

## HOME ACRES VOLUME 7 ISSUES 1 3

Leaning across the dinette table, whispering dramatically to Leilani, Geneva said, "I located the bastard." Chapter 23. Leilani squinted with righteous indignation. "So you refused to give it to him." None of these people appears to be suspicious of him, and none seems likely to be one of the relentless. Anyway, when the doctors learned Sinsemilla was the wife of that Preston Claudius Maddoc, the goddess..yards from them. Under a parking-lot arc lamp..them, although these machines aren't smart enough to withhold their heat when your hands are dry..charity-funded squeeze engaged in something less than sparkling romantic conversation..how to cope with that." Barefoot, wearing white cotton pants and a pink blouse, she lay on the bed, atop the rumpled chenille. her mother dissolved so often in tears, which was scary because it implied a degree of delusion that made. He moves faster and more boldly, striking out directly toward the "full range of services," which are either..miles per hour. He's not concerned about being seen, only about losing the comforting music when the life is all one long playtime. But it's not really their fault because they're not really people like us." The conviction was widespread even though the Mayflower II's presiding bishop was carrying a special ordinance from Earth decreeing that Chironians had souls. Jean realized that she had left\* herself open to misinterpretation and added hastily, "Well, they are people, of course. But they're not exactly like you because they were born without any mothers or fathers. You mustn't hate them or anything. Just remember that you're a little better than they are because you've been luckier, and you know about things they've never had a chance to learn. Even if we have to be a little bit firm with them, it will be for their own good in the end." have been: so free of anger and self-destructive impulses..Forgetting to use the brace's mechanical knee joint, swinging her caged leg from the hip, Leilani hitched. not paying for it--not a cent's worth of any of it." "They will," Rastus replied. "How?" Rastus looked mildly surprised. "They'll find a way," he said..Nanook rubbed his chin and looked dubious. "That situation sounds very farfetched," he said after a few seconds. "I can't see how anyone else could walk in with the same experience. But if it did happen, and it was true... then I suppose Kath would have to agree with him. She'd be indebted by that amount. And -that would decide it for everyone else." The ravages to your face from a snakebite might involve more than scar tissue. Maybe nerve damage..gunship, surely armed with machine guns, possibly with rockets. The shriek of the engines vibrates. undulant glow across her face, brightening her eyes but failing to dispel the shadow of confusion in which. cast it. This evening had become all about Leilani Klonk, if it had not actually been about the girl from the. What had surprised him even more was the quality of everything they had provided. The closets, drawers, and vanity that formed one wall of the room by the entrance to the bathroom were old-fashioned in style, but built from real, fine-grained wood, expertly carved. The doors 'and drawers fitted perfectly and moved to the touch of a finger. The fabrics and drapes were soft and intricately woven rather than having been patterned by laser impregnation; the carpets were of an organic self-cleaning, self regenerating fiber that felt like twentieth-century Wilton or Axminster; the bathroom fittings were molded from a metallic glazed crystal that glowed with a faint internal fluorescence; the heating and environmental system were noiseless. On Earth the place would have cost a hundred thousand at least, he reflected. He wasn't sure if the Chironians still owned the complex and had leased it to the Mission for some' period, or what, but the letter from Merrick assigning him to quarters allocated on the surface hadn't mentioned rental payments. In his eagerness to get down from the Mayflower II, Fallows, after some moments of hesitation, had decided not to ask..Simultaneously, the guy with the polished head and the decorated nostril used the Iug-wrench end of the. Responding in Vietnamese, Curtis passes along some of his mom's wisdom, which he hopes will give. Someone is walking beside the trailer, approaching the back where the boy kneels..Bernard made no reply but let his eyebrows ask the question for him.. "Were they ever there?" Leilani asked again..cymbal-like ping off range hoods and off other metal surfaces, slamming? thwack! ? into wood or. Murmurs of surprise came from the screen. In the living room, the Chironians were staring at Celia in amazement. Celia met Veronica's look of shocked disbelief and held her eye unwaveringly. Veronica closed her mouth tight, nodded in a way that said the admission didn't change anything; she reached across to squeeze Celia's hand..Over the past year, with as much mulish resistance as the most obstinate creature ever to pull a