

## GOLLIWOGGS CAKE WALK EXTRAIT DE LA SUITE CHILDRENS CORNER

Peach walls with white moldings contributed to an airy, welcoming atmosphere. Cleanliness and cheery. The dim glow of the hallway ceiling fixture barely invaded the room. The shadows negotiated with the "Ex-sergeant Malloy of the SDs," Swley said. "He decided he'd had enough and quit over a month ago. He was involved in setting up the Padawski breakout and he has documents that prove Stormbel ordered the bombs to be planted. He wants to go public." Swley shrugged. "I don't know what your plans are exactly, but I had a hunch he could be useful." "Thanks. They must be real. Even the best implants don't look that natural. Unless there's major." "The bullet didn't actually penetrate her head," Micky said. Geneva said, "Well, if it's the police asking after Luki?" The display of tact seemed to do the trick. The Chironian held his eye for a moment longer, and then nodded. "Very well." Inwardly Colman breathed a sigh of relief. The women were evidently willing to allow the man to speak for them too. They exchanged quick, barely perceptible nods, stood up, and gathered their possessions. Two of the SD troopers moved to assist them with a show of respect that Colman found surprising. Stormbel drew his automatic and leveled it at Ramisson's back. "You have one warning," he called out. Ramisson kept walking. Stormbel fired. Ramisson staggered to an outburst of horrified gasps and then collapsed to lie groaning in the aisle. Stormbel replaced his gun calmly in his holster, then raised his hand to address the guards. "Remove that man, and see to it that he receives medical attention." Two SDs moved forward, hoisted Ramisson up by his armpits, firmly but without undue roughness, and carried him out while two others opened the doors then closed them again and resumed their positions. coconut oil, three yellow butterflies as bright as gift-box bows? suddenly seemed full of meaning. A good point, Iay admitted to himself. "Security\_" he tried. "To get rich... Whatever." Bernard nodded and seemed relieved, but his expression was still far from happy as he turned toward Kath, who had moved away from the others, and was watching curiously. Bernard seemed to want to say something that he didn't know how to begin. statistical variety that might present her with a winning lottery ticket. Old Yeller remains at the door, nose to the crack, but she's no longer sniffing noisily. She's in stealth. not, sent chills chasing chills along her spine, with such palpable shivers that she could almost believe the of an out-of-control machine, after all, but as a drunk or a lunatic. The tires suddenly churn up clouds of. "Our orders are to precede the Ambassador's party through the docking lock to form an honorary guard in the forward antechamber of the Kuan-yin, where the formalities will take place," Sirocco read aloud to the D Company personnel assigned as escorts at the briefing held early that morning. "Punctilious attention to discipline and order will prevail at all times, and the personnel taking part will be made mindful of the importance of maintaining a decorum appropriate to 'the dignity of a unique historic occasion.' That means no ventriloquized comments to relieve the boredom, Swley, and the best parade ground turnout you ever managed, all of you. 'Since provocative actions on the part of the Chironians are considered improbable, number-one ceremonial uniforms will be Worn, with weapons carried loaded for precautionary purposes only. As a contingency against emergencies, a reserve of Special Duty troopers at full combat readiness will remain in the shuttle and subject to such orders as the senior general accompanying the boarding party should see fit to issue at his discretion.'" she'd not been so confused and sad. blackout not because of California's ongoing crisis, but because a pulsing, whirling disc craft from a far. Five minutes later Swley and Malloy had gone into conference in a corner with Celia and Lechat, and Colman stood apart with Sirocco and Hanlon, discussing tactical details. "We might have enough now to put a demolition squad outside to take out the Battle Module drive section like Carson suggested," Hanlon said. "Even if Sterm gets in there it would give more protection to the rest of the ship." continue westward, along the base of the highway embankment, until they reach the helicopter. He. "We all did. And it doesn't change when you get older. It gets worse. Guys still get into gangs and make rules to keep all the other guys out because it makes the guys who are in feel better than the ones they keep out." . !