

FATALITY BY FIRELIGHT

"That's true," Bernard agreed. "But the risk of Stern trying anything with those weapons has to be greater if he thinks he can blackmail a defenseless planet. If he knew what he was up against—you don't have to give him every detail—it might be enough to persuade him to give it up. That's all we're asking. For the sake of those people up there, you owe it to spell out a warning, clearly and unambiguously." The planet had evolved a variety of life-forms, some of which approximated in appearance and behavior examples of terrestrial flora and fauna, and some of which did not. Although several species were groping in the general direction of the path taken by the hominids of Earth two million years previously, a truly intelligent, linguistic, tool-using culture had not yet emerged. The bag was folded and sealed. Noah peeled back the tape, opened the flap, and half extracted a wad, and the plaque of dust gritting between his teeth could not have been more vile. He is unable to work up. "Do you deny that by exposing civilians you hoped to precipitate an incident that would have justified sending in troops?" ornate hand-tooled designs that, to the boy's questioning fingertips, speak of parades, horse shows, and. Perhaps the girl was genuinely astonished by the concept of Preston Maddoc as a child molester. Or. Colman went through the motions of having to think back. "Yes . . . I think so. But I don't remember Swyley being around." enough to stop caring about helpless girls? the one next door and the one that she herself had been not. The girl grew silent. hot as her anger had been in the past, but it had the potential to quicken. The long day of rejection left her. "You never know. The chances might be better after we reach Chiron," Sirocco said. Colman's transfer application had been turned down by Engineering. "With the population exploding like crazy, there might be all kinds of. Five minutes later Swyley and Malloy had gone into conference in a corner with Celia and Lechat, and Colman stood apart with Sirocco and Hanlon, discussing tactical details. "We might have enough now to put a demolition squad outside to take out the Battle Module drive section like Carson suggested," Hanlon said. "Even if Stern gets in there it would give more protection to the rest of the ship." "What I really need is a beer." he could find the willpower to deal with them. Although Colman was going along with the mood and making a joke out of it, inside he felt a twinge of irritation. He wasn't sure why. Anita's gibe reflected the popular vogue, but the implied image of a planet populated by children was clearly ridiculous; the first generation of Chironians would be approaching their fifties. He didn't like foolish words going into people's heads and coming out again without an. thought about their meaning having transpired in between. Anita was an attractive girl, and not stupid. She didn't have to do things like that. Then it occurred to him that perhaps he was being too solemn. Hadn't he just done the same thing? "The Director alone has the prerogative to decide that," Fulmire told him coldly. about. What we're dealing with here is Darth Vader with lots of Larry, Curly, and Moe blood in his. some demented children's book? The Little Snake that Could? then she was screwed. snake-gnawed face and her snake-chomped nose. He asks Donella if there's a toilet nearby, and as she writes up his takeout order on a small notepad, she. information than all five human senses combined, so he doesn't nudge her out of the way. As he replaced the communicator, a subdued murmuring ran around the squad behind, punctuated by one or two almost inaudible whistles. He turned to find that the object of their approval was a woman coming out of the main entrance. She stopped for a second to look around, saw the soldiers, and began walking toward them. followed seemed to be charged with some supernatural energy, as the aura of an elemental spirit might. She must deal with this, and fast; but nothing on the bed would be of help to her in a snake chase, snake. INSIDE THE RESTAURANT, which must have the capacity to seat at least three hundred, the boy. Perhaps the trucker has just now remembered a particularly funny joke. His unrestrained hilarity is. Stormbel made a signal to somewhere in the background and announced, "Sixty-second countdown commenced." night-stained surface of a pond. She is alert, ears pricked, drawn not by the frankfurters but by an. Fulmire moved his head to check another clause, and after a while nodded his head reluctantly. "If the Director becomes incapacitated or otherwise excluded from discharging the duties of his office, then the Deputy Director automatically assumes all powers previously vested in the Director," he stated. "So Dr. Doom is a UFO nut," Micky pressed. as though they were disguised blessings from which unexpected benefits would arise in time. Part of. "Luck," Micky clarified. "The angle of the shot was severe. The slug literally ricocheted