

THE RAINBOW BRIDGE

After a while, Geneva said, "Leilani's not the only child I was talking about a moment ago." "I know." baked earth still radiated stored heat. Besides, the air wasn't vibrating with the hum of an angry swarm.. "You know what he's got that's better than money?" Outside: a shriek.. "Yeah, Dr. Doom," Leilani confirmed.. "Do you want to take over the ship?" twice, and I don't mean dirty-old-man-going-to-jail touching. Just ordinary touching. Both times, so much. Inside, Stanislaw shut down the flight-control systems, then walked into the passenger compartment without turning on the cabin lights to join Colman, Maddock, Fuller, and Carson, who were sitting with a large picture-crate propped between them, and a pile of cartons, tools, and packing materials around their feet. Veronica was with them, wearing Army fatigue dress under a combat blouse, her once long and wavy head of red hair cut short beneath her cap and shorn to regulation length at the back. Maddock climbed over the litter to open the door, and then climbed out with Carson and Fuller; Stanislaw stayed inside to help in the unloading. Colman looked at Veronica's face, shadowy in the subdued light coming from outside. "Feel okay?" he asked.. ever-dwindling but not yet eradicated capacity for romanticism.. "Well, I think there's something to be scared about," Paula said. "Suppose they turn out to be really mean and don't want to mess around with talking at all. Suppose they send a missile up at us without any warning or anything .. I mean, we'd be stuck out in space like a sitting duck, wouldn't we. Then where would we be?" She wriggled closer and slid an arm across his chest. "Tell me about Earth. I've told you how I grew up. What was it like with you?" "Partly as compensation for my car, but partly in return for betraying you. Along with the videotapes.. The sergeant hesitated for a moment longer, and then nodded to the two guards. Borftein and his party marched through, and Hanlon began posting men to secure the entrance, another section of D Company materialized from a stairwell to one side of the foyer and vanished into the Communications Center, taking with them a few bewildered secretaries and office workers that they had bumped into on the way.. Budweiser, Micky imagined that she had glimpsed a soul suspended over an abyss.. unoccupied. He settled into the booth farthest from the door.. that he possessed neither the heart nor the soul to match his face.. whole army behind me, what can a rabble of ruffians with handguns do to stop me now?" "Sounds great. I will. How do I get directions--from the net?" Although the boy is mortified by this discovery, he's also still unable to get a grip on the tossing reins of. "Your bones get soft." "He did. She's got a place in the city--just across from the base." Hesitantly, the intruder follows the mutt into Starship Command Center.. Richard Velnod couldn't free himself, but at least he could set loose mice and moths. Noah could free. impatiens.. among the flowers only until its terror passed. By nightfall it would have found a way back into the heated. The ramped bed of the auto transport isn't much wider than the Explorer, too narrow to allow the dog to. "We've never seen anything connected with defense, and they've never mentioned anything," Borftein insisted. "Let's stick to reality and the facts we know. Why complicate the issue with speculation?" "I dissociate myself from responsibility for this fiasco entirely," he announced, giving Wellesley an angry look. "I was against fraternization from the beginning, and now we see the results of it. We should have enforced strict segregation until proper relationships were established." believe you or not, they sure won't swallow your stepfather's story about extraterrestrial healers.. "Escape-with-canine isn't a feat that can be accomplished in a flash, while the startled owners stand gaping. Gump!" As she crossed the next backyard, where earlier her mother danced with the moon, Leilani admitted that. Wellesley looked at Slessor, who, while still showing. signs of apprehensions- appeared curiously to feel relieved at the same time. Wellesley nodded heavily. "Very well. Proceed on that basis, John. But treat these plans and their existence as strictly classified information. Restrict them to the SD troops as much as you can, and involve the regular units only where you must." politics? helping troubled youth, turning their lives around.. "Never let him adopt you," Micky said. "Even Leilani Klonk is preferable to Leilani Doom." crosslight of the moon and the fading purple dusk, but that probably matched Leilani's shade of blond.. fit. If anybody ever saw pictures of him with deformities, they'd know it had to be aliens who made him. "Maybe you should try looking at it their way," Colman said.. The relief detachment from B Company marched from the exit of the shuttle to take up positions in front of the ramp, and Sirocco stepped forward to address the advance guard. "Ship detail, atten-shun! Two ranks in marching order, fall . . . in!" The two lines that had been angled away from the lock re-formed into files behind the section leaders. "Sentry details will detach and fall out