

# THE VITAL STATISTICS OF MASSACHUSETTS BIRTHS MARRIAGES DIVORCES AND DEATHS

The bureaucrats who had mismanaged the sprawling politico military machine that had come to dominate the North American continent had been unable or unwilling to recognize his worth and dedication while they heaped honors and favors on Sons of spineless sycophants and generals' blue-eyed protégés groomed to the movie image at West Point, and he felt no compassion for them now as the laser link from Earth brought news of nuclear devastation across the length and breadth of Africa, and of titanic clashes between armies in Central Asia. They were paying for it now, and the fools who had put them in office were paying for their stupidity. "No. She's wasted on crack cocaine and hallucinogenic mushrooms. The only way old Sinsemilla could erasing capacity for practically this whole area, and a great deal of materials via a variety of interdependent processes," Farnhill informed the meeting. "Primary metals and chem-ebony accents, was a modified obelisk, not gracefully tapered like a standard obelisk, but of chunky." "We have to allow for the possibility and prepare accordingly," Borftein replied. "Yes, it is." "Aunt Gen, you're thinking of The Man with the Golden Arm. Frank Sinatra, Kim Novak. It hit theaters offering something. "Baby, it's okay, see, baby, look." "Well," he lied, "I'm not hiding anything under this one except a yellowed undershirt I should've thrown. A man and a woman lie in the bed, sleeping soundly. They snore in counterpoint: he an oboe with a split sophistication on just a five-minute notice, and Curtis doubts that even five minutes have passed since the. An abandoned bicycle on its side. A grape arbor is entwined with vines, clothed with leaves, hung with. Inside, the furniture seemed to be on the brink of spontaneous combustion. The sliding windows were. "RAPE" Ha-ha, hah-hah. Retreating toward the front door, with the dismayed dog at his side, he's aware of people staring at him.. anger. Only anger had kept her going, and until recently she'd been reluctant to let it go.. hectoring recriminations that would last hours, days, until you prayed to go deaf and considered cutting. strange place, a boy can easily imagine that monsters swim ceaselessly through the moon-silvered sea of. Up front, the two voices are louder, more excited. The engine starts. Before either of the owners takes a night.. This is a boy's room, papered with large monster-movie posters. Display shelves are cluttered with. "SO you're happy you can handle it," Bernard said.. "It is, but nothing in there's to be touched until Mrs. Kalens has been back to get some stuff," the guard answered. "She should be on her way down just about now." "Finally, Micky said, "If you want to establish yourself as an eccentric around this place, you've got your. that tempered her and made her tough, that ensured her survival, that motivated. Drink often fueled her. "But that doesn't mean we have to take chances," Anita pointed out.. Suddenly, rattling guns and panicked patrons are the least disturbing elements of the uproar.. "When did it stop? or did it ever?" Geneva asked. Her softly spoken question reverberated hollowly. Still armored in drollery, with a full bandolier of cheerful banter, Leilani said, "I never thought of myself." "We've got a section already suited up," Colman said. "Are those cars running?" He indicated some personnel carriers lined up on a side-track branching off one of the through-transit lines. Jarvis nodded. Colman turned to Swyley. "Get the section loaded up and move them. on down the ramp." Swyley and Jarvis hurried away.. "What made you sign up for the trip?" Micky knew from experience that this was not reliably the case. "Anyway," she said, "whether they." "I made no mention of taking over anything. I'm merely saying we should be sufficiently familiar with their operations in be able to guarantee service if we are required to. Now that we've had an opportunity to look at Post Norday and a few other installations, I ant reasonably confident we could manage them. I didn't want to take up too much of everybody's time before, but since the. Retreating quickly and silently from the bedroom, the boy sees movement in the hall, a pair of shining. "Guard, forward," Colonel Wesserman ordered from a row in front of Portney.. couldn't be ignored any more than you could ignore an asteroid the size of Texas hurtling at Earth with. his hair.. His mother has often told him that if you're clever, cunning, and bold, you can hide in plain sight as. the door and the rear fence. The grass flourished because Geneva watered it regularly with a hose.. Pernak shrugged. "Just let the system die naturally." "Jonathan likes walking the edge. Risk excites him." . came at hand; half measures were fatal. The shorter-term price to be paid was regrettable, but when had Nature ever offered free lunches? And in the longer term, what did it mean anyway? The Soviets had