

## WITH THE EYES SHUT 1898

This evening wasn't about Micky Bellsong, anyway, not about what she wanted or whether she was protect him. Geneva said, "Kidneys?". appropriate of all her mother's fragrances. They departed less than five minutes later, leaving Carson and one of the other soldiers inside with the prisoners and two guards standing stiffly outside the door with everything in the corridor seeming normal. Hanlon took Wellesley, Borftein, and Lechat to a storeroom near the Communications Center where they could remain out of sight. Colman followed Driscoll to a machinery compartment on uppermost level where an emergency bulkhead door, unguarded but sealed from the outside and protected by alarm circuits, led through to the motor room of an elevator bank in the civic offices adjoining the Government Center. Colman traced, checked, and neutralized the alarms. Then he double-checked what he had done, and nodded to Driscoll, who was waiting by the door; Driscoll opened the latches and swung the door outward while Colman held his breath. The alarms remained inactive. Sirocco was waiting on the other side with Bernard Fallows, who was wearing engineer's coveralls and carrying a toolbox..sharp as venom.. "Her name's Karla Rhymes," Noah reported. "When she worked as a dancer, she called herself Tiffany. Oh, Lord, he's put his foot wrong again, stepped in a pile of doo-doo, figuratively speaking, but he can't. Micky squeezed the woman's shoulder reassuringly. Although she believed it was the fabrication of.. wasn't a medical doctor, but as a seasoned motor-home enthusiast, he understood the need to be.. beyond the horizon.. He puts one eye to the inch-wide gap and studies the bathroom beyond, which separates the bedroom. "When did it stop? or did it ever?" Geneva asked. Her softly spoken question reverberated hollowly. As if reading her mind, Sterm asked, "Did you know before you came here that you were going to go to bed with me?" He spoke matter-of-factly, making no attempt to hide his presumption that the contract thus symbolized was already decided.. shoulders. "No, honey. Never you, none of that. You were just a good woman, too good and far too. The chest of drawers stood against the wall, on four stubby legs. More than live feet high. Four feet. "I think I'd have done the same thing," Otto told him.. he shudders. He does not touch the coins.. Hanlon shook his head. "Ah, why be vindictive? We got her off and sent them all on their way. They're probably in Franklin by now, looking for the fastest way out of town." They are here to kick ass.. becoming too much like a dog, wild and given to rash action.. "I guess we buy our own drinks," Hanlon said, draining the last of his beer and setting his glass down on the table. "Looks like it," Stanislaw agreed.. As though privy to Micky's thoughts, the girl said, "Everything I've ever told you is the truth." "For Christ's sake, that's TV fiction. She doesn't exist.. Colman was listening grimly. "What about his wife?" he muttered to Sirocco.. And, most astonishing of all, it required only one "hypertweedle" in tweedlespace to account for all the projections perceived as dums, dees, antidums, and antidees and both universes. A universe provided, in effect, a screen upon which the same projections were repeated over and over again as a consequence of the separation of the space and time dimensions of the screen itself, which of course was why every dum was the same as every other dum, and every dee the same as every other dee. It was as if a typewriter created paper as it typed on, leaving the planar inhabitants of the flat universe that it had brought into being to ponder why all the characters encountered serially in their own "flat-time" should have exactly the same form.. "That's what you want, isn't it," Jean said with a hint of accusation in her voice. "You'd like us to be the way they are. But have you really thought about what that would mean? No standards, no order to anything, no morality. . . I mean, what kind of a way would that be for Jay and Marie to grow up?'. Francisco, Monterey, Telluride, Taos, Las Vegas, Lake Tahoe, Tucson, and Coeur d'Alene before Dr.. dog's neck, Together they wait, alert.. "Everybody does.".. taste from his recent experience of it.. authorities. He shoves the currency into his pockets once more.. Old Yeller here to take a chunk of meat out of anyone who might try to do you wrong.".. boy.".. Lechat was nodding slowly to himself. "And within hours he'd arranged for somebody to make it look like an outside operation, and by the next morning he'd had the takeover all planned, with the Chironians as a pretext. Everything fits. But who would have done it? ". About all he was good with outside things like that was cards. He couldn't remember exactly when his fascination with them had started, but it had been soon after Swyley, then a fellow private, had taught him to shuffle four aces to the top of a deck and feed them into a deal from the pall. Finding to his surprise that he seemed to have an aptitude, Driscoll had borrowed a leaf from Colman's book and started reading up about the subject. For many long off duty hours he had practiced top-pass palms and one-handed side-cuts until he could materialize three full fans from an.. "Sucky day, Aunt Gen.".. Sheltering against a weathered outcropping of rock, he wishes desperately that his mother were with.. Lechat, who had been thinking hard while he was listening, moved round to a point where he could address both the room and the screen. "Perhaps there is something else we can do," he said. Everybody looked at him curiously and waited. He raised his hands briefly. "The whole thing that's given Sterm an extra lease on life is the death of Howard Kalens, isn't it? Enough people in high places, especially some among the top ranks in the Army, believe it was the work of the Chironians and that they could be next in line. So they're clustering around Sterm for mutual preservation. But there has been another unexpected outcome as well, which gives us a chance to strip the last of that support away.".. "That's up to them. If it pleases them to say so, why should we mind?".. Lechat nodded. "That was already understood," he replied grimly.. "See, there?'s that anger again.".. JEAN FALLOWS WAS beginning to hate Chiron, the Chironians, and everything to do with the lawless, godless, alien, hostile place. After twenty years of the familiar day-today and month-to-month routine of life aboard the Mayflower II, she missed the warmth and protectiveness that she had grown to know and yearned to be back amid the sane, civilized surroundings that she understood. She understood a way of life in which budget and necessity decided priorities of need, in which clear rules set limits of behavior, and where tried and trusted protocols defined role and function-her own as well as everybody

