

MICHELLE SAGARA

— SHORT STORY —

Four  
Attempts  
*at a*  
Letter

12



FOUR ATTEMPTS AT A  
LETTER



MICHELLE SAGARA

Rosdan Press

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## INTRODUCTION

*Mike Resnick asked me for a story for an "Alternate Celebrity" anthology. I panicked. My friends and family are used to the way I wander through our pop-cultural landscape in a vacuum, and they are (usually) not surprised when I wander past a television they're watching, stop, and say, "Who is that woman?" even though I should probably know who Julia Roberts is by now. So I told Mike that I really didn't think I could write a story that would work in the confines of the theme presented, and he gently (this means something specific to people who know Mike) suggested that celebrity could also mean "well-known".*

*In fact, if I remember things correctly, one of the names he tossed out was Golda Meier.*

*The inclusion of the story at this time makes me wonder about the state of the world. The Israel that Golda Meier and her compatriots envisioned was naïve -- but the world itself was naïve, then. I remember reading, in her autobiography, that she was so shocked when she first found out that there was prostitution in her country, among her people. She had thought that those things would never happen at home because it wouldn't be necessary.*

*I remember thinking that belief is a dangerous thing; it moves and shapes nations, and perhaps nothing at all would change without it -- but it informs what we see, how we see it, and what we're willing to sacrifice to achieve it.*

## INTRODUCTION

*Naïve or not, I found her struggle intensely moving.*



## FOUR ATTEMPTS AT A LETTER

**M**<sup>ay 30, 1948</sup>

DEAR CLARA,

PLEASE FORGIVE ME FOR NOT WRITING SOONER. YOU HAVE BEEN reading the news, no doubt, and you know of my situation. Indeed, I shouldn't be writing now. It's late; there is no power in Tel Aviv, and the candles should be spared.

I do not know how quickly word travels, or how accurate that word is, but the situation in Israel is not good. While we managed to smuggle in arms and ammunition during the last days of the British Mandate, most of these were confiscated, and our single factory cannot turn out the quantities that a war against five nations require. I have heard that you have continued to be active in our cause; we need your help -- and the donations of the American Jews -- now, more than ever. In the past two weeks, weapons and disassembled

planes have arrived, and these we have put to the best use possible. They are not enough.

Once before I travelled in America, and the American Jews responded to our cause. I am not sorry, given the circumstances, that I declined to accept the invitation of Henry Montor's United Jewish Appeal; I am needed here. But so is the aid of the United States. You understand as well as I the need for their aid, Clara. Tell them to hurry. Tell them it is already almost too late. Do not try to be fancy; do not try to sound erudite or philosophical. Speak only from the heart, and they will listen with the heart.

I said I would be brief; the candles have burnt low, and there is still no power.

But I can't sleep, and the darkness is unbearable to me at the moment. The candle is flickering and my hand shakes as I write. I have too much to tell you, all of it bad news. I don't know where to begin.

David Ben-Gurion died last night.

He was the founding father of Israel -- but you know that. Even writing, I babble. Is it any wonder that I can't sleep? We held service for him, and Sharett, and Allon, in the early hours of morning. I could not bring myself to look at their bodies; to see his death would have been too great a defeat. I want, in part, to believe that he is still alive -- that he still guides this nation that he built. But I also want to remember him as he was: formidable, always decisive, always active. What could the sight of his corpse do but take these fragile things away?

Allon is a loss that will hurt us just as badly in the short term. His was our military genius. His was the mind that preserved Israel, to this day, against the Arab invaders. But he was not Ben-Gurion, and my heart is too deadened to mourn him properly, although he was still young.

We placed a hastily scribed copy of the declaration of Independence upon Ben-Gurion's grave, while the Egyptians prepared for another air raid. The country -- our Country! -- is silent. Everywhere I walk, people are wide-eyed and pale. I tried to offer comfort or

guidance to them, Clara -- I honestly tried. But I, too, had little to give and too much to mourn.

