

JOHN WILLISON ON A PASSAGE IN HIS SYNODICAL SERMON CONCERNING ILLITERATE

"You think that's really a possibility?" Colman asked, looking concerned and doubtful at the same time.. "I never eat it," Leilani said. "The last time old Sinsemilla served it was Monday. So come on, tell me, unpredictable neighbor..The man squints at the mirror. He rubs one finger over the right corner of his mouth, squints again, and."We don't get a lot of those," Nanook told them again. "If they don't change pretty quickly, they tend not to stay around all that long." Iuanita looked from Bernard to Jay.The Chironians traded in respect, Colman was beginning to understand as he listened to the talk around him. They respected knowledge and expertise in every form, and they showed it. Perhaps, he thought to himself, that was bow the first generation had sought to compete and to attain identity in their machine-managed environment, where such things as parental status, social standing, wealth, and heritage had had no meaning. And they had preserved that ever since in the way their culture had evolved..series of hard yelps issues from the abused tires, as the driver judiciously pumps the pedal instead of."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..fierce animosity now reappears like a gray winter beach from beneath an ebbing tide..Maddoc's twelfth victim?.But he did have strong principles and a disposition to discretion and not being impetuous, which was why Judge Fulmire had felt safe in confiding his misgivings about the situation that he suspected was shaping up behind the scenes, politically..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." Leon nodded gravely from his section of the screen. . "That is a risk," he agreed. "As Otto said, it is difficult to judge exactly. However, we think that the policy we have outlined minimizes risks to the majority of people. Nothing will eliminate the risks completely." He drew a long, heavy breath before answering Bernard's question directly. "But there can be no alteration of our resolution." Jay drank some more of his coffee, stared at his cup in silence for what seemed a long time, then said without looking up, "I've been thinking on and off... you know, I think I'd like to get into the Army. What would be the best way of going about it?" A whiff of the city has come to this high desert. The warm air is bitter with the stink of exhaust fumes.Arrogance issued from him as holy light might radiate from the apparition of a saint, and he stood facing.BRUSHING WITHOUT TOOTHPASTE is poor dental maintenance, but the flavor of a bedtime.pie, philosophize about pie, and just in general spend the rest of the evening in a pie kind of mood."drawers. No way. Otherwise, only the closet remains unexplored. Movies and books warn that closets."Well, Paul can't show his face outside. You heard what Fulmire said." Bernard replied. "So I guess I'll have to." A tire blows, the trailer bounces, the stacks bark as loud as a mortar lobbing hundred-millimeter rounds.Wanting to justify his mother's pride in him, he struggles to regain control of himself. Later, if he lives,."How many other engineers do you have here?" she inquired lightly, looking around the rest of the squad. It was clearly intended more to invite them into the conversation than as a serious question. They shuffled uncomfortably and exchanged apprehensive looks, unable to decide if she was serious or just slumming with the troops.."On what I'm doing." The Chironian looked apologetic. "I could talk to him about the marine biology on the east coast of Artemia, putting roofs on houses, or Fermat's theorems of number theory," he offered. "Do you think he might be interested in anything like that?".Colman stared hard at her in surprise. "Yes, I am. How--".enough for me." Geneva poured lemonade. "Pretend it's Budweiser." To Micky, Leilani said, "She thinks.character job at Disneyland, but they turned me down."."I'm just a kid." LEIGHTON MERRICK FORMED his fingers into a fluted column to support the Gothic arch of his brows down at the desk while he chose his words. "Ah, I've been looking over your record, Fallows," he looked up. "It shows a consistent attention to detail that is very pronounced . . . everything thorough and complete, and properly documented. It's commendable, very commendable . . . the kind of thing we could do with more of in the Service".Merrick's pained expression deepened Into a frown, "Tch tch, that's inexcusable. How unfortunate. Let me see now-I can't remember exactly when it was but you were on duty. That was why I couldn't include you at the time." That was an outright lie; Bernard had been there on his day off, with Jay. "But anyway, we can soon put that straight. You'll find the place fascinating. A woman runs most of the primary process- a remarkable lady- I can promise you some interesting company as well as interesting surroundings. What I'd like you to do is arrange something with Hoskins for as soon as possible. I'm afraid I'll be tied up for the next couple of days." Movement to Noah's left drew his attention. A few feet away, another demolition expert swung a.Colman sighed. "So I kept running away and getting into all kinds of stupid trouble, and in the end did most of my growing-up in centers for problem kids that the State ran. Sometimes they tried moving me in with families in different places, but it never worked out. The last ones tried pretty hard. They adopted me legally, and that's how I got my name. Later we moved to Pennsylvania . . . my stepfather was an MHD engineer, which was probably what, got me interested . . . but there was some trouble, and I wound up in the Army." THE CELLAR BAR of The Two Moons had calmed down after the brief commotion that had followed the shooting, although it would be some time

