

Magenta Zephyr & The Universe Bender

*EXCERPT #4
From the Novel by Tim Storm*

The Present . . .

“If Fate throws you into the stream, you must swim! Swim! Swim!”
- *The Great Cosmic Book* -

* * * * *

“How much longer until we get to the Pleasure Domes? I’m starting to feel like I’m vacuum-sealed in a nutri-ration pack,” Bonzo grunted and banged his head against the wall of the compact shuttle cruiser. “I need to get me a woman,” he muttered to himself.

“Calm down, you genetic backlash! Only another couple of cycles and we’ll be pulling into the Pleasure Domes. I think you can suppress your primitive urges long enough to survive until then!” Mako almost spat it out.

“It’s this damn cramped tin can! It feels like the walls are moving in on me,” Bonzo complained.

“The tour ship is waiting for us at the docks, and when we leave the Pleasure Domes, we’ll be traveling in the lap of luxury.” Mako glared at Bonzo with obvious disdain. “You’ve done nothing but complain since we started on this flight.”

The band was on their way to the port of Mars to perform at the Pleasure Domes, then they would take possession of their newly renovated ship, the *Zephyr*, and embark upon the first stage of the tour. The ship had been customized from the hull of a classic Van Winkle Star Cruiser, completely refurbished and retrofitted with brand new hyperspace engines. The distinctive body was painted jauntily with the Magenta Zephyr Band logo on each side and stylized scarlet lightning bolts along its extreme contours. Michael had commissioned its renovation, and he had proudly shown them the graphic renderings of the finished vessel, interior

and exterior. They would definitely be traveling in comfort and style when they left the Pleasure Domes, but being confined in the small shuttle to Mars had given them all a case of cabin fever.

“I’m sure you will find suitable companionship once we reach Mars,” Sashar intervened before this exchange became another dramatic episode in what had become a steady stream of quarrels between Bonzo and Mako. “We will be staying there for more than twelve cycles. I presume that should be enough time for anyone to find companionship, especially at the Pleasure Domes.”

“I don’t know about that. I’m not nearly as much of a Romeo as any of you guys,” Sly mumbled.

“You don’t need to be a Romeo, Sly. All you need is a pocketful of credit,” Bonzo said, attempting to be helpful but utterly failing.

“All good things come to those who are patient, my friend,” said Sashar, knowing that Sly was surely seeking less superficial companionship. “We are on a monumental quest here, and along the way we shall all find whatever it is we seek. Let’s just enjoy the ride.”

“For sure,” Sly had to agree with Sashar’s simple assessment.

Michael and Starr were sleeping, tied up in lazy knots, spread across a couple of reclined seats. The band mates looked toward the newly initiated lovers as if they were a living sculpture that illustrated the essence of their conversation.

Maggie had long ago retired to her cramped little cabin so she could sleep somewhat comfortably. She had become fatigued by the long series of farewell concerts on Earth and was unaccustomed to the strains imposed on the human body by space travel.

“I suppose you’re right, Sashar,” Mako reached forward and patted his friend’s shoulders. “This is going to be the adventure of our lives!”

Sashar smiled.

Sly quaked his planet in agreement.

“Damn!” Bonzo grunted. “I don’t know about any of that Zen crap. I just need a woman,” he grumbled, more to himself than to his companions.

* * * * *

“In order to get the utmost enjoyment when eating candies, the important things to remember are to eat them one at a time, savor them slowly, and the red ones always taste best.”

- *The Great Cosmic Book*

* * * * *

Magenta woke abruptly in her small cabin, though she remained a bit groggy from exhaustion and it took her a moment to realize exactly where she was. In the previous six months, during the band’s farewell tour, she had spent nights in luxury hotels on nearly every continent on Earth. It had become difficult to keep track of her whereabouts from day to day, and the whirlwind performance schedule had kept her slightly dazed and confused.

She activated the comm-unit at her bedside.

“Monica, are you there?” she asked softly.

“Yes, sister. What can I do for you?”

“Just wondering how long ‘til we get to the port.”

“Nearly four hours at this speed. I can rev it up, if you’d like.”

“No, that’s fine. I’m tired . . . very tired. This space-travel-stuff is kind of strange to me, hard to get used to.” Magenta said, the weariness apparent in the timbre of her voice.

“Well, you’ve been performing heavily for the last six months. It was bound to catch up to you eventually. Just rest for a while. We have plenty of time before docking.”

“Wake me about an hour before our arrival.”

“Okay. Good night, beautiful.”

“I love you, Monica,” Magenta said, stifling a yawn.

“Same to you,” Monica whispered as she slowed the ship’s speed down a bit to allow Magenta more time to rest.

Magenta quickly slid back into a restful slumber until Monica woke her more than eight hours later.

* * * * *

“Who forces time is pushed back by time; who yields to time finds time on his side.”

- *The Talmud* -

* * * * *

Please visit

www.magentazephyr.com

to learn more about Magenta Zephyr and the full-length novel

Magenta Zephyr and the Universe Bender

© 2009 - ALL RIGHTS RESERVED