The Histadrut is in disarray. The haganah and the palmach have been badly hurt; I do not know how long they will hold what little they have managed to retain. The Syrian and Lebanese armies have passed through and taken our settlements in the North. We've had word from Dayan; he's been forced to retreat. Thank God we haven't lost him, too.

But we have so little. The British continue to send military aid and weapons to the Arabs. Truman will not come to our aid -- nor will any of the European countries; we have asked, but expect little else. In the end, the allies allowed for the murder of six million of our kind -- what difference will another ten percent of that make, in their eyes?

I hate them, little sister. I hope they choke and die on their oil and their politics. Just as we will.

Excuse me, Clara. I cannot write at the moment. My hands are shaking too much, and I can't see the page anymore.



MAR 30, 1948

DEAR CLARA,

FORGIVE ME FOR NOT WRITING TO YOU WITH THE NEWS THAT I know you must want. But it is dark outside, and for the moment quiet. The *haganah* holds Tel Aviv; the Egyptians have not managed to bring their brigades this far. I want peace, and not war, for just a few hours, maybe even a few minutes. I will take what I can get.

How are things in America? How is your husband? How are your children?

Let me assume they are well.

Morris and I have not spoken in two weeks; I don't think he will

ever speak to me again. Clara, I should never have brought him to Palestine. I should never have taken him from America. We should never have had children. The children.

You know, of course, that Sheyna and mother have criticized me constantly about the children. Sheyna can be understanding, sometimes, in her severe way. But mother? Never. I love her dearly, Clara, please understand that. But even living in Palestine as it became Israel—our nation, our homeland -- she has never, and will never, understand the choices that I was forced to make. She thinks about father, and about her friends, and about her children—you, Sheyna, me. Only you, she doesn't worry about, and that's because you're safe. I'm grateful that you're safe, because I, too, need one living relative that I don't have to worry about.

EVEN NOW, MOTHER SAYS THAT I SHOULD HAVE BEEN A BETTER wife to Morris, should have made our marriage work. She said I just gave up on it—as if Morris had no say at all. She's right, of course. But had I been a better wife to Morris, how much of me would have been left for Israel? Does she think a nation comes from nowhere, nothing?

It doesn't, Clara. It comes from sweat and dedication and sacrifice. I have done all these things, even if they weren't enough, and I will do more.

Yes, I know that the Arabs of Palestine have some claim to these lands -- although I say it here, for you alone. I can't say it again, ever, anywhere else. But we're family. Let us put aside the claim of land and ownership; let us ignore the fact that we, the Jews who immigrated to Palestine, bought the lands that we farm from Arabs who wanted our money. Let us forget that throughout my life here, Jews have been killed by anti-Zionist Arab factions, commanded by the Mufti of Jerusalem.

I will not argue moral imperative here; I said at the beginning of this letter that I wished to set aside war for a while. But let me say this clearly: If I have not been a good mother to my own children, I have been a mother in almost fact to those Jews that no one else

wanted. They had no home but this one; no place to go, but those awful camps. They couldn't mourn their dead in peace; they were almost dead themselves. Six \_million\_ of \_my\_ people perished because no one, outside of the Jews, could conceive of just how hated a people they were. And hundreds of thousands of those Jews could have been saved, Clara. On the day that I signed the declaration of Independence, I could not forget them, and embarrassed myself with public tears; I will never be able to rest wondering whether or not there was more I could have done to bring even a single child more, to Israel.

You ask me, as a mother of the Jewish people, whether I will kill my children in certainty, or cast another's child loose to fend for itself, what other answer can there be? Every mother has the right to defend her own children; to feed them and clothe them and house them.

I would never have hurt an innocent Arab. I would never have countenanced -- I never did -- the acts of terrorism that devolve around the deaths of the weak and the unarmed. I was willing -- we were almost all willing -- to live in peaceful co-existence with the Arabs. But Ben-Gurion was right, in the end. I was only willing to let them live in a house that was mine, where I could watch over the safety of all of my children in surety. And tomorrow, I will go out to the armies and I will once again reaffirm that position. Even if I know that the innocent will die at the hands of the soldiers I send into battle. Better that they kill than be killed.

