

Womba

They could not go home

For they had joined the navy.

So sailed east,

To the Great Khan.

Hoping to meet sages,

Who could tell them how to bribe Daghdha,

So they could go home.

Some to Filthy Big Bertha's.

Some to get lost in cesspit Haliput.

Some to wet steamy Tandoori forests.

Some to kitchen vacancies.

Some to nature reserves for dwarfs and bears.

Some to remain cogs.

And missed Womba so dropped a key down a crack in the deck just above his lap.

"For your eyes only," the note attached said.

For Garrison refused to admit they missed him.

So freed himself the next day after a good sulk and left the key behind.

"Here free me too," Drunken Noddy to Red Beard.

"Listen son someone is needed to row this galley," and left.

"A parrot cannot be expected to row," What'shisname and left.

“Yes and a seaman needs sea air,” Cutyagizzardout and left.

So the engine cog was still chained and did a mental, not to worry he calmed down and took his anger out rowing so knew all about anger management.

Anyway: “Where can we go?” The Lost Patrol.

“To the Land of Confucus,” The Mage looking east, he’s a pensioner who knows everything. For nothing he will tell us what we want to know.”

“For nothing?” Offaltrex disbelieving.

“Yes his wisdom is inside every fortune cookie,” The Mage adding, “he has ethics,” not expecting Offaltrex to understand.

“Is it like triple vision?” Tom.

“Yes, for it is free and affects those who touch. His cookies of wisdom never fail.”

“How do we know he’s alive?” Tom and Conan was proud for the boy had wisdom and an argumentative streak that every good barbarian has.

“Even the dead talk through the wiggles of a sacrificial victim,” The Mage.

“That’s against the law,” Garrison united knowing volunteers were sacrificial victims.

“When do we get there?” Offaltrex checking his brochures to see what people who gave away cookies could buy from him.

“At this rate, three years and six days,” The Mage and he clicked and a whale appeared and pushed the ship from behind.

“At last a tea break,” the lone engine cog below gasped.

“I smell the cooks are cooking something special?” Womba and his words unleashed Harold as his knuckles scraped the deck to check the rumor out.

“That whatever Harold is has eaten the contents of Alicadabara's cauldron of salmon steaks in Hollandaise sauce covered in chopped Broccoli,” The Lost patrol complained so Womba was not popular again so ate alone his ration of cold snails covered in lard to swallow easily.

“I want what whatever ate?” A plucky unwise member of the Lost Patrol for whatever did not like attention drawn to itself for then you were volunteered. So just like that it happened for out of the deck shadows darted and the plucky marine was gone.

“About time I got someone to chat too?” Drunken Noddy below; but it did not stop the others wanting:

“I want a roast horse,” that arthritic barbarian Conan.

“That albatross would do nicely,” the Burke tempting bad luck so found himself alone again.

“Boar in red wine sauce sprinkled in chopped asparagus,” The Mage showing mages were different for they were educated folk.

“Filthy Big Bertha I want,” Tom showing the true colors of common as muck Garrison.

“Ook,” Apes agreeing for Big Bertha let him eat the big juicy termites in the wood there.

“I want a soft cushion, some books to read, waitress service and a green bottle of meths,” and the engine cog could want all he liked.

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Now Confucius Land today has a statue of a donkey for a caravan once visited the Great Khan Dim Sun with camels, horses, elephants, mules and a talking donkey traveling through the second hand horse flesh markets.

And Dim Sun sent for Confucius who saw a good joke here; “He says he is the donkey god and wants clean vegetables,” so put Tootanfoot in a stable with rice, noodles, dried smelly fish and a stable boy who charged admission to see the only talking donkey in the Middle Kingdom of Confucius.

And the donkey was considered good luck to touch, even if it was seen scratching fleas.

Then one sunny day Tootanfoot saw a war galley because the stable boy was leaving the stable window open, for donkeys tend to stink the place up.

“I am saved,” Tootanfoot enawed as he saw the ship was Ballenese forgetting all about a certain war galley needing volunteers; so he jumped through the open window and trotted as fast as a donkey could down to the docks.

Behind him a stable boy intent on lassoing the donkey for the tourists paid him much to let them touch the lucky donkey.

Why already he had thrown away his smelly leather jerkins covered in donkey stuff and wore pink and green silks; and smelled of scented rose water and spoke funny too; and had enough takings to hire a street urchin to get covered in donkey stuff too. A

street urchin he kicked here and there and threw donkey's nibbled carrots at him to feast upon.

But to the people of Confucius this mysterious ship must be lucky for it had a big monkey in a sailor's uniform swinging about the rigging. While below hairy fairies stared at them from the railings, hairy fairies that had been at sea for months, with fat wallets of unspent pay.

"Hey Jimmie want noodle soup and waitress service?" A vendor in a sampan near the Victorious.

