

MEMORIES OF SANDRA ANDERSON

A Cosmic Explorer

Book Two

Eight Fantasy Stories
(Twelve – Nineteen)

Written by
Tanya Ferris

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Memories of Sandra Anderson

A Cosmic Explorer

A never ending exploration through 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, that is synchronicities, between the material world and the astral planes.

More is yet to come...

Story Twelve: Art of God

*originally handwritten
from 9th July to 14th August, 1993*

Today was one of those days at school that I wish I could forget once and for all. Nevertheless, it had started under very favourable auspices, as I thought I would surprise everybody with my talent in Maths. During the past two days, I seemed to be the only one who had managed to solve a rather difficult problem in our last test in class. All my schoolmates, including my beloved George Dim, admired my cleverness.

On the third day, that is today, my solution to the problem was eventually proved to be wrong: the correct outcome was -2 instead of my +2. Eva, one of the most disagreeable pupils in class, was the one who proved that on the blackboard, finally crossing my solution out with a gigantic X. All the glory was now hers, before everybody, including George Dim...

After that unprecedented humiliation in class, I felt sad and frustrated. During the break, I stayed all alone at the balcony, leaning heavily on the railing, contemplating on my misfortune over and over again. I knew it was one of those crushing events which are meant to stamp themselves in my soul forever.

Suddenly, my frame of mind began to change, and other thoughts flowed like torrents in my mind: *You know something? This is all nonsense! Why do we have to go to school and study hard, day in day out, during the happiest*

years of our lives? To learn what happened two thousand years ago, or solve differential equations? Of course not! What we do learn at school, is how to spend most of the day in a kind of prison, sitting at a specific desk, performing dull, uninteresting tasks which are actually none of our business! We learn how to become “responsible” workers, that is slaves, who are constantly dogged by the fear of failure in life! But I, the fourteen-year-old Emma Lloyd, have already failed in life – and look what I’ve become...

Those were my thoughts that winter morning, as I was watching a yellow leaf slowly falling from a big elm tree opposite the school. However, that leaf never seemed to be reaching the ground...

* * * * *

“You got it, pal? You are a skinny teenager, going for a walk in the woods at night, and suddenly you realize that a horrible extraterrestrial monster is following you, its mouth watering! And instead of taking to your heels, you just stay there and make believe clever!”

All three youngsters laughed at their friend's jesting remark about the cinema movie they had just watched. Then, they all stood still as they saw him standing before them in that dark alley...

To cut a long story short: Goddart was a mutant from outer space, probably the only survivor of a nuclear holocaust that had changed him into something that was no longer human. He didn't look like a dreadful alien or anything like that; he looked much like a handsome young man, with a slender figure and wavy blond hair that shimmered in the moonlight. The three boys, who saw him on their way home, were the first on planet Abarth to meet him. From that moment, their lives would never be the same again...

* * * * *

I, Sandra Anderson, was invited to Ibala, the capital of Abarth, by an old friend of mine named Kyel. It wasn't long before I discovered the real purpose of his invitation: I was expected to track down and, if possible, extinguish “a terrible curse which seems to be taking over the planet fast”, according to Kyel's words.

Not that it was something easily discernible or understandable; I mean everybody looked perfectly normal at first sight. Yet, the *alteration* was taking place slowly and irreversibly deep within them, and I could sense that after coming in contact with certain persons from time to time.

Initially, I had no idea what was wrong; then, after lots of research, I got some vague information about a mutant vampire known as Goddart, who was believed to roam the galaxies absorbing energy from living beings – this is what “gods” usually do to inhabited planets. Of course, I hadn't managed to find any real evidence he was there, on Abarth, but all the facts seemed to be leading to that conclusion.

On the days that followed, Kyle and I visited many cities on the planet. Everybody and everything looked ordinary in the beginning; however, after a little while, I could perceive a kind of general exhaustion in the air, and it was more palpable among human beings. I sensed an invisible stream of *life force* oozing all around, as it was gradually drained from living creatures. After close observation, not only in the material but in the astral planes as well, I figured out this stream of life force was directed to a specific destination, feeding a secret “center” hidden somewhere on the planet.

We hadn't travelled for more than a week, but when we returned to Ibala, I could already feel -and see- the same,

perturbing changes in the atmosphere. People walked up and down the clean streets, but it was getting clearer and clearer that certain persons, more and more every day, were no longer the same. I no longer had doubts about Kyel's theory: It was almost obvious that some alien entity was gradually absorbing their vital and psychic energy, without their being able to oppose anyhow.

