

Tales from the Golden Age

by David Ackley

Characters:

Ned, a writer of epics, a person of solitary disposition and questionable hygiene

Johannes, inventor/entrepreneur

Scene: A mudflat in really olden times, someplace like Phoenicia or Assyria, one of those places everybody's heard of but nobody can find.

Ned is writing on the mudflat with a pointed stick when Johannes enters, a scroll under his arm.

Johnannes: How's the latest coming, mate?

Ned: All right...if it wasn't for the wind and the friggin' rain.

--How's that?

--Every time I finish a chapter, the wind comes up and buries it in sand. Or the bloody monsoon washes it all away. So I got to start all over, and half the time I can't even remember what name I give the hero.

--Gilgamesh, was it?

--Somethin' like that. What you got there?

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--This here? This here's a scroll and the stuff wrapped around it, that's your basic papyrus.

--What's it for, Johannes? A bed sheet? Something like that? Pretty handy bed sheet roll, I'll give you that.

--I was thinkin' it's something you'd be interested in, for the odd epic.

--What? To buy? Talk to the wife. She takes care of the bedding.

Johannes unrolls the scroll to show the writing on the papyrus.

--No. To write on. So's you could take the product round to your customers and wouldn't have to be all the time draggin' them out to the mudflats for a demo before the weather blows in.

--There's a thought...Let's have a look...Little curly, in't it? I prefer something that'll lay nice and flat for you. Can't beat your old mudflat for that. Your mudflat won't budge an inch in a year.

--Except for the wind and the rain. And the buffalo coming down to the waterhole for a drink.

--Fucking buffalo, the writer's curse.

--Here, I'll leave this off for you. Give her a test drive. Let me know what you think. Oh, and you'll need one of these reeds, and some of this ink. I think you're gonna love this.

He leaves and Ned stares after him in disgust.

--Bloody inventors, always trying to sell you a bunch of shit you don't need.

He kicks the papyrus, quill and ink out of his way.

--Give me a pointed stick and some good level mud every time. Now,
where was I at? Ginger Mac? Gil the Mensch?

He sets contentedly to work with stick, in mud.

