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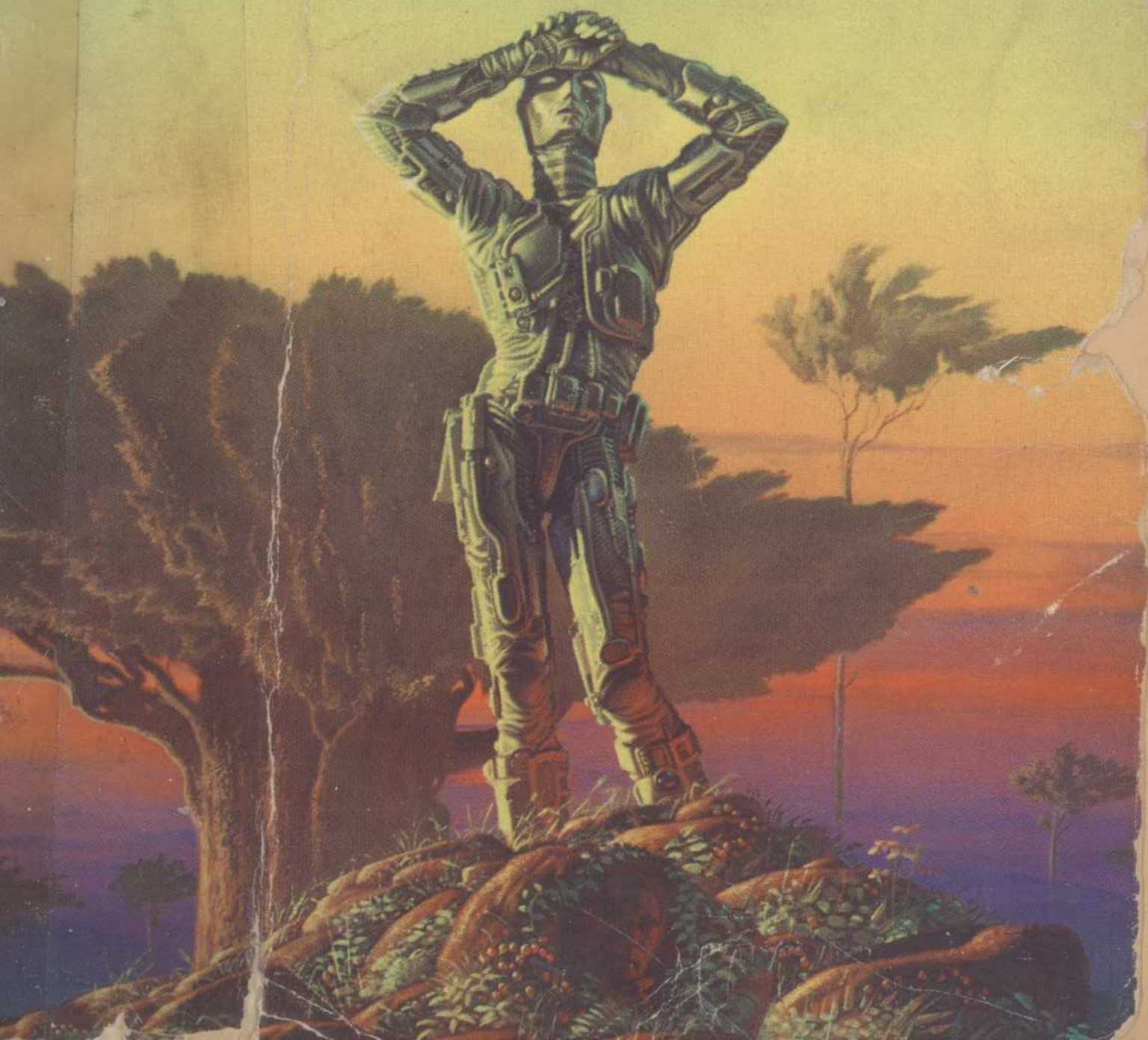


Over 3 months on  
the *New York Times* Bestseller List

# ISAAC ASIMOV

# THE ROBOT<sup>S</sup> OF DAWN

A Lije Baley & R. Daneel Olivaw Novel





**ISAAC ASIMOV**

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**THE ROBOTS OF  
DAWN**



A Del Rey Book

BALLANTINE BOOKS • NEW YORK

A Del Rey Book  
Published by Ballantine Books

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## 1. BALEY

1

Elijah Baley found himself in the shade of the tree and muttered to himself, "I knew it. I'm sweating."

