

The Lost Temple of Keekong Dong

"But enough about me, now. I'm parched. How about you tell me what you think of me? What about you, Your Lordship," he asks the Duke, "I know you followed me about for several months when I was trying to beat you to the lost temple of Keekong Dong. I could never ken how ye beat me there, and why you had four geese and a monkey with a small accordian with you instead of your sherpas when you did."

"It was during one of my famed week long garden parties, if I recall correctly", says the Duke. "We were re-enacting the 5th siege of the Great Wall of China with our invited guests: My then fiancée Buttercup, who was of course taking the part of the Wall, the Luigi brothers as the defending nation of the Middle Kingdom, and myself as the Emperor of China."

"We'd just run out of Mongols at that stage in the party and I sought to acquire a fresh batch for the festivities. As you know, it is damned difficult to import hordes of any sort into England at short notice. Especially after my tif with the Postmaster General."

The Duke sips his wine before continuing, somewhat off-track.

"Yes, at a previous party with my then fiancée Rouge D'Chemise I had been accosted by the Postmaster General who berated me quite wittily about my extravagant use of the postal service. Something along the lines of a man obliging nobles is not the same as Noblesse Oblige."

"I can't offhand remember my rejoinder, but at one point I do recall chopping his head off, so I must have won the arguement."

"Happier days, happier days..."

"Anyhow, there I was, one horde short of an invasion and a damnably unbeseiged (and breathing) fiancée."

The [Contessa](#) smiled indulgently. "Your own skills on horseback are surely equal to those of an entire Mongol horde, Duke, so I daresay you tried to save the re-enactment by besieging the Great Wall yourself. But I'll wager that once the battle was joined, you quite forgot that the Mongols were supposed to lose the fight, but instead went on to completely overcome the Great Wall's defences right there and then! While I'm sure Buttercup was pleasantly surprised, was not her father also a guest at your party?"

"He was somewhat chagrined at the site of the catapults and siege towers. But I assured him they were authentic for the period in question.", says the Duke. "At first, perhaps, Buttercup was pleased to receive the attentions of her fiancée rather than a Mongol horde - but I let not intimate relations distract me from what was, after all, an accurate presentation of siegecraft."

"I do fear that in the heat of the moment, and with her acknowledged thespian skill, I may have mistaken her for an inanimate brick wall of at least 4000 miles in length."

Enter the Mule Ape

"What about the Monkey, your Grace?", says Patsy, ever faithful servant and occasional bookend.

"Are you asking to be mortally wounded, Patsy? Again? I'm just getting to that bit", the Duke responds.

"It was at this point, as I, last-minute replacement for the Mongol Horde, were about to bring down the Great Wall of China that misfortune struck. This long ingeniously planned strategy to rid myself of another fiancée with the contrivance of a war re-enactment from a period in history that fascinated my then future father-in-law came to nought. The distraction of a full siege in ancient China giving credence to the razing of his daughter - down to her very foundation - was interrupted, by, as Patsy intimated, a monkey."

"In fact, it was a rare Mule Ape from the deepest Tibetan rainforests brought especially as surprise reinforcements by the Luigi brothers. Whom, I might add, I will not be inviting to further parties. Acrobatic leaping from platform to platform is not sufficient entertainment reason."

"Mule Apes are known for several strange behaviours out of the ordinary nature of monkeys - Their large size, their tendency to climb any large structure in sight, their ability to create out of thin air - explosive barrels to hurl and more importantly (at least to me at the time) - their preponderance to kidnapping fiancées."

The Duke pauses and looks to the [Bruce](#).

"I imagine it was the barrel hurling nature of the Mule Ape, or the barrels themselves you were after that attracted your interest. Although I am not sure how you found out the nature of my quest to follow. Perhaps you would care to fill in the details?"

"Needless to say, in the confusion of the siege, the barrels and a troublesome father, the Mule Ape's disappearance with my fiancée was quite spectacular. A swift interrogation of the Luigis with a heraldic plunger, brought forth details on the beast and a possibility."

"Buttercup's father was quite apoplectic with rage at a beast meaking off with his daughter, and perhaps suspicious of my re-enactment motives, charged me forthwith to retrieve his daughter. Naturally I set off at once, after seeing my guests out, tidying the place up a bit and making necessary preparations."

"Within a year, I began tracking the Mule Ape. Little realising that my quest would take me to its home in the dark forest of Tibet. To the very temple of its home. The Keekong Dong."

