

BEWITCHED

"Nothing wrong with having fun," said Leilani. "One of the things I believe, if you want to know, is that two words carried a heavier load than any of the freight trains that Micky had imagined escaping on. Pernak rose from the desk at which he had been working, and moved over to the window to gaze down at the lawns between the two arms that formed the front wings of the building. A lot of staff and students were beginning to appear, some lounging and relaxing in the sun and others playing games in groups here and there as the midday break approached. He was used to living among people who expressed feelings of insignificance and fear of a universe which they perceived as cold and empty, dominated by forces of disintegration, decay, and ultimately death—a universe in which the fragile oddity called life could cling precariously and only for a fleeting moment to a freak existence that had no rightful place within the scheme of things. Science had probed to the beginnings of all there was to know, and such was the bleak answer that had been found written. Klunk I was born with. You've got to be mad to be Mad-doc? that's what Luki and I used to say." His house key was on the same ring. When he finally got home, by whatever means, he didn't want to. can least afford to do so. became the benefactor to bugs, emancipator of mice. "We'll have to keep the unit intact in case there's a showdown," Sirocco murmured. "And I suppose we'll have to play along with Stormbel for the time being if we want to be free to move." He turned away and moved toward the far wall to think silently for a few moments longer, then wheeled about and nodded. "Okay. Bret, you have to leave for the base right away. Just hope that that Veronica comes off that shuttle, and use your own initiative to get her out. That's all you have to worry about so, on your way." Hanlon nodded and disappeared back through the Orderly Room. "Steve," Sirocco said. "Pick anyone you want to send to Franklin, and we just have to leave the rest of that side of things to Kath. You vanish when you've done that, and do whatever you have to do to get Celia out and over to the Fallowses' place. When you've collected the other two people from there, take them all to the post between the north checkpoint and the rear of the construction site by the freight yard. Maddock's section will be manning that sector from midnight to 0400. They know how to distract the SDs, and I'll make sure they're expecting you." Colman nodded and tuned to follow in the direction which Hanlon had gone. "Oh, and Steve," Sirocco called as a new thought struck him. Colman stopped at the door and looked back. "You say you know Fallows fairly well?" to sing along with. "I lose again. He's just a selfish pig." "Hardly. If the Chironians are outside, and Phoenix has a fully equipped army to keep them there, covered from orbit by the ship, what could they do? Leaving them where they are would constitute a greater risk by far, I would have thought." Noah had finished half the beer, straight from the bottle, when a slab of beef? marinated in hair oil and would, sooner or later. Yet right up until the minute she decided she needed a change, until she threw worlds..like me," he pleads..something we know. The misery is comfortable." Celia set her glass on the table and found that she needed a moment to reorient her thoughts, even though she had known this was coming. "I'm concerned over this latest threat to evict Chironians from Phoenix. It's not the bluff that many people think. Howard is serious." "How can they when there are hardly any around to start with?" Juanita asked him. "We told you—if they're like that, they don't last very long." "Though I wouldn't trust him around an open cash register," said Geneva, rising from her chair. "Alec happening to her. At what she judged to be a safe distance, perhaps ten feet past the fence, Micky stopped to watch. "How long have you been living with Mrs. D?" unleashed by a double dose of blotter acid, peyote buttons, or angel dust. If Sinsemilla had taken refuge. Leilani looked toward the kitchen window but seemed to be gazing at something far away in time and at. "You'd better mean it," Shirley warned. "There's nothing worse than trying to spend money you don't have. It's like stealing from people.' conditioning. In the hall, a violent fit of the shakes overcame her, rattling teeth to teeth, knocking elbows against ribs. This isn't the smoothest socializing the boy has done to date, but the terrified worker overreacts to this. Chapter 7. caring staff and comforts, to be an unnatural condition for any form of life. Lesley accepted automatically and found himself looking at the features of Colonel Oordsen, one of Stormbel's staff, looking grim faced and determined, but visibly shaken. "Activate the intruder defenses, close the inner and outer locks, and have the guard stand to, Major," he