But tonight, Clara, I wish that you were here. I want to call on Morris, but I know that he won't come. He was a better father than I was a mother. When Sarah came to us both, and told us of her plans to go to Revivim and live a life of hardship in the Negev, he said no. I said yes. Because I didn't want to stunt her growth. Because if I had my choice, I would be back on the kibbutz myself.

Clara, this is too hard. Thirteen days ago, my baby was killed by the Egyptians. They rased Revivim. They raped and killed every living person there. If any survived or escaped, we haven't heard about it.

We couldn't get the bodies out. I couldn't cry at the memorial

service, although Morris and mother did. Mother will be fine; she has her anger to sustain her, as I have mine. But Morris is a shadow now. Not even Ben-Gurion's death disturbed him.

Two weeks it's been, and already I miss Morris. But I miss Sarah more. The house is quiet, and she'll never cross the threshold again. How many other mothers feel what I feel tonight? How many other mothers had to stand at the memorial with a stiff face and no tears, because they had to present a strong face to Israel?

If I could issue the orders tonight, I would tell my soldiers to kill every living Arab in our territory. I would scream it, Clara -- I would shout it in a voice that would be heard across the Middle East. I would carry a gun, though I have little training; I would learn how to throw grenades. And I would ride with the army through each and every Arab village to see the carnage with my own eyes.

Because tonight, even if I was a bad mother, I am only Sarah's mother. Tomorrow, I will be mother to the Jewish people again. God, Clara -- I can't believe it. I can't write anymore. I can't believe how weak I'm being, when Israel needs my strength. But I am crying now, and these will be the last of my tears.



*MAY 30, 1948*

DEAR CLARA,

MY TIME IS SHORT AND THIS IS PERHAPS THE LAST NEWS YOU WILL have of your family in Israel. I will try to be brief. Ben-Gurion, and most of his advisers, died in Tel Aviv last night, in an air raid that we were unprepared for.

Because we are in a state of emergency, I have taken some of the responsibility of running what remains of our infrastructure here. We have the advantage of organization, but the Arabs have the advantage of numbers and their weaponry is by far superior. Ben-

Gurion was the Commander in Chief of our armed forces, but he relied on Allon and Dayan. Dayan has been called to the capital, and he will speak with our advisory board as soon as he arrives. If he arrives.

I used to find the night a private, comfortable time. This once, I hate it. I hate the darkness; it seems that it will go on and on without relief. I have now run through three candles; there is wax on the table, and I have a handful of cigarettes left. No coffee. I've tried twice to sleep, but I can't abide what the darkness holds.

Someone once said -- I forget who, but it isn't important -- that humanity has darkness because in darkness the brightest dreams are born. I nodded when I heard it; I was younger then. I am even guilty of repeating it on several occasions. But I have my answer to that now. If dreams are born, so are nightmares.

It's the nightmares I can't face now. The six million dead, and the several hundred thousand that will surely fall if we fail. Did I mention that Sarah died fighting in the Negev? I might have forgotten to tell you, because Israel has suffered so many losses in the last two weeks. Well, she comes back to me now, among the dead. So I sit here, my hands swollen with the humidity, the smell of burning wax in my hair.

I have always been certain of everything, Clara. Of Zionism. Of Socialism. Of equality and justice. I have always believed that if I put everything, my heart, my mind, my energy, into a cause, I could make things happen. Even ten years ago, if you had asked me, I would have said that this was true. Don't ask me tonight. I didn't even have the strength to face Ben-Gurion's death.

But tell me instead that in America everything is fine. That your children grow well; that they are happy, and Jewish, and safe. Tell me that your daughter is wearing hideous clothing that these young people think is fashion, that she is obstinate and willful and argues with you. Tell me that your neighbours invite you to dinner, even if they are not Jewish, and that you have a pleasant conversation, a nice evening. Tell me that the war in Israel will not destroy my country.

