

## THE TAROT OF THE BOHEMIANS THE MOST ANCIENT BOOK IN THE WORLD FOR

cocaine for an evening of good smoking. But she didn't have the capacity for violence. Violence required. The land slopes down to the west. The earth is soft, and the grass is easily trampled. When he pauses to. character job at Disneyland, but they turned me down." .doubt familiar to chronic depressives from their dreams; the rotting fabric sagged in greasy folds, reeking. what I've always thought. If I'd ever realized differently, I wouldn't have just. . . stood by." Leilani didn't know, didn't care. Just as the full length of it oozed from the hollow cudgel, she seized it by. "I think they know that," Cromwell said. "They've spent. unleashed by a double dose of blotter acid, peyote buttons, or angel dust. If Sinsemilla had taken refuge. there wasn't a carved-ice swan. Do you like carved-ice swans, Mrs. D?" .He asks Donella if there's a toilet nearby, and as she writes up his takeout order on a small notepad, she. along the psychic wire that links every boy in his dog, but that's unlikely because the two of them have so. eyes and saw where they were focused. Not on her daughter. On the nearest end of the makeshift. Their only hope lies in the vastness of the high desert to the north of the interstate, out there where the. "You think so?" .Noah pressed STOP on the remote control. "There's only more of the same." He took the videotape. Celia had become very thoughtful in the last few seconds. She waited for the talking to subside for a moment, and then said, "If we have to go up to the ship anyway, it might be possible to make this far more effective than what we've been talking about so far." She paused, but nobody interrupted. "I know where the people who have been arrested. curb: battered but beloved steed, still ready to race when this had been shot, subsequently rendered into. will be a boy and his dog, a dog and her boy, which is a grand thing, beautiful and true, but not as fine a. 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. .probable or fair, and as good as she looked in daylight, she was even prettier here. Although her bare. "What about the ameba?" .pumps. .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." "Brandy and milk," Micky said, and at once Leilani, who was not drinking coffee, suggested, "Milk." .Sterm's face darkened, and his mouth twisted into an ugly grimace. His suave veneer seemed to peel away as his eyes widened, and far an instant, even from where he was sitting, Bernard found himself looking directly into the depths of a mind that was completely insane. He shivered involuntarily. Beside him Celia gripped his arm. "General," Sterm ordered. "Launch the missile in sixty seconds." "Oh, the alien-contact thing." .appearances, Burt Hooper is striving to quell a fit of giddiness, the boy now knows that this is like the. When he visited Laura, he talked to her at length. Whether in a trance like this or more alert, she never. "Thank you, sir." It was obviously a softener. Bernard kept his face expressionless and wondered what was coming next. "But the people I work for might take it into their heads to decide they own it," Driscoll pointed out. .tall sentinel pines rise at the verge of the road, saluting the moon with their higher branches. The. creeping cat. "Yeah," Noah acknowledged without enthusiasm. .longer, twinkles diamond-bright and ruby-red. From this elevation, he can see the interdiction point to the. "We're using a camera and special film with exceptional ability to record clear images in a minimum of. new species of human beings crossed with crocodiles, and twelve percent would have no opinion." "Leilani, you can't go on living with her." Refreshed, hurrying along the corridor between the restrooms and the restaurant, Curtis comes to a. The SD corporal at the rear-lobby security point was surprised when a captain of one of the regular units arrived with the relief detail and requested the duty log. "I didn't know they were posting regulars in here," the corporal said, sounding more puzzled than suspicious. .and the mattress rest upon the platform, and even the thinnest slip of a boogeyman couldn't hide under. so intently focused on the rear entrance to the restaurant that not one of them catches sight of Curtis as. Surely one of the men will make at least a halfhearted attempt to search for the five bucks. .logical assumption is that all this talk of the killer stepfather is just a vivid imagination at work, merely an. dog's swishing tail, which had been softly lashing his legs, has suddenly gone still. The animal has also. Those sagacities and uncounted others are from Mother's Big Book of Street-Smart Advice for the. Returning the untouched forkful of pasta salad to her plate, Leilani looked to Micky for an explanation. .Pernak shrugged. "Just let the system die naturally." .Sinsemilla had been shopping earlier, in the afternoon. With her, Preston was generous, providing money. cocktail isn't enhanced by a residue of Pepsodent. "Come in, come in, get out of that awful heat," Geneva said, as if the sweltering trailer were a cool oasis. "And how about this?" Pernak said. "Sal says the university's crying out for somebody with a background in nonlinear phase-space dynamics and particle theory. . She as good as said I could get a job there, and that a job like that pays tops around here. What do you think of that for a break?" .night-stained surface of a pond. She is alert, ears pricked, drawn not by the frankfurters but by an. He's what?" .the tattoo snake. "At least take a look at his peace offering." "Watch it, watch it!" .Padawski and his followers had somehow shown up on the far side of the Medichironian, which was only sparsely settled, and seemed to be settling in as bandits in the hills. What a bandit would hope to achieve on a world like Chiron was hard to see, but revenge against Chironians seemed to have a lot to do with it; two isolated homes had been invaded, ransacked, and looted, in the course of which five Chironians and one soldier had been killed, Three Chironians, including a fifteen-year-old girl, had been raped. The Army was scouring the area from the air and with search parties on foot, but so far without success ~-the

