

once seed, now
soil
L in rest
in labors,
in fore

The last seed she swallows.

Graphic: A garden moderately grown.

Go on to the next page.

Graphic: A garden well grown. King Brady stands in it.

*bur of
may
no crown*
~~Include power-wire crown in his hair.~~ (50)

Go on to the next page.

The man
~~The old man stands by the pool.~~ She gives him fruit from
the water-gardens: one piece, then two, then three.

Go on to the next page.

She sees —

It is Tam Rosse who stands in front of her, holding the fruit she has given him. She reaches out her hand to touch his nerve-scars, but they are gone. And the hand she draws back is young and unwrinkled, with stars glowing on her dark skin, and as she touches him again, her whole body is freed of old age, young, as if her life and death so far has been a dream.

*dreamed
the past
agonies? her
dream before
dying?*

Go on to the next page.

They share the fruit between them, priestess and ^{ship's} ~~ship~~ ^{man} master, with nothing known between them yet but desire and purpose, and all the future to make real between them. And they hear a child's delighted laughter and see a baby playing by the tanks of water, playing with red flowers, a child with a power-crown of wires in his hair.

[Here begins Inattention & Stupidity--]⁹¹ Oh, wow.

"You got anything to trade?" The old man looks from one to the other. "I got a whole spacin' ship to trade."

The priestess does something to the stars on her body. For a moment she glows like a girl-shaped lightbulb. In the glare, Tam Rosse blinks and looks around the place where they're standing. Maybe one time it was a standard airlock/decontamination room. Not big--freight goes into the ship on the lower-G levels, not up here at 1.0--but after the supply ship and the lifeship, it looks as big as the Carlsbad Caverns.

In comparison with the ship, the old man looks good.

Go on to the next page.

The place looks like a galactic garage sale. An amazingly old hardshell vacuum suit with the front smashed in, looks like it got hit with a cannon and then used for laser practice. Laser practice right here in this airlock. Sear marks scar the walls around it. The red-stenciled gee ^{sign} mark--1.0--has been outlined in laser marks.

Fall right out of the wall. Holes in the side of the ship, Arabic numeral shaped, a great space tradition. Ho, ho. Great. Tam wishes he was spacehabbed.

There's a big box of some kind, transport pod maybe. Painted on its side, an arrow and FRAGILE! ALIGN ARROW WITH GRAVITIC AXIS. Not unless the ^{arrow} gravitic axis goes sideways. There's half a witchstick engine without its witchstick.

The decon equipment is hanging off the ceiling now, looking like the last person who used it was John Glenn.

The priestess switches herself off. Tam Rosse sees little green specks in the blackness.

Go on to the next page.

"Um," says the priestess. (Everything else black.)

Go on to the next page.

Tam Rosse couldn't have put it better himself.

"You Favored to him?" the old man asks her.

What she says next chills Tam Rosse.

Go on to the next page.

"No," the priestess says. "I asked him for a favor, but he refused."

(Graphic--priestess is sad but stern)

Go on to the next page.

No, I didn't--

He couldn't have.

His skin chills.

Go to page 33.

Genetic codes--

Is that what the ceremony involves?

Forget that. Is that what she wanted from the seeds?

Is that what she wanted from, uh?

"Hey, look, I'm really sorry. I thought you wanted . . . I mean, I've been in prison for a long time, I didn't want to get just completely distracted . . . you're a pretty girl . . . I was . . . "

. . . really stupid . . .

". . . you know?"

Go on to the next page.

The priestess sashays over to him and lays her hand on his arm. He can't help noticing the curve of her hips.

I was supposed to um. I had an obligation to um.

If he trusted the airlock walls, he'd bang his head against them.

Oh, lady, just ask me again.

But no one asks a favor twice.

Go on to the next page.

Tam has to ask K.B. for a favor — otherwise no air, food, water for him.

