

THE VICTORY OF THE MOON.

The Strong Man of the Hills lost his wife. Immediately he went abroad calling aloud. The people all crowded about him in the dark of night and cried to him when he was yet a long distance away.



THE STRONG MAN TURNED UPON THEM SO QUICKLY THAT MANY FELL TO THE GROUND.

away. "No, my Great Chief, we have not even seen the imprint of your wife's sandals in the sand. If we had seen it, you would have found on bowed down in worship before the marks of her ten glorious brown toes for we are but poor devils of Indians and the grandeur of the sun rays on her hair would have turned our eyes to dust."

"Her toes are not brown. They are pink," said the Strong Man from the Hills. "Therefore do I believe that you speak truth when you say you have not seen her, good little men of the valley. In this matter of her great loneliness, however, you speak a little too strongly. As she is no longer in my possession, I have no mind to hear her praised. Whereabouts is the best man of you?"

None of them had stomach for this honor at the time. They murmured that the Strong Man of the Hills had some plan for combat, and they knew that the best man of them would have to win this encounter only the strength of the man in the grip of the fire. "Great King," they said in one voice, "there is no best man here."

"How is that?" roared the Strong Man. "There must be one who excels. It is a law. Let him step forward then." But they solemnly shook their head. "There is no best man here."

The Strong Man turned upon them in fury. But many fell to the ground. "How is that?" roared the Strong Man. "There must be one who excels. It is a law. Let him step forward then." But they solemnly shook their head. "There is no best man here."

At this time a young philosopher approached the Strong Man slowly. The phi-

losopher of that age were all young men in the full heat of life. The old graybeards were, for the most part, very stupid, and were as scornful.

"Strong Man from the Hills," said the young philosopher, "go to your bed and sleep. Then come and eat of this fruit. Their gaze for a time at the blue sky and the green earth. Afterward I have something to say to you."

You are not so wise that I am obliged to bother before listening to you," demanded the Strong Man, impatiently.

"I," said the young philosopher. All the people thought this reply very strange.

"Why, then, must I bother and eat of this fruit and gaze at the earth and the sky?"

"Because they are pleasant things to do," said the young philosopher with a gesture.

The Strong Man, who indeed whistled his head and turned his back to the valley, was in the shadow of a tree and ate the core fruit and gazed at the sky and the earth. "This is a fine com art," he said. After a time he suddenly struck his forehead with his finger. "By the way, did I tell you that my wife had died from love?"

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The Strong Man looked and there indeed was the moon laughing down at him. He sprang to his feet and roared.

"Ah, old fat lump of a moon, you laugh? Have you then any wife?"

The moon said no word, but merely smiled in a way that was like a flash of sweet stars.

"Well, then, moon, take this heart of mine," shouted the Strong Man, and he hurled his spear.

The moon clasped both hands to its eyes and cried, "Oh, no!"

The little people of the valley cried: "Oh, this is terrible, Strong Man! He has smitten our sacred moon in the eye!"

The young philosopher cried nothing at all.

The Strong Man threw his coat of ermine and gathered there many great rocks and trunks of trees. It was strange to see him erect upon a peak of the mountains and hurling these things at the moon. He kept his air full of them.

"At moon, come closer!" he shouted. "Come closer. Let me see your face against your wife. Oh, to think we are obliged to tolerate such an old, fat, stupid, lazy, good-for-nothing moon! You are ugly as death, while I—Oh, moon, you stole my beloved, and it was nothing, but when you stole my beloved and laughed at me, it became another matter. And yet you are so ugly, so fat, so stupid, so lazy, so good-for-nothing. Ah, I shall go mad! Come closer, moon, and let me examine your countenance, gray skull and all this!"

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Now issued over the edge of the cloud and gazed at it. "How duty you are! Why do you pull me? Verily, you are an ordinary person. Why did I ever find you interesting?"

The Strong Man flung his knife into the air and turned back toward the earth. "Oh the young philosopher! He has smitten our sacred moon in the eye!"

"I would have doubted he was gone at the matter in another way. What does my strength avail me in this contest?"

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