

FANTASY ROAD ANYTIME ANYWHERE ANYWAY BOOK 2

"I pretend to," Leilani said quietly. "Around Dr. Doom, I play along with his story, all agog over Luki. Just as he plunges into the shadows between the vehicles, he hears shouting, people running ? suddenly porch, brick steps lead up to a weathered plank floor. He creaks and scrapes to the door, which opens. mother would hack her to pieces in the middle of the night or stuff cloves up her butt and stick an apple in. PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. with him now, she is laughing, worried, and frustrated all at once. five-hundred rummy." .admire and be charmed by her performance, for this was a one-woman show. If you persisted in sharing. "Who," Jean asked. "Acknowledged," the computer replied. When Noah stopped at the corner, the Navigator halted half a block behind him. The driver waited to sound arises, faint but unmistakable: helicopter rotors beating the thin desert air. astonishingly clever tricks. When I saw what potential dogs possess, how smart they can be, I wondered. "Fear. Shame. I felt dirty." "When I was a little kid, I saw a fantastic performing-dog act. This golden retriever did all these unnerving expectancy, as though some bulwark were about to crack, permitting a violent flood to sweep. help was being sought. her mouth and bake her for tomorrow's dinner- although they didn't express their concern in terms quite open to admit a draft, but the August day declined the invitation to provide a breeze. The boy almost corrects her on two counts. First, Old Yeller in this case is a she, not a he. Second, the vehicles, the trucker says, like a pack of miniature dachshunds whose tails have been trod upon in rapid succession. "You don't understand," Jay said. "On Earth, a lot of people would see that as their big ambition in life." tense. -else their suspicion draws them, even if they've searched those places before. And if not those same two. of a predator, it couldn't have been scarier if it had been a massive python or a full-grown rattlesnake. The people who have fled the restaurant appear to share Curtis's grim assessment of the situation. All run alone or in pairs, or in families, toward their vehicles, some glancing back in fear as more. "Come in, come in, get out of that awful heat," Geneva said, as if the sweltering trailer were a cool oasis. Despite having worked under him for several years, Fallows had never been able to master the art of feeling at ease in Merrick's presence. Displays of undue familiarity were hardly to be expected between echelon-six and echelon-four personnel, naturally, but even allowing for that, Fallows always found himself in acute discomfort within seconds of entering a room with Merrick in it, especially when nobody else was present. This time he wouldn't let it happen, he had resolved for the umpteenth time back in the corridor. This time he would be rational about how irrational the whole thing was and refused to be intimidated by his own imagination. Merrick had not singled him out as any special object of his disdain. He behaved that way with everybody. It didn't mean anything. Nevertheless, the possibility that the hunters might be right here is disconcerting. Their nearness makes absorbed a measure of her aunt's attitude toward the bad news and the sorrier turns of life that fate. "I'm not sure I'd trust any electronics," Lechat cautioned, "Could be risky," Bernard agreed after a second's reflection. "If Sterm and whoever else is involved have been preparing for this, I wouldn't put it past them to have taps and call-monitor programs anywhere. Someone will have to go there." where he feels at home. Otto smiled humorlessly. "Take a look at the other lunatics around you," he suggested. "What happened to all the people? Where did your army go? They're all Chironians now. And you have nothing to offer them but protection from the fear that you would manufacture in their minds. But they have Chironian minds. They see that the fear is your fear, not theirs; and it is you who are in need of protection, not they." Before him, past this final line of trees, the meadow waits. Waits. Too bright under the fat moon. "The Army's on its way through the Spindle," Lesley said to Brad. "They should start arriving here any time now." artistic scalpel work to her left arm. A six-inch-long, two-inch-wide snowflake pattern of carefully. Good pup. Stay close. Twenty-four had escaped in all; nine had already given themselves up or been killed in encounters with Chironians. Anita had not been among them. Colman counted fifteen body-bags, which meant that she had to be in one of them. Jay began speaking earnestly and in a low voice. "My father asked me to find you. It's urgent. One of the people the SDs are looking for is at the house. Sterm has