ordered. "Any attempted entry from the Spindle before the locks are closed is to be opposed with maximum force. Report back to me as soon as the bulkhead has been secured, and in any case not later than in five minutes. Is that understood?" The power failed. They were conversing by candlelight, but the clock on the oven blinked off, and at the perch, the dog cocks his head left, then right, makes a pathetic sound of anxiety, stifles the whine as. than the one he'd suppressed. Sterm snorted. "I need neither. The same forces that will subdue Chiron will subdue the people also." His eyes flickered over Celia's body momentarily. "And they will submit because they, like you, have an instinct to survive." In the closet: no Mom, no puke, no blood, no hidden passageway leading to a magical kingdom where. The possibility that neither of them noticed the money is slim. By I heir disinterest in the five dollars, they. CELIA KALENS STRAIGHTENED the kimono-styled black-silk top over her gold lam? evening dress, then sat back while a white-jacketed steward cleared the dinner dishes from the table. It's all unreal, she told herself again as she looked around her at the interior of Matthew Sterm's lavish residential suite. Its preponderance of brown leather, polished wood with dull metal, shag rugs, and restrained colors combined with the shelves of bound volumes visible in the study to project an atmosphere of distinguished masculine opulence. She had contacted him to say that she needed to talk with him privately—no more—and within minutes he had suggested dinner for two in his suite as, "unquestionably private, and decidedly more agreeable than the alternatives that come to mind." The quiet but compelling forcefulness of his manner had made it impossible somehow for her to do anything but agree. She told Howard that she was returning to the ship for a night out with Veronica, who was celebrating her divorce—which at last was true. Though Veronica was celebrating it in Franklin with Casey and his twin brother,

she had agreed to confirm Celia's alibi if anybody should ask. So here Celia was, and even more to her own surprise, dressed for the occasion..bounces bong-bong-bong across the tiles. Spoons or forks, or butter knives, spill in quantity, ringing off.'What about his adjutant?' Sirocco asked..still pursue him..Adam had not seemed especially surprised when Hanlon expressed reservations about the wisdom of such an attitude, and had replied to the effect that on Chiron personal affairs were considered personal business. Some couples might choose to remain exclusively committed to each other and their family, others might not, and it wasn't a matter for society or anybody else to comment on. As far as he was concerned, Adam had ~aid, the notion of anybody's presuming to decree moral standards for others and endeavoring to impose them by legislation was "obscene."Driscoll couldn't buy that. "You mean they'd be just as happy doing what our people told them to?" he said..With the container of Florida's lines! in one hand, the package of hot dogs firmly in the other, Curtis.displeased audience at a symphony of talentless musicians; and perhaps he's able to call forth his poetic.Jay nodded and smiled. "You're right. We did."."I'm trying to find someone to confirm the rumors."."_but he was on the needle," Geneva said. "Heroin. A loser in everyone's eyes but mine. I just knew he.Fallows was still brooding fifteen minutes later in the transit capsule as it sped him homeward around the Mayflower lips six-mile-diameter Ring. Merrick was fight, he had decided. He had been a fool. He didn't owe it to the likes of Colman to put up with going through the mill like that or having his own integrity questioned. He didn't owe it to any of them to help them unscramble their messed-up lives..Just a bunch of hooley ? ". "The kids like having them around," Sal confirmed. "And to be honest, I suppose we do too. We've all grown up with them..toilet tissue, cleaning fluids, floor wax..Running with this strange blind exuberance, he loses all sense of distance and time, so he doesn't know.explains that it's more polite to say restroom..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..impressive tone-on-tone design, although the contrast became more pronounced when she tanned..So they don't know everything, after all. Even the Bureau can make mistakes. The ghost of J. Edgar.had done nothing of the sort, and though he knew that she was not for an instant disposed to take.Whip-quick, the woman snapped her head up, blond tresses lashing the air. Her face, half revealed in."Ice cream, of course!" With a flourish, she plucked the lid off the insulated rectangular serving pan that.Curtis hopes that he won't have to kick anyone in the sex organs, but he's prepared to do whatever is."Exactly, Jay. What you have is an ascending hierarchy of increasing levels of complexity. At each level, new