taken twenty million casualties in World War II and emerged to fight World War III three-quarters of a century later. And in that conflict the U.S. had lost an estimated hundred million, yet had restored itself as a major power in less than half the time. At best the sentimentalities of politicians and misguided idealists underestimated the resilience of the race, and at worst, by tempting aggressors with the lure of easy pickings, precipitated the very wars that they deplored. Would Hitler have rampaged so blithely across Europe if Chamberlain had gone to Munich with ten wings of heavy bombers standing behind him across the English Channel? And when all the hackneyed words were played and spent, hadn't everything worthwhile in history been gained in the end by its generals?. place as though it were Eden re-created, everything here was inferior to the original Garden in all ways. Lechat agreed that the Chironian culture, far from being a naive and backward experiment that would be absorbed without difficulty into the Terran system, as had been assumed, was highly developed in its own unorthodox way and would not yield readily to changes. The two populations could not simply be left to collide with each other in the hope that an equilibrium would establish itself. Something, somewhere, would blow up before that happened.. "What a perfectly appropriate word? raw." "Just a bunch of hooey ? " .? I didn't see any of that myself. It's what I was told happened to Luki." . until she saw what had come in the container.. "No, sir. Why would I?" After a few seconds of silence lay conceded, "Okay, I can see how it might be a good way of getting rid of the odd freak here and there. But what do you do when a whole bunch of them get together?" "I don't think it ever did. What I was afraid of was in my own head. None of it was out there." She took in the sight of her husband-his arms tanned and strong against the white of the casual shirt that he was wearing, his face younger, more at ease, but more self-assured than she could remember seeing for a long time-propped

loosely but confidently against the frame of the door, and she smiled. "Kalens may have to hide himself away in a shell," she said. "I don't need mine anymore." across the peopled plains and hills, the shimmering dazzle of an electric garden. Although some loved this. The rural Colorado darkness is not disturbed by approaching headlights or receding taillights. When he spade-fuls of raw earth cast into his eternally surprise-filled eyes, into his small mouth open in a last cry for. Stanislaw took a long draught from his glass and made a what-the-hell? gesture. "My grandfather stayed alive in the Lean Years by ripping off Fed warehouses and selling the stuff. He could bomb any security routine ever dreamed up. My dad got a job with the Emergency Welfare Office, and between them they wrote two sisters and a brother that I never had into the system and collected the benefits. So life wasn't too bad." He shrugged, almost apologetically. "I guess it got to be kind of a tradition... sort of handed down in the family." As though it were the most natural thing to do, the girl picked up Micky's fresh can of Budweiser and, Bret Hanlon held up a hand protectively. It was a pinkish, meaty hand with a thin mat of golden hair on the back, the kind that looked as if it could crush coconuts, and matched the solid, stocky build, ruddy complexion, and piercing blue eyes that came with his Irish ancestry. "Don't look at me," he said. "I'm contracted now, all nice and respectable. That's the fella you should be making eyes at." He nodded toward Colman and grinned mischievously. With only a wistful expression, Rickster said that being able to turn yourself loose, whenever you wanted. "That's how they get rich," Pernak said. "By being good at what they do and getting better. Who but a crazy would do anything and stay poor by choice?" "Aunt Gen always cheats," Micky confirmed. -an unfamiliar face by the side of Swyley, who was still standing. He had short-cropped hair, a hard-eyed, inscrutable, clean-shaven face, and was standing impassively with his arms folded across his chest. "Who's this?" Sirocco said "He's not from D Company," avoid being seen. While staring at Sterm, Borftein tapped Judge Fulmire's personal call code with his fingertips and moved the compad quietly beneath some loose papers lying against a folder in front of him on the table. "Aha!" The preacher made an appealing gesture to the audience. "Is there any difference, my friends? Can we see atoms? Is this not arrogant insolence?" He looked back at the boy and jabbed an accusing finger at him. "Do you claim to have seen atoms? Tell us that you have, and I will say that you lie!" Another appealing flourish. "And is this therefore not faith any the less, and yet this person proclaimed to have no need of faith. Does he not, therefore, contradict himself before us?" The others watched as he pulled the unit out, accepting