MEMORIES OF SANDRA ANDERSON

A Cosmic Explorer

Book One

Eleven Fantasy Stories

Written by Tanya Ferris

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Memories of Sandra Anderson A Cosmic Explorer

A never ending exploration in the vast worlds of fantasy, as far as the most remote areas of the Cosmic Network; a magical journey into the abysses of the unconscious mind, a jumble of primordial symbols, subconscious desires, metaphysical quest.

Fateful choices, traversing the spiral vortex of time and space, lead the heroine and the reader beyond the insupportable earthly reality to unimaginable dreamlands or, even, nightmarelands. However, even the worse nightmare is more preferable than the world of everyday life...

Every adventure is a personal magic ritual. I cannot foresee the result of such rituals, but there must always be a result, for there are points of contact –synchronicities- between the material world and the astral planes.

More is yet to come...

Story One: Planet Doom

originally handwritten from 31st July to 10th August, 1992

My name is Emma Lloyd. I am thirteen years old and I attend the second class of Gymnasium.

During the first break this morning, I was playing badminton with a girl who had just arrived from Australia. A little crowd of pupils was around us and I was feeling kinda proud of knowing how to play this unusual game. Then I noticed that handsome George Dim was not anywhere near.

I lifted my head and scanned the schoolyard with my eyes; there he was in the distance, laughing and chatting with another girl from our class. His indifference towards me made me feel rather bitter inside; being so abstracted, I hardly managed to hit the shuttlecock. A sense of emptiness overwhelmed me, a sun ray flooded my eye sight and...

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Next moment the entire setting had changed. I was now admiring a fascinating, galactic landscape spreading before me. The craggy rocks sparkled in bluish colours; sparse, golden craters studded the azure plains; crystal cities were barely discernible amongst the craters in the distance; an eerie red sea extended beyond the plains to the horizon, making the environment even more outlandish. The night sky was magnificent, all covered by a unique galaxy rise.

I relished the breathtaking view from a big window, during a meeting with some friends. Strangely enough, the name of the planet was beyond my ken at that moment in time... and I was no longer Emma. My body was different, more mature, strong and well-trained; my personality was also different, my memories were not those of Emma's – for her existence was receding fast in my conscience. I had a different name now, and it was *Sandra Anderson*.

First there were knocks on the door, then a terrible blow. Next moment the heavy, wooden door was thrust to pieces and a wild gang of villain motorists appeared at the threshold, all armed to the teeth. They were laughing and groaning with paranoid wickedness in their eyes. We all stood still, frozen of astonishment and fear. *Just what we needed right now*, I thought right after.

They trooped into the living room without hesitation, smashing down whatever they found in their way. They approached threateningly, asking us to give them all our money – but we all knew that was just a pretense; very soon we would all be dead. Unless...

There was a violent grasp around my waist; one of them had grabbed me and his ironic smile meant nothing good. His arms were strong and muscular, and I felt as if the air were driven out of my lungs.

"This sweetie here will die last", he chuckled, putting a hand around my neck. "If she is good enough, of course", he added, and the rest of them burst into mad laughter, while my friends were still frozen of terror. "Let me tell you chickens, either you give us the money or not, you are going to die, for we are..."

The vicious man holding me, apparently their chief, paused before completing his sentence. I had not managed to suppress my laughter successfully...

"What's the matter with her?" he wondered and I felt his grasp loosening a little.

"Don't shout like this; you just make me laugh", I answered calm, breaking every pretense.

Next moment the intruders were extremely outraged, so I had to act instantly and instinctively; I hit the chief with my elbow and one of his men with a flying kick. I jumped high into the air, avoiding the blazing guns of the rest, right before landing on their faces. They were just too slow for me. Within moments they were all knocked out, save one: their chief, who was just making his way out through the thrashed door.

My friends had seized the guns of his companions, so they no longer needed my help. I rushed out immediately and ran to the underground garage, where I had parked my motorbike; it was certainly inferior to the villain's, smaller and probably slower, but I had to reach and arrest him no matter what...

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I rode miles and miles on my motorbike among the serene, turquoise dunes, trying to keep up with him, until I realized -not without a certain anxiety- that I had lost him. I slowed down, stopped, got off the vehicle and looked carefully all around. There was no sign of the rider, nothing but desert dunes and shallow craters, and the crystal cities seemed to be further than ever before. Obviously, I had ridden too far; I was now completely alone in the middle of an alien wilderness, and I had a very bad feeling about this.

Everything seemed to be happening weirdly fast today; all of a sudden, someone pounced on me from behind, without making the slightest sound. *Where was he hiding?* I only wondered and then we were both down on the sand fighting. At that moment I realized I had no idea who that man was, what he wanted from me or how he had managed to find me on this isolated planet... My opponent proved to be quite flexible, avoiding my blows with considerable ease. As he stood before me, parrying another direct attack of mine, I saw he was very young, with a well-trained body and a tight fitting uniform. He didn't look much like the wild villain who had invaded my friends' house some minutes ago. Just then it occurred to me he was a warrior of Venor, my archenemy.