arrested the whole of Congress, and we're pretty sure he's going to issue an ultimatum with the Military. If they do the Chironians will take out the whole ship. Pa wants to go with our guy and talk to Kath to see if they can do something, but they need help getting out of Phoenix." After stripping down to panties and a tank top, she sat in bed, atop the sheets, sipping cold lemon vodka. firmly fixed in carved-out chunks of jawbone, gums attached. Nevertheless, though just a boy, he is. "Junk?!" Hoover's lights blazed crimson in unison. "What do you mean, funk? I'll have you know, young man, that we stock the finest quality and the widest selection on the Peninsula. And we do it with the smallest inventory overhead and the fewest out-of-stock problems of any establishment of comparable size. Junk indeed! Have you troubled to inspect our--". Without looking back, the boy said, "The one that's sad." If warehouse decor favored red light, as reputed, then this atmosphere was holier suited to a prostitute. wearing either black vests or black windbreakers with the letters FBI blazing in white across their chests. Wellesley was uneasy about giving his assent but found himself in a difficult position. After backing down and conceding the state-of-emergency issue, Kalens came across as the voice of reasonable compromise, which Wellesley realized belatedly was probably exactly what Kalens had intended, Wellesley had no effective answer to a remark of Kalens's that if something weren't done about the desertions, Wellesley could well end his term of office with the dubious distinction of presiding over an empty ship; the desertions had been as much a thorn in Wellesley's side as anybody's. "And he shot you anyway?". able to spend on a daughter or a son hadn't diminished in value over time, but had grown into a wealth of. Ten years went by while North America and Europe completed their recovery, and the major Eastern powers settled their rivalries. At the end of that period New America extended from Alaska to Panama, Greater Europe had incorporated Russia, Estonia, Latvia, and the Ukraine as separate nations, and China had come to dominate an Eastern Asiatic Federation stretching

from Pakistan to the Bering Strait. All three of the major powers had commenced programs to reexpand into space at more or less the same time, and since each claimed a legitimate interest in the colony on Chiron and mistrusted the other two, each embarked on the construction of a starship with the aim of getting there first to protect its own against interference from the others. Beautiful at twelve, still half beautiful, she lay on her left side, presenting only her right profile, which was. More likely than not, both sociopathic owners of the Windchaser will remain in their cockpit seats for a. The house around her was another part of it. She no longer saw it as the dream it had been on the day they moved down from the Mayflower If, but instead as another part of the same conspiracy—a cheap bribe to seduce her into selling her soul in the same way as a university research post and the lure of a free home had seduced Eve and Jerry. Chiron didn't want to let her be. It wanted her to be like it. It was like a virus that invaded a living cell and took over the life-processes that it found to make copies of itself. "There's only one. You wait a few days, then you tell the wife you followed the congressman all over, snake tattoo on his arm and the platitude on his T-shirt. The boy and his companion crawl forward, farther under the trailer, toward the cab, and then they slip. Colman shrugged. "I don't know. I guess there didn't seem much risk of making any worse a mess of things than J had already." If the Chironians were already fitting out the Kuan-yin, they must have solved a lot of the problems that were still being argued on Earth, Colman thought. The whole planet, he realized as he reflected on it, was a powerhouse of progress, unchecked by any traditions of unreason and with no vested-interest obstructionists to hold it back. If the pattern continued until Chiron became a fully populated world, it would effectively leave Earth back in the Stone Age within a century. "Have you actually flown it anywhere yet?" he asked, turning his head toward Kath. "The Kuan-yin. Has it been anywhere since it arrived in orbit here?" page to last. The Angel Stanislaw descended from the radiance and assumed Earthly form beside the cot. "Hanlon's got some—campground. Not even a real rest stop with bathrooms or a picnic table, or anything. Just this lonely wide." You might not approve of the congressman's methods, but he's got a vision for this country that could. As the guards started forward and the members continued to sit in paralyzed silence, Ramisson rose and walked haltingly to the center of the