

THE ART OF INVESTMENT

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?" ate tofu and canned peaches on a bed of bean sprouts?". He returned the squeeze reassuringly. "You'd better believe it?". making a connection with her. His stubborn persistence through the years had been motivated by. Maybe something hideous does lurk in there. Perhaps awaiting Curtis is a discovery far more disgusting. "Not all, I guess," Colman replied with a grin. He turned to Adam and then Kath. "You, er--you don't seem to have any religion here at all, at least, not that I've seen. Is that right?" Having grown up to accept it around him as a part of life, he hadn't been able to help noticing. "To your approval, I trust," he said. Celia had suggested a cognac earlier on, when Sterm had asked her preference for an after dinner liqueur. gunfire, leaps at him, like a playful dog, and tosses his hair. hope of escape lies ahead. "You mean the way's clear right down to the Battle Module?" Colman asked. "Ah, well, it's not over yet," Hanlon said. His eyes twinkled for a second as he remembered something else. "Oh, by the way, there was another thing I was meaning to tell you," he said to Colman. "We made an arrest over at the shuttle base--just before midnight, it was, when we were about to be relieved." "-Maybe we shouldn't rush things too much," Bernard suggested. He looked at lay: "You may want to give yourself time to acclimatize before you get into something like this." His tone said that he was being tactful in his phrasing; lay wasn't going. For the moment, at least, lay didn't feel inclined to argue too much. a confident assessment. "Sure," Chang said confidently. "I'll give you a call when I've talked to Adam. He's the friend. Would Jay like to go too."?. Toward Sterm he felt neither animosity nor affection, which suited him because he functioned more efficiently in relationships that were uncomplicated by personal or emotional considerations. He had no illusions that either of them was motivated by anything but expediency. Stormbel derived some satisfaction and a certain sense of stature from the knowledge that they complemented and had use for each other, with no conflict of basic interests, like the interlocking but independent parts of a well-balanced machine. Sterm wanted the planet but needed a strong-arm man to take it, while Stormbel relished the strong-arm role but had no ambitions of ownership or taste for any of the complexities that came with it. grove of trees. Drying her hands on a dishtowel, she turned to the girl. "I don't have any suspicions. I'm just saying, if." "Jay!" Jean exclaimed. "Did you find anywhere nice? -What are those things?". with one shackled leg might run. Major Lesley shook his head slowly and continued to stare ahead with a vacant look in his eyes. "This shouldn't be happening," he murmured. "They're not the enemy. They shouldn't be fighting each other." The rhythmic thuds of marching feet died away and were replaced by the background sounds of daily life aboard the Kuan-yin--the voice of a girl calling numbers ~ of some kind to somebody in the observatory on the level above, children's laughter floating distantly through an open door at the other end of the narrow corridor behind Driscoll, and the low whine of machinery. A muted throbbing built up from below, causing the floor to vibrate for a few seconds. Footsteps and a snatch of voices came from the right before being shut off abruptly by a closing door. resulting in splashed upholstery and wet fur. In the console between the seats were molded-plastic. too, and lowers the barrier, which is well oiled and rattle-free. He could have stepped onto the bumper. took things from you that you never-ever wanted to give, the proper authorities weren't there for you. Swyley moved farther 'into the room and paused to survey the surroundings through his thick, heavy-rimmed spectacles, his pudgy face cloaked by his familiar expressionless expression. Driscoll was with him, and more were marching in behind them, Sirocco blinked and - swallowed hard as they dispersed among the empty seats at the back and began sitting down. Harding, Baker, Faustzman, Vanderheim. "Oh. Yeah. My dog," the boy says, feeling stupid and dismally incompetent at this. "Probably not much of anything," Leilani said, without a pause. "Except in having fun and getting through. Nevertheless, during the week that she'd been staying with Aunt Gen, she awakened each morning with. "Well . . . yeah. Who knows? He was about to say something more when Wellington interrupted. "It seems irrational to me to argue one way or another about things there's no evidence for," a boy of about four' teen remarked. "You can make up anything you want if there's no way of testing whether it's true or not, so what's the point?". authorities. He shoves the currency into his pockets once more. transforming moment of grace that Geneva had wished for her. She didn't believe in miracles, neither the. Leilani herself had written lousy weepy epic poems about lost puppies and kittens nobody wanted, but. "No roses." men more than she valued me. She always got tired of them sooner or later, and she always knew she. A few seconds of silence elapsed while the Chironians considered the suggestion. Their expressions seemed to say. it couldn't do any harm, but it probably wouldn't change very much. "Is the case strong enough to turn the whole Army round in a moment?" Kath asked doubtfully at last. "We have no proof about Padawski and the bombings. What you've said about Howard Kalens might result in some debate, but would it have sufficient impact on its own to convince enough people of how insane Sterm really is? Now, if we could prove all the incidents, all at the same lime-". SWAT squad, but more accurately a SWAT platoon. Shiny black riot helmets. Shatterproof acrylic face. "Fifty?". His debut into life had been very different. The war had left his parents afflicted by genetic damage, and their first two children had not survived infancy. Aging prematurely from side effects, they had known they would never see Chiron when they brought him aboard the Mayflower II as a boy of eight and sacrificed the few more years that they might have spent on Earth in order' to give him a new start somewhere else. Paradoxically, their health had qualified them favorably in their application to join the Mission since the planning had called for the inclusion of older people and higher-risk actuarial categories among the population to make room for the births that would be occurring later. A dynamic population had been deemed desirable, and the measures taken to achieve it had seemed callous to some, but had been necessary. the mothering. Only the normality mattered. The peace. Here, now, Leilani was

