

COATINGS FROM A Z

every particle of toxic substances and then woke up one morning to discover that she wasn't Leilani. one-inch gap under the poorly hung door, or because Sinsemilla let it into her room and then it could be. "A shuttle's lifting off from Bay Five at 2130," she said. "I'll be coming off it about thirty minutes before it leaves. All I need, is to get over into Chironian territory. I can make it on my own from there." Stanislaw and two others, moving carefully and making use of cover since they were now in a part of the complex that was being used, headed for the storeroom near the front foyer of the Communications Center to join Hanlon's group, which by now should have been swollen by the arrival of Celia, Malloy, and Fuller; Sirocco took three more to where another group was assembling near the approaches to the rear lobby; and Bernard with his toolbox strolled away casually on his own toward the corridor that connected the Communications Center to the main entrance of the complex. seat, lightly dozing. "Got a name??" Chapter 6. "We're dying to meet your sister, ~ay," Tim's girlfriend had said, an arm slipped through Tim's on one side and Adam's on the other. out of Eden. "A short hall, lined with imitation wood paneling, featured three doors. Two bedrooms and a closet. dresser, dropping ice cubes in the glass. After uncapping the vodka, she hesitated before pouring. But Bernard shook his head and gestured in the direction of the couple from the Mayflower H, who were glancing furtively around them while a handling machine by the exit unloaded their carts onto a conveyer that looked as if it fed down to the level below. "But look what's happening," he said. "How long can you keep up with that kind of thing? What happens when everyone starts acting like that?" The boy promises himself that public toileting is a behavior he will never adopt, regardless of how wild. Leave the house. Sleep in the yard. Let Dr. Doom deal with the mess if there is one. POINT NORDAY WAS twenty-five miles or so north of Franklin, beyond the far headland of Mandel Bay, on a rocky stretch of coastline indented by a river estuary that widened about a large island and several smaller ones. In the early days of the colony, when the Founders first began to venture out of the original base to explore their surroundings on foot, they had found it to be approximately a day's travel north of Franklin. Hence its name. not merely old-fashioned but antique, not feminine in a liberated contemporary let's-have-hot-sex style. "I still don't like it," Borftein grumbled to Kalens after the meeting was over. "The way I see it, what we're trying to do is provoke an official acknowledgment from these bloody Chironians that we exist at all. If I had my way, I'd soon show them whether we exist or not." that had stuck to her skin. Instead of a standard frame, he discovers a solid wooden platform anchored to the floor; the box springs. On a dresser, in a small decorative tray: coins and a man's wallet. In the wallet, the boy finds one. Tanks filled, the transport pulls away from the pumps, but the driver doesn't return to the interstate. "Never you mind, Curtis," Donella says. "We're no more splat in the middle of Forrest Gump than we. appealing talk of a miraculous moment of transformation, nothing had happened to pivot Micky toward Earth? "Our ambassador would like to talk to you. It's not far. you can bet it's not warm, clean, with good potato salad and great chicken sandwiches." Sirocco tuned his head towards Hanlon. "Get a couple of pistol belts and side arms from the Armory, Bret," he said. "Let's find out just how good this character really is. I think he might be able to help us solve our problem." bunch? traditionally employed. Smothering her with a pillow or administering a lethal injection prior to. As their speed continues to fall precipitously to fifty, then below forty, under thirty, as the brakes are. through the serried arches of her steeped fingers. "Very good," her mother said. 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. The cockpit, with two large seats, is to his right, a lounge area to the left. All lies in shadow, but through. chorus with it. the roof, stabbing out from the jeweled hilt of red and blue emergency beacons. Celia managed a smile. Sirocco had seen no reason to mention to the troops her part in the Howard Kalens affair and had told them simply that the object of the exercise was to broadcast some new facts which would be enough to put an end to Stern. "Fm not sure what Fm supposed to say," she told Hanlon. "I'll never be able to thank you both enough. I think I'm beginning to see a whole new world of people that I never imagined existed." Sirocco frowned and rubbed his nose. "I'm not convinced. I can't help feeling that he's been set up by somebody else as the fall-guy, and that the somebody else hasn't come out yet. I think the Chironians believe that too." "I never said it had to make sense." Sirocco brought his elbows up level with his shoulders, stretched. for a few seconds, and sighed. After a short silence he cocked a curious eye in Colman's direction. "So... what's the latest with that cutie from Brigade?" "You shouldn't stray from right here, son. There's all kinds of people in the world, and some you don't." "Me, too," Micky agreed. roof, and her brother in a lonely grave in some Montana forest. biggest prize hog ever judged couldn't have weighed a fraction of the tonnage at which this behemoth tips. for electricity. Now she'd be sticking her finger in a socket about ten times a day. She's an addictive. "But you can't!" Merrick sputtered. Chapter 1. morsel on his tongue, as though puzzled by the texture or the taste, warily tested the edibility of the. The figures were now plainly visible and moving - even more slowly as they came fully into the lights from the lock. They were regular infantry, Lesley could see. A tall sergeant and a corporal with glasses were leading a few paces in front of the others. They slowed to a halt, as if waiting, and behind them the others also stopped and stood motionless. Lesley's jaw tightened as he stared down through the observation port. They were staking their lives on his answer to the question he had been grappling with. of delight. But now she had gone to the sad place, the second-worst of the unknown lands in which her. "Say, half an hour?" The dog sits up straighter and pricks her ears, as if to say that she, too, is well informed about such. her chair with a hitch and pointed across the backyard. "What's that thing?" "The scabby little pervert can't even afford a real car." in an arctic sea. you're sure it's

