Petteri Hannila, Fantasy, Avant-garde, English

Three Carafes of Wine

This scenario is my way of honoring the stories of Clark Ashton Smith. The world of Zothique is of his creation, even though I have here put an island of mine in it.

Bizarre fantasy-drama set in an exotic island of a dying earth.

In a dying world of Zothique, the exotic island of Xutholanti resides far south in the middle of Indaskian Sea. The kingdom Xutholanti, old as aeons, has always prospered. The produce of their land is highly valued in courts of northern lands: beads, wines, accessories of any kind and as their sea-currents are beyond navigable by others than pure-bred Xutholanti using the magical sailing ships of their own making, no raiding or enforcing of military power over them has ever been a possibility.

The people of Xutholanti are a varied folk. The traditional dwellers are lithe and slim to the extreme to the point that half of their women die in childbirth. This is why the culture has traditionally avoided reproduction, creating a twofold existence in the island.

Firstly there are the countless slaves, beings of myriad origins that toil under the harsh leash of the ruling class. They outnumber the aboriginals ten to one but are kept in control with magic and sword alike.

Secondly, the number of inhabitants in the island hasn't grown in the past generations. The society has locked itself into a stagnating existence, even if seemingly glorious when observed from the top of the food chain.

King Karasdos has ruled over the land for the past decade. During that time, he has searched for debauchery after another, putting whole kingdom under a tremendous load. He has killed thousands of people, slaves and nobles alike in his exotic whims. He has thwarted countless assassination attempts using his court sorceress Zalata, who people say is an abomination descended straight from archdemon Thasaidon himself in the form of a woman to oppress them. People wonder how the loathsome king can control such a she-fiend at all.

People are desperate, yet there is nothing that seems to be able to shake the damned king and his sorcerer from power.

Grains

- Perhaps there is no tomorrow
- The vilest of things often carry unexpected beauty
- Humanity is forever doomed

Thasador Myr

Once a goatherder in the southern plains of Yoros, Thasador Myr was captured by a slavesnatcher-ship of the Xutholanti. Her existence has since then been miserable to the extreme until a toss of a coin of fate threw her into the royal household.

Her masters found her to be rather witty, so she has performed various tasks of importance to the kings court. King himself hasn't paid attention to her, as his lavish vices are already much more elaborate than the plain harassdom of simple peasant girls. Nonetheless she has been able to avoid death from king's altering temper as well as from necromantic experiments conducted to random slaves by the vile Zalata. Generally this has been accomplished by her ability to keep her head down when something of note was happening.

This was true until that morn of course. King was in one of his foulest moods, beating servants and drugsters who tried to give him remedies and narcotics to ease his temper. A delegation of nobles was dispatched to the executioner as king deemed they were impolite towards his dog.

This is when Thasador came in. Contrary to her usual, mundane chores the kitchen-master had sent her to the king with three large wine carafes of drugged wine to ease his temper. She did as she was told, with a nimbleness characteristic to her slender frame.

The king bursted out laughing when she did so. And when he was finished, he phrased:

“Look girl. As long as these three drugged wine carafes last, you will be the queen of this kingdom.”

And he announced it loudly and forced the royal rule-shouters to yell it to the great marketplace as well. The slave-girl Thasador Myr would rule the kingdom until three carafes of drugged wine were consumed by the king. All her commands, unless directly threating the king, were to be followed as his.

So saying the cruel king bursted out of the royal hall with a slave boy carrying the carafes before him. The temporary queen, stiffened with fear, was carried to the throne of ivory and mahogany.

Traits	
3	**Wits of a Fox** Her wits have saved her on several occasions.
2	**Mundane** Her appearance is that of an ordinary slave girl.
2	**Restrain** She has learned to hide her true nature.
1	**Luck** She seems to be able to avoid harm.
1	**Animal Familiarity** Animals of all kind seem to like and obey her.

Burdens	
1	**Edged Past** She has endured things no girl of fifteen summers should have.
1	**Small** She is of small stature, unable to overpower an adult.

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