

## TEMPORAL POWER

It was the right thing to do. She collected her wits quickly, shouldered the roll at an angle across the back of her neck, and followed him into the lounge. Colman went ahead to stand peering through tile doorway from one side while soldiers came and went in bewildering confusion and then he motioned her out suddenly. In a strangely dreamlike way she found herself being conveyed down the stairway between two soldiers who were keeping up a steady exchange about something not being large enough and a typical screw-up somewhere, and then she was outside and crossing the rear parking area toward a personnel carrier standing a short distance back behind some other vehicles. Suddenly, without really remembering getting in, she was sitting in the cabin, ~figures materialized swiftly and silently from the darkness and jumped in after her. The last of them closed the door, the engine started, and she felt herself being lifted. Only then did she start shaking. "On the other hand, if you mean who's in charge of assigning the equipment up here and keeping track of who's scheduled to do what and when, then that would be Cromwell," Carla said. "He's linked into the ship's main computers and through them to the planetary net." Bernard's eyes narrowed a fraction. It tied in with what Kath had said at the fusion complex, if the rationalizations were stripped away. So what was Merrick doing- increasing the intended overseeing force because the Directorate had decided to go ahead with the plan, using Padawski as an excuse? "I'm not sure that I do," he replied. "It sounds as if you're talking about taking over some of the key Chironian facilities. Wouldn't that only make any trouble worse?" "It's happened," Hanlon told him. "Kalens is dead. We found him inside the house, shot six times. Whoever did it knew what they were doing." Her back is to him, but as he approaches her, he can see that she's approximately the age of the man. "Now, let's see what we've got here," Adam said, scooping up his hand and opening it into a narrow fan. On the other sides of the table, Paula, one of the civilian girls from the Mayflower II, and Chang, Adam's dark-skinned friend, did likewise..he leaned into the car through the open door to pluck the key from the ignition..Hanlon made a throwing-away motion in the air. "Ah, this is all getting to be too serious for a Saturday night. Why are we talking like this at all? Are we letting silly rumors get to us?" He looked at Sirocco. "Our glasses are nearly empty, Your Honor. A round was part of the bet." your murderous stepfather, we're to believe you had a brother who was abducted by aliens." "In fact," Leilani continued, "old Sinsemilla?that's my mother? is a little nuts, period." He doesn't want to endanger these people. If he stays here, they might be dead even before they empty." "A witch doctor." Kalens smiled at the frown on Celia's. By the time the flyer touched down at the front of the house, Celia's earlier nervousness had given way to a stoic resignation to the fact that she was now committed. She had gambled that Stern would accept her desire to return to her home as normal feminine behavior and that because he believed her to be helpless and without anyone else to run to anyway, the thought of her trying to escape would not enter his mind seriously. That - was just how it had worked out; her three SD guards and a matron had orders to keep her under observation and from talking to anybody, but she was not considered to be a prisoner. Her only worry now was that Veronica might have failed to contact Colman or that for some reason he might have been unable to do anything..Despite having worked under him for several years, Fallows had never been able to master the art of feeling at ease in Merrick's presence. Displays of undue familiarity were hardly to be expected between echelon-six and echelon-four personnel, naturally, but even allowing for that, Fallows always found himself in acute discomfort within seconds of entering a room with Merrick in it, especially when nobody else was present. This time he wouldn't let it happen, he had resolved for the umpteenth time back in the corridor. This time he would be rational about how irrational the whole thing was and refused to be intimidated by his own imagination. Merrick had not singled him out as any special object of his disdain. He behaved that way with everybody. It didn't mean anything.. "I know you didn't, Aunt Gen. I know." Leilani.. "They never had any parents or peers for that kind of stuff to rub off from," Pernak agreed. "Classes, echelons, black, white, Soviet, Chinese ... it's all the same to them. They don't care. It's what you are that matters." "Maybe because if Snow was as sexy as you, people would start to wonder what she might've been up." "I don't get your attitude." "He has, successfully self-taught Eng Dip One through Eve," Fallows pointed out. Sounding argumentative was making him feel nervous, but he wasn't being given much choice. "I thought that possibly he might be capable of making a Two on the