Anybody could be mutated; there were no visible signs of the alteration, apart from some increased sensuality. All the affected were very charming indeed – they had the charm of a psychic vampire. Not all of them were active vampires: Some gave more; others received more. Yet, the stream of energy in the air was an almost palpable, and seemed to be directed to a dark centre...

None of the mutants seemed to be suspecting that something was wrong; on the contrary, they all looked more self-confident than ever, with a sinister, alien glow in their eyes. I had even overheard discussions about a divine “Saviour” who had just come to their world in order to offer them deliverance. There was also an odd rhyme whispered by more and more people continually, even as they walked along the roads:

*A ghost star is my world,
endless lands of gold;
a splendor to be spread
all over the universe...*

Anyway, I had to locate the source of the plague fast, before it was too late for the whole of Abarth and other planets as well...

* * * * *

A few days later, I began to notice Kyel was changing. I

could no longer shut my eyes to this; his skin looked somewhat thinner and fairer, and he had become more than friendly to me.

We were out for a walk, crossing the bridge over the beautiful river that winds through the city of Ibala, when he suddenly bent over me, in a rather provocative manner, actually forcing me to kiss him. That wouldn't have been so bad, unless I had suddenly felt worn out; and, Goddess, he was ice cold...

I pushed him back, grabbed my weapon and fired at him at once. Of course, the laser ray wasn't strong enough to kill him, but it should have rendered him unconscious – and that didn't happen. He only looked at me in wonder and stuttered “Sandra, why did you do that?” in simulated sorrow.

Then I was aware of all those people, who were gradually surrounding me, coming to help their kind. A hand touched my left shoulder and I moved aside startled. I had to perform some fast and accurate martial art moves in order to avoid being captured by them, and I finally escaped running like crazy through the narrow, stone alleys.

Later on, I contacted Peter of the Stars. He arrived on Abarth in almost no time and we found refuge in an isolated inn, far from any city. We spent the whole night talking about Goddart and the regime of intense psychic vampirism he had imposed on the planet. Peter looked rather thoughtful during our conversations, as if he had already known, or as if he was hiding some crucial details from me.

“Guess who else is here, on Abarth!” he said finally.

* * * * *

Next evening I found myself among countless wild youngsters, who were waiting for a music concert to begin.

It was Peter who had insisted on our going there, without explaining why. *One of his surprises*, I reckoned. There was a certain delay of course, just to make the impatience of the crowds grow. The settings on the stage were not particularly impressive, just some thick chains hanging down and a metal network in the background.

All of a sudden, the stage lights were on and everything changed: I could hardly believe my eyes, as now the chains and the network looked like magic instruments glowing weirdly in the colourful streams of light that flashed around in fascinating combinations of purple, blue, red, white. The whole stage looked like a mystical land consisted of light, where the star singer and his musicians were already moving like fleshless shadows.

The first notes of music hypnotized the crowds, who were already raving, while I was standing there watching, numb and frozen of astonishment. I could already feel something was very wrong but I could not resist, so I experienced...

Once again,

I want to get high...

The singer's voice was low, hoarse and enigmatic, with a rather evocative effect that made me chill.

You know what I want,

So just give it to me...

I watched like magnetized the top singer in his tight, red leather outfit which made him look very sexy; his long hair was dyed black and waved in the night breeze. Every move he made gushed of sensuality; even the way he held the microphone was a simulation of sex, which brought the audience to a state of trance, and I was no exception.

Lilac, blue, green, golden cascades of light flashed all

around, as the song culminated to a crescent refrain:

I need more... always more...

I need it all,

the life force you can give...

This is real magic, I reckoned in wonder. I could sense terrible quantities of energy -tangible in the air- being conveyed from the delirious audience to the musicians, mostly to the top singer. Naturally, this is what happens any time crowds of people worship somebody on a stage or somewhere else, but in this case the phenomenon was thousands of times more intense. Very soon all these people would be drained of their energy; moreover, they would be happy about it.

I need more... always more...

The singer demanded once again and I stared at him in reverie.

That man... I just wanted him madly... and I knew who he was, and I just didn't care...

I need your life force,

all the force you can give...

“Venor!” I exclaimed then.

Nobody heard me of course, apart from Peter who was standing next to me, chuckling at my astonishment.

Just let me feel you,

Get out of control...

The singer's voice echoed around sepulchral, as if it were coming from a tomb...