"Your quest?" cries the outraged Bruce, "That was MY quest. You were following me, remember? At least most of the way. And it wasnae the barrels I was after at the Dong, if I want exploding barrels there's a brewery in Aberdeen that never seem to be able to get it right. I was after one of those hammers the Luigi brothers have. I'm sure you noticed them at your party. In fact, since I cannae see any other reason to invite a pair of overactive oddballs in overalls to a party, I wouldnae be surprised if you were planning on using one of their hammers to raze your fiancee to the ground. That's what I wanted one for."

"Razing the Great Wall that is, not your fiancee."

"Your pardon, Bruce, in the heat of the retelling I had mislaid some of the finer details. It was infact my seeking the whereabouts of the Mule Ape that led me across your path for the temple that is its home."

"And I could never imagine you razing Buttercups, Bruce."

"The hammers were, indeed the reason for the brothers' invitation - I little realised it was only part of what they brought from Keekong Dong."

Hammer Time

"As the Bruce has pointed out", says Duke Peter, "he was on a quest himself to find one of the legendary hammers of Keekong Dong. Being more learned in this matter, and reading of happenings of my party in the Scottish edition of the Times (the one with the BIG letters), he had begun tracking the Mule Ape and Buttercup in the hopes of discovering the temple."

"A temple that had been lost nigh on 20 years - ever since the Luigi brothers famous kegger of 18-. They have of course, now sworn off the imbibing of more than two kegs in an evening. And the Italian sport of head hitting as well."

"The Bruce had the foresight to enlist the aid of several Sherpas for their tracking ability. For their enlarged nostrils aided them well in picking up scents, even those of a year old fleeing Mule Ape across water, as well as their natural mountain climbing attributes. Many a Sherpa has slipped and fell from a ludicrous height, only to be saved at the last moment with the help of their enlarged nostrils."

"I, of course, had not employed Sherpas. Not even for protection from the rain - which is another added advantage of noses. So somewhat wet and bedraggled, I was always several steps behind the Bruce. Always catching the next carriage after him, the next ship or the next passing whale. Never catching up."

"I knew of his intent for the Hammers from a jolly good friend of mine in a certain Gentleman's club, and so knew his quest diverged from my own. And yet, being a Scot, I did fear for my fiancée and resolved to do my best to get ahead of him. Truth be told, I feared the Bruce would rescue her, returning her to her father. This then, was the main impetus of my quest."

"And it would have failed, but for the serendipitous discovery of a music grinder's monkey in the quaint Arabic town of Djelibebe towards the southern tip of the Sahara Desert."

Duke Peter waves a lace encircled hand repeatedly past his nose." "I do apologise", he says, "I was momentarily distracted by a passing Frenchy."

"I had, of course, meant that a Sherpa's nose was quite efficacious in times of inclement weather. Not all noses in general. I am even given to understand that one of the least French people in Paris went on to sell an invention based on Sherpa nostrils. Rather unimaginatively called the model number one from Paris. Or the Paris-01."

In Distress

"The sun beat down in the desert of dry desolation as I distraughtly despaired at the dread diffidence of the Divine."

"Dallying in Djelibebe didn't deliver a damn detail of the damnsel's destination. I delayed a day."
"And as I attempted to ascertain an appropriate abode in which to abide and hide from the ascerbic

Arabic afternoon, I was accosted.

"Mistaking my meloncholic meanderings a merchant manhandled a malodourous monkey while making music on his machine in a misjudged mission to modify my mood, and, mayhap, make money."

"Suddenly seeing some soiled sheik soliciting strangers with a smelly simian should simply be suffered for the sake of societal stability."

"Except every European enveloped in excruciating heat experiences extraordinarily easily engaged enragement."

"Like lighting I loped off the ludicrous lout's lumpish left leg, leaving little left of the limb living."

"The surrounding crowd applauded my action. As you know, under Muslim law, a thieves hands are removed. But as you may not be aware - for the stupidity of creating very bad music and forcing a monkey to dance, the musician's leg is removed."

"And so I inherited the monkey - the grinder no longer being in the land of the living. As you know, legless Arabs are not tolerated in muslim countries."

"The monkey itself was, not only rather smelly, but quite intelligent. She was able to communicate her thoughts to me via the medium of a specially build Accordion. One the right size for her paws."

"It is in this manner that I discovered the wherabouts of the Keekong Dong - legendary temple of monkeys. For the monkey had been there herself. All I need now do was beat the Bruce to Tibet."

