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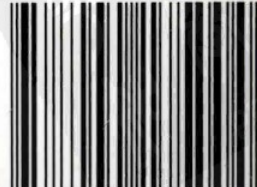
AMAZING TALES

Second Series

IV



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Amazing Tales

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凌濛初 著

李子亮 译

Attributed to Ling Mengchu

Translated by Li Ziliang



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目 录

- 卷三十 1412
瘞遗骸王玉英配夫 偿聘金韩秀才赎子
- 卷三十一 1458
行孝子到底不简尸 殉节妇留待双出柩
- 卷三十二 1502
张福娘一心贞守 朱天锡万里符名
- 卷三十三 1538
杨抽马甘请杖 富家郎浪受惊
- 卷三十四 1576
任君用恣乐深闺 杨太尉戏官馆客
- 卷三十五 1628
错调情贾母晋女 误告状孙郎得妻
- 卷三十六 1668
王渔翁舍镜崇三宝 白水僧盗物丧双生



CONTENTS

- Tale 30* 1413
To Thank Han for His Burying Her Remains,
Wang Yuying Offers to Be His Wife
Repaying the Betrothal Money, Han Xiucui
Buys Back His Son's Freedom
- Tale 31* 1459
A Filial Son Says No to a Postmortem Examination
Request upon His Deceased Father
A Faithful Wife Vows to Kill Herself and Go to
Her Grave Together with Her
Deceased Husband
- Tale 32* 1503
Zhang Funiang Resolves to Stay Unmarried
for Integrity
Zhu Tianxi Takes a Long Journey to Identify
a Name
- Tale 33* 1539
Yang Chouma Asks to Be Thrashed
A Rich Man Is Frightened
- Tale 34* 1577
Ren Junyong Lustily Revels with
Confined Beauties
Minister Yang Sinisterly Castrates His Literary
Hack as Revenge
- Tale 35* 1629
Mother Jia Reproaches Her Daughter for a
Suspected Affair
A Young Man Sun Takes a Wife from a
Mistaken Lawsuit
- Tale 36* 1669
Fisherman Wang Donates a Mirror in Worship
of Buddha
Two Monks Lose Their Lives for Stealing
the Treasure



卷三十七 1712

叠居奇程客得助 三救厄海神显灵

卷三十八 1754

两错认莫大姐私奔 再成交杨二郎正本

卷三十九 1796

神偷寄兴一枝梅 侠盗惯行三昧戏



<i>Tale 37</i>	1713
Cheng Zai Tides over Difficulties by Repeated Hoarding and Profiteering	
The Sea-goddess Manifests Her Power by Rescuing Cheng Zai from Three Dangers	
<i>Tale 38</i>	1755
Sister Mo Elopes with the Wrong Lover	
Second Brother Yang Marries His Former Mistress	
<i>Tale 39</i>	1797
An Ingenious Thief Conveys His Sentiment with a Plum	
A Gallant Burglar Plays His Game with Adroitness	
 <i>Notes</i>	 1863
<i>Glossary</i>	1864



卷三十

瘞遗骸王玉英配夫 偿聘金韩秀才赎子

诗云：

晋世曾闻有鬼子，今知鬼子乃其常。

既能成得雌雄配，也会生儿在冥壤。

话说国朝隆庆年间，陕西西安府有一个易万户，以卫兵入屯京师。同乡有个朱工部，相与得最好。两家夫人各有妊孕。万户与工部偶在朋友家里同席，一时说起，就两下指腹为婚。依俗礼各割衫襟，彼此互藏，写下合同文字为定。后来工部建言，触忤了圣旨，钦降为四川泸州州判；万户升了边上参将，各奔前程去了。

万户这边生了一男，传闻朱家生了一女。相隔既远，不能勾图完前盟。过了几时，工部在谪所水土不服，全家不保，剩

Tale 30

To Thank Han for His Burying Her Remains, Wang Yuying Offers to Be His Wife Repaying the Betrothal Money, Han Xiucan Buys Back His Son's Freedom

A poem reads thus:

I have long heard that ghosts can have children.
Now I am fully convinced.
Once the spirits of the dead join the living in marriage,
They can also give birth to children.

During the Longqing reign of emperor Muzong, Zhu Zaihou (1567-1572), in our Ming Dynasty, there was a Brigade Commander¹ surnamed Yi in Xi'an Prefecture, Shaanxi. While he was holding office in the capital, he was charged with the task of garrisoning the capital. The current minister of the Ministry of Public Works Zhu, his fellow townsman, was on close terms with him. At that time, both Yi and Zhu's wives were expecting.

One day, while Yi and Zhu were having dinner at the house of one of their friends, they brought up the subject of their wives' pregnancy. Instantly they proposed a future marriage between the two unborn babies. Each cutting a piece of cloth off their shirts according to conventional formalities, they exchange them and treasured them up. Then they wrote an agreement as a pledge for future reference. Some time later, Zhu's views infuriated the emperor and, as a result of this, he was degraded by the emperor to the position of an assistant to the Prefect of Luzhou, Sichuan, while Yi was promoted to the position of frontier commander and was sent to a certain border area to guard the frontier fortress.

Yi's wife gave birth to a baby boy, and it was said that Zhu's wife gave birth to a baby girl. As the two families were separated by a long distance, it turned out later they failed to fulfill the marriage as had been pledged.



得一两个家人，投托着在川中做官的亲眷，经纪得丧事回乡，殡葬在郊外。其时万户也为事革任回卫，身故在家了。

万户之子易大郎年已长大，精熟武艺，日夜与同伴驰马较射。一日正在角逐之际，忽见草间一兔腾起，大郎舍了同伴，挽弓赶去。赶到一个人家门口，不见了兔儿。望内一看，元来是一所大宅院。宅内一个长者走出来，衣冠伟然，是个士大夫模样，将大郎相了一相，道：“此非易郎么？”大郎见是认得他的，即下马相揖。长者拽了大郎之手，步进堂内来，重见过礼，即分付里面治酒相款。酒过数巡，易大郎请问长者姓名。长者道：“老夫与易郎葭莩不薄，老夫教易郎看一件信物。”随叫书童在里头取出一个匣子来，送与大郎开看。大郎看时，内有罗衫一角，文书一纸，合缝押字半边，上写道：

朱易两姓，情既断金，家皆种玉。得雄者为婿，必谐百年。背盟者天厌之！天厌之！



Years later, the whole family of Zhu, except a couple of servants, died in Luzhou due to lack of acclimatization. Seeking patronage from Zhu's official relatives in Sichuan, the servants survived managed to take the dead back to their native home in Xi'an and buried them in the outskirts of Xi'an city. Meanwhile, Yi committed an offence and was demoted from office and sent back to his native home too. Not long after this, he died in Xi'an.

When the son of Brigade Commander Yi, Yi Dalang, grew up, he became extremely well versed in martial arts and dedicated himself to galloping horses and hunting with his companions. One day, while he was hunting with his companions, a hare suddenly jumped out of the grass before him. Abandoning his companions, he started to go after the hare with bows and arrows in his hands. As he reached the entrance of a house, the hare disappeared abruptly. Taking a look at the house, he found out that it was a mansion with a spacious courtyard. An elderly well-dressed man with the bearing of an official came out of the house and looked at Dalang from head to toe. Then the elderly man asked, "You're Brigade Commander's son, aren't you?" Seeing that the elderly man knew him, Dalang quickly got off his horse bowed toward him. Taking Dalang's hand in his, the elderly man showed Dalang to the main hall of the house. Once again they greeted each other before they took their seats respectively. Then the elderly man told his family to entertain Dalang with a banquet. When the wine had gone round several times, Dalang inquired about the elderly man's name. The elderly man said, "You and I should be close relatives. I'll show you something." So saying, the elderly man told his page boy to bring over the suitcase from the inner room and show it to Dalang. Opening the suitcase, Dalang found a piece of cloth cut off from a shirt and an agreement written on a sheet of paper within it. The agreement read thus:

As the Zhu and Yi families have been on intimate terms with each other for years, we hereby agree that our unborn babies be husband and wife when they grow up. The party who does not honor the agreement is subject to punishment by the Heaven!

At a certain date, in a certain month of a certain year of the Longqing reign



隆庆某年月日，朱某、易某书。坐客某某为证。

大郎仔细一看，认得是父亲万户亲笔，不觉泪下交颐。只听得后堂传说：“孺人同小姐出堂。”大郎抬眼看时，见一个年老妇人，珠冠绯袍，拥一女子，袅袅婷婷，走出厅来。那女子真色澹容，蕴秀包丽，世上所未曾见。长者指了女子对大郎道：“此即弱息，尊翁所订以配君子者也。”大郎拜见孺人已过，对长者道：“极知此段良缘出于先人成命，但媒妁未通，礼仪未备，奈何？”长者道：“亲口交盟，何须执伐？至于仪文末节，更不必计较。郎君倘若不弃，今日即可就甥馆。万勿推辞。”大郎此时意乱心迷，身不自主。女子已进去妆梳。须臾出来行礼，花烛合卺，悉依家礼仪节。是夜送归同房，两情欢悦，自不必说。

正是欢娱夜短，大郎匆匆一住数月，竟不记得家里了。一日，忽然念着道：“前日骤马到此，路去家不远，何不回去看看就来？”把此意对女子说了。女子禀知父母，那长者与孺人坚意不许。大郎问女子道：“岳父母为何不肯？”女子垂泪道：



Signature: Zhu and Yi

Witness: Mr. So and so

Realizing it was his father's handwriting, Dalang shed a flood of tears. Then someone in the inner room announced, "Lady and Miss are coming to the main hall!" Looking up, Dalang saw a richly dressed and bejeweled elderly lady, supported by an extremely beautiful girl, coming out into the main hall. The elderly man pointed at the beautiful girl and said to Dalang, "She is my daughter. Your father and I had you two betrothed years ago." After saluting the elderly lady, Dalang turned to the elderly man and said, "I'm fully aware that it was the will of both my father and you that your daughter and I be husband and wife when we grow up. But I haven't got someone to act as a matchmaker for me, nor have I got betrothal gifts with me. What can we do with it?"

The elderly man said, "Your father and I signed the agreement personally before you two were born. Why do we need a matchmaker? As regards the betrothal gifts, there is no need at all to fuss about such trifles. If you have no objections, you two can get married today. Hope you do not turn me down!" Utterly confused and disconcerted, Dalang felt as if he was not of his own accord. The girl had already gone to the inner room to make herself up for the wedding. Before long, the girl came out. Then the wedding ceremony was held in accordance with the conventional custom often practiced in their native homes in Xi'an. At night, the newly-weds entered the bridal chamber and made love affectionately.

A jolly good time flies. Several months passed quickly before Dalang noticed it and he almost forgot to return to his own home. One day, an idea suddenly struck him, "My horse took me here in a very short time the other day. So it must not be very far from here to my home. Why not go back home and have a look?" Dalang told the girl his intention and the girl made it known to her parents. The elderly couple flatly refused Dalang's offer. Dalang asked the girl, "Why did your parents oppose my idea of going back home to see my family?" The girl answered, "Because they have fears that you will not come back to us when you're back home." Dalang said, "How could it be possible? My family does not know that



“只怕你去了不来。”大郎道：“那有此话？我家里不知我在这里，我回家说声就来。一日内的事，有何不可？”女子只不应允。大郎见他作难，就不开口。又过了一日，大郎道：“我马闲着，久不骑坐，只怕失调了。我须骑出去盘旋一回。”其家听信。大郎走出门，一上了马，加上数鞭，那马四脚腾空，一跑数里。马上回头看那旧处，何曾有甚么庄院？急盘马转来一认，连人家影迹也没有，但只群冢累累，荒藤野蔓而已。

归家昏昏了几日，才与朋友们说着这话。有老成人晓得的道：“这两家割襟之盟，果是有之。但工部举家已绝，郎君所遇，乃其幽宫。想是夙缘未了，故有此异。幽明各路，不宜相侵，郎君勿可再往。”大郎听了这话，又眼见奇怪，果然不敢再去。自到京师，袭了父职回来，奉上司檄文，管署卫印事务。夜出巡堡，偶至一处，忽见前日女子，怀抱一小儿迎上前来，



I'm now living with your family. I'll surely come back to you soon after I tell them of my whereabouts. I can make the trip within one day, why don't you let me go?" Seeing that the girl became silent, Dalang dropped the matter.

One day later, Dalang said to the girl and the elderly couple, "My horse has been left unused for quite some time. I'm afraid it will become intractable. So, I'll have to take it out for a ride." The girl and the elderly couple believed Dalang's words. The moment he was on the horse, Dalang whipped it and the horse galloped ahead as swift as the wind. In no time Dalang found he was several *li* away from the girl's mansion. Looking back at the mansion with the spacious courtyard, he found it was no longer there! Hurrying back on his horse for a closer look, he found no traces at all of people living around this place except a few graves and some wild vines.

Dalang didn't tell his companions about his strange encounter with the girl and the elderly couple until after he had remained in a daze for several days in his home. Upon hearing Dalang's story, some senior and experienced men remarked, "It's true that Zhu and Yi proposed a future marriage between the two unborn babies and wrote an agreement as a pledge. But the Zhu family all died a long time ago. The place you came across must be the Zhus' graves. I guess the reason you had such a strange encounter with the girl is that you do have a predestined relationship with the girl. As the dead and the living live in different worlds, they are not supposed to get entangled with each other. So, better keep yourself away from those graves." As he had witnessed the strangeness in this matter, and now having heard these remarks, Dalang, sure enough, didn't venture to move close to the graves any more.

Years later, Dalang went to the capital and inherited his father's title. After returning home in Xi'an, he took the post of military officer in charge of the local public security by order from upper authorities. One night, while he was making an inspection tour at the station troops, he ran into the girl again at a certain place. Carrying a baby in her arms, the girl came over to Dalang and said, "Do you still remember me, Dalang? You may not remember me, but take a look at this baby and you'll find out



道：“易郎认得妾否？郎虽忘妾，襁中之儿，谁人所生？此子有贵征，必能大君门户。今以还郎，抚养他成人，妾亦籍手不负于郎矣。”大郎念着前情，不复顾忌，抱那儿子一看，只见眉清目秀，甚是可喜。大郎未曾娶妻有子的，见了好个孩子，岂不快活？走近前去，要与那女子重叙离情，再说端的。那女子忽然不见，竟把怀中之子掉下去了。大郎带了回来。后来大郎另娶了妻，又断弦再续了两番，立意要求美色，娶来的皆不能如此女之貌，又绝无生息。惟有得此子长成，勇力过人，兼有雄略。大郎因前日女子有“大君门户”之说，见他不凡，深有大望。一十八岁了，大郎倦于戎务，就让他袭了职。以累建奇功，累官至都督，果如女子之言。

这件事，全似晋时范阳卢充与崔少府女金碗幽婚之事。然有地有人，不是将旧说附会出来的。可见姻缘未完、幽明配合，鬼能生子之事，往往有之。这还是目前的鬼，魂气未散。更有



whose son he is. This boy is your son. He will surely bring honor to your family. Now I return him to you and hope you bring him up.” Remembering their happy times together, Dalang took over the baby without misgivings. Seeing that the baby was remarkably handsome, he was filled with joy. As he was not married and had no children, how glad he was to have such a lovely baby son! When he moved closer to the girl and was about to relive the past with her, the girl disappeared abruptly, leaving the baby with Dalang. Then Dalang took the baby to his home.

Later afterwards, Dalang got married. He remarried twice after the death of his first wife and second wife, but none of his three wives were as beautiful as that girl and none were able to have children. However, this baby boy grew up to be a man of great valor and outstanding talent. Remembering the girl’s words that this boy will surely bring honor to his family, Dalang placed great hope on him. When the boy reached eighteen, Dalang became tired of the military affairs and had his son inherited his official title. Later Dalang’s son rendered meritorious service time and again. As predicted by the girl, Dalang’s son turned out to be extremely successful in official career and finally reached the position of Supreme Governor.

The story mentioned above is almost the same as the Jin Dynasty story which tells about intermarriage between the living Lu Chong from Fanyang and the deceased daughter of Chamberlain for the Palace Revenues Cui. In these two stories, all the places and persons were real. So they were not drawn up on the basis of old stories. It’s thus clear that it is also possible the dead and the living can make love and have children if their marriage predestined by fate failed to be fulfilled when they are alive. The girl in the aforementioned story is but a new ghost and her spirit has not yet dispersed.

* * *

Now I’ll tell you a much more amazing story about a woman ghost of several hundred years old. This woman ghost could also give birth to a boy.

Han Qingyun, a *xiucai* from Fuqing County, Fuzhou Prefecture of Fujian, ran a private school at a place named Shiyouling Hills, Lantian,



几百年鬼，也会与人生子，做出许多话柄来，更为奇绝。要知此段话文，先听几首七言绝句为证。

洞里仙人路不遥，洞庭烟雨昼潇潇。
莫教吹笛城头阁，尚有销魂乌鹊桥。（其一）
莫讶鸳鸯会有缘，桃花结子已千年。
尘心不识蓝桥路，信是蓬莱有谪仙。（其二）
朝暮云骖闽楚关，青鸾信不断尘寰。
乍逢仙侣抛桃打，笑我清波照雾鬟。（其三）

这三首乃女鬼王玉英忆夫韩庆云之诗。那韩庆云是福建福州府福清县的秀才，他在本府长乐县蓝田石尤岭地方开馆授徒。一日散步岭下，见路傍有枯骨在草丛中，心里恻然道：“不知是谁人遗骸，暴露在此。吾闻收掩骸骨，仁人之事。今此骸无主，吾在此间开馆，既为吾所见，即是吾责了。”就归向邻家借了锄耨畚鍤之类，又没个人帮助，亲自动手，瘞埋停当。撮土为香，滴水为酒，以安他魂灵，致敬而去。

是夜独宿书馆，忽见篱外毕毕剥剥，敲得篱门响。韩生起来，开门出看，乃是一个端丽女子。韩生慌忙迎揖。女子道：“且到尊馆，有话奉告。”韩生在前引导，同至馆中。女子道：“妾姓王，名玉英，本是楚中湘潭人氏。宋德祐年间，父为闽州守，将兵御元人，力战而死。妾不肯受胡虏之辱，死此岭下。当时人怜其贞义，培土掩覆。经今二百馀年，骸骨偶出，蒙君埋藏，恩最深重。深夜来此，欲图相报。”韩生道：“掩骸小事，



in Changle County of the same prefecture. One day while he was taking a stroll at the foot of the hill, which was not far from his school, he discovered some dry bones from a dead body in the grass by the roadside. “Whose bones could they be?” Han wondered. “Lying there completely exposed like this. I often hear people say it is the duty of benevolent gentlemen to bury the bones of the dead once they happen to see them. These bones must have remained here unattended for some time. Since I’m running a school at this place and these bones are seen by me, it must be my duty to have them buried properly.” So thinking, he borrowed a spade from a family nearby and had the bones buried. Scooping up some earth to serve as incenses and pouring down some water to serve as wine, he wished the soul of the dead to rest in peace. Then he left, his heart filled with deep respect for the dead.

On the same night, while Han was sleeping alone at his school, there suddenly came a burst of hurried knocks at the twig fence. Getting up from his bed, Han came out of his room and saw a beautiful charming young lady standing at the fence. In a flurry, Han greeted the young lady with a bow. The young lady said, “I have something to talk to you. Please let me in.” After Han led the lady into the school, the lady said, “My name is Wang Yuying and my native place was actually Xiangtan in Chu region (present-day Hubei and Hunan provinces). During the Deyou reign of emperor Zhao Xian (1275) of the Song Dynasty, my father was the prefect of Minzhou Prefecture, Fujian. That year my father led his troops into a battle against the invading Yuan soldiers. My father fought undauntedly against a multitude of strong enemies, but unfortunately he was killed in the battle. Unwilling to suffer humiliation from the northern tribe, I committed suicide at the foot of the Shiyouling Hills. To show their respect for my moral integrity, the local inhabitants had my body buried at this place. Now more than two hundred years have passed. My bones got exposed recently and you had them buried properly. My gratitude for you is really beyond words. So, I’ve come to see you late at night to repay your great kindness.”

“Burying your bones is not worth mentioning,” said Han. “The living and the dead live in different world. Why bother to come to see me?” The

不足挂齿。人鬼道殊，何劳见顾？”玉英道：“妾虽非人，然不可谓无人道。君是读书之人，幽婚冥合之事，世所常有。妾蒙君葬埋，便有夫妻之情。况夙缘甚重，愿奉君枕席，幸勿为疑。”韩生孤馆寂寥，见此美妇，虽然明说是鬼，然行步有影，衣衫有缝，济济楚楚，绝无鬼意。又且说话明白可听，能不动心？遂欣然留与同宿。交感之际，一如人道，毫无所异。韩生与之相处一年有馀，情同伉俪。忽一日，对韩生道：“妾于去年七月七日，与君交接，腹已受妊。今当产了。”是夜即在馆中产下一儿。

初时韩生与玉英往来，俱在夜中，生徒俱散，无人知觉。今已有子，虽是玉英自己乳抱，却是婴儿啼声，瞒不得人许多，渐渐有人知觉。但亦不知女子是谁，婴儿是谁，没个人家主名，也没人来查他细帐，只好胡猜乱讲，总无实据。

传将开去，韩生的母亲也知道了，对韩生道：“你山间处馆，恐防妖魅。外边传说你有私遇的事，果是怎么样的，可实对我说。”韩生把掩骸相报及玉英姓名说话，备细述一遍。韩母惊道：“依你说来，是个多年之鬼了。一发可虑！”韩生道：“说也奇怪，虽是鬼类，实不异人，已与儿生下一子了。”韩母



young lady Wang said, “Though I’m no more a human being, I’m not without human feelings. As a man of letters, you must know it is not strange for the living and the dead to get married. It’s so kind of you to have buried my bones. For this reason, I’m willing to be your wife. Moreover, you and I had a predestined relationship in our previous existences. I would feel very happy if you don’t have any suspicions at my offer.”

Han had been quite lonesome living in his private school. Though the lady made it clear that she was a ghost, Han found out she was in no way like a ghost, for she could move and had a shadow and there were seams on her decent dress as well. In addition to this, the lady appeared to be extremely clear-headed and had a clear articulation. How could it be possible for Han not to fall for her? Overcome with delight, Han accepted her offer readily and slept with her. While he made love with the lady, Han felt she was every bit the same with ordinary women. After they lived together for over a year, the young lady suddenly said, “I came here to live with you on the seventh day of the seventh month of last year and I’m now expecting.” On that night she gave birth to a baby boy.

As Wang and Han always dated at nighttime when everybody had retired to bed, nobody had the slightest knowledge of their affair for the whole year. After the birth of the baby, however, the baby’s cries slowly reached the ears of the local inhabitants. But the local inhabitants had no idea who this baby was and who the mother was. Except making some groundless guesses, none came to Han’s private school to inquire Han about the matter.

As the matter circulated from mouth to mouth, Han’s mother also got wind of it. Han’s mother said to Han, “You live close to the hills. You must guard against evil spirits. Many people say you’re carrying on an affair with someone. Is it true? Tell me the truth.” Han told his mother in detail how he had buried the bones and how Wang Yuying had come to thank him by living with him. Surprised, Han’s mother said, “According to what you said, she is a ghost of several hundred years old. In this case, you must be more careful about her!” Han said, “Strange enough, she is no different at all from human beings, though she said she was ghost.



道：“不信有这话！”韩生道：“儿岂敢造言欺母亲？”韩母道：“果有此事？我未有孙，正巴不得要个孙儿。你可抱归来与我看一看，方信你言是真。”韩生道：“待儿与他说着。”果将母亲之言与玉英说知。玉英道：“孙子该去见婆婆。只是儿受阳气尚浅，未可便与生人看见，待过几时再处。”韩生回覆母亲。韩母不信，定要捉破他踪迹，不与儿子说知，忽一日自己魃地到书馆中来。玉英正在馆中楼上，将了果子，喂着儿子。韩母一直闯将上楼去。玉英望见有人，即抱着儿子从窗外逃走。喂儿的果子多遗弃在地，看来像是莲肉。拾起仔细一看，元来是蜂房中白子。韩母大惊道：“此必是怪物！”教儿子切不可再近他。韩生口中唯唯，心下实舍不得。等得韩母去了，玉英就来对韩生道：“我因有此儿在身，去来不便。今婆婆以怪物疑我，我在此也无颜。我今抱了他，回故乡湘潭去，寄养在人间，他日相会罢。”韩生道：“相与许久，如何舍得离别？相念时节，教小生怎生过得！”玉英道：“我把此儿寄养了，自身去来由我。今有二竹筴，留在君所。倘若相念及，有甚么急事要相见，只把两筴相击，我当自至。”说罢，即飘然而去。



We've already had a son." Han's mother said, "You're talking nonsense!" Han said, "How dare I lie to you, my mother?" Han's mother said, "Is it really true? I've got no grandson. I would be only too glad to have one. Take him to me and let me have a look. I won't believe you until I see him with my own eyes." Han said, "I'll talk it over with Wang."

Soon Han told Wang that his mother wished to see the child. Wang said, "Grandmother can see our son. But I'm afraid he hasn't had enough *yang* from this human world. So, I don't think he should see strangers now. Better leave it for later consideration." Han told his mother Wang had declined her request.

Filled with doubts and suspicions, Han's mother decided to find out the ins and outs of the whole matter. One day, she suddenly appeared at Han's private school without informing her son in advance. At the moment, Wang was in the room upstairs feeding her son with something like a kind of fruit. Han's mother rushed upstairs into the room. Seeing someone breaking into the room, Wang immediately ran away from the window with her son in her arms, leaving the fruit behind her on the ground. The fruit looked like lotus seeds. But when she examined it more carefully, Han's mother found it was a honeycomb. Taken aback, she said, "She must be an evil spirit!" Then she told her son never to see her again. Han agreed readily in words, but was reluctant to part with her in mind. After Han's mother was gone, Wang returned and said to Han, "I have difficulty in moving about with this baby. Just now your mother suspected that I'm an evil spirit. I feel ashamed to stay here with you any longer. So I'll take our son to my native place in Xiangtan and entrust him to the care of a certain person. I'll come to see you some time later."

Upon hearing this, Han said, "We've been living together for such a long time. How can I bear to part with you? What should I do if I miss you?" Wang answered, "After I have our son entrusted to the care of someone, I'll be able to come and go freely. Here is a pair of bamboo clappers. I'll leave them to you. When you miss me or if you have anything urgent and want to see me, just clap them and I'll be right here immediately." Finishing these words, Wang disappeared gracefully.

After arriving at Xiangtan with her son, Wang Yuying wrote a few



玉英抱此儿到了湘潭，写七字在儿衣带上道：“十八年后当来归。”又写他生年月日在后边了，弃在河傍。湘潭有个黄公，富而无子，到河边遇见，拾了回去，养在家里。玉英已知，来对韩生道：“儿已在湘潭黄家，吾有书在衣带上，以十八年为约。彼时当得相会，一同归家。今我身无累，可以任从去来了。”

此后韩生要与玉英相会，便击竹筴，玉英即来。凡有疾病祸患，与玉英言之，无不立解。甚至他人祸福，玉英每先对韩生说过，韩生与人说，立有应验。外边传出去，尽道韩秀才遇了妖邪，以妖言惑众。恰好其时主人有女淫奔于外，又有疑韩生所遇之女即是主人家的。弄得人言肆起，韩生声名颇不好听。玉英知道，说与韩生道：“本欲相报，今反相累。”渐渐来得希疏，相期一年只来一番，来必以七夕为度。韩生感其厚意，竟不再娶。

如此一十八年，玉英来对韩生道：“衣带之期已至，岂可不去一访之？”韩生依言，告知韩母，遂往湘潭。正是：



words on the clothes of the baby, reading, "This baby will return to his ancestral home and join his family in eighteen years." Below these words she put on the birthday and month of the baby. This being done, she left the baby at a riverside.

There was a local inhabitant surnamed Huang in Xiangtan. Huang was rich but childless. One day he came across the baby at the riverside and took him to his home. Wang Yuying, having learned that her son had been taken away by Huang, came to Han and said, "Our son is now in the care of a man surnamed Huang living in Xiangtan. I put down the words on the clothes of our son that he'll return to his ancestral home and join you in eighteen years. So, by then our son will come back to you. Now I'm free to move about without difficulty."

Whenever Han wanted to see Wang, he would clap the bamboo clappers. Wang then would come over to see him. Each time Han got ill or met difficulties and told Wang about them, Wang would instantly help him get out of the trouble. Sometimes Wang would also tell Han that a certain neighbor was going to have good fortune or a certain neighbor was going to have bad luck. Soon after Han told these neighbors about their imminent good fortune or bad luck, Han's words would certainly come true. When the local inhabitants slowly learned about this matter, they all believed that Han was bewitched and was spreading fallacies to hoodwink the public. It so happened that the daughter of a rich and powerful family eloped at the time. Many people suspected that Han was carrying on an affair with the daughter of this rich and powerful family. Thus plenty of unfavorable comments arouse against Han. When Wang Yuying learned about this, she said to Han, "Originally I intended to repay you for your great favor, but now it turns out I've put you into trouble." From then on, Wang visited Han only once in a year and it was always on the seventh day of the seventh month. Deeply moved by Wang's love for him, Han remained single.

Eighteen years passed. One day, Wang came over to Han and said, "Eighteen years have passed. It's time for you to go to Xiangtan and look for our son." After informing his mother about the matter, Han made his way to Xiangtan.



阮修倡论无鬼，岂知鬼又生人。

昔有寻亲之子，今为寻子之亲。

且说湘潭黄翁，一向无子，偶至水滨，见有弃儿在地，抱取回家。看见眉清目秀，聪慧可爱，养以为子。看那衣带上面，有“十八年后当来归”七字，心里疑道：“还是人家嫡妾相忌，没奈何抛下的？还是人家生得儿女多了，怕受累弃着的？既已抛弃，如何又有十八年之约？此必是他父母既不欲留，又不忍舍，明白记着，寄养在人家，他日必来相访。我今现在无子，且收来养着，到十八年后再看如何。”黄翁自拾得此儿之后，忽然自己连生二子。因将所拾之儿取名鹤龄，自己二子分开他二字，一名鹤算，一名延龄，同共送入学堂读书。鹤龄敏惠异常，过目成诵。二子虽然也好，总不及他。总卯之时，三人一同游庠。黄翁欢喜无尽，也与二子一样相待，毫无差别。二子是老来之子，黄翁急欲他早成家室，目前生孙，十六七岁，多与他毕过了姻。只有鹤龄因有衣带之语，怕父母如期来访，未必不



Ruan Xiu advocates the nonexistence of ghosts.

But now, Wang Yuying, a woman ghost, has given birth to a boy.

We have stories that children look for their ghost fathers in days of yore.

Today Han is on his way to look for his son he has had with a ghost.

Now let's come back to Huang. Huang was sonless. When he found the baby at the riverside, Huang took him home. Seeing that the boy was remarkably handsome, intelligent and lovely, he adopted him as his son. But the words written on the clothes of the baby made him wonder, "Why did the parents abandon their own child? Is it because the wife and the concubine are too jealous of each other and the mother can no longer keep the baby? Or is it because the parents have had too many children to bring him up? Since they had abandoned the baby, why did they write these words that 'this baby will return to his ancestral home and join his family in eighteen years?' I guess there must be some reason behind it. They must have written these words in the hope that someone might take him home and bring him up and, with this line as evidence, they would be able to come to retake him. As I'm now childless, I'll just take care of him and wait and see what will happen eighteen years later."

After he got this boy by the riverside, Huang and his wife had two sons of their own successively. And naturally this was totally out of their expectation. He named the boy Heling and his own sons Hesuan and Yanling respectively. Later, the three boys were sent to an old-style tutorial school. Heling turned out to be an extremely intelligent boy and could memorize a passage with one reading. The two sons of Huang's own were clever too, but were not as good as Heling. In their childhood, the two sons of Huang's own also went to the county school together with Heling to study. Having three sons around him, Huang felt very contented and treated them without the slightest difference.

As Huang had two sons of his own when he was getting old, he was eager to have them married as early as possible so that he could have grandchildren. He had his two own sons married when they reached the age of sixteen or seventeen. Considering the words on baby Heling's clothes, Huang was deeply worried that Heling's own parents might come to retake him one day when he reached the age of eighteen. For this reason,



要归宗，是以独他迟迟未娶。却是黄翁心里过意不去道：“为我长子，怎生反未有室家？”先将四十金与他定了里中易氏之女。那鹤龄也晓得衣带之事，对黄翁道：“儿自幼蒙抚养深恩，已为翁子。但本生父母既约得有期，岂可娶而不告？虽蒙聘下妻室，且待此期已过，父母不来，然后成婚，未为迟也。”黄翁见他讲得有理，只得凭他。

既到了十八年，多悬悬望着，看有甚么动静。一日，有个福建人在街上与人谈星命，访至黄翁之家，求见黄翁。黄翁心里指望三子立刻科名，见是星相家，无不延接。闻得远方来的，疑有异术，遂一面请坐，将着三子年甲，央请推算。谈星的假意推算了一回，指着鹤龄的八字对黄翁道：“此不是翁家之子。他生来不该在父母身边的，必得寄养出外，方可长成。及至长成之后，即要归宗。目下已是其期了。”黄公见他说出真底实话，面色通红道：“先生好胡说！此三子皆我亲子，怎生有寄



Huang had Heling alone remain unmarried.

However, Huang felt rather sorry about having Heling remain single. One day, he said to Heling, “You are my eldest son. How can I bear to see you remain single?” Soon he had Heling engaged with the daughter of the Yi family with forty taels of silver. Heling also knew about the words written on his clothes when he was a baby. So, he said to Huang, “I’m deeply grateful for your bringing me up and I regard you as my own father. But, since my own parents had fixed a time about my returning to them, how can I get married without letting them know about it beforehand? You’ve had me engaged with the daughter of the Yi family and I feel very much indebted to your kindness. But I don’t think it will be too late for me to get married if my own parents fail to appear at the fixed time.” Seeing Heling was on just grounds, Huang had to give his consent.

When the fixed time of eighteen years arrived, both Huang and Heling quietly awaited to see if anything would happen. One day, a fortune-teller from Fujian called at Huang’s house and requested an audience with Huang. At the moment Huang was cherishing high hopes on his three sons and was looking forward to their success in passing the imperial examinations at the provincial level. Huang gave the fortune-teller an extremely cordial reception. Upon learning that the fortune-teller was from a distant land, Huang thought he must be an exceptionally unusual talent in fortune-telling.

When the fortune-teller took his seat, Huang put down the years, the months, the days and the hours of his three sons’ birth respectively and then asked him to tell the fate of each of them. Making a show of reckoning, the fortune-teller pointed at the time of Heling’s birth and said, “This one is not your own son. He is fated to be brought up by someone else instead of his own parents. After he has grown up, he will definitely return to his ancestral home and claim his own parents. Now the time for him to leave you has come.”

Realizing the fortune-teller had gotten to the truth, Huang flushed and rebutted, “What nonsense are you talking about? All these three young men are my own sons. The one you talked about is my eldest son and he

养的话说？况说的更是我长子，承我宗祧，那里还有宗可归处？”谈星的大笑道：“老翁岂忘衣带之语乎？”黄翁不觉失色道：“先生何以知之？”谈星的道：“小生非他人，即是十八年前弃儿之父韩秀才也。恐翁家不承认，故此假扮做谈星之人，来探踪迹。今既在翁家，老翁必不使此子昧了本姓。”黄翁道：“衣带之约果然是真，老汉岂可昧得？况我自有子，便一日身亡，料已不填沟壑，何必赖取人家之子！但此子为何见弃，乞道其详。”韩生道：“说来事涉怪异，不好告诉。”黄翁道：“既有令郎这段缘契，便是自家骨肉。说与老夫知道，也好得知此子本末。”韩生道：“此子之母非今世人，乃二百年前贞女之魂也。此女在宋时，父为闽官，御敌失守，全家死节。其魂不泯与小生配合生儿。因被外人所疑，他说家世湘潭，将来贵处寄养。衣带之字，皆其亲书。今日小生到此，也是此女所命，不





will carry on my ancestral shrine. How could he have another ancestral home to return to?" Laughing heartily, the fortune-teller asked, "How could you forget the words written on his clothes?" Turning white with consternation, Huang asked, "How do you know about it?" The fortune-teller answered, "I'm Han Xiucan, the very father of the baby boy abandoned eighteen years ago. I feared you might deny the fact, so I posed as a fortune-teller so that I could get into your house to fish for information. As this boy is now at your home, I don't suppose you're not going to return him back to me."

Huang said, "It's true there were words on his clothes when I discovered him. How could I possibly conceal the fact! What's more, I have two sons of my own, and I'm fully confident that my body is not to be cast away in the gully after my death. There is no need for me to keep the son of someone else as my own! But why did you abandon this boy? Could you enlighten me on this?" Han answered, "I'm afraid I can't make it clear to you, because it is related to some unusual phenomena." Huang said, "Since your son is destined to be taken care of by me, the relationship between you and me must be no different than that of blood relations. I'll be able to know the origin of this boy if you would be kind enough to tell me about it."

"This boy's mother," said Han, "is not from our present world. She is actually the spirit of a loyal woman who died two hundred years ago. The father of this woman, who used to be an official in Fujian in the Song Dynasty, failed to resist the invading enemy, and the whole family of this woman died of honor. However, the spirit of this woman didn't vanish. She came to me and lived with me for quite some time. Thus we had this boy. But our affair aroused plenty of suspicions among the local inhabitants. She told me her ancestral home was Xiangtan. For this reason, she took this boy to this place and hoped that someone might bring him up. The words on the baby boy's clothes are her own handwriting. Also by order of this woman, I've come to this place to look for my son. And out of my expectation, I've come to the right place. Could I see him?"

Huang said, "What a strange event! Considering your son's unusual origin, he will definitely turn out to be an exceptionally outstanding person.

想果然遇着，敢请一见。”黄翁道：“有如此作怪异事！想令郎出身如此，必当不凡。今令郎与小儿，共是三兄弟，同到长沙应试去了。”韩生道：“小生既远寻到此，就在长沙，也要到彼一面。只求老翁念我天性父子，恩使归宗，便为万幸。”黄翁道：“父子至亲，谊当使君还珠。况是足下冥缘，岂可间隔？但老夫十八年抚养已不必说，只近日下聘之资，也有四十金。子既已归足下，此聘金须得相还。”韩生道：“老翁恩德难报，至于聘金，自宜奉还。容小生见过小儿之后，归与其母计之，必不敢负义也。”

韩生就别了黄翁，径到长沙，访问黄翁三子应试的下处。已问着了，就写一帖，传与黄翁大儿子鹤龄。帖上写道：“十八年前与闻衣带事人韩某。”鹤龄一见衣带说话，感动于心，惊出请见，道：“足下何处人氏？何以知得衣带事体？”韩生看那鹤龄时：

年方弱冠，体不胜衣。清标固禀父形，媿质犹同母貌。

恂恂儒雅，尽道是十八岁书生；邈邈源流，岂知乃二百年鬼子。

韩生看那鹤龄模样，俨然与王玉英相似，情知是他儿子，遂答道：“小郎君可要见写衣带的人否？”鹤龄道：“写衣带之人，



Your son, along with my two sons, has gone to Changsha to take part in the imperial examinations.” Han said, “Since I’ve traveled such a long distance and have arrived at this place, I’ll have to make a trip to Changsha and see him in person. I would very much appreciate it if you could return him to me.” Huang said, “This boy is your own child. Of course I will return him to you. Moreover, he is the son of you and your love from the nether world. How could I have the heart to separate you from each other? But there is one thing I must make clear. It goes without saying that I’ve taken care of him for eighteen years, and there is no need to talk more about this. What I’m going to say is that I spent forty taels of silver on having him betrothed. You can have your own son, but you need to repay me the betrothal money.” Han said, “My gratitude for you is boundless. As regards the betrothal money, I will pay it back to you. Please be patient and allow me to see my son first, and then I’ll talk it over with my son’s mother. You may rest assured I’ll never be the ungrateful sort.”

After bidding farewell to Huang, Han set off for Changsha. Arriving at Changsha, he inquired about the temporary lodging of Huang’s three sons. After he got it, he wrote a note and then managed to give it to Huang’s eldest son Heling. The note read roughly, “I’m Han. I know all about who wrote the words on your clothes eighteen years ago when you were a baby. Hereby I’m seeking an audience with you.” The note touched Heling to the heart. Instantly he came out of his room to meet Han. “Who are you and where are you from? How did you know the person who wrote those words on my clothes?” asked Heling. At the sight of Heling’s appearance, Han was deeply impressed:

Thought in the initial period of his manhood, he appears to be too young to fit his clothes. His fine and handsome features take after his father, while his delicateness and pretty looks take after his mother. Respectful and elegant in manners, he is an eighteen-year-old scholar. With a remote origin, he is the son of a two-hundred-year-old woman ghost.

At the sight of Heling, Han knew he was his son, for he realized Heling did take after Wang Yuying. “Do you really want to see the person who wrote those words on your clothes, young man?” asked Han. Heling replied, “The one who wrote those words on my clothes must be either



非吾父，即吾母。原约在今年，今足下知其人，必是有的信。望乞见教。”韩生道：“写衣带之人，即吾妻王玉英也。若要相见，先须认得我。”鹤龄见说，知是其父，大哭，抱住道：“果是吾父！如何舍得弃了儿子一十八年？”韩生道：“汝母非凡女，乃二百年鬼仙，与我配合生儿。因乳养不便，要寄托人间。汝母原籍湘潭，故将至此地。我实福建秀才，与汝母姻缘也在福建。今汝若不忘本生父母，须别了此间养父，还归福建为是。”鹤龄道：“吾母如今在那里？儿也要相会。”韩生道：“汝母倏去倏来，本无定所。若要相会，也须到我闽中。”鹤龄至性所在，不胜感动。

两弟鹤算、延龄在旁边听见说着要他归福建说话，少年心性，不觉大怒起来，道：“那里来这野汉，造此不根之谈，来诱哄人家子弟，说着不达道理的说话！好耿耿一个哥哥，却教他到福建去，有这样胡说的？”那家人每见说，也多嗔怪起来，对鹤龄道：“大官人不要听这个游方人，他每专打听着人家事体，来撰造是非，哄诱人的。”不管三七二十一，扯的扯，推的推，要搯他出去。韩生道：“不必啰唆，我已湘潭见过了你老主翁，他只要完得聘金四十两，便可赎回，还只是我的儿子。



my father or my mother. According to the words on my clothes, I'm supposed to return to my own parents this year. Your note shows you know everything behind this matter. I'd like you to enlighten me on this." "The one who wrote those words on your clothes is my wife Wang Yuying," said Han. "If you want to see her, you'll have to acknowledge me as your father."

Upon hearing these words, Heling knew that the man in front of him was his own father. Bursting into tears, he held Han in his arms and said, "My father! How could you have the heart to leave me behind and let me stay in a strange land for eighteen years?" Han answered, "Your mother is no ordinary woman. She is a spirit of two hundred years old. Because she had difficulties in bringing you up, she left you in the care of someone else. Xiangtan is your mother's ancestral home, so she took you to Xiangtan to be brought up. I'm a *xiucaï* from Fujian and it is also in Fujian that your mother and I lived together for quite some time. If your own parents are still in your mind, you'll have to leave your adoptive father and return to Fujian with me." Heling said, "Where is my mother now? I want to see her." Han said, "Your mother comes and goes swiftly and has no permanent residence in this world. If you want to see her, you'll have to go to Fujian with me." As was dictated by his deepest instinctive love of his parents, Heling was tremendously moved.

Upon hearing that Han was about to take their brother to Fujian, Heling's younger brothers Hesuan and Yanling, young and hot-tempered, became angry and shouted at Han, "How dare you make up such an absurd story to fool my brother! Who are you and where are you from? How dare you talk such nonsense! We won't let you take my good brother to Fujian! Away with your rubbish!" The three brothers' followers were also infuriated when they learned about what was going on. Turning to Heling, they also told him not to believe what Han had said. Casting all caution to the winds, they started to push and shove Han out. Han protested, saying, "Don't make trouble! I've already seen your father in Xiangtan. He's promised me that Heling will still be my son and I can take Heling away with me only if I repay your father the betrothal money of forty taels of silver to buy him back. How can you act so recklessly?" But how would

你们如何胡说！”众人那里听他，只是推他出去为净。鹤龄心下不安，再三恋恋，众人也不顾他。两弟狠狠道：“我兄无主意，如何与这些闲棍讲话？饶他一顿打，便是人情了。”鹤龄道：“衣带之语，必非虚语，此实吾父来寻盟。他说道曾在湘潭见过爹爹来，回去到家里必知端的。”鹤算、延龄两人与家人只是不信，管住了下处门首，再不放他进去与鹤龄相见了。

韩生自思：“儿子虽得见过，黄家婚聘之物理所当还，今没个处法还得他，空手在此一年也无益，莫要想得儿子归去，不如且回家去，再做计较。”心里主意未定，到了晚间，把竹筴击将起来，王玉英即至。韩生因说着已见儿子，黄家要偿取聘金方得赎回的话。玉英道：“聘金该还，此间未有处法，不如且回闽中，别图机会。易家亲事，亦是前缘，待处了聘金，再到此地完成其事，未为晚也。”韩生因此决意回闽。一路浮湘涉湖，但是波浪险阻，玉英便到舟中护卫。至于盘缠缺乏，也是玉英暗地资助，得以到家。



they listen to Han!

However, Heling felt very uneasy and appeared to be unwilling to part with his father. Regardless of Heling's feelings, Hesuan and Yanling spoke to Heling ruthlessly, "You do not know your own mind. Why get yourself involved with such a country bumpkin? We'll be showing mercy on him if we let him go without giving him a beating." Heling explained, "The words written on my clothes eighteen years ago are in no way mere fabrications. This man is indeed my father and he has come a long way to look for me. Since he said he had seen our father in Xiangtan, we'll be able to know the ins and outs of the whole matter after we get back home." In spite of all this, Hesuan and Yanling and their followers all turned a deaf ear to Heling's explanation. Moreover, they told the doorkeepers not to let Han in to see Heling again.

Han thought to himself, "I feel so good I've seen my son, and it's only natural that I should repay the betrothal money to Huang. But I do not have this sum of money on me at this moment. It will be of no use even if I stay at this place for a whole year, for I won't be able to take my son back to Fujian without paying back Huang the betrothal money. Would it be better for me to go back home and mull over what would be the best way to solve the problem?" Han couldn't decide what to do.

At night Han clapped the bamboo clappers. Wang Yuying showed up in a twinkling. Han told her that he had seen their son and Huang would not agree to return their son until he paid back the betrothal money. "Of course we should repay Huang the betrothal money," said Wang. "But you won't be able to get this sum of money at this place. You'd better go back to Fujian to see what can be done about it. Our son is predestined to marry the daughter of the Yi family. After you get the sum of forty taels of silver, you may return to this place again to complete our son's marriage." Having heard Wang's words, Han decided to go back to Fujian. Traveling over land and water, he made the trip to Fujian. Each time Han met with a mishap on his journey, Wang Yuying would always appear miraculously and come to his rescue. Wang also gave Han the traveling expenses he needed for the trip.

All the local inhabitants were greatly surprised to see Han coming



到家之日，里邻惊骇，道是韩生向来遇妖，许久不见，是被妖魅拐到那里去，必然丧身在外，不得归来了；今见好好还家，以为大奇。平日往来的，多来探望。韩生因为众人疑心坏了他，见来问的，索性一一把实话从头至尾，备述与人，一些不瞒。众人见他不死，又果有儿子在湘潭，方信他说话是实，反共说他遇了仙缘，多来慕羡他。不认得的，尽想一识其面。有问韩生为何不领了儿子归来，他把聘金未曾还得，湘潭养父之家不肯的话说了。有好事的，多愿相助，不多几时，凑上了二十馀金，尚少一半。夜间击筭，与王玉英商量。玉英道：“既有了一半，你只管起身前去，途中有凑那一半之处。”

韩生随即动身。到了半路，在江边一所古庙边经过。玉英忽来对韩生道：“此庙中神厨里坐着，可得二十金，足还聘金了。”韩生依言，泊船登岸。走入庙里看时，只见：

庙门颓败，神路荒凉。执榼的小鬼无头，拿簿的判官落帽。庭中多兽迹，狐狸在此宵藏；地上少人踪，魍魉投来夜宿。存有千年香火样，何曾一陌纸钱飘。

韩生到神厨边，揭开帐幔来看，灰尘堆来有寸多厚。心里道：



back, for they thought he must have been carried off by some evil spirits to some remote place and must have died in a strange land long before. Now seeing that Han had returned safe and sound, everyone was astonished. Many of his friends came to his home to visit him. To dispel everyone's suspicions about him, Han, holding nothing back, told them in detail what had happened to him from the beginning to the end. Seeing that Han was back home alive and learning that he had met his son in Xiangtan, everyone was convinced by what he said and started to admire him, saying that Han must have met an immortal. Those who did not know him also wished to see him. Some asked him why he didn't take his son back to Fujian. Han told them that his son's adoptive father wouldn't let Heling return to his ancestral home until the betrothal money was repaid. Hearing this, many offered to help Han with some money. Soon Han received more than twenty taels of silver, but there was still a shortfall of half of the total amount of the betrothal money. At night he clapped the bamboo clappers. When Wang arrived, Han consulted her about the matter. Wang said, "Since you've got half of the total amount of the money, you might as well set out for Xiangtan. You will get the other half on your way there."

Han set out for Xiangtan over water. While he was halfway passing by an old temple, Wang Yuying suddenly appeared before him and said, "Get into this temple and hide yourself in the built-in cabinet. You'll get twenty taels of silver. Then you'll have enough for the betrothal money." As was instructed, Han left the boat and disembarked.

Han found the temple to be a dilapidated one, the door of which was extremely worn out. No traces of human beings were discernible. The little devil holding a whip appeared to be headless; while the judge of the nether world with a notebook in the hand was hatless. Footmarks of wild animals could be seen everywhere in the courtyard. Foxes and ghosts must have often frequented this temple. How could it be possible for one to get a single coin from this age-old temple?

Moving close to the built-in cabinet, Han drew aside the heavy curtain and found that the dust was as thick as several inches. "How can I get silver from such a place?" Han wondered. However, he thought better of



“此处那里来的银子？”然想着玉英之言，未曾有差，且依他说话，爬上去蹲在厨里。

喘息未定，只见一个人慌慌忙忙走将进来，将手在案前香炉里乱塞。塞罢，对着神道声喏道：“望菩萨遮盖遮盖，所罚之咒，不要作准。”又见一个人在外边嚷进来道：“你欺心偷过了二十两银子，打点混赖？我与你此间神道面前罚个咒。罚得咒出，便不是你。”先来那个人便对着神道口里念诵道：“我若偷了银子，如何如何。”后来这个人见他赌得咒出，遂放下脸子道：“果是与你无干，不知在那里错去了。”先来那个人把身子抖一抖，两袖洒一洒，道：“你看我身边须没藏处。”两个唧唧啾啾，一路说着外边去了。韩生不见人来了，在神厨里走将出来，摸一摸香炉，看适间藏的是甚么东西。摸出一个大纸包来，打开看时，是一包成锭的银子，约有二十馀两。韩生道：“惭愧！眼见得这先入来的瞒起同伴的银子，藏在这里，等赌过咒、搜不出时，慢慢来取用。岂知己先为鬼神所知，归我手也。”欲待不取，总来是不义之财；欲待还那失主，又明显出这个人的偷窃来了。不如依着玉英之言，且将去做赎子之本，有何不可？当下取了，出庙下船。船里从容一秤，果有二十两重，分毫不少。



it when he remembered Wang Yuying's instructions, for none of her predictions had proved to be wrong. As was told by Wang, Han got into the built-in cabinet and squatted on his heels.

Hardly had Han calmed down when a man rushed into the temple in a hurry. The man quickly tucked something into the incense burner on the table. This being done, the man spoke towards the image of Buddha, "Buddha bless me! Hope what I swear will not count!" No sooner had this man finished these words than another man hurried in and shouted at the top of his voice, "You stole twenty taels of silver from me. Are you going to deny it? If you have the guts to swear before the image of Buddha that you didn't steal my silver, I'll believe you." Then the man who arrived first spoke facing the image of Buddha, "If I have stolen the silver, I would be so and so." Upon hearing the man's curse, the other man turned friendly and said, "Now I know you have nothing to do with my lost money. I guess my memory is failing me." Shaking his clothes and swinging his sleeves, the man who arrived first said, "You see, I have nowhere to hide it." As they talked thus, the two men went out of the temple.

When the two men were out of sight, Han came out of the built-in cabinet and started to fumble about in the incense burner to see what the man had hidden in it. He found it was a big bundle wrapped up with paper. Han opened it and found plenty of silver ingots in the bundle, which were about twenty taels. "For shame!" said Han. "Obviously the man who arrived first had covered up the other's silver. He just hid it at this place. He must be planning to come back for the silver some time later after he took the oath and the other man failed to spot it at this place. He never expected that his mind had already been fully read by the deities, and now this silver had fallen into my hands." Considering that the silver was dishonest gains, he was not willing to take it. But on second thought, he felt certain it would disclose the theft of the man if he returned the money to its original owner. Why not follow Wang Yuying's instruction and take the money? So thinking, he took it and left the temple. As he got onto the boat, he weighed it with the steelyard. Pleasantly surprised, he found it to be exactly twenty taels.



韩生大喜，到了湘潭，径将四十金来送还黄翁聘礼，求赎鹤龄。黄翁道：“婚盟已定，男女俱已及时。老夫欲将此项，与令郎完了姻亲，此后再议归闽。唯足下乔梓自做主张，则老夫事体也完了。”韩生道：“此皆老翁玉成美意，敢不听命？”黄翁着媒人与易家说知此事，易家不肯起来道：“我家初时，只许嫁黄公之子，门当户对，又同里为婚，彼此俱便。今闻此子原籍福建，一时配合了，他日要离了归乡，相隔着四五千里，这怎使得？必须讲过，只在黄家不去的，其事方谐。”媒人来对黄翁说了。黄翁巴不得他不去的，将此语一一告诉韩生道：“非关老夫要留此子，乃亲家之意如此。况令郎名在楚籍，婚在楚地，还闽之说，必是不妥。为之奈何？”韩生也自想有些行不通，再击竹筴与玉英商量。玉英道：“一向说易家亲事是前缘，既已根绊在此，怎肯放去？况妾本籍湘中，就等儿子做了此间女婿，成立在此也好。郎君只要父子相认，何必归闽？”韩生道：“闽是吾乡，我母还在，若不归闽，要此儿子何用？”玉英道：“事数到此，不繇君算。若执意归闽，儿子婚姻便不



After arriving at Xiangtan, Han gave Huang forty taels of silver. Huang said, "Heling and Yi have been engaged to be married and they both have reached the legal age for marriage. I'd like to accomplish their wedding with this sum of money before you take him to Fujian. After the marriage you and your son may do whatever you like on your own. By then my duty will be fully carried out." Han said, "I'm deeply obliged to your kindness in completing Heling's marriage. How could I refuse your proposal?"

Huang sent the matchmaker to the Yi family to inform them that Heling would leave for Fujian with his own father after the wedding. Upon hearing this, the Yi family became unhappy. "Originally we had our daughter betrothed to the son of Huang because of our well-matched social status and our daughter and Heling can live in the same place after their marriage. What shall our daughter do if Heling leaves her and goes back to his ancestral home in Fujian after the wedding. We'd like to make it clear beforehand that we won't have our daughter marry him unless he agrees to stay at Huang's home after the wedding." The matchmaker returned to Huang and told him what the Yi family had said. Actually this was exactly what Huang had been wishing for. Huang then said to Han, "I do not care much about Heling's leaving for Fujian. But the in-laws wished him to stay. Since Heling has grown up at Xiangtan and is about to get married at Xiangtan, it seems inappropriate for him to return to Fujian after their marriage. What should be done about this matter?"

Again Han clapped the bamboo clappers, hoping to consult Wang Yuying. Wang said, "Last time I told you our son is predestined to marry the girl from the Yi family. Now that they've been engaged, better let Heling stay at Xiangtan. You know Xiangtan is my ancestral home. It wouldn't be a bad thing if we have him stay here and be a son-in-law in my ancestral home. So long as he has recognized you as his father, why must you take him back to Fujian?" Han replied, "Fujian is my ancestral home. Moreover, my mother is still alive. What's the use of acknowledging him as my son if I don't take him to my ancestral home?" Wang said, "This is Heling's fate. You can't change the natural course of the event. If you insist on taking him back to your ancestral home, our son's marriage



可成。郎君将此儿归闽中，又在何处另结良缘？不如且从黄、易两家之言，成了亲事。他日儿子自有分晓也。”韩生只得把此意回覆了黄翁，一凭黄翁主张。黄翁先叫鹤龄认了父亲，就收拾书房，与韩生歇下了。然后将此四十两银子，支分作花烛之费，到易家道了日子。易家见说不回福建了，无不依从。

成亲之后，鹤龄对父韩生说，要见母亲一面。韩生说与玉英，玉英道：“是我自家的儿子，正要见他。但此间生人多，非我所宜。可对儿子说，人静后房中悄悄击笑，我当见他夫妇两人一面。”韩生对鹤龄说知，就把竹笺，密付与他。鹤龄领着去了。

等到黄昏，鹤龄击笑，只见一个澹妆女子，在空中下来。鹤龄夫妻知是尊嫜，双双跪下。玉英抚摹一番道：“好一对儿子媳妇！我为你一点骨血，精缘所牵，二百年贞静之性，不得安闲。今幸已成房立户，我愿已完矣。”鹤龄道：“儿子颇读诗书，曾见古今事迹。如我母数百年精魂，犹然游戏人间，生子成立，诚为希有之事。不知母亲何术致此，望乞见教。”玉英



with the girl of the Yi family will vanish like soap bubbles. How can you find him such a good match after you take him to Fujian? Better accept the Huangs' and the Yis' proposals and accomplish the wedding at Xiangtan. You'll know the final outcome of our son some day in the future." Thus decided, Han informed Huang of his agreement of allowing Heling to stay at Xiangtan after the marriage.

Then, bringing Heling over to Han, Huang had Heling acknowledge Han as his father. After this, Huang tidied up the study and put Han up. Huang spent the forty taels of silver on arranging the wedding. When everything was ready, Huang arrived at the Yis' house and decided on the day for the marriage. After learning Heling had given up the idea of returning to Fujian, the Yi family agreed with pleasure on everything Huang proposed.

After the wedding, Heling told Han that he wanted to see his own mother. Han told Wang Yuying of Heling's wish. Wang said, "Heling is our son, and I'm thinking of seeing him too. But, as there are too many strangers around this place at daytime, I find it improper for me to see him right now. Just tell him to clap the bamboo clappers in the secret when everybody becomes quiet. Then I'll come to see him and his wife." Han told Heling of Wang's instructions and then gave him the pair of clappers. Heling took the pair of clappers and left his father.

When evening came, Heling clapped the bamboo clappers. A lady, dressed up quietly and elegantly, descended from the air. Knowing this lady was Heling's mother, Heling and his wife both threw themselves on their knees in front of her. After stroking the young couple for some time, the lady said, "My son, my daughter-in-law, what a perfect match! For two hundred years, I haven't had a few moments of peace in my mind because of you. Now that you've got married and have started your own career, my wish has been fully accomplished."

Heling said, "I read a lot and know many things from the ancient times up to the present. But it is really rare and amazing that a spirit of several hundred years old like you, my mother, can still rove around in this world and give birth to a child! I wonder what a miraculous power you've gotten to achieve it. Could you enlighten me on this?" "Refusing to lose my



道：“我以贞烈而死，后土录为鬼仙，许我得生一子，延其血脉。汝父有掩骸之仁，阴德可纪，故我就与配合，生汝以报其恩。此皆生前之注定也。”鹤龄道：“母亲既然灵通如此，何不即留迹人间，使儿媳辈得以朝夕奉养？”玉英道：“我与汝父有缘，故得数见于世，然非阴道所宜。今日特为要见吾儿与媳妇一面，故此暂来。此后也不再来了。直待归闽之时，石尤岭下再当一见。我儿前程远大，勉之勉之！”说罢，腾空而去。鹤龄夫妇恍恍自失了半日，才得定性。事虽怪异，想着母亲之言句句有头有尾，鹤龄自叹道：“读尽稗官野史，今日若非身为之子，随你传闻，岂肯即信也？”次日与黄翁及两弟说了，俱各惊骇。

鹤龄随将竹笊交还韩生，备说母亲夜来之言。韩生道：“今汝托义父恩庇，成家立业，俱在于此。归闽之期，知在何时？”



chastity,” said Wang, “I died for honor. For this reason, the God of Earth made me the Ghost Fairy and promised to give me a son in the human world to carry on my family name. To repay your father’s great kindness in burying my bones, I lived with him and gave birth to you. And all this has been predestined in our previous lives.”

Heling asked, “Since you’re a fairy with exceptionally outstanding power, why not stay in this world so that my wife and I can keep you company and serve you every day?” Wang answered, “My relationship with your father is preordained by fate. Therefore, your father and I can live together in this world for quite some time. However, the way of the nether world will not permit me to stay with your father forever. Today I’m especially here to see you, my son and daughter-in-law. Later, I’m afraid it won’t be easy for me to have the chance to come to see you. By the time you are back in Fujian, I’ll manage to see you for the last time at Shiyouling Hills. My son, you’ll have a bright future. It is hoped that you will do your best!” Finishing these words, Wang Yuying flew up and vanished in the air.

Heling and his wife, feeling lost as if they were at sea, didn’t regain their consciousness until after quite some time. Though Heling considered the matter rather strange, he felt what his mother had told him was extremely methodical, and also there were both a beginning and an end in everything she talked about. Deeply touched at the bottom of his heart, Heling marveled, “I’ve read countless books of anecdotes. However, had I not been the son of Wang Yuying, I wouldn’t have believed a tiny bit of it, no matter how people talk about it.

On the next day, Heling told Huang and his two younger brothers about his encounter with his mother Wang Yuying, and everyone was stupefied with terror and surprise.

When he saw Han and returned him the bamboo clappers, Heling told his father in detail about his meeting with his mother the previous night. Han said, “Thanks to the great favors your adoptive father has showered on you, you’ve now grown up and got married. But it is still unknown that when you’ll be able to return to Fujian. Well, just forget about it and leave it for later consideration. Now I have to leave for home and see



只好再过几时，我自回去看婆婆罢了。”鹤龄道：“父亲不必心焦。秋试在即，且待儿子应试过了，再商量就是。”从此韩生且只在黄家住下。

鹤龄与两弟俱应过秋试，鹤龄与鹤算一同报捷，黄翁、韩生尽皆欢喜。鹤龄要与鹤算同去会试，韩生住湘潭无益，思量暂回闽中。黄翁赠与盘费，鹤龄与易氏，各出所有送行。韩生仍到家来，把上项事一一对母亲说知。韩母见说孙儿娶妇成立，巴不得要看一看，只恨不得到眼前。此时连媳妇是个鬼也不说了。

次年，鹤龄、鹤算春榜连捷。鹤龄给假省亲，鹤算选授福州府闽县知县，一同回到湘潭。鹤算接了黄翁，全家赴任。鹤龄也乘此便，带了妻易氏，附舟到闽访亲，登堂拜见祖母，喜



your grandmother.” Heling said, “Take your time, Father. The imperial civil examinations held at the provincial capital in the autumn is drawing near. Let’s discuss about your return home later after I have sat for the examinations.” Thus decided, Han stayed at Huang’s house.

Heling and his two younger brothers all took part in the imperial civil examinations held at the provincial capital in the autumn and the outcome turned out to be that both Heling and Hesuan passed the examinations successfully and were awarded the title of juren. Huang and Han were filled with joy at the good news. As Heling and Hesuan were about to take part in the general examinations held once every three years in the capital, Han considered it unnecessary for him to continue to remain in Xiangtan. Therefore, he became lost in thoughts of returning to Fujian. Huang gave Han some money needed for the journey. Heling and his wife also gave Han some traveling expenses and saw him off.

Back home in Fujian, Han came to his mother and made a full account of his experiences in Xiangtan and told her how her grandson Heling was doing. Upon hearing that Heling had got married, Han’s mother was only too anxious to have a look at her grandson. Unfortunately Heling didn’t come back home. She was beside herself with so much joy that she even forgot the fact her daughter-in-law was but a spirit of two hundred years old.

The next spring came the report of Heling and Hesuan’s success in passing the general examinations held at the capital in the previous autumn. Heling was granted a leave by the emperor to return to Fujian to see his family and Hesuan was commissioned to the post of County Magistrate of Minxian County, Fuzhou Prefecture, Fujian. Then Heling and Hesuan left the capital in each other’s company and made their way home toward Xiangtan.

Taking his father Huang with him, Hesuan set off for Minxian County, Fuzhou Prefecture, to take office. Meanwhile, making use of this opportunity, Heling and his wife Yi also joined them on the trip so as to return to Fujian and visit his ancestral home. An atmosphere of rejoicing and festivity prevailed in the hall of Han’s house when Heling paid his respects to his grandmother.

庆非常。韩生对儿子道：“我馆在长乐石尤岭，乃与汝母相遇之所，连汝母骨骸也在那边。今可一同到彼，汝母必来相见。前日所约，原自如此。”遂合家同到岭下。方得驻足馆中，不须击筭，玉英已来。拜韩母道：“今孙儿媳妇多在婆婆面前，况孙儿已得成名，妾所以报郎君者已尽。妾幽阴之质，不宜久在阳世周旋，只因夙缘，故得如此。今合门完聚，妾事已了，从此当静修玄理，不复再入尘寰矣。”韩生道：“往还多年，情非朝夕。即为儿子一事，费过多少精神！今甫得到家，正可安享子媳之奉，如何又说要别的话来？”鹤龄夫妇涕泣请留。玉英道：“冥数如此，非人力所强。若非数定，几曾见有二百年之精魂，还能同人道生子，又在世间往还二十多年的事？你每亦当以数自遣，不必作人间离别之态也。”言毕，翩然而逝。鹤龄痛哭失声，韩母与易氏各各垂泪，惟有韩生不十分在心上。





Han said to his son, "My private school is close to Shiyouling Hills. It was at this place that I met your mother. Your mother's remains were somewhere near this place too. Now we can go there for a look. Your mother is sure to come and see us. Remember the appointment she made the other day? She was actually referring to this special occasion."

Hence, the whole family arrived at Shiyouling Hills. No sooner had they entered the school than Wang Yuying appeared before their eyes, needless to clap the bamboo clappers. Prostrating herself before Han's mother, Wang said, "Now your grandson and granddaughter-in-law have all come to see you. What's more, your grandson has made a name for himself and is starting a successful career. Up to now I've done what I'm obliged to to repay your son Han's great kindness shown on me. As I'm just a spirit from the nether world, I have lots of difficulties in staying for long and moving around in this world. However, because I had a special relationship with Han, which had been predestined in our former existences, I had to come and go in my own way. Today has come the reunion of your whole family and my business has come to an end. From now on, I'll dedicate myself to the study of the mysteries of the universe and will no longer come to this world."

Han said, "For so many years, we've been living in perfect harmony and have cherished a profound attachment for each other. How much trouble you've taken on our son's behalf! Now our son has returned home with your assistance and it's time for you to enjoy a happy life in the care of your son and daughter-in-law. Why talk about departure?" Heling and his wife, with tears in their eyes, also urged her to stay. Wang said, "Fate is beyond the power of human beings. Had it not been fate, how could you have witnessed a spirit of two hundred years old who has given birth to a child and has lived in this world for over twenty years? It is also hoped that you divert yourselves with the arrangements of fate. No need to have worldly sorrows of parting." Finishing these words, Wang Yuying disappeared gracefully. Heling cried himself hoarse with sadness. Han's mother and Heling's wife Yi could not refrain from tears too. On the contrary, Han alone appeared not to care much about it. Han had become accustomed to Wang's coming and going. He took it for granted that she

他是惯了的，道夜静击筊，原自可会。岂知此后随你击筊，也不来了。守到七夕常期，竟自杳然。韩生方忽忽如有所失，一如断弦丧偶之情。思他平时相与时节，长篇短咏，落笔数千言，清新有致，皆如前三首绝句之类。传出与人，颇为众口所诵。韩生取其所作成集，计有十卷，因曾赋《万鸟鸣春》四律，韩生即名其集为《万鸟鸣春》，流布于世。

韩生后来去世，鹤龄即合葬之石尤岭下。鹤龄改复韩姓，别号黄石，以示不忘黄家及石尤岭之意。三年丧毕，仍与易氏同归湘潭。至今闽中盛传其事。

二百年前一鬼魂，犹能生子在乾坤。

遗骸掩处阴功重，始信骷髅解报恩。



would surely come back to him if he was to clap the bamboo clappers when night fell. Out of his expectations, Wang Yuying never returned to him no matter how hard he clapped the bamboo clappers. Han waited till the seventh day of the seventh month, the time they used to meet, but still Wang Yuying didn't show up. Feeling extremely distracted, Han became overwhelmed with a profound sadness, as if he had lost his wife.

Later, Han was often immersed in reveries about the happy times when he was with Wang Yuying, during which Wang penned up plenty of poems, both refreshing and tasteful. After he made her poems known to the public, everyone was filled with admiration and respect for her superb literary talent. As it later turned out, her poetic writings were always on the lips of many people. Han compiled her poems into a collection of ten volumes. Among this collection were four four-line poems, with seven characters in each line, entitled *Ten Thousand Birds Sing the Praises of Spring*. Therefore, he named this collection of her poems *Ten Thousand Birds Sing the Praises of Spring*, and it has spread far and wide among later generations.

After Han's death, Heling buried his father together with Wang Yuying at the foot of Shiyouling Hills. Heling changed his family name into Han and styled himself Huangshi, implying that he would never forget his adoptive father Huang and Shiyouling. After he had observed mourning for his deceased father for three years, he returned to Xiangtan with his wife Yi. This tale is still on everyone's lips in Fujian even today.

A spirit two hundred years old as she is,
She can still give birth to a son in this world.
A meritorious deed it truly is to bury the remains of the dead.
Without reading this tale, who would believe the bones of the
dead can repay a debt of kindness?

卷 三 十 一

行孝子到底不简尸 殉节妇留待双出柩

诗云：

削骨蒸肌岂忍言，世人借口欲伸冤。

典刑未正先残酷，法吏当知善用权。

话说戮尸弃骨，古之极刑。今法被人殴死者，必要简尸。简得致命伤痕，方准抵偿，问入死罪，可无冤枉，本为良法。自古道：“法立弊生。”只因有此一简，便有许多奸巧做出来。那把人命图赖人的，不到得就要这个人偿命，只此一简，已够奈何着他了。你道为何？官府一准简尸，地方上搭厂的就要搭厂钱，跟官、门皂、轿夫、吹手多要酒饭钱，作作人要开手钱、





Tale 31

A Filial Son Says No to a Postmortem Examination Request upon His Deceased Father A Faithful Wife Vows to Kill Herself and Go to Her Grave Together with Her Deceased Husband

A poem reads thus:

How should one be hardhearted enough to mention
postmortem examination?

People call for postmortem examinations on the pretext
of appealing for vindication.

The dead sustain atrocities of being dissected
before justice is done.

It is advisable court officials consider the matter carefully
before making such a decision.

In ancient times, it was a capital punishment to dissect the dead and throw away the bones. However, according to our present legal provisions, those who are beaten to death have to receive postmortem examinations. And only when fatal injuries are precisely confirmed can the defendant be sentenced to death. By doing so, justice will be ensured. Basically, this is accepted by all as positive. As an old saying goes, "Advantages are always accompanied by disadvantages." Treacherous and sly people will always seize the opportunity to create lots of trouble each time a postmortem examination is called for. One who disavows the offence of assault and battery will have to sustain tremendous losses in one way or another from the postmortem examination, even though he might not be punished to give his life. Do you know why?

Once the *yamen* approves the postmortem request, local tent-builders will demand payments for putting up the tent, and officials in charge of the examination, runners, sedan carriers and trumpeters will demand



洗手钱，至于官面前桌上要烧香钱、朱墨钱、笔砚钱，毡条坐褥俱被告人所备，还有不肖佐贰要摆案酒，要折盘盏，各项名色甚多，不可尽述。就简得雪白无伤，这人家已去了七八了；就问得原告招诬，何益于事？所以奸徒与人有仇，便思将人命为奇货。官府动笔判个“简”字，何等容易，道人命事应得的，岂知有此等害人不小的事？除非真正人命，果有重伤简得出来，正人罪名，方是正条。然刮骨蒸尸，千零百碎，与死的人计较，也是不忍见的。律上所以有“不愿者听”及“许尸亲告递免简”之例，正是圣主曲体人情处。岂知世上惨刻的官，要见自己风力，或是私心嗔恨被告，不肯听尸亲免简，定要劣擻做去，以致开久殓之棺，掘久埋之骨，随你伤人子之心，堕傍观之泪，他只是硬着肚肠不管。原告不执命，就坐他受贿；亲友劝息，就诬他私和。一味蛮刑，打成狱案，自道是与死者伸冤，不知死者惨酷已极了。这多是绝子绝孙的勾当。



money for food and wine, and coroners will demand allowances for the postmortem operation. The defendant has to pay for the joss sticks, ink and writing brushes on the table of the chief official. Also the defendant has to pay for the felt rug cushions and padded mattresses. In addition, deputy officials will demand silver for a banquet. Such kinds of expenses are too numerous to be mentioned here in detail. Though coroners may fail to detect injuries, the defendant will have to sustain incalculable losses. The defendant may accuse the plaintiff of bringing false charges against him, but what good will it do to the defendant?

Therefore, perfidious officials who have grudges against people always regard the dead as rare commodities. How easy it is for the *yamen* officials to make a postmortem decision! They will say it's a case involving human life, and they are just doing what they should do. However, they never expect such aforementioned inhuman acts will happen. So, postmortem examinations won't be perfectly justifiable unless true fatal injuries are detected to testify to the crime of the defendant. Nevertheless, it is really inhuman to dissect the dead.

For this reason, there are clauses such as authorities must comply if they meet objections from the parties concerned, and the postmortem examination can be excused if the bereaved family hand in an application against it. But cruel officials who are fond of making spectacles of themselves or who have grudges against the defendant, instead of listening to the request of the relatives of the deceased, always tough their hearts to open long-buried coffins and unearth long-buried bones, totally regardless of others' feelings. If the plaintiff does not ascertain criminal responsibility of the killer, black-hearted officials will accuse him of having taken briberies; relatives and friends will be condemned guilty of settling a case involving a human life in private if they mediate between the two parties. Thus, both the plaintiff and the relatives and friends of the deceased will be put to torture or they might even be imprisoned. *Yamen* officials always think they are doing so because they want to do justice to the deceased. But it never comes to their mind what atrocities they will commit. Indeed, all these acts are inhuman.

Once there lived a man named Chen Fusheng in the Min region



闽中有一人，名曰陈福生，与富人洪大寿家佣工，偶因口语不逊，被洪大寿痛打一顿。那福生才吃得饭过，气郁在胸，得了中懣之症，看看待死。临死对妻子道：“我被洪家长痛打，致恨而死。但他是富人，料搯他不倒，莫要听了人教唆，赖他人命，致将我尸首简验，粉骨碎身。只略与他说说，他怕人命缠累，必然周给后事，供养得你每终身，便是便益了。”妻子听言，死后果去见那家长，但道：“因被责罚之后，得病不痊，今已身死。惟家长可怜孤寡，做个主张。”洪大寿见因打致死，心里虑怯的，见他说得揣己，巴不得他没有说话，给与银两，厚加殡殓，又许了时常周济他母子。已此无说了。

陈福生有个族人陈三，混名陈喇虎，是个不本分、好有事的。见洪大寿是有想头的人家，况福生被打而死，不为无因，就来撺掇陈福生的妻子，教他告状执命。妻子道：“福生的死，



(present-day Fujian Province). Chen Fusheng worked as a hired laborer at Hong Dashou's family. The Hong family was a rich one. One day, Hong gave Chen a good beating, because Chen made some impertinent remarks towards him. Soon after dinner, Chen felt an obstruction of the circulation of vital energy and was extremely depressed. Getting choked with resentment, he appeared to be breathing his last. As he lay dying, he told his wife, "I sustained a fatal injury from Hong's beating. I'm going to die with a deep grievance in my heart. But Hong is rich and powerful. I think it will be very difficult for us to redress the injustice he has done to me. Therefore, it is advisable not to listen to others' instigations about the matter. Don't bring him to court and make him give his life for my death. Otherwise, the court will make a postmortem examination of my body, making me smashed to pieces and my bones crushed to pulp. Just talk with him about the matter roughly. He must be afraid of getting involved in a life. So, he is sure to offer some money for my funeral and support you financially for the rest of your life. That would be the best we could hope for."

As was instructed by her husband, Chen's wife called at the Hong's after Chen's death and said, "My husband failed to recover from the punishment by beating and now he is dead. I would be extremely grateful if you could have mercy on me and give me some help." Upon hearing the sudden death of Chen, Hong felt quite uneasy at heart. Realizing she was not trying to get him into trouble, he was only too anxious to have her mouth shut about the matter and settle it in private. So he gave her some silver and told her to give her husband a decent funeral. In addition, he promised that he would help her and her son in the time to come. And that's all about it.

