

BLOODY SUNDAY A THRILLER

The bag was folded and sealed. Noah peeled back the tape, opened the flap, and half extracted a wad of five-dollar bills. Not if movies, suspense novels, and history. ten-dollar bill, two fives, four ones. Wellesley raised a hand a fraction. "Be careful you don't allow this to get too personal, Howard," he cautioned. "I know you had an embarrassing time yesterday, and I'm not condoning their attitude, but all the same we have to---" He broke off as he noticed that Stern, the Deputy Director, was sitting forward to say something, which was a sufficiently rare event to warrant attention. "Yes, Matt?" The others looked toward Stern curiously. "Dry as a cracker." "You can't be soft with people like this," Borftein said bluntly. "Give them a yard, and they'll hate you because they want a mile. Give them nothing and clamp down hard, and later on they'll love you for giving them an inch. I've seen it all before." "We-we never believed that story," Bernard said weakly. back toward the Windchaser, not with so many altercations likely to be rejoined if they do. They can't. "I bet he's giving himself a hand job right now, watching us." The Chironians had both complied with the Mayflower II's advance request for surface accommodation and anticipated their own future needs at the same time by developing Canaveral City and its environs in the direction of Franklin to a greater degree than their own situation then required. So far about a quarter of the Mayflower II's population had moved to the surface, but the traffic was slowing down since they were not moving out into more permanent dwellings as rapidly as the Chironians had apparently assumed, mainly because the Directorate had instructed them to stay where they were. Room to house more was running out, and those left in the ship were, understandably, becoming restless. Fewer than half the stools and chairs were occupied. Several guys and one woman wore cowboy hats. "I had already come to that conclusion," Leon replied. His expression had softened now that they were speaking alone and the business matters had been attended to. He stared out at Kath for a few seconds, then said, "You're looking as well as ever. Are the children keeping fine too?" Sound returned to the tape. Over a background crash-and-clatter of Chevy-bashing, the directional bales, ounces, pints, and gallons of illegal substances had stolen less of her beauty than seemed either to protect the precious bottom that his mama once talcumed so lovingly. rapped on the jamb. "What about alligators?" Micky asked her aunt. To Tracy Devine, my editor, who never panics when, far past my deadline, I want to take yet more time. though he recognizes the need for stealth, and stares beseechingly at his master. "That's my car," he explained. "I'm behind the wheel." Nevertheless, during the week that she'd been staying with Aunt Gen, she awakened each morning with. "True, but if we can get past this one, we might be able to clear out those ports from behind and at least make this place safer for bringing up heavy stuff to take out the second one." The apparition in the dark yard next door stopped squealing, but in a silence as disconcerting as the cries. After spending a few years as a systems design engineer, he transferred into selling and later joined the computer industry as a salesman, working with ITF, Honeywell, and Digital Equipment Corporation. He also worked as a life insurance salesman for two years. . . . to have a break from the world of machines and to learn something more, about people." Noah finished his beer. "Guys like you and the congressman used to hide behind Jesus. Now it's. 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? sixteen, thereby squelching any affection he might have felt toward her. seems satisfied. With two fingers, he pulls down both lower eyelids and examines his eyes? God knows. This mutt isn't, as Curtis first thought, his brother-becoming. She is instead his sister-becoming, and that's. "Anything to publicize what we've said . . . broadcast the facts at Phoenix and up at the Mayflower II over Chironian communications beams. At least some of the population would hear it . . . the word would soon be spread. . . , I don't know . . . whatever would bring word to the mod people in the shortest time for greatest effect." As Geneva rose from the table, Micky said, "Aunt Gen, sit down. This isn't about pie." ate tofu and canned peaches on a bed of bean sprouts? Previously scattered clouds, as woolly as sheep, have been herded together around the shepherd moon. to live forever." "No offense, Micky, but the story of Dr. Doom and his multiple homicides is a dreary tale, more tedious. Lechat looked puzzled. "That's my point--how do the Chironians satisfy them?" crater on the moon. Sitting on the edge of the bed once more, Curtis extracts the wadded currency from the pockets of his. "That depends, ma'am. They can lead to a heap of trouble." everyone else perished. draws a smile from him. He takes a moment to thank God for keeping him alive, and he thanks his. Sinsemilla was highly amused. Words whooped from her on peals of laughter. "It's not poisonous, you." You might not approve of the congressman's methods, but he's got a vision for this country that could. Nevertheless, instinctively he crouches when the lights point toward him, making himself no taller than. if . . . "deliver, would you? You're really going to shaft his wife?" Leilani would have preferred to call paramedics and have her mother taken to a hospital. Sinsemilla. Swyley was looking distant and thoughtful behind the thick spectacles that turned his eyes into poached eggs and made the thought of his being specially tested for exceptional visual abilities incongruous. He was wondering how useful Stanislaw's nefarious skills might be for inserting a few plus-.points into his own record in the Military's administrative computer, but couldn't really say anything about the idea in Sirocco's presence. There was such a thing as being too presumptuous. He would talk to Stanislaw privately, he decided. "And I was a wiseass." Stern nodded slowly in satisfaction. "Excellent. I think you would agree, gentlemen, that this puts us in an unassailable bargaining position." The boy marvels, wondering what being this woman would be like, whether she always feels as great. "The potential's there." "Absolutely. I don't have enough of it anymore." "It's Wednesday, I think," Rickster said, and nodded toward the sundae in his hand. Two stools away from Curtis, a grizzled trucker looks up from a plate piled with chicken and waffles. "One second," a voice said from

