

THE TRIALS OF ANTHONY LEMON



Episode I: Battle With Screeching Tusk

“He launched the blade like a javelin.”

A porter slid the gate open a crack.

—Yes? he asked.

—I came to sell you my socks, answered a gruff voice.

—State your name.

—Anthony Lemon.

—Come, Mr. Lemon.

Anthony Lemon and the porter walked up stone staircase. They crossed a courtyard in which boys played kickball, then walked through a triangular doorframe.

Inside, the porter took from the wall a sconce. A plump round flame guided them through the hall. Anthony Lemon saw shadows move and thought:

‘Anything is possible here.’

Anthony Lemon debouched with the porter into a room of braziers. At the room’s center lay a dirt ring.

—Whooo comes here? asked a voice in the gloom.

—I am Anthony Lemon, said Anthony Lemon.

A bead of sweat trickled from the back of Anthony Lemon’s neck into his spotless collar.

One is all.

—And what is Anthony Lemon’s business here?

—I came to sell you my socks, said Anthony Lemon.

From the darkness a fast angry fist flew at Anthony Lemon’s face. Anthony Lemon blocked with the palm of his hand.

Arm and fist retreated to the gloom.

Anthony Lemon stood a moment in silence. Then he muttered: “Someone’s always trying to kick my ass.”

From the gloom a tusked brawler stepped forward. He had a wide flat face like a pancake and, unshod, wore pants of black leather.

—State your price, Mr. Lemon, said the tusked brawler.

Anthony Lemon inhaled and exhaled. Then he said:

—Five thousand dollars for my socks.

The tusked brawler laughed.

—Is Mr. Lemon open to negotiations? asked the tusked brawler.

—No, said Anthony Lemon.

Now he will try to kill me.

A blade darted out the man's palms towards Anthony Lemon's right eyeball. Anthony Lemon finessed the blade out of the air. Then tucked it into his pocket.

Amanita ocreata: toxic. Beneath the pines.

The tusked brawler traversed the ring in a second.

Anthony Lemon stepped deftly to one side and swept out his right leg. The tusked brawler tripped, lost balance, placed two arms out in front of him and pulled a somersault. Then he jetted back to the gloom.

—Is he all? thought Anthony Lemon.

Monkeys screeched.

Howlers.

Anthony Lemon drew the blade from his pocket. He launched the blade like a javelin into the dark.

A high pitched choke sounded; the monkeys went silent.

They will not try me now.

Anthony Lemon spun and redirected the tusked brawler's fist.

—Goodness gracious, the tusked brawler said before retreating into the gloom.

‘Where did that scumbag porter go?’ wondered Anthony Lemon.

He heard shuffling.

‘Step deftly aside left, send a fist up, then fall as a comet. Finish with a kick.’

The ring flooded with purple light.

Now!

Anthony Lemon stepped deftly left then raised his fist into the dark and brought it down like a comet. The brawler’s tusks cracked under his fist, spurting a rope of blood onto his palms.

Anthony Lemon kicked fondly, remembering p.k. shots.

Never missed.

Anthony Lemon’s boot collided with soft warm flesh.

—Ohhhhhh.

The brawler collapsed.

Out.

Anthony Lemon.

Anthony Lemon stooped to the wreck of the brawler:

—Tell me where the cocaine is, he said.

The wrecked brawler vomited on the floor.

—Worthless piece of shit, said Anthony Lemon.

Anthony Lemon took from his pocket a leaf and tossed it to the wreck.

—What a fucking mess.

The porter emerged.

Right this way, Mr. Lemon. The Master will want your socks now. How much did you say?

Mr. Lemon grinned.

END