



Forerunner: The Second Venture

Andre Norton

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Sisma, the beggar whose mind held the ancient legacy of the Forerunners, had escaped her claw-and-fang life in the Burrows, with the off-planet Rangers. But the Rangers wanted her in captivity for study by historians.

So Sisma and Zass, her winged hunting zorsal, escaped again, taking a stolen lifeboat to an unknown world. A desert where shapeshifting creatures lurked beneath the sand, where Zass and Sisma's hunting skills, psychic powers, and strange link to the Elder One in Sisma's mind were their only survival weapons.

Then Thom, the Ranger who saved--and perhaps betrayed--Sisma, crashed on the planet. Together, they realized that a mysterious, mind-threatening and possibly monstrous power had found them...

And only the Elder One could help.

Forerunner: The Second Venture Details

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Doris says

Simsa battles with the visions and powers, and the potential loss of her whole self, as the ancient memories and persona she first welcomed threaten to her own self, and become the dominant in this strong tale of multiple personalities with a fantasy twist.

Simsa had been invaded, and her memories and frightened young self overpowered, by the clinging memory of a Forerunner - one of those peoples who had existed so far in the past that no one knew much of them.

Now, she struggles to be her own person again, but also contends with those who would use her to find out more about those others. She does not always act wisely, and the moves she takes to correct her actions and protect herself are the strength of the story.

Valerie says

There really wasn't long between Forerunner and this, its sequel. I suppose prolific authors, having so much more to remember, can be forgiven for minor failures of continuity. In this case, however, it's something of a doozy. In Forerunner, there's no doubt that Simsa has retractable claws. It's pertinent to the plot, and has impacts several places. In this book, she regrets the lack of claws (to aid in climbing, for example). So what happened? Surely she wasn't declawed?

I'm not sure why this book is shoehorned into a series in the citation, btw. The simple use of the common word Forerunner, (even in the title) doesn't establish any necessary linkage. These two books can stand alone, despite many elements in common with other books, though there's room for a third book, if necessary.

Note that the education the Burrowers and other poor children in and around Kuxortal is frankly abusive, involving repeated beatings. If the children AREN'T naturally inquisitive, there's very little likelihood of then learning anything.

Susan says

This is a sequel to Forerunner, but I didn't think it was as good as the first one. It's a fairly short book, less than 200 pages. Thom has talked Simsa into going with him into space, but when she reads the minds of some of the people on the ship, she wants to escape. She and her zorsal get into a Life Boat, which deposits them on an arid, burnt-out planet. She is saved by a small cluster of creatures who help her, but when a flitter arrives one of them uses her powers to bring it down. She realizes that Thom may be on it, looking for her, and feels she must save his life. She is continually learning more about the Elder One who inhabited her body (see Forerunner), but fights to keep her own persona at the same time. She and Thom go back to the people who helped her, but yet another ship comes following the signal of Thom's flitter. Simsa must decide whether to stay as an exile, or go with him and find herself back in the power of the spacers. This could be

read as a standalone, as some of the happenings in Forerunner are sprinkled here and there, but in my opinion it is better to read them in order.

Doris says

This book is dealing with the same characters as in "Forerunner" but in a different twist, Norton does not have the same plot theme – searching for the world of origin for Simsa. I really liked the character, but had a little trouble reconciling some of the discrepancies between that plot and this one.

Although this will never be one of the strongest books as far as plot, it does have as a strength the struggle for personal and cultural identity and the ability to grow and trust. It also allows us to see Simsa as she struggles to fit in without being used, meld in without giving up herself and self knowledge, and above of to be part of something. In that sense, this book is a bridge to the Simsa's future.

Andrea says

This follows very shortly after "Forerunner" and adds a layer of complexity to the "past Simsa" and "current Simsa" situation. Still not one of Norton's stronger books, but I did feel acutely Simsa's struggle for identity and trust, her need to not be used against the sheer loneliness of her situation.

Fredrick Danysh says

A living member of the race called Forerunner is discovered living in the Burrow. She is taken into space by the humans where the only human she trusts pursues her and his life is endangered to the point that she must decide whether to save him or not.

James says

This is the sequel to Forerunner, you will be confused if you don't read it first. You may feel a bit befuddled anyway, the story is a chase story that seems forced. Simsa flees from some of the scientists that work with her buddy from the first book Thom, but its unclear if they were really going to do anything bad to her. She escapes via lifeboat to a hostile planet upon which alarms and excursions occur, many of them involving the wave of Simsa's magic wand. A decent read but not one of Norton's best.