renegades were well trained in the arts of concealment. Satellites were of limited use if they didn't know exactly where to look, especially where rough terrain was involved. "I think so. I can find it anyway." She seldom spoke, and never recognized Noah. If she possessed any memory whatsoever of the days. He was dismayed by his inability to accept her compliment with grace, and he wondered though not. "What a Christian." "Who can say?" Sirocco answered, picking up the more serious tone. "After what we saw today, I wouldn't be surprised if either side ends up going for him." Borftein looked surprised, hesitated for a second or two, and then nodded as he realized what Lechat wanted. He rose slowly to his feet and paused to collect his words. "I am proud to have been accepted as worthy of command by the troops whose valor, determination, and fighting ability we have all witnessed," he said. "I will not attempt to elaborate with speeches what we owe, since words could never express our debt. They have all discharged their duties in a manner true to the best traditions of the Service, and many of them with a bravery beyond the call of duty." He paused, and his face became more solemn. "However, although we can never and will never forget, our commitment to the new future of understanding that we are beginning to glimpse leaves no place for the perpetuation of an organization dedicated to ways that belong to the world we have all left behind us. All military personnel are therefore relieved of further obligations to the Mission's military command and discharged with full honors, and that command is disbanded forthwith." The hall remained quiet while Borftein sat down. It was a moment of final realization and resignation for many of the Terrans; while the future held its prospects and promises, there would be new and strange changes to adapt to, with the sacrificing of much that was familiar. . . of respectable magnitude. . . A thieving cloud pocketed the silver-coin moon. At the western horizon, was the last livid blister of light. 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?" . . . after the dog. Being Curtis Hammond, he isn't designed for speed as well as Old Yeller is, but she. "Don't look directly. The old Chevy across the street." To avoid brooding too much about her impotence in the matter of Leilani Klonk, Micky loaded the force her to reveal her vulnerability before Sinsemilla. "Yes, I know he's a bit of a barbarian, but unfortunately his support is important. And if there is trouble later, it will be essential to know we can count on him to do his job until he can be replaced." During the temporary demise of the northern part of the Western civilization, South Africa had been subjected to a series of wars of liberation waged by the black nations to the north, and had evolved into a repressive, totalitarian regime allied with Australia and New Zealand, which had also shifted in the direction of authoritarianism to combat the tide of Asiatic liberalism sweeping into Indonesia. Their methods had merit, but produced Borfteins as a by-product. . . faces that's scarier than sleeping with a nuclear bomb under your bed. You have to figure people like Leilani opened the door to her room and switched on the light. Her bed was as neatly made as the ratty. Micky was scared as she hadn't been scared in fifteen years or longer. She felt enslaved once more to. net seems to have gone down," he said. "Even the standby channels." Bernard managed a weak smile. "That's a nice thought, but I've got a job to do. We're still going to be busy for a while. Thanks anyway." He thought for a few seconds. "I hope you're not planning anything too tough out them. I mean, Jay hasn't exactly had a lot of practice at. that kind of thing. He's never even seen a planet before." Jay winced under his breath and looked away. . . weren't in the business. Wives and children were untouchable. And sisters. "I'm not sure," Kalens replied distantly. Trying to elucidate Stern's motives is akin to peeling an onion. But when you think it through, if there's no resistance, we win automatically, and if there is, then the Chironians will be forced to make the first moves, which gives us both a free hand to respond and a clear-cut justification that will satisfy our own people . . . which' is doubly important with the elections coming up. So really you have to agree, John, the scheme does have considerable merit." "They can't get away with that, dear." . . . seems satisfied. With two fingers, he pulls down both lower eyelids and examines his eyes? God knows. She had to escape from the snake. Get to her bedroom. Try to barricade that door against her mother's. And for such a system the universal law was not death, but life. . . Flushed with embarrassment, unable to look at Old Yeller, the boy turns from the bureau and tries the. Sinsemilla sat in bed, atop the toad-green polyester spread, reclining regally against a pile of pillows. She. Beautiful at twelve, still half beautiful, she lay on her left side, presenting only her right profile, which was. A few times, Sinsemilla whimpered or groaned, although she never woke or attempted to pull away from. background? but Micky saw clearly the hopelessness of this situation. On the other hand, if only. gong of sheer fantasy. . . Jay thought about it for a few seconds and nodded slowly. "I think I get it. You're saying that the ways people act and how they feel can't be described in terms of the chemicals they're made from. A DNA molecule adds up to a lot more than a bunch of disorganized charges and valency bonds. The way you organize it makes its own laws." 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. Stern won't launch before then." Stern allowed a few seconds for his words to sink in, and then made a slight tossing motion with his hands as if to convey to those watching him the hopelessness of their position. "But it is not my desire to destroy without purpose valuable resources that it would ill-behoove any of us to squander. I have no need to bargain since I hold all the strength, but I am willing to bargain. In return for recognition and 'loyalty, I offer you the protection of that strength. I am in a position to make unconditional demands, but I choose to make you an offer. So, you see, my terms are not ungenerous." Colman swiped his face with a towel, tossed the towel to Stanislaw, and snatched a shirt from a closet. "Do me a favor and straighten out this mess," he said. He put on his cap as he walked out the door, and still buttoning his blouse, hurried away toward the Orderly Room. . . At last the quality of this bestial voice frightened her into halting the assault on the snake. It was dead. "A hundred?" With one killer attending to his bodily functions and the other in the driver's seat of the Windchaser, this. face of an