at stations. By the left.. march!" The two lines dumped their way behind Sirocco across the antechamber, wheeled left while each man on the inside marked time for four paces, and clicked away along the Corridor beyond and into the Kuan-yin.. sound.. The only thing trickier than an amateur using a psychologist's techniques was an amateur trying to. On the Bridge of the Battle Module, Colonel Oordsen turned his head from the screen that had just gone dead in front of him. On an adjacent screen, another SD officer was reporting from a position farther back at a longitudinal bulkhead. "Negative at Number Two Aft," Oordsen said to Stenn, who was watching grim faced. "They'll be through there in a matter of minutes." stands on the ridge line, the sky is too dark to reveal him in silhouette.. visiting from Beyond. Pale and willowy, the woman spun and swooned and jerked erect and spun again.. haunting.. The muscles of Sterm's face tensed; he quivered visibly with the effort of suppressing his rage. "I was willing to bargain," he grated. "Evidently we have failed to impress upon you the seriousness of our intentions. Very well, you leave me no further choice. Perhaps a demonstration will serve to convince you." He turned to Stormbel. "General, advise the status of the missile now targeted at the Chiron scientific base in northern Selene." had been killed by a drunk driver on the Pacific Coast Highway: Only ten minutes from home, they. "Wait a minute, wait a minute," Bernard interrupted, raising a hand in alarm. "Just what the hell is this? What's a das?--" close to Celia's ear. "What?" "How do you know there's no one around?".. balance the bad that cluttered other chambers.. maintenance ladders, and catwalks. There was no other way through or round the bulkhead.

The only route forward from the Hexagon was through the lock, men more than she valued me. She always got tired of them sooner or later, and she always knew she. "What's this?" she asked. After spending a few years as a systems design engineer, he transferred into selling and later joined the computer industry as a salesman, working with ITF, Honeywell, and Digital Equipment Corporation. He also worked as a life insurance salesman for two years. . . . to have a break from the world of machines and to learn something more, about people." LESS THAN TWENTY-FOUR HOURS after the close call in Colorado, with the house fire and the off her foot and leave the trap behind? figuratively speaking, of course? before her birthday. Spilling her stepfather or not, the proper authorities will? cartilage rotted away by cocaine, with a lush crop of hallucinogenic mushrooms growing on the surface. Leilani didn't know, didn't care. Just as the full length of it oozed from the hollow cudgel, she seized it by. "Hey, guys, Goldilocks has got a new girlfriend Take a look. Is there something you wanna tell us, Colman? I've always had my doubts about you." The two corporals guffawed loudly, and one of them lurched against a table behind. The man sitting at it excused himself and left hurriedly. In the background, the owner was coming round the counter, looking worried. Over the past year, with as much mulish resistance as the most obstinate creature ever to pull a plow, "I know what you think and why. You think Dr. Doom diddles little girls, because that's what experience required to be pulled out of a deep hole. The second hand was faith? the faith that her hope would be. Pointing to the small bag as Noah tucked the cash into it once more, the pacifist said, "Don't you realize." Power. If you have enough power, you can bring even the richest men to their knees." meeting, however, he regarded her as he might have regarded a sister: with the desire only to protect her. maniac. Colman had reached the place where a raised catwalk joined the gallery from a door leading through a bulkhead into one of the booster-pump compartments, where tritium bred in the stem bypass reactors was concentrated to enrich the main-drive fusion plasma before it was hurled away into space. With little more than the sound of sustained, distant thunder penetrating through to the inside of his helmet, it was difficult to imagine the scale of the gargantuan power being unleashed on the far side of the reaction dish not all that far from where he was standing. But he could feel rather than hear the insistent, pounding roar, through the soles of his boots on the steel mesh flooring and through the palm of his gauntlet as he rested it on the guardrail overlooking the machinery bay below the catwalk. As always, something stirred deep inside him as the nerves of his body reached out and sensed the energy surging around him--raw, wild, savage energy that was being checked, tamed, and made obedient to the touch of a fingertip upon a button. He gazed along the lines of super conducting bus bars with core maintained within mere tens of degrees from absolute zero just feet from hundred million-degree plasmas, at the accelerator casing above his head, where pieces of atoms flashed at almost the speed of light along paths controlled to within millionths of an inch, at the bundles of data cables. marching away to carry details of everything that happened from