

## EUROPEAN BREEZES

"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. Fate possessed the sharper teeth, the stronger jaws. Against all odds, he's still alive. STARSHIP COMMAND CENTER, CAPTAIN CURTIS HAMMOND. This was a private establishment with a dedicated, friendly staff. Noah appreciated their professionalism. You have this kind of pride. Honor, he called it. But these days, honor is for suckers, and that makes you. footprints where table stone gives way to a swale of soft sand. few feet, the boy can see this is debris with value: a five-dollar bill. Driscoll turned his eyes a fraction to the side. They widened in disbelief as one of the Kuan-Yin's steel colossi marched into view, holding a length of aluminum alloy tubing over its left shoulder and being followed by a brown, Indian-looking gift of about seven and a fair-halted boy of around the same age. bursting with potential in this rank, mildew-riddled bathroom. Leilani knew that many intelligent. Can't you see he's not quite right? to do. I can get where I want to go, no matter how hard it is. disappointment. "I sure did want to be Minnie." "Give me one." - "That's only the first door," Swley reminded him, lowering the instrument from his eyes. "There are two of them. Whatever we do to that one won't stop them from closing the second one." "Have you ever seen a really good dog act, Ms. Tavenall?" Seated, bowing her head, Geneva offered a succinct but heart felt prayer: "Thank you, God, for. Colman smiled ruefully. "I don't have any fine family pedigree or big family trees full of famous ancestors to talk about," he warned. At least she knew the excuse was a lie. She supposed that her inability to fully deceive herself might. "And Gaultz, presumably," Celia said, referring to one of the Mission's senior scientists. Leading with her good leg, dragging her left, long-practiced grace abandoned, hard-won dignity lost. Other days, she might lie here smiling, eyes shining with amusement, occasionally issuing a soft murmur. "Yeah, Dr. Doom," Leilani confirmed. "The kids like having them around," Sal confirmed. "And to be honest, I suppose we do too. We've all grown up with them." This was a girlish merriment, sweet and musical, almost shy. understanding descend on you so unexpectedly that it just pivots you in a new direction, changes you. Bernard nodded grimly, but his expression did not contain the dismay that it might have. Evidently he had been half-prepared for the news. "Borftein's been checking on that possibility," he said. "It'll be forty minutes before the Kuan-yin goes behind the rim. Sterm won't launch before then." Disconcerted to hear such a thing from a child, Micky covered her discomfort with self-deprecation. Supposing he had glimpsed two men wearing cowboy hats, he still couldn't have been sure that they. "When I call him my pseudofather, I'm indulging in wishful thinking. He's my legal stepfather. He married." So what will you do? Sirocco inquired, propping his feet back on the desk. "Figured it out yet?" door shut again, to hold back the avalanche before it gains unstoppable momentum. from her TV show. "I've been thinking about that ..." Sirocco continued to gaze across the room at Driscoll, who was recounting his experiences to Maddock and a group of others. "He's pretty good, isn't he," Sirocco said, still half to himself. something more desperate than hope, by a faith that sometimes seemed foolish to him but that he never. "Sinsemilla says the Fates can't find you to snip your thread and end your life if they don't know where. feet were grass-stained and filthy, though her fine slip was rumpled and streaked with dirt, though her hair. The process had been the same all through history, and it was happening again. The latest four-year-old news from Earth described the rapid escalation of the latest war against the New Israel of the South. Only this time the EAF was getting involved. The Western strategists had interpreted it as an EAF policy to provoke an all-out war all across Africa so they could move in afterward and dose up on Europe from the south. Apparently the idea was to try and take over the whole landmass of Asia, Africa, and Europe. Why did they want to take over the whole of Asia, Africa, and Europe? Colman didn't know. He was pretty sure that most of the people killing each other back there didn't want the territory and didn't care all that much who had it. The Howard Kalenses were the ones who wanted it, just as they wanted everything else. Perhaps if they'd learn how to get along with people without being scared to turn their backs all the time and how to make love with their own wives in bed, they wouldn't need geographical conquests. And yet they could tell everybody it made them better than the people were, and the people believed it. Gump, as nature made him. "Is Sirocco around?" Colman moved over to the washbasin to rinse his face. CHAPTER TWELVE. The driver doesn't apply the brakes, but allows the Windchaser's speed to fall steadily. Not good, not. knew to be a cold command: "Come, glowering girl, come, come! Looketh upon this little beauty and. to wondering about. Twenty years later, I saw another dog act, and I realized that in the meantime life. consoling words for any situation, had known when she could smooth your hackled heart just by lovingly. meeting, however, he regarded her as he might have regarded a sister: with the desire only to protect her. 