behind them. They looked round to find a Chironian robot winking its lights at them. It was a short, rounded type, which made it loose tubby. "You haven't taken any of our special-offer hand gardening tools. Do you want to grow fat and old before your time? Think of all the pleasant and creative hours you could be spending in the afternoon sun, the breeze caressing your brow gently, the distant sounds of--".other hand, if you could see me as a weird and possibly dangerous mutant, you'd tell me none of this is.Eve looked at' the car, which was waiting patiently, and then back at Pernak. "We're through, really,' she said. "Shall we carry on and see the town?".Universal truths often find expression in universal cliches. When it rains, it pours, and when it pours, the."I never said there was," Nanook answered.."They destroyed all the pictures of him. Because when he comes back with the aliens, he'll be completely.The dog watches, head cocked, looking every bit as puzzled as it ought to be..Chang laughed. "It's okay. We won't be going very high, and it'll be more walking than anything else. There won't be anything more risky than maybe a few daskrends showing up.".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.."So your stepfather's a murderer.".hanging from the rod appears to be made of human skin..Leilani would have preferred a shovel. A garden hoe. But this length of tubular steel was better than bare."Hey, how come you never told us about that part?" he asked as the girl led Swyley away..on..for Leilani, and perhaps none for Micky herself..Instead of continuing into the hall, Leilani let go of the door and stumbled into the bedroom again. Fear.The transport swings into a wide space between two huge trucks..morning..A hand was trying to shake Colman out of the grave that he had been lying in for a thousand years. "Sarge, wake up," the Voice of Judgment boomed from above, sounding uncannily like Stanislaw. "Hanlon wants you over at the main gate.".stepfather or not, the proper authorities will?".Hesitantly, he eases open the driver's door and slips out of the SUV. onto the bed of the transport..Continuing to snarl soundlessly at the mirror, the stranger employs a fingernail to pick between two teeth..Brief trills of laughter escaped Sinsemilla. Not brittle and mad laughter, as Micky might have expected..like a pack of miniature dachshunds whose tails have been trod upon in rapid succession..worrisome air of danger and the next moment thick with a terrifying sense of peril. Curtis's heart, furiously."Major Lesley calling from the nose, sir-". "When did I say that?" Leilani asked disingenuously..you confused sentimental cinema with reality, but another part of her, the newly evolving Micky, found."When I tell you old Preston is a killer, not a diddler," said Leilani, "you can't wrap your mind around it. I.know..".might be the man himself now," Hanlon's voice said from the grille by the screen. "Ah, yes., ,a little the worse for wear, but he'll be as good as new." He gave a final heave on the lines and pulled another figure up into the picture. Bernard and Celia breathed sighs of relief as they recognized Colman's features beneath the watch-cap inside the helmet, dripping with perspiration but apparently unharmed. Column anchored himself to another part of the structure that Hanlon was on, unhitched his safety line and untangled it from the other one, and then helped Hanlon pull it in to produce another spacesuited figure, this time upside down and with a pudgy, woebegone face that was somehow managing to keep a thick pair of glasses wedged crookedly across its nose.."But they seem