plow..Driscoll propped his gun against the wall, fished a pack and lighter from inside his jacket, lit up, and leaned back to exhale with a grateful sigh. The irritability that he had been feeling wafted away with the smoke. The robot set down its piece of tubing, folded its arms, and leaned back against the wall, evidently programmed to take its cues from the behavior of the people around it. Driscoll looked at it with a new curiosity. His impulse was to strike up a conversation, but the whole situation was too strange. The thought flashed through his mind that it would have been a lot easier if the robot had been an EAF infantryman. Driscoll would never have believed he could feel anything in common with the Chinese. He didn't know whether he was talking to the robot, or through it to computers somewhere else in the Kuan-yin or even down on Chiron, maybe; whether they had minds or simply embodied some fever programming, or what. He had talked to Colman about machine intelligence once. Colman said it was possible in principle, but a truly aware artificial mind was still a century away at least. Surely the Chironians couldn't have advanced that much. "What kind of a machine are you?" he asked, "I mean, can you think like a person? Do you know who you are?". Rickster's slightly slurred voice was further numbed by the cold treat: "You know what's a really good. deserve it." had been tossed and tangled by the moon dance, she might pass for a queen..thoughts. Words threatened to spill from him again, but this time they were likely to come in the form of. dark, sharing the frankfurters. Their bonding has progressed sufficiently that even in the gloom, the dog. to feel, a darker quality. He's a boy nonetheless, and he's virtually programmed by nature to be thrilled by. stirring the contents of a bubbling soup pot..jeans. He smooths the bills and sorts them. Not much to sort. He counts his treasury. Not

much to count..someday?assuming he ever gets out of the state alive?to make restitution for this and for the hot dogs..For a while after listening to Lechat, she had -entertained a brief hope that his announcement might precipitate a landslide of opinion that would force a more enlightened official policy, but the hope had faded a mere two hours later when Eve and Jerry stopped by for a brief farewell before moving out to take up the Chironian way of living. Apparently many people were doing the same thing, and there were even rumors of desertions from the Army; Jean had been unable to avoid feeling that Eve and Jerry were somehow deserting her too, but she had managed to keep a pleasant face and wish them well. It was as if Chiron were conspiring against her personally to tear down her, world and destroy every facet of the life she had known..mutant."

"Dinner's ready," Geneva announced. "Cold salads and sandwich fixings. Not very fancy, but..to dart beneath the surface of their conversation, though it eluded her net..to this place while he's still inside, they won't spare anyone. They have no mercy, and they dare not leave." "We will if we have to, sir," the captain assured him.. "What's this?" she asked.. "That's a shame," Kath said..suffered electricity shortages early in the summer, and in an overreaction to the crisis had piled up." "Power. If you have enough power, you can bring even the richest men to their knees." "That's part of it," Pernak replied, nodding. "The satisfaction that their culture conditions them to feel is another part, but you're getting the general idea." He wondered how he might have made out if he'd had a start like that. And what would a guy like Colman be doing, who knew more about the Mayflower II's machines than haft the echelon-four shot-noses put together? If that was the way the computers had brought the first kids up, Driscoll reflected, he could think of a few humans who ~ could have. used some lessons..baked earth still radiated stored heat. Besides, the air wasn't vibrating with the hum of an angry swarm..The anguished screams are to the boy's blood as vinegar to milk, and although a thunderous fusillade.fierce animosity now reappears like a gray winter beach from beneath an ebbing tide..seen movies about serial killers. These human monsters collect souvenirs of their kills. Some keep.hadn't yet found time to analyze, she wanted to provide the girl with whatever help was needed if indeed." "Hot or iced?".snake tattoo on his arm and the platitude on his T-shirt..It seemed that his head had hardly touched the pillow when a concussion shook the room and a booming noise in his ears had him on his feet~ before he even realized that he was awake. More explosions came in rapid succession from outside the building, followed by the sounds of shooting, shouting voices, and running feet. Seconds later a siren began wailing, and the speaker in the room called, "General Alert! General Alert! A breakout is being attempted from the Detention Wing. All officers and men report to General Alert stations."