Parenthesis

Venor, son of Assar the Great, is the heir to the throne of the Interstellar Yrkanian Empire. Having conquered lots of civilizations in lots of galaxies, the Yrkanian Fleet attacked my home planet as well. I happened to be one of the few survivors taken prisoners of war, destined to become servants of the Empire. However, I soon managed to escape thanks to my innate psychic powers, till then unsuspected by the enemies. I have been fighting the Yrkanian tyranny ever since, all over the known universe...

End of Parenthesis

Therefore, that warrior had been assigned to follow me on this planet and arrest or kill me. At the moment he was standing a few meters away, threatening me with a magnetic boomerang in hand. In a split second he launched it against me and I barely managed to destroy it with my laser gun. He looked at me with in proud despair, as I was aiming at his fine body – and he looked so oddly attractive...

Next moment, he jumped high in the air and performed an impressive somersault, with the intention of attacking me again. I hardly had the time to reduce the power of my laser gun before firing. He collapsed on the ground, right before me, unconscious. I approached with slow steps, touched his right shoulder hesitantly and felt the electrifying quivers; there was nothing else I could do at the time but... I carried him into the nearest crater, laid him down on the golden sand and observed his slender body like mesmerized. Unwittingly my hand was on his broad chest, then on his neck. I felt the muscles under the thin, metalized fabric for a few moments, and I could no longer resist; I laid over him and kissed his lips. He came to himself with a start, only to stay motionless for some seconds of astonishment. His efforts to push me aside proved to be rather weak; in fact, he was more than eager to make my erotic fantasies come true as a prisoner of war, and I enjoyed his body to the fullest until he was exhausted.

In the meanwhile, I sought to interrogate him so as to find out what he had actually wanted from me in the first place, but my endeavors brought no result. I only found out his name was Jason and I was surprised to realize he looked a lot like a comic hero of my youth; beyond that, the young man appeared to be oddly innocent, without any hidden purposes whatsoever. So much the better for him...

I had just let him go, not without certain bitterness, when I suddenly overheard a familiar voice coming from his bracelet transmitter. Strangely enough, Mark didn't seem to mind I could hear: "Everything is ready; the planet has been mined and there will be no more opposition; you've done an excellent job, keeping her busy long enough; but time is running out, so get out of there now!"

I shuddered as I recognized Venor's voice. It was crystal clear to me now that this was all a set-up right from the start. *How could I be so foolish?* I wondered, angry with myself. At that point Mark turned and faced me with sinister eyes. He gave me a weird, crooked smile and... that was it: he began to transmute, finally obtaining a form I knew terribly well.

Both of us were elsewhere suddenly – inside a dark chamber

that had just been materialized around us, out of nowhere. Behind three brightly-lit red candles, I could discern the demon's platinum hair and green eyes, a non-human expression on his wild face. He was dressed in black garments that seemed to be made of thick darkness. I stepped back in horror, as I recognized the arch-demon widely known as Asmodeus, ruler of the Dark Side and ancestral protector of the Yrkanian Empire.

He opened his mouth to utter one of his dreadful magic spells and I shut my eyes in despair, knowing there was no escape from such evil in the material world.

I am not at all sure about how I managed to escape. Falling in trance, I sought to transfer my consciousness through space and time instantly – something I have achieved only a few times so far.

I made it; I abandoned the doomed planet with the echo of a demonic chuckle in my ears, but I knew it was not over yet. I needed urgent help -the help of whom I had just cheated on- and I only hoped I had not made any mistakes in transferring my conscience to a very specific, most desired place...

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The landscape surrounding me was magnificent: there were steep rocks around a crystal pagoda on my right, in front of a turquoise waterfall; its shallow river winded through the dark brown stone masses, the water sparkling at the sun rays like diamonds. The serene, emerald sea on my left reflected a huge sun rising over purple volcanoes in the horizon, under a fiery sky. Flocks of white birds were flying away. Thick branches of almond trees in blossom crowned the unique panorama. I sighed in relief, as I was sure I was at the right place, for there was no land in the whole universe as magical and real as the legendary *Eldyla*. He was there too, my one and only *Peter of the Stars*, king and ruler of this semi-material planet, unbelievably attractive as always. He looked so innocent and unpredictable, dynamic and restless, casually sitting on a cliff, gazing at the wondrous sunrise as if in reverie. I accosted him slowly, making sure not to make the slightest noise, intending to surprise him. The chances of my achieving that were close to none, yet we always enjoyed that little game, and he always pretended to be taken aback by my sudden appearance.