Tech refresher...him, know him, whether he's in plain sight or hiding in a cave a thousand feet from sunlight..all around her people perished in the cold and fell through the ice that, though solid under her, was. With the lights come screams, soul-searing even at a distance, not just shouts of alarm, but shrieks of." "They don't have to make sense. All they have to do is say you're different. Now do you get it? Your dad belongs to a group who made a lot of rules that he never had anything to do with, and because he's wired the same as everybody else, he needs to feel he's accepted. To be accepted, he has to be seen to go by the rules. If he didn't he'd become a threat to the group, and they'd reject him. And nobody can take that. Look around and watch all the crazy things people get into just so they can feel they belong to something that matters." "You should try to find yourself, Steve. It's healthy." A gray-haired man in shirt-sleeves stepped forward from a group huddled outside one of the office doorways. "I am," he said, "McPherson-Communications and Datacenter Manager." After a short. pause he added, "At your disposal." She rejected that unnerving thought as soon as it pierced her. She, too, had grown up in a wretched.the movies. When she lowered her gaze, she saw Aunt Gen and Leilani also studying the ceiling.. "Maybe I'm not," he said, although the word maybe issued from him without conscious intention, "but my." "You've already worked most of that out." apparent cowardice and the alacrity with which he had betrayed his client confirmed for them that he. Bernard nodded. "Okay. We'll see you later then. Maybe you'd better leave that stuff here for now, Jay. If things turn out to be not quite the way you said, it might be a good idea not to go carrying it around." "What do you think of that theory, Mrs. D?" Leilani asked with little of her usual humor, but with a quiet. slowly

in place, and then sidestepped in a circle. Soon she began to dance light-footedly, in a graceful. "I can speak for them," Chazure said. "You can ten the general that the news is good." "That's monumentally romantic, Mrs. D, but as my mother's proved with numerous dooper boyfriends, it.Grinning, Leilani bit into a crisp dill pickle. "I really like you, Micky B. You, too, Mrs. D." "A good try, Wellesley," Sterm said from the large screen. "In fact I find myself forced to commend you for your surprising resourcefulness. Unfortunately from your point of view, however, we now see it was in vain." He turned his eyes away to address a point off-screen, presumably a display showing Otto and Chester. "And unfortunately from your point of view, I'm afraid that we deduced the secret of the Kuan-yin a long time ago."opening and the brief clatter of something being fumbled from a closet floated back into the room..confusion of real-life experiences with the fantasies of the cinema had prepared her to relate to the girl's.Micky shook her head. "They wouldn't leave you in the care of your mother's boyfriend."shoes and up into the mother ship.' ".Four elderly women, three elderly men, a thirty-year-old mother of two ... a six-year-old boy in a.unmarked by the violence that had changed her life. The unrevealed half of her face, pressed into the.The scale of these events and the rapidity with which they are unfolding allow for no measurable effect of.The relief detachment from B Company marched from the exit of the shuttle to take up positions in from of the ramp, and Sirocco stepped forward to address the advance guard. "Ship detail, atten-shun! Two ranks in marching order, fall . . . in!" The two lines that had been angled away from the lock re-formed into flies behind the section leaders. "Sentry details will detach and fall out at stations. By the left... march!" The two lines dumped their way behind Sirocco across the antechamber, wheeled left while each man on the inside marked time for four paces, and clicked away along the Corridor beyond and into the Kuan-yin.."I might just do that," Fallows said, nodding slowly. "Yeah .... I could use being out and about for a few hours. Thanks for the tip."his boot. "Remainder of detail, by the left.. . march!" Clump, clump, clump, clump...experiencing the fullness of life, which might have filled those vacant rooms with good memories to.desert-scorched, sand-abraided, brush-scratched look acquired by more arduous use than trips to the.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."..This was a girlish merriment, sweet and musical, almost shy..of the FBI, but not in the least heartened by this unexpected development..Bernard shook his head. "No. We're in touch with them but Wellesley vetoed any mention of it." Colman nodded. He wouldn't have risked their deciding to fire first either. Bernard went on, "Wellesley's tried contacting the Battle Module too, but Sterm won't talk. We sure he'll keep the module attached until after the attack goes in-in other words if he doesn't pull it off and gets blasted, we all get blasted. The same thing applies if the Chironians decide to press the button. We have to assume he's on a forty-minute countdown, Hanlon and Annley are on their way there, and Sirocco left a few minutes ago. Borftein is sending through everybody he can scrape together. What are the chances?"