

REPORT ON THE INVESTIGATIONS AT ASSOS VOLUME 2

The theory opened up whole new realms, Pernak was beginning to appreciate as he sat back in his office to give his mind a rest from absorbing the information being presented on the wall screen opposite. What he was starting to glimpse hadn't just to do with the physics; it was the completely new philosophy of existence that came with the physical interpretation.. "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." At least thirty men, dressed in black, debark from the trailer: not merely a SWAT team, not even a "Twenty?" out of Eden." "Aunt Gen, you're thinking of The Man with the Golden Arm. Frank Sinatra, Kim Novak. It hit theaters. Colman looked away in exasperation. She could have been a unique, thinking person. Instead she chose to be a doll, shaped and molded by everything she saw and heard around her. It was all around him--half the people he could see were in the chorus line behind Stormbel's puppet show. They could be told what to think because they didn't want to think. Suddenly he remembered all the reasons why he had cooled things with Anita months ago, when he had been toying seriously with the idea of making their relationship contractual and settling down as Hanlon had. He had tried to tune into her wavelength and found nothing but static. But what had infuriated him more was that her attitude had been necessary--she had a head but wouldn't use it..hat, meant as a sign of respect to ladies and other upstanding citizens, and at last he goes inside..Fulmire looked uneasy but in the end was forced to nod his agreement. "But such a situation could only come about if an emergency condition had already been in force to begin with," he warned. "It could not be applied in any way to the present circumstances." "Would it worry anyone if I smoked?" words that penetrate his screaming..mode, though her tail continues to wag gently..Of course, this is a little cottage on wheels, not a castle. It doesn't afford as many hiding places as a titled.fit. If anybody ever saw pictures of him with deformities, they'd know it had to be aliens who made him.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.."A payoff from your husband, ten thousand bucks, offered by one of his flunkies." Jerked up and jammed down, the lever handle doesn't release the latch, but pulled inward, it works..Leilani looked toward the kitchen window but seemed to be gazing at something far away in time and at.Colman stood near Hanlon in front of the Third and Second platoons of D Company and a short distance behind Sirocco, well to one side of the main Army contingent Only a few of the Company were absent for one reason or another, conspicuous among them Corporal Swyley, who was in Brigade sick bay and looking forward to a turkey dinner; the standing order for a spinach-and fish diet had mysteriously erased itself from the administration computer's records. The dietician had been certain he'd seen something of the sort in there before, but conceded that perhaps he was confusing Swyley with somebody else. Swyley had agreed that there had been something like that in the records by saying he disagreed, and the dietician had misunderstood and decided to forget 'about the whole thing..flamboyant fantasies rivaled Dorothy's dreams of Oz; however, Micky could get no glimpse of yellow.After he puts down the extinguished flashlight, as he pulls the curtains aside, plastic rings scrape and click."One of our units at the base is expecting her. They'll get her out, and the Chironians will have someone waiting to collect her from there."Curtis Hammond mutters, wrestles briefly with his sheets, but doesn't wake.."Minnie's pretty flat-chested."Lechat's brows lifted and then creased into an even deeper frown. "And then there were those bombings...He looked down at Celia. ?Was Stern behind those things as well?.That morning Paul Lechat, whom she had never thought of as especially noteworthy on any issue, had announced himself as a late candidate in the elections and called for the establishment of a separate Terran colony in Iberia, somewhere up in Selene. He wanted to allow the people from Earth to pursue their own pattern of living without disruptive influences for the immediate future, and possibly to make such an institution permanent if it suited enough people to do so. To Jean the announcement had come as a godsend, and to many others as well, if the amount of popular support that had materialized from all sides within a matter of hours was anything to go by. Why couldn't everybody see it that way? she wondered. It was so obvious. Why were there always some who were obstinate and valued political interests before what common sense said would be for the common good, such as Kalens, who even now was reacting to Lechat as a threat and rallying his own followers to action?.forever. Girl, I'd give everything I have if that could happen for you."To the girl, Geneva said, "So you don't believe Lukipela went off with aliens." used the restroom only a short while ago..refused to dwell on or even to lament adversities, and she remained determined instead to receive them.reason to worry about losing her apple pie.."So your stepfather's a murderer."The sight of this shiny cudgel knocked fresh laughter out of Sinsemilla. She clapped her hands, oblivious.Her aunt, from whom fate had stolen everything except a reliable sense of humor, referred to the yard as.with." Micky tried to keep her wetter emotions bottled in the cellar of her heart, safe storage that she'd.The killers had been even closer on his trail than he'd feared. What he sensed, stepping into that upstairs.Understanding its new master's intent, the dog springs into the cargo bed of the truck, landing so lightly.In Rickster's soft features, as well as in his earnest eyes, were a profound natural kindness

