

**SILVERHEART**



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MICHAEL  
MOORCOCK  
◆  
SILVERHEART  
A NOVEL OF THE MULTIVERSE

◆  
STORM  
CONSTANTINE



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# INTRODUCTION



I do very few collaborations, but I have for a long time wanted to do a book with Storm Constantine, a writer whom I greatly admire for her Wraeththu stories and others. We had toyed with the idea of writing more Elric stories together, but in the end the character is so thoroughly “mine” that we both agreed it probably would always remain a pipe dream.

However, when the opportunity arose to write *Silverheart* with her I jumped at it. I provided her with some 45,000 words of manuscript, hoping she would make something more of the characters and story than I had done. She came up trumps. I love the characters she has brought to life from my broad outlines. She breathed real life and souls into them.

We never met while working on the book (we’ve in fact only met a handful of times over the years). She lives in the English midlands

## 6 ♦ SILVERHEART

and I live in central Texas and we communicated electronically, thanks to the marvels of e-mail. Yet the collaboration could not have gone more smoothly. The resulting book, which fits into my multiverse without being exactly part of my usual Eternal Champion sequence, is what you now hold.

We are currently working on a sequel. I enjoyed creating with Storm the backgrounds and characters of *Silverheart's* environment, with its Lords of Metal and its strange, formal games playing, its absence of a surfeit of heroes or villains. All sides have their own arguments, their own reasons for behaving as they do. It's one of my favorites, perhaps because in the end it is flavored so strongly with Storm's unique and outstanding talent.

I hope you'll enjoy it and that if you're not familiar with Storm's or my other work, it will whet your curiosity to explore our different worlds.

Michael Moorcock  
The Old Circle Squared  
Lost Pines, Texas  
January 2005

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# AN EXTRACT FROM “TRAVELS IN TIME” BY CORNELIUS BEGG

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**T**here’s a city, they say, at the centre of the multiverse. It has been there since the beginning of Time.

The name of this city is Karadur -Shriltasi. Some would have you believe that she is no more than an illusion maintained by illusion; a mirage, which voyagers through the multiverse glimpse once and spend the rest of their lives seeking in vain.

Others say she is the very core of the multiverse, that the fate of the city determines the nature of all ordered matter in myriad worlds and countless realities.

Such disputes are of little consequence to most of us. Few have ever found Karadur-Shriltasi or gazed upon the Shren Diamond, the fabled Jewel of All Time, which came into being long before the city was built. It had been discovered in the distant past by a miner named Shren, who had seen it glowing through a wall of solid rock. The Jewel is said to be

the crystallised essence of the Original Matter , formed from swirling Chaos when Eternity began, from which all other matter derives.

Mere legend, perhaps? Or commonplace reality for those who live and die in Karadur-Shriltasi and never think to question the bizarre logic upon which their existence depends?

Many will inform you, most forcefully, that Karadur-Shriltasi does not and cannot exist. But I know that it does. I have travelled the moonbeam roads of the multiverse. I have been to the city , seen her splendours, and I can take you there. Words will be our vessel of light to this far-off destination.

We will journey to the centre of the multiverse, from where radiate all other realities, level upon level of universes, each with billions of inhabited worlds.

When I visited Karadur-Shriltasi, I found myself in a paradise of inspiring beauty, but in the taverns and gardens of this place, I learned of the city's history. I heard a fabulous tale, one scarcely believable. "Is this a fiction to gull tourists?" I asked my informants, but with guileless smiles they directed me to the Museum of the Metal, and there I saw for myself the ancient evidence: machines from the past, careful chronicles and works of art.

In Karadur, before our tale begins, the city stood in arrogant isolation upon a vast plain of ice. She was known only as Karadur then, and the reason for this is part of the tale. Lacking contact with other realities, perhaps the spirit of the city herself believed she was the *only* reality—the best of all possible worlds, denying decay , defying destruction. Yet those who knew of her existence, adepts who can gaze into the most hidden areas of the multiverse, predicted she was doomed to collapse beneath the weight of her ruler's extraordinary, all-encompassing self-deception, their own stifling orthodoxy.

Seen from the ice, the city appeared through the chill mist as an asymmetrical mound; its tall, glittering buildings of brick and stone bound about with collars and cuffs of iron, steel, gold and brass. From



above, Karadur's four circular quarters could easily be discerned, each a fief of the ruling Metal clans. Between the quarters, forming a square of the entire city, were the free zones, traditionally the habitat of lowlifes, criminals and misfits, who either shunned true city life or else had been outcast from it. The zones were surrounded by covered farms, where the city's crops and herds were husbanded, and the entrances to mines, which burrowed beneath the ice.

In the centre of Karadur, rose the great Guild Tower, a masterpiece in metal, dedicated to the power of the city's rulers. Each of the Guild Tower's four main girders, or "legs," was cast in a metal specific to each of the great Lords of the Metal: Iron, Silver, Gold and Copper, whose inviolable authority maintained stability and law within the city. In turn, the girders were bound about with bands of other metals, to symbolise the unity and strength of the Lords of the city.