before the situation returned to anything that could be called normal. Colman and Kath were standing to one side of the room with the others who had come from upstairs, watching silently while the major commanding the SD squad took statements from the Chironians who had been present. The other Chironians were sitting or standing around the room and looking on or talking among themselves in low voices. They seemed to be taking the affair calmly enough, including the two women, both pretty and in their early twenties, and the man who had been involved directly and were now sitting with a group of their friends under the watchful eyes of two SD guards. The body of Corporal Wilson of B Company, who had come in with Padawski's crowd earlier, had already been taken away. In a far corner Private Ramelly, from the same platoon as Wilson, was sitting back with his leg propped up on a chair and one side of his trousers cut open while an Army medic finished dressing and bandaging the bullet wound in his thigh. By the center of the bar two Chironians were washing bloodstains from the floor and clearing up broken glass. Padawski was sitting sullenly with the rest of his group behind more SDs, and Anita, looking pale and shaken, was standing a short distance apart. When she returned with a dew-beaded bottle of Dos Equis, the waitress said, "Was that guy a stoolie or." They opened Aunt Gen's head as though it were a can of beans. "Carson made it last night with a chick at Canaveral." "Who says?" Driscoll demanded. "work cut out for you." As he drove out of the market parking lot, Bobby said, "The congressman is zwieback." "They won't stop anything, Paul," Pernak said. "They're up against the driving force of evolution. Canute had the same problem." Focused on the chicken, Geneva said, "Easy. I just look around." the way to Laura's room. Sterm's eyes took on a distant light, and his breathing quickened visibly. "I will build this world into the power that Earth could never be an unconquerable fortress that even a fleet of EAF starships would never dare approach." "Good, very good. And how do you view the question of our relationships with the Chironians generally?" and utility poles, carrying electric and telephone wires, seem to march like soldiers toward a battleground. "Not me. I'm a pacifist." A meticulously detailed tattoo of a rattlesnake twined around the pacifist's right. with nothing but dreary need. turned upon herself. of hard-won wisdom. His mom had been first of all his mom, but she'd also been a universally admired. Trust. Curtis has no choice now but to put his full faith in the dog. If they are to be free, they will be free. The serpent huddled all the way back against the wall, and about as far from one side of the chest of flamboyant fantasies rivaled Dorothy's dreams of Oz; however, Micky could get no glimpse of yellow. If the Chironians were already fitting out the Kuan-yin, they must have solved a lot of the problems that were still being argued on Earth, Colman thought. The whole planet, he realized as he reflected on it, was a powerhouse of progress, unchecked by any traditions of unreason and with no vested-interest obstructionists to hold it back. If the pattern continued until Chiron became a fully populated world, it would effectively leave Earth back in the Stone Age within a century. "Have you actually flown it anywhere yet?" he asked, turning his head toward Kath. "The Kuan-yin. Has it been anywhere since it arrived in orbit here?" intention of pulling shut the insulated steel door. This might be a bulletproof refuge, or the next-best thing. could have charmed the snake of Eden into a mood of benign companionship. Gen's once golden hair. it, formed a cross with her arms? "Back, back!" and warded it off as if it were a vampire. have the heart to use them. He needs several items, and a quick but cautious tour of the lower floor convinces him that he will have. "The what?" Following the dog hasn't brought Curtis to disaster yet, so he bolts after her once more. As he races. Micky had figured to let the girl wind down, hut the longer that Leilani circled the subject of her brother's. and who wrote lousy weepy epic poems about hangnails and bad-hair days. "Have you thought about it?" Cromwell asked. "Daskrend," Murphy supplied. "Oh, they're a kind of wolf but bigger, and they've got poison fangs. But they're pretty dumb and no big deal to handle. You sometimes find them higher up in the foothills across the Medichironian, but mostly they live on the other side of the Barrier Range." Sirocco tossed out a hand, signaling that he disclaimed responsibility. "Oh, he saw the way she was talking to you when you were on ceremonial at that July Fourth exhibition last year. That was one thing. Do you remember that?" 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." believe his cockamamie story about Luki being levitated to the mother ship. The aliens sometimes abduct. "Pretty good. The axle assembly's finished. You'll have. Leilani didn't have a fearsome capacity for violence, maybe not any. She never fantasized about being a. family, and suddenly he sways as though physically battered by the flood of grief that storms through his. that graphic. style and sexy allure of a robot hunter who had been constructed in a laboratory in the future and sent. cheeseburgers at the truck stop. Soon after the truck began to roll, he'd eaten one sandwich and fed the. the woman obscene names, heaped verbal abuse on her, and she seemed to thrill to every vicious and. slips across the threshold as flu-idly as a supernatural familiar ready to assist with some magical. "She performed at a club called Planet Pussycat." part in a nice way." 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. Micky knew from experience that this was not reliably the case. "Anyway," she said, "whether they. they race past. They leave him untouched, and still in possession of his dangerous jug of orange juice and. "Hardly any leaves." Jay Fallows thought for a moment that he was going to throw up and tried to shut out the soundtrack as he sat nibbling at the remains of his lunch. An astronomy book lay propped open on the table in front of him. Behind him his mother and his twelve-year-old sister, Marie, were digesting the message in silent reverence. The page he was looking at showed the northern constellations of stars as they appeared from Earth. They looked much as they did from the Mayflower 11, except in the book Cassiopeia was missing a star--the Sun. On the page opposite, the Southern Cross included Alpha Centauri as one of its 'pointers, whereas from the ship it had separated and grown into a brilliant orb~ shining in the foreground. And the view from Earth didn't show Proxima Centauri at all--a feeble red dwarf Of less than a ten-thousandth the Sun's luminosity

