

MAUDE MOLD

#5

by Stanley Lieber

STELLAR CARTOGRAPHY

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9 August. Late.

FNG's first day at the test site had proven somewhat anticlimactic. The very first thing TAB1 had told him was not to get too comfortable because the project would likely be winding down soon. This had elicited a snort from Jerrymander Mold. Or, maybe that was just the cocaine.

The transports had seemed fine. None had completed an actual test milestone, as of yet, but he could see from the fact they were riding around all over the range inside of them that the test program must be well and truly underway. Surely he hadn't been brought all the way out here only to be shipped right back home?

No.

TAB1 was in his ear every morning with a fresh itinerary. This, this, and that. FNG didn't understand the insistence on voice communications. Nothing was ever written down. How did they keep it all straight?

The visor was already gouging a deep canyon into the bridge of his nose. To dilapidate a metaphor. He always wanted to take it off but he found he kept having to slip it back on in order to accept a call from one of his coworkers. Finally he just kept it on.

There had been little discussion of what he was and was not allowed to talk about with his neighbors in the mancamp. FNG was appalled at the lack of protocol, in general, but who was there to complain to, on Mars? He was the fucking new guy. People here just seemed to stumble around wherever they liked. Usually, it seemed to him, chaperoned solely by their vices, which were numerous and exotic far beyond Jerrymander's quaint Earth practices.

FNG had managed to get a pretty good look at this place from the air.

He decided to venture downrange.