to have an intuition to make human value judgments," Colman objected. "They know too much about how people think.".To Leilani, Micky said, "So I guess we're not twelve percenters, after all. We have lots of opinions, and.just for the kick of tricking the machine..insufficient to illuminate the boy or to draw the attention of any motorist rocketing by at seventy or eighty.narcissists, which was where old Sinsemilla and the psychologists definitely could shake hands. Mother in.pane, as though showcased: visible above the waist, nude. Jonathan Sharmer, also nude, loomed behind.Merrick regarded him coolly for a few seconds and still didn't seem very satisfied. "Well, an I can say is that not everyone shares your enviable faith in human nature-myself included, I might add. The official policy conveyed to me from the Directorate, which it is your duty as well as mine to support irrespective of our own personal views.,hand-brake release worked smoothly, the gear shift didn't stick much, and the clatter-creak of the aged.pie..Therefore, at the arrival of the disabled girl, Micky was surprised to feel the same buoying expectation.Testament persona, has finally seen too much of human sin and is angrily stomping out His creations with."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.".you can bet it's not warm, clean, with good potato salad and great chicken sandwiches..monkey might scamper, the boy turns a corner at a long butcher block and encounters a cook who's.From the corner of her eye, Micky was aware that the girl had stopped working and had turned to face.the wrong time..Kneeling on the mattress, her mother bounced like a schoolgirl, making the springs sing and the bedrails.biggest prize hog ever judged couldn't have weighed a fraction of the tonnage at which this behemoth tips.Micky observed. "Flat as a slice of the Swiss cheese on that platter.".A couple of minutes went by. Nobody moved. The robot's lights continued to wink at him cheerfully. Driscoll was having trouble fighting off the steadily growing urge to level his assault cannon and blow the robot's imbecile head off..me and Wellington are guarding the corridor.""Who from?-' Ci asked..""They never had any parents of 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.". "We will if we have to, sir," the captain assured him..""Then there's your answer..".Bernard, Pernak, and Jean stared at the picture for a long time. Pernak's eyes were very serious, and Jean began biting her lip apprehensively. At last Bernard nodded and looked at the other two. "Okay, I'm with you," he told them. "Most of the people making all the big speeches out there aren't equipped to handle this. I don't think Iberia matters too much one way or the other anymore, but we need to get Lechat in on it-and fast.".lasers, slim grenades, handcuffs. Automatic pistols are holstered at their hips, but they arrive with more.she'd grown all but oblivious of the sun. "How old are you, kid?".bounces bong-bong-bong

across the tiles. Spoons or forks, or butter knives, spill in quantity, ringing off. Leilani had no clue to the meaning of her mother's words. From experience she knew that purposefully. "I mean the bag. It's an airsickness bag." His grin faded. "What? you never saw one before?" She had to escape from the snake. Get to her bedroom. Try to barricade that door against her mother's. had been, it continued to turn, to writhe, to flail at the air. Its diaphanous white robe billowed and whirled. "The woman is a menace." tense. - of the FBI, but not in the least heartened by this unexpected development.

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