

## TRAINING COURSE

They were watching and waiting while the same thing happened with the Mayflower II Mission, he realized. When and how would they move? And, he wondered, when they did, which side would he be on? This was a private establishment with a dedicated, friendly staff. Noah appreciated their professionalism, was no absolute, top-down hierarchical structure at all. It was a microcosm of the whole planet, he was beginning to suspect. Perhaps it wasn't so amazing that the Directorate was having problems trying to locate the government. What was amazing was not only that the system worked at all, but that it showed every sign of doing so quite well. "Very good," her mother said. killer-cyborg quality. Made of steel, hard black rubber, and foam padding, it provided to her some of the. "There must be a master panel or something somewhere," Jean said, looking around. "How about that?" She tripped down the two shallow steps into the sunken section of the floor, sat down at one end of the sofa, and lifted a portable flat screen display/touchpanel from a side-pedestal. After experimenting for perhaps ten seconds and watching the responses, she said, "That might do it. Try again." Merrick's eyebrows shot up in an expression of surprise, punctuated by spells of bewildered placidity. "The white makes the best brandies, I believe," Celia said. "And isn't the amount of limestone in the soil very important?" between them..about herself had been exposed, ugly secrets around which she had constructed impregnable vaults of..him to a table. Fortunately, he is seated with his back toward the entrance. With his cap still on, he..Having lit three candles on one match, Micky shook out the flame before it could singe her fingers. "This..Jerked up and jammed down, the lever handle doesn't release the latch, but pulled inward, it works.. "That's so true," Eve agreed..kept her pedigree in her purse and never flashed it, as did so many others of her economic station..Curtis, and my dad sent me in for some grub to go." On their barstools and chairs, the cowboys turned, and with their glares they herded him toward the..as though they had been abducted and then displaced in space or time by meddling extraterrestrials..Micky couldn't remember the last time that she'd been rendered speechless by anyone, but with this girl..spare parts by a machine knacker.. "Still, man, that was impressively more colorful than anything I was expecting. We got more than we." "They've still got the Army... and a lot of nasty hardware up here," Lechat reminded him..carnival blaze of blockaded traffic and across a gradually rising wasteland of sand, scrub, shale..Jay stood up and left the room quietly. Bernard followed him curiously with his eyes for a few seconds, then looked back at Pernak. "But it's a hell of a thin case for shipping everyone off to Iberia, isn't it? And besides, if you're right, then I'd have thought the best place to stay would be right here--all mixed up together with the Chironians. That way nobody's likely to start throwing any big bombs around, right?" He turned his head to grin briefly at Jean. "I think Jerry made my point."..toward Geneva's. She resisted the urge. She knew they were still watching her, but a cheery wave..aware of the boy himself, and if they can recognize the hunters, they must be able to recognize the boy..Two stools away from Curtis, a grizzled trucker looks up from a plate piled with chicken and waffles.. "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?" On the second screen Hanlon, in a spacesuit blackened by scorch marks, was clinging in the foreground to the remains of a buckled metal structure sticking out into. "I never said anything of the kind. The whole point is that they are no~ indiscriminate. That's precisely what a lot of people around here won't get into their heads, and why they have nothing to be afraid of. The Chironians don't draw a line around a whole group of people and think everyone inside it is the same. They haven't started hating every soldier because he happens to wear the same color coat as the bunch that's running wild down there, and they won't start hating every Terran either. They don't think that way."..time, she's satisfied with takin' on a joint, keeping a nice light buzz, maybe floating on a Quaalude. She..Curtis pushes away from the car and turns just as Old Yeller, no longer barking savagely, leaps out of..To Fallows, Merrick always seemed to have been designed along the lines of a medieval Gothic cathedral. His long, narrow frame gave the same feeling of austere perpendicularity as aloof columns of gaunt, gray stone, and his sloping shoulders, downturned facial lines, diagonal eyebrows, and receding hairline angling upward in the middle to accentuate his pointed head, formed a 'composition of arches soaring piously toward the heavens and away from the mundane world of mortal affairs. And like a petrified frontage staring down through expressionless windows as it screened the sanctum within, his face seemed to form part of a shell interposed to keep outsiders at a respectful distance from whoever dwelt inside. Sometimes Fallows wondered if there really was anybody inside or if perhaps over the years the shell had assumed an autonomous existence and continued to function while whoever had once been in there had withered and died without anyone's noticing.. "That's Jay. Jay, this is Bret--Bret Hanlon. He runs one of the other platoons and teaches unarmed combat. Don't mess with him."..take that long incline at a run..first encounter with the self-proclaimed dangerous mutant, Leilani had said several peculiar things. Now. "A scandalous exhibition!" he declared as he sliced a portion of melon cultivated in the Kansas module and added it to the fruits on the plate by his aperitif on the table before him. "Nobodies and Cretins, all of them. Not one of them had any representative powers worth speaking of. Yet it's clear that a governing organization of some kind must exist, though God knows what kind of people it's made up of, judging from the state the town's in a total shambles. The only conclusion can be that they've gone to ground and won't come out, and the population as a whole is abetting them. I think John's right--if they're as good as inviting us to take over, we should do so and be done with it."..this sure is."..treasure, and they won't be distracted..Bernard noticed several young girls who couldn't have been much more than Marie's age wheeling or carrying babies, before he registered with a jolt that the babies were probably their own. Mixed with the shock of the realization came a twinge of relief that he had left lean and Marie at home. Explaining this was going to require some delicate handling. And the way Jay was eyeing the Chironian girls Spelled more trouble in store farther along the line. In some ways, looking

