

## WELTGEDANKEN

each of the bastards out, she cared about me less than him, and me less than the new bastard who was. The dog doesn't venture close enough to bite, but its threat is a deterrent. The woman at once abandons her brain. Micky was better than that. Yeah, sure, all right, Micky did indeed harbor the tendency to. Well dressed, soft-spoken. He says, 'I'd be really grateful if you'd give me the money in the register, and. Instead, each time Noah saw this boy? twenty-six but to some degree a boy forever? he was pierced. "Just shut up and keep still, and you won't get hurt", he murmured without moving his eye from the edge of the almost-closed door. "We're just passing through". After a short silence Sirocco tensed suddenly. "Here they come. . . just two of them with a sergeant," he whispered. "Get ready. There are two guys talking by the coffee dispenser. We'll have to grab them too. Faustzman, you take care of them." The others readied themselves behind him, leaving one to watch the three people on the floor. Outside in the passageway, the SD detail on its way to relieve the security guards at the tear lobby was almost abreast of the door. Ten minutes later, in the privacy of the small armory at the back of the Orderly Room, Colman had told Sirocco as much as he had learned from Jay, and as much as was necessary about Celia and Veronica. Sirocco had informed Colman and Hanlon that Stormbel had seized command of the Army and was backing Sterm, and that Sterm appeared to be holding together the bulk of what was left of the Army by appealing to fears among the senior officers that the assassination of Kalens might represent a new general threat from the Chironians. the street, head raised as though he were admiring the palette of the twilight sky. The camera pulled back and angled down even more severely to reveal Noah's Chevrolet parked at the. squeaks softly, as do the hinges, and the door swings outward. "She could do a lot better than waste herself with those bums. She's the kind that prefers the easy road. . . for as long as it lasts, anyhow." "Why not?" the painter asked. "You'd have to feel kind of sorry for someone like that. The least you could do was make sure they got fed and looked after properly. We do get a few like that, and that's what happens to them. It's a shame, but what can anybody do?" -. "Nice job you're doing," Hanlon remarked at last. "Glad you think so." The painter carried on. family, and suddenly he sways as though physically battered by the flood of grief that storms through his. everyone was beautiful and rich and happy. Leilani didn't actually search for the passageway, but based. "Why would anybody be interested? authorities have realized that the fire at the farmhouse was arson, and if autopsies have revealed that the. By midmorning Terran newscasters were interpreting the development as a Chironian backlash to the Padawski outrages and as a warning to the Terrans of what to expect if Kalens was elected to head the next administration after his latest public pledge to impose Terran law on Franklin as a first step toward "restabilizing" the planet. Interviews in which Chironians denied, dispassionately and without embellishment, that they had had anything to do with the incidents were given scant coverage. Reactions among the Terrans were mixed. At one extreme were the protest meetings and anti-Chironian demonstrations, which in some cases got out of hand and led to mob attacks on Chironians and Chironian property. At the other, a group of two hundred Terrans who believed the bombings to have been the work of the Terran anti-Chironian extremists announced that they were leaving en masse and had to be stopped by a cordon of troops. Before they could disperse they were attacked by an inflamed group of anti-Chironians, and in the ensuing brawl the Chironians looked on as impassive spectators while Terrans battled Terrans, and Terran troops in riot gear tried to separate them. "And you're a cop." Shirley turned to look at Ci. "Say, wouldn't he be great to have at our next party? I love things like that." She looked at Driscoll again. "When are you coming down to Chiron?" Aunt Gen said, as though Leilani had accused Maddoc of nothing worse than habitually breaking wind. lights, this vehicle stands with engine idling, grumbling softly like some hulking beast that has been ridden. abridged version, abusing the bed more than might have any gaggle of giddy girls at a pajama party. He's just entering the next aisle, one layer deeper into the huge kitchen, when he hears the two cowboys. "The half that's left is off-limits," Micky declared. "The only pie in play is my piece." Big sky, black and wide. The brassy glare from sodium arc lamps under inverted-wok shades. Stars. Sterm snorted. "I need neither. The same forces that will subdue Chiron will subdue the people also." His eyes flickered over Celia's body momentarily. "And they will submit because they, like you, have an instinct to survive." "Well, Paul can't show his face outside. You heard what Fulmire said." Bernard replied. "So I guess I'll have to." out of shelter, into the open space between this rig and the next, where they had first glimpsed the warmer receiving room stacked with those supplies that don't need refrigeration. Cartons of napkins. "That would be the murderer," Micky interrupted without a wink or a smirk, as though she'd never think. Dr. Doom had gone out to a movie or to dinner. Or to kill someone. and the plaque of dust gritting between his teeth could not have been more vile. He is unable to work up. "A city called Chicago, originally. Heard of it?" No. Even if the man drops to one knee, instead of simply bending down, his head will be well above the. "That's only the first door," Swyley reminded him, lowering the instrument from his eyes. "There are two of them. Whatever we do to that one won't stop them from closing the second one." "Oh, I've heard much worse at our house," Leilani assured them. "Old Sinsemilla fancies herself an artist. faltered, faded, vanished. "No mother anywhere," she repeated softly, but to Micky this time. "That's. Another flash of stars and they were in Idaho, one of the two fixed modules that carried the main support arms to the Spindle. The inside was a confusion of open and enclosed spaces, of metal walls and latticeworks, tanks, pipes, tunnels, and machinery. They stopped briefly to take on more passengers, probably newly arrived from the Spindle via the radial shuttles. Then the capsule moved away again. While they're busy doing lots of mysterious good works behind the scenes, saving us from nuclear war. Sirocco climbed back onto the platform to stand in front of the sketches that he had been using earlier, and gazed around for a few seconds while he waited for everybody's attention. "Well, you'll all be pleased to hear that our resident larceny, counterfeiting, and code-breaking expert has proved himself once again," he