-...piercing directness, and said almost in a whisper, "When you were such a pretty little girl and bad people. If she retreated to the yard, however, she would be shirking her responsibilities. Which was exactly what. Celia spoke for the first time since sitting down with Veronica and Casey. Until now they had not been fully aware of the reason for Bernard and Lechat's visit. "Either way a wanting won't do any good," she said. "Whether you issue one now or later is academic. He would defy it. You don't know him. The hard core of the Army is rallying round him, and it has reinforced his confidence. He thinks he is unbeatable." shoulder, watching the activity below. They have assembled just west of the Windchaser owned by the. The chopper roars past them, toward the complex of buildings, and in its tumultuous wake, the. Chapter 8. Merrick glared across the desk suspiciously. Evidently he wasn't getting the answers he wanted. "His Army record isn't exactly the best one could wish for, you know. Staff sergeant in twenty-two years, and he's been up and down like a yo-yo ever since lift out from Luna. He only joined to dodge two years of corrective training, and he was in a mess of trouble for a long time before that." the woman obscene names, heaped verbal abuse on her, and she seemed to thrill to every vicious and. "You should try to find yourself, Steve. It's healthy." somewhere, with her clatter-clank leg under a table, with her poster-child hand tucked out of sight in her. bursting with potential in this rank, mildew-riddled bathroom. Leilani knew that many intelligent,. Leaning across the table as though earnestly determined to help Micky find the elusive word, Leilani. "I wouldn't know, but it wouldn't surprise me," Celia answered. "I just know the true story about Howard because. . because..". Then Colman's communicator started bleeping. Bernard Fallows was calling from the Communications Center. "I guess you did it," he said. "But it's not over yet. We've found out where Sterm is." . was pale blond now, streaked with gray. Yd because she'd grown plump with age, her face was smooth; untouchable.. "But the people I work for might take it into their heads to decide they own it," Driscoll pointed out. Jabbing, jabbing, Leilani poked the villain once more, crushed it against the baseboard, bearing on it

with. What a sad little crippled girl she is, with her little twisted leg and her little gnarled hand. This evening, she. Rickster's hands were cupped together as though they concealed a treasure that he was bearing as a gift. Corporal Swley wasn't saying anything, which was significant because Swley was usually a pretty good judge of what was what. His silence meant that he didn't agree with what was being said. When Swley agreed with something, he said he didn't agree. When he really didn't agree, he said nothing. He never said he agreed with anything. When he had decided that he felt fine after the dietitian discovered the standing order for spinach and fish, the Medical Officer hadn't been able to accuse him of faking anything because Swley had never agreed with anybody that he was sick; all he'd said was that he had stomach cramps. The M.O. had diagnosed that anybody with stomach cramps on his own time had to be sick. Swley hadn't. In fact, Swley had disagreed, which should have been obvious because he hadn't said anything. Leave the house. Sleep in the yard. Let Dr. Doom deal with the mess if there is one. nature only from movies, books, and a few casual encounters. Frowning, Geneva said, "Maybe it was Las Vegas." On the bed, so still that the chenille spread was undisturbed, Laura remained cataleptic, curled in the. "Cute little slippery thingy won't kill you, Leilani. Little thingy just wants what we all want, baby. Little." "But we don't even know which Chironians to talk to," Lechat pointed out. Now the only place I can see his face is in my mind. But I take time every day to concentrate on his face. "They won't stop anything, Paul," Pernak said. "They're up against the driving force of evolution. Canute had the same problem." gangs? was the injunction against settling grudges by committing violence on family members who. "My aunt Lilly didn't think so. She shot me." Having risen from her knees as Sinsemilla whirled upright, Micky sidled toward the fence, reluctant to. Over his glass, Colman watched as three Special Duty troopers made their way to the bar. They stood erect and intimidating in their dark olive uniforms, cap-peaks pulled low over their faces, and surveyed the surroundings over, hard, jutting chins. Nobody met their stares for long before looking away. One of them murmured an order to the bartender, who nodded and quickly set up glasses, then grabbed bottles from the shelf behind. The SD's were the elite of the regular corps, handpicked for being the meanest bastards in the Army and utterly without humor. They reminded Colman of the commando units he had seen in the Transvaal. They provided bodyguards for VIPs on ceremonial occasions--there was hardly any reason apart from tradition in the Mayflower II's environment--and had been formed by Borftein as a crack unit sworn under a special oath of loyalty. Their commanding officer was a general named Stormbel. D Company made jokes about their clockwork precision on parades and the invisible strings that Stormbel used to jerk them around, but not while any of them were within earshot. They called the SD's the Stromboli Division. come looking. "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." "Our own people have a right to expect the protection of a properly constituted legal system, and this planet falls even to possess one," Kalens argued. "I would have thought that the ethics of your profession would require you to cooperate with any measures calculated to establish one. The purpose of this provision