He paused, straightened up, wiped the perspiration from his brow with the back of his hand, then looked dourly at the moisture that covered it.

"I *hate* sweating," he said to no one, throwing it out as a cosmic law. And once again he felt annoyance with the Universe for making something both essential and unpleasant.

One *never* perspired (unless one wished to, of course) in the City, where temperature and humidity were absolutely controlled and where it was never absolutely necessary for the body to perform in ways that made heat production greater than heat removal.

Now *that* was civilized.

He looked out into the field, where a straggle of men and women were, more or less, in his charge. They were mostly youngsters in their late teens, but included some middle-aged people like himself. They were hoeing inexpertly and doing a variety of other things that robots were designed to do—and could do much more efficiently had they not been ordered to stand aside and wait while the human beings stubbornly practiced.

There were clouds in the sky and the sun, at the moment, was going behind one of them. He looked up uncertainly. On the one hand, it meant the direct heat of the sun (and the

1

sweating) would be cut down. On the other hand, was there a chance of rain?

That was the trouble with the Outside. One teetered forever between unpleasant alternatives.

It always amazed Baley that a relatively small cloud could cover the sun completely, darkening Earth from horizon to horizon yet leaving most of the sky blue.

He stood beneath the leafy canopy of the tree (a kind of primitive wall and ceiling, with the solidity of the bark comforting to the touch) and looked again at the group, studying it. Once a week they were out there, whatever the weather.

They were gaining recruits, too. They were definitely more in number than the stout-hearted few who had started out. The City government, if not an actual partner in the endeavor, was benign enough to raise no obstacles.

To the horizon on Baley's right—eastward, as one could tell by the position of the late-afternoon sun—he could see the blunt, many-fingered domes of the City, enclosing all that made life worthwhile. He saw, as well, a small moving speck that was too far off to be made out clearly.

From its manner of motion and from indications too subtle to describe, Baley was quite sure it was a robot, but that did not surprise him. The Earth's surface, outside the Cities, was the domain of robots, not of human beings—except for those few, like himself, who were dreaming of the stars.

Automatically, his eyes turned back toward the hoeing stardreamers and went from one to the other. He could identify and name each one. All working, all learning how to endure the Outside, and—

He frowned and muttered in a low voice, "Where's Bentley?"

And another voice, sounding behind with a somewhat breathless exuberance, said, "Here I am, Dad."

Baley whirled. "Don't *do* that, Ben."

"Do what?"

"Sneak up on me like that. It's hard enough trying to keep my equilibrium in the Outside without my having to worry about surprises, too."

"I wasn't trying to surprise you. It's tough to make much noise walking on the grass. One can't help that. —But don't

you think you ought to go in, Dad? You've been out two hours now and I think you've had enough."

"Why? Because I'm forty-five and you're a punk kid of nineteen? You think you have to take care of your decrepit father, do you?"

Ben said, "Yes, I guess that's it. And a bit of good detective work on your part, too. You cut right through to the nub."

Ben smiled broadly. His face was round, his eyes sparkling. There was a lot of Jessie in him, Baley thought, a lot of his mother. There was little trace of the length and solemnity of Baley's own face.

And yet Ben had his father's way of thinking. He could at times furrow into a grave solemnity that made it quite clear that he was of perfectly legitimate origin.

"I'm doing very well," said Baley.

"You are, Dad. You're the best of us, considering—"

"Considering what?"

"Your age, of course. And I'm not forgetting that you're the one who started this. Still, I saw you take cover under the tree and I thought—well, maybe the old man has had enough."

"I'll 'old man' you," said Baley. The robot he had noted in the direction of the City was now close enough to be made out clearly, but Baley dismissed it as unimportant. He said, "It makes sense to get under a tree once in a while when the sun's too bright. We've got to learn to use the advantages of the Outside, as well as learning to bear its disadvantages. —And there's the sun coming out from behind that cloud."

"Yes, it will do that. —Well, then, don't you want to go in?"

"I can stick it out. Once a week, I have an afternoon off and I spend it here. That's my privilege. It goes with my C-7 rating."

"It's not a question of privilege, Dad. It's a question of getting overtired."

"I feel fine, I tell you."

"Sure. And when you get home, you'll go straight to bed and lie in the dark."

"Natural antidote to overbrightness."