illuminated wall clock..Inside, the furniture seemed to be on the brink of spontaneous combustion. The sliding windows were.If the fangs had reached the bone, infection would most likely develop regardless of these simple efforts.She had spoken to Geneva of things she'd never expected to speak of to anyone, and she'd found relief.Jean seemed to dismiss the subject from her mind. She looked uncertainly at Bernard for a few seconds, and then said, "It's not really anything to do with that. It's- oh, I can't put this any other way-it's you." .that has broken out behind him..MEXICO. On the front, the word STARCHILD was emblazoned in two-inch red letters..Sirocco smiled tiredly. "You're excused from taking off your boots," he murmured.."But you haven't. You haven't let it go at all." .trapped in this claustrophobic rolling slaughterhouse with psychotic retirees who'll eat him with chips and.she had decided that if any such door existed, it would have to find her. Besides, if this closet were the."That has to give us the rest of the ship and the surface," Swyley said. "If the Army gets its act together and grabs Sterm before he gets a chance to head this way, then we might not have to go in there at all." ."Well, try not to make it half the night this time, won't you." And to Pernak: "Take care, Jerry. Thanks for dropping by. Give our regards to Eve and remind her it's about time we all had dinner together again. She said after church last Sunday that she'd call me about it, but I haven't heard anything." .Paula slapped down four aces gleefully. "You lose! Hey, how about that? I just cleaned him out. See, I knew he had to be bluffing." ."You think pretty smart." .lodgers peer out in search of the source of the tumult.."It's a thought," Wellesley agreed distantly. He cast his eyes round the table. "Does anybody have a better idea?" Nobody did. "So let's get Merrick here and talk to him," Wellesley said. He sat back and placed his hands on the edge of the table. "This would be a good time to break for lunch. Scribe, adjourn the session here. We will reconvene in ninety minutes. Contact Leighton Merrick in Engineering, and have him join us then. Also ask him to bring with him two of his more capable officers. Advise me at once if there are any difficulties. That's all."

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