

The Gaul of It All

by
Celli the Happy Go Lucky Celaphopod

© Copyright Brett Paufler 2009
www.Paufler.net
Brett@Paufler.net

In the end, the Nazgul always find the Shire. Of course, it's not always The Nazgul or The Shire -- the world's a big place, after all -- but you can bet if there is a Shire (by any name anywhere), eventually the Nazgul (by whatever name) will find it.

But before the Nazgul found it, I had found my little Shire, my little Shangri La -- my little desert oasis if you will -- on the Island of Gaul, a small little vortex far off the beaten path and away from it all. Believe it or not, I had been sent there to write a travel article for my uncle's journal, but I never really got the style right -- of a travel article. And what with the distractions and all, to be honest after the first few days I didn't give the project much thought -- not at all. And of course, a travel article is out of the question now. It'd be sort of superfluous.

All the same, you may wonder what would a vacation might have been to the Island of Gaul -- before. Well, it would have been delightful, wonderful, awe inspiring. Me, I spent my time lazing about with the Gaul himself and his amphibian minions -- fun loving chaps. We watched old movies on his big screen TV -- or crystal ball, if you'd like -- and lazed in the sun when we weren't chasing after the local girls -- such wonders, such beauties, and not all so terribly hard to catch. Suffice to say, I could sing their praises for hours and never do the girls justice. To say they came right out of my dreams would be an understatement, and in truth, any further elaboration or embellishment would likely only serve to spoil the memory, so I will leave it at that.

Surrounded by good food, plenty of wine, and the aforementioned women: need I explain how quickly time passed. Without thought or concern, days became weeks, weeks became months, and months became years. And not that he ever expected much, but eventually even my uncle stopped asking about his article, and then I was completely alone -- free to let my soul drift in the surf. I even took up the guitar then -- not well mind you, but to the never-ending delight of the girls -- and became an expert at the luau and roasting fish over a coal.

Eventually I suppose -- if given enough time -- I would have learned to ferment coconuts the way the locals did and spice them with K'fr, but things never got that far. The Troats saw to that. It happened so quickly -- the first sign at the setting sun... and by nightfall it was over. Oh, after the fact and during the night, rumors abounded as to the cause, the reason why. Was it an ancient feud? An imagined slight? Or maybe the Troats were looking for gold -- for the gold I never did see.

Whatever the reason, they wrecked the place in an instant -- in the blink of an eye. They simply destroyed it. I mean, they cut through the defenses like they weren't even there, like it was all an illusion. And in hours -- in minutes -- the whole thing unraveled, like a house of cards crumbling down... or a castle built on sand flowing away with the tide.

What could I do? Along with the others, I ran. I ran for my life away from the Troats, away from the beach, and deep into the Man-Grove infested tropical forest. And all of this time, where was the Gaul -- the ruler of all? At the first sign of trouble, he slid into the sand -- much like the surf -- and simply faded away, leaving us all -- the locals, the tourists, and the serving girls -- to run for our lives and fend for ourselves.

The exodus was a madhouse. I don't know if you've ever stared into the flames of a fire devouring the forest around you, but I imagine the experience would be much same. Terrified, scared out of my wits: what do I remember of it? Branches and sticks scratching my face, falling on slippery rocks, a bloody jaw, and

others about me -- here, there, and then gone -- racing on by, letting the foolish haole -- the reporter -- to fend for himself.

Where were my amphibian friends then? Those who had shown me so much, where were they?

You can imagine my fright. I was lost, alone, and helpless. But then I confess, if I had known what I was doing, if I had known the way, I may not have stopped; I may not have lingered; and in truth, I may not have cared.

But I was lost and alone, and so when I saw her I lingered. She was alone as well, hiding as best she could in the underbrush, cradling a newborn baby in her arms, nursing it to keep it calm -- to keep it quiet. Something told me that if I helped her, she would know the way. So for my safety, for my peace of mind, for the preservation of my soul: I did not see how I had any choice. I grabbed her arm and urged her on -- to where I knew not. Me guiding her -- her guiding me -- somehow we found the other side. She was my luck and I was hers. We hit the boats together. And then later, the barge, the slip, the train, and the plane. And all the while I watched her nurse her beloved, giving life to the child. Oh, my! What a sight to behold! What a wonder! What a delight!

The trip home took me -- which is to say, us -- a fortnight. And if I wasn't before, by the end, I was in love. At customs I helped her as best I could. I mean, my papers were good, but what does a serving wench from the outer realms know of these things -- the formalities of paper. I tried to vow for her and pledge my support, but it wasn't money that worried them. Believe it or not, a demon child -- of all things -- is what they feared most. And so, they did their tests, ran their probes, but to my immense surprise both she and the child were thoroughly clean.

Oh, they peeled back the veil and looked under the disguise, but all they saw was an expatriates' daughter -- turned runaway... slave.

They let her through -- baby and all. And to be honest, having done my bit, having repaid my debt, I thought that would be all.

But the girl had other things in mind. Which is to say, the Gaul had other things in mind. And now mother and daughter, and husband and wife do the best that we can to recreate our long lost tropical delight in our Park Lane apartment -- twenty stories in the sky.

That is of course, when we're not watching the game on the big screen or calling out for pizza. My Gaul's got one voracious appetite. But then, she's eating for two now, you know, she's eating for two.