"And Mom worries."

"Well, let her worry. It will do her good. Besides, what's the harm in being out here? The worst part is I *sweat*, but I



just have to get used to it. I can't run away from it. When I started, I couldn't even walk this far from the City without having to turn back—and you were the only one with me. Now look at how many we've got and how far I can come without trouble. I can do plenty of work, too. I can last another hour. Easy. —I tell you, Ben, it would do your mother good to come out here herself."

"Who? Mom? Surely you jest."

"Some jest. When the time comes to take off, I won't be able to go along—because she won't."

"And you'll be glad of it. Don't kid yourself, Dad. It won't be for quite a while—and if you're not too old now, you'll be too old then. It's going to be a game for young people."

"You know," said Baley, half-balling his fist, "you are such a wise guy with your 'young people.' Have you ever been off Earth? Have any of those people in the field been off Earth? I have. Two years ago. That was before I had any of this acclimatization—and I survived."

"I know, Dad, but that was briefly, and in the line of duty, and you were taken care of in a going society. It's not the same."

"It *was* the same," said Baley stubbornly, knowing in his heart that it wasn't. "And it won't take us so long to be able to leave. If I could get permission to go to Aurora, we could get this act off the ground."

"Forget it. It's not going to happen that easily."

"We've got to try. The government won't let us go without Aurora giving us the go-ahead. It's the largest and strongest of the Spacer worlds and what it says—"

"Goes! I know. We've all talked this over a million times. But you don't have to go there to get permission. There are such things as hyper-relays. You can talk to them from here. I've said that any number of times before."

"It's not the same. We'll need face-to-face contact—and I've said *that* any number of times before."

"In any case," said Ben, "we're not ready yet."

"We're not ready because Earth won't give us the ships. The Spacers will, together with the necessary technical help."

"Such faith! Why should the Spacers do it? When did they start feeling kindly toward us short-lived Earthpeople?"

"If I could talk to them—"



Ben laughed. "Come on, Dad. You just want to go to Aurora to see that woman again."

Baley frowned and his eyebrows beetled over his deep-set eyes. "Woman? Jehoshaphat, Ben, what are you talking about?"

"Now, Dad, just between us—and not a word to Mom—what *did* happen with that woman on Solaria? I'm old enough. You can tell me."

"*What* woman on Solaria?"

"How can you look at me and deny any knowledge of the woman everyone on Earth saw in the hyperwave dramatization? Gladia Delmarre. *That* woman!"

"*Nothing* happened. That hyperwave thing was nonsense. I've told you that a thousand times. She didn't look that way. *I* didn't look that way. It was all made up and you know it was produced over my protests, just because the government thought it would put Earth in a good light with the Spacers.—And you make sure you don't imply anything different to your mother."

"Wouldn't dream of it. Still, this Gladia went to Aurora and you keep wanting to go there, too."

"Are you trying to tell me that you honestly think the reason I want to go to Aurora— Oh, *Jehoshaphat!*"

His son's eyebrows raised. "What's the matter?"

"The robot. That's R. Geronimo."

"Who?"

"One of our Department messenger robots. And it's out here! I'm off-time and I *deliberately* left my receiver at home because I didn't want them to get at me. That's my C-7 privilege and yet they send for me by robot."

"How do you know it's coming to you, Dad?"

"By very clever deduction. One: there's no one else here who has any connection with the Police Department; and two: that miserable thing is heading right toward me. From that I deduce that it wants me. I should get on the other side of the tree and stay there."

"It's not a wall, Dad. The robot can walk around the tree."

And the robot called out, "Master Baley, I have a message for you. You are wanted at Headquarters."

The robot stopped, waited, then said again, "Master Baley, I have a message for you. You are wanted at Headquarters."

"I hear and understand," Baley said tonelessly. He had to say that or the robot would have continued to repeat.

Baley frowned slightly as he studied the robot. It was a new model, a little more humaniform than the older models were. It had been uncrated and activated only a month before and with some degree of fanfare. The government was always trying for something—anything—that might produce more acceptance of robots.

It had a grayish surface with a dull finish and a somewhat resilient touch (perhaps like soft leather). The facial expression, while largely changeless, was not quite as idiotic as that of most robots. It was, though, in actual fact, quite as idiotic, mentally, as all the rest.