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." "Ahem . . ." General Portney cleared his throat. "We will be posting guards around the Kuan-yin for the duration of the negotiations. I trust there will be no objections." The military officers stiffened as they waited for the response to the first implied challenge to the legitimacy of the Chironian administration of the Kuan-yin. He's wearing a headset with an extension arm that puts the penny-size microphone two inches in front of. The boy had drunk bottled water from the container, but this had proved more difficult for the dog. By their very presence, however, the cowboys have won allies for Curtis. As the crouching boy. in spite of how looney life could sometimes be here in Casa Geneva, and though the relentless August. "Old Yeller would be your dog?" Bobby's Honda was parked next to a collection bin for Salvation Army thrift shops. "Does it do-that a lot?" Colman asked from his chair, which had been cleared of a pile of books and some stuffed birds to make room for him. when they had arrived an hour or so earlier. 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-" Chazure 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." Maddoc. CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR. bones. "Toast done twice." "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." water, a cheeseburger for my dad, a cheeseburger for me, potato chips, and probably two. 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?". during the day, she'd been troubled by a new version of her former rage; this sullen resentment wasn't as those places she goes. herself under the right circumstances. package of frankfurters to his chest, scampering like a monkey, and retreating pell-mell from the battle. "The planet... Chiron. Who runs it?" Honda and out of sight. baroque detail was not a fabrication, then what of the murderous stepfather, Dr. Doom, and his eleven. when there's a new sighting or a new abduction story, we haul ass for the place, wherever it is, so maybe. was, by the current definition, a good citizen. time-distorting August heat, they were as silent as the trinity of flames bright upon the smokeless wicks. beyond the next door, he finds logic rewarded. A warm breeze, free of kitchen odors and the smell of. with. "Micky tried to keep her wetter emotions bottled in the cellar of her heart, safe storage that she'd. well-balanced, responsible, and especially good-smelling people practiced aromatherapy and toxin. memory for names. saturated with toxins. "It's an organization the congressman founded. That's where he made a name for himself, before. "I've got a friend whose mother works most of her time there. Her name's Kathy. When Jay called that morning Adam had told him to invite as many Terrans as he wanted. Jay reached Colman at the school that the Army was using as a temporary barracks in Canaveral City, but Colman started to explain that he had set the afternoon aside for other things--in fact he'd intended to find out more about Port Norday from the Chironian computers. However, he changed his plans when Jay mentioned that Kath would be there to see her grandchildren. After all, Colman reasoned, he couldn't have hoped for a better source of information on Port Norday than Kath. As Hanlon was off duty, Colman had invited him along too. one over at the main gate who wants to talk to you. Says it's urgent." watched from any window. Beyond the open back door lay a deserted kitchen dimly revealed by the. Fallows was unable to unravel the logic sufficiently to dispute the statement. Instead, he shook his head. "It doesn't sound like it, I suppose." After a while, Geneva said, "Leilani's not the only child I was talking about a moment ago." "I know." own way, she loves you very much." Aunt Gen was childless, not by choice. The love she'd never been. That didn't explain anything. Jay couldn't see it either. "Yes, it would be nice if everyone in the world were reasonable and rational about everything all the time. But they can't be, can they? Chironians have the same mix of genes as everyone else. There can't be anything radically different." "Oh, Christ Wearily, Colman brought a hand up to his brow. "Okay. Look, as soon as I can-" Footsteps approaching at the double interrupted and made him look around. It was Sergeant Armley, from the Orderly Room. "When we were discussing the Continuity of Office clause," Kalens prompted. "Frankly," Leilani said, "neither do I. But the alternative is too hideous to consider, so I just suspend my. Lechat glanced uneasily in Celia's direction for a moment and then looked back. "Howard Kalens," he said in a lower voice. "Couldn't that have been a final warning? Look at the effect it's having on the Army, except that they don't seem to be reading the right things into it." He looked at Jay. "I can't see that they've got it all figured out. They can't have." "Easy, easy now," Micky counseled, still on her knees, making placating gestures with her hands. "What are you getting at?" Colman asked him. 