overcome with a pleasant. The thought of a shower was appealing; but the reality would be unpleasant. The cramped bathroom had. "Good thing we weren't playing Russian roulette," Leilani said. "My brains would be all over the kitchen." you're thinking about Ashley Judd or Sharon Stone, or maybe Pam Grier. Whip-quick, the woman snapped her head up, blond tresses lashing the air. Her face, half revealed in. The boy is athletic, agile. The leap from the porch roof is a challenge easily met. He lands on the lawn. Waiters slipped off his jacket and hung it in the closet by the door after taking a book from the inside pocket. Fallows frowned but made no comment. space-shuttle gyroscope. You could eat half a cow and drink a keg of beer every day, and your butt. slumped shoulder. To the delight and applause of the staff and residents, he walked outside and released. allowed to go free. Not ever. when the moon is in the seventh house, when Jupiter is aligned with Mars, that kind of thing. Most of the. Micky had figured to let the girl wind down, hut the longer that Leilani circled the subject of her brother's. among its contents that even the low rhythmic wheeze of the idling engine provides sufficient screening. "Our what?" omnium-gatherum of bath additives that any citizen of medieval times would have recognized her at once. hers was not the transient beauty of childhood, but an enduring quality. on the head. She hates him a lot, which is maybe why she hates me and Luki a little, too. And Luki more. The major sighed wearily. "It doesn't matter. Forget it. Do you know anyone else around here we should try asking?" it's crack cocaine and hallucinogenic mushrooms, much enhanced by old Sinsemilla's patented brand of. the bedroom window across the street. The drapes had been pulled aside. Karla Rhymes stood at the. Colman looked away in a daze. Hanlon and Armley were waiting impatiently, and Jay was watching imploringly. He thought furiously. Why Celia should be in danger and desperate to escape, he didn't know, but he could find out later. If he said he had to get away for a few hours. Sirocco would cover for him, so that was okay. The threat of the Chironians' being able to destroy the ship was obviously the most serious problem but there was little likelihood of that becoming critical within the next few hours; on the other hand, Celia was already committed to whatever she and Veronica had cooked, up between them, and that couldn't be delayed or changed. So Celia would have to come first. Jay could go home and tell his father that Colman would be a while; at the same time Jay would be able to warn the Fallowses to be prepared for more company, since Colman would have to take Celia there with him. In fact that would probably work out pretty well since it would enable her to be smuggled out of Phoenix in one operation with Bernard and the other fugitive that Jay had mentioned. Vehicles flying out of Phoenix were programmed to operate only inside a narrow corridor unless specifically authorized to go to some other destination, so the smuggling would have to be across the border. He could fix something with Sirocco back in the Orderly Room, no doubt, but that was a relatively minor issue since Colman was already adept at getting himself in and out of Phoenix. As for Veronica's getting away from the base, he would have to leave that to Hanlon. connected scars, as intricate as lacework, decorated or disfigured her forearm, depending on your taste. the parking lot penetrates to allow Curtis to move quickly toward the back of the motor home, although. nonetheless rude, distracting Curtis and Donella from their mutual apologies. "We lived in San Francisco then." to go upstairs to find those necessities. though unintentionally he flings off one of his sandals. "Well, that was up to you. We told you." Out in the vast parking area, where cones of dirty yellow light alternate with funnels of shadow, there's. "That's exactly what they are," Pernak said. "In the material sense, anyway. That's why possessions don't have any status value to them--they don't say anything. That's why you won't find any absolute leaders down there either." "How come?" Lechat asked, puzzled. "What are the gifts still talking about in there?" Bernard asked. anger. Only anger had kept her going, and until recently she'd been reluctant to let it go. T-shirt. The impressive mass of bone in his brow surely weighed more than the five-pound sledge that he. "Oh, okay," lay said. "Their laws couldn't tell them anything about the cold universe before that instant. Flame physics only came into existence when the flame did." but fear for her one good hand caused her to choose the nether end. give a rat's ass whether it was poisonous or not, because it could have changed her life if it had gotten. As a matter of emotional survival, she had recently been making an effort to keep her anger sheathed. "You got it wrong," Colman told them. "It's not the little ones at all." He widened his eyes in a parody of lewd anticipation and grinned. "Think of all those grandmothers." Terry and Paula laughed. She glanced down at her feet. No snake. net seems to have gone down," he said. "Even the standby channels." Yes, Simmonds?" 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." Then movement catches his eye, not immediately under the rig but along the side of it, in the lamplit. with a patina of perspiration. In spite of her genius IQ, her street smarts, and her well-polished wise-ass. had these memory problems now and then, ever since I was shot in the head. A few wires got scrambled. cue from him, the dog slows to a trot, then lowers its head and slinks forward at his side, more like a cat. To Leilani, Micky said, "So I guess we're not twelve percenters, after all. We have lots of opinions, and. Onward, quickly to the paved road, which leads north and south to points unknown. Either direction will. an electrical current would leap across an arc between two charged poles. Fallows was still brooding fifteen minutes later in the transit capsule as it sped him homeward around the Mayflower lips six-mile-diameter Ring. Merrick was fight, he had decided. He had been a fool. He didn't owe it to the likes of Colman to put up with going through the mill like that or having his own integrity questioned. He didn't owe it to any of them to help them unscramble their messed-up lives. Colman shook his head. "There shouldn't be any need. Celia's hair is a lot shorter. There'll be fewer people around later. It'll be okay - . . . as long as there's a different guard there by then, and provided we can get him down along that corridor for a minute. And anyhow, they'll be expecting people to be going in there then." "It might not want to die that easily," Lechat pointed out. "You should listen to what's going on a few blocks from here right now in the room I just came from." What troubled Fulmire was the specter of Kalens's emerging from the midst of it all as a virtual dictator, with Borftein supporting him and straining to be let off the leash. Every

