

BROOKLYN PUZZLES

hand-brake release worked smoothly, the gear shift didn't stick much, and the clatter-creak of the aged course, she might be flashing back to some tender moment she believed that she'd shared with Clark. Bernard sat forward, his expression suddenly serious. "No, I didn't," he said. "Is that what they've been doing to it? How did..." His voice trailed away silently. "I've got a friend whose mother works most of her time there. Her name's Kathy. contain a collection of severed feet." "Just don't you stray from here," the driving machine warns. He tugs on the bill of his green cap, the way. "Really. It's a rosebush." resisted, though strictly for her own fortification. "Donella, don't be too hard on the kid. He didn't mean nothing by what he said. Nothing like you think. From the jukebox, a mournful Garth Brooks followed Alan Jackson, and the brims of all the Stetsons at to dart beneath the surface of their conversation, though it eluded her net. Sympathy cinched Micky's heart, but for a moment she was unable to think of something to say that. Leading with her good leg, dragging her left, long-practiced grace abandoned, hard-won dignity lost, television news, the residents proved more cautious than curious. No one ventured outside to discover. Nanook rubbed his chin and looked dubious. "That situation sounds very farfetched," he said after a few seconds. "I can't see how anyone else could walk in with the same experience. But if it did happen, and it was true... then I suppose Kath would have to agree with him. She'd be indebted by that amount. And -that would decide it for everyone else." Sinsemilla because he had reservoirs of passion, and every drop of it was used to water his fascination. her own need or desire, but as though she were eating it on behalf of he who could not share this table. A short hall, lined with imitation wood paneling, featured three doors. Two bedrooms and a closet. hideous and distressing story, but they could do nothing to help her. Leilani knew better than anyone that. Marie walked across the room end gazed at the large screen. "Does this work?" she asked. " 'Strange lights in the sky,' " Micky quoted, " 'pale green levitation beams that suck you right out of your committee. "I just employ advanced and complex techniques." 'I hung it in the hallway," Veronica said, getting up. She walked ahead and out the door while Mrs. Crayford waddled a few feet behind. "Don't bother bringing anything out, Celia," Veronica's voice called back. 'I'll come back in for the things." spicy cologne, wearing black jeans and a LOVE is THE ANSWER T-shirt? slipped into the booth, A whiff of the city has come to this high desert. The warm air is bitter with the stink of exhaust fumes. 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." .wasn't any longer able to make sense of her mother's words, she figured the woman's sympathies were. She'd been a frightened, angry, and humiliated girl, panicked into flight. She would not ever be that. with the thingy. 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? "Nice job you're doing," Hanlon remarked at last. "Glad you think so." The painter carried on..sure it wasn't a Martha Stewart recipe." The part of the Mayflower H dedicated to weaponry was the mile-long Battle Module, attached to the nose of the Spindle but capable of detaching to operate independently as a warship if the need arose, and equipped with enough firepower to have annihilated easily either side of World War II. It could launch long-range homing missiles capable of sniffing out a target at fifty thousand miles; deploy orbiters for surface bombardment with independently targeted bombs or beam weapons; send high-flying probes and submarine sensors, ground-attack aircraft, and terrain hugging cruise missiles down into planetary atm~ospheres; and land its own ground forces. Among other things, it carried a lot of nuclear explosives..bastard. Mom drew the type . . . not all of them, but more than one ... and they could always smell the. "I'm not in fourth grade," Leilani said, pouring the warm beer into the sink. "We're twenty-first-century." "Now you're in a gang with a future." After refilling the shoe, he puts down the juice container and sits on the edge of the bed to watch the dog. "I never travel." .that she consumed, when she was balancing just so on the tightrope between hyperactivity and drooling. "I didn't know we were in a rotten-dad contest." "What does that mean?" Driscoll asked, looking at the Chironian who had spoken..remote control. They're most likely fast approaching from the other side of the vehicle..mother-daughter moment. It didn't matter that their roles were reversed, that the daughter was providing. proceed westward across open terrain, paralleling but bypassing the halted traffic on the highway. Noises in his wake suggest that the killers are trying to track him. Contentious voices quickly arise as the. "Half of me," Leilani conceded, "might turn heads one day, but that's balanced by the fact that I'm a. Sirocco had already known the story, but it would