



The King's Harem

Megan Derr

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Tavamara is renowned for its famous Market, its decadent wines, the harsh climate in which it manages to flourish—and the infamous concubines kept by the members of the royal family. King Shahjahan's harem is especially well known, for the men who comprise his harem come from all walks of life: the son of nobles who once tried to assassinate the king, a shameless pirate the king once saved, a quiet monk, a prisoner of war, and a young horse trainer, all brought together by the devotion and love they share for Shahjahan.

This volume also contains three additional stories:

Knight to Rook

Displaced by war, Rook makes a home in the Great Desert where his cousin Cordelia has become Princess. Once a strategist of unmatched ability, famous in the armies of his homeland, he spends his days in the Desert adrift and alone. With no way to use his skills, and held in contempt for his inability to use a sword, Rook can only watch and wait for a chance to prove he belongs amongst the Sons of the Sands.

Everything You Need

Though he left the Desert years ago and is set to become the next Advisor to the King of Tavamara, Ikram spends most of his days feeling slightly out of place, living a life of civility and calm that is hard to accept after a lifetime in the brutal, blood-soaked Sands. Eager to get away from the palace for a time, he braves the famous Market and finds far more than the soap he'd been seeking.

The Jewel of Tavamara

Fahima has always been the lesser sister: younger, plainer, too smart, too independent, and obsessed with temple work. Then her sister commits the ultimate taboo, and in order to save the lives of her family, Fahima must take her sister's place—though she was never meant to be Queen, and could never hope to truly catch the notice of the handsome and compelling Shahjahan.

Note: This story contains polyamory

The King's Harem Details

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From Reader Review The King's Harem for online ebook

Mara Ismine says

I love the tales of Tavamara nearly as much as Sandstorm (in the same universe/timeframe) and I enjoyed the two het stories as well - although I did appreciate the warning about the het content.

Each of King Shahjahan's harem has his own story, with glimpses of life in the palace now. One of the het stories is about how Shahjahan came to choose Fahima as his wife and the start of her harem. The second het story is a link between Sandstorm and King's Harem and explains how Simon (from Sandstorm) became the adopted son of Ikram (Shahjahan's advisor). There is one more story that is more Sandstorm than Tavamara which tells how Rook, Cordelia's cousin finds acceptance and more from Genral Noor.

Sasha Ambroz says

Well. No.

Maybe I'm wrong or narrow, but when I'm bying the book with the title "The King's Harem", I expect some porn in there. And not only some. Unfortunately the part with the harem has rating no more then PG-13. Besides, the writing itself is boring and similar in plot. All the stories about's King's concubines are the same: a boy sees Shah, a boy likes his kind eyes, a boy falls in love with the Shah. Forward to the next boy. The second part starts better, with nice story about how King met with the Queen and a quick and hot romance of a general and a strategist.

But the last story made me see red. Clever barbarian meets a beautiful and troubled woman who is not ready to marry him, so the barbarian decides to "shake this woman till the only thing she can say is "yes, I will marry you".

Just no.

BTina says

stories, historical fantasy, nice comfort reading

Edit:

After readig Sandstorm, I changed my rating for King's Harem from 3 to 4 stars. This is actually the second part of a series. I reread parts of King's Harem and with the backstory of Sandstorm, especially the "Other Tales" make a lot more sense.

Emy says

The King's Harem is a collection of four short, erotic stories set in the world of Tavamara.

Firstly, I love the subtle culture building in the stories. I think this is something Megan Derr does really well. I particularly like the cultural importance of wine - some of the wines sounded really nice, and I don't even

like wine! :P

I also really enjoy the fact that the stories manage to be both romantic and erotic without resorting to any explicit sex (except in 'Knight to Rook'). It made a refreshing, sensual change.

Jumping around timelines between the stories could be quite jarring at times, but it was easy enough to settle down after that realisation.

As for the stories themselves:

'The King's Harem' - ♥♥♥♥♥ - 'The King's Harem' told the stories of the five members of King Shahjahan's harem, and how they came to be a part of it. Not very much over-arching plot, really, just mini-plots for each character within their own chapter.