Because Israel is the only thing that is left in my heart that has

MICHELLE SAGARA

not yet been broken. And Clara, I do not know if anything at all that I can do will save it.

Wait; I hear a humming. Let me go to the window and look.

Clara -- the power has been restored; I can see the windows with their dim lights suddenly flicker on in the quiet city. They'll be shut off at once, of course. But still.



*MAY 30, 1948*

DEAR CLARA,

DO NOT BELIEVE EVERYTHING YOU READ. ISRAEL IS HURT, BUT IT IS not yet dead, and it will never die. By the time you read this, you will have heard of Ben-Gurion. He was Israel's greatest hero, and his death will spur us all to greater actions in his memory. We can do no less than he did, or rather, we can attempt to do no less.

I will call Montor if the phones hold. Starkly put: Israel needs money if it is to survive. Do what you can to help him; he's a good man.

The sky has turned dawn pink. I am smoking my last cigarette -- yes, I know they are hard on the throat, but I'm old enough to cling to my few vices, so don't mention it -- and writing to you as hurriedly as possible. Mother, Sheyna and Morris are well. Menachem and Sarah do us proud in their service with the army.

We have suffered as a people, and we have finally brought about our own nation, our own sovereignty. Do you think that we will ever surrender it? Never. We have a right to be in Israel, as recognized by the United Nations. We have the right to self-rule. We will take every displaced Jew on the face of the earth, and give them a land of their own in which to live without fear. We believe this, with more strength and ferocity than ever. That has never failed us, Clara -- and it will not fail us now.

FOUR ATTEMPTS AT A LETTER

I see the car below; I must go. I will mail this after our meeting, if at all possible. Give my love to the children.

GOLDA

*MAILED ON THE 31ST OF MAY, 1948 FROM THE OFFICE OF GOLDA  
Meier*

*acting Prime Minister of the State of Israel  
acting Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of Israel*



## OTHER SHORT STORIES

The first six stories released are connected to the Essalieyan Universe of the novels I write for DAW as Michelle West. Since those are my most asked-for short stories, those are the ones I wanted to make available first. The rest of the stories will be released in chronological order from the date of their first appearance, which are listed in brackets beside the titles, along with the anthology in which they first appeared. All of the stories have introductions (which will probably come through in the samples if you've already read the stories but want to read those.)

*In the Essalieyan universe:*

1. Echoes (2001, *Assassin Fantastic*)
2. Huntbrother (2004, *Sirius, the Dog Star*)
3. The Black Ospreys (2005, *Women of War*)
4. The Weapon (2005, *Shadow of Evil*)
5. Warlord (1998, *Battle Magic*)
6. The Memory of Stone (2002, 30<sup>th</sup> *Anniversary DAW Fantasy*)



