

How the Gods Avenged Meoul Ki Ning

Meoul Ki Ning was on his way with a lily from the lotus ponds of Esh to offer it to the Goddess of Abundance in her temple Aoul Keroon. And on the road from the pond to the little hill and the temple Aoul Keroon, Ap Ariph, his enemy, shot him with an arrow from a bow that he had made out of bamboo, and took his pretty lily up the hill and offered it to the Goddess of Abundance in her temple Aoul Keroon. And the Goddess was pleased with the gift, as all women are, and sent pleasant dreams to Ap Ariph for seven nights straight from the moon.

And on the seventh night the gods held conclave together, on the cloudy peaks they held it, above Narn, Ktoon and Pti. So high their peak arises that no man heard their voices. They spake on that cloudy mountain (not the highest hamlet heard them). "What doth the Goddess of Abundance," (but naming her Lling, as they name her), "what doth she sending sweet dreams for seven nights to Ap Ariph?"

And the gods sent for their seer who is all eyes and feet, running to and fro on the Earth, observing the ways of men, seeing even their littlest doings, never deeming a doing too little, but knowing the web of the gods is woven of littlest things. He it is that sees the cat in the garden of parrakeets, the thief in the upper chamber, the sin of the child with the honey, the women talking indoors and the small hut's innermost things. Standing before the gods he told them the case of Ap Ariph and the wrongs of Meoul Ki Ning and the rape of the lotus lily; he told of the cutting and making of Ap Ariph's bamboo bow, of the shooting

of Meoul Ki Ning, and of how the arrow hit him, and the smile on the face of Lling when she came by the lotus bloom.

And the gods were wroth with Ap Arip and swore to avenge Ki Ning.

And the ancient one of the gods, he that is older than Earth, called up the thunder at once, and raised his arms and cried out on the gods' high windy mountain, and prophesied on those rocks with runes that were older than speech, and sang in his wrath old songs that he learned in storm from the sea, when only that peak of the gods in the whole of the earth was dry; and he swore that Ap Arip should die that night, and the thunder raged about him, and the tears of Lling were vain.

The lightning stroke of the gods leaping earthward seeking Ap Arip passed near to his house but missed him. A certain vagabond was down from the hills, singing songs in the street near by the house of Ap Arip, songs of a former folk that dwelt once, they say, in those valleys, and begging for rice and curds; it was him the lightning hit.

And the gods were satisfied, and their wrath abated, and their thunder rolled away and the great black clouds dissolved, and the ancient one of the gods went back to his age-old sleep, and morning came, and the birds and the light shone on the mountain, and the peak stood clear to see, the serene home of the gods.