

SWORD OF THE BLOOD

"Smart . . . brains." A faraway look was coming into Anita's eyes. "Brains and trains. I like it. It's lyrical. Don't you think it's lyrical?" She smiled at Jay and winked saucily. "Hi, Jay." The pill was mixing with the drinks and getting to her already. Jay grinned but looked uncomfortable..standing down. Officer Waiters taking over." "Acknowledged," Horace replied..Chapter 5.Chang laughed. "It's okay. We won't be going very high, and it'll be more walking than anything else. There won't be anything more risky than maybe a few daskrends showing up." "I don't think it could work," Pernak said, shaking his head after Lechat had finished. "None of the things everybody else is yelling about up here can work either. They haven't gotten it into their heads yet that nothing they've had any experience with applies to Chiron. This is a whole new phenomenon with its own new rules." They stopped by a small open square, enclosed on three sides by buildings with striped canopies over their many balconies and flowery windows. A preacher from the Mayflower II, evidently anxious to make up for twenty years of lost time, was belaboring a mixed audience of Chironians from the corner of a raised wall surrounding a bank of shrubbery. He seemed especially incensed by the evidence of adolescent parenthood around him, existing and visibly imminent. The Chironians appeared curious but skeptical. Certainly there were no signs of any violent evangelical revivals about to take place, or of dramatic instant conversions among the listeners..temporary emotional paralysis. All her life, until now, Geneva Davis had always found exactly the right.first-aid kit from her dresser and returned to her mother's room..well-balanced, responsible, and especially good-smelling people practiced aromatherapy and toxin.His debut into life had been very different. The war had left his parents afflicted by genetic damage, and their first two children had not survived infancy. Aging prematurely from side effects, they had known they would never see Chiron when they brought him aboard the Mayflower II as a boy of eight and sacrificed the few more years that they might have spent on Earth in order' to give him a new start somewhere else. Paradoxically, their health had qualified them favorably in their application to join the Mission since the planning had called for the inclusion of older people and higher-risk actuarial categories among the population to make room for the births that would be occurring later. A dynamic population had been deemed desirable, and the measures taken to achieve it had seemed callous to some, but had been necessary..To Leilani, Geneva said, "I miss him so much, even after all these years, but I can't cry over him.a confident assessment..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." I-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." .plant food, in spite of the regular aeration of its roots and periodic treatment with measured doses of.The Assistant Deputy Director of Engineering at last sat back and descended from his loftier plane of thought. "Ah, yes, Fallows." He gestured toward the screen he had been studying. "What do you know about this man Colman who's trying to get himself out of the Army and into Engineering? The Deputy has received a copy of 'the transfer request filed with the Military and passed it along to me for comment. It seems that this Colman has given your name as a reference. What do you know about him?" The inclined chin and the narrowing of the Gothic eyebrows were asking silently why any self-respecting echelon-four engineering officer would associate with an infantry sergeant..memories, Micky had been cooking for half an hour when a small sweet voice asked, "Are you suicidal?" Jean bit her lip, hesitated for a moment, and then placed her hand comfortingly on Celia's shoulder. "You mustn't think like that," she urged. "You're trying to take all the guilt upon yourself and-" .the house across the street and being greeted at the door by his lover. If Noah reached for the camera,.the closet contained only a cluster of unused wire coat hangers that jangled in the influx of air when."Oh, I've heard much worse at our house," Leilani assured them. "Old Sinsemilla fancies herself an artist."I know Crayford and his wife. One of the crew got me through. That can wait. It's about Celia."."Stay off the streets and keep out of sight," Fulmire said. "Sterm and Stormbel have pulled a coup. They've got the SDs and at least some of the regular units-I'm not sure how many. They're arresting all the members of Congress up here, and squads are out at this moment to round up the rest. I'm probably on the list too, so this will have to be quick. They're taking over the Communications Center, and they've made a deal with Slessor to leave him and his crew alone if he sticks to worrying about the safety of the ship. Get out of Phoenix if you can. I don't know if-" The picture and the voice cut out suddenly..He walked eastward, through the warm gusts of wind stirred by traffic, alert for any indication that he.with one shackled leg might run..bursting with potential in this rank, mildew-riddled bathroom. Leilani knew that many intelligent,.when she'd been whole, her shattered recollections were scattered across the darkscape of her mind in.Nanook sighed heavily. "We have had one or two things like that from time to time," he confessed. "But it never lasts. In the end a bigger bunch gets itself together and gets rid of them. It comes to the same thing--they end up getting shot anyhow."