
Future Memories

by Amanda Kear

Ninth Pass: 2432.03.15

Printed in FTA #22 (2005)

This story is printed by Kadanzer Weyr (www.kadanzer.org), a fan club approved by Anne McCaffrey in 1995. Kadanzer Weyr is a non-profit group -- all materials pertaining to Ms. McCaffrey's works displayed on this website may only be accessed for personal, non-commercial purposes. Please do not reproduce without permission. All references to worlds and characters based on Anne McCaffrey's fiction are copyright© Anne McCaffrey 1967, 2005, all rights reserved, and used by permission of the author. The Dragonriders of Pern® is registered U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, by Anne McCaffrey, used here with permission. Use or reproduction without a license is strictly prohibited.

Dunia eased herself out of bed. Corsan didn't stir, being used to her midnight excursions to the necessary at this late stage in her pregnancy. But this was not that kind of need – Dunia felt restless and had a desire to wander. She pulled on her wherhide jacket over her nightgown and slipped out of the weyrcot, heading through the moonlit darkness past the hatching grounds and towards the path that led to the shore.

She paused at the head of the path and gazed out over the darkened sea, her restlessness not intense enough to risk the steep climb with her baby-heavy body. She ran her hands over her swollen belly, wanting to feel some contact with the child inside, but it was quiescent at the moment.

There was enough moonlight to make the distant Whitewing Islands stand out as darker silhouettes against the sea. The Wherry Arches, the Southern Weyr inhabitants called them. The anomalies in their shape attracted her eye even now, when they were just black forms on the night horizon. Dunia closed her eyes and visualised the cluster of tiny islands as they should be – as they *would* be again one day. *That sea stack gone, that arch collapsed, the shape of that cliff eroded back...* She needed to keep those images fresh in her mind. A reminder of what the fury of the tsunami and four hundred turns of storms could do. A reminder that, however comfortable and content she was with Corsan and Southern Weyr, she could not stay.

The Whitewing Islands were the warning that her time here was limited – the patterns of the stars were the pathway that would lead her home. Dunia opened her eyes and stared at Belior's disk full in the sky, with stars glinting around it. She ran through the pattern of changes in the position of the constellations and the Red Star that she had pieced together from Starsmith charts and the star lore that all goldriders knew. The advance and retreat of the Red Star in its orbit –

what had guided Lessa and the Five Weyrs could guide her too.

If she had got it right. She would be risking more than Nioranth and herself when she went. Dunia stroked her pregnant abdomen again.

She sighed and turned away from the ocean. No point worrying herself about the journey until her baby was born and old enough to make the trip. Corsan already surely thought her mad, stitching baby blankets that would keep an infant warm through a polar winter, here in the tropics of Southern Weyr. So far, he had given no inkling that he might suspect her real reason for needing to keep their child so warm.

Dunia halted at the entrance to the hatching grounds, and reached to partly uncover one of the glowbaskets that hung on the wall for just such a night time visit. Gentle light spilled over the sands and the dark gold shape that was Nioranth. The queen blinked a sleepy eye open and rumbled contently at the sight of her rider.

My eggs harden well. They will hatch soon. The gold stretched out her neck to fuss with the arrangement of one of the clutch, pushing sand up against it with her nose. He great head tilted to one side. ***Your baby will hatch soon too, will it not?***

Dunia giggled at the idea of her imminent delivery being considered a 'hatching'. She would have to share that one with Corsan. *Yes, Nioranth, my baby will be born soon. Perhaps before your eggs hatch, the healers tell me.*

Good. I want to fly again, high and far, with you on my back. We will fight with the Queens' Wing again. Nioranth had only really appreciated the restrictions a heavily pregnant body put on acrobatic flying when she herself was egg heavy. Once her eggs had been laid, the gold's memories of that awkward phase had faded. She had become impatient for Dunia to be again what she referred to as *a proper rider*, even if that only meant a brief trip adragonback to the beach to bathe before hurrying back to stand guard over her eggs.

The young goldrider picked her way carefully across the sands. *Yes, yes, impatient one. We will fly with the Queens Wing again soon.* She stroked Nioranth's soft nose, and basked in her gold's love and approval.

When she returned to the 10th Pass, these eggs, this hatching ground, everything... would all fade from Nioranth's memory. The gold would quickly forget Southern Weyr and the bronze who had fathered this clutch and the dragonets that would hatch from it. Dunia rested her head against her dragon's soft skin and wished that human memories were so easily erased.



Kadanzer Weyr

Alternate Tenth Pass *Dragonriders of Pern*® Fanclub

www.kadanzer.org