I really, really enjoyed this story, and I loved the relationships the members of the harem had with their king and with each other. And each member of the harem is so unique and well-developed. It would have been so easy to have this become a series of inter-connected sex scenes, and I am SO glad Megan Derr did not go down that route.

My favourite story out of the four. :)

'Knight to Rook' - ♥♥♥ - I actually found this story quite confusing at first, probably because this story is set after *Sandstorm* (another Tavamara novel) and makes references to characters and events I haven't read about.

However, I enjoyed the relationship between Rook and General Noor, and the overall plot of this story. Weirdly, I didn't enjoy the sex scene as much as I usually would, probably due to the fact I was still admiring the lack of sex in the previous story. It *was* well written and quite sensual, in spite of that fact.

My least favourite story out of the four, but nonetheless a good read.

'Everything You Need' - ♥♥♥♥♥ - This story is the romance of Ikram and Valerie. I have a feeling Valerie's son, Simon, might be important in *Sandstorm*, as this is set years before.

A het romance! I haven't read one of those in a little while, haha. This story was actually very romantic, and I loved the character of Ikram. I especially liked the insight into the tribes of the Sands, and how he wished he was still a member so he could just carry Valerie off! Hahaha. He was weirdly quite a gentleman for all that.

Very enjoyable story, and the wines again make an appearance!

'The Jewel of Tavamara' - ♥♥♥♥♥ - This tells the story of how King Shahjahan met his queen, and the start of *her* harem. (That's right, this book even has a little bit of f/f!)

I enjoyed this story a lot. It was quite strange to be looking at Shah's harem from the outside after being quite intimately acquainted with them in the first story. They were quite intimidating for all that, even though Shah only had two concubines at this point in the timeline.

I would have liked to see a bit more romance between Shah and Fahima, because... well, there isn't that much. I can tell Shah was intrigued by Fahima and visa versa, but I didn't get the atmosphere of romance that

I did from Ikram and Valerie.

For all that, however, it was still an enjoyable read. :)

Overall, I recommend this collection of stories highly, but - unlike me - I recommend you read them after *Sandstorm*. It could save you a lot of unnecessary confusion, particularly in the second story.

Allerleihrau says

Drei Sterne bedeuten hier wirklich, dass es gut zu lesen war, dennoch war ich nicht zufrieden.

Edit: inzwischen einen Stern aufgerundet, Erklärung am Ende der Besprechung

Grundsätzlich passt mir die Tavamara Serie derzeit gut ins Konzept, weil sie, wie so ziemlich alles, was die Autorin veröffentlicht hat, jenseits der ausgetretenen Bahnen der Gay-Romances liegt. Sie schreibt wirklich im LGTB Bereich und schöpft diese Bandbreite komplett aus.

Und auch wenn die Autorin das Label "Fantasy" benutzt, sind die Romane, die ich von ihr gelesen habe, alle eher pseudo-historisch.

Damit kommen wir zu meinem wichtigsten Kritikpunkt für den ersten Band der Serie, die klar von klassischen Wüsten/Scheich-Romanen inspiriert wurde, es ist kein Roman.

Es ist eine lose Aneinanderreihung von Kurzgeschichten.

Erst wird erzählt wie die (ausschließlich männlichen) Konkubinen des Königs jeweils Teil des Harems werden. Und darum, wie dieser seine Königin erwählt. Dann folgt noch mal ein Nachzügler für den Harem der sehr viel später dazu stößt.

Am Ende steht dann eine Geschichte um zwei völlig fremde Figuren, die nach Tavamara reisen.

Ich habe beim Lesen die ganze Zeit darauf gewartet, dass "die Geschichte" endlich losgeht.

Aber, es gibt keine Geschichte, sondern nur diese "Vorstellungsrunde" möchte ich es mal nennen.

Auf der Plusseite steht sicherlich, dass die Autorin viel Liebe und Sorgfalt in ihre Figuren legt und sie alle sehr lebendig sind, selbst wenn hier typische Klischees bedient werden.

Angenehm fand ich es auch, dass Harems-Geschichten hier nicht in schwülstige Erotik ausarten.