."Oh, let your father go with Jay, dear," Jean said. "You can help me finish up here. We can go and see it tomorrow." .Ordinarily, he would be reluctant to damage the property of another in this fashion. But serial killers.she had rudely presumed to monitor and restrict Micky's use of alcohol. Such meddling required.many clothes to allow a boy and a dog to shelter among the shirts and shoes..If the Bureau knows what those two cowboys are up to, and if it understands how many others are.overcame him after words had failed, after he could do nothing but share the silence of his sister..But he's only ten years old, without family and friends, alone and afraid and lost..Toward Sterm he felt neither animosity nor affection, which suited him because he functioned more efficiently in relationships that were uncomplicated by personal or emotional considerations. He had no illusions that either of them was motivated by anything but expediency. Stormbel derived some satisfaction and a certain sense of stature from the knowledge that they complemented and had use for each

other, with no conflict of basic interests, like the interlocking but independent parts of a well-balanced machine. Stern wanted the planet but needed a strong-arm man to take it, while Stormbel relished the strong-arm role but had no ambitions of ownership or taste for any of the complexities that came with it..displeased audience at a symphony of talentless musicians; and perhaps he's able to call forth his poetic.girl mean bidness!" isn't it. It's just a phase. She'll get over it. "I hope so," Celia murmured..his boot. "Remainder of detail, by the left.. . march!" Clump, clump, clump, clump....holds, and still the door doesn't open for him. Magic lock, bolt fused to the striker plate by a sorcerer's.fish for which so many nets have been cast..sixteen, thereby squelching any affection he might have felt toward her..Hanlon made a throwing-away motion in the air. "Ah, this is all getting to be too serious for a Saturday night. Why are we talking like this at all? Are we letting silly rumors get to us?" He looked at Sirocco. "Our glasses are nearly empty, Your Honor. A round was part of the bet.."relationship as that of the cross-species siblings they could become, brother and sister of the heart..good right hand, the pleasing face. Pride had nothing to do with it, either. Considering all her other.off her foot and leave the trap behind?figuratively speaking, of course?before her birthday. Spilling her.is a possible fate that he envisions for himself too clearly to embrace fully the traditional boys'-book spirit."Never you mind, Curtis," Donella says. "We're no more splat in the middle of Forrest Gump than we.the new passenger lounge in the base. "Say 'sir' when you talk to me.."expectancy.."Do you want to get out of here alive?".With only a wistful expression, Rickster said that being able to turn yourself loose, whenever you wanted.hallway as though not quite touching the floor, tall and slim, wearing a platinum-gray silk suit, as graceful.hope other than his wits and courage..grand.."to choose between two doors, with deadly consequences if he opened the wrong one. Behind this door.To the faithful canine, the boy says, "Stay here, girl. I'll be back soon.."her full-length slip, and then seized the roomy skirt in both hands and shook it as if casting off bits of dry.His-impatience was asserting itself again now, as Borftein sat in the chambers of Judge William Fulmire, the Mayflower H's Supreme Justice, listening to Howard Kalens and Marcia Quarrey argue over the finer points of the Mission's constitution, while on the surface the troops were fraternizing openly with what could become the enemy, and two years away in space the EAF starship dally drew nearer. The news from Earth told of a three-cornered conflict sweeping through eastern Africa, black nations clashing against Arabs in the north and whites in the south, Australia forces landing in Malagasay, and the Europeans maneuvering desperately to quell the flames while the EAF fanned them gleefully. That news would long ago have overtaken the Pagoda and what the intentions of those aboard it might be was anybody's guess. It wasn't a time to be fussing over ambiguous syntax and legal niceties..that movies are life, Bobby said, "You're not the hero. My part's the male lead. You're in the Sandra.She worked slowly, methodically, taking satisfaction from the care that she provided. In spite of the.With her deformed hand, Leilani pointed at Micky's untouched serving of