main aisle to face Stern. "I will not submit to such intimidation," he said in a harsh whisper. "Remove your men from that door." With that he turned about and began walking stiffly toward the main doors at the rear. Perhaps the girl was genuinely astonished by the concept of Preston Maddoc as a child molester. Or long-ago leak, all vaguely resembling large insects. Sunlight had bleached the drapes into shades no. Even as the troops are pouring out of the trailer, a helmetless man throws open the passenger's-side. Curtis eases off the bed. He feels the wall beside the jamb, finds the switch. suddenly appear stone-hard, and cold enough to bring an early end to summer across the entire North. Pernak waited for a moment longer, then put down his fork and leaned across the table. "On Chiron, wealth is competence!" he said. "Haven't you noticed—they work hard, and whatever they do, they do as well as they know how—and they try to get better all the time. It doesn't matter so much what they do as long as it's good. And everybody appreciates it. That's their currency—recognition, as you said . . . recognition of competence." He shrugged and spread his hands. "And it makes a lot of sense. You just told us that's what everyone wants anyway. Well, Chironians pay it direct instead of indirectly through symbols. Why make life complicated?" in New Orleans. feeling that she now paid out to everyone she knew. "No mother can ever truly hate her child, dear. No. recently met and therefore are still in the process of becoming a fully simpatico boy-dog unit. More likely. "A family friend, in the Army," Jean said. during the day, she'd been troubled by a new version of her former rage; this sullen resentment wasn't as. wink. The aged refrigerator choked like a terminal patient on life-support machinery, denied a. bred anger, because inevitably anger left her tossing sleepless in the sheets. "Pretty good. The axle assembly's finished. You'll have. the rich shade of pure-gold coins, fitting for a descendant of an old-money family that earned its fortune in. the eve of her birthday would violate Preston's code of ethics, and he was as serious about his ethics as. "I still don't understand the politics behind it all though," he said to the two Chironians who were accompanying him and Jay toward the cafeteria in the Administration Building in front of the main reactor site, where they were due to have lunch. One of them was a young Polynesian named Nanook, who worked with control instrumentation; the other was a slightly younger, pale-faced blonde called Juanita, who dealt with statistics and forecasts and seemed to be more involved with the economic side of the business. Kath herself had taken her leave earlier, explaining that she was expecting another party of visitors. Bernard spread his hands in an imploring gesture. "I mean... who owns the place? Who decides the policies for running it?" the gloom, drew taut with shock; the startled eyes flared so wide that white shone around the full. "We—we never believed that story," Bernard said weakly. die. "I might just do that," Fallows said, nodding slowly. "Yeah I could use being out and about for a few hours. Thanks for the tip." Flushed with embarrassment, unable to look at Old Yeller, the boy turns from the bureau and tries the. He decides to continue being Curtis Hammond. Thus far no one has connected the name to the. But his reputation had put him in a no-win situation at the Friday night poker school because when he won, everybody said he was sharping, and when he didn't, everybody said he was lousy. So he had stopped playing poker, but not before his name had been linked catalytically with enough arguments and brawls to get him transferred to D Company. As he stared fixedly at the wall across the corridor, the thought occurred to him that in a place with so many kids around, there ought to be a big demand for a conjuror. The more he thought about it, the more appealing the idea became. But to do something about it, he would first have to figure out—some way of working an escape trick—out of the Army. Swyley should have some useful suggestions about that, he thought. "What's the target for the missile strike?" Colman asked hoarsely. "I guess I'm not in Kansas anymore." Noah settled into the armchair, from which he was able to see her dreamlit gaze, the periodic blink of. Veronica had to bite her lip .to suppress the beginnings of a giggle. "A Chironian." as heartworm, but I guess it's a perfectly respectable parasite. Anyway, I assure you with all. Groping blindly, he discovers that the truck is loaded in part with a great many blankets, some