I hugged him from behind and he turned round supposedly astonished; he responded promptly to my warm kisses and we loved each other wildly right on that flat rock facing the sunrise. Since Eldyla is a place beyond any other space and time, I didn't mind at all about the precious time spent in heavenly love...

When that bliss came to an end, I told him everything about the doomed planet, Asmodeus' threat against me and Venor's involvement, explaining I could not face such dangers all by myself. He looked at me askance and replied nothing, but I knew well what his silence meant.

* * * * *

Then I was back in that dark room again, but it was completely empty now, cold and murky; thank Goddess, Asmodeus was not there – yet, I knew I was not alone.

"No time this time, Sandra!"

I turned around instantly and faced my fatal enemy, the throne prince Venor of Yrkania. He was standing there haughty, his laser firearm aiming at me. A silver beam flashed and I hardly avoided it by ducking just in time. I rolled on the floor and attacked him immediately, grabbing his legs and making him lose balance; the gun fell into the electro-digital fireplace and exploded in a soft, white light.

We fought really hard down on the floor, among the shattered furniture. It was not long before I was under him, his strong hands holding mine wide open over my head. I tried to break free but this proved to be impossible, as I felt strained and overwhelmed. My resistance got weaker and weaker until I could no longer move; then there was a terrible blow on my head and nothing else.

As soon as I came to myself again, I noticed two lines of red, flickering lights on the ceiling, which allowed me to see that my cell was made of metal walls; it was hot and steamy, most probably a furnace. The temperature was rising moment by moment and, just as I was about to panic in the prospect of my imminent, horrible death, suddenly the power was cut off. I couldn't help laughing aloud, full of unspeakable relief, as the heavy portal sprang open and I saw: Peter of the Stars was standing there; he had already undermined all electronic systems, escaped all soldier blocks, found the place of my execution, opened the metal portal and pulled me out. Just his kind of action...

"I just can't thank you enough", I said and hugged him; yet he seemed somewhat indifferent to my affection.

I stayed speechless, listening to the ominous silence for a few seconds. Then, through the window pane apposite us, I witnessed something like lightning in the horizon and I knew it was already too late. The chain of nuclear reactions had already started; soon, this beautiful planet would be nothing but a memory. Just like innumerable times before, a whole planet would be used as a sacrifice and an altar at the same time, an offer to the sinister entities which have been protecting the Yrkanian Empire for thousands of years.

We ran as fast as we could to find an exit, but no sooner had we finally found it, than it proved to be a dead end. The very next moment we heard a sinister laugh echo behind us; we both turned round simultaneously and faced the arch-demon Asmodeus in his pitch black garment hovering in the air, his long white hair shimmering like silky waves of light. Within a split second the apparition was gone, but I wasn't relieved at all.

An instant later I noticed an impressive fresco that covered a large part of the outside wall: It showed Prince Philip, one of Venor's ancestors. He had short brown hair, a nice smile on his young face; he was wearing an attractive outfit in shades of orange and brown, as well as a red mantle. He was holding a shiny sword in his right hand, a green shield in the left one. He looked quite majestic as he was running away from a lofty tower on top of a steep path; grass and laurels grew under his purple boots. Then my strange reverie was broken and I noticed Peter had just pulled out his laser sword -but it was too late...

Venor had already reached us and had shot down Peter, who was now lying down with his right thigh bleeding. "That was it... you won, Venor", I heard Peter utter breathless, as the enemy was about to give him the final blow.

Defying the enemy and his heavy firearm, I rolled on the ground fast, grasped a big stone and hurled it against Venor without thinking at all; as if in slow motion, I watched the stone performing a parabolic truck towards the enemy's head, while he was gaping of bewilderment.

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Then everything began to blur and change; the whole world seemed to be melting before my eyes and, after a moment of vertigo I, Emma Lloyd, managed to strike back the shuttlecock.

The game of badminton went on for some more minutes. A

group of schoolmates were still watching, while George Dim was still wandering around the schoolyard smiling and talking to everybody but me, while I was trying to put my mind together again.

All the above narrated space adventure had taken place within a second of ordinary earth time.

To experience worlds inside the world is the definition of madness; but I can control this madness...

Story Two: Mind Games

originally handwritten from 17th to 24th August, 1992

I can still recall very clearly my first contact with George Dim in the astral planes. Let me tell you how it happened.

The day was dawning and I, Emma, had hardly woken up when I saw him standing next to my bed. I looked at him for a few moments of pleasant bewilderment; I just couldn't believe my eyes, and he was so irresistible. "I want to give you a kiss", he told me in a low voice. "A real kiss".