Page 77

"Why don't you ask the old man a favor?" ~~he asks.~~

~~This is not a suggestion.~~

The old man reaches up to scratch his head. No one has lice in space. The sanitary conditions in the ship probably make the airlock look good.

They probably make Circe look good. Tam knows about lice from Circe.

And if he asks a favor from this man, he owes him loyalty.

If necessary, he owes him his life.

I'm not the one he needs, lady. It's you. You can turn this ship into a garden if you want. You can fix the algae--

"Lady, don't you want to trade favors with him? He's the one who has the ship."

She meets his eyes.

"He has nothing to trade with me."

Go on to the next page.

"Old man, I ask a favor from you."

(Graphic)

Go on to the next page.

"Favors, eh? What I got for favors?" The old man holds his candle high, goes peering around the mounds of junk. "Got some food--san'wiches--somewhere--you hungry, boy?" He is. There was nothing to eat in the supply ship. The old man picks up something on a plate, takes a bite from it. It crunches like very old bread or very thin plastic. "Not that." More bending and peering. "Got some--hah!" He straightens up, carefully holding something heavy by its stem.

"Got some wine."

Go on to the next page.

The wine goblet is made of some heavy metal. Tam Rosse hefts it.

"For you," the old man says to the priestess. "Someone like you. We was expecting someone once. Stars on her skin."

The priestess looks into the cup. She smiles. Can't be so bad if she's smiling, can it?

"Ceremony wine," she murmurs. "Would you like to try it?"

Tam nods. Sure. He can smell the stuff from here. Half Old Granddad and half rocket fuel. Aged in the ^{goblet} glass. How long ago were they expecting that priestess?

"This, ah, won't, um, hurt me . . . "

"Oh, no," she says.

Through the teeth and over the gums, close the nose and here she comes . . .

"Of course," the priestess says just as he chugs it,
Go on to the next page.

"Most people have a very large meal beforehand."

(Graphic like comic-book "Wham!")

Go on to the next page.

Somebody's trying to get his attention. All he wants to do is snuggle up against this nice soft witchstick engine.

"Boy, get me something to eat," the old man says. ~~Actually,~~
There's a
~~he makes~~ a sound like an atmospheric re-entry vehicle breaking the sound barrier, about three feet from Tam's eardrum. The roar enters Tam's left ear and ricochets around the skull, shattering neurons as it goes.

This is only a headache . . . a BIG headache . . . But that
WINE . . . Ought to have done the old man a favor by drinking it
. . .

Go on to the next page.

Favor . . .

Tam Rosse sits upright. His skull comes completely loose, caroms around the airlock, strikes painfully against several large and heavy objects, and comes to rest miraculously balancing on top of his neck. Tam weaves back and forth, trying to keep it balanced.

Favor.

The old man has asked him a favor. ^{Get me something to eat. Food is a} When he does it, they're ^{favor} even. ^{Always}

No years of servitude to the old man. No defending the ship against Venusian algae pirates.

Just something to eat. What could be easier.

Go on to the next page.

"Just serve me a sandwich and some tea, boy." The old man shuffles over to the com unit on the wall and taps it with a long fingernail. "I am King Brady," he says to the com unit. "Show this boy down to the little kitchen."

An iris in the wall creaks open. Flickering streaks of red light point the way down a corridor.

Couldn't be easier. If he could just find where he put his legs . . .

Tam staggers off down the corridor.

Go on to the next page.

Puzzle: Tam finds his way to an elevator. Something interesting should happen with this elevator. It shouldn't be something that prevents Tam from getting to the kitchen--the ship has got this order and it's going to carry it out. However, the elevator can do something characteristic of semi-sentient machines--get Tam to play a simple game, discuss phenomenology with Tam, tell Tam corny jokes, ^{boast how long it's been since it was inspected,} whatever you like. Establish that the elevator has a literal mind and a sick sense of humor. "Yes, I would have let you out whether you won the game or lost it," the elevator might say, "but you wouldn't have played the game if you knew that . . . nobody likes to play games with an elevator, they just stare at the little numbers . . . "

The elevator "floors" are fractions of gravity: 0.85G, 0.6G. Tam begins to float accordingly.