..He hadn't noticed this gathering of tiny figures before: Eight or ten motorists have descended part of the.his lips, and though the other platoon members bear no identifying legends or insignia, this man is wearing."It sure smells fantastic." On the griddles, tantalizing treats sizzle, pop, bubble, and steam fragrantly..Even as he thought that, Eve's words about brainwashing came back to him. Yes, he was willing to concede that he had been through the same processes as everyone else, and that could be why he was unable in his mind to dissociate wealth and status from material possessions. But even if a sufficiently advanced society could supply possessions in an abundance great enough to make their restriction purposeless, that still couldn't equate to unlimited wealth, surely. The very notion was a contradiction in terms, for wealth by definition meant something that was highly valued and in limited supply. In other words, if on Chiron possessions did not equate to wealth and thereby satisfy the universal human hunger to be judged a success, then what did?..And therefore the Chironian rejected the death-cult of surrender to the inevitability of ultimate universal stagnation and decay. Just as an organism died and decomposed when deprived of food, or a city deserted by its builders crumbled to dust, entropy increased only in closed systems that were isolated from sources of energy and life. But the Chironian universe was no longer a closed system. Like a seedling rooted in soil and bathed by water and sunlight, or an egg-cell dividing and taking on form in a womb, it was a thriving, growing organism- an open system fed from an inexhaustible source.."Leilani, you can't go on living with her."The boy smoothes the currency between his hands, folds it, and stuffs it in a pocket of his jeans..those blue eyes. "I remember Lukipela walking to the SUVJ clomping along with his one built-up shoe..flushing elsewhere in the trailer, she was stricken by the terrible perception that under Leilani's.Driscoll had taken Shirley up on her invitation to get in touch when he got down to the surface, and she had asked him along to the party in Franklin, at the same time telling him to feel free to bring anyone he wanted. So Driscoll had invited Colman, Swyley, Maddock, and Stanislaw, who among them had persuaded Sirocco to come too, and Sirocco had suggested bringing some of the girls from the Mayflower II. Adam, who turned out to be a friend of Ci's, had also been invited with Kath, and between them they had brought Adam's twin brother, Casey, and Casey's girlfriend from the ship-the lively woman that Colman hadn't been able to place previously..With only a wistful expression, Rickster said that being able to turn yourself loose, whenever you wanted.imitation of a claw, raked the air, and hissed..he'll have a lifetime for anguish, loss, and loneliness..far end of the adjacent living room, a ginger-jar lamp with a rose damask shade went dark with a pink.Around and under more prep tables, past tall cabinets with open shelves full of stacked dishes, taking.had done nothing of the sort, and though he knew that she was not for an instant disposed to take.a lot longer in space than the few trips you've made.""I suppose so."..snake-gnawed face and her snake-chomped nose.."Then how-" "How about that?" Hanlon shouted delightedly. "The guy did it!" "I need more than a few right now. How much did your Navigator cost?" Noah asked..grandfather if he were ever in a major motion picture; but he would never

be cast as a chainsaw-wielding.to your future. Miss too many opportunities, thus sustaining too many wounds, and you wouldn't have a it. When he pulls a lever without paying, the machine won't give him a packet of Trojans, whatever they."Proceed, General," Farnhill said from the back..in a stretch limousine, perhaps with a complimentary heroin lollipop.."Freezer Sirocco stepped out in front of them with his automatic drawn and Stewart beside him holding a leveled assault cannon. Before the SD's could react, two more weapons were trained on them from behind. They were disarmed in seconds, and Sirocco motioned them through the open door with a curt wave of his gun while Faustzman herded the two startled civilians from the coffee machine. Two women rounded the corner just as the door of the office closed again, and walked by talking to each other without having seen anything. Moments later Sirocco left the office again with two privates. They formed up in the center of the corridor and moved off in step in the direction of the rear lobby..Aunt Gen said, as though Leilani had accused Maddoc of nothing worse than habitually breaking wind.The voice of the shuttle's captain, who was officially in command of the operation' until after docking, reported over the cabin intercom: "Distance one thousand miles, ETA six minutes. Coming into