else's; she did not understand, or even want to understand, the swirling ocean of anarchy in which she now found herself, in which individuals were expected to flounder helplessly like paper boats tossed in a tempest, with no charted shores, no havens of anchor, and no guiding stars. She had no place in it, and she desired no place in it. Secretly she dreamed of a miracle that would turn the Mayflower II around and embark her on another twenty-year voyage, back to Earth..She took a sip. It was smooth, warm, and mellowing. "It's excellent," she replied..salad, a tray of cheese, and other stuff in the fridge. Would you put everything on the table?".Although the polls still gave him a comfortable margin, Kalens was worried that even as chief executive the division of power with the Mission's Congress would prevent his exercising the concentrated authority that he believed the situation would demand. Only a strong leader with the power to act decisively would stand a chance of solving the problems, and the Mayflower II's constitution was designed to prevent anyone's becoming one. Its spirit was an anachronism inherited from antiquity when a newly rounded Federation had sought to guard itself against a renewed colonialism, and the governing system embodied that spirit quite effectively. That was the problem..He's just entering the next aisle, one layer deeper into the huge kitchen, when he hears the two cowboys.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."..probably had not spoken in a phony accent out of a bad production of Camelot. "I was going to bed..way deep into the flesh of her memory, beyond the hope of excision, and prickle as long as she lived..The others exchanged puzzled looks. Jean shook her head and looked back at Celia. "I'm sorry, we're not with you. Why-".confusion of real-life experiences with the fantasies of the cinema had prepared her to relate to the girl's..When he glanced back, he noticed a Lincoln Navigator pulling away from the curb across the street, no.mutant." "Dinner's ready," Geneva announced. "Cold salads and sandwich fixings. Not very fancy, but."To assume the proposition as a premise is not to prove it," the girl explained, looking up at the preacher. "Your argument, I'm afraid, is completely circular."..low.."This kind of thing always starts with 'love yourself.' ".another larceny..When Noah leaned close to have a look, Rickster's hands parted hesitantly; a wary oyster, jealous of its."Very,' Bernard agreed. He didn't really have a clue. "These are the guys I was telling you about," lay said. "The ones who are with the group that's going to the mountains."..to dart beneath the surface of their conversation, though it eluded her net..Curtis quickly feels his way past the sink, past the stacked washer and dryer, to a tall narrow door. A.dog surely knows what Heaven's like and won't confuse paradise with a good dinner..What followed was a General Foul-up.."You've got it." Kath smiled..precise in their details and of such explicit depth that she turned away from them in revulsion or in anger,- At that moment a local alarm sounded inside the command post. Within seconds the sounds of men running to stations came from the passageways and stain to the rear. One of the duty crew was already flipping switches to collect report summaries, and Charez got up to go to the outer observation room just as the Watch Officer appeared in the doorway from the other side. "There are troops approaching the lock," the Watch Officer announced. "Regulars-thirty or more of them."..Driscoll couldn't buy that. "You mean they'd be just as happy doing what our people told them to?" he said..As now, however, she sometimes showered without removing the brace. Afterward, she'd have to towel..interest in her drink when the siren grows as loud as an air-raid warning in the immediate wake of the.original. Where'd you find her?".Fingertips steepled toward the bridge of her nose, Geneva half hid her face in a prayer clasp, as if the."They know where to find us," Colman said.."Amazing," the robot replied in a neutral voice..track him down myself." "That's so completely radical!" In the gathering shadows that darkened but didn't."What About her?".The serpent huddled all the way back against the wall, and about as far from one side of the chest of."Hardly any leaves."..HOSTESS. She's petite, pretty, speaks with A comic drawl, but is as formidable as a prison-camp guard."For the status," lay said. Chang looked at him blankly. "It's okay," Rastus said. "As long as they pay for it."..They're all such selfless do-gooders." Constance Tavenall's voice was crisp with sarcasm but..With a Grrrrrrrrr, spoken and thought, Old Yeller draws Curtis's attention away from the chopper in the..By the time that she reached the bathroom, she heard her mother being busy in the master bedroom. She..Kalens looked at him calmly for a few seconds, then nodded. "Very well. I withdraw the statement and apologize.".."It's a klutz," Adam said wearily. "It's got a glitch in its visual circuits somewhere ...something like that. I don't know."..Gazing at Micky with a solemnity that she hadn't exhibited before, the girl at last said, "I better.".."Okay, then the lowly paramecium," Leilani said, shouldering past Micky to the sink..Colman turned on his elbow and found Swyley leaning with his arms on the bar, staring straight ahead at the bottles on the shelves behind. Colman raised his eyebrows. Had it been anyone else he would have looked more surprised, but Swyley's ability to read minds was just another of his mysterious arts that D Company took for granted. After a few seconds Swyley went on, "They're seducing all of us. That's how they're fighting the war."..Setting the orange juice and the frankfurters on the floor, he whispers, "Good pup." He hopes that Old..Surprising the boy, she affectionately squeezes his right hand. "Whenever people think they're smarter..by ETs?it was supposed to happen before we were ten. Each of us would be made whole, he promised..bones..vehicles, the trucker says,."He's just playing on emotion, Jean. I had it on down here for a few minutes but couldn't stand it. All he's interested in is scoring a few points against Wellesley and stopping a run to Lechat. And all that stuff about the Chironians claiming everything is theirs-it's pure garbage! I mean, it couldn't be further from the truth, could it, but nobody stops to think." He frowned to himself for a moment. It was true that he hadn't been at The Two Moons, but he had called Colman early that morning and gotten what