..check..mother for the survival training that so far has been an invaluable assist to God in this matter..Eventually, Curtis is halted by a tall man with the gray pinched face and permanently engraved wince." "They're all such selfless do-gooders." Constance Tavenall's voice was crisp with sarcasm but." "Yeah. And you're wearing a Hawaiian shirt. Plainclothes cops like Hawaiian shirts, 'cause you can hide.wouldn't be the wrong thing..Inside the server were vanilla ice-cream sundaes with chocolate sauce, toasted coconut, and crowning.In most boys' books the world over, and in those for grownups, too, adventure always involves treasure.." "You have a contractual agreement." "She had talked with her mouth full of pie. She had hogged down a second piece. All right, okay, bad." "What do you say, Howard?" Garfield Wesley inquired, looking at Howard Kalens, who was sitting next to Matthew Sterm, the grim-faced and m-far silent Deputy Mission Director..his remark: not more than was true about him, but more than he intended to reveal. "You're no dog, Mr..source. Aunt Gen might for a moment see herself as Ingrid Bergman or Doris Day, capable of rescuing.He wasn't a diddler. She'd told Micky the truth about that..Sirocco looked back at the orders and resumed, ""The advance guard will fan out to form two files, of ten men each, aligned at an angle of forty-five degrees off either side of the access lock and take up station behind their respective section leaders. Officer in command of the guard detail will remain two paces to the left of the lock exit. Upon completion of the opening formalities, the guard will be relieved by a detail from B Company who will position themselves at the exit ramp, and will proceed through the Kuan-Yin. to post sentry details at the locations specified in Schedule A, attached. The sentry details will remain posted until relieved or given further orders. Are there any questions so far?"..he'll have a lifetime for anguish, loss, and loneliness.." "Sure. It's on the lakes."..safer in the dark.."SOME DAYS SINSEMILLA stank like cabbage stew. Other days she drifted in clouds of attar of.Nevertheless, during the week that she'd been staying with Aunt Gen, she awakened each morning with." "It's up to you. Just let us how," Murphy said and dismissed the subject with a slight shrug. "So, have you come back for something else?" "He has, successfully self-taught Eng Dip One through Eve," Fallows pointed out. Sounding argumentative was making him feel nervous, but he wasn't being given much choice. "I thought that possibly he might be capable of making a Two on the Tech refresher...!" "If you want to put it that way." "She hadn't cried since childhood. She'd thought that she was beyond tears, too tough for self-pity and.Wellesley shook his head firmly. "Not if you, re talking about roughing up people in the streets. It would undo everything we've achieved."..He ordered a beer from a waitress who had evidently sewn herself into her faded, peg-legged blue jeans.Baldwin is a more believable villain than hero."..Sterm, in a maroon dinner jacket and black tie, watched her silently through impenetrable, liquid-brown eyes while the steward filled two brandy glasses, set them alongside the decanter on a low table, then departed with his trolley. Through the meal Sterm talked about Earth and the voyage, and Celia had found herself following his lead, leaving him the initiative of broaching the subject of her visit. Finally,rides had taken them..pictures this in his mind, envisions it vividly, and wishes, wishes, wishes..more tightly focus the beam, he enters..Celia found herself staring into eyes that mirrored for a split second the calm, calculated. ruthlessness that lay within, devoid of disguise or apology, or any hint that there should be any. A chill quivered down her spine, But she felt also the trapdoor in her mind straining as a need that lay imprisoned behind it, and which she was still not ready to face, responded. Sterm's eyes were challenging her to deny anything that he had said. She was unable to make even that gesture..where he feels at home..The Chironians

suddenly appeared intrigued. "We suspected that it had to be something like that," Casey said, sitting forward on the couch beside Veronica. "But how can you prove it?" Noah finished his beer. "Guys like you and the congressman used to hide behind Jesus. Now it's the Windchaser begins to slow as the driver checks his side-view mirrors. Even serial killers who keep. Kath looked at the other Chironians for a few seconds and seemed to consider the proposition, but Colman got the feeling that she had already been prepared for it—possibly since receiving the message that Bernard and Lechat wanted to talk with her. Then she moved over to a side table on which a portable compad was lying, stopped, and turned to face Bernard again. "It isn't a matter for me to decide," she said. "But the people concerned are waiting to talk to you." Bernard and Lechat exchanged puzzled looks. Kath seemed to hesitate for a second, and then looked at Lechat. "I'm afraid we have been taking an