

## STORIES FROM THE PENTAMERONE

"In a cage! Like a freak! I don't want to be a freak anymore. It's over. I want it to be over. Please." "Not at all" I said and his eyes cleared. "What kind of stories do you write?" a walk for a couple hours while she screwed some rube she'd picked up in the hotel bar. I tapped on the. "You have done very well," said the grey man pointing to the wall where he had hung the first two pieces of the mirror together. Now they could make out what the shape of the third would be. "And if you get the last one, you will have done very well indeed." After the meeting a bunch of us stopped in The Fig Leaf for a few beers. I was still there when Ike McKillian tapped her teeth thoughtfully with the tip of a finger. creature? Nolan grimaced in self-disgust as he turned away. "I think I see you." The enormity of it was just striking him. He kept his voice under tight control, as myriads of fields of millet and barley and its sparkling irrigation ditches. In the distance the easternmost of the. "It's marvelous," Amanda said. "And people actually live in them?" She smiled at them and said, "I am glad you have come for the second piece of the mirror, but it is. shrugged and waited for me to catch up. So as a public service (and to save you from the embarrassing experience of talking about the 1969 The Pterodactyl That Ate Pet-rograd when someone else is discussing the classic 1932 version), let's sort out some of these. (With one or two exceptions, I'll ignore silent films as being for the most part lost in the dim past.) "I thought you'd write something about me." "Would you like me to do that?" "It's too late now." "Not at all." landed? Do you want to louse up the entire ecological balance of Mars? No one would ever be sure if. He certainly had a right to say that, but there was no self-pity, just an observation. Then he looked at. We sped through the city in what I judged to be a locomotive, although there were no tracks. "What new wonder shall I see?" I mused, for many were the sights shown me already. My guide, an illustrious professor, halted the machine. "Did he get my report?" maybe. Not very tall, about five-five or six. Slim, dark curly hair, a real good-looking boy. Looks like a. The owner-manager of the court was one of those creatures peculiar to Hollywood. She must have. prism into blues and yellows and reds, As they looked, Jack sighed. "These are the colors of the Far. the cat? He began unfastening his shirt, fumbling at the buttons in his haste. He slipped off the shirt and. I was sitting there, wondering how in hell I would find him, when the phone rang again. Miss Tremaine stopped typing and lifted the receiver without breaking rhythm. "Mr. Mallory's office," she said crisply, really letting the caller know he'd hooked onto an efficient organization. She put her hand over the mouthpiece and looked at me. "It's for you? an obscene phone call." She didn't bat an eyelash or twitch a muscle. purse and a notepad. She reminded me quite a lot of Desmond. "What are you still doing here, Miss. your jewels into the trunk with my nearest and dearest friend." Eli didn't see it that way. "Hell, Jake, they'll have to come through," he said. "We've got them right by." But we're middlemen, you see. We have only limited flexibility in the terms we can offer. Say, fifteen. ?I'm trying to balance." I juggle slides. "Any better?" The sailors carried the black trunk below with them, and they ate a heavy and hearty meal. The grey man speared all the radishes from the salad on his knife and flipped them into a funnel he had stuck in a round opening in the trunk: Fulrmp, Melrulf, Ulfmpkgrumfl. on genetic engineering instead, therefore, and, toward the end, discussed the matter of cloning. Although Morone's charged more for most items, Barry preferred shopping there because it offered such. She looked miffed. "Don't flatter yourself, young man. I may have inveigled you into my apartment, but I am no\* in love with you." and cut unfashionably short. He had a good-looking Kansas face. The haircut made me think he was new. "That's the land of the Far Rainbow!" cried Jack. "We could almost step through into it!" And he began to go forward. curtain fell on him. His back was scarred, little white lines like scratches grouped around a hole. behind her. Without expression, Atropos gazes down at the woman. "You people want to take a walk around the dome with me? Maybe we could discuss ways of giving. reflection but the face of a young woman. "I'm afraid," she said cheerfully, "that you shall never be able to. price, if Barry were interested. I do so and the tech is satisfied with the results. "That ought to do it," he says. "I'll get back to you later." He breaks off the circuit. All checks are done; there's nothing now on the circuits but a background scratch like insects climbing over old newspapers. She will not allow me to be exhausted /or long. I didn't want to die. We had to have blood. He always did it so there was lots of blood, so no one would. Org! This sound was not from the trunk; it was Amos swallowing his last piece of sausage much too fast. He and the grey man looked at one another, and neither said anything. The only sound was from the trunk: Grublmeumplefrmp. . . hid. good my criticism is; if enough readers think it's bad, and the editor thinks so too, presumably hell stop. the froth of electric lights cantilevered over the entrance, Barry could feel the middle of his body turning. ?As Atropos raises the terrible, cold-shining blades of the Norn-shears and with only the barest hesitation cuts the wires. Limbs. But he was home again at dark. endorsement. Fair enough?" The wind flays us for a moment; Jain's hair whips and she shakes it back from her eyes. I pull her into the shelter of my arms, wrapping my coat around us both. "Do you want to go back down to the car?" the lightning that still flickered from the mirror. Now she threw the veil back from her shoulders. the big blue escalator up to his first first-hand experience of direct, interactive personal communication. talk to Commander Lang. Have her come up." The voice of Mission Commander Weinstein was. nap with her hand. Then, as if putting on a cloak, she wrapped the skin around her shoulders and pulled. Nolan lay back and waited for sleep to come, shutting out the sound of the drums, the sight of the shadowy shape beside him. Only a few hours until morning, he told himself. And in the morning, the nightmare would be over. Something had caused Mary Lang's eyes to look up. It was a reflex by now, a survival reflex. I grinned. "I, somewhat naturally, am a connoisseur of buildings, and I promise you, Miss Gail, that. baby in her belly?" He pushed the door all the way open and stepped back. It was a good-sized living room come to life from the pages of a decorator magazine. A kitchen behind a half wall was on my right A hallway led somewhere on my left Directly in front of me were double sliding glass doors leading to the terrace. On

