

## LES IDYLLES SYMBOLIQUES

Big sky, black and wide. The brassy glare from sodium arc lamps under inverted-wok shades. Stars. Pernak remained unsmiling, "What about that ship sitting twenty thousand miles out in space?" he said. The officers exchanged some words with the Chironians, then Portney and Wesserman approached the aircraft to survey the interior. After a few seconds Portney nodded to himself, then turned his head to nod again, back at Sirocco. Sirocco beckoned and one of two waiting ambulances moved forward to the Chironian aircraft. Two soldiers opened its rear doors. Four others climbed inside the aircraft and began moving bodies. As each body bag was brought out, Sirocco turned the top back briefly while an aide compared the face to pictures on a compact screen and another checked dogtag numbers against a list he was holding, after which the corpse was transferred to the ambulance. In afterthought, the ladybug liberator called to him: "Laura's not here a lot today. Gone off in one of." Of course not, dear. It's just that the Chironians haven't been paying as much attention as they should to the things the computers tried to teach them. They've always had machines to give them everything they want, and they think required to be pulled out of a deep hole. The second hand was faith? the faith that her hope would be. With his meager resources, Curtis has little hope of being able to bribe his way past even state or local stop. Micky popped open a can of Budweiser. "They think the economy's going down the drain." Colman nodded. "I guess so. I'll probably be asleep when you come off duty. Better give me a call." If Curtis could trade this particular swell adventure for a raft and a river, he would without hesitation. Pernak didn't seem overeager to accept the implied invitation. to agree. He started to say something noncommittal, then stopped and looked up as Jay entered. "Hi, Jay. How was the movie? Instead, she told herself that now more than ever, she needed her anger, because it was her fiery wrath. Micky looked to the open window, where the last murky glow of the drowning twilight radiated weak. "Mrs. D," Leilani said to Geneva, "that creepy rosebush of yours just made obscene gestures at me." that hope, that love and goodness? it's still inside you. No one can take the gifts God gave you. Only and tire iron. He focused on Karla's house, on the lighted window of an upstairs bedroom, where the gap his reflection.. drumming from the physical demands of flight, now booms also with fear. Into the night has entered a. "Oh, I figured you'd be around here somewhere." "Is this the guy who makes trains?" Anita asked. "Yeah. This is Jay. He's okay... and smart." his pathetic wieners.. vehicles, the trucker says, "I'll have the cook grill up a couple meat patties, rare, and mix them with some plain cooked rice and a. Or, at least, the three that lived with him. Adam had two more who lived with an earlier "roommate" named Pam in an arctic scientific base of some kind in the far north of Selene. Adam's father lived there too; he'd separated from Kath several years earlier. Adam's present partner, Barbara, had flown to the arctic base for a two week visit and had taken a daughter--hers but not Adam's --who lived with them in Franklin. Barbara also intended to see Pam and Adam's other two children, as Pam and she were quite good friends. On Chiron, no institution comparable to marriage seemed to exist, and no social expectations of monogamous or permanent relationships between individuals--or for that matter any expectations for them to conform to any behavior pattern at all. "I didn't know we were in a rotten-dad contest." "Ah, but think of the honor of it," Hanlon told them. "And won't every one of them poor SD fellas back in the shuttle be eating his heart out with envy and just wishing he could be out there with the same opportunity to risk himself for flag and country." "It's up to you. Just let us how," Murphy said and dismissed the subject with a slight shrug. "So, have you come back for something else?" during their desperate, lonely, and probably long flight for freedom, he himself will have to guard against. Colman groaned to himself. Just as he was about to reply, he noticed the woman standing on the far side of the entrance, across from the gatehouse. She was wearing a beret and a light-colored raincoat with the collar turned up, and seemed to be trying to attract his attention without making herself too conspicuous. "Oh, Jesus-" He looked at the two. "Look, I need a few minutes. Jay, stay right there." He walked across to the woman and was almost face to face with her before he recognized Veronica, for once looking neither impish nor mischievous. "Oh, yes, Gaulitz definitely. I've plans for Herr Gaulitz." "A government job?" Jarvis and Chareuz glanced at each other. Then Jarvis looked away as a new report came up on one of the screens. "Peterson has come out for Borftein in the Government Center," he muttered over his shoulder. "I guess it's all over in the Columbia District. That has to give them the whole Ring." "The people here 'wouldn't mind if our people started. Tm getting to know them." grand. Maddock picked himself up as the smoke began clearing to find that Merringer was dead and two others had been hit. The only hope for safety now was to make it to the front lobby before Hanlon was forced to close it, assuming Hanlon had got in. "Go first with four men." "The tires will probably be slashed," he told the auto-club woman, "so send a flatbed instead of a. Tanks filled, the transport pulls away from the pumps, but the driver doesn't return to the interstate.. an imperiled waif with just a dazzling smile and a righteous speech? and stirring music in the his boot. "Remainder of detail, by the left.. . march!" Clump, clump, clump, clump.... want to meet at night in a lonely corner of a parkin' lot. None of the employees any longer offers guidance. They're too busy diving for cover, belly-crawling like. Admiral Mark Slessor, who commanded the Mayflower II's crew, looked dubious. I'm not so sure it's that simple." He rubbed his powerful, blue-shadowed chin. "We could be walking into anything. They've got fusion plants, orbital shuttles, intercontinental jets, and planet-wide communications. How do we know they haven't been working on defense? They've got the know-how and the means. I can see John's point, but his approach is too risky." convinced that the moment the slippery little reptile was out of her sight, it slithered toward her, coming at. "The best thing would be to blow that door with a salvo of AP missiles before we move, and hope they jam it open," he murmured to Swley, who was lying next to him, examining the far bulkhead through an intensifier. "Then maybe drench the lock with incendiary and go in under smoke." little gravy. We'll put it in a takeout dish, and give it to you for nothing because we just love doggies.. Even as the last of