The elevator can take a long time to get him to the right floor, which is a very low fraction of G.

Go on to the next page.

Tam floats through a short spiral corridor, where nothing happens, to a section of the ship that is independently rotating.

This is the kitchen, another puzzle.

It is a 1.0G environment (look at the notice painted on the wall) but very small, so that Tam suffers from Coriolis effects and from differential gravity. (See Appendix A, four pages from Harry Stine's Handbook for Space Colonists, which discusses these.) This means that:

- As things get further away from the floor, they get lighter. Water vapor will rise and not fall again, because it is so light on the ceiling. (I think; I'll check this out. It's neat anyway.) If the teakettle is allowed to boil long enough, the room gets very foggy.
- Tea can be poured only at a certain height from the floor. Otherwise it floats upward.
- Tea can be carried only at a certain height from the floor or in a covered cup. (Tam will need the covered cup for the later trip back through the low-gravity spiral corridor.) The covered cups should not be too easy to get.
- The effects of gravity change depending on the direction Tam goes in. If he walks in the direction of rotation, apparent gravity is higher; if in the other direction, it is lower.
- To get to anyplace in the kitchen, Tam must move in a clockwise spiral when he's going in one direction and a counterclockwise spiral in the other.

Go on to the next page.

To put on tea, Tam has to do the following things in this order:

- Find the teakettle. (Sentient closets. "You're getting warmer!" "Get out of here!") Kettle can do a Carmen Miranda imitation--"I'm out of the closet!"--or be somewhat lonely and snively--"Oh, I'm SO sad that I'm locked up in the closet. I'm SO sad that I'm locked up in the closet. Oh, I'm SO glad that you let me out of the closet . . . "
- Find out where the water is. Put water in the teakettle and keep it there.
- Put the teakettle on the stove. "That's all right," mutters the teakettle. "Everybody does it. Closet to stove, stove to closet, I'm used to it . . . "
- Find out how to light the burner or functional equivalent. (Tam can ask the teakettle, which may or may not lie about it.) Light the burner. Once the water begins to bubble, the teakettle begins to murmur, "I'd forgot how it was . . . such an incredible sensation . . . Little bubbles . . . moving inside me . . . I feel so WARM . . . "
- Get a sandwich from the refrigerator. ("You are in a maze of twisty little sandwiches, all alike . . . ")
- Get out of the refrigerator. (Let's not have him turn into King Brady inside the refrigerator, but save it for the journey back.) This is a timed puzzle, since the water in the teakettle boils in a certain time. When the water

boils, the teakettle screams orgiastically. "Ee! Eee!
Eeee! Oh, don't stop," etc.

- Turn off the teakettle before the room fills with steam.
- Find a covered cup, take off the cover, pour tea into it,
and replace the cover.

All this time he is blundering around because of the effects
of the wine.

Go on to the next page.

With tea in cup and sandwich in plastic wrap, Tam gets out of the kitchen into the corridor. The red flickering lights have gone away . . .

Of course. King Brady told the ship to show him the way to the kitchen. It didn't say to show him the way back.

If he used a covered cup, he can get as far as the elevator before he has to say, "I am King Brady." Upon which he turns into King Brady.

If he didn't use a covered cup the tea promptly becomes little globs of hot liquid floating everywhere. He has to catch them or go back and brew another cup of tea. To do this, he has to get back into the kitchen, for which he has to say, "I am King Brady" and turn into King Brady.

When he says the magic words, his head immediately clears (there is still Coriolis effect in the kitchen, if he's there, but he recognizes it for what it is and knows how to deal with it).

In any case, he finds himself an old man, ~~clear-headed,~~ with a sandwich and a cup of tea at the elevator.

KB hears e ship—

e ship says, "I'm dead..."