faction would see such a concentration of power as a potential battering ram to be harnessed exclusively for the advancement of its own cause, and even more as an instrument to be denied at all costs to its rivals. In an explosive situation like that anything could happen, and Fulmire had visions of the whole Mission tearing itself apart in internecine squabbling with a strong possibility of bloodshed at the end of it all when frustrations boiled over. The only force that he could see with any potential for exerting a stabilizing influence was the more moderate consensus as represented by the Mayflower I's population as a whole; and Lechat, possibly, could provide a means of mobilizing it before things got out of hand..how often these weird little gray guys are supposed to have totaled one of their gazillion-dollar, and perhaps irrational notion. He's just a boy of comparatively little experience, and she's a grand person. Colman smiled to himself. "I've only seen her around..fish for which so many nets have been cast..Mrs. D and Micky were also worried about Dr. Doom. Of course he was a more serious case than old.As the Windchaser slows steadily, Curtis slides shut the window and takes up a position at the bedroom.She shivered at the thought and got up from the sofa to find Bernard. No doubt he would be in the basement room that he and Jay had made into a workshop to supplement the village's communal facility. Bernard had been taking more interest in Jay's locomotive lately than he had on the Mayflower II. Jean suspected he was doing so to induce Jay to spend more time at home and allay some of the misgivings that she had been having. But his enthusiasm hadn't prevented Jay from going off on his own into Franklin, sometimes until late into the evening, after spending hours in the bathroom fussing with his hair, matching shirts and pants in endless combinations with a taste that Jean had never known he had, and experimenting with neckties, which he'd never bothered with before in his life unless told to. Whatever he was up to, Marie at least, mercifully, was managing to occupy herself with her own friends and to stay inside the complex..his in Congress, and that they might see more long-term profit in betraying her than in serving her honestly.THE COFFEE HAD SIMMERED long enough to turn slightly bitter. By the time she sampled her third.Solemnly, Leilani finished the second piece of pie, solemnly, as though she were eating it not to satisfy.out of shelter, into the open space between this rig and the next, where they had first glimpsed the.Curtis screams, and even when he realizes that the snack in her hand isn't a human ear, after all, but.lunatic, but so many things in this world aren't what they appear to be, including Curtis himself.."I'm not sure I believe in life before death," Micky said..eyes, a flash of teeth in the hooded beam of light. He almost cries out in alarm.."I guess I'll have to think about it," Jay conceded. Hanlon ordered three hamburger dinners, and the two sergeants spent a half hour talking with Jay about Army life, football, and how Stanislaw could crash the protected sector of the public databank. Finally Jay said he had to be getting home, and they walked with him up several levels to the Manhattan Central capsule point..Wellesley seemed thoughtful. "I wonder if Leighton Merrick and his specialists could run a place like that," he mused. After a few seconds, he added hastily, "Not immediately, of course, but at some time in the future, possibly, depending on circumstances. As insurance, it would certainly pay us to know something more about it..Luki and I have the same last name, but that doesn't mean anything. It's not actually our father's name..self-assurance, her wit, and her indomitable spirit made it hard to think of her as disabled, even now."We might not be the only ones who've noticed there's an.Bullock role..Jean glanced at the screen and then looked at Bernard. "Should we try calling her through Jeeves ... via the Chironian net? It shouldn't be affected, should it?..astute.. "She isn't here, We've checked with transportation, and she was booked onto a shuttle up to the ship earlier this."We're looking into that. It will depend on how many people Steve can spare. Now, if Bret can get there from the Columbia District after the transmission has gone out, then that might put a different.. ." Sirocco's voice trailed away, and his mouth hung open as he stared disbelievingly toward the door at the back of the room. The heads turned one by one, and as they did so, gasps and mutterings, punctuated by a few good-natured jeers, began breaking out on all sides. /

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