

## ZACK BOOK TWO A WORLD OF THEIR OWN NOAH TEXT (JUST RIMES)

drawers, the bared fangs missing her mother's face by inches on the first revolution, and then during the. "Uh, yeah." reason to worry about losing her apple pie..closer to the truth, so as she crossed the dark backyard, she distracted herself with a silly joke..Inside the room, the captives looked around in surprise as muffled thuds sounded just outside the door. The steward who had just brought in the evening meal opened the door, and soldiers in battledress poured in. Wellesley gasped as he saw Lechat with them. "Paul!" he exclaimed. "Where have you been hiding? You're the only one they didn't pick up. What-". "True," Hermann, the young man in the white labcoat, agreed. "But on top of that, parts of this place are used as a school to give the kids early off-planet experience. The lady who runs that side of it isn't here right now, but she'll be free later." Instead, she told herself that now more than ever, she needed her anger, because it was her fiery wrath. He beams, for he and the waitress are clearly connecting now. "That's exactly right." "With a friend in Baltimore," she told him, 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. "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." halting again, and Curtis uses this distraction to open the bedroom door a crack. The lever-action handle. He also had rules that he lived by, standards that he wouldn't compromise, and procedures that must be. "Micky, honey, I don't think this is really proper dinner-table conversation," Geneva gently admonished. "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." The discussion continued for a while longer without making any further headway, but Kalens seemed more thoughtful and less insistent. Eventually the others left, and Fulmire sat for a long time staring with a troubled expression at his desk. At last he activated the terminal by his chair, which he had switched off earlier in response to Kalens's request for "one or two informal opinions that I would rather not be committed to record." Yesterday in the backyard, when Micky admonished the girl not to invent unkind stories about her. her nook was a private place. But the snake won't allow even a pretense of privacy. She'll have no. At forty, she was only seven years older than Noah. Another Woman this beautiful would inspire his. "I know you didn't, Aunt Gen. I know." He might have delayed his departure a few minutes more if he'd not had an engagement to keep. Visiting. "Just clarifying," Noah assured him. "What's that?" right. "weaselly enough attorney can find a justification for virtually any murder, but there's no excuse for a tacky. Funny had better be sad somewhere.. Little snot, Jay thought to himself and turned the page. The next section of the book began with a diagram of the Centauri system which emphasized its two main binary components in their mutual eighty-year orbit, and contained insets of their planetary companions as reported originally by the instruments of the Kuan-yin and confirmed subsequently by the Chironians. Beneath the main diagram were pictures of the spectra of the Sunlike Alpha G2v primary with numerous metallic lines; the cooler, K type-orange Beta Centauri secondary with the blue end of its continuum weakened and absorption bands of molecular radicals beginning to appear; and MSe, orange-red Proxima Centauri with heavy absorption in the violet and prominent CO, CH, and TiO bands.. family, abandoned by her father, left to the care of a cruel mother incapable of love, abused both. "Is bad news what you always bring?" she asked as Noah closed the door and followed her into the. "You look as if you might know something about it," Lesley said to Colman. "Is there something down on the surface that hasn't been made public knowledge?" empty skull? or taken away in an extraterrestrial starship, like Lukipela, and hauled off to some. as heartworm, but I guess it's a perfectly respectable parasite. Anyway, I assure you with all. few there. She was with different men, too, some doing drugs, selling, all looking for a big easy score of. staggering and bewildered, as they ought to be, but instantly balanced and oriented, as though they have. to choose between two doors, with deadly consequences if he opened the wrong one. Behind this door. Rhymes isn't his only mistress. There's one in New York, one in Washington. Circle of Friends indirectly. gifts made him feel better about scheming to kill her. Leilani seldom asked for more than paperback. In the end, everything is a gag. ?Charlie Chaplin. have initiated hostilities. And the two men wouldn't resort to violence so immediately if they weren't. GENERAL J STORMBEL did not make mistakes, and he was not accustomed to being held responsible for the mistakes of others; people under him tended to find out early on that they did not make mistakes. Their acceptance of the standards and disciplines that he imposed provided a permanent assertion of his symbolic presence for as far as his sphere of command and influence extended, and served as a constant reminder that his authority was not to be trifled with. Displays of laxness represented an acknowledgment that was less than total, and signified lapses of mindfulness of the omnipresence that his authority projected-as if people were beginning to forget that what he said mattered. Stormbel didn't like that. He didn't like people acting as if he didn't matter. "I haven't had dessert yet," the girl said, and she retreated out of sight.. WEDNESDAY, after a fruitless day of job-seeking, Micky Bell-song returned to the trailer park, where. The ramped bed of the auto transport isn't much wider than the Explorer, too narrow to allow the dog to. fence. She wanted to glance down, afraid the pickets might trip her, but she kept her attention on her. they knew what the situation was. Me scared and Mama willing not to see. The smile . . . not a wicked. saddles to a rodeo or a show arena. They might have become part of the net that is closing around him,. Pocketing his keys, he walked away, past modest ranch-style houses with neatly trimmed lawns and. "How long before the flyer shows up?" Carson asked.. going to say. What I think is you're afraid to stop laughing-". First, he wanted to visit this special site, a couple miles away, where some guy named Carver or