Im Gegenteil verzichtet die Autorin hier auf ausgeschriebenen Sex, er findet statt, er wird erwähnt, aber er wird nicht beschrieben.

Und doch habe ich am Ende mit einem großen Fragezeichen im Gesicht da gestanden und mich gefragt: "Wo ist die Geschichte? Was ist das für eine Welt, von der ich nur Stückchen und Häppchen erahnen konnte."

Von daher bleibt es bei drei Sternen, weil es zwar nett zu lesen, aber eben nichts Halbes und nichts Ganzes war.

Edit Juni 2018:

Ein Stern aufgerundet, weil :

Inzwischen habe ich einige Zeit auf den verschiedenen Seiten der Autorin verbracht und festgestellt, dass sie

viele solcher kurzen Geschichten in ihren verschiedenen Universen schreibt.

Wenn ich sie richtig verstanden habe, dann haben auch diese Geschichten genau diese Entstehungsgeschichte. Das verändert witzigerweise meine Akzeptanz für diese Geschichten. Oder vielleicht besser, es dämpft meine Enttäuschung :-)

Auch wenn ich mir wünschen würde, dass eine entsprechende Anmerkung am Anfang des Buches gestanden hätte, so wie sie es in ihrem Blog geschrieben hat ich zitiere: *"So once upon a time I wrote a dumb series of fluffy stories about a king and his harem. I totally thought it would be a one off type thing, but it spawned (and I really really should have known it would)."*

Dann hätte ich nämlich keinen vollständige Geschichte erwartet.

JJ says

I was inspired to read The King's Harem after reading and absolutely loving The Harem Master, which is book three in this series. However, I can't say that my experience with this book was all together positive. First of all, there was a main story which covered half the book and then there were three additional short stories that took place in the same world. The main story was about how the different members of the harem came to be part of the king's harem.

I liked this story mostly for the beautiful harem men and the sweetness of their polyamorous relationship. However, the story switched back and forth between past and present and shared the viewpoints of so many different characters that I found it difficult to follow. There also appeared to be no intrigue and no story arch. It was mostly a recounting of each man's route to the king's heart. Though I loved the world building, I had difficulty connecting with the characters individually. There also didn't appear to be any strong romance between the men and sex was completely absent.

In addition to this main story, the other tale that stood out in my mind was The Jewel of Tavamara. In this story Fahima finds herself in the position of marrying the king, which was something she never expected. Though she is in love with the king, it feels like he is marrying her out of convenience. She suffers because he doesn't appear to love her back. In addition to this story was Everything You Need which was the second M/F story in the book. The last story was Knight to Rook, which was M/M romance and was actually quite sexy.

Overall, I loved the world building and detailed description which made the characters seem very real. However, I was disappointed with the lukewarm romance between the harem men and wished there was more to the plot. As a side note, after finishing this book, I read more on the Tavamara Series and found out that other readers recommend reading Sandstorm first, which is listed as book two.

This book was provided free in exchange for a fair and honest review for Love Bytes. Go there to check out other reviews, author interviews, and all those awesome giveaways. Click below.

Vivian (????)? says

(*note I have no problem at all with the multiple relationship/harem)

I'm a huge huge fan of Ms Derr's books but I think this was one of the books that failed to draw me in to the extent that her books usually do. The writing was a pleasure to read as always, but the story itself, well, it actually didn't really have much of a story. It was basically just jumped from the POVs of all harem members and told the story of how they came to be in the harem. In each of their POVs it jumped from the past to the present etc. The longest part written in the present was at the end when the newest addition of the harem came along. I can't remember what his name was but.

Anyway I enjoyed reading about these characters, but didn't really feel any sort of connection to them. Ms Derr managed to convey the very strong camaraderie between the harem members and the king but I honestly actually didn't really feel this deep rooted true love shit so much.

Apart from that, the two short stories were really about people I didn't care much about, but I still enjoyed the first one. I didn't really like the story about the Queen too much, but I think that's because I felt betrayed that the King kissed the Queen.