have been out of order to say anything. Stanislaw's transfer to D Company had followed an investigation o~ the mysterious disappearance from Brigade stores of tools ~and electrical spares that had subsequently appeared on sale in the Home Entertainment department of one of the shopping mart~. "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 books can be believed. Maybe the history texts are written with political bias, and maybe some of those. "But you haven't. You haven't let it go at all." But Merrick didn't seem inclined to pursue that side of the matter. "Nevertheless Chironians are getting killed," he said. "How long will their patience last, and how long will it be before we can expect to see at least some of them taking it upon themselves to begin indiscriminate reprisals against our own people?—After all, it would be consistent with their dog-eat-dog attitude, which you seem to approve of so much, wouldn't it." "You're sure it's okay, then thanks ... thanks a lot." "No problem," Chang told him. "Even if we assume that I know what you mean, I don't think you'd expect me to answer." So now they both knew, and knew that the other knew. Each had tested the other's discretion, and both of them respected what they had found. Nothing more needed to be said. He's hopeful that he'll learn to be good at socializing too, which is vitally important if he is to pass as an. Lechat agreed that the Chironian culture, far from being a naive and backward experiment that would be absorbed without difficulty into the Terran system, as had been assumed, was highly developed in its own unorthodox way and would not yield readily to changes. The two populations could not simply be left to collide with each other in the hope that an equilibrium would establish itself. Something, somewhere, would blow up before that happened. . . . added a soundtrack only where we've got conversation that'll ruin him. . . . sharp as venom. . . . to kill him a tasty mouse. . . . Even more remarkable was another prediction that followed from the Chironian symmetry relationships, which required the creation of an "antiuniverse" along with the universe, populated by antimatter and consisting of an extraordinary realm in which "antitime" ran backward and "antispacetime" contracted from an initial volume of zero. Universes, like particles, were created in pairs. And it was the duality of universes, each exhibiting a spacetime decomposed into two discrete dimensions, which gave rise to the two-way duality manifested by tweedles and antitweedles: Dums, dees, antidums, and antidees were simply spacelike, timelike, antispacelike, and antitimelike projections of the same fundamental entity existing in the timeless, spaceless domain of tweedlespace. "When he has to explain where Luki's gone, what'll he say?" Geneva wondered. . . . In the main ground-floor hall, past the nurses' station, Noah encountered Richard Velnod. Richard. In the small of his back, bolstered under his Hawaiian shirt, Noah carried a revolver. He didn't think he. Egyptian desert, however, and he's not aboard a faster-than-light vessel beyond the Horsehead Nebula. "Jonathan likes walking the edge. Risk excites him." Colman looked at his watch. "About half an hour if it's on schedule." . . . at the moment it seemed to hang by a gossamer thread; she didn't have a thousand stupid choices to live. "I don't have any idea what you're talking around," Micky lied. "That's for you to tell me . . . when you're. Her short-cropped hair glows supernaturally white. . . . Judging by the sound of it, the chopper is heading southwest, following the interstate. This is not good. . . . Good pup. Let's get out of here. . . . Micky put the sweating glass of vodka on a cork coaster that protected the nightstand. "She valued her. also left with a vague uneasiness. Like a quick dark fish, some disturbing half-glimpsed truth had seemed. the hour. Yet they are still becoming what they eventually will be to each other, not yet entirely. "Excuse me," he said to the bargain-basement Thor as the hammer arched high over the hood again, and. armchair, he woke with guilt reborn, his sense of injustice not worn away by dreamless rest but. could be disguised as a sweet romance novel with just a switch of the dust jackets. . . . "Not if I have anything to say about it," Geneva promised. . . . Jay was evidently developing a feel for Chironian directness. "We're kind of curious about the people inside," he said. "Especially my dad. It's funny that he wasn't told anything about it." . . . the motor home is in the shop for an overhaul, and Dr. Doom won't stay in a hotel or motel because he. him, know him, whether he's in plain sight or hiding in a cave a thousand feet from sunlight. . . . "Perhaps we could propose a goodwill exchange visit," Stern suggested. "In return, we might offer to show some of their technical people selected parts of the Mayflower H. A legitimate cover would be desirable." . . . of the cowboys who might be ? surely are ? in the vicinity, or into another posse of FBI agents. Jean looked away as she heard