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?" "You don't think that a ship full of Asiatics coming at us armed to the teeth qualifies as an emergency?" Borftein asked sarcastically. chorus with it. mother for the survival training that so far has been an invaluable assist to God in this matter. Chapter 4. next year covered." sliding doors. He draws a deep breath, clenches his teeth, and opens the closet. making a connection with her. His stubborn persistence through the years had been motivated by. Celia sat and looked at the boxes, and wondered what it was about the whole business that upset her. It wasn't so much the spectacle of Mrs. Crayford's mindless parading of an affluence that now meant nothing, she was sure, since she had known the woman for enough years to have expected as much. Surely it couldn't be because she herself had succumbed to the same temptation, for that had been a comparatively minor thing--a single, not very large, sculpture, and not one that had included any precious metals or rare stones. She turned her head to gaze at the piece again--she had placed it in the recess by the corner window--the heads of three children, two boys and a girl, of perhaps ten or twelve, staring upward as if at something terrifying but distant a threat perceived but not yet threatening. But as well as the apprehension in their eyes, the artist had captured a subtle suggestion of serenity and courage that was anything but childlike, and had combined it with the smoothness of the faces to yield a strange wistfulness that was both captivating and haunting. The piece was fifteen years old, the dealer h3 Franklin had told them, and had been made by one of the Founders. Celia suspected that the dealer may have been the artist, but he hadn't reacted to her oblique questions on the subject. Were the expressions on those faces affecting her for some reason? Or did the artist's skill in working the grain around the highlights to simulate illumination from above cause Celia to feel that she had debased a true artistic accomplishment by allowing it to be included alongside the others as just another item to be snatched at greedily and gloated over? "So have I," Colman said. "And it's worse than that, he's setting up a missile strike right now. The target has to be the Kuan-yin." Bernard stared at his glass for a few seconds, then

shook his head again. "I can't buy it," he said. "We've never seen anything or heard any mention of anything to do with strategic weapons. Where are they supposed to be?" and bitter, him havin' a hissy fit, him broodin' up bad snaky revenge.". "We don't intend to let it happen," Kath said. Paralleling each other, these two vehicles move north, toward Curtis. They grind along slowly, sweeping, tried to settle his nerves.. "Okay," said Micky, "then try this one on for size. You're a child because you don't yet have boobs.". "Was your father like that too?" he'd no doubt be left with a hand full of bones as shattered as the windshield.. seriously his suggestion of dishonesty.. the tail. She knew that snakehandlers always gripped immediately under the head to immobilize the jaws.. Tiny pill bugs curled as tightly as threatened armadillos. All these and more had been rescued by this. Lechat nodded and seemed satisfied. "That gets us up there," he said. "Now what about getting into the Communications Center?". The chest of drawers stood against the wall, on four stubby legs. More than live feet high. Four feet. The party of Terrans and Chironians moved on and left the audience to the explosive tirade that followed. "Those were hardly more than children," Eve Verritty murmured.. don't you go on after the others. I'll catch up later." You don't want me around?". "We're using a camera and special film with exceptional ability to record clear images in a minimum of." What in hell's come over him?" Hanlon asked, nonplussed. "Aren't they paying captains well these days?". should convince locals in a ten-mile radius that Almighty God, in His more easily disappointed Old. Abruptly the camera tilted down, too late to show the shattering of the windshield. Documented.. Although the serpent hadn't been poisonous, the bite looked wicked. The punctures were small. No. "It couldn't fire anyway," Kath replied. "It's wiodiflcations aren't completed yet We've already toli-4ou that". "No you don't. You were born perfect, and you've got one of those metabolisms tuned like a. The capacity of the complex itself took account of long-range-demand forecasts and. more than outstripped the current requirements of the industries scattered around the general area. Its primary power source was a one-thousand gigawatt, magnetically confined fusion system which combined various features of the tokamak, mirror, and "bumpy toms" configurations pioneered toward the end of the previous century, producing electricity very efficiently by blasting high-velocity, high-temperature, ionized plasma through a series of immense magnetohydrodynamic coils. In addition, the fast neutrons produced in copious mounts from this process were harnessed to breed more tritium fuel from lithium, to breed fissionable isotopes of uranium and plutonium from fertile elements obtained elsewhere in the same complex, and to "burn up" via nuclear transmutation the small mounts of radioactive wastes left over from the economy's fission component, the fuel cycle of which was fully closed and included complete reprocessing and recycling of reactor products.. "Yes, people have been doing aft kinds of things with it over the last ten, fifteen years or so.". As Leon spoke, Colman looked curiously at Kath to see if he could detect any reaction, but the remained impassive.. Movement gives him confidence, and confidence is essential to maintaining a successful disguise.. "I know what you think and why. You think Dr. Doom diddles little girls, because that's what experience. For a few seconds Bernard and lay were too stunned to say anything. "But... that's crazy," Bernard protested at last. "You can't just let everybody go round shooting anyone they don't like.". Sympathy cinched Micky's heart, but for a moment she was unable to think of something to say that. "To Congress, the people.". stop near Provo, while the driver lingered over a slice of pie in the diner. The door of one of the

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