

LAYS OF FAITH AND LOVE

"A payoff." She pinned the thrashing serpent to the baseboard, but only for two seconds, maybe three, and then her. She seldom spoke, and never recognized Noah. If she possessed any memory whatsoever of the days. "What does a Chironian computer print when you attempt illegal access?" one of them asked Colman when they had got into their joke repertoires. Instead of seeking chairs, they remained standing for the show. Bernard grinned. "It takes some getting used to, doesn't it? I think we've been shut up in a spaceship for so long that we've forgotten what on-planet life was like." His mother has often told him that if you're clever, cunning, and bold, you can hide in plain sight as. Curtis doesn't want a refuge. He wants to find an escape hatch. And quickly. Ridiculous. They aren't the type to play games. They're vicious and efficient. If they were here now, he'd. Clem waved an arm casually without looking back. "Go ahead," he said. "Can't see as you really need any, though. You're pretty safe up here. We don't get many burglars." Farnhill glanced helplessly at his aides, then braced himself and began leading the group after Clem while the Chironians parted to make way. The military deputation broke formation. to take up the rear with Wesserman tossing back a curt "Carry on, Guard-Commander" in the direction of Sirocco. In a half squat, shambling side to side and using his swinging arms for counterbalance, just as a frightened. deeply concerned. Worse than concerned. Grim. Maybe even bleak. Besides, if Sinsemilla flipped out when she woke up and found herself in a hospital, her performance. "Well, I'm pleased to hear that at least one Terran thinks so," Bobby said. "That man who was talking in town the other day about invisible somethings in the sky, saying it was wrong to have babies didn't seem to. He said we'd suffer forever after we were dead. How can he know? He's never been dead, It was ridiculous." with one shackled leg might run. gunfire? Curtis hears it for sure this time? erupts, muffled but unmistakable, from the depths of the. should convince locals in a ten-mile radius that Almighty God, in His more easily disappointed Old. a million disguised as a research grant. Her own nonprofit corporation holds title to the property. "Stay. . . there!" the girl instructed. She stifled another giggle and said to the boy in a lower voice, "Come on, let's put another one outside the Graphics lab. They crept away and left Driscoll staring across the corridor at the imperturbable robot. "And by implication that he was mixed up in the bombings and the Padawski escape too," Bernard threw in. In one sense, the nearness of those searching for him doesn't matter. The likelihood of his being. "But you can't!" Merrick sputtered. She'd been a frightened, angry, and humiliated girl, panicked into flight. She would not ever be that artistic scalpel work to her left arm. A six-inch-long, two-inch-wide snowflake pattern of carefully. Then the tramp of marching footsteps growing louder came from beyond the main doors. A second later the doors burst open, and General Stormbel stomped in at the head of a group of officers leading a detachment of SD troopers. With dispatch, the troopers fanned out, closed all the exits, and posted themselves around the walls to cover the assembly, while Stormbel and the officers marched down the main aisle to the center of the floor and turned to face the Congress from in front of where Wellesley was still standing. Borftein leaped to his feet, but checked himself when an SD colonel trained an automatic on him. He sank into his seat, a dazed expression on his face. He had been less generous with the small bag of potato chips. They were crisp and so delicious that he. if it is. Someone's got to remember, you know. Someone. The bagman cocked his head and wagged one finger at Noah; "You have an anger problem, don't you?" Bernard looked startled, but Kath seemed neither offended nor surprised. "I thought you might be," she said, nodding half to herself. "Nanook told me about that." She looked at Bernard. "We don't have a lot of time for secrets," she told him. "Farnhill says it's part of an exchange visit, but that's just a cover that he doesn't know we can see through because he's never asked us. They're reconnoitering this place in case they decide they want to take it over later. That's why your chief, Merrick, is with them--to assess whether your engineers could handle it. He's picked Waiters and Hoskins to put in here if the Directorate goes ahead with the idea." Armley stopped in front of Colman and beckoned Hanlon over. "Sirocco wants you both back right away," he said breathlessly. "I'll take over at the gate. There's trouble. salad, a tray of cheese, and other stuff in the fridge. Would you put everything on the table?" Lechat agreed that the Chironian culture, far from being a naive and backward experiment that would be absorbed without difficulty into the Terran system, as had been assumed, was highly developed in its own unorthodox way and would not yield readily to changes. The two populations could not simply be left to collide with each other in the hope that an equilibrium would establish itself. Something, somewhere, would blow up before that happened. Leilani pulled open the door. Walters grunted, scanned quickly over the displays, and called the log for the last four hours onto an empty screen. "Looks like we're in for another strip down on that goddamn pump," he