



Yun'sara: Book Two of the Twelve Dimensions

Paul L. Centeno

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Saving the universe requires planning, preparation, and considerable fighting in the series science fiction novel Yun'sara.

A former space captain and an ancient enemy face off in Paul L. Centeno's science fiction novel *Yun'sara*.

In this second installment of the Twelve Dimensions series, Shira, who was excommunicated from a magical religious order responsible for space exploration, has taken to her new role as a freelance jack-of-all-trades for nonmagical guilds. On contract from her former employers, she investigates claims of mysterious deaths at a nursing facility. She uncovers and exposes a plot involving memory wiping and consciousness swapping, gaining favor with the guild master.

But a second contract leaves Shira in a coma, after which her companions search for a potential remedy on a desert planet. Elsewhere, as members of Shira's former crew await their new assignments, Ashkarath the Koth'vurian, an ancient alien who consumed Shira's magic and whose existence heralds the end times, attacks. Shira recovers and, with a motley crew of former companions and new allies, forces Ashkarath to retreat. Her new team sets out to complete as many high-paying freelance contracts as they can, hoping to secure a new battleship and banish the Koth'vurians once again.

The series' universe expands in this entry. While most of Shira's contracts are executed on her crowded home planet, others take her and her crew to other worlds, including an ocean planet and a desert planet. Each world's lore, creatures, and political undercurrents represents new challenges for Shira and her crew. Still, they continue to accept assignments that others would not, underscoring the guild master's trust in Shira.

Shira's analytical thinking skills are on display as she completes contracts, but her characterization shifts as she adjusts to civilian life. She is often distracted by her physical needs and emotions, and that the once-focused captain is so easily waylaid as a private citizen yields mixed reactions. But Shira is also not such a dominant character in this novel, wherein others have room to develop. The connections between Shira and her crew deepen as the novel progresses, though one misogynist among them threatens to sour their dynamics. He comments on Shira's appearance too often, making her seem less capable than she is.

While the crew's banter keeps the story from stagnating between its action sequences, where people's step-by-step motions are covered without matching the breakneck pace of Shira's contract assignments, the fact that each of Shira's team's contracts receives its own chapter compromises the narrative's continuity. Why Shira is so eager to acquire an interstellar spaceship is unclear here; indeed, knowledge of the previous installment is required to fill in such gaps. And even after Shira achieves her goal, she is set on a new quest in the final battle against the Koth'vurians, who, for all of the imminent danger they are said to pose, feature into this series entry very little.

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DONTANÁ MCPHERSON-JOSEPH (July 28, 2021)

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