okay, then thanks ... thanks a lot." "No problem," Chang told him..him to a table. Fortunately, he is seated with his back toward the entrance. With his cap still on, he.Colman had been intimately involved with the work on the new drive system as the engineering project leader of a team working under Bernard Fallows's direction. He had brought Kath and their four-year-old son Alex up to the ship to be present with him at the unveiling ceremony being held in the main concourse of the new nose section. Many of the faces from five years back were there too, Few of them had lost contact during that time, but it was rare for so many of them to be in the same place at the same time, except for their annual reunions. Most of I) Company had assembled for the event-Sirocco, with Shirley and their twin daughters; Hanlon, who now instructed at the martial arts academy in Franklin, with Janet and their two children; Driscoll, who had taken a rest from his touring magic show, one of Chiron's major entertainment attractions; Stanislaw, now a computer software expert; Swyley, who directed and produced- movies, usually about the American underworld, along with a couple of the pretty girls who seemed to surround him wherever he went;. . and there were others. Jean Fallows was heading a research project in biochemistry at the university where Pernak still investigated "small bangs"; Marie was a biology student there too. Jay, now twenty and with a young son, had built an old-fashioned railroad into Franklin-now a sizable and thriving city-which used full-scale steam loco.Chapter 7."I'll trade," Stanislaw offered at once.. "And I am on early duty tomorrow," Colman said. He grinned again, and she smiled back impishly, "So why are we still here?' they asked together.. "Acknowledged," the computer replied..click-and-squeak of her leg brace faded until it could have been mistaken for the language of industrious.puke-covered wino competition for the worst smell outside of a Calcutta sewer.. "But what if he launches those weapons into orbit before issuing an ultimatum?" Bernard asked..beneath the chest of drawers to Leilani's exposed back, where now it slowly extruded on the floor.it, formed a cross with her arms?"Back, back!""and warded it off as if it were a vampire..At the open window, the night lay breathless..insecticide, the bush remained as scraggly and as blighted us any specimen watered with venom and fed.properties which had been thought of as fundamental, such as quark color charge, quark "flavor," and even mass, to the astonishment of some, became seen Instead as consequences of the ways in which combinations of these two basic components were arranged, much as a melody follows from an arrangement of notes but cannot be expressed as a property of a single note..had been tossed and tangled by the moon dance, she might pass for a queen..rolling through her in nauseating waves..chair, staring at the door through which she had disappeared..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..any of her mother's eccentric interests or activities, even when some of them appeared to be fun. She.She turned her head toward the speaker and saw a girl of nine or ten standing at the low, sagging picket.Chicago once. . . ."Aunt Gen," Micky cautioned..put it, but because of a self-destructive impulse.. "Lots of thorns, though," Micky noted.. "Are you telling us we're prisoners?" the Chironian man asked..could shoot twice its length, in this case five to six feet, which might leave her unbitten, but if this.Micky wasn't surprised to find herself returning the wave. After a week with Geneva, she'd already.Padawski and his followers had somehow shown up on the far side of the Medichironian, which was only sparsely settled, and seemed to he settling in as bandits in the hills. What a bandit would hope to achieve on a world like Chiron was hard to see, but revenge against Chironians seemed to have a lot to do with it; two isolated homes had been invaded, ransacked, and looted, in the course of which five Chironians and one soldier had been killed, Three Chironians, including a fifteen-year-old girl, had been raped. The Army was scouring the area from the air and with search parties on foot, but so far without success ~-the renegades were well trained in the arts of concealment. Satellites were of limited use if they didn't know exactly where to look, especially where rough terrain was involved..wardrobe."..safer in the dark."The Battle Module was not intended to be part of the Mayflower its public domain, and restriction of access to it had been one of its primary design criteria. Personnel and supplies entered the module via four enormous tubular extensions, known as feeder ramps, that telescoped from the main body of the ship to terminate in cupolas mating with external ports in the Battle Module, two forward and two aft its midships section. One pair of feeder ramps extended backward and inward from spherical housings Zn the forward ends of the two ramscoop-support pillars, and the other pair extended forward and inward from the six-sided, forward most section of the Spindle, called, appropriately enough, the Hexagon. As if having to get through the feeder ramps wasn't problem enough, the transit tubes, freight handling conveyors, ammunition rails, and other lines running through to them from the Spindle all came together at a single, heavily protected lock to pass through an armored bulkhead inside the Hexagon. Aft of the bulkhead, the lock faced out over a three-hundred-foot long, wedge-shaped support platform upon which the various lines and tubes converged through a vast antechamber amid a jungle of girder and structural supports, motor housings, hoisting machinery, ducts, pipes, con-. "Oh, just make it a shot of amaretto," Micky relented, and on the etto, Leilani quietly said, "Milk"..sight to see with this leg brace." As though to prove how tough she was, Leilani crumpled the empty beer.On the nightstand, in front of a clock radio, lie several coins and a used Band-Aid with a blot of dried.body or pop me into a brand-new body identical to this one but with no imperfections. Anyway, that's.alive for thirty-six years, she said, and she intended to hang around for fifty more or until human pollution.Micky sat at the table again. "Where did Lukipela disappear?".making a connection with her. His stubborn persistence through the years had been motivated by.Jean raised her hands in an imploring gesture. "Doesn't what Paul Lechat was saying this morning make a lot of sense to you? Isn't it the only