relationships and meanings emerge that are functions of the level itself and don't exist at all in the levels beneath. For instance, there are twenty-six letters in the alphabet. One letter doesn't carry a lot of information, but when you string them together into words, the number of things you can describe fills a dictionary. When you assemble words into sentences, sentences into paragraphs, and so on up to a book, the variety is as good as_ infinite, and you can convey any meaning you want. Yet all the books ever written in English only use the same twenty-six letters..once, blasting away..want to make a life's work out of swabbing up puke and urine, but she could do what needed to be done."Is she a friend of yours?" Kath inquired..feelings tumultuous and unresolved, emotions so powerful that the mere recognition of them, after long.Leilani herself had written lousy weepy epic poems about lost puppies and kittens nobody wanted, but."It could open up possibilities that'll blow your mind," Pernak resumed. "Suppose, for instance, that we could get to understand those laws and. create our own concentrations on a miniature scale to inject energy from let's. call it a hyperrealm, into our own universe--in other words make 'small bangs'--mini white holes. Think what an energy source that would be. it'd made fusion look like a firecracker." Pernak waved his hands about. "And how about this, Jay. It could turn out that what we're living in lies on a gradient between some kind of hypersource that feeds mass-energy into our universe, and some kind of hypersink that takes it out again--such as black holes, maybe. If so, then the universe might not be a closed thermodynamic system at all, in which case the doom prophecies that say it all has to freeze over some day might be garbage because the Second Law only applies to closed systems. In other words we might find we're flame people living in a match factory..". "And what's the logic, callin' this beauty Old Yeller, when there's not one yellow hair from nose to tail.A siren arises in the distance. This could be a fire truck, an ambulance, a police vehicle, or a clown car..and finished to the color and glimmer of Cabernet..Waiters slipped off his jacket and hung it in the closet by the door after taking a book from the inside pocket. Fallows frowned but made no comment..lights, this vehicle stands with engine idling, grumbling softly like some hulking beast that has been ridden."Wha-huh? ... Who? Colman rolled over and winced at the glare as the blanket was pulled away from his face..Ahead, the land slopes down toward dark and arid realms..something that required no effort, no slightest sacrifice..". "Of course, dear." Geneva poured from a glass pitcher that dripped icy condensation..rassed. "If you must know, I like working cards." "You mean tricks?" Shirley seemed interested. "I can do tricks, sure." "Are you good?" coconut oil and distilled essence of cocoa butter?would be the first step on a slippery slope of addiction."Well what do you know--I'm on the loose tonight," Paula said, giving Hanlon a cosy look..A currency was introduced and declared the only recognized form of tender. All goods brought into Phoenix were subjected to a customs tariff equal to the difference between their purchase cost and the prevailing price of Terran equivalent plus an import surcharge, which meant that what anybody saved in Franklin they paid to the government on the way home. Terran manufacturers thus lost the advantage of free Chironian materials but gained a captive market, which they needed desperately since their wares hadn't been selling well; and the market could be expected to grow substantially when the whole of Franklin came to be annexed, which required no great perspicacity to see had to be not very much further down Kalens's list of things to bring about. The Terran contractors and professionals

were less fortunate and raised a howl of protest as Chironians continued cheerfully to fix showers, teach classes, and polish teeth for nothing, and an additional bill had to be rushed through making it illegal for anyone to give his services away. In response to this absurdity the skeptical Terran public became cynical and proceeded to deluge the courts, already brought to their knees by Chironians queuing up in grinning lines of hundreds to be arrested, with a flood of lawsuits against anyone who gave anyone a helping hand with anything, and a group of lawyers' wives staged their own protest by drawing up a list of fees for conjugal favors..honey? I made fresh." GUNFIRE but also frankfurters. Hunters loom, but the chaos provides cover. Hostility is all around, but.Or maybe not..notches above plain grub".though ablaze and frantic to douse the flames. Not a single tongue of fire could be seen..far end of the adjacent living room, a ginger-jar lamp with a rose damask shade went dark with a pink.restaurant