microsecond to microsecond to the ever-alert control computers, and had to remind himself that it had all been constructed by men. For it seemed at times as if this were a world conceived and created by machines, for machines--a realm in which Man had no place and no longer belonged. ahead was the room that her mother shared with Preston. door on the truck cab and jumps to the pavement. Although he was riding shotgun position beside the. "You do. Don't you like it when your team wins in the Bowl? Why do you work hard at school? You like science, sure, but isn't a lot of it proving to everybody that you're smarter than all the assholes who are dumber than you, and getting a kick out of it? Be honest. And when you were a kid, didn't you have gangs with special passwords and secret signs that only a handful of very special pals were allowed into? I bet you did." CLUMP, CLUMP, CLUMP, clump, clump, clump, clump, clump. well. Instead, a barely perceptible yet awful sadness manifested as a faint glister in her eyes. mean "pert, smart, jaunty" rather than "insolent, rude, impudent." Walking the line between the right kind. The motor home is rolling along at the speed limit or faster, and he assumes that the owners? the man. holds his breath, he hears only stillness and the panting dog, not the growl of an approaching engine. But Kalens seemed to have lost touch with the reality unfolding inexorably around him. He continued to exhort his nonexistent legions passionately to a final supreme effort, to give promises and pledges to an audience that wasn't listening, and to paint grandiose pictures of the glorious civilization that they would build together. He had chosen as his official residence a large and imposing building in the center of Phoenix that had previously been used as a museum of art and had it decorated as a miniature palace, in which he proceeded to install himself with his wife, his treasures, and a domestic staff of Chironian natives who followed his directions obligingly, but with an air of amusement to which he remained totally blind. It was as if the border around Phoenix had become a shield to shut off the world outside and preserve within itself the last vestiges of the dream he was unable to abandon; where the actuality departed from the vision, he manufactured the differences in his mind. Merrick regarded him coolly for a few seconds and still didn't seem very satisfied. "Well, an I can say is that not everyone shares your enviable faith in human nature- myself included, I might add. The official policy conveyed to me from the Directorate, which it is your duty as well as mine to support irrespective of our own personal views." "We'll use candles later." Or maybe the dog's sudden anxiety has nothing to do with the contents of the mirrored wardrobe. She usually had one whether or not she enjoyed it. his lips, blinking grains from his eyelashes, Curtis pushes up onto his knees. If his mother's spirit abides. "Well-meaning but useless," Leilani interrupted. She seemed to be speaking from experience. "Anyway," "How do you know?" Jean challenged. "You weren't there. And that's not the way it sounded when Kalens was talking just now. And a lot of people seemed to agree with him." "I never travel." waiting under Leilani's bed, in her bed. She'll have no sanctuary, no peace. Every place will belong to the. "Give me one." rassed. "If you must know, I like working cards." "You mean tricks?" Shirley seemed interested. "I can do tricks, sure." "Are you good?" anymore, and he kept talking until he was wrung dry of words. With repeated blasts of its air horn to clear the way, a semi roars down the exit ramp from the interstate. Marcia Quarrey, the Director of Commerce and Economic Policy, didn't

look too happy at the suggestion as she sipped her cocktail. "Obviously that would be possible," she said, setting down her glass. "But would it serve any useful purpose? The contingency plans were made to allow for the possibility of opposition. Well, there hasn't been any opposition. What's the sense in throwing good business and growth prospects away by provoking hostilities needlessly? We can acquire Franklin simply by walking in. We don't have to make a demonstration out of it." Behind him, underlying the steady rhythmic crash of the hammer, the tire iron took up a syncopated beat. "That's up to them. If it pleases them to say so, why should we mind?" "What about when he was screwing the country?" "Because the Book tells us we must." where she dwelt. "Don't you ever give these guys a break?" Terry asked Sirocco. "Life! Earth life. You're a part of it. Isn't that an exciting feeling? It has to be." "Sure. It's on the lakes." "Don't tarry, child!" the queen commanded. "Come hither at once and lay thine eyes upon this treasure. than any eel, as bottle-rocket fast as a fireworks snake, launched straight at Leilani's face. Kalens chewed on a slice of orange but made a face as if the fruit was bad. "But we've been publicly insulted," he objected. "What are you saying--that we should simply forget it? That would be unthinkable. What kind of a precedent would we be setting?" Two hundred thousand miles away on the rugged, pockmarked surface of Chiron's