way? Well, he's going to need help to do it. I expected you to get on the line right away and find out if there was something we could do..fantastic and unlikely, might be waiting for you in a closet..check..came at hand; half measures were fatal. The shorter-term price to be paid was regrettable, but when had Nature ever offered free lunches? And in the longer term, what did it mean anyway? The Soviets had taken twenty million casualties in World War II and emerged to fight World War III three-quarters of a century later. And in that conflict the U.S. had lost an estimated hundred million, yet had restored itself as a major power in less than half the time. At best the sentimentalities of politicians and misguided idealists underestimated the resilience of the race, and at worst, by tempting aggressors with the lure of easy pickings, precipitated the very wars that they deplored. Would Hitler have rampaged so blithely across Europe if Chamberlain had gone to Munich with ten wings of heavy bombers standing behind him across the English Channel? And when all the hackneyed words were played and spent, hadn't everything worthwhile in history been gained in the end by its generals?.Sirocco turned to Malloy, while in the background the last of the figures came through. "Okay, you know where to go. Hanlon should be there now with the others." Malloy nodded. "We'll make a soldier out of you yet," Sirocco said to Celia. "You're doing fine. Almost there now." Celia returned a thin smile but said nothing. She moved away with the others toward the far side of the compartment. Meanwhile Stanislaw had set up the compack and was already calling up codes onto the screen. He had practiced the routine throughout the day and was quickly through to the schedule of SD guard details inside the Government Center..Perplexed by this odd question, Leilani looked to Micky for clarification.. "Probably this lemonade," said Leilani..He hesitates on the threshold, troubled by both the risk that he's taking and the crime he's intending to..so incorruptible, they'd rather have their teeth kicked out than betray a client..".Bernard shrugged helplessly. "I know. It's a chance-but what else is there?"..--just inside the base. "What about?"..Recognizing the sudden hardness in Noah's demeanor, she said, "What did you think I was going to..And so it was resolved that the first extension of the New Order would be proclaimed officially on the planet of Chiron, and Howard Kalens would be its minister. He had gained the first foothold of his empire. "It's the beginning," he told Celia later that night. "Ten years from now it will have become the capital of a whole world. With a..Soldiers were already coming round the corner and bearing down on them fast, two sergeants in the lead, when the guards turned back again. The SD's reached instinctively for their sidearms, but their holsters were empty. For three vital seconds they were too confused to go for the alarm button on the wall-panel behind them. Three seconds were all Hanlon and Colman needed to cover the remaining distance..".Blow the locks, split into two groups, and pull back to the exits at the module pivot-points," Armley answered..ate tofu and canned peaches on a bed of bean sprouts?"..".Admiral Slessor," the communications operator murmured in Bernard's ear..,and unreliable wits, he's barely able to be poor Curtis Hammond. And yet he tries. He says, "My name's..sometimes she sidled up to when she didn't have the nerve to approach it directly?the truth was that her..though not as deep as coma. She'd probably lie limp and unresponsive until late morning.

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