off her skull." "Don't you think stealing people's homes and throwing them out is violent enough?" Jean asked from one of the dining chairs, while Jay listened silently from across the table. "What were they supposed to do? They ignored the soldiers and settled it with the man responsible. He should have been expecting it." which were half full. "Have you ever seen a really good dog act, Ms. Tavenall?" He grabs the handle on a container of orange juice, making a mental note to return to Utah. savoring his ice cream while gazing out the window. Stanislaw entered more commands. A different table of information appeared on the screen. "SD guard details and timetable for posts inside the Columbia District tonight," Stanislaw said. They would refrain from doing anything to that one until the last moment. Bantam Books are published by Bantam Books, a division of Random House, Inc. Its trademark. "Too hard," Geneva declared proudly. the wake of even nauseating fear. The heart may heal slowly, but the mind is resilient and the body ever. INSIDE THE LOCAL command post behind the Hexagon's armored bulkhead, Major Lesley of the Special Duty Force was still too stunned by what he had heard to be capable of a coherent reaction for the moment. He stared at the companel where a screen showed a view from the Columbia District, where the SD guard commander had entered the Communications Center under a truce flag some minutes previously to talk with Borftein, and tried to separate the conflicting emotions in his head. Captain Jarvis, Lesley's adjutant officer, and Lieutenant Chazure watched in silence while around the command post the duty staff averted their eyes and occupied themselves with their own thoughts. His dilemma was not so much having to choose between conflicting orders for the first time in his life, for their order of precedence was plain enough and he had no duty to serve

somebody who had usurped rank and criminally abused the power of command, but deciding which side he wanted to be on. Though Borftein was waving the credentials, Stormbel was holding the gun..from the VCR and put it in a Neiman Marcus shopping bag that he'd brought. "I've given you two more.Although the blessed gloom provided emotional cover, Geneva didn't look at Micky. She stared at the.Kalens shrugged without looking up from the table. "From what I can see of the anarchy here, we just phone them up and say we're coming." heart, and mercy would more likely be wrung from any stone..Rickster's hands were cupped together as though they concealed a treasure that he was bearing as a gift.Go, pup, he says or only thinks..Her puzzlement passed to pained compassion, and Noah knew that she had read the text and subtext of.To avoid using a compad in not-too-private surroundings, he went to a public booth in the lobby at Rockefeller's to call the number programmed to accept cabs only if she was alone. While Colman waited for a response, his mind flashed back six months. He had been standing stiffly at attention in dress uniform alongside a display of a remote-fire artillery control post that was part of the Army's contribution to the Fourth of July celebrations, when she wandered away from a group of VIPs sipping cocktails and stood beside him to gaze admiringly at the screens. carrying simulated battlefield displays. She ran her long, painted fingernail slowly and suggestively along the intricate control panel for the satellite-tracking subsystem. "And how many more handsome young men like you do they have in the Army, Sergeant?" she murmured at the displays before her.."We had to try," Wellesley insisted from beside Lechat. 'We could not risk informing you that such people had seized control of those weapons. The decision was mine and nobody else's."But SD's were already pouring out of the guardroom behind the main doors of the Government Center and racing along the corridor toward the communications facility while civilians flattened themselves against the walls to get out of the way, and others who had been working late peered from their offices to see what was happening. The engineer iii coveralls who had been working inconspicuously at an opened switchbox through an access panel in the floor closed a circuit, and a reinforced fire-door halfway along the corridor - closed itself in the path of the oncoming SD's. The SD major leading the detachment stared numbly at it for a few seconds while his men came to a confused halt around him. "Back to the front stairs," he shouted. "Go up to Level Three, and come down," on the other side." ? but a bunch of hooley that maybe has a second and more serious purpose," Micky suggested..Even disheveled, in the dirty rumpled full-length slip with its squashed and filthy flounce, Sinsemilla was.NOAH FARREL WAS SITTING in his parked Chevy, minding someone else's business, when the.from those teeth, all related to the well-known fact that most serial killers are also cannibals..the stink of the carpet into a taste that made her gag..Kath watched in silence for a second or two but for some reason seemed to find the situation amusing. Bernard stared with a mixture of uncertainty and resentment. "I think I know what's going through your mind," she told him. "But don't worry about it. We don't take orders from Farnhill or Merrick here. Hoskins doesn't have a lot of experience with high-flux techniques yet, and Walters is good but careless with details. If the people here were going to accept anybody new, it would be somebody who knew what they were doing and who didn't leave anything to chance, however tiny."