

Perfect Nonsense

And with that last peaceful quiver I felt I knew the answer. Or was it just a nightmare, was I to wake up in my

bed, feverishly searching for the morning tea. Ignorant of all pain in the world...But that would never happen. I would

never wake up from this sleep. I now knew the answer. Now I knew the meaning of life.

It was early morning when they woke us, for the sun had not yet warmed the horizon in the east. It was the 6th

day I knew. The 6th day I'd figured it all out. I had to admit it was much less exciting than I'd imagined. We went straight

to work, fetching water and getting food for ourselves and the overseers. I could not understand why they were fed

more than the workers when they did less. But what did I know, I was Yue Yun one of many workers on what would

become the Great Wall of China. Nobody important, nobody to be remembered, no hero, no saint...just me.

We had a tough start but no different from any other. My good friend Qi was sitting on a rock smiling and happy as

always. I wondered how he was able to maintain his happiness in such horrid times.

“Hello, beautiful day is it not?” he said in his ever cheerful voice.

“We shall see...for the day has only just begun” I said while looking up at the sky.

“Something grand will happen today. I can feel it.” he said with a sudden serious tone.

“Perhaps” was my simple reply. For even though I did not admit it, I felt it as well. This underlying excitement.

Something would happen today. But what it was I did not know.

I had the same dream I had 6 days before. Except it was different somehow. I couldn't remember. It was simple,

just a butterfly flying over a field of grain. I thought for a moment...no not flying.

“Hey Yun are you ok?” Qi was looking at me an odd expression on his face.

“Umm yeah I'm fine” I said, quickly picking up the stone I'd been staring at.

He took it from me. “Are you sure?”

“Yes I'm sure now get to work before the overseer comes.” I said it jokingly but it was very serious. If the overseer

caught us not working we would be beat or sometimes killed. And I could not let that happen.

“Oh yeah and you know I'm so afraid of them” he kept a strait face but I saw the fear in his eyes.

“Yes I do know.” I said. We went back to work silently.

It was tiresome laying stones all day, everyday. It didn't matter what the weather was whether it be rain, snow, heat, or

wind we worked. Stone after stone, layer upon layer all to build this wall. I often wondered what would become of this

wall. Probably nothing it would most likely be destroyed. This saddened me that all of our hard work would be lost...

forgotten. No I could not use that word I'd completely forbidden the use of that word after 6 days earlier I'd found out

it was true...I would without a doubt be forgotten. Since then I'd pondered ways not to be...forgotten, the word made

me wince.

Well I suppose I could kill myself that'd make them remember me. No I cant how selfish of me to think such things.

Maybe if I did what I was told and worked as hard as I could I would be remembered. No that would never work I knew

for I already did that and so did many others. Perhaps to stop working then, to revolt. Now that might just work. -crack-

I herd the sound of a whip a ways away and my gut twisted. No I would be whipped and killed on the spot without

hesitation. I felt so hopeless then like there was no saving me from this disease that was being forgotten.

Ugh I must not think about this anymore these thoughts strangle me with helplessness...but what was I to think

about doing nothing would not solve my problem. I thought about it. But what if it did. Maybe I had to leave it to fate

and what leave it for the gods to decide. This annoyed me I disliked doing nothing. I waved that idea away like one

waves a fly away...and like a fly it kept coming back. Over and over again it landed on the corners of my mind an it

seemed to elude my hand when swatted at.

“Stub your toe?” Qi asked out of the blue.

“No. Why?” I looked at him puzzled.

“Well you seem very annoyed at something. I thought maybe you stubbed your toe.”

“Oh no I’m fine” I laughed at this for it seemed Qi always knew what was on my mind.

“Thinking again” he said more fact than question.

“Ha-ha how do you know?” I asked expecting a childish answer.

“Because I watch you when you think you just never notice.” he shrugged.

He watches me I wondered ha-ha probably because he finds my facial expressions amusing.

“No because I’m trying to figure out what your thinking of... It intrigues me.” he said thoughtfully.

I wondered if I’d said that out loud and scolded myself for slipping up. “Oh its nothing of importance just nonsense.”

“Ahhh but it is perfect nonsense” he added.

“Ha-ha is there such a thing” I said confused.

“Of course ther-” he was interrupted by one of the overseers

“Hey come and move this rock boy” he ran over to help.

I turned back to my work, we would continue this conversation later. As I turned I stubbed my toe on a rock.

“OWWW” I said holding my foot.

It must have all happened so fast but to me it seemed the universe slowed down. Qi turned around horror on his face

as he yelled my name. Puzzled for a moment I looked up to see a stone plummeting down onto me. I did not move for

I was leaving this to fate...and fate spoke as the heavy rock pinned me to the ground. The pain...

unbearable but

somehow it released my tension. I watched the color of Qi's face disappear as he ran towards me. I suddenly felt sad.

He knelt next to me and I smiled up at him not noticing the blood flow down my neck. His did not have the usual

cheery smile upon his face nor were his eyes light and joyous. This is what saddened me more than anything.

Usually it was windy or cold when we worked as if the gods plotted against us. However it was nice today, some

clouds, otherwise like Qi had said it was beautiful. Though no one paid close enough attention to notice. Now I finally

did. I heard the birds in the trees, I watched the plants grow from the earth, I smelled the sweet air, I tasted the blood

in my mouth and I felt the tension melt away.

"Beautiful indeed." I said and gestured around.

He looked confused and about to cry. "Yes...very"

"Do not be sad for I will be gone but never shall I leave." I coughed.

"And that is perfect nonsense." If the circumstances were any different he would have laughed. But now instead he cried.

I coughed again looking at the stone that was my death. And with that last peaceful quiver I felt I knew the answer. Or

was it just a nightmare was I to wake up in my bed feverishly searching for the morning tea. Ignorant of all pain in the

world...But that would never happen. I would never wake up from this sleep. I now knew the answer. Now I knew the

meaning of life. The meaning of life is simply to die. Just like the meaning of the days work is to tier you, so you may

find answers in your dreams at night. And death is just a long sleep.

With my last breath I said “Húdié bù fēi tā chàn.” and I do believe I would be remembered for now I am a part of this

wall. This wondrous wall, built with the strength of many and ruler of one.