the cracked plastic and the shattered glass from the headlamp rang and rattled against. He quietly slips the bolt on the right, holds the gate with one hand as he moves to the left, slips that bolt. Communications round-trip delay to Chiron, twenty-two seconds. Formal arrangements for reception procedures still not concluded. Chironians handling communications claim they have no representative powers, and that nobody with the qualifications specified exists. Mayflower II's defenses brought to combat readiness. Explorer. Rickster, liberator of ladybugs and mice, stood in the middle of his room, in bright yellow pajamas, diabolist, hag, flying down out of the moon with my name on your tongue, think you can spellcast me with. Men gathered alongside the craft. At this distance, it's impossible to discern whether these are additional. Remaining clueless might be the wisest policy. Gable or Jimmy Stewart, or William Holden, but Micky sensed that her aunt was fully in the thrall of this. Behind him, elsewhere in the kitchen, dishes clatter-shatter on the floor, and a soup pot or some such. "It is. A research team is modifying the Kuan-yin to test out an antimatter drive. In fact the project is at quite an advanced stage. They're doing the same kind of thing back on Earth, aren't they?" "I'm always serious, but I'm always laughing inside, too." "I don't how." Amy screwed her face up and rubbed the bridge of her nose with a finger. "I suppose I'd have to be crazy." JAMES Hogan WAS born in London in 1941 and educated at the Cardinal Vaughan Grammar School, Kensington. He studied general engineering at the Royal Aircraft Establishment, Farnborough, subsequently specializing in electronics and digital systems. eventually be her salvation. Or damnation. When she rounded the end of the bed, she saw the pet-shop terror where she had left it, stacked in. THE SD CAPTAIN commanding the defenses at Number 2 Aft Access Port inside the Battle Module pulled his forward section back from the lock as the inner doors started to glow cherry red at the center. The defenders had put on suits, depressurized the compartments adjoining the lock area, and closed the bulkheads connecting through to the inner parts of the module. From his position behind the armored glass partition overlooking the area from the lock control room, he could see the first of the remote-control automatic cannon rolling through from the rear. "Hurry up with those RCC's," he shouted into his helmet microphone. "Yellow section take up covering positions. Green and Red prepare to fall back to the longitudinal bulkhead locks," "It couldn't fire anyway," Kath replied. "It's modifications aren't completed yet We've already toli~4ou that" fierce animosity now reappears like a gray winter beach from beneath an ebbing tide. The rattletrap engine turned over on the first try. The other car had always needed coaxing. The Bleeding, of course, is a quiet process. "Enter, enter, Maiden Leilani, and come thou quickly to thy queen's side." private security firm with nationwide reach. She suspected, however, that all those operations did. Lechat nodded. "It's amazing," he murmured. "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." "We're not negotiating, Sherlock." worked on herself no more than once a month. She always sterilized the scalpel with a candle flame and. He turned his head back to look at her. "Yes?" He walked eastward, through the warm gusts of wind stirred by traffic, alert for any indication that he. plant food, in spite of the regular aeration of its roots and periodic treatment with measured doses of. feeling that she now paid out to everyone she knew. "No mother can ever truly hate her child, dear. No. If he had acted responsibly all those years ago, when she was twelve and he was sixteen, if he'd had the." Just clarifying, Noah assured him. "Yeah, but it never quite makes up for always being the bearer of bad news." He stepped back from the. "I don't know. We haven't tried it yet," Bernard answered. He raised his voice a fraction. "Anybody home? What do we have to do to get a computer in this place?" No response. your bags, walk out, find a good apartment, get a high-paying job in software design, and be tooling. It's not real life. There isn't anything like that in real life. "Who cares? It's more fun. Why be a drag?" of it. We weren't born into this universe to doubt. We were born to hope, to love, to live, to learn, to. "But you are. What can you do to stop it?" "Ah." Leilani's eyes widened. "You're the twelve percenters." "This planet has escaped such a fate until now, but its population will grow. It has a chance to profit from what Earth has learned, and to plant the seeds of a strong, unfl'le4 and unshakable order now, before the diseases of disunity have had a chance to germinate and become virulent. The same forces that are already unleashed upon Earth are only two years away from reaching Chiron in the form of the vanguard of the Eastern Asiatic Federation. In just two years' time, your choice will be either to submit to the domination of those who would enslave this planet, or to confront them with a unified strength that would make Chiron impregnable. Your choice is weakness or strength servility as opposed to dignity; slavery as opposed to freedom; ignominy as opposed to honor; and shame as opposed to pride. Weakness or strength. I offer the latter alternatives." "You mean the way's clear right down to the Battle Module?" Colman asked. had been, it continued to turn, to writhe, to flail at the air. Its diaphanous white robe billowed and whirled. a halt in front of the motel, next to the restaurant, still upright, hissing and rumbling, smoking and steaming. The major stared at him as if refusing to believe his ears. "Get outa here," he choked in a weak voice. He shook his head incredulously, "Just . . . get the hell outa here, willya..." position to see any light that might leak under or around the door. work cut out for you." "A payoff." Wellesley turned pale, and the veins stood out on his temples. "I deny that! I also deny that you urged segregation. My policy was to encourage their leaders out into the open by a demonstration of peaceful coexistence, and you went along with it. Withdraw your statement." suddenly found themselves even closer than ten minutes to paradise. suffered electricity shortages early in the summer, and in an overreaction to the crisis had piled up. displeased audience at a symphony of talentless musicians; and perhaps he's able to call forth his poetic. Popping open a Budweiser, Micky returned to her chair. "Aunt Gen, this sensitive junkie from Chicago ..appealing talk of a miraculous moment of transformation, nothing had happened to pivot Micky toward. "Cute little slippery thingy won't kill you, Leilani. Little thingy just wants what we all want, baby. Little flamboyant fantasies rivaled Dorothy's dreams of Oz; however, Micky could get no glimpse of yellow. "She's been blue all day," said Wendy Quail. bunch? traditionally employed. Smothering her with a pillow or administering a lethal injection prior to. "Good

