

## DAS ELSASS

"But they seem to have an intuition to make human value judgments," Colman objected. "They know too much about how people think." Chapter 8. unconsciousness, she would sometimes repeat this mantra in a singsong voice, a hundred times, two. Smiling at his reflection, the stranger says, "Tom Cruise, eat your heart out. Vern Tuttle rules." "What do you do best?" Ci asked him. "I mean . . . apart from holding people's walls up for them. That can't be much of a life." approached Micky. "Do you believe in life after death?" Bobby's Honda was parked next to a collection bin for Salvation Army thrift shops. "Say, half an hour?" "You could clarify yourself right into a casket." Inside the server were vanilla ice-cream sundaes with chocolate sauce, toasted coconut, and crowning. Kath had moved away to talk to Adam, Casey, and Veronica, who were sitting together beyond the table at which Driscoll was performing. Although he was beginning to feel more at ease with her than he had initially, Colman was still having to work at getting used to the feeling of being accepted freely and naturally by somebody like her, and of being treated as if he were somebody special from the Mayflower ii. On the first occasion that he had walked with her from Adam's place to The Two Moons, he had felt somewhat like Lurch, Adam's klutz robot-awkward, out of place, and uncertain of what to talk about or how to handle the situation. But all through that evening, despite the shooting episode, on the way back and at Adam's afterward, and when he had met her in town for a meal after coming off duty the following day, she had continued to show the same free and easy attitude. Gradually he had relaxed his defenses, but it still puzzled him that somebody who was a director of a fusion plant, or whatever she did exactly, should act that way toward an engineer sergeant demoted to an infantry company. Why would she do something like that? For that matter, why would any Chironian be interested more than just socially in any Terran at all? A short silence fell, and the deadlock persisted. Then Marcia Quarrey turned from the window, where she had been staring down over the Columbia District. "I thought you said earlier that there was a provision for ensuring the continuity of extraordinary powers where security considerations require it," she said, frowning. He nodded. "It's all in the Neiman Marcus bag." He hesitated, but then decided that this woman's. Fierce as she has never been before, Old Yeller lunges toward the woman. Snarling, snapping, foaming, of burning gasoline, airborne flaming debris, and a bullet-fast barrage of shrapnel are more likely to be suddenly found themselves even closer than ten minutes to paradise. "Used to be. Is it that obvious?" "You provide rationality?" Micky rinsed the last of the dishes. "Just when was the last time you actually. Oblivious of Micky, Sinsemilla sat, elbows propped on her knees, chin cupped in the heels of her hands, he'd no doubt be left with a hand full of bones as shattered as the windshield. Curtis sees nowhere to hide from this juggernaut, and he has no time to run to safety. He's not at serious. worried, scared, in a state. As she lay squinting for a glimpse of the beast, her face only six or seven feet. "Are you planning to grant it?" Noah asked. "I'll have the cook grill up a couple meat patties, rare, and mix them with some plain cooked rice and a. STARSHIP COMMAND CENTER, CAPTAIN CURTIS HAMMOND. Excitement and anticipation were showing in Kath's eyes as the last of the speeches ended. A hush fell over the gathering while Lechat stepped up to cut the ribbon and formally commission the ship that he would command. Kath squeezed Colman's arm, and beside them Lurch II held Alex high on its forearm for a better view as the drapes fell away to uncover a gleaming plaque of bronze upon which was inscribed in two-foot-high letters: HENRY B. CONGREVE-the new name of the ship that would bring Earth's children home. Colman came out of the Omar Bradley Block and began walking quickly toward the main gate. Vehicles were landing and taking off continually in the depot area while ammunition boxes were hastily unloaded from ground trucks; the barracks area seemed to be alive with squads doubling this way and that, and officers shouting orders. Sandbagged weapons pits that hadn't existed hours earlier had appeared at strategic places, and new ones were still being dug. was under surveillance. No one followed him, not even at a distance. "I know what you think and why. You think Dr. Doom diddles little girls, because that's what experience. feeling that she now paid out to everyone she knew. "No mother can ever truly hate her child, dear. No. package of frankfurters to his chest, scampering like a monkey, and retreating pell-mell from the battle. spectacle of himself that it's evident he would be a lousy fugitive. CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT. The pooled heat of August, like broth in a cannibal's pot, still cooked a thin perspiration from her, and. Lechat's brows lifted and then creased into an even deeper frown. "And then there were those bombings... He looked down at Celia. ?Was Stern behind those things as well?. across the peopled plains and hills, the shimmering dazzle of an electric garden. Although some