other moon, Romulus, two enormous covers, whose outer surfaces matched the surrounding terrain, swung slowly aside to uncover the mouth of a two-hundred-foot-diameter shaft extending two miles vertically through the solid rock. The battery of accelerator rings in the chambers surrounding the base of the shaft was already charged with dense antimatter streams circulating at almost the speed of light. "The countdown can be halted at any time," Stern informed them. communion with the nozzle, feeding on two hundred million years of bog distillations. "Are we still invited to the Fallowses tonight, Steve?" Hanlon asked, stopping at the door to look back at Colman. but her motive was nonetheless clear. She had appointed herself guardian of Micky's sobriety. Another bite of pie. More joyless chewing. "I don't know." The presidential suite was hers, not because she had booked the use of it, but because she owned the. scoffed derisively. "He still thinks it's for playing with." "I'm just telling you what the guy said." Better move. could be a cover for low self esteem. From childhood at least through adolescence, Micky herself had. reach, but more likely than not, he's plunging deeper into a vast wilderness. "Why is it the way it is? How does what you and I do in Jersey have anything to do with my dad's job? It doesn't make any sense." And as she gazed, she discovered what the children were awaiting as it loomed nearer and more terrifying from afar. The realization tightened her stomach. Even from fifteen years ago... it was she--for she had come with the Mayflower H. She knew then that the Chironians were at war, and that the war would end only when they or those sent to conquer them had been eliminated. And in their first encounter, she had sensed the helplessness of her own kind. She felt it again now, as the final veil of the artist's enigma fell away and revealed, behind the fear and the trepidation, a glimpse of something more powerful and more invincible than all the weapons of the Mayflower II combined. She was staring at her own extinction. sandwiches. "Those people are just pessimists. The economy's always going down the drain for some. Tail wagging, the pooch pads into the bathroom? and straight toward the toilet cubicle. Pretending that the thorny tentacles of the bloomless rosebush had threatened her, she turned to confront. Running with this strange blind exuberance, he loses all sense of distance and time, so he doesn't know. concentrate on your lessons when your teacher has his hand up your skirt." "I know you didn't, Aunt Gen. I know." out of Eden." "Sure," Murphy accepted, and they all began walking. On the way, Jay explained the problem to his three friends. "Not for me to say, ma'am," Colman had told the laser cannon standing twenty feet in front of him. "I'm not an expert on handsome men." busy. No one appears interested in Curtis when he enters. the plan we've been operating on for about four years now." By the time that she reached the bathroom, she heard her mother being busy in the master bedroom. She. Veronica laughed. 'You'll have to eat your heart out wondering. Take care. I'll call you tonight.' The restaurant employees are protesting less, maybe because the hunters' steely indifference to every. "I might have guessed," Colman said, nodding to him. He smiled. "I think you've got something there, Francene." "My shift's over at eleven." Wellesley looked down and studied his hands while he considered what had been said. In his sixties, he had shouldered twenty years' of extraterrestrial senior responsibilities and two consecutive terms as Mission Director. Although a metallic glitter still remained in the pale eyes looking out below his thinning, sandy hair, and the lines of his hawkish features were still sharp and clear, a hint of inner weariness showed through in the hollows beginning to appear in his cheeks and neck, and in the barely detectable sag of his shoulders beneath his jacket. His body language seemed to say that when he finally had shepherded the Mayflower II safely to its destination, he would be content to stand down. In the Political Science course at school, the Mayflower II's primary mission had been described as one of "preemptive liberation," which meant that because the Asiatics and the Europeans were the way they were, they would seize Chiron and convert it to their own corrupt ways if given the chance, and the Mayflower II therefore had two years to teach the Chironians how to protect themselves. There were other, more abstract reasons why it was so important for these Chironians to be educated and enlightened, which Jay didn't fully understand, but which he accepted as being among the many mysteries that would doubtless reveal themselves in their own good time as part of the complicated business of growing up. As a matter of emotional survival, she had recently been making an effort to keep her anger sheathed. The moonless darkness baffles, but the dog is close enough for Curtis to see that she's interested in the. impact predicted for noon Friday. progresses by hitch and twitch through the kitchen, cooks and bakers and salad-makers and dishwashers

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