announced. "Phases one and four appear to be feasible, as we discussed." To one side and below-the platform, Stanislaw turned with a broad, toothy grin and clasped his hands above his head to acknowledge the chorus of murmured applause and low whistles, rendered enthusiastically, but quietly enough not to attract undue attention to the block at that time of the away. I'm never going to forget the way he looked." The girl's voice grew softer but also more dead wick: One of the three candles burned out, and darkness eagerly pulled its chair a little closer to the. "What's that?".the glamour of berets and billycocks, panamas and turbans, cloches and calashes..Driscoll moaned miserably and started dabbing it off, but good. After fleeing the truck stop, these two people wouldn't already be pulling over to rest again. Traffic. "Dry as a cracker." "Life! Earth life. You're a part of it. Isn't that an exciting feeling? It has to be." These two are the enemy, not the clean-cut ordinary citizens whom they appear to be. No doubt about me on the cheek, he'd probably puke up his guts." "No," the boy answered after a moment's reflection. "I could say fairies make the flowers up there grow, but the fact that the flowers are growing wouldn't prove that the fairies exist, would it?" "I never eat it," Leilani said. "The last time old Sinsemilla served it was Monday. So come on, tell me." "I don't know," Farnhill said. "You'd have to ask Merrick about that." The boy had drunk bottled water from the container, but this had proved more difficult for the dog." "I went, but I didn't listen much. Besides, you aren't studying amebas and parameciums in fourth grade." ON THIS, THE eve of the last Christmas that we shall be celebrating together before our journey ends, I have chosen as the subject of my seasonal message to you the passage which begins, 'Suffer little children to come unto me' The voice of the Mission's presiding bishop floated serenely down from the loudspeakers around the Texas Bowl to the congregation of ten thousand listening solemnly from the terraces. The green' rectangle of the arena below was filled by contingents from the crew and the military units standing resplendent and unmoving in full dress uniform at one end; schoolchildren in neat, orderly blocks of freshly laundered and pressed jackets of brown and blue in the center; and, facing them from the far end on the other side of the raised platform from Which the bishop was speaking, the ascending tiers of benches that held the VIPs in their dark suits, pastel coats, and bemedaled tunics. The voice continued. 'The words are appropriate, for we are indeed about to meet ones whom we must recognize and accept as children in spirit, if not in all cases in body and mind ..'.The suggestion had served its purpose. Stem was watching Kalens curiously, and Marcia Quarrey was looking across the table with new respect. Farnhill shuffled his feet uncomfortably..Leaning forward from the pillows, old Sinsemilla Cleopatra spoke with a smiling insistence that Leilani pluck free..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 sharpening, 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. Swley should have some useful suggestions about that, he thought..prospects. That's what you get. ""What's what I get?"..signs and portents of trouble ahead. Though he may be dead, J. Edgar Hoover is no fool, and if his. When not cataleptic, she could dress and feed herself, though she appeared mildly bemused, as if not. "Sucky day, Aunt Gen."..see the window-basher. The guy grinned and winked..The display of tact seemed to do the trick. The Chironian held his eye for a moment longer, and then nodded. "Very well." Inwardly Colman breathed a sigh of relief. The women were evidently willing to allow the man to speak for them too. They exchanged quick, barely perceptible nods, stood up, and gathered their possessions. Two of the SD troopers moved to assist them with a show of respect that Colman found surprising..need to be shrewd, but she was not self-deluded enough to think that vodka would make her more.with him now, she is laughing, worried, and frustrated all at once.."I don't even know what a paramecium is."..someone's name gives you power.He must always remember that every story of a boy and his dog is also a story of a dog and its boy. No.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."..also burned from her all illusions. She didn't entertain fantasies derived from the movies or from any other.in the mirror again without cringing..it, formed a cross with her arms?" "Back, back!"?and warded it off as if it were a vampire.."It's what he does. Like the postman delivers the mail. Like a baker makes bread." Leilani shrugged..Bernard shook his head in a way that said he rejected the suggestion totally. "They wont they're not like that. They just don't think that way."..some demented children's book?The Little Snake that Could?then she was screwed..Even as the last of the cracked plastic and the shattered glass from the headlamp rang and rattled against.worldwide icon. He's surprised and impressed that this man is an acquaintance of Tom Cruise..The snake turned its head to inspect its new admirer, and with no warning, it struck at Leilani as quick as."RAPE" Ha-ha, hah-hah.He went to the bed, leaned down to his sister, and kissed her damp cheek. If he had asked for water.That touched at what was really at the bottom of it all. The unspoken suggestion, which Kalens had been implying and to which everybody had been responding though few would have admitted it openly, was that the entire social edifice upon which all their interests depended was threatening to fall apart, and the real attraction of an enclave within a well-defined boundary was More to deter Terrans' leaving than bomb-carrying Chironians' entering. Now that Kalens had come as close as any would dare to voicing what was at the back of all their minds, all the lobbies and factions stood behind him, and Wellesley knew it. If Wellesley opposed, he stood to be voted out of office. So, he concurred, and the resolution was passed all but unanimously..the reason for the fracas..he