Chen Fusheng had a clansman by the name of Chen San, nicknamed Chen Lahu. Being a man who never kept his place, Chen Lahu loved to poke his nose into others' affairs. Considering that Hong Dashou was a rich man and Chen Fusheng was beaten to death by him, Chen Lahu wanted to pick up some crumbs from Hong. So he urged Chen Fusheng's wife to bring an action against Hong. But Chen Fusheng's wife said, "It is true Fusheng was bullied by Hong and became sick with depression,



固然受了财主些气，也是年该命限。况且死后他一味好意，殡殓有礼，我们翻脸子不转，只自家认了晦气罢。”喇虎道：“你每不知事体！这出银殡殓，正好做告状张本。这样富家，一条人命，好歹也起发他几百两生意，如何便是这样住了？”妻子道：“贫莫与富斗。打起官司来，我们先要银子下本钱，那里去讨？不如做个好人住手。他财主每或者还有不亏我处。”陈喇虎见说他不动，自到洪家去吓诈道：“我是陈福生族长。福生被你家打死了，你家私买下了他妻子，便打点把一场人命糊涂了？你们须要我口净，也得大家吃块肉儿。不然，明有王法，不到得被你躲过了。”洪家自恃福生妻子已无说话，天大事已定，傍边人闲言闲语不必怕他，不教人来兜揽，任他放屁喇撒一出，没兴自去。喇虎见无动静，老大没趣，放他不下。思量道：“若要告他人命，须得是他亲人。他妻子是扶不起的了；若是自己出名，告他不得。我而今只把私和人命首他一状，连尸亲也告在里头，须教他开不得口。”登时写下一状，往府里首了。

府里见是人命，发下理刑馆。那理刑推官最是心性惨刻的，



which finally resulted in his death. But his life expectancy is decided by his lot. Moreover, Hong has been very kind to us since Fusheng's death and has given us lots of silver for the funeral. I don't think I can turn hostile to him. I'll have to admit to my bad luck." Lahu retorted, "You just don't understand the natural course of the matter! The silver Hong gave you for the funeral can just be served as the evidence against him at the court. Hong is very rich. At least we can gain several hundred taels of silver from him for a human life. How could you wind it up so offhandedly?" Fusheng's wife said, "The poor can't afford such a lawsuit against the rich. How can we get so much silver for a lawsuit? Better give up the idea of lawsuit. The rich might as well give us our due."

Unable to bring Fusheng's wife round, Chen Lahu got to Hong's house and threatened him by saying, "I am the head of the Chen clan. You beat Fusheng to death and then you bought his wife over in private. Do you think you can wind up a case of murder so easily? If you want to silence me, you must give me some silver too. Otherwise, the law knows no mercy, and you're perfectly aware of it. I don't think you can escape punishment." However, knowing Fusheng's wife had accepted it as it was, Hong was overconfident and complacent about the matter and thought that the whole thing had been well settled. He feared no gossips and accusations at all and allowed Lahu to shoot off his mouth, for he was definitely sure Lahu would be disheartened and go away in dejection. He also told his family to remain silent about the matter no matter what Lahu would wrangle.

As he got no answer from Hong, Chen Lahu felt left out in the cold. But he just couldn't put it aside. "Only Fusheng's wife has the right to sue him for murder," he thought to himself, "but now it seems there is little hope for her to do so. I don't have the right to sue him in my own name. Now I might as well bring an action against him and Fusheng's wife for compounding a case of homicide. Sure Hong will find it difficult to offer a plausible explanation." Instantly he wrote a complaint and submitted it to the *yamen* of the prefecture.

Seeing it was a case involving a human life, the prefecture *yamen* delivered it to the judicial department. The judge of the judicial department

喜的是筒尸，好的是入罪，是个拆人家的祖师。见人命状到手，访得洪家巨富，就想在这桩事上显出自己风力来。连忙出牌拘人，吊尸筒验。陈家妻子实是怕事，与人商量道：“递了免筒，就好住得。”急写状去递。推官道：“分明是私下买和的情了！”不肯准状。洪家央了分上去说：“尸亲不愿，可以免筒。”推官一发怒将起来，道：“有了银子，王法多行不去了？”反将陈家妻子拶出，定要筒尸。没奈何，只得抬出棺木，解到尸场，聚齐了一千人众，如法蒸筒。忤作人晓得官府心里要报重的，敢不奉承？把红的说紫，青的说黑，报了致命伤两四处。推官大喜，道是拿得倒一个富人，不肯假借，我声名就重了。立要问他抵命。怎当得将律例一查，家长殴死雇工人只断得埋葬，问得徒赎，并无抵偿之条。只落得洪家费掉了些银子，陈家也





was an extremely venomous fellow. He was especially fond of making postmortem examinations and keen on passing judgments and meting out punishments. He was the originator of those wicked people who took delights in breaking up others' families. The moment he took over the case of homicide and learned that Hong Dashou was an extremely rich man, he longed to make a spectacle of himself by handling this matter. Immediately he issued an order to take Hong into custody and get Chen Fusheng's corpse ready for a postmortem examination.

Being chicken-hearted and overcautious, Fusheng's wife sought advice from some people, who suggested, "The deceased can be excused from a postmortem examination if you hand in an application to the court." Fusheng's wife did so as she was told. The judge shouted, "Obviously Hong Dashou has bought you over!" Thus, Fusheng's wife's request was turned down. Hong's family and friends also pleaded on her behalf at the court, saying, "Since Fusheng's wife is unwilling, better not do the postmortem examination." Flying into a rage, the judge shouted, "Can silver hold back the enforcement of the law?" The judge then drove Fusheng's wife out of the court and ordered that the postmortem examination be made.

Finally Fusheng's coffin was carried over to the tent for examination. When a group of officials concerned were all present, the postmortem examination was made upon the dead according to the fixed rules. The coroners knew the judge's mind perfectly. How could they have the nerve not to fawn upon him? Aggravating the injuries, the coroners reported a couple of fatal ones. The judge was very pleased with the result of the postmortem examination, thinking that he would soon become famous by showing no tolerance towards a rich man.

However, just as he was about to sentence Hong to give his life for the crime of murder, he consulted the laws and decrees and found out that employers who beat their hired laborers to death were only to be punished by taking care of the victims' funerals and a few years' imprisonment instead of receiving capital punishment. Thus the lawsuit came to an end. Hong Dashou wasted some more silver. Fusheng's wife was greatly upset. Chen Fusheng, though already well encoffined, was taken out of the coffin



不得安宁，陈福生殁好入棺了，又狼狼籍籍这一番，大家多事。陈喇虎也不见沾了甚么实滋味，推官也不见增了甚么好名头，枉做了难人。一场人命结过了，洪家道陈氏母子到底不做对头，心里感激，每每看管他二人，不致贫乏。

陈喇虎指望个小富贵，竟落了空，心里常怀怏怏。一日在外酒醉，晚了回家，忽然路上与陈福生相遇。福生埋怨道：“我好好的安置在棺内，为你妄想吓诈别人，致得我尸骸零落，魂魄不安。我怎肯干休？你还我债去！”将陈喇虎按倒在地，满身把泥来搓擦。陈喇虎挣扎不得，直等后边人走来，陈福生放手而去。喇虎闷倒在地，后边人认得他的，扶了回家。家里道是酒醉，不以为意。不想自此之后，喇虎浑身生起癞来，起床不得，要出门来扛帮教唆，做些惫懒的事，再不能勾了。淹缠半载，不能支持。到临死才对家人说着：“路上遇陈福生，嫌我出首，简了他尸，以此报我。我不得活了！”说罢就死。死后家人信了人言，道癞疾要缠染亲人，急忙抬出，埋于浅土，被狗子乘热拖将出来，吃了一半。此乃陈喇虎作恶之报。



again and made a mess. Lahu gained nothing. The judge won no honor, either. On the contrary, the judge brought everyone concerned into trouble. Seeing that Fusheng's wife and son were determined not to turn hostile to him, Hong felt deeply grateful to them. From time to time, Hong visited Fusheng's wife and son and accorded them allowance for living expenses so as to ensure that the mother and son would not fall into destitute circumstances.

Chen Lahu's evil designs to make some gains finally came to naught. In the days that followed, he felt very much disheartened and remained in low spirits. One night he got blind drunk in a tavern. While he was on his way home, he suddenly bumped into Chen Fusheng. Fusheng complained to him, "Actually I had been well placed in the coffin. But you behaved unscrupulously and threatened to extort money from Hong. Because of your wicked designs, I was dissected into bits and pieces, and my soul was greatly disturbed. How can I take it lying down? You must pay with your life!" So saying, Fusheng flung Lahu to the ground and covered him with mud. Chen Lahu could not break away from Fusheng however hard he tried. Fusheng didn't let go of him until he saw someone moving closer from behind him. Lying on the ground, Lahu fainted away. The man who had just arrived knew him. So he helped Lahu get on his feet and sent him home.

Lahu's family thought that he was just drunk. So they didn't take Lahu's conditions seriously. However, out of everyone's expectation, Lahu became affected with leprosy and could no longer get out of bed. After suffering from leprosy for half a year, Lahu came to the verge of death. On his deathbed, he said to his family, "I met Chen Fusheng. He had a deep hatred against me. I brought in a lawsuit and it resulted in the dissecting of his body. He made me suffer from this disease to avenge himself. I've come to the end of my life!" Finishing these words, Lahu died. Trusting the saying that Lahu would transmit the disease to his family members, Lahu's family hastily took his corpse to the field and buried it with a thin layer of earth. But dogs hauled it out immediately and ate half of it. This was the retribution for Lahu's evildoings.

Instead of cherishing a grudge against Hong Dashou, Chen Fusheng

却是陈福生不与打他的洪大寿为仇，反来报替他执命的族人，可见简尸一事，原非死的所愿。做官的人要晓得，若非万不得已，何苦做那极惨的勾当？倘若尸亲苦求免简，也该依他为是。至于假人命，一发不必说，必待审得人命逼真，然后行简定罪。只一先后之着，也保全得人家多了。而今说一个情愿自死，不肯简父尸的孝子，与看官每听一听。

父仇不报忍模糊，自有雄心托湛卢。

梟獍一诛身已绝，法官还用简尸无？

话说国朝万历年间，浙江金华府武义县有一个人，姓王名良，是个儒家出身。有个族侄王俊，家道丰厚，气岸凌人，专一放债取利，行凶剥民。就是族中支派，不论亲疏，但与他财利交关，锱铢必较，一些面情也没有的。王良不合曾借了他本银二两，每年将束修上利。积了四五年，还过他有两倍了，王良意思，道自家屋里，还到此地，可以相让，此后利钱，便不上紧了些。王俊是放债人心性，那管你是叔父？道逐年还煞，





avenged himself by punishing Chen Lahu, his clansman, who had tried to redress the injustice done to him. This shows clearly that postmortem examinations are the last thing the deceased wish to have. *Yamen* officials must be fully aware of it. Why commit such atrocities upon the deceased, unless it is the last resort? Also it is advisable that officials follow the request of the bereaved family. Postmortem examinations should never be carried out when a murder case has not been absolutely approved. Only when a murder case is clearly ascertained can officials decide to conduct the postmortem examination and mete out punishment in accordance with the law. More families will be saved from damages if this proper order is observed.

* * *

Now I'd like to tell you a tale about a filial son who would rather die than give his consent to the request of making a postmortem examination upon his deceased father.

Suffering indignity and living in disgrace,

He can afford to wait to avenge his father's death.

Refusing to become an unfilial son, he commits suicide.

How are you judges going to have the chance to have your way

During the Wanli reign (1573-1620) of our Ming Dynasty, there lived a man named Wang Liang in Wuyi County, Jinhua Prefecture of Zhejiang. Wang Liang was born into a scholar's family. He had a nephew by the name of Wang Jun. Being comfortably off, Wang Jun was always conceited and domineering. He practiced usury wholeheartedly and resorted to evildoings. He would be haggling over every coin even with his relatives, close or distant, without taking into any account of their sensibilities, when they were related in matters concerning silver. Once Wang Liang borrowed two taels of silver from Wang Jun, and every year Wang Liang paid him the interest. In the four or five years that followed, the interest Wang Liang paid him amounted to twice as much as the principal. Considering the amount of interest he had paid him and his close relationship with Wang Jun, Wang Liang took it for granted that Wang Jun would make some concessions. Naturally he suspended the payment of the annual interest. Wang Jun was but a usurer by nature. How would

只是利银，本钱原根不动，利钱还须照常，岂算还过多寡？一日在一族长处会席，两下各持一说，争论起来。王俊有了酒意，做出财主的样式，支手舞脚的发挥。王良气不平，又自恃尊辈，喝道：“你如此气质，敢待打我么？”王俊道：“便打了，只是财主打了欠债的。”趁着酒性，那管尊卑，扑的一掌打过去。王良不隄防的，一交跌倒。王俊索性赶上，拳头脚尖一齐来。族长道：“使不得！使不得！”忙来劝时，已打得不亦乐乎了。

大凡酒德不好的人，酒性发了，也不认得甚么人，也不记得甚么事，但只是使他酒风，狠戾暴怒罢了，不管别人当不起的。——当下一个族侄把个叔子打得七损八伤。族长劝不住，猛力解开，教人负了王良家去。王俊没个头主，没些意思，耀武扬威，一路吆吆喝喝，也走去了。

讷知王良打得伤重，次日身危。王良之子王世名，也是个读书人。父亲将死之时，唤过分付道：“我为族子王俊殴死，此仇不可忘。”王世名痛哭道：“此不共戴天之仇，儿誓不与俱生





he care about the fact that Wang Liang was his uncle? He claimed again and again: Wang Liang was only paying the annual interest and, as the principal had not been paid back, the annual interest should not be discontinued. How could he talk about how much he had paid me?

One day while they were at the dinner table hosted by the head of the Wang clan, Wang Liang and Wang Jun had a dispute over the issue, both equally self-opinionated. Assuming the airs of a rich man, Wang Jun, who was then slightly tipsy, threatened to start a fistfight. Considering his higher position in the clan, Wang Liang could not take it any more. He shouted, "How audacious you are! Are you threatening to beat me?" Wang Jun answered, "A creditor beats a debtor - there is nothing wrong about it!" So saying, Wang Jun took the advantage of his drinking bout and slapped his uncle in the face, totally regardless of the proper order of seniority.

As he was not prepared at the moment, Wang Liang was knocked down to the ground. Seizing the opportunity, Wang Jun dashed forward and gave his uncle a sound beating. The head of the clan shouted, "Stop! Stop!" But Wang Liang had been beaten up when the head of the clan rushed forward to separate them. — Generally speaking, when people who know no propriety in drinking are throwing a drunken fit, they totally disavow their kith and kin and forget everything. When crazy drunk, they just blow their tops, casting all caution to the winds. — Thus, the uncle suffered injuries of all sorts. As he found it difficult to stop Wang Jun, the head of the clan had to exert himself to separate Wang Jun and Wang Liang. Then he ordered someone to carry Wang Liang home. Feeling left out in the cold, Wang Jun slunk off too with his chin up, shouting and yelling all the way.

Out of everyone's expectation, Wang Liang was fatally injured. On the next day, he was on the verge of death. Wang Liang had a son by the name of Wang Shiming. Wang Shiming also dedicated himself to the studies of Confucian doctrines. On his deathbed, Wang Liang called his son forward and said, "I'm beaten to death by my nephew Wang Jun. You must bear this hatred in mind." Wang Shiming wept sadly and said, "This is inveterate hatred. I swear not to live under the same sky with Wang

人世。”王良点头而绝。王世名拊膺号恸，即具状到县间，告为立杀父命事，将族长告做见人。县间准行，随出牌吊尸到官，伺候相简。

王俊自知此事决裂，到不得官，苦央族长处息，任凭要银多少，总不讨论；处得停妥，族长分外酬谢，自不必说。族长见有些油水，来劝王世名罢讼道：“父亲既死，不可复生。他家有的是财物，怎与他争得过？要他偿命，必要简尸。他使用了诈作，将伤报轻了，命未必得偿，尸骸先吃这番狼籍，大不是算。依我说，乘他惧怕成讼之时，多要了他些，落得做了人家。大家保全得无事，未为非策。”王世名自想了一回道：“若是执命，无有不简尸之理。不论世情敌他不过，纵是偿得命来，伤残父骨，我心何忍？只存着报仇在心，拚得性命，那处不着





Jun.” Nodding his consent, Wang Liang breathed his last.

Feeling deeply grieved at the death of his father, Wang Shiming lodged a complaint at the county *yamen* against Wang Jun, charging him with the crime of killing his father. The head of the clan was asked to serve as a witness at court. The County Magistrate approved Wang Shiming’s lawsuit and ordered to bring Wang Liang’s corpse to the *yamen* for a postmortem examination.

Being fully aware that he would be the loser in this lawsuit, Wang Jun desperately entreated the head of the clan to help him settle the case out of court, saying that he would not care how much silver it would cost and if the case could be settled in private, he would richly reward him for the trouble he had taken.

Seeing he could get some gains from this matter, the head of the clan came to Wang Shiming and exhorted him to give up the lawsuit. “Now your father is dead,” the head of the clan said, “and we can’t bring the deceased back to life. Wang Jun has got a huge wealth. How can you beat him at court? If you want him to give his life, your father has to suffer a postmortem examination. Most probably he will bribe the coroners and, if the coroners resort to fraudulence in filing up the examination report, deliberately turning serious fatal injuries into slight ones, Wang Jun will not necessarily be sentenced to death. But your father will be made a mess. It won’t be worthwhile. In my opinion, Wang Jun does not have the nerve to face you at court at present. Better claim for some more silver and things from him and with this money you can improve your living conditions. Everything will be fine for you and this would be the best policy.”

Wang Shiming turned the matter over in his mind, “If I stick it out at court and demand that Wang Jun pay with his life, there is no reason not to do the postmortem examination. Leaving aside the problem of my unfavorable position in the lawsuit, my father’s corpse will surely be dissected into bits and pieces even though I might succeed in making him give his life. How can I bear to see my father suffer like this? Better bury the hatred in my heart. How shouldn’t I get a chance to avenge myself if I’m ready to give my life for it? Why must I settle this account in court at



了手？何必当官，拘着理法，先将父尸经这番惨酷？又三推六问，几年月日才正得典刑？不如目今权依了他们处法，诈痴佯呆，住了官司，且保全了父骨，别图再报。”回覆族长道：“父亲委是冤死。但我贫家，不能与做头敌，只凭尊长所命罢了。”

族长大喜，去对王俊说了。主张将王俊膏腴田三十亩，与王世名为殡葬父亲、养膳老母之费；王世名同母当官递个免简，族长随递个息词，永无翻悔。王世名一一依听了，来对母亲说道：“儿非见利忘仇，若非如此，父骨不保。儿所以权听其处分，使彼绝无疑心也。”世名之母妇女见识，是做人家念头重的，见得了这些肥田，可以受享，也自甘心罢了。

世名把这三十亩田所收花利，每岁藏贮封识，分毫不动。外边人不晓得备细，也有议论他得了田业息了父命的，世名也不与人辨明。王俊怀着鬼胎，倒时常以礼来问候叔母。世名虽不受他礼物，却也像豪无嫌隙的，照常往来。有时撞着杯酒相会，笑语酬酢，略无介意。众人又多有笑他忘了父仇的。事已



the cost of my father's sufferings? In addition to this, repeated interrogations are sure to follow in court. When will justice be done then? It would be better to feign stupidity and follow his advice and drop the lawsuit for the purpose of excusing my father from suffering the postmortem examination. I'll look for other opportunities to avenge myself in the future." With this in mind, he said to the head of the clan, "It is true my father died from injustice. But I'm too poor to go against Wang Jun in this lawsuit. So, I'll follow your advice."

Overjoyed at Wang Shiming's decision, the head of the clan told Wang Jun that Shiming had consented to drop the lawsuit. He also ordered Wang Jun to give Shiming a piece of fertile land of thirty *mu* as the payments for his father's funeral and his mother's future livelihood. Wang Shiming and his mother handed in an application to the court, requesting that Wang Liang be excused from the postmortem examination. The head of the clan also submitted an application to the court to drop the lawsuit and told Wang Shiming he should never renege. Wang Shiming complied with all the terms.

Coming over to his mother, Shiming said, "I didn't forget my hatred at the sight of money, Mother. But my fathers' corpse will be made a mess if I don't comply. The reason why I consented to all of their requests is that I wanted to clear their minds of their doubts and misgivings." Shiming's mother was but a shallow woman, and what she cared most was how to make life easier. Believing that this piece of fertile land could ensure her and her son a better life, she called it quits then and there.

Every year, Shiming stored up all the profits he gained from this piece of land and kept them completely intact. Those who didn't know the inside story commented on this matter by saying that Shiming got a piece of land, but he forgot his father's unjust death. But Shiming would not argue with them.

Wang Jun, however, was gripped with a guilty conscience. From time to time, he would call on his aunt with due respect and gifts. Wang Shiming treated him as usual as if there was no feud at all between them, but he never accepted his gifts. There were also times when they would sit at the same dinner table and exchange toasts as they talked and laughed, as if



渐冷，径没人提起了。怎知世名日夜提心吊胆，时刻不忘，悄悄地铸一利剑，镂下两个篆字，名曰“报仇”，出入必佩。请一个传真的，绘画父像，挂在斋中；就把自己之形，也图在上面，写他持剑侍立父侧。有人问道：“为何画作此形？”世名答道：“古人出必佩剑，故慕其风，别无他意。”有诗为证：

戴天不共敢忘仇，画笔常将心事留。

说与傍人浑不解，腰间宝剑自飕飕。

且说王世名日间对人嘻笑如常，每到归家，夜深人静，便抚心号恸。世名妻俞氏，晓得丈夫心不忘仇，每对他道：“君家心事，妾所洞知。一日仇死君手，君岂能独生？”世名道：“为子死孝，吾之职分。只恐仇不得报耳；若得报，吾岂愿偷生耶？”俞氏道：“君能为孝子，妾亦能为节妇。”世名道：“你身是女子，出口大易，有好些难哩。”俞氏道：“君能为男子之事，安见妾身就学那男子不来？他日做出便见。”世名道：“此身不幸，遭罹仇难。娘子不以儿女之见相阻，却以男子之事相勉，足见相成了。”夫妻各相爱重。



nothing had happened between them. All the people at the table would laugh at Shiming for his forgetfulness of avenging his father. As time passed, everyone seemed to have forgotten the matter. But, as a matter of fact, Shiming never forgot the deep-seated hatred. He cast a sword in the quiet and engraved a word on it in seal character, reading "Revenge." He would carry the sword at his waist wherever he went. One day, he asked a painter to make a portrait of his father. When the portrait was done, he put it on the wall of his room. Then he made a sketch of his own image carrying a sword at the waist and standing beside the image of his father. Someone asked him, "Why did you make such a self-portrait?" Shiming answered, "It is common practice that the ancient men were sure to carry swords at their waists whenever they went out. I just love this practice, nothing else." The poem below can describe it:

Long-standing hatred never dies.

Self-portrait well speaks the mind.

No one else can conceive what it heralds.

Only the gleaming sword is threatening a chilly wind.

During the day, Wang Shiming laughed and frolicked as usual. But after he got home at night, he would wail with abandon in the still of night. Shiming's wife, née Yu, were keenly aware that her husband had never forgotten to avenge the wrong done to his father. Yu said to Shiming, "I know perfectly what's in your mind. But how are you going to live if you kill your enemy?" Shiming answered, "As a filial son, I can give my life to avenge my father, and I regard it as my duty to do so. I'm dreadfully worried that I won't be able to avenge my father. If I can, how would I be willing to drag out an ignoble existence?" Yu said, "If you can fulfill the duties of a filial son, I can fulfill the duties of a faithful wife too." Shiming said, "You're just a woman. Easier said than done. It will be extremely difficult." Yu retorted, "You have the makings of a filial son. But how do you know I don't have the makings of a faithful woman? It will be clear I'm not joking if I put my word into practice one day." Shiming said, "Unfortunately, I've got into so much trouble. Instead of talking me out of avenging my father with a woman's sentimentality, you spurred me on with a man's resolve to do what a man and a son should. I really appreciate

五载之内，世名已得游泮，做了秀才。妻俞氏又生下一儿。世名对俞氏道：“有此呱呱，王氏之脉不绝了。一向怀仇在心，隐忍不报者，正恐此身一死，斩绝先祀，所以不敢轻生做事。如今我死可瞑目。上有老母，下有婴儿，此汝之责。我托付已过，我不能再顾了。”遂仗剑而出。

也是王俊冤债相寻，合该有事。他新相处得一个妇人在乡间，每饭后不带仆从，独往相叙。世名打听在肚里，晓得在蝴蝶山下经过，先伏在那边僻处了。王俊果然摇摇摆摆，独自一人踱过岭来。世名正是：

恩人相见，分外眼明。

仇人相见，分外眼睁。

看得明白，飏的钻将过来，喝道：“还我父亲的命来！”王俊不提防的，吃了一惊，不及措手，已被世名劈头一刹。说时迟，那时快，王俊倒在地下挣扎。世名按倒，枭下首级，脱件衣服下来，包裹停当，带回家中。见了母亲，大哭拜道：“儿已报仇，头在囊中。今当为父死，不得侍母膝下了。”拜罢，解出首级，到父灵位前拜告道：“仇人王俊之头，今在案前。望父





it.” The couple loved and respected each other more than ever.

Five years later, Shiming successfully passed the imperial examinations at the county level and became a *xiuca*. Yu gave birth to a baby boy. Shiming said to Yu, “I’ve got a son to carry on my family name. The reason why I had borne my hatred patiently in mind and swallowed the humiliation is that I was afraid I would leave no offspring if I lost my life. Therefore, I didn’t dare to take any rash actions which would be of any danger to my life. Now I can rest easy in my grave. I’ll have to entrust my old mother and our baby son to your care. I’ve said all I want to say, and sorry I won’t be able to take care of them any more.” Finishing these words, Wang Shiming strode out of his house with the sword in his hand.

On that day, Wang Jun was fated to give a life for a life. He had recently developed an affair with a woman who lived in the countryside. Every day after dinner, he would go and date this woman, with no family servants accompanying him. Shiming learned about his whereabouts and knew that he would pass by the Butterfly Mountain every day. Shiming lurked in the shadows in advance at the foot of the mountain. Before long, Wang Jun staggered over alone towards the mountain. Indeed, when true friends meet, their eyes gleam with loving tenderness; when sworn enemies face each other, their eyes blaze with inveterate hatred. Knowing for sure it was Wang Jun, Shiming leapt forward abruptly and shouted, “Give your life for my father!” As he was caught unprepared, Wang Jun got a big surprise. Before Wang Jun could figure out what was happening, Shiming had chopped him straight on the head. In the twinkling of an eye, Wang Jun fell to the ground. While Wang Jun was struggling desperately on the ground, Shiming rushed forward and chopped off his head. Then he took off his outer garment, wrapped up the head of Wang Jun and carried it home.

Arriving at home, Shiming prostrated himself before his mother and wept bitterly, saying, “I’ve killed Wang Jun. Here is his head. I’ll have to lay down my life for the sake of my father. I won’t be able to wait upon you any more.” Then Shiming took the head of Wang Jun to his father’s memorial tablet and said on his knees, “Wang Jun’s head is now right on the table. I wish your spirit were not far away. I’ll go and surrender myself



阴灵不远，儿今赴官投死去也。”随即取了历年所收田租帐目，左手持刀，右手提头，竟到武义县中出首。

此日县中传开，说王秀才报父仇，杀了人，拿头首告，是个孝子。一传两，两传三，哄动了一个县城。但见：

人人竖发，个个伸眉。竖发的恨那数载含冤，伸眉的喜得今朝吐气。挨肩叠背，老人家挤坏了腰脊厉声呼；裸袖舒拳，小孩子踏伤了脚指号咷哭。任侠豪人齐拍掌，小心怯汉独惊魂。

王世名到了县堂，县门外喊发连天，何止万人挤塞！武义县陈大尹不知何事，慌忙出堂坐了，问其缘故。王世名把头与剑放下在阶前，跪禀道：“生员特来投死。”陈大尹道：“为何？”世名指着头道：“此世名族人王俊之头。世名父亲被此人打死，昔年告得有状。世名法该执命，要他抵偿。但不忍把父尸简验，所以只得隐忍。今世名不烦官法，手刃其人，以报父仇，特来



to the *yamen* immediately.” Finishing these words, Shiming took out the title and all the records of the gains he had acquired from this piece of land during the past few years. Holding his sword in his left hand and Wang Jun’s head in his right hand, he went straightforward to the *yamen* of Wuyi County to give himself up.

That day, the news circulated throughout the town that filial son Wang Xiucan killed Wang Jun to avenge his father and had come to the *yamen* with Wang Jun’s head to give himself up. One person told two, who told three. The news spread far and wide quickly, and soon everyone in town knew about it. The following lines may serve to describe it:

Everyone’s hair stood on end and at the same time everyone raised his eyebrows. Those whose hair stood on end were filled with remorse and grief because the injustice had not been righted for so many years; those who raised their eyebrows were wild with joy because the injustice was finally redressed today. Getting pushed and elbowed in the crowd, the old sustained injuries in the waist and they started to shout at the top of their voices. The crowd were rolling up their sleeves and stretching their arms. Young children’s toes were stamped and wounded and they started to weep and wail. The upright and chivalrous clapped their hands and shouted “Bravo,” while the weak and cowardly were frightened out of their wits.

Wang Shiming arrived at the county *yamen*. Thousands of people gathered around the entrance of the *yamen*, and they shouted like mad. Not knowing what had gone amiss, Magistrate Chen of Wuyi County came to the court in a hurry and questioned Wang Shiming the whys and wherefores of his coming to the court. Putting down the head and the sword in front of the steps, Shiming went on his knees and said, “I’ve specially come here to surrender myself to the court.” “Why?” asked Magistrate Chen. Pointing at the head of Wang Jun, Shiming said, “This is the head of my cousin Wang Jun. My father was beaten to death by him several years ago and at that time I lodged a complaint against Wang Jun. I should have brought him to the court and demanded that he pay with his life for a murder in accordance with the law. But I withdrew the lawsuit and swallowed the humiliation, because I couldn’t bear to see my deceased father receive a postmortem examination. Now I’ve offended the law and



投到请死，乞正世名擅杀之罪。”大尹道：“汝父之事，闻和解已久，如何忽有此举？”世名道：“只为要保全父尸，先凭族长议处，将田三十亩养膳老母。世名一时含糊应承，所收花息，年年封贮，分毫不动。今既已杀却仇人，此项义不宜取，理当入官。写得有簿籍在此，伏乞验明。”大尹听罢，知是忠义之士，说道：“君行孝子之事，不可以文法相拘。但事干人命，须请详上司为主，县间未可擅便。且召保候详。王俊之头，先着其家领回候验。”看的人恐怕县官难为王秀才，个个伸拳裸臂，候他处分。见说申详上司，不拘禁他，方才散去。

陈大尹晓得众情如此，心里大加矜念，把申文多写得恳切。说先经王俊毆死王良是的，今王良之子世名报仇，杀了王俊，论来也是一命抵一命。但王世名不繇官断，擅自杀人，也



killed him to avenge my father. Therefore, here I am to ask you to sentence me to death for my offence of killing a man presumptuously.”

Magistrate Chen said, “So far as I know, the case concerning the death of your father was reconciled a long time ago. Why did you suddenly take such a move?” Shiming answered, “In order to excuse my father from the postmortem examination, I followed the advice of the head of my clan and carelessly accepted thirty *mu* of land from Wang Jun as support payments for my old mother. Each year, I stored up all the profits I obtained from this piece of land and kept them completely intact. Now that I’ve killed my foe, I don’t think it fitting and proper for me to keep them. Naturally, I ought to turn them over to the *yamen*. Here are the records. Please check and accept them.”

Upon hearing these remarks, Magistrate Chen knew Shiming was a man of loyalty and righteousness. So he said to Shiming, “As you were actually performing your duties of a filial son, I don’t think it appropriate to have you detained according to the written laws and decrees. But it’s a case involving human life. I’ll have to report it to the higher authorities for a decision. The *yamen* at the county level does not wish to presume. You may stay out on bail. Wang Jun’s family can take his head home for the time being, but Wang Jun’s head has to await examinations.” Fearing that Magistrate Chen might deliberately make it difficult for Shiming, all the on-lookers rolled up their sleeves and stretched their arms as they listened to how the magistrate would handle this matter. They didn’t leave until they heard the magistrate say this case would be reported to the higher authorities for a judgment and Shiming would not be taken into custody.

Magistrate Chen knew well the morale of the public and was filled with boundless compassion for Wang Shiming. Naturally he made a sincere and moving communication to the higher authorities. In this communication, he explained the matter thus: “It is true that Wang Jun beat Wang Liang to death years ago. Now, Wang Shiming, Wang Liang’s son, has killed Wang Jun to avenge his father. Normally, a life for a life, but Wang Shiming didn’t turn to the court to settle the matter and he killed Wang Jun without authorization. He should be guilty too. Wang



该有罪。本人系是生员，特为申详断决。申文之外，又加上禀揭，替他周全，说孝义可敬，宜从轻典。上司见了，也多叹羨，遂批与金华县汪大尹会同武义审决这事。汪大尹访问端的，备知其情，一心要保全他性命。商量道：“须把王良之尸一筒。若果然致命伤重，王俊原该抵偿，王世名杀人之罪就轻了。”

会审之时，汪大尹如此倡言。王世名哭道：“当初专为不忍暴残父尸，故隐忍数年，情愿杀仇人而自死。岂有今日仇已死了，反为要脱自身，重筒父尸之理！前日杀仇之日，即宜自杀。所以来造邑庭，正来受朝庭之法，非求免罪也。大人何不见谅如此？”汪大尹道：“若不筒父尸，杀人之罪难以自解。”王世名道：“原不求解，望大人放归别母，即来就死。”汪大尹道：“君是孝子烈士，自来投到者，放归何妨？但事须断决，可归家与母妻再一商量。倘肯把父尸一筒，我就好周全你了。此本县好意，不可错过。”



Shiming was a *xiucai*, therefore, it is up to the higher authorities to make a decision.” Also attached to the communication was an explanatory note, in which Magistrate Chen tried to absolve Shiming of his responsibility, saying that his filial piety was respectable and therefore he should be treated with leniency.

The superiors all gasped in indescribable admiration for Shiming’s filial piety for his father. Accordingly the higher authorities handed the case over to Magistrate Wang of Jinhua County to handle in conjunction with Magistrate Chen of Wuyi County. After Magistrate Wang learned about the ins and outs of the case, he decided to save Shiming’s life. Magistrate Wang and Magistrate Chen exchanged their views with each other, saying, “A postmortem examination of Wang Liang’s corpse is needed. If serious and fatal injuries can be detected, it would be only right and proper that Wang Jun should give his life for a life. Such being the case, Wang Shiming’s capital offence can be considered a misdemeanor.”

At court, Magistrate Wang told Shiming what he and Chen thought of the case. Shiming said in a sobbing tone, “I have borne patiently with it for so many years only because I can’t have the heart to see my father’s corpse dissected into bits and pieces. I would rather kill my enemy and lay down my own life willingly. Now my enemy is dead, how could I possibly agree to have my father’s corpse examined so as to save my own life? The moment I killed my enemy the other day, I killed myself too. I came to the court to accept punishment according to the law, not to plead for forgiveness. Why couldn’t you make out what’s in my mind?” Magistrate Wang said, “Your offence of killing a man can’t be pardoned if you don’t allow us to do the postmortem examination.” Shiming answered, “Actually I never wanted to get pardoned. I only hope you could let me go home so that I can pay my last respects to my old mother. Then I’ll come back and die.” Magistrate Wang said, “You are a filial son and a man of heroic ambitions. Since you could come here to give yourself up, there will be no harm in letting you go home. But this lawsuit must be settled. You may go home and talk it over with your mother and wife. If you agree to have your father’s corpse examined, I’ll be able to absolve



王世名主意已定，只不应承。回来对母亲说汪大尹之意，母亲道：“你待如何？”王世名道：“岂有事到今日，反失了初心？儿久已拚着一死，今特来别母而去耳。”说罢，抱头大哭。妻俞氏在傍，也哭做了一团。俞氏道：“前日与君说过，君若死孝，妾亦当为夫而死。”王世名道：“我前日已把老母与婴儿相托于你。我今不得已而死，你与我事母养子，才是本等。我在九原，亦可瞑目。从死之说，万万不可，切莫轻言。”俞氏道：“君向来留心报仇，誓必身死。别人不晓，独妾知之。所以再不阻君者，知君立志如此。君能捐生，妾亦不难相从，故尔听君行事。今事已至此，若欲到底完翁尸首，非死不可。妾岂可独生以负君乎？”世名道：“古人言：死易，立孤难。你若轻一死，孩子必绝乳哺，是绝我王家一脉，连我的死也死得不正当了。你只与我保全孩子，便是你的大恩。”俞氏哭道：“既如此，为君姑忍三岁。三岁之后，孩子不须乳哺了，此时当从君地下，君亦不能禁我也。”



you of your responsibility. It is entirely for your good that I have said so. Hope you don't miss the opportunity."

Shiming had already made up his mind, though he didn't give an answer at the moment. After returning home, he told his mother what Magistrate Wang had talked to him. His mother asked, "What do you think?" Shiming answered, "Now things have come to this, how can I change my original intentions? I was prepared a long time ago to die for the sake of my father. So I'm especially here to pay my last respects to you." Finishing these words, Shiming started to cry with abandon. Shiming's wife Yu wept and melted into tears too. Yu said, "As I told you the other day, I'll die for you if you die for filial piety." "I entrusted my old mother and our baby son to your care the other day," said Shiming. "Now I've got no alternative but to die. But you'll have to do your duties to take care of my mother and our baby son. Only you do so can I rest easy in my grave. On no account can you take your own life. Stop talking that nonsense."

Yu said, "You've been fully preoccupied with the idea of avenging your father and you made up your mind to lay down your life for this purpose. It is not in the knowledge of others, but I know it perfectly. So, the reason why I didn't stop you is that I was fully aware that you had already set your mind to it heart and whole. You can die for filial piety, so can I for faithfulness. Therefore, I let things go unchecked. Now that things have come to this, you will not escape death if you want to keep your father's body intact. How can I go back on my word and become unfaithful so as to live merely for the sake of living?"

Shiming said, "The ancients said, 'To die is easy, but it is by no means easy to bring up a fatherless child.' If you take your life, our baby son will be certainly cut off from breast-feeding and I'll have no son to carry on my family line. This being the case, I'm afraid I will not die a justifiable death. I will be greatly indebted to you if you could only bring up our child." In a sobbing tone, Yu said, "Such being the case, I might as well endure it for three years. When our child reaches three, he'll no longer need breast-feeding. By then you will have no right to stop me if I am bent on taking my life for the sake of faithfulness."

Shiming and his wife were plunged into deep grief. Just at this moment,



正哀惨间，外边有二三十人喧嚷，是金华、武义两学中秀才与王世名曾往来相好的，乃汪、陈两令央他们来劝王秀才。还把前言来讲道：“两父母意见相同，只要轻兄之罪，必须得一简验，使仇罪应死，兄可得生。特使小弟辈来达知此意，与兄商量。依小弟辈愚见，尊翁之死，实出含冤，仇人本所宜抵。今若不从简验，兄须脱不得死罪，是以两命抵得他一命。尊翁之命，原为徒死。况子者，亲之遗体；不忍伤既死之骨，却枉残现在之体，亦非正道。何如勉从两父母之言，一简以白亲冤，以全遗体，未必非尊翁在天之灵所喜。惟兄熟思之。”王世名道：“诸兄皆是谬爱小弟，肝鬲之言。两令君之意，弟非不感激。但小弟提着‘简尸’二字，便心酸欲裂。容到县堂再面计之。”众秀才道：“两令之意，不过如此。兄今往一决，但得相从，事体便易了。弟辈同伴兄去相讲一遭。”王世名即进去拜了母亲四拜，道：“从此不得再侍膝下了。”又拜妻俞氏两拜，



there came a hubbub of voices of about twenty to thirty people from outside the door. All these people were the *xiucais* from the two county schools of Jinhua and Wuyi, and all of them were Shiming's close friends. Magistrates Wang and Chen had sent them to Shiming's house to talk him round. Seeing Shiming, the *xiucais* said, "Both Magistrate Wang and Magistrate Chen have the same view on this question. To extenuate your offence, the postmortem examination has to be done. Your life can be saved only when the postmortem examination gives evidence that Wang Jun deserves death. The two magistrates especially sent us here to inform you of their suggestion. In our humble opinion, your father did suffer a great injustice and Wang Jun ought to give his life for a life. If you refuse to comply with the postmortem examination, your capital offence will not be pardoned, and it will become a matter of two lives for one. If so, your father would have died in vain. Moreover, as a son, you're the continuation of your father's life. It's understandable you don't have the heart to do harm to the body of the deceased, but it wouldn't be fit and proper for you to have the heart to lose your own life. Why not follow the two magistrates' advice and give your approval to the postmortem examination so that the injustice done to your father can be redressed and at the same time your life will also be saved? Your father's soul in heaven may not be necessarily displeased. We do hope you can give serious thought to it."

Wang Shiming said, "I'm extremely grateful to you all, my friends, for the kindness you have lavished on me. And I know these words come from the bottoms of your hearts. I'm also deeply grateful to the two magistrates' profound kindness. But the mention of the two words 'postmortem examination' just breaks my heart. Please allow me to talk it over with the two magistrates face to face when I get to the court." The *xiucais* said, "The two magistrates' viewpoint on this matter is nothing but as what we've just told you. Things will become much easier for you if you could follow the two magistrates' suggestion and make a decision at court. We'll go there together with you." Then, Wang Shiming went into the inner room and made four kowtows towards his mother, and said, "From now on, I can't wait upon you anymore." After this, he turned



托以老母幼子。大哭一场，噙泪而出，随同众友到县间来。

两个大尹正会在一处，专等诸生劝他的回话。只见王世名一同诸生到来，两大尹心里暗喜道：“想是肯从所议，故此同来也。”王世名身穿囚服，一见两大尹，即称谢道：“多蒙两位大人曲欲全世名一命，世名心非木石，岂不知感恩？但世名所以隐忍数年，甘负不孝之罪于天地间，靦颜嘻笑者，正为不忍简尸一事。今欲全世名之命，复致残久安之骨，是世名不是报仇，明是自杀其父了。总是看得世名一死太重，故多此议论。世名已别过母妻，特来就死，惟求速赐正罪。”两大尹相顾持疑，诸生辈杂遝乱讲，世名只不改口。汪大尹假意作色道：“杀人者死。王俊既以殴死，致为人杀，论法自宜简所殴之尸有伤无伤，何必问尸亲愿简与不愿简？吾们只是依法行事罢了。”王世名见大尹执意不回，愤然道：“所以必欲简视，止为要见伤痕。便做道世名之父毫无伤，王俊实不宜杀，也不过世名一



to his wife Yu and made two kowtows, and entrusted his mother and son to her care. Then he started crying loudly and bitterly. His eyes brimming with tears, he parted his mother and wife and left for the county *yamen* along with his *xiucais* friends.

At that time, the two magistrates were at the *yamen*, awaiting the *xiucais*' reply about this matter. As they saw Wang Shiming returned together with the *xiucais*, they both were secretly pleased and said, "Shiming must have accepted our advice, so they've returned together." Shiming was still in his prison clothes. At the sight of the two magistrates, he thanked them, saying, "Thank you both for your kind intentions to save my life. My heart is neither wood nor stone. How couldn't I feel grateful? But the reason why for so many years I have borne patiently and willingly the blame of being an unfilial son and why I have been meek and careless, laughing and joking all day long, is that I just can't find it in my heart to accept the idea of doing a postmortem examination on my father. It's very kind of you to try to save my life, but it will do harm to the body of my long-deceased father. If I comply, what I have done is not so much avenging my father as killing him. Actually you valued my life too much, and this gave rise to a flurry of discussion. I've bidden farewell to my mother and my wife and I'm now back to ask you to put me to death as soon as possible."

Looking at each other disbelievingly, the two magistrates were stunned. The *xiucais* around started speaking all at once. But Shiming didn't change his mind. Feigning annoyance, Magistrate Wang said, "One has to give a life for a life. Wang Jun beat your father to death, and you killed Wang Jun. According to our present laws and decrees, it is only right and proper to make postmortem examinations upon the deceased to see if there are any injuries. Why should we bother to ask the family and relatives of the deceased for permission? We'll have to act according to law." Flushing with rage at Magistrate Wang's perseverance in doing the postmortem examination, Shiming answered unflinchingly, "The fundamental objective of your insisting on having the postmortem examination is only to find physical injuries, and that's all. Even if not a single injury can be detected and Wang Jun should not be killed, my life will settle all the



死当之，何必再简？今日之事，要动父亲尸骸，必不能勾。若要世名性命，只在顷刻可了，决不偷生以负初心。”言毕，望县堂阶上一头撞去。眼见得世名被众人激得焦燥，用得力猛，早把颅骨撞碎，脑浆迸出而死。

囹圄自可从容入，何必须臾赴九泉？

只为书生拘律法，反令孝子不回旋。

两大尹见王秀才如此决烈，又惊又惨，一时做声不得。两县学生一齐来看王秀才，见已无救，情义激发，哭声震天。对两大尹道：“王生如此死孝，真为难得。今其家惟老母、寡妻、幼子，身后之事，两位父母主张从厚，以维风化。”两大尹不觉垂泪道：“本欲相全，岂知其性烈如此！前日王生曾将当时处和之产，封识花息，当官交明，以示义不苟受。今当立一公案，以此项给其母妻，为终老之资，庶几两命相抵。独多着王良一死无着落，即以买和产业周其眷属，亦为得平。”诸生众



accounts. There is no need at all for the postmortem examination! I will never allow you to touch my father's corpse! If you want my life, you can get it right now! But I'll never change my original intentions to preserve my own life!" Finishing these words, Shiming suddenly bumped his head against the steps in the court. Obviously Shiming had been deeply infuriated by Magistrate Wang and his *xiucais* friends. He overexerted himself and broke his skull. Dashing his brains out on the steps, he died instantly.

You can remain composed and steady behind the bars,

But why so anxious to go to the nether world?

As a young scholar you take the law too much to heart,

And this has only strengthened your resolve of doing duties of a filial son.

For a moment both magistrates were so stunned with Shiming's sudden and tragic death that they couldn't utter a word for a long while. The *xiucais* from the two county schools rushed up to Shiming and found out that he was already beyond cure. Extremely overwhelmed by sorrow, they all burst into loud crying. Turning to the two magistrates, they said, "It's really great of Wang Shiming to die such a heroic death for the sake of his father. He has left behind him his old mother, his wife and his baby son. We hope you could see to it and give Shiming an elaborate funeral so as to safeguard morals and manners."

Unable to refrain from tears, the two magistrates said, "Originally we wished to save his life. We never expected he would be so hot-tempered! A couple of days ago, Shiming handed in to the court the title of the thirty *mu* of land and the records of the gains he had acquired from this piece of land during the past few years to take a clear-cut stand that he would not accept them. Now we'd like to place a case on file and propose that the gains from this piece of land be given to his old mother and wife as support payments for the rest of their lives. Only by doing so can Shiming's life and Wang Jun's life be finally made good. But Wang Liang's death still remains unanswered. Therefore, we propose that the thirty *mu* of land also be given to Shiming's family. And we think this will make an equitable settlement of the case as a whole." All the *xiucais* repeatedly said "yes." Each of the two magistrates contributed ten taels of silver and the *xiucais*

口称是。两大尹随各捐俸金十两，诸生共认捐三十两，共成五十两，召王家亲人来将尸首领回，从厚治丧。

两学生员，为文以祭之，云：

呜呼王生，父死不鸣。刃加仇颈，身即赴冥。欲全其

父，宁弃其生。一时之死，千秋之名。哀哉尚飨！

诸生读罢祭文，放声大哭。哭得山摇地动，闻之者无不泪流。哭罢，随请王家母妻拜见，面送赙仪。说道：“伯母、尊嫂宜趁此资物，出丧殡殓。”王母道：“谨领尊命，即当与儿媳商之。”俞氏哭道：“多承列位盛情。吾夫初死，未忍遽殡，尚欲停丧三年，尽妾身事生之礼。三年既满，然后议葬。列位伯叔，不必性急。”诸生不知他甚么意思，各自散去了。

此后，但是亲戚来往，问及出柩者，俞氏俱以言阻说，必待三年。亲戚多道：“从来说入土为安，为何要拘定三年？”俞氏只不肯听，停丧在家。直至服满除灵，俞氏痛哭一场，自此



contributed thirty taels of silver, making up fifty taels, for Shiming's funeral. Then the two magistrates summoned the bereaved family to the *yamen* to take Shiming's body home, and told them to arrange an elaborate funeral for him with the fifty taels of silver.

The *xiucais* from the two county schools composed a funeral oration over Shiming's death. It read thus:

Alas! Wang Shiming, you didn't cry out against the injustice done to your father. The moment you brandished your sword, you had already decided to end your life in common ruin with your enemy. In order to keep your father's remains intact, you would rather give up your own life. Your name will forever be remembered and revered by posterity. Such being our sorrow, do rest in peace!

Having finished reading the funeral oration, the *xiucais* all burst into loud weeping, which made the hills topple and the earth shake. All who heard their weeping melted into tears. When their weeping was over, the *xiucais* requested an audience with Shiming's mother and wife so as to present them some money. Seeing the bereaved family, they said, "Aunt and Sister-in-law, please take this silver for Shiming's funeral." "Thank you very much for your kindness," said Shiming's mother. "My daughter-in-law and I will make arrangements for Shiming's funeral right now." In a sobbing tone, Yu said, "I deeply appreciate your great kindness. My husband died just now. I only couldn't find it in my heart to bury him in haste. I would like to observe mourning for my deceased husband for three years so that I can fulfill my duties of waiting upon him at home. So I wouldn't consider the matter of his funeral until three years later. Please don't worry about it." The *xiucais* didn't make much of what she said. And they all dispersed.

Since then, whenever the relatives inquired about Shiming's funeral and urged her to take Shiming's coffin to the grave, Yu would always decline their offer by saying she wouldn't consent to it until the three-year mourning period came to an end. The relatives wondered, "An old saying goes 'Burial brings peace to the deceased,' why does she so rigidly stick to a limit of three years?" Yu just turned a deaf ear to their remarks.

When the three-year mourning came to an end, Yu cried her heart out.

绝食。旁人多不知道。不上十日，肚肠饥断，呜呼哀哉了。学中诸生闻之，愈加希奇，齐来吊视。王母诉出媳妇坚贞之性：“矢志从夫，三年之中，如同一日，使人不及隄防，竟以身殉。今止剩三岁孤儿与老身，可怜！可怜！”诸生闻言，恸哭不已，齐去禀知陈大尹。大尹惊叹道：“孝子节妇，出于一家，真可敬也。”即报各上司，先行奖恤，候抚按具题旌表。诸生及亲戚又义助含殓，告知王母，择日一同出柩。方知俞氏初时必欲守至三年，不肯先葬其夫者，专为等待自己双双同出也。远近闻之，人人称叹。巡按马御史奏闻于朝，下诏旌表其门曰“孝烈”，建坊褒荣。有《孝烈传志》行于世。





From then on, she started a hunger strike. No one knew about it. Within ten days, she died. The moment they learned about Yu's death, the *xiucais* from the two county schools all gaped with amazement. When they paid homage to the deceased, Shiming's mother gave them an account of Yu's faithfulness, "She swore that she would always remain faithful to her husband and would die for him. For three years she never changed her mind, and all this made it impossible for us to take precautionary measures against her irrational moves. Eventually she committed suicide for faithfulness, leaving me, an old woman, alone with her three-year-old child. How unfortunate! Woe is me!"

Everyone present burst out crying upon hearing the sad news. Hurriedly the *xiucais* went to the *yamen* of Wuyi County and brought the matter to the attention of Magistrate Chen. Greatly surprised, Magistrate Chen said, "A filial son and a faithful wife in one family! Indeed, they are worthy of respect!" After this, Magistrate Chen made a detailed report to his superiors of the whole story of Wang Shiming and his wife Yu. Losing no time, he commended and compensated the bereaved family of Shiming and Yu. Some time later, the Pacification Commissioner conferred a horizontal inscribed board on Wang Shiming's family. The *xiucais* and relatives again contributed silver and had Yu encoffined. Then they chose a date for the funeral of the couple and told it to Shiming's mother. It was not until then did they know that the reason why Yu had originally insisted on observing mourning for three years and refused to bury her deceased husband at the moment was that she had already pledged herself to go to her grave together with her long deceased husband. The story of Wang Shiming and his wife Yu spread far and wide quickly, and everyone who heard it praised them profusely. Censor on Tour Ma presented a memorial to the emperor. The emperor issued an imperial edict, conferring the honor of "Home of Filial Piety and Faithfulness" upon Wang Shiming's family, and a memorial arch was built up by the imperial order in honor of Wang Shiming filial piety and Yu's faithfulness. *Records of Filial Piety and Faithfulness* has been handed down to this very day. It reads thus:

Human it is for a son not to have the heart to consent to postmortem examination of his father deceased. The grievance is not revenged until the son has nursed



父死不忍简，自是人子心。
怀仇数年馀，始得伏斧砧。
岂肯自吝死，复将父骨侵？
法吏拘文墨，枉效书生忱。
宁知侠烈士，一死无沉吟。
彼妇激馀风，三年蓄意深。
一朝及其期，地下遂相寻。
似此孝与烈，堪为薄俗箴。

a hatred for several years. How can the son bear to witness the sight of his father's remains being made a mess just for the purpose of saving his own life? Because of their rigid adherence to the laws and decrees, the two magistrates' painstaking efforts are finally made in vain. The son of a fiery character gives his life in defense of his father without the slightest hesitation. Deeply moved by her husband's filial piety, the wife swears she will kill herself three years after her husband's death. When the three-year mourning period is over, the wife gives her life and joins her deceased husband in the underworld. Such filial piety and faithfulness must be honored by all with admiration and praise.



卷 三 十 二

张福娘一心贞守 朱天锡万里符名

诗云：

耕牛无宿草，仓鼠有馀粮。

万事分已定，浮生空自忙。

话说天下凡事皆由前定。如近在目前，远不过数年，预先算得出，还不足为奇。尽有世间未曾有这样事，未曾生这个人，几十年前先有前知的道破了，或是几千里外恰相凑着的，真令人梦想不到。可见数皆前定也。

且说宋时宣和年间，睢阳有一官人，姓刘，名槩，与孺人年皆四十外了。屡生子不育，惟剩得一幼女。刘官人到京师调官去了，这幼女在家又得病而死，将出瘞埋。孺人看他出门，悲痛不胜，哭得发昏，倦坐椅上。只见一个高髻妇人走将进来说道：“孺人何必如此悲哭？”孺人告诉他屡丧嗣息，止存幼女，今又夭亡，官人又不在家这些苦楚。那妇人道：“孺人莫心焦，从此便该得贵子了。官人已有差遣，这几日内就归。归来时节，





Tale 32

Zhang Funiang Resolves to Stay Un-remarried for Integrity Zhu Tianxi Takes a Long Journey to Identify a Name

A poem reads thus:

Oxen often go hungry,
Hamsters always have grain reserves.
Life is transient and everything is predestined,
All efforts will be made in vain.

All the things in the wide world are predestined. It's not at all surprising to foresee what is to happen at present or in the near future. What's unusual and surprising is that one with insight can reveal what will happen to a certain person dozens of years before his birth or unveil what's exactly happening to someone several thousand *li* away. It is thus clear that destiny prevails in everything.

During the first year of the Xuanhe reign (1119-1125) of emperor Song Huizong, Zhao Ji, of the Song Dynasty, there lived an official named Liu Jiang in Suiyang (present-day Shangqiu city in Henan Province). Liu and his wife were both in their early forties. They had several sons, but unfortunately none of them survived. At present, they had an only little daughter. While Liu was in the capital city awaiting to be transferred to another post, this little daughter died of illness at home. On the day the little girl was to be buried, Liu's wife abandoned herself to grief. Then she fell into a chair, looking extremely tired and sleepy.

All of a sudden, a woman wearing a tall bun on the head came to Liu's wife and asked, "Why are you so sad, madam?" Liu's wife told her that she had lost her sons one after another and now her only little daughter had died too, and worse still, her husband was not at home at present. Upon hearing this, the woman said, "Don't worry, madam. Now you're going to have a baby son. Your husband has got a promotion and he is



但往城西魏十二嫂处，与他寻一领旧衣服留着。待生子之后，借一个大银盒子，把衣裙铺着，将孩子安放盒内。略过少时，抱将出来。取他一个小名，或是合住，或是蒙住，即易长易养，再无损折了。可牢牢记取老身之言。”孺人妇道家心性，最喜欢听他的是这些说话。见话得有枝有叶，就问道：“姥姥何处来的，晓得这样事？”妇人道：“你不要管我来处去处，我怜你哭得悲切，又见你贵子将到，故教你个法儿，使你以后生育得实了。”孺人问：“高姓大名？后来好相谢。”妇人道：“我惯救人苦恼做好事，不要人谢的。”说罢，走出门外，不知去向。

果然过得五日，刘官人得调滁州法曹掾，归到家里。孺人把幼女夭亡，又逢着高髻妇人的说话，说了一遍。刘官人感伤了一回，也是死怕了儿女的心肠，见说着妇人之言，便做个不着，也要试试看。况说他得差回来，已此准了，心里有些信他。次日即出西门，遍访魏家。走了二里多路，但只有姓张姓李，姓王姓赵，再没有一家姓魏。刘官人道：“眼见得说话作不得准了。”走回转来，到了城门边，走得口渴。见一茶坊，进去坐下，吃个泡茶。问问主人家，恰是姓魏。店里一个后生，是



coming back home in a couple of days. When he is back, ask him to go to the western outskirts of the town and borrow a used dress from Sister-in-law Wei the Twelfth. After you give birth to the baby, borrow a large silver box and put the used dress in it. Then, place your baby in the silver box. Let the baby stay in the box for a while and then take him out. Give him a nickname like “Baby-covered” or “Baby-enveloped,” and you’ll be able to bring him up easily. Do keep my words in mind!”

Being typical of womenfolk, Liu’s wife was very interested in such remarks. Astounded by the woman’s vivid instructions, Liu’s wife asked, “Where are you from? Why do you know such things?” The woman answered, “Don’t bother about where I come from or where I go. Your sadness moved me to compassion. Moreover, I know you’re going to have a baby son. So, I told you what you need to do to bring up your son.” Liu’s wife asked, “Could I know your name? I’ll repay you for your great kindness.” The woman answered, “I’m in the habit of doing good and helping others out of their sufferings. I don’t need repayment.” Finishing these words, the woman walked out and left, and where she had gone was unknown.

After having been promoted to the post of the administrator of the law section of Chuzhou Prefecture (present-day Chuxian County, Anhui Province) by the imperial court, Liu returned home five days later. His wife told him about their little daughter’s death and her meeting with the woman wearing a tall bun. Liu was deeply grieved at the death of his little daughter. As he had lost all of his children, Liu became worried that he would have no offspring to carry on his family line. Therefore, what that woman had talked about with his wife also aroused his interest. He decided to try his luck. In addition, the woman’s prediction about his promotion had come true. So he was inclined to trust her.

On the next day, Liu got out of the city through the western gate and headed westward to search for the Wei family. He walked over two *li* trying to locate the Wei family, but all his efforts proved fruitless. Returning to the western gate, he felt very thirsty. Then he found a teahouse nearby and got in to have a cup of tea. To his surprise, he learned that the owner of the teahouse was surnamed Wei. The teahouse owner’s nephew, who

主人之侄，排行十一。刘官人见他称呼出来，打动心里，问魏十一道：“你家有兄弟么？”十一道：“有兄弟十二。”刘官人道：“令弟有嫂子了么？”十一道：“娶个弟妇，生过了十个儿子，并无一个损折。见今同居共食，贫家支撑，甚是烦难。”刘官人见有了十二嫂，又是个多子的，讖兆相合，不觉大喜。就把实情告诉他，说屡损幼子及妇人教导向十二嫂假借旧衣之事：“今如此多子，可见魘样之说不为虚妄的。”十一见是个官人，图个往来，心里也喜欢，忙进去对兄弟说了。魏十二就取了自穿的一件旧绢中单衣出来，送与刘官人。刘官人身边取出带来纸钞二贯答他。魏家兄弟断不肯受，道：“但得生下贵公子之时，吃杯喜酒，日后照顾寒家照顾勾了。”刘官人称谢，取了旧衣回家。

不多几时，孺人果然有了妊孕。将五个月，夫妻同赴滁州之任。一日在衙对食，刘官人对孺人道：“依那妇人所言，魏十二嫂已有这人，旧衣已得，生子之兆，显有的据了。却要个大银盒子！吾想盛得孩子的盒子，也好大哩，料想自置不成。甚样人家有这样盒子，好去借得？这却是荒唐了！”孺人道：“正是这话。人家料没有的；就有，我们从那里知道，好与他





was the eleventh child of the family, was attending to the teahouse at the moment. Liu asked Wei the Eleventh, "Do you have brothers?" "I have twelve brothers," replied Wei the Eleventh. Liu asked, "Is your younger brother married?" Wei the Eleventh answered, "Yes, he is. And he's already had ten sons. All of his ten sons are in perfect condition. But life is pretty difficult for them, for there are so many of them and they have to live together."

Upon hearing there was really a Sister-in-law Wei the Twelfth, who had as many as ten sons, Liu was overjoyed. Again the woman's predictions proved to be true. Then Liu told Wei the Eleventh that he had lost his children one after another and a woman had instructed him to come here and borrow a used dress from Sister-in-law Wei the Twelfth. Realizing Liu was an official, Wei the Eleventh desired to have some contacts with him in the days to come. So Wei the Eleventh appeared to be very happy to get acquainted with Liu. Losing no time, Wei the Eleventh went into the inner room and told his younger brother about this matter. Thus Wei the Twelfth picked up one of his used silk dress and gave it to Liu. Liu in return took out some money and handed it to the Wei brothers as a token of thanks. However, the Wei brothers firmly declined it, saying, "We would be very glad if you could just invite us to a drink to celebrate the birth of your son and if you could give us some care in the future." After expressing his thanks, Liu took the used dress and left for home.

Before long, Liu's wife was pregnant. Four or five months after Liu's wife was pregnant, Liu, along with his wife, got to Chuzhou and assumed office. One day, while they were having dinner, Liu said to his wife, "We've found Sister-in-law Wei the Twelfth and borrowed a used dress from her family. That woman's predictions that we'll have a baby son have been partially fulfilled one by one. All this indicates we're really going to have a son. But how can we get a big silver box? I guess a silver box that can hold a baby must be a large one. So, I don't think we can make such a large silver box ourselves. But what a family should have such a large silver box? Who can we turn to for help? The woman's remarks about the silver box are simply ridiculous!" "You're right," said Liu's wife. "Ordinary families won't have such a thing. Furthermore, even though a



借？只是那姥姥说话，句句不妄，且看应验将来。”

夫妻正在疑惑间，刘官人接得府间文书，委他查盘滁州公库。刘官人不敢迟慢，分付库吏取齐了簿籍，凡公库所有，尽皆简出备查。滁州荒僻，库藏萧索，别不见甚好物，独内中存有大银盒二具。刘官人触着心里，又疑道：“何故有此物事？”试问库吏，库吏道：“近日有个钦差内相谭稹到浙西公干，所过州县，必要献上土宜。那盛土宜的，俱要用银做盒子，连盒子多收去。所以州中备得有此。后来内相不打从滁州过，却在别路去了，银盒子得以不用，留在库中收贮，作为公物。”刘官人记在心里，回与孺人说其缘故，共相诧异。

过了几月，生了一子。遂到库中借此银盒，照依妇人所言，用魏十二家旧衣衬在底下，把所生儿子眠在盒子中间。将有一个时辰，才抱他出来，取小名做蒙住。看那盒子底下镌得有字，乃是“宣和庚子年制”。想起妇人在睢阳说话的时节，那盒子还未曾造起，不知为何他先知道了。这儿子后名孝黉，字正甫，



certain family might have one, how can we know about it? But the fact is that most of that woman's predictions have proved true. Let us just wait and see."

While Liu and his wife were assailed with doubts and suspicions, Administrator Liu received an order issued by the prefecture *yamen* to check the storehouse of Chuzhou. Admitting no delay, Liu demanded the storehouse keeper to bring him all the records so as to make an inventory of the things in storage. As Chuzhou was located in a desolate and out-of-the-way place, there were not many goods in the storehouse. Liu didn't find anything valuable in it except two large silver boxes. These two large silver boxes struck a chord in Liu's heart. "How come there are two such silver boxes in the storehouse?" Liu wondered. Then he questioned the storehouse keeper about the two silver boxes. The storehouse keeper answered, "A few days ago, an imperial commissioner called Tan Zhen went to the western region of Zhejiang on business. All the prefectures and counties Tan Zhen was to pass through had to offer him local products. Moreover, the boxes holding the local products must be made of silver and Tan Zhen would also take the boxes away with him. For this reason, the prefecture *yamen* prepared two silver boxes. But, as it later turned out, Tan Zhen didn't pass through Chuzhou. Naturally these two silver boxes were not put to use. So, they're now kept in the storehouse as public property." After he returned home, Administrator Liu told his wife about the story of the silver boxes he had found in the prefecture storehouse, and both considered this matter rather astonishing.

Several months later, Liu's wife gave birth to a son. Liu borrowed a silver box from the storehouse and took it home. As was instructed by that woman, he first placed the used dress on the bottom of the silver box, and then he put the baby into the box. After a while, he took the baby out and named him "Baby-enveloped." Taking a look at the bottom of the silver box, Liu noticed a line of inscription, which read, "Made in the Second Year of the Xuanhe Reign." Actually the silver box had not been made at the time when the woman met Liu's wife in Suiyang in the first year of the Xuanhe reign and told her to get the silver box. It was unknown how that woman had foreseen that such a silver box would be made in the



官到兵部侍郎，果然大贵。高髻妇人之言，无一不验。真是数已前定，并那件物事世间还不曾有，那贵人已该在这里头眠一会，魔样得长成，说过在那里了，可不奇么？

而今说一个人在万里之外，两不相知，这边预取下的名字，与那边原取下的竟自相同。这个定数，还更奇哩。要知端的，先听小子四句口号：

有母将雏横遣离，谁知万里遇还时。

试看两地名相合，始信当年天赐儿。

这回书也是说宋朝，苏州一个官人，姓朱，字景先，单讳着一个铨字。淳熙丙申年间，主管四川茶马司。有个公子名逊，年已二十岁。聘下妻室范氏，是苏州大家。未曾娶得过门，随父往任。那公子青春正当强盛，衙门独处无聊，欲念如火，按纳不下。央人对父亲朱景先说，要先娶一妾以侍枕席。景先道：“男子未娶妻，先娶妾，有此礼否？”公子道：“固无此礼，而今客居数千里之外，只得反经行权，目下图个伴寂寥之计。他日娶了正妻，遣还了他亦无不可。”景先道：“这个也使得。只恐他日溺于情爱，要遣就烦难了。”公子道：“说过了话，男子汉做事，一刀两段，有何烦难！”景先许允。公子遂托衙门中



following year. Later on, Liu's son was formally named Liu Xiaowei, alias Zhengfu. As expected, Liu Xiaowei later achieved the high position of the Vice-minister of the Ministry of War. That woman's predictions were all confirmed by later developments. It is really true everything is predestined.

* * *

Now I'd like to tell you a more amazing story concerning destiny. In our following story, the grandfather gave his grandson a name which turned out to be exactly the same with his present one, though both parties lived tens of thousands of *li* apart and had never seen each other before.

The mother-in-law, breaking the bond,

forced the concubine and her unborn son to leave the Zhus.

Ten thousand *li* apart, none could anticipate

if the son could have the chance to come back.

The Zhus and the concubine happened to give the boy the same name

Tianxi, meaning godsend.

Undoubtedly this boy must have been sent by Heaven at that time to the Zhu family.

This tale is about a government official from Suzhou who lived in the Chunxi reign (1174-1190) of emperor Xiaozong, Zhao Shen, of the Song Dynasty. The official's name was Zhu Quan, alias Jingxian. He was the director of the Department of Tea and Horses in Sichuan. He had a son by the name of Zhu Xun, who was then twenty years old and was betrothed to a woman from a wealthy and influential family surnamed Fan in Suzhou. However, before he was married, the young man followed his father to his office in Sichuan. Zhu Xun was in his prime and full of vigor. Gradually he found life in his father's residence was rather boring. Unable to curb his desires, he asked someone to talk to his father on his behalf to request that he be allowed to take a concubine first. His father Jingxian said, "I wonder whether there's such a rite that allows one to take a concubine before a wife." The son answered, "No, certainly not. But I am right now thousands of *li* away from home. To rid myself of loneliness, I have to go against convention. When I marry a wife in future, there will be nothing wrong in dismissing the concubine."



一个健捕胡鸿，出外访寻。胡鸿访得成都张姓家里有一女子，名曰福娘，姿容美丽，性格温柔，来与公子说了。将着财礼银五十两，取将过来为妾。福娘与公子年纪相仿，正是：

少女少郎，其乐难当。

两情欢爱，如胶似漆，过了一年。

不想苏州范家，见女儿长成，女婿远方随任，未有还期，恐怕担阁了两下青春，一面整办妆奁，父亲范翁亲自伴送到任上成亲。将入四川境中，先着人传信到朱家衙内。已知朱公子一年之前娶得有妾，便留住行李不行，写书去与亲家道：

先妻后妾，世所恒有。妻未成婚，妾已入室，其义何在？今小女于归戒途，吉礼将成，必去骍枝，始谐连理。此白。

看官听说：这个先妾后妻，果不是正理。然男子有妾，亦是常事。今日既已娶在室中了，只合讲明了嫡庶之分，不得以先后至有僭越，便可相安，才是处分得妥的。争奈人家女子，无有不妒。只一句有妾，即已不相应了，必是逐得去，方拔了眼中之钉。与他商量，岂能相容？做父亲的有大见识，当以正



Jingxian said, "That sounds alright, but you will find it difficult to part from the concubine once you become intimate with her." The young man said, "A man should be as good as his word. Why should it be difficult to break off with her?" Then Jingxian granted his son's request. The young man asked an able runner called Hu Hong to find him a concubine. Hu Hong learned that the family of the Zhangs in Chengdu had a daughter named Funiang, who was both beautiful and genteel. Hu Hong told the young man about her. The young master presented a gift of fifty taels of silver to take the girl as his concubine. Funiang and the young man were about the same age, so the young couple had boundless pleasure in living together. Thus they spent a year in mutual attachment.

The father of the Fan family in Suzhou became very much concerned over the waste of youth in his grown-up daughter and would-be son-in-law, who at the moment was living so far away from her with his office-holding father, because there was no sign of his return in the foreseeable future. So the father prepared a dowry and set off with his daughter for Sichuan in the hope of fulfilling the marriage. As they got close to the border of Sichuan, a messenger was sent to inform the young man of the Zhu family of their imminent arrival. After learning of the young master's having taken a concubine one year earlier, Fan stopped their journey and sent a letter to Zhu Jingxian, reading:

It is always acceptable to take a concubine after marriage, but how can the moral system allow a concubine to come before the wife? At present, my daughter is on the way for her marriage along with her dowry. The concubine must be disposed of before the marriage can be completed.

Readers, it is not in accordance with the convention for a man to take a concubine before marriage, though it is common that a man keeps concubines after marriage. But since a concubine, in this case, had already been obtained, it would be realistic to make clear the wife's superior status and to warn the concubine that she mustn't take her advantage of earlier arrival so as to bring the family life into harmony. However, all women are jealous. A woman can't stand hearing the word "concubine." A concubine is a thorn in the flesh which should be pulled out. Who could talk the bride into tolerating a concubine? A prudent father should speak



言劝勉，说：“媵妾虽贱，也是良家儿女。既已以身事夫，便亦是终身事体，如何可轻说一个去他？使他别嫁，亦非正道。到此地位，只该大度含容，和气相与，等人颂一个贤惠，他自然做小伏低，有何不可？”若父亲肯如此说，那未婚女子虽怎生嫉妒，也不好渗渗癩癩，就放出手段，要长要短的。当得人家父亲，护着女儿，不晓得调停为上，正要帮他立出界墙来，那管这一家增了好些难处的事！只这一封书去，有分交：锦窝爱妾，一朝剑析延津；远道孤儿，万里珠还合浦。正是：

世间好物不坚牢，彩云易散琉璃碎。

无缘对面不相逢，有缘千里能相会。

朱景先接了范家之书，对公子说道：“我前日曾说过的。今日你岳父以书相责，原说他不过。他又说必先遣妾，然后成婚。你妻已送在境上，讨了回话，然后前进。这也不得不从他了。”公子心里委是不舍得张福娘，然前日要娶妾时，原说过了娶妻遣还的话，今日父亲又如此说，丈人又立等回头，若不遣妾，便成亲不得。真也是左难右难，眼泪从肚子里落下来。只得把



to his daughter with reason, saying, “Though the concubine is humble, she’s from a good family; since she has given herself to the young man, she will be willing to serve him for the rest of her life. How can we mistreat her by renouncing her? Besides, to force her into a marriage with someone else is not completely an act of righteousness. In view of the present condition, I suggest that you take a noble-minded stance and treat her with generosity, which will eventually earn you a reputation of virtue. The concubine will undoubtedly be satisfied with her inferior family standing. Isn’t that the good way to solve the problem?”

If the father had said so, the girl to be married might not have gone to such great lengths to get what she had wanted, even though she was consumed by jealousy. The father of the girl, however, would act only in the interest of his daughter and made no attempt at reconciliation, certainly unmindful of what trouble might arise in the young master’s family. This very letter would fuse our story: Zhu Xun’s lovely concubine is dismissed, and the fatherless son returns to his ancestral home from ten thousand *li* away.

Good times don’t last long.

Pinky clouds disappear easy at dawn.

If not fated, people miss each other though they meet face to face.

If fated, they come together though a thousand *li* apart.

Zhu Jingxian got the letter and said to his son, “At the very beginning, I told you about the possible consequences of your taking a concubine. Now your father-in-law is blaming us in his letter, and we are in no position to counter him. He’s requesting that you dispose of your concubine before your marriage to his daughter. Your wife has been escorted to the border of our region and will not come to meet you until you give her a satisfactory answer. I think we will have to meet their request.” The young man could not bear to tear himself away from his concubine. However, he had made the promise earlier to get rid of the concubine upon his marriage. Now his father was pushing him and his father-in-law was awaiting an immediate reply of compliance. If he turned them down, his marriage would be impossible. He was in a predicament, feeling greatly dismayed. He told Zhang Funiang about his state of mind.



这些话与张福娘说了。张福娘道：“当初不要我时，凭得你家。今既娶了进门，我没有得罪，须赶我去不得。便做讨大娘来时，我只是尽礼奉事他罢了，何必要得我去？”公子道：“我怎么舍得你去？只是当初娶你时节，原对爹爹说过，待成正婚之日，先行送还。今爹爹把前言责我，范家丈人又带了女儿住在境上，要等送了你去，然后把女儿过门。我也处在两难之地，没奈何了。”张福娘道：“妾乃是贱辈，唯君家张主。君家既要遣去，岂可强住，以阻大娘之来？但妾身有件不得已事，要去也去不得了。”公子道：“有甚不得已事？”张福娘道：“妾身上已怀得有孕，此须是君家骨血。妾若回去了，他日生出儿女来，到底是朱家之人，难道又好那里去得不成？把似他日在家守着，何如今日不去的是？”公子道：“你若不去，范家不肯成婚，可不担阁了一生婚姻正事？就强得他肯了，进门以后必是没有好气，相待得你刻薄起来，反为不美。不如权避了出去，等我成亲过了，慢慢看个机会，劝转了他，接你来同处，方得无碍。”张福娘没奈何，正是：

人生莫作妇人身，百年苦乐由他人。

福娘主意不要回去，却是堂上主张发遣，公子一心要遵依丈人说话，等待成亲。福娘四不拗六，徒增些哭哭啼啼，怎生撇强得过？只得且自回家去守着。



Funiang said, "It would be all right if originally your family had not taken me as your concubine. Now that you have taken me into your house and I did not commit any offenses, it's not fair for you to throw me out now because of your marriage. On the other hand, you can rest assured that I will show respect and courtesy in serving your wife once she moves into the family. Why do you have to drive me out?"

The young man said, "I am by no means willing to let you go. I promised my father at the time of your coming that, when I formally married, you would be sent back home. Now my father is urging me to make good my word. My father-in-law and his daughter are currently waiting on the border, waiting for me to send you away before the marriage is completed. I'm in a dilemma." Zhang Funiang said, "I'm without privileges and at your disposal. If you resolve to get rid of me, how can I refuse to leave and stop your wife from coming into marriage? However, something has happened to me that keeps me from leaving you now." The young man asked, "What's happened to you?" Zhang Funiang said, "I'm expecting. It is an offspring of yours. If I go home now, I'll give birth to a child later. Since the child is yours, how can you deny it a place in your family? If you eventually decide to take the child home, it would be better for me to stay here right now."

