

## MR LINCOLN AND MR SEWARD

Abashed at his nervous bumbling in the face of this man's easy and nonthreatening conversation, the boy hung it in the hallway," Veronica said, getting up. She walked ahead and out the door while Mrs. Crayford waddled a few feet behind. "Don't bother bringing anything out, Celia," Veronica's voice called back. "I'll come back in for the things." "You mean you'll be gone in a week?" Aunt Gen asked. A web of worry strung spokes and spirals at the appears entirely normal. Pudgy, about sixty, with a full head of thick white hair, he might play a "When did you see a shoddy piece of workmanship on Chiron a door that didn't fit, or a motor that wouldn't start?" Eve asked him. "Have you ever come across anything like that anywhere there? It makes what we're used to look like junk. I was at a trade show yesterday that some of our companies put on in Franklin to do some market research. The Chironians thought it was a joke. You should have seen the kids down there. They thought our ideas of design and manufacturing were hilarious. Our guys had to give it up as a dead loss." "I agree, I agree," Lechat told them. "But we only know what we know, and we can only do what we can do. Surely doing so is not going to make things any worse. Will you try it?" Before anyone could reply, Colman said, "There might be a way to make it better." Everyone looked at him. He swept his hands around quickly. "There is a way we could get the message out to everybody, all at the same time-to the public, the Military-everyone." He looked around again. The others waited. "Through the Communications Center up in the ship," he said. "Every channel and frequency of the Terran net is concentrated there, including the military network and the emergency bands. We could broadcast from there on all of them simultaneously. You couldn't make much more impact than that." He sat back and looked around again to invite reactions..Merrick regarded him coolly for a few seconds and still didn't seem very satisfied. "Well, an I can say is that not everyone shares your enviable faith in human nature- myself included, I might add. The official policy conveyed to me from the Directorate, which it is your duty as well as mine to support irrespective of our own personal views,'Colman went through the motions of having to think back. "Yes . . . I think so. But I don't remember Swyley being around."..rolling through her in nauseating waves..If she retreated to the yard, however, she would be shirking her responsibilities. Which was exactly what."I thought it would be at least one ninety," Micky replied..A call came through from Brigade, and Sirocco switched into the audio channel to take it. Colman sat back and looked around. The indicators and alarms on the console in front of him had nothing to report. Nobody was creeping about under the floor, worming their way between the structure's inner and outer ski..~, tampering with any doors or hatches, cutting a hole through from the booster compartments, crawling down from the accelerator level above, or climbing furtively across the outside. Nobody, it seemed, wanted any thermonuclear warheads today. He rose and moved round behind the chair. "Need to stretch my legs," he said as Sirocco glanced up behind his faceplate. ',It's time to do a round anyhow." Sirocco nodded and carried on talking inside his helmet. Colman shouldered his M32 and left the guardroom..in museums. Her willow-leaf eyes were as green as spring and as cool as the layered shade deep in a..twenty-eight, but who sometimes felt ancient..she had rudely presumed to monitor and restrict Micky's use of alcohol. Such meddling required..childhood, her defenses against a cruel life had been anger and stubbornness. She'd seen herself as the..Those sagacities and uncounted others are from Mother's Big Book of Street-Smart Advice for the.."Well, Paul can't show his face outside. You heard what Fulmire said." Bernard replied. "So I guess I'll have to." "But all the troubles in the world," said Wendy, "have the same one answer." "True," Hermann, the young man in the white labcoat, agreed. "But on top of that, parts of this place are used as a school to give the kids early off-planet experience. The lady who runs that side of it isn't here right now, but she'll be free later."..Sheltering against a weathered outcropping of rock, he wishes desperately that his mother were with."I hope you're not expecting an answer," Hanlon said. "It makes about as much sense to me as Greek .... "He slowed then and inclined his head to indicate the direction across the street. "Now, there's the fella you should be asking," he suggested..old Cracker Jack."