KB fn e capt hee a dead ship ch v a capt,
h resrs m— h lls m e mst do gd 4L,

pur crown = Captain

Goal / V+A / pur crown.

Goal / L+L / pur crown.

de she dream evryte a e sex p n l?

V+A - sexual

L+L "

Efr Advor

I+S - Comedy

K Brady fr e captain. bec a dead ship ch v a captain.

L 5 years - L lls me mel do gd 4x, bec 13

N enf 1 12, 4 12. L refs m, hfs m.

at T ans in e pur crown.

Here begins Violence & Anger--

"You got anything to trade?" The old man looks from one to the other. "I got a whole spacin' ship to trade."

A whole ship-- Tam tries to look calmer than he feels. A Greatship for the taking.

What would it give him? Personal safety. If he can get himself declared captain of this ship, the ship will spacehab him. A man who can stand vacuum can get back into Circe--and bring prisoners out with him.

Who will he take first? De Reszke, Thompson, Matsuyama, Ngelele, Jabarat. The swords of the Uprising.

With such men, and a Greatship, he can do anything. He can take Circe. Space, he can go up against Earth.

Go on to the next page.

The Priestess already has her powers. He has done that for her. She owes him a favor.

He looks at the girl, a teenager in fancy dress streaked with blood. She stares back at him defiantly. But she'll play by the rules. Her kind do.

He jerks his hand at her. "This girl owes me a favor. I'll give you her favor. She'll fix the ship for you."

The old man holds his candle high. (Where did he get that candle? Where did he get the fat for it?) The candle wax spatters the girl's breasts. She does not flinch.

Go on to the next page.

The old man chuckles. "Pretty," he says. "Favor, eh?"

Tam Rosse holds onto the girl's arm. "My favor in return?"

The old man looks mad-shrewdly from under his eyebrows.

"Co-captain with you." Give me half your power. It is a big gamble. But if the old fool wants his ship, he's going to give half of it away. And if Tam has half, he'll get it all.

"Are you captain?" the girl asks the old man.

"Captain," the old man wheezes as if somebody has told him a joke. "Ship," he says. "The ship knows me." (See page 50.)

The girl twists her arm away from Tam Rosse's hand. "He doesn't own my favor," she says. "He took by force what he took. He owns nothing."

Go on to the next page.

He grabs her with his good hand, pins her against the wall with his left arm and his half-useless numbed hand. The dagger releases itself from its sheath into his good hand. He holds it against her throat. "I own you," he says, "or you own nothing."

She laughs. "I own my powers," she says. Pain lances through the palm of his hand as if it had been crushed and the fingers curl in spasms. He cannot control his arm; it jerks out, throwing the dagger away. He falls to the dirty floor, rolling on the arm, trying to massage some of the pain out of the muscles. It is worse than when the trusty broke his arm. He sees one of the girl's feet by his head; a small foot, dark-skinned, stained with dirt and blood and glowing with stars.

"I did what I had to!" he gasps. "Good men are in prison--dying--"

Then someone kicks him in the head, and it all goes black.
Go on to the next page.

Graphic: blackness.

Go on to the next page.

Blackness. His gut aches and he can taste blood. When he sits up he drifts briefly off the floor and his head swims with Coriolis effect. He's much nearer the axis of the ship, probably in one of the storage areas in the spokes of the wheel.

The human-life areas are toward the one-G section of the wheel, further out from the axis. There's a water center at one-G, maybe more than one in a ship this size; that's where the priestess will be. From his build, old Brady lives in low-G, maybe at .5 or .25. King Brady with his power-wire crown in his hair. Brady will be somewhere in low-G.

He wonders if the priestess has exchanged favors with Brady yet. I told her what to ask for, he thinks bitterly.

Go on to the next page.

Ask for half the ship.

Ask for Ship's Favor. (See page 50.)

If the ship is protecting her, Tam Rosse hasn't got a chance against her.

He moves his arm, and the heartsblood dagger slides down from its sheath into his hand.