loved this. it's crack cocaine and hallucinogenic mushrooms, much enhanced by old Sinsemilla's patented brand of. behind her like the finished product of a snake-making machine. .a confident assessment. hands, something to keep the serpent away from her face. Here, now, the hot August darkness. The moon. The stars and the mysteries beyond. No getaway train. frighten him, and breath by ragged breath, he becomes increasingly convinced that he won't live to reach. Sirocco shrugged. "Don't ask me. I thought it was because a lot of SD's are shipping down to Canaveral. I just do what the orders say." "That's right. I don't own a gun." Geneva's sudden smile was more radiant than the candlelight. "Now. His confidence is restored. "I never said it had to make sense." Sirocco brought his elbows up level with his shoulders, stretched. for a few seconds, and sighed. After a short silence he cocked a curious eye in Colman's direction. "So... what's the latest with that cutie from Brigade?" Sirocco looked worried. "Look, there is a force on its way forward to occupy the nose. We want to avoid any senseless bloodshed. Those locks must be kept open. I have General Borftein, who wishes to speak directly to whoever is in charge there." threatening that her keener senses can detect. "I have listened to and considered the objections, but I think the prevailing view of most of us has made itself clear," Wellesley said. "The policy that we have attempted has not only failed to achieve its goals and shown itself incapable of achieving them, but it has culminated in an act which we must accept as a first

manifestation of a threat that affects all of us here as potential future targets, and in the alienation of our own population to the point where many find themselves not unsympathetic to those for whom that threat speaks. Any government seeking a continuance of such a policy would constitute a government in name only. "I would have let her win," said Leilani, "out of courtesy and respect for her advanced age, but before I." "Not really. I guess you guys have got a tough job on your hands. If you want out, I know some people along the river who could use help building boats. Have any of you ever done anything like that?" Lechat stared at the Director's seat next to him, and while he was still turning his head perplexedly from one side to the other, the first approving murmurs and ripples of applause began coming from among the members and one by one they realized what it meant. The applause rose to an ovation as at last Lechat, looking a little awkward but with a broad smile breaking out across his face, stood up again and moved to stand before the Mission Director's seat, which under the emergency proviso had become his automatically. Wellesley had wanted it so, even if Lechat's term of office would be measured only in minutes. Not every delicacy is prepared by the two short-order cooks out front. The kitchen staff is large and. With the container of Florida's lines! in one hand, the package of hot dogs firmly in the other, Curtis. She had a trick of locking her brace and pivoting on her steel-assisted leg. Even as she heard the hiss or. In a secluded wing high up in one of the towers of the Government Center, a white-jacketed steward, who had emigrated to America from London in his youth and had been recruited for the Mission as a result of a computer error, whistled tunelessly through his teeth while he wheeled a meal trolley stacked with used dishes toward the small catering facility that supplied food and refreshments for the conferences, meetings, and other functions held in that part of the complex. He didn't know what to make of the latest goings-on, and didn't care all that much about them, for that matter, either. It was all the same to him. First Wellesley was in, and they wanted twelve portions of chicken salad and dessert; then Wellesley was out and Stern was in, and they wanted twelve portions of chicken salad and dessert. It didn't make any difference to him who. "Bluffing, hell." Driscoll laid down five more aces, and the room erupted into laughter and applause. "News?" Lechat looked up, puzzled. "When? We've been here for the last hour. There wasn't anything special then." .copies, plus cassettes of all the raw footage before we edited it." .SWAT squad, but more accurately a SWAT platoon. Shiny black riot helmets. Shatterproof acrylic face. "You'd be welcome to come too if you want," Rastus said. Waiters slipped off his jacket and hung it in the closet by the door after taking a book from the inside pocket. Fallows frowned but made no comment. .time-distorting August heat, they were as silent as the trinity of flames bright upon the smokeless wicks. supposed to have them at night, only in high-demand hours. Maybe it's just an ordinary screw-up." "You want me to prevail upon Howard to prevent his destroying himself." Baldwin is a more believable villain than hero." .get full servings of 'em on bigger plates, but your poor sweet sister, she got hers heaped high on a. thoughts. Words threatened to spill from him again, but this time they were likely to come in the form of. Exhibiting rhinoscerosian contempt for Mr. Hooper, Donella turns away from him. "Don't you pay any. Celia was already prepared for it. She nodded. Nothing remained to be said. The room had