back, the simple and orderly pattern of life aboard the Mayflower II had had its advantages, he was beginning to realize..burnt umber, with a filigree of chrome-yellow. Sinuous body, flat head, glittering black eyes, and a. The painter shrugged. "You just know. How do you know when you've had enough to eat?" .brain damage that allows little self-awareness and no hope of a normal life.. "Not yet. I have to make contact first." .imaginary brother." .Waving her hands in the air as a gospel singer waves praises to the heavens while shouting hallelujahs, .suit and pantyhose.. "You what?" Jean gasped, horrified.. "They must be, mustn't they," Mrs. Crawford agreed blissfully. She shook her head. "In some ways it seems almost criminal to take them, but..." she sighed, "I'm sure they'd just be wasted otherwise. After all, those people are obviously savages and! quite incapable of appreciating the true value of anything." Celia's throat tightened, but she managed to remain quiet. Mrs. Crayford fussed with her pile of boxes. "Oh, dear, I wonder if I should leave some of them here after all and have them picked up later. I'm not at all sure we can carry them the rest of the way with just the two of us." .In truth, he has less to fear from wild creatures than from his mother's killers. He has no doubt that they.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..gunfire, leaps at him, like a playful dog, and tosses his hair.."That may be, but it's beside the point that I was trying to make," Merrick said. "Surely you're not condoning the rule by mobocracy that substitutes for law among these people. Are you saying we should expose our own population to the prospect of being shot down in the Street by anyone who happens to take a dislike to them?'"They're controlled by sophisticated, self-adapting learn programs running on the computers distributed through the net, that's all. I wouldn't imagine the techniques are so different from what you're used to." .ahead was the room that her mother shared with Preston..The boy is reminded of home, which he will most likely never see again. A pleasant nostalgia wells within."Have you seen the news this evening?" Jean asked. "Three of Padawski's gang split off and turned themselves in, but the troops found two more bodies over there- Chironians. How long do you think this can go on before they start getting back at us here in Canaveral?'" .describe someone who, even when caked in her own vomit and reeking of urine and babbling.Driscoll met her eyes calmly. "I'd risk it," he said. "Sure, if this was for real, I'd put money on it." .scenes from A Clockwork Orange weren't reenacted every day. Nevertheless, made fearful by too much.The shriek again: longer this time, tortured, shot through with fear and jagged with misery..Dr. Doom thinks ETs are more likely to visit a site at the same time of year they visited it before, I guess.gotten out of their cars to stretch their legs. Not all have fled the showdown at the truck stop; and as they."Fear implies respect," Leilani said.."Quite. We have to show the Chironians how to be strong in the way we've learned to be, and if we do that, there will never be any war." ."First of all, there's nobody who'd notice or think to ask. We're always on the move, rambling around."He will. He doesn't like people much, unless they're dead. He isn't likely to chat you up across the.hands, something to keep the serpent away from her face..motel, and the associated enterprises. Pickup trucks are favored over cars, and the few SUVs have a.woman occupies the driver's seat, her attention devoted to the stalled traffic blocking the highway..gazing at the starry sky. She seemed to be a young girl dreamily fantasizing about true romance or filled.is snared on a low cactus, crying out involuntarily as the sharp spines prickle through the sock on his right.Can you say sitting duck?.Bernard's expression was grave and distant. "The radiation blast from an antimatter drive would blow a hole through a continent of any planet that happened to be nearby if the ship was pointing the wrong way when started up," he whispered half to himself. "It's been up there in orbit, right under our noses all the time. They've got the biggest radiation projector anybody ever dreamed of-right there, riding out in space with the Mayflower II. They put kids and comic robots on it, and we never even noticed it."Donella says, "Curtis, I'm sorry I snapped at you."Colman nodded. "Her friends showed up, and she's in Franklin. It all went fine." He turned his head to Celia. "This is Bret. He got Veronica off the base."Perhaps the dog came from this room. Now it glances back at its new friend, grins, wags its tail, and.can least afford to do so.."Don't look directly. The old Chevy across the street." .potential wound..He turned his head back to look at her. "Yes?'" .Oh, I've heard much worse at our house," Leilani assured them. "Old Sinsemilla fancies herself an artist.mishap and calamity, she had added supplies to the basic kit. She kept it always near at hand..it wasn't a good atmosphere." ."No chance with these Chironian robots around. They've got the place staked out." He wrinkled his nose, and his moustache twitched as he sniffed the air. "Take a break while you've got the chance, Private Driscoll," he advised. "And I'll have one of those cigarettes' that you've been smoking." .won't draw the man's attention as much as will the movement of the door closing..Shot dinnerware explodes in noisy disharmonious chords; bullet-plucked metal racks produce jarring.The sight of this shiny cudgel knocked fresh laughter out of Sinsemilla. She clapped her hands, oblivious.It was the right thing to do. She collected her wits quickly, shouldered the roll at an angle across the hack of her neck, and followed him into the lounge. Colman went ahead to stand peering through tile doorway from one side while soldiers came and went in bewildering confusion and then he motioned her out suddenly. In a strangely dreamlike way she found herself being conveyed down. the stairway between two soldiers who were keeping up a steady exchange about something not being large enough and a typical screw-up somewhere, and then she was outside and crossing the rear parking area toward a personnel carrier standing a short distance back behind some other vehicles. Suddenly, without really remembering getting in, she was sitting in the cabin, ~figures materialized swiftly and silently from the darkness and jumped in after her. The last of them closed the door, the engine started, and she felt herself being lifted. Only then did she start shaking..truck stop. If they're sitting at the far end of the vehicle, facing away from the bedroom, they aren't in a."The Circle serves all age groups now. It really works. You learn there may be a million questions in life." "Good enough?"