The young man said, "If you stay, the Fan family will reject the marriage. That will ruin my whole life. Besides, even if my wife is forced to accept you into the family, you can't expect to be treated well by her in future. If you're resented all the time, that'll make your life miserable. You'd better leave for home now. I'm assuring you that I'll talk to my wife and get you back sometime after the marriage." Funiang was silent. This is exactly the scenario that:

One should not choose to be a woman if a choice is available;

Otherwise one chooses to give up the choice of life to someone else.

Funiang was unwilling to leave, but the young man's father insisted on sending her away and the young man would not turn down his future father-in-law's request for a marriage. Unable to reverse the course of the matter, Funiang sobbed sadly and left for home.

At once the family of Zhu sent a message to the family of Fan. The



这朱家即把此信报与范家，范翁方才同女儿进发。昼夜兼程，行到衙中，择吉成亲。朱公子男人心性，一似荷叶上露珠儿，这边缺了，那边又圆。且全了范氏伉俪之欢，管不得张福娘仳离之苦，夫妻两下且自过得恩爱，此时便没有这妾也罢了。

明年，朱景先茶马差满，朝廷差少卿王渥交代，召取景先还朝。景先拣定八月离任。此时福娘已将分娩，央人来说，要随了同归苏州。景先道：“论来有了妊孕，原该带了同去为是。但途中生产，好生不便。且看他造化，若得目下即产，便好带去了。”福娘再三来说：“已嫁从夫。当时只为避取大娘，暂回母家，原无绝理。况腹中之子，是那个的骨血，可以弃了竟去么？不论即产与不产，嫁鸡逐鸡飞，自然要一同去的。”朱景先是仕宦中人，被这女子把正理来讲，也有些说他不过。说与夫人，劝化范氏媳妇，要他接了福娘来衙中，一同东归。

范氏已先见公子说过两番，今翁姑来说，不好违命。他是诗礼之家出身的，晓得大体，一面打点接取福娘了。怎当得：

天有不测风云，人有旦夕祸福。

朱公子是色上要紧的人，看他未成婚时，便如此忍耐不得，急于取妾，以致害得个张福娘上不得，下不得，岂不是个



future father-in-law Fan then renewed the journey with his daughter. A trip of several days and nights brought them to the office of Zhu. An auspicious date was picked and the marriage was completed. The young master was indeed a man by nature and his feeling was as inconstant as the dewdrops rolling on a leaf. The newlyweds were in marital bliss, utterly ignoring the sadness-stricken Zhang Funiang. It seemed to them all right that the concubine was absent.

The following year, Zhu Jingxian's term of office expired. The imperial court sent a ranking official, named Wang Wo, as his successor and summoned Zhu Jingxian back to the capital city. Zhu Jingxian decided to leave in the eighth month. Funiang, close to giving birth, sent a message asking to be taken to Suzhou. Zhu Jingxian said, "She should be with us since she's pregnant. But it will be an annoyance if she gives birth on the journey. If she has the child before our departure, we'll take her with us. Let's see what fortune befalls her." Funiang sent in a few more messages pleading, "What I've said is that I was one of your family before. I moved out only for the sake of the arrival of the young master's wife. I see no reason for us to break off. Besides, the baby I'm carrying is the young master's. How can you leave it behind and feel at ease? It's only rational for you to take me along with you back to your native place no matter whether I give birth before or after the departure, because I'm intrinsically part of your family." As a ranking official, Zhu Jingxian fell short of words to argue with the woman. So he talked to his wife, and they went together to try to persuade their daughter-in-law into taking Funiang back and bringing her along with them.

The young wife had learned of this matter earlier from her husband. Now her father-in-law brought it up again and put more pressure on her. Being from a civilized family, she was quite sensible, and finding it irrational to haggle over the matter, she made herself ready to receive Funiang into the family. However, the change in weather is beyond man's ken, the fortune or misfortune is at fate's whim.

The young man was a womanizer. Before his marriage, he had been impatient to wait until marriage and had taken a concubine. As a result, Zhang Funiang was victimized and abandoned. The young master was



喉急的？今与范氏夫妻，你贪我爱，又遣了张福娘，新换了一番境界，把从前毒火，多注在一处，朝夜探讨。早已染了痲怯之症，吐血丝，发夜热，医家只戒少近女色。景先与夫人商量道：“儿子已得了病，一个媳妇，还要劝他分床而宿。若张氏女子再娶将来，分明是油锅内添上一把柴了。还只是立意回了他，不带去罢。”“只可惜他已将分娩，是男是女，这是我朱家之后，舍不得撇他。”景先道：“儿子媳妇，多是青年。只要儿子调理得身体好了，那怕少了孙子？趁着张家女子尚未分娩，黑白未分，还好辞得。他若不日之间产下一子，倒不好撇他了。而今只把途间不便生产去说，十分说不倒时，权约他日后来相接便是。”计议已定，当下力辞了张福娘，离了成都，归还苏州去了。

张福娘因朱家不肯带去，在家哭了几场。他心里一意守着腹中消息。朱家去得四十日后，生下一子，因道少不得要归朱家，只当权寄在四川，小名就唤做寄儿。福娘既生得有儿子，就甘贫守节，誓不嫁人。随你父母乡里百般说谕，并不改心。只绩纺补纫，资给度日，守那寄儿长成。

寄儿生得眉目疏秀，不同凡儿。与里巷同伴一般的孩童戏耍，他每每做了众童的头，自称是官人，把众童呼来喝去，俨然让他居尊的模样。到了七八岁，张福娘送他上学从师，所习



truly a lecher. His marriage with Fan witnessed his continuous unrestrained indulgence in sex. After Zhang Funiang had left, a fresh eruption of passion plunged him into insatiable acts with his newlywed. Consequently he contracted consumption, spitting blood and running fever at night. The doctor warned him of the danger of continued sexual indulgence. Jingxian said to his wife, "Our son's sick. We will have to let him and his wife sleep separately. If Zhang Funiang joins him now, that will add oil to the flames. I think we should leave Zhang Funiang here instead of taking her along with us." Jingxian's wife said, "It's a shame that she's going to give birth. Since the baby is of our descent, no matter whether it's a boy or girl, it's hard to leave it."

Jingxian said, "Our son and daughter-in-law are pretty young. If our son gets back his health, we won't need to worry about obtaining grandsons. It's a good time now to desert Zhang Funiang before she has the baby. Otherwise she may give birth anytime later with us, and it would be difficult to renounce her at that time. We can use the inconvenience of childbirth on the journey as an excuse. If we can't talk her round, make a promise that we will bring her to join us in the future." After making up their minds, they firmly turned down Zhang Funiang and left Chengdu for Suzhou.

Left behind, Zhang Funiang wept sadly many times. She waited on herself attentively before the day of birth. Forty days after the departure of the Zhu family, she gave birth to a baby boy. To her mind, the boy would sooner or later go back to the Zhu family. For the present, she named him Ji'er, meaning living temporarily away from home, and she raised him in her home in Sichuan. With her son, she would rather live in poverty than remarry, totally ignoring whatever her parents and neighbors said about her. A rough life of twisting hemp threads and mending clothes for others kept her and her son alive.

Under her care, the boy grew up to be handsome with unusual features. Among his peers, he always stood at the head, addressing himself as a "government official" and bossing others around in loftiness while he was playing with them. At age seven or eight, Funiang sent him to school. He had an excellent memory and was quick to learn the Confucian classics



诗书，一览成诵。福娘一发把做了大指望，坚心守去，也不管朱家日后来认不认的事了。

且不说福娘苦守教子。那朱家自回苏州，与川中相隔万里，彼此杳不闻知。过了两年，是庚子岁，公子朱逊病不得痊，呜呼哀哉。范氏虽做了四年夫妻，倒有两年不同房，寸男尺女皆无。朱景先又只生得这个公子，并无以下小男小女，一死只当绝了后代了。

有诗为证

不孝有三无后大，谁料儿亡竟绝孙。

早知今日凄凉景，何故当时忽妾妊？

朱景先虽然仕宦荣贵，却是上奉老母，下抚寡媳，膝下并无儿孙，光景孤单，悲苦无聊，再无开眉欢笑之日。直至乙巳年，景先母太夫人又丧，景先心事，一发只有痛伤。此时连前日儿子带妊还妾之事，尽多如隔了一世的，那里还记得影响起来。

又道是无巧不成话。四川后任茶马王渥少卿，闻知朱景先了了母忧，因是他交手的前任官，多有首尾的，特差人赍了贖仪奠帛，前来致吊。你道来的是甚么人？正是那年朱公子托他讨张福娘的旧役健步胡鸿。他随着本处一个巡简邹圭到苏州公干的便船，来至朱家。送礼已毕，朱景先问他川中旧事，是件



by heart. His intelligence placed such high hopes in Funiang's mind that her confidence was further strengthened in remaining single with her son, unmindful whether the Zhus would acknowledge the boy's legitimate identity.

As Funiang spent her days with her son in Sichuan, the Zhu family, after returning to Suzhou, tens of thousands of *li* away, lost contact with her. Two years later, the young master failed to recover from his illness and died. His wife had been married to him for four years, but had slept separately from him for the last two. She had had no children. The young master was the only son of Zhu Jingxian, and his death left the family heirless. The following lines may bear testimony for this:

Of the three kinds of unfilial acts,
 the greatest is not to have a son to carry on the family line.
 It is a misfortune that the son dies without offspring.
 He would not have ignored that the concubine was expecting,
 Had he foreseen the misery and wretchedness in the evening of his life.

Zhu Jingxian scarcely benefited from the honor and wealth his government career had brought him. He had to attend to his aged mother and widowed daughter-in-law. The lack of grandchildren rendered his later years depressing. A few years following the death of his son, his mother passed away and Jingxian sank deeper into grief. By now he had completely forgotten the pregnant concubine his son had left behind years before, as if ages had elapsed.

Again as the old saying goes, "A tale counts on coincidence." Wang Wo, the succeeding director of the Department of Tea and Horses in Sichuan, learned of the grief his immediate predecessor, Zhu Jingxian, sustained over the death of his mother, and sent a runner with brocade to offer condolences. Who was this runner? He was exactly the able runner Hu Hong, who the young master had entrusted with the concubine-seeking task and who had obtained Zhang Funiang for the young master. Hu Hong took a ride on the boat of Zou Gui, a patrol runner going to Suzhou on business, and came to the home of Zhu Jingxian. After accepting the gift, Zhu Jingxian asked him about former happenings in Sichuan. Hu Hong answered all his questions in full detail. Zhu Jingxian had been in



备陈。朱景先是个无情无绪之人，见了手下旧使役的，偏喜是长是短的婆儿气，消遣闷怀。

那胡鸿住在朱家了几时，讲了好些闲说话，也看见朱景先家里事体光景在心，便问家人道：“可惜大爷青年短寿。今不曾生得有公子，还与他立个继嗣么？”家人道：“立是少不得立他一个，总是别人家的肉，那里煨得热？所以老爷还不曾提起。”胡鸿道：“假如大爷留得一股真骨血在世上，老爷喜欢么？”家人道：“可知道喜欢！却那里讨得出？”胡鸿道：“有是有些缘故在那里，只不知老爷意思怎么样。”家人见说得蹊跷，便问道：“你说的话，那里起？”胡鸿道：“你每岂忘记了大爷在成都曾娶过妾么？”家人道：“娶是娶过，后来因娶大娘子，还了他娘家了。”胡鸿道：“而今他生得有儿子。”家人道：“他别嫁了丈夫，就生得有儿子，与我家甚么相干？”胡鸿道：“冤屈！冤屈！他那曾嫁人？还是你家带去的种哩！”家人道：“我每不敢信你这话。对老爷说了，你自说去。”

家人把胡鸿之言，一一来禀朱景先。朱景先却记起那年离任之日，张家女子将次分娩，再三要同到苏州之事，明知有遗腹在彼地。见说是生了儿子，且惊且喜，急唤胡鸿来问他的信。胡鸿道：“小人不知老爷主意怎么样，小人不敢乱讲出来。”朱景先道：“你只说前日与大爷做妾的那个女子，而今怎么样了就是。”胡鸿道：“不敢瞒老爷说，当日大爷娶那女子，即是小人在里头做事的，所以备知端的。大爷遣他出去之时，元是有娠。后来老爷离任得四十多日，即产下一个公子了。”景先道：



desolation for a time. Now seeing his former subordinate, he liked to chatter about experiences of the past to dispel his present distress.

Hu Hong stayed at Zhu's place for some time, and talked a lot with members of the host family. Seeing their present state, he said to one servant, "The young master died so young. It's a shame. He left no son behind. Is the family planning to adopt a son as heir?" The servant replied, "Adoption is inevitable. But after all it is not the family's blood and flesh. How can he feel deeply attached to the family? So my old master has not mentioned this matter yet."

Hu Hong then said, "If the young master left one offspring, how would your old master like that?" The servant replied, "He would surely be overjoyed. But how could that have happened?" Hu Hong said, "Well, there's a possibility. But I wonder whether your old master is serious about the matter." Confused and interested, the servant asked, "What do you mean?" Hu Hong said, "Do you remember that the young master once took a concubine?" "Yes," the servant said, "he did. But, after his marriage, he sent the concubine back home." Hu Hong then said, "But she gave birth to a son." The servant said, "So she remarried and gave birth to a son. What does her son have to do with our family?" Hu Hong replied, "You've wronged her! She has never remarried. The truth is the seed was planted in your family!" The servant said, "I could hardly believe what you've said. You'd better talk to my old master."

The servant told Zhu Jingxian what Hu Hong had said. Zhu Jingxian recalled that when he left his position Zhang Funiung was going to give birth and had begged to be taken back with them to Suzhou. He realized that their family would have a child born in an alien place. Now the news that the child was a boy both surprised and delighted him. He hastily called Hu Hong for further inquiry. Hu Hong said, "I didn't know how you would react to this matter, so I didn't bring it up." Zhu Jingxian said, "Tell me about the young master's concubine. What happened to her?" Hu Hong said, "To tell you the truth, I helped the young master attain the concubine, so I know everything about her. She was expecting when sent back home by the young master. She gave birth to a son forty days after your departure." Zhu Jingxian asked, "Where's the boy now?" Hu Hong



“而今见在那里？”胡鸿道：“这个公子生得好不清秀伶俐，极会读书。而今在娘身边，母子相守，在那里过日。”景先道：“难道这女子还不嫁人？”胡鸿道：“说这女子也可怜！他缝衣补裳，趁钱度日，养那儿子，供给读书，不肯嫁人。父母多曾劝他，乡里也有想他的，连小人也巴不得他有这日，在里头再赚两数银子。怎当得他心坚如铁，再说不入。后来看见儿子会读了书，一发把这条门路绝了。”景先道：“若果然如此，我朱氏一脉可以不绝，莫大之喜了。只是你的说话可信么？”胡鸿道：“小人是老爷旧役，从来老实，不会说谎。况此女是小人的首尾，小人怎得有差？”景先道：“虽然如此，我嗣续大事非同小可。今路隔万里，未知虚实。你一介小人，岂可因你一言，造次举动得？”胡鸿道：“老爷信不得小人一个的言语，小人附舟来的是巡简邹圭，他也是老爷的旧吏。老爷问他，他备知端的。”

朱景先见说话有来因，巴不得得知一个详细，即差家人请那邹巡简来。邹巡简见是旧时本官相召，不敢迟慢，忙写了禀帖，来见朱景先。朱景先问他蜀中之事，他把张福娘守贞教子，与那儿子聪明俊秀不比寻常的话，说了一遍。与胡鸿所说，丝毫不差。景先喜得打跌，进去与夫人及媳妇范氏备言其故。合家惊喜道：“若得如此，绝处逢生，祖宗之大庆也！”景先分付备治酒饭，管待邹巡简，与邹巡简商量川中接他母子来苏州



replied, "This boy is handsome and bright. He's good at learning. Now he and his mother, both of them, are living together."

Jingxian asked, "Did this woman not remarry?" Hu Hong answered, "I feel sorry for her. She's lived on a tight budget by mending clothes, and she has managed to support her son in school. She refused to remarry. Her parents often tried to persuade her in this regard, and some neighbors have wanted to marry her. Even I myself hoped to make a little money by playing a matchmaker for her. But she has stood firm and no one has been able to talk her round. When she saw that her son was an excellent pupil, she became even more resolute."

Zhu Jingxian said, "If that is the case, my family name will be carried on. How happy I am! But are you sure what you've said is true?" Hu Hong answered, "I used to be your subordinate, an honest man, not a liar. Furthermore, I handled the business concerning this woman from the very beginning and know every detail of it. How could anything be wrong?" Zhu Jingxian said, "It sounds believable. But the heir of my family is no trifle. They're tens of thousands of li away from here, and I'm not sure of their present situation. You're only a runner. How can I venture on something I've obtained by word of mouth only from you?" Hu Hong said, "If you don't believe me, you can double-check with Zou Gui, the Patrol Runner, also one of your former subordinates. I came here with him in his boat."

Zhu Jingxian realized that the news was not groundless and thus he really wanted to make sure of it. So he sent for Zou Gui. Seeing himself called by his former superior, Patrol Runner Zou did not delay in completing a visiting card and soon arrived. At Zhu Jingxian's inquiry about the matter, he recounted Zhang Funiang's resolution to remain unmarried and to educate her son, and he described her son's extraordinary features and talents. His narrative fitted Hu Hong's story perfectly. Zhu Jingxian went into raptures. He went inside to tell it to his wife and daughter-in-law. The whole family was in great happiness, saying, "If this is true, we're seeing the hope of survival in an impasse. Congratulations to our ancestors!" Zhu Jingxian ordered a dinner to be prepared for the patrol runner and then talked to him about bringing the



说话。邹巡简道：“此路迢迢，况一个女人，一个孩子，跋涉艰难，非有大力，不能周全得直到这里。小官如今公事已完，早晚回蜀。恩主除非乘此便，致书那边当道，支持一路舟车之费。小官自当效犬马之力，着落他母子起身，一径到府上，方可无误。”景先道：“足下所言，实是老成之见。下官如今写两封书，一封写与制置使留尚书，一封即写与茶马王少卿，托他周置一应路上事体，保全途中母子无虞。至于两人在那里收拾起身之事，全仗足下与胡鸿照管停当。下官感激不尽，当有后报。”邹巡简道：“此正小官与胡鸿报答恩主之日，敢不随便尽心，曲护小公子到府？恩主作速写起书来，小官早晚即行也。”朱景先遂一面写起书来。书云：

铨不禄，母亡子夭，目前无孙。前发蜀时，有成都女子张氏，为儿妾，怀娠留彼。今据旧胥巡简邹圭及旧役胡鸿，俱言业已获雄，今计八龄矣。遗孽万里，实系寒宗如线。欲致其还吴，而伶仃母子，跋涉非易。敢祈鼎力覆庇，使舟车无虞。非但骨肉得以会合，实令祖宗藉以绵延，感激非可名喻也。铨白。

一样发书二封，附与邹巡简将去。就便赏了胡鸿，致谢王少卿



mother and son to Suzhou.

Patrol Runner Zou said, "It's going to be a long journey, and it will be hard for her and her son, woman and boy, to trek over the rough roads. Without substantial help, they cannot make it. Since I'm finished with my business here, and am going back pretty soon, you can take advantage of my return trip by writing a letter to the authorities there and providing the traveling expenses. I will do my best to bring mother and son here. Arrangements like this should be safe." Jingxian said, "That is the shrewd vision of experience. I'm going to write two letters, one to Minister Liu of the Department of the Military and Security and another to Wang Wo, director of the Department of Tea and Horses, requesting that they make arrangements for the journey and make sure that the mother and son will be alright on the way here. As for their packing and departure, I have to entrust you and Hu Hong to take care of everything. I will appreciate it very much, and you will be rewarded later." Zou Gui said, "This is a way that Hu Hong and I can return the kindness you showed us in the past. How could we treat slightly the mission to bring the little master here? Please compose the letters, my kind master. I'll take off soon." Zhu Jingxian started to write the letter, which read as follows:

I, Zhu Quan, an unblessed man, have lost my mother and son. I have no grandson. During my tenure in office in Sichuan years ago, my son had a concubine called Zhang and left her behind pregnant. Now according to the reports of Zou Gui, one of my former patrols, and Hu Hong, one of my former runners, she gave birth to a boy and the boy is now eight years old. The deserted offspring in an alien land reveals my family's slim line of descent. I mean to let the mother and son come here to join us. However, the journey is not easy for them. I am presenting this request for your assistance in their travel by boat and carriage so that we can have a family reunion and maintain the succession of our family name. My gratitude is beyond expression. Zhu Quan reporting.

He prepared two copies of the letter and gave them to Patrol Runner Zou. At the same time he rewarded Hu Hong and extended his gratitude for the gift that Wang Wo sent to him in terms of the condolences on the death of his mother. In addition he gave the two men some money for

相吊之礼。各厚赠盘费，千叮万嘱，两人受托而去。朱景先道是既有上司主张，又有旧役帮衬，必是停当得来的，合家日夜只望好音，不题。

且说邹巡简与胡鸿，回去到了川中。邹巡简将留尚书的书，去至府中递过。胡鸿也回覆了王少卿的差使，就递了旧茶马朱景先谢帖并书一封。王少卿遂问胡鸿这书内的详细，胡鸿一一说了。王少卿留在心上，就分付胡鸿道：“你先去他家通此消息，教母子收拾打叠停当了，来禀着我。我早晚乘便，周置他起身就路便是。”

胡鸿领旨，竟到张家见了福娘，备述身被差遣，直到苏州朱家作吊太夫人的事。福娘忙问：“朱公子及合家安否？”胡鸿道：“公子已故了五六年了。”张福娘大哭一场。又问公子身后事体，胡鸿道：“公子无嗣，朱爷终日烦恼。偶然说起娘子这边有了儿子，娘子教他读书，苦守不嫁。朱爷不信，遂问得邹巡简之言相同，十分欢喜。有两封书，托这边留制使与王少卿，要他每设法护送着娘子与小官人到苏州。我方才见过少卿了。少卿叫我先来通知你母子，早晚有便，就要请你们动身也。”张福娘前番要跟回苏州，是他本心，因不得自繇，只得强留在彼，又不肯嫁人，如此苦守。今见朱家要来接他，正是叶落归根事务，心下岂不自喜？一面谢了胡鸿报信，一面对儿子说了，打点东归。只看王少卿发付。



traveling and made repeated requests regarding their mission before they departed. Zhu Jingxian thought that, with the assistance of the local authorities and his former subordinates, everything would be alright, so the whole family settled down to patient waiting.

Patrol Runner Zou and Hu Hong made their way back to Sichuan. Zou Gui took the letter to Minister Liu. Hu Hong reported to Wang Wo on his completion of business and presented to him the note of thanks and letter from Zhu Jingxian. Wang Wo asked Hu Hong about the business concerned in the letter. Hu Hong answered in detail. Then Wang Wo told Hu Hong, "Go and tell the mother and son about this and let them prepare for the trip. Then report back to me. I'll make sure they get on the road soon."

Accepting the mission, Hu Hong went directly to see Zhang Funiang, telling her of his business trip to Suzhou regarding condolences on the death of Zhu Jingxian's mother. Funiang eagerly inquired for news about the young master and the rest of the family. Hu Hong told her, "The young master died five or six years ago." Upon hearing this, Zhang Funiang broke into tears. Then she asked about what had happened after his death. Hu Hong said, "Without issue from the young master, the old master was despairing day and night. I touched upon the subject of your life with your son, your discipline of your son regarding education and your resolution to remain unmarried. Master Zhu was not convinced until he double-checked with Patrol Runner Zou. Then he was delighted. He wrote two letters, asking Minister Liu and Lord Wang to make arrangements for your trip to Suzhou. I have just come back from meeting with Lord Wang and he told me to let you know that you should get ready for the trip. You and your son, the little master, should get ready for your journey soon."

Years before, Zhang Funiang had longed to go with the Zhu family back to Suzhou, but was rejected. She had had to stay in Sichuan and led a rough and unmarried life. Now the family was bringing her to Suzhou, just as a falling leaf finally finds its settling place at the roots of the tree. How could she help but get excited? She expressed her thanks for Hu Hong's bringing the message, and then told her son to pack for the trip

王少卿因会着留制使，同提起朱景先托致遗孙之事，一齐道这是完全人家骨肉的美事，我辈当力任之。适有蜀中进士冯震武，要到临安，有舟东下。其路必经苏州，且舟中宽敞，尽可附人。王少卿知得，报与留制使，各发柬与冯进士说了。如此两位大头脑去说那些小附舟之事，你道敢不依从么？冯进士分付了船户，将好舱口分别得内外的，收拾洁净，专等朱家家小下船。留制使与王少卿各赠路费、茶果、银两，即着邹巡简、胡鸿两人赍发张福娘母子动身，复着胡鸿防送到苏州。张福娘随别了自家家里，同了八岁儿子寄儿，上在张进士船上。张进士晓得是缙绅家属，又是制使、茶马使所托，加意照管，自不必说。一路进发，尚未得到。

这边朱景先家里，日日盼望消息，真同大旱望雨。一日，遇着朝廷南郊礼成，大赍恩典，侍从官员，当荫一子，无子即孙。朱景先待报有子孙来，目前实是没有；待说没有来，已着人四川勾当去了。虽是未到，不是无指望的，难道虚了恩典不成？心里计较道：“宁可先报了名字去，他日可把人来补荫。”主意已定，只要取下一个名字，就好填了。想一想道：“还是取一个甚么名字好？”

有恩须赁子和孙，争奈庭前未有人。

万里已迎遗腹孽，先将名讳报金门。





that was being arranged by Wang Wo.

Wang Wo met with Minister Liu and discussed Zhu Jingxian's recovery of the grandson. They said to each other, "It will be a happy family reunion for Zhu Jingxian. We should do our best to help him accomplish the work." It so happened that a *jinshi* called Feng Zhenwu was about to depart for Lin'an via Suzhou by boat. His boat was spacious enough for a few more passengers. Having learned of this, Wang Wo reported the matter to Minister Liu, and then they separately sent letters to the *jinshi*. With two ranking officials looking into this minor business of requesting a ride for two extra boat passengers, how could the *jinshi* refuse? Accordingly, he told the boatman to partition the cabin and clean it up. Minister Liu and Wang Wo presented Zhang Funiang and her son with traveling expenses, tea, dried fruit and silver, and asked Patrol Runner Zou Gui and Hu Hong to take care of them as they set off on their way. Hu Hong was ordered to escort the mother and son to Suzhou.

Zhang Funiang bid farewell to her own family and got aboard the boat. Knowing that they were the dependents of a high official and it was a special mission from Minister Liu and Director Wang, the *jinshi* showed no negligence in taking care of them all the way.

Meanwhile, Zhu Jingxian was waiting anxiously at home as if a rainfall was expected in a land of long drought. One day the imperial court announced that they would hold a ceremony of rites south of the capital city to grant privileges to one son of each government official or the grandson if the son was not available. Zhu Jingxian wanted to register his grandson, who had not yet arrived though men had been sent to bring him from Sichuan. If he waited until his grandson's arrival, this good chance to receive the imperial privileges would slip away. Therefore, he decided he would enter a name now and have the ceremony later after his grandson arrived. With this plan in mind, he only needed to write down a name for his grandson in the book to be sent to the imperial court. He pondered, "What name should I give him?"

Bounties bestowed by the monarch should go to sons and grandsons.

What a pity Zhu Jingxian has neither a son nor a grandson at the present.

Lucky he is his posthumous grandson is coming to him from a thousand

朱景先辗转了一夜，未得佳名。次早，心下猛然道：“蜀中张氏之子，果收拾回来，此乃是数年绝望之后，从天降下来的，岂非天赐？《诗》云：‘天锡公纯嘏。’取名天锡，既含蓄天幸得来的意思，又觉字义古雅，甚妙！甚妙！”遂把有孙朱天锡填在册子上，报到仪部去。准了恩荫，只等蜀中人来顶补。

不多几时，忽然胡鸿复来叩见，将了留尚书、王少卿两封回书来禀道：“事已停当。两位爷给发盘缠，张小娘子与小公子多在冯进士船上附来，已到河下了。”朱景先大喜，正要着人出迎，只见冯进士先将帖来进拜。景先接见冯进士，诉出留、王二大人相托，顺带令孙母子在船上来，幸得安稳，已到府前说话。朱景先称谢不尽，答拜了冯进士，就接取张福娘母子上来。

张福娘领了儿子寄儿，见了翁姑与范氏大娘，感起了旧事，全家哭做了一团。又教寄儿逐位拜见过，又合家欢喜。朱景先问张福娘道：“孙儿可叫得甚么名字？”福娘道：“乳名叫得寄儿。两年之前，送入学堂从师，那先生取名天锡。”朱景先大惊道：“我因仪部索取恩荫之名，你每未来到，想了一夜，才取这两个字，预先填在册子上送去。岂知你每万里之外，两





a name first and send it to the imperial court?
 tossed and turned, but could not come up with a
 next morning an idea struck him, "I'll soon receive
 Funiang. It is a great fortune that has fallen from
 ars of despair. Is it perhaps Heaven's bestowal?
 'Heaven bestows a huge fortune on you.' Let me
 xi. That name implies Heaven's granting of my
 uch of classic elegance. Wonderful!" So he put
 xi for his grandson in the book that was to be
 of Rites. After the privileges were granted, he
 wa the arrival of his grandson to receive the honor.

Before long, Hu Hong reported his arrival. He presented to Zhu
 Jingxian the two letters from Minister Liu and Wang Wo and said, "The
 two masters provided the traveling funds. Zhang Funiang and her son
 rode in the boat of the *jinshi* Feng and are now waiting down on the river
 bank." Zhu Jingxian was quite delighted. As he was about to go out to
 meet them, the *jinshi* Feng entered with a note of greeting. Feng said,
 "Minister Liu and Lord Wang assigned me this mission and I have brought
 your grandson and his mother by boat. It's good luck that they have arrived
 here safe and sound." Then Zhu Jingxian expressed many thanks to the
jinshi and went out to meet the mother and son.

Zhang Funiang led her son, Ji'er, up to meet his grandfather and aunt.
 The calling up of memories of the old days brought tears to all the family.
 The little master, Ji'er, was taken to meet every member of the family,
 which was in great happiness. Zhu Jingxian asked Zhang Funiang, "Does
 my grandson have a name?" Funiang answered, "He has a pet name,
 Ji'er. Two years ago when I sent him to school, the teacher gave him the
 name, Tianxi." Stunned, Zhu Jingxian said, "I had a request from the
 Department of Rites for the name of my grandson not long ago, a name
 that could be used at the reception for granting imperial privileges. I
 thought for a whole night and finally decided on the name Tianxi. I put it
 down in the book and sent it in. I couldn't have known that you had
 obtained exactly the same name two years before and tens of thousands

年之前，已取下这两个字作名了。可见天数有定若此，真为奇怪之事。”合家欢异。

那朱景先忽然得孙，直在四川去认将来，已此是新闻了。又两处取名适然相同，走进门来，只消补荫，更为可骇。传将开去，遂为奇谈。后来朱天锡袭了恩荫，官位大显，张福娘亦受封章。这是他守贞教子之报。有诗为证：

娶妾先妻亦偶然，岂知弃妾更心坚。
归来万里繇前定，善念阴中必保全。



of *li* away from here! It must have been predestined by Heaven! What an extraordinary miracle!” The whole family was amazed.

Zhu Jingxian’s sudden recovery of his grandson from Sichuan was news in its own right. The grandson had acquired the same name in two different places, and now had come home to attend a ceremony for receiving imperial privileges. This fact added more amazement. The event circulated as a tale of admiration. Later Zhu Tianxi achieved a high government position due to his reception of imperial privileges. Zhang Funiang also received the imperial conferment of title. It was a reward for her moral integrity and strict upbringing of her son. The following lines may serve as a testimony for the story:

It’s rare to take a concubine before marriage,
But stronger is the young man’s resolution in breaking the bond.
It’s predestined that the concubine and her son will return,
For it’s the will of Heaven that good be rewarded with good.

卷 三 十 三

杨抽马甘请杖 富家郎浪受惊

诗云：

敕使南来坐画船，袈裟犹带御炉烟。

无端撞着曹公相，二十皮鞭了宿缘。

这四句诗乃是国朝永乐年间少师姚广孝所作。这个少师乃是僧家出身，法名道衍，本贯苏州人氏。他虽是个出家人，广有法术，兼习兵机，乃元朝刘秉忠之流。太祖分封诸王，各选一高僧伴送之国。道衍私下对燕王说道：“殿下讨得臣去作伴，臣当送一顶白帽子与大王戴。”“白”字加在“王”字上，乃是个“皇”字，他藏着哑谜，说道辅佐他做皇帝的意思。燕王也有些晓得他不凡，果然面奏太祖，讨了他去。后来赞成靖难之功，出师胜败，无不未卜先知。燕兵初起时，燕王问他利钝如何，他说：“事毕竟成，不过费得两日工夫。”后来败于东昌，





Tale 33

Yang Chouma Asks to Be Thrashed A Rich Man Is Frightened

A poem reads thus:

I, an imperial convoy, sail southward in a gaily-painted pleasure boat.
My kasaya still smells of the smoke from the imperial incense burner.
Fate has it I'll bump into Cao, the assistant of the County Magistrate,
And get twenty floggings to settle our accounts.

The author of this poem was Yao Guangxiao, Junior Preceptor during the Yongle reign (1403-1424) of emperor Zhudi of our Ming Dynasty. Originally Yao was a monk with the clerical name of Daoyan and his native place was Suzhou. Monk as he was, Yao not only possessed magic arts, but also was an expert in military affairs. He was very similar to Liu Binzhong¹ of the Yuan Dynasty. When the princes and nobles were invested with fiefs, emperor Ming Taizu² permitted each of them to select an eminent and learned monk to be their companions. In private, Yao said to the Prince of Yan, "If you choose me to be your companion, I'll give you, my Prince (大王), a white 白 hat." The characters "白" and "王" will make up the character "皇". An enigma is hidden in what Yao says. Actually Yao was dropping a hint that he would assist him to become the emperor.

Fully aware that Yao was a remarkably outstanding talent, Prince of Yan did get him as his companion after Prince of Yan had personally expressed his wish to emperor Ming Taizu. Yao's predictions of the success and failure of the campaigns all proved correct. Later Yao assisted Prince of Yan to move his troops south and launch an armed revolt, and Prince of Yan finally captured Nanjing and seized the throne successfully. In the beginning, when Prince of Yan and his army got ready to launch an armed revolt, Prince of Yan solicited Yao's opinion about the consequence of



方晓得“两日”是个“昌”字。他说道：“此后再无阻了。”果然屡战屡胜，燕王直正大位，改元永乐。道衍赐名广孝，封至少师之职。虽然受了职衔，却不肯留发还俗，仍旧光着头，穿着蟒龙玉带，长安中出入。文武班中晓得是他佐命功臣，谁不钦敬？

一日成祖皇帝御笔亲差他到南海普陀落伽山进香。少师随坐了几号大样官船，从长江中起行。不则数日，来到苏州马头上，湾船在姑苏馆驿河下。苏州是他父母之邦，他有心要上岸观看风俗，比旧同异如何。屏去从人，不要跟随，独自一个，穿着直裰在身，只做野僧打扮，从胥门走进街市上来行走。

正在看玩之际，忽见喝道之声远远而来，市上人虽不见十分惊惶，却也各自走开在两边了让他。有的说是管粮曹官人来了。少师虽则步行，自然不放他在眼里的，只在街上摇摆不避。须臾之间，那个官人看看抬近轿前，皂快人等高声喝骂道：“秃驴！怎不回避？”少师只是微微冷笑。就有两个应捕，把他推



the forthcoming military operation. Yao replied, “After all, success is certain. But you’ll have a rough time of “two days” (two “日”). Later Prince of Yan suffered a defeat at Dongchang (东昌). Up till now, Prince of Yan realized that “two days” (two “日”) actually suggested “chang”(昌).

After losing the battle at Dongchang, Yao said to Prince of Yan, “From now on, you’ll have no obstacles ahead of you.” As predicted by Yao, Prince of Yan really had scored one victory after another. Then Zhu Di, Prince of Yan, proclaimed himself emperor and changed the title of his reign into Yongle. Emperor Zhu Di bestowed Yao the name Guangxiao, and conferred him the title Junior Preceptor. Though he got an official title, Yao was unwilling to grow hair and resume secular life. Wearing his official’s suit, he moved to and fro in the capital city, but baldheaded. Knowing Yao had rendered outstanding service to the emperor, all the court officials, both civilian and military, admired and respected him.

One day, emperor Chengzu, Zhu Di, issued an imperial edict to send Junior Preceptor Yao to go on a pilgrimage to the Putuo Mountain in Zhejiang. Thus, getting aboard a gorgeous official boat, Junior Preceptor Yao set sail for the Putuo Mountain along the Yangtze River. Within a few days, he arrived at Suzhou and ordered to have his boat moored at the Gusu Post House. As he was a native of Suzhou, Junior Preceptor Yao hoped he could go onshore and take a look at the local conditions and customs to see if anything had changed. Dismissing his followers, he went out through Xumen Gate and got onto the busy street alone in his outer vestment of a Buddhist monk.

While Junior Preceptor was enjoying the scene on the street, there suddenly came an uproar of shouting from a distance. Though not quite panic-stricken, the people on the street all kept to the sides to make way for the approaching official. Some said official Cao, a county official in charge of grains, was coming. Of course, Junior Preceptor Yao, though he was strolling around on foot at the moment, would not pay any attention to it. Instead of getting out of the way, he just continued to stagger down the street. Soon the sedan chair carrying the county official approached Yao.

The runners shouted loudly, “You baldheaded donkey! Why don’t you



来抢去。少师口里只说得一句道：“不得无理！我怎么该避你们的？”应捕见他不肯走开，道是冲了节，一把拿住。只等轿到面前，应捕口禀道：“一个野僧冲道，拿了，听候发落。”轿上那个官人问道：“你是那里野和尚，这等倔强？”少师只不做声。那个官人大怒，喝教拿下打着。众人喏了一声，如鹰拿燕雀，把少师按倒在地，打了二十板。少师再不分辩，竟自忍受了。才打得完，只见府里一个承差同一个船上人，飞也似跑来说道：“那里不寻得少师爷到，却在这里！”众人惊道：“谁是少师爷？”承差道：“适才司道府县各爷，多到钦差少师姚老爷船上迎接。说着了小服，从胥门进来了。故此同他船上水手，急急赶来。各位爷多在后面来了。你们何得在此无理？”众人见说，大惊失色，一哄而散。连抬那官人的轿夫，把个官来撇在地上了，丢下轿子，恨不爷娘多生两只脚，尽数跑了。刚刚剩下得一个官人在那里。元来这官人姓曹，是吴县县丞。当下承差将出绳来，把县丞拴下，听候少师发落。

须臾，守巡两道府县各官多来迎接，把少师簇拥到察院衙门里坐了。各官挨次参见已毕。承差早已各官面前禀过少师被



get out of the way?" Yao just responded with a faint sneer. Then a couple of runners started to push and shove him. Yao said in a stern voice, "Don't you be rude! Why must I make way for you?" Thinking that he had violated the protocol, the runners got hold of Yao all at once. When the county official arrived at the scene in his sedan chair, the runners reported, "A wild monk got in the way. We've captured him. We'd like to have your instructions." The county official in the sedan chair asked Yao, "Who are you, wild monk? Why are you so blunt?" Yao remained silent. Flying into a rage, the county official ordered to give him a beating. Like eagles snatching bramble finches, the runners knocked Yao down on the ground and gave him twenty floggings. Junior Preceptor Yao didn't utter a word. On the contrary, he simply accepted it.

When the flogging was over, an official runner from the prefecture *yamen* and a follower of Yao's from the boat rushed forward and said, "We've been looking for you everywhere, Junior Preceptor. We never expected you are here!" Surprised, the county official's followers asked, "Which one is Junior Preceptor?" The official runner from the prefecture *yamen* said, "All the senior officials of this region have gone to the imperial convoy Junior Preceptor's boat to meet him. But they were told he had already gone downtown in plain clothes through the Xumen gate. So I've rushed here in haste with his follower to search for him. All the senior officials are coming soon. How dare you be so rude?" Upon hearing this, all the county official's followers were frightened out of their wits and scattered in a rush. Even the county official's sedan-chair bearers dispersed helter-skelter, leaving the county official behind alone. It turned out that the county official was surnamed Cao, the assistant of the county magistrate of Wuxian County. Immediately the assistant of the county magistrate was tied up by the official runner from the prefecture and handed over to Junior Preceptor Yao for a decision.

Before long, the senior officials from this region all arrived to meet Junior Preceptor Yao. These senior officials thronged him forward and showed him into the Investigating Bureau. Consequently each of the senior officials had showed their respect to Yao one after another. As they had already learned from the prefecture official runner about the humiliation



辱之事，各官多跪下待罪，就请当面治曹县丞之罪。少师笑道：“权且寄府狱中，明日早堂发落。”当下把县丞带出，监在府里。各官别了出来，少师是晚即宿于察院之中。

次早开门，各官又进见。少师开口问道：“昨日那位孟浪的官人在那里？”各官禀道：“见监府狱。未得钧旨，不敢造次。”少师道：“带他进来。”各官道是此番曹县丞必不得活了，曹县丞也道性命只在霎时，战战兢兢，随着解人，膝行到庭下，叩头请死。少师笑对各官道：“少年官人不晓事。即如一个野僧，在街上行走，与你何涉，定要打他？”各官多道：“这是有眼不识泰山，罪应万死。只求老大人自行诛戮，赐免奏闻，以宽某等失于简察之罪，便是大恩了。”少师笑嘻嘻的，袖中取出一个柬帖来，与各官看，即是前诗四句。各官看罢，少师哈哈大笑道：“此乃我前生欠下他的。昨日微服闲步，正要完这夙债。今事已毕，这官人原没甚么罪过，各请安心做官罢了。学生也再不提起了。”众官尽叹伏少师有此等度量。却是少师是晓得过去未来事的，这句话必非混帐之语。



Yao sustained a moment ago, the senior officials knelt down before him to ask for punishment. Meanwhile they also demanded that the assistant Cao be punished right away. Laughingly, Junior Preceptor Yao said, "Put him in the prison of the prefecture and I'll announce what punishment he'll receive tomorrow morning." Then Assistant Cao was sent to the prefecture prison. The senior officials said goodbye to Yao and left. Yao passed the night at the Investigating Bureau.

On the next morning, the senior officials again came to have an audience with Junior Preceptor Yao. Yao asked, "Where is that rash official?" The senior officials reported back, "He is now in the prefecture prison. We do not dare to do anything to him without your instructions." "Bring him to me," ordered Yao. The senior officials thought to themselves that Assistant Cao was sure to meet his doom. Assistant Cao himself also felt that he was on his last legs. Trembling with fear, Cao moved on his knees and reached the court. Then he kowtowed towards Yao and asked for death punishment. Turning to the senior officials, Yao said, "How thoughtless this young assistant is! Even though I am an itinerant monk, what business is it of yours if I only walk on the street? Why must you flog him?" The senior officials said, "He has eyes but no pupils. Even death is too light a punishment for him. It's all up to you to decide whatever punishment he'll get. We would be only grateful if you would not memorialize it to the throne and excuse us of our negligence of our duties."

With a smile on his face, Yao pulled a note out of his sleeve and showed it to the senior officials around him. What was written on the note was exactly the four-line poem I've quoted at the beginning of this tale. After everyone had read the poem, Yao laughed heartily and said, "I owed him twenty flogging in my previous existence. Yesterday I deliberately took a stroll in plain clothes so as to settle this account between us two. Now it has been completed. This assistant Cao is actually not guilty of any crime. Just set your mind at rest and devote yourselves to your duties. And I'll forget about this matter." Everyone present gasped in admiration for Junior Preceptor Yao's broad-mindedness. However, Yao was a man who knew about both the past and the future, and I'm fully convinced that this remark is by no means impudent language.

看官若不信，小子再说宋时一个奇人，也要求人杖责了前欠的，已有个榜样过了。这人却有好些奇处，听小子慢慢说来，做回正话。

从来有奇人，其术堪玩世。

一切真实相，仅足供游戏。

话说宋朝蜀州江源有一个奇人，姓杨，名望才，字希吕。自小时节，不知在那里遇了异人，得了异书，传了异术。七八岁时在学堂中，便自跷蹊作怪：专一聚集一班学生，耍他舞仙童，跳神鬼，或扮个《刘关张三战吕布》，或扮个《尉迟恭单鞭夺槊》，口里不知念些甚么，任凭随心搬演，那些村童无不一一按节跳舞，就像教师教成了一般的。傍观着实好看。及至舞毕，问那些童子，毫厘不知。一日，同学的有钱数百文在书笥中，并没人知道。杨生忽地向他借起钱来，同学的推说没有。杨生便把手指掐道：“你的钱有几百几十文，见在笥中，如何赖道没有？”众学生不信，群然启那同学的书笥看，果然一文不差。于是传将开去，尽道杨家学生有希奇术数。年纪渐大，长成得容状丑怪，双目如鬼，出口灵验。远近之人多来请问吉凶休咎，百发百中。因为能与人抽筒禄马，川中起他一个混名，叫做杨抽马。但是经过抽马说的，近则近应，远则远应，正则正应，奇则奇应。且略述他几桩怪异去处：



If you don't believe me, readers, I'll tell you a story about another man happened in the Song Dynasty. This man also asked to be thrashed so as to repay what he had owed in his previous life. In addition, there are some more interesting anecdotes about this man. Now I'd like to have your patience.

The magic arts of a man of great talent often defy all ethical values.

The actual state of affairs is always to be disclosed amidst amusing jokes.

* * *

During the Song Dynasty (960-1279), in Jiangyuan County of Shu Prefecture (present-day Sichuan Province), there was a remarkable man called Yang Wangcai, formally named Xilü. No one knew how he, as a little boy, had met a supernatural man, acquired a magic book and learned extraordinary skills from him. At seven or eight, he showed some of his magic tricks at school. Often he summoned a group of school children around him and made them dance, babbling away and improvising acts of entertainment, or he would play a part in *Three Heroes Fight with Lü Bu*² or a part in *Yuchi Gong Rescues the Emperor*³ He simply mumbled something and those village kids would dance to his beat, as if they were following a teacher's instructions, offering an amusing spectacle. After each performance, the children could never explain what they had done.

One day one of his schoolmates had hundreds of coins in his bamboo-woven suitcase. No one knew he had the money. Yang asked him to lend him some. His schoolmate told him that he had no money to lend. Yang then counted on his fingers and said, "You have so many hundred so many ten and so many coins in your bamboo-woven suitcase. Why do you say you don't have money?" The other students didn't believe him. They opened the schoolmate's box and found that exact amount of cash inside. Then, word got around that the boy from the Yang family possessed magic powers. As he grew older, his looks became ugly and threatening, and he had ghostly eyes. But his predictions were accurate, and people from far and wide came to him to have their fortunes told, and he never failed them. Because of his ability in forecasting horoscopes and prophecy, he obtained a nickname Yang Chouma. His prophecies always came true no matter whether they concerned the present or future, the regular or



杨家住居南边，有大木一株，荫蔽数丈。忽一日写个帖子出去，贴在门首道：

明日午未间，行人不可过此，恐有奇祸。

有人看见，传说将去道：“抽马门首，有此帖子。”多来争看。看见了的，晓得抽马有些古怪，不敢不信，相戒明日午未时候切勿从他门首来走。果然到了其期，那株大木忽然摧仆下来，盈塞街市；两傍房屋，略不少损。这多是杨抽马魔样过了，所以如此。又恐怕人不知道，失误伤犯，故此又先通示，得免于祸。若使当时不知，在街上摇摆时节，不好似受了孙行者金箍棒一压，一齐做了肉饼了？

又常持缣帛入市货卖。那买的接过手量着，定是三丈四丈长的，价钱且是相应。买的还要讨他便宜，短少些价值，他并不争论。及至买成，叫他再量量看，出得多少价钱，原只长得多少。随你是量过几丈的，价钱只有尺数，那缣也就只有几尺长了。

出去拜客，跨着一匹骡子，且是雄健。到了这家门内，将骡系在庭柱之下。宾主相见，茶毕，推说别故暂出，不牵骡去。骡初时叫跳不住，去久不来，骡亦不作声，看看缩小。主人怪异，仔细一看，乃是纸剪成的。

四川制置司有三十年前一宗案牍，急要对勘。年深尘积，



irregular. Here are some examples.

There was a big tree to the south of his house, the leafy branches and twigs of which shaded a huge circular area tens of yards in diameter. One day he posted a notice on his door reading, "Please stay away from here and make a detour during the first three hours tomorrow at noon. There may be a strange disaster." A man spotted it and soon word spread that "Chouma has a notice on his door." At once a crowd gathered to look, and because everyone had heard of Choama's mysterious powers, they believed in his prophecy and warned one another about the danger of walking past his door during the specified time the next day. Exactly at that time the following day, the tree fell, completely blocking the road in front of the house and destroying some of the buildings along the street. This was Yang Chouma's work of enchantment. He thought the happening might hurt some uninformed pedestrians, so he had offered the warning in advance. If someone had been ignorant of the impending disaster and had wandered through the street at that time, they could not have avoided being struck and crushed like a meat pie, as if hit by the Monkey King's golden cudgel as described in the popular novel *Journey to the West*.

Yang was also a street vendor of fine silks and brocade. Often a customer would purchase a piece of silk eleven or twelve yards long from him, the price being determined by the length of silk. If the customer bargained with him, expecting to bring down the price a little, Yang never haggled. But after the transaction, when the customer measured the silk again trying to calculate the cost, he would be shocked to discover that the amount of his purchase was exactly as the price he had paid. Even if you measured the silk to be tens of yards, it would turn out but a few yards, since the money you had paid was the price of this length.

Once Yang Chouma rode on a fine mule to visit a friend. He dismounted at the house and tied the mule on a post inside the yard. The host and guest talked over tea. After tea, Chouma excused himself to go out for a while, leaving his mule behind. The mule neighed and pawed the ground when Chouma left the house. As time passed, Yang did not return and then the mule became silent and started to shrink. The host was stunned. He took a close look only to find that the mule was made of paper.



不知下落。司中吏胥，彷徨终日，竟无寻处。有人教他请问杨抽马，必知端的。吏胥来问，抽马应声答道：“在某屋某柜第几脊下。”依言去寻，果然即在那里翻出来。一日，眉山琛禅师造门相访，适有乡客在座。那乡客新得一马，黑身白鼻，状颇骏异。杨抽马见了道：“君此马不中骑，只该送与我罢了。君若骑他，必有不利之处。”乡客大怒道：“先生造此等言语，意欲吓骗吾马。吾用钱一百千买来的，乘坐未久，岂肯轻为你赚去么？”抽马笑道：“我好意替你解此大厄，你不信我，也是你的命了。今有禅师在此为证，你明年五月二十日，宿冤当有报应，切宜记取，勿可到马房看他舂秣，又须善护左肋。直待过了此日，还可望再与你相见耳。”乡客见他说得荒唐，又且利害，越加忿怒，不听而去。到了明年此日，乡客那里还把他言语放在心上？果然亲去喂马。那匹马忽然跳跃起来，将双蹄乱踢，乡客倒地。那马见他在地上了，急向左肋用力一踹，肋骨齐断。乡客叫得一声“阿也”，连吼是吼，早已后气不接，呜呼哀哉。琛禅师问知其事，大加惊异，每向人说杨抽马灵验，这是他亲经目见的说话。



Another time the department of military and security affairs in Sichuan urgently needed to examine a file, which had been misplaced thirty years before. They could not locate it. The clerk working in the department was frustrated for days. Then a man said to him, "Why not go ask Yang Chouma? He knows everything." The clerk went to Yang for help. Yang Chouma told him that it was in a certain pile, which was stacked in a certain cabinet of a certain room. The clerk followed his instructions and quickly located the file.

One day, Monk Chen from Meishan came to visit him. Another local guest was also at the meeting. This guest had a horse that looked rather imposing with a black body and white nose. Seeing this horse, Yang Chouma said to the guest, "Your horse is not good for riding, sir. You'd better give it to me. If you keep it for riding, misfortune will surely befall you." The guest became angry and rebuked him, saying, "Why do you bluff me? Do you want to rob me of my horse? I paid thousands of coins for this horse and have not ridden it much. How can I simply let you take it away?" Chouma laughed and said, "I'm sincere in my desire to help you steer clear of a terrible catastrophe. If you don't believe me, you will experience ill luck. Here we have Monk Chen as a witness. On the twentieth of the fifth month, next year, you will meet your doom because of some old grudge in your former life. Keep this in mind: don't go to the stable to fodder the horse that day, and you will need to protect your left side of your chest as well. If you survive that day, we may have chance to see each other again."

The guest thought his warning was absurd and offensive. His rage ran high, so he ignored his words and left. By the specified day the following year, the guest had completely forgotten about the warning. As he went to feed his horse, the horse suddenly pounced, kicking its feet wildly and knocking his owner to the ground. With the man lying there, the horse stamped forcefully on the left side of his chest and broke all his ribs. The man let out a yell and made a few more gasps before he breathed his last. Monk Chen learned of this and was, of course, shocked. He told everyone he met that he saw with his own eyes that Yang Chouma could predict accurately.

虞丞相自荆襄召还，子公亮遣书来叩所向。抽马答书道：
得苏不得苏，半月去作同佥书。

其时佥书未有带“同”字的，虞公不信。以后守苏台到官十五日，果然召为同佥书枢密院事。时钱处和先为佥书，故加“同”字。其前知不差如此。

果州教授关寿卿，名耆孙，有同僚闻知杨抽马之术，央他遣一仆，致书问休咎。关仆未至，抽马先知，已在家分付其妻道：“快些造饭，有一关姓的家仆来了，须要待他。”其妻依言造饭。饭已熟了，关仆方来。未及进门，抽马迎着笑道：“足下不问自家事，却为别人来奔波么？”关仆惊拜道：“先生真神仙也！”其妻即将所造之饭，款待此仆。抽马答书，备言祸福而去。

元来他这妻子姓苏，也不是平常的人。原是一个娼家女子，模样也只中中，却是拿班做势，不肯轻易见客。及至见过的客，他就评论道：某人是好，某人是歹，某人该兴头，某人该落泊，某人有结果，某人没散场……。恰像请了一个设帐的相士一般，看了气色，是件断将出来。却面前不十分明说，背



Prime Minister Yu was called back from his mission in the prefectures of Jing and Xiang to the capital city. His son, Gongliang, sent a letter to Yang Chouma for a prediction as to his father's next assignment. Chouma replied in his letter, "He may go, or not, to Sutai, but he will be appointed concurrent minister of justice fifteen days after he arrives at Sutai."

At that time the government position was called minister of justice and Sutai had no position of concurrent minister of justice. Prime Minister Yu doubted what Chouma had said. Later he was indeed sent to the work in Sutai. Fifteen days after his arrival, he was appointed concurrent minister of justice under the Privy Council as Yang Chouma had predicted. Because another official by the name of Qian Chuhe had been appointed minister of justice before Yu's appointment, he was appointed to the concurrent position, which fitted Chouma's prediction precisely.

An old private school instructor Guan Shouqing, alias Qisun, was urged by one of his colleagues, who had heard about Yang Chouma's supernatural powers, to send a servant to inquire about his fortune. Yang Chouma had foreknowledge the servant's arrival and told his wife, "Go prepare dinner. A servant from the Guan family is coming. We have to entertain him." Accordingly, his wife prepared the dinner. When the food was ready, the servant arrived. Before he stepped up to the door, Yang Chouma emerged to meet him, saying with a smile, "Have you come all the way on behalf of somebody else rather than for yourself?" The servant was astonished and said, "You're as omniscient as a god, sir!" Yang's wife attended him with food. Chouma wrote a letter of reply telling the fortune and then sent the servant off.

Yang Chouma's wife, whose family name was Su, was not an ordinary woman either. With common looks, she had once been a prostitute. However, she had put on such airs that she usually shunned receiving clients. When people passed her house, she would comment, "This one is good, but that one is bad. This one will prosper, while that one will go broke. This one will get through to be something eventually, but that one may never see the end of his current state." She appeared as a fortune-teller sitting in a tent and meting out accounts by judging a person's complexion. However, she never made explicit predictions in front of the

后说一两句，无不应验的。因此也名重一时，来求见的颇多，王孙公子，车马盈门。中意的晚上也留几个。及至有的往来熟了，欲要娶他，只说道：“目前之人皆非吾夫也。”后来一见杨抽马，这样丑头怪脸，偏生喜欢道：“吾夫在此了。”抽马一见苏氏，便像一向认得的一般，道：“元来吾妻混迹于此！”两下说得投机，就把苏氏娶了过来，好一似桃花女嫁了周公，家里一发的一——

阴阳有准，祸福无差。

杨抽马之名，越加著闻。就是身不在家，只消到他门里问着，也是不差的。所以门前热闹，家里喧阗，王侯贵客，无一日没有坐在座上的。

忽地一日，抽马在郡中。郡中中走出两个皂隶来，少不得是叫做张千、李万，多是认得抽马的，齐来声喏。抽马一把拉了他两人出郡门来道：“请两位到寒舍，有句要紧话相央则个。”那两个是公门中人，见说请他到家，料不是白差使，自然愿随鞭镫，跟着就行。抽马道：“两位平日所用官杖，望乞就便带了去。”张千、李万道：“到宅上去，要官杖子何用？难道要我们去打那个不成？”抽马道：“有用得着处，到彼自知端的。”张千、李万晓得抽马是个古怪的人，莫不真有甚么事得做？依着言语，各捐了一条杖子，随到家来。抽马将出三万钱来，送与他两个。张千、李万道：“不知先生要小人那厢使唤。未曾效劳，怎敢受赐？”抽马道：“两位受了薄意，然后



people concerned. Yet behind a customer's back she might say one or two sentences that never failed to come true. Thus her reputation spread far and wide, drawing crowds that included government officials and dependents of celebrities riding in carriages. When she was attracted to some of the visitors, she would let them stay the night. Those who were on familiar terms with her wanted to marry her, but she said, "None of the people I've seen can be my husband."

Later she met Yang Chouma whose terribly ugly looks caught her fancy. She then said, "Here comes my husband!" Similarly Yang Chouma's impression of her struck a note of intimacy. He said, "I didn't know my wife could be found here!" Agreeable conversations ensued. Therefore Yang Chouma married her. It was a perfect marriage like that of Peach Blossom Girl and Duke Zhou. Since then the two meted out even more accurate prophecies concerning the fortune and misfortune of human and ghosts.

After the marriage, Yang Chouma's reputation rose even higher. His visitors, princes and nobles, could be satisfied now, even if he was not in, by enlisting the clairvoyant services of his wife who was equally gratifying. One day Yang Chouma walked in the town of the prefecture where two runners, Zhang Qian and Li Wan, greeted him. Yang grabbed both of them and dragged them out of the office building. He said to them, "Please honor me with your presence at my home. I have something important to talk with you two." The two men were mediators in the government office. Guessing that it would be some kind of rewarding business, they instantly agreed to follow him. Yang Chouma said, "Would you please bring your penalty cudgels with you?" Zhang Qian and Li Wan asked, "What's the point of bringing the cudgel to your house? Do you want us to beat somebody?" Chouma replied, "You'll have use of them. It'll be clear once you're there." Knowing Chouma was a man of bizarre behavior, the two men figured that perhaps he did have some business for them to do. So they each picked up a cudgel and went to his home.

Once there, Chouma took out thirty thousand coins and gave them to the two men. Zhang Qian and Li Wan said, "What sort of business do you want us to do, sir? Why should we get paid before doing anything for



敢相烦。”张千、李万道：“先生且说将来，可以效得犬马的，自然奉命。”抽马走进去，唤妻苏氏出来，与两位公人相见。张千、李万不晓其意，为何出妻见子，各怀着疑心，不好做声。只见抽马与妻每人取了一条官杖，奉与张千、李万道：“在下别无相烦，止求两位牌头将此杖子，责我夫妻二人每人二十杖，便是盛情不浅。”张千、李万大惊道：“那有此话！”抽马道：“两位不要管，但依我行事，足见相爱。”张千、李万道：“且说明是甚么缘故。”抽马道：“吾夫妇目下当受此杖，不如私下请牌头来，完了这业债，省得当场出丑。两位是必见许则个。”张千、李万道：“不当人子！不当人子！小人至死也不敢胡做。”抽马与妻叹息道：“两位毕竟不肯，便是数已做定，解禳不去了。有劳两位到此，虽然不肯行杖，请收了钱去。”张千、李万道：“尊赐一发出于无名。”抽马道：“但请两位收去，他日略略用些盛情就是。”张千、李万虽然推托，公人见钱，犹如苍蝇见血，一边接在手里了，道：“既蒙厚赏，又道是‘长者赐，少者不敢辞’，他日有用着两小人处，水火不避便了。”两人真是无功受赏，头轻脚重，欢喜不胜而去。

且说杨抽马平日祠神，必设六位。东边二位空着虚座，道是神位。西边二位，却是他夫妻二人坐着作主。底下二位，每请一僧一道同坐。又不知奉的是甚么神，又不从僧，又不从道，



you?" Chouma said, "Only after you accept this little pay will I be comfortable enough to tell you what I want you to do." The two men said, "Please tell us what the business is, and we will definitely do our best to accomplish it." Chouma went to the inner room and called out his wife to meet the two runners. Zhang Qian and Li Wan, unable to make out his meaning, thought, "Why is he bringing his wife out?" They were confused but said nothing. Chouma and his wife then each picked up one of the cudgels and handed it to the two men. Chouma said, "I have nothing particular for you to do, but a simple request that you beat my wife and me each with twenty cudgel strokes. I will appreciate considerably your kindness." The two men were surprised and said, "What are you talking about?" Chouma answered, "Don't mind, please. Just do as I say. I'll be grateful for your help."

Zhang Qian and Li Wan said, "Tell us why you want to do this." Chouma answered, "We deserve this cudgeling torture now. So I asked you government runners to come to my house to complete the business. It will save us public disgrace in future. You're doing us a favor now." Zhang Qian and Li Wan said, "Absurd! Absurd! We absolutely cannot do it!"

Chouma and his wife sighed and said, "Since you've made up your minds not to beat us now, we're doomed to adversity and can't find a way out. Anyway, please accept the money as you're already here." The two men said, "Your reward makes no sense." Chouma said, "Please take it. Later we will have chance to appreciate your kindness." Zhang Qian and Li Wan made a perfunctory refusal but clutched the money, for government runners had an insatiable appetite for money just as a fly feeds on blood. They thanked him by saying, "We appreciate your kindness in giving us such a handsome gift. An old saying goes, 'The young have no right to turn down a reward from the old.' Please don't hesitate to let us know if you need us in future. We'll make every effort to work for you." Having gotten paid without having to perform any service, they left with joy.

The worship of gods was a routine business for Yang Chouma. He usually set up six seats at home. Leaving the two seats vacant on the east side, he and his wife often took the two seats of honor on the west, and

人不能测。地方人见他行事古怪，就把他祠神诡异，说是左道惑众，论法当死，首在郡中。郡中准词，差人捕他到官，未及讯问，且送在监里。狱吏一向晓得他是有手段的跷蹊作怪人，惧怕他的术法利害，不敢加上械扭，曲意奉承他。却又怕他用术逃去，没寻他处，心中甚是忧惶。抽马晓得狱吏的意思了，对狱吏道：“但请足下宽心，不必虑我，我当与妻各受刑责。其数已定，万不可逃，自当含笑受之。”狱吏道：“先生有神术，总使数该受刑，岂不能趋避？为何自来就他？”抽马道：“此魔业使然，避不过的。度过了厄，始可成道耳。”狱吏方才放下了心。果然，杨抽马从容在监，并不作怪。

郡中把他送在司理杨忧处议罪。司理晓得他是法术人，有心护庇他，免不得外观体面，当堂鞫讯一番。杨抽马不辨自己身上事，仰面对司理道：“令叔某人，这几时有信到否？可惜！可惜！”司理不知他所说之意，默然不答。只见外边一人走将进来，道是成都来的人，正报其叔讷音。司理大惊退堂，心服抽马之灵。

其时司理有一女久病，用一医者陈生之药，屡服无效。司理私召抽马到衙，意欲问他。抽马不等开口，便道：“公女久



gave the last two to a Buddhist monk and a Taoist priest as invited guests. At that time there was speculation as to what gods he might worship, for he did not believe in Buddhism or Taoism. The suspicion of his weird practices gave rise to the accusation that he upheld heresy, with which he “misguided the public” and so “deserved capital punishment.” An indictment was submitted to the prefecture governor.

The governor permitted the filing of the lawsuit. Runners were sent to arrest him and his wife. The two were put behind bars without trial. The jailers had heard about Chouma’s supernatural powers and feared his retaliation, so they did not fasten him with shackles but made a point of playing up to him. But they were anxious because he might make an escape with his magic powers. Chouma recognized their apprehension and said to them, “Take it easy, sirs. I’m fine. My wife and I should receive punishment. Our ill fate is doomed, so we can’t escape it but will meet it with easy minds.” One jailer said, “You have magic powers. Why didn’t you use them to keep off destruction instead of coming to meet it?” Chouma answered, “This evil force holds sway and we can’t flee. After undergoing the punishment, we should be able to attain divine enlightenment.” His words put the jailers at ease. In the days that followed, he stayed in prison, compliant and free of his powers.

The prefecture magistrate sent him to Judge Yang You for trial. Judge Yang knew Chouma was a man of supernatural abilities and hoped to protect him. In order to put on a show for the public, Judge Yang brought Chouma into court for interrogation. Facing the judge directly, Chouma disregarded the accusation and said, “You’ve got an uncle. Have you heard anything from him recently? It’s a shame, it’s a shame!” Ignorant of what he was talking about, the judge made no reply. At that moment a man arrived from Chengdu, bringing news of the death of the judge’s uncle. The judge was enormously surprised, and withdrew with admiration for this extraordinary man.

At the time the judge’s daughter was afflicted with a lingering disease. She used the prescription of a doctor named Chen which showed no effect. The judge summoned Chouma to the court, planning to ask him for help. Before the judge could utter a word, Chouma said, “Your daughter has



病，陈医所用某药一毫无益的，不必服他。此乃后庭朴树中小蛇为祟。我如今不好治得，因身在牢狱，不能役使鬼神。待我受杖后以符治之，可即平安，不必忧虑。”司理把所言对夫人说，夫人道：“说来有因。小姐未病之前，曾在后园见一条小蛇，缘在朴树上，从此心中恍惚得病起的。他既知其根繇，又说能治，必有手段。快些周全他出狱，要他救治则个。”

司理有心出脱他，把罪名改轻，说元非左道惑众死罪，不过术人妄言祸福，只问得个不应、决杖，申上郡堂去。郡守依律科断，将抽马与妻苏氏各决臀杖二十。元来那行杖的皂隶，正是前日送钱与他的张千、李万，两人各怀旧恩，又心服他前知，加意用情，手腕偷力，蒲鞭示辱而已。抽马与苏氏尽道业数该当，又且轻杖，恬然不以为意。

受杖归来，立书一符，又写几字，作一封送去司理衙中，权当酬谢周全之意。司理拆开，见是一符，乃教他挂在树上的。又一红纸，有六字，写道：“明年君家有喜。”司理先把符来试挂，果然女病洒然。留下六字，看明年何喜。果然司理兄弟四



been sick for a long time, sir, and doctor Chen's medicine is fruitless. Stop taking it. She is plagued by a small snake on the hackberry tree in your back yard. I'm now in prison, unable to subdue the snake, nor can I use my magic powers. As soon as I receive a cudgel punishment, I'll cure your daughter of her disease. Don't worry, please." The judge told his wife about this, and his wife said, "It does seem that this may be the cause of our daughter's disease. One day she saw a small snake winding up the hackberry tree in the back yard. After that she fell into a deep trance and contracted this disease. Since this man seems to know the cause of her sickness and is able to cure her, he must know how to cure our daughter. You should let him out of prison immediately and ask him to treat our daughter."

With the idea of releasing him, the judge altered the charge against Chouma, and issued a verdict that Chouma did not originally want to misguide the public, so it was not a capital crime; what he did was to spread absurd fortune-telling accounts studded with sorcery. Chouma was interrogated and unable to deny this. The sentence was punishment by cudgel. The verdict was reported to the prefect. On the basis of law, the prefect made a final decision that Chouma and his wife should each receive twenty strokes of a cudgel thrashing on the buttocks. The runners who were to carry out the thrashing were none other than Zhang Qian and Li Wan, the two runners whom Chouma had called to his home and given money to them days before. The two men wanted to return Chouma's generosity and admired his foresight, so they performed a perfunctory thrashing, just to show the act of law enforcement. Chouma and his wife had foreseen their time of adversity, and the flogging was merciful. Thus they bore it easily.

Chouma went back home after the punishment. He at once drew a figure, wrote a few words on it, wrapped it up in an envelope and sent it to the office of the judge as a token of gratitude. The judge opened it and saw that it was a figure for him to hang on the tree. Along with it was a slip of red paper with characters that said, "Your family will have good tidings next year." The judge tentatively hung the figure on the tree, and then his daughter recovered from the disease. The judge wondered whether



人，明年俱得中选。

抽马奇术如此类者，不一而足。独有受杖一节，说是度厄，且预先要求皂隶自行杖责解褫，及后皂隶不敢依从，毕竟受杖之时，用刑的仍是这两人，真堪奇绝。有诗为证：

祸福从来有宿根，要知受杖亦前因。

请君试看杨抽马，有术何能强避人？

杨抽马术数高奇，语言如响，无不畏服。独有一个富家子与抽马相交最久，极称厚善，却带一味狎玩，不肯十分敬信。抽马一日偶有些事干，要钱使用，须得二万。囊中偶乏，心里想道：“我且蒿恼一个人着。”来向富家借贷一用。富家子听言，便有些不然之色。看官听说：大凡富人，没有一个不悭吝的。惟其看得钱财如同性命一般，宝惜倍至，所以钱神有灵，甘心跟着他走。若是把来不看在眼里，东手接来西手去的，触了钱神嗔怒，岂肯到他手里来？故此非悭不成富家，才是富家一定悭了。真个“说了钱，便无缘”，这富子虽与杨抽马相好，只是见他兴头有术，门面撮哄而已，忽然要与他借贷起来，他就心中起了好些歹肚肠。一则说是江湖行术之家，贪他家事，起发他的，借了出门，只当舍去了。一则说是朋友面上，就还得本钱，不好算利。一则说是借惯了手脚，常要款动，是开不得例子的。只回道是：“家间正在缺乏，不得奉命。”抽马见他推



the prophecy would also come true. The following year, the judge and his three brothers all passed the imperial examinations or obtained promotions. Chouma's magic performances were numerous. But his reception of the cudgel thrashing was the most remarkable. He had the prescience of going through such an ordeal, but asked the two runners to flog him so as to keep off the misfortune. Though the two runners had refused to meet his request, they were predetermined to carry out the order of punishment.

Fortune and misfortune are both always predestined.

The cause itself results in Chouma's being thrashed.

Though he has magic powers,

He can never avoid being punished with a cudgel thrashing

The exceptional powers and apocalyptic speech of Chouma earned him awe and admiration. However, there was a rich man, a long-term friend of his, who was supposed to be kind and generous but was in fact a little conceited and skeptical about Chouma's abilities. One day Chouma happened to need twenty thousand pieces of cash for a certain business transaction, but he did not have the sum with him at the moment. He thought to himself, let me trouble him. He went to see the rich man to get a loan from him. The rich man was not happy about his request. Readers, the rich are stingy in general and consider money as important as life. They treasure it and are parsimonious in regard to it, so that the god of money is inspired and accumulates riches for them. If one irritates the god of money by squandering riches, then money does not come steadily to them. So frugality makes the rich, while the rich have to be frugal.

Just as "the mention of money brings to the end of relations," the rich man, though a friend of Chouma's, in fact was no more than a good-weather friend. Seeing Yang Chouma ask a loan, he started to calculate. He figured that because Chouma was a fortune-teller, he envied the rich man's wealth and wanted to rob him of his money. He thought that if he lent Chouma the money, chances were it would be gone forever. Besides, in view of their friendship, he couldn't ask for payment of interest even if the principal could be returned. Furthermore, Chouma might develop the habit of borrowing money from him, so this dangerous precedent should be avoided. Therefore, the rich man replied to Chouma, "I'm sorry but

辞，哈哈大笑道：“好替你借，你却不肯。我只教你吃些惊恐，看你借我不迭，那时才见手段哩。”自此，见富家子再不提起借钱之事。

富家子自道回绝了他，甚是得意。偶然那一日独自在书房中歇宿，时已黄昏人定，忽闻得叩门之声。起来开看，只见一个女子闪将入来，含颦万福道：“妾东家之女也。丈夫酒醉逞凶，横相逼逐，势不可当。今夜已深，不可远去，幸相邻近，愿借此一宿。天未明，即当潜回家里，以待丈夫酒醒。”富家子看其模样，尽自飘逸有致，私自想道：“暮夜无知，落得留他伴寝。他说天未明就去，岂非神鬼不觉的？”遂欣然应允道：“既蒙娘子不弃，此时没人知觉，安心共寝一宵，明早即还尊府便了。”那妇人并无推拒，含笑解衣，共枕同衾，忙行云雨。

一个孤馆寂寥，不道佳人猝至；一个夜行凄楚，谁知书舍同欢。两出无心，略觉情形忸怩；各因乍会，翻惊意态新奇。未知你弱我强，从容试看；且自抽离添坎，热闹为先。



I'm currently short of funds also. I can't meet your request." Seeing that the rich man was turning him down, Chouma broke into laughter and said, "Well, I made a courteous request, but you rejected me. All right, I'm going to let you have some pangs of fright. You'll soon know more about my powers and will be only too eager to give me the sum of money." Since then, Chouma mentioned no more of borrowing money from the rich man when they met.

The rich man was satisfied that he had rejected Chouma. One day at dusk, he was sitting in his study to take a rest. Suddenly there was a knock on the door. He rose and opened it, and a woman slipped in. With a frown, she curtsied and said, "I live next door. My husband has gotten drunk and abused me. I can't bear it. It's midnight now, and I can't go anywhere for refuge. It's good to have you as a neighbor. I'd like to stay in your house for the night. Before dawn, I'll go back home and see to it that my husband awakes from his drunkenness." Seeing that she was graceful and elegant, the rich man thought to himself, "It's midnight and there's nobody around. I'll let her stay and sleep with me. She said she would leave before dawn. Who will know what I've done tonight?" Thus he promptly replied, "I appreciate your kindness in not overlooking me, madam. You can stay with me for the night and go home tomorrow morning. No one will know about it." The woman readily agreed. Smiling, she undressed herself, got into bed and slept together with him.

A man, lonely and bored, is whiling away his unbearable
night hours,

When a beautiful woman suddenly intrudes.

A woman, dreadfully sad, happens to be forced out
into a night flight,

While an unexpected lover offers her a moment
of blissful merriment.

Both unprepared, they feel coy and shy.

New to each other, they anticipate with novelty.

Which is to show signs of weakness?

Time will prove.

Infatuated with passion, they put this tremendous pleasure and joy



行事已毕，俱各困倦。睡到五更，富家子恐天色乍明，有人知道，忙呼那妇人起来。叫了两声，推了两番，既不见声响答应，又不見身子展动。心中正疑，鼻子中只闻得一阵阵血腥之气，甚是来得狠。富家子疑怪，只得起来挑明灯盏，将到床前一看，叫声：“阿也！”正是：

分开八片顶阳骨，浇下一桶雪水来。

你道却是怎么？元来昨夜那妇人，身首已斫做三段，鲜血横流，热腥扑鼻，恰像是才被人杀了的。富家子慌得只是打颤，心里道：“敢是丈夫知道，赶来杀了他？却怎不伤着我？我虽是弄了两番，有些疲倦，可也忒睡得死。同睡的人被杀了，怎一些也不知道？而今事已如此，这尸首在床，血痕狼籍，倏忽天明，他丈夫定然来这里讨人，岂不决撒？若要并叠过，一时怎能干净得？这祸事非同小可，除非杨抽马他广有法术，或者可以用甚么障眼法儿，遮掩得过。须是连夜去寻他！”也不管是四更五更，日里夜里，正是慌不择路，急走出门，望着杨抽马家里乱乱窜窜跑将来，擂鼓也似敲门，险些把一双拳头敲肿了，杨抽马方才在里面答应出来道：“是谁？”富家子忙道：“是我！是我！快开了门，有话讲。”此时富家子正是——

急惊风撞着了慢郎中。

抽马听得是他声音，且不开门，一路数落他道：“所贵朋友交厚，缓急须当相济。前日借贷些少，尚自不肯；今如此黑夜，来叫我甚么干？”富家子道：“有不是处，且慢讲。快与我开开门着！”



in the first place.

After finishing making love, they were weary and fell into a deep sleep. Before dawn, the rich man awoke and figured that someone might see them together at daybreak, so he quickly called to the woman to get up. He called her a couple of times and gave a few shoves, but there was no answer and the body remained motionless. He was puzzled at this and the strong, unbearable stench of blood that rose up into his nose. He got up, lit a candle and went back to the bed for a closer look. "Wow!" he yelled, as if he was hit by a thunderbolt.