murmured without turning his head. "Looks like it," Fallows agreed with a sigh. compassion and fairness that were the costume of preference among politicians, but he was still reliably a. "They could have," Bernard agreed. "But have they? It doesn't add up to the way Sterm's acting." sex organs is generally effective. But without a steady supply of new converts to sustain it, the enthusiasm of the politically active early years of the voyage had waned. For a while she had absorbed herself in a revived dedication to her original calling by attending specialist courses in the Princeton module on such subjects as gene-splicing, and extending her activities later to include research and some teaching at the high-school level. Her research work at Princeton and her teaching had brought her into contact with Jerry Pernak, who was in research, and Eve Verritty, who had been a junior administrator with the Education Department at the time. In fact it was Jean who had first introduced them to each other. With only a wistful expression, Rickster said that being able to turn yourself loose, whenever you wanted. coppery freckles and lively green eyes testified to the abiding presence of the young girl thriving in the. On the passenger's seat lay the digital camera that contained photos of the philandering husband entering. dedication is too effusive and in need of cutting. Well, this time she's wrong. But Celia seemed for the moment to be on the verge

of collapse from nervous exhaustion. He sighed to himself, decided answers could wait for a little longer, and settled into his seat. Colman exhaled a long breath. He could see now why Celia had been scared, and why Stern had kept her under constant watch. No doubt until he had attended to the more pressing aspects of the unexpected opportunity that had presented itself. They're in the Columbia District-not far from the Communications Center. If there was some way of getting Borftein out and taking him in on our plan, it would stand a much better chance of having the effect you want on the Army." Then as an afterthought she added, "And if Wellesley could be included as well as Borftein, it might help to make up for some of the things we can't prove." She shifted her gaze around the room and eventually allowed it to settle on Colman. "But I don't know if something like that would be possible." CHAPTER FOUR. "It has to. You can't love others until you love yourself. I was sixteen when I joined the Circle, seven. CHAPTER FIFTEEN. "And I'm getting to know them better," Pernak told both of them. Something in his tone made them turn their heads toward him curiously. He spread his hands above his knees. "It's not exactly that kind of trouble I'm bothered about. But if this goes further than that . . . if the Army starts cracking down, and especially if it starts wheeling out the weapons up in the ship, if things like that start getting thrown around, we won't be counting the bodies in ones and twos." "Jay was able to connect the facts without too much difficulty," Kath pointed out. "We didn't try to hide them. Haven't the scientists on the ship done the same?" Or maybe the dog's sudden anxiety has nothing to do with the contents of the mirrored wardrobe. She. Disconcerted, the stranger drops his restraining hand, and his wince lines cut deeper into his lean face as. No sooner had Leilani's defenses cracked than they mended. Her eyes glazed with emotion at the. "I'm trying to find someone to confirm the rumors." Lechat looked at them for a few seconds longer, then sat up and mustered a grin. "Well, what can I say? Good luck. He nodded to himself. That was what he would do. He would call Jean and then go over to Cordova Village to talk to her and Bernard about it. seems satisfied. With two fingers, he pulls down both lower eyelids and examines his eyes? God knows. her, Aunt Gen. There's nothing we can do tonight." the glamour of berets and billycocks, panamas and turbans, cloches and calashes. the rush and rumble of the trains to which she had listened on many other nights. him, and had wounded Noah himself? once in the left shoulder, once in the right thigh? when he was. Violators of visa privileges would face permanent exclusion. Chironian residents who failed to comply with the registration requirement after a three-day- grace period would be subject to expulsion and confiscation of their property for resale at preferential rates to Terran immigrants. Retreating toward the front door, with the dismayed dog at his side, he's aware of people staring at him. Kath had moved away to talk to Adam, Casey, and Veronica, who were sitting together beyond the table at which Driscoll was performing. Although he was beginning to feel more at ease with her than he had initially, Colman was still having to work at getting used to the feeling of being accepted freely and naturally by somebody like her, and of being treated as if he were somebody special from the Mayflower ii. On the first occasion that he had walked with her from Adam's place to The Two Moons, he had felt somewhat like Lurch, Adam's klutz robot-awkward, out of place, and uncertain of what to talk about or how to handle the situation. But all through that evening, despite the shooting episode, on the way back and at Adam's afterward, and when he had met her in town for a meal after coming off duty the following day, she had continued to show the same free and easy attitude. Gradually he had relaxed his defenses, but it still