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CHAPTER 1

Craig Carter was asleep in his spacecraft after having just completed a particularly tiring mission for his boss, Commander Simms, and he was presently on course for Earth.

Suddenly his dreams were interrupted by a vision, which formed in his mind.

“Craig Carter, I need your help!” The voice begged. “You don’t know me, but I’m one of Tamus’ subjects. She’s in terrible trouble and has requested that I contact you on her behalf. She’s in the clutches of Andocia, whom you have already met, and she was captured by a subtle plot. It was her wish that you search for her, but it will be a trying and dangerous time for you. Tamus was very reluctant to ask this of you, but you are her last hope and she doesn’t know where else to turn. If you decide not to do this though, my mistress will not hold it against you. However, if you decide to help us, she will be eternally grateful to you. I’ve been asked to allow you to think about this on the way back to Earth. I will contact you again when you have landed safely and spoken this over with your boss. It won’t be an easy mission, but you must persevere. To help you on your journey, you’ll find a ring of solid gold, with a white stone set into it beside your bed when you wake up. It has magical properties and you must take very good care of it. Good luck, Craig Carter ...”

The voice faded away and Craig slept on. When he awoke his gaze fell on the ring, which dazzled him as the glow from his ship’s lights reflected in it.

“So, it wasn’t my imagination; I really did see that strange man! I remember Andocia, but she has stayed out of my life so far, thank goodness. Now however, someone wants me to cross swords with her once more.”

Craig stared at the ring but he made no move to take it. Instead he stood up and paced around the cockpit of his spacecraft, deep in thought.