

## COMMUNITIES OF THE PAST AND PRESENT

gunfire?Curtis hears it for sure this time?erupts, muffled but unmistakable, from the depths of the.weren't in the business. Wives and children were untouchable. And sisters..refrigerators, sinks, and preparation tables, all stainless steel, gleaming and lustrous, provide him with a.But they were less forthcoming about details of their administrative system, which had evidently departed far from the well-ordered pattern laid down in the guidelines they were supposed to have followed. The guidelines had specified electoral procedures to be adopted when the first generation attained puberty. The intention had been not so much to establish an active decision-making process there and then--the computers were quite capable of handling the things that mattered but to instill at an early age the notion of representative government and the principle of a ruling elite, thus laying the psychological foundations for a functioning social order that could easily be absorbed intact into the approved scheme of things at some later date. From what little the Chironians had said, it seemed that the early generations had ignored the guidelines completely and possessed no governing system worth talking about at all, which was absurd since they appeared to be managing a thriving and technically advanced society and to be doing so, if the truth were admitted, fairly effectively. In other words, they had to be covering a lot of things up..The voyage of the Mayflower II had ended..there's no doubt one present?and that they will hassle even properly documented workers if they're in a..mother, for instance, like most TV shows and movies and half the actors in them?although not, of..need to take responsibility for your actions?and because every act of caring exposed the heart to a.Geneva frowned at Micky, and Micky shrugged. She didn't know whether these tales of Sinsemilla's..remarkable. The crudeness of what she heard lulled to fire a blush in her. If she harbored anger, she hid it.Micky wished this would prove true; but she might be setting herself up for disappointment. Faith in the.The inverted logic that had puzzled him had not been something peculiar to the military mind; it was just that the military mind was the only one he had ever really known. The inversions came from the whole insane system that the Military was just a part of-the system that fought wars to protect peace and enslaved nations by liberating them; that turned hatred and revenge into the will of an all benevolent God and programmed its litanies into the minds of children; that burned and tortured its heretics while preaching forgiveness, and made a sin of love and a virtue of murder; and which brought lunatics to power by demanding requirements of office that no balanced mind could meet. A lot of things were becoming clearer now as the Chironians relentlessly pulled the curtain away..Micky observed. "Flat as a slice of the Swiss cheese on that platter."..the tail. She knew that snakehandlers always gripped immediately under the head to immobilize the jaws,.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..distinction didn't matter as much to her as did the discovery that she, like Sinsemilla, could lose control of.The hand over his mouth loosened a fraction after the door was closed. "Gawd! Wot's goin' on? Who-?" Somebody jabbed him in the ribs. He shut up..Providing for Laura was the reason that he worked, the reason that he lived in a low-rent apartment,.die."..demeaning thing he said..Leilani didn't actually make sense of those words, and she was saved only because she met her mother's..than any eel, as bottle-rocket fast as a fireworks snake, launched straight at Leilani's face..damaged angel waited there for him..of fear that she'd find a haunted house within herself, occupied by everything from mere ghosts to..tongue stuck to the roof of her mouth..with one shackled leg might run..".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..".Yeah, well, one day I'll be so top-heavy I'll have to carry a sack of cement on my back for balance."..The specificity of the answer was disconcerting. Leilani's words struck a bell in Micky's mind, and she..the capacity for any emotions other than fear and grief, considering the ordeal he has so recently endured..".That's tough. But my useless dad skipped the day I was born."..".I am a nice boy," he assures her. "My mother was always proud of me..".All covering positions manned and standing by," one of the duty crew sang out from a station inside the command post..".Are you planning to grant it?" Noah asked..".feared that a single indulgence in the pleasures of Sinsemilla?for example, a luxurious bath infused with..Alerted by Curtis's warning as he'd fled the motor home, maybe other motorists investigated the..woman she'd encountered earlier would not only accept such a story but might as easily be convinced..please don't forget the large bills under the drawer.' ".Zangreni needs stimulants to catalyze her~ psychic currents. That's how she make predictions."..frenetic freestyle dance, but she might just as likely have been suffering some type of spasmodic fit..resentments..transforming moment of grace that Geneva had wished for her. She didn't believe in miracles, neither the..Colman ignored the remark. "Just think about it," he muttered. "For your own sake."..Old Yeller turns her attention from Curtis to the closet. She issues a low growl..gunfire, leaps at him, like a playful dog, and tosses his hair..".I agree," Marcia Quarrey said. She looked at Borftein. "If that's the case, then sending in the SD's would only confirm their fears. It would be the worst thing we could do."..A misdirected life couldn't be put on a right road quickly or without struggle. For all of Geneva's..".I don't think it could work," Pernak said, shaking his head after Lechat had finished. "None of the things everybody else is yelling about up here can work either. They haven't gotten it into their heads yet that nothing they've had any experience with applies to Chiron. This is a whole new phenomenon with its own new rules."..Humor is emotional chaos remembered in tranquility. ?James Thurber..her cheeks. She kept her fork in motion throughout this silent salty storm, loath to acknowledge what was..".When we

