

Habibi (Beloved)

Inspired and titled by Her Excellency Baroness Kisaiya Zingara of Sacred Stone

I was tending to my flocks, in the hill above the rocks, when a man on horseback came.
He was all in armor clad, with a helm upon his head, and he asked of me my name
 Zuleika, I am called, but why do you want to know?
 For you are one of the infidel lords, and thus my deadly foe.

He dismounted with a sigh, and I saw to my surprise, a young man, as young as I.
He had hair of golden hue, and his eyes, a brilliant blue, were the color of the sky!
 Ranulf is my name, I hail from a northern shore.
 I journeyed here my fortune to seek, but I weary so of war.

He knelt down as to a throne, took my hands between his own, and gazed up into my face.
I am heartsick of this fight, thought they say our cause is right. I am sore in need of grace.
 Zuleika, paynim maid, let me drink in thy loveliness,
 And remember that the world holds still, an oasis of gentleness.

I raised him to his feet, and bade him share my feast, of bread and figs and wine.
We spoke a while at length, and I think it gave him strength, for his eyes began to shine.
 Ranulf, I too grieve, for I've lost my brother dear,
 But cannot find it within my heart, to hate you sitting here.

We talked for many days, and we learned each other's ways, though we lived from day to day.
Then one time he came, so sad, spoke of orders that he had, and that he must march away.
 Zuleika, I must go, though it tears out my heart within.
 Only God in His wisdom knows if I e'er shall see thee again.

But I am not bereft, nor has he truly left, for I've bourn this baby nigh.
He has hair as black as night, but his eyes, so wide and bright, are the color of the sky.
 Ranulf is his name, thought strange it sounds to me.
 May Allah grant him a happier fate, than his father from o'er the sea!

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