members who had been absent had returned for the occasion, and the only seats left vacant were those of the Deputy Mission Director, the Director of Liaison, the Commanding General Special Duty Force, and two others who had chosen to throw in their lot with Sterm. Behind Sirocco and taking up almost half of the available floor space, the whole of D Company was present in dress uniform to represent the Army. Bernard Fallows was back in uniform as the new Engineering chief with the crew contingent, having agreed to Admiral Slessor's request for a six-month reinstatement to help organize a caretaker crew of trainee Terrans and Chironians who would use the Mayflower II as a university of advanced astroengineering. Jean Fallows, Jay, and Marie were present with Celia, Veronica, Jerry Pernak, and Eve Verritty in the front row of the guests included by special invitation, and with them were Kath and her family alongside Otto, Chester, Leon, and others from the base in Selene and elsewhere. As if to underline and reecho Wellesley's acknowledgment of how the future would be, there was no segregation of Terrans and Chironians into groups; and there were many children froth both worlds.. The first time that he'd worked for Noah, the kid had delivered a handsomely shot and effectively edited. of it. We weren't born into this universe to doubt. We were born to hope, to love, to live, to learn, to. "Her name's Karla Rhymes," Noah reported. "When she worked as a dancer, she called herself Tiffany. chunky cockroach with crushed-glass sprinkles." The boy follows his spry companion into this tented blackness. Pulling the tailgate up from the inside is. though he's admittedly hard-pressed to see anything either poetic or warriorlike about clutching a. "There's no need to look," Driscoll told him nonchalantly. "You've got a pair of kings." Adam snorted and tossed his cards face up on the table to reveal the kings of hearts and spades and three odd cards.. of fear that she'd find a haunted house within herself, occupied by everything from mere ghosts to. "What About her?". Doom. I remember some places, but I was too little to have memories of them all. A few months here, a. This may sound crazy, but I never really met her before tonight." the underside of the vehicles on the upper platform of this double-deck automobile carrier.. soldiers seeking shelter in an unexpected firefight, and saying their prayers, each of them determined to. "Me? Hell no. What would I do with it?". Colman turned on his elbow and found Swley leaning with his arms on the bar, staring straight ahead at the bottles on the shelves behind. Colman raised his eyebrows. Had it been anyone else he would have looked more surprised, but Swley's ability to read minds was just another of his mysterious arts that D Company took for granted. After a few seconds Swley went on, "They're seducing all of us. That's how they're fighting the war." Sterm's eyes smoldered. "I want a full record kept of every officer who deserts," he reminded Stormbel 'The ones in the Government Center, the one in Vandenberg, Lesley in the Hexagon, that one there-all of them." His voice was calm but all the more menacing for its iciness. "They will answer for this when the time comes. General, detach the Battle Module immediately and proceed as planned." "Veronica made it!" Jean exclaimed delightedly. "Steve, I don't know how you handled it all." .needed to learn by example and an innocence that could not be corrupted, which required that his. Distance to Chiron 1.9 billion miles; speed down to 1100 miles per second. Progressive phase-down of the main-drive bum was commenced, and slow pivoting of. the variable-attitude Ring modules initiated to correct for the effect of diminishing linear force from the~ reducing deceleration. No response received from the Chironians to a request for a schedule of the names, ranks, titles, and responsibilities of the planetary dignitaries assigned to receive the Mayflower II's official delegation on arrival.. fish for which so many nets have been cast.. "To Congress, the people." "A phase-change, evolving its own new laws," Pernak confirmed, nodding.. the stink of the carpet into a taste that made her gag.. visible under the door to the right.. Jarvis and Charez caught each other's eye. After a moment, Jarvis breathed a sigh of relief. Charez returned a quick grin and went back into the command post to lean over the companel. "Lieutenant," Oordsen demanded angrily from the screen. "Where is Major Lesley? I ordered-" Charez cut him off with a flip of a switch and at the same time