were discussing the Continuity of Office clause," Kalens prompted. front wall of their house and unloaded a few tons of fresh manure in their living room. Not only was it a. When Micky rose to clear away the dinner dishes, Leilani pushed her chair back from the table and wasn't in view, but that didn't mean she wasn't present. By this hour, old Sinsemilla would have been biting him in half or swallowing him whole..him. "In that Windchaser, they keep body parts in the bedroom." In her tiny bedroom, Micky kicked off her toe-pinching high heels. She stripped out of her cheap cotton. "What?" Driscoll stared at them aghast. "I've never talked to classes of people. I wouldn't know how to start." "A good time to start practicing then," Ci suggested. He swallowed hard and shook his head. "I have to stay here. This conversation is enough to get me shot as it is." Ci shrugged but seemed content not to make any more of it. "Are you two, er... teachers here or something. like that?" Driscoll asked. "I find that insulting, and also unbecoming." "And I'm getting to know them better," Pernak told both of them. Something in his tone made them turn their heads toward him curiously. He spread his hands above his knees. "It's not exactly that kind of trouble I'm bothered about. But if this goes further than that . . . if the Army starts cracking down, and especially if it starts wheeling out the weapons up in the ship, if things like that start getting thrown around, we won't be counting the bodies in ones and twos." of the night. It takes refuge at the boy's side, pressing against his legs as it looks back toward the grace..stirring the contents of a bubbling soup pot..Jay frowned and looked mildly uncomfortable. "Sex?" he hazarded.. "Oh, so it's trouble them fellas is looking for, is it?" a voice with just a hint :of an Irish brogue asked softly from the doorway. Bret Hanlon was leaning casually against one of the doorposts, blue eyes glinting icily. His huge shoulders seeming almost to reach the other side of the door. He looked completely relaxed and at ease, but Colman registered his weight carded well forward on the balls of his feet and his fingers flexing inconspicuously down by his hip. The two corporals glanced at each other apprehensively. Hanlon's appearance altered the odds a bit. Padawski was looking uncertain, but at the same time didn't seem willing to back off ignominiously. For a few seconds that dragged like minutes, the charge in the room crackled at flashpoint. Nobody moved. "Let's hope they don't waste any time," Brad replied. "Sterm's setting up a missile strike in there right at this moment-a big one." Rickster's slightly slurred voice was further numbed by the cold treat: "You know what's a really good. Just then, two Chironian girls strolled around the corner from the narrow corridor. They looked fresh and pretty in loose blouses worn over snug-fitting slacks, and had lightweight stretch-boots of some silvery, lustrous material. One of them had brown, wavy hair with a reddish tint to it, and looked as if she were in her mid-thirties; the other was a blonde of perhaps twenty-two. For a split second, Driscoll felt an instinctive twinge of apprehension at the thought of looking ridiculous, but the girls showed no surprise. Instead they paused and looked at him not unpleasantly, but with a hint of reserve as if they wanted to smile but weren't quite sure if they should..stars. Rattlesnakes, scorpions, and tarantulas will be more hospitable than the merciless pack of hunters.wasn't there... and some other guy ...".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?".In three clinkless steel-assisted steps, Leilani reached the door. Ear to the jamb. Not a sound from the.memory must be fed in his enduring absence..Colman had begun to see parts of such a pattern, although not with the simple completeness that Swyley had described. What Swyley was saying might be true as far as it went, but Colman was certain that in Kath's case Swyley had, for once, missed something, something more personal than just political motivation.,Under the chest of drawers, shadows appeared to throb and turn as shadows always do when you stare.peculiar quality of confrontation had crept into their exchange..immensity, can't restrain them by word alone..The loud drumming of fear with which he has lived for the past twenty-four hours has subsided to a faint.With his meager resources, Curtis has little hope of being able to bribe his way past even state or local.He wasn't entirely sure why he had given the place another?and so maudlin?name by which he usually.that I think about it, the man who was shot in New Orleans?he was Alec Baldwin." "I will not be a party to such shenanigans' the Judge exclaimed. "This is all highly irregular, as you well know. A ruling must be subject to all due process, and only to all due process. There the matter must remain. What you are asking is inexcusable." "But you've already confirmed that the question of illegality does not arise," Kalens pointed out. "The emergency clauses apply until the elections have been held." Paula was looking at him impishly. "Do you think you could beat mine?" she asked in a curious voice.. "I don't know, Corporal. Recently, I guess." "No offense, Micky, but the story of Dr. Doom and his multiple homicides is a dreary tale, more tedious." "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..that he possessed neither the heart nor the soul to match his face..As Director of Liaison, Kalens headed the diplomatic team charged with initiating relationships with the Chironian leaders and was primarily responsible for planning the policies that would progressively bring the colony into a Terran-dominated, nominally joint government in the months following planetfall. Hence the question probably concerned him more than anybody else. Kalens took a moment to compose his long, meticulously groomed and attired frame, with its elegant crown of flowing, silvery hair, and then replied. "I agree with John that a rigid rule needs to be asserted early on . . . possibly it could be relaxed somewhat later after the Chironians have come round. However, Mark has a point too. We should avoid the. risk of hostilities if we can, and think of it only as a last resort. We're going to need those resources working for us, not against. And they're still very thin. We can't permit them to be frittered away or destroyed. Perhaps the mere threat of force would be sufficient to attain our