OTHER SHORT STORIES

7. Birthnight (1992, *Christmas Bestiary*)
8. Gifted (1992, *Aladdin, Master of the Lamp*)
9. Shadow of a Change (1993, *Dinosaur Fantastic*)
10. For Love of God (1993, *Alternate Warriors*)
11. Hunger (1993, *Christmas Ghosts*)
12. Four Attempts at a Letter (1994, *By Any Other Fame*)
13. Winter (1994, *Deals with the Devil*)
14. What She Won't Remember (1994, *Alternate Outlaws*)
15. The Hidden Grove (1995, *Witch Fantastic*)
16. Ghostwood (1995, *Enchanted Forests*)
17. When a Child Cries (1996, *Phantoms of the Night*)
18. The Sword in the Stone (1997, *Alternate Tyrants*)
19. Turn of the Card (1997, *Tarot Fantastic*)
20. The Law of Man (1997, *Elf Fantastic*)
21. Flight (1997, *Return of the Dinosaurs*)
22. The Vision of Men (1997, *The Fortune Teller*)
23. By the Work, One Knows (1997, *Zodiac Fantastic*)
24. Under the Skin (1997, *Elf Magic*)
25. The Dead that Sow (1997, *Wizard Fantastic*)
26. Kin (1998, *Olympus*)
27. Step on the Crack (1998, *Black Cats and Broken Mirrors*)
28. Diamonds (1998, *Alien Pets*)
29. Sunrise (1999, *A Dangerous Magic*)
30. Elegy (1999, *Moon Shots*)
31. Return of the King (1999, *Merlin*)
32. Work in Progress (1999, *Alien Abductions*)
33. Water Baby (1999, *Earth, Air, Fire and Water*)
34. Faces Made of Clay (2000, *Mardi Gras Madness*)
35. Sacrifice (2000, *Spell Fantastic*)
36. Shelter (2000, *Perchance to Dream*)
37. Pas de Deux (2000, *Guardian Angels*)
38. Déjà Vu (2001, *Single White Vampire Seeks Same*)
39. To Speak With Angels (2001, *Villains Victorious*)
40. Lady of the Lake (2001, *Out of Avalon*)
41. Truth (2001, *The Mutant Files*)
42. The Last Flight (2001, *Creature Fantastic*)

43. The Knight of the Hydan Athe (2002, *Knight Fantastic*)
44. Legacy (2002, *Familiars*)
45. The Nightingale (2002, *Once Upon a Galaxy*)
46. A Quiet Justice (2002, *Vengeance Fantastic*)
47. The Augustine Painters (2002, *Apprentice Fantastic*)
48. How to Kill an Immortal (2002, *The Bakka Anthology*)
49. Fat Girl (2002, *Oceans of the Mind VI, ezine*)
50. Diary (2003, *The Sorcerer's Academy*)
51. Dime Store Rings (2004, *The Magic Shop*)
52. To The Gods Their Due (2004, *Conqueror Fantastic*)
53. The Stolen Child (2004, *Faerie Tales*)
54. The Rose Garden (2004, *Little Red Riding Hood in the Big Bad City*)
55. The Colors of Augustine (2004, *Summoned to Destiny*)
56. Unicorn Hunt (2005, *Maiden, Mother Crone*)
57. The Snow Queen (2005, *Magic Tails*; with Debbie Ohi)
58. Shahira (2006, *Children of Magic*)
59. Choice\* (1997, *Sword of Ice: Friends of Valdemar*)
60. Winter Death\* (2003, *The Sun in Glory: Friends of Valdemar*)
61. Childhood's End (1998, *Tad William's Mirror World*)

\*Set in Mercedes Lackey's Valdemar, as the anthology titles suggest



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**The Sacred Hunt**

Hunter's Oath

Hunter's Death

The Sacred Hunt (omnibus)

**The Sun Sword**

The Broken Crown

Uncrowned King

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Battle

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Chronicles of Elantra Vol 2

Chronicles of Elantra Vol 3

Chronicles of Elantra Vol 4

**Queen of the Dead**

Silence

Touch

Grave



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Michelle writes as both Michelle Sagara and Michelle West; she is also published as Michelle Sagara West (although the Sundered books were originally published under the name Michelle Sagara).

She lives in Toronto with her long-suffering husband and her two children, and to her regret has no dogs.

Reading is one of her life-long passions, and she is paid for her opinions about what she's read by the venerable *Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*. No matter how many bookshelves she buys, there is Never Enough Shelf space. Ever.

*For more information—or just to say hello!—I can be found online at:*

[michellesagara.com](http://michellesagara.com)

[michelle@michellesagara.com](mailto:michelle@michellesagara.com)





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I will not argue moral imperative here; I said at the beginning of this letter that I wished to set aside war for a while. But let me say this clearly: If I have not been a good mother to my own children, I have been a mother in almost fact to those Jews that no one else wanted. They had no home but this one; no place to go, but those awful camps. They couldn't mourn their dead in peace; they were almost dead themselves. Six million of my people perished because

no one, outside of the Jews, could conceive of just how hated a people they were. And hundreds of thousands of those Jews could have been saved, Clara. On the day that I signed the declaration of Independence, I could not forget them, and embarrassed myself with public tears; I will never be able to rest wondering whether or not there was more I could have done to bring even a single child more, to Israel.

