

The Beds of Doctor Kataboskun

By Richard Paul

Daughter of an ancient family,
By the spoils of Earth made wealthy,
She was raised without expectation,
Left to find herself 'midst anomy,
In cruelty find her satisfaction,
Answer injustice with inaction.

But Kataboskun's good heart was rare
And moved her, in spite of all, to care
For the fates of the fallen humans,
And thus her own people's wrath to dare
To see some small deed of mercy done,
Which most Velnibeth would judge treason.

Her great passion was biology
And from this did stem her charity
Once her wealth had bought her own palace
Where she might work with no one to see.
Beneath a facade of glib menace
She'd try to countervail some malice.

Her house was her laboratory,
Its top floors turned over to study
And for this she would purchased used slaves
"To defile them" allegedly,
But in truth these doomed humans she'd save
And send them, in drugged bliss, to the grave.

Let it never be understated
How sick were the pleasures which sated
The tribe that held Earth in bloody chains.
To foul ends were most humans fated,
It was true kindness to be slain
In Doctor Kataboskun's domain.

Yet peaceful death is scant charity
And eased the Doctor's heart dismally,
Yet what else, from the dark, could she do?
Though none thought she needed scrutiny,
Still she risked enough by her small boon.
Habitual law was human doom.

But inspiration came unbidden
And thus for space she found a need then
For what she named a new collection.
Beneath her home she had carved a den
Where her patients would know elation

In dreams from which they'd not awaken.

A great many disused beds she bought
And five-score half-dead people she brought,
Laying each one down in such a bed,
And to a device which looked Hell-wrought
She connected them, thus were they fed
And thus from their evil plight were sped.

By various drugs and new machines,
Controlling digestion and hygiene
Or countering muscle atrophy,
Her patients could be housed unseen
And given over to lifelong dreams
And the defiance of ecstasy.

Seven years and near-three hundred souls
Were preserved in the good Doctor's hold,
Then after those years came the war's end
And Earth's Velnibeth faced a red scold;
Yet those humans whose kin she did tend
Safeguarded Kataboskun, their friend.

With her long-held secret revealed,
Surprising favour did it yield
And a place in Queen Cynewyn's court.
Yet the kind heart she'd long concealed
Could ill-bear the constant, leaching thought
Of her liberators' bloody sports.

For a new beginning she was set
And journeyed to the Velrib's planet
Where her story earned a fair welcome.
Her kindness she could never forget
And although the evil war was won
Her good work was soon proved far from done.

She proposed a new clinic be raised
And packed with her beds, so that she may
Not consign people to endless dreams
But grant them release for just one day
To those haunted by their dead friends screams,
Whose innocence could not be redeemed.

The Velrib gladly approved the plan
And gave the Doctor sufficient land
That this place of relief might be built,
Open to any allied veterans,
That for but a trice their ghosts might wilt,
To be free of horror, rage and guilt.

Though not-unjust fears of addiction

Through the Fortune-Confederation
Outlawed any clinics in their space,
Any who suffered such afflictions
Could make pilgrimage to this blessed place
And rest in all-encompassing grace.

Fewer patients today does she find
With human veterans lost to time
And the golden peace enduring still;
Yet life has more ways to prove unkind
And those who have known travesty will
Be granted one of the beds to fill.

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