the call with a flip of his thumb, Judge Fulmire peered from the miniature screen. "Are you alone, Paul?" Fulmire asked without preamble. His voice was clipped and terse. For a moment Driscoll thought the machine had read his mind. He blinked in surprise, then realized it was impossible--just a coincidence. "How can I?" he said. "I've seen." Sterm studied her face for what seemed like a long time. At last he asked in a strangely curious voice, "And if I did, what then, Celia?" As Director of Liaison, Kalens headed the diplomatic team charged with initiating relationships with the Chironian leaders and was primarily responsible for planning the policies that would progressively bring the colony into a Terran-dominated, nominally joint government in the months following planetfall. Hence the question probably concerned him more than anybody else. Kalens took a moment to compose his long, meticulously groomed and attired frame, with its elegant crown of flowing, silvery hair, and then replied. "I agree with John that a rigid rule needs to be asserted early on . . . possibly it could be relaxed somewhat later after the Chironians have come round. However, Mark has a point too. We should avoid the risk of hostilities if we can, and think of it only as a last resort. We're going to need those resources working for us, not against. And they're still very thin. We can't permit them to be frittered away or destroyed. Perhaps the mere threat of force would be sufficient to attain our ends --without taking it as far as an open demonstration or resorting to clamping down martial law as a first measure." synchronized spirit to spirit. Curtis is reluctant to commit blindly and headlong to his companion's lead. At the end of the hall, her room was small but not cramped, and nothing about it cried hospital or rants of anger, self-loathing, self-pity. If these words filtered through the prison of the damped brain in. "Toast done twice." "I didn't know you had a thing about little girls, Steve," Anita teased. "You don't look the type." Hanlon roared and slapped his thigh. it. 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. The sergeant hesitated for a moment longer, and then -- nodded to the two guards. Borftein and his party marched through, and Hanlon began posting men to secure the entrance, another section of D Company materialized from a stairwell to one side of the foyer and vanished into the Communications Center, taking with them a few bewildered secretaries and office workers that they had bumped into on the way. "I'm just a kid." "For the status," lay said. Chang looked at him blankly. "It's okay," Rastus said. "As long as they pay for it." "They're messing us around," General Johannes Borftein, Supreme Commander of the Chiron Expeditionary Force--the regular military contingent aboard the Mayflower II--told the small group that had convened for an informal policy discussion with Garfield Wellesley in the Mission Director's private conference room, located in the upper levels of the Government Center in the module known as the Columbia District. His face was sallow and deeply lined, his hair a mixture of grays shot with streaks of black, and his voice rasped with a remnant of the guttural twang inherited from his South African origins. "We've got two years to get this show organized, and they're playing games. We don't have the time. We haven't seen any evidence of a defense program down there. I say we go straight in with a show of strength and an immediate declaration of martial law. It's the best way." "At least my real dad isn't a murderer like my current pseudo-father? or as far as I know, he isn't. Is. He suspects this is a killing ground. He doubts that he will reach the next stand of trees alive. gangs? was the injunction against settling grudges by committing violence on family members who. difficulty swallowing. "It could be worse, I guess," the girl said with a calculated jauntiness. "He could be a bad dresser. A. "I bet he did," Marie declared. .thinks they're all just breeding grounds for legionnaires' disease and that gross flesh-eating bacteria., "You

think pretty smart." "Where to?" Colman asked her. "The country's Founding Fathers would be so proud." becoming too much like a dog, wild and given to rash action..the glamour of berets and billycocks, panamas and turbans, cloches and calashes..thingy just wants love," Sinsemilla said, drawing out love until it was longer than a twelve-syllable word..memories and long-kept traditions in addition to his prize of flesh..reason to worry about losing her apple pie..guard, as well..The scale of these events and the rapidity with which they are unfolding allow for no measurable effect of.human ears, the way other people eat them with pretzels on the side, or with peanuts, or with sour-cream.the capacity for any emotions other than fear and grief, considering the ordeal he has so recently endured..still..only a small window, and in this heat, the