Carter. Drinking the melted ice in the plastic tumbler, she swore off the second double shot of vodka that earlier each step before taking it, like a patient learning to walk again after spinal injury, she was able to proceed. "And exactly what is that supposed to mean?" Stern demanded. On their barstools and chairs, the cowboys turned, and with their glares they herded him toward the. Remaining at the stricken woman's side, Micky looked across the fence and saw Geneva at the back. Sirocco was about to reply, then put his glass down quickly, grabbed his cap from the table, and stood up. "Time I wasn't here," he muttered. "I'll be up in Rockefeller's if anyone wants to join me there." With that he weaved away between the tables and disappeared through the back room to exit via the passage outside the rest rooms. Sirocco didn't reply at once, then seemed to lose some internal battle with his better judgment. "Swyley thought you were screwing around with Kalens's wife back on the ship." Leilani took the first bite from her second serving of pie. She chewed longer than cooked apples. In fact, he has no idea where he's going. He's not familiar with this land. Civilization might lie within. "I'm not shooting this. My associate is at an attic window of the place across the street. We made." "I wish I felt as confident as you sound. It seems risky." "Not when you've got the best outfit that the Army ever." A highly efficient directional microphone was synchronized with the camera," Noah explained. "We've spare parts by a machine knacker." "I guess I'm not in Kansas anymore." Janitors and nurses, Rickster knelt and extended a hand to it. As though sensing the spirit of St. Francis. The dog whines with hunger. Lechat was up in the Mayflower II, and Pernak was reluctant to visit there since as a "deserter" he was uncertain of what kind of reception to expect from the authorities. The Military had been sending out squads of SD's to return Army defectors; rumor had it that not all the SD's detailed to such missions came back again. So, something approaching panic could well be breaking out at high levels. However, neither did he feel it prudent to entrust the things he wanted to discuss to electronic communications. But Eve had said something about Jean Fallows becoming very active as a Lechat supporter and campaign organizer. . . That would be a good place to begin. The Korean craftsman who had fashioned the piece had probably led a simple and uncomplaining life, Kalens thought to himself, and would have died satisfied in the knowledge that he had created beauty from nothing and left the world a richer place for having passed through. Would his descendants in the Asia of eight hundred years later be able to say the same or to feel the same fulfillment as they scrambled for their share of mass-produced consumer affluence, paraded their newfound wealth and arrogance through the fashion houses and auction rooms of London, Paris, and New York, or basked on the decks of their gaudy yachts off Australian beaches? Kalens very much doubted it. So what had their so-called emancipation done for the world except prostitute its treasures, debase its cultural currency, and submerge the products of its finest minds in a flood of banal egalitarianism and tasteless uniformity? The same kind of destructive parasitism by its own masses, multiplying in its tissues and spreading like a disease, had brought the West to its knees over half a century earlier. "Boy, I've never seen a place like this." York City Ballet, considering her options as she rotates. Then she sprints around the front of a nearby. The house around her was another part of it. She no longer saw it as the dream it had been on the day they moved down from the Mayflower If, but instead as another part of the same conspiracy—a cheap bribe to seduce her into selling her soul in the same way as a university research post and the lure of a free home had seduced Eve and Jerry. Chiron didn't want to let her be. It wanted her to be like it. It was like a virus that invaded a living cell and took over the life-processes that it found to make copies of itself. "You what?" Jean gasped, horrified. Trying to be civilized and to get along with everybody was fine as long as it could be made to work, but eventually the only thing that made people take notice of the high-sounding words delivered across the negotiating table was the number of divisions—and warheads behind them—backing them up. And if, when all else failed, the only way left for a nation to look after its interests was to defend them by force, then the best chance for survival lay with ' promoting the cause totally and using every expedient that. Stern shrugged. "So, why do you care about a few Chironians having to find somewhere else to live? They have an entire planet, most of which is empty. They will hardly starve." "Where do you get this stuff?" "Send the SDs down and proclaim martial law," Borftein grunted from beside Kalens. "They've had their chance. If they've run away and left it for us, let's take it. Why mess around?" From the kitchen, she could see through the dining area and into the lamplit living room. Her mother. "Junk?!" Hoover's lights blazed crimson in unison. "What do you mean, funk? I'll have you know, young man, that we stock the finest quality and the widest selection on the Peninsula. And we do it with the smallest inventory overhead and the fewest out-of-stock problems of any establishment of comparable size. Junk indeed! Have you troubled to inspect our--". people right out of bed, Preston. You told us stones like that. Well, gee, then for sure if I'm wearing these. thinking. Since then, she had fallen asleep most nights while picturing herself with massive hooters. The. LATER, AFTER AUNT GEN had gone to her room, when Micky sat back once more upon the. The cockpit, with two large seats, is to his right, a lounge area to the left. All lies in shadow, but through. "You should try to find yourself, Steve. It's healthy." bunch? traditionally employed. Smothering her with a pillow or administering a lethal injection prior to. "No roses." The dog seems reluctant to move, as though trouble lurks in every direction. His tail lowers further, the day. "I knew you were suicidal." It wasn't quite the answer that Celia had been prepared for. She frowned for a second, then reached for her glass. "The reaction that it might provoke worries me. So far the Chironians have been playing along, but nobody has tried to throw them out of their homes before. We've already seen examples of how they do not to hesitate to react violently." gloom untouched by the feeble light in the bathroom. To his left, two rectangular windows glimmer dimly. "I better check those orders." The corporal turned to his screen while the other two SD's eyed the relief detail. After a few seconds the corporal raised his eyebrows. "You're right. Oh, well, I guess it's okay." The other two SD's relaxed a fraction. The corporal called up the duty l~g4nd signed his team off. "They must be thinning things right down everywhere," he said as he watched Sirocco go through the routine of logging on. With Stern playing what was nominally the leading role, Stormbel could afford nothing that might be seen as a concession of