Someone with a sense of humor has left him his weapon.

Go on to the next page.

Sheathing his dagger, he feels his way cautiously into the blackness.

If he goes to lower gravity, go to page 99.

If he goes to higher gravity, go to page 100.

NOTE on the puzzles that follow this: Each one of them has something to do with reciprocation. In no way should they be a chance for Tam Rosse to look merely intelligent or to "win". Their theme is the painfulness of necessary things.

Puzzle:

If he goes to a lower-gravity area, he is simply going to get lost in blackness. He gets hungrier and thirstier, with nodes coming up that say ever-stronger variants of: "His throat is dry with thirst. His stomach is cramped with hunger." This is not just an Infocom-style counter; this is painful. Whatever he does, he doesn't win anything.

He is tormented by spyflies. (See page 124.)

Perhaps they could kill him. Some spyflies are armed with nerve poisons. He doesn't know whether they can't, or whether she is playing with him.

"I did what I had to," he shouts. "If you knew how they're suffering in Circe--suffering all over this spacing system!--you'd help me."

He catches one of the spyflies and crushes it in his good hand. He waits for the tingling and the numbness to spread up his arm.

Nothing happens.

He is very thirsty.

Puzzle:

If he goes to a higher-gravity area, for a long time he is going to get lost in blackness. He gets hungrier and thirstier, with nodes coming up that say ever-stronger variants of "His throat is dry with thirst. His stomach is cramped with hunger." This is not just an Infocom-style counter; this is painful.

He is tormented by spyflies. (See page 124.)

Perhaps they could kill him. Some spyflies are armed with nerve poisons. He doesn't know whether they can't, or whether she is playing with him.

He catches one of the spyflies and crushes it in his good hand. He waits for the tingling and the numbness to spread up his arm.

Nothing happens.

He is very thirsty.

And still he is lost in blackness.

Eventually there is a small light and he gets to . . .

Go on to the next page.

The kitchen.

WRITE ME

It has a combination-lock, the answer to which may be something clever-reciprocal (see page 98).

The kitchen has food that is irradiated. It has a refrigerated storage area. It has a microwave cooking area. It has a cooking area that heats food with fire. It has other storage areas. Most of them are not physically near the kitchen; they are accessed by computer.

There can be puzzles around getting food. They should not be too complex.

The major puzzle is that when he gets the food and eats it, eating hurts. When he chomps down on something, he feels as if he is being eaten. When he drinks, he feels as if he is being drunk. There is no way around this.

Because of this pain, he cannot eat or drink enough to satisfy him. He is still terribly hungry and thirsty. (In other words, even if he solves the puzzle, it leaves him in exactly the same situation as if he had not. Is this frustrating? We could let him die if he didn't solve the puzzle. But then he'd miss the lifeship, which would be a shame.)

The kitchen then "shuts down" and he can't do anything more with it. He goes out into the corridor again.

Go on to the next page.

More blackness. More chance for puzzle.

He finds his way into the lifeship, as per next page.

The corridor becomes flexible, something like walking in the inside of a flexible tube. Ahead there is a light in the endless corridors. It is white, cool, a kind of light he has seen before.

He pauses at the open door.

The ship of the Fertile Worlds is smooth and white inside, brightly lit, like the inside of a star's egg.

At the center of the sphere, in coldsleep, lies a girl.

She is encased in a half-moon of what seems like ice. Sparkles of silver ray out from her body. Her skin is the dusky color at the edge of twilight on the Fertile Worlds, and on it, faintly, glow stars. Piercing her right ear is a silver earring in the shape of a sickle moon.

If he goes in, go on to the next page.

If he doesn't, send him around the blackness again and keep offering it at intervals until he does.

Go on to the next page.

To initialize her powers, he knows what he must do. No time for delicacy. Tam Rosse reaches through the "ice" and rips the earring out of her ear.

