

THE VASE

I was strolling through Princes Arcade, a delightful arcade that runs from Jermyn Street to Piccadilly, when a beautiful vase displayed in one of the windows caught my eye.

I entered the shop and stood admiring the item for a while before the Proprietor approached me.

"It's a very rare Japanese vase Sir, known as "The Vase of Trust".

I was intrigued and asked him to explain.....

He carefully took the vase from its plinth and held it in his palms, displaying it's magnificent decoration to fine effect.

Then he began. "Artwork we see here Sir is not merely for ornamentation. The figures actually depict the meaning of the vase." And during the telling of the story,

he indicated relevant scenes finely painted there in immaculate detail.....

"Here is a man and a woman at their marriage ceremony and they are pledging their trust to each other."

'From their expression we know they are both extremely happy"

"They are then blessed with children and here with their parents, the scene is also one of great happiness"....

"Now we see a man embracing the woman, and this represents a lover seducing the once faithful young bride."

"The husband discovers them and goes to the Priest for guidance. Should he leave his wife, even though he still loves her, or should he forgive her?"

"The Priest tells him only he can make that decision, but before he does he should listen to the parable of the vase."

And then he began to relate the myth that surrounds the vase.

"An exquisite porcelain vase represents the beauty of trust. When that trust is honoured, if we tap the vase it will emit a clear ring. If trust is broken, demonstrated by a crack in the vase, then the sound we hear will be dull and flat."

The Priest paused for a while and studied the man's expression which suggested he understood, and so he continued.

"Sometimes the vase is expertly repaired and to all who view it, it appears perfect. This represents reconciliation, but however keenly it is mended, can it ever truly ring again"....

The Priest briefly held the man's gaze then went on. "And there is such a vase in existence, this Vase of Trust."

"It was made perfect then deliberately broken, before being restored to apparent perfection. And with it we can determine if pure reconciliation is possible"

At this point the Proprietor in Princes Arcade affectionately wiped the vase with a fine cotton cloth, before returning it to its plinth.

In silence, we stared at the vase, reliving it's fascinating history, before the Proprietor turned towards me and smiled.

Clearly sensing the question I was about to ask he produced a pencil from his jacket pocket.

Then, ever so gently he tapped the vase rim.