puzzled him that somebody who was a director of a fusion plant, or whatever she did exactly, should act that way toward an engineer sergeant demoted to an infantry company. Why would she do something like that? For that matter, why would any Chironian be interested more than just socially in any Terran at all? sure it wasn't a Martha Stewart recipe." Stroking the mutt's head, rubbing behind one of the floppy ears and then behind the other, the frightened. Before this bad situation can turn suddenly worse, boy and dog scramble across the brow of the ridge. person again. Never. The real Leilani was back? rested, refreshed, ready to take care of business.. "What makes you imagine that I could?" was being told that she had an alcohol problem or an attitude problem, or a problem with motivation, or. "Pretty good. The axle assembly's finished. You'll have pumps.. She threw off Micky's hand and scooted backward in the grass. A last sob clogged her throat, and ever since she popped me out of the oven, and I've still got all my limbs, or at least the same odd. have the heart to use them.. The Lion-yin's lower orbit put it out of synchronism with the Mayflower 11 and resulted in the two vessels being shielded from each other by Chiron's mass for a period of thirty-two minutes every three-and-a-quarter hours. The sixteen Devastator missiles would be launched from the Battle Module while the Mayflower Ii was screened from the Kuan-yin's retaliatory fire. One salvo would be programmed to follow planet-grazing courses that would bring them up low and fast from points all around Chiron's rim, while the second salvo, launched a few minutes earlier, would swing wide and out into space to come back in at the Kuan-yin from various directions at the rear, the flights being timed so that they all converged upon the Chironian weapon simultaneously. A mass the size of the Kuan-yin could not maneuver rapidly, and the worst-case simulations run on the computers had shown an overwhelming margin in favor of the attack, whatever. blurred, and she heard vintage feeling wash through her words. "I could hope . . . one day I might be. place with both hands, his face entirely concealed, evidently because he thinks this will provide some. as though this were a manic ghost that had no patience for the eerie but tedious pace of a traditional. "With a friend in Baltimore," she told hint, thus making her capitulation total. She needn't have, she knew, but something compelling inside her wanted that. She knew also that it was Stern's way of forcing her to admit it to herself. The terms were now understood.. "Was it respect they showed that boy who was killed last night?" Jean asked bitterly. "And our people say they're not even going to press charges against the man who did it. What kind of a way is that to live? Are we supposed to just let them dictate their standards to us by shooting anyone who steps over their lines? Are we supposed to do nothing until we get a call telling us that Jay's in the hospital-or worse-because he said the wrong thing?" pleased by his growing fluency, which improves when he keeps his attention on the pooch instead of. 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..bite, so quickly reducing her to these spasms, these half-mad headlong frenzies, out of control.. "That was cool back there," Bobby said as he started the engine. "Absolutely arctic." "How long have you been living with Mrs. D?"..he himself is a total Forrest Gump, good-hearted but a Gump nonetheless. Well-meaning, Mr. Hooper.Do you believe in life after death?.On the threshold, gripping the doorknob, she glanced back to see if the snake pursued her. It remained.whispered sanitarium. The faux-Persian rug, though inexpensive, lent grace and warmth to the space:..beneath interlaced boughs that have provided only an occasional brief glimpse of the night sky..Feet thump up the entry stairs, and the floorboards creak under new weight. Lamps come on in the.Squincing her face, Leilani said, "I bet it pulls up its roots late at night and creeps around the..A flux of light throbs through the air beyond the ridge line: the moving searchlight beams reflecting off the."Of course I do."..Padawski was glowering from a few feet away, and seemed to have regained some of his confidence now that the SD's were in control. "You stay away from her, Goldilocks," he spat. "Stick with your nice, murdering friends. We won't forget you either." 1-Ic turned his head back to glare at the whole room before turning for the door. "And that goes for all of you," he warned in a louder voice. "We won't forget. You'll see."..Leilani said, "She just calls him Klunk because she claims that was the noise he made if you rapped him."What?' Driscoll stared at them aghast. "I've never talked to classes of people. I wouldn't know how to start." "A good time to start practicing then," Ci suggested. He swallowed hard and shook his head. "I have to stay here. This conversation is enough to get me shot as it is." Ci shrugged but seemed content not to make any more of it. "Are you two, er... teachers here or something. like that?" Driscoll asked.. "We lived in San Francisco then."..foul-mouthed as my mother, and in return for all my self-discipline, He'll give her as long as she needs to.CHAPTER FIVE.Yet instinct causes the young intruder to halt one step past the threshold..contains the toilet. He enters, switching on the light in there, and pulls the door shut behind him..and country-and-western bars from Omaha to Santa Fe, to Abilene, to Houston, to Reno, to Denver..Celia was unable to reply. The answer lay behind a trapdoor in her mind that she had refused to open. She made a quick, shaking movement with her head and asked instead, "Why are you making it sound like a strange thing to want to do?"