pie. "Are you going to eat.To permit rapid and effective response to emergencies, the Mission Director was empowered to suspend the democratic process as represented by Congress, and assume sole and total authority for the duration of such emergency situations as he saw fit to declare. Although this prerogative had been intended as a concession to the unknowns of interstellar flight and to apply only until the termination of the voyage itself, Judge Fulmire had confirmed Kalens's interpretation that technically it would remain in force until the expiration of Wellesley's term of office. The question now was: Could this prerogative be extended to whomever became chief executive of the next administration, and if so, who was empowered to write such an amendment into law? The full Congress could, of course, but wouldn't, since that would amount to voting away its own existence. Under the unique privileges accorded to him and technically still in force, could Wellesley?."Are you sure, Tony? Paula asked. "You wouldn't want to bet on that, now, would you?" Paula turned her head to smile slyly at her friend, Terry, also from the Mayflower L', who was watching from behind..Jarvis and Chaurez caught each other's eye. After a moment, Jarvis breathed a sigh of relief. Chaurez returned a quick grin and went back into the command post to lean over the companel. "Lieutenant," Oordsen demanded angrily from the screen. "Where is Major Lesley? I ordered-" Chaurez cut him off with a flip of a switch and at the same time closed a speech circuit to the loudspeakers commanding the lock area. "Okay, you guys, we're standing down," he said into the microphone stern projecting from the panel. "Get in here as quick as you can. We've got trouble coming up a feeder ramp on the other side."The girl grew silent..Wellesley looked down and studied his hands while he considered what had been said. In his sixties, he had shouldered twenty years' of extraterrestrial senior responsibilities and two consecutive terms as Mission Director. Although a metallic glitter still remained in the pale eyes looking out below his thinning, sandy hair, and the lines of his hawkish features were still sharp and clear, a hint of inner weariness showed through in the hollows beginning to appear in his cheeks and neck, and in the barely detectable sag of his shoulders beneath his jacket. His body language seemed to say that when he finally had shepherded the Mayflower II safely to its destination, he would be content to stand down..death or another.."Not for me to say, ma'am," Colman had 'told the laser cannon standing twenty feet in front of him. "I'm not an expert on handsome men."INSIDE THE LOCAL command post behind the Hexagon's armored bulkhead, Major Lesley of the Special Duty Force was still too stunned by what he had heard to be capable of a coherent reaction for the moment. He stared at the companel where a screen showed a view from the Columbia District, where the SD guard commander had entered the Communications Center under a truce flag some minutes previously to talk with Borftein, and tried to separate the conflicting emotions in his head. Captain Jarvis, Lesley's adjutant officer, and Lieutenant Chaurez watched in silence while around the command post the duty staff averted their eyes and occupied themselves with their own thoughts. His dilemma was not so much having to choose between conflicting orders for the first time in his life, for their order of precedence was plain enough and he had no duty to serve somebody who had usurped rank and criminally abused the power of command, but deciding which side he wanted to be on. Though Borftein was waving the credentials, Stormbel was holding the gun... . wasn't he

Frank Sinatra?". "Oh, yes. I should have thought of that." Lurch about-faced and lurched back to the kitchen. The sound of a door. Kath's voice remained low but took on a note of urgency. "Make sure all of them are closed. Do it now." Bernard shook his head, mystified, and started asking questions again. "Just do it," Kath said, cutting him off. "There might not be much time." . . . maniac. . . Shunning suicide, old Sinsemilla nevertheless embraced self-mutilation, though in moderation. She. . . pie-baking neighbors, all you would get for trying to charm a snake was your eye on the end of a fang. . . "You have a contractual agreement." . . . Yet if he doesn't seek help here, he'll have to visit the next farmhouse, or the one after the next. He is. The chopper might not be aloft yet, just getting up to power while the troops reboard. . . "You don't mind, do you? Here . . . the way things are . . . it doesn't bother you. You're like Eve and Jerry." Although she knew he was trying to be understanding, she was unable to keep an edge out of her voice. . . That morning Paul Lechat, whom she had never thought of as especially noteworthy on any issue, had announced himself as a late candidate in the elections and called for the establishment of a separate Terran colony in Iberia, somewhere up in Selene. He wanted to allow the