The Earl pauses for thought - it appears to take some time. Finally, he says, "Your Grace, this may surprise you, but I believe I know the young monkey in question."

"I would wager that the lass was a spy for the Mule Ape Nation, and her mission was in fact to lure you to the temple in order to honour your proposal to the Mule Ape Queen. Which is, of course, where the geese come in."

"I say, Buttercup must have been furious when she found out about your, eh-heh, prior engagement!"

Goosed

The Duke sighs, remembering the irritating encumbrances that fate placed in his way that day. "It was in deed the case, your Grace.", he says.

"No sooner had we established a method of communication via the playing of her accordian than her insidious plot began to unfold. Under the guise of telling me the location of the temple, Hari, for 'twas her name, or perhaps better knowns as Monkey Hari the simian spy, began to mesmerize me to sleep."

"The soothing tones of the accordian hid well the hypnotical commands that sent me into a deep sleep. And I did not see where the monkey kept her trained Arabic carrier geese, but can only surmise she was a conjurer as well."

The Duke turns and addresses the Bruce.

"It was in this manner, unconscious with an accordian playing master- spy monkey - we were carried

to the lost temple of Keekong Dong, and managed to arrive well before you."

"Aye, I understand that well enough," the Bruce says, "but if that was all of it ye would've been asleep when I arrived. As it was, you were up on your feet and in possession of several exploding barrels, and at least two thirds of your fiancée. And ye'd managed to hide the hammer somewhere. I'll wager ye managed to turn the geese against the monkey even while you were asleep somehow."

The Land of the Terse

Duke Peter of Gloucester eyes the Earl dubiously. "I had not thought that the Queen of the Mule Apes had survived the aborted invasion of the planet Terserus, but she did. And it was perhaps that fact that allowed me to escape the carrier geese. You must have sources I am not aware of to have known about the Queen Mule Ape, you Grace.."

"The planet Terserus, as you know, sits on the opposite side of the sun to us and is therefore always in the shade. It can only be reached by animals not only capable of traversing the ether between the planets, but also able to withstand the occasional meteor shower. Ducks naturally leap to mind - water off a ducks back and all that, but they are unfortunately not of a size adequate for transportation."

"Hence my first encounter with Arabic carrier geese."

"At the time, I was making a social visit to the Terserons of Terserus. Catching up in a light dinner conversation with a doctor friend of mine. It was rather an inconvenient place to have dinner, however - as the Terserons are reknown for their method of communication - to be blunt, the controlled breaking of wind."

"However, the Doctor was there on business - something architectural I understand, and this was possibly the last time I could see him. And so I made the trip via ACG (arabic carrier geese). Whilst there for an extended period - the geese picked up a smattering of the local dialect. I didn't realise at the time that they were working for the Mule Ape Empire and this trip was just the excuse needed to do some preparatory scouting."

"To cut a long digression short - It was only through a promise to marry the Mule Ape Queen that I was able to avert the invasion of the planet Terserus by soldier monkeys via ACG the following evening. Apparently the Queen had heard of my many previous fiancées and decided to find out for herself what was so attractive about me. It did not occur to her to check as to why they were ex-fiancées, nor wonder at how mysterious their disappearances and unfortunate deaths."

"Otherwise she might have thought twice before lighting her celebratory cigar at her hen's party while on Terserus."

"Needless to say, I escaped unharmed, although until arriving at Keekong Dong - I had though she had not."

The Duke pauses and sips his wine before continuing.

"It was the survivors of the original invasion force - I tell you now, I had not noticed their occasional half charred feathers - that bore me aloft to the temple. If it weren't for the noted loyalty of the ACG, I'm sure they Mule Ape empire would not use them so much on their various espionage activities."

"Whilst mesmerized into unconsciousness through the accordeon playing of Monkey Hari I had lost control of all parts of my body - save for one muscle alone. And it is in that manner, whilst the spy monkey held her nose in disgust and wondered what I had eaten for lunch, that I successfully communicated with the geese."

"With the skill of language I am blessed with - a silver tongue, or other parts, I convinced the geese of their betrayal. As they were partially cooked already from a previous matrimonial disaster, it was easy enough to imply that they would be cooked and served in a wedding banquet were it all likely that I was forced to marry the Mule Ape Queen."

"It is in this manner that I turned her followers against her, and used the geese later - when we arrived at the temple."

The Duke quaffs his drink, pondering his memories.

