

THE THREE RIDDLES.

[FROM THE GERMAN.]

The Princess Ila was of course very beautiful for is not she the heroine of our story...

said: "Bosch, the darling, look out this time. There is something in that. That is no mere coincidence."

No, was heard a trumpet's blast and the whole Court assembled. The young man was ushered into the audience hall, bowed before the King and the Princess, and pronounced his first riddle.

"Brava!" cried out Court and Councilors and Commissioners. But the young man was no, with disappointment. "That is not right," he said calmly.

"Then Ila grew red, because otherwise the trick would have been disclosed. So the suitor pronounced the second riddle—and that went just like the first—and the third—and the same thing happened."

"Ila darling," chuckled the old King through his tawny beard when his daughter confided to him this new and original idea of hers. "Ila darling, do be a little careful. In the first place, I absolutely forbid your having a part in any such nonsense, and in the second place you will be mighty sorry for yourself afterwards if you do."

Whoever wished to enter the contest had to pay twenty golden guineas in advance and his name would then be set down in the great list. Also he had to submit his three riddles to the High Commission on Riddles. Tests in order to have the commission ascertain accurately and exactly that there were just three riddles; no more, no less, and that they contained nothing to menace the State.

Naturally the Commission kept all its business strictly confidential. But all the Commissioners were so bewitched by the charm and intelligence of the Princess that they could not make any secret of a secret in her presence. In this way she always found out the right answers to all the riddles—and one of the Princesses after another would give his gallant charger an extra vicious kick and ride away from the portals of the King's castle, disappointed and cynical.

A cynic is a man who is disappointed in other people.

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