But why? What is Venor doing here? And why all this masquerade? I wondered. Surely Venor knows quite a few

methods of gathering and handling psychic energy -all dictators do- but this...

Once again the singer asked for “more life force”; four women dancers moved towards him and started touching him all over his body, while he was pretending unwillingness. As the song went on, the women insisted; the singer knelt down, slowly surrendering to their affection, while the audience were watching like mesmerized.

I need all your life force, he went on, in a hoarse voice.

The women finally moved away and he was standing on his feet again, holding the microphone tight in his hand, in a rather sensual manner. I could hardly take my eyes off him.

... I need more and more... for...

There was a brief pause that only made the crowd even more delirious. Then, the sepulchral voice was heard all over the place again:

*A ghost star is my world,
endless lands of gold;
a splendor to be spread
all over the universe...*

Everybody, me included, was overwhelmed by a sweet weakness that grew stronger and stronger with each verse. When it was all over, we all just stood there like inanimate stone statues, without breath. I felt as if all my energy had been absorbed by the top singer, who was now standing tall among the hanging chains – no doubt the strongest psychic vampire I had met so far. However, I could perceive he wasn't the final receptor of all that vital and psychic energy; he was able to handle only a small percentage of it; the rest

was destined to be used by someone else, someone much more powerful...

After a few moments of general numbness, the crowds cheered exhilarated. Venor smiled broadly and waved at the spectators in triumph. At an unsuspected time, I swear he fixed his eyes on me and I felt a sting in my heart, although Peter and I weren't near enough to be possibly recognized from the stage.

* * * * *

When the concert was over, Peter and I sought to find Venor backstage. Having neutralized two of the technicians and taken their clothes, it wasn't so hard for us to search along the narrow corridors without being detected. It wasn't hard at all, I'd say...

Twice we had to use passwords so as to open locked doors, but this has never been a problem for Peter. I'm not at all certain how he does it, but he can hack any entrance code within seconds.

We found Venor just in time, as he was getting ready to leave. He was wearing one of his casual uniforms now, a dark purple one with black boots, but he was still incredibly attractive.

“Sandra!” he chuckled. “I've been waiting for you!”

“What are you doing here, Venor?” I demanded to know immediately.

“What do you think?” he asked back.

Next moment he set fire on his right thumb, just by rubbing it against the wall.

“You see? It doesn't even hurt!” he smiled.

Of course; psychic vampires of this kind are almost

invulnerable, I pondered after the initial surprise.

“Hurt? Why do you think I want you hurt?” I said softly.

I approached and touched his right cheek gently, hoping to put him off guard.

“I don't want you hurt”, I reassured him in a low voice.

His face got softer and he bent his head slightly with frowned eyes, as if admitting his guilt. I knew he was already up to something.

“She is the one you've been telling me about, right Venor?” rang a man's metallic voice behind me.

“That's right, Goddart!”

For a moment I froze stiff. *So, the infamous Goddart is right here*, I thought, *having certain dealings with Venor of Yrkania!* I certainly hadn't seen that coming.

I turned round slowly and faced the master of all psychic vampires; he looked more like an apparition than a human, as the substance he was made of was obviously a lot thinner than flesh and blood.

“Is he your new friend, Venor?” I asked the prince in feigned coolness.

“So, now you know; and this is the last thing you will ever know!” he replied frigidly.

I turned my head and stared at the blond, weird man again. Chills ran down my spine, as the aura he emitted was indescribable: It was as if billions of different energies were converging towards him, making him stronger and stronger moment by moment – the life force of innumerable living beings, human or other species, being willingly offered to him, and all his victims were meant to acknowledge the soul-destroying peril only when it was too late.

“How could you ever be allied to such a thing?” I asked Venor then, but received no answer.

Next moment I pulled out my laser gun and fired at him – again and again. He didn't even flinch.

In the meantime Peter got ready to fight Venor, as the two men took out their laser swords simultaneously. The prince forced Peter to step back; both were outside the room now, on the wide landing of the stairway, their laser blades already hissing and flashing in the semi-darkness.

Peter was an excellent fighter but Venor was considerably stronger in muscle and very unpredictable sometimes. The duel went on for some long moments; I could feel how impatient Peter had become, as he kept on striking with extraordinary vehemence against an enemy who always parried his blows quite easily.

At the same time, I was wondering about the right way to confront my opponent. He had done nothing to harm me so far, whereas I had already used my laser weapon against him. His cool, inexpressive face showed that not only had it left him intact, but it had invigorated him as well.