The half-moon of ice turns into water, rivulets flowing down into the surface of the egg-ship. There is a flash of great heat, a warmth and wetness. Tam Rosse breaks into a sweat. The girl opens her eyes and reaches up her hand to her bloodied ear.

Go on to the next page.

To initialize her powers, he knows what he must do.

The "ice" is not ice, but it is cold, jellylike on his bare skin. Her body slips under his. He holds her down on the slab, roughly, his left arm with its half-useless hand pinning her across her shoulderblades. He needs more hands than he has. For four years he has thought of the first woman he would have after prison. A Pallas woman, perfumed in a thousand places. This girl is cold and unlubricated, like an iced rubber glove. With the icy cold white light and the icy jelly, it's like making love to the dead in a morgue.

Go on to the next page.

He sees a sliver of her eyeballs under her partly closed eyelids. He comes in a spasm of disgust, remembering the loveless penetrations of prison. For the first time he feels he will never escape from Circe, from what Circe has done to him.

He rips out her virgin's earring and throws it onto the floor, taking pleasure in the savage action. A globe of blood swells in the ice near her ear, then spreads.

The heat circuits cut in as he fastens his jumpsuit. He begins to sweat, smelling his bodystink over the cool neutral air of the lifeship. The half-moon of ice dissolves, rivulets flowing down into the surface of the egg-ship. Her blood flows with it, down in a watery delta into the lifeship. The lifeship will use it. That's how it is, thinks Tam Rosse. We all get used.

The girl opens her eyes and reaches up her hand to her bloodied ear.

Go on to the next page.

To initialize her powers, he knows what he must do.

He sees himself doing it. He reaches through the cold-jelly ice and sees another man in red grabbing a sleeping girl, jamming her up against the wall of her compartment. He is hungry. He is thirsty. He wants to stuff his mouth with the ice, there is water in it and nutrients. But he cannot do what he has not done before. He can only hold her down on the slab, roughly, his left arm with its half-useless hand pinning her across her shoulderblades. And flickering in front of his eyes, another man holds another girl down.

Look at the man . . . Go on to the next page.

Look at the girl . . . Go to page 114.

Look at them both . . . Go to page 113.

Go on to the next page.

He feels himself, elbow to elbow with himself, both of them pumping at the girl's unresisting flesh. Then there are three and four of him. He smells himself. He bumps up against them, him; he smells their, his stale sweat and sex-stink, a hundred men sweating in loveless sex.

He is hungry. He is thirsty. Are they all hungry and thirsty too?

He is his own delusion, a ghost of himself so strong that he no longer knows which of him is live flesh, which is ghost.

Go on to the next page.

He cannot stop himself, because he is only one of a hundred of himself, and all their actions have been fixed. He no longer knows which one he is, he has lost himself in the crowds of himself.

Look at the man . . . Go on to the next page.

Look at the girl . . . Go to page 114.

No single person can ever stop him, not himself, no, no one. He is only one of so many, and all of them drive themselves into this woman and call their need some political name, saving the Uprising, saving their friends or themselves.

Go on to the next page.

There are thousands of him and of her crowded into this place. When he focuses on one, the others are blurred, but when he moves his eyes, there is another, always another, always at the center of his vision. Every moment of his rape of her is represented, always, somewhere in this little room.

Go on to the next page.

Always, somewhere in this place, he will be deciding to initialize her powers. Always, somewhere, he will just have seen the gleam of her eyes under her eyelids, have taken pleasure in his savage rape of her. Always, somewhere, he remembers the names of his friends and the necessity of the Uprising, always the nights in the prison and the woman of Pallas. Always, somewhere, he is hungry. He is thirsty. He is cold. Always. Somewhere. Forever.

###

They are becoming part of one another, a dazzling ballet, the two of them, he the attacker and she the victim, or he the victim, he doesn't know. He holds her down on the slab, roughly, his left arm with its half-useless hand pinning her across her shoulderblades. He is in her power.

He jeers at himself.