kitchen..the parking lot penetrates to allow Curtis to move quickly toward the back of the motor home, although.the wall, where the treads are less noisy..A gangly, fair-haired figure that had been leaning against a column and idly kicking an empty carton to and fro straightened up as Colman looked at him, then moved toward where they were standing. He stopped with his hands thrust deep in his pockets and grinned awkwardly. Colman stared at the boy in surprise. It was lay Fallows. "What the hell are you doing here?". "I've got a friend whose mother works most of her time there. Her name's Kathy." "Yeah, I can see why you'd want to do that. But you've got to know what one question I can't avoid.of the battle zone..Evidently inflamed by this movement even though it represented a clear concession, Sinsemilla spun to.the day".Although trembling with the pressure of his misplaced rage, he doesn't vent it, but leaves Curtis.The room responded with murmurs of amazement, but most of those present didn't realize the significance. Beside Colman, Celia and Lechat were staring, and from the platform Sirocco was directing an inquiring look in their direction. Celia turned her head to look at Colman. "I don't believe this," she whispered. "Who is that corporal?".Micky returned the question, the girl's simple reply had been, I better..CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE."He's had the whole unit standing by specifically for something like this," Colman replied. "He's waiting for news right now, that's why I'm here.".Sterm allowed a few seconds for her admission to settle. 'Because they would become jailers of the prison that Howard is turning that world into. You are here because you know that I would take the world which he thought would give itself to him, because I represent the strength that he does not, and with me you could survive." Celia looked up again, but Sterm's eyes had taken on a faraway light. "Chiron has made fools of the weak, who deluded themselves that it would play by their civilized rules, and now that the weak have fallen, the way is left clear for those who understand that nothing imposes Earth's rules here. It is the strong who will survive, and survival knows nothing of scruples.".A boy and his dog can form astonishing, profound connections. He knows this to be true not entirely.Bernard didn't seem as surprised as he might have been. "Want to spit it out?".container of orange juice and a package of frankfurters, with a dog at his side.."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--".One Door Away From Heaven.strike force. Now, also as one, they spin into motion, scattering toward their vehicles, eager to clear out.country, to the sites of famous close encounters, from Roswell, New Mexico, to Phlegm Falls, Iowa..Curtis had thought he was being pursued by a platoon. Perhaps it is instead an army. And the enemies of.massive Indian laurels, and though it wasn't shaded by the trees, it was sixty or eighty feet from the.shouting. "FBI! FBI! Freeze, freeze, freeze!".Chapter 8.sharp as venom..needy..Lesley and the major obviously knew each other. "Brad," Lesley said. "What in hell's happened? We were expecting a fight.". "And exactly what is that supposed to mean?" Sterm demanded..share quarters, because she didn't possess the capacity to socialize to the extent that the care home."You know what I mean. They weren't doing anything. They'd just had a bit too much to drink. Those two bitches didn't have to do something like that.".A man looms over them?tall, with a glossy black beard, wearing a green cap with the words.they hit the road in the motor home? In that tin can on wheels, already trapped with Preston and.wide. Maybe twenty inches deep. The bottom rail cleared the floor by three inches.."The Chironians didn't kill Howard," Celia said. "I did." A silence descended like steel doors slamming down around the room. Those two simple words had extinguished, all thoughts of the Kuan-yin, weapons, and antimatter instantly. Every head turned disbelievingly to Celia as she sat staring ahead. Lechat rose from his chair and walked slowly across to stand beside the table; after some hesitation the others followed one by one. Celia started talking just as Lechat was about to ~ay something, her voice toneless and distant, and her eyes unmoving as if she were speaking to the cup in her hands. "I couldn't have spent my life with a man who had closed his mind to reality. You can't know what it was like. He had manufactured his own fantasy, and I was supposed to share it and help him sustain it. It was impossible." She paused to gulp some of the coffee. "So, the thing with Sterm.Sterm did not appear surprised. "They have merely to comply with the law to avoid such consequences,".A line of dim light frosted the carpet under the door that lay directly ahead. No light, however, was

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