Far back in its history, Karadur had been divided into its four quarters, each under the jurisdiction of a great clan of the Metal and named for some ancient, hallowed artisan. Thus Clan Silver controlled Akra Quarter, Clan Iron controlled Peygron Quarter, Clan Gold ruled in Ihrn, while Clan Copper had responsibility for Shinlech. Each clan had a great dwelling built in the centre of their circular quarters to represent its power and aspirations, as well as the qualities of its clan metal. Clan Silver inhabited the fabulously structured Moonmetal Manse, while Clan Copper resided within Verdigris House. Clan Iron proudly maintained the simple title of the Old Forge for their massive pile. The Old Forge was a vast foundry complex within which were arranged the living quarters of the clan. The foundry was worked by the descendants of the ancient Leadworkers Guild: massive foundrymen, who had their own codes and culture.

Only Clan Gold no longer used its traditional seat—the gloomy Gragonatt Fortress, which had been transformed into a prison. Instead, the Golds occupied a smaller and more elegant palace known as New Mint Yard, which was situated close to one of the free zones.

By long tradition, the mechanical militia of the Metal, known as

the Roaring Boys and the Blinding Boys, were refused entrance into the free zones. These areas were occupied by the so-called free poor, who claimed loyalty to no clan. Generally, the poor supplied labour for all the great factories of the city, except for the foundry of the Old Forge. Their independence had long been guaranteed, for they controlled the city's four great wells, from which came all her freshwater. Each well lay at the heart of a free zone.

It might seem as if the noble clans, the regular citizens and the poor of the free zones lived in close harmony, relying upon one another for survival in that hostile territory. But increasingly the citizens had grown impatient with their lords, who had no real contact with the people, and whose justice was abstract and sometimes inappropriate. The city was slowly decaying. Brick and stone were crumbling within their corsets of metal. What must be done? Couldn't the clans see what was happening? The Lords of the Metal, however, in haughty isolation, believed themselves to be both just and humane, and saw it as their holy duty to maintain the city exactly as she had always been. The concept of change was anathema to them. Perhaps they were indeed blind to the dissolution creeping all about their ancient palaces. If a building sagged, they simply ordered it to be buttressed with more girders of iron or steel. An additional rank of golden gargoyles could hide a listing eave. Metal was both protection and strength. It had always been so.

All the ruling families of Karadur were related to the clans, often by marriages which created amalgams—thus the marriage of old Lord Septimus Tin and the young Lady Cordelia Silver had produced Sir Clovis Pewter. There were hundreds of Brasses and Bronzes, not to mention the powerful Steels, who were closely bound to the Iron family, and helped them to control the massive foundries, which continued to pour artefacts out into the shivering, unstable streets of a city beginning to show her age. Death was, of course, an inevitable consequence of old age.

But there were legends in Karadur that predicted a very different fate for the city. Down in the back streets of the free zones, where ragged savants debated their philosophies over tankards of musty ale, it was said that death *would* be usurped by change. If Karadur could only rediscover her own salvation, she'd bring salvation to the entire multiverse. The layers of reality, which over the millennia had begun to bend and fracture, would be revitalised, fully prepared once more for the perpetual struggle between Life and Death—what some called Good and Evil.

In keeping with such legends, the outcome was reputed to depend, rather unfairly, upon the shoulders of a single man, a young man with no notion of his fate, who would never willingly accept such a responsibility. Some even dared to conjecture that this man already lived among them, that they knew his name. But they were only whispers, hopeful dreams drowned in puddles of ale. For if the legends were correct, and this man existed, he would be master of the subtle energies of creation and destruction, what was commonly termed magic.

The lords of Karadur denied the existence of the occult sciences. Following the dark ages of the Clan Wars, some millennia in the past, the then–newly created Council of the Metal made it a crime to study the art, or any related subject. Similarly, the use of electricity had been outlawed, for it was a force that could not be perceived with the naked eye. During the Clan Wars, the subtle powers of the multiverse had been misused to devastating effect. Their manipulation was seen as corrupting, essentially *wrong*. Thus the great Reformation occurred. Only steam power was permitted, for its breath could be seen and felt by all. It was real before the senses, wholesome, the natural way to power machinery. Electricity was too mysterious to trust and enabled all manner of bizarre devices to threaten the stability of the city. It placed too much power into individual hands. During the wars, its use had brought the world close to ruin. It had permitted the creation of all kinds of insane devices, such as thinking machines whose ambitions

none could control. Thus it was with magic and other false sciences. Those who had courted such delusory powers had always lost control. The students of black, aggressive arts were condemned, punished and disciplined, for they threatened the security and peace of mind of the entire community. The subtle forces of the universe were mutable and unstable. They precipitated change.

Magic, said the lords, did not exist. Those who claimed to practice it were tricksters and liars at best. Charlatans by definition. Therefore, anyone discovered practising the forbidden arts was accused of Public Deception and punished. The worst offenders found themselves in the gloomy Gragonatt Fortress, where they were reeducated, but rarely released. None *escaped* the Fortress. Like magic, said the lords, escape was impossible.

But statements such as this are fragile, simply made to be disproved. The multiverse, being the essence of change, cannot resist finding cracks in the structure of belief and seeping through with all its perplexing contradictions. After all, if conditions had remained the same in Karadur, until it had merely rusted into the ice and been forgotten, there would be no tale to tell. When great changes occur, they often begin in the gutters, the meanest hovels, the haunts of thieves. And so it was in Karadur.

BOOK ONE



DREAMS  
AND DISASTERS