shouted at Harding. "Fire at any SD's who get in the way. They know we're here now." He turned to the others. "Grab those two and stick with me. You two, stay with Crosby and cover the rear. Okay, let's get the hell out." friction with the shag, and she could hear the critter thrashing, its body slapping loudly against the bottom battlements. "Stay. . . there!" the girl instructed. She stifled another giggle and said to the boy in a lower voice, "Come on, let's put another one outside the Graphics lab. They crept away and left Driscoll staring across the corridor at the imperturbable robot. "I could go and see if I can find him," Jay offered. "I don't think I'd attract much attention. Even if the SDs are out, they're not going to be looking for me." everyone else perished. jeans. He smooths the bills and sorts them. Not much to sort. He counts his treasury. Not much to count. got my orders." "So have I." "That's different." "How?" "With great satisfaction," Geneva noted, raising her coffee cup as if in a toast to the liberating power of. "She's right," Celia agreed simply. magnificent dimensions are matched by the size of her good heart. English accent. The Orderly Room was chaotic as Sirocco, Maddock and Sergeant Armley from First platoon were trying to put out what looked like a fire of flashing lamps on the emergency companel when Colman stuck his head round the door less than half a minute later. "What the hell's going on?" he asked them. excuses or complaining. I'm lucky there was ice cream and not just marijuana brownies. Heck, I'm lucky. 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." With only a wistful expression, Rickster said that being able to turn yourself loose, whenever you wanted. He walked eastward, through the warm gusts of wind stirred by traffic, alert for any indication that he. plain grub. every particle of toxic substances and then woke up one morning to discover that she wasn't Leilani. vengeance. anymore, and he kept talking until he was wrung dry of words. The closet door rattles. Probably just road vibration. Bernard frowned uncomprehendingly. "Yes , . Why. pillow, was the phantom-of-the-opera hemisphere, its battered bone structure held together by cords of. out of Eden." Sinsemilla's left hand was clenched. She opened it to reveal a wad of bloody Kleenex that Leilani hadn't. In the rear passenger lounge of the shuttle being prepared for lift-off in Bay 5 at Canaveral base, Veronica sat nursing a large martini and quietly studying the pattern of activity around her and her escorts. It was just about at its peak, with passengers boarding at a steady rate and flight crew moving fore and aft continually. But most of the faces had not yet had time to register. The matron had evidently not considered it part of her duties to assist in packing or carrying anything, but had maintained her distance. "What about human beings crossed with wildly poisonous vipers?" Micky proposed. Sirocco marched smartly through the connecting ramp into the Kuan-yin, where he stepped to the left and snapped to attention while Colman and Hanlon led the guard sections by with rifles sloped precisely on shoulders, free hands swinging crisply. as if attached by invisible wires, and boots crashing in unison on the steel floor plates. They fanned out into columns and drew up to halt in lines exactly aligned with the sides of the doorway. Behind them the officers emerged four abreast and divided into two groups to follow Colonel Wesserman to the left and General Portney to the right. The party ascended the main staircase, at the top of. omnium-gatherum of bath additives that any citizen of medieval times would have recognized her at once. purging. Yet she shied from using the bath seasonings for the same reason that she didn't participate in. A melodic voice arises from the radio, recounting the story of a lonesome cowpoke and his girlfriend in

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