He smiled softly, got in bed beside me and that was it -a soft kiss that felt like electricity. I caressed his neck, then his shoulders, his arms, his chest, his waist; every touch felt smooth as velvet, yet so strong...

Without even my thinking about it, I kissed him all over his body, feeling the vibration of pure *élan* in every spot of his fair skin. His brown hair shimmered in the first light of day, his hazel eyes were sparkling straight into my heart. I tasted his love like intoxicated, while his face was radiating with an odd, innocent lust.

Within the vertigo of our unworldly love, the walls of my bedroom began to melt away; the furniture started to change gradually, until my room gave its place to a long, empty corridor. Emma was already sinking to oblivion; Sandra Anderson was about to emerge...

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It was a new mission for me, a challenge in a faraway part

of the known universe, on an insignificant planet called Earth; I had been informed about a "haunted corridor" in an underground military base. People vanished there, and I had been hired to solve the mystery.

Well, the case was clear to me right from the start; I only wondered why all those people had failed to see it. There was a black metal chair stuck on the floor of that corridor and nobody could tell me how long ago or why it had been left there. The item looked kinda strange, as there was a round hole at the centre of the seat; its back was made of a single, vertical, iron bar.

There were cameras all along that corridor and I had to spend hours in a special surveillance room, watching people (most of them workers in the base) going up and down that corridor. Occasionally someone sat on that chair; after a while, a kind of helmet sprouted from the vertical bar and came down on the person's head, making them torpid for some seconds. Then, all at once, the person was actually pulped and absorbed inside the hole on the seat.

My first thought was to destroy the chair, but then I changed my mind, because I knew that was not just an object; I had no doubt it was an alien life form. Yet, I had no idea what it was exactly and I preferred to avoid any possible consequences of its immediate destruction. I just explained my point of view to those in change and made sure nobody would cross that corridor ever again.

The black "chair" is still standing solitary in the abandoned, dark corridor. When will anyone come and keep me some company? I feel so lonely... but maybe one day I will meet someone who's like me, it ponders gloomily every now and then.

They didn't seem to be very satisfied with my job, so I left Earth disappointed, having decided not to accept any job of that kind again. All I wanted now was an extreme adventure, a kind of experience that could give me real satisfaction...

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There was only one thing in the whole universe that could whip up my interest at that time. It was a kind of ancestral legend, there was only one way I might be able to reach it and it could prove to be fatal. Anyway, I had to find Peter of the Stars first, for I needed his help for that.

I found him fighting the notorious space vagabond Kochon on the villain's spacecraft, which had just landed on the mossy cliffs of Eldyla, Goddess knows for what sinister purpose. Peter had stepped on a bulky, external canon, and he was trying to fight back when the enemy managed to disarm him with a fast blow. Peter's laser gun slipped off his hand and fell into the sea below.

"You are unarmed now, Peter, and I still have my weapon!" Kochon groaned.

"I can see that!" Peter snapped coolly.

Next moment the vagabond aimed his laser weapon at his opponent's chest; Peter reacted just in time and overwhelmed the enemy with a sharp flying kick, finally disarming him.

"What... what was that?" Kochon uttered in surprise.

Peter's answer was another high kick on the vagabond's chin, which made him fall back, quite a few meters away. But, enough of that game...

I made my appearance right at that moment, on the highest cliff nearby, and cast the vagabond my sternest look.

"Kochon, I suggest you get in your spacecraft and leave Eldyla at once!" I told him in a firm voice.

Without saying anything, the Lord Kochon stood up, made a

wry face and walked away. It's just as well that it had all ended so easily...

Later on I explained my plan to Peter in detail. At first he was skeptical, but finally he saw it as a worthy challenge and agreed to help me.

* * * * *

I had thought of that plan over and over again, and seemed to be fine. However, now that I was standing at the edge of the precipice, while those menacing Yrkanian soldiers were approaching, I felt scared as never before and not at all sure about my plan. But it was too late for regrets...

As I saw them coming up the steep rocks towards me, I clasped my laser gun even more firmly. Within moments they had surrounded me and there was nothing for me to do, as I had reached a dead end.

"Drop it, Sandra, or you're dead!" one of them cried.

I obeyed reluctantly, while my heart was beating like a drum. But... *What dies when you die?* I asked myself, only to dismiss the thought at once.

Prince Venor could not believe his eyes when he saw me in his starship, taken as a prisoner by eight of his warriors.

"She was watching our starship from the rocks, at the highest top of the precipice" one of them explained.

"Put her in a cell", ordered Venor in a flat voice. "I shall take special care of her later".

Nevertheless, that "later" proved to last a lot more than expected. Days and days passed weary in that cell, and I tried really hard to contain my anxiety. There was no doubt the prince was watching every movement of mine through hidden cameras. I was feeling quite vulnerable at that time, as I was literally at Venor's mercy, and I knew he was

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