What he saw was the woman's body, chopped into three parts, with blood streaming all over the place and a hot, offensive smell all around. It looked like a homicide. The rich man shuddered, thinking, "Did her husband come last night and kill her? But why didn't I get injured? I know I was exhausted last night after two rounds of making love, and slept soundly. But how could I not have been disturbed in the slightest when she was so cruelly killed at my side? Now this has happened, and the body is on the blood-smearred bed. Pretty soon it will be daylight and her husband will surely come here to look for her, the body will definitely be discovered. I could try to cover it up, but how can I completely clean it up? This is a horrible calamity for me! I can't shake it off unless I have the help of Yang Chouma. He has magic powers. He can produce a magic trick to free me of it. I've got to rush right now and talk to him!"

In desperation, the rich man tottered in the dark towards Chouma's place. He raced to the door and pounded on it with all his might, narrowly avoiding injury to his hands. Yang Chouma uttered a reply from inside, "Who is it out there?" The rich man, catching his breath, said, "It's me. It's me! Please be quick and open the door. I've got something urgent to talk with you." For the rich man, it was just like a case of acute disease being treated by a procrastinating doctor. Knowing it was the rich man, Chouma did not hurry to open the door but chided him casually, "We've been good friends, and should come to each other's help in times of need. The other day when I wanted to borrow some money from you, you turned me down. Now it's nighttime. What can I do for you?" The rich man said, "That was my fault, sir, and we can talk about that later. But do hurry up



抽马从从容容把门开了。富家子一见抽马，且哭且拜道：“先生救我奇祸则个！”抽马道：“何事恁等慌张？”富家子道：“不瞒先生说，昨夜黄昏时分，有个邻妇投我，不合留他过夜。夜里不知何人所杀，今横尸在家，乃飞来大祸，望乞先生妙法救解。”抽马道：“事体特易。只是你不肯顾我缓急，我顾你缓急则甚？”富家子道：“好朋友！念我和你往来多时。前日偶因缺乏，多有得罪。今若救得我命，此后再不敢吝惜在先生面上。”抽马笑道：“休得惊慌。我写一符与你拿去，贴在所卧室中，亟亟关了房门，切勿与人知道。天明开看，便知端的。”富家子道：“先生勿耍我。倘若天明开看，仍复如旧，可不误了大事？”抽马道：“岂有是理！若是如此，是我符不灵，后来如何行术？况我与你相交有日，怎误得你？只依我行去，包你一些没事便了。”富家子道：“若果蒙先生神法救得，当奉钱百万相报。”抽马笑道：“何用许多？但只原借我二万足矣。”富家子道：“这个敢不相奉？”

抽马遂提笔画一符与他，富家子袖了急去。幸得天尚未明，慌慌忙忙，依言贴在房中，自身走了出来，紧把房门闭了，站在外边，牙齿还是捉对儿厮打的，气也不敢多喘。守至天大明了，才敢走至房前。未及开门，先向门缝窥看，已此不见甚么狼籍意思。急急开进看时，但见干干净净，一床被卧，不曾



and let me in now.”

Slowly Chouma opened the door. The rich man fell on his knees and, with tears in his eyes, said, “Please help me, sir. I’m involved in a disaster!” Chouma asked, “What sort of business makes you so frantic?” The rich man said, “You don’t know, sir, that at dusk yesterday a neighbor woman came to ask me to put her up for the night. I did wrong to let her stay. It is strange that she was killed during the night by somebody. Now her body is in my home. This is a catastrophe that has fallen out of the clear sky. Please use your powers to save my life.” Chouma said, “That is very easy, but you rejected my request when I needed your help. Why should I help you now?”

The rich man said, “Friend, for the sake of our long-term relationship. It was my mistake to offend you when you were in need of money. If you save my life now, I will never refuse to lend you money in the future.” Chouma laughed and said, “Don’t worry. I’m going to draw you a figure. You should put it up in your bedroom and shut the door. Don’t let anyone know about it. The next day when you open the door, the body will be gone.” The rich man said, “Don’t kid me, sir. If I open the door the next morning and nothing has changed, it will kill me.” Chouma said, “Nonsense! If that were true, my figure would have no power at all. How could I then continue with my trade? Besides, you’re my old friend. Why would I make a fool of you? Go and do as I told you, and everything should be alright.” The rich man said, “If you help me this time, I will give you a million pieces of cash as a token of my gratitude.” Chouma laughed and said, “Why so much? I only need a sum of twenty thousand I originally wanted to borrow. That’ll be enough.” The rich man said, “I’ll be more than willing to give you that.”

Chouma then picked up a brush and drew a magic figure. The rich man slipped it into his sleeve and raced out. He was lucky to return home before dawn. He frantically posted the figure in his room and then reeled out, shutting the door behind him. He stood outside, his teeth grinding incessantly and his heart in his mouth. He stayed there until it was broad daylight. He didn’t dare to open the door but peeped through a crack in it. The mess was gone. So he entered the room and saw that his bedding was



有一点渍污，那里还见甚么尸首？富家子方才心安意定，喜欢不胜。

随即备钱二万，并分付仆人携酒持肴，特造抽马家来叩谢。抽马道：“本意只求贷二万钱，得此已勾，何必又费酒肴之惠？”富家子道：“多感先生神通广大，救我难解之祸。欲加厚酬，先生又分付只须二万。自念莫大之恩，无可报谢，聊奉卮酒，图与先生遣兴笑谈而已。”抽马道：“这等，须与足下痛饮一回。但是家间窄隘无趣，又且不时有人来寻，搅扰杂沓，不得快畅。明日携此酒肴一往郊外，尽兴何如？”富家子道：“这个绝妙！先生且留此酒肴自用，明日再携杖头来，邀先生郊外一乐可也。”抽马道：“多谢！多谢！”遂把二万钱与酒肴多收了进去。富家子别了回家。

到了明日，果来邀请出游。抽马随了他到郊外来。行不数里，只见一个僻净幽雅去处，一条酒帘子飘飘扬扬在那里。抽马道：“此处店家洁静，吾每在此小饮则个。”富家子即命仆人将盒儿向店中座头上安放已定，相拉抽马进店，相对坐下，唤店家取上等好酒来。只见里面一个当垆的妇人应将出来，手拿一壶酒，走到面前。富家子抬头看时，吃了一惊，元来正是前夜投宿被杀的妇人，面貌一些不差，但只是像个初病起来的模样。那妇人见了富家子也注目相视，暗暗痴想，像个心里有甚



neat and clean, free of blood stains. There was no sign of the dead body. With a sigh of relief, he became happy.

Then he took twenty thousand pieces of cash and went to Chouma's home, with his servant following behind carrying wine and food, to extend his thanks. Chouma said, "I only wanted to borrow twenty thousand pieces of cash from you, and that's all. Why do you bother to bring me wine and food?" The rich man replied, "Your skills were extraordinarily powerful, and I appreciate your kindness in saving my life. I would like to present more as a token of my gratitude, but you insisted that you only want twenty thousand pieces of cash. You did me a huge favor. This modest gift of wine and food is far from enough to repay your kindness. I'd like to have dinner with you while we entertain ourselves a little today." Chouma said, "In this case, I should like to have a drink with you, but my house lacks space and I have visitors visiting and leaving all the time during the day. That will disturb our fun in drinking. Why not take this dinner to some place out of town tomorrow so we can enjoy ourselves there?" The rich man said, "Absolutely right. But please keep the wine and food for yourself today. I'll bring some money with me tomorrow, so we can go to the country and have a good time together." Chouma replied, "Many thanks, many thanks." Hence Chouma accepted the twenty thousand pieces of cash and the wine and food as well. Then the rich man left for home.

On the next day, the rich man came with an invitation for an outing and meal. Chouma went out of town with him. A trip of a few *li* brought them to a quiet refreshing place where a tavern was located with a streamer flapping in the breeze. Chouma said, "It's nice and clean here. Let's go in and have a drink."

The rich man told the servant to set down the gift basket on the table, as he, with Chouma, walked in and took seats facing each other. He called the tavern-keeper to bring out the best wine available. A waitress emerged with a wine pot in one hand, and walked up to them. Glancing up, the rich man was astounded. It was the woman who had asked him for accommodation and was later murdered. There was no mistake about it. The only difference was that she looked like she had recently recovered



么疑惑的一般。富家子有些鹞突，问道：“我们与你素不相识，你见了我们，只管看了又看，是甚么缘故？”那妇人道：“好教官人得知，前夜梦见有人邀到个所在，乃是一所精致书房，内中有少年留住。那个少年模样，颇与官人有些厮像，故此疑心。”富家子道：“既然留住，后来却怎么散场了？”妇人道：“后来直至半夜方才醒来，只觉身子异常不快，陡然下了几斗鲜血，至今还是有气无力的。平生从来无此病，不知是怎样起的。”杨抽马在旁，只不开口，暗地微笑。富家子晓得是他的作怪，不敢明言。私念着一晌欢情，重赏了店家妇人，教他服药调理。杨抽马也笑嘻嘻的袖中取出一张符来，付与妇人道：“你只将此符贴在睡的床上，那怪梦也不做，身体也自平复了。”妇人喜欢称谢。

两人出了店门，富家子埋怨杨抽马道：“前日之事，正不知祸从何起，元来是先生作戏。既累了我受惊，又害了此妇受病。先生这样耍法，不是好事。”抽马道：“我只召他魂来诱你，你若主意老成，那有惊恐？谁教你一见就动心营勾他，不惊你惊谁！”富家子笑道：“深夜美人来至，遮莫是柳下惠、鲁男子也忍耐不住，怎教我不动心？虽然后来吃惊，那半夜也是我受用过了。而今再求先生致他来与我叙一叙旧，更感高情，再容酬谢。”抽马道：“此妇与你元有些小前缘，故此致得他魂来，



from an illness. The woman also stared at the rich man, nonplused and ruminating over some puzzle. The rich man was confused and said to her, “We don’t know each other. Why are you gazing at me?”

The woman replied, “To be frank, I had a dream the night before last that I was invited to a house. I entered a nice study and a young man asked me to stay. That young man looked like you. So I was curious.” The rich man said, “What happened after that?” The woman answered, “After midnight I woke up. My body felt pinched and then I found that blood was flowing profusely out of me. I’m still feeble now. I never had such a sickness before. I’ve no idea what happened to me.” Yang Chouma said nothing but only laughed inwardly. The rich man realized that it was a trick Chouma had played on them, but he felt too embarrassed to say so. The fantasy of his intimacy with the woman that night lingered with him. He gave a generous reward to the woman and told her to get some medicine to help her recover. Yang Chouma also slipped a sheet of paper with a figure on it out of his sleeve, and, with a smile, gave it to the woman, saying, “Post this on your bed, madam, and you won’t have that kind of odd dream any more. You’ll be fully recovered soon.” The woman expressed her thanks.

Yang Chouma and the rich man left the tavern. The rich man grumbled to Yang Chouma, “I didn’t know how that terrible incident could have taken place the other night. Now I know it was a trick you played on me. You frightened me and caused this woman to become sick. It was not the right thing to do.” Chouma said, “I was bringing her soul over to bewitch you. If you had held on to your integrity, would you have been so terrified? It was your fault to be tempted with thoughts of seduction! How could you, then, have avoided the fright?” The rich man laughed and said, “When such a beauty appeared at midnight, I guess, even the most honest and upright gentlemen could not keep their heads cool. How could I hold on? Though terrified later that night, I enjoyed myself the first half of the evening. Now I beg you to bring her to me once again so that we can keep up our affection. That way I would even more appreciate your kindness and thank you with much payment.” Chouma said, “This woman was somewhat connected to you by fate, so I was able to bring her soul to



不是轻易可以弄术的。岂不怕鬼神责罚么？你夙债原少我二万钱，只为前日若不如此，你不肯借，偶尔作此顽耍勾当。我原说二万之外，要也无用。我也不要再谢，你也不得再妄想了。”富家子方才死心塌地，敬服抽马神术。

抽马后在成都卖卜，不知所终。要知虽是绝奇术法，也脱不得天数的。

异术在身，可以惊世。

若非夙缘，不堪轻试。

杖既难逃，钱岂妄凯？

不过前知，游戏三昧。

you. But I cannot perform such magic rashly. If I do, don't I fear the punishment of the gods? You owed me a debt of twenty thousand coins in the previous life, so I played this trick. If I had not done so, you would never have lent me the money. I told you that I only needed twenty thousand. I have no use for anything beyond that sum. I don't want any more of your money, and you should forget about those fantasies." The rich man was then compliant and admired of Chouma's extraordinary powers even more.

Some time later, Chouma maintained his fortune-telling business in Chengdu, but nobody knew where he died. Whatever magical arts one possesses, his life will eventually be manipulated by fate.

He astounds the world with his magic powers.

Yet he refrains from any rash action unless it's a cause
from previous existence.

As a thrashing is inevitable, he has many a reason to claim the money.

A person of foresight, he simply takes his action as mere playing games,
defying all mysteries.



卷 三 十 四

任君用恣乐深闺 杨太尉戏官馆客

诗曰：

黄金用尽教歌舞，留与他人乐少年。

此语只伤身后事，岂知现报在生前。

且说世间富贵人家，没一个不广蓄姬妾。自道是左拥燕姬，右拥赵女，娇艳盈前，歌舞成队，乃人生得意之事。岂知男女大欲，彼此一般，一人精力要周旋几个女子，便已不得相当。况富贵之人，必是中年上下，取的姬妾，必是花枝也似一般的后生，枕席之事，三分四路，怎能勾满得他们的意，尽得他们的兴？所以满闺中不是怨气，便是丑声。总有家法极严的，铁壁铜墙，提铃喝号，防得一个水泄不通，也只禁得他们的身，禁不得他们的心。略有空隙，就思量弄一场把戏，那有情趣到你身上来？只把做一个灰物看承而已。似此有何好处？费了钱财，用了心机，单买得这些人的憎嫌。试看红拂离了越





Tale 34

Ren Junyong Lustily Revels with Confined Beauties Minister Yang Sinisterly Castrates His Literary Hack as Revenge

A poem reads thus:

All the gold has gone for keeping a whole harem of young
and beautiful concubines.

Sure enough, after the master's death they will fall
into others' embraces.

This remark is in most cases just a helpless sigh at the master
after his death.

But who will ever expect to suffer a living disgrace?

It is common practice that masters of rich and powerful families always keep a troop of young and beautiful concubines so as to enjoy the sensual pleasures of singing and dancing. And of course, this is the happiest moment in life. However, as men and women's sexual urge is basically about the same, it will be no easy task for a man to carry on with several women. What's more, rich masters with a harem of young concubines around them must have all reached middle age. How could it be possible for them to gratify these young women's insatiable desire? For this reason, all the concubines are usually filled with sorrows and grievances. In some families with strict domestic disciplines, concubines are tightly guarded in a bastion of iron. But this can only confine their bodies. As it always turns out, nothing can confine their hearts. The moment they are free, they will think of starting love affairs. How can it be possible for them to remain faithful to their masters? They only regarded their masters with disgust and hatred. So what's the good of keeping a troop of young and beautiful concubines? It's only a waste of money and thinking. What the



公之宅，红绡逃了勋臣之家，此等之事，不一而足。可见生前已如此了，何况一朝身死，树倒猢狲散，残花嫩蕊，尽多零落于他人之手。要那做得关盼盼的，千中没有一人。这又是身后之事，管不得许多，不足慨叹了。争奈富贵之人，只顾眼前，以为极乐。小子在旁看的，正替你担着愁布袋哩。

宋朝有个京师士人，出游归来，天色将晚。经过一个人家后苑，墙缺处苦不甚高，看来像个跳得进的。此时士人带着酒兴，一跃而过。只见里面是一所大花园子，好不空阔。四围一望，花木丛茂，路径交杂，想来煞有好看。一团高兴，随着石砌阶路，转弯抹角，渐走渐深，悄不见一个人，只管踱的进去，看之不足。

天色有些黑下来了，思量走回，一时忘了来路。正在追忆寻索，忽地望见红纱灯笼远远而来，想道必有贵家人到。心下慌忙，一发寻不出原路来了。恐怕撞见不便，思量躲过。看见道左有一小亭，亭前太湖石畔，有叠成的一个石洞，洞口有一片小毡遮着。想道：“躲在这里头去，外面人不见，权可遮掩



rich masters got in return is nothing but disgust and hatred from their concubines.

At the end of the Sui Dynasty (581-618), Hongfo, a concubine of Yang Su, one of the most powerful court officials, left her master and eloped with Li Jing. During the Tang Dynasty (618-917), Hongxiao, a concubine of a top-rank official also left her master's mansion and eloped with a young man surnamed Cui, a visitor of the top-rank official. Similar cases are legion. Such things happen even when the concubines' masters are still alive. Let alone when the masters are dead. When the tree falls, the monkeys scatter. All the young and beautiful concubines will fall into others' arms immediately after their master's death. Not even one concubine like Guan Panpan¹ can be found in a thousand. However, the fact is that all the rich and powerful usually find what will happen to their concubines after their death unworthy of their serious consideration. After all, they care nothing except seizing every opportunity to enjoy worldly pleasures as much as they can. As an onlooker, I'm really in a sweat for them.

During the Song Dynasty, there once lived a scholar in the capital city. It was getting late when he returned from his outing. While passing by the courtyard of a certain household, the scholar found that there was a breach in the wall. Feeling elated with wine, he jumped over the wall and got into the backyard of the house. Looking around, he found it was an extremely huge garden with a thick growth of flowers and trees and intermingled routes. Presumably he thought it must be a wonderful place. So he sauntered forward along the zigzagging stone steps. Soon he moved into the inner part of the garden and all became pretty quiet. Not one soul could be found. He strolled around in the garden and enjoyed the sight to the full.

After a short while, night fell. He thought of getting out of the garden, but he found he had lost his way. While he was racking his brains to find his way out, he suddenly caught sight of a red gauze lantern approaching him from a distance. He thought the people behind the red gauze lantern must be bigwigs. Anxious and flurried, he found it even harder to find his way back. Fearing that he might be caught, he thought of finding a shelter.



过了，岂不甚妙？”忙将这片小毡揭将开来，正要藏身进去，猛可里一个人在洞里钻将出来，那一惊可也不小。士人看那人时，是一个美貌少年，不知为何先伏在这里头。忽见士人揭开来，只道抄他跟脚的，也自老大吃惊，急忙奔窜，不知去向了。士人道：“惭愧！且让我躲一躲着。”于是吞声忍气，蹲伏在内，只道必无人见。

岂知事不可料，冤家路窄，那一盏红纱灯笼偏生生地向那亭子上来。士人洞中是暗处，觑出去看那灯亮处较明，乃是十来少年妇人，靓妆丽服，一个个妖冶举止，风骚动人。士人正看得动火，不匡那一伙人一窝蜂的多抢到石洞口，众手齐来揭毡。看见士人面貌生疏，俱各失惊道：“怎的不是那一个了？”面面厮觑，没做理会。一个年纪略老成些的妇人，夺将纱灯在手，提过来把士人仔细一照道：“就这个也好。”随将纤手拽着士人的手，一把挽将出来。士人不敢声问，料道没甚么歹处，软软随他同走。引到洞房曲室，只见酒肴并列，众美争先，六博争雄，交杯换盏，以至搂肩交颈，搵脸接唇，无所不至。几杯酒下肚，一个个多兴热如火，不管三七二十一，一把推士人在床上了。齐攒入帐中，脱裤的脱裤，抱腰的抱腰，直到五鼓，方才一个个逐渐散去。士人早已弄得骨软筋麻，肢体无力，行走不动了。



Looking left, he noticed a pavilion. In front of the pavilion was a Taihu Stone rockery with a cave in it. The entrance of the cave was covered up with a felt pad. "Better hide myself in this cave," the scholar thought to himself. As he unveiled the felt pad and was about to enter the cave, a man suddenly dashed out of the cave, giving the scholar a start.

The scholar had no idea why this man had hidden himself there in advance. Taking a look at the man, the scholar found he was a handsome young man. This handsome young man was also taken aback when the scholar unveiled the felt pad, thinking that it must be someone who had been shadowing him. Losing no time, the handsome young man fled like mad. The scholar said, "Sorry, sorry! Let me hide in this place for a moment." Submitting to humiliation, he crouched himself in the cave, and was sure that no one would discover him.

However, things are always hard to predict and foes are fated to meet on a narrow road. The red gauze lantern just moved over towards the pavilion. As he was lying low in the dark cave, the scholar could see the lantern and the people around it rather clearly. He noticed they were about a dozen of pretty and coquettish young women, all gorgeously dressed. As he watched these beautiful young women, he became quite excited. But these young women all rushed up to the cave and unveiled the felt pad all at once.

Seeing a stranger hiding in the cave, the women were greatly surprised, saying, "Why not that one?" They gazed at each other in blank dismay. An elderly woman seized the lantern and took it close to the scholar. Lighting the scholar with the lantern, she said, "This one is good too." So saying, she stretched out her soft delicate hand and guided the scholar out of the cave. The scholar did not dare to utter a word. Knowing for sure they would do no harm to him, he simply followed them to the inmost recesses of a house in which a table of wine and food had been well arranged. The young women all fell over each other to have wine and food. They even went so far as to hold each other's necks and started to kiss. They all became excited after they took a few cups of wine. Casting all caution to the winds, they shoved the scholar onto the bed and started to undress him. Then they make love with him. Before dawn, the young



那一个老成些的妇人，将一个大担箱放土人在内，叫了两三个丫鬟扛抬了，到了墙外，把担箱倾了土人出来，急把门闭上了，自进去了。此时天色将明，土人恐怕有人看见，惹出是非来。没奈何，强打精神，一步一步挨了回来，不敢与人说知。

过了几日，身体健旺，才到旧所旁边，打听缺墙内是何处。听得人说，是蔡太师家的花园，土人伸了舌头出来，一时缩不进去，担了一把汗，再不敢打从那里走过了。

看官，你想：当时这蔡京太师何等威势！何等法令！有这一班儿姬妾，不知老头子在那里昏寐中，眼睛背后，任凭他们这等胡弄。约下了一个，惊去了，又换了一个，恣行淫乐，如同无人。太师那里拘管得来？也只为多蓄姬妾，所以有这等丑事。同时称高、童、杨、蔡四大奸臣，与蔡太师差不多权势的杨戩太尉，也有这样一件事，后来败露，妆出许多笑柄来。看官不厌，听小子试道其详。

满前娇丽恣淫荒，雨露谁曾得饱尝？

自有阳台成乐地，行云何必定襄王！



women took their leave one after another. And the scholar, feeling weak and limp all over from the lovemaking, could not even have the strength to walk.

The elderly woman then had the scholar put into a large trunk and ordered a couple of servant girls to carry the scholar out of the house. When they were out on the street, the servant girls dumped the scholar. The servant girls hurried back and closed the gate. It was dawning at the moment. Panic-stricken, the scholar was deeply worried that he might get himself into trouble once he was spotted on the street. Utterly helpless, he had to summon up all his energy and drag himself back home step by step.

After a few days, the scholar recovered his health and revisited the place where there was a breach in the wall. Upon inquiry, he learned that it was Prime Minister Cai Jing's garden. The scholar put out his tongue and was unable to draw it back for a long time. Terribly frightened out of his wits, the scholar never ventured to pass by that garden.

Readers, just imagine what overwhelming power and influence Prime Minister Cai Jing had! These beautiful young women were some of his concubines. This old chap must be sleeping somewhere else at the moment. So these concubines could have the chance to act wildly. The young man they had formerly arranged to meet in the garden was frightened away by the scholar. But they picked up another man to enjoy themselves in indulging in carnal pleasures. Moreover, they acted willfully and unscrupulously without any misgivings. How could Prime Minister Cai keep them under strict control? The reason for such a disgraceful affair was that Prime Minister Cai kept too many concubines.

Gao Qiu, Tong Guan, Yang Jian and Cai Jing were the four treacherous courtiers during the last years of the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127). Yang Jian, Minister of the Imperial Military Department, was just about the same in power and influence with Prime Minister Cai Jing. There was also a similar disgraceful affair in Yang Jian's household. Now I'd like to have your patience for this story.

Thirsty for love, young and beautiful concubines can never feel contented with their masters.



话说宋时杨戩太尉，恃权怙宠，靡所不为。声色之奉，姬妾之多，一时自蔡太师而下，罕有其比。

一日，太尉要到郑州上冢，携带了家小同行。是上前的几位夫人，与各房随使的养娘、侍婢，多跟的西去。馀外有年纪过时了些的，与年幼未谙承奉的，又身子娇怯、怕历风霜的，月信方行、轿马不便的，剩下不去。合着养娘侍婢们，也还共有五六十人留在宅中。太尉心性猜忌，防闲紧严，中门以外直至大门，尽皆锁闭，添上朱笔封条，不通出入。惟有中门内前廊壁间挖一孔，装上转轮盘，在外边传将食物进去。一个年老院奴姓李的，在外监守。晚间督人巡更，鸣锣敲梆，通夕不歇。外边人不敢正眼觑视他。

内宅中留下不去的，有几位奢遮出色，乃太尉宠幸有名的姬妾。一个叫得瑶月夫人，一个叫得筑玉夫人，一个叫得宜笑姐，一个叫得餐花姨姨，同着一班儿侍女，关在里面。日长夜永，无事得做，无非是抹骨牌、斗百草、戏秋千、蹴气球，消遣过日。然意味有限，那里当得甚么兴趣？况日间将就扯拽过了，晚间寂寞，何以支吾！这个筑玉夫人，原是长安玉工之妻，资性聪明，仪容美艳，私下也通些门路，京师传有盛名。杨太



To quench their carnal desires, they have to carry on love affairs
with other men

* * *

During the Song Dynasty (960-1279), Yang Jian, Minister of the Imperial Military Department, abused his power, encouraged favoritism, defied the law, and enjoyed sensual pleasures with an army of concubines, the second largest in number at that time, only a little fewer than those of Prime Minister Cai Jing.

One day Minister Yang wanted to visit his family tombs in the city of Zhengzhou. He took with him a few of his favorite concubines together with some nurses and maid servants. Left behind were the considerably elder concubines, the young who were inexperienced in flattering their master, those physically fragile, and those undergoing a period of menstruation so as not to be fit for travel, plus a host of nurses and servants, totaling up to about fifty or sixty women.

As he was a suspicious and jealous man by nature, Minister Yang had the women tightly guarded under lock and key inside the inmost quarters, some distance away from the main entrance to the mansion. Seals of paper strips with red characters were posted on the inner gate. A hole was hollowed in the wall of the verandah beside the inner gate, and a revolving wheel was mounted inside the hole in order for the old housekeeper to supply food from outside to the inmates. The housekeeper, surnamed Li, stayed in the main courtyard keeping watch. At night he supervised a patrol of men beating gongs and clappers through to dawn, which struck anyone with awe who wanted to peep into the mansion.

Among the concubines who stayed in the mansion, a few were rather attractive. They were the Minister's most favorite ones. They were Fair-moon, Jade-beauty, Sweet-smile and Fine-flower. With their group of servant-girls, they lived in tedious confinement and had nothing to do except play bone dice, hold plant competitions, ride on a swing, and kick a feather-stuffed ball. But soon they found these games boring. What else could they do to while away the hours? Even if they could manage to fill the hours of the day, how would they kill the boredom of the night?

Jade-beauty was originally the wife of a jade craftsman in the capital



尉偶得瞥见，用势夺来，十分宠爱，立为第七位夫人，呼名筑玉。谁知标致如玉琢成一般的人，也就暗带着本来之意。他在女伴中伶俐异常，妖淫无赛。太尉在家之时，尚兀自思量背地里溜将个把少年进来取乐；今见太尉不在，镇日空闲，清清锁闭着，怎叫他不妄想起来？

太尉有一个馆客，姓任，表字君用，原是个读书不就的少年子弟，写得一笔好字，也代做得些书启简札之类。模样俊秀，年纪未上三十岁。总角之时，多曾与太尉后庭取乐过来，极善诙谐帮衬。又加心性熨贴，所以太尉喜欢他，留在馆中作陪客。太尉郑州去，因是途中姬妾过多，轿马上下之处恐有不便，故留在家间外舍不去。任生有个相好朋友，叫做方务德，是从幼同窗。平时但是府中得暇，便去寻他闲话饮酒。此时太尉不在家，任生一发身畔无事，日里只去拉他各处行走。晚间或同宿娼家，或独归书馆，不在话下。

且说筑玉夫人晚间寂守不过，有个最知心的侍婢，叫做如霞，唤来床上做一头睡着，与他说些淫欲之事，消遣闷怀。说得高兴，取出行淫的假具，教他缚在腰间权当男子行事。如霞弄得兴头上问夫人道：“可比得男子滋味么？”夫人道：“只好略取解馋，成得甚么正经！若是真男子滋味，岂止于此。”如霞道：“真男子如此直钱，可惜府中倒闲着一个在外舍。”夫人道：“不是任君用么？”如霞道：“正是。”夫人道：“这是太尉相公最亲爱的客人，且是好个人物。我们在里头窥见他，常自火动



city. She was intelligent, charming, and had some close friends and a fame in the capital. On one occasion, Minister Yang caught sight of her and used his power to take her home. Particularly attracted to her, he ranked her as his seventh lady. Her name indicated her appearance of jade-like beauty and grace. Among her female peers, she stuck out because of her wisdom and sexual appetite. Even when the Minister was at home, she often tried to smuggle in a young man for fun. Now the Minister was away and life had become restricted and dull. How could she endure the fickle of her sexual fantasies?

Minister Yang had a literary hack named Ren Junyong, a profligate young man who was poor at learning but well-versed in calligraphy. He was used to doing secretarial and bookkeeping work. Now in his late twenties, he looked very handsome. While they were in their childhood, Ren and the Minister had been lovers. Ren was humorous, considerate and easy to get along with. So he won the favor of the Minister, who kept him as an assistant for meeting guests. When the Minister departed for Zhengzhou, he was left behind so as to avoid any traveling hassle with the large number of concubines. He stayed in the outer quarters of the mansion. Ren Junyong had a good friend, called Fang Wude, who had been a schoolmate of his. Ren Junyong often went to have a drink with Fang Wude when he was not engaged in business in the Minister's residence. Now with the absence of the Minister, Ren Junyong was quite bored. He took strolls with Fang Wude during the day and at night they often visited prostitutes or stayed at his study.

Jade-beauty found it hard to while away her nights, so she called a favorite maidservant named Ruxia to go to bed with her. Jade-beauty told Ruxia obscene stories. In the heat of storytelling, Jade-beauty took out an artificial male organ, tied it around Ruxia's waist and they performed a lovemaking act. As Ruxia got excited, she asked her mistress, "How do you find this in comparison with a real man?" Jade-beauty said, "Well, it quenches my desire for the moment, but it's far from a real one. Making love with a man is a lot more exciting!" Ruxia said, "If a man is so desirable, it's shame that one idles about outside this yard." Jade-beauty asked, "Are you talking about Ren Junyong?" Ruxia said, "Exactly."



的。”如霞道：“这个人若设法得他进来，岂不妙哉？”夫人道：“果然此人闲着。只是墙垣高峻，岂能飞入？”如霞道：“只好说耍，自然进来不得。”夫人道：“待我心生一计，定要取他进来。”如霞道：“后花园墙下，便是外舍书房。我们明日早起，到后花园相相地头，夫人怎生设下好计弄进来，大家受用一番。”夫人笑道：“我未曾到手，你便思想分用了？”如霞道：“夫人不要独吃自屙！我们也大家有兴，好做帮手。”夫人笑道：“是，是。”一夜无话。

到得天明，梳洗已毕，夫人与如霞开了后花园门，去摘花戴，就便去相地头。行至秋千架边，只见绒索高悬。夫人看了，笑一笑道：“此件便有用他处了。”又见修树梯子倚在太湖石畔，夫人叫如霞道：“你看，你看，有此二物，岂怕内外隔墙？”如霞道：“计将安出？”夫人道：“且到那对外厢的墙边，再看个明白，方有道理。”如霞领着夫人，到两株梧桐树边，指着道：“此外正是外舍书房，任君用见今独居在内了。”夫人仔细相了一相，又想了一想，道：“今晚端的只在此处取他进来一会，不为难也。”如霞道：“却怎么？”夫人道：“我与你悄地把梯子拿将来，倚在梧桐树旁。你走上梯子，再在枝干上踏上去两层，即可以招呼得外厢听见了。”如霞道：“这边走上去不难，要外厢听见也不打紧，如何得他上来？”夫人道：“我将几片木板，用秋千索缚住两头，隔一尺多缚一片板。收将起来，只是一捆；撒将直来，便似梯子一般。如与外边约得停当了，便



Jade-beauty then said, "He's the favorite employee of our Minister. He's handsome too. I often glance at him out there and I am filled with amorous feelings." Ruxia said, "If we could bring him inside, wouldn't that be wonderful?" Jade-beauty replied, "He spends the day idling away his time, but the wall is too high. How could we make him fly over it?" Ruxia said, "I am saying this for fun. Of course he can't enter our mansion." "Let me think about it," Jade-beauty said. "Definitely I want to get him here!" Ruxia then said, "Outside the backyard wall is his study. Let's wake up early tomorrow and take a look around that area. If you come up with a good idea and bring him in, we can all enjoy ourselves." Jade-beauty laughed and replied, "I've not got hold of him yet, but you're already thinking of sharing him with me, aren't you?" Ruxia said, "You'd better not begrudge us. We servants will then be highly motivated and give you a hand in obtaining him." Jade-beauty then said, "You're right." The night passed without event.

The next morning, after washing and dressing, Jade-beauty and Ruxia went into the backyard to pick flowers. Walking past the swing and exploring the area, they spotted a rope hung high from the swing framework. With a grin, Jade-beauty said, "We can use it!" A tree-pruning ladder was leaning against a huge rock. Jade-beauty called to Ruxia, "Look, look! We now have these two things here. We can do something about the wall." Ruxia asked, "What's your idea?" Jade-beauty said, "Let's go to the wall and figure out a way." Ruxia led Jade-beauty to the two parasol trees, and said, pointing forward, "Outside this wall is Ren Junyong's study." Jade-beauty examined the trees and said, "I think we can get him in here tonight. It won't be very difficult." Ruxia replied, "Tell me what idea you've got in your mind, madam."

Jade-beauty said, "Let's move that ladder quietly over here and lean it against the tree. You can climb the ladder and get high up into those tree branches. Then you should be able to call outside across the wall." Ruxia said, "It won't be hard to get up on the tree and talk to him over the wall, but the problem is how we can pull him up to the top of the wall." Jade-beauty said, "I'm going to fasten a few boards at the ends with the swing rope, one foot apart. Gathering them up, you have a bundle, and spreading



从梯子走到梧桐枝上去，把索头扎紧在丫杈老干，生了根。然后将板索多抛向墙外挂下去，分明是张软梯。随你再多几个，也次第上得来，何况一人乎？”如霞道：“妙哉！妙哉！事不宜迟，且如法做起来试试看。”笑嘻嘻且向房中取出十来块小木板，递与夫人。夫人叫解将秋千索来，亲自扎缚得坚牢了，对如霞道：“你且将梯儿倚好，走上梯去，望外边一望，看可通得个消息出去。倘遇不见人，就把这法儿先坠你下去，约他一约也好。”

如霞依言，将梯儿靠稳，身子小巧利便，一轂碌溜上枝头。望外边书舍一看，也是合当有事，恰恰任君用同方务德外边游耍，过了夜，方才转来，正要进房。墙里如霞笑指道：“兀的不是任先生？”任君用听得墙头上笑声，抬头一看，却见是个双鬟女子指着他说话，认得是宅中如霞。他本是少年的人，如何禁架得定！便问道：“姐姐说小生甚么？”如霞是有心招风揽火的，答道：“先生这早在外边回来，莫非昨晚在那处行走么？”任君用道：“小生独处难捱，怪不得要在外边走走。”如霞道：“你看我墙内，那个不是独处的？你何不到里面走走，便大家不独了。”任君用道：“我不生得双翅，飞不进来。”如霞道：“你果要进来，我有法儿，不消飞得。”任君用向墙上唱一个肥喏道：“多谢姐姐！速教妙方。”如霞道：“待禀过了夫人，晚上伺候消息。”说罢了，溜下树来。任君用听得明白，不胜侥幸道：“不知是那一位夫人，小生有此缘分。却如何能进得去？且到晚上看消息则个。”一面只望着日头下去。正是：



them out, you get something that looks like a ladder. After we schedule a time with him, you can go up into the branches with the ladder and fasten one end of the rope tightly onto a sturdy fork in the tree. Then you can throw the bundle of boards across the wall. That will give him a rope ladder. It will be strong enough to hold several men, let alone himself!" Ruxia exclaimed, "Great, Great! Come on and let's do it right now to see whether it works or not." She joyously raced into the room and grabbed about ten small boards and gave them to Jade-beauty. Jade-beauty asked her to untie the swing rope and fasten the boards, and then she said to Ruxia, "Get the ladder and lean it against the tree. You can climb to the top and take a look to see whether you can make yourself heard outside. If nobody is around, you can go down outside and talk to him about this matter."

Ruxia set up the ladder, sprightly ascended into the tree branches, and looked around outside. It so happened that Ren Junyong and Fang Wude had just returned after staying out the whole night for merrymaking. As Ren Junyong was about to enter his study, Ruxia laughed and called out, pointing to him, "Is that Master Ren over there?" Ren Junyong heard someone calling him from the wall and raised his head. He saw a girl there and recognized that she was Ruxia. How could he, a young man, remain emotionally untouched? So he asked, "Young lady, were you talking to me?" Desiring to flirt with him, Ruxia answered, "You're coming back early in the morning, sir. Did you go somewhere last night?" "I couldn't stand the loneliness. Ren Junyong replied. "So I stayed out last night."

Ruxia said, "Look here inside. Every one of us is lonely. Why not come on in and join us? Then we'll all not be lonely." Ren Junyong said, "I've got no wings. How can I fly in?" Ruxia answered, "I know how to get you in. You don't have to fly in." Ren Junyong bowed low with hands clasped in front of him and said, "I appreciate your kindness, sister. Please let me know your idea." Ruxia said, "I'm going to tell the mistress first. Please come here this evening for instructions." Then she slid down the tree. Ren Junyong, puzzled by Ruxia's words, wondered which mistress it was. He thought to himself, "What good luck I have! But how will I be



无端三足乌，团圆光皎灼。

安得后羿弓，射此一轮落。

不说任君用巴天晚。且说筑玉夫人在下边，看见如霞和墙外讲话，一句句多听得，不待如霞回覆，各自心照，笑嘻嘻的且回房中。如霞道：“今晚管不寂寞了。”夫人道：“万一后生家胆怯，不敢进来，这样事也是有的。”如霞道：“他方才恨不得立地飞了进来。听得说有个妙法，他肥喏就唱不迭，岂有胆怯之理？只准备今宵取乐便了。”筑玉夫人暗暗欢喜。

床上添铺异锦，炉中满爇名香。榛松细果贮教尝，美酒佳茗顿放。久作阱中猿马，今思野外鸳鸯。安排芳饵钩檀郎，百计图他欢畅。（词寄《西江月》）

是日将晚，夫人唤如霞同到园中。走到梯边，如霞仍前从梯子溜在梧桐枝去，对着墙外大声咳嗽。外面任君用看见天黑下来，正在那里探头探脑，伺候声响。忽闻有人咳嗽，仰面瞧处，正是如霞在树枝高头站着。忙道：“好姐姐，望穿我眼也！快用妙法，等我进来。”如霞道：“你在此等着，就来接你。”急下梯来，对夫人道：“那人等久哩。”夫人道：“快放他进来！”



able to go in? I'll have to come and see this evening." He only wished the sun would set as quickly as possible.

Bright and scorching, the sun shines.

How I wish I were Houyi²

Now let's leave him waiting there for the moment and return to Jade-beauty, who was then standing inside the yard and had got each word of Ruxia's talk with Ren Junyong. She became quite excited, and, before Ruxia could report to her, joyfully returned to her room. Ruxia said to her, "We're not going to be bored this night." Jade-beauty responded, "If he's timid, he will withdraw. Things like that happen that way." But Ruxia replied, "He looked only too anxious to get inside just now and he made a big bow to me. How could he be timid? You just get ready for fun tonight, madam." Jade-beauty restrained her joy at this news.

Bright and gorgeous brocade is well spread on the bed.

The best incense is lit in the censer.

Fine hazels, pine nuts, vintage wine and scented tea
make everyone drool with greed.

Having been horse kept in the shafts for so long,

They now yearn to be the mandarin ducks in the open country.

Sweet and fragrant baits are ready for fish to take.

A hundred and one ways we have tried,

For nothing but joy and fun.

(To the tune of "Xijiangyue")

Jade-beauty and Ruxia went into the backyard again at dusk. As they got to the ladder, Ruxia quickly mounted the tree. She gave out a loud cough over the wall, where Ren Junyong was sneaking about restlessly. Upon hearing someone cough, Ren Junyong looked up and saw that Ruxia up there on the tree. He said, "Good sister, I'm running out of patience! Tell me how to get inside quickly!" Ruxia said, "Wait a minute. I'll get you in."

Climbing down the ladder, Ruxia said to Jade-beauty, "He's been there waiting pretty long." Jade-beauty said, "Hurry up and get him in." Ruxia picked up the rope and boards that had been fixed earlier. Tucking them under her arm, she climbed up the ladder and tied the ends of the rope to



如霞即取早间扎缚停当的索子，辘在腋下，望梯上便走。到树枝上，牢系两头。如霞口中叫声道：“着！”把木板绳索向墙外一撒，那索子早已挂了下去。任君用外边凝望处，见一件物事抛将出来，却是一条软梯索子，喜得打跌。将脚试踹，且是结得牢实，料道可登。踹着木板，双手吊索，一步一步吊上墙来。如霞看见，急跑下来道：“来了！来了！”夫人觉得有些害羞，走退一段路，在太湖石畔坐着等候。任君用跳过了墙，急从梯子跳下。一见如霞，向前双手抱住道：“姐姐恩人，快活杀小生也！”如霞啐一声道：“好不识羞的，不要馋脸！且去前面见夫人。”任君用道：“是那一位夫人？”如霞道：“是第七位筑玉夫人。”任君用道：“可正是京师极有名标致的么？”如霞道：“不是他，还有那个？”任君用道：“小生怎敢就去见他？”如霞道：“是他想着你，用见识教你进来的，你怕怎地？”任君用道：“果然如此，小生何以克当？”如霞道：“不要虚谦逊，造化着你罢了！切莫忘了我引见的。”任君用道：“小生以身相谢，不敢有忘。”

一头说话，已走到夫人面前。如霞抛声道：“任先生已请到了。”任君用满脸堆下笑来，深深拜揖道：“小生下界凡夫，敢望与仙子相近？今蒙夫人垂盼，不知是那世里积下的福。”夫人道：“妾处深闺，常因太尉宴会，窥见先生丰采，渴慕已久。今太尉不在，闺中空闲，特邀先生一叙。倘不弃嫌，妾之



the tree fork. With a shout of “go,” she tossed out the bundle of rope and boards. The rope ladder hung across the wall outside. Ren Junyong, waiting outside, suddenly saw the rope ladder descending. Overjoyed, he tentatively set his foot on it to make sure that it would hold him steady. Then he climbed the boards with his hands holding onto the rope, and, step by step, ascended to the top of the wall.

Ruxia descended from the tree, crying, “He’s here! He’s here!” Meanwhile, fearing the initial embarrassment of meeting Ren Junyong, Jade-beauty had moved away to the side of the rock. Then she sat there and waited. Having gotten on top of the wall, Ren Junyong used the ladder to slide down the other side. He sprang forward and held Ruxia in his arms, saying, “Sister, you did me a great favor. I’m dying of joy!” Ruxia spat at him and said, “It’s shameful! Don’t do this to me. Go and see the mistress right now.”

Ren Junyong asked, “Which mistress?” Ruxia replied, “Seventh Lady, Jade-beauty.” Ren Junyong then said, “Is she the one who is well known for her beauty in the capital city?” Ruxia said, “Exactly.” Ren Junyong said, “Humble as I am, how can I be so imprudent as to meet her?” “It’s she who has wanted to see you,” Ruxia said. “She thought up this idea to get you inside. Why are you so shy?” “If so, the bliss is far more than I can deserve,” said Ren Junyong. Ruxia said, “Stop pretending to be modest. Go get your good luck! But, don’t forget that it was me who first introduced you to her.” Ren Junyong said, “I dare not forget your kindness. I’ll repay it with my body.”

They walked, talking, to where Jade-beauty was sitting. Ruxia said, “Here’s Master Ren, Madam.” With a deep bow, Ren Junyong smiled and said, “I’m a worldly being. How could I have ever expected to meet you, a goddess, in my life? I appreciate your kindness in thinking about me. I suppose my ancestors must have accumulated enormous meritorious deeds.” Jade-beauty said, “I used to stay in my abode. Occasionally I caught glimpses of you at the feasts held by the Minister. I’ve been admiring your impressive manners in secret for a long time. Now the Minister is not in and I feel pretty lonely. So I’m inviting you to come to my room for a chat. If you honor my request with your agreement, it will



幸也。”任君用道：“夫人抬举，敢不执鞭坠镫？只是他日太尉知道，罪犯非同小可。”夫人道：“太尉昏昏的，那里有许多背后眼？况如此进来，无人知觉，先生不必疑虑，且到房中去来。”夫人叫如霞在前引路，一只手挽着任君用同行。任君用到此魂灵已飞在天外，那里还顾甚么利害？随着夫人，轻手轻脚，竟到房中。此时天已昏黑，各房寂静。如霞悄悄摆出酒肴，两人对酌，四目相视，甜语温存。三杯酒下肚，欲心如火，偎偎抱抱，共入鸳帷。两人之乐，不可名状。

本为旅馆孤栖客，今向蓬莱顶上游。

偏是乍逢滋味别，分明织女会牵牛。

两人云雨尽欢。任君用道：“久闻夫人美名，今日得同枕席，天高地厚之恩，无时可报。”夫人道：“妾身颇慕风情，奈为太尉拘禁，名虽朝欢暮乐，何曾有半点情趣？今日若非设法得先生进来，岂不辜负了好天良夜？自此当永图偷聚，虽极乐而死，妾亦甘心矣。”任君用道：“夫人玉质冰肌，但得挨皮靠肉，福分难消。何况亲承雨露之恩，实遂于飞之愿，总然事败，直得一死了。”两人笑谈欢谑，不觉东方发白。如霞走到床前来，催起身道：“快活了一夜，也勾了。趁天色未明，不出去了，更待何时？”任君用慌忙披衣而起，夫人不忍舍去，执手



be my good luck.”

Ren Junyong said, “You’ve stooped to see me, Madam. How could I dare turn you down? However, if the Minister learns about our meeting, it will not be an ordinary offense.” Jade-beauty said, “He is muddle-headed and doesn’t have many informers working for him. In addition, the way you got in is known to no one else. Don’t worry about it. Just come on in.” With Ruxia leading the way, they walked off arm in arm. Ren Junyong was thrilled at this moment, giving no thought to the grave consequences that might arise in the future. He quietly followed Jade-beauty to her room. It was completely dark now, and silence reigned everywhere in the residence. Ruxia brought wine and food, and they drank to each other. Lost in each other’s gaze, they traded terms of endearment. After three drinks were downed, they found their urges burning. They cuddled as they lurched into the drape-hung bed. The ensuing enjoyment was, of course, beyond description.

Formerly a lonely sojourner,

But now an immortal roving on Penglai Island.

Indeed, an unexpected love affair has a different flavor.

At last, the Weaver Girl has met her distant lover the Cowherd

When the merrymaking was over, Ren Junyong said, “I’ve long admired your beauty. Today I’ve gotten the great fortune of sharing a bed with you. I won’t be able to repay your kindness for the rest of my life.” Jade-beauty replied, “I aspire to romantic love. But the Minister keeps close watch upon me. It may look like I have plenty of fun all day long, but what true love can I get out of it? If you had not come to join me tonight, it would have been the loss of a good time. We should definitely do this again and again in future. I will die satisfied!”

Ren Junyong said, “Madam, you have such a jade-like enchanting body that even having a chance to touch it would be my immense good fortune. Now you’ve let me enjoy your body the whole night, it would not have occurred to me in my wildest fantasy. Even if it is divulged, I will die with no complaints.” As they chatted away merrily, the day was dawning. Ruxia came to the bed and urged them to rise. “You’ve had a good time the whole night, sir,” she said. “That’s enough! Get up and



留连，叮咛夜会而别。分付如霞送出后园中，元从来时方法，在索上挂将下去。到晚夕仍旧进来，真个是：

朝隐而出，暮隐而入。

果然行不繇径，早已非公至室。

如此往来数晚，连如霞也弄上了手，滚得热做一团。筑玉夫人心欢喜，未免与同伴中笑语之间，有些精神恍惚，说话没头没脑的，露出些马脚来。同伴里面初时不觉，后来看出意态，颇生疑心。到晚上有有心的，多方察听，已见了些声响。大家多是吃得杯儿了的，巴不得寻着些破绽，同在浑水里搅搅，只是没有找着来踪去迹。

一日，众人偶然高兴，说起打秋千，一哄的走到架边，不见了索子。大家寻将起来。筑玉夫人与如霞两个多做不得声。元来先前两番，任君用出去了，便把索子解下藏过，以防别人看见。以后多次，便有些托大了，晓得夜来要用，不耐烦去解他。任君用虽然出去了，索子还吊在树枝上，挂向外边，未及收拾。却被众人寻见了，道：“兀的不是秋千索，如何缚在这里树上，抛向外边去了？”宜笑姐年纪最小，身子轻便，见有梯在那里，便溜在树枝上去，吊了索头，收将进来。众人看见一节一节缚着木板，共惊道：“奇怪，奇怪。可不有人在此出入的么？”筑玉夫人通红了脸，半晌不敢开言。瑶月夫人道：“眼见得是甚么人在此通内了，我们该传与李院公查出，等候太尉来家禀知为是。”口里一头说，一头把眼来瞅着筑玉夫人。筑玉夫人只低了头。餐花姨姨十分瞧科了，笑道：“筑玉夫人



leave before daylight. Do you want to be late?" Ren Junyong hastily slipped into his clothing. Jade-beauty hated to part from him and, grabbing his hand, assured him of a meeting the following night. She told Ruxia to send him off with the rope ladder the same way he had got inside. Ren Junyong came back as planned the following night.

Before daybreak, he steals out of the lady's bedroom.

After dusk, he steals into it again.

Though not taking the original path,

he has entered the boudoir furtively through a new shortcut

After a few nights of merrymaking, even Ruxia joined them. Too excited to calm herself down, Jade-beauty lost her head when talking with the other ladies and, with a slip of her tongue, blurted out her nightly pastime. At first the other ladies didn't take it seriously. But they gradually grew suspicious. At night some of them tried to spy on her and picked up a few clues. Such a matter made these ladies envious, and they hoped to take advantage of the situation to enjoy themselves too. However, they still couldn't figure out how a man could come and go.

One day, these ladies went out in high spirits to ride on the swings. As they got close to its framework, they found the rope missing. They began to search for it while Jade-beauty and Ruxia held their tongues. On the first couple of nights, the rope had been untied from the tree after Ren Junyong departed, and returned to its original position so that its absence would not be discovered by others. Later on, since the rope needed repeatedly every night, Jade-beauty and Ruxia let down their guard and they did not bother to untie it anymore. Therefore after Ren Junyong departed, the rope remained hanging from the tree over the wall.

The rope was now found by the other ladies. They asked, "Is that the swing rope over there? Why is it hanging from the tree by the wall?" Sweet-smile was young and spry. With the aid of the ladder, she swiftly climbed into the tree branches. She pulled the rope up and the ladies saw that it held a bundle of boards. Surprised, they said, "Strange! Strange! Did someone come and go from here?" Blushing, Jade-beauty remained silent. Fair-moon said, "We'd better report this to Housekeeper Li and he will tell the Minister about it later on." As she said this, she hurled glances



为何不说一句？莫不心下有事？不如实对姐妹们说了，通同作个商量，倒是美事。”如霞料是瞒不过了，对筑玉夫人道：“此事若不通众，终须大家炒坏，便要独做也做不成了。大家和同些说明白了罢。”众人拍手道：“如霞姐说得有理，不要瞒着我们了。”筑玉夫人才把任生在此墙外做书房、用计取他进来的事，说了一遍。瑶月夫人道：“好姐姐，瞒了我们做这样好事！”宜笑姐道：“而今不必说了。既是通同知道，我每合伴取些快乐罢了。”瑶月夫人故意道：“做的自做，不做的自不做，怎如此说？”餐花姨姨道：“就是不做，姐妹情分，只是帮衬些为妙。”宜笑姐道：“姨姨说得是。”大家哄笑而散。

元来瑶月夫人内中与筑玉夫人两下最说得来，晓得筑玉有此私事，已自上心，要分他的趣了。碍着众人在面前，只得说假撇清的话。比及众人散了，独自走到筑玉房中，问道：“姐姐，今夜来否？”筑玉道：“不瞒姐姐说，连日惯了的，为甚么不来？”瑶月笑道：“来时仍是姐姐独乐么？”筑玉道：“姐姐才说不做的自不做。”瑶月道：“才方是大概说话。我便也要学做做儿的。”筑玉道：“姐姐果有此意，小妹理当奉让。今夜唤他进来，送到姐姐房中便了。”瑶月道：“我与他又不厮熟，羞答答的，怎好就叫他到我房中？我只在姐姐处做个帮户便使得。”筑玉笑道：“这件事用不着人帮。”瑶月道：“没奈何，我初次害羞，只好顶着姐姐的名尝一尝滋味，不要说破是我，等熟分了再处。”筑玉道：“这等，姐姐须权躲躲过，待他到我床



toward Jade-beauty, who was keeping her head low. Fine-flower figured out what had happened and said with laugh, "Why did you, Jade-beauty, not say anything? Do you have something on your mind? I think you'd better let us know about it. It would be wonderful for us all if you talk about it with us."

Realizing that they could keep the lid on no longer, Ruxia said to Jade-beauty, "If we don't let them know about it, they will make a scandal. The whole business for us will be ruined. Better tell them and seek their understanding." Clapping their hands, the rest said, "Exactly, you're right, Ruxia. Come on and let us know." Then Jade-beauty had to tell them how she had managed to let Ren Junyong get in her room. Fair-moon said, "Good sister, you have enjoyed yourself behind our backs!" Sweet-smile said, "I don't think we should talk about it anymore. Since it's now known to everybody, let's share the fun." Fair-moon said, "I think some of us want to, and others may not. You cannot say so." Fine-flower said, "Those who do not want to join in should help us for the sake of sisterhood." Sweet-smile said, "You're right." Then they dispersed, laughing.

Fair-moon was actually a close friend of Jade-beauty. She intended to join Jade-beauty in the merrymaking, but talked seriously to the other ladies for show. When left alone, she went to the room of Jade-beauty and asked her, "Sister, is he coming here again tonight?" Jade-beauty replied, "To tell you frankly, Sister, we've enjoyed each other's company so much these days, why should he stop coming?" Fair-moon laughed and said, "Are you going to keep him to yourself, Sister?" Jade-beauty said, "According to what you said to us just now, it seems you're not interested." Fair-moon said, "Well, that was a general remark. I'm eager to have a try." Jade-beauty said, "If you're really interested, sister, I'd like to yield him to you tonight. When he arrives, I'll send him directly to your room." Fair-moon replied, "I don't know him very well. I will be embarrassed. How can you let him come to my room directly? I think I should give you a hand at your side, instead. That'll be fine with me." Jade-beauty laughed and said, "I don't think I need any help with this kind of thing." "I know," Fair-moon said, "but I do feel shy for the first time. I just want to have a try in your name, Sister. Don't let him know I



上，脱衣之后，吹息了灯，掉了包就是。”瑶月道：“好姐姐，彼此帮衬些个。”筑玉道：“这个自然。”两个商量已定。

到得晚来，仍叫如霞到后花园把索儿收将出去，叫了任君用进来。筑玉夫人打发他先睡好了，将灯吹灭，暗中拽出瑶月夫人来，推他到床上去。瑶月夫人先前两个说话时，已自春心荡漾。适才闪在灯后偷觑任君用进来，暗处看明处较清，见任君用俊俏风流态度，着实动了眼里火。趁着筑玉夫人来拽他，心里巴不得就到手。况且黑暗之中，不消顾忌，也没甚么羞耻，一毂碌钻进床去。床上任君用只道是筑玉夫人，轻车熟路，也不等开口，翻过身就弄起来。瑶月夫人欲心已炽，猛力承受，弄到间深之处，任君用觉得肌肤腠理，与那做作态度略是有些异样，又且不见则声，未免有些疑惑。低低叫道：“亲亲的夫人，为甚么今夜不开了口？”瑶月夫人不好答应。任君用越加盘问，瑶月转闭口息声，气也不敢出。急得任君用连叫“奇怪”，按住身子不动。筑玉在床沿边站着，听这一会。听见这些光景，不觉失笑，轻轻揭帐，将任君用狠打一下，道：“天杀的！便宜了你。只管絮叨甚么？今夜换了个胜我十倍的瑶月夫人，你还不知哩！”任君用才晓得果然不是，便道：“不知又是那一位夫人见怜，小生不曾叩见，辄敢放肆了。”瑶月夫人方出声道：



am with you. I'll find a way after he and I become familiar with each other." Jade-beauty said, "No problem, you just hide yourself somewhere in my room. He will get into my bed and undress himself. After I blow out the light, we can simply switch places." Fair-moon said, "I'll need your help anyway, good sister." Jade-beauty said, "Sure, I'll be with you." Thus they agreed.

When evening arrived, Ruxia was again sent to the backyard to toss the rope over the wall, which brought Ren Junyong inside. Jade-beauty got him into bed and blew out the light. Then she dragged Fair-moon out from the hiding place and tucked her into the bed. Fair-moon's desire had been aroused earlier when she talked with Jade-beauty. Then in the semi-darkness, she saw Ren Junyong come into the room, attractive and graceful, and her passion ran wild. Before Jade-beauty had pulled her out of the hiding place, she was already out of patience and ready to jump into play. In the darkness that screened all shades of embarrassment, she slunk into the bed.

Ren Junyong took it for granted that Jade-beauty was with him, and, with no trade of words, immediately began in the familiar way of rolling on top of her and thrusting himself into her. Driven by her sexual frenzy, Fair-moon vigorously played her part. As they reached the peak of excitement, with their bodies robbing against one another, Ren Junyong found something peculiar in the way the lady under him moved her body and limbs. The fact that he had a silent partner this time made him more suspicious. He murmured, "Sweetie, why don't you talk to me tonight?" Fair-moon could not utter a word. Ren Junyong continued to question her, and she remained silent, even holding her breath. Ren Junyong grew more anxious and said, "How strange!" He paused in the wriggling of his body.

Standing by the side of the bed, Jade-beauty heard everything and let out a laugh. She gently lifted the bed-drape and gave him a forceful slap, saying, "You idiot! What a good deal you have! Why do you keep talking? You have Fair-moon with you tonight, ten times better than me. Yet you haven't realized it." Ren Junyong now realized that he was with somebody else, so he said, "I wonder who this lady is who is showing such kindness



“文诌诌甚么，晓得便罢。”任君用听了娇声细语，不繇不兴动，越加鼓煽起来。瑶月夫人乐极道：“好知心姐姐，肯让我这一会快活死也！”筑玉夫人听得，当不住兴发，也跳上床来。任君用且喜旗枪未倒，瑶月已自风流兴过，连忙帮衬，放下身来，推他到筑玉夫人那边去。任君用换了对主，另复交锋起来。正是：

倚翠偎红情最奇，巫山黯黯雨云迷。

风流一似偷香蝶，才过东来又向西。

不说三人一床高兴，且说宜笑姐、餐花姨姨日里见说其事，明知夜间任君用必然进内，要去约瑶月夫人，同守着他，大家取乐。且自各去吃了夜饭，然后走到瑶月夫人房中，早已不见夫人。心下疑猜，急到筑玉夫人处探听。房外遇见如霞，问道：“瑶月夫人在你处否？”如霞笑道：“老早在我这里，今在我夫人床上睡哩。”两人道：“同睡了？那人来时却有些不便。”如霞道：“有甚不便？且是便得忒煞，三人做一头了。”两人道：“那人已进来了么？”如霞道：“进来，进来，此时进进出出得不耐烦。”宜笑姐道：“日里他见我说了合伴取乐，老大撇清，今反是他先来下手。”餐花姨姨道：“偏是说乔话的最要紧。”宜笑姐道：“我两个炒进去，也不好推拒得我每。”餐花姨姨道：“不要，不要。而今他两个弄一个，必定消乏，那里还有甚么本事轮到得我每！”附着宜笑姐的耳朵说道：“不如



to me. I'm an ordinary man. Please forgive me for my rude behavior before greeting you." Fair-moon then said, "Don't pretend to be courteous. Now you know it, and that's fine." Her soft voice tickled Ren Junyong's passion and he was aroused in an attempt to continue with the lovemaking. Sunk in extreme pleasure, however, Fair-moon said, "You knew what I needed, Sister, and offered me such enjoyment!" Having heard her words, Jade-beauty was unable to bridle her lust. She sprang into the bed, while Ren Junyong was anxious to complete his part of the action, but Fair-moon had reached her climax and was now exhausted. Fair-moon, after having a good time herself, yielded the position by getting up and pushing Ren Junyong into all embrace of Jade-beauty. Ren Junyong then made no delay in launching another round of battle with the second opponent.

Nestling against different beauties really strikes him as novel.

Shrouded in the mist of cloud and rain,

he is given to sexual pleasures.

Like a butterfly busy stealing fragrant and sweet pistils,

He has fun with each of beauties in succession.

Let us now leave them for the moment. Sweet-smile and Fine-flower, after learning of Jade-beauty's affair, were sure that Ren Junyong would come again at night. So they decided to talk to Fair-moon about seizing the man and sharing in the fun. After dinner, they got to Fair-moon's room but found she was not in. Their suspicion arose. They ran to the room of Jade-beauty and encountered Ruxia standing outside. They asked Ruxia, "Is Fair-moon in your place?" Ruxia laughed and answered, "She's been here for some time. She's now in my mistress' bed." The two sisters asked, "Is she going to bed with your mistress? It will make that business impossible when the man arrives." Ruxia said, "Why impossible? It gives more fun, in fact. The three of them can roll into work together!" They asked, "Is that man in now?" Ruxia said, "Sure. Maybe he is now tired of that in-out business!" Sweet-smile said, "When I said we could share the fun that afternoon, Fair-moon pretended to be virtuous. But now she's tried her hand at it ahead of us." Fine-flower responded, "The most high-sounding are the least to be trusted." Sweet-smile said, "Let's intrude on them now. They can't throw us out." Fine-flower said, "No! No! He's



耐过了今夜，明日我每先下些功夫，弄到了房里，不怕他不让我每受用。”宜笑姐道：“说得有理。”两下各自归房去了，一夜无词。

次日早，放了任君用出去，如霞到夫人床前，说昨晚宜笑、餐花两人来寻瑶月夫人的说话。瑶月听得，忙问道：“他们晓得我在这里么？”如霞道：“怎不晓得？”瑶月惊道：“怎么好？须被他们耻笑。”筑玉道：“何妨！索性连这两个丫头也弄在里头了，省得彼此顾忌，那时小任也不必早去夜来，只消留在这里，大家轮流，一发无些阻碍，有何不可？”瑶月道：“是倒极是，只是今日难见他们。”筑玉道：“姐姐今日只如常时，不必提起甚么。等他们不问便罢，若问时，我便乘机兜他在里面做事便了。”瑶月放下心肠，因是夜来困倦，直睡到晌午起来，心里暗暗得意乐事，只隄防宜笑、餐花两人要来饶舌，见了带些没意思。

岂知二人已自有了主意，并不说破一字。两个夫人各像没些事故一般，怡然相安，也不提起。到了晚来，宜笑姐与餐花姨姨商量，竟往后花园中迎候那人。两人走到那里，躲在僻处，瞧那树边。只见任君用已在墙头上过来，从梯子下地，整一整巾幘，抖一抖衣裳，正举步要望里面走去。宜笑姐抢出来，喝道：“是何闲汉，越墙进来做甚么？”餐花姨姨也走出来，一把扭住道：“有贼！有贼！”任君用吃了一惊，慌得颤抖抖道：“是，是，是里头两位夫人约我进来的。姐姐休高声。”宜笑姐



working on two of them and must be worn-out. How could he have enough energy left to entertain us tonight?" She then whispered in Sweet-smile's ear, "We'd better be patient tonight and wait until tomorrow night when we can take the initiative and sweep the man into our room. What fun won't we have at that time!" Sweet-smile said, "Exactly!" They then parted and retired to their own rooms.

The rest of the night passed without incident. The next morning Ren Junyong was sent back to his study. Ruxia came to Jade-beauty's bed and told the two ladies that Sweet-smile and Fine-flower had arrived to look for Fair-moon the night before. Fair-moon became anxious and asked, "Did they know I was here?" Ruxia rejoined, "Why wouldn't they!" Fair-moon said with frustration, "What can I do then? They will laugh at me." Jade-beauty responded, consolingly, "Never mind. We will simply pull those two girls into our party. It will save us a lot worry. By then, Ren Junyong won't need to leave before dawn and return at night. He can just stay here. We can take turns with no worry at all. Isn't that a pretty good idea?" Fair-moon said, "Yes, it truly is. But I will feel embarrassed when I meet them today." Jade-beauty said, "Just do as usual today, Sister. Don't say anything if they don't mention it. If they do, I'll take care of the matter." Fair-moon's heart was thus set at rest. The fatigue of the previous night overpowered her and she didn't wake up until noon the following day. She basked in silence and personal contentment. She was a little scared that Sweet-smile and Fine-flower would broach the subject, so she tried to avoid their glances during the day. However, she didn't know that they had made up their mind not to mention a word of it in front of her. Hence, Jade-beauty and Fair-moon passed the day comfortably as if nothing had happened.

Night arrived. After consulting with each other, Sweet-smile and Fine-flower, waited in the backyard to meet that man. Hiding some distance away, they watched the tree. Soon Ren Junyong came over the wall and descended down the ladder. He adjusted his turban and whisked the dirt off his clothes. As he was about to move forward, Sweet-smile jumped out, yelling, "What a villain is this? What are you up to?" Fine-flower dashed forward, grabbed him and shouted, "Stop thief! Stop thief!"



道：“你可是任先生么？”任君用道：“小生正是任君用，并无假冒。”餐花姨姨道：“你偷奸了两位夫人，罪名不小。你要官休私休？”任君用道：“是夫人们教我进来的，非干小生大胆。却是官休不得，情愿私休。”宜笑姐道：“官休时，拿你交付李院公，等太尉回来，禀知处分，叫你了不得。既情愿私休，今晚不许你到两位夫人处去，只随我两个悄悄到里边，凭我们处置。”任君用笑道：“这里头料没有苦楚勾当，只随两位姐姐去罢了。”当下三人捏手捏脚，一直领到宜笑姐自己房中，连餐花姨姨也留做了一床，翻云覆雨，倒凤颠鸾，自不必说。

这边筑玉、瑶月两位夫人，等到黄昏时候，不见任生到来，叫如霞拿灯去后花园中隔墙支会一声。到得那里，将灯照着树边，只见秋千索子挂向墙里边来了。元来任君用但是进来了，便把索子收向墙内，恐防挂在外面有人瞧见，又可以随着尾他踪迹，故收了进来，以此为常。如霞看见，晓得任生已自进来了，忙来回覆道：“任先生进来过了，不到夫人处，却在那里？”筑玉夫人想了一想，笑道：“这等，有人剪着络去也。”瑶月夫人道：“料想只在这两个丫头处。”即着如霞去看。如霞先到餐花房中，见房门闭着，内中寂然。随到宜笑房前，听得房内笑声哈哈，床上轧轧震动不住，明知是任生在床做事。如霞好不口馋，急跑来对两个夫人道：“果然在他那里，正弄得兴哩，我们快去炒他！”瑶月夫人道：“不可，不可，昨夜他们也不捉破我们，今若去炒，便是我们不是，须要伤了和气。”筑玉道：“我正要弄他两个在里头，不匡他先自留心，已做下了，正合



Terrified, Ren Junyong stuttered and quivered, saying. "I, I, I have come here at the request of two ladies who made an appointment. Lower your voice, Sister, please." Sweet-smile questioned him, "Are you Ren Junyong?" "Yes," he replied, "Surely I am." Fine-flower then said, "You seduced the two mistresses. It is not an ordinary offense! Do you want to resolve this problem in court or out of court?" Ren Junyong said, "They asked me to come to them. I would not have had the courage to do that on my own. I would rather resolve it out of court instead of making it public." Sweet-smile said, "In terms of settling it in court, you'll be turned over to Housekeeper Li and have to wait until the Minister comes back to punish you. It's bound to be a terrible punishment for you. Since you want to be treated privately, you should keep away from the two ladies tonight, but follow us quietly to our room. You'll be subject to our disposal." A smile lit up Ren Junyong's face as he said, "I'm sure I want to be punished in your room. I'd like to go with you." Then the three of them stealthily went into the room of Sweet-smile. Fine-flower also stayed with them. What followed was a passionate play.

Meanwhile Jade-beauty and Fair-moon waited until dusk and there was still no sign of Ren Junyong. They sent Ruxia with a light to meet him. Using the light, she looked around the tree and found the rope hanging on the inside of the wall. Ren Junyong always pulled in the rope each time he got into the yard for fear of being detected by others who might hunt him down. Later this became routine. Ruxia thus knew that Ren Junyong was inside the yard. She ran back to report, "Master Ren has already come in. Since he's not here, where can he be?" Jade-beauty pondered the matter and said with a smile, "Okay, someone stole him." Fair-moon said, "I guess he's with those other two." They then sent Ruxia to find out how things stood.

Ruxia first went to Fine-flower's room and found the door shut and the room quiet. She went to Sweet-smile's room. There she heard laughter from inside and the groan of the bed under pressure. She knew Ren Junyong was there making love. Envy sprang up in her immediately. She hurried back and told the two ladies, "He's there, and they're in the heat of doing that business! Let's go and harass them!" But Fair-moon said,



我的机谋。今夜且不可炒他，我与他一个见识，绝了明日的出路，取笑他慌张一回，不怕不打做一团。”瑶月道：“却是如何？”筑玉道：“只消叫如霞去把那秋千索解将下来，藏过了，且着他明日出去不得，看他们怎地瞒得我们！”如霞道：“有理，有理。是我们做下这些机关，弄得人进来，怎么不通知我们一声，竟自邀截了去？不通！不通！”手提了灯，一性子跑到后花园，溜上树去，把索子解了下来，做一捆抱到房中来，道：“解来了！解来了！”筑玉夫人道：“藏下了，到明日再处。我们睡休。”两个夫人各自归房中，寂寂寞寞睡了。正是：

一样玉壶传漏出，南宫夜短北宫长。

那边宜笑、餐花两人，搂了任君用，不知怎生狂荡了一夜，约了晚间再会。清早打发他起身出去，任君用前走，宜笑、餐花两人蓬着头尾在后边，悄悄送他同到后花园中。任生照常登梯上树，早不见了索子软梯，出墙外去不得。依旧走了下来，道：“不知那个解去了索子。必是两位夫人见我不到，知了些风，有些见怪，故意难我。而今怎生别寻根索子，弄出去罢。”宜笑姐道：“那里有这样粗索吊得人起，坠得下去的？”任君用道：“不如等我索性去见见两位夫人，告个罪，大家商量。”餐花姨姨道：“只是我们不好意思些。”



“No, no. They didn’t disturb us last night. If we break in on them, it’ll be our fault and hurt their feelings.” Jade-beauty said, “I had thought of getting them two into our game, but didn’t realize they would start on their own. It fits my idea very well. We should leave them alone tonight. I have a way to cut off his retreat. Let’s play a trick on them and make them frantic. Then they will join us.” “So what’s your point?” Fair-moon asked. Jade-beauty said, “Send Ruxia to untie that rope and put it away. Then Ren Junyong won’t be able to get out of here tomorrow. By then we’ll see how they can keep the matter from us.” Ruxia said, “Absolutely right! We first worked out this plan to get him in. How can they get him away without letting us know? Outrageous! Outrageous!”

With a lantern in hand, Ruxia raced to the backyard. She climbed into the tree, untied the rope, and then rolled the rope and boards into a bundle and carried them back to the room, shouting, “I got it down! I got it down!” Jade-beauty said, “Hide it somewhere until tomorrow. Let’s go to sleep.” The two ladies retired to their own rooms and went to bed in loneliness.

Jade water clocks are the same, though,
The night in the southern boudoir is unbearably short,
While the night in the northern one long

Sweet-smile and Fine-flower, in the meantime, thrilled to the embraces of Ren Junyong the whole night. They promised to meet again the following evening. They saw Ren Junyong off before dawn. Ren Junyong walked in front, followed by Sweet-smile and Fine-flower, their hair disheveled. Quietly they reached the back of the yard. As usual, Ren Junyong went to climb up the ladder and get up to the tree. But to his surprise, the rope ladder was no longer there. Unable to get out of the yard, he turned back and said, “I wonder who took the rope away? Maybe it was because the two ladies didn’t see me last night, they figured I must be elsewhere, and so they were hurt. That’s why they are making trouble for me. Where can I obtain a rope to get out now?” Sister Sweet-smile said, “Where can we find a rope that is thick enough to hold a man and land him down outside?” Ren Junyong then suggested, “I may as well go and see the two ladies and admit my fault, so we can be reconciled.”



三人正踌躇间，忽见两位夫人同了如霞赶到园中来，拍手笑道：“你们瞒了我们干得好事！怎不教飞了出去？”宜笑姐道：“先有人干过了，我们学样的。”餐花道：“且不要斗口，原说道大家帮衬。只为两位夫人撇了我们，自家做事，故此我们也打一场偏手。而今不必说了。且将索子出来，放了他出去。”筑玉夫人大笑道：“请问，还要放出去做甚么？既是你知我见，大家有分了，便终日在此，还碍着那个？落得我们成群合伙喧哄过日。”一齐笑道：“妙！妙！夫人之言有理。”筑玉便挽了任生，同众美步回内庭中来。

从此任生昼夜不出，朝欢暮乐，不是与夫人每并肩叠股，便与姨姐们作对成双。淫欲无休，身体劳惫，思量要歇息一会儿，怎繇得你自在？没奈何，求放出去两日，又没个人肯。各人只将出私钱，买下肥甘物件，进去调养他。虑恐李院公有言，各凑重赏，买他口净。真是无拘无忌，受用过火了。所谓——

志不可满，乐不可极。

福过灾生，终有败日。

任生在里头快活了一月有馀，忽然一日，外边传报进来，说太尉回来了。众人多在睡梦昏迷之中，还未十分准信，不知太尉立时就到，府门院门，豁然大开。众人慌了手脚，连忙着



Fine-flower protested, "But we will be embarrassed."

While the three were talking, they saw the two other ladies and Ruxia come into the yard. Jade-beauty and Fair-moon clapped their hands and said, laughing, "You enjoyed yourselves behind our backs. Why not let him fly out now?" Sweet-smile replied, "Someone did it before, so we simply followed suit." Fine-flower said, "Stop bantering. We were supposed to team up in doing things. But you two ladies took the opportunity secretly first. Therefore we did it in return. Now let's forget about the matter. Please bring out that rope so he can get out." Jade-beauty broke into laughter and said, "I've got a question. What is the point of sending him out? Since it is known to everybody now and we all have a share in the business, why do we need to take precautions against each other, even if he stays here all day long? We can work in collaboration and have fun together." Everyone laughed, saying, "Excellent, excellent! A very good idea!" Then Jade-beauty took Ren Junyong by the arm and went back toward the rooms with the other ladies.

From then on, Ren Junyong lived inside these ladies' quarters day and night, indulging himself completely in the merrymakings, either coupling with the ladies or pairing off with the maidservants. It was an ongoing spree of lust, a steady drain on the young man's energy. He became rundown and wanted to have a break. But how could he be allowed that privilege? Then he asked for a couple of days off to go home. However, everybody begrudged him of that opportunity. Then each of them brought some nutriment at their expense in order to keep him in good condition. Fearing that Housekeeper Li might inform on them later on, they gathered up a generous sum of money and bribed Li. They were unscrupulous and had run out of control. But they forgot the following lines:

Ambitions should not be completely fulfilled
While joy should be curbed within a certain boundary.
As good fortune is succeeded by misfortune,
The day of fall is inevitable.