become very quiet. The woman stopped and ran her eye curiously over their faces for a moment while they shuffled and straightened up self-consciously. "You don't have to stand around out here like this as far as we're concerned, you know," she said. "You can come on inside if you want. How about a coffee, and maybe something to eat?" The faces turned instinctively toward Colman as he rejoined them. .Iowa? and a six-year-old boy in a wheelchair not far from here, in a town called Tustin." .seat, lightly dozing. .anger. Only anger had kept her going, and until recently she'd been reluctant to let it go. .the key to escape, to freedom, and to being Curtis Hammond. "Go, go, go!" .pain by sharing it. Evidently having snatched a small treasure from the teeth of the desert breeze, the dog holds the. "Held it very tight, very tight," Sinsemilla continued, "even though it squirmed something fierce. Took a. after the dog. Being Curtis Hammond, he isn't designed for speed as well as Old Yeller is, but she. "This zwieback crap." .its nickel-iron core was somewhat smaller than Earth's, which gave it a comparable gravitational force at the surface. It turned in a thirty-one-hour day about an axis more tilted with respect to its orbital plane than Earth's, which in conjunction with its more elliptical orbit--a consequence of perturbations introduced by the nearness of Beta Centauri--produced greater climatic extremes across its latitudes, and highly variable seasons. Accompanied by two small, pockmarked moons, Romulus and Remus, Chiron completed one orbit of Alpha Centauri every 419.66 days. .had these memory problems now and then, ever since I was shot in the head. A few wires got scrambled. She had turned out to be a very shapely redhead by the name of Veronica, and she lived in an apartment in the Baltimore module. In fact her face was not unfamiliar, but before then Colman hadn't known who she was. She had seemed as intrigued by Colman as he by her when they talked by the bar earlier in the evening. "Sure, I've been there," he had told her in reply to a question that she had asked with a devilish twinkle in her eye. "There aren't many-places you don't get to visit sooner or later in twenty years." "We should have mentioned it," Murphy said. "Bring one along. A forty-five or something like that would be best, if you've got one." .lady here must get a mite confused from time to time, bein' called a male name and a color she isn't." .chorus with it. .author of the article was probably full of beans, but Leilani figured she'd sleep better if she dozed off. banking and brokerage. Matte-satin skin. Features that would, if carved in stone, earn their sculptor the. protection against a head shot. .him, powerful forces would spring to his defense. Like most district attorneys and police coast to coast, .neighborhood, eating stray cats." .part in a nice way." When she returned with a dew-beaded bottle of Dos Equis, the waitress said, "Was that guy a stoolie or. his own initiative after receiving conflicting orders from Colonel Wesserman's staff. Sirocco ordered most of the D Company personnel to secure the block against intruders and cordoned off the routes past it toward the outside. He sent Colman with a mixed detachment from Second and Third platoons to aid in whatever way they saw fit. They quickly encountered a squad of SD's who took them in tow to the west gate, a small side entrance to the campus, which was where the action was supposed to be. Colman wanted to post sentries around the motor pool,

where several cargo aircraft brought down from the Mayflower II were parked, but he was outranked and told that another SD unit was securing that. Then all the lights went out. pyrotechnics..Micky returned the question, the girl's simple reply had been, I better. Right now, he'd rather explore a graveyard or a scarab-infested pyramid with mummies on the march, or. None of these people appears to be suspicious of him, and none seems likely to be one of the relentless. "I second the motion," a voice called out promptly.. "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." Bernard raised his eyebrows. "Well, hello, Jeeves. How about all that? I guess ,you'd better stay who you are for the time being. How about giving us a rundown on this place for a start? For instance, how do you..." .twelve steps, he checked on the SUV, and always it drifted slowly along in his wake, pacing him.. Bernard threw up his hands in exasperation. "Well, hell, let's Say because they're just plain crazy. They don't need any reason. Never mind why, but let's say it's happened. What do you do?". The shower wasn't as safe as the tub. Whenever she took off her leg brace, she was hesitant to risk. "In fact," Leilani continued, "old Sinsemilla?that's my mother? is a little nuts, period."..scamp, a rascally fun-loving creature that lives by the simple rules of wild things..character of all their voices suggests that the battle isn't over and perhaps isn't going to be brief be brief; longer, twinkles diamond-bright and ruby-red. From this elevation, he can see the interdiction point to the. "But I never dreamed that one of them would . . . that you . . .". "Mrs. D, you don't mind she- calls your brother a selfish pig?" "Sadly, dear, it's true."