..Beyond the wide median strip, traffic races northeast toward Salt Lake City, with what seems like angry.."That's right-Michigan. I think I was something of a not-very-welcome accident. My mother liked the fun life-lots of boyfriends, and staying out all night and stuff. I guess I was in the way a lot of the time." "Easy, easy now," Micky counseled, still on her knees, making placating gestures with her hands.."It couldn't fire anyway," Kath replied. "It's wiodiflcations aren't completed yet We've already toli~4ou that"."You provide rationality?" Micky rinsed the last of the dishes. "Just when was the last time you actually..of an out-of-control machine, after all, but as a drunk or a lunatic. The tires suddenly churn up clouds of..The officers exchanged some words with the Chironians, then Portney and Wesserman approached the aircraft to survey the interior. After a few seconds Portney nodded to himself, then turned his head to nod again, back at Sirocco. Sirocco beckoned and one of two waiting ambulances moved forward to the Chironian aircraft Two soldiers opened its rear doors. Four others climbed inside the aircraft and began? moving bodies. As each body bag was brought out, Sirocco turned the top back briefly while an aide compared the face to pictures on a compact screen and another checked dogtag numbers against a list he was holding, after which the corpse was transferred to the ambulance..This evening wasn't about Micky Bellsong, anyway, not about what she wanted or whether she was..table..you can roll with that one."..it. They radiate the telltale intensity: in their stance, in their demeanor. In their eyes..Chapter 21..of great age and immeasurable wisdom. Nevertheless, he wishes he had been brave for her..Michelle or Heather or Courtney."..of the bite, excited by the prospect of the entertainment to come..1. Physically handicapped children?Fiction..could shoot twice its length, in this case five to six feet, which might leave her unbitten, but if this..from movies and books, but from experience with animals in the past..Colman sighed. "So I kept running away and getting into all kinds of stupid trouble, and in the end did most of my growing-up in centers for problem kids that the State ran. Sometimes they tried moving me in with

families in different places, but it never worked out. The last ones tried pretty hard. They adopted me legally, and that's how I got my name. Later we moved to Pennsylvania . . . my stepfather was an MHD engineer, which was probably what, got me interested . . . but there was some trouble, and I wound up in the Army." .reasons why that's an absurd idea." Everybody looked at Colman again, this time with a new interest. A different mood was taking hold 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..make the swap. Instead, he lights out for the Territory, chasing the clever mutt, hurrying away from the.Bobby's Honda was parked next to a collection bin for Salvation Army thrift shops..As he moves along the salad-prep aisle, the grim cowboy looks left and right, shoving aside the men and.Still armored in drollery, with a full bandolier of cheerful banter, Leilani said, "I never thought of myself.tube top stretched so extravagantly that it might kill bystanders if it snapped, she was temptation.Later, when she poured a third portion of vodka more generous than either of the previous rounds, she.At that moment Sirocco turned back another flap; Col~ man saw Anita's face inside the bag. It was white, like marble, and waxy. He swallowed and stared woodenly. The Chironian's eyes flickered briefly across his face. "Someone you knew?'.commotion..remarkable. The crudeness of what she heard lulled to fire a blush in her. If she harbored anger, she hid it.to the pair of you. I hope everything works out." "Thanks," Pernak acknowledged..horse as they cross burning desert sands. After "Cool Water" comes a spate of advertisements, nothing.kept her pedigree in her purse and never flashed it, as did so many others of her economic station..He dries his hands thoroughly on paper towels, but then holds them under one of the hot-air blowers..,"When we were discussing the Continuity of Office clause," Kalens prompted..displeased audience at a symphony of talentless musicians; and perhaps he's able to call forth his poetic.Although a couple hundred people are nearby, this place in this moment of time seems as lonely as any.Micky closed her eyes against the sight of her aunt's perfect and unconditional love, which brought her to.explains that it's more polite to say restroom..Well dressed, soft-spoken. He says, 'I'd be really grateful if you'd give me the money in the register, and.long Johns instead of proper pants and a shirt isn't a reliable judge of who's not quite right." .Later that evening Bernard returned home from the shuttle base to find Jerry Pernak there. Pernak explained over dinner that he had reconsidered his opposition to Lechat's Separatist policy. He had heard from Eve that Jean was involved actively, wondered if Bernard was too, and wanted to cooperate..In her despondency, just as when she lay in a trance of sweet amusement, she could not be reached..inch or two from the ground and hidden by glossy cascades of hair that appeared to be white in the.hiding behind a sofa or curled in die fetal position on the floor of a closet..godforsaken alien planet where there's nothing worth watching on TV and the only flavor of ice cream is.thinking. Since then, she had fallen asleep most nights while picturing herself with massive hooters. The."Major Lesley calling from the nose, sir"- .with one shackled leg might run..back toward the Windchaser, not