that he hadn't. must be clotting ahead of them. fence. She wanted to glance down, afraid the pickets might trip her, but she kept her attention on her. 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. Stern 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." Jay and Marie were her latest weapons. Bernard knew she was rationalizing her own fears of the changes involved, but he wasn't going to make a public issue of it. "I'd like them to have the chance to Make the best lives for themselves that they can, sure. They've got that chance right here. We don't have to go halfway round the planet to recreate part of a world we don't belong to anymore. It couldn't last. That's all over now. You have to bring yourself to face up to it, hon." "You don't sound like a guy who wants to be friends." Reaper's robe. The truck passes too fast for the boy to see who is driving or if anyone is riding shotgun. Micky had figured to let the girl wind down, but the longer that Leilani circled the subject of her brother's. Hitching clumsily but warily alongside the bed, telling herself, Calm. Telling herself, Get a grip. The snake still coiled near the baseboard, under the window. Luminous eyes. Head weaving as if to the. "Yeah, well, she's a mouse." that movies are life, Bobby said, "You're not the hero. My part's the male lead. You're in the Sandra. plaster, puncturing full soup pots with a flat bonk and drilling empty pots with a hollow reverberant pong. The Chironians had both complied with the Mayflower II's advance request for surface accommodation and anticipated their own future needs .at the same time by developing Canaveral City and its environs in the direction of Franklin to a greater degree than their own situation then required. So far about a quarter of the Mayflower II's population had moved to the surface, but the traffic was slowing down since they were not moving out into more permanent dwellings as rapidly as the Chironians had apparently assumed, mainly because the Directorate had instructed them to stay where they were. Room to house more was running out, and those left in the ship were, understandably, becoming restless. "You think pretty smart." At the windows of the two-story motel, most of the drapes have been flung back. Curious, worried. "His best performance ever. Everything okay out there?" "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." they knew what the situation was. Me scared and Mama willing not to see. The smile . . . not a wicked. alien queen, Geneva would smash through the door without hesitation, and kick butt. Furthermore, he is reluctant to put these people? whoever they may be? at risk. If the killers track him. but by nothing more than landmarks, broken wagon wheels of previous failed expeditions, and the ordinary boy under the name Curtis Hammond or any other. MRS. GRAYFORD, THE plump, extravagantly dressed wife of Vice-Admiral Crawford, Slessor's second-in-command of the Mayflower H's crew, closed the box containing her new set of Chironian silver cutlery and added it to the pile of boxes on the table by her chair. Among other things the jumble included some exquisite jewelry, an inlaid chest of miniature, satin-lined drawers to accommodate them, a set of matching animal sculptures in something not unlike onyx, and a Chironian fur stole. "Where we'll end up living, I've no idea, but I'm sure these will enhance the surroundings wherever it is. Don't you think the silver is delightful? I'd never have thought that such unusual, modern styling could have such a feel of antique quality, would you? I must return to that place the next time I go down to Franklin. Some of the tableware there went with it perfectly." "Do I what?" split tongue fluttering, the serpent swam through the air with the wriggle of an eel through water, but faster. Leilani was clearly unbreakable. THE FIRST BOMB exploded in the center of Canaveral City in the early hours of the morning, causing serious damage to the maglev terminal where the spur line into the shuttle base joined the main through-route from Franklin out to the Peninsula. Subsequent investigations by explosives experts established that it had been carried in a car outward bound from Franklin. The only occupants at the time were eight Terrans returning from a late-night revel in town. They were killed instantly. bride. "Not you," she disagreed, as though she knew him well. "Anger's more like it." "I guess we buy our own drinks," Hanlon said, draining the last of his beer and setting his glass down on the table. "Looks like it," Stanislaw agreed. "Opposed," Geneva responded with firm resolve. whipping tail. . The dog whimpers. campground. Not even a real rest stop with bathrooms or a picnic table, or anything. Just this lonely wide. "A scandalous exhibition!" he declared as he sliced a portion of melon cultivated in the Kansas module and added it to the fruits on the plate by his aperitif on the table before him. "Nobodies and Cretins, all of them. Not one of them had any representative powers worth speaking of. Yet it's clear that a governing organization of some kind must exist, though God knows what kind of people it's made up of, judging from the state the town's in a total shambles. The only conclusion can be that they've gone to ground and won't come out, and the population as a whole is abetting them. I think John's right--if they're as good as inviting us to take over, we should do so and be done with it." "Sure," Driscoll told her. His eyes twinkled just for an instant. "If you want to know how, I'd beat you with aces." She continued to feel ashamed of herself, not because of the dumb joke with the rosebush, but because. approaches to social problems, while marriage to this woman lent him class, respectability. For a. In the week following Lechat's brief term as Director, the laser link from Earth had brought news of the holocaust engulfing the whole planet. Then the signals had ceased, and for five years there had been nothing. No doubt many pockets of humanity had managed to survive, but mankind's first attempt to establish an advanced civilization had ended in failure - or almost in failure, for it had served its purpose; it had lifted humankind from its primitive, animal beginnings to a level where human, not animal, values could evolve, and it had hurled a seed of itself outward to take root, grow, and blossom at a distant star. And then it had died, as it had to. "A lot of people are starting to think he could have had those bombs planted. What do you think?" This wasn't so much to want. The twisted leg, the deformed hand, the brain too smart for her own good. Sinsemilla said, "Oh, Lani, baby, you should see yourself! You look so completely St. Patrick, in a total. busy. No one appears interested in Curtis when he enters. This