"I wondered what the smell was when I got there," the Bruce says, "I thought maybe it was the yak butter. I managed to cope, but my sherpas with their giant nostrils, all keeled over straight away."

"A lucky thing they did too, eh?", says the Duke.

"Otherwise we might not have had adequate cover during the following fracas. I do, however, prefer slightly less hairy alcoves in which to fight."

"Aye, well ye were the one who insisted we try some haruspication before we left.", says the Bruce.

"Yes, well it is one thing to predict the future through the entrails of animals - and quite another to divine the future from the innards of a Sherpa's nostrils.", says the Duke.

"Answer murky, blow again later..."

"With all the pinguin bogeys inside and the fighting outside," the Bruce recalls, "I wasnae sure we were going to get out of there alive. It was lucky I thought to lend you my spurtle."

Girder action

"Anyhow, back at the rediscovered lost temple of Keekong Dong - if I may lead the story back to where I last left off - I was being carried by Arabic carrier geese with a monkey spy playing an according."

The Duke continues.

"There was some form of renovation work happening at the temple at the time - or perhaps they were merely adding an extension. As there appeared to be metal girders bolted together creating a rude structure around and through the temple proper. At the very top of this structure was the Mule Ape Queen, together with my fiancée, Buttercup, who was looking quite put out."

"There was some form of cage like structure in which I was to be unceremoniously dumped, and then likely ceremoniously tortured to death. However several gaseous emissions later it was Monkey Hari herself that was dropped from a great height into the cage. Unfortunately the accordeon cushioned her fall."

"I was flown now by my geese allies towards the Queen and my fiancée who now appeared to be in cahoots together. Somewhat uncomfortable apparel I know, but then they were quite strange fiancées."

"Unfortunately I came within barrel flinging range of the Mule Ape Queen, and would have been blown to bits if I had not the foresight to use the geese as cover. I fell to the earth and the Queen began systematically rolling barrels down upon me, forcing me to dodge around girders and tactically retreat to the base of the structure."

"It was there that the Bruce discovered me, as he finally managed to track down the temple. The possible rhythmic explosion may have been a contributing factor. I knew it would be a dashed difficult task to make my way to the top with those unpredictable barrels rolling willy nilly down the girders."

"Whilst we sheltered in the Sherpa nostrils, from the barrel debris raining from above - occasionally venturing for to skillfully dice and slice any advance forces of Mule Apes, I realised that perhaps the barrels were not that unpredictable. I did have a Scot with me who likely knew haruspication, all the rage in Scotland I am led to believe. Unfortunately we had no animals nearby - not able to venture forth from the Sherpa nostrils for very long with the explosions taking place all about."

"The Sherpa nostrils themselves, however seemed to be ideal and I suggested them to the Bruce. He was dismayed by the dryness of the Sherpa internals, moisture being a major part of all haruspication. It was then that he remembered his Spurtle and sprayed the sinuses liberally, enabling a moist enough predictive surface."

"With foreknowledge of barrel locations as the plummeted, rolled and bounced down structure - we skillfully made our way to the top."

"Aye, it was lucky I'd had my spurtle fitted with the emergency spray nozzle. Normally a spurtle is just a stick for stirring porridge with.", says the Bruce.

Barrel full of monkeys

"Looking back on events now, I should have realised that the Mule Apes would be found at a temple some where. After all, they all had tonfas, and were obvious monk monkeys."

"As we took shelter behind one of the girders halfway up the structure temporarily, I noticed what appeared to be a hammer floating in the air within reach, if one could jump high enough, further along. Dashing forward, leaping high, I grabbed it, bringing it down on one of the barrels. In the process of smashing it, I noticed how the explosive effect was nullified. A wonderful thing to me at the time.", says the Duke.

"Unfortunately I had to leave the Bruce behind to seek his own hammer as I reached the summit. "

"The Mule Ape Queen, now with Buttercup on her side, was dashed irritated at my arrival. She brought forth yet another barrel and would have hurled it forthwith had I not fortuitously let fly the hammer. Catching her in the midriff, she was knocked off balance and plummeted to her doom off the great height.

"Buttercup, did not however, venture any better. The barrel that the Queen had held was set free by her fall and landed, hard enough to explode, on the floor by my fiancée's feet."

"Which is, sad to say, all that is now left of her, and all that I could return to her father on my return."

"We looked for the Mule Ape Queen - primarily so the Bruce could get his hammer - but neither her, nor the hammer could be found. They had disappeared from the face of the earth."

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