You ask me, as a mother of the Jewish people, whether I will kill my children in certainty, or cast another's child loose to fend for itself, what other answer can there be? Every mother has the right to defend her own children; to feed them and clothe them and house them.

I would never have hurt an innocent Arab. I would never have countenanced—I never did—the acts of terrorism that devolve around the deaths of the weak and the unarmed. I was willing—we were almost all willing—to live in peaceful co-existence with the Arabs. But Ben-Gurion was right, in the end. I was only willing to let them live in a house that was mine, where I could watch over the safety of all of my children in surety. And tomorrow, I will go out to the armies and I will once again reaffirm that position. Even if I know that the innocent will die at the hands of the soldiers I send into battle. Better that they kill than be killed.

But tonight, Clara, I wish that you were here. I want to call on Morris, but I know that he won't come. He was a better father than I was a mother. When Sarah came to us both, and told us of her plans to go to Revivim and live a life of hardship in the Negev, he said no. I said yes. Because I didn't want to stunt her growth. Because if I had my choice, I would be back on the kibbutz myself.

Clara, this is too hard. Thirteen days ago, my baby was killed by the Egyptians. They razed Revivim. They raped and killed every living person there. If any survived or escaped, we haven't heard about it.

We couldn't get the bodies out. I couldn't cry at the memorial service, although Morris and mother did. Mother will be fine; she has her anger to sustain her, as I have mine. But Morris is a shadow now. Not even Ben-Gurion's death disturbed him.

Two weeks it's been, and already I miss Morris. But I miss Sarah more. The house is quiet, and she'll never cross the threshold again. How many other mothers feel what I feel tonight? How many other mothers had to stand at the memorial with a stiff face and no tears, because they had to present a strong face to Israel?

If I could issue the orders tonight, I would tell my soldiers to kill every living Arab in our territory. I would scream it, Clara—I would shout it in a voice that would be heard across the Middle East. I would carry a gun, though I have little training; I would learn how to throw grenades. And I would ride with the army through each and every Arab village to see the carnage with my own eyes.

Because tonight, even if I was a bad mother, I am only *Sarah's* mother. Tomorrow, I will be mother to the Jewish people again. God, Clara—I can't believe it. I can't write anymore. I can't believe how weak I'm being, when Israel needs my strength. But I am crying now, and these will be the last of my tears.



MAR 30, 1948

DEAR CLARA,

MY TIME IS SHORT AND THIS IS PERHAPS THE LAST NEWS YOU WILL have of your family in Israel. I will try to be brief. Ben-Gurion, and most of his advisers, died in Tel Aviv last night, in an air raid that we were unprepared for.

Because we are in a state of emergency, I have taken some of the responsibility of running what remains of our infrastructure here. We have the advantage of organization, but the Arabs have the advantage of numbers and their weaponry is by far superior. Ben-Gurion was the Commander in Chief of our armed forces, but he relied on Allon and Dayan. Dayan has been called to the capital, and

he will speak with our advisory board as soon as he arrives. If he arrives.

I used to find the night a private, comfortable time. This once, I hate it. I hate the darkness; it seems that it will go on and on without relief. I have now run through three candles; there is wax on the table, and I have a handful of cigarettes left. No coffee. I've tried twice to sleep, but I can't abide what the darkness holds.

Someone once said -- I forget who, but it isn't important -- that humanity has darkness because in darkness the brightest dreams are born. I nodded when I heard it; I was younger then. I am even guilty of repeating it on several occasions. But I have my answer to that now. If dreams are born, so are nightmares.

It's the nightmares I can't face now. The six million dead, and the several hundred thousand that will surely fall if we fail. Did I mention that Sarah died fighting in the Negev? I might have forgotten to tell you, because Israel has suffered so many losses in the last two weeks. Well, she comes back to me now, among the dead. So I sit here, my hands swollen with the humidity, the smell of burning wax in my hair.