..whether they peed themselves, all sorts of kinky stuff."..his lips, and though the other platoon members bear no identifying legends or insignia, this man is wearing.Paul Lechat paced back and forth in agitation across the lounge of the Fallowses' apartment in Cordova Village. "I didn't think the Chironians would go that far." he said. "I thought they would react only against direct violence. Why couldn't they have just let everything die a natural death?"..The video had been silent. When the kiss ended, sound was added: Jonathan Sharmer and his.mildew-scented space was deserted and no worse of a mess than it had been when they moved in here..Colman watched for a moment, then turned slowly back and began moving toward the bulkhead door. He didn't feel resentful, nor particularly surprised. He'd seen it all too many times before. Fallows wasn't a bad guy; somebody somewhere had jumped on him, that was all. "He might know all about how machines work," Colman murmured half-aloud to himself as he returned to the gallery outside the Bomb Factory. "But he doesn't understand how they think."..her knees. Lying prone, head turned to one side, she pressed her right cheek to the greasy shag..never seen their faces clearly.."Why's it so important to be better than somebody?"..Who're you running from, boy?".. "You think that's really a possibility?" Colman asked, looking concerned and doubtful at the same time..members who had been absent had returned for the occasion, and the only seats left vacant were those of the Deputy Mission Director, the Director of Liaison, the Commanding General Special Duty Force, and two others who had chosen to throw in their lot with Stern. Behind Sirocco and taking up almost half of the available floor space, the whole of D Company was present in dress uniform to represent the Army. Bernard Fallows was back in uniform as the new Engineering chief with the crew contingent, having agreed to Admiral Slessor's request for a six-month reinstatement to help organize a caretaker crew of trainee Terrans and Chironians who would use the Mayflower II as a university of advanced astroengineering. Jean Fallows, Jay, and Marie were present with Celia, Veronica, Jerry Pernak, and Eve Verritty in the front row of the guests included by special invitation, and with them were Kath and her family alongside Otto, Chester, Leon, and others from the base in Selene and elsewhere. As if to underline and reecho Wellesley's acknowledgment of how the future would be, there was no segregation of Terrans and Chironians into groups; and there were many children froth both worlds..THE CHIRONIANS' HANDLING of the Padawski incident and the absence of any organized reaction among them to the initial Terran hysteria led to a widespread inclination among the Terrans privately to absolve the Chironians of blame over the bombings, but the Terrans avoided thinking about the obvious question which that implied. The aftertaste of guilt and not a little shame left in many mouths alienated the Terran extremists from the majority, and relations with the Chironians quickly returned to normal. Nevertheless, the wheels that had been set in motion by the affair continued to turn regardless, and five days later the Territory of Phoenix was declared to exist..house..She didn't seem to be in physical pain, after all. She might have been working off excess energy in a.The fence, old and in need of

repair, clatters as he climbs across it. When he drops to the lane beyond, The soft knock wasn't opportunity, but Micky said, "Come in." appears to be at once enthralled by the offerings on the tall, two-fold menu. "I'd love a piece, thanks," Leilani said..magic or money, not with force or doctors or laws or sweet talk, nobody EVER the boss of me!" .he'd lost her. Until then, she'd been a radiance, the one brightness in a family that otherwise lived in.was." .of sandal, she sprints westward along the broken white line, flanked by frustrated motorists in their.A synchronizing computer issued commands, and the accelerator rings discharged tangentially into the shaft in sequence to send a concentrated beam of instant annihilation streaking out into space through giant deflection coils controlled by data from the Chironian tracking satellites.. "For a long time," Colman said.. "I said you were in too much of a hurry," Jean said to Bernard. "Just think, all that work for nothing. We should have waited a bit longer for those Chironians to get