"Here Jimmy, I buy your mother in law OK?" Another vendor.

"Want a guide?" Another one and soon they were throwing choppers and chop sticks at each other for each wanted the rich picking of HMS Victorious to themselves; and here an Aslop's fable, "Share for there is enough blueberries for everyone."

Then Khan Dim Sun came to the docks in a sedan chair a hundred hands high. Gold and mounted on a thousand backs to heave it about and a guard legion in black silk.

"Trouble brewing," Conan and spat tobacco and hit a vendor and bounced off him and hit another then ricocheted off him to hit Wotanic.

"Womba line Garrison up on the docks," The Mage not thinking for he was sniffing dried medicines mingled in with the aroma of Wok cooking, "Lovely," he added ogling the waitresses in long silk dresses slit up the side revealing long smooth legs so he dribbled at the mouth and shook; and that should teach the old dirty man but he was a man and full of macho; them that shave with a blunt razor, eat without teeth, cover

themselves in rose water and carry a pack of playing cards! Why playing cards? Only Macho men know what to do with playing cards.

So as The Mage shook Womba lined Garrison up on the dock for Dim Sun to inspect and the smile on the Khan's face vanished for Conan picked his nose and flicked the greenie nearby, Tom picked his ears and wiped the wax nearby, Harold snarled showing canines Apes secretly coveted.

"Woof," and Cur cocked his leg nearby.

"Ook," and Apes carelessly threw a banana skin nearby.

"We are only marines and not with them," The Lost Patrol and added, "He is," pushing Captain Moronicus forward to be nasty hoping to be rid of the aspirer for good.

And The Great Khan was nearby and furious and had many Pittar Patters running to meet Garrison when suddenly: "Hi ho Silver Gee up Grisly," and The Khan was so amused watching a bear take spurs off a dwarf and change positions so the dwarf was raked good by those spurs, forgot all about boiling Garrison in oil, then frying them in sesame seeds and oyster sauce.

"Oh Great Khan I have spoken to an evil wizard in the ship's kitchen and he assures me these hairy fairies are called Garrison," Confucus wanting away for he had read books that a land called Ball existed beyond the mountain passes of Confucus Land and a sub species of ape lived there called Garrison.

Nasty trouble making thieves as well that loved to drink XXX all day and night. And did not tell The Great Khan these exciting extras for he would wait till The Great Khan

had stuffed brass ovens full of his soothsayers and astrologers who had been unable to tell him anything about Garrison.

For Confucius wanted the glory all to himself and the rewards that went with glory, the gold, medals and top class waitress service at the Hotel Confucius.

“Tell them the hospitality of Confucius Land is there’s,” The Great Khan to a little elf called Grovelatkhan’sfeet whose job was to run down the hundred hands high sedan chair and tell Garrison this. But Dim Sun had not made it clear who was welcome? Was it the shredded dwarf and bear riding a rickshaw or Garrison crowding about The Mage?

“Gasp pant,” Grovelatkhan’sfeet as he returned to Dim Sun, “They say ‘Ta very much’ and what is your reply of great lord?” Grovelatkhan’sfeet hoping there wasn’t a reply.

“Have they got any gifts for me?” Dim Sun and Grovelatkhan’sfeet ran all the way down to ask Garrison were the wrapped up presents were?

“Could give him What’s his name?” Conan.

“He means volunteers,” Womba looking up Book.

“Then means Wotanic certainly,” Tom and Conan beamed pride.

“Ask Dim Sun what he wants?” The Mage and Grovelatkhan’sfeet struggled back up the hundred hands to Dim Sun.

“I want the dwarf juggler, the bear flying a kite, the ape eating banana skins and the one legged ventriloquist who uses the stuffed parrot,” Dim Sun and sent Grovelatkhan’sfeet back to Garrison.

Meantime Confucius invited The Mage back to his house, The Flowering Green Aphid for tea, special friend rice, boiled duck beak in black bean sauce, star fish soup and tasty fried dandelions in sweet and sour sauce.

"Oink," Harold accepting the invitation.

"See you at 6 pm then," Confucius giving The Mage a map, "just show this to the rickshaw boys over there."

And the rickshaw boys made shapely curves with their hands, drank imaginary bottles, opened black brief cases showing items to treat, timers, shoes, handbags, carved sea chests and like the vendors in the boats knew there could only be one vendor, so threw choppers about and here another Aslop fable, "Remember the stage coach times for this city isn't big enough for many vendors."

And Dim Sun waved a finger at Grovelatkhan's feet who was crawling up the sedan anyway, panting and gasping of course leaving sweaty pools everywhere.

"I need a cool refreshing fizzy drink," the sweaty one.

"Sound my gong," Dim Sun to be annoying and a bronze gong the size of a house was hit so Grovelatkhan's feet forgot what he had climbed all the way up for so started running down to Garrison but unfortunately he slipped on a caterpillar and flew down the rest of the way, head first of course.