I have always been certain of everything, Clara. Of Zionism. Of Socialism. Of equality and justice. I have always believed that if I put everything, my heart, my mind, my energy, into a cause, I could make things happen. Even ten years ago, if you had asked me, I would have said that this was true. Don't ask me tonight. I didn't even have the strength to face Ben-Gurion's death.

But tell me instead that in America everything is fine. That your children grow well; that they are happy, and Jewish, and safe. Tell me that your daughter is wearing hideous clothing that these young people think is fashion, that she is obstinate and willful and argues with you. Tell me that your neighbours invite you to dinner, even if they are not Jewish, and that you have a pleasant conversation, a nice evening. Tell me that the war in Israel will not destroy my country.

Because Israel is the only thing that is left in my heart that has not yet been broken. And Clara, I do not know if anything at all that I can do will save it.

Wait; I hear a humming. Let me go to the window and look.

MICHELLE SAGARA

Clara—the power has been restored; I can see the windows with their dim lights suddenly flicker on in the quiet city. They’ll be shut off at once, of course. But still.



MAY 30, 1948

DEAR CLARA,

DO NOT BELIEVE EVERYTHING YOU READ. ISRAEL IS HURT, BUT IT IS not yet dead, and it will *never* die. By the time you read this, you will have heard of Ben-Gurion. He was Israel’s greatest hero, and his death will spur us all to greater actions in his memory. We can do no less than he did, or rather, we can attempt to do no less.

I will call Montor if the phones hold. Starkly put: Israel needs money if it is to survive. Do what you can to help him; he’s a good man.

The sky has turned dawn pink. I am smoking my last cigarette—yes, I know they are hard on the throat, but I’m old enough to cling to my few vices, so don’t mention it—and writing to you as hurriedly as possible. Mother, Sheyna and Morris are well. Menachem and Sarah do us proud in their service with the army.

We have suffered as a people, and we have finally brought about our own nation, our own sovereignty. Do you think that we will ever surrender it? Never. We have a right to be in Israel, as recognized by the United Nations. We have the right to self-rule. We will take every displaced Jew on the face of the earth, and give them a land of their own in which to live without fear. We believe this, with more strength and ferocity than ever. That has never failed us, Clara—and it will not fail us now.

I see the car below; I must go. I will mail this after our meeting, if at all possible. Give my love to the children.

. . .

FOUR ATTEMPTS AT A LETTER

GOLDA

*MAILED ON THE 31ST OF MAY, 1948 FROM THE OFFICE OF GOLDA  
Meier*

*acting Prime Minister of the State of Israel*

*acting Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of Israel*



## OTHER SHORT STORIES

The first six stories released are connected to the Essalieyan Universe of the novels I write for DAW as Michelle West. Since those are my most asked-for short stories, those are the ones I wanted to make available first. The rest of the stories will be released in chronological order from the date of their first appearance, which are listed in brackets beside the titles, along with the anthology in which they first appeared. All of the stories have introductions (which will probably come through in the samples if you've already read the stories but want to read those.)

*In the Essalieyan universe:*

1. Echoes (2001, *Assassin Fantastic*)
2. Huntbrother (2004, *Sirius, the Dog Star*)
3. The Black Ospreys (2005, *Women of War*)
4. The Weapon (2005, *Shadow of Evil*)
5. Warlord (1998, *Battle Magic*)
6. The Memory of Stone (2002, 30<sup>th</sup> *Anniversary DAW Fantasy*)