seemed like an honest account. But with Jean acting the way she was, he didn't want to mention that. "Anyhow, the facts about the shooting are on record," he said. "All you have to do is ask Jeeves." "the police." "That's my car," he explained. "I'm behind the wheel." "required to survive. By nature, he's more of a dreamer than he is a schemer, more poet than warrior, enough saliva to spit out a foul alkaline taste. Having been raised for a time on the edge of a desert more. The scene was an alfresco working-lunch, being held on the terrace of the roof garden atop the Government Center, which crowned the ascending tiers of buildings forming the central part of the Columbia District. High above, the shutters outside the module's transparent roof had been opened to admit the almost forgotten phenomenon of natural sunlight, streaming in from Alpha Centauri, as it held a position low in the sky below the nose of the Spindle while the Mayflower H rotated with its axis kept steady toward it..grandfather if he were ever in a major motion picture; but he would never be cast as a chainsaw-wielding..not, sent chills chasing chills along her spine, with such palpable shivers that she could almost believe the." "Where was she institutionalized?" "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. Nonetheless, she could imagine that the people passing on the highway were in some cases traveling..drinking pina colodas on a palm-shaded terrace in Heaven, what will they be serving in Hell?" "I'm not sure why, but it's important. - . from the Chironians." "than a breeze that has found an open door in the attic of the forest." "I'm sorry, sir. He just went down to the lock." "to Sundaes on Wednesdays." "You turning yourself loose?" Rickster asked. "Yeah. Yeah, I'm leaving." "but she willed steel into her good knee and kept moving..Micky wished, not for the first time, that she had been Geneva's daughter. How different her life would." "Cut it," Colman grated. "You leave him out of it. If it's me you want, I'll take the three of you, but some other place. He's got nothing to do with this." "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. question: "Were you?" "The two men walk westward from the back of the semi? in the general direction of the automobile. mountain with a shaved head and a nose ring. The Chevy stood in an open space midway between. Staying closer than Curtis intended, the dog presses against his legs and pushes her nose to the gap. The fallen fence pales clicked and rattled under Micky's feet as she entered the adjoining property.. "But the rules are so dumb," lay protested. "They don't make sense. Why is somebody any better because of what it says on the outside of his office? It's what h~ does inside that matters." "She assured them, as she had done before, that her mother wasn't a danger to anyone but herself. Sure, "Not interested?" CHAPTER SIXTEEN. "How long before the Kuan-yin is eclipsed?" Sterm asked, looking across at Stormbel, who was supervising the preparations to detach. He had intended taking advantage of the Mayflower II's cover until after the strike was launched, but the unexpected loss of the rest of the ship, coupled with Lesley's treacherous change of sides in the hexagon and the arrival of assault troops outside the Battle Module itself had forced him to revise his priorities. There would be lime point in destroying the Kuan-yin if he lost the Battle Module in the process.. A synchronizing computer issued commands, and the accelerator rings discharged tangentially into the shaft in sequence to send a concentrated beam of instant annihilation streaking out into space through giant deflection coils controlled by data from the Chironian tracking satellites.. 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 equivalents 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..are." "chair, staring at the door through which she had disappeared..sinks to his ankles, is thrown off-balance, and topples forward, imprinting his face in the sand, fortunately." "Then how-" "Come on, Stan. Give," Terry, Paula's companion, insisted. Colman gave Stanislaw 'a challenging look that left him no way out..address is also his apartment? and the whole shebang in three rooms above a palm-reader's office."

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