You went back into her ship! Where she has Ship's Favor!

Her ship will protect her now.

Go to page 105.

Graphic: Blackness.

Go on to the next page.

He feels himself but through her. Her mind is shrieking in panic but her legs and arms are floppy, they cannot move. He is caught in her flesh, unable to fight back. He cannot even raise his eyelids. He smells himself, stale sweat and sex-stink, rank in every breath she takes, then his arm clamps clumsily across her throat and he cannot breathe.

What is happening? It is some priestess-magic, something she's doing to his mind. It's flashback. He is himself, and her, and himself four years ago. A teenaged political prisoner, the first night in the cages on Circe, held down by four men while a fifth rapes him.

Bitch, stay out of my mind!--

He slaps her, hits her across the face, and he tastes blood in his mouth. He thrusts into sticky, rubbery flesh, and feels his insides tear and the blood flow. He feels his breasts, no, hers, crush against ribs. He can't see. He can't breathe. He can't stop.

Go on to the next page.

Then there are three and four of him, of her. They bump up against each other, suffering, and not even alone. She gets control of her eyelid muscles, she can half-flutter them up, she can see. A red-faced man with his mouth drawn back over his teeth. A hundred red-faced men, sweating in loveless sex over a hundred women with dark skin, women whose stars are fading on their skins as the breath shrieks in their throats, a hundred women dying.

I'm hurting you for the Uprising! a hundred red-faced men say. I'm doing it so humans can be free! A hundred women mouth an O of breathless pain.

Free!

He hurts her.

Free! Free!

Go on to the next page.

Not in his own body any more, he is only in hers, caught, helpless, a woman, a priestess named Aster. Aster's throat is being crushed. The man's arm leans across it. The man braces himself on his other arm, his right arm. Aster's bulging eyes see the knife-sheath on the red arm, the knife loose in it. Aster's fingers drag across the hard surface her body is lying on, the strength is coming back to her muscles, but too slowly, the hand and fingers flop like dead meat at the end of her arm. The red-faced man gasps but he is not drawing breath for the two of them.

Aster shudders. Tam Rosse shudders. Neither knows whether it is his orgasm or her death.

Go on to the next page.

Blackness.

Go on to the next page.

Tam Rosse awakes in the lifeship, lying on the floor. He is alone. The lights are dimmed, the place feels abandoned. There are streaks of blood on the platform where she lay.

Escaped from Circe?

He shudders.

He rises shakily to his feet. He aches all over. His body feels like a bad dream. Here he is a man in a red convict suit, in his familiar body with his shaking, half-controllable bad hand. But he is fragmented. Here he is too, a girl eighteen years old, her body split, her powers thrust on her with a stranger's violence. He is a teenaged rebel on his first night in the tanks on Circe, with four men holding him down and a knife at his throat. He is a lonely trusty, a frightened man, taking sex that nobody gave him, taking power over a teenager in the dark because a man's got to have power, a man's got to have power or one day he wakes up with his throat cut. And the teenager's got to have power too, so he cuts the trusty's throat before he and his friends escape in the supply ship. And the prison's got to have power, so the supply ship is a deathtrap.

"I raped you for the Uprising," he says to the walls, if they're listening, if she's listening through them. But he knows what it was for. And so do the priestess and her mad co-captain, old Brady.

This is the equation of the universe. I get hurt so I hurt.

I hurt before I get hurt.

Now they have power over him.

No one answers.

Use the lifeship to escape . . . go to page 121.

Go back into the corridor . . . go to page 122.

He can't find any of the controls.

[We can make this as complicated as we like, but it's probably the wrong time to do it.]

[We can also let him escape and die . . . or escape and be able to do nothing . . .]

He goes down the corridor, back into the ship, feeling his way through the darkness. This time he feels it's not just her he's fighting, it's the system he thought he was fighting back on Io. The Fertile Worlds eat Io and the asteroids; the bosses on Io eat the workers; the trusty bosses eat the proles . . .