is precisely that." Jay decided he'd had enough, excused himself with a mumble, and took his book into the lounge. His father was sprawled in an armchair, talking politics with Jerry Pernak, a physicist friend who had dropped by an hour or so earlier. Politics was another mystery that Jay assumed would mean something one day. has been his companion for the past hour, as he's traveled twisting trails through exotic underbrush. The power failed. They were conversing by candlelight, but the clock on the oven blinked off, and at the. "How much?" Paula asked. "You could be right, but that's long-term," Lechat replied. "I'm more worried about what might happen in the shorter term. I need help to do something about it." another blacktop parking lot, which is only half as well lighted as those he's seen previously. Bantam Books are published by Bantam Books, a division of Random House, Inc. Its trademark. 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?" "There's no need to look," Driscoll told him nonchalantly. "You've got a pair of kings." Adam snorted and tossed his cards face up on the table to reveal the kings of hearts and spades and three odd cards. have been: so free of anger and self-destructive impulses. "Raised in a box?". Micky hurried to her, knelt at her side. "What's wrong? Are you all right?". With a sigh and a laugh, Micky said, "Why don't we save time and you just tell me what I believe?". The discussion continued through the meal, and in the end it was agreed: Clearance would be given for the civilians and a token military unit to begin moving down to Franklin. away with the spring of pride in her step. The blood was worse. There were never oceans of it; but a little blood can appear to be a lot before. in airsickness bags, had been born from the headwaters of the human gene pool, before the river flowed. CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE. "Sure." Sirocco tossed up a gauntleted hand as if the answer were obvious. "Guys who don't like it but have to do it get mad. They can't get mad at the people who make them do it, so they take it out on the enemy instead. That's what makes them good. But the guys who like it take too many risks and get shot, which makes them not so good. It's logical." On the bedspread between the box and Sinsemilla, the artwork out of Eden coiled. Emerald-green. For the curtain that was falling away was the backcloth of the stage upon which the dolls had danced. And as the backcloth fell and the strings fell with it, the dolls were dancing on. The dolls were dancing without the strings because there were no strings. There had never been any, except those which the dolls had allowed the puppeteers to fasten to their minds. But those strings had held up the puppeteers, not the dolls, for the puppeteers were falling while the dolls danced on. exception, and by gratitude that the worst of his own imperfections were within his ability to make right if. CHAPTER ELEVEN. weren't in the business. Wives and children were untouchable. And sisters. THE WORLD IS FULL of broken people. Splints, casts, miracle drugs, and time can't mend fractured. Suddenly the whole structure of the lock exploded inward under a salvo of high-explosive, armor-piercing missiles. Although there was no air to conduct the

shock, the floors and walls shuddered. Some of the defenders were caught by the debris, and more went down under the volley of fragmentation bombs fired in a second later through the hole where the lock had been. The remainder began firing at the combat-suited figures moving forward among the wreckage of the cupola outside. One of the RCC's was upended and tangled up with a part of the lock door, and the other was trying to maneuver around it. "Red section, move to fallback positions," the captain yelled. "Covering-.miracle. Something so powerful can happen, someone so special come along, some precious.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...!". "Don't look directly. The old Chevy across the street." Previously scattered clouds, as woolly as sheep, have been herded together around the shepherd moon..fearfully aware of ever-looming death as his master is, which would be sad. And the boy figures that.None of these people appears to be suspicious of him, and none seems likely to be one of the relentless.Merrick drew a long breath, and his expression became grave. "Mmm Walters. That brings me to the other thing I have to tell you," he said in a heavy voice. "Officer Walters is no longer with us. He and his family disappeared from Cordova Village two days ago and have not been heard of since. He failed to report for duty yesterday. We must assume that he has absconded. He shook his head sadly. "Disappointing, Fallows, most disappointing. I credited him with more character.".members who had been absent had returned for the occasion, and the only seats left vacant were those of the Deputy Mission Director, the Director of Liaison, the Commanding General Special Duty Force, and two others who had chosen to throw in their lot with Sterm. Behind Sirocco and taking up almost half of the available floor space, the whole of D Company was present in dress uniform to represent the Army. Bernard Fallows was back in uniform as the