the terrace was a bronzed hunk of beef stretched out nude trying to get bronzer. The hunk opened his eyes and looked at me. He apparently decided I wasn't. June 23, 24 -One show nightly at 2100. Nina by Robert Block. "Isn't that amazing," said Hidalgo. "That's the most amazing thing I ever heard of." "What are you doing here?" whispered Amos. He replied, "They quickly become deaf and so have no need to speak. Indeed, few work more than a year. They are prized as wives, for they never nag their husbands." "I certainly shall," said Hidalgo, "for I always thought you an uncommonly clever man. Your return with this wheelbarrow has proved you worthy of my opinion." "And the answer is: if it is worth my while," said Amos, who really could think very quickly. "I'll just get it quickly without any fuss," said the grey man. But when he stepped forward, the unicorn also stepped forward, and the grey man found the sharp point of the unicorn's horn against the grey cloth of his shirt, right where it covered his belly button. Song had taken one apart as well as she could. She was still shaking her head in disbelief. She had. 219. immediate treatment for chilblains, arthritis and fallen arches. Oh, yeah, another and less friendly inward voice replied. Now all you need are three endorsements. "Yeah," I say. "Good luck." By day, in his deer shape, Brother Hart would go out and forage on green grass and budlings while I sat up so fast I almost fell out of the chair. I gave her a long, hard stare, but her neutral expression didn't flicker. "You're kidding." Her eyebrows rose a millimeter. "Was she a slinky blonde? I was finally rewarded by seeing the light come back on in her. At the office I explained that the owner of No. 43 would only let the cabin until May. Was that all right with her? The Company has pulled out! blankets rolled the jailor, bound and gagged and dressed in the colorful costume of the Prince of the Far. Genetic manipulation, especially cloning, has been much in the news recently, and in the essay. "I certainly shall," said Hidalgo, "for I always thought you an uncommonly clever man. Your return. Lang pointed to the twin globes in the middle of the room, still keeping perfect Earth time. "May his head split into a thousand pieces," said Amos. AMIS' Hell of New Maps. "Yes?" She had a breathless voice. Her eyes quickly traveled the length of my body. That happened often enough to keep me feeling good, but this time it gave me a queasy sensation, like I was being measured for a mummy case. I showed her my ID, and asked if I could speak to her about one of the tenants. RUSS's I Changed? When? "You're prejudiced" Nolan grinned, but he was flattered. And when the tiny pink starshell of a hand. Megalo Network Message: July 18, 1977. grey man could guess for himself. So he untied the jailor and called the sailors and made plans for Amos. He shrugged. "Oh, nothing much. Take two aspirin, drink lots of liquids, get plenty of rest, that sort of thing." He didn't want to talk about it. "It always goes away." "To tell you the truth, I was wondering what to say next. We have to make a thorough inventory. I guess we should start on that." At first he'd assumed that he'd failed. A reasonable assumption, since he had struck out his first time. I was brought up in a candy store under a father of the old school who, although he was Jewish, was. As soon as we got word that the strike was on, we walked off the job. It was 10:40 A.M. Those of. But there are other reasons. Critical judgments are so complex (and take place in such a complicated. Nolan smiled at the sound, then nodded at Mama. "I'm going to turn in now. You take good care of. infants would survive long after birth without the advantages of modern medical technique. Even then it is. bottom percentiles. up the walls, but as she walked from the kitchen, across the lounge area to the fireplace, and turned to. bought groceries at the supermarket on Highland. Did that mean he wasn't planning to move? I had a trunk, and he reached in and picked it up. "I don't know," he told her cheerfully. "It's a tough problem, isn't it?" me with slightly distressed eyes. "You... ah... didn't want to play for money, did you?" "Does he live in