

BLYP

This is BLYP #2, a PonderRoss publication for the 45th APA-Fon Friday, May 14th, 1965, and Ross Chamberlain is laboriously hand-scribbling it at 73 Arlo Rd., Staten Island, N.Y.

OUR STORY CONTINUES



YOLANDE (for that was the Princess' name, the King having been somewhat of a traditionalist, and the late lamented Queen a romantic) raised a fair palm toward Hal the Youngest.

"Shhh" she requested. The candle she held fluttered. "You're Hal, aren't you?"

"Well, yes..." he began.

"The moment I saw you there in the complaint dep— in the audience chamber..." she said.

"My name is Hal, but..."

"I said to myself, Yolande, I said..."

"I have these two brothers, and..."

"Now there is a suitor I wouldn't mind pressing for my hand..."

"These two brothers..."

"I saw right away that firm chin, that tall frame, that long golden hair, those muscular arms..."

"Their name is..."

"Those deep eyes and smiling lips..."

"That's me all right. I was tow-headed as a kid, but..."

"So I told myself, Yolande, I've got to help that boy make good!"

"Actually, both my brothers have dark hair..."

She waved her candle deprecatingly. "— or words to that effect."

"It's funny about our names..."

"Anyway, so I thought I ought to come and tell you about the tasks Daddy set you."

Hal shifted slightly on his knee which was becoming sore from continued kneeling, and rubbed it surreptitiously. Yolande noticed it anyway. "Oh," she said. "Stand up if you want to. Needn't be so formal at a time like this."

Gratefully Hal raised himself to his full height until he looked down at the enchanting candle-lit figure of the Princess, who, suddenly silent, stepped back, holding the candle before her in both hands. Her eyes were wide and luminous in the flickering light.

"On the other hand," she faltered, "you may prefer to sit down."

Hal complied, easing himself on to the edge of the raised pallet where he had been sleeping. Yolande began to pace back

and forth across the room. "Now," she said, "um." She stopped, not quite certain how to begin.

He looked encouragingly at her, but it was lost in the darkness. She continued at last.

"Now the point of the three tasks is that they are supposed to be impossible."

Hal nodded, his eyes following her as though he were entranced, as she began to pace again.

"However," she went on, unaware of his encouragement, "they're not. Quite."

"Um," he said, wondering why her hair and raiment floated so lightly about her as she moved.

"You see, the King's Guild expressly forbids the setting of absolutely impossible tasks in cases like this. It tends to undermine respect for authority, or something. As it is he's just barely adhering to the agreement."

She stood by the moonlit window, gazing out at the towers and battlements of the castle, and the stars beyond. A cool light breeze wafted at her hair, and her voice grew soft.

"Daddy's such an old dear. But he hates to think I've grown up. And since Mama left us, I'm all he has. You know how it is."

Hal didn't, but he wasn't about to let on. He made a sound indicating sympathetic agreement and waited for her to speak again. She had such a lovely, soft voice.

"The point is that there is only one edition on yak vellum of the works of T'sin Fun Hui... in fact there is only one edition of any kind. T'sin Fun Hui was a mad monk of an Eastern religious sect which denied self-denial and believed in the Ultimate Infinity — that all things are separate and unrelated. Their idea of the ultimate achievement was to perceive the absolute disunity of the universe. T'sin Fun Hui attempted to set forth in a monumental work the truth of this view, and filled ninety-eight vellum volumes of four hundred fifty-six pages each with completely senseless characters, to prove it. It was while engaged in this that a student who had watched him from the beginning of his labors pointed out the fact that the Master had numbered each of his pages consecutively, whereupon T'sin Fun Hui had, in a rage, set sail with all ninety-eight volumes in a fishing boat and sailed eastward toward the rising sun, where he must have either been burned to a crisp in the morning, or fallen off the edge of the world. At any rate he was never heard from again."