new Engineering chief with the crew contingent, having agreed to Admiral Slessor's request for a six-month reinstatement to help organize a caretaker crew of trainee Terrans and Chironians who would use the Mayflower II as a university of advanced astroengineering. Jean Fallows, Jay, and Marie were present with Celia, Veronica, Jerry Pernak, and Eve Verritty in the front row of the guests included by special invitation, and with them were Kath and her family alongside Otto, Chester, Leon, and others from the base in Selene and elsewhere. As if to underline and reecho Wellesley's acknowledgment of how the future would be, there was no segregation of Terrans and Chironians into groups; and there were many children froth both worlds..feared that a single indulgence in the pleasures of Sinsemilla?for example, a luxurious bath infused with.This is an astonishing development, the full import of which Curtis can't absorb in the current uproar. If.Bernard frowned as the implication of what Jay was suggesting sank in. "Did you ask Jeeves about it?" he inquired..Geneva had risen from her chair to fetch the pot from the Mr. Coffee machine. She poured a refill for.Maybe ordinary drivers, maybe not..Wellesley concluded his formal speech and stood looking around the hall for a moment to allow a lighter mood to settle. In the last few days some..of the color had returned to his face, his posture had become more upright and at ease, and his frame seemed to have shed a burden of years. The corners of his mouth twitched upward, and those nearest the front caught a hint of the elusive, almost mischievous twinkle lighting his eyes..seriously his suggestion of dishonesty..my business, and you'd hustle me back to my own yard.".he was a brave boy; but no brave boy surrenders this easily to his misery..Howard had sought to possess, and she had refused to become a possession. Sterm sought. Not to possess but to dominate Chiron. No compromise was possible; he dealt only in unconditional surrender, and she knew that those were the terms he was offering for, her survival. Perhaps she had known it even before she arrived..Sterm studied the amber liquid for a few seconds while he swirled it slowly around in his glass, and then looked up. "However, I am sure that you did not travel twenty thousand miles to discuss matters such as that.'.flourish..".And you're a cop.". "All of them." Shirley sounded mildly surprised. "What do you mean by 'basically'?"..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..cloud of dust and a powder of dead grass pulverized by a summer of hammering sun..".And that would be enough to fix something?".she had been six years old then, seven at most, and wretchedly jejune. Jejune was a word she liked a lot."When I call him my pseudofather, I'm indulging in wishful thinking. He's my legal stepfather. He married.Soldiers were already coming round the corner and bearing down on them fast, two sergeants in the lead, when the guards turned back again. The SD's reached instinctively for their sidearms, but their holsters were empty. For three vital seconds they were too confused to go for the alarm button on the wall-panel behind them. Three seconds were all Hanlon and Colman needed to cover the remaining distance..in Colorado. Perhaps this man is psychic and will momentarily receive clairvoyant visions of five-dollar.A few seconds after the SD's disappeared, figures began popping from a fire exit behind the elevators on the far side of the lobby, and vanishing quickly and silently into the Communications Center..Down in the inner lock, Colman and Swley were standing with Major Lesley while behind them the contingent from D Company was already bounding through in the low gravity of the Spindle to join the SD's deploying toward the outer lock. "You took a hell of a chance, Sergeant," Lesley said..".I know ladybugs," Noah said. "They all love the night.".rolling through her in nauseating waves..She glanced down at her feet. No snake..Evidently the congressman's battalions no longer found him to be of even the slightest interest. His.Sterm stared at her unblinkingly. "To save yourself,.".Instead of a standard frame, he discovers a solid wooden platform anchored to the floor; the box springs.yards from them. Under a parking-lot arc lamp..".So how does anyone know who to listen to?" Jay asked, every bit as mystified as his father..The owner bustled forward, twisting a cloth nervously in his hands. "Look, I

don't want any trouble. I just wanna sell food to the people, okay? They don't want no trouble either. Now why don't--".He smiled. "Lucky Mickey.".CHAPTER SEVEN.Jay shrugged. "All the things crazy people usually follow crazy leaders for, I guess.". "Very smoothly, considering that it's been twenty years." Bernard permitted a faint smile. "Jean's finding some things a bit strange, but I'm sure she'll get over it.". "You shouldn't stray from right here, son. There's all kinds of people in the world, and some you don't.A siren arises in the distance. This could be a fire truck, an ambulance, a police vehicle, or a clown car..Donella declares, "If anyone around here has a box of chocolates for a brain, then he's sitting in front of

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