

Excerpt from Hannah's Warrior: Cosmos' Gateway Book 2

By S. E. Smith

Hannah rolled out of the bed and wrapped one of Tink's robes around her. It was a bit on the small side since Hannah was a couple of inches taller than Tink's five foot four frame. Luckily, Hannah was wearing an oversized T-shirt and a pair of boxers to sleep in. She moved quietly down the steps, her bare feet not making any noise on the oak steps. The second level of the warehouse was Cosmos' living quarters. Hannah had been in it dozens of times and quickly remembered the format. There was a bedroom area off to the left. The stairs were to the right and across from it was the doorway to a small kitchenette area where they usually ate. Hannah moved cautiously down the steps, the alarm sounding louder in her gut with each step she took. Hannah ducked under the stairwell and moved across through the door into the kitchenette. She reached up and took one of Tink's prized aluminum frying pans down from the hook over the center stove area and held it firmly against her chest. From the corner of her eye, Hannah saw a dark shape move against the light filtering in through the windows overlooking the river. A friend would have turned on some lights when they entered so that only left the un-friendly. Hannah stepped back into a small recess next to the counter and held her breath. The huge figure of the intruder was moving around the open bar heading towards her. Hannah gripped the frying pan tighter and said a prayer of thanks for picking out the black silk robe instead of the hot pink one. As the figure came through the door Hannah swung with all her might bringing the bottom of the frying pan down over the back of the man's head, watching in relief as he collapsed at her feet.

Borj hesitated a moment as he took stock of his surroundings. He was in some type of lab or workroom from the equipment. He didn't know what to expect when he walked through the doorway. He moved silently towards a group of what looked like primitive controls of some type. Borj ran his fingers lightly over a type of input device with strange markings on it before moving over to a set of steps leading down to a lower level. He stopped at the top observing the strange metal archway against one wall and the cables and wires running to it. It did not appear to have an exit. Turning, he noticed a small area containing a sink and some cabinets. Out of the corner of his eye, he saw the set of clear doors Tink told him about and another set on the other side of them which she said led out of the lab. Borj pulled the map of the warehouse out of his pocket that Tink had drawn for him and studied it carefully. Tink said if Cosmos was not in his lab he should be in his living quarters. She didn't know the exact time it was on Earth but even if Cosmos wasn't there she said Borj could wait for him on the second level.

Tink had reassured him Cosmos would know how to get in touch with Hannah if she was not there already. Borj walked over to the control panel on the wall and punched in the symbols she had written down for him. She said it was a by-pass code in case RITA was down and the person did not have voice recognition set up yet. Borj watched as the doors slid open. He stepped into the small area, turning to watch as the doors behind him closed silently. Turning back around, he entered the second set of symbols. A solid metal door clicked open and he pushed his way into a

dimly lit narrow corridor. There were two sets of stairs - one lead up while the other lead down. Borj turned and moved upward.

At the top of the stairs the room opened up into a large area with a set of windows along one side. Borj did not know how to turn on the lighting in the area. Normally when he entered a room the lights would automatically adjust to his preferences. It didn't matter, he could see just fine with the light coming in through the windows. He moved over to them and gazed out on the home world of the female he wanted to claim. He watched as strange transports moved back and forth over a small bridge spanning the river below him. The village below him was brightly lit with a brilliant sprinkling of lights. He could see humans walking along the edge of the river, some holding hands, others alone. He wondered vaguely if any of them could be his female. Tink said she should have arrived by now. Borj turned away from the window and moved towards the bedroom area to see if the male was there. He walked through noticing the bed was empty and the cleansing room was dark. He returned to the living area and moved towards the food preparation area. He was curious as to how the human's living space compared with those on Baade. He had just walked into the small cooking area when he felt a sense of warning he was not alone. He was just about to turn when a blow from behind struck him and everything went dark.

Hannah looked down at the figure lying face down on the kitchen floor. She quickly turned on the light over the sink and bent to make sure the man was incapacitated. Seeing he was out cold, Hannah quickly jerked open the drawers in the kitchen looking for something to tie the intruder up with. She crowed in triumph when she came across a package of plastic tie straps. *They were the large, heavy duty type too*, Hannah thought with relief. From the size of the guy lying on the floor she was going to need the extra strength variety. She quickly attached one to each of his wrists then connected them together with another one. Not wanting to take a chance, she put three more around both wrists and three up his legs starting at his ankles. Hannah stared at the three remaining ties and shrugged her shoulders. She might as well use them too. She quickly attached two more to the ties around his wrists and then to the belt loops on the back of his jeans and the last one she tied around his ankles. *Twelve of those bad boys should keep him immobile when he wakes up!* Hannah thought smugly.

Hannah struggled to roll the huge male over so she could get a better look at him. She wanted to make sure she could identify him if the cops asked her. A vague thought flashed through her mind that this might be the senator's son looking for Tink but Hannah remembered Cosmos telling her the aliens had taken him with them. *Surely, he hadn't escaped?* Hannah thought in dismay. Hannah gasped when she got her first good look at the man under her. He was taller than Cosmos by a couple of inches and much broader. His hair was black and cut short, almost like a military style haircut. Hannah frowned as she took in his facial features. They were similar to a human's but different. He had high cheekbones but his nose was a little broader than most males. His skin color was a warm, dark tan almost like the color of a rich honey. Hannah reached out with one of her hands and gently traced the side of his face from his hairline down to his chin. His skin felt hot against her touch. There was something different about him but Hannah couldn't

quite figure out what it was. She was just about to move away when a voice behind her made her squeal in surprise.

"What the hell are you doing?" Cosmos asked in shock.

Hannah fell back on her butt on the cold floor and grabbed her chest with her free hand. The other hand was still clutching the aluminum frying pan like a life line. Hannah turned enough so she could see Cosmos standing in the doorway to the kitchen that the intruder had entered through just minutes before.

"Holy crud, Cosmos! You scared the shit out of me!" Hannah gasped out.

Cosmos took in the scene in front of him. Hannah was sitting on the floor barely covered in the robe he bought Tink last Christmas clutching one of Tink's favorite frying pans in her hand. Next to her was a huge, unconscious male. Cosmos felt his stomach sink as he took in the man's features. If he wasn't mistaken, the aliens were back. He let his gaze wander over the still figure frowning as he took in the odd way the man was laying with his back bowed up and his hands underneath him. As his gaze moved down, he couldn't quite hold back the small smile tugging at the corner of his lips as he noticed how Hannah had tied the poor guy up. From the guy's knees to his ankles he had enough tie straps connected around him to hold a team of mules back. His eyes flickered to the empty tie bag lying on the floor next to the two.

"Christ, Hannah. Do you think you used enough tie straps on him?" Cosmos said shaking his head.

The figure on the floor suddenly sat up next to Hannah with a loud growl. Hannah squealed, startled at the sudden movement of the man beside her and the deep growl. Without thinking, she swung the frying pan again clobbering the man across the forehead. Both Hannah and Cosmos watched as the man's eyes crossed for just a second before he fell backwards with a hard thump to the floor.

"Shit! You didn't kill him, did you?" Cosmos said rushing forward to where the man was out cold again.