OTHER SHORT STORIES

7. Birthnight (1992, *Christmas Bestiary*)
8. Gifted (1992, *Aladdin, Master of the Lamp*)
9. Shadow of a Change (1993, *Dinosaur Fantastic*)
10. For Love of God (1993, *Alternate Warriors*)
11. Hunger (1993, *Christmas Ghosts*)
12. Four Attempts at a Letter (1994, *By Any Other Fame*)
13. Winter (1994, *Deals with the Devil*)
14. What She Won't Remember (1994, *Alternate Outlaws*)
15. The Hidden Grove (1995, *Witch Fantastic*)
16. Ghostwood (1995, *Enchanted Forests*)
17. When a Child Cries (1996, *Phantoms of the Night*)
18. The Sword in the Stone (1997, *Alternate Tyrants*)
19. Turn of the Card (1997, *Tarot Fantastic*)
20. The Law of Man (1997, *Elf Fantastic*)
21. Flight (1997, *Return of the Dinosaurs*)
22. The Vision of Men (1997, *The Fortune Teller*)
23. By the Work, One Knows (1997, *Zodiac Fantastic*)
24. Under the Skin (1997, *Elf Magic*)
25. The Dead that Sow (1997, *Wizard Fantastic*)
26. Kin (1998, *Olympus*)
27. Step on the Crack (1998, *Black Cats and Broken Mirrors*)
28. Diamonds (1998, *Alien Pets*)
29. Sunrise (1999, *A Dangerous Magic*)
30. Elegy (1999, *Moon Shots*)
31. Return of the King (1999, *Merlin*)
32. Work in Progress (1999, *Alien Abductions*)
33. Water Baby (1999, *Earth, Air, Fire and Water*)
34. Faces Made of Clay (2000, *Mardi Gras Madness*)
35. Sacrifice (2000, *Spell Fantastic*)
36. Shelter (2000, *Perchance to Dream*)
37. Pas de Deux (2000, *Guardian Angels*)
38. Déjà Vu (2001, *Single White Vampire Seeks Same*)
39. To Speak With Angels (2001, *Villains Victorious*)
40. Lady of the Lake (2001, *Out of Avalon*)
41. Truth (2001, *The Mutant Files*)
42. The Last Flight (2001, *Creature Fantastic*)

43. The Knight of the Hydan Athe (2002, *Knight Fantastic*)
44. Legacy (2002, *Familiars*)
45. The Nightingale (2002, *Once Upon a Galaxy*)
46. A Quiet Justice (2002, *Vengeance Fantastic*)
47. The Augustine Painters (2002, *Apprentice Fantastic*)
48. How to Kill an Immortal (2002, *The Bakka Anthology*)
49. Fat Girl (2002, *Oceans of the Mind VI, ezine*)
50. Diary (2003, *The Sorcerer's Academy*)
51. Dime Store Rings (2004, *The Magic Shop*)
52. To The Gods Their Due (2004, *Conqueror Fantastic*)
53. The Stolen Child (2004, *Faerie Tales*)
54. The Rose Garden (2004, *Little Red Riding Hood in the Big Bad City*)
55. The Colors of Augustine (2004, *Summoned to Destiny*)
56. Unicorn Hunt (2005, *Maiden, Mother Crone*)
57. The Snow Queen (2005, *Magic Tails*; with Debbie Ohi)
58. Shahira (2006, *Children of Magic*)
59. Choice\* (1997, *Sword of Ice: Friends of Valdemar*)
60. Winter Death\* (2003, *The Sun in Glory: Friends of Valdemar*)
61. Childhood's End (1998, *Tad William's Mirror World*)

\*Set in Mercedes Lackey's Valdemar, as the anthology titles suggest



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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Michelle writes as both Michelle Sagara and Michelle West; she is also published as Michelle Sagara West (although the Sundered books were originally published under the name Michelle Sagara).

She lives in Toronto with her long-suffering husband and her two children, and to her regret has no dogs.

Reading is one of her life-long passions, and she is paid for her opinions about what she's read by the venerable *Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*. No matter how many bookshelves she buys, there is Never Enough Shelf space. Ever.

*For more information—or just to say hello!—I can be found online at:*

[michellesagara.com](http://michellesagara.com)

[michelle@michellesagara.com](mailto:michelle@michellesagara.com)