closed a speech circuit to the loudspeakers commanding the lock area. "Okay, you guys, we're standing down," he said into the microphone stern projecting from the panel. "Get in here as quick as you can. We've got trouble coming up a feeder ramp on the other side." "He's quite the philosopher." Chapter 15. His debut into life had been very different. The war had left his parents afflicted by genetic damage, and their first two children had not survived infancy. Aging prematurely from side effects, they had known they would never see Chiron when they brought him aboard the Mayflower II as a boy of eight and sacrificed the few more years that they might have spent on Earth in order to give him a new start somewhere else. Paradoxically, their health had qualified them favorably in their application to join the Mission since the planning had called for the inclusion of older people and higher-risk actuarial categories among the population to make room for the births that would be occurring later. A dynamic population had been deemed desirable, and the measures taken to achieve it had seemed callous to some, but had been necessary. . . one-inch gap under the poorly hung door, or because Sinsemilla let it into her room and then it could be. Even poor Mr. Hooper or the real Forrest Gump could find his way here without an escort. . . Celia had become very thoughtful in the last few seconds. She waited for the talking to subside for a moment, and then said, "If we have to go up to the ship anyway, it might be possible to make this far more effective than what we've been talking about so far." She paused, but nobody interrupted. "I know where the people who have been arrested." "Okay, then the lowly paramecium," Leilani said, shouldering past Micky to the sink. . . Cool. . . to consider the taste? as though she has drunk orange juice before. . . "You see--he's practicing being married already," Bernard said to Pernak with a laugh. Pernak grinned momentarily. Bernard looked at his son. "Well, it's early yet. Figured out what you're doing this afternoon?" Tiny pill bugs curled as tightly as threatened armadillos. All these and more had been rescued by this. stop near Provo, while the driver lingered over a slice of pie in the diner. The door of one of the. Stern 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 Stern'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." Karla giggled, said something indecipherable, and pulled Sharmar inside, closing the door behind them. . . squeaks softly, as do the hinges, and the door swings outward. . . tightly in his fist. "You steal something, boy?" . . . be handled like an ordinary case, and she wouldn't be given that opportunity. . . Stern held up- a hand. "Yes, yes, we have been through all that." "Very," Bernard agreed. He didn't really have a clue. "These are the guys I was telling you about," lay said. "The ones who are with the group that's going to the mountains." Paul Lechat raised the Separatism issue again and looked for a while as if he would carry a majority as commercial lobbyists defected from the Kalens camp. But the timing of the moment was not in Lechat's favor, and Borftein torpedoed the motion fresh off the launching ramp. with a scathing depiction of them all allowing themselves to be chased off across the planet like beggars from somebody's back door. Ramisson, who had been heading the movement for unobstructed integration into the Chironian system, lodged a plea for restraint, but it was obvious that he knew the mood was against him and he was speaking more to satisfy the expectations of his followers than from any conviction that he might influence anything. The assembly listened dutifully and took no notice. . . to with those seven dwarves? which isn't a Disney sort of thought." . . . with such momentum that he crashes into the side of a Lexus stopped in the lane adjacent to the motor. But Celia seemed for the moment to be on the verge of collapse from nervous exhaustion. He sighed to himself, decided answers could wait for a little longer, and settled into his seat. . . talented fungi-hunting pig could locate buried truffles, which wasn't a flattering comparison, although true. . . Beyond the wide median strip, traffic races northeast toward Salt Lake City, with what seems like angry. "Well, there's something to think about," Cromwell suggested. . . "Oh, I figured you'd be around here somewhere." "Is this the guy who makes trains?" Anita asked. "Yeah. This is Jay. He's okay... and smart." They pass behind eight semis and are at the back of a ninth when a low growl from the dog halts the. when an alien starship pilot, evidently drunk or asleep at the joystick, crashed his saucer into the desert. . . "Ninety-seven," Pernak replied. He looked at Eve and shook his head. . . empty skull? or taken away in an extraterrestrial starship, like Lukipela, and hauled off to some. Bernard looked startled, but Kath seemed neither offended nor surprised. "I thought you might be," she said, nodding half to herself. "Nanook told me about that." She looked at Bernard. "We don't have a lot of time for secrets," she told him. "Farnhill says it's part of an exchange visit, but that's just a cover that he doesn't know we can see through because he's never asked us. They're reconnoitering this place in case they decide they want to take it over later. That's why your chief, Merrick, is with them--to assess whether your engineers could handle it. He's picked Waiters and Hoskins to put in here if the Directorate goes ahead with the idea." . . complete nut. UFOs are only one of his interests. But since marrying old Sinsemilla, he's pretty much. about a confrontation, and if what Pernak was beginning to glimpse of the Chironians was anything to go by, then that faction might well be in for some nasty surprises. That didn't worry Pernak so much as the thought that a lot of people stood to get hurt in the process. Knowing what he now knew, he felt he couldn't allow himself just to sit by on the sidelines and leave things to take such a course. . . "Hey, kid, how do you like---". Jay blinked and looked up to find Pernak watching him curiously. For an instant he felt guilty and at a loss for the explanation that seemed to be called for. "Bernard told me about it," Pernak said before Jay could offer anything. "I guess he's under a lot of pressure right now, so don't read too much into it." He stared at the box in Jay's hand. "I don't see anything--not a damn thing. Come on, Jay. Let's take a look at that loco of yours." The major stared at him as if refusing to believe his ears. "Get outa here," he choked in a weak voice. He shook his head incredulously, "Just . . . get the hell outa here, willya...". his lips, and though the other platoon members bear no

identifying legends or insignia, this man is wearing..never seen their faces clearly.."Not in this case," said Geneva. "I saved him." "You did? How?"..pie, philosophize about pie, and just in general spend the rest of the evening in a pie kind of mood.."friction with the shag, and she could hear the critter thrashing, its body slapping loudly against the bottom.Before the snake could wind back on itself and bite her hand, Leilani shot to her feet faster than her.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.

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