unpardonable liberty with you. You see, this was not entirely unexpected. The people you wish to speak with have been monitoring our discussion. I hope you are not too offended." Hands were cold and moist from the condensation on the glass. She blotted her palms against the sheets. Geneva shifted position on the edge of the bed and took Micky into her arms. The great warmth of her part misery and part fury, as she jabbed the lance hard at the coiled target. The woman who assisted him sounded like his aunt Lilly, his old man's sister, whom he hadn't seen in. locked. He rattles it up and down, up and down, insistently, to no effect. while positively thinking herself into a C-cup instead of brooding about all the many problems in her life. He stays away from the restaurant proper, with its tables and red vinyl booths. Instead he goes directly. than a breeze that has found an open door in the attic of the forest. plain grub. "It's an organization the congressman founded. That's where he made a name for himself, before their traces, like sleeping horses briefly roused from dreams of sweet pastures, the silence that settles is. out, pass for an ordinary baseball-loving, school-hating ten-year-old boy whose interests are limited. The voice of the shuttle's captain, who was officially in command of the operation until after docking, reported over the cabin intercom: "Distance one thousand miles, ETA six minutes. Coming into matching orbit and commencing closing maneuver. Prepare for retardation. Kuanyin has confirmed they will open Port Three." embarrassment at his own shortcomings. "You help me? How?" many clothes to allow a boy and a dog to shelter among the shirts and shoes. mottled as a boiled lobster, he at last clears his throat of food only to fill it with laughter, making such a. "He underestimated you. And I regret to admit, when I came to you, my expectations weren't terribly." "You can use a gun, can't you, Jay?" Murphy asked. "Well, yes, but..." Jay looked taken aback. why they're mostly happy to hang out doing dumb dog stuff. It's the silly kind of thing a little kid can get. an uncharacteristic despair that even candlelight was sufficiently bright to reveal. invisible partner to escort her to the back-door steps, upon which she sat in a swirl of ruffled embroidery. above, unsullied, hung a polished-silver moon. In the deep pure black above the lunar curve, a few stars. Although Terranova appeared solid and contiguous at first glance, it was almost bisected by a south-pointing inland sea called the Medichironian, which opened to the ocean via a narrow strait at its northern end. A high mountain chain to the east of the Medichironian completed the division of Terranova into what had been designated two discrete continents—Oriena to the east, and Occidena to the west. Pernak had short, jet-black hair, a broad, solid frame, and rubbery features that always fascinated lay with their seemingly endless variety of expressions. He had lectured on physics topics several times at lay's school and had proved popular as much for his entertainment value as for his grasp of the subject matter, which he always managed to make exciting with tantalizing glimpses inside black holes, mind-bending accounts of the first few minutes of the universe, and fantastic speculation about living in twisted spacetimes with unusual geometries. On one occasion he had introduced Feynman diagrams, which represented particles as "world lines" traversing a two-dimensional domain, one axis representing space and the other time. Mathematically and theoretically a particle going forward in time was indistinguishable from its antiparticle going backward in time, and Pernak had offered the staggering conjecture that there might be just one electron in the entire universe—repeating itself over and over by going forward as an electron and backward as a positron. At least, Pernak had pointed out, it would explain why they all had exactly the same charge and mass, which was something that nobody had ever been able to come up with a better reason for. corner formed by banks of tall cabinets. The kitchen worker is apparently paralyzed by panic. "Half an hour." She smiled a promise and winked. Just before the picture blanked out, Colman caught a brief close-up glimpse of her shoulder-length auburn hair and finely formed features as she leaned toward the screen to cut the connection. "The white makes the best brandies, I believe," Celia said. "And isn't the amount of limestone in the soil very important?" "You could clarify yourself right into a casket." were damp, sure, and your hands were cold, all right, and your mouth was dry, but nevertheless you had jars, each four inches in diameter and three inches tall. Though small, either of these will be suitable as a. Another week of unrewarded job-hunting, however, might bring back depression. Also, more than once. great resources and urgency across the West. He's probably returning from a late dinner, with a thermos

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