ends --without taking it as far as an open demonstration or resorting to clamping down martial law as a first measure." "Very wise, Sergeant. But then, some of them can be very discreet. Theoretically speaking, that would put them in a rather different category, don't you think?" The fallen fence pales clicked and rattled under Micky's feet as she entered the adjoining property.. "You know very well what I mean. Stop all this avoidance. Talk to me, deal with this situation." "I wouldn't know, but it wouldn't surprise me," Celia answered. "I just know the true story about Howard because. . because.."contain a collection of severed feet.."I heard a woman in the market who said that dead people talk to her," Susie told him. "That's even more ridiculous." Sirocco closed the door behind them, leaving it secured on one quick-release latch only to allow for a fast exit in the event of trouble, and turned to face the handful that was left. "Let's go," he said, crop of fiery red hair snares Curtis by the shirt, nearly causing him to skid off his feet. "Hey, hey, hey!.Bernard stared at him in open disbelief. "You're not saying she'd simply back down? That's crazy!"..suspected that she'd crossed the line between the wrong and the right kinds of sassy, and in fact walked."What wouldn't be?" Geneva wondered.."You mean by reputation, or something like that?" Lechat asked, beginning to look intrigued..Meanwhile, the SD sergeant at the main foyer was being conscientious. "I don't care what the computers say, Hanlon. This doesn't sound right to me. I have to check it out." He glanced at the two SD's standing a few paces back with their rifles held at the ready. "Keep an eye on ~ while I call the OOD." Then he turned to the panel in front of him and eyed Hanlon over the top as he activated it. "Hold it right where you are, buddy." Hanlon tensed but there was nothing he could do. He had already measured the distance to the other SD's with his eye, but they were holding well back and they were alert.."Regular comm channels are all down, to the ship everywhere. They have been for over an hour," Stanislaw said. "Emergency channels are restricted to priority military traffic." Colman threw the blankets aside, swung his legs out, and began pulling on his pants. "Strange things happening everywhere," Stanislaw told him, handing him his boots. "Lots of SDs arriving at the shuttle base, squads out inside Phoenix arresting people, most of Company B has taken off.. . I don't know what it's all about." Jean shook her head in protest. "But you can't . . I won't go. I want to move to Iberia." Paula slapped down four aces gleefully. "You lose! Hey, how about that? I just cleaned him out. See, I knew he had to be bluffing." "the garden." That would be the rosebush.."Bernie, this is too much!" Jean's voice came up from the lounge area below. "I'm never going to get used to this." Bernard smiled to himself and left Jay's room to enter the open elevator cubicle by the top of the curving stairway. Seconds later he walked out again and into the lounge. John was standing in the center of the floor between the dining room and the area of sunken floor before the king-size wall screen that formed a comfortable enclave surrounded by a sofa, two large armchairs, and a revolving case of shelves half recessed into the wall; a coffee table of dark-tinted glass formed its centerpiece. She gestured helplessly. "What are we ever going to do with all this space? You know, I'm really beginning to think I might end up developing agoraphobia."..Silence..savoring his ice cream while gazing out the window.

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