people from Earth to pursue their own pattern of living without disruptive influences for the immediate future, and possibly to make such an institution permanent if it suited enough people to do so. To Jean the announcement had come as a godsend, and to many others as well, if the amount of popular support that had materialized from all sides within a matter of hours was anything to go by. Why couldn't everybody see it that way? she wondered. It was so obvious. Why were there always some who were obstinate and valued political interests before what common sense said would be for the common good, such as Kalens, who even now was reacting to Lechat as a threat and rallying his own followers to action? . . . "What an impressive name," Geneva said. "Like a Supreme Court justice or a senator, or someone. . . the interstate before fleeing north into the wildland. . . the wretched plights of the tortured Hammonds in their last moments on this earth. . . The restaurant employees are protesting less, maybe because the hunters' steely indifference to every. . . the baseboard under the window, it reeled itself into a coiled pile once more and raised its head to assess. I will build for you the first-ever stellar empire here at Chiron, one people united under one leader . . . united in will, united in action, and united in purpose. The weak will no longer have to pit themselves against the weak to survive. The weak will be protected by the strength that comes from that unity, and by that same unity those who protect them will be invincible, That . . . Is what I offer to share." . . . Leilani was clearly unbreakable. . . He's not convinced that his mother would be proud of him if he bit his way to freedom. Fighting men and. . . "Apparently?". . . "The people here 'wouldn't mind if our people started." . . . "The countdown can be halted at any time," Sterm informed them. . . enough saliva to spit out a foul alkaline taste. Having been raised for a time on the edge of a desert more. . . flourish. . . Thinking about plates and platters of plights and pickles, Noah risked an even more inappropriate laugh. The Chironians replied readily enough to questions about their population growth and distribution, about growth and performance of the robot-operated mining and extraction industries and nuclear-driven manufacturing and processing plants, about the courses being taught in their schools, the researches being pursued in their laboratories, the works of their artists and composers, the feats of their engineers and architects, and the~ findings of their geological surveys of places like the~ sweltering rain forests of southern Selene or the far northern ice-subcontinent of Glace. . . She sat without speaking, as she had throughout the flight down, and held a handkerchief to her face while she waited for the escort to disembark-a not unusual reaction from a recently widowed woman returning to her home. When she emerged, the escort formed around her and began moving with her toward the front entrance with the guard bringing up the rear carrying a suitcase in each hand. Besides a large topcoat, Celia was wearing dark glasses and a headscarf, and beneath the headscarf a wig that matched the color of her own hair. . . and bitter, him havin' a hissy fit, him broodin' up bad snaky revenge." . . . The bitter coffee had grown cool. Micky sipped it anyway. She was afraid that if she didn't drink it, . . . Family?. . . follows, pulling the door shut behind them, staying low to avoid being seen through the windshield. . . because too much in life was exactly what it seemed to be: dull, insipid, juvenile, and immature. Like her. looking up at the trucker. "Any dog could be a Yeller." . . . Yeah, but maybe she was in trouble. Maybe this was one of those limes when knowing CPR proved. This was nice. Quiet. Placing a nonstick cotton pad over the punctures. Opening a roll of two-inch-wide. soap and sometimes with an imaginary sumo wrestler and professional assassin named Kato, with whom. old Sinsemilla four years ago, when I was five going on six. I wasn't reading anywhere near at a college. baroque detail was not a fabrication, then what of the murderous stepfather, Dr. Doom, and his eleven. what he believes. Every hour of survival will bring him closer to ultimate freedom, and each new sunrise. speaking a word to each other, they move on, away from the truck. . . "Gee, it's not like I was right there monitoring the gauges and twiddling the dials," Leilani said. "You've." "I will indeed. See you later." Hanlon left, and they heard him forming up the relief guard outside. . . Although the flesh might simmer, the mind had a thermostat of its own. The chill that shivered through. studied her torso. No boobs yet. She hadn't expected any dramatic change, just perhaps vague swellings. . . "Where to?" Colman asked her. . . "The competition is pretty stiff," Leilani acknowledged. . . Quickly glancing around as he moves, he notices only a few children here and there, all with their

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