For a moment, Baley thought of R. Daneel Olivaw, the Spacer robot who had been on two assignments with him, one on Earth and one on Solaria, and whom he had last encountered when Daneel had consulted him in the mirror-image case. Daneel was a robot who was so human that Baley could treat him as a friend and could still miss him, even now. If all robots were like that—

Baley said, "This is my day off, boy. There is no necessity for me to go to Headquarters."

R. Geronimo paused. There was a trifling vibration in his hands. Baley noticed that and was quite aware that it meant a certain amount of conflict in the robot's positronic pathways. They had to obey human beings, but it was quite common for two human beings to want two different types of obedience.

The robot made a choice. It said, "It is your day off, master. —You are wanted at Headquarters."

Ben said uneasily, "If they want you, Dad—"

Baley shrugged. "Don't be fooled, Ben. If they really wanted me badly, they'd have sent an enclosed car and probably used a human volunteer, instead of ordering a robot to do the walking—and irritate me with one of its messages."

Ben shook his head. "I don't think so, Dad. They wouldn't know where you were or how long it would take to find you. I don't think they would want to send a human being on an uncertain search."

"Yes? Well, let's see how strong the order is. —R. Geronimo, go back to Headquarters and tell them I'll be at work at 0900." Then sharply, "Go back! That's an order!"

The robot hesitated perceptibly, then turned, moved away, turned again, made an attempt to come back toward Baley, and finally remained in one spot, its whole body vibrating.

Baley recognized it for what it was and muttered to Ben, "I may have to go. Jehoshaphat!"

What was troubling the robot was what the roboticists called an equipotential of contradiction on the second level. Obedience was the Second Law and R. Geronimo was now suffering from two roughly equal and contradictory orders. Robot-block was what the general population called it or, more frequently, roblock for short.

Slowly, the robot turned. Its original order was the stronger, but not by much, so that its voice was slurred. "Master, I was told you might say that. If so I was to say—" It paused, then added hoarsely, "I was to say—if you are alone."

Baley nodded curtly to his son and Ben didn't wait. He knew when his father was Dad and when he was a policeman. Ben retreated hastily.

For a moment, Baley played irritably with the notion of strengthening his own order and making the roblock more nearly complete, but that would surely cause the kind of damage that would require positronic analysis and reprogramming. The expense of that would be taken out of his salary and it might easily amount to a year's pay.

He said, "I withdraw my order. What were you told to say?"

R. Geronimo's voice at once cleared. "I was told to say that you are wanted in connection with Aurora."

Baley turned toward Ben and called out, "Give them another half hour and then say I want them back in. I've got to leave now."

And as he walked off with long strides, he said petulantly to the robot, "Why couldn't they tell you to say that at once? And why can't they program you to use a car so I wouldn't have to walk?"

He knew very well why that wasn't done. Any accident involving a robot-driven car would set off another antirobot riot.

He did not slacken his pace. There were two kilometers to walk before they even got to the City wall and, thereafter, they would have to reach Headquarters through heavy traffic.

Aurora? What kind of crisis was brewing now?



It took half an hour for Baley to reach the entranceway into the City and he stiffened himself for what he suspected ahead. Perhaps—*perhaps*—it wouldn't happen this time.

He reached the dividing plane between Outside and City, the wall that marked off chaos from civilization. He placed his hand over the signal patch and an opening appeared. As usual, he didn't wait for the opening to be completed, but slipped in as soon as it was wide enough. R. Geronimo followed.

The police sentry on duty looked startled, as he always did when someone came in from Outside. Each time there was the same look of disbelief, the same coming to attention, the same sudden hand upon the blaster, the same frown of uncertainty.

Baley presented his identity card with a scowl and the sentry saluted. The door closed behind him—and it happened.

Baley was inside the City. The walls closed around him and the City became the Universe. He was again immersed in the endless, eternal hum and odor of people and machinery that would soon fade below the threshold of consciousness; in the soft, indirect artificial light that was nothing at all like the partial and varying glare of the Outside, with its green and brown and blue and white and its interruptions of red and yellow. Here there was no erratic wind, no heat, no cold, no threat of rain; here there was instead the quiet permanence of unfelt air currents that kept everything fresh. Here was a designed combination of temperature and humidity so perfectly adjusted to humans it remained unsensed.

Baley felt his breath drawn in tremulously and he gladdened in the realization that he was home and safe with the known and *knowable*.

That was what always happened. Again he had accepted the City as the womb and moved back into it with glad relief. He knew that such a womb was something from which humanity must emerge and be born. Why did he always sink back this way?