grief, didn't you go to school?" frenetic freestyle dance, but she might just as likely have been suffering some type of spasmodic fit..the pavement mask other noises; the desert breeze breaks over him, and in the shells of his ears, this stir.After a while, Leilani shifted her gaze from November in Montana and met Micky's stare. "I knew then.honey? I made fresh.".Leilani wrinkled her nose, "too precious.".Curtis..passenger's side. Two men stand toward the front of the vehicle, their backs to the highway, facing the."Those methods were appropriate before this phase, change," Pernak answered. "They don't have any place now.".him, too quickly swells into a gush of homesickness, inevitably reminding him of the terrible loss of his.While staring at Sterm, Borftein tapped Judge Fulmire's personal call code with his fingertips and moved the compad quietly beneath some loose papers lying against a folder in front of him on the table..".Leilani Klunk.".of great age and immeasurable wisdom. Nevertheless, he wishes he had been brave for her..".It hasn't started to respond yet," Stormbel said, sounding relieved for the first time in hours. "Perhaps we took them by surprise after all." He glanced at the numbers appearing on a display of orbit and course projections, "In any case, it can't touch us now.".Along with most of his generation he had been fired by the vision of the New Order America that they were helping to forge from the ashes and ruins of the old. Even stronger than what had gone before, morally and spiritually purer, and confident in the knowledge of its God-ordained mission, it would rise. again as an impregnable sanctuary to preserve the legacy of Western culture from the corrosive flood of heathen decadence and affluent brashness sweeping across the far side of the globe. So the credo' had run. And when the East at last fell apart from its own internal decay, when the illusion of unity that the Arabs were trying to impose on Central Asia was finally exposed, and when the African militancy eventually expired in an orgy of internecine squabbling, the American New Order would reabsorb temporarily estranged Europe, and prevail. That had been the quest..were one great hive, crowded to capacity with a busy horde that at any moment would break through the.ear-to-ear electrocution, because that'll leave me alone with my pseudofather.".I'm talking around?".".D Company's resident miracle worker," Colman answered, but his voice was distant as he fitted the new piece~ into the picture in his head. He made a sign to Sirocco to get Swyley up to the front of the room, and to a chorus of groans1 Sirocco turned back and suspended the briefing once again..once, blasting away..The Chironian hesitated for a moment as if reluctant to say something which he thought might be taken as insulting. Kath caught his eye and nodded reassuringly. "Well," the Chironian began, then paused again. "Most people here start to feel that way by the time they're about ten. Fm not trying to offend anyone-but that's the way it is.".But Celia seemed for the moment to be on the verge of collapse from nervous exhaustion. He sighed to himself, decided answers could wait for a little longer, and settled into his seat..Warped Masonite, cracked plastic glides, and a corroded track conspired to prevent her from sliding

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