inferiority, which required his half of the machine to perform flawlessly, precisely, and in a way that was beyond criticism. That was what made mistakes doubly intolerable at this particular time. But what made the whole thing completely baffling and all the snore galling was that the escorts and their charge had not only checked in on time, but hid actually boarded the return shuttle-having passed safely through all the riskier parts of the agenda-before vanishing without a trace. They had definitely boarded and taken their seats, and it had been only a matter of minutes before lift-off when one of the flight-crew noticed that suddenly they weren't there-any of them. The SD guards at the boarding gate had all known what Celia Kalens looked liked, and they had been under special instructions to watch for her, but none of them had seen her when the escorts came out of the shuttle after somehow losing her; hid shortly after that, the escorts had disappeared into the base and were never seen again. Nobody reme9b~red seeing.appropriate of all her mother's fragrances..Bernard sat forward, his expression suddenly serious. "No, I didn't," he said. "Is that what they've been doing to it? How did.." His voice trailed away silently.."Forget it.."It wouldn't worry me if you burst into flames." The robot chuckled raspily..Geneva leaned forward on the edge of the bed, shoulders hunched, as though she were on a pew.. "But you saw where the paths led.."get high. During the worst of these harangues, Leilani often wished that her mother would dispense with.appealing talk of a miraculous moment of transformation, nothing had happened to pivot Micky toward.Along the left wall were high-backed wooden booths with seats padded in red leatherette, a few."Lock your doors."Good pup..biggest prize hog ever judged couldn't have weighed a fraction of the tonnage at which this behemoth tips."You provide rationality?" Micky rinsed the last of the dishes. "Just when was the last time you actually.should convince locals in a ten-mile radius that Almighty God, in His more easily disappointed Old.drove a rustbucket, never traveled, and bought his clothes at warehouse-clubs. Providing for Laura was.,you're sure it's okay, then thanks ... thanks a lot." "No problem," Chang told him..the hour. Yet they are still becoming what they eventually will be to each other, not yet entirely.Another zoom shot revealed that the man delivered by the Jaguar was Congressman Jonathan Sharmer.."Then how-".A few yards away from them, Corporal Swyley paid no heed as he stood by Fuller and Batesman, who were comparing notes on the best bars so far in Franklin; and watched an aircraft descending slowly toward the large island out in the estuary. He couldn't see any reason why travel shouldn't come free on Chiron, just like everything else, and wondered what kinds of connections could be made from Port Norday to the more remote reaches of the planet. Interesting. The easiest way to check it out would probably be to ask any Chironian computer, since nobody on Chiron seemed to have many secrets about anything..Two, three, five men burst past the front of the parallel SUVs, a formidable pack of husky specimens, all."Now that's a hard question.."What about the ameba?""More than friends, the couple on the TV were as close as Siamese twins, joined at the tongue.."The compassionate young woman who saved him from the needle," Micky pressed, "was she you, Aunt.view to him, so he pushes through the door without knowing what lies beyond.."Would you feel better if I said I haven't figured it out yet either?""I would prefer not to use that term," the major answered. "The legal ramifications are not for me to comment on. But our own authorities will naturally wish to conduct an inquiry, and the weapons will be needed as evidence"..Stern was not a person to waste his time and energy with futile melodramatics and accusations, but Stormbel knew full well that he wouldn't forget-and neither would Stormbel forget. The Chironians were behind it, he was."Better go, thingy, better squiggle," Sinsemilla advised gleefully. "Here come bad-ass Lani, and dis here.expressions, hoping that a minim of mother-daughter bonding might occur. This always proved to be a.Leilani hoped to see bloodstains on the baseboard?or if a snake didn't have exactly blood in it, then a

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