One month of gaiety ran by happily for Ren Junyong before the news suddenly came that Minister Yang was coming back. The ladies and maidservants were awakened from their dreams not yet totally convinced



两个送任生出后花园，叫他越墙出去。任生上得墙头，底下人忙把梯子掇过，口里叫道：“快下去！快下去！”不顾死活，没头的奔了转来。那时多着了忙，那曾仔细？竟不想不曾系得秋千索子，却是下去不得；这边没了梯子，又下来不得。想道有人撞见，煞是利害，欲待奋身跳出，争奈淘虚的身子，手脚酸软，胆气虚怯，挣着便簌簌的抖，只得骑着墙檐脊上坐着，好似——

羝羊触藩，进退两难。

自古道：“冤家路儿窄。”谁想太尉回来，不问别事，且先要到院中各处墙垣上看有无可疑踪迹，一径走到后花园来。太尉抬起头来，早已看见墙头上有人。此时任生在高处望下，认得是太尉自来，慌得无计可施，只得把身子伏在脊上。这叫得兔子掩面，只不就认得是他，却藏不得身子。太尉是奸狡有馀的人，明晓得内院墙垣有甚事，却到得这上头，毕竟连着闺门内的话，恐怕传播开去，反为不雅。假意扬声道：“这墙垣高峻，岂是人走得上去的？那上面有个人，必是甚邪祟凭附着他了，可寻梯子扶下来问他端的。”左右从人应声去掇张梯子，将任生一步步扶掖下地。

任生明明听得太尉方才的说话，心生一计，将错就错，只做懵懵不省人事的一般，任凭众人扯扯拽拽，拖至太尉跟前。



of the master's returning. However, the Minister's arrival was unexpectedly quick, with the residence gates and yard doors being immediately thrown open. The women flew into agitation. Two of them hastily led Ren Junyong to the backyard and asked him to get over the wall. As Ren Junyong mounted to the top of the wall, they dragged the ladder away, shouting, "Get out! Get out!" and frantically raced off, leaving him alone on top of the wall. Because they were in such a flurry, they forgot to fix the swing rope for him. Hence he was left on the wall with neither the swing rope to slide down outside nor the ladder to get off the wall from inside. He thought to himself, "If someone comes here right now, I will be in trouble!" He thought of jumping off the wall, but did not feel capable of doing that, given his withered body and feeble limbs. Finally he just sat on the wall, shuddering in fear. Like a ram having its antlers caught in a hedge while trying to jump over, he felt caught in a dilemma.

An old saying goes, "Foes are fated to meet on a narrow road." Upon his return, Minister Yang did nothing but walk along the yard wall, trying to detect dubious traces. As he came to the backyard, he at once noticed someone sitting on top of it. Up on the wall, Ren Junyong could see the Minister clearly. In desperation, Ren Junyong bent over the ridge. His position could be described by the phrase, "The hare shields its face only." He was able to hide his face but not his body.

Minister Yang was particularly cunning. He quickly realized that something had happened relating to this man. But this was obviously tied in with his ladies, whose scandalous behavior would eventually bring down his own reputation. So he called out, as if he were unmindful, "The wall is so high, how can you get onto it? That man sitting on the top of it must have been haunted by evil spirits. Get a ladder and bring him down so we can ask him what has happened to him." The followers brought a ladder and supported Ren Junyong so that he could come down carefully.

Ren Junyong had heard the Minister's words clearly, and decided to take advantage of the Minister's apparent confusion by pretending to be muddled-headed. Therefore the men had to pull and shove the reeling Ren Junyong in front of the Minister. Minister Yang recognized him and



太尉认一认面庞，道：“兀的不是任君用么？元何这等模样？必是着鬼了！”任生紧闭双目，只不开言。太尉叫去神乐观里请个法师来救解。太尉的威令，谁敢稽迟？不一刻法师已到。太尉叫他把任生看一看。法师捏鬼道：“是个着邪的。”手里仗了剑，口里哼了几句咒语，喷了一口净水，道：“好了，好了。”任生果然睁开眼来，道：“我如何却在这里？”太尉道：“你方才怎的来？”任生诌出一段谎来道：“夜来独坐书房，恍惚之中，有五个锦衣花帽的将军来说，要随他天宫里去抄写甚么。小生疑他怪样，抵死不肯。他叫从人扯捉，腾空而起。小生慌忙吊住树枝，口里喊道：‘我是杨太尉爷馆宾，你们不得无礼。’那些小鬼见说出‘杨太尉’三字，便放松了手，推跌下来，一时昏迷不省，不知却在太尉面前。太尉几时回来的？这里是那里？”傍边人道：“你方才被鬼迷在墙头上伏着，是太尉教救下来的。这里是后花园。”太尉道：“适间所言，还是何神怪？”法师道：“依他说来，是五通神道，见此独居无伴，作怪求食的。今与小符一纸，贴在房中，再将些三牲酒果安一安神，自然平稳无事。”太尉分付当直的依言而行。送了法师回去。

任生扶在馆中将息。任生心里道：“惭愧！天字号一场是非，早被瞒过了也。”任生因是几时斫丧过度了，精神元是虚耗的，做这被鬼迷了要将息的名头，在馆中调养了十来日。终



said, "You are Ren Junyong, aren't you? Why do you look so pitiful? You must have been bewitched by ghosts." With his eyes shut tightly, Ren Junyong held his tongue. Then the Minister sent for a Taoist priest from the Temple of Divine Happiness to dispel the evil spirits haunting him. No one dared to slight the Minister's command. Thus, shortly thereafter, a Taoist priest arrived. The Minister asked him to take a look at Ren Junyong. The Taoist priest said, "He's bewitched." Then, with a sword in hand, he chanted incantations, sprayed a mouthful of pure water over him and said, "All right. He is all right." Ren Junyong opened his eyes and asked, "Why am I here?" The Minister said, "What happened to you just now?"

Ren Junyong made up a story. "Last night while I was sitting alone in the dim light in my study, I saw five generals glitteringly attired with colorful hats on their heads. They told me to go with them to the heavenly palace to transcribe something. Scared by their strange looks, I refused to go with them. But they had some followers pick me up and carry me into the air. Frantically I grabbed the twigs of the tree and shouted, 'I work for Minister Yang. You should not be so rude!' After hearing the name of Minister Yang, they let me go. I dropped and lost consciousness. I didn't realize I was in front of you. When did you return? Where is this place?" Someone told him, "You were bewitched by ghosts and moments ago were sitting on the wall. The Minister asked us to bring you down. You're in the backyard now."

The Minister then asked, "What monsters was he speaking about?" The Taoist priest replied, "According to what he has described, it must have been the Ghosts of Five Accomplishments. As they saw him staying alone, they wanted to extort some gains by plaguing him. I will give him an amulet. Post it in the room and present the sacrificial meat, food and drinks, so as to ease the concern of the ghosts. Things should return to normal soon." The Minister told his followers on duty to do so accordingly and sent the Taoist priest away.

Ren Junyong was supported back to his room for a rest. He thought to himself, "What good luck I have! The most horrible destruction has been avoided!" Ren Junyong's extravagant acts of sex had considerably



是少年易复，渐觉旺相，进来见太尉称谢道：“不是太尉请法师救治，此时不知怎生被神鬼所迷，丧了残生也不见得。”太尉也自忻然道：“且喜得平安无事。老夫与君用久阔，今又值君用病起，安排几品，畅饮一番则个。”随命取酒共酌，猜枚行令，极其欢洽。任生随机应变，曲意奉承。酒间任生故意说起遇鬼之事，要探太尉心上如何。但提起，太尉便道：“使君用独居遇魅，原是老夫不是。”着实安慰。任生心下私喜道：“所做之事，点滴不漏了。只是众美人几时能勾再会？此生只好做梦罢了。”书房静夜，常是相思不歇。却见太尉不疑，放下了老大的鬼胎，不担干系，自道侥幸了。

岂知太尉有心，从墙头上见了任生，已瞧科了九分在肚里。及到筑玉夫人房中，不想那条做软梯的索子，自那夜取笑，将来堆在壁间，终日喧哄，已此忘了，一时不曾藏得过，被太尉看在眼里，料道此物正是接引人进来的东西了。即将如霞拷问。如霞吃苦不过，一一招出。太尉又各处查访从头彻尾的事，无一不明白了，却只毫不发觉出来。待那任生一如平时，宁可



undermined his constitution. Now he went through a period of rest and recuperation from the so-called haunting experience of ghosts. Since he was young, he had gradually recovered after ten days. He went to see the Minister to express his thanks. “Without your prompt rescue in sending for the Taoist priest,” he said, “I would have been virtually wretched in the hell of evil spirits, and probably would have even died.”

The Minister put up a show of gladness and responded, “I’m glad you’re back to health. I haven’t seen you for a long time, and now you’ve recovered from sickness. Let’s have some food and drink together.” So saying, the Minister ordered that wine be brought, and then they started to drink and play drinking games. It was a friendly, pleasant get-together. Ren Junyong fully displayed his resourcefulness at the dinner table in responding to and flattering the Minister. At dinner, Ren Junyong brought up the subject of his encounter with the ghosts in order to detect the Minister’s mind. But the Minister said, “You were left alone in a solitary room, so the ghosts attacked you. It was my fault.” The load was thus off Ren Junyong’s mind. With secret gladness, he mused, “He is absolutely ignorant of what I did. But it’s shame that I don’t know when I will be able to join those pretty ladies again. Maybe I will have to meet them only in my dreams for the rest of my life.” After that, sitting in his study, he often sank into recollections of the ladies in the still of the night. He heaved a sigh of relief, and was overjoyed at his good luck in keeping the Minister in the dark about what he had done.

However, the Minister was not what he appeared to be. The moment he saw Ren Junyong sitting on the wall, he was nine-tenths convinced that something had gone wrong. One day the Minister ventured into Jade-beauty’s room and found the rope there. It was the rope that the ladies had used for the ladder, but later untied from the tree and left in the closet of the room, forgetting that they needed to put it away. The Minister pondered, “This is exactly what they used to get the man inside.” Then he ordered that Ruxia be tortured. Unable to bear the pain, she confessed everything. The Minister made a follow-up examination and obtained a clear picture of what had happened. But he revealed nothing that was in his mind. Instead he treated Ren Junyong even better than usual. It is true

加厚些。正是：

腹中怀剑，笑里藏刀。

撩他虎口，怎得开交？

一日，太尉召任生吃酒，直引至内书房中。欢饮多时，唤两个歌姬出来唱曲，轮番劝酒。任生见了歌姬，不觉想起内里相交过的这几位来，心事悒悒，只是吃酒，被灌得酩酊大醉。太尉起身走了进去，歌姬也随时进来了，只留下任生正在椅子上打盹。忽然四五个壮士走到面前，不繇分说，将任生捆绑起来。任生此时醉中，不知好歹，口里胡言乱语，没个清头，早被众人抬放一张卧榻上。一个壮士拔出风也似一把快刀来。任生此时，正是：

命如五鼓衔山月，身似三更油尽灯。

看官，你道若是要结果任生性命，这也是太尉家惯做的事，况且任生造下罪业不小，除之亦不为过，何必将酒诱他在内室了，然后动手？元来不是杀他，那处法实是希罕。只见拿刀的壮士，褪下任生腰裤，将左手扯他的阳物出来，右手颯的一刀割下，随即剔出双肾。任生昏梦之中，叫声“阿呀”，痛极晕绝。那壮士即将神效止疼生肌的敷药敷在伤处，放了任生捆绑，紧闭房门而出。这几个壮士是谁？乃是平日内里所用阉工，专与内相净身的。太尉怪任生淫污了他的姬妾，又平日喜欢他知趣，着人不要径自除他，故此分付这些阉工把来阉割了。因是阉割的见不得风，故引入内里密室之中。古人所云“下



that:

With a dagger held behind his back,
He gave a smile that preceded a fatal blow;
If you choose to tickle a tiger,
You should be clear about what you may end up with.

One day Minister Yang asked Ren Junyong to come to his inner study for drinks. After they had drunk happily for some time, the Minister called over two singing girls to entertain them with songs and offer them wine in turn. The sight of the singing girls brought back to Ren Junyong the memories of his love affairs with the ladies. He kept drinking in sadness until he was completely drunk. The Minister then rose and left, and so did the singing girls. Alone in his seat, Ren Junyong dozed off. All of a sudden four or five stout men broke into the room and quickly tied him up. Ren Junyong was still drunk and mumbling away. The men set him on a bed, and one of them pulled out a sharp knife. What a scene! Like an oil lamp almost burnt out in the depths of night, Ren's life was hanging in the balance.

Readers, you may think that Ren Junyong was about to be killed. To kill a person was indeed a common practice in the house of the Minister. Besides, Ren Junyong's offense was so outrageous that he would ordinarily have been killed. But why would the Minister have the drink with him first before killing him? It turned out that Ren Junyong was not supposed to die. The planned penalty was odd. The stout man slid down Ren Junyong's pants. Using his left hand he pulled out Ren Junyong's organ and, with his right hand holding the knife, cut it off. Then he removed Ren Junyong's two testicles. Ren Junyong screamed in pain and lost consciousness. The stout man at once smeared some effective pain-relieving and muscle-recovering medicine on the wound. They then untied Ren Junyong and left him in the room.

Who were these men? They were castrators who were hired whenever a castration was needed. Although the Minister hated Ren Junyong for the seduction of the ladies, he liked him for his quick wit and easy-going manners. Therefore he called these men to castrate him instead of having him killed. Because the man to be castrated needed to be kept out of the

蚕室”，正是此意。太尉又分付如法调治他，不得伤命。饮食之类，务要加意。任生疼得十死九生，还亏调理有方，得以不死。明知太尉洞晓前事，下此毒手，忍气吞声，没处申诉。且喜留得性命。过了十来日，勉强挣扎起来，讨些汤来洗面，但见下颏上微微几茎髭须尽脱在盆内。急取镜来照时，俨然成了一个太监之相。看那小肚之下，结起一个大疤。这一条行淫之具，已丢向东洋大海里去了。任生摸了一摸，泪如雨下。有诗为证：

昔日花丛多快乐，今朝独坐闷无聊。

始知裙带乔衣食，也要生来有福消。

任君用自被阉割之后，杨太尉见了，便带笑容，越加待得他殷勤。索性时时引他到内室中，与妻妾杂坐，宴饮耍笑，盖为他身无此物，不必顾忌，正好把来做玩笑之具了。起初瑶月、筑玉等人凡与他有一手者，时时说起旧情，还十分怜念他。却而今没蛇得弄，中看不中吃，要来无干。任生对这些旧人道：“自太尉归来，我只道今生与你们永无相会之日了。岂知今日时时可以相会，却做了个无用之物，空咽唾津，可怜，可怜！”自此任生十日倒有九日在太尉内院，希得出外。又兼颏净声雌，太监嘴脸，怕见熟人，一发不敢到街上闲走。平时极往来得密的方务德，也有半年不见他面。务德曾到太尉府中探问，乃太尉分付过的，尽说道他死了。

一日，太尉带了姬妾，出游相国寺。任生随在里头，偶然



wind for health reasons, the business was done in the inner study, which was called by an old phrase “The Silkworm House.”

Then the Minister ordered servants to take care of Ren Junyong as he recovered and to prescribe methods and diet without hurting his health. Ren Junyong suffered enormous pain, but eventually recovered due to the attentive treatment. He now realized that the Minister had learned of his affair and for this reason had ordered the punishment. He could not complain to anyone and had to bear the insult. He felt fortunate for having survived. In about ten days, he struggled to get up and wash his face with hot water. A few beards dropped from his lower chin into the basin. He at once took a mirror and saw in it the complete look of eunuch. Looking down under his belly, he saw a big scar there, with his penis nowhere to be seen. He reached to feel that part, while tears streamed down his cheeks.

Happy and joyful he was when nestling against the beauties.

But now he is overcome with boring loneliness and distress.

He was aware skirt girdles could be substitutes for food and clothing,

But he ignored the fact he had not got such an innate good fortune

After the castration, Minister Yang smiled at Ren Junyong each time he met him, and treated him with even more kindness. He led him to the rooms of his concubines and let him chat with them, for Ren Junyong had lost that part of his anatomy and thus no longer posed any concern to the Minister. In fact he became a target of ridicule.

At first Fair-moon, Jade-beauty and the other ladies who had had affairs with him were rather sympathetic whenever they talked of those old days. Later they regarded him as useless, for his looks aroused their passion which only had to be repressed thereafter. Ren Junyong said to his former lovers, “After the return of the Minister, I thought I would never see you ladies again. I didn’t know that I would be seeing you now from time to time, but as a useless person. Shameful! Shameful!” After that, Ren Junyong stayed in the inner yard and seldom went out. In addition, his bare chin and feminine voice, those attributes of a eunuch, made him afraid to meet friends. So he dared not stroll in the street at all. His close friend, Fang Wude, did not see him for half a year, and once went to the home of the Minister to inquire about him. The common reply, as required



独自走至大悲阁下，恰恰与方务德撞见。务德看去，模样虽像任生，却已脸皮改变。又闻得有已死之说，心里踌躇，不敢上前相认，走了开去。任生却认得是务德不差，连忙呼道：“务德，务德，你为何不认我故人了？”务德方晓得真是任生，走来相揖。任生一见故友，手握着手，不觉呜咽流涕。务德问他许久不见及有甚伤心之事，任生道：“小弟不才遭变，一言难尽。”遂把前后始末之事细述一遍，道：“一时狂兴，岂知受祸如此！”痛哭不止。务德道：“你受用太过，故折罚至此。已成往事，不必追悔。今后只宜出来相寻同辈，消遣过日。”任生道：“何颜复与友朋相见？贪恋馀生，苟延旦夕罢了。”务德大加嗟叹而别。

后来打听任生郁郁不快，不久竟死于太尉府中，这是行淫的结果。方务德每见少年好色之人，即举任君用之事以为戒。看官听说：那血气未定后生们，固当谨慎；就是太尉虽然下这等毒手，毕竟心爱姬妾被他弄过了，此亦是富贵人多蓄妇女之鉴。

堪笑累垂一肉具，喜者夺来怒削去。

寄语少年渔色人，大身勿受小身累！



by the Minister, was, "He died."

One day Minister Yang took his concubines with him on a tour to the Temple of Xiangguo, and Ren Junyong went along with them too. As Ren Junyong walked alone into the Pavilion of Mercy, he ran into Fang Wude. Fang was puzzled at the sight of a man who looked like Ren Junyong, but whose facial skin was unusual. Fang had heard that Ren Junyong was dead, so he dared not to greet the man, but walked away instead. Ren Junyong recognized Fang Wude and called to him immediately. "Wude, Wude," he said, "why don't you recognize your old friend?" Then Fang Wude knew it was indeed Ren Junyong. He came up to greet him. Ren Junyong clasped the hands of his old friend, tears rolling down his cheeks. Fang Wude said to him, "I've not seen you for ages. Why are you so sad?" Ren Junyong replied, "I was stupid and had a terrible misfortune. It is a long story!"

Then he told his friend about his experience and said, "I had a brief revelry but suffered a horrible torture!" He wept incessantly. Fang Wude said, "Your extravagant enjoyment incurred this disaster. It is over now. Forget about it. Later you should come out periodically to see your friends and have a good time." Ren Junyong said, "How can I meet my friends after such a disgrace? I'll have to stay alone in order to keep a lingering and shameful life." With a deep sigh, Fang Wude left.

Later he learned that Ren Junyong lived in sorrow and died shortly after in the house of the Minister. It was the payment he received for his lustful indulgence. Later Fang Wude often warned young lechers by telling them about what happened to Ren Junyong. Readers, it is advisable that the young should behave cautiously on the one hand. On the other, though Minister Yang took revenge by cruelly torturing Ren Junyong, his wives and concubines had been enjoyed by the young man. It is a lesson to be learned by the rich, who like to keep a large number of women for themselves.

 Hanging a burdensome flesh organ looks ridiculous indeed.

 Those who are fond of it contend for it,

 while the one boiling with rage has it castrated.

 Here is my message for young womanizers:

又一诗笑杨太尉云：

削去淫根淫已过，尚留残质共婆婆。
譬如宫女寻奄尹，一样多情奈若何？



Never get yourselves into trouble for that organ of flesh.
The following is a poem to ridicule Minister Yang:

The licentious days are gone forever with the removal
of his flesh organ.

Becoming incomplete as a man, he is allowed to hang around
with his lovers each passing day.

However, eunuchs and maids in-waiting can also take pleasure
in flirtations.

What should Minister Yang do about them and their tender affections?



卷 三 十 五

错调情贾母詈女 误告状孙郎得妻

诗曰：

妇女轻自缢，就里别贞淫。

若非能审处，枉自命归阴。

话说妇人短见，往往没奈何了，便自轻生。所以缢死之事，惟妇人极多。然有死得有用的，有死得没用的。

湖广黄州蕲水县有一个女子陈氏，年十四岁，嫁与周世文为妻。世文年纪更小似陈氏两岁，未知房室之事。其母马氏，是个寡妇，却是好风月淫滥之人。先与奸夫蔡凤鸣私通，后来索性赘他入室，作做晚夫。欲心未足，还要吃一看二。有个方外僧人性月，善能养龟，广有春方，也与他搭上了。蔡凤鸣正



Tale 35

Mother Jia Reproaches Her Daughter for a Suspected Affair A Young Man Sun Takes a Wife from a Mistaken Lawsuit

A poem reads thus:

When haunted by worries of chastity
and lascivious conduct,
Women prefer to hang themselves.
However, their death will come to nothing,
If the suicides fail to be submitted to court
for investigation and trial.

It is often said that women are associated with shortsighted views. Once landed in a helpless situation, they attempt suicide. Therefore, among those who hang themselves, women hold an overwhelming majority. However, some die for something, while others die for nothing.

Once there was a girl surnamed Chen in Qishui County, Huangzhou Prefecture of Huguang. When she was fourteen, she married Zhou Shiwen. And Zhou, still two years junior to Chen, was not quite acquainted with the affairs between men and women. Zhou's mother, nee Ma, a widow, was a licentious woman. After having a liaison for some time with her adulterer Cai Fengming, Ma had Cai move into her house and got married with him.

Hot with carnal lust, Ma kept looking at the pot while eating from her own bowl. Not long after her marriage with Cai, she got acquainted with a licentious monk and started to carry on an affair with him. The monk was full of learning about the art of having sex and was well versed in carrying on secret love affairs with women. As Cai was eager to learn some more skills of having sex and wanted to get some help from

要学些抽添之法，借些药力帮衬，并不吃醋捻酸，反与僧人一路宣淫，晓夜无度。有那媳妇陈氏在面前走动，一来碍眼，二来也带些羞惭，要一网兜他在里头。况且马氏中年了，那两个奸夫见了少艾女子，分外动火，巴不得一到手。三人合伴，百计来哄诱他，陈氏只是不从。婆婆马氏怪他不肯学样，羞他道：“看你独造了贞节牌坊不成？”先是毒骂，渐加痛打。蔡凤鸣假意旁边相劝，便就捏捏撮撮撩拨他。陈氏一头受打，一头口里乱骂凤鸣道：“繇婆婆自打，不干你这野贼事，不要你来劝得。”婆婆道：“不知好歹的贱货，必要打你肯顺随了才住。”陈氏道：“拚得打死，决难从命。”蔡凤鸣趁势抱住道：“乖乖，偏要你从命，不舍得打你。”马氏也来相帮，扯裤揪腿，强要奸他。怎当得陈氏乱颠乱滚，两个人用力，只好捉得他身子住，那里有闲空凑得着道儿行淫！原来世间强奸之说，元是说不通的。落得马氏费坏了些气力，恨毒不过，狠打了一场才罢。

陈氏受这一番作践，气忿不过，跑回到自己家里，哭诉父亲陈东阳。那陈东阳是个市井小人，不晓道理的，不指望帮助女儿，反说道不该逆着婆婆，凡事随顺些自不讨打。陈氏晓得分理不清的，走了转来，一心只要自尽。家里还有一个太婆，





aphrodisiacs, he was not jealous of the monk at all. On the contrary, Cai and the monk even slept together with Ma and gave themselves over to their carnal desires with unbridled license.

As Chen lived in the same house with Ma, Cai and the monk often found her a hindrance to their secret affair with Ma. On the other hand, Chen's presence always made them feel ill at ease from shame. So they wanted to net her too. Moreover, as Ma had reached middle age, Cai and the monk immediately fell for this young girl Chen. The three ganged up to seduce Chen, but she refused them categorically. Ma, the mother-in-law, scolded Chen, "Are you expecting to have a chastity arch?" Later, Ma started to beat her for her disobedience. Pretending to talk Chen round by reasoning, Cai Fengming began to take liberties with her, attempting to provoke her. While being beaten by her mother-in-law, Chen let loose a stream of abuse toward Cai, "I'm ready for my mother-in-law's beating. It's none of your business, you adulterer! I don't want you to talk me round!"

Ma shouted at Chen, "You're a good-for-nothing! I won't stop beating you until you're willing to comply with us." Chen answered, "I'll never comply with you even though you beat me to death." Then Cai Fengming held Chen in his arms and said, "Sweetie, I want you. I don't want you to be beaten." Ma also rushed over to help Cai undress Chen so that Cai could rape her. But Chen protested violently. With all their might, Cai and Ma could only get hold of Chen. How could they have the chance to rape her? Thus, all Ma's efforts were wasted. Getting wild with fury, Ma gave Chen a sound beating.

Unable to bear such a humiliation, Chen ran back to her own home and sobbed out her misfortunes to her father Chen Dongyang. Chen Dongyang was actually a senseless vulgar villain. Instead of helping his daughter, he scolded her by saying that she shouldn't have gone against her mother-in-law and if she had been obedient, she wouldn't have brought trouble upon herself. Knowing for sure that she would not be able to obtain help from her father, Chen left her home. She only wanted to kill herself.

Chen had a grand grandmother aged eighty-five. Her grand



年纪八十五了，最是疼他的。陈氏对太婆道：“媳妇做不得这样狗彘的事，寻一条死路罢，不得伏侍你老人家了。却是我决不空死，我决来要两个同去！”太婆道：“我晓得你是个守志的女子，不肯跟他们胡做。却是人身难得，快不要起这样念头！”陈氏主意已定，恐怕太婆老人家婆儿气，又或者来防闲着他，假意道：“既是太婆劝我，我只得且忍着过去。”是夜在房，竟自缢死。

死得两日，马氏晚间取汤澡牝，正要上床与蔡凤鸣快活，忽然一阵冷风过处，见陈氏拖出舌头尺馀当面走来，叫声：“不好了！媳妇来了！”蓦然倒地，叫唤不醒。蔡凤鸣看见，吓得魂不附体，连夜逃走英山地方，思要躲过。不想心慌不择路，走脱了力。次日发寒发热，口发谵语，不上几日也死了。眼见得必是陈氏活拿了去。

此时是六月天气。起初陈氏死时，婆婆恨他，不曾收殓。今见显报如此，邻里喧传，争到周家来看。那陈氏停尸在低檐草屋中，烈日炎蒸，面色如生，毫不变动。说起他死得可怜，无不垂涕。又见恶姑奸夫俱死，又无不拍手称快。有许多好事儒生，为文的为文，作传的作传，备了牲礼，多来祭奠。呈明



grandmother loved her very much. Chen said to her, "I hate Cai and Ma. They are worse than swine. I would rather die than comply with them. Sorry I won't be able to take care of you in the future. But I will not die in vain. I must send them to hell!" Her grand grandmother said, "I know perfectly well you're a chaste girl and you will not fool with them. But life is hard to come by. Don't be silly! Just forget this foolish idea!" At that time, Chen had made up her mind to kill herself. Fearing that her old grand grandmother might be put out by her remarks, and also fearing that her grand grandmother would keep a close watch upon her, Chen lied, "I'll follow your advice and do whatever I can to swallow the humiliation." On the same night, Chen hanged herself.

Two days after Chen's death, Ma got some water and washed herself at night. As she was about to make merry with her Cai Fengming, there suddenly came a gust of cold wind. Chen was moving over right towards Ma, her tongue stretching out as long as over thirty centimeters. Ma let out a scream, "Oh, blast! Daughter-in-law is back again!" All of a sudden, Ma fell on the ground, and gave no answer no matter how hard Cai tried to wake her up. Frightened out of his wits, Cai fled to Yingshan County that very night, hoping to go into hiding. But, as he was all in a flutter, he used up the last ounce of his energy and was fatally worn out. On the next day, he ran a fever and went out of his right mind. He started to talk nonsense. Within a few days, he died too. Obviously, it was Chen who had brought them to justice.

It was June when Chen hanged herself. As Ma had had a grudge against Chen, Ma didn't put Chen's body in a coffin and had her properly buried. When all the neighbors learned about the punitive justice done on Ma, they all came to the Zhou family to see Chen. Chen's body was in a shabby thatched hut. The sun was burning overhead, but Chen looked rosy in the face as if she was still alive. Overcome with compassion for her death, all the neighbors shed tears. Meanwhile, everyone clapped their hands and shouted "Bravo!" when they learned that the wicked mother-in-law and the adulterer Cai had paid for it with their lives. Many kindhearted scholars contributed memorial writings on Chen's death when they arrived at the Zhou family to pay their respects for her. Then, after

上司，替他立起祠堂。后来察院采风，奏知朝廷，建坊旌表为烈妇，果应着马氏独造牌坊之讖。这个缢死，可不是死得有用的了？

莲花出水，不染泥淤。

均之一死，唾骂在姑。

湖广又有承天府景陵县一个人家，有姑嫂两人。姑未嫁出，嫂也未成房，尚多是女子，共居一个小楼上。楼后有别家房屋一所，被火焚过，馀下一块老大空地，积久为人堆聚粪秽之场。因此楼墙后窗，直见街道。二女闲空，就到窗边看街上行人往来光景。有邻家一个学生，朝夕在这街上经过，貌甚韶秀。二女年俱二八，情欲已动，见了多次，未免妄想起来，便两相私语道：“这个标致小官，不知是那一家。若得与他同宿一晚，死也甘心。”

正说话间，恰好有个卖糖的小厮，唤做四儿，敲着锣，在那里后头走来。姑嫂两人多是与他卖糖厮熟的，楼窗内把手一招，四儿就挑着担，走转向前门来，叫道：“姑娘们买糖？”姑





submitting a report to the local authorities, they set up a memorial hall for her.

Later, the Imperial Investigating Bureau inspected this region and collected local customs, they presented a memorial about Chen's moral integrity to the throne. The emperor conferred her the title of "Chaste Woman" and issued an edict to build a chastity arch in her honor. Thus, Ma's sarcastic remark about Chen and the chastity arch finally came true. Indeed, Chen's death was not worthwhile, was it?

Like a lotus flower sprung up from water,
She is free from sludge.
Though dead, she will be remembered by all.
The wicked mother-in-law will be spat on and cursed.

* * *

In Jingling County (present-day Tianmen city, Hubei Province), Chengtian Prefecture of Huguang, there once lived two women, one was a girl and the other the girl's brother's fiancée. Neither the girl nor the girl's brother's fiancée had got married. So they were still virgins. They lived together in one storeyed building. Just behind their building was the house of another family. But this house had been reduced to ruins in a fire. So, it was a large open space. With the passing of time, people living nearby used it as the garbage dump. Looking out of the window, the two girls could see the street clearly. They found that a handsome young scholar often passed through this street every morning and evening. The two girls were about sixteen years old, and they were both haunted with stirrings of love. They had seen this young scholar quite a lot. Unavoidably they started to have fantasies. "Who is this handsome young man?" they talked in whispers. "I'll be willing and glad to die if I could sleep with him for one night."

While they were thus whispering, a boy selling sweets, called Si'er, strolled forward, striking his gong. The two girls often bought sweets from him. So they were quite familiar with each other. Seeing that the two girls waved their hands at him, the sweets boy came to the front gate of the house with his carrying pole and two loads of sweets. "Do you want to buy sweets?" the boy shouted. Coming downstairs, the two girls



嫂多走下楼来，与他买了些糖，便对他道：“我问你一句说话，方才在你前头走的小官，是那一家？”四儿道：“可是那生得齐整的么？”二女道：“正是。”四儿道：“这个是钱朝奉家哥子。”二女道：“为何日日在这条街上走来走去？”四儿道：“他到学堂中去读书。姑娘问他怎的？”二女笑道：“不怎的。我们看见，问问着。”四儿年纪虽小，倒是点头会意的人，晓得二女有些心动，便道：“姑娘喜欢这哥子，我替你们传情，叫他来耍耍何如？”二女有些羞缩，多红了脸，半晌方才道：“你怎么叫得他来？”四儿道：“这哥子在书房中，我时常挑担去卖糖，极是熟的。他心性好不风月，说了两位姑娘好情，他巴不得在里头的。只是门前不好来得，却怎么处？”二女笑道：“只他肯来，我自有处。”四儿道：“包管我去约得来。”二女就在汗巾里解下一串钱来，递与四儿道：“与你买果子吃。烦你去约他一约，只叫他在后边粪场上走到楼窗下来。我们在楼上窗里抛下一个布兜，兜他上来就是。”四儿道：“这等，我去说与他知道了。讨了回音，来复两位姑娘。”三个多是孩子家，不知甚么利害，欢欢喜喜，各自散去。

四儿走到书房来寻钱小官，撞着他不在书房，不曾说得。走来回覆，把锣敲得响，二女即出来问。四儿便说未得见他的话。二女苦央他再去一番，千万等个回信。四儿去了一会，又



bought some sweets from him and said, "We've got something to ask you. Do you know that young man who walked in front of you just a moment ago?" "Do you mean that handsome young man?" asked Si'er. "Exactly," replied the two girls. Si'er said, "He is the young master of Qian Chaofeng's son." The two girls asked, "Why does he come and go on this street every day?" Si'er answered, "He goes to school every day. Why do you ask?" The two girls answered, "Nothing serious. We see him coming and going on this street every day. So, it just escaped our lips."

Though young, Si'er understood them perfectly. Realizing the two girls were stirred, he said, "If you're interested in this young man, I'll act as a go-between for you and bring him over. What do you think?" Feeling somewhat embarrassed, the two girls flushed all over. After quite some time, the two girls asked, "How are you going to bring him to me?" Si'er answered, "I often sell sweets to him when he is in his study. So we know each other pretty well. He is a romantic young man. He will be only too glad to hear your kind intentions. But it is by no means appropriate for a young man to come to your boudoir. What should be done about it?" Smilingly, the two girls answered, "We know how to manage it, only if he is willing to come." "I assure you I can bring him over to you," promised Si'er. The two girls took a string of coins from their kerchief and handed the money to Si'er, saying, "Take this money and buy some fruits for you. Please go and tell him to come to the back window of our house and we'll drop a cloth bag down from the window and pull him up." Si'er said, "All right. I'll go and talk to him. And I'll come back to you to confirm it when I get a reply from him." Being childish, they three were not fully aware of the serious consequences of the matter. Joyfully, Si'er left the two girls.

Si'er came to Young Master Qian's study to look for him. It so happened Young Master Qian was not there at the moment. Si'er had no chance to pass the girls' message to the young master. Si'er came back. When he was close to the girls' building, he struck his gong hard. Upon hearing the sound of the gong, the two girls came out and inquired him about the matter. Si'er told them that Young Master Qian was not there in his study. The two girls piteously entreated him to go and look for the young master



走来道：“偏生今日他不在书房中。待走到他家里去与他说。”二女又千叮万嘱道：“不可忘了。”似此来去了两番。

对门有一个老儿，姓程，年纪七十来岁，终日坐在门前一只凳上，朦胧着双眼，看人往来。见那卖糖的四儿，在对门这家去了又来，频敲糖锣。那里头两个女人，但是敲锣，就走出来与他交头接耳。想道：“若只是买糖，一次便了，为何这等藤缠？里头必有缘故。”跟着四儿到僻净处，便一把扯住问道：“对门这两个女儿，托你做些甚么私事？你实对我说了，我与你果儿吃。”四儿道：“不做甚么事。”程老儿道：“你不说，我只不放你。”四儿道：“老人家休缠我，我自要去寻钱家小哥。”程老儿道：“想是他两个与那小官有情，故此叫你去么？”四儿被缠不过，只得把实情说了。程老儿带着笑说道：“这等，今夜若来，就成事了？”四儿道：“却不怎的！”程老儿笑嘻嘻的扯着四儿道：“好对你说，作成了我罢。”四儿拍手大笑道：“他是女儿家，喜欢他小官，要你老人家做甚么？”程老儿道：“我老则老，兴趣还高。我黑夜里坐在布兜内上去了，不怕他们推了我出来。那时临老入花丛，我之愿也。”四儿道：“这是我哄



again and do get a verbal message in reply from him. Si'er came back to the girls again after he had been away for some time and said, "Unfortunately he is not in his study today. I'll go and get him in his home and talk to him about this matter." Again the two girls exhorted him repeatedly, "Don't forget it." Like this, Si'er went a couple of times on this errand.

There lived an old chap surnamed Cheng in the house facing that of the two girls' across the street. Cheng was about seventy years old. All day long, he sat on a stool at the gate of his house, watching people come and go on the street, his eyes heavy with sleep. He caught sight of Si'er running back and forth on the street with his gong in hand. Each time Si'er beat his gong, the two girls would come out. Then they would whisper to each other, totally lost in their conversation.

Old chap Cheng thought in his mind, "If they were just buyers and seller, one meeting was enough. But why so many frequent contacts? There must be some unmentionable secrets." Having followed Si'er to a quiet place, Cheng suddenly caught hold of him and asked, "What private affairs did the two girls entrust you with? I'll give you some fruits if you tell me the truth." "Nothing," replied Si'er. Old chap Cheng continued, "I won't let you go if you don't tell me." Si'er said, "Let me go please. I'll have to go and look for the young man Qian." Cheng said, "The two girls must have fallen for that young man. So they dispatched you to talk to him. Am I right?" Finding it hard to deal with Cheng and free himself, Si'er told him the truth.

With a smile on the face, Cheng said, "This being the case, the two girls will be waiting for a man tonight, right?" "Exactly," replied Si'er. Beaming with smiles, Old Cheng grabbed Si'er and said, "Do me a favor and let me take his place." Clapping his hands, Si'er laughed and said, "They are young girls and they love that young man. You are too old. They won't want an old man like you." "Though advanced in years," said Cheng, "I'm still in high spirits for that kind of thing. I'll just sit in that cloth bag and they'll pull me up into their room in the cover of the darkness. I'm sure they won't refuse me once I am there. It is my long-cherished wish to flutter about among flowering shrubs when I get old." Si'er said,



他两个了，我做不得这事！”程老儿道：“你若依着我，我明日与你一件衣服穿。若不依我，我去对他家家主说了，还要拿你这小猴子去摆布哩！”四儿有些着忙了，道：“老爹爹果有此意，只要重赏我，我便假说是钱小官，送了你上楼罢。”程老儿便伸手腰间钱袋内摸出一块银子来，约有一钱五六分重，递与四儿道：“你且先拿了这些须去，明日再与你衣服。”四儿千欢万喜，果然不到钱家去，竟诌一个谎，走来回覆二女道：“说与钱小官了，等天黑就来。”二女喜之不胜，停当了布匹等他，一团春兴。

谁知程老儿老不识死，想要剪绺。四儿走来回了他的话，他就呆呆等着日晚。家里人叫他进去吃晚饭，他回说：“我今夜有夜宵主人，不来吃了。”磕磕撞撞，撞到粪场边来，走至楼窗下面，咳嗽一声。时已天黑，不辨色了。两女听得人声，向窗外一看，但见黑魑魑一个人影，料道是那话来了，急把布来每人捏紧了一头，放将中段下去。程老儿见布下来了，即兜在屁股上坐好。楼上见布中已重，知是有人，扯将上去。那程老儿老年的人，身体干枯，苦不甚重。二女趁着兴高，用力一扯，扯到窗边。正要伸手扶他，楼中火光照出窗外，却是一个白头



“This is cheating. I can’t do this for you!” Cheng said, “If you do me this favor, I’ll give you a dress tomorrow. If you refuse me, I’ll go and inform the two girls’ parents about this matter. By then, I’m sure you’ll be punished for your outrageous deeds.”

Upon hearing these words, Si’er felt a little worried. “If you give me a handsome reward,” said Si’er, “I’ll go tell the girls a lie that Young Qian has gladly accepted their offer and will be coming for them from the back window, and then I’ll send you upstairs.” Hearing this, Cheng took out a piece of silver from his moneybag and handed it to Si’er, saying, “Take this silver first. I’ll give you a dress tomorrow.” Wild with joy, Si’er accepted the silver. Instead of going to Qian’s home, he came back to the two girls and lied, “I’ve told Young Qian about it and he’ll come to you when it gets dark.” Feeling greatly delighted at the news, the two girls immediately got ready some cloth and then waited for Young Qian.

Cheng harbored lascivious intentions on these two young girls. Poor old Cheng was actually courting death, wasn’t he? Si’er came back to Cheng and confirmed the matter. As if in a daze, Cheng sat there and waited for the nightfall. When asked to go back home to have supper, he said, “Someone will entertain me with supper tonight. So don’t wait for me for supper.”

When night fell, Old Cheng staggered along towards the garbage dump. Arriving at the back wall of the two girl’s house, he coughed below the window. It was then pitchy dark. Hearing someone coughing, the two girls looked out of the window. They saw a vague image of a man. Taking it for granted that it was the young man; they held the two ends of the cloth tightly and lowered the central part of it down to the ground. Seeing the cloth landing on the ground, Old Cheng sat down on it. The moment the girls felt the load on the cloth, they started to pull it up. Being an old man, Cheng was very skinny. So he was not too heavy. In the height of their spirits, the two girls exerted themselves and pulled Cheng up to the window. As they were about to help the man get into the room, they got a big surprise. Illuminated by the light in the room, they found the person at the window was a white-haired old man. This gave them such a fright that their arms became like a jelly. They let go of the cloth and Old Cheng



老人，吃了一惊。手臂索软，布扯不牢，一个失手，程老儿早已头轻脚重，跌下去了。二女慌忙把布收进，颤笃笃的关了楼窗，一场扫兴，不在话下。

次日，程老儿家见家主夜晚不回，又不知在那一家宿了，分头去亲眷家问，没个踪迹。忽见粪场墙边一个人死在那里，认着衣服，正是程翁。报至家里，儿子每来看，不知其繇，只道是老人家脚蹉，自跌死了的。一齐哭着，扛抬回去，一面开丧入殓，家里嚷做一堆。

那卖糖的四儿还不晓得缘故，指望讨夜来信息，希冀衣服，莽莽走来。听见里面声喧，进去看看，只见程老儿直挺挺的躺在板上。心里明知是昨夜做出来的，不胜伤感，点头叹息。程家人看见了道：“昨夜晚上请吃晚饭时，正见主翁同这个小厮在那里唧啷些甚么，想是牵他到那处去，今日却死在墙边。那厢又不是街路，死得跷蹊，这小厮必定知情。”众人齐来一把拿住道：“你不实说，活活打死你才住！”四儿慌了，只得把昨日的事一一说了道：“我只晓得这些缘故，以后去到那里，怎么死了，我实不知。”程家儿子们听了这话道：“虽是我家老子老没志气，牵头是你。这条性命断送在你身上，干休不得。”就把四儿缚住，送到官司告理。



fell headlong down to the ground. Trembling with fear, the two girls collected the cloth and shut the window in a hurry. Thus the girls' enthusiasm was dampened, and this is not worth mentioning.

On the next day, the Cheng family found that Old Cheng didn't come back home for the night. Not knowing where he had gone, they went to their relatives' homes separately to inquire about Old Cheng's whereabouts, but they got no news of him at all. However, they sighted of a dead man at the foot of the wall by the garbage dump. Looking closely at the outerwear of the dead, they found it was none other than Old Cheng. Thinking that their old father had tumbled down and got killed by accident, Cheng's sons wept sadly and carried his body home. The whole family was plunged into chaos, busy preparing for the funeral and having Old Chen encoffined.

The sweets boy, Si'er, had no knowledge at all of what had happened to Old Cheng. Eager to know about Cheng's romantic love affair of the previous night and wishing to get a dress from Old Cheng, he rushed over to Cheng's home rashly. At the sight of the commotion, he got in and saw that Old Cheng was lying on a board, straight and stiff. Being fully aware that Old Cheng lost his life the previous night, Si'er was overwhelmed with sadness and anxiety. When members of the Cheng family saw Si'er, they said, "When we asked our master to come home for supper, we saw our master discussing something with him in a whisper. Most probably he was trying to take our master to a certain place. Now we found our master's body at the foot the wall near the garbage dump. The garbage dump is some distance away from the street and our master's death smells fishy. This boy must know something."

Seizing Si'er abruptly, they said, "We'll beat you to death if you don't tell us the truth!" Being thrown into a great flutter, Si'er confessed everything he knew. Then he added, "This is all what I know. Where did he go and how he got killed are completely beyond my knowledge." Having heard these words, Old Cheng's sons said, "Our father was a good-for-nothing, but you acted as go-between for this disgraceful affair. You won't escape the responsibility!" So saying, they trussed Si'er up. Then, they lodged a complaint against him and brought him to court.

四儿到官，把首尾一十一五说了。事情干连着二女，免不得出牌行提。二女见说，晓得要出丑了，双双缢死楼上。只为一时没正经，不曾做得一点事，葬送了三条性命。这个缢死，可不是死得没用的了？

二美属目，眷眷恋童。

老翁夙孽，彼此凶终。

小子而今说一个缢死的，只因一吊，倒吊出许多妙事来。正是：

失马未为祸，其间自有缘。

不因俱错认，怎得两团圆？

话说吴淞地方，有一个小官人，姓孙，也是儒家子弟，年方十七，姿容甚美。隔邻三四家，有一寡妇，姓方，嫁与贾家，先年其夫亡故。止生得一个女儿，名唤闰娘，也是十七岁，貌美出群。只因家无男子，止是娘女两个过活，顾得一个秃小厮使唤，无人少力，免不得出头露面。邻舍家个个看见的，人人称羨。孙小官自是读书之人，又年纪相当，时时撞着，两下眉来眼去，各自有心。只是方妈妈做人刁钻，心性凶暴，不是好惹的人。拘管女儿甚是严紧，日里只在面前，未晚就收拾女儿到房里去了。虽是贾闰娘有这个孙郎在肚里，只好空自咽唾。





At court, Si'er gave a detailed account of what had happened the other day. As the two girls were involved in the case, the court official naturally ordered that the two girls appear in court. Soon the girls learned about the notice of appearance in court. Realizing that they would unavoidably make an exhibition of themselves, they hanged themselves in their room. An indecent attempt on the spur of the moment involved three deaths. The death of these two girls was not worthwhile at all.

Two young girls, lovesick,
Yearn for a young man.
Suddenly an old chap bites the hook.
Thus three lives end in common ruin.

* * *

Now I'll tell you a story about another girl who hanged herself. This girl's suicide attempt gave rise to many unexpected results. Indeed, everything in this world is predestined. Sometimes, misfortune may be an actual blessing. Had it not been for the misunderstandings, there would be no union in wedlock.

Once there lived a seventeen-year-old young master in Wusong (present-day northern part of Shanghai) with the family name of Sun. He was very handsome and was educated with Confucian doctrines. A few doors farther away lived a widow with the family name of Fang, who, at an early age, had been married into the family of Jia. Her husband, however, had died and left her with a daughter named Runniang. The girl was also seventeen. She was extremely beautiful. With no man at home, the mother and daughter had to hire a baldheaded servant-boy to do the chores. Due to lack of hands, the mother and daughter had to do some work in public. Neighbors admired the beauty of the daughter.

Sun, a young scholar of the same age, often saw Runniang from a distance and they traded amorous glances, but they kept silent about their affection for each other. Mother Fang was cunning, cruel and hard to deal with. She watched her daughter closely, following her about all day long and shutting her in her room before dusk fell. Though attracted to Sun, Jia Runniang had to suffer from the pain of being unable to express her feelings. Each day Sun paced around in front of her house, like a shuttle



孙小官恰像经布一般，不时往来他们门首，只弄得个眼熟，再无便处下手。幸喜得方妈妈见了孙小官，心里也自爱他一分的，时常留他吃茶，与他闲话，算做通家子弟，还得频来走走，捉空与闰娘说得句把话。闰娘恐怕娘疑心，也不敢十分兜揽。似此多时，孙小官心痒难熬，没个计策。

一日，贾闰娘穿了淡红褂子，在窗前刺绣。孙小官走来，看见无人，便又把语言挑他。贾闰娘提防娘瞧着，只不答应。孙小官不离左右的，惹了好两次。贾闰娘只怕露出破绽，轻轻的道：“青天白日，只管人面前来晃做甚么？”孙小官听得，只得走了去，思量道：“适间所言，甚为有意。教我青天白日不要来晃，敢是要我夜晚些来？或有个机会，也不见得。”

等到傍晚，又惹来贾家门首，呆呆立着，见贾家门已闭了。忽听得呀的一响，开将出来。孙小官未知是那个，且略把身子退后，望把门开处，走出一个人来，影影看去，正是着淡红褂子的。孙小官喜得了不得，连忙尾来，只见走入坑厕里去了。孙小官也跳进去，拦腰抱住道：“亲亲姐姐，我被你想杀了！你叫我日里不要来，今已晚了，你怎生打发我？”那个人啐了一口道：“小人娘贼！你认做那个哩？”元来不是贾闰娘，是他母亲方妈妈。为晚了，到坑厕上收拾马子。因是女儿换下褂子在那里，他就穿了出来。孙小官一心想着贾闰娘，又见衣服是日里的打扮，娘女们身分必定有些厮像，眼花撩乱，认错了。直等听得声音，方知是差讹，打个失惊，不要命的一道烟跑了去。

方妈妈吃了一场没意思，气得颤抖抖的，提了马子回来。想着道：“适才小猢猻的言语甚有跷蹊，必是女儿与他做下了，



going to and fro, with infatuation burning but having no chance to be with her. Fortunately Mother Fang liked the young man too and therefore occasionally invited him into their home for tea and a chat, which gave the young man opportunities to exchange a few words with Runniang. Worried about her mother's suspicions, Ruiniang remained restrained. As time passed, Sun grew desperate, but he could do nothing.

One day Jia Runniang, dressed in a pink garment, was doing embroidery work by the window. Sun came along. Seeing nobody around, he spoke to her in a flirting manner. Jia Runniang kept silent for fear of being seen by her mother. Sun then teased her several more times. Rather worried, Jia Ruiniang said quietly to him, "What are you up to here in such broad daylight?" After hearing this, Sun walked away, thinking to himself, "What she said makes some sense. If she does not want me to move around her during the day, does she mean that I should come to see her at night instead? Probably I will be able to see her at night."

When evening arrived, he came again, but he found the door was shut. Suddenly the door creaked open. A little nervous, the young man stepped backward. Someone slipped out and could be faintly seen wearing a pink garment. Delighted, Sun began to follow. The person walked into the walled latrine and Sun went in too. Embracing the person, Sun said, "Sweet sister, I'm dying of thinking of you! You drove me off this morning. Now we're here at night. How are you going to treat me?" Spittle shot out of the person's mouth, and the person swore, "You little rascal! Who did you think I was?" It turned out that this was Mother Fang rather than Jia Runniang. She had gone out to fetch the chamber-pot from the outdoor latrine that evening after she had slipped into the pink garment her daughter had just taken off. Sun took her for Jia Ruiniang, because he had expected to see Runniang and the pink dress had assured him that it was her. Besides, in the dim light both women looked alike. When he heard her yell, he was shocked and realized he had hugged the wrong person. He quickly disappeared.

Mother Fang trembled in embarrassment and rage. With chamber-pot in hand, she said to herself, "What that little son of bitch said was strange. It must have something to do with my daughter. Probably they had an

有甚么约会，认错了我，故作此行径，不必说得！”一忿之气，走进房来对女儿道：“孙家小猢猻在外头，叫你快出去！”贾闰娘不知一些清头，说道：“甚么孙家李家，却来叫我？”方妈妈道：“你这臭淫妇约他来的，还要假撇清？”贾闰娘叫起屈来道：“那里说起！我好耿耿坐在这里，却与谁有约来？把这等话脏污我。”方妈妈道：“方才我走出去，那小猢猻急急赶来，口口叫姐姐，不是认做了你这臭淫妇么？做了这样齷齪人，不如死了罢！”贾闰娘没口得分割，大哭道：“可不是冤杀我！我那知他这些事体来？”方妈妈道：“你浑身是口，也洗不清。平日不调得喉惯，没些事体，他怎敢来动手动脚？”方妈妈平日本是难相处的人，就碎聒得一个不了不休。贾闰娘欲待辨来，往常心里本是有他的，虚心病说不出强话。欲待不辨来，其实不曾与他有勾当，委是冤屈。思量一转，泪如泉涌，道：“以此一番，防范越严，他走来也无面目，这因缘料不能勾了。况我当不得这擦刮，受不得这腌臢，不如死了，与他结个来生缘罢。”哭了半夜，趁着方妈妈炒骂兴阑，精神疲倦，昏昏熟睡，轻轻床上起来，将束腰的汗巾悬梁高吊。正是：

未得野鸳交颈，且做羚羊挂角。

且说方妈妈一觉睡醒，天已大明，口里还唠唠叨叨说昨夜的事，带着骂道：“只会引老公，招汉子。这时候还不起来，挺



appointment, but he took me for her by mistake. I guess it must be so!" She furiously marched into her daughter's room and shouted, "That son of bitch from the family of Sun is waiting outside for you. You'd better go out and see him."

Jia Runniang, unable to make head or tail of it, said, "I don't understand what you're talking about." Mother Fang said, "You slut! You have brought him here, but you're pretending to know nothing!" Feeling wronged, Jia Runniang said, "How can you say that? I was sitting here and did nothing with anybody. You've insulted me!" Mother Fang said, "I went out just now. That son of bitch came up to me and called me sister. Didn't he take me for you? What a shameless person you are! You should go and die!" Unable to clear herself, Jia Runniang cried, "This is a terrible wrong you're doing to me! How could I know anything about it?" Mother Fang said, "Even if you had a hundred mouths, you could not convince me of your good name. If you had behaved yourself, why would he be bold enough to get fresh with me?"

Mother Fang was hard to get along with and annoyingly garrulous when offended. Jia Runniang wanted to defend herself, but knew she was silently in love with the young master, so she was in no position to give a forceful argument. It also struck her not to defend herself. However, she felt injured and remained silent on the basis that she had done nothing of the kind. As she weighed the matter, tears gushed out of her eyes. She thought, "Now my mother will keep a closer watch on me. He will be too embarrassed to stop in and I will lose the opportunity of continuing my relationship with him. Besides, I cannot bear this disgrace and her taunts. I would rather die and meet him in the next life!" She wept until midnight. Mother Fang went to sleep, having become worn out by her fit of fury. Runniang rose and hung herself from a crossbeam using her silk girdle. Before she'd got the chance to date the man of her heart, she committed suicide by hanging herself.

As Mother Fang awoke the next morning, she again gave vent to her anger of the night before and swore at her daughter, "You're capable of soliciting at night, but you're not up at such a late hour in the morning. Why are you still clinging to your bed? You lazy bones!" She prattled in



着尸做甚么？”一头碎聒，一头穿衣服，静悄悄不见有人声响，嚷道：“索性不见则声，还嫌我做娘的多嘴哩！”夹着气盂，跳下床来，抬头一看，正见女儿挂着，好似打秋千的模样，叫声：“不好了！”连忙解了下来。早已满口白沫，鼻下无气了。

方妈妈又惊又苦又懊悔，一面抱来放倒在床上，捶胸跌脚的哭起来。哭了一会，狠的一声道：“这多是孙家那小人娘贼害了他性命，更待干罢！必要寻他来抵偿，出这口气。”又想到：“若是小人娘贼得知了这个消息，必定躲过我。且趁着未张扬时，去赚得他来，留住了，当官告他。不怕他飞到天外去。”忙叫秃小厮来，不与他说明，只教去请孙小官来讲。

孙小官正想着昨夜之事，好生没意思。闻知方妈妈请他，一发心里缩缩胸胸起来道：“怎倒反来请我？敢怕要发作我么？”却又是平日往来的，不好推辞得，只得含着些羞惭之色，随着秃小厮来到，见了方妈妈。方妈妈撮起笑容来道：“小哥夜来好莽撞，敢是认做我小女么？”孙小官面孔通红，半晌不敢答应。方妈妈道：“吾家与你家门当户对。你若喜欢着我女儿，只消明对我说，一丝为定，便可成事。何必做那鼠窃狗偷、没道理的勾当？”孙小官听了这一片好言，不知是计，喜之不胜道：“多蒙妈妈厚情，待小子去备些薄意，央个媒人来说。”方妈妈道：“这个且从容。我既以口许了你，你且进房来与小女相会一相会，再去央媒也未迟。”孙小官正像尼姑庵里卖卵袋——巴不得要的，欢天喜地，随了方妈妈进去。方妈妈到得



this way as she dressed herself. Having received no response, she called out, “Did you hear me? Are you still angry with me?” As she shouted, she jumped off the bed. Looking up, she found her daughter hanging from the beam, as if on a swing. She screamed, “Oh no!” Quickly she untied the girl, who had stopped breathing and her mouth was capped with the white foam of saliva.

Terrified, grieving and regretful, she held her daughter in her arms and set her on the bed. Hitting her own chest and stamping her feet, the mother wept. After a moment, she paused and said bitterly, “Her death was caused by that little rogue! I will surely make him pay for it with his life. Otherwise I will never be able to live down this disgrace!” Then she thought, “If that little rogue gets word of this, he will go into hiding. I should summon him here before he learns of it. I will lock him up and sue him. In this way, he can’t flee.” So thinking, she sent the baldheaded boy servant to bring Sun to her house without telling him anything else.

The young man Sun was feeling rather frustrated by what had happened the previous evening. The moment he received the message from Mother Fang, he became flustered, thinking to himself, “Why is she asking me to come? Is she going to throw a fit in front of me?” Yet as an old neighbor, he found it hard to turn her down. So he followed the servant boy to Mother Fang’s house, with a look of shame on his face.

Putting on a smile, Mother Fang said to him, “You were rash last night. Did you take me for my daughter?” Blushing, Sun was tongue-tied. Mother Fang said, “Our two families are of the same social status, if you love my daughter, just let me know. After we trade betrothal gifts, you can get married. Why did you have to take to such a stealthy, ignoble line of action?” These words delighted the young man, who wasn’t aware of her trap. Then he replied, “I appreciate your kindness, Madam. I’m going to fix a humble gift and find a matchmaker.” Mother Fang said, “Just take your time. You may rest assured of my words. Come on in and meet my daughter first. You can go to find the matchmaker later.” Just like coming across a chance that testicles were being on sale in a nunnery - this was exactly what Sun was looking for. He joyfully followed Mother Fang towards the room.



房门边，推他一把道：“在这里头，你自进去。”孙小官冒冒失失，踹脚进了房。方妈妈随把房门拽上了，铿的一声，下了锁。隔着板障，大声骂道：“孙家小猢猻，听着！你害我女儿吊死了，今挺尸在床上，交付你看守着。我到官去告你因奸致死，看你活得成活不成！”孙小官初时见关了门，正有些慌忙，道不知何意。及听得这些说话，方晓得是方妈妈因女儿死了，赚他来讨命。看那床上，果有个死人躺着，老大惊惶。却是门儿已锁，要出去又无别路。在里头哀告道：“妈妈，是我不是，且不要经官，放我出来再商量着。”门外悄没人应。元来方妈妈叫秃小厮跟着，已去告诉了地方，到县间递状去了。

孙小官自是小小年纪，不曾惊过甚么事体，见了这个光景，岂不慌怕？思量道：“弄出这人命事来，非同小可，我此番定是死了。”叹口气道：“就死也罢，只是我虽承姐姐顾盼好情，不曾沾得半分实味。今却为我而死，我免不得一死偿他。无端的两条性命，可不是前缘前世欠下的业债么？”看着贾闰娘尸骸，不觉伤心大哭道：“我的姐姐！昨日还是活泼泼与我说话的，怎今日就是这样了？却害着我！”

正伤感间，一眼觑那贾闰娘时：

双眸虽闭，一貌犹生。袅袅腰肢，如不舞的迎风杨柳，亭亭体态，像不动的出水芙蓉。宛然美女独眠时，只少才郎同伴宿。

孙小官见贾闰娘颜面如生，可怜可爱，将自己的脸偎着他脸上，又把口鸣嚙一番。将手去摸摸肌肤身体，还是和软的，不觉兴动起来。



As they came to the door, Mother Fang pushed him into the room and said, "She's inside. Please go in and see her." With no other thought, Sun strode into the room. Mother Fang slammed the door closed and locked it. Through the screen board, she shouted, "Listen, you little son of bitch! You've caused the death of my daughter. The body is now on the bed and left with you. I'm going to the authorities to bring a lawsuit against you for her death because of your adultery. You're going to pay for it with your life!" Sun was a little scared as the door slammed shut, but after hearing Mother Fang's words, he realized that she wanted to get revenge for her daughter's death. Looking ahead, he saw a person lying on the bed. Terrified, he turned to leave, but the door was tightly locked. He began to plead from inside, "Madam, I know it was my fault. Please don't go to the court. Let me out and we can talk." Outside, Mother Fang had already disappeared. She went with the servant boy to the county government office and turned in an indictment.

How could the young and inexperienced man remain tranquil in the face of such a horrible situation? He thought to himself, "To cause a death is no ordinary crime. I will surely be sentenced to death." He sighed and said, "If I have to die, I can't do anything about it. But it's shame that, though she and I were in love, I did not even have a chance to touch her. Now she has died for me and I will have to pay with my life. Two lives will be gone. Is it something predestined by fate because of the evils we committed in our former lives?" Staring at Jia Runniang's body, he broke into tears, saying, "My sweetheart, you were so lovely yesterday when talking to me. What has happened to make you like this today? It will be my doom!" While in great sorrow, he glanced at Jia Ruiniang and saw:

Her eyes shut, but she looked alive; her slim waist resembled a hanging willow branch; her tall and upright figure suggested a lotus rising out of the water; truly she was a sleeping beauty, who was awaiting her talented lover.

Seeing that Jia Runniang appeared pretty and pitiful, he couldn't help touching her cheeks with his own and kissing her on the face. He touched her body and was surprised to find it still soft and springy. At this he got excited with a fantasy, saying to himself, "I didn't touch her even once



心里想道：“生前不曾沾着滋味，今旁无一人，落得任我所为。我且解他的衣服开来，虽是死的，也弄他一下，还此心愿，不枉把性命赔他。”就揭开了外边衫子与裙子，把裤子解了带扭，褪将下来，露出雪白也似两腿。孙小官按不住欲心如火，腾的跳上身去，嘴对着嘴，恣意亲啣。只见贾闰娘口鼻中渐渐有些气息，喉中咯咯声响。元来起初放下时，被汗巾勒住了气，一时不得回转，心头温和，原不曾死。方妈妈性子不好，一看见死了，就耐不得，只思报仇害人，一下子奔了出去，不曾仔细解救。今得孙小官在身体上腾那，气便活动，口鼻之间，又接着真阳之气，恹恹的苏醒转来。

孙小官见有些奇异，反惊得不敢胡动。跳下身来，忙把贾闰娘款款扶起。闰娘得这一起，胸口痰落，忽地叫声“哎呀”，早把双眼朦胧闪开。看见是孙小官扶着他，便道：“我莫不是梦里么？”孙小官道：“姐姐，你险些害杀我也。”闰娘道：“我妈妈在那里了，你到得这里？”孙小官道：“你家妈妈道你死了，哄我到此，反锁着门，当官告我去了。不想姐姐却得重醒转来。而今妈妈未来，房门又锁得好好的，可不是天叫我两个成就好事了？”闰娘道：“昨夜受妈妈炒聒不过，拚着性命。谁知今日重活，又得见哥哥在此，只当另是一世人了。”孙小官抱住要云雨，闰娘羞阻道：“妈妈昨日没些事体，尚且百般丑骂。若今日知道与哥哥有些甚么，一发了不得。”孙小官道：“这是你妈妈自家请我上门的，须怪不得别人。况且姐姐你适才未



when she was alive. Now there's no one around. Her body is subject to my will. I will undress her and have her to fulfill my aspirations. I will not die for her in vain." So he untied her outer girdle and shirt. He then untied her pants and slid them off. Her snowy legs sprang into his sight. Sun could not repress his urges. He leaped on the top of her body and gave her a wild kiss. However, at this point, Jia Runniang started to breathe and noises came out of her throat. It turned out that when Mother Fang took her down from the beam, she was strangled due to the tight knot of the girdle. But she was actually not dead. Her heart was beating softly. Yet she could not recover from the choking right away. Mother Fang had been impetuous and, taking her daughter for dead, she did not look further before thinking of taking revenge. She had rushed out without trying to revive her daughter. Now, after the young man had squirmed on the top of her, her breath started to come back through her nose and mouth. His wriggle inside of her also helped bring her slowly back into consciousness.

The young man was stunned at the surprising turn of events. He stopped and quickly slid off her. As he propped Jia Runniang up, she swallowed and screamed, "Ahhh!" Her eyelids slowly opened. Seeing Sun, she said, "Am I dreaming?" Sun replied, "Sister, you almost had me killed." Runniang said, "Where is my mother? How did you get in here?" Sun said, "Your mother told me you were dead and tricked me into coming here and then locked me in your room. She has now gone to the *yamen* to sue me. I was surprised to see you come back to life. Now that your mother is away and we are shut in here together, it is good luck allowing us to do whatever we want!" Runniang said, "Last night I could not tolerate my mother's scolding and I hung myself. I was shocked that I have come back to life now. When I saw you by my side, Brother, I thought I was in another world." Sun came over and hugged her in an attempt to get affectionate.

Runniang said with embarrassment, "Yesterday my mother scolded me and swore a lot for no reason at all. If I do something with you today, she'll get extremely angry." Sun said, "Your mother got me inside your room, so we should not be to blame for whatever we do here. To tell you the truth, I've done something when you were unconscious. Now you



醒之时，我已先做了点点事了。而今不必推掉得。”闰娘见说，自看身体上，才觉得裙裤俱开，阴中生楚，已知着了他的手。况且原是心爱的人，有何不情愿？只算任凭他舞弄。孙小官重整旗枪，两下交战起来。

一个朦胧初醒，一个热闹重兴。烈火干柴，正是相逢对手；疾风暴雨，还饶未惯娇姿。不怕隔垣听，喜的是房门静闭；何须牵线合，妙在那觊面成交。两意浓时，好似渴中新得水；一番乐处，真为死去再还魂。

两人无拘无管，尽情尽意，乐了一番。闰娘道：“你道妈妈回家来见了，却怎么？”孙小官道：“我两人已成了事，你妈妈来家，推也推我不出去，怕他怎么？谁叫他锁着你我在这里的！”

两人情投意合，亲爱无尽。也只诓妈妈就来，谁知到了天晚，还不见回。闰娘自在房里取着火种，到厨房中做饭与孙小官吃。孙小官也跟着相帮动手，已宛然似夫妻一般。至晚妈妈竟不来家，两人索性放开肚肠，一床一卧，相偎相抱睡了。自不见有这样凑趣帮衬的事，那怕方妈妈住在外边过了年回来。这厢不题。

且说方妈妈这日哄着孙小官锁禁在房了，一径到县前来叫屈。县官唤进审问，方妈妈口诉因奸致死人命事情。县官不信，道：“你们吴中风俗不好，妇女刁泼。必是你女儿病死了，想



needn't worry and resist it, sweetheart." Hearing these words, Ruiniang looked down at herself and found her girdle and skin untied. She also felt a faint pain in her private parts. Then she realized that he had taken her. However, since she loved him, why should she stop him from doing anything to her? Hence she gave herself entirely up to his will. Sun got excited again and the two jumped at their chance for love:

One awoke while the other regained his thrill,
It was a good match, as raging flames consume dry firewood;
Passion came as a devastating storm,
As the act was studded with tender and immature movements;
They gave no care for any eavesdropper,
They were joyous to be confined;
With no need of a matchmaker, their love was natural and intense,
Their affection ran strong as water slakes on's thirst;
Love gave them so much excitement
They would willingly die for it and come back in another world.

They were gratified in their lovemaking. Then Ruiniang said, "If my mother returns, what can we do?" Sun said, "We did it. When your mother comes back, she can't split us apart. Why do you worry? What can she say since she, herself, is to blame for locking us up here?"

Then they again sank head over heels in love. They guessed Mother Fang would come back soon. But she did not. As evening arrived, Ruiniang took a lighter from the room into the attached kitchen and started cooking for Sun, who followed her around as her helper. They were like husband and wife. As evening turned to night, Mother Fang still did not return. They grew bolder and gave no heed to the results of their actions. They even went to bed together in each other's embrace. They felt lucky and hoped that Mother Fang would not come back until the next year. Let's drop them for the moment.

That morning Mother Fang had raced to the county *yamen* and shouted her grievances. When the County Magistrate let her in, she told him of her daughter's death because of seduction. The County Magistrate doubted her story and said, "You have an immoral style of living in your area. Women there are cunning and vicious. Your daughter must have died of



要图赖邻里的。”方妈妈说：“女儿不从缢死，奸夫现获在家，只求差人押小妇人到家，便可扭来，登堂究问。如有虚诞，情愿受罪。”县官见他说得的确，才叫个吏典，将纸笔责了口词，准发该房出牌行拘。

方妈妈终是个女流，被衙门中刁难，要长要短的，诈得不耐烦，才与他差得个差人出来。差人又一时不肯起身，藤缠着要钱，羁绊住身子。转眼已是两三日，方得同了差人，来到自家门首。

方妈妈心里道：“不诨一出门，担阁了这些时，那小猢猻不要说急死，饿也该饿得零丁了。”先请公差到堂屋里坐下，一面将了钥匙去开房门。只听得里边笑语声响，心下疑惑道：“这小猢猻在里头，却和那个说话？”忙开进去，抬眼看时，只见两个人并肩而坐，正在那里知心知意的商量。方妈妈惊得把双眼一擦，看着女儿道：“你几时又活了？”孙小官笑道：“多承把一个死令爱交我相伴，而今我设法一个活令爱还了。这个人是我的了。”方妈妈呆了半晌，开口不得。思量没收场，只得拗曲作直，说道：“谁叫你私下通奸？我已告在官了！”孙小官道：“我不曾通奸，是你锁我在房里的，当官我也不怕。”方妈妈正有些没摆布处，心下踌躇，早忘了支分公差。外边公差每焦燥道：“怎么进去不出来了？打发我们回覆官人去！”方妈妈只得走出来，把实情告诉公差道：“起初小女实是缢死了，



some disease, but you want to land the responsibility on your neighbor.” Mother Fang said, “My daughter was unwilling to comply with the rapist and has committed suicide. The seducer is now locked in my home. I am asking for you to send some men with me to bring him here. You can then interrogate him in court. If I’ve made up anything, I will be willing to receive punishment.” Seeing that she was sure, the country magistrate told a clerk to record her words and he then issued an order.

From the beginning, the *yamen* took advantage of Mother Fang as woman and kept asking her for money to pursue the matter, until her patience ran out. Now she was finally assigned a runner, but the runner also asked her for money before departing. Thus she was held up two or three days before she could go back home with the runner. She said to herself, “I didn’t know that it would take so long to get back. That son of bitch must be reduced to a bag of bones by hunger, if not have worried to death.” She let the runner take a seat in the main room. As she went to open the locked one with her key, she heard the sound of chatting and laughter. Confused, she thought to herself, “With whom can that rogue be talking?”

After opening the door, she found the two lovers sitting shoulder to shoulder and murmuring tenderly to each other. Mother Fang was stunned and rubbed her eyes before taking a closer look. She asked her daughter, “How did you come back to life?” Sun laughed and responded, “I appreciate your kindness in giving me your dead daughter. However, I am now returning your daughter to you alive. She’s mine now!” Mother Fang was at a loss for words. For quite a while she just stood there hunting for words with which to rebuke him. Slowly she pulled herself together by saying, “Why did you commit adultery? I’ve sued you.” Sun replied, “I didn’t do that, but you locked me up in here. I don’t care now if I go to court.” Mother Fang was completely at a loss and for the moment forgot that the runner was waiting outside.

The runner called anxiously, “Why don’t you come out? I’ve got to go and report to the County Magistrate.” Mother Fang had to come out. She told the runner what had happened and said, “My daughter committed suicide by hanging herself. That is true. It is for that reason that I brought



故此告这状。不想小女仍复得活，而今怎生去回得官人便好？”公差变起脸来道：“匾大的天，凭你掇出掇入的？人命重情，告了状，又说是不死，你家老子做官，也说不通！谁教你告这样谎状？”方妈妈道：“人命不实，奸情是真，我也不为虚情。有烦替我带人到官，我自会说。”就把孙小官交付与公差。孙小官道：“我须不是自家走来的。况且人又不曾死，不犯甚么事，要我到官何干？”公差道：“这不是这样说。你牌上有名，有理没理你自见官分辨，不干我们事。我们来一番，须与我们差使钱去。”孙小官道：“我身子被这里妈妈锁住，饿了几日，而今拚得见官，那里有使用？但凭妈妈怎样罢了！”

当下方妈妈反输一帖，只得安排酒饭，款待了公差。公差还要连闰娘带去，方妈妈求免女儿出官。公差道：“起初说是死的，也少不得要相验尸首；而今是个活的，怎好不见得官？”贾闰娘闻知，说道：“果要出丑，我不如仍旧缢死了罢！”方妈妈没奈何，苦苦央及公差。公差做好做歉了一番，又送了东西，公差方肯住手，只带了孙小官同原告方妈妈到官回覆。

县官先叫方妈妈问道：“你且说女儿怎么样死的？”方妈妈因是女儿不曾死，头一句就不好答应，只得说：“爷爷，女



a lawsuit to the court. I didn't know, however, that she would now come back to life. Now what can I say to the County Magistrate?" The runner flared up, shouting, "Are you going to say that you can do whatever you want in this world? One's life and death are serious issues. You first brought the matter to court and now you are denying it. Even if your father were the County Magistrate, you would not be able to do things at will. It is your fault for telling a lie in the first place." "I admit it is not true that my daughter is dead," Mother Fang said, as she shoved the young man in front of the runner, "but the seduction is crystal clear. I beg you to bring him to court and I will account for the matter in full." Sun said, "The truth is that I didn't come here of my own free will. Besides, she is not dead. I didn't commit any crime. What is the point of bringing me to court?"

However, the runner said, "You are not right. I've got an order to arrest you. It is not my business whether you are a criminal or not. You have to defend yourself in court. Since I've come, you must pay me." Sun said, "I was confined in the room without food for days. How can I have money to give you? I don't care if you will bring me to the authorities. Mother Fang may do whatever she pleases!"

Finding herself in a weak position for further argument, Mother Fang had to feed the runner with a meal. As the runner also wanted to take Ruiniang to court, Mother Fang requested permission that he let her daughter stay at home. The runner replied, "At first you said she was dead. If so, the body would have to be examined. Since she's now alive, how can you keep her from appearing in court?" Jia Runiang heard this and said, "If I have to be humiliated today by going to the court, I might as well hang myself and die." Having no alternative, Mother Fang kept on pleading with the runner, but the runner persisted. Finally, the runner permitted her request after he received some gifts from her. Hence the runner brought Sun and Mother Fang, the plaintiff, to the yamen.

The County Magistrate said to Mother Fang, "Tell me how your daughter died." Mother Fang found it hard to answer, for her daughter was not dead. She had to explain, "My lord, my daughter actually did not die." The County Magistrate said, "If she is not dead, why did you sue



儿其实不曾死。”县官道：“不死怎生就告人因奸致死？”方妈妈道：“起初告状时节是死的，爷爷准得状回去，不想又活了。”县官道：“有这样胡说？原说吴下妇人刁，多是一派虚情。人不曾死，就告人命。好打！”方妈妈道：“人虽不死，奸情实是有的。小妇人现获正身在此。”县官就叫孙小官上去，问道：“方氏告你奸情，是怎么说？”孙小官道：“小人委实不曾有奸。”县官道：“你方才是那里拿出来的？”孙小官道：“在贾家房里。”县官道：“可知是行奸被获了！”孙小官道：“小人是方氏骗去锁在房里，非小人自去的，如何是小人行奸？”县官又问方妈妈道：“你如何骗他到家？”方妈妈道：“他与小妇人女儿有奸，小妇人知道了，骂了女儿一场，女儿当夜缢死。所以小妇人哄他到家锁住了，特来告状。及至小妇人到得家里，不想女儿已活，双双的住在房里了几日。这奸情一发不消说起了。”孙小官道：“小人与贾家女儿邻居，自幼相识，原不曾有一些甚么事。不知方氏与女儿有何话说，却致女儿上吊，道是女儿死了，把小人哄到家里，一把锁锁住。小人并不知其繇。及至小人慌了，看看女儿尸首时，女儿忽然睁开双目，依然活在床上。此时小人出来又出来不得，便做小人是柳下惠、鲁男子时，也只索同这女儿住在里头了。不诨一住就是两三日，



someone for seducing your daughter and causing her death?" Mother Fang replied, "Originally she was dead, so I brought my suit to you. After you approved it, she surprisingly came back to life." The County Magistrate said, "What a sheer fabrication? I have long heard that the women from your area are sly and deceptive. Your daughter was alive but you reported her death. You deserve a beating!" Mother Fang said, "Though she is not dead, the seduction is definitely true. The offender now is right here."

The County Magistrate then told the young man to come to him and said, "Fang has sued you for seducing her daughter. What do you have to say about it?" Sun answered, "I did not commit seduction at all." The County Magistrate asked, "Where were you arrested?" Sun replied, "In Mother Fang's house." The County Magistrate said, "Then you were caught on the spot of seduction." Sun defended himself, "I was tricked into going into her house and locked in there. I didn't go there by myself. Why am I accused of seducing her?" The County Magistrate then asked Mother Fang, "How did you trick him into going into your house?"