"Lazy bugger that Khan," Tom not liking what he saw for volunteers got jobs like that so sympathized.

"Yeh so let's do him good," the barbarian Conan thinking of temples to ravage and girls in slit skirts at street corners needing ravaging.

And the gong summoned a cohort of the guard to sweep away the rickshaw boys and their postcards with revealing pictures of ducks, pagodas and girls in slit skirts of course.

And Dim Sun summoned Grovelatkhan's feet back up with a flick of a royal finger just like her with the pretty ankles does in Ball.

"Master?" Grovelatkhan's feet.

"You are sacked."

And rickshaw boys were herded towards a war junk needing volunteers and behind them Grovelatkhan's feet about to throw himself off the dock to a waiting fin for he had several wives, heaps of kids and needed money to keep them all in different addresses.

"I am ashamed," Grovelatkhan's feet.

"This isn't right, volunteers needed," Womba and they came and sent Tom to fetch King Charles from the engine.

"Gasp, I can't see anything for the sun is so bright," Drunken Noddy for engine cogs row in semi darkness.

And Womba took Grovelatkhan's feet and held him close so Grovelatkhan's feet was afraid for he saw things moving from Womba onto him, and then the smell of an unwashed barbarian overcame him so he grew faint.

"Please let me throw myself to the fin?" Grovelatkhan's feet begged but Womba did not understand Confucius language.

But Grovelatkhan's feet knew the khan should have him boiled in tripe, then covered in Soya sauce and left outside the city walls for the jackals to eat for tripping.

"You come here," Dim Sun to his new messenger who ran all the way up the hundred hands of the sedan.

"Arrest them unwashed barbarians," Dim Sun and the new messenger to save time jumped and landed with a thud near Garrison.

And then Drunken Noddy was lined up and someone had stuck fig leaves in his hair and thrown a red rug on his shoulders, so now Drunken Noddy scratched here and there for it was Cur's sleeping rug.

And no one ever washed that nasty dog.

So Dim Sun summoned his new messenger back up and asked, "Who is he?"

And the new messenger on the way down complained, "Why can't he ask all the questions at once?" And added, "Pant gasp."

"Our king?" The Mage using finger signs.

"I understand that sign," Dim Sun beginning to froth.

And the new messenger ran all the way to Dim sun and grunted what The Mage had said.

"Ha he ha he," Dim Sun and the guard laughed too and stopped just like that when Dim Sun stopped.

"Why didn't you laugh?" He asked the messenger.

"Gasp pant he ha he ah," the messenger.

"That is better," the cruel Khan, and "go tell the barbarians I want presents or else?" And shoved the new messenger so he tumbled all the way down to land next to Garrison.

"Gasp pant," was all the new messenger was able to pant so never delivered the message.

"Bonsai," Dim Sun and the cohort charged Garrison.

Now The Mage was examining Alicadabara's bandaged wand and pointed it at the road and the road vanished and a hole appeared. A hole with green mist coming from it and the sound of a drunk drinking meths and a red eared hound baying.

"Still works I see," The Mage returning the wand.

"Can I try yours; it has been so long since I had a good working model?"

Alicadabara.

"Certainly old boy," The Mage handing his over and just in case Ali had any ideas had cast a return spell on it so anything Ali cast at him would cast upon Ali; perhaps rabbit ears and a tail.

"Cucumbers," Ali and the hundred hands that were actually two hundred steps up the sedan to the throne became ice, ice that Dim Sun slid down. All the way to the hole on the road.

"Gee up mules." Was heard as Arawan got his wagon into action.

"I have two hundred wives, an aviary to fill with budgies and zoo were my talking donkey escaped, I am needed back home, please let go of me?" Dim Sun.

"Burp," the rude reply from the drunk down there.

And new rickshaw boys appeared from behind bamboo grass and shouted, "Hey sailor you want young pixie girl in slit skirts?"

“We must refrain for we are fairies and need to visit Confucius at The House of the Green Aphid,” The Mage and was a sour bunch Garrison was that followed him, thinking of ways of pushing him down that hole, accidentally of course.

“I have eyes in the back of my head, the first fairy that gets too close wears invisible clothes,” The Mage and that silenced Garrison for they had too think about that one.

But never mind Wotanic eager to find bargains had waved his wallet above his head. A wallet soon to be emptied for about him shiny alligator shoes, singing crickets to send you top sleep, soft drinks, hard XXX, pixie women postcards and suits made in five minutes.

“You want play Bingo with me? You number one General?” One of them pixies as she played with Wotanic’s buttons on his tunic not pants as this is a respectable story.

“Grunt,” the reply from Wotanic as his brain was now empty.

“First you get washed as you smell like them,” the pixie meaning departing Garrison following The Mage.

“Grunt,” Wotanic’s second reply.

And here another Alsop fable, “Men.”