round to us." .The bagman cocked his head and wagged one finger at Noah; "You have an anger problem, don't you?" .Leaving Colonel Oordsen peering out of the screen, Lesley rose and walked through the door in the steel wall..need to take responsibility for your actions?and because every act of caring exposed the heart to a.Only Celia seemed strangely to be unmoved, but continued to sit staring at the cup in her hands without any change of expression. Her unexpected reaction caused the others to fall quiet and stare at her uncertainly. Then Jean said in a hesitant voice, "You don't seem very excited, Celia. Is there something wrong?" .Jean brought a hand up to her brow and shook her head as if despairing at having to voice the obvious. "When I first knew you, you wouldn't have sat down here playing with trains while all this was going on outside," she replied at last. "Don't you understand? What's happening out there, right now, is important. It affects you, me, Jay, Marie, and how we're all going to live - probably for the rest of our lives. Twenty years ago you-both of us-we'd have done something. Why are we sitting here shut up in this place and letting other people-vain, arrogant, greedy, unscrupulous people-decide our lives? Why aren't we doing something? It's that. I can't stand it." .becoming too much like a dog, wild and given to rash action..and clumped toward the closet, which regrettably put the bed between her and the snake. She was.here, imaginary goblins had eaten her as neatly as a duchess might eat pudding with a spoon. Currently.During her short walk, the electrical service had come on again. The wall clock glowed, but it displayed.offering, then crunched the salty delicacy with exaggerated movements of his jaws. The hound likewise."We'll work out something. Where and when?" Hanlon said. Colman looked over at Veronica..Jay and Colman stared at each other as they both came to the same, obvious conclusion at the same time. "That's it," Jay murmured..She quieted the cynic in him, and he liked this inner hush, which he hadn't known for many years..His handsome profile was ideal for stone monuments in a heroic age, though by his actions he had proved.Driscoll frowned, thought about it, and dismissed it with a shake of his head. "This is kinda funny," he said to.inch or two from the ground and hidden by glossy cascades of hair that appeared to be white in the.choose between comfort and being a sex object, I'll choose comfort every time." .and had to endure her verbal battering?sometimes for hours?until she wound down or went away to.neither himself nor his sister, and could take satisfaction only from the possibility that his voice, like a rag.Jean was too astonished to do anything but gape at him while Jay stared in undisguised amazement. Pernak blinked a couple of times and waited a few seconds for the atmosphere to discharge itself. "The problem is it isn't quite that simple," he finally said, forcing his voice to remain steady. "If everybody was going to be left alone to make that choice I'd agree with you, but they're not. There's a faction at work somewhere that's pushing for trouble, and what I've seen of the Chironians says that could mean big trouble. The Iberia thing would at least keep everybody apart until this all blows over, and that's all I'm saying. I agree with you, Bern-I don't think it'll last into the long-term future either, but it's not the long-term that I'm worried about." He glanced at Jean apologetically. "Sorry, but that's how I think it'll go." .She had a trick of locking her brace and pivoting on her steel-assisted leg. Even as she heard the hiss or.third swing, the serpent met the furniture with a crack of skull that took all the wriggle out of it forever..arpeggios; from a severed refrigeration line, a toxic mist of rapidly evaporating coolant hisses like a.She was in her late thirties--Te. Evidently one of the Founders-and carried herself with a stately elegance that was proud and upright without crossing the boundary into haughtiness. Her hair hung naturally to her shoulders and was off-blonde with a vivid, fiery tint that bordered on orange in the sunlight; her face was firm and well formed in a way that reminded him vaguely of Celia Kalens, though with more girliness about it, a softer nose and chin, and a mouth that looked as if it laughed more spontaneously. She was tall, on the slim side of average, but nicely proportioned, and dressed in a stylish but unpretentious two-piece jacket and skirt in beige trimmed with rust red, which revealed shapely, tanned calves that tensed and relaxed hypnotically as she walked..He set the coffees down and slid into the seat opposite Jay. "Ever been thirsty?" he asked as he stirred sugar into his cup..During the boy's first sixteen years, he had lived in the bigger world, with his mother and father. They.Sterm held up- a hand. "Yes, yes, we have been through all that." .One Door Away From Heaven."Certainly not wit."

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