Mother Fang said, "My daughter had an affair with him. I learned of it and abused my daughter. She hung herself and died that night. So I tricked him into going into my house and locked him up there. Then I came here to sue him. But when I later got back home, my daughter had come back to life. They stayed in my house for a couple of days. Their affair became outrageous." Sun said, "Her daughter and I were neighbors and have been on good terms since childhood. We didn't have any affair before. I don't know what Mother Fang said to her daughter that night so that she tried to commit suicide by hanging herself. After learning of her death, Mother Fang tricked me into going into her house and locked me up. I was absolutely ignorant of what had happened. I was frightened at the sight of her daughter's body. But she slowly opened her eyes and came back to life on the bed. At that time, getting out of the room was absolutely impossible. Having no choice, I had to stay with her in the room even though I were Liuxiahui and Lunanzi. But I never expected I would stay there for two to three days till now. And now you've brought me to the *yamen* for this offence. I'm not to blame for this matter because I didn't



却来拿小人到官。这不是小人自家走进去住在里头的，须怪小人不得。望爷爷详情。”

县官见说了，笑将起来道：“这说的是真话。只是女儿今虽不死，起初自缢，必有隐情。”孙小官道：“这是他娘女自有相争，小人却不知道。”县官叫方氏起来问道：“且说你女儿为何自缢？”方妈妈道：“方才说过，是与孙某有奸了。”县官道：“怎见得他有奸？拿奸要双，你曾拿得他着么？”方妈妈道：“他把小妇人认做了女儿，赶来把言语调戏，所以疑心他有奸。”县官笑道：“疑心有奸，怎么算得奸？以前反未必有这事，是你疑错了。以后再活转来，同住这两日夜，这就不可知。却是你自锁他在房里，成就他的。此莫非是他的姻缘了！况已死得活，世所罕有，当是天意。我看这孩子仪容可观，说话伶俐，你把女儿嫁了他，这些多不消饶舌了。”方妈妈道：“小妇人原与他无仇，只为女儿死了，思量没处出这口气，要摆布他。今女儿不死，小妇人已自悔多告了这状了。只凭爷爷主张。”县官大笑道：“你若不出来告状，女儿与女婿怎能勾先相会这两三日？”遂援笔判道：

孙郎贾女，貌若年当。疑奸非奸，认死不死。欲繫其



go into her room out of my own free will. Would you please make a thorough examination of this case?"

The County Magistrate laughed and said, "I think what you had said is true. Now the daughter didn't actually kill herself, but there must have been some reason for her attempted suicide." Sun said, "That's something between them, mother and daughter. I have no idea about it." The County Magistrate called Mother Fang up and asked, "Tell me why your daughter tried to commit suicide?" Mother Fang answered, "I told you about it a moment ago. It was because they had an affair." The County Magistrate asked, "How did you know they had had an affair? You would need to catch both of them at it. Did you catch them?" Mother Fang replied, "He mistakenly took me for my daughter, speaking obscenely to me. So I was suspicious of the affair they must have carried on."

The County Magistrate smiled and said, "How can you base your conclusion just on suspicion? They might not have had an affair at all before, so you were wrong in your suspicion. Later she gained consciousness and stayed with him for a couple of days. It's hard to tell whether they carried on an affair or not. In addition, you shut him inside there, helping him achieve his end. It seems they are predestined to be a couple. Besides, it is extremely rare for the dead to come back to life. It must be the will of heaven. I see this young man is handsome and speaks eloquently. Don't quibble anymore. I suggest that you marry your daughter to him." Mother Fang said, "I don't have any hatred for him. After my daughter's death, I found it hard to swallow the insult, so I wanted to make him suffer. Now that my daughter is alive, I regret bringing the lawsuit to court. I would like to follow your instructions now, sir." Laughingly, the County Magistrate said, "If you had not brought the lawsuit to court, how would your daughter and son-in-law have had the chance to stay together for a couple of days?" Then he picked up a brush and wrote this verdict:

The son from the family of Sun and the daughter from the family of Jia are a good match both in appearance and age. They were suspected of carrying on an affair but it was not true. The girl was thought to be dead but she came back to life. The boy was confined in the room, but, in fact, given



钻穴之身，反遂夫同衾之乐。似有天意，非属人为。宜效绸缪，以消怨旷。

判毕，令吏典读与方妈妈、孙小官听了，俱各喜欢，两两拜谢而出。孙小官就去择日行礼，与贾闰娘配为夫妇。这段姻缘，分明在这一吊上成的。有诗为证：

姻缘分定不须忙，自有天公作主张。

不是一番寒彻骨，怎得梅花扑鼻香？

the chance to sleep with his love. Their union is part of a heavenly design instead of human aspirations. Their love should be maintained and their wish be fulfilled.

Then an official read the verdict to Mother Fang and Sun. They were both very happy. After expressing their gratitude, they withdrew. Sun proceeded to prepare for his marriage with Jia Ruiniang on a selected date. This marriage was accomplished due to an attempted hanging suicide. The following poem may serve to describe it:

Far beyond human efforts
Marriage is decided by the will of Heaven.
How could the plum flowers blossom
If it had not been for the piercing cold?



卷 三 十 六

王渔翁舍镜崇三宝 白水僧盗物丧双生

诗云：

资财自有分定，贪谋枉费踌躇。

假使取非其物，定为神鬼挪揄。

话说宋时淳熙年间，临安府市民沈一，以卖酒营生。家居官巷口，开着一个大酒坊。又见西湖上生意好，在钱塘门外丰楼买了一所库房，开着一个大酒店。楼上临湖玩景，游客往来不绝。沈一日里在店里监着酒工卖酒，傍晚方回家去。日逐营营，算计利息，好不兴头。

一日，正值春尽夏初，店里吃酒的甚多。到晚未歇，收拾不及，不回家去，就在店里宿了。将及二鼓时分，忽地湖中有一大船，泊将拢岸。鼓吹喧阗，丝管交沸。有五个贵公子，各戴花帽，锦袍玉带，挟同姬妾十数辈，径到楼下。唤酒工过来，





Tale 36

Fisherman Wang Donates a Mirror in Worship of Buddha Two Monks Lose Their Lives for Stealing the Treasure

A poem reads thus:

Private properties and wealth are predestined.
Schemes and endeavors aiming to be covetous will be futile.
If one takes anything that does not belong to him,
He is sure to be derided by the deities.

It is said that, during the Chunxi reign of the Song Dynasty, there was a man named Shen Yi in Guanxiangkou, Lin'an Prefecture, who lived on running a wine shop. Later, as he realized he could make a better deal by the West Lake, he bought a storehouse at Fenglou Building in Qiantang and opened a large tavern. Tourists streamed to the Fenglou Building every day to enjoy the beautiful scenery of the West Lake. Shen Yi worked at his tavern at daytime, keeping watch over his wine sellers, and would not return home until it was getting late. Every day, he worked hard to build up his tavern, and he was always in high spirits when he counted his earnings.

It was the end of the Spring and the early of the Summer, one day many people came to have drinks at Shen Yi's tavern. The tables were not cleared up until it was very late. Unable to go back home, Shen Yi stayed the night in the tavern. When it was about the second watch, a large boat suddenly pulled to shore amid a great din of drums and pipes. Then five men, all wearing hats with flower designs and silken robes with jade belts, and accompanied by a dozen of concubines, directly came to the entrance of Shen Yi's tavern.

Calling over a waiter, they asked, "Where is your boss?" The waiter



问道：“店主人何在？”酒工道：“主人沈一，今日不回家去，正在此间。”五客多喜道：“主人在此更好，快请相见。”沈一出来见过了。五客道：“有好酒只管拿出来，我每不亏你。”沈一道：“小店酒颇有，但凭开量洪饮。请到楼上去坐。”五客拥了歌童舞女，一齐登楼。畅饮更馀，店中百来坛酒，吃个罄尽。算还酒钱，多是雪花白银。沈一是个乖觉的人，见了光景，想道：“世间那有一样打扮的五个贵人？况他容止飘然，多有仙气。只这用了无数的酒，决不是凡人了。必是五通神道无疑。既到我店，不可错过了。”一点贪心忍不住，向前跪拜道：“小人一生辛苦经纪，赶趁些微末利钱，只勾度日。不道十二分天幸，得遇尊神，真是夙世前缘，有此遭际。愿求赐一场小富贵。”五客多笑道：“要与你些富贵也不难，只是你所求何等事？”沈一叩头道：“小人市井小辈，别不指望，只求多赐些金银便了。”五客多笑着点头道：“使得，使得。”即叫一个黄巾力士听使用。力士向前声喏，五客内中一个为首的唤到近身，附耳低言，不知分付了些甚么，领命去了。

须臾回覆，背上负一大布囊来，掷于地。五客教沈一来，与他道：“此一囊金银器皿，尽以赏汝。然须到家始看，此处不可泄露。”沈一伸手去隔囊捏一捏，捏得囊里块块累累，其



answered, "My boss is Shen Yi and he is just in the tavern." Feeling delighted, the five guests said, "It's nice the boss is in. We'd like to see him." Soon Shen Yi came out of the tavern and expressed his greetings. The five guests said, "Bring us your best wine. We will give you your due." Shen Yi answered, "I've got plenty of wine in my tavern. Come on in and enjoy yourselves." In the cluster of song and dance girls, the five guests moved into the tavern. After about two hours' drink, they drank about a hundred jars of wine, and this was all the wine the tavern had. The five guests paid Shen a large sum of white silver for the wine.

Shen Yi was a quick and smart man. Seeing all these, he pondered, "How should five gentlemen in this world dress themselves in the same way? Moreover, they all have graceful bearings and ethereal looks. The amount of wine they have drunk is such that they are by no means ordinary people. They must be the Five Immortals. Now that they've come to my tavern, I must not let slip this opportunity." Finding it hard to suppress his avarice, he went down on his knees in worship of the five guests and said, "I spare no pains toiling all the year round only to make some small profits and drag out a miserable existence. I never expected I would be able to meet you, the Five Immortals. How fortunate I am! I wish you could grant me some riches and honor." The five guests smiled and said, "It's not quite difficult to grant some riches and honor. But could you be more specific about your wishes?" Shen Yi kowtowed and said, "I'm just a philistine. I only wish you could grant me some more gold and silver." The five guests nodded their agreement smilingly, "No problem, no problem." One of the five guests called over a strong man wearing a yellow turban on the head and whispered something to him. Then the strong man left with the order.

Before long, the strong man returned, carrying a large bag on the back. After the strong man put the bag on the ground, the five guests called forward Shen Yi and said, "This is a bag of gold and silver wares and they are all for you. But you mustn't open the bag and see the wares until you get home." Shen Yi felt the bag and the wares within with his thumb and other fingers and heard the sonorous clatters of the large silver and gold wares. Unable to restrain himself for joy, Shen Yi kowtowed



声铿锵，大喜过望，叩头称谢不止。俄顷鸡鸣，五客率领姬妾上马，笼烛夹道，其去如飞。

沈一心里快活，不去再睡，要驼回到家开看。虑恐入城之际囊里狼狽被城门上盘诘，拿一个大锤，隔囊锤击，再加蹴踏匾了，使不闻声。然后背在肩上，急到家里，妻子还在床上睡着未起。沈一连声喊道：“快起来！快起来！我得一主横财在这里了，寻秤来与我秤秤看。”妻子道：“甚么横财？昨夜家中柜里头异常响声，疑心有贼，只得起来照看，不见甚么。为此一夜睡不着，至今未起。你且先去看看柜里着，再来寻秤不迟。”沈一走去取了钥匙，开柜一看，那里头空空的了。元来沈一城内城外两处酒坊，所用铜锡器皿家伙，与妻子金银首饰，但是值钱的，多收拾在柜内，而今一件也不见了。惊异道：“奇怪，若是贼偷了去，为何锁都不开的？”妻子见说柜里空了，大哭起来道：“罢了！罢了！一生辛苦，多没有了！”沈一道：“不妨，且将神道昨夜所赐来看看，尽勾受用哩。”慌忙打开布袋来看时，沈一惊得呆了。说也好笑，一件件拿出来看，多是自家柜里东西。只可惜被夜来那一顿锤踏，多弄得歪的歪，匾的匾，不成一件家伙了。沈一大叫道：“不好了！不好了！被这伙泼毛神作弄了！”妻子问其缘故，乃说：“昨夜遇着五通神道，求他赏赐金银，他与我这一布囊。谁知多是自家



repeatedly to express his thanks. Soon the cocks crowed. The five guests, along with their concubines, quickly got on their horses and dashed off as swift as wind.

Feeling pleasantly surprised, Shen Yi stayed awake that night. He was eager to take the bag home and see what was inside. For fear that the guards at the city gate might question him closely about the pointed and swelling things in the bag, he knocked the wares with a big hammer and stamped them flat so that they wouldn't bang against each other. Carrying the bag on his shoulder, he hurried back home. At that time, his wife was still in bed, sleeping. Shen Yi shouted at his wife, "Get up! Get up quickly! I've got a windfall. Bring me the steelyard. I want to weigh it." His wife said, "What windfall? I heard a strange noise coming from our cupboard last night. I suspected there were burglars. I got up and had a look, but I didn't find anything unusual. For this reason, I laid awake for the whole night. So, I'm not up yet. You'd better check the cupboard first before we find the steelyard to weigh your windfall."

Shen Yi moved over and got the key to the cupboard. He opened the cupboard and found it was empty. Actually, all of Shen Yi's household wares, either bronze or tin, and all of his wife's expensive pieces of jewelry had been stored up in this cupboard. Now they were all gone. Greatly surprised, Shen Yi said, "How strange! Could it be possible they have been looted by a burglar? How come the padlock was still there, locked?" Bursting into tears, Shen Yi's wife shouted, "No, no! All my wealth is gone!" Shen Yi consoled her by saying, "Don't worry. Let's take out what the Five Immortals gave me last night and see what valuables they are. They must be quite enough for us to enjoy for the rest of our lives."

When he opened the bag, Shen Yi was stupefied. Taking the things out of the bag one after another, he found they were exactly the things that had been stored in the cupboard, only that they went out of their original shapes due to his forceful hammering and stamping. Shen Yi shouted, "Oh no! No! I was made a fool by that gang of cunning immortals!" Shen's wife asked him what had happened. Shen Yi said, "Last night I met the Five Immortals. I asked them to grant me some gold and silver. And this is what they gave me. I never expected the things they gave me

屋里东西，叫个小鬼来搬去的。”妻子道：“为何多打坏了？”沈一道：“这却是我怕东西狼狽，撞着城门上盘诘，故此多敲打实落了。那知有这样□，自家害着自家了。”

沈一夫妻多气得不耐烦，重新唤了匠人，逐件置造过，反费了好些工食。不指望横财，倒折了本。传闻开去，做了笑话。沈一好些时不敢出来见人。只因一念贪痴，妄想非分之得，故受神道侮弄如此。可见世上不是自家东西，不要欺心贪他的。

小子说一个欺心贪别人东西，不得受用，反受显报的一段话，与看官听一听，冷一冷这些欺心要人的肚肠。有诗为证：

异宝归人定夙缘，岂容旁睨得垂涎？

试看欺隐皆成祸，始信冥冥自有权。

话说宋朝隆兴年间，蜀中嘉州地方，有一个渔翁，姓王，名甲。家住岷江之旁，世代以捕鱼为业。每日与同妻子棹着小舟，往来江上，撒网施罟。一日所得，恰好供给一家。这个渔翁虽然行业落在这里头了，却一心好善敬佛。每将鱼虾市上去卖，若匀了一日食用，便肯将来布施与乞丐，或是寺院里打斋



were private properties of my own. A ghost moved them away from our house by their order.” “Why were they all destroyed like this?” asked his wife. Shen Yi answered, “It was because I had fears I might be questioned by the guards at the city gate when they noticed the pointed and swelling articles in the bag. So I struck them flat with a hammer. What lousy luck! I damaged our own things!”

Overcome with a fit of the sulks, Shen Yi and his wife found an artisan and had these wares remolded one by one, and this cost them both some money and some time. Instead of getting a windfall, Shen Yi sustained losses. Later, Shen Yi’s story spread far and wide as a joke. For a long time, Shen Yi felt quite ill at ease from shame and did not dare to come out and see people. Driven by momentary inordinate desires for money, Shen Yi was thus made a fool by the immortals. From this story we can assume that one should never take anything, not even a penny, that does not belong to himself.

* * *

Here I’d like to tell you a story about two greedy monks. They embezzled a treasure that did not belong to them, and finally they received due punishment for their evildoings. The following lines may serve to describe it:

It is predestined the rare mirror will fall into the hands of the fisherman.
How could the mouths of others drool at it with greed?
As Heaven will eventually settle all accounts,
Evildoings are sure to bring disasters.

During the Longxing reign (1163-1165) of the Song Dynasty, as the story has it, there lived a fisherman named Wang Jia in Jiazhou in the Shu region (present-day Sichuan Province). His family, generations of fishermen, lived close to the Minjiang River. Every day with his wife he rowed out in a boat along the river, casting out and pulling in the net. A day’s catch usually provided enough food for his family. Though he took fishing as his trade, he turned out to be a good-natured person who was a faithful Buddhist. Each day he brought the fish and lobsters he caught to the market for sale. If he had more than enough left to feed his family for the day, he would give the rest of his money to monks as a donation or to



化饭，禅堂中募化腐菜，他不拘一文二文，常自喜舍不吝。他妻子见惯了的，况是女流，愈加信佛，也自与他一心一意。虽是生意浅薄，不多大事，没有一日不舍两文的。

一日正在江中棹舟，忽然看见水底一物，荡漾不定，恰像是个日头的影一般，火采闪烁，射人眼目。王甲对妻子道：“你看见么？此下必有奇异。我和你设法取他起来，看是何物。”遂教妻子理网，搜的一声，撒将下去。不多时，掉转船头，牵将起来。看那网中光亮异常，笑道：“是甚么好物事呀？”取上手看，却元来是面古镜，周围有八寸大小，雕镂着龙凤之文，又有篆书许多字，字形像符篆一般样，识不出的。王甲与妻子看了，道：“闻得古镜值钱。这个镜虽不知值多少，必然也是件好东西。我和你且拿到家里藏好，看有识者，才取出来与他看看，不要等闲褻渎了。”

看官听说：原来这镜果是有来历之物，乃是轩辕黄帝所造。采着日精月华，按着奇门遁甲，拣取年月日时，下炉开铸。上有金章宝篆，多是秘笈灵符。但此镜所在之处，金银财宝多来聚会，名为聚宝之镜。只为王甲夫妻好善，也是夙世前缘，合该兴旺，故此物出现，却得取了回家。自得此镜之后，财物不求而至。在家里扫地也扫出金屑来，垦田也垦出银窖来，船上去撒网也牵起珍宝来，剖蚌也剖出明珠来。

一日在江边捕鱼，只见滩上有两件小白东西，赶来赶去，



beggars as alms. When Buddhist temples collected alms, he was not stingy at all in giving a few coins. His wife was familiar with his way of doing things. A submissive woman, she was an even more pious Buddhist. So she was in agreement with her husband. Though they did not prosper at their shoe-string business, their alms-offering of a couple of strings of cash was a daily practice in their lives.

One day while they were rowing in the river, they saw something glittering in the water, something like the sun's shadow cast in brilliance. Wang Jia said to his wife, "Do you see that? It must be something extraordinary. We should pick it up and see what it is." Then he told his wife to throw out the net and, as the bow of the boat turned, pulled it up. The thing shone brightly in the net. He grinned and asked, "What kind of interesting thing is it?" He picked it up in his hand. It was an antique mirror with a diameter of about eight inches, and it bore the engraving of a dragon and a phoenix as well as some indecipherable seal characters resembling those used for incantations. Handing it to his wife, he said, "I have heard that an antique mirror is precious. Though I don't know how much this mirror may be worth of, it must be a valuable possession. Let's take it back home and save it. Later we can show it to some expert for judgment so as to give it its due respect."

Readers, this mirror had a particular origin: It was the product of an ancient chief called Huangdi, who created it with magic powers at the auspicious moment of the day, month and year, the prime of sunshine and moonlight. On the mirror were some badges, seal characters and boxes engraved in gold. The mirror brought wealth, including gold and silver, to its location and hence it had obtained the name of a treasure-gaining mirror. Due to their benevolence and the virtuous deeds they had accumulated in former lives, Wang Jia and his wife had the good luck to obtain this magic mirror. Soon a fortune turned in. A sweeping of the floor gathered scraps of gold; the plowing of land led to the discovery of a silver pit; hauling in the fishing net yielded jewelry; and even gems were found inside fresh-water mussel shells when they were ripped open.

One day they were fishing in the river. They noticed two little white objects moving about on the shore as if they were chasing one another.



盘旋数番。急跳上岸，将衣襟兜住，却似莲子大两块小石子，生得明净莹洁，光彩射人，甚是可爱。藏在袖里，带回家来，放在匣中。是夜即梦见两个白衣美女，自言是姊妹二人，特来随侍。醒来想道：“必是二石子的精灵，可见是宝贝了。”把来包好，结在衣带上。

隔得几日，有一个波斯胡人，特来寻问。见了王甲道：“君身上有宝物，愿求一看。”王甲推道：“没甚宝物。”胡人道：“我远望宝气在江边。跟寻到此，知在君家；及见君走出，宝气却在身上。千万求看一看，不必瞒我。”王甲晓得是个识宝的，身上取出与他看。胡人看了，啧啧道：“有缘得遇此宝。况是一双，尤为难得。不知可肯卖否？”王甲道：“我要他无用，得价也就卖了。”胡人见说肯卖，不胜之喜，道：“此宝本没有定价。今我行囊止有三万缗，尽数与君，买了去罢。”王甲道：“吾无心得来，不识何物。价钱既不轻了，不敢论量。只求指明，要此物何用？”胡人道：“此名澄水石，放在水中，随你浊水皆清。带此泛海，即海水皆同湖水，淡而可食。”王甲道：“只如此，怎就值得许多？”胡人道：“吾本国有宝池，内多奇宝。只是淤泥浊水，水中有毒，人下去的，起来无不即死。所以要



Wang Jia leaped onto the shore, picked them up and put them in his lap. They were two little lovely rocks the size of the lotus seeds, clean and bright, sparkling with great beauty. He tucked them inside his sleeve and brought them back home. He put them into a small box. That night in a dream he met two beauties in white dresses. They told him they were sisters coming to wait upon him. Upon waking, he decided, "They must be the souls of the two little rocks. The rocks are indeed treasures." Then he wrapped them up and fastened them to his girdle.

A few days later, a Persian visitor arrived and said to Wang Jia, "You have something valuable on you. Can I have a look?" Wang Jia replied, "I don't think I have any such thing." The Persian said, "I noticed a wisp of treasure rising along the shore from a distance. I tracked it here and saw it in your home. But when you came out, I saw it on you. Please show it to me. You can't lie about it." Knowing this man was someone who could tell good from bad, Wang Jia took the rocks from his girdle and showed them to the Persian. With clicks of his tongue in admiration, the Persian said, "It's good luck to come by this sort of treasure. It's particularly hard to acquire a pair of them. I wonder if you're willing to sell them to me." Wang Jia replied, "I have no use for them. I'll sell them to you, if you give me a reasonable price." The Persian was delighted at the host's agreement to sell them, and said, "This treasure does not have a definite price. I've got thirty thousand pieces of cash on me. I'll give all of that to you for the sale." Wang Jia said, "I acquired them by accident. I have no idea what they are. You offer such a handsome price so that I can't ask for more. I only hope you will tell me why you want to purchase them?"

The Persian said, "These rocks are called 'Water-clearing Stones.' If you take them with you on a sea voyage, sea water will become crystal clear no matter how muddy it is. If you put them into sea water, the sea water will become as fresh and drinkable as lake water." Wang Jia said, "But why do they cost so much, given that is the use for them?" The Persian explained, "In my country we have a treasure pond in which there are plenty of marvelous treasures. But the water is muddy and full of sludge. Besides, it is poisonous. If a person goes into the pond, he is



取宝的，必用重价募着舍性命的下水。那人死了，还要养贍他一家。如今有了此石，只须带在身边，水多澄清，如同凡水，任从取宝，总无妨了。岂不值钱？”王甲道：“这等，只买一颗去勾了，何必两颗多要？便等我留下一颗也好。”胡人道：“有个缘故。此宝形虽两颗，气实相联，彼此相逐，才是活物，可以长久。若拆开两处，用不多时，就枯槁无用。所以分不得的。”王甲想胡人识货，就取出前日的古镜出来，求他赏识。胡人见了，合掌顶礼道：“此非凡间之宝，其妙无量，连咱也不能尽知其用。必是世间大有福的人，方得有此。咱就有钱，也不敢买。只买此二宝去也勾了。此镜好好藏着，不可轻觑了他。”王甲依言，把镜来藏好，遂与胡人成了交易，果将三万缗买了二白石去。

王甲一时富足起来，然还未舍渔船生活。一日天晚，遇着风雨，掉船归家，望见江南火把明亮，有人唤船求渡，其声甚急。王甲料此时没有别舟，若不得渡，这些人须吃了苦。急急冒着风，掉过去载他。元来是两个道士，一个穿黄衣，一个穿白衣。下在船里了，摇过对岸。道士对王甲道：“如今夜黑雨



likely to die when he gets out of it. In order to obtain the treasure, one has to hire people for a huge amount of money, who are willing to go under the water at the risk of their lives. After those people die, we have to support the families they leave behind. Now a treasure-fetching person will be able to go into the water with one of these rocks on him, and the water will become clear and harmless, so treasure can be scooped up at will. Don't you think such a thing is priceless?"

Wang Jia said, "Well, if that is true, why are you buying two of them instead of just one? It might be good to leave one with me." The Persian said, "The reason that I want both of them is that they are a pair, an intrinsic whole, supplementing one another. The combination gives them long-lasting power. If they are separated, they will become shriveled and useless. That's why we can't split them." Wang Jia realized that this Persian was fairly knowledgeable, so he brought out the antique mirror for his judgment. At the sight of it, the Persian immediately prostrated himself before the mirror with his palms together, saying, "It is not an earthly treasure. It has extraordinary powers, about which I'm not in a position to tell. Only a person who has massive good luck can come into the possession of it. Even if I had the money, I would not be courageous enough to buy it. I think I've gotten enough with the purchase of the two rocks. Please keep the mirror in a safe place. Don't trifle with it." Accordingly, Wang Jia put it away carefully. He then completed the deal with the Persian on the purchase of the two rocks at the price of thirty thousand pieces of cash.

Wang Jia had become rich overnight. But he would not give up his fishing career. One evening when a storm broke, he rowed his boat homeward. He saw someone on the southern riverbank with a torch, anxiously signaling him to ferry them across the river. Knowing there was no other boat around at that hour, Wang Jia decided that if he ignored his request the person would be in trouble. So he turned his boat around and rowed it against the storm in the direction of the light. It turned out to be two Taoist priests, one in yellow dress and the other in white. They climbed on board the boat and were ferried across the river.

The Taoists said to Wang Jia, "It's dark and raining hard. At this hour



大，没处投宿，得到宅上权歇一宵，实为万幸。”王甲是个行善的人，便道：“家里虽蜗窄，尚有草榻可以安寝，师父每不妨下顾的。”遂把船拴好，同了两道士到家里来，分付妻子安排斋饭。两道士苦辞道：“不必赐餐，只求一宿。”果然茶水多不吃，径到一张竹床上，一铺睡了。

王甲夫妻夜里睡觉，只听得竹床栗喇有声，扑的一响，像似甚重物跌下地来的光景。王甲夫妻猜道：“莫不是客人跌下床来？然是人跌，没有得这样响声。”王甲疑心，暗里走出来，听两道士宿处寂然没一些声息，愈加奇怪。走转房里，寻出火种，点起个灯来。出外一照，叫声：“阿也！”元来竹床压破，两道士俱落在床底下，直挺挺的眠着。伸手去一摸，吓得舌头伸了出去，半个时辰缩不进来。你道怎么？但见这两个道士：

冰一般冷，石一样坚。俨焉两个皮囊，块然一双宝体。

黄黄白白，世间无此不成人；重重痴痴，路上非斯难算客。王甲叫妻子起来道：“说也希罕，两个客人，不是生人，多变得硬硬的了。”妻子道：“变了何物？”王甲道：“火光之下看不明白，不知是铜是锡，是金是银。直待天明，才知分晓。”妻子道：“这等会作怪通灵的，料不是铜锡东西。”王甲道：“也是。”

渐渐天明，仔细一看，果然那穿黄的是个金人，那穿白的是一个银人，约重有千百来斤。王甲夫妻惊喜非常，道此是天赐，只恐这等会变化的，必要走了那里去。急急去买了一二十



we can't find any lodging. If you can accommodate us tonight, we would appreciate it very much." Being a charitable man, Wang Jia said, "My home lacks space, but, if you masters deign to respect me, I have thatched beds for you." Then he fastened the boat and led the two Taoists to his home. He called his wife to prepare dinner for them, but the Taoists insisted they would not eat anything. They said, "Please don't bring us any food. We just want to sleep." They ate nothing before they turned in on the bamboo bed.

During the night, Wang Jia and his wife suddenly heard a grating sound coming from the bamboo bed on which the Taoists slept, and then a thump as if some heavy object had dropped on the floor. The couple thought, "Could it be the visitors who have dropped to the floor? But the fall of a human should not make such a loud sound." Puzzled, Wang Jia tiptoed to the Taoists' room and found it in dead silence. He became even more confused. He went back to his room to light a candle. Then he let out a cry, "Ah!" when he saw what the candlelight revealed. The bamboo bed was crushed and the Taoists were lying under the bed, motionless on the floor. Reaching out to feel their bodies, he became terrified, standing open-mouthed for quite a while. What had happened?

These two Taoists were deadly cold and rigidly hard: they look like human but in reality were two bodies of treasure in white and yellow colors, without which no one can make a living in the world nor a traveler make a trip.

Wang Jia called to his wife and said, "It is weird that the two visitors have become hard and stiff, not human beings anymore." His wife asked, "What have they become then?" Wang Jia said, "In the candlelight I can't see clearly. I've no idea whether they are copper, tin, gold or silver. We can't make sure until tomorrow morning." His wife replied, "If it's something supernaturally powerful, it will not be copper or tin." Wang Jia said, "You're right."

As the daylight gradually got brighter, they looked closely and found that the Taoist in the yellow robes was now a gold figure and the one in white a silver figure, with a total weight of about one thousand *jin*. Wang Jia and his wife were overjoyed, believing this was a gift bestowed on them by Heaven. But they feared the figures might move somewhere,



簏山炭，归家炽煊起来，把来销熔了。但见黄的是精金，白的是纹银。王甲前此日逐有意外之得，已是渐饶。又卖了二石子，得了一大主钱。今又有了这许多金银，一发瓶满瓮满，几间破屋没放处了。

王甲夫妻是本分的人，虽然有了许多东西，也不想去起造房屋，也不想去置买田产，但把渔家之事搁起，不去弄了，只是安守过日。尚且无时无刻没有横财到手，又不消去做得生意，两年之间，富得当不得。却只是夫妻两口，要这些家私竟没用处，自己反觉多得不耐烦起来。心里有些惶惧不安，与妻子商量道：“我家自从祖上到今，只是以渔钓为生计，一日所得，极多有了百钱，再没去处了。今我每自得了这宝镜，动不动上千上万，不消经求，凭空飞到，梦里也是不打点的。我每且自思量着，我与你本是何等之人？骤然有这等非常富贵，只恐怕天理不容。况我每粗衣淡饭便自过日，要这许多来何用？今若留着这宝镜在家，只有得增添起来。我想天地之宝，不该久留在身边，自取罪业。不如拿到峨眉山白水禅院，舍在圣像上，做了圆光，永做了佛家供养，也尽了我每一片心，也结了我每一个缘，岂不为美？”妻子道：“这是佛天面上好看的事。况我每知时识务，正该如此。”

于是两个志志诚诚，吃了十来日斋，同到寺里，献此宝镜。寺里住持僧法轮问知来意，不胜赞叹道：“此乃檀越大福田事。”



because they were capable of changes. So they rushed out and purchased more than ten baskets of charcoal and started to melt the figures. As a result, the yellow human figure was turned into ingots of pure gold and the white human figure into bars of fine silver. Some time earlier Wang Jia had acquired lucky treasures every day. Then the sale of the two rocks brought him a good sum of money. Now the sizable amount of gold and silver filled all his jars and urns, making his house appear to be short of space.

Being law-abiding people, Wang Jia and his wife had no intention of building another house, nor did they want to purchase fields despite their overnight possession of wealth. The couple just quit fishing and stayed at home. As the fortune continued to flow in with no effort on his part, Wang Jia grew extremely rich in two years. Unable to put their wealth to use, the husband and wife became uneasy.

One day Wang Jia said to his wife anxiously, "Our family has made a living by fishing for generations. A gain of one hundred pieces of cash was the most we could hope to come by in a day. We could obtain no more than that. Since we have acquired this magic mirror, fortune keeps on coming in huge amounts. It is a windfall. I would have never dreamed of it. I've often wondered what kind of people we are to deserve such tremendous wealth. I guess it's outrageous in light of the heavenly laws. On the other hand, we live simply in terms of clothing and food. Why do we need this great wealth? If we continue to keep this mirror, the wealth will accumulate steadily. To my way of thinking, the treasure of the world should not go to just one family. Such accumulation is evil. We should take this mirror to the Temple of White Water on Mount Emei and donate it as the halo of the figure of Buddha. It will be a complete virtue if we dedicate and contribute it to Buddhism forever. By doing this, we will be happy and prove our devoutness to Buddha. Do you think that is a good idea?" His wife answered, "It is indeed a good thing to do in terms of Buddhism. We are sensible people. That is just what we should do."

So they piously abstained from eating meat for ten days and went to the temple to present the mirror. Upon learning of their arrival, Falun, the abbot of the temple, said in praise, "This is your enormous contribution



王甲央他写成意旨，就使邀集合寺僧众，做一个三日夜的道场。办斋粮，施衬钱，费过了数十两银钱。道场已毕，王甲即将宝镜交付住持法轮，作别而归。法轮久已知得王甲家里此镜聚宝，乃谦词推托道：“这件物事，天下至宝，神明所惜。檀越肯将来施作佛供，自是檀越结缘，吾僧家何敢与其事？檀越自奉着置在三宝之前，顶礼而去就是了，贫僧不去沾手。”王甲夫妻依言，亲自把宝镜安放佛顶后面停当，拜了四拜，别了法轮，自回去了。

谁知这个法轮是个奸狡有馀的僧人，明知这镜是至宝，王甲钜富皆因于此，见说肯舍在佛寺，已有心贪他的了。又恐怕日后翻悔，原来取去，所以故意说个不敢沾手，他日好赖。王甲去后，就取将下来，密唤一个绝巧的铸镜匠人，照着形模，另铸起一面来。铸成，与这面宝镜分毫无异，随你识货的人也分别不出的。法轮重谢了匠人，教他谨言。随将新铸之镜装在佛座，将真的换去藏好了。那法轮自得此镜之后，金银财物，不求自至，悉如王甲这两年的光景。以致衣钵充牣，买祠部度牒度的僮奴，多至三百馀人。寺刹兴旺，富不可言。

王甲回去，却便一日衰败一日起来。元来人家要穷，是不



to Buddhism.” Wang Jia asked for a statement to be written. According to the statement, all the monks of the temple would gather to observe a three-day performance of Buddhist rites for saving the souls of the dead. The subsequent Buddhist charitable effort in collecting food and money cost Wang Jia tens of taels of silver. After the performance, Wang Jia handed his mirror to the abbot and left.

Falun had heard about Wang Jia’s possession of the mirror long before, but to cover up his secret thoughts, he hypocritically said, “It is the most precious treasure in the world and highly valued by the gods. You, our benefactor, have donated it to the worship of Buddha, indicating your great allegiance. How could we Buddhist monks be so blasphemous as to seize it for ourselves? Please set it in front of the statues of Buddha and prostrate yourselves in worship. Then you can leave. We will never touch it.” Wang Jia and his wife did accordingly and made four kowtows. They then said goodbye to Falun and left for home.

It turned out that Falun was a very cunning and sinister monk. He had learned of how Wang Jia had prospered from this magic mirror. Upon Wang Jia’s donation of it, he began to think of some way to procure it for himself. He worried that Wang Jia might change his mind and want to claim it back, so he assured Wang Jia that he would never lay a finger on it in order to make an easy disavowal later. After Wang Jia left, Falun took the mirror and called in an experienced mirror craftsman. He asked the craftsman to make another mirror exactly like the original, so that no one could tell the real from the fake. Falun gave the craftsman a generous reward and asked him to keep his mouth shut about the matter. Then he put the newly made mirror in front of the figure of Buddha and stored the original one in a secret place. After he thus acquired the magic mirror, gold and silver started to roll in for Falun without any effort, just as it had for Wang Jia over the last two years. He had abundant food and clothing and bought more than three hundred disciple-servants licensed by the governmental ministry of sacrifices. The temple thrived with such immense wealth.

After Wang Jia returned home, he found his life becoming poorer with each passing day. Going broke does not take much time. Even though



打紧的。不消得盗劫火烧，只消有出无进，七颠八倒，做事不着，算计不就，不知不觉的，渐渐消耗了。况且王甲起初财物原是来得容易的，慷慨用费，不在心上，好似没底的吊桶一般，只管漏了出去。不想宝镜不在手里，更没有得来路，一用一空。只勾有两年光景，把一个大财主仍旧弄做个渔翁身分，一些也没有了。俗语说得好：

宁可无了有，不可有了无。

王甲泼天家事，弄得精光，思量道：“我当初本是穷人，只为得了宝镜，以致日遇横财，如此丰厚。若是好端端放在家中，自然日长夜大，那里得个穷来？无福消受，却没要紧的舍在白水寺中了。而今这寺里好生兴旺，却教我仍受贫穷，这是那里说起的事？”夫妻两个互相埋怨道：“当初是甚主意，怎不阻当一声？”王甲道：“而今也好处。我每又不是卖绝与他，是白白舍去供养的。今把实情去告诉住持长老，原取了来家。这须是我家的旧物，他也不肯不得。若怕佛天面上不好看，等我每照旧丰富之后，多出些布施，庄严三宝起来，也不为失信行了。”妻子道：“说得极是！为甚么睁着眼看别人富贵，自己受穷？作急去取了来，不可迟了。”商议已定，明日王甲径到峨眉山白水禅院中来。

昔日轻施重宝，是个慷慨有量之人；今朝重想旧踪，无非穷促无聊之计。一般檀越，贫富不同。总是登临，苦乐顿别。



one may be free of robberies and disasters, one will find their fortune quickly fading away before they realize it if they live on their savings with no income or they fail in their business. Wang Jia had got his wealth without any effort, so he was very generous and thoughtless when spending his money. His wealth dwindled quickly, as if the contents dropped out of a bottomless bucket. With the magic mirror gone and no new resources, Wang Jia sank from being a rich man to being a fisherman again within two years. He was then as poor as he used to be. An old saying sums it up: "It's better for a poor to get rich than for a rich to become poor."

After Wang Jia had squandered his fortune away in such a short time, he mused, "Originally I was poor. After I acquired the magic mirror, I obtained a great deal of wealth each day and became rich. If I had kept the mirror at home, wealth would have kept coming in. How could I have suffered in poverty? Now I need money, but the mirror is sitting in the Temple of White Water. The temple is now rather prosperous while I become so poor. This is outrageous." Wang Jia and his wife started to blame each other, saying, "Why didn't you say something at that time against the idea of donating the mirror to the temple?"

Wang Jia then said, "All right, it's fine. In fact we didn't sell the mirror to the temple. We just presented it in front of the figure of Buddha for worship. We should go and tell the abbot about what has happened to us. We'll bring it back home. It was originally one of our belongings. I don't think he will turn us down. In terms of showing our Buddhist faithfulness, we will promise offer more almsgivings once we are rich again and add sublimity to the Buddha statues. It should not be considered unrighteous." His wife responded, "Exactly. Why should we suffer while other people prosper. Make no delay. You should go and bring it back." Thus they settled on the agreement. The following day Wang Jia made his way to the Temple of White Water.

When the benefactor had donated his magic mirror to the temple he was a generous man; now he came back to pick it up because of his financial plight; the benefactor was the same person, but in former times he was rich, at present he was poor. He came to the Temple of White Water twice, the first time with a happy heart, while the second time in utter distress.



且说王甲见了住持法轮，说起为舍镜倾家，目前无奈，只得来求还原物。王甲口里虽说，还怕法轮有些甚么推故。不匡法轮见说，毫无难色，欣然道：“此原是君家之物，今日来取，理之当然。小僧前日所以毫不与事，正为后来必有重取之日，小僧何苦又在里头经手？小僧出家人，只这个色身尚非我有，何况外物乎？但恐早晚之间有些不测，或被小人偷盗去了，难为檀越好情，见不得檀越金面。今得物归其主，小僧睡梦也安，何敢吝惜？”遂分付香积厨中办斋，管待了王甲已毕，却令王甲自上佛座，取了宝镜下来。王甲捧在手中，反覆仔细转看，认是旧物宛然，一些也无疑心。拿回家里来，与妻子看过，十分珍重，收藏起了。指望一似前日，财物水一般涌来；岂知一些也不灵验，依然贫困。时常拿出镜子来看看，光彩如旧，毫不济事。叹道：“敢是我福气已过，连宝镜也不灵了。”梦里也不道是假的。有改字陈朝驸马诗为证：

镜与财俱去，镜归财不归。

无复珍奇影，空留明月辉。

王甲虽然宝藏镜子，仍旧贫穷；那白水禅院，只管一日兴似一日。外人闻得的，尽疑心道：“必然原镜还在僧处，所以如此。”起先那铸镜匠人打造时节，只说寺中住持无非看样造



Wang Jia met the abbot Falun. He told him of the decline in the family fortune due to the loss of the magic mirror, and requested its return so as to change his present financial plight. As he spoke, Wang Jia was somewhat worried that Falun might reject him with an excuse. Surprisingly, Falun immediately agreed and said, "It was originally yours. Since you've come to get it today, I will by all means return it to you. I haven't touched it because I thought you might possibly come back for it some day. Why should I bother to prevent its return? I'm an ordinary monk. My earthly body is not mine, let alone anything else. I've been worried that the mirror might be damaged or stolen at night. If that happened, your generosity would go for nothing and I would feel ashamed to see you again. Now that the mirror is going back to its owner, I will be able to sleep soundly, completely at ease. Why should I refuse to return it to you?" Then he ordered the kitchen to fix a vegetarian dinner for Wang Jia. After dinner, he let Wang Jia personally go to pick up the mirror from the top of the statue of Buddha. Holding the mirror in his hands, Wang Jia checked it carefully and was sure that it was indeed his mirror.

Back home, Wang Jia showed it to his wife. They highly valued and treasured it in the hope that wealth would soon steadily flow in as before. However, the miracle did not happen this time, and they remained as poor as ever. Occasionally they took out the mirror to have a look. It looked as glittering as before, But it had simply lost its magic powers. Wang Jia heaved a sigh and said, "Is this because my good luck is over that the mirror won't work any more?" He never expected that the mirror was a fake. The following lines may serve as a proof:

Gone forever are the mirror and the fortune.

The mirror is regained, but not the fortune.

Not the least trace of a rare treasure can be found again,

Though it still shines with luster

While Wang Jia tried to fight his poverty with the fake mirror, the Temple of White Water continued to prosper. People began to wonder, "It's because the original mirror must still be in the temple." The mirror craftsman was ignorant of what was happening when he was told by Falun to make a mirror with the original one as a model. Now the mirror



镜，不知其中就里。今见人议论，说出王家有镜聚宝，舍在寺中，被寺僧偷过，致得王家贫穷，寺中丰富一段缘繇，匠人才省得前日的事，未免对人告诉出来。闻知的越恨那和尚欺心了。却是王甲有了一镜，虽知其假，那从证辨？不好再向寺中争论得，只得吞声忍气，自恨命薄。妻子叫神叫佛，冤屈无申，没计奈何。法轮自谓得计，道是没有尽藏的，安然享用了。看官，你道若是如此，做人落得欺心，倒反便宜，没个公道了。怎知：

量大福亦大，机深祸亦深。

法轮用了心机，藏了别人的宝镜，自发了家。天理不容，自然生出事端来。

汉嘉来了一个提点刑狱使者，姓浑，名耀，是个大贪之人。闻得白水寺僧十分富厚，已自动了顽涎。后来察听，闻知有镜聚宝之说，想道：“一个僧家，要他上万上千，不为难事。只是万千也有尽时，况且动人眼目。何如要了他这镜，这些财富尽跟了我走，岂不是无穷之利？亦且只是一件物事，甚为稳便。”当下差了一个心腹吏典，叫得宋喜，特来白水禅院，问住持要借宝镜一看。只一句话，正中了法轮的心病，如何应承得？回吏典道：“好交提控得知，几年前有个施主，曾将古镜一面舍在佛顶上，久已讨回去了。小寺中那得有甚么宝镜？万



craftsman heard that Wang Jia had become rich with a magic mirror and then had donated it to the temple, but that the monk defrauded him of the mirror, bringing wealth to the temple and leaving Wang Jia in poverty. The truth thus dawned on the mirror craftsman. Gradually he made the story known to the public, which made people despise the monk Falun.

Though Wang Jia learned that he had been cheated of the magic mirror, he did not know where could he obtain evidence to prove the point. He lacked any forceful reason with which to go to the temple for argument. He had to put up with the situation and moan about his fate. His wife, feeling wronged, did not know where to turn to for justice. At the same time, Falun was happy that he had made a gain great enough for an eternal use. Readers, you may think from this that treachery triumphs and no justice is done. But the fact is:

The more tolerant one remains, the more good luck
one will gain;

While the more crafty one becomes, the more destruction
one will sustain.

Falun had procured Wang Jia's magic mirror by means of deception and had become rich. This ran against the heavenly law and naturally drew punishment.

There was a jail director named Hun Yao, who came from prefectures Han and Jia (in present-day Sichuan Province). He was a pretty greedy man. When he learned of the prosperity of the Temple of White Water, he became covetous of its wealth. Later he heard about the magic mirror that had brought the fortune, and then thought to himself, "He's only an ordinary monk. It won't be difficult for me to demand a great deal of treasure from him. But even a great amount of wealth will be gone sooner or later. Besides, it will draw public attention. If I acquire his magic mirror, wealth will begin to come to me, and the mirror is small and handy." He at once sent a favorite jailer, called Song Xi, to the temple to borrow the magic mirror.

The request to borrow the magic mirror deepened Falun's secret worries. How could he meet the demand? He said, in answering to the jailer, "I'm telling you the truth, sir, that a man donated an antique mirror



望提控回言一声。”宋喜道：“提点相公坐名要问这宝镜，必是知道些甚么来历的，今如何回得他？”法轮道：“委实没有，叫小僧如何生得出来？”宋喜道：“就是恁地时，在下也不敢回话，须讨嗔怪。”法轮晓得他作难，寺里有的是银子，将出十两来，送与吏典道：“是必有烦提控回一回。些小薄意，勿嫌轻鲜。”宋喜见了银子，千欢万喜道：“既承盛情，好歹替你回一回去。”

法轮送吏典出了门，回身转来，与亲信的一个行者真空商量道：“此镜乃我寺发迹之本，岂可轻易露白，放得在别人家去的？不见王家的样么？况是官府来借，他不还了，没处叫得撞天屈。又是瞒着别人家的东西，明白告诉人不得的事。如今只是紧紧藏着，推个没有。随他要得急时，做些银子不着，买求罢了。”真空道：“这个自然。怎么好轻与得他？随他要了多少物事去，只要留得这宝贝在，不愁他的。”师徒两个愈加谨密，不题。

且说吏典宋喜去回浑提点相公的话，提点大怒道：“僧家直恁无状！吾上司官取一物，辄敢抗拒不肯！”宋喜道：“他不是不肯，说道原不曾有。”提点道：“胡说！吾访得真实在这里，是一个姓王的富人舍与寺中，他却将来换过，把假的还了



a few years ago, which was put on the figure of Buddha. But he took it back home long ago. I would appreciate your kindness if you would report that to the jail director.” Song Xi said, “The jail director talked to me about the mirror that you own and wanted to see it. He must have known a lot about it. How can I let him down by bringing back nothing?” Falun said, “To be frank, I’m not in possession of it, so how can I show it to him, sir?” Song Xi said, “Even if that is true, I would not dare to tell him so. If I do, I will definitely get scolded.” Knowing Song Xi was intentionally making trouble, Falun brought out ten taels of silver from the temple, since he had no lack of it, and gave it to the jailer. Then Falun said, “I’ll be grateful if you will take this message to the jail director for me. Here’s payment for your service. I hope you will not complain about this meager amount.” At the sight of the silver, Song Xi was overjoyed and said, “To return your generosity, I’ll do my best to pass on the message.”

Having sent the jailer off, Falun turned to a favorite disciple named Zhen Kong and said, “Our temple counts on this mirror to prosper. How can we let someone take it away, for that will become known to everybody later? Haven’t you seen how Wang Jia has become poor? Besides, if the government official borrows it and then doesn’t return it, we can never retrieve it. Since we’ve already deceived Wang Jia about the mirror, we’ll have to keep the matter from the public. From now on we’ll watch the magic mirror closely and deny any knowledge of it. If they press hard to see it, we’ll give them some silver and send them away.” Zhen Kong said, “Sure, how can we easily give it away to someone else? We can let them take everything from the temple but this mirror. With this mirror in our temple, we’ll be assured of more prosperity.” The master and disciple became even more watchful.

The jailer, Song Xi, went back to report to the jail director, Hun Yao. The jail director flew into rage and shouted, “How indiscreet the monk is! I, a government official, wanted to borrow something from him. But I can’t believe he dared to reject me!” Song Xi explained, “He didn’t say he refused to show it to you. He denies that he possesses the mirror.” The jail director said, “Nonsense! I have checked the fact that a rich man



本人。真的还在他处，怎说没有？必定你受了他贿赂，替他解说。如取不来，连你也是一顿好打！”宋喜慌了道：“待吏典再去与他说，必要取来就是。”提点道：“快去！快去！没有镜子，不要思量来见我！”

宋喜唯唯而出，又到白水禅院来见住持，说：“提点相公必要镜子，连在下也被他焦燥得不耐烦。而今没有镜子，莫想去见得他。”法轮道：“前日已奉告过，委实还了施主家了，而今还那里再有？”宋喜道：“相公说得丁一卯二的，道有姓王的施主，舍在寺中，以后来取，你把假的还了他，真的自藏了。不知那里访问在肚里的，怎好把此话回得他？”法轮道：“此皆左近之人，见小寺有两贯浮财，气苦眼热，造出些无端说话。”宋喜道：“而今说不得了。他起了风，少不得要下些雨。既没有镜子，须得送些甚么与他，才熄得这火。”法轮道：“除了镜子，随分要多少，敝寺也还出得起。小僧不敢吝，凭提控怎么分付。”宋喜道：“若要周全这事，依在下见识，须得与他千金，才打得他倒。”法轮道：“千金也好处，只是如何送去？”宋喜道：“这多在我，我自有送进的门路方法。”法轮道：“只求停妥得，不来再要便好。”即命行者真空在箱内取出千金，交与宋喜明白；又与三十两，另谢了宋喜。

宋喜将的去，又藏起了二百，止将八百送进提点衙内，禀道：“僧家实无此镜，备些镜价在此。”宋喜心里道：“量便是



named Wang Jia presented the mirror to the temple. The monk replaced it secretly. He gave the copy to Wang Jia and kept the original for himself. You must have taken bribes from him so you are speaking for him. If you can't bring it to me, you'll be punished with a beating!" Song Xi panicked and said, "I'm going to talk to the monk again and make sure to wring it out of him." The jail director said, "Do it, and hurry up! Don't come back to me without the mirror."

Song Xi retreated and returned to the temple. He said to the abbot, "The jail director insists that he must have the mirror. His rage makes me worry. I can't go back to see him unless I get the mirror." Falun said, "The other day, I told you that the mirror was returned to the owner. How could I have another one?" Song Xi said, "The jail director told me in detail that the donor Wang Jia presented it to the temple. Later he came to pick it up and you gave him a fake one and kept the original for yourself. I don't know how he learned all this. How can I tell him the mirror is not at your place?" Falun answered, "It all comes from gossips who saw our humble temple was a little bit richer and envied us. So they spread this nonsense." Song Xi said, "But you can't reason with the jail director. Wind always comes with rain. If he got that word, there must be something of the truth in it. If you insist on denial, I think you'll have to give him something so as to satisfy him."

Falun said, "Except the mirror, which we don't have, I can let you take anything from our humble temple. I'm not stingy and I'll follow his instructions." Song Xi replied, "In my opinion, you will have to give him one thousand taels of silver in order to smooth out his displeasure." Falun said, "That sum of money is fine with us. But how can I deliver it to him?" Song Xi said, "You can count on me. I know how to handle this matter." Falun said, "Alright. I only hope that we can settle it once and for all so that I won't be bothered again." So he told Zhen Kong to bring out one thousand taels of silver and hand it to Song Xi. Then an additional thirty taels of silver was given to Song Xi as a token of reward.

Song Xi took the silver. He kept two hundred taels for himself and gave the rest, eight hundred taels of silver, to the jail director, telling him, "It's true the monk does not have the mirror. But he is presenting you



宝镜，也未必值得许多，可以罢了。”提点见了银子，虽然也动火的，却想道：“有了聚宝的东西，这七八百两只当毫毛，有甚希罕？叵耐这贼秃，你总是欺心赖别人的，怎在你手里了，就不舍得拿出来？而今只是推说没有，又不好奈何得。”心生一计道：“我须是刑狱重情衙门，我只把这几百两银做了赃物，坐他一个私通贿赂、夤缘刑狱、污蔑官府的罪名，拿他来敲打。不怕不敲打得出来！”当下将银八百两封贮库内，即差下两个公人，竟到白水禅院拿犯法住持僧人法轮。

法轮见了公人来到，晓得别无他事，不过宝镜一桩前件未妥。分付行者真空道：“提点衙门来拿我，我别无词讼干连，料没甚事。他无非生端，诈取宝镜。我只索去见一见，看他怎么说，我也讲个明白。他住了手，也不见得。前日宋提控送了这些去，想是嫌少。拚得再添上两倍，量也有数。你须把那话藏好些，一发露形不得了。”真空道：“师父放心。师父到衙门，要甚使用，只管来取。至于那话，我一面将来藏在人寻不到的去处，随你甚么人来，只不认帐罢了。”法轮道：“就是指了我名来要，你也决不可说是有的。”两下约定。好管待两个公人，又重谢了差使钱了，两个公人各各欢喜。

法轮自恃有钱，不怕官府，挺身同了公人，竟到提点衙门



with a gift equal to the value of the mirror.” Meanwhile Song Xi was thinking to himself, “The magic mirror may not even cost this much money. The matter should be dropped.” Though the jail director’s eyes brightened at the sight of the silver, he still calculated, “In comparison with the magic mirror, the seven or eight hundred taels of silver are nothing. Why should they be considered a sizable amount? You bald son of bitch! The mirror was cheated from others, why should you be so reluctant in showing it to me? Now that he’s denied possession of it, it is hard to deal with him.” Suddenly the jail director hit upon an idea. “I’m in charge of a jail for prisoners with heavy sentences,” he reasoned. “I will take this silver to be a bribe that he sent to me, and accuse him of bribing, pulling swings with a jail official and slandering the local government. I’ll have him brought here for intimidation and torture. I don’t think he can bear it.” At once he ordered that the silver be put away in storage, and then he sent two runners to arrest Abbot Falun.

Falun saw the runners coming and realized they were after the mirror, the unsettled business. He told Zhen Kong, “The jail director is sending men to arrest me. He can’t come up with any accusation against me. I should be fine. He just wants to rob me of the magic mirror. I’ll go with them and see what he says about it. I’ll let him know clearly about the situation. Then he may drop the matter. Who knows? The other day the jailer Song Xi took the silver. Probably the jail director desires a larger amount. If I have to make a painful decision, we can give him another amount of silver doubling the previous amount. His insatiable demand can’t keep rising. Anyway, you should take good care of that mirror and never let out any sign of it.” Zhen Kong said, “Please rest at ease, master. When you are at the government office, just send word back home for whatever you need. Regarding that thing, I’ll store it in a place no one can find. No matter what kind of people they send here, I’ll just give them a complete denial.” Falun said, “Even if they come to fetch it in my name, you shouldn’t acknowledge that we have it.” Thus they settled on the plan and treated the runners. The runners, in addition, were very glad to receive some money as payment for their business trip.

Falun was confident that he had enough money. He did not fear the



来。浑提点升堂，见了法轮，变起脸来，拍案大怒道：“我是生死衙门。你这秃贼，怎么将着重贿，营谋甚事？见获赃银在库，中间必有隐情。快快招来！”法轮道：“是相公差吏典要取镜子，小寺没有镜子，吏典教小僧把银子来准的。”提点道：“多是一划胡说！那有这个道理？必是买嘱私情，不打不招。”喝叫皂隶拖翻，将法轮打得一佛出世，二佛涅槃，收在监中了。

提点私下又教宋喜去把言词哄他，要说镜子的下落。法轮咬定牙关，只说：“没有镜子。宁可要银子，去与我徒弟说，再凑些送他，赎我去罢。”宋喜道：“他只是要镜子，不知可是增些银子完得事体的？待我先讨个消息，再商量。”宋喜把和尚的口语回了提点，提点道：“与他熟商量，料不肯拿出来。就是敲打他也无益。我想，他这镜子无非只在寺中。我如今密地差人把寺围了，只说查取犯法赃物，把他家资尽数抄将出来，简验一过，那怕镜子不在里头？”就分付吏典宋喜，监押着四个公差，速行此事。

宋喜受过和尚好处的，便暗把此意通知法轮。法轮心里思量道：“来时曾嘱付行者，行者说把镜子藏在密处，料必搜寻不着。家资也不好尽抄没了我的。”遂对宋喜道：“镜子原是没有，任凭箱匣中搜索也不妨。只求提控照管一二，有小徒在彼，不要把家计东西乘机散失了，便是提控周全处。小僧出去，另



government office and marched away with the runners. After they arrived at the government office, Director Hun held a court session. At the sight of Falun, the director banged on the table in rage and shouted, "I'm in charge of the jail, a government section of life and death. You, bald knave, offered a bribe to the government office. What are you up to? Now the bribe is in the storage. You must have some evil plan. Tell the truth immediately!" Falun said, "You sent the jailer to fetch the mirror from us. Our humble temple does not possess the mirror. The jailer asked me to offer you the silver to make up for it." The jail director said, "That's all bullshit! How can that be true? You must have pulled strings with your money. You apparently won't tell the truth without a beating." He then told the runners to beat him. The beating almost killed Falun, and then he was thrown into jail.

Later the jail director secretly sent Song Xi to cajole Falun into telling the mirror's whereabouts. Falun made a desperate decision and said to Song Xi, "I don't have the mirror. If he wants more silver, you can go and talk to my disciple who will give him more as a way of redeeming me." Song Xi said, "He only wants the mirror. I don't think he will let you out after he has received more silver. But I'll go and talk to him first and see what he says." Song Xi went back with the monk's words. The jail director said, "I don't think I can get anything out of him by talking to him. Even a beating makes little difference. The mirror must be in the temple, I'll quietly send men to put the temple under siege, confiscate the property and rummage through everything thoroughly in the name of seizing bribes. I think we can get the mirror that way!" Thus he sent out Song Xi and four other runners at once.

Because Song Xi had received money earlier from Falun, he secretly told Falun about the jail director's intentions. Falun thought to himself, "I talked to Zhen Kong before I left the temple and he promised me that he would store the mirror in a safe place. I don't think the runners will be able to find it. They can't sweep away everything from the temple." So he said to Song Xi, "I assure you that we don't have the mirror. It's fine with us if you sift through the trunks and boxes. My disciple is there, but I still have a request that you take care of the confiscation so that my



有厚报。”宋喜道：“这个当得效力。”别了法轮，一同公差到白水禅院中来，不在话下。

且说白水禅院行者真空，原是个少年风流淫浪的僧人，又且本房饶富，尽可凭他撒漫。只是一向碍着住持师父，自家像不得意。日前见师父官提了去，正中下怀，好不自由自在。俗语云：“偷得爷钱没使处。”平日结识的私情，相交的表子，没一处不把东西来乱搵乱用，费掉了好些过了。又偷将来各处寄顿下，自做私房，不计其数。猛地思量道：“师父一时出来，须要查算，却不决撒？况且根究镜子起来，我未免不也缠在里头。目下趁师父不在，何不卷掳了这偌多家财，连镜子多带在身边了，星夜逃去他州外府，养起头发来，做了俗人，快活他下半世，岂不是好？”算计已定，连夜把箱笼中细软值钱的，并叠起来，做了两担。次日自己挑了一担，顾人挑了一担，众人面前只说到州里救师父去，竟出山门去了。

去后一日，宋喜才押同四个公差来到，声说要搜简住持僧房之意。寺僧回说：“本房师父在官，行者也出去了，止有空房在此。”公差道：“说不得，我们奉上司明文，搜简违法赃物，那管人在不在？打进去便了！”当即毁门而入。在房内一看，里面止是些粗重家伙，椅桌狼狽，空箱空笼，并不见有甚么细软贵重的东西了。就将房里地皮翻了转来，也不见有甚么镜子在那里。宋喜道：“住持师父叮嘱我，教不要散失了他的东西。



things do not get lost. If you can do this favor for me, I promise I'll give you a good reward after I'm freed." Song Xi said, "Sure, I'll do my best." Then he went with the runners to the Temple of White Water. Let's leave them for now.

Zhen Kong, Falun's disciple, was a young, lewd monk. He behaved at will with the temple's fortune. But he always felt restrained in the abbot's presence. Now Falun's absence played into Zhen Kong's hands and he was free of any scruples. An old saying goes, "One has to think of ways to dispose of money he has stolen from his master." Zhen Kong once had a number of lovers and whores. Now he lavishly gave some of the temple's treasure to each of them. Thus a large amount of wealth was gone. Then he transferred other treasures in countless numbers out of the temple and stored them in various places for himself. But he soon realized, "Once the master gets out of jail, he will look for the property. How can I keep him from knowing about it? Besides, the government investigation regarding the mirror is progressing. Soon I'll get involved, too. I will take advantage of the master's absence and make off with all the property, as well as the mirror, and go to another prefecture. I'll let my hair grow, resume a secular life, and enjoy the rest of my years. Isn't that a wonderful idea?" After thus making up his mind, he sorted out the valuables at night and prepared two shoulder-pole loads. The next day he carried one shoulder pole and hired a man to carry the other. Telling the others in the temple that he was going to save the master from imprisonment, he set out on the downhill journey.

One day later, Song Xi arrived with the four runners to search the abbot's room. The monks responded, "The abbot is currently with the government, and his major disciple is away, too, leaving an empty house behind." One runner said, "Stop talking about that. We have come with a government order to search for stolen goods. We don't care whether you have someone in charge or not. Let's break in." They pulled down the door to the abbot's room and entered. What they saw were only heavy objects in the room, such as sturdy tables and chairs and empty trunks and baskets. There was no treasure at all. Then they dug into the floor, but still couldn't find the mirror. Song Xi said, "The abbot told me to take



今房里空空，却是怎么呢？”合寺僧众多道：“本房行者不过出去看师父消息，为甚把房中搬得恁空？恐怕是乘机走了。”四个公差见不是头，晓得没甚大生意，且把遗下的破衣旧服乱卷掬在身边了，问众僧要了本房僧人在逃的结状，一同宋喜来回覆提点。

提点大怒道：“这些秃驴，这等奸猾！分明抗拒我，私下教徒弟逃去了，有甚难见处？”立时提出法轮，又加一顿臭打。那法轮本在深山中做住持，富足受用的僧人，何曾吃过这样苦？今监禁得不耐烦，指望折些银子，早晚得脱。见说徒弟逃走，家私已空，心里已此苦楚。更是一番毒打，真个雪上加霜，怎经得起？到得监中，不胜狼狈，当晚气绝。提点得知死了，方才歇手。眼见得法轮欺心，盗了别人的宝物，受此果报。有诗为证：

贗镜偷将宝镜充，翻令施主受贫穷。

今朝财散人离处，四大元来本是空。

且说行者真空偷窃了住持东西，逃出山门，且不顾师父目前死活，一径打点他方去享用。把日前寄顿在别人家的物事，多讨了拢来，同寺中带出去的放做一处。驾起一辆大车，装载行李，顾个脚夫，推了前走。看官，你道住持偌大家私，况且金银体重，岂是一车载得尽的？不知宋时尽行官钞，又叫得纸币，又叫得官会子，一贯止是一张纸。就有十万贯，止是十万



care and not to lose any of his things in the room. But it's an empty room. What's happened?" The monks said, "His major disciple said he went to see the master. Why would he strip the room before he left? Did he possibly take advantage of the opportunity and run away? The four runners realized that something unexpected had occurred, and a longer search would not bring any better results. They scraped up the old clothes and took them with them. They asked the monks to write down a statement regarding Zhen Kong's escape and left with Song Xi to report to the jail director.

The jail director flew into rage and said, "These bald asses! They are so sly! It is obvious that the abbot opposed me by secretly letting his disciple run away." At once he ordered them to bring in Falun and give him another sound thrashing. Falun was the abbot of a temple in the mountain who had led a rich and easy life. How could he bear such a severe torture? The imprisonment had pushed him to the verge of physical collapse. He had expected to be released shortly after spending some silver. Now he knew his disciple had made off with all his valuables. He was thus quite depressed. The severe beating was devastating, and made his condition worse. How could he stand it? Tossed back into jail, he had little breath left in him. That very night he died. The jail director heard of his death and let the matter drop. Falun had treacherously robbed someone of the treasure, but he had finally paid for his evil deed.

The magic mirror is replaced with a fake,

Making its original owner live in penury.

Not until all his wealth is gone with his death

Does he suddenly realize everything in this world is void.

Now Zhen Kong had fled the temple with the treasure he had stolen. He did not care about his master's life. His mind was only on how to run to another place so he could enjoy himself. He picked up the things he had previously stored in other places, and put them together with those he carried out from the temple. He got a cart, set the baggage on it and set out on a run, with a man he hired to pull the cart in front.

Readers, you may wonder, since the abbot had such a huge property, including silver that was heavy, how would Zhen Kong be able to load all of this into a cart? Well, during the Song Dynasty, the government issued



张纸，甚是轻便。那住持固然有金银财宝，这个纸钞兀自有了几十万，所以携带不难。行者身边藏了宝镜，押了车辆，穿山越岭，待往黎州而去。到得竹公溪头，忽见大雾漫天，寻路不出。一个金甲神人，闪将出来——

躯长丈许，面有威容。身披锁子黄金，手执方天画戟。大声喝道：“那里走？还我宝镜来！”惊得那推车的人丢了车子，跑回旧路，只恨爷娘不生得四只脚，不顾行者死活，一道烟走了。那行者也不及来照管车子，慌了手脚，带着宝镜，只是望前乱窜，走入林子深处。忽地起阵狂风，一个斑斓猛虎跳将出来，照头一扑，把行者拖的去了。眼见得真空欺心盗了师父的物件，害了师父的性命，受此果报。有诗为证：

盗窃原为非分财，况兼宝镜鬼神猜。

早知虎口应难免，何不安心守旧来？

再说渔翁王甲讨还寺中宝镜，藏在家里，仍旧贫穷。又见寺中日加兴旺，外人纷纷议论，已晓得和尚欺心调换，没处告诉。他是个善人，只自家怨怅命薄。夫妻两个，说着宝镜在家时节许多妙处，时时叹恨而已。一日，夫妻两个同得一梦，见一金甲神人分付道：“你家宝镜今在竹公溪头，可去收拾了回家。”两人醒来，各述其梦。王甲道：“此乃我们心里想着，所



many bills called “paper money.” One string of cash equaled one bill. Ten hundred thousand strings of cash equaled ten hundred thousand bills, not heavy to carry around. Falun had silver and treasure, but he also possessed tens of hundred thousand bills. So it was easy to carry them. Zhen Kong carried the magic mirror personally and followed the cart on the journey. He trekked in the mountains and made his way toward Lizhou County .

When he reached the side of the Brook of the Bamboo Man, a heavy fog developed, enveloping the road ahead. Then a godlike spirit in golden armor leaped out in front of him: With an awe-inspiring look he was more than ten feet tall; attired in a golden suit of chain armor he held a halberd. The godlike spirit shouted, “Where are you going? Return the magic mirror to me!” Terrified, the cart puller took flight in the direction from which he had come, going as fast as he could and wishing he might be given another pair of feet to carry him. Horrified too, Zhen Kong deserted the cart and carried the magic mirror in a wild run. He fled into a wood where a fierce tiger sprang out in a sudden gust of wind. The tiger leaped onto Zhen Kong and dragged him off. Zhen Kong had robbed his master in his greediness, for which he now paid with his life. The following lines may describe it:

Fortune stolen from others is never one’s due.

Let alone the magic mirror has a power of its own.

Had he had the foreknowledge he is booked for the tiger’s mouth,

Wouldn’t it be better not to go beyond what is proper?

Wang Jia had returned home with the mirror, but the mirror did not reverse his destitute situation. Later he saw that the temple steadily thrived and he learned about the abbot’s seizure of his magic mirror by a deceptive substitution. But he did not know how to get it back. He was kind-hearted and could just blame his bad luck. He and his wife often talked to each other about their old days when the magic mirror gave them so much treasure and joy, and they were saddened because of their present state. One night in a dream they both met a godlike spirit in gold armor, who said to them, “Your magic mirror is now by the side of the Brook of the Bamboo Man. You may go there and get it.” They woke up and talked to



以做梦。”妻子道：“想着做梦，也或有之，不该两个相同。敢是我们还有些造化，故神明有些警报。既有地方的，便到那里去寻一寻看也好。”王甲次日问着竹公溪路径，穿山度岭，走到溪头。只见一辆车子倒在地上，内有无数物件，金银钞币，约莫有数十万光景。左右一看，并无人影。想道：“此一套无主之物，莫非是天赐我的么？梦中说宝镜在此，敢怕也在里头。”把车内逐一简过，不见有镜子。又在前后地下草中四处寻遍，也多不见。笑道：“镜子虽不得见，这一套富贵，也勾我下半世了。不如趁早取了他去，省得有人来。”整起车来，推到路口，顾一脚夫推了，一直到家里来。对妻子道：“多蒙神明指点，去到溪口寻宝镜。宝镜虽不得见，却见这一车物事在那里。等了一会，并没个人来，多管是天赐我的，故取了家来。”妻子当下简看，尽多是金银宝钞，一一收拾，安顿停当。

夫妻两人，不胜之喜，只是疑心道：“梦里原说宝镜，今虽得此横财，不见宝镜影踪，却是何故？还该到那里仔细一寻。”王甲道：“不然，我便明日再去走一遭。”到了晚间，复得一梦，仍旧是个金甲神人来说道：“王甲，你不必痴心。此镜乃神天之宝，因你夫妻好善，故使暂出人间，作成你一段富贵，也是你的前缘。不想两人奸僧之手。今奸僧多已受报，此



each other. Wang Jia said, "We have been thinking about the mirror, so I had such a dream." His wife said, "It's true that we thought of it and so we dreamed about it. But the dreams should not be exactly alike. Is it possible that we've got some good luck left and the gods have come to our help with this clue? Since the location is specified, we should go there and have a look."

The next day Wang Jia headed for the Brook of the Bamboo Man. He trekked through mountains and arrived at the spot. He saw a cart turned over by the roadside, which contained a huge amount of wealth, great piles of silver and countless bills worth tens of hundred thousand pieces of cash. He found no one around and thought to himself, "This is a deserted fortune. Could it be bestowed on me by Heaven? I was told in the dream that the magic mirror would be located around here. I wonder whether it is in the cart or not." He raked through the contents of the cart but did not find the mirror. Then he searched about in the grass. Still there was no sign of the mirror. He smiled and said, "Though the mirror is not here, I've got this fortune, which will surely provide me with a good life. I'd better take it with me before someone arrives." He straightened out the load on the cart and pushed it to a crossroads. Then he hired a man to pull the cart back home.

Back home, Wang Jia said to his wife, "I followed the divine clue to the side of the brook. Though I did not find the mirror, a fully loaded cart was abandoned there. I waited, but no one arrived to claim it. I decided it was a heavenly bestowal and so I brought it back home." His wife saw the collection of silver and money. She unloaded it and put it away.

Wang Jia and his wife were overjoyed. But they were puzzled, "I was told in the dream that it would be the magic mirror I would find in that place. Though I've obtained this fortune, the magic mirror is still not back with me. Why? I should go there again and search more closely." Wang Jia then said to his wife, "I think I will go there tomorrow and see if I can find it."

That night Wang Jia had another dream. The same gold-armored godlike spirit appeared and said to him, "Wang Jia, don't think about the mirror anymore. The magic mirror is a heavenly treasure. Due to the



镜仍归天上去矣。你不要再妄想。昨日一车之物，原即是宝镜所聚的东西，所以仍归于你。你只坚心好善，就这些也享用不尽了。”飒然惊觉，乃是南柯一梦。王甲逐句记得明白，一一对妻子说。明知天意，也不去寻镜子了。夫妻享有寺中之物，尽勾丰足，仍旧做了嘉陵富翁。此乃好善之报，亦是他命中应有之财，不可强也。

休慕他人富贵，命中所有方真。

若要贪图非分，试看两个僧人。



kind-heartedness of you and your wife, it was ordained to come down to earth in order to help you prosper. But unexpectedly it twice fell into the hands of evil monks. Now the evil monks have been punished. The magic mirror should return to Heaven. Forget your wild dreams about it. Yesterday you acquired a cartload of wealth. This is the fortune the magic mirror gathered. It is yours now. As long as you remain kind and honest, this fortune will provide you with a prosperous life.” Wang Jia awoke in a shudder. It was a dream. Wang Jia recounted the dream in detail to his wife. Knowing it was the will of heaven, they dropped the matter of the mirror forever. They, husband and wife, enjoyed the wealth the temple had accumulated and became rich in their native region. It was the payment they received for their benevolence.

Envy not the fortune others possess.

Only the wealth one is fated to have is wealth.

Think about the endings of the two monks

Before avarice starts to run wild.



卷 三 十 七

叠居奇程客得助 三救厄海神显灵

诗曰：

窃渺神奇事，文人多寓言。

其间应有实，岂必尽虚玄。

话说世间稗官野史中，多有纪载那遇神遇仙，遇鬼遇怪，情欲相感之事。其间多有偶因所感，撰造出来的。如牛僧孺《周秦行纪》，道是僧孺落第时遇着薄太后，见了许多异代、本朝妃嫔美人，如戚夫人、齐潘妃、杨贵妃、昭君、绿珠，诗词唱和，又得昭君伴寝，许多怪诞的话。却乃是李德裕与牛僧孺有不解之仇，教门客韦瓘作此计诬着他。只说是他自己做的，中怀不臣之心，妄言污蔑妃后，要坐他族灭之罪。这个记中事体，



Tale 37

Cheng Zai Tides over Difficulties by Repeated Hoarding and Profiteering The Sea-goddess Manifests Her Power by Rescuing Cheng Zai from Three Dangers

A poem read thus:

Though most of the mystical and miraculous stories
are penned by the literati,

There must be something true in their records.

Of all the books of anecdotes, many of them are about humans' encounters with immortals, or deities, or ghosts or monsters of all kinds and their love affairs. Of course, most of them are pure fabrications aroused by accidental thoughts or feelings. For an instance, it was said Niu Cengru of the Tang Dynasty once wrote a story, in which he described how he ran into the Empress Bo after his failure in passing the imperial examinations, and how he had many fantastic meetings and merrymakings with the highest ranking imperial concubines and beauties of both the present and the past dynasties, such as Lady Qi, Concubine Qipan, Concubine Yang, Wang Zhaojun and Luzhu, and also how Zhaojun slept with him.

But the fact was that Niu Cengru's contemporary, Li Deyu, who was the political enemy of Niu, had his follower Wei Guan make up this story so as to frame Niu up. Li Deyu made it public that Niu wrote this story because he was unfaithful to the sovereign and was making absurd remarks to slander the empress. Li hoped that this would make Niu guilty of a severe crime so that the sovereign would kill him and his entire family. On the basis of all this, Niu Cengru's story about his chance encounters with those ladies must be unreliable.