After starting gaymance I think I have this weird thing where I feel betrayed when the main character kisses a female. I know the King loves the Queen and such, but after reading Sandstorm I thought the King and Queen had a *strictly* platonic relationship.

Urgh.

(feeling betrayed).

Weird. I know.

Anyway whilst the book was a bit bland and bored me in some turns, I did enjoy it.

nisie draws says

did not finish. quit at 5-10%. poly's not my thing, but if that's what you're into this could be the book for you!

Kat says

Re-read today... I still love it :)

Kaa says

None of these stories were very interesting and the writing style just didn't work for me.

charlotte says

Rep: mlm characters, wlw characters, Middle Eastern inspired setting and characters

The King's Harem - 3 stars

It's cute polyamorous fluff but besides that not much happens. And also, the king's harem recruitment runs thus:

KING: hey I just met you, and this is crazy, but here's my number, so join my harem maybe?

GUY: sure, why not

The Jewel of Tavamara - 3 stars

Fahima is my favourite. I adore her. Plus lesbians.

Knight to Rook - 4 stars

My favourite one, to be honest. Mostly because of the enemies/not-entirely-on-friendly-terms to lovers trope. I am weak.

Everything You Need - 2 stars

I was so tempted to skip this, but I didn't, and now I'm slightly worried about this guy's possessive nature. Like, seriously, he commented that the only response to his offer of marriage that he would accept is 'yes'. OK, bud.

Telwyth says

I just wanted to read something short from this author to get a glimpse of her writing because she was recommended to me. It didn't WOW me or anything but I enjoyed everyone's little story and I will continue to try more works by this author that friends have recommended.

Natalie says

I always enjoy these. A short collection of stories based around a king and his harem. I liked Beyum best. The queen was strong willed. In the additional stories I liked the one with Rook and Noor.

LWM says

An interesting medley of stories tied together by Tavamara and good 'ole love.

I'm in awe of Megan Derr's writing talent. She blended several techniques within one book, combining the tales like chapter except for the one about the King's harem, hence the book's title. She broke each concubine's story into separate chapters while inserting flashbacks to tell each one's backstory. Hence, we discover how Shah collected his blend of "flowers" for his eclectic garden of beautiful men. The only one I felt a disconnect with was Witcher, probably because he was so foreign in looks and origin, but ultimately Shah was fated/destined for Witcher, and Witcher was meant for all of them. They all were so diverse from a range of backgrounds, and aside from Nanda and Witcher, from poor or common families, yet were brought ceremoniously together by their king, and it's a testament to Derr's skill their story and presentation worked.

The other stories were okay - Fahima's background was a nice added touch and explained why she didn't mind her husband's harem. A lesser woman would have felt intimidated or threatened by the gorgeous assortment that comprised Shah's harem, but of course, Fahima was simply far from intimidated and secure in her status as well as Shah's affections. Each short story was well told with only minimal errors - occasional misspellings, the wrong self-correction inserted, no doubt, but minor.

iam says

The King's Harem is a collection of short stories, some of which tie together to be a novella.

The biggest part of the book is, as the title says, about the men in the King's Harem and how they came to be there, thus switching between past and present about when they first met the king and how their relationship is like years later. The main characters are Shahjahan, the king of Tavamara; Nandakumar, a talented musician with a conspiring family; Beynum, a former pirate with unexpected loyalty; Aikhadour, who grew up in a temple and leaves it for the first time to visit the palace; Witcher, a bastard prince and commander of a foreign nation turned hostage, and Rakiah, a young noble and horse trainer.

The other three stories are vaguely related, some playing before and others after the events: One is about Fahima, the queen and how she came to be Shahjahan's wife. The second is about Rook, a military stratetigst who lives with the desert tribes and can't seem to find his place, and the tribes' commander, and the third is about the future king's advisor who meets the love of his life on the famous Tavamaran market.

Overall the stories are nice and easy to read, but they all have one thing in common: insta love. Everyone is smitten and deeply committed on first sight (ok, second sight in one case) and I missed the development in the relationships.

There were also a handful of scenes that made me very uncomfortable with the way characters expressed their desire/possessiveness.