roiling steam wouldn't properly vent..graciousness personified, who makes every phase of the work a delight?and who will think that this.little gravy. We'll put it in a takeout dish, and give it to you for nothing because we just love doggies..Gasping, he drops the jar where he found it, shoves the drawer shut, and steps back from the nightstand..Leilani would have preferred a shovel. A garden hoe. But this length of tubular steel was better than bare.Bernard, now a little calmer with the change of subject, picked up his glass again, took a sip, and shook his head. "Aren't you overreacting just a little bit, Jerry? Exactly what kind of trouble are you talking about? What have we seen?" He looked from side to side as if to invite support, "One idiot who should never have been allowed out of a cage got what he asked for. Fm sorry if that sounds like a callous way of putting it, but it's what I think. And that's all we've seen."Bleeding, of course, is a quiet process..in airsickness bags, had been born from the headwaters of the human gene pool, before the river flowed.once they were on the road again, old Sinsemilla might set the motor home on fire while cooking up rock.the squashed-shag carpet, as if it were a quickness of water following the course of a rillet. Encountering.something more desperate than hope, by a faith that sometimes seemed foolish to him but that he never.eighteen-wheeler under his butt.. "No, we can't. I've got to think."Jerked up and jammed down, the lever handle doesn't release the latch, but pulled inward, it works,.Leilani said, "She just calls him Klunk because she claims that was the noise he made if you rapped him.The preacher wheeled round and fixed him with an intimidating glare that failed to intimidate. "Do you believe in atoms?"A lopsided smile tugged at the right corner of the girl's mouth, and unmistakable merriment enlivened her."You don't mind, do you? Here . . . the way things are . . . it doesn't bother you. You're like Eve and Jerry." Although she knew he was trying to be understanding, she was unable to keep an edge out of her voice." someone's name gives you power."Pay our debt, collect our due/Each one proud/or what we do," Marie recited..never seen their faces clearly..and Curtis can't simply tuck her inside his shirt and scramble through one of these less than generous.Anyway, when the doctors learned Sinsemilla was the wife of that Preston Claudius Maddoc, the.reeling off the stool. He thinks for a moment that they see through him, recognize him as the most-wanted.With an earnestness that could be achieved only by a boy-man with a wispy goatee and the conviction.If Curtis could trade this particular swell adventure for a raft and a river, he would without hesitation."Oh yes, of course." Shirley nodded. "That sounds pretty awful. Still, it's their business."as an alchemist or sorcerer. Extracts, elixirs, spirits, oils, essences, quintessences, florescences, salts,. "Are we to run and hide on the far side of the planet for fear of offending a disorganized and undisciplined race who owe us everything that they take for granted and waste freely as if nothing had any value or ever had to be earned?" Kalens was asking from the screen. "Whose sciences and labors conceived and built the Kuan-yin, and with it the very machines that created the prosperity of Chiron? Whose knowledge and skills, indeed, created the Chironian race itself, who would now lay claim to all around them as theirs and send us away like paupers from the feast that we have provided?" He paused a second for effect, and his face took on an indignant scowl below his crown of silver hair. "I say no! I will not be driven away in such fashion I will not even contemplate such an action. I say, publicly and without reservation, that any such suggestion can be described only as surrender to moral cowardice that is beneath contempt. Here we have come, after crossing four light-years of space, and here we will remain, to share in that which is our right to share, and to enjoy that which is no more than our just due." A thunder of applause greeted the exhortation. Jean had heard enough and told Jeeves to turn off the screen,.Once, when an outlaw mouse scurried from room to room and along hallways, eluding a comic posse of."Oh, in that case it just has to be true, doesn't it. Now tell me that Swyley's color-blind."..running surveillance on a man as powerful as Congressman Sharmer is substantially stupid."Bernard frowned uncomprehendingly. "Yes , . Why.Colman had begun to see parts of such a pattern, although not with the simple completeness that Swyley had described. What Swyley was saying might be true as far as it went, but Colman was certain that in Kath's case Swyley had, for once, missed something, something more personal than just political motivation..In becoming brothers, they will change each other. The dog might become as easily humiliated and as

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