A man and a woman had a daughter to whom they ever taught, in selecting a husband, to take none but a man with rough hands, as then she might know he would work.

Overhearing this advice, and desiring a wife, a blind man took some rice, pounded it, and having rubbed it over his hands, came to woo the maiden. Though utterly blind, the eyes of the blind man appeared even as the eyes of those who see, and the maiden loved him and gave herself to him in marriage. Never did she suspect the truth.

Many days they lived happily, but upon a time the wife made curry of many kinds of meat, and her husband ate but of one kind. When she asked him why he ate but of the one kind, the husband replied, "If a man eat from a dish, that dish should he wash. If I eat but from one, I need wash but one."

Again, upon a day, as the husband plowed the rice field, he plowed up the ridges between the fields.

"Why dost thou work after that fashion?" asked the wife.

"The places for planting the rice are small and narrow. I wish to make them larger," replied the husband.

When the rice had grown, the man went into the fields with his wife, and, as they walked, he fell over the ridges, in among the rice.

"Why dost thou fall upon the rice?" asked the wife.

"I do but measure the distance between the plants. If the rice be good this year, I will then know just how far apart to plant it next year," he answered.

And upon a time it happened the house was burning, and, as the wife fled, she saw her husband lingering and unable to find the door.

"Come this way, the door is here," cried the wife.

"I know, I know. I but measure the house that we may build another of its size," retorted the husband.

Lo, as the husband left the burning house and was running, he fell into a well. His wife placed a ladder for him to climb out, but, behold, he climbed far above the mouth of the well.

"Come down. Here is the ground," called the wife.

"I know, I know. I am up here to see if the fire is out," called down the husband.

Long had the father of the wife suspected the husband was blind, and, upon a day, he came to test his eyes. Carrying a bell, such as a buffalo wears, the father hid in the bushes and rang the bell.
"Go, bring the buffalo into the compound," (1) directed the wife. Suspecting naught, the husband went to the bushes, and cried, "Yoo, yoo!" (2) The father struck him, but he freed himself and returned to the house and told his wife that the buffalo had been dangerous and had horned him. But the father, convinced the husband had deceived them all, drove him from the house.

As the blind man walked, he met a man with palsied feet.

"If thou wilt be eyes to me, I will be feet to thee," called the blind man, and, forthwith, he put the palsied man on his back. As they journeyed, they met a wizard, who said, "Would you prosper, that which you grasp hold with a secure hand."

And upon a day, the man with the palsy saw a bird's nest; thinking there would be eggs therein, he bade the blind man go up the tree and bring them. When the blind man grasped the nest, the head of a venomous snake appeared, but his companion called, "Grasp it tightly," and, as he held it, the snake cast of its venom in his eyes, and he saw all things. Just lingering to place the snake on his afflicted friend, and seeing him, too, restored, the husband hastened home to his wife, but as he ran, he beheld her coming out to him. With these kind words did she greet him, "O, my husband, come I will work for thee. I have ever loved thee!" but, when she beheld that his eyesight was restored, she was exceeding glad, and greatly did she rejoice.

Notes:
1: Enclosed grounds or yard--generally a place of residence.
2: Yoo, yoo--stand still, be quiet.

(The end)
Katherine Neville Fleeson's short story: Blind Man

By Katherine Neville Fleeson