There was a soft thud coming from outside; I turned my head for second and glanced through the open door: Venor had just slipped off the stairs and he was hanging from the baluster. He strove to climb up but it proved to be pretty hard; Peter approached and gave him a hand, so that they could go on with a fair fight. However, Venor was insidious enough to punch Peter on the chin as soon as he was on the landing again. The young man was taken off guard and Venor had the chance he needed to get the edge, performing two fast high kicks against his opponent. Peter lost balance as well as his laser sword, and collapsed on the floor with a cry of pain.

“That was very treacherous of you, Venor! You will regret it!” threatened Peter as soon as he stood up on his feet again, hurt and unarmed.

Venor laughed complacently and attacked again with bare hands, only to be held in check by Peter's excellent martial art moves. Venor had to fight hard so as not to be cornered by his opponent; he was actually astonished at the unexpected turn the fight had taken.

Next moment, the Yrkanian prince was forced to retreat all the way back, his elbows now leaning against the metal baluster. Peter smiled satisfied and got ready to give the final blow. However, he paused for an instant, having just realized that his opponent was now watching something extraordinary with an expression of anguish on his face. Both duelists forgot all about their fight, turned their heads and watched...

* * * * *

I had just lowered my laser gun, acknowledging it would be useless against a powerful cosmic vampire like Goddart. I was only standing there motionless, captive of the creature's outlandish charm. I didn't feel like fighting him anymore. At least I was still aware of the fact that my will had weakened dangerously, as I kept on staring at his mesmerizing, golden eyes. Then his lips moved...

“A ghost star is my world...”

After the first verse was heard, I could hardly think of anything.

“...endless lands of gold...”

Each word drained more and more of my life force; the laser weapon slipped off my hand.

“...a splendor to be spread...”

I was already falling into a sweet torpor I didn't want to come out from.

“...all over the universe...”

As the last verse reverberated in the ionized air, there was a spectral vision before my wide open eyes: I could actually see those “endless lands of gold”, all those worlds Goddart had conquered – so serene, blissful, perfect... Tears rolled down my cheeks, as I now knew he was right about everything. Nevertheless, I also had the impression those eyes were not my own eyes anymore...

Right at that moment, I felt the *power* surging inside me little by little. *Maybe not all is lost after all*, I reckoned, while I suddenly knew what to do exactly.

Well, this is no something I normally do; I resort to such means only on very special occasions – and that was such an occasion.

For a few moments Goddart watched me dumbfounded, while I was tracing wide circles in the air with my hands – two concentric circles made of luminous, white, astral fluid, very soon complete with magic ideograms. The shape resembled a protective shield, but it was more than that: It was the third seal of Isis, which eliminates all kinds of perils and enemies. Next instant I began the invocation:

*I adjure and order you, Goddart,
with all my force and vehemence,
with the virtue of Whom
spoke and all was created;
in the name of the Great Goddess Isis,
Mother of Gods, Mistress of the Heavens,
who decrees that I shall live forever,*

whilst you'll be gone once and for all...

Next instant the circles moved towards the enemy and crashed upon him. He vanished into nothingness, as he was thrown out of this reality, out of this continuum of time and space.

Several minutes lapsed in absolute serenity. I thought I had succeeded and got ready to walk away but, all of a sudden, there he was again – Goddart was standing before me again, he was inside this world again. I looked at him flabbergasted, as nobody had managed to break the seal of Isis so far. However, he did look different now: I supposed he had lost enormous amounts of energy, for he no longer looked semi-spectral; the man I was now facing was flesh and blood, just a normal, material man.

“That was a great mistake, Sandra!” he shouted at me, outraged.

I sought to collect my laser weapon but I didn't have the time to do so; he attacked immediately with a fast flying kick, which I hardly dodged. I tried to fight back but he kept on escaping my blows with considerable ease. An unexpected, lightning kick on my head made me lose the world and collapse on the floor breathless. I could barely move; I was lost in a never-ending vertigo, while a frenzied voice echoed all around: “Die, Sandra Anderson!”

He fired at me at once, having grasped my own laser weapon at an unsuspected time. I can't really tell why he missed; either he was too angry or I was very lucky: I slipped instinctively aside and the laser beam flashed right beside me. He got ready to fire again, full of wrath, while I was trying to stand on my feet; it was only a matter of seconds till he would get me...

At that moment, Peter forgot all about Venor and rushed in,

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