And would that always be? Would it really be that, though he might lead countless numbers out of the City and off the

Earth and out to the stars, he would not, in the end, be able to go himself? Would he always feel at home only in the City?

He clenched his teeth—but there was no use thinking about it.

He said to the robot, “Were you brought to this point by car, boy?”

“Yes, master.”

“Where is it now?”

“I do not know, master.”

Baley turned to the sentry. “Officer, this robot was brought to this spot two hours ago. What has happened to the car that brought him?”

“Sir, I went on duty less than an hour ago.”

Actually, it was foolish to ask. Those in the car did not know how long it would take the robot to find him, so they would not wait. Baley had a brief impulse to call in, but they would tell him to take the Expressway; it would be quicker.

The only reason he hesitated was the presence of R. Geronimo. He didn't want its company on the Expressway and yet he could not expect the robot to make its way back to Headquarters through hostile crowds.

Not that he had a choice. Undoubtedly, the Commissioner was not eager to make this easy for him. He would be annoyed at not having had him on call, free time or not.

Baley said, “This way, boy.”

The City covered over five thousand square kilometers and contained over four hundred kilometers of Expressway, plus hundreds of kilometers of Feederway, to serve its well over twenty million people. The intricate net of movement existed on eight levels and there were hundreds of interchanges of varying degrees of complexity.

As a plainclothesman, Baley was expected to know them all—and he did. Put him down blindfolded in any corner of the City, whip off the blindfold, and he could make his way flawlessly to any other designated portion.

There was no question then but that he knew how to get to Headquarters. There were eight reasonable routes he could follow, however, and for a moment he hesitated over which might be least crowded at this time.

Only for a moment. Then he decided and said, “Come with me, boy.” The robot followed docilely at his heels.

They swung onto a passing Feeder and Baley seized one of the vertical poles: white, warm, and textured to give a good grip. Baley did not want to sit down; they would not be on for long. The robot had waited for Baley's quick gesture before placing its hand upon the same pole. It might as well have remained standing without a grip—it would not have been difficult to maintain balance—but Baley wanted to take no chance of being separated. He was responsible for the robot and did not wish to risk being asked to replace the financial loss to the City should anything happen to R. Geronimo.

The Feeder had a few other people on board and the eyes of each turned curiously—and inevitably—to the robot. One by one, Baley caught those glances. Baley had the look of one used to authority and the eyes he caught turned uneasily away.

Baley gestured again as he swung off the Feeder. It had reached the strips now and was moving at the same speed as the nearest strip, so that there was no necessity for it to slow down. Baley stepped onto that nearest strip and felt the whipping of air once they were no longer protected by plastic enclosure.

He leaned into the wind with the ease of long practice, lifting one arm to break the force at eye level. He ran the strips downward to the intersection with the Expressway and then began the run upward to the speed-strip that bordered the Expressway.

He heard the teenage cry of "Robot!" (he had been a teenager himself once) and knew exactly what would happen. A group of them—two or three or half a dozen—would swarm up or down the strips and somehow the robot would be tripped and would go clanging down. Then, if it ever came before a magistrate, any teenager taken into custody would claim the robot had collided with him and was a menace on the strips—and would undoubtedly be let go.

The robot could neither defend itself in the first instance, nor testify in the second.

Baley moved rapidly and was between the first of the teenagers and the robot. He sidestepped onto a faster strip, brought his arm higher, as though to adjust to the increase in wind speed, and somehow the young man was nudged off course and onto a slower strip for which he was not prepared. He



called out wildly, "Hey!" as he went sprawling. The others stopped, assessed the situation quickly, and veered away.

Baley said, "Onto the Expressway, boy."

The robot hesitated briefly. Robots were not allowed, unaccompanied, on the Expressway. Baley's order had been a firm one, however, and it moved aboard. Baley followed, which relieved the pressure on the robot.

Baley moved brusquely through the crowd of standees, forcing R. Geronimo ahead of him, making his way up to the less crowded upper level. He held on to a pole and kept one foot firmly on the robot's, again glaring down all eye contact.

Fifteen and a half kilometers brought him to the close-point for the Police Headquarters and he was off. R. Geronimo came off with him. It hadn't been touched, not a scuff. Baley delivered it at the door and accepted a receipt. He carefully checked the date, the time, and the robot's serial number, then placed the receipt in his wallet. Before the day was over, he would check and make certain that the transaction had been computer-registered.