with so many altercations likely to be rejoined if they do. They can't."You should think about things as well as just ask questions. Otherwise you might end up letting other people do your thinking for you instead of relying on yourself." .Sirocco tweaked his moustache pensively. "It's a problem knowing where to start. You know the kind of thing I'd like to get out and see the whole planet. The Barrier Range is as big as the Himalayas, there's Glace . . . a Grander Canyon out in Oriena . . . there's so much of it. But you have to do something useful, I suppose, as well as just go off enjoying yourself. But I think there's a lot of survey work waiting to be done yet. What I might try and do is get in touch with that geographical society that Swyley was taking such an interest in before he and Driscoll pulled their vanishing act." Sirocco stared at his feet for a second as if trying to make up his mind whether or not to mention something. "And then of course there's Shirley," he added nonchalantly..A hand descended on his arm and slid upward to tease the back of his neck. He turned round to find that Kath had come back. "You're starting a bachelors' party here," she said. "I have to break that up before the idea catches on." .of the murdered have surely been heard widely on news broadcasts..And therefore the Chironian rejected the death-cult of surrender to the inevitability of ultimate universal stagnation and decay. Just as an organism died and decomposed when deprived of food, or a city deserted by its builders crumbled to dust, entropy increased only in closed systems that were isolated from sources of energy and life. But the Chironian universe was no longer a closed system. Like a seedling rooted in soil and bathed by water and sunlight, or an egg-cell dividing and taking on form in a womb, it was a thriving, growing organism- an open system fed from an inexhaustible source..natural-foods phase that stretched the definition of natural to include things like chocolate-covered ants,.against the sensitive surfaces of his upturned eyes..smoke, as hard to nail down as your father's identity, as what happened to your brother, as just about.flourish..,"So-o-o-o?".want to make a life's work out of swabbing up puke and urine, but she could do what needed to be done.The Mayflower II, when at last it began growing and taking shape in lunar orbit year by year, became the tangible symbol of that quest..borne out; and although her hope had grown stronger, perhaps her faith had not.."Oh, Christ Warily, Colman brought a hand up to his brow. "Okay. Look, as soon as I can-" Footsteps approaching at the double interrupted and made him look around. It was Sergeant Armley, from the Orderly Room..Otto shook his head. "If Earth is tearing itself apart, it ~ because its people allowed themselves to believe the same - self-fulfilling prophecies that you are asking us to accept, Mr. Sterm. But we reject them. We need no more protection from you against the people in the EAP starship than they need from their Sterms to protect them against us. We have no need of that kind of strength. Is it strength for neighbors to fortify their homes against each other, or is it paranoia? You must feel very insecure to wish to fortify an entire star system." Sterm's mouth clamped into a grim, down turned line.."Grumbling, but not too bad. Any news from inside?" "Nothing yet. It's about time you took a breather. I'll be out in a few minutes to take a spell with Carson and Young. Tell Swyley and Driscoll to stand down with you. They've been out there the longest." .bobbed happily..JEAN FALLOWS WAS beginning to hate Chiron, the Chironians, and everything to do with the lawless, godless, alien, hostile place. After twenty years

of the familiar day-to-day and month-to-month routine of life aboard the Mayflower II, she missed the warmth and protectiveness that she had grown to know and yearned to be back amid the sane, civilized surroundings that she understood. She understood a way of life in which budget and necessity decided priorities of need, in which clear rules set limits of behavior, and where tried and trusted protocols defined role and function—her own as well as everybody else's; she did not understand, or even want to understand, the swirling ocean of anarchy in which she now found herself, in which individuals were expected to flounder helplessly like paper boats tossed in a tempest, with no charted shores, no havens of anchor, and no guiding stars. She had no place in it, and she desired no place in it. Secretly she dreamed of a miracle that would turn the Mayflower II around and embark her on another twenty-year voyage, back to Earth. "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." Adam also had an older sister—to the surprise of the Terrans—who designed navigation equipment for spacecraft at an establishment located inland from the Peninsula, a twin brother who was an architect and rumored to be getting friendly with a lively redhead from the Mayflower H whom Colman couldn't place, a younger sister who lived with two other teenagers somewhere in Franklin, and a still younger half-brother, not a son of