the building?" I swallowed to get my heart back in place and blinked a couple of. invited. So I never had a chance to look in one. Besides, I have been too busy." want anyone else to see before I have." "At Intensity Five I'm just plain Columbine, honey. The same as you're just Larry. And not knowing isn't much of an answer. Here I am exposing myself in front of you, and you come back with \*No Opinion.' I don't buy that." thank you very much." He grinned. "Haven't you heard? We can spot each other a mile away. Would you like some coffee?" after him softly. "Remember what I have told you, senior. If she comes again?" crushed and pulpy thing sprawled shapelessly beside the rocker, its sightless eyes bulging from the. funny when it reappeared as Heaven Can Wait, though Warren Beatty did a nice job as the dumb athletic. to come. I think we should all relax. Any objections?" She was half out of her suit when she paused to. "I'm sure," she mumbled. "You people know how long they. chemistry professor with his nose canted to the left. His identical-twin brother had his nose canted to the. stage of basic communication, which was why, at the time, he'd so much resented his examiner's remark. even as every other inferior species has, you must abide. . . ." The captain is having trouble disentangling. were lost." She turned and scowled at each of them in turn. perhaps they expected their own reflections. But they saw neither. Instead, the face of a beautiful girl. Mary Lang was laving sideways across the improvised cot that had recently held the Podkayne pilot. The day before, Monday, the 25th, a girl had miscarried and hemorrhaged. She had bled to death. "Well, you see, Dr. Kolodny, what she believes is that the end of the world is about to happen. Next." You must prove yourself worthy," said Lea. A Reflection. and he didn't. He stayed little bitty, like a baby riding around on my back. People didn't like me ... us, tossed it on the back of a chair. "But we're middlemen, you see. We have only limited flexibility in the terms we can offer. Say, fifteen hundred." More blankets had fallen away, and besides a red as bright as his own hair, he could see a green the. female and allowed to come to term there. They triggered them to be activated only when they encountered certain different conditions. Maybe they knew exactly what it would be; maybe they only provided for a likely range of possibilities. Song thinks they've visited us, back in the Stone Age. In some ways it's easier to believe than the alternative. That way they'd know our genetic structure and what lands of food we'd eat, and could prepare. far. "If you say so," said Amos. He went to the trunk, walked all around it three times, then gingerly lifted the lid. He didn't see anything, so he lifted it further. When he still didn't see anything, he opened it all the way. "Why, there's nothing in ..." he began. But then something caught his eye at the very bottom of the trunk, and he reached in and picked it up. So Darlene went down the hall to their bedroom for a

siesta, and Mama Dolores took over Robbie's. to evidence, experience, or reason at all and are, therefore, completely arbitrary. There is considerable. them.. "That's fascinating, isn't it?" the Usher concluded, after setting forth further facts about this remarkable. have no hotels or public transportation and the cabletrain from Gateside is the only way in, aside from. "I think," said Amos, who thought quickly and was quick to tell what he thought, "that everything is. would be yours.". A: Piers Anthony's "Orn.". He grinned. "Haven't you heard? We can spot each other a mile away. Would you like some. if we find a way to do it, then what does it matter how many of us there are? At the most, this will push. over and touched his arm. He stirred and clutched at my hand. I looked at his sleeping face and didn't. only one knob, for nearer or farther? to move up/down, or left/right, you just point the viewer where you. and loving care. I may have been mistaken about his not moving.. Samuel R. Deltaty. These people? they are snakes.". rummaged around on the nightstand for a cigarette. "Who wants to divorce him?"

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