..In the rear passenger lounge of the shuttle being prepared for lift-off in Bay 5 at Canaveral base, Veronica sat nursing a large martini and quietly studying the pattern of activity around her and her escorts. It was just about at its peak, with passengers boarding at a steady rate and flight crew moving fore and aft continually. But most of the faces had not yet had time to register. The matron had evidently not considered it part of her duties to assist in packing or carrying anything, but had maintained her distance.And perhaps his mother's spirit watches over him..indifference might be repaid in kind, and she wouldn't tolerate a thankless child..chair, staring at the door through which she had disappeared..Another pulse..CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE."Then you lose out to the system. It's like playing against Driscoll-the system makes it's own ace." "Now that's a hard question."..the coffee..As Curtis opens the motor-home door, the dog springs past him, up the pair of steps and inside. He.thinks he hears sporadic gunfire. He can't be sure. His explosive breathing and the slap of his sneakers on."For a few hours maybe."..a gunshot victim. This is a hideous squeal of agony. He has heard cries like this before, too often. It's.forward lounge, and a gray wash of secondhand light spills all the way to Curtis."Runs the planet? Gee... I don't know anything about that."..properly coordinated..Onward, quickly to the paved road, which leads north and south to points unknown. Either direction will."He did. She's got a place in the city--just across from the base."..The girl put down the beer?on the far side of her plate, out of Micky's reach. Her manner was casual,..At about the same moment, inside the memory unit of a lower-security logistics computer located on the same floor, the references to C Company contained in a routine order-of-the-day suddenly and mysteriously changed themselves into references to D Company. At the same time, D Company's orders to remain standing by at the barracks until further notice transformed themselves into orders for C Company. Ten minutes later a harassed clerk in Phoenix brought the change to the attention of Captain Blakeney, who commanded C Company. Blakeney, far from being disposed to query it, told the clerk to send off an acknowledgment, and then gratefully went back to bed. Inside the logistics computer in the Mayflower II, an instruction that shouldn't have been in memory was activated by the incoming transmission, scanned the message and identified it as carrying one of the originator codes assigned to C Company, then quietly erased it..task is to stop any SD's getting out and, more important, to stop Sterm and his people from getting in if things go well and they realize they can't hold the rest of the ship. What we have to prevent at all costs is Sterm and Stormbel get/ ting in there and detaching the module so that it can threaten the rest of the Mayflower II as well as the planet."All set, except for springing Borftein and Wellesley," Colman said. "Now that we've got Malloy, those two would make the whole thing cast-iron." He turned his head to Sirocco, who was half listening but looking away across the room with a thoughtful expression on his face. "Had any more thoughts about that?" Colman asked. Sirocco responded distantly, "Borftein and Wellesley."..This was a girlish merriment, sweet and musical, almost shy..her full-length slip, and then seized the roomy skirt in both hands and shook it as if casting off bits of dry.of the cowboys who might be ? surely are ? in the vicinity, or into another posse of FBI agents.door of the trailer, standing on the top step, watching. Leilani remained inside..Before the snake could wind back on itself and bite her hand, Leilani shot to her feet faster than her.The major stared at him as if refusing to believe his ears. "Get outa here," he choked in a weak voice. He shook his head incredulously, "Just . . . get the hell outa here, willya...'.sooner or later she'd have to come out. To get food. To use the bathroom. They were going to be here a.demand. Since we are not talking about a technologically backward environment, a considerable degree of expertise in modern industrial processes would be essential to the fulfillment of that obligation, which gives

us, in Engineering, an indispensable role. I trust you see my point." beaten and left for dead. Her life wouldn't now be a long series of waking dreams and nightmares. best. . . maybe a midwife. I'd be beyond amazed if our births were ever registered anywhere." Abashed at his nervous bumbling in the face of this man's easy and nonthreatening conversation, the boy flourished. Pernak twisted his face through a few contortions, then sighed again. "I know. That crossed my mind too, but what is there to provoke any real trouble? There may be one or two flareups before it's all over, but this state of affairs can't last." He shook his head. "We're convinced 'this is the only way to go. We can't make other people's minds up for them, but they'll come round in their own time. Anything else would cause worse problems."

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