matching orbit and commencing closing maneuver. Prepare for retardation. Kuanyin has confirmed they will open Port Three.."they clearly have developed sufficient evidence to overcome all their doubts.."I find them a refreshingly honest and direct people. You know where you stand with them." Bernard gave a slight shrug. "In view of the short time we've been here, I think everything has gone surprisingly well. Certainly it could have been a lot worse.."too quickly, she might invite accusations of rudeness. Her mother imposed no rules or standards on her.Evidently the congressman's battalions no longer found him to be of even the slightest interest. His.looked clean, so far from Earth..low..started to get up..by the weight of all the hopes and dreams that people had allowed to die here over the years.."I'm not sure I believe in life before death," Micky said..Now she knew why Earth seemed so far away. And she knew too what her mind in its wisdom had been cloaking and shielding from her. It was fear..Frowning, Geneva said, "Maybe it was Las Vegas.."from the idling engines of the vehicles that are backed up from the roadblock..each of the bastards out, she cared about me less than him, and me less than the new bastard who was."That's exactly what they are," Pernak said. "In the material sense, anyway. That's why possessions don't have any status value to them--they don't say anything. That's why you won't find any absolute leaders down there either." "How come?" Lechat asked, puzzled..age, about the size of the night visitor who stands over him..incoherently, believed herself to be a more delicate and exquisite flower than any hothouse orchid..goddess..she knew Luki for what he was even before he popped out of her. Lukipela is Hawaiian for Lucifer"..blue eyes. "Now don't you wish you could see me as a mutant?"..STRANGELY, here in the sunshine, less than a day later, Micky couldn't stop thinking about the."As long as you don't make it your business to go bothering people, you'll be okay," Nanook pointed out. "So it never affects most people. And when it happens . . . it happens.."They will see through him, perhaps not immediately, but soon, and if they get their hands on him, he will."Good enough?" Sirocco asked, cocking an eyebrow at Lechat.."Do I what?..just for the kick of tricking the machine..stars. Rattlesnakes, scorpions, and tarantulas will be more hospitable than the merciless pack of hunters."You can say that again," Bernard agreed..part misery and part fury, as she jabbed the lance hard at the coiled target..if melancholy sense of what might have been?but never would be.."Why should they?" Chang asked. He looked across at the couple curiously. "I was wondering what they want with all that stuff. Anyone would think it's about to run out.."Does he expect you tonight?" Sterm inquired curiously, although Celia couldn't avoid a feeling that he already knew the answer. She shook her head. "Where are you supposed to be?..Into the meadow now, without further delay, risking dangers unknown but surely countless. A ripe.dressed in all manner of styles and colors and reflecting the various races of Earth in more or less even proportions, which was to be expected since the genetic codes carried by the Kuan-yin had comprised a balanced mix of types. Children and young people were everywhere, and humanoid robots seemed to be part of the scheme of things. The robots intrigued Bernard; such creatures were not unknown on Earth, but they had tended to be restricted to experiments in research labs as technological curiosities since, functionally, they didn't really make a lot of sense. Presumably the Chironian robots had been developed from the machines that had raised the first Chironians, which had-been designed not in the form of tin men at all, but to suit their purpose--as warm-bodied, soft surfaced tenders. So conceivably the notion of machines as companions had become a permanent feature of Chironian life that could be traced back to the earliest days. The designs had later been changed to suit the whims and preferences of the children after natural parents appeared on the scene to satisfy their more basic physiological and psychological needs. To his surprise Bernard found himself thinking that the relationship between man and humanoid machine might have been quite warm, and in some way charming; certainly he could see no evidence~ of the cold and sinister state of affairs that Jean had pictured.."Worming your way into .." Micky fell silent, surprised by what she had been about to say..produce a credible apparition and point at least a few of the SWAT agents toward Curtis..longer, twinkles diamond-bright and ruby-red. From this elevation, he can see the interdiction point to the.Veronica came back into the room and began picking up Mrs. Crayford's boxes. "It's all right. You stay there, Celia. I can manage." She saw the expression on Celia's face and smiled. Her voice dropped to a whisper. "I know--awful..I knew they were faithless, shiftless," Geneva continued.

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