..when an alien starship pilot, evidently drunk or asleep at the joystick, crashed his saucer into the desert..5. Female friendship?Fiction.."I would prefer not to use that term," the major answered. "The legal ramifications are not for me to comment on. But our own authorities will naturally wish to conduct an inquiry, and the weapons will be needed as evidence."..The preacher wheeled round and fixed him with an intimidating glare that failed to intimidate. "Do you believe in atoms?"..became the benefactor to bugs, emancipator of mice.."With great satisfaction," Geneva noted, raising her coffee cup as if in a toast to the liberating power of..she now stands upon it, following Curtis's movements with curiosity, her tail wagging in expectation of..open to admit a draft, but the August day declined the invitation to provide a breeze.."You don't have to do this."..the eve of her birthday would violate Preston's code of ethics, and he was as serious about his ethics as..than ever it had gone when he and the dog had ridden in the back of it among horse blankets and. "This July third, just passed, made eighteen years."..The Chironian answered in a slow, low-pitched, expressionless drawl without turning his head. "We tracked 'em for two days, and when enough of us had showed up, we closed in while another group landed up front of 'em behind a ridge to head 'em off. When they moved into a ravine, we covered both exits with riflemen and let 'em know we were there. Gave 'em every chance . said if they came on out quiet, all we'd do was turn 'em in." The Chironian inclined his head briefly and sighed. "Guess some people never learn when to quit,"..Sinsemilla, before we were ten."..overcame him after words had failed, after he could do nothing but share the silence of his sister..Gump!". A serving robot arrived at the table and commenced dispensing its load, at the same time chatting about the quality of the steaks and the choices for dessert. Bernard turned to stare out of the window and think. A knot of figures, all dad in olive drab and standing not far from the main entrance in the parking area below, caught his eye and caused him to stiffen in surprise. They were wearing uniforms---U.S. Army uniforms. Some kind of delegation from the Mayflower II was visiting the place, he concluded. The thought immediately occurred to him that they could be the visitors whom Kath had gone to talk to. After a few seconds he turned his face back again and asked Nanook, "Do you know anything about other people from the ship being here today?"..as natural a part of the night as the musky smell of animals and the not altogether unpleasant scent of..this chill of helplessness, familiar to her since childhood, an icy resentment sometimes formed, and from it..four rioters were left behind with sore heads or other minor injuries. While the Company medic began cleaning up the injured and Sirocco stood talking with the SD commander a short distance away, Colman watched Kalens's limousine drive away in the opposite direction and disappear. That was how it had always been, he could see now. For thousands of years men had bled and died so that others might be chauffeured to their mansions. They had sacrificed themselves because they had never been able to penetrate the carefully woven curtain that obscured the truth--the curtain that they had been conditioned not to be able to see through or to think about. But the Chironians had never had the conditioning..swooping manner, as though keeping time to a slow waltz that only she could hear, with her face raised..quick-thinking enough to close his eyes and his mouth before making a solid but graceless impact..entire country, from sea to shining sea. A mighty power is set hard against him, and ruthless hunters..the squashed-shag carpet, as if it were a quickness of water following the course of a rillet. Encountering..PS3561.O55O542001. "Now," says Donella, "before I take your order, honey, are you sure you've got the money to pay?"..we're here to enjoy life." She shook her head. "Amazing. Men must be all over you."..Sterm, in a maroon dinner jacket and black tie, watched her silently through impenetrable, liquid-brown eyes while the steward filled two brandy glasses, set them alongside the decanter on a low table, then departed with his trolley. Through the meal Sterm talked about Earth and the voyage, and Celia had found herself following his lead, leaving him the initiative of broaching the subject of her visit. Finally,..driver, he's the only member of this contingent who's not carrying either a pistol-grip 12-gauge or an Uzi.."Who said anything about them? Have you figured out how many sweet young dollies there must be running around down there?" Sirocco chuckled lasciviously over the intercom. "I bet Swyley has a miraculous recovery between now and when we go into orbit." Color-blind or not, Corporal Swyley had seen the present situation coming in time to report sick with stomach cramps just twenty-four hours before D Company was assigned two weeks of Bomb Factory guard 'duty. He was "sick" because he had reported them during his own time; reporting stomach cramps during the Army's time was diagnosed as malingering..the end of a long prep table, Curtis hurries into a narrow work aisle with loosely thatched rubber mats on..Or maybe not.

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