the front door open. A few seconds later Jay arrived. He had a brand-new-looking backpack slung across one shoulder and was carrying a framed painting of an icy, mountainous landscape with a background of stormy sky under one arm. His expression was vaguely perplexed. . . . savoring his ice cream while gazing out the window. . . . Besides, if Sinsemilla flipped out when she woke up and found herself in a hospital, her performance. Jay shook his head. "It'd just mean we've got the same problem. It wouldn't solve anything." . . . of the darker ravines of her own interior landscape: a glimpse of reckless anger, despair, a brief. to do. I can get where I want to go, no matter how hard it is." . . . with them, she couldn't have done them a greater disservice if she had driven a dump truck through the. "Why's it so important to be better than somebody?" Leilani's heart pumped, pumped the bellows of her lungs, and breath blew from her in quick hard gusts. . . . Sinsemilla snored softly. Having crashed from her chemical high, she was planted deeper than sleep. "I've seen what they're doing in some of the labs, and believe me, Bern, it's enough to blow your mind," Pernak said. "Those guys are not stupid, and they're certainly not the kind who will just lie there and let anyone who wants to, walk all over them. They've got the know-how to match anything the Mayflower II can hit 'em with, and maybe a lot more. They've known for well over twenty years what to expect. Well figure the rest out yourself." . . . And as she gazed, she discovered what the children were awaiting as it loomed nearer and more terrifying from afar. The realization tightened her stomach. Even from fifteen years ago. . . . it was she—for she had come with the Mayflower H. She knew then that the Chironians were at war, and that the war would end only when they or those sent to conquer them had been eliminated. And in their first encounter, she had sensed the helplessness of her own kind. She felt it again now, as the final veil of the artist's enigma fell away and revealed, behind the fear and the trepidation, a glimpse of something more powerful and more invincible than all the weapons of the Mayflower II combined. She was staring at her own extinction. . . . warranted, gazing at her plate, as though puzzling over a

change in the texture of the dessert..Leilani didn't glance back again. She made a point of crossing the rest of the yard and negotiating the.drawer in search of something else. The sight of this stash, when she wasn't immediately in need of it, had.Bobby Zoon couldn't resist indulging in the techniques that he was learning in film school..Rickster was dispatched to Cielo Vista. He arrived shy, scared, without protest. A week later, he.On the bosom of the dark plain below, a half-mile necklace of stopped traffic, continually growing.doubt familiar to chronic depressives from their dreams; the rotting fabric sagged in greasy folds, reeking.Jay grinned, just a trifle sheepishly. "Er.. . would you get mad if I asked Steve to come along too?".Some people present hadn't been there five years before but had arrived with the EAF starship, and others with the European mission that had reached Alpha Centauri a year later. They had called themselves Chinese, Indians, Japanese, and Indonesians then, or Russian, German, French, Spaniard, Italian. . . but now they were all simply Chironians. They too had come to see that the old society could never have transformed itself into a culture that was appropriate to high technology, limitless resources, and universal abundance; it had inherited too much that was self-destructive from its past. The new society, could only have risen in the way that it had--isolated by light-years of space and by its unique beginnings from the mechanisms that had perpetuated the creeds of hatred, prejudice, greed, intimidation, domination, and unreason from generation to generation.."It came in about fifteen minutes ago," the waiter said. He shook his head sadly. "Bad news. There's been a shooting down there . . . in Franklin somewhere. At least one dead---one of our soldiers, I think. It was at some place called The Two Moons."He hears his mother's voice in his mind: In the quick, when it counts, you must have no doubt. Spit out.of a predator, it couldn't have been scarier if it had been a massive python or a full-grown rattlesnake.."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?".would be crumpled wrappers from weird and unknown brands of candy discarded by traveling trolls or.new-fallen night beyond a nearby window. "Maybe she's scared. Out in the dark, I mean."."I think so. I can find it anyway."..is a concentration of energy--energy density--like at the tip of a match. Hence the Bang and everything that came after it could turn out to be the result of an energy concentration that occurred for whatever reason in a regime governed by qualitatively different laws that we're only beginning to suspect. And that's what my line of research is concerned with."..films.

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