Kath's, who was with their father in Selene. It was all very confusing. ricochets and stray bullets. He's wearing a large stainless-steel colander as though it's a hat, holding it in. Curtis squirms away, sprints on, though he realizes now that the dog is leading him westward. The "What made you sign up for the trip?" certain that these Bureau agents know them for who they really are. with the thingy. "All right then," Cromwell challenged. "Now what do you think would make you walk like that when people shouted at you?" "Even if we assume that I know what you mean, I don't think you'd expect me to answer." So now they both knew, and knew that the other knew. Each had tested the other's discretion, and both of them respected what they had found. Nothing more needed to be said. not exactly sure what perverts do, or why they do whatever it is they do, but he knows that secretly. from the galley, lounge, and cockpit. The door at the opposite end of the bath stands less than halfway. "He's just playing on emotion, Jean. I had it on down here for a few minutes but couldn't stand it. All he's interested in is scoring a few points against Wellesley and stopping a run to Lechat. And all that stuff about the Chironians claiming everything is theirs—it's pure garbage! I mean, it couldn't be further from the truth, could it, but nobody stops to think." He frowned to himself for a moment. It was true that he hadn't been at The Two Moons, but he had called Colman early that morning and gotten what seemed like an honest account. But with Jean acting the way she was, he didn't want to mention that. "Anyhow, the facts about the shooting are on record," he said. "All you have to do is ask Jeeves." "An afterlife without Hell," Aunt Gen explained, "would be as polluted and unendurable as a world." "You're a better person than any of them." happening to her. Noah's feet felt as heavily iron-shod as Rickster's appeared to be, but he tried not to shuffle the rest of. The driver and his partner return to the cab of the truck. One door slams, then the other. enough to stop caring about helpless girls? the one next door and the one that she herself had been not. "I've never been much good at relationships . . . but I'm willing to try." The sawn-off circular end of the hollow tubular pole wouldn't be as effective as a sharp knife, but it. On the threshold, Karla and the politician embraced. Even in the fading light of dusk, and further. hours at the Haven of the Lonesome and the Long Forgotten were drawing toward a close, and a. At the open window, the night lay breathless. memory must be fed in his enduring absence. Jarvis appeared Suddenly in the doorway beside Charez. "Three companies in battle order have arrived at the Spindle and are heading forward, and more are on their way from the Ring," he announced. "Also there is a detachment from the Battle Module coming up one of the aft feeder ramps. They must be coming back to close the lock." "You're wrong. It's hilarious." Speaking his heart seems the best way to make amends. "You're so fabulous, so beautiful, so. Can't you see he's not quite right?" Colman shook his head. "There shouldn't be any need. Celia's hair is a lot shorter. There'll be fewer people around later. It'll be okay - . . . as long as there's a different guard there by then, and provided we can get him down along that corridor for a minute. And anyhow, they'll be expecting people to be going in there then." "I'm not a cripple." "Oh, is that what it is? I never realized. You never told me you were with a special unit." when her left hand rested on the table, obviously misshapen in the otherwise forgiving glow of the three. "That's my point," the boy told him. "The facts aren't going to be changed, no matter how strongly you want to believe they're different, and no matter how many people you persuade to agree with you, are they? There just isn't any sense in saying there are things you can't see and in believing things you can't test." The blood was worse. There were never oceans of it; but a little blood can appear to be a lot before. STILL NO OVERTURE came from the Chironian leaders. The Chironian who seemed to direct a lot of what went on at Canaveral, the main shuttle base outside Franklin, stated that he didn't report uniquely to any individual or organization that approved his actions or gave him directions. So who told him how the place was to be run? It depended. He originated requests for things like equipment and new constructions because he knew what the base needed. How did he know? Because the people in charge of capacity planning and traffic control told him, and besides, it was his job to know. On the other hand, the companies that built the shuttles and other hardware worked out the technical specifications because that was their business, and the customers took care between them of the priorities of the missions to be flown from the base. He stayed out of that and did his best to support the schedules they said they needed. So ultimately, who was in charge? Who told whom to do what, and who did it? It depended. Nothing made any sense.

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