For another instance, there was a Tang Dynasty story entitled *The Legend of the Goddess of Earth*. As recorded in this story, Wei Andao

可不是一些影也没有的了？又有那《后土夫人传》，说是韦安道遇着后土之神，到家做了新妇，被父母疑心是妖魅，请明崇俨行五雷天心正法，遣他不去。后来父母教安道自央他去，只得去了，却要安道随行。安道到他去处，看见五岳四渎之神，多来朝他。又召天后之灵，嘱他予安道官职钱钞。安道归来，果见天后传令洛阳城中访韦安道，与他做魏王府长史，赐钱五百万。说得有枝有叶，元来也是借此讥着天后的。后来宋太宗好文，太平兴国年间，命史官編集从来小说，以类分载，名为《太平广记》，不论真的假的，一总收拾在内。议论的道：“上自神祇仙子，下及昆虫草木，无不受了淫褻污点。”道是其中之事，大略是不可信的。

不知天下的事，才有假，便有真。那神仙鬼怪固然有假托的，也原自有真实的，未可执了一个见识，道总是虚妄的事。



met the incarnation of the Goddess of Earth and took her as his wife. Being suspicious that their daughter-in-law was an evil spirit, Wei's parents asked a reverend Taoist priest to use magic to drive her away, but she didn't leave. Then they urged their son Wei Andao to have her dismissed. The Goddess of Earth agreed to leave his home on condition that Wei Andao would go with her. Having no option, Wei and the Goddess of Earth left together. Arriving at the dwelling of the Goddess of Earth, Wei saw that all the deities from the Five Sacred Mountains and all sides of the earth came to worship her; then the deities summoned the spirit of the present empress to bestow a high official position as well as money upon Wei Andao. After returning home, Wei Andao found out that the empress did issue an edict to search for Wei Andao in the city of Luoyang. Then Wei Andao was appointed as the first secretary in Prince Wei's Palace and received a huge reward of five million coins of cash from the empress. Though this story is portrayed in such a vivid detail and sounds true, it is actually ridiculing the present empress.

During the Taiping Xingguo's reign (976-983) in the Song Dynasty, emperor Song Taizong issued an imperial edict, ordering historians to collect and classify all the anecdotal tales from the past to the present. Thus the *Extensive Records of Taiping*, a comprehensive collection of anecdotal tales from the Northern and Southern Dynasties (420-589) to the early years of the Song Dynasty (960-1127), came into being. Disregarding the truth or falsehood of the stories, the *Extensive Records of Taiping* included almost all the tales within this period of about five hundred years. Some people thus commented on it: All creatures, from the deities and immortals in the sky to all the insects and woods on earth, are obscene." From this remark, we know that most of the tales recorded in the *Extensive Records of Taiping* were not true and reliable.

However, of the entire thing in the world, the untrue and the true are an inseparable whole. Although most of the stories relating to deities, immortals, ghosts or monsters are fictional, there are still some which are based on facts. So we should in no case stick to one view that stories relating to immortals or ghosts are all fabrications. If we turn to the writings produced after the *Extensive Records of Taiping*, we can find countless

只看《太平广记》以后许多记载之书，中间尽多遇神遇鬼的，说得的的确确，难道尽是假托出来不成？只是我朝嘉靖年间，蔡林屋所记《辽阳海神》一节，乃是千真万真的。盖是林屋先在京师，京师与辽阳相近，就闻得人说有个商人遇着海神的说话，半疑半信。后见辽东一个佥宪、一个总兵到京师来。两人一样说话，说得详细，方信其实。也还只晓得在辽的事，以后的事不明白。直到林屋做了南京翰林院孔目，撞着这人来游雨花台。林屋知道了，着人邀请他来相会，特问这话，方说得始末根由，备备细细。林屋叙述他靛面自己说的话，作成此传，无一句不真的。方知从古来有这样事的，不尽是虚诞了。

说话的，毕竟那个人是甚么人？那个事怎么样起？看官，听小子据着传文敷演出来。正是：

怪事难拘理，明神亦赋情。

不知精爽质，何以恋凡生？

话说徽州商人姓程，名宰，表字士贤，是彼处渔村大姓。世代儒门，少时多曾习读诗书。却是徽州风俗，以商贾为第一等生业，科第反在次着。正德初年，与兄程案将了数千金，到



stories about deities or ghosts which are all portrayed with extreme vividness. Could it be possible they are all concoctions?

During the Jiajing reign (1522-1566) of the Ming Dynasty, Cai Yu, alias Linwu, wrote a tale entitled *The Legend of the Sea-goddess in Liaoyang* on the basis of a real story. While Cai Linwu was in the capital in 1528, which was not very far from Liaoyang, he heard some people say that a merchant met the Sea-goddess. But he was quite suspicious of its truth. Then quite accidentally he met a government official and a garrison commander from Liaoyang, and both told him the story in detail. But still he didn't hear anything about what happened to this merchant after he left Liaoyang. By the year 1536 when he was at the Southern Imperial Academy in Nanjing, he heard from a guest that this merchant was in Nanjing and would take a trip to the Yuhua Pavilion. Cai Linwu then invited him to his place and made inquiries about his experiences. It was not until then did Cai Linwu know his whole story in detail. Based on this merchant's own account of his experiences, Cai Linwu wrote this tale. So each line of this tale should be true. From this, I'm more convinced that such kind of stories did exist even in ancient times and not all ghost stories are mere fabrications.

Storyteller, who is after all this merchant? How did the tale begin? Please be patient, readers. Now I'll tell you this tale on the basis of Cai Linwu's *The Legend of the Sea-goddess in Liaoyang*.

Strange things do not sting to common conventions.

Deities also have feelings.

How can they fall in love with common people

If they haven't got a clean and fresh character?

As the story has it, Cheng Zai, alias Shixian, was a native of Huizhou. In that fishing village, the Cheng family was a rich and big one. The general practice was that children of scholars' families took up the study of Confucianism as their major cause. However in Huizhou, learning to be a businessman was considered to be the first reference, and pursuing officialdom through passing the imperial examinations came second. In the first year of the Zhengde reign of the Ming Dynasty, Zheng Zai and his elder brother Cheng Cai, bringing with them huge sums of money,



到辽阳地方为商，贩卖人参、松子、貂皮、东珠之类。往来数年，但到处必定失了便宜，耗折了资本，再没一番做得着。徽人因是专重那做商的，所以凡是商人归家，外而宗族朋友，内而妻妾家属，只看你所得归来的利息多少为重轻。得利多的，尽皆爱敬趋奉；得利少的，尽皆轻薄鄙笑。犹如读书求名的中与不中归来的光景一般。程宰弟兄两人因是做折了本钱，怕归来受人笑话，羞惭惨沮，无面目见江东父老，不思量还乡去了。

那徽州有一般做大商贾的，在辽阳开着大铺子。程宰兄弟因是平日是惯做商的，熟于帐目出入，盘算本利。这些本事，是商贾家最用得着的。他兄弟自无本钱，就有人出些束修请下了他，专掌帐目，徽州人称为二朝奉。兄弟两人日里只在铺内掌帐，晚间却在自赁的下处歇宿。那下处一带两间，兄弟各住一间，只隔得中间一垛板壁。住在里头，就像客店一般湫隘，有甚快活？也是没奈何了，勉强度日。

如此过了数年，那年是戊寅年秋间了，边方地土，天气早寒。一日晚间，风雨暴作。程宰与兄各自在一间房中，拥被在床，想要就枕。因是寒气逼人，程宰不能成寐，翻来覆去，不觉思念家乡起来。只得重复穿了衣服，坐在床里，浩叹数声，自想如此凄凉情状，不如早死了倒干净。此时灯烛已灭，又无月光，正在黑暗中苦挨着寒冷。忽地一室之中，豁然明朗，照



went to trade in Liaoyang. However, the venture was a failure, and in a few years they went bankrupt. It was a custom for Huizhou merchants in distant lands to return to their hometowns after a lapse of several years, and how well or badly they were received by their family and relatives all depended upon their success or failure in business. Those who got more profits would be greeted with respect and flatteries, while those who got less profits would be treated with scorn and derision—just like how the successful and the unsuccessful candidates for the imperial examinations were treated when they returned home. The Cheng brothers, who were in such strained circumstances, felt very depressed and guilty and saw no prospect of returning. So they gave up the idea of going back home.

There were some rich merchants from Huizhou who ran large stores in Liaoyang. As the Cheng brothers had been doing business for years, they were familiar with income and expenditure accounts. This forte of theirs was most useful for rich merchants. Because they had no principal to start their own business, they were employed as accountants working for a certain big store. At daytime, the two brothers worked at the accounts in the store, while at nighttime, they put up for the night at a house they rented at their own expense. The house they rented was actually one room, and this room was separated into two rooms by a wood wall. Each one lived in one room. Living in such a narrow and low-lying house was nothing different from living in inns. How could they feel happy? Having no other way out, they had to scrape along.

By the autumn of the 13th year of the Zhengde reign of our Ming Dynasty (1518), a dozen years had passed. Cold weather set in early in Liaoyang. One evening there suddenly came a storm when Cheng Zai and his brother, each in his own room, were about to go to sleep on their beds. Cheng Zai couldn't sleep because of the cold and his homesickness. He put on his clothes and sat up, giving out a long sigh and wishing for death to end all this misery. The candle had burned out, and there was not a ray of moonlight that night. He had to endure the bitter cold in the darkness of the night.

All of a sudden, however, the room turned as bright as day. It was so bright that even the tiniest thing in the room could be clearly seen. Cheng



耀如同白日，室中器物之类，纤毫皆见。程宰心里疑惑。又觉异香扑鼻，氤氲满室，毫无风雨之声，顿然和暖，如江南二三月的气候起来。程宰越加惊愕，自想道：“莫非在梦境中了？”不免走出外边，看是如何。他原披衣服在身上的，亟跳下床来，走到门边，开出去看。只见外边阴黑风雨，寒冷得不可当，慌忙奔了进来。才把门关上，又是先前光景，满室明朗，别是一般境界。程宰道：“此必是怪异！”心里慌怕，不敢移动脚步，只在床上高声大叫其兄。程宰止隔得一层壁，随你喊破了喉咙，莫想答应一声。程宰着了急，没奈何了，只得钻在被里，把被连头盖了，撒得紧紧，向里壁睡着，图得个眼睛不看见，凭他怎么样了。却是心里明白，耳朵里听得出的，远远的似有车马喧阗之声，空中管弦金石音乐迭奏，自东南方而来。看看相近，须臾之间，已进房中。程宰轻轻放开被角，露出眼睛偷看。只见三个美妇人，朱颜绿鬓，明眸皓齿，冠帔盛饰，有像世间图画上后妃的打扮，浑身上下，金翠珠玉，光采夺目。容色风度，一个个如天上仙人，绝不似凡间模样。年纪多只可二十馀岁光景。前后侍女无数，尽皆韶丽非常，各有执事，自分行列。但见：

或提炉，或挥扇，或张盖，或带剑，或持节，或捧琴，
或秉烛花，或挟图书，或列宝玩，或荷旌幢，或拥衾褥，
或执巾帨，或奉盘匱，或擎如意，或举肴核，或陈屏障，或
布几筵，或陈音乐。

虽然纷纭杂沓，仍自严肃整齐。只此一室之中，随从何止数百？



Zai was much puzzled. Meanwhile, he felt a scent was permeating the room. The storm ceased, and in an instant the biting cold disappeared. Warmth suddenly assailed him. It was just like the warm weather in early spring in Southern China. Cheng Zai was all the more baffled. "Am I dreaming?" he wondered. Not knowing what to do, he got off his bed and opened the door to see what the matter was. Outside, the storm raged and darkness pervaded everywhere. But on withdrawing into the room and closing the door he found a completely different world - it was as bright as day in his room.

He began to think that ghosts were haunting the place and, remaining on his bed, called out loudly several times to his brother for help. Though his brother's bedroom was separated from his by a mere thin mud wall, there came no answer. Feeling all the more frightened and bewildered, Cheng covered his head with a shawl and lay in bed facing the wall. Out of sight, out of mind. In spite of all this, he was absolutely sensible. A moment later, he heard a tumultuous rumbling of carts and galloping of horses in the air, and then there came heavenly music from the southeast, which at first seemed far away but a moment later had already drifted into the room.

He looked out secretly and saw three beautiful women of about twenty with crimson faces, dark hair, shining eyes and white teeth. They were richly attired, looking like court ladies depicted in paintings. Their bodies were decked with gold, emeralds, jade and pearls, which, in their brilliance, set each other off exquisitely. Their manners were so graceful, their beauty so breathtaking that they were indeed like heavenly beings. Around them clustered hundreds of pretty handmaidens: some carrying stoves, some waving fans; some holding canopies, some swords; some bearing zithers, some jade gifts; some holding candles, some books; some displaying objects of art, some supporting banners; some carrying silken quilts, some scarves; some carrying with toilet articles, some jade toys; some offering sweet meats and fruits, some putting up screens; some arranging tables, some playing music. Although there were crowds of them, they were in perfect order and moved to and fro at their duties easily in the small room. How could such a small room hold several hundred people? You



说话的，你错了。这一间空房，能有多大，容得这几百人？若一个个在这扇房门里走将进来，走也走他一两个更次，挤也要挤坍了。看官，不是这话。列位曾见《维摩经》上的说话么？那维摩居士止方丈之室，乃有诸天，皆在室内，又容得十万八千狮子坐。难道是地方着得去？无非是法相神通。今程宰一室有限，那光明境界无尽。譬如一面镜子，能有多大？内中也着了无尽物像。这只是个现相，所以容得数百个人，一时齐在面前，原不是从门里一个两个进来的。

闲话休絮，且表正事。那三个美人，内中一个更觉齐整些的，走到床边，将程宰身上抚摩一过，随即开莺声，吐燕语，微微笑道：“果然睡熟了么？吾非是有害于人的，与郎君有夙缘，特来相就，不必见疑。且吾已到此，万无去理。郎君便高呼大叫，必无人听见，枉自苦耳。不如作速起来，与吾相见。”程宰听罢，心里想道：“这等灵变光景，非是神仙，即是鬼怪。他若要摆布着我，我便不起来，这被头里岂是躲得过的？他既说是有夙缘，或者无害也不见得。我且起来见他，看是怎地。”遂一毂辘跳将起来，走下卧床，整一整衣襟，跪在地下道：“程宰下界愚夫，不知真仙降临，有失迎迓，罪合万死，伏乞哀怜。”美人急将纤纤玉手，一把拽将起来道：“你休惧怕，且与我同坐着。”挽着程宰之手，双双南面坐下。那两个美人，一个向西，一个向东，相对侍坐。



may wonder.

You got it wrong, readers. This is really a small room. How could it hold several hundred people? It will take them hours just to enter this room one by one and the house will break down with overcrowding. Readers, you can't take it this way. Have you ever read *Vimalakirti Sutra*? *Vimalakirti's* room is only three square meters in size, but it not only holds all the Gods but also a hundred and eight thousand Buddha's seats. How can such a small place have so huge a capacity? Nothing but that Dharma has supernatural powers. Limited in size as Chen Zai's room is, the sphere of brightness is infinite. For instance, how large can a mirror be? It can hold innumerable images of things. What happens in Cheng Zai's room is merely a phenomenon. So it can hold several hundred people. They appear there at the same time one and all, and not that they get in through the door one after another.

Enough for this digression. Now come back to the story itself. In a short while, one of the three beautiful women, the most beautiful one, approached Cheng Zai's bed, caressed him, and said with a smile, "Are you really sleeping? I'm not an evil person. We have been predestined to a relationship, and I've come to fulfill it. Don't be suspicious of me! Since I'm already here, there is no reason to send me away. Even if you call to your brother loudly all night long, he won't be able to hear you. You'll simply torment yourself by doing so. Get up quickly! Get up quickly, please!"

Cheng Zai thought to himself, "This thing changes itself so easily. It must be either an immortal or a ghost; if it wants to harm me, how can I escape it by continuing to lie in bed? Since it said it has a predestined relationship with me, perhaps it won't harm me at all." So he got out of bed, knelt down before the beautiful lady and said, "I'm a humble, earthly man and never dreamed immortals would grace my humble place. So I was not prepared for your arrival and didn't come to meet you. Please have pity on me and forgive my insolence." The beautiful lady supported him up and told him not to fear. Then she sat and Cheng Zai down together, both facing south, while the other two beautiful women sat beside them, one facing east and the other facing west.



坐定，东西两美人道：“今夕之会，数非偶然，不要自生疑虑。”即命侍女设酒进饌，品物珍美，生平目中所未曾睹。才一举箸，心胸顿爽。美人又命取红玉莲花卮进酒。卮形绝大，可容酒一升。程宰素不善酌，竭力推辞不饮。美人笑道：“郎怕醉么？此非人间曲蘖所酝，不是吃了迷性的，多饮不妨。”手举一卮，亲奉程宰。程宰不过意，只得接了到口。那酒味甘芳，却又爽滑清冽，毫不粘滞。虽醴泉甘露的滋味，有所不及。程宰觉得好吃，不觉一卮俱尽。美人又笑道：“郎信吾否？”一连又进数卮，三美人皆陪饮。程宰越吃越清爽，精神顿开，略无醉意。每进一卮，侍女们八音齐奏，音调清和，令人有超凡遗世之想。

酒阑，东西二美人起身道：“夜已向深，郎与夫人可以就寝矣。”随起身褰帷拂枕，叠被铺床，向南面坐的美人告去。其馀侍女，一同随散。眼前凡百具器，霎时不见，门户皆闭，又不知打从那里去了。

当下只剩得同坐的美人一个，挽着程宰道：“众人已散，我与郎解衣睡罢。”程宰私自想道：“我这床上布衾草褥，怎么好与这样美人同睡的？”举眼一看，只见枕衾帐褥，尽皆换过，锦绣珍奇，一些也不是旧时的了。程宰虽是有些惊惶，却已神魂飞越，心里不知如何才好，只得一同解衣登床。美人卸了簪珥，徐徐解开髻发绀辮，总绾成一窝丝来。那发又长又黑，光明可鉴。脱下里衣，肌肤莹洁，滑若凝脂，侧身相就。程宰汤



The two beautiful women facing east and west said to him, "Today's meeting is by no means accidental. Please believe us!" So saying, they then ordered the maids to bring in food and wine and delicacies Cheng Zai had never seen in his life. The first taste tantalized him and he felt instantly refreshed. The beautiful lady offered him wine in a red, lotus-shaped jade cup. The cup was fairly big, and Cheng Zai seldom drank. Naturally he declined persistently. The beautiful lady laughed and said, "Are you afraid of getting drunk? This wine is not made of earthly grain. Why should you take it as a strong spirit?" As she said so, she put the cup to Cheng Zai's lips. Cheng Zai was obliged to taste it. It was as mellow as honey and as fragrant as manna dew. Cheng Zai finished the first cup with much relish. Then the beautiful lady said smilingly to him, "Don't you trust me now?" They drank more cups, feeling elated but not at all drunk. Whenever one round was finished, there would come serene and harmonious music, which made one wish to leave this earth and join the immortals.

Having finished their drink, the other two women stood up and said, "It's getting late now. It's time for the master and madam to retire for the night." Then they made the bed and left, and the maids followed them. All the things they had brought with them also disappeared in a glance. The door remained closed, and Cheng Zai couldn't figure out how they managed to get out.

Cheng Zai was left alone with the beautiful lady. Turning to Cheng Zai, the lady said, "They're all gone. Let me undress you and let us sleep." Cheng Zai thought, "The beddings on my bed are coarse cotton quilt and straw mat. How can I have the heart to let such a beauty sleep with me on this bed?" Raising his head, he was surprised to find that the things on the bed were all replaced by silken covers and pillow, and the former ones were no longer there. His heart was stirred up by the beautiful lady before him, though he was in a flurry. Feeling at a loss what to do, he had to undress and go to bed with the lady. The lady slowly let down her hair, which was lustrously black and meters long; and her skin was incomparably smooth and radiant. Touching her skin, Cheng Zai felt weak and numb all over. The beautiful lady made love with him tenderly.



着，遍体酥麻了。真个是：

丰若有馀，柔若无骨。云雨初交，流丹浹藉。若远若近，宛转娇怯。俨如处子，含苞初拆。

程宰客中荒凉，不意得了此味，真个魂飞天外，魄散九霄，实出望外，喜之如狂。美人也自爱着程宰，枕上对他道：“世间花月之妖，飞走之怪，往往害人。所以世上说着便怕，惹人憎恶。我非此类，郎慎勿疑。我得与郎相遇，虽不能大有益于郎，亦可使郎身体康健，资用丰足。倘有患难之处，亦可出小力周全。但不可漏泄风声，就是至亲如兄，亦慎勿使知道。能守吾戒，自今以后，便当恒奉枕席，不敢有废。若一有漏言，不要说我不能来，就有大祸临身，吾也救不得你了。慎之！慎之！”程宰闻言甚喜，合掌罚誓道：“某本凡贱，误蒙真仙厚德，虽粉骨碎身，不能为报。既承法旨，敢不铭心？倘违所言，九死无悔。”誓毕，美人大喜，将手来勾着程宰之颈，说道：“我不是仙人，实海神也。与郎有夙缘甚久，故来相就耳。”语话缠绵，恩爱万状。不觉邻鸡已报晓二次。美人揽衣起道：“吾今去了，夜当复来。郎君自爱。”

说罢，又见昨夜东西坐的两个美人，与众侍女齐到床前，口里多称：“贺喜夫人、郎君！”美人走下床来，就有捧家伙的侍女，各将梳洗应用的物件，伏侍梳洗罢，仍带簪珥冠帔，一如昨夜光景。美人执着程宰之手，叮咛再四，不可泄漏。徘徊眷恋，不忍舍去。众女簇拥而行，尚回顾不止。人间夫妇，无此爱厚。程宰也下了床，穿了衣服，伫立细看，如痴似呆，欢喜依恋之态不能自禁。转眼间，室中寂然，一无所见。看那



As he had been living alone by himself for quite some time, Cheng Zai was carried away with wild joy at this unexpected happy romance. The lady loved Cheng Zai very much too. On the bed she said to him, "In the human world the fair witch and roaming spirit often harm people. No wonder they are hated. I'm not of that sort, so please don't worry. Though I can't be of great help to you, I can make you healthy and rich. If you meet misfortunes, I can help you to overcome or avoid them. But all this is just between you and me. From this evening on, I'll come to your bed every night. You mustn't tell this even to your brother, otherwise disasters will befall you, and I won't be able to help you any more. Do keep my words in mind."

Cheng Zai was enormously pleased at hearing these words and vowed with clasped palms, "I'm just a humble fellow. Today you have done me such a great favor that I can't express my gratitude even if I die the cruelest death. I swear I will follow your instructions faithfully under pain of death." Hearing this, the woman was extremely delighted. Then she held Cheng Zai's neck in her arms and said, "I'm actually not a fairy, but a sea-goddess. I have come here because I have a predestined relationship with you." Her words were tender and affectionate.

Soon cocks began to crow in the neighborhood. The woman put on her clothes and said, "I must be leaving now, but I'll come again at night. Take good care of yourself!" At these words the other two fair ladies and the handmaidens came into the room, each expressing their congratulations. Then as the woman got off the bed, some maids came over to her, each carrying some toilet articles with them, and helped her get washed and put on headdresses as she had worn the night before. The woman held Cheng Zai's hands and warned him again and again not to tell others of their affair. She kept on looking back at him, very reluctant to leave. The profound love she showed to him was really beyond description and seldom found between husbands and wives in this world. Cheng Zai got off the bed too and got dressed. Standing there watching the lady, struck dumb as a wooden chicken, he felt it hard to cover up his love for her. However, in a twinkling of an eye, all became quiet and all had vanished into thin air. He looked at the door, which remained shut as



门窗，还是昨日关得好好的。回头再看房内，但见：

土坑上铺一带荆筐，芦席中拖一条布被。欹颓墙角，堆零星几块煤烟；坍塌地垆，摆缺绽一行瓶罐。浑如古庙无香火，一似牢房不洁清。

程宰恍然自失道：“莫非是做梦么？”定睛一想，想那饮食笑语，以及交合之状，盟誓之言，历历有据，绝非是梦寐之境。肚里又喜又疑。

顷刻间，天已大明。程宰思量道：“吾且到哥哥房中去看一看。莫非夜来事体，他有些听得么？”走到间壁，叫声：“阿哥！”程案正在床上起来，看见了程宰，大惊道：“你今日面上神彩异常，不似平日光景，甚么缘故？”程宰心里踌躇道：“莫非果有些甚么怪样，惹他们疑心？”只得假意说道：“我与你时乖运蹇，失张失志，落魄在此，归家无期。昨夜暴冷，愁苦的当不得，展转悲叹，一夜不曾合眼。阿哥必然听见的，有甚么好处？却说我神彩异常起来！”程案道：“我也苦冷，又想着家乡，通夕不寐。听你房中，静悄悄地不闻一些声响。我怪道你这样睡得熟，何曾有愁叹之声？却说这个话！”程宰见哥哥说了，晓得哥哥不曾听见夜来的事了，心中放下了跼踖。等程案梳洗了，一同到铺里来。

那铺里的人见了程宰，没一个不吃惊道：“怎地今日程宰哥面上这等光彩？”程案对兄弟笑道：“我说么！”程宰只做



ever. Gazing round the room, he saw the same mud bed, cotton quilt, willow basket and straw mat, a few pieces of coal sparsely scattered at the corner, a row of broken bottles and jars lying in disorder on the ground, and the entire room was as dirty as it used to be. It was just like an ancient temple long deserted and a dirty jail. The splendor of the night before had all gone. Cheng Zai felt lost and said to himself, "Was it only a dream?" But the wine, the delicacies, the laughter, the lovemaking, and the vows all came to his mind vividly, testifying it was not a dream at all. He was overwhelmed with both bewilderment and joy.

Before long, day broke. Cheng Zai thought to himself, "Now I'll go to my brother's room and have a look. Could he hear anything astir in my room last night?" Upon entering Cheng Cai's room, Cheng Zai shouted, "Brother!" At the moment, Cheng Cai was getting out of bed. At the sight of Cheng Zai, he asked in amazement, "You brim with energy and vitality today, totally different from ordinary days. Why? What has happened to you?"

Deeply worried, Cheng Zai thought to himself, "Could there be anything unusual on me that has made him suspicious?" Having no other choice, he lied, "We've been out of fortune for years, and there is still no prospect of our returning home. Last night's storm and the sudden cold it brought made me even more despondent and homesick. I tossed about in bed and couldn't sleep all through the night. You must have heard my sighs. How can I brim with energy and vitality?" His brother Cheng Cai replied, "I also felt cold last night and your room was deadly quiet, and I didn't hear any sound at all." I just wondered last night how you could be sleeping so soundly. How could I hear your sighs? Why do you say so?" Upon hearing these words, Cheng Zai knew that his brother didn't hear anything happened in his room the previous night, and felt very much relieved. Having finished washing, the two brothers made their way to their employer's store.

Greatly astounded at the sight of Cheng Zai, everyone in the store asked with surprise, "Why you glow with vigor and health today, Brother Cheng Zai?" Hearing these remarks, Cheng Cai said to his brother, laughingly, "Got it? Didn't I say the same thing?" Pretending not to know



不晓得，不来接口。却心里也自觉神思清爽，肌肉润泽，比平日不同，暗暗快活，惟恐他不来了。

是日频视晷影，恨不速移。刚才傍晚，就回到下处，托言腹痛，把门扃闭，静坐度想，等待消息。到得街鼓初动，房内忽然明亮起来，一如昨夜的光景。程宰顾盼间，但见一对香炉前导，美人已到面前。侍女止是数人，仪从之类稀少，连那傍坐的两个美人也不来了。美人见程宰嘿坐相等，笑道：“郎果有心如此，但须始终如一方好。”即命侍女设馔进酒，欢谑笑谈，更比昨日熟分亲热了许多。须臾彻席就寝，侍女俱散。顾看床褥，并不曾见有人去铺设，又复锦绣重叠。程宰心忖道：“床上虽然如此，地下尘埃秽污，且看是怎么样。”才一起念，只见满地多是锦裯铺衬，毫无寸隙了。是夜两人绸缪好合，愈加亲狎。依旧鸡鸣两度，起来梳妆而去。

此后人定即来，鸡鸣即去，率以为常，竟无虚夕。每来必言语喧闹，音乐铿锵。兄房只隔层壁，到底影响不闻，也不知是何法术如此。自此情爱愈笃。程宰心里想要甚么物件，即刻



anything about what they were talking, Cheng Zai just turned a deaf ear and gave no answer to their remarks. However, he himself could feel that he was enlivened and more vigorous than ever. He was secretly pleased, but worried that the beautiful lady would not come to see him again.

That day he kept on looking at the sundial, wishing that the time would pass more quickly. He returned to his room when it was just dusk, pretending that he had a stomachache and waited anxiously. At the first beating of the night drum his room was abruptly lit up just as the previous evening. A while later, the beautiful lady arrived, preceded by two girls each carrying a stove. This time there were only a few maids. The procession was not as imposing as that of the day before, and the other two beautiful ladies did not reappear. Seeing that Cheng Zai was sitting there in silence, waiting for her, the beautiful lady said smilingly, "You're faithful indeed, and you should keep so to the very end." Then she ordered the maids to bring food and wine, which were as delicious as before. Talking and laughing hilariously, the beautiful lady and Cheng Zai were better acquainted with each other and more affectionate this time than the day before. Soon the feast ended, and the maids left. Cheng Zai looked at his bed, and he again found silken quilts there, but saw no one arranging them.

Cheng Zai thought to himself, "The bed has now been well made. What about my dirty floor?" He was about to look down on the floor when he found that the whole floor was decorated with silk and brocade, and there was not any empty space left. This night they again enjoyed their ecstatic lovemaking. When the cocks began to crow, the beautiful lady rose and left after washing and dressing herself.

From then on, the woman would come to Cheng Zai when people went to bed and leave when the cocks began to crow. She never missed a single night. When they were together, they would talk loudly, laugh boisterously and listen to music. But his brother Cheng Cai, though just next door to him, never heard any of this, nor did he know the magic involved in it. From then on, mutual affection for each other between Cheng Zai and the lady grew deeper and deeper. As for Cheng Zai, if he desired anything, it would appear right before his very eyes.



就有，极其神速。一日，偶思闽中鲜荔枝，即有带叶百馀颗，香味珍美，颜色新鲜，恰像树上才摘下的。又说此味只有江南杨梅可以相匹，便有杨梅一枝，坠于面前，枝上有二万馀颗，甘美异常。此时已是深冬，况此二物皆不是北地所产，不知何自得来。又一夕，谈及鸚鵡，程宰道：“闻得说有白的，惜不曾见。”才说罢，便有几只鸚鵡飞舞将来，白的、五色的多有，或诵佛经，或歌诗赋，多是中土官话。一日，程宰在市上看见大商将宝石二颗来卖，名为硬红，色若桃花，大似拇指，索价百金。程宰夜间与美人说起，口中啧啧，称为罕见。美人抚掌大笑道：“郎如此眼光浅，真是夏虫不可语冰。我教你看着！”说罢，异宝满室，珊瑚有高丈馀的，明珠有如鸡卵的，五色宝石有大如栲栳的，光艳夺目，不可正视。程宰左顾右盼，应接不暇。须臾之间，尽皆不见。程宰自思：“我夜间无欲不遂，如此受用，日里仍是人家佣工，美人那知我心事来？”遂把往年



One evening he just happened to be thinking about fresh litchis. Instantly more than a hundred fresh litchis appeared on the table. They tasted delicious and fragrant, as if they were newly picked from litchis trees. Then Cheng Zai casually mentioned that the only fruit that could be compared with litchis in taste was nothing but red bayberries grown south of Yangtze River.. Almost at once a big bough with twenty thousand tasty red bayberries was presented to him. Indeed they were extremely delicious. It was already late winter then, and Cheng Zai had no idea whence the litchis and bayberries came. He was particularly puzzled because such fruits were not grown in the north.

Another evening their conversation turned to parrots. Cheng Zai said, "I've heard there are white ones, but unfortunately I've never seen any." Soon after these words were out, he saw some parrots flying in front of him, half of them were white, and other half were of various colors. They were chanting sutras or poems in the dialect of Central China. One day he saw a merchant selling two precious stones in the market. They were as red as peach flowers and bigger than a thumb, but the merchant demanded a hundred taels of silver for each.

That night he mentioned this to the beautiful lady with admiration and envy and exclaimed that they were really rare treasure. Holding his hand, the beautiful lady said, laughingly, "You've really seen little of the world. One can not talk about ice to the insect that lives only a summer. This is true indeed! Let me show you something!" Hardly had she spoken these words when rare gems and precious stones filled the room. There were corals several meters long, pearls as big as goose eggs, and enormous rubies, all shining so brightly that it hurt to keep one's eyes on them. Looking around the treasures, Cheng Zai could not have a moment's leisure. But they disappeared again in a glance. Cheng Zai thought to himself, "All my wishes came true at night and I felt extremely happy. But I am again a hired laborer at daytime. How could this woman read my mind?"

Then Cheng Zai told her how he had lost several thousand taels of silver in the past few years in doing business and, as a result of this, he had to live a wretched life in this place far away from home. While



贸易耗折了数千金，以致流落于此，告诉一遍，不胜嗟叹。美人又抚掌大笑道：“正在欢会时，忽然想着这样俗事来，何乃不脱洒如此！虽然，这是郎的本业，也不要怪你。我再教你看一个光景。”说罢，金银满前，从地上直堆至屋梁边，不计其数。美人指着问程宰道：“你可要么？”程宰是个做商人的，见了偌多金银，怎不动火？心热口馋，支手舞脚，却待要取。美人将箸去饌碗内夹肉一块，掷程宰面上道：“此肉粘得在你面上么？”程宰道：“此是他肉，怎粘得在吾面上？”美人指金银道：“此亦是他物，岂可取为己有？若目前取了些，也无不可；只是非分之物，得了反要生祸。世人为取了不该得的东西，后来加倍丧去的，或连身子不保的，何止一人一事？我岂忍以此误你！你若要金银，你可自去经营，吾当指点路径，暗暗助你，这便使得。”程宰道：“只这样也好了。”

其时是己卯初夏，有贩药材到辽东的，诸药多卖尽，独有黄柏、大黄两味卖不去，各剩下千来斤。此是贱物，所值不多。那卖药的见无人买，只思量丢下去了。美人对程宰道：“你可去买了他的，有大利钱在里头。”程宰去问一问价钱，那卖的巴不得脱手，略得些就罢了。程宰深信美人之言，料必不差，身边积有佣工银十来两，尽数买了他的归来，搬到下处。哥子程案看见累累堆堆，偌多东西，却是两味草药。问知是十多两银子买的，大骂道：“你敢失心疯了？将了有用的银子，置这样无用的东西！虽然买得贱，这偌多几时脱得手去，讨得本利到手？有这样失算的事！”谁知隔不多日，辽东疫病盛作，二



recounting his story, he couldn't help sighing. Again the beautiful lady held his hand and said, "We are just beginning our happy life, but already your heart has turned to earthly things. Why can't you remain aloof? But I suppose this is natural, because it's your profession. Let me show you something else" No sooner had she said this than an untold amount of gold and silver piled up on the ground until it reached the ceiling. The beautiful lady pointed at it and said, "Is this what you desire?" Cheng was greatly allured by what he saw and wanted to take some, but the beautiful lady picked up a piece of meat from the plate, put it on Cheng's face and said, "Can this flesh stick to your face?" Cheng replied, "It's another's flesh. How can it stick to my face?" The beautiful lady pointed at the gold and silver and laughed, "This is another's money. How should you take it? You can keep it now if you want, but ill-gotten fortune can't give you happiness. It can only bring disaster. How can I ruin you? If you want this, you should make your own efforts, and I will help you." "That'll do if it will work," said Cheng Zai.

It was then the early 14th year of Zhengde reign (1519), and there was a seller of medicinal herbs who had sold all his goods except a thousand *jin* of cork and a thousand *jin* of rhubarb. He wanted to leave the place and was eager to be rid of them. The beautiful lady said to Cheng Zai, "This can be hoarded. You'll be able to sell it at a good price later." Cheng Zai went to the seller and inquired about the price. The seller, being only too anxious to sell them at the moment, charged very little money for the deal. As he firmly trusted the beautiful lady's words, Cheng Zai thought it must be good deal. He had only ten taels of silver he had earned as a hired laborer, and he spent all of it on the medicinal herbs and then brought them to his dwelling place. Cheng Cai never expected such a large stack of stuff was nothing but two medicinal herbs.

Upon learning that Cheng Zai had bought these herbs for over ten taels of silver, Cheng Cai scolded him, "Are you out of your mind? Buy useless rubbish with white silver! Though the price is low, when can you sell them out to get back your principal and due profit? I've never seen such a miscalculated move!" However, a few days later, an epidemic disease became widespread, and these two medicinal herbs were in great



药各铺多卖缺了，一时价钱腾贵起来。程宰所有，多得了好价，卖得罄尽，共卖了五百馀两。程窠不知就里，只说是兄弟偶然造化到了，做着了这一桩生意，大加欣羡道：“幸不可屡侥。今既有了本钱，该图些傍实的利息，不可造次了。”程宰自有主意，只不说破。

过了几日，有个荆州商人贩彩缎到辽东的，途中遭雨湿磨黦，多发了斑点，一匹也没有颜色完好的。荆商日夜啼哭，惟恐卖不去，只要有捉手，便可成交，价钱甚是将就。美人又对程宰道：“这个又该做了。”程宰罄将前日所得五百两银子，买了他五百匹。荆商大喜而去。程窠见了道：“我说你福薄！前日不意中得了些非分之财，今日就倒灶了。这些彩缎，全靠颜色。颜色好时，头二两一匹，还有便宜。而今斑斑点点，那个要他？这五百两不撩在水里了？似此做生意，几能勾挣得好日回家？”说罢大恸。众商伙中知得这事，也有惜他的，也有笑他的。谁知时运到了，自然生出巧来。程宰顿放彩缎不上一月，江西宁王宸濠造反，杀了巡抚孙公、副使许公，谋要顺流而下，



demand. As they were out of stock in other stores, people rushed to Cheng Zai to buy them at a high price and, when these two herbs were sold out, Cheng Zai therefore got more than five hundred taels of silver.

Cheng Cai was not aware of the inside story, only thinking that his brother had just bumped into good luck by chance and made some money in this business. Overwhelmed with admiration and envy, Cheng Cai said, "Good luck never repeats! Now that you've got some principal, you should manage to get some more reliable interests from it. No more risks!" However, Cheng Zai, self-assured, kept the matter to himself. A few days afterwards, a merchant from Jingzhou, Hubei selling satin came to Liaoyang. Because of the rain and damp weather, all of his satin became discolored with black stains. Fearing he could not sell out the stained satin, the merchant cried day and night. He decided he would sell it at any price if he came across anyone who had the mind to purchase it.

The beautiful lady said to Cheng Zai, "This can also be hoarded." So Cheng Zai bought five hundred bolts with his five hundred taels of silver. The merchant from Jingzhou left with joy after he had sold his satin. Seeing this, his brother Cheng Cai was again outraged. "What an unfortunate fellow you are!" said Cheng Cai. "You got some undue money the other day out of luck, but now lousy luck is on your side. For satin, it is its color that matters. When its color is perfect, one bolt of satin can be worth only one to two taels of silver, or much less than that. Now it's stained with black spots, who will buy it? Aren't you simply throwing away that five hundred taels of silver? When will we be able to make fortune and go back home if you do business in this way?" He was overcome with deep sorrow as he finished these words. Of all Cheng Zai's fellow merchants who had learned about this matter, some felt sorry for him, while some laughed at him.

However, when one is having the best of his luck, everything goes well with him. Just within a month's time after he purchased the satin, a rebellion led by Prince Zhu Chenhao broke out in the southern province of Jiangxi, killing the Imperial Inspector Sun and the Deputy General Commander garrisoning Nanjing. Then the rebellious forces moved on forward and captured Anqing and Nanjing in succession, threatening the



破安庆，取南京，僭宝位。东南一时震动，朝廷急调辽兵南讨。飞檄到来，急如星火。军中戎装旗帜之类，多要整齐，限在顷刻。这个边地上，那里立地有这许多缎匹？一时间价钱腾贵起来。只买得有就是，好歹不论。程宰所买这些斑斑点点的，尽多得了三倍的好价钱。这一番除了本钱五百两，分外足足撰了千金。

庚辰秋间，又有苏州商人贩布三万匹到辽阳，陆续卖去已有二万三四千匹了，剩下粗些的还有六千多匹。忽然家信到来，母亲死了，急要奔丧回去。美人又对程宰道：“这件事又该做了。”程宰两番得利，心知灵验，急急去寻他讲价。那苏商先卖去的得利已多了，今止是馀剩，况归心已急，只要一伙卖，便照原来价钱也罢。程宰遂把千金尽数买了他这六千多匹回来。明年辛巳三月，武宗皇帝驾崩，天下人多要戴着国丧。辽东远在塞外，地不产布，人人要件白衣，一时那讨得许多布来？一匹粗布，就卖得七八钱银子。程宰这六千匹，又卖了三四千两。

如此事体，逢着便做，做来便希奇古怪，得利非常。记不得许多。四五年间，展转弄了五七万两，比昔年所折的，倒多了几十倍了。

正是：



throne. The southeast part of China was thrown into chaos. The imperial court hastily deployed Liao troops to go down south to suppress it. It was an immediate call to arms and the imperial forces had to go to war without delay. Military uniforms and banners had to be made as soon as possible. How could they gather up so much satin and silk in such a faraway place in so short a time? As a result, the price of silk and satin went up. Regardless of its quality, they bought all the satin and silk available. Cheng Zai sold his satin at a price three times higher than the price he had paid for it and his money thus tripled, gaining as much as one thousand taels of silver.

In the fall of the 15th year of Zhengde reign (1520), a cloth merchant from Jiangsu came to trade in Liaoyang with thirty thousand bolts of white cloth. He had already sold twenty-three to twenty-four thousand bolts when he heard of the sudden death of his mother. The amount left was mostly coarse cloth and there were still as many as six thousand colts. However, he was in a hurry to go back home to take care of his mother's funeral. The beautiful lady again urged Cheng Zai, "Again your chance has come." As he had gained tremendously twice, Cheng Zai knew this deal would work too. So he went to bargain with him without losing a second. The merchant, eager to go home to attend his mother's funeral and having already made a big profit, sold the cloth to Cheng Zai at its cost price. He bought six thousand bolts with one thousand taels of silver. In the third month of the following year, Emperor Wuzong died, and people all over the land were to be dressed in white to go into mourning for the newly deceased emperor. Since Liaoyang was a remote place where cloth was not produced, how could people there get so much cloth when everyone had to wear a white mourning dress for the deceased emperor? One colt of coarse cloth would cost six to seven *qian* of silver. Hence, Cheng Zai again gained three to four thousand taels of silver from selling these six thousand colts.

Such strange things happened many times and each time Cheng Zai would get lot of gains. There is no need to tell them all. In four or five years' time, Cheng Zai had amassed a great fortune, totaling up to fifty to seventy thousand taels of silver, dozens of times the amount of money he had previously lost.



人弃我堪取，奇赢自可居。

虽然神暗助，不得浪贪图。

且说辽东起初闻得江西宁王反时，人心危骇，流传讹言，纷纷不一。有的说在南京登基了，有的说兵过两淮了，有的说过了临清到德州了。一日几番说话，也不知那句是真，那句是假。程宰心念家乡切近，颇不自安，私下问美人道：“那反叛的到底如何？”美人微笑道：“真天子自在湖湘之间，与他甚么相干？他自要讨死吃，故如此猖狂，不日就擒了。不足为虑。”此是七月下旬的说；再过月馀，报到，果然被南赣巡抚王阳明擒了解京。程宰见美人说天子在湖湘，恐怕江南又有战争之事，心中仍旧惧怕。再问美人，美人道：“不妨，不妨。国家庆祚灵长，天下方享太平之福，只在一二年了。”后来嘉靖自湖广兴藩，入继大统，海内安宁，悉如美人之言。

到嘉靖甲申年间，美人与程宰往来已是七载，两情缱绻，犹如一日。程宰囊中幸已丰富，未免思念故乡起来。一夕对美人道：“某离家已二十年了，一向因本钱耗折，回去不得。今



He takes what others discard.
Rare commodities are worth hoarding.
Though the Goddess gives him covert assistance,
He should not be inordinately greedy.

Prince Zhu Chenhao's rebellion struck terror into people's hearts, and rumors were rife. Some said, "Prince Chen has made himself emperor in Nanjing." Others said, "His troops have crossed the Huaihe River." And still others said, "His troops have passed Linqing and are now near Dezhou." Each day different news passed from mouth to mouth, and people could not tell the true from the false. Much worried about his hometown, Cheng Zai felt restless. He asked the beautiful lady what she thought about the situation.

The beautiful lady laughed, saying, "The emperor is in the districts of Hunan and Hubei. The rebels can achieve nothing and will soon be executed. Why should you worry?" It was then late July. Surely enough, one month later the rebellion was reported suppressed, and Zhu Chenhao was captured and then escorted to the capital by Wang Shouren, the Imperial Inspector of Southern Jiangxi. When Cheng Zai learned that the real emperor was in the districts of Hunan and Hubei, he was worried that the southern part of the country would be again thrown into chaos. But the beautiful lady shook her head and said, "Don't worry. The dynasty's rule will last forever. In one or two years, the country will enjoy peace and prosperity." Cheng wished to know more, but the beautiful lady said, "It's already near at hand. Why do you have to know it at this very moment?" Before long, the emperor's rule was restored, and everything that happened in the country was exactly as the beautiful lady had predicted. Her predictions of big events had all come true. There is no need to mention the details.

By the third year of the Jiajing reign (1524), the beautiful lady and Cheng Zai had been together for seven years. And they were extremely happy when they together. Now having become rich, Cheng Zai thought of going back home to visit his family. One evening Cheng Zai said to the beautiful lady, "I have been away for twenty years. In the past I dared not go back because I had lost all my money. Now with your kind help I am



蒙大造，囊资丰饶，已过所望。意欲暂与家兄归到乡里，一见妻子，便当即来。多不过一年之期，就好到此，永奉欢笑。不知可否？”美人听罢，不觉惊叹道：“数年之好，止于此乎？郎宜自爱，勉图后福，我不得伏侍左右了！”欷歔泣下，悲不自胜。程宰大骇道：“某暂时归省，必当速来，以图后会。岂敢有负恩私？夫人乃说此断头话！”美人哭道：“大数当然，彼此做不得主。郎适发此言，便是数当永诀了。”

言犹未已，前日初次来的东、西二美人及诸侍女仪从之类，一时皆集。音乐竞奏，盛设酒筵。美人自起，酌酒相劝，追叙往时初会与数年情爱，每说一句，哽咽难胜。程宰大声号恸，自悔失言，恨不得将身投地，将头撞壁。两情依依，不能相舍。诸女前来禀白道：“大数已终，法驾齐备，速请夫人登途，不必过伤了。”美人执着程宰之手，一头垂泪，一头分付道：“你有三大难，今将近了。时时宜自警省，至期吾自来相救。过了此后，终身吉利，寿至九九。吾当在蓬莱三岛，等你来续前缘。你自宜居心清净，力行善事，以副吾望。吾与你身虽隔远，你一举一动，吾必晓得。万一做了歹事，以致堕落，犯了天条，吾也无可周全了。后会迢迢，勉之！勉之！”叮宁



rich beyond my expectations. I'd like to go back home with my brother to pay respects to our dead parents at their tombs and see my wife. I promise to come back to you in a year and will never leave you again. Would you give me your consent?"

The beautiful lady gave a long sigh and said, "Are our years of love to end up like this? Take good care of yourself so as to enjoy greater happiness in the future." So saying, she was overwhelmed with profound grief. Cheng Zai was much frightened and said, "I'm asking your leave to let me go, and I'll come back as soon as I can to rejoin you. How could I be ungrateful to you, and why are you in such despair?"

The beautiful lady wept and said, "This is our destiny and can't be changed by either of us. The words you just said mean that we must part for ever." Hardly had she said these words when the two pretty ladies and all the maids and attendants who had been with her before gathered around them. Then music sounded, and a banquet was set, just as the first time they met. The woman rose from her seat and offered a drink to Cheng Zai. When she recalled the happy nights they had spent together all these years, tears streamed down the beautiful lady's cheeks. Cheng Zai too was plunged into deep sorrow and regretted his words. How he wished he could throw himself onto the ground or bump against the wall. The two loved each other tenderly and couldn't bear to part. At midnight, the other two ladies came forward and said, "What is preordained can not be revoked. The heavenly chariot is ready. Please leave here immediately, for there is no use tormenting yourself like this."

The beautiful lady still held Cheng Zai's hands and wept, saying, "Three calamities will come your way, and they are already very near you. Take care, and I'll come to help you in time of need. When the calamities are over, you'll lead a pure life without any regret. When you reach the age of ninety-nine, I'll be waiting for you at the Three Godly Mountains of Penglai to fulfill our former vows. You too must keep a clear conscience and try your best to do good things so as to live up to my expectations. Though I'm far away from you, I can know your every act. If you break the heavenly laws and fall, there will be nothing I can do to help you. It will be a long time till we meet again. Take care!" She urged him again



了又叮宁，何止十来番。程宰此时神志俱丧，说不出一句话，只好唯唯应承，苏苏落泪而已。正是：

世上万般哀苦事，无非死别与生离。

天长地久有时尽，此恨绵绵无限期。

须臾，邻鸡群唱，侍女催促，诀别启行。美人还回头顾盼了三四番，方才寂然一无所见。但有：

蟋蟀悲鸣，孤灯半灭。凄风萧飒，铁马玎珰。曙星东升，银河西转。顷刻之间，已如隔世。

程宰不胜哀痛，望着空中，禁不住的号哭起来。才发得声，哥子程窠隔房早已听见，不像前番随你间壁翻天覆地，总不知道的。哥子闻得兄弟哭声，慌忙起来问其缘故。程宰支吾道：“无过是思想家乡。”口里强说，声音还是凄咽的。程窠道：“一向流落，归去不得。今这几年来，生意做得着，手头饶裕，要归不难，为何反哭得这等悲切起来？从来不曾见你如此，想必有甚伤心之事，休得瞒我。”程宰被哥子说破，晓得瞒不住，只得把昔年遇合美人，夜夜的受用，及生意所以做得着，以致丰

and again to keep her words in mind. As for Cheng Zai, he was completely lost and couldn't utter a single word. All he could do was to cry his eyes out.

Many and varied are the sorrows in this world.

Sorrows of parting or separation by death are the most saddening.

The boundless sky and endless earth may pass away,

But this vow unfulfilled will be regretted for aye.

In a while the cocks began to crow, and the others entreated the beautiful lady to depart at once. With Cheng Zai's hands in hers, she finally bade farewell to him in tears, but still kept on looking back at him, till all of a sudden the place became deadly quiet. Only crickets chirped mournfully, and the lonely candle was half burned down. Though all this happened within a minute, to Cheng Zai a century seemed to have passed. He desperately ran out of the door, only to find morning stars rising in the east, the Milky Way moving towards the west. The wind was sighing sorrowfully, and the hoof-shaped irons were jingling on the eaves.

Unable to hold back his grief any longer, Cheng Zai shouted out in despair. His first shouts had already reached his brother Cheng Cai who was then staying in the next room. This time it was totally different from the previous times when Cheng Cai was ignorant of what had been happening in Cheng Zai's room no matter how Cheng Zai and the beautiful lady raised a rumpus next door. Upon hearing Cheng Zai's first wailing, Cheng Cai hurried into his room and asked him why he was crying. Cheng Zai hummed and hawed, "Nothing but homesickness." He uttered these words forcibly in a sobbing voice.

Cheng Cai said, "We've been away from home for years and it was not easy for us to go back home in the past. But in recent years, we've made some money and are much better off. It won't be difficult if we want to go back home now. Why did you cry so sadly? I've never seen you feel so mournful. There must be a heart-breaking affair. Don't hide it from me." Seeing that his brother had put it bluntly, Cheng Zai found it impossible to withhold the truth any longer. He told him the whole story: his first meeting with the beautiful lady, the happy nights he had had with her, and the fortune he had acquired with the aid of the beautiful lady. His



富，皆出美人之助，从头至尾述了一遍。程家惊异不已，望空礼拜。明日与客商伴里说了，辽阳城内外没一个不传说程士贤遇海神的奇话。程宰自此终日郁郁不乐，犹如丧偶一般。与哥子商量，收拾南归。

其时有个叔父在大同做卫经历，程宰有好几时不相见了，想道：“今番归家，不知几时又到得北边。须趁此便，打那边走一遭，看叔叔一看去。”先打发行李资囊，付托哥子程家监押，从潞河下在船内，沿途等候着他。他自己却顾了一个牲口，由京师出居庸关，到大同地方。见了叔父，一家骨肉久别相聚，未免留连几日，不得动身。晚上睡去，梦见美人走来催促道：“祸事到了，还不快走！”程宰记得临别之言，慌忙向叔父告行。叔父又留他饯别，直到将晚，方出得大同城门。时已天黑，程宰道：“总是前途赶不上多少路罢了，不如就在城外且安宿了一晚，明日早行。”睡到三鼓，梦中美人又来催道：“快走！快走！大难就到，略迟脱不去了。”程宰当时惊醒，不管天早天晚，骑了牲口，忙赶了四五里路。只听得炮声连响，回头看那城外时，火光烛天，照耀如同白日。元来是大同军变。





brother was startled and listened to the tale with awe. Then Cheng Cai, with his face turning to the sky, bowed to the benefactress to show his respect. On the next day, the Cheng brothers disclosed the matter to their fellow merchants. Then the amazing story that Cheng Zai had met the Sea-goddess was passed from mouth to mouth both in town and in the countryside. Cheng Zai was thrown into a long dejection. He felt as if he had lost his wife. After consulting his brother, he gathered his things and was ready to return south.

At that time, Cheng Zai's uncle was in Datong, holding a post of administering official dispatches, and they had not seen each other for years. Cheng Zai thought to himself, "I have no idea when I'll be able to come back to the north after I return home. I must take this opportunity and go there and pay a visit to my uncle." Having packed up his luggage and other belongings, he entrusted them to the care of his brother and asked him to take them to Luhe River for shipment. He also told his brother to wait for him on the Luhe River. Cheng Zai asked his brother to take leave first by boat with their luggage, while Cheng Zai himself went on horseback by way of Beijing through the Juyong Pass until he reached Datong in Shanxi.

There he called at his uncle's house. Since it was a reunion of family members after long separation, Cheng Zai stayed at his uncle's place for several days. In the evening he suddenly dreamed of the beautiful lady urging him to leave at once, "Disaster is going to befall you. Why are you still staying here?" Cheng Zai recalled her earlier warnings and went to say goodbye to his uncle early at dawn. But his uncle insisted on his having a farewell dinner with him. When he left the town, it was already dark. Cheng Zai said to himself, "It's too late. Any way, I don't think I can cover any distance anymore. Why not just stay overnight at a hotel out of town and continue my journey early tomorrow morning?"

At midnight he again dreamed of the beautiful lady warning him to leave immediately, "Calamity will befall you! You can't escape it unless you leave at once." Cheng Zai woke up in terror and rode at full speed eastwards for about four or five *li*, when he suddenly heard the roaring of cannons. He looked back at the town and found that it was lit by myriads



且道如何是大同军变？大同参将贾鉴，不给军士行粮。军士鼓噪，杀了贾鉴。巡抚都御史张文锦出榜招安，方得平静。张文锦密访了几个为头的，要行正法。正差人出来擒拿，军士重番鼓噪起来，索性把张巡抚也杀了，据了大同，谋反朝廷。要搜寻内外壮丁，一同叛逆，故此点了火把出城，凡是饭店经商，尽被拘刷了转去，收在伙内，无一得脱。若是程宰迟了些个，一定也拿将去了。此是海神来救了第一遭大难了。

程宰得脱，兼程到了居庸。夜宿关外，又梦见美人来催道：“趁早过关。略迟一步，就有牢狱之灾了。”程宰又惊将起来，店内同宿的多不曾起身，他独自一个，急到关前挨门而进。行得数里，忽然宣府军门行将文书来，因为大同反乱，恐有奸细混入京师，凡是在大同来进关者，不是公差吏人有官文照验在身者，尽收入监内，盘诘明白，方准释放。是夜与程宰同宿的人多被留住，下在狱中。后来有到半年方得放出的，也有染了病，竟死在狱中的。程宰若非文书未到之前先走脱了，便干净无事，也得耐烦坐他五七月的监。此是海神来救他第二遭的大难了。



of torches and had become as bright as day.

It was the Datong Mutiny. Readers, do you have any idea about the Datong Mutiny? Jia Jian, General of Datong, embezzled soldiers' pay and provisions. The soldiers rose up with a great clamor and killed Jia Jian. The uproar didn't come to an end until Zhang Wenjin, the Imperial Inspector, offered amnesty to the rebels and enlisted their service. However, Zhang Wenjin secretly found out several ringleaders who were held responsible for the rebellion and was about to have them executed. At the order of Zhang, his men were at that moment tracking down the ringleaders. The soldiers raised a hubbub again. They killed the Imperial Inspector too, occupied Datong and conspired against the imperial court. Currently they were press-ganging all able-bodied men in and outside the town to join their ranks. For this purpose, they rushed out of the city gate with torches. All the men staying in the hotels and the stores were forced to join them. Had Cheng Zai not escaped in time, he would have been captured by the rebels. This was the first calamity the Sea-goddess helped Cheng Zai escape.

Arriving at the Juyong Pass, Cheng Zai decided to stay overnight at a hotel outside of Juyong Pass. But at night he again dreamed of the woman urging him to leave the place, "You will be put into prison if you don't leave instantly." Cheng Zai once more woke up in terror and got out of bed, while the others were all sleeping in the hotel. He hurriedly went to the gate of the Pass and successfully got inside. When he had walked about several *li* away from the Pass,, a message came from Xuanfu, the military headquarters, which ordered all people who had entered Juyong Pass from Datong, except those on official business, to be put into prison to be questioned, for the authorities feared that spies would worm their way into the capital. And none was to be released until they were thoroughly questioned.

All the others staying at the same hotel were arrested. Some were detained for half a year, while others died of illness in prison. Hadn't Cheng Zai left before the message from Xuanfu came, he would also have been put into prison and stayed there for five to seven months, even though he might survive. This was the second calamity the Sea-goddess



程宰赶上了潞河船只，见了哥子，备述一路遇难，因梦中报信得脱之故，两人感念不已。一路无话，已到了淮安府高邮湖中，忽然：

黑云密布，狂风怒号。水底老龙惊，半空猛虎啸。左掀右荡，浑如落在簸箕中；前跷后颠，宛似滚起饭锅内。

双桅折断，一舵飘零。等闲要见阎王，立地须游水府。

正在危急之中，程宰忽闻异香满船，风势顿息。须臾，黑雾四散中，有彩云一片，正当船上。云中现出美人模样来，上半身毫发分明，下半身霞光拥蔽，不可细辨。程宰明知是海神又来救他，况且别过多时，不能厮见，悲感之极，涕泗交下，对着云中，只是磕头礼拜。美人也在云端举手答礼，容色恋恋，良久方隐。船上人多不见些甚么，但见程宰与空中施礼之状，惊疑来问。程宰备说缘故如此，尽皆瞻仰。此是海神来救他第三遭的大难。此后再不见影响了。

后来程宰年过六十，在南京遇着蔡林屋时，容颜只像四十



helped Cheng Zai to escape.

When Cheng Zai was aboard his brother's boat at Luhe River, he told his brother his adventures in detail. As the Sea-goddess had informed him in his dreams of his imminent misfortune, Cheng Zai escaped narrowly twice. Both the Cheng brothers expressed utmost gratitude to the Sea-goddess.

When they were crossing Gaoyou Lake in Huai'an Prefecture, the sky was suddenly covered with dark clouds, and a big storm arose on the lake. Their boat rocked violently, and soon both masts were broken and the rudder was smashed to pieces. It seemed that the boat would sink in no time. Just at this moment the boat was filled with a strange fragrance, and the storm ceased immediately. A moment later, the dark clouds dispersed, and a rainbow appeared just above the boat. On the rainbow stood the beautiful lady. The upper part of her body was clear to the eye, but below her waist all was covered by rosy clouds and couldn't be distinguished.

Cheng Zai obviously knew that the Sea-goddess appeared again and rescued him. Thinking that it had been a long time since they parted with each other and now he could not join her even though she was just there, Cheng Zai was overcome by gratitude and sorrow, tears falling incessantly down his cheeks. He looked at the beautiful lady on the rainbow and bowed deeply to her. The beautiful lady waved her hands in return. It was evident she was not willing to leave. She didn't disappear until a considerably long time had passed. But to others on the boat she was invisible. When they saw Cheng Zai bowed towards the sky, the people on the boat were all surprised and bewildered. They asked Cheng Zai why he did so. Cheng Zai told them the story in detail and everyone present looked up towards the sky with reverence. This was the third calamity the Sea-goddess helped Cheng Zai escape. Some time later the woman disappeared and from that time on was never seen again.

When he was in his sixties, Cheng Zai met Cai Linwu in Nanjing. In Cai's eyes, although Cheng was in his sixties, he looked like a man of forty. This was sufficient proof that he had had connections with an immortal or the like. According to what the beautiful lady had told him

来岁的。可见是遇着异人无疑。若依着美人蓬莱三岛之约，他日必登仙路也。但不知程宰无过是个经商俗人，有何缘分，得有此一段奇遇。说来也不信，却这事是实实有的。可见神仙鬼怪之事，未必尽无。有诗为证：

流落边关一俗商，却逢神眷不寻常。
宁知钟爱缘何许，谈罢令人欲断肠。





about their future meeting at the Three Godly Mountains of Penglai, Cheng Zai must have become an immortal too. However, I just can't understand why Cheng Zai, nothing but an ordinary merchant, could be so fortunate enough to have such an unusual experience. Believe it or not, this tale is true. It is thus clear that tales relating to deities, immortals, ghosts or monsters are not necessarily untrue.

Common it is that an ordinary merchant meets with adversity,
But by no means common he runs into the embrace of the Sea-goddess.
None can figure out the inmost reasons why they are fated to meet,
But it breaks everyone's heart who hears their romance.



卷 三 十 八

两错认莫大姐私奔 再成交杨二郎正本

诗云：

李代桃僵，羊易牛死。

世上冤情，最不易理。

话说宋时南安府大庾县有个吏典黄节，娶妻李四娘。四娘为人心性风月，好结识个把风流子弟，私下往来。向与黄节生下一子，已是三岁了。不肯收心，只是贪淫。一日黄节因有公事，住在衙门中了十来日。四娘与一个不知姓名的奸夫说通了，带了这三岁儿子一同逃去。出城门不多路，那儿子见眼前光景生疏，啼哭不止。四娘好生不便，竟把儿子丢弃在草中，自同奸夫去了。

大庾县中有个手力人李三，到乡间行公事。才出城门，只听得草地里有小儿啼哭之声。急往前一看，见是一个小儿，眠在草里，搯天倒地价哭。李三看了，心中好生不忍，又不见一个人来睬他，不知父母在那里去了。李三走去抱扶着他。那小儿半日不见了人，心中虚怯，哭得不耐烦。今见个人来偎傍，虽是面生些，也倒忍住了哭，任凭他抱了起来。元来这李三不



Tale 38

Sister Mo Elopes with the Wrong Lover Second Brother Yang Marries His Former Mistress

A poem reads thus:

As it is always hard to redress an injustice,

From time immemorial, many have answered for the crimes of others.

As the story has it, during the Song Dynasty, there lived a *yamen* official named Huang Jie in Dayu County, Nan'an Prefecture. Huang had a wife named Li Siniang. Being a flirtatious character, Li Siniang loved to mix with some licentious young men. Though Huang and his wife Li had got a three-year-old son, Li had no intention of mending her ways. She just continued to hanker after sexual indulgence. Once Huang Jie stayed in the *yamen* for about ten days because he had to attend to some official duties. During this period, Siniang developed an affair with an adulterer, whose name was unknown to her, and they came to an agreement to elope with the three-year-old son. Shortly after they got out of the town, Siniang's little son started to cry incessantly the moment he found he was unfamiliar with the place. Finding it difficult to move about with her son, Siniang abandoned him in the grass and slunk off with her adulterer.

There was a *yamen* runner named Li San in Dayu County. On that day, he went out of town on business. The moment he was out of the gate of the town, he heard a baby crying in the grass. Moving closer to the grass, he found a baby boy was lying there, crying loudly. Li San had no heart to stand by. As no one else was around at the moment, he could not figure out where the boy's parents had gone. He moved over to the boy and took him in his arms. The boy had not seen a soul for quite a long time, so he stopped crying immediately after Li San carried him in his arms. Li San had no children. So he was very pleased to run into this boy. Li San was fated to get into trouble that day. Thinking this boy was a godsend to him,



曾有儿女，看见欢喜。也是合当有事，道是天赐与他小儿，一径的抱了回家。家人见孩子生得清秀，尽多快活，养在家里，认做是自家的了。

这边黄节衙门中出来，回到家里，只见房闼寂静，妻子多不见了。骇问邻舍，多道是：“押司出去不多日，娘子即抱着小哥，不知那里去了。关得门户寂悄悄的，我们只道到那里亲眷家去，不晓得备细。”黄节情知妻四娘有些毛病的，着了忙，各处亲眷家问，并无下落。黄节只得写下了招子，各处访寻，情愿出十贯钱做报信的谢礼。

一日，偶然出城数里，恰恰经过李三门首。那李三正抱着这拾来的儿子，在那里与他作耍。黄节仔细一看，认得是自家的儿子，喝问李三道：“这是我的儿子，你却如何抱在此间？我家娘子那里去了？”李三道：“这儿子吾自在草地上拾来的，那晓得甚么娘子？”黄节道：“我妻子失去，遍贴招示，谁不知道？今儿子既在你处，必然是你作奸犯科，诱藏了我娘子，有甚么得解说？”李三道：“我自是拾得的，那知这些事？”黄节扭住李三，叫起屈来，惊动地方邻里，多走将拢来。黄节告诉其事，众人道：“李三元不曾有儿子。抱来时节，实是有些来历不明。却不知是押司的。”黄节道：“儿子在他处了，还有我娘子不见，是他一同拐了来的。”众人道：“这个我们不知



he carried him home. Everyone of Li San's family was filled with joy when they saw this lovely boy, so they started to take care of this boy as their own.

Returning home from the *yamen*, Huang Jie found that his house was quiet and still and his wife was gone. He questioned his neighbors. But they all answered, "Your wife went away with your son only a few days after you left home for office. We have no idea where they have gone. Your house was quiet and still all day long. We thought they must have gone to one of your relatives' homes. We don't know the detailed story." Huang Jie was thrown into a panic, for he was aware that his wife had that kind of bad habit. He visited all of his and his wife's relatives to inquire about his wife, but got no news of her whereabouts. Finally he had to write notices for looking for his wife and son and put them up at different places, saying that he was ready to offer ten strings of cash as a reward for those who could notify him of his wife's whereabouts.

One day Huang Jie went out of the town. After several *li*'s walk, he happened to pass at Li San's house. At the moment, Li San, standing in front of his house, was having fun with the boy in his arms. Looking closely at the boy, Huang Jie realized that this boy was none other than his own son. "This boy is my son," said Huang Jie sternly. "Why is he in your arms? Where has my wife gone?" Li San replied, "I found this boy in a growth of grass. How should I know your wife?" Huang Jie said, "My wife is missing. I've put up many notices to locate her. How could it possible you don't know about it?" Li San explained, "I only found this child. I'm not aware of the other things you mentioned just now." Seizing Li San, Huang Jie started to cry about his grievances, and this created a sensation in the village. Li San's neighbors and the local authorities all moved over and gathered around them. Huang Jie told everyone the course of the incident. The neighbors said to Huang Jie, "It is true Li San has never got a son of his own. We were all impressed by the boy's dubious background when Li San brought him home. As a matter of fact, we didn't know he is your son." Huang Jie said, "My son is now in his hands. My wife is still missing. He must have abducted my wife too." The neighbors said, "This we don't know."



道。”李三发极道：“我那见甚么娘子？那日草地上只见得这个孩子在那里哭，我抱了回家。今既是押司的，我认了悔气还你罢了，怎的还要赖我甚么娘子？”黄节道：“放你娘的屁！是我赖你？我现有招贴在外。你这个奸徒，我当官与你说话！”对众人道：“有烦列位与我带一带，带到县里来。事关着拐骗良家子女，是你地方邻里的干系，不要走了人。”李三道：“我没甚欺心事，随你去见官，自有明白。一世也不走！”黄节随同了众人，押了李三，抱了儿子，一直到县里来。

黄节写了纸状词，把上项事一一禀告县官。县官审问李三，李三只说：“路遇孩子，抱了归来是实，并不知别项情由。”县官道：“胡说！他家不见了两个人，一个在你家了，这一个又在那里？这样奸诈，不打不招！”遂把李三上起刑法来，打得一佛出世，二佛生天，只不肯招。那县里有与黄节的一般吏典二十多个，多护着吏典行里体面，一齐来跪禀县官，求他严行根究。县官又把李三重加敲打。李三当不过，只得屈招道：“因为家中无子，见黄节妻抱了儿子在那里，把来杀了，盗了他儿子回来。今被捉获，情愿就死。”县官又问：“尸首今在何处？”李三道：“恐怕人看见，抛在江中了。”县官录了口词，取了供状，问成罪名，下在死囚牢中了。分付当案孔目，做成招状，只等写完文卷，就行解府定夺。孔目又为着黄节，把李三狱情做得没些漏洞。



Flying into a rage, Li San shouted, "I never saw your wife. I only saw this boy crying there in the grass and I took him home. Now that you've claimed to be the father of this boy, I'm ready to swallow my rotten luck. How can you make up a story against me by saying I've abducted your wife?" Huang Jie retorted, "What crap! You adulterer! Let's go to court!" Turning to the neighbors and the village head, he continued, "Could you give me a hand and take him to the county *yamen*? He is a kidnapper. We mustn't let him run away! Otherwise, none of you can escape responsibility." Li San said, "I did no evil deeds. I'll follow you to the county *yamen* to see the magistrate and the whole thing will be out in the open. I will not run away!" Carrying his son in his arms, Huang Jie, along with all the others, escorted Li San to the county *yamen*.

Huang Jie lodged a complaint against Li San in the county court. When questioned by the County Magistrate, Li San said, "It is true I came across this boy on my way and I brought him to my home. As regards Huang's wife, I do not have the least inkling of her whereabouts." "You're talking rot!" shouted the County Magistrate. "Two people got lost in the Huang family. The boy was found in your home. Where could the other one be? You trickster! You won't admit to it if I do not put you to torture!" Half beaten to death though, Li San refused to plead guilty.

About twenty county officials in the *yamen*, all of them being on good terms with Huang Jie, prostrated themselves before the County Magistrate and entreated him to make a thorough investigation of the matter. Again the County Magistrate subjected Li San to more savage torture. Unable to put up with the torments, Li San admitted to the false charge, saying, "I've got no son, so I killed Huang's wife and took her son away when I saw her standing there with her son. Now that you've got me, I'm willing to die." "Where did you leave her corpse?" asked the County Magistrate. Li San answered, "I threw it into the river." The County Magistrate took down his confession and sentenced him to death. Then Li San was put into the death house. Before Li San was sent to the prefecture under escort for the final judgment, the County Magistrate ordered the clerks in charge of files to make the document of Li San's confession. The clerks were also Huang Jie's friends. So they played tricks in recording Li San's case



其时乃是绍兴十九年八月二十九日，文卷已完，狱中取出李三解府。系是杀人重犯，上了镣肘，戴了木枷，跪在庭下，专听点名起解。忽然阴云四合，空中雷电交加，李三身上枷扭尽行脱落。霹雳一声，掌案孔目震死在堂上；二十多个吏典，头上吏巾皆被雷风掣去。县官惊得浑身打颤。须臾性定，叫把孔目身尸验看，背上有朱红写的“李三狱冤”四个篆字。县官便叫李三问时，李三兀自痴痴地立着，一似失了魂的。听得呼叫，然后答应出来。县官问道：“你身上枷扭，适才怎么样解了的？”李三道：“小人眼前昏黑，犹如梦里一般，更不知一些甚么。不晓得身上枷扭，怎地脱了。”县官明知此事有冤，遂问李三道：“你前日孩子果是怎生的？”李三道：“实实不知谁人遗下在草地上啼哭，小人不忍，抱了回家。至于黄节夫妻之事，小人并不知道。是受刑不过屈招的。”县官此时又惊又悔，道：“今日看起来，果然与你无干。”当时遂把李三释放，叫黄节与同差人别行寻缉李四娘下落。后来毕竟在别处地方寻获。



so as to make it appear as flawless as possible.

It was on August 29, the nineteenth year of the Shaoxing reign (1131-1163) of the Southern Song Dynasty. When the document was done, Li San was brought out of the death house and taken to the court. Getting down onto his knees, he waited to be escorted to the *yamen* of the prefecture. Being regarded as a murderer, Li San was set to a heavy yoke and fetters. When the County Magistrate was about to give the order of sending him to the *yamen* of the prefecture, dark clouds suddenly gathered over their heads and flashes of lightning shot across the sky accompanied by peals of thunder. The yoke and fetters fell apart themselves. The chief clerk was struck dead by a thunderbolt. The turbans on the heads of the twenty *yamen* officials were blown away. The County Magistrate trembled with terror. After a while, the County Magistrate pulled himself together and asked the officials to examine the body of the chief clerk. Four seal characters written in red ink were found on the back of the chief clerk, reading "Li San Is Wronged."

Frightened out of his wits, Li San stood there still. Because he was transfixed with horror, he didn't hear the County Magistrate's question until the County Magistrate's voice grew louder. The County Magistrate asked, "How come the yoke and fetters on you suddenly fell off?" Li San answered, "Just now I was thrown into utter darkness. I felt as if I was in a dream. I knew nothing. I don't know why the yoke and fetters on me suddenly fell off."

Knowing perfectly that Li San had been wronged, the County Magistrate asked, "How the devil did you get that boy the other day?" Li San replied, "To be honest, I really don't know who abandoned that boy in the grass. When I met him, he was crying his eyes out. I couldn't have the heart to leave him alone there, so I took him home. As regards Huang Jie's wife, I'm completely in the dark. I admitted to it only because I could no longer bear the torture." Upon hearing this, the County Magistrate was both amazed and repentant. He said, "Now it appears you're really innocent." Instantly, the County Magistrate ordered to set Li San free and told the officials to help Huang Jie hunt for Li Siniang in other regions. As it turned out later, Li Siniang was finally found in some other place.



方知天下事，专在疑似之间冤枉了人。这个李三，若非雷神显灵，险些儿没辨白处了。

而今说着国朝一个人，也为妻子随人走了，冤着一个邻舍往来的，几乎累死，后来却得明白。与大庾这件事有些仿佛，待小子慢慢说来，便知端的。

佳期误泄桑中约，好事讹牵月下绳。

只解推原平日状，岂知局外有翻更。

话说北直张家湾有个居民，姓徐，名德，本身在城上做长班。有妻莫大姐，生得大有容色，且是兴高好酒，醉后就要趁着风势，撩拨男子汉，说话勾搭。邻舍有个杨二郎，也是风月场中人，年少风流，闲荡游耍过日，没甚根基。与莫大姐终日调情，你贪我爱，弄上了手，外边人无不知道。虽是莫大姐平日也还有个把梯己人往来，总不如与杨二郎过得恩爱。况且徐德在衙门里走动，常有个月期程不在家里，杨二郎一发便当，竟像夫妻一般过日。

后来徐德挣得家事从容了，衙门中寻了替身，不消得日日出去，每有时节歇息在家里，渐渐把杨二郎与莫大姐光景看了些出来。细访邻里街坊，也多有三三两两说话。徐德一日对莫大姐道：“咱辛辛苦苦了半世，挣得有碗饭吃了，也要装些体面，



Indeed, doubts and suspicions always do people wrong! Hadn't the God of Thunder manifested its power, Li San would have been treated unjustly.

* * *

Here I'd like to tell you a story of another man from our Ming Dynasty. This man's wife eloped with someone too. A neighbor was unfortunately implicated in this affair. But in the end the truth was brought to light. This story is similar with the one happened in Dayu County. Now I'd like to have your patience.

Divulging her secret plan by mistake when making love in drunkenness,
The wife elopes with the wrong lover in a daze.

Drawing conclusions only according to affairs on ordinary days,

The husband never expects it will be a new story.

Once there was a man named Xu De who lived in Zhangjiawan in Northern Zhili (present-day Beijing area). He worked as an assistant in the town government office. His wife, Sister Mo, was a rather pretty and attractive woman. She loved to drink and tended to flirt with men after she became drunk. Their next-door neighbor was a lecherous young man called Second Brother Yang, who whiled away his days and did nothing to pursue a career. He carried on an affair with Sister Mo, which later became known to everyone. Though Sister Mo was also interested in other men, Second Brother Yang was the one who most caught her fancy. Moreover, Xu De was busy with his government work and often stayed away from home for a month or so at a time. So Second Brother Yang had plenty of opportunities to be with Sister Mo. Later they even lived together as if they were husband and wife.

Later on Xu De earned enough money to ease his family budget. Accordingly he found an occasional replacement for himself at work and so he didn't need to show up regularly at the government office. As the length of his stay at home increased, he gradually discovered his wife's affair with Second Brother Yang, which was further confirmed by his neighbors' remarks.