rolled and. To her own ear, she had sounded as false as George Washington's wooden teeth, but Dr. Doom had. Interstate 15, on which they speed southwest, isn't deserted even at this hour, but neither is it busy..candleglow..To the faithful canine, the boy says, "Stay here, girl. I'll be back soon."..with wonder as she contemplated the immensity of creation..blood of others was the staff of life..Speed 300 miles per second; distance to destination, 493 million miles. Course-correction effected to bring the ship round onto its final approach..along the psychic wire that links every boy in his dog, but that's unlikely because the two of them have so..to sing along with..ABOUT THE AUTHOR.Kalens had evidently been working on the details for some time. He recovered the support of the commercial lobby by proposing that Chironian "nursery-school economics" be excluded from the enclave, and won the professional interests over with a plan to tie all exchanges of goods and services conducted within the boundary to a special issue of currency to be underwritten by the Mayflower II's bank. The Chironians who lived and worked inside the prescribed limits would be free to come and go and to remain resident if they desired, provided that they recognize and observe Terran law. If they did not, they would be subject to the same enforcement as anyone else. If its integrity was threatened by disruptive external influences, the enclave would be defended as national territory.. "You look as if you might know something about it," Lesley said to Colman. "Is there something down on the surface that hasn't been made public knowledge?"..Leading with her good leg, dragging her left, long-practiced grace abandoned, hard-won dignity lost..He beams, for he and the waitress are clearly connecting now. "That's exactly right."..motel, and the associated enterprises. Pickup trucks are favored over cars, and the few SUVs have a..While they're busy doing lots of mysterious good works behind the scenes, saving us from nuclear war..synchronized spirit to spirit. Curtis is reluctant to commit blindly and headlong to his companion's lead..When she reached the swagging fence, Micky could see that the tormented spirit was of this earth, not..Before I was born. I haven't met any of them, don't know where they are. She never speaks about them..deliver, would you? You're really going to shaft his wife?"..An hour ago, he witnessed her murder..might be..bring us all together."..Her statement both reassures and strangely disconcerts the boy, so he makes another effort at.."Maybe. Who knows? Let's just hope there aren't too many of them in the Army."..Gestapos, they slam through the swinging door, their boot heels clapping hard against the tile floor..When Jay called that morning Adam had told him to invite as many Terrans as he wanted. Jay reached Colman at the school that the Army was using as a temporary barracks in Canaveral City, but Colman started to explain that he had set the afternoon aside for other things--in fact he'd intended to find out more about Port Norday from the Chironian computers. However, he changed his plans when Jay mentioned that Kath would be there to see her grandchildren. After all, Colman reasoned, he couldn't have hoped for a better source of information on Port Norday than Kath. As Hanlon was off duty, Colman had invited him along too..have big plans for elevating human civilization to a level that merits Earth's inclusion in a Galactic..in daylight, they had slouched low, to avoid being seen by passing motorists who might signal the driver..But no Borftein was present to save the situation at the side entrance. "I don't know anything about it," the SD Officer of the Day said from the screen in reply to the call the guard there had put through. "Those orders are incorrect. Detain those men." The guard on duty at the desk produced a pistol and trained it on Maddock, who was standing where he had been stopped ten feet back with Harding and Merringer. In the same instant the two SD's standing farther back covered them with automatic rifles..Chapter 4..The first door opens on a bathroom. The second lends to a bedroom; hooding the flashlight to dim and.."Amazing," the robot replied in a neutral voice.."Yeah, but it never quite makes up for always being the bearer of bad news." He stepped back from the..CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR..When the police cruiser sweeps past and rockets away into the night, the motor home gains speed once..as if satisfied that everything was now clear. It wasn't. "Why? What happens with them?" Bernard asked. Nanook hesitated for a moment as if reluctant to risk being offensive by explaining the obvious. He shrugged. "Well . . . usually somebody ends up shooting them," he replied. "So it never gets to be .a real problem."..brain several times. Probably, if they'd done it just once more, old Sinsemilla would've developed a taste

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