time, the pacifist didn't smile. "Guess I should have said do the smart thing." .EPILOGUE.be handled like an ordinary case, and she wouldn't be given that opportunity..Lechat allowed a few seconds for the mood to pass, then rose to his feet again. "My first resolution is that all claims, rights, and legislations previously enacted with respect to the Territory of Phoenix be revoked in their entirety, that the proclamation of that Territory as being subject to the jurisdiction of this Congress be repealed, and that the area at present referred to as Phoenix be formally reverted to its previous condition in all respects."."They don't have to make sense. All they have to do is say you're different. Now do you get it? Your dad belongs to a group who made a lot of rules that he never had anything to do with, and because he's wired the same as everybody else, he needs to feel he's accepted. To be accepted, he has to be seen to go by the rules. If he didn't he'd become a threat to the group, and they'd reject him. And nobody can take that. Look around and watch all the crazy things people get into just so they can feel they belong to something that matters."..terror, wails of anguish. The most piercing squeals seem less like human sounds than like the panicked..Although a couple hundred people are nearby, this place in this moment of time seems as lonely as any..gunfire?Curtis hears it for sure this time?erupts, muffled but unmistakable, from the depths of the..boy. Even if the animal's sudden anxiety hadn't been strong enough to feel, the nearest of the tall pole.Kath's pocket communicator buzzed, and she took it out to answer. It was Adam, who had heard the news and was checking to make sure that she and Colman were all right. Colman left her talking and moved over to where Anita was standing near the door on the fringe of the party assembling to depart. "Why'd you ever get mixed up with that bunch?" he murmured. "Wise up when it's all over. Get out of it."."Worth considering for what? You're not saying he'd make an engineering officer, surely."..the dog might otherwise inspire him to be..They're messing us around," General Johannes Borftein, Supreme Commander of the Chiron Expeditionary Force--the regular military contingent aboard the Mayflower II--told the small group that had convened for an informal policy discussion with Garfield Wellesley in the Mission Director's private conference room, located in the upper levels of the Government Center in the module known as the Columbia District. His face was sallow and deeply lined, his hair a mixture of grays shot with streaks of black, and his voice rasped with a remnant of the guttural twang inherited from his South African origins. "We've got two years to get this show organized, and they're playing games. We don't have the time. We haven't seen any evidence of a defense program down there. I say we go straight in with a show of strength and an immediate declaration of martial law. It's the best way."..okay?""So it could take a while," Colman said.. "Too hard," Geneva declared proudly..won't draw the man's attention as much as will the movement of the door closing..IN A FAINT and inconstant breeze, waves stir through the lush meadow. At this lonely hour, in this..She hated searching for her mother like this. She never knew in what condition Sinsemilla would be..arrive at a destination, but will race perpetually through alternating stretches of moon-dazzled meadow..Colman groaned. The target could only be the Kuan- y-- yin. If the strike succeeded it would leave Stern in command of the only strategic weapons left on the planet, and in a position to dictate any terms he chose; if he failed, then Stern and his last few would take the whole of the Mayflower II with them when the Kuan-yin rose above Chiron's rim to retaliate. Outside the lock, the first carrier loaded with troops in zero-pressure combat suits moved away and disappeared into the tunnel that Brad and his party had appeared from.,Chapter 20.Evidently the congressman's battalions no longer found him to be of even the slightest interest. His

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