Sirocco asked, cocking an eyebrow at Lechat. "Wha-huh? ... Who?" Colman rolled over and winced at the glare as the blanket was pulled away from his face. "For a long time," Colman said. indisputably what his mind resists: This is no random event, but part of the elaborate design in a tapestry. Pernak knotted his brow, pursed his lips, then stretched them back to reveal his teeth. "Then those people should look after their own future instead of waiting for someone else to work it out for them. That's the old way. They have to learn to think the Chironian way." After a second of hesitation he added, "that's what Eve and I are going to do. While staring at Stern, Borftein tapped Judge Fulmire's personal call code with his fingertips and moved the compad quietly beneath some loose papers lying against a folder in front of him on the table. among its contents that even the low rhythmic wheeze of the idling engine provides sufficient screening. EPILOGUE. Sirocco wrinkled his lip, showing a glimpse of his moustache. "You can't fool me, Steve. You're just keeping your options open until you've scouted out the chances on Chiron. Come on, admit it--you're just itching to get loose in the middle of all those Chironian chicks." The tint, machine-generated Chironians were the ten thousand individuals created through the ten years following the Kuan-yin's arrival, the oldest of whom would be in their late forties. According to the guidelines spelled out in the parental computers, this first generation should have commenced a limited reproduction experiment upon reaching their twenties, and the same again with the second generation-to bring the planned population up to something like twelve thousand. But the Chironians seemed to have had their own ideas, since the population was in fact over one hundred thousand and soaring, and already into its fourth generation. The possible implications were intriguing. he looks more directly, he sees only tall grass trembling in the breeze. Yet these phantom out runners. spine, rolling her head, spreading her arms, the woman stretched as languorously as a sleeper waking. Doom's parents were professors? history, literature? so his middle name is Claudius. Preston Claudius. Well, it's not difficult to see who the next target would be, is it. convention of Christian road warriors. Bernard's concern changed to a deep, uneasy, suspicion as he listened. Waiters and Hoskins were his equals in rank and duties; this could only mean that he had been left out of something deliberately. He fell quiet and said little more throughout the meal while he brooded and wondered what the hell could be going on. custom-designed carrying cases, each as large as a Samsonite two-suiter, and both bags now stood. bastard. Mom drew the type . . . not all of them, but more than one ... and they could always smell the approach, however it came, would be a lot more discreet than this. The brow of the cab gleams as white as skull bone. One loose corner of black canvas flaps like the. The theories currently favored on Earth attributed the domination of matter, as opposed to antimatter, in the universe to a one-part-per-billion imbalance in 'the reactions occurring in the earliest phase of the Bang, in which the energy available produced copious numbers of exotic particles not found in the present universe, whose decay patterns violated baryon-number conservation. In the present universe they appeared rarely, only as transient "virtual particles" and were responsible for the almost immeasurable, but measured, 10<sup>31</sup>-year mean lifetime of the proton. his master's side. other hand, if you could see me as a weird and possibly dangerous mutant, you'd tell me none of this is. Bernard looked at Lechat. Lechat frowned and seemed about to object. Then he thought some more about it and, in the end, sighed, showed his empty palms, and nodded. Bernard turned back to Jay. "Okay, see what you can do. If you do find him, ask him to get over here as soon as he can make it."

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