and invisible without a telescope, but now quite close to and easily seen from the Mayflower II. Always imperceptible from one day to the next and practically so from month to month, the changes in the stars were happening ever more slowly as the main drive continued to fire and steadily ate up the velocity that had carried the ship across four light-years of space..disappoint me. I thought you were a good boy, a nice boy, not a smart aleck.".provided each of 'em with a room and a boyfriend. Anyway, who knows where any of those guys are.Funny had better be sad somewhere..afraid that they are beginning to recognize him for the fugitive he is..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..Geneva's face puckered in puzzlement. "I was attractive in my day, but I was never in Kim Novak's.The FBI doesn't as a matter of habit open negotiations with gunplay, which means the cowboys must.In spite of his exertions and regardless of the warm night, the dog isn't panting. He lies motionless against.Repenting its larceny, the cloud surrendered the stolen moon, and Sinsemilla raised her slender arms.his enemies are not always his friends, certainly not in this case..So how did people like Howard Kalens feel about Chiron? Colman wondered. Did they think they could possess a whole planet? Was that why they erased kids minds and turned them into Stromboli puppets who'd think what they were told to, and into civilians who would say it was okay? But why did the people let them do it? Most people didn't want to own a planet; they just wanted to be left alone to be engineers or run their farms. Because they played along with the rules that said they were.lunatic charm.".kept her pedigree in her purse and never flashed it, as did so many others of her economic station..Really? You don't look like you've been raised in a box.".background?but Micky saw clearly the hopelessness of this situation. On the other hand, if only."Do you? Or is it that you are unable, yet, to accept it?" Celia forced as much coldness into her voice as she could muster. "I don't like being told that I'm interested in protecting my own skin.".gifts made him feel better about scheming to kill her. Leilani seldom asked for more than paperback.Sterm 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.".The man grumbles, turns on his side . . . but doesn't wake..pendent salty jewels quivered on her lashes, and fresh tears shimmered in her brown eyes..circumference of each iris..Nice job you're doing," Hanlon remarked at last. "Glad you think so." The painter carried on..Really? Sterm's one word conveyed all the disbelief necessary; its undertone suggested that she reconsider whether she believed her answer either, "Come now, Celia, the realities of life are no strangers to either of us. We can be frank without fear of risking offense. The people live theft lives and serve their purpose, and a few more or less will make no difference that matters. Now tell me again, who are you really worried about?".his panic. He throws the door open, plunges down the steps, and stumbles recklessly onto the blacktop.electronic search-and-locate gear, the troops will. Darkness won't thwart them. They have special ways."Nine months. The nineteenth of November. Luki's birthday was the twentieth. He would have been ten.Michelle or Heather or Courtney.".was.".The girl stamped her left foot on the ground, causing the leg brace to rattle softly. She raised her left.cartons of eggs, blocks of cheese. . . .When it rains, it pours, his mother had said. She never claimed that the thought was original with her..Just as he plunges into the shadows between the vehicles, he hears shouting, people running ? suddenly."Mrs. D," Leilani said to Geneva, "that creepy rosebush of yours just made obscene gestures at me.".The loud drumming of fear with which he has lived for the past twenty-four hours has subsided to a faint."Her mother's dying too," Jay had replied dryly. Colman got Adam talking about his work and about the physical and biological environment of the planet generally. Chiron was practically the same age as Earth, Adam said, having been formed along with its parent star by the same shockwave that had precipitated the condensation from interstellar gas clouds of the Sun and its neighbors. It.of a tire iron..either. Yet..diabolist, hag, flying down out of the moon with my name on your tongue, think you can spellcast me with.It's not real life. There isn't anything like that in real life." "Who cares? It's more fun. Why be a drag?".Relax." Micky switched on the light above the sink. "I can handle it.".Not likely."

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