This time it has a human face.

Maze? gets him to one of two places:

- The Kitchen, shut up tight . . . go to page 123.
- The Water Center. . . go to page 125.

WRITE ME. Is this necessary at this point?

QUAROCs--quasi-autonomous robotic constructs, popularly known as spyflies--were developed for fine repair work aboard ship in areas too small for humans.

Modified QUAROCs may play a role in the ship's intelligence and defense systems by gathering and transmitting information. Some modified QUAROCs extrude nerve-poison "stingers" that paralyze or kill intruders. However, because they are small and move slowly, QUAROCs are seldom used as offensive weapons.

By plugging into the ship's larger-scale defense system, they can interact with other defense elements, such as bulkheads and waldoes, to take concerted action.

In flight, the rotary wing of a QUAROC makes a characteristic buzzing sound.

Go to page 126.

At the end of the corridor there is a dim and glimmering light: sunlights, but so badly dimmed that he can hardly see. He feels the stiff sponginess of dried-out nutrient floor under his feet. Above his head, the shadowy water-globes are choked with dying algae. No fish swirl through them. He slips on the slimy floor under the globes. A broken valve drips water into the slime. "You should be taking care of the ship!" he tells the invisible priestess.

Go on to the next page.

He stands under the valve. Water drips into his mouth. The fish-taste of algae almost makes him gag. But the water is cool. He can swallow it without pain.

At least he can do something about the valve. He traces the pipe back to its connection and dogs the shunt closed. He finds spare parts and tools in a suitcase-locker on the wall. The valve is corroded. He fits a spanner around it and leans into it to break it free.

[Make this something that the reader can manipulate, perhaps with the arrow keys?]

Go on to the next page.

Just as the valve creaks in its socket, he hears water moving in the big open tank behind him.

Go on to the next page.

Puzzle: He fights with a construct, a big waldo, the Mirror Dragon, which has risen, dripping, out of the algae-scummed water of the big tank. The Mirror Dragon's "scales" are dark, but when they catch the dim glow of the sunlights, they reflect light like a mirror. The more violently he fights the Mirror Dragon, the more violently it fights back.

The Dragon appears to be vulnerable at its joints. He can attack it there, though he has only his dagger to use on it.

If he continues to fight for N turns, he is killed.

If he chooses to end the fight, go to next page.

D
Destroy the waldo and she will use something else. It is not the waldo he is fighting, it is her, her idea of him. He is fighting what she wants to do to him. It is what he did to her that he is fighting.

He lowers the dagger.

I get hurt so I hurt. I hurt before I get hurt. I get power so someone won't get power over me.

That was what he was fighting too, a long time ago on Io, in a dream called the Uprising.

"All right," he says to its sensors, although he knows that she can hear him everywhere. "If killing me is what you want."

If he can't make his dream live, at least he can die for it.

D
Go on to the next page.

The waldo looms in the air over him, poised to strike.

(Graphic.)

Go on to the next page.

After a long time,
a very long time,
he realizes it has stopped moving.

(Same graphic.)

Go on to the next page.

Beyond the clouded globes of the Water Center, a door-iris opens--he hears the hiss of pressures equalizing--and closes with a soft echoing thunk as the air-seals grab hold again.

Across the water of the big tank, she stands looking at him. Familiar, a slender woman with the glow of stars across her skin, reflected in the glassy globe-tanks; but in a sense he has not seen her before, no more than she has seen him. And he notices individual things, the set of her shoulders, the shape of her thumbs.

They are only just not enemies, only perhaps and someday allies, a long way from now and only after long knowledge. And his road is much longer than he thought. Before he will be part of the Uprising again, captain of a working Greatship, he will have had to gain her trust. He will have to know the captain. And by that time, he may know too much to be sure about the Uprising.

The road begins here.

"Tell me how to clean the filters," he calls over to her. And he bends to his long work.

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Here begins Fight for a Woman and Life out of Death--