Now he was going to see the Commissioner—and he knew the Commissioner. Any failing on Baley's part would be suitable cause for demotion. He was a harsh man, the Commissioner. He considered Baley's past triumphs a personal offense.

### 3

The Commissioner was Wilson Roth. He had held the post for two and a half years, since Julius Enderby had resigned once the furor roused by the murder of a Spacer had subsided and the resignation could be safely offered.

Baley had never quite reconciled himself to the change. Julius, with all his shortcomings, had been a friend as well as a superior; Roth was merely a superior. He was not even City-bred. Not *this* City. He had been brought in from outside.

Roth was neither unusually tall nor unusually fat. His head was large, though, and seemed to be set on a neck that slanted slightly forward from his torso. It made him appear heavy: heavy-bodied and heavy-headed. He even had heavy lids half-obscuring his eyes.

Anyone would think him sleepy, but he never missed any-

thing. Baley had found that out very soon after Roth had taken over the office. He was under no illusion that Roth liked him. He was under less illusion that he liked Roth.

Roth did not sound petulant—he never did—but his words did not exude pleasure, either. “Baley, why is it so hard to find you?” he said.

Baley said in a carefully respectful voice, “It is my afternoon off, Commissioner.”

“Yes, your C-7 privilege. You’ve heard of a Waver, haven’t you? Something that receives official messages? You are subject to recall, even on your off-time.”

“I know that very well, Commissioner, but there are no longer any regulations concerning the wearing of a Waver. We can be reached without one.”

“Inside the City, yes, but you were Outside—or am I mistaken?”

“You are not mistaken, Commissioner. I was Outside. The regulations do not state that, in such a case, I am to wear a Waver.”

“You hide behind the letter of the statute, do you?”

“Yes, Commissioner,” said Baley calmly.

The Commissioner rose, a powerful and vaguely threatening man, and sat on the desk. The window to the Outside, which Enderby had installed, had long been closed off and painted over. In the closed-in room (warmer and more comfortable for that), the Commissioner seemed the larger.

He said, without raising his voice, “You rely, Baley, on Earth’s gratitude, I think.”

“I rely on doing my job, Commissioner, as best I can and in accord with the regulations.”

“And on Earth’s gratitude when you bend the spirit of those regulations.”

Baley said nothing to that.

The Commissioner said, “You are considered as having done well in the Sarton murder case three years ago.”

“Thank you, Commissioner,” said Baley. “The dismantling of Spacetown was a consequence, I believe.”

“It was—and that was something applauded by all Earth. You are also considered as having done well on Solaria two years ago and, before you remind me, the result was a revision

in the terms of the trade treaties with the Spacer worlds, to the considerable advantage of Earth.”

“I believe that is on record, sir.”

“And you are very much the hero as a result.”

“I make no such claim.”

“You have received two promotions, one in the aftermath of each affair. There has even been a hyperwave drama based on the events on Solaria.”

“Which was produced without my permission and against my will, Commissioner.”

“Which nevertheless made you a kind of hero.”

Baley shrugged.

The Commissioner, having waited for a spoken comment for a few seconds, went on, “But you have done nothing of importance in nearly two years.”

“It is natural for Earth to ask what I have done for it lately.”

“Exactly. It probably does ask. It knows that you are a leader in this new fad of venturing Outside, in fiddling with the soil, and in pretending to be a robot.”

“It is permitted.”

“Not all that is permitted is admired. It is possible that more people think of you as peculiar than as heroic.”

“That is, perhaps, in accord with my own opinion of myself,” said Baley.

“The public has a notoriously short memory. The heroic is vanishing rapidly behind the peculiar in your case, so that if you make a mistake you will be in serious trouble. The reputation you rely on—”

“With respect, Commissioner, I do not rely on it.”

“The reputation the Police Department *feels* you rely on will not save you and *I* will not be able to save you.”

The shadow of a smile seemed to pass for one moment over Baley’s dour features. “I would not want you, Commissioner, to risk your position in a wild attempt to save me.”

The Commissioner shrugged and produced a smile precisely as shadowy and fleeting. “You need not worry about that.”

“Then why are you telling me all this, Commissioner?”

“To warn you. I am not trying to destroy you, you understand, so I am warning you *once*. You are going to be involved in a very delicate matter, in which you may easily make a