One day Xu De said to Sister Mo, "We've worked hard during the first half of our lives to establish ourselves financially. Now we should be cautious and behave decently so as not to be laughed at by others." Sister



不要被外人笑话便好。”莫大姐道：“有甚笑话？”徐德道：“钟不扣不鸣，鼓不打不响。欲人不知，莫若不为。你做的事，外边那一个不说的？你瞒咱则甚？咱叫你今后仔细些罢了。”莫大姐被丈夫道着海底眼，虽然撒娇撒痴，说了几句支吾门面说话，却自想平日忒做得渗濼，晓得瞒不过了，不好十分强辨得。暗地忖道：“我与杨二郎交好，情同夫妻，时刻也间不得的。今被丈夫知道，必然防备得紧，怎得象意？不如私下与他商量，卷了些家财，同他逃了，去他州外府，自由自在的快活，岂不是好？”藏在心中。

一日，看见徐德出去，便约了杨二郎，密商此事。杨二郎道：“我此间又没甚牵带，大姐肯同我去，要走就走。只是到外边去，须要有些本钱，才好养得口活。”莫大姐道：“我把家里细软尽数卷了去，怕不也过几时！等住定身子，慢慢生发做活就是。”杨二郎道：“这个就好了。一面收拾起来，得便再商量走道儿罢了。”莫大姐道：“说与你了。待我看着机会，拣个日子，悄悄约你走路。你不要走漏了消息。”杨二郎道：“知道。”两个趁空处又做了一点点事，千分万付而去。

徐德归来几日，看见莫大姐神思撩乱，心不在焉的光景，又访知杨二郎仍来走动，恨着道：“等我一时撞着了，怕不斫



Mo retorted, "Why do they laugh at us?" Xu De answered, "The bell needs striking to toll, and the drum will not sound without beating. The only way to keep your deed secret is not to perform it at all. Who does not know what you've been doing in the neighborhood? Why have you not been honest with me on this point? I'm just giving you a warning." With her husband talking directly about her affair, Sister Mo could no longer cover it up by showing her wife-like indulgence and ignorance of it. Though she hemmed and hawed, she understood that she had been rather unscrupulous in the affair and it was impossible to keep her husband from knowing about it. She did not deny it openly, but thought to herself, "I'm truly in love with Second Brother Yang, as intimately as if we were husband and wife. Now our affair has been discovered by my husband. For this reason, he will watch me more closely. How will we be able to keep up our relationship as before? I should talk to my love. We can take some of the family property and elope together to another prefecture to live a free and happy life. That is a marvelous idea." She secretly kept this idea in mind.

One day when Xu De was out, she met Second Brother Yang and talked with him about her idea. Second Brother Yang said, "I have nothing to worry about. If you, sister, want to escape with me, I am willing to do so at any moment. The problem is that we need money to feed ourselves after we leave our homes." Sister Mo said, "I'll seize all the valuables in my household and I'm sure they will provide us with a living for some time. After settling down in some place, we will manage to find a way to make a living one way or another." Second Brother Yang said, "Alright. We should get prepared and decide later on the date to flee." Sister Mo said, "I'll wait for an opportunity and schedule a date of departure with you. Don't let anybody know about it." Second Brother Yang replied, "I understand." They did not miss the chance to make the most of being together, before they vowed to each other to carry out the plan, and then they separated.

A few days later, Xu De came back home. When he found that his wife was absent-minded and restless, he made inquiries and learned that her lover had been with her again. Burning with indignation, Xu De



他做两段！”莫大姐听见，私下教人递信与杨二郎：“目下切不要到门前来露影。”自此杨二郎不敢到徐家左近来。莫大姐切切在心，只思量和他那里去了便好。已此心不在徐家，只碍着丈夫一个是眼中钉了。

大凡女人心一野，自然七颠八倒，如痴如呆，有头没脑，说着东边，认着西边，没情没绪的。况且杨二郎又不得来，茶里饭里多是他，想也想痴了。因是闷得不耐烦，问了丈夫，同了邻舍两三个妇女们约了，要到岳庙里烧一炷香。此时徐德晓得这婆娘不长进，不该放他出去才是。却是北人直性，心里道：“这几时拘系得紧了，看他恍恍惚惚，莫不生出病来？便等他外边去散散。”北方风俗，女人出去只是自行，男子自有勾当，不大肯跟随走的。当下莫大姐自同一伙女伴，带了纸马酒盒，抬着轿，飘飘逸逸的出门去了。只因此一去，有分交：

闺中佚女，竟留烟月之场；枕上情人，险作圈套之鬼。

直待海清终见底，方今盆覆得还光。

且说齐化门外有一个倬峭的子弟，姓郁，名盛。生性淫荡，立心刁钻，专一不守本分，勾搭良家妇女。又喜讨人便宜，做那昧心短行的事。他与莫大姐是姑舅之亲，一向往来。两下多有些意思，只是不曾得便，未上得手。郁盛心里道是一桩欠事，时常记念的。一日在自己门前闲立，只见几乘女轿抬过。他窥



murmured to himself, "Once I catch him, I will break him in two!" Sister Mo detected her husband's rage. So, she sent a message to Second Brother Yang, telling him, "Don't come to my home at the present time." Thus Second Brother Yang dared not to meet her in her house. Sister Mo waited while constantly thinking about her flight with her lover. She did not care about her home, and her husband became nothing but a thorn in her flesh.

When women are involved in amorous relationships, they tend to lose their minds, getting infatuated and talking wildly. With Second Brother Yang out of sight, Sister Mo was constantly tormented by thoughts of him. Hence she was deeply caught with annoyance and obsession. However, she got her husband's approval to go on an arranged trip with a few neighboring women to burn joss sticks at the Temple of Mount Tai.

Since Xu De knew his wife was not virtuous, he should not have agreed. However, he was open-hearted as all northerners were. He thought, "I've been watching her closely and I find her often in a daze. Maybe she's sick. Let her go for a release of tension." According to the conventions of north China, a husband would let his wife go alone on a trip while he took care of business at home. Therefore Sister Mo set out in a sedan chair with her women friends, carrying with them sacrificial offerings such as food, wine, paper money and paper horses. But her departure was to become a turning point in her life: It was a stroke of fate that a beautiful woman would be cast into a brothel, and a bed-sharing lover would narrowly escape death in prison. But in the end the truth of the whole matter was brought to light.

Outside of Qihuamen Gate there lived a tall and handsome man named Yu Sheng. Full of salacious and sinful thoughts, he observed no code of honor, but seduced many chaste and pretty ladies from good families. He also liked to engage in immoral acts, such as procuring petty gains from others. He and Sister Mo were cousins and, because of this, they kept close contact. Though they were attracted to one another, they had not had a chance to start an affair. However, Yu Sheng felt sorry for himself because of this, so he never let her drop from his mind.

By chance he was idling about one day in front of his house when he saw several sedan chairs go by. He peered stealthily into one of them and



头探脑去看那轿里抬的女眷，恰好轿帘隙处，认得是徐家的莫大姐。看了轿上挂着纸钱，晓得是岳庙进香；又有闲的挑着盒担，乃是女眷们游耍吃酒的。想道：“我若厮赶着他们去闲荡一番，不过插得些寡趣，落得个眼饱，没有实味。况有别人家女眷在里头，便插趣也有好些不便。不若我整治些酒馔在此，等莫大姐转来。我是亲眷人家，邀他进来打个中火，没人说得。亦且莫大姐尽是贪杯高兴，十分有情的，必不推拒。那时趁着酒兴营勾他，不怕他不成这事。好计，好计。”即时奔往闹热胡同，只拣可口的鱼肉荤肴，榛松细果，买了偌多，撮弄得齐齐整整。正是：

安排扑鼻芳香饵，专等鲸鲵来上钩。

却说莫大姐同了一班女伴，到庙里烧过了香，各处去游耍。挑了酒盒，野地上随着好坐处，即便摆着吃酒。女眷们多不十分大饮，无非吃下三数杯。晓得莫大姐量好，多来劝他。莫大姐并不推辞，拿起杯来就吃就干，把带来的酒吃得罄尽，已有了七八分酒意。天色将晚，然后收拾家伙，上轿抬回。

回至郁家门前，郁盛瞧见，忙至莫大姐轿前施礼道：“此是小人家下，大姐途中口渴了，可进里面告奉一茶。”莫大姐醉眼朦胧，见了郁盛是表亲，又是平日调得情惯的，忙叫住轿。走出轿来，与郁盛万福道：“元来哥哥住在这里？”郁盛笑容满面道：“请大姐里面坐一坐去。”莫大姐带着酒意，踉踉跄跄的跟了进门。别家女轿，晓得徐家轿子有亲眷留住，各自先去



caught a glimpse of Sister Mo as the curtain flapped open. He noticed the paper money hanging from the sedan chair and servants carrying boxes on shoulder poles. He realized that the ladies were heading for the Temple of Mount Tai to offer incense and to have a picnic with wine. He pondered, "If I go with them, I will see a lot of her, but that will be the most I can achieve. It will not be much fun. I won't be able to do anything with her. Moreover, the other ladies are around and I will have to restrain myself from making advances. I'd better fix some food and wine here and wait for her. As I am her relative, nobody will be suspicious if I invite her to come in for dinner on her way back home.. Sister Mo loves drink and fun and I know she has some amorous feelings toward me. She will never reject me. I will first arouse her with wine and I'm sure I can make it. Excellent idea! Excellent idea!" Immediately he ran to the market and purchased plenty of good fish, meat, hazelnuts and some other fruit. He then prepared these in a clean, neat fashion. It was just like that the fragrant fishing bait was ready for the fish to bite.

Sister Mo arrived with the ladies at the temple. After burning incense, they strolled around. Then they sat down on the ground in a wild clearing and took out the wine for a picnic. The women drank moderately three or four cups of wine. But they all knew that Sister Mo was a good drinker, so they pressed her to take more. Sister Mo lightheartedly accepted their urge to drink more, downing one cup after another. After the wine was all gone, she was close to drunkenness. Darkness was falling, so they collected their belongings and got into the sedan chairs to go home.

At the sight of the ladies passing by his house, Yu Sheng raced to Sister Mo's sedan chair and said in greeting, "Here's my humble home, Elder Sister. I think you must be thirsty on your tour. Please come in and have some tea." With only dim vision because of her intoxication, Sister Mo recognized Yu Sheng as her relative and the one with whom she had flirted a great deal before. So she immediately called for a stop. She dismounted from the sedan chair, did a courtesy and said to him, "I didn't know you lived here, Brother." With all smiles, Yu Sheng said, "Please come in and have a rest, Elder Sister." Sister Mo got inside in a staggering way. The other ladies knew that Sister Mo was stopping at her relative's



了。徐家的轿夫住在门口等候。莫大姐进得门来，郁盛邀至一间房中，只见酒果肴馔摆得满桌。莫大姐道：“甚么道理，要哥哥这们价费心？”郁盛道：“难得大姐在此经过，一杯淡酒，聊表寸心而已。”郁盛是有意的，特地不令一个人来伏侍，只是一身陪着，自己斟酒，极尽殷勤相劝。正是：

茶为花博士，酒是色媒人。

莫大姐本是已有酒的，更加郁盛慢橹摇船捉醉鱼，觑觑着面庞，央求不过，又吃了许多。酒力发作，乜斜了双眼，淫兴勃然，倒来丢眼色，说风话。郁盛挨在身边同坐了，将着一杯酒，你呷半口，我呷半口，又噙了一口，勾着脖子，度将过去。莫大姐接来，咽下去了，就把舌头伸过口来。郁盛咂了一回，彼此春心荡漾，偎抱到床中，褪下小衣，弄将起来。

一个醉后掀腾，一个醒中摩弄。醉的如迷花之梦蝶，醒的似采蕊之狂蜂。醉的一味兴浓，担承愈勇；醒的半兼趣胜，玩视偏真。此贪彼爱不同情，你醉我醒皆妙境。两人战到间深之处，莫大姐不胜乐畅，口里哼哼的道：“我二哥，亲亲的肉。我一心待你，只要同你一处去快活了罢。我家天杀的不知趣，又来拘管人，怎如得二哥这等亲热有趣！”说罢，将腰下乱颠乱耸，紧紧抱住郁盛不放，口里只叫：“二哥亲亲。”

元来莫大姐醉得极了，但知快活异常，神思昏迷，忘其所以。真个“醉里醒时言”，又道是“酒道真性”。平时心上恋恋



place, and so they continued their trip home, leaving Sister Mo's sedan chair bearers waiting outside the gate.

Sister Mo was led into a room where she saw a table covered with wine, food and dry fruit. She said to Second Brother Yang, "I don't understand why you bothered to get such a feast prepared." Yu Sheng replied, "You rarely come here, Elder Sister. It's just an ordinary meal that I am presenting to you as a token of my hospitality." Intentionally wishing to have the two of them left alone, Yu Sheng waited on her personally. He poured the wine and treated her attentively. An old saying goes, "Tea enhances the beauty of flowers while wine stirs amorous desires."

Sister Mo had been in a drunken stupor before she arrived. Now Yu Sheng kept pushing more drink on her, as if he were quietly rowing a boat to catch a drowsy fish. She turned red but had to consume the drinks repeatedly offered to her. Wholly overwhelmed by intoxication, she felt the surge of her desire. Looking askance at him, she began to pass lustful glances at him and to utter obscene expressions. Yu Sheng took a seat by her side and offered her yet another drink. She took half a sip before he took a sip. Then, holding some wine in his mouth, Yu Sheng craned his neck over toward her, as Sister Mo leaned forward to take the wine from his mouth and gulp it down. After that she stuck out her tongue while he sucked it. The heat of sexual desire caught them completely, as they hugged and made their way into bed. There they undressed and made love.

One of them took up the act vigorously in drunken dizziness, while the other performed in merry soberness; dizzily she moved like a butterfly who had lost her way among flowers, and soberly he went at her like a bee gathering honey from a stamen; her passion remained high in drowsy excitement, while his enjoyment came with a tinge of frivolity; though the love continued with different sentiments, they reached a convergence of gratification.

At the peak of their lovemaking, Sister Mo in extreme passion moaned and said, "Sweetie, Second Brother! You're the only one I love. I'm longing to fly away with you to enjoy ourselves! My wretched husband is not as interesting as you, yet he keeps close watch over me. Oh, Second Brother, you are far more tender to me!" As she said this, she wiggled her



的是杨二郎，恍恍惚惚竟把郁盛错认。干事的是郁盛，说的话多是对杨二郎的话。郁盛原晓得杨二郎与他相厚的，明明是醉里认差了。郁盛道：“叵耐这浪淫妇，你只记得心上人，我且将计就计，诳他说话，看他说甚么来。”就接口道：“我怎生得同你一处去快活？”莫大姐道：“我前日与你说的，收拾了些家私，和你别处去过活。一向不得空便。今秋分之日，那天杀的进城上去，有那衙门里勾当。我与你趁那晚走了罢。”郁盛道：“走不脱却怎么？”莫大姐道：“你端正下船儿，一搬下船，连夜摇了去。等他城上出来知得，已此赶不着了。”郁盛道：“夜晚间把甚么为暗号？”莫大姐道：“你只在门外拍拍手掌，我里头自接应你。我打点停当好几时了，你不要错过！”口里糊糊涂涂，又说好些，总不过肉麻说话。郁盛只拣那几句要紧的，记得明明白白在心。

须臾云收雨散，莫大姐整一整头髻，头眩眼花的走下床来。郁盛先此已把酒饭与轿夫吃过了，叫他来打着轿，搀扶莫大姐上轿去了。郁盛回来，道是占了采头，心中欢喜。却又得了他心腹里的话，笑道：“诧异！诧异！那知他要与杨二郎逃走，尽把相约的事，对我说了。又认我做了杨二郎，你道好笑么？我如今将错就错，顾下了船，到那晚剪他这辮，落得载他娘在别处去，受用几时，有何不可？”郁盛是个不学好的人，



hips, hugging Yu Sheng, then murmured, “My dear, Second Brother.”

Sister Mo was drunk but very excited. In her dizziness she couldn’t tell exactly who she was with. It was a matter of “uttering thoughts in drunkenness” or “telling truth upon drinking.” She loved Second Brother Yang. But now she mistook Yu Sheng for Second Brother Yang in her drunkenness and was airing her mind to her present partner. Yu Sheng had heard about her affair with Second Brother Yang and knew she was now confused because of her drunkenness. He thought to himself, “You bitch, you only keep your sweetie in your mind! I’ll take advantage of that and coax her secrets from her.” He then said to her, “How can we escape and enjoy ourselves?” Sister Mo replied, “As I told you the other day, we will take his valuables with us and run to another place to live a happy life. It’s been hard for us to get a chance. On the day of the autumnal equinox that louse of a husband will go to town on his government business. Let’s take off that night.” Yu Sheng then asked, “How can we get away?” Sister Mo said, “You can row a boat down there and then we can move the things into the boat. We’ll leave at night. It will be too late when he returns from town and learns about it.” Yu Sheng said, “Should we have a secret signal on that night?” Sister Mo said, “Just clap your hands outside and I’ll come out to meet you. I’ll get ready and wait for you. Don’t forget it.” After that she murmured many more lewd expressions than sensible words. Yu Sheng picked up those important words and bore them in mind.

Soon they finished. Sister Mo adjusted her hairpins and lurched off the bed. Yu Sheng called on the sedan-chair carriers, who earlier had been treated to dinner, to help her into the sedan chair and she went off. Yu Sheng went back into the house. Delighted with his good luck, Yu Sheng was very happy with his good time he had had as well as the secret plan she had told him about. He smiled and said to himself, “Marvelous, marvelous! I was surprised to hear about her intention to elope with Second Brother Yang. She took me for Second Brother Yang by mistake. Isn’t that interesting? Now I’ll take advantage of her confusion and rent a boat. On the designated night I’ll take her away to another place and enjoy her for some time. Won’t that be wonderful?” As a rouge, Yu Sheng secretly



正挠着他的痒处，以为得计。一面料理船只，只等到期行事，不在话下。

且说莫大姐归家，次日病了一日酒，昨日到郁家之事，犹如梦里，多不十分记得。只依稀影响，认做已约定杨二郎日子过了。收拾停当，只待起身。岂知杨二郎处虽曾说过两番，晓得有这个意思，反不曾精细叮咛得，不做整备的。

到了秋分这夜，夜已二鼓，莫大姐在家里等候消息。只听得外边拍手响，莫大姐心照，也拍拍手。开门出去，黑影中见一个人在那里拍手，心里道是杨二郎了。急回身进去，将衣囊箱笼逐件递出，那人一件件接了，安顿在船中。莫大姐恐怕有人瞧见，不敢用火，将房中灯打灭了，虚锁了房门，黑里走出。那人扶了上船，如飞把船开了。船中两个多是低声细语，况是慌张之际，莫大姐只认是杨二郎，急切辨不出来。莫大姐失张失志，历碌了一日，下得船才心安，倦将起来，不及做甚么事。说得一两句话，那人又不十分回答。莫大姐放倒头，和衣就睡着了去。

比及天明，已在潞河，离家有百十里了。撑开眼来，看那舱里同坐的人不是杨二郎，却正是齐化门外的郁盛。莫大姐吃了一惊，道：“如何却是你？”郁盛笑道：“那日大姐在岳庙归来，途中到家下小酌，承大姐不弃，赐与欢会。是大姐亲口约



rejoiced at his gain. He made arrangements for the boat and waited for the arrival of that day.

Meanwhile Sister Mo returned home overpowered by the effect of the wine until the following day. As if she had awoken from a dream, she could hardly recall accurately what had happened the previous night in Yu Sheng's place, except for some dim memory of her telling Second Brother Yang about the date of elopement. Hence she got things ready and waited. Second Brother Yang, however, was not aware of Sister Mo's scheduled date of departure, though she had earlier told him a couple of times about her intention of fleeing with him.

After the second watch on the night of the autumnal equinox, Sister Mo, who had been waiting at home, heard the clapping of hands outside. She clapped her hands in reply, then opened the door and went out. Seeing a man faintly out there in the dark, she thought it was Second Brother Yang. She dashed back into her room and brought everything out of her wardrobe and packed her suitcases, while the man received one piece after another and put them into the boat. Worried about being discovered, she did not use a light outside the room. She put out the light in her room, locked the door and went over to the boat in darkness. The man supported her as she got on board and then the boat immediately started to move. Hastily the two of them whispered to each other. Sister Mo thought she was with Second Brother Yang. She couldn't recognize the man as he did not show his face clearly in the dark. After one day's urgent preparation for the trip, Sister Mo was finally at rest upon getting into the boat. Exhausted, she could not do anything. She tried to talk to the man but received only a taciturn reply. So she lay down and went to sleep with her clothes on.

When morning arrived, they were already on the Luohe River, about one hundred *li* away from home. Sister Mo woke up and saw that the man sitting in the boat with her was not Second Brother Yang but Yu Sheng from outside Qihuamen Gate. Stunned, she asked him, "Why are you here with me?" With a smile, Yu Sheng replied, "Elder Sister, you came to my home after your visit to the temple the other day, and had a drink with me. I appreciate your kindness in giving me the opportunity to have



下我的，如何倒吃惊起来？”莫大姐呆了一回，仔细一想，才省起前日在他家吃酒，酒中淫媾之事。后来想是错认，把真话告诉了来。醒来记差，只说是约下杨二郎了，岂知错约了他。今事已至此，说不得了，只得随他去。只是怎生发付杨二郎呵？因问道：“而今随着哥哥到那里去才好？”郁盛道：“临清是个大马头去处，我有个主人在那里。我与你那边去住了，寻生意做。我两个一窝儿作伴，岂不快活？”莫大姐道：“我衣囊里尽有些本钱，哥哥要营运时，足可生发度日的。”郁盛道：“这个最好。”从此莫大姐竟同郁盛到临清去了。

话分两头。且说徐德衙门公事已毕，回到家里，家里悄没一人，箱笼什物，皆已搬空。徐德骂道：“这歪刺姑，一定跟得奸夫走了！”问一问邻舍，邻舍道：“小娘子一个夜里不知去向，第二日我们看见门是锁的了，不晓得里面虚实。你老人家自想着，无过是平日有往来的人约的去。”徐德道：“有甚么难见处，料只在杨二郎家里！”邻舍道：“这猜得着，我们也是这般说。”徐德道：“小人平日家丑，须瞒列位不得。今日做出事来，眼见得是杨二郎的缘故。这事少不得要经官，有烦两位做一做见证。而今小人先到杨家去问一问下落，与他闹一场则个。”邻舍道：“这事情那一个不知道的？到官时，我们自然讲出公道来。”徐德道：“有劳！有劳！”

当下一忿之气，奔到杨二郎家里。恰好杨二郎走出来，徐德一把扭住道：“你把我家媳妇子拐在那里去藏过了？”杨二



a good time with you. You personally told me about our departure. Why are you surprised?"

Dumbfounded for a while, Sister Mo slowly recollected that night she had drunk in his home and made love with him. She thought, "Probably I mistook him for my lover and told him of my thoughts." Now she woke up and found that she had scheduled the elopement with Yu Sheng instead of her lover Second Brother Yang. Now she realized she couldn't undo the matter. She could only go with him. "But," she thought, "what will I later say to Second Brother Yang?" She then said to Yu Sheng, "Where shall we go, Brother?" Yu Sheng answered, "Linqing is a big port. I have a friend there so we can settle in that place and start a business. We'll live together. Don't you think we'll have a good life?" Sister Mo said, "I've got a large sum of money with me. That should start you in business." Yu Sheng replied, "Excellent." Thus Sister Mo went with Yu Sheng to Linqing.

Now let's now pick up another thread of the story. Xu De returned home after finishing his business to find the room stripped of all its contents. He swore, "That bitch must have gone with the adulterer!" He checked with his neighbors. They said, "The lady disappeared at night. The following day we saw the door was locked and did not know what had happened inside. You might think about the matter, it must be a man who has seen her a lot in the past that has taken her away." Xu De said, "Isn't it very clear? She must be at the home of Second Brother Yang." The neighbors said, "Yes, we would guess so too." Xu De then said, "The disgrace to my family is no news to you. Now she's disappeared. It's unquestionably because of Second Brother Yang. This matter has to be settled in court. I would appreciate it if you would appear in court as witnesses. Now I'm going to find Second Brother Yang and argue with him." The neighbors said, "Who does not know their affair? When you need us in court, we'll surely put in a good word for you." Xu De replied, "I will appreciate that."

Soon Xu De angrily raced to the home of Second Brother Yang, when Yang was coming out of the house. Xu De grabbed him and said, "Where did you take my wife?" Second Brother Yang knew nothing about what had happened, but Sister Mo had been constantly on his mind. As the



郎虽不曾做这事，却是曾有这话关着心的，骤然闻得，老大吃惊。口里嚷道：“我那知这事，却来嫌我？”徐德道：“街坊上那一个不晓得你营勾了我媳妇子？你还要赖哩，我与你见官去。还我人来！”杨二郎道：“不知你家嫂子几时不见了？我好耿耿在家里，却来问我要人。就见官，我不相干。”徐德那听他分说，只是拖住了交付与地方，一同送到城上兵马司来。

徐德衙门情熟，为他的多。兵马司先把杨二郎下在铺里。次日徐德就将奸拐事情，在巡城察院衙门告将下来，批与兵马司严究。兵马审问杨二郎，杨二郎初时只推无干。徐德拉同地方，众口证他有奸。兵马喝叫加上刑法，杨二郎熬不过，只得招出平日通奸往来是实。兵马道：“奸情既真，自然是你拐藏了！”杨二郎道：“只是平日有奸，逃去一事，委实与小的无涉。”兵马又唤地方与徐德问道：“他妻子莫氏还有别个奸夫么？”徐德道：“并无别人，只有杨二郎奸稔是真。”地方也说道：“邻里中也只晓杨二郎是奸夫，别一个不见说起。”兵马喝杨二郎道：“这等，还要强辨！你实说，拐来藏在那里？”杨二郎道：“其实不在小的处，小的知他在那里？”兵马大怒，喝叫重重夹起，必要他说。杨二郎只得又招道：“曾与小的商量，要一同逃去，这说话是有的。小的不曾应承，故此未约得定。



news exploded on him, he was shocked and said, "I absolutely know nothing about it. How can you accuse me?" Xu De said, "Who in this neighborhood does not know that you have an affair with my wife? But you're denying it. Let's go to court! You must give me back my wife!" Second Brother Yang said, "I have no idea where your wife has gone. I've stayed at home and done nothing related to her. Why are you asking me about her and taking me to court? I have nothing to do with her." Not listening to him, Xu De seized Second Brother Yang and turned him over to the local authorities. Then he was taken to the department of the garrison.

Xu De had many connections and got a lot of help from the *yamen*. The head of the department of the garrison put Second Brother Yang into custody. The next day Xu De had his indictment of Second Brother Yang granted from the prefecture's department of inspection. The department of the garrison was authorized to examine the case. The head of the garrison interrogated Second Brother Yang. At first Second Brother Yang denied any relation to the missing of Sister Mo. Xu De and the neighbors all gave their testimony of his illicit relationship with her. The head of the garrison ordered that he be tortured. Second Brother Yang could not stand it, so he admitted to the adultery he had committed with Sister Mo over a long time. The head of the garrison then said, "If the adultery is true, you must have taken her away." Second Brother Yang said, "Though I participated in adultery, I really have no knowledge of her disappearance."

The head of the garrison then asked Xu De, "Does your wife have another lover?" Xu De said, "No. Second Brother Yang is the only one she has kept." The local authorities also said, "He is her lover, and this is known to everybody in the neighborhood." The head of the garrison then shouted at Second Brother Yang, "Do you still want to deny the facts? You must tell the truth. Where have you hidden her?" Second Brother Yang insisted, "She is not in my place. How can I know where she is now?" Flying into a rage, the head of the garrison shouted, "Clamp him up! Make him confess." Second Brother Yang had to confess, "She talked to me about our fleeing together. This is true. But we did not schedule a time. Now I don't have any idea where she has gone." The head of the garrison said, "Since you talked together about fleeing, you must have



而今却不知怎的不见了。”兵马道：“既然曾商量同逃，而今走了，自然知情。他无非私下藏过，只图混赖一时，背地里却去奸宿。我如今收在监中，三日、五日一比，看你藏得到底不成！”遂把杨二郎监下，隔几日就带出鞠问一番。杨二郎只是一般说话，招不出人来。徐德又时时来催禀，不过做杨二郎屁股不着，打得些屈棒，毫无头绪。杨二郎正是俗语所云：

从前作事，没兴齐来。

乌狗吃食，白狗当灾。

杨二郎当不过屈打，也将霹诬枉禁事情在上司告下来，提到别衙门去问。却是徐德家里实实没了人，奸情又招是真的，不好出脱得他。有矜疑他的，教他出了招帖，许下赏钱，募人缉访。然是十个人内倒有九个说杨二郎藏过了是真的，那个说一声其中有冤枉？此亦是杨二郎淫人妻女应受的果报。

女色从来是祸胎，奸淫谁不惹非灾？

虽然逃去浑无涉，亦岂无端受枉来！

且不说这边杨二郎受累，累年不决的事。再表郁盛自那日载了莫大姐，到了临清地方，赁间闲房住下，两人行其淫乐，混过了几时。莫大姐终久有这杨二郎在心里，身子虽现随着郁盛，毕竟是勉强的，终日价没心没想，哀声叹气。郁盛起初绸缪相处了两个月，看看两下里各有些嫌憎，不自在起来。郁盛



some knowledge about her whereabouts. I think what you've done was to put her away in a secret place, then deny the fact here so as to continue your affair with her later. I'll send you to jail and bring you up for interrogation every three to five days. Let's see how long you can hide her!"

Second Brother Yang was put behind bars, and in every few days was subjected to inquisition and torture. However, he told nothing. Xu De came periodically to urge the head. Second Brother Yang was punished with the repeated beatings on his buttocks, but the interrogation was fruitless. As the old saying goes, "Once a thief, always a thief." Poor Second Brother Yang had to bear the blame for someone else.

Second Brother Yang could not stand the torture any more. So he also filed an indictment with another government office over the false charge and unjust imprisonment. However, it was well known that Xu De had lost his wife and Second Brother Yang's adultery was undeniable. So no one would free him. Some people who doubted his crime and showed sympathy toward him urged him to have notices posted, offer a reward and hire men to hunt for the missing woman. But nine out of ten people examined said that Second Brother Yang was responsible for putting his lover away. Who would admit that he had been wronged? Thus it was the payment Second Brother Yang received for his seduction of somebody else's wife.

Women are always the root of trouble.

Adultery inevitably invites for misfortune.

Though he has nothing to do with the elopement,

The wrong done to him is not without rhyme or reason!

Let's leave Second Brother Yang with his troubles for the moment and turn again to Yu Sheng, who had carried Sister Mo away that day to Linqing. They settled down in a rented house and continued with their affair for a while. But the thought of her relationship with Second Brother Yang lingered in Sister Mo's mind. She grappled with her reluctance to be with Yu Sheng and was saddened all day long, heaving great sighs. Yu Sheng found both Sister Mo and himself lacking appeal for each other after an initial two months of copulative bliss. Uneasy, he figured, "I'm



自想道：“我目下用他的。带来的东西须有尽时，我又不会做生意，日后怎生结果？况且是别人的妻小，留在身边，到底怕露将出来，不是长便。我也要到自家里去的，那里守得定在这里？我不如寻个主儿卖了他。他模样尽好，倒也还值得百十两银子。我得他这些身价，与他身边带来的许多东西，也尽勾受用了。”打听得临清渡口驿前乐户魏妈妈家里，养许多粉头，是个兴头的鸨儿，要的是女人。寻个人去与他说了。魏妈只做访亲，来相探望。看过了人物，还出了八十两价钱，交兑明白，只要抬人去。郁盛哄着莫大姐道：“这魏妈妈是我家外亲，极是好情分。你我在此异乡，图得与他做个相识往来，也不寂莫。魏妈妈前日来望过了你，你今日也去还拜他一拜才是。”莫大姐女眷心性，巴不得寻个头脑，外边去走走的。见说了，即便梳妆起来。郁盛就去顾了一乘轿，把莫大姐竟抬到魏妈家里。

莫大姐看见魏妈妈笑嘻嘻相头相脚，只是上下看觑，大刺刺的不十分接待；又见许多粉头在面前，心里道：“甚么外亲！看来是个衙衙人家了。”吃了一杯茶，告别起身。魏妈妈笑道：“你还要到那里去？”莫大姐道：“家去。”魏妈妈道：“还有甚么家里？你已是此间人了。”莫大姐吃一惊道：“这怎么说？”魏妈妈道：“你家郁官儿得了我八十两银子，把你卖与我家了。”莫大姐道：“那有此话？我身子是自家的，谁卖得我？”魏妈妈道：“甚么自家不自家，银子已拿得去了，我那管你？”莫大姐道：“等我去和那天杀的说个明白！”魏妈妈道：“此时



now spending the money she brought with her. The money will be all gone one day. I'm inexperienced at doing business. What will I do then? Moreover, she's not my wife and that will become gradually known to the outside. I can't stay long with her. I will have to return home. How can I live here for very long? I'd better sell her to someone. She is good-looking and may be worth one hundred taels of silver. With that sale plus the rest of her money, I'll be able to live pretty well." He learned that Mother Wei, the owner of a brothel in front of the post station by the pier of Linqing, maintained a group of prostitutes. Mother Wei needed many women for her thriving business. He asked someone to take a message to Mother Wei.

Mother Wei came to him one day on a pretext that she was on a visit to see a relative, and saw Sister Mo. Mother Wei paid eighty taels of silver after a bargain was reached and was then ready to take Sister Mo away. Yu Sheng said to Sister Mo, cajolingly, "Mother Wei is one of my remote relatives and she's very good-natured. As we're far way from our homes, it's good to have her around to dispel boredom. Some days ago she came to see you. Now you should pay her a visit in return." Sister Mo was interested in social activity because that is the nature of women. Having heard his words, she started dressing herself up. Yu Sheng rented a sedan chair and sent Sister Mo to Mother Wei's place.

Sister Mo noticed that Mother Wei was not particularly warm in meeting her, but only looked her up and down with smile. Then she saw many prostitutes around the place. She wondered, "What kind of remote relative is she? This is a brothel, I think." After having a cup of tea, she rose and began to take her leave. With a smile, Mother Wei asked her, "Where are you going?" Sister Mo replied, "I'm going home." Mother Wei said, "Why are you still talking about your home? You belong to here." Taken aback, Sister Mo said, "What do you mean by saying that?" Smiling, Mother Wei said, "Your man, Master Yu, received my payment of eighty taels of silver for the sale of you to me." Sister Mo said, "What nonsense! My body is mine. Who can sell me?" Mother Wei said, "I don't care whether the body is yours or not. The silver was paid. You're now mine." Sister Mo said, "I'm going to reason with him to make it



他跑自家的道儿，敢走过七八里路了，你那里寻他去？我这里好道路，你安心住下了罢，不要讨我杀威棒儿吃。”莫大姐情知被郁盛所赚，叫起撞天屈来，大哭了一场。魏妈妈喝住，只说要打；众粉头做好做歉的来劝住。莫大姐原是立不得贞节牌坊的，到此地位，落了圈套，没计奈何，只得和光同尘，随着做娼妓罢了。此亦是莫大姐做妇女不学好应受的果报。

妇女何当有异图？贪淫只欲闪亲夫。

今朝更被他人闪，天报昭昭不可诬。

莫大姐自从落娼之后，心里常自想道：“我只图与杨二郎逃出来快活，谁道醉后错记，却被郁盛天杀的赚来卖我在此！而今不知杨二郎怎地在那里？我家里不见了人，又不知怎样光景？”时常切切于心。有时接着相投的孤老，也略把这些前因说说，只好感伤流泪，那里有人管他这些唠叨？

光阴如箭，不觉已是四五个年头。一日，有一个客人来嫖宿饮酒，见了莫大姐，目不停瞬，只管上下瞧觑。莫大姐也觉得有些面染，两下疑惑。莫大姐开口问道：“客官贵处？”那客人道：“小子姓幸，名逢，住居在张家湾。”莫大姐见说“张家湾”三字，不觉潜然泪下，道：“既在张家湾，可晓得长班徐德家里么？”幸客惊道：“徐德是我邻人，他家里失去了嫂子



clear!” Mother Wei replied, “I think he is seven or eight li away from here by now, on his way back home. How will you catch him? You can make a good living here in my house. Just be at ease and settle here. Otherwise you are asking for a thrashing with a discipline club!” Realizing that she had been cheated by Yu Sheng, Sister Mo broke into tears because she had been wronged. Mother Wei yelled for her to stop, threatening her with punishment if she did not. The other women came over to calm her down. Basically Sister Mo deserved no praise for her former conduct in terms of morality. Now she was ensnared and was not in any position to reverse the situation. She simply yielded in obedience and became a prostitute in the house. It was retribution for her ignoble deeds.

How should a wife commit adultery?

Licentiousness only makes her abandon her husband.

But today she is thrown away by someone else.

True it is retribution is bound to follow.

After she sank into prostitution, Sister Mo often thought to herself, “I had really intended to run away with Second Brother Yang and lead a happy life. But I made a mistake when I was drunk, giving an opportunity for that wretch Yu Sheng to sell me here! I wonder how things are with Second Brother Yang and where he is at present? How about my husband when he found I was missing?” She was restless with these thoughts. Occasionally she revealed her mind to some of her clients, but no one really cared what she said. So her days often passed in weeping.

Time passed by like a flying arrow and four or five years elapsed before one realized it. One day a customer arrived for prostitution. He stared at Sister Mo as if he knew her, while Sister Mo also seemed to have seen a familiar face in him. They both wondered. Sister Mo broke the silence by asking, “May I know who you are and where you are from, sir?” The customer replied, “My name is Xing Feng. I live in Zhangjiawan.” The mention of Zhangjiawan brought tears to Sister Mo’s eyes. She said, “Since you’re from Zhangjiawan, I wonder whether or not you know a government assistant called Xu De?”

Surprised, Xing Feng said, “Xu De lives in my neighborhood. He lost his wife years ago. I thought you looked familiar. Are you his wife?”



几年。适见小娘子面庞有些厮像，莫不正是徐嫂子么？”莫大姐道：“奴正是徐家媳妇，被人拐来坑陷在此。方才见客人面庞，奴家道有些认得，岂知却是日前邻舍幸官儿。”元来幸逢也是风月中人，向时看见莫大姐有些话头，也曾咽着干唾的，故此一见就认得。幸客道：“小娘子你在此不打紧，却害得一个人好苦！”莫大姐道：“是那个？”幸客道：“你家告了杨二郎，累了几年官司，打也不知打了多少，至今还在监里，未得明白。”莫大姐见说，好不伤心，轻轻对幸客道：“日里不好尽言，晚上留在此间，有句说话奉告。”

幸客是晚就与莫大姐同宿了。莫大姐悄悄告诉他，说委实与杨二郎有交，被郁盛冒充了杨二郎拐来卖在这里。从头至尾，一一说了。又与他道：“客人可看平日邻舍面上，到家说知此事。一来救了奴家出去；二来说清了杨二郎，也是阴功；三来吃了郁盛这厮这样大亏，等得见了天日，咬也咬他几口。”幸客道：“我去说，我去说。杨二郎、徐长班多是我一块土上人，况且贴得有赏单，今我得实，怎不去报？郁盛这厮有名刁钻，天理不容，也该败了。”莫大姐道：“须得密些才好。若漏了风，怕这家又把我藏过了。”幸客道：“只你知我知。而今见人，再不要提起。我一到彼，就出首便是。”

两人商约已定，幸客竟自回转张家湾，来见徐德道：“你家嫂子已有下落，我亲眼见了。”徐德道：“见在那里？”幸逢



Sister Mo said, “Yes, I am Xu’s wife. I was abducted and brought here to suffer. Your face looks familiar and I think I must have seen you before. It is a surprise that you’re our neighbor, Master Xing!” It turned out that Xing Feng was also a philanderer, who used to be attracted to Sister Mo because of her beauty. So he quickly recalled her now. He then said to Sister Mo, “You don’t know, madam, while you are away, one man suffers a great deal.” Sister Mo asked, “Who?” Xing Feng replied, “Second Brother Yang was sued by your husband and has been jailed for years. He must have been beaten innumerable times. He’s still in prison and can’t clear himself.” Sister Mo’s heart sank at this news. She said softly to him, “It’s not appropriate to talk here. Stay with me tonight and I’ll have something to tell you.”

That night Xing Feng slept with her. Sister Mo told him in detail about her relationship with Second Brother Yang, about Yu Sheng’s deception through posing as Second Brother Yang, and about her abduction. Then she said to him, “In terms of our relation as neighbors, please do me a favor by going to my home and telling them all about this first, I’ll be able to get out of here. Second, it will clear Second Brother Yang of the charge — that will be a meritorious deed I should perform so as to obtain the gods’ blessings. Third, I’ll be able to confront Yu Sheng, since he has made me suffer so much. I would like to take a few bites out of him in revenge.”

Xing Feng said, “Sure, I’ll tell it when I get back. Second Brother Yang, Xu De and I are fellow townsmen. Furthermore, there is an offer of a reward posted everywhere in this case, which I’ll certainly try to claim. Why wouldn’t I go and report the matter to the government? Yu Sheng is well known for his cunning. It would be outrageous to let him remain at large. It’s time for his downfall.” Sister Mo said, “You should keep this matter secret. If you let it out, the mistress of this house will put me away.” Xing Feng replied, “I’ll keep it between us and won’t say a word about it to anyone else. Once I get back home, I will tell the authorities.” Thus they agreed on the plan.

Upon arrival at home, Xing Feng found Xu De and said to him, “I know your wife’s whereabouts. I saw her personally.” Xu De said, “Where



道：“我替你同到官面前，还你的明白。”徐德遂同了幸逢，齐到兵马司来。幸逢当官递上一纸首状。状云：

首状人幸逢，系张家湾民，为举首略卖事。本湾徐德，失妻莫氏，告官未获。今逢目见本妇，身在临清乐户魏鸨家倚门卖奸。本妇称系市棍郁盛略卖在彼是的。贩良为娼，理合举首。所首是实。

兵马即将首状判准在案，一面申文察院，一面密差兵番拿获郁盛，到官刑鞫。郁盛抵赖不过，供吐前情明白，当下收在监中，俟莫氏到时质证定罪。随即奉察院批发明文，押了原首人幸逢与本夫徐德，行关到临清州，眼同认拘莫氏及买良为娼乐户魏鸨到司审问，原差守提。临清州里即忙添差公人，一同行拘。一千人到魏家，好似——

瓮中捉鳖，手到拿来。

临清州点齐了。发了批回，押解到兵马司来。杨二郎彼时还在监中，得知这事，连忙写了诉状，称是与己无干，今日幸见天日等情，投递兵马司。准了，等候一同发落。

其时人犯齐到听审。兵马先唤莫大姐问他。莫大姐将郁盛如何骗他到临清，如何哄他卖娼家，一一说了备细。又唤魏鸨儿问道：“你如何买了良人之妇？”魏妈妈道：“小妇人是个乐户，靠那取讨娼妓为生。郁盛称说自己妻子愿卖，小妇人见了



is she?" Xing Feng said, "Let's go to the government office and I'll tell you what has happened." Xu De went with Xing Feng to the department of the garrison. Xing Feng then presented a statement. It read thus:

I am Xing Feng from Zhangjiawan, presenting this lawsuit on the abduction and sale of a woman. Xu De from my native place Zhangjiawan lost his wife, Sister Mo, and brought a lawsuit, but the case has remained unsolved. I saw with my eyes the woman working as a prostitute in a brothel run by the family of Wei in Linqing. The woman said she was sold there by Yu Shen, a knave. The sale and prostitution of a good woman is a criminal offense, and whoever knows the facts should report to the government. I swear my statement is based on truth.

The head of the garrison put the statement on file at once. When he sent a report to the prefecture's department of inspection, he gave a secret order to arrest Yu Sheng for interrogation. Yu Sheng could not deny the facts and confessed all his offenses. He was imprisoned and was about to be sentenced when Sister Mo arrived and confronted him in court. The head of the garrison then sent an order, following directions from the department of inspection, that the plaintiff, Xing Feng, and Sister Mo's husband, Xu De, go with the runners to Linqing and help arrest Sister Mo and the owner of the brothel, Mother Wei. and then the runners bring them to the court for trial. The Linqing *yamen* also sent men to the house of Wei at once to assist in the catching. The arrest was "a job as easy as catching a turtle in a jar." The Linqing *yamen*, after making the arrest, sent the group back to the department of the garrison.

At that time Second Brother Yang was still in jail. Hearing the news, he filed a petition with the county's department of the garrison, stating that he was innocent and happy to see himself cleared of the charge. His petition was approved and he was told to wait.

With the people concerned all brought to court, the head of the garrison first called Sister Mo for questioning. Sister Mo presented a complete narrative of Yu Sheng's taking her away by deception to Linqing and his selling of her into prostitution. The head of the garrison then called up Mother Wei and asked, "Why did you purchase the wife of an honest man?" Mother Wei replied, "I run a brothel, which provides me with a



是本夫做主的，与他讨了。岂知他是拐来的？”徐德走上来道：“当时妻子失去，还带了家里许多箱笼资财去。今人既被获，还望追出赃私，给还小人。”莫大姐道：“郁盛哄我到魏家，我只走得一身去，就卖绝在那里。一应所有，多被郁盛得了，与魏家无干。”兵马拍桌道：“那郁盛这样可恶！既拐了人去奸宿了，又卖了他身子，又没了他资财，有这等没天理的！”喝叫：“重打！”郁盛辩道：“卖他在娼家，是小人不是，甘认其罪。至于逃去，是他自跟了小人走的，非干小人拐他。”兵马问莫大姐道：“你当时为何跟了他走？不实说出来，讨拶！”莫大姐只得把与杨二郎有奸、认错了郁盛的事，一一招了。兵马笑道：“怪道你丈夫徐德告着杨二郎。杨二郎虽然屈坐了监几年，徐德不为全诬。莫氏虽然认错，郁盛乘机盗拐，岂得推故？”喝教把郁盛打了四十大板，问略贩良人军罪，押追带去赃物给还徐德；莫氏身价八十两，追出入官。魏妈买良，系不知情，问个不应罪名；出过身价，有几年卖奸得利，不必偿还。杨二郎先有奸情，后虽无干，也问杖赎，释放宁家。幸逢首事得实，量行给赏。



living. Yu Sheng told me that he wanted to sell his wife. I thought that it was alright for a husband to sell his wife, so I made the purchase. How could I know he had abducted her?" Xu De came forward and said, "My wife fled with many of my valuables from wardrobes and boxes. Now that they are captured, the stolen property should be returned to me." Sister Mo said, "Yu Sheng sold me to the house of Wei, so I stayed there empty-handed. He seized all my property. This property has nothing to do with the house of Wei."

Striking the table, the head of the garrison shouted, "What a vicious man Yu Sheng is! You took away a woman for sex, and then sold her to the brothel. You also seized her property. This is grossly offensive!" He then cried, "Give him a sound beating!" Yu Sheng protested, "I admit my offense of selling her to the brothel. As for the elopement, she followed of her own accord. I did not abduct her." The head of garrison asked Sister Mo, "Why did you run away with him? Tell the truth. Otherwise you are asking for punishment!" Sister Mo had to confess to her offense of committing adultery with Second Brother Yang and her elopement with Yu Sheng, whom she mistook for her lover. The head of the garrison laughed and said, "That's why your husband, Xu De, sued Second Brother Yang! Though Second Brother Yang served a few years of imprisonment, Xu De's charge was not completely groundless. Sister Mo admits her offense, but how can you, Yu Sheng, deny your crime of taking advantage of her in abducting her?" He issued an order to beat Yu Sheng with forty severe strokes of a lash and sentenced him to military service and the return of all the valuables he seized from Xu De. In addition, the eighty taels of silver Yu Sheng obtained from selling Sister Mo had to be turned in to the *yamen*. Mother Wei had bought a good woman in ignorance of the truth, so the nature of her offense was commitment of an unintended crime. She was to give Mo back, but not to deliver the money that Sister Mo had made during her years in prostitution. Second Brother Yang had committed adultery but was not involved in the crime. According to law, he was punished with flogging and then paid bail for himself. Since Xing Feng had made an accurate report, he was granted the reward.

The verdict was thus delivered. Sister Mo was returned to Xu De. But



判断已明，将莫大姐发与原夫徐德收领。徐德道：“小人妻子背了小人逃出了几年，又落在娼家了，小人还要这滥淫妇做甚么？情愿当官休了，等他别嫁个人罢。”兵马道：“这个由你。且保领出去，自寻人嫁了他，再与你立案罢了。”

一千人众，各到家里。杨二郎自思：“别人拐去了，却冤了我坐了几年监，更待干罢！”告诉邻里，要与徐德厮闹。徐德也有些心怯，过不去，转央邻里和解。邻里商量调停这事，议道：“总是徐德不与莫大姐完聚了，现在寻人别嫁，何不让与杨二郎娶了，消释两家冤仇？”与徐德说了。徐德也道：“负累了他，便依议也罢。”杨二郎闻知，一发正中下怀，笑道：“若肯如此，便多坐了几时，我也永不提起了。”邻里把此意三面约同，当官禀明。兵马备知杨二郎顶缸坐监，有些屈在里头。依地方处分，准徐德立了婚书，给与杨二郎为妻。莫大姐称心像意，得嫁了旧时相识。因为吃过了这些时苦，也自收心学好，不似前时惹骚招祸，竟与杨二郎到了底。这莫非是杨二郎的前缘？然也为他吃苦不少了，不为美事。后人当以此为鉴。



Xu De said, “My wife fled home and deserted me years ago. She later became a prostitute. What shame I will have to bear by taking the bitch back to my home! I’m willing to divorce her in court and to let her marry someone else.” The head of the garrison said, “This business is up to you. Take her back for the present. When you find a man to marry her, come to court for the registration.”

The other people returned home after the court session. Second Brother Yang thought to himself, “Somebody took Sister Mo away but I was wronged in being imprisoned for years. I must right this wrong!” He told this to his neighbors in order to show his intention of confronting Xu De. Xu De was a little worried, so he begged the neighbors to mediate the dispute. The neighbors consulted among themselves and said, “Since Xu De wants to terminate the marriage and look for someone to marry his wife, why not let Second Brother Yang marry her so that the grievance between him and Xu De will be cleared?” They talked to Xu De, and the latter responded, “I understand that Second Brother Yang was wronged. I don’t object to your plan.”

Second Brother Yang heard of it and was overjoyed that the matter had played into his hands. He smiled and said, “If I can have Sister Mo as my wife, I will not complain, even if I were to be given a few more years of imprisonment.” The neighbors double-checked that the three parties were in agreement and then reported this to the *yamen*. The head of the garrison understood that it was not fair to have had Second Brother Yang imprisoned for those few years, and he therefore approved the neighbors’ request, permitting Xu De’s divorce and Second Brother Yang’s marriage. Sister Mo was very happy in marrying her lover. She had learned the lesson from her years of suffering and renounced her past behavior of flirting with men. From then on, she remained faithful to Second Brother Yang. Perhaps Second Brother Yang’s marriage to her was predestined by fate. Though he eventually married his love, he suffered a lot. So this was by no means an enviable experience. People should take a lesson from this tale.

枉坐囹圄已数年，而今方得保婣娟。
何如自守家常饭，不害官司不损钱！



Hard to endure indeed are the several years
of wronged imprisonment,
But true lovers finally end in a happy marriage.
Wouldn't it be better to follow the homely food,
Which will neither waste money nor bring lawsuit?



卷 三 十 九

神偷寄兴一枝梅 侠盗惯行三昧戏

诗曰：

剧贼从来有贼智，其间妙巧亦无穷。

若能收作公家用，何必疆场不立功？

自古说孟尝君养食客三千，鸡鸣狗盗的多收拾在门下。后来被秦王拘留，无计得脱。秦王有个爱姬传语道：“闻得孟尝君有领狐白裘，价值千金。若将来送了我，我替他讨个人情，放他归去。”孟尝君当时只有一领狐白裘，已送上秦王，收藏内库，那得再有？其时狗盗的便献计道：“臣善狗偷，往内库去偷将出来便是。”你道何为狗偷？乃是此人善做狗噪。就假做了狗，爬墙越壁，快捷如飞，果然把狐白裘偷了出来。送与秦宫爱姬，才得善言放脱，连夜行到函谷关。孟尝君恐怕秦王





Tale 39

An Ingenious Thief Conveys His Sentiment with a Plum; A Gallant Burglar Plays His Game with Adroitness

A poem reads thus:

All thieves are wise and resourceful.
Their performances in stealing are always ingenious and superb.
If recruited by the government,
Sure they'll render outstanding service on the battlefield.

It is said that Lord Mengchang kept an extremely large number of hangers-on, altogether three thousand. He even took in many mean people who always resorted to petty tricks, such as those who could crow like cocks and snatch like dogs. Later Lord Mengchang was captured by the king of the Qin kingdom and taken into custody. He could not think of a way to make good his escape. A consort of the king of the Qin kingdom sent word to Lord Mengchang, "I hear Lord Mengchang has a white fox-fur robe which is worth a thousand pieces of gold. If he gives it to me, I'll go to the king to beg for mercy on his behalf and set him free." It was true Lord Mengchang had a fox-fur robe, but he had already given it to the king of the Qin kingdom who put it up in storage in the imperial storehouse. How could he have one more?

Just at this moment, one of his hangers-on who had the ability to snatch like a dog offered advice by saying, "I'm good at snatching. I can go steal it back for you." Climbing roofs and scaling walls, this man succeeded in snatching the robe from the imperial storehouse. Then Lord Mengchang presented it to the consort who later talked the king of the Qin kingdom into setting him free. On the same night, Mengchang fled for his life and got to Yougu Pass. Fearing that the king of the Qin kingdom might go back on his word and come to snatch him up again, Mengchang was extremely anxious to get out of the pass. But the gate of the pass would



有悔，后面追来，急要出关。当得关上直等鸡鸣才开。孟尝君着了急，那时食客道：“臣善鸡鸣，此时正用得着。”就曳起声音，学作鸡啼起来，果然与真无二。啼得两三声，四下群鸡皆啼，关吏听得，把关开了，孟尝君才得脱去。

孟尝君平时养了许多客，今脱秦难，却得此两小人之力。可见天下寸长尺技，俱有用处。而今世上只重着科目，非此出身，纵有奢遮的，一概不用。所以有奇巧智谋之人，没处设施，多赶去做了为非作歹的勾当。若是善用人材的收拾将来，随宜酌用，未必不得他气力，且省得他流在盗贼里头去了。

且如宋朝临安有个剧盗，叫做“我来也”。不知他姓甚名谁，但是他到人家偷盗了物事，一些踪影不露出来，只是临行时壁上写着“我来也”三个大字。第二日人家看见了字，方才简点家中，晓得失了贼。若无此字，竟是神不知、鬼不觉的，煞好手段。临安中受他蒿恼不过，纷纷告状。府尹责着缉捕使臣，严行挨查，要获着真正写“我来也”三字的贼人。却是没个姓名，知是张三、李四？拿着那个才肯认帐？使臣人等受那



not be open until cockcrow. Mengchang was deeply worried. Just at this moment, one of his hangers-on said, "I can crow like a cock. This will be of some help." So saying, he began to mimic cockcrow. The sound he produced appeared to be exactly the same with that of a real cock. After two or three crows, the cocks in the vicinity all started to follow suit. When the gatekeepers heard the crows of the cocks, they opened the gate of the pass. Thus Lord Mengchang made good his escape.

Ordinarily Lord Mengchang kept a large number of hangers-on. As a result of these two men's assistance, he made a narrow escape from the Qin kingdom. This shows that all skills are useful, no matter how insignificant they are. However, the present authorities only give priority to the imperial civil examinations when they select and appoint officials. Anyone who has failed to pass the imperial civil examinations, no matter how remarkable they are, will be excluded from entering the officialdom. For this reason, many of those who are both able and resourceful can find no scope to display their tactics and abilities. As a result of this, they all undertook criminal activities. If men who are good at scouting talents take them in and put them to proper positions, they are sure to get help from these people. And by doing so, these people will not become outlaws.

* * *

It is said that there was once a burglar named "I've-Been-Here" in Lin'an Prefecture during the Song Dynasty. The real name of the burglar was unknown. He would leave no trace at all of his burglary. However, he would always write "I've been here" in large characters on the wall before he left. None would be able to realize their houses had been burglarized until they saw these words on the walls. The theft he committed would be unknown to god or ghost if he did not leave these words on the walls. He was really a master thief.

Greatly harassed by the burglar, people of Lin'an brought an action against him in succession. The Prefect instructed arrest runners to exert their utmost to catch the burglar "I've Been Here." But the burglar's name was not known. Would anyone be willing to admit it if they were captured? However, as they were hardly pressed by the Prefect, the arrest runners had to go around and make intensive inquiries so as to track down the



比较不过，只得用心体访。元来随你巧贼，须瞒不过公人，占风望气，定然知道的。只因拿得甚紧，毕竟不知怎的缉着他的真身，解到临安府里来。

府尹升堂，使臣禀说缉着了真正“我来也”，虽不晓得姓名，却正是写这三字的。府尹道：“何以见得？”使臣道：“小人们体访甚真，一些不差。”那个人道：“小人是良民，并不是甚么‘我来也’。公人们比较不过，拿小人来冒充的。”使臣道：“的是真正的，贼口听他不得。”府尹只是疑心。使臣们禀道：“小人们费了多少心机，才访得着。若被他花言巧语脱了出去，后来小人们再没处拿了。”府尹欲待要放，见使臣们如此说，又怕是真的，万一放去了，难以寻他，再不好比较缉捕的了。只得权发下监中收监。

那人一到监中，便好言对狱卒道：“进监的旧例，该有使费。我身边之物，尽被做公的搜去。我有一主银两，在岳庙里神座破砖之下，送与哥哥做拜见钱。哥哥只做去烧香，取了出来。”狱卒似信不信，免不得跑去一看，果然得了一包东西，约有二十馀两。狱卒大喜，遂把那人好好看待，渐加亲密。

一日，那人又对狱卒道：“小人承蒙哥哥盛情，十分看待得好，小人无可报效。还有一主东西，在某处桥堍之下，哥哥



burglar. Resourceful as burglars were, they could never keep the *yamen* runners in ignorance. Finally, as it turned out, the burglar “I’ve-Been-Here” was captured and brought to the *yamen* of Lin’an Prefecture.

At court, the arrest runners reported to the Prefect, “We’ve caught the burglar ‘I’ve-Been-Here.’ We don’t know his name, but he is the very man who wrote these words.” The Prefect asked, “How do you know it was this man who wrote these words?” The arrest runners answered, “We’ve made a thorough investigation of the matter and we are positively certain he is the very burglar.” The man said, “I am a law-abiding man. I’m not ‘I’ve-Been-Here.’ As the arrest runners could no longer put up with the coercion from their superiors, they passed me off as ‘I’ve-Been-Here.’” The arrest runners said, “We guarantee he is the very burglar. Don’t believe him.” Suspicion clouded the Prefect’s mind. The arrest runners insisted, “It took us lots of trouble to capture him. If you are deceived by his story and set him free, it will be no easy task for us to catch him again.” The Prefect was actually inclined to release him. But, upon hearing the arrest runners’ words, he was also worried that he might let the true criminal go unpunished if this man was the true “I’ve-Been-Here.” By then he would not have the sensibilities to coerce them into hunting for him again. So, he put the man behind the bars for the time being.

The moment he was put to prison, the man said to the prison guard, “According to the old practice, I need to tip you. But the official runners seized everything I had on me. I have a sum of silver, and it is kept under the broken bricks of the base of in the shrine of the yue Fei Temple. I’d like to give it to you as a present for our first meeting. You may go there and take it in the disguise of a pilgrim.” Half doubting, half believing, the prison guard made a trip to the temple and, to his great surprise, found a pack under the bricks. There were about twenty taels of silver in the pack. The prison guard was very much pleased, and began to treat the man nicely.

On another day, the man again said to the prison guard, “I feel deeply grateful for your profound kindness and care for me. I have nothing on me to give you at present. But I still have a sum of silver at the foot of the



去取了，也见小人一点敬意。”狱卒道：“这个所在是往来之所，人眼极多，如何取得？”那人道：“哥哥将个筐篮，盛着衣服，到那河里去洗。摸来放在篮中，就把衣服盖好，却不拿将来了？”狱卒依言，如法取了来，没人知觉。简简物事，约有百金之外。狱卒一发喜谢不尽，爱厚那人，如同骨肉。晚间买酒请他。

酒中那人对狱卒道：“今夜三更，我要到家里去看一看，五更即来。哥哥可放我出去一遭。”狱卒思量道：“我受了他许多东西，他要出去，做难不得。万一不来了怎么办？”那人见狱卒迟疑，便道：“哥哥不必疑心。小人被做公的冒认做‘我也’，送在此间。既无真名，又无实迹，须问不得小人的罪，小人少不得辨出去。一世也不私逃的，但请哥哥放心，只消两个更次，小人仍旧在此了。”狱卒见他说得有理，想道：“一个不曾问罪的犯人，就是失了，没甚大事。他现与了我许多银两，拚得与他使用些，好歹糊涂得过。况他未必不来的。”就依允放了他。那人不繇狱门，竟在屋檐上跳了去。屋瓦无声，早已不见。

到得天未大明，狱卒宿酒未醒，尚在朦胧，那人已从屋檐跳下，摇起狱卒道：“来了，来了。”狱卒惊醒，看了一看道：



pier of a certain bridge. You may go there and take it. I'd like to give it to you as a token of thanks." The prison guard said, "It's a busy place and there are always many people crossing the bridge. In what way can I get it?" The man answered, "Just go there with a basket of clothes. While washing your clothes at the river, put the silver in your basket and then cover it up with the clothes. By doing so, you get the money, won't you?" As was instructed, the prison guard went to the bridge and got the money without anyone knowing it. He counted the silver and found that there were more than one hundred taels. The prison guard was wild with joy, and treated the man much better, as if they were blood relations. He bought some wine and entertained the man the same night.

In the middle of their drinking, the man said to the prison guard, "I want to go and see my family at the third watch tonight. I'll be back by the fifth watch. Could you do me this favor?" The prison guard thought in his mind, "He has given me so much silver. Now that he wants to go out for some time, I don't think I should turn him down. But what if he doesn't come back?" Realizing the prison guard's hesitation, the man said, "Don't worry, please. The official runners passed me off as 'I've-Been-Here' and put me behind the bars. On the one hand, they don't know my original name; on the other hand, they never caught me stealing. I'm sure they can't pronounce me guilty of theft. I will reason things out and justify myself. I promise you I will not run away. I will be back in two watches."

Finding what the man said was reasonable, the prison guard thought to himself, "This man has not been denounced guilty. It won't be a serious matter even though he runs away. He's given me lots of silver. Worst of all, I'll have to spend some money on his behalf so as to skirt the issue. Moreover, he may not necessarily run away." So thinking, the prison guard consented to his request. Instead of passing through the prison gate, the man jumped out of the prison from the eaves without making any noise. Soon he was lost in the darkness of the night.

Before dawn, while the prison guard was still fast asleep due to the wine he had had the previous night, the man jumped into the prison from the eaves. Shaking the prison guard hard to wake him up, the man said,



“有这等信人!”那人道:“小人怎敢不来,有累哥哥?多谢哥哥放了我去,已有小小谢意留在哥哥家里,哥哥快去收拾了来。小人就要别了哥哥,当官出监去了。”狱卒不解其意,急回到家中。家中妻子说:“有件事,正要你回来得知。昨夜更鼓尽时,不知梁上甚么响,忽地掉下一个包来。解开看时,尽是金银器物。敢是天赐我们的?”狱卒情知是那人的缘故,急摇手道:“不要露声!快收拾好了,慢慢受用。”狱卒急转到监中,又谢了那人。

须臾,府尹升堂,放告牌出。只见纷纷来告盗情事,共有六七纸,多是昨夜失了盗,墙壁上俱写得有“我来也”三字,恳求着落缉捕。府尹道:“我元疑心前日监的未必是真‘我来也’,果然另有这个人在那里。那监的岂不冤枉?”即叫狱卒来分付,快把前日监的那人放了。另行责着缉捕使臣,定要访个真正“我来也”解官,立限比较。岂知真的却在眼前放去了!只有狱卒心里明白,伏他神机妙用。受过重贿,再也不敢说破。

看官,你道如此贼人智巧,可不是有用得着他的去处么?这是旧话,不必说。只是我朝嘉靖年间,苏州有个神偷懒龙,



“I’m back. I’m back!” Awakened with a start, the prison guard exclaimed, “What a man of honor!” The man said, “How could I make a jailbreak and get you into trouble? Thank you for what you’ve done for me. I’ve left something at your home as a token of my thanks. Better go home and get it. Now I’d like to bid you farewell, for I’ll be freed from prison pretty soon.” Filled with confusion, the prison guard hurried off home.

Arriving at home, the prison guard’s wife said, “I was just thinking of telling you something. There suddenly came some sound on the roof of our house when it was dawning last night. Then a bundle fell down to the ground. I opened it and found it was a bundle of silver. Isn’t it a godsend?” Immediately the prison guard understood it was that man who did it. Waving his hand to his wife hastily, he said, “Keep your mouth shut about this matter! Just take it and keep your joy to yourself.” Returning to the prison in a hurry, the prison guard thanked the man again.

Before long, the Prefect arrived at the court to hear cases. Six to seven people came to the court to complain about cases of theft happened on the previous night, saying that the words “I’ve-Been-Here” were again found on the walls of their houses. They entreated the Prefect to catch this burglar immediately. The Prefect wondered, “Originally I doubted if the man I imprisoned the other day was the real ‘I’ve-Been-Here.’ Now it’s crystal clear the real ‘I’ve-Been-Here’ is still at large. I wronged the man I imprisoned, didn’t I?” Instantly the Prefect instructed the prison guard to set the man free. Then he ordered the arrest runners to go and catch the real “I’ve-Been-Here” and bring him to court for trial within a certain period of time. He also gave an order that arrest runners would be severely punished if they failed to capture the real “I’ve-Been-Here.” But he would never know he had set free the real “I’ve-Been-Here.” The prison guard was the only one who knew the whole thing and he admired the man very much for his resourcefulness and superb stratagems. As he had taken bribery, he remained silent about the matter.

* * *

Readers, don’t you think such a clever and resourceful burglar will be very much helpful? Of course, this one is an old story, and there is no need to dwell more upon it. Now I’d like to tell you another story happened



事迹颇多。虽是个贼，煞是有义气，兼带着戏耍，说来有许多好笑好听处。有诗为证：

谁道偷无道？神偷事每奇。

更看多慷慨，不是俗偷儿。

话说苏州亚字城东玄妙观前第一巷，有一个人，不晓得他的姓名，后来他自号懒龙，人只称呼他是懒龙。其母村居，偶然走路遇着天雨，走到一所枯庙中避着，却是草鞋三郎庙。其母坐久，雨尚不住，昏昏睡去，梦见神道与他交感。归来有妊，满了十月，生下这个懒龙来。懒龙生得身材小巧，胆气壮猛，心机灵变，度量慨慷。且说他的身体行径：

柔若无骨，轻若御风。大则登屋跳梁，小则扞墙摸壁。随机应变，看景生情。撮口则为鸡犬狸鼠之声，拍手则作箫鼓弦索之弄。饮啄有方，律吕相应。无弗酷肖，可使乱真。出没如鬼神，去来如风雨。果然天下无双手，真是人间第一偷。

懒龙不但伎俩巧妙，又有几件希奇本事，咤异性格。自小就会着了靴在壁上走，又会说十三省乡谈。夜间可以连宵不睡，日



in the Jiajing reign (1522-1567) of our Ming Dynasty. Once there was a thief named Lazy Dragon in Suzhou whose thefts were extraordinary and numerous. Though he was a thief, he maintained a sense of justice and gained a great deal of enjoyment through his deeds. Therefore his story is pretty interesting and this poem describes it:

Who says in stealing there's no art?
A clever thief performs unusual deeds.
You'll be convinced a vulgar robber he's not
If you see how he helps those in need.

It is said that there once lived a man in the first alley by Xuanmiao Temple in the eastern part of the town of Yazi in Suzhou. No one knew his real name. He later styled himself Lazy Dragon and that was what people called him. His mother lived in a village. One day she had wandered out and it began to rain. She entered a deserted temple for shelter. This was the Temple of the Third Brother in Straw Sandals. As the rain continued, she sat there and waited. Soon she fell asleep and had dreamed that a god came to her. When she returned home, she found herself pregnant. Ten months later, she gave birth to Lazy Dragon. Lazy Dragon was short, sprightly, brave, intelligent and generous. The following lines are a description of his stealing activities:

He moved to and fro softly as if he were a boneless creature easily blown away in the wind; for a demanding mission, he could leap up to the roof of a house and move along the roof-beams; for an easy task, he could cross a wall and pry open a door; he was quick in making decisions about what effort might be required of him; working with his mouth, he could produce the sound of a cock, dog, fox and mouse; clapping his hands, he could make music that could only come from a bamboo-flute, drum and stringed instruments; like a ghost he left no trace of his coming and going; resembling a storm he attacked with force and unexpectedly; unmatched in power, he was truly the best thief in the world.

He was not only competent in those skills, but he had also acquired a few other extraordinary abilities. From his childhood he could walk on the wall with his shoes on; he could speak all the dialects in the country. He could stay awake for several nights running, and sleep days on end



间可以连睡几日，不茶不饭，像陈抟一般。有时放量一吃，酒数斗，饭数升，不够一饱；有时不吃起来，便动几日不饿。鞋底中用稻草灰做衬，走步绝无声响。与人相扑，掉臂往来，倏忽如风。想来《剑侠传》中白猿公、《水浒传》中鼓上蚤，其矫捷不过如此。

自古道：“性之所近。”懒龙既有这一番哝，便自藏埋不住，好与少年无赖的人往来，习成偷儿行径。一时偷儿中高手有：

芦茄茄（骨瘦如青芦枝，探丸白打最胜）；

刺毛鹰（见人辄隐伏，形如蚕蚕，能宿梁壁上）；

白搭膊（以素练为腰缠，角上挂大铁钩，以钩向上抛掷，遇胃挂，便攀缘腰缠上升，欲下亦藉钩力，梯其腰缠，翩然而落）。

这数个多是吴中高手，见了懒龙手段，尽皆心伏，自以为不及。懒龙原没甚家缘家计，今一发弃了，到处为家，人都不晓得他歇在那一个所在。白日行都市中，或闪入人家，但见其影，不见其形。暗夜便窃入大户朱门寻宿处，玳瑁梁间、鸳鸯楼下、绣屏之内、画阁之中，缩做刺猬一团，没一处不是他睡场。得便就做他一手。因是终日会睡，变幻不测如龙，所以人叫他懒龙。所到之处，但得了手，就画一枝梅花在壁上，在黑处将粉写白



without consuming any food or tea, as Chen Tuan had done, a Taoist from the Five-dynasties and early Song Dynasty who could sleep a hundred days running. Sometimes he drank a few jars of wine and ate several liters of food, but this was not enough to fill his stomach. Sometimes he observed a fast for days and did not feel hungry at all. His stuffed his soles with straw ash, so that when he walked he made no sound. In wrestling, he moved his arms and turned himself around as swiftly as a wind.

An old saying goes, “Birds of a feather flock together.” Lazy Dragon tended to show his skills and abilities off and to mess around with young rascals. That was why he developed the stealing habit. Among the well-known thieves he associated with, there were:

Reed Stem, who was as skinny as a green reed and was a good slinger; Thorny Hawk, who, upon spotting someone around, would hide on a roof-beam like a scorpion; And White Girdle, who, with a piece of white silk tied around his waist and a big iron hook fastened to the end of it, would toss the hook up, catch it on something, climb up the silk and then descend again, all in nimble fashion.

They were the master thieves of the local area. But Lazy Dragon’s remarkable powers won their esteem, for they found his skills overshadowing theirs. Single and without family fortune, Lazy Dragon did not depend on anyone for living. He took the world at large as his home. No one could tell where he stopped at night. During the day, he sometimes appeared around town and sometimes sneaked into the home of a certain family, leaving a trace that instantly vanished before he was detected. At night he often stole into a rich residence and found shelter there. Getting into a huddle like a hedgehog, he might sleep on exquisitely constructed roof-beams with the design of a hawkbill turtle on them, or inside a house of newlyweds, or behind the wooden screen in a young lady’s bedroom, or in a colorfully decorated pavilion. He could sleep anywhere and, at the same time, never miss a chance to steal. Because he could sleep any time of the day and kept to mysterious behavior like a dragon, people called him Lazy Dragon, just as he referred to himself. Wherever he hit a target, he would draw a plum on the wall of the room

字，在粉墙将煤写黑字，再不空过。所以人又叫他做一枝梅。

嘉靖初年，洞庭两山出蛟，太湖边山崖崩塌，露出一古冢朱漆棺，宝物无数，尽被人盗去无遗。有人传说到城，懒龙偶同亲友泛湖，因到其处。看见藤蔓缠棺，已被斩断；开发棺中惟枯骸一具；冢傍有断碑模糊。懒龙道是古来王公之墓，不觉恻然，就与他掩蔽了。即时出些银两，顾本处土人聚土埋藏好了，把酒浇奠。奠毕将行，懒龙见草中一物碍脚，俯首取起，乃是古铜镜一面。急藏袜中，不与人见。及到城中，将往僻处，刷净泥滓细看，那镜小小只有四五寸，面上精光闪烁，背上鼻钮四傍，隐起穷奇、饕餮、鱼龙、波浪之形，满身青绿，尽蚀朱砂、水银之色。试敲一下，其声冷然。晓得是件宝贝，将来佩带身边。到得晚间，将来一照，暗处皆明，雪白如昼。懒龙得了此镜，出入不离，夜行更不用火，一发添了一助。别人怕黑时节，他竟同日里行走，偷法愈便。

却是懒龙虽是偷儿行径，却有几件好处：不肯淫人家妇女；不入良善与患难之家；许了人说话，再不失信。亦且仗义疏财，偷来东西，随手散与贫穷负极之人；最要薙恼那慳吝财





and write some characters with white chalk against a black background, or with black coal against a white background. Therefore he was also sometimes called “Plum Bough.”

In the beginning of the Jiajing reign, One day a crocodile sprang out from two the hills in the Dongting Mountains and cliffs fell down by Taihu Lake, exposing an ancient tomb with a burgundy-painted coffin and countless treasures. The treasures were later stolen, but word of this spread to the town. Lazy Dragon went there, rowing a boat with some of his friends. He saw that the coffin’s binding vines had been cut off. Looking inside, he only saw a dried skeleton. At the side of the tomb was a broken tombstone with undecipherable characters on it. Lazy Dragon believed it was the tomb of an ancient prince and his heart sank. He then shut the coffin, hired a few local men at his expense to give it a burial and made a libation in front of it.

As Lazy Dragon was leaving, he stepped on something. He bent over to pick it up. It was an antique copper mirror. Quickly he slipped the mirror into his sock so it would not be seen by others. When he got back to town, he ran to a quiet place and removed the dirt from the mirror for a closer look. It was a small mirror, about four or five inches in diameter and shining brightly. Around the handle on the flipside were a few blurred designs of strange beasts, fishes and dragons. It was green and bore traces of cinnabar and mercury. A tap on it gave a clear sound. Knowing this was a treasure, Lazy Dragon hid it on his person. At night he took it out and then the darkness was lighted up like broad daylight. After acquiring this mirror, Lazy Dragon carried it all the time. It proved a great help for him in moving around at night because now he no longer needed to use fire for light. Where other thieves avoided dark places, Lazy Dragon walked in as if he was strolling around by daylight. His stealing was thus made a lot easier.

Despite his thievery, Lazy Dragon was meritorious in a few ways. He did not seduce women. He did not enter the house of virtuous and unfortunate families to commit theft. He was always a man of his word, believing in brotherhood and charity — he gave his stolen goods to people in poverty or desperate situations. He loved to offend parsimonious and



主、无义富人，逢场作戏，做出笑话。因此到所在，人多倚草附木，成行逐队来皈依他，义声赫然。懒龙笑道：“吾无父母妻子可养，借这些世间馀财，聊救贫人，正所谓损有馀补不足，天道当然。非关吾的好义也。”

一日，有人传说一个大商下千金在织人周甲家，懒龙要去取他的。酒后错认了所在，误入了一个人家。其家乃是个贫人，房内止有一张大几。四下一看，别无长物。既已进了房中，一时不好出去，只得伏在几下。看见贫家夫妻对食，盘餐萧瑟。夫满面愁容，对妻道：“欠了客债要紧，别无头脑可还，我不如死了罢。”妻子道：“怎便寻死？不如把我卖了，还好将钱营生。”说罢，夫妻泪如雨下。懒龙忽然跳将出来，夫妻慌怕。懒龙道：“你两个不必怕我，我乃懒龙也。偶听人言，来寻一个商客，错走至此。今见你每生计可怜，我当送二百金与你，助你经营。快不可别寻道路，如此苦楚。”夫妻素闻其名，拜道：“若得义士如此厚恩，吾夫妻死里得生了。”懒龙出了门去。一个更次，门内铿然一响，夫妻走起看时，果然一个布囊有银二百两在内，乃是懒龙是夜取得商人之物。夫妻喜跃非常，写个懒龙牌位，奉事终身。

有一贫儿，少时与懒龙游狎，后来消乏，与懒龙途中相遇，身上褴褛，自觉羞惭，引扇掩面而过。懒龙掣住其衣，问道：“你不是某舍么？”贫儿踟蹰道：“惶恐，惶恐。”懒龙道：“你



evil rich persons, and take advantage of situations to make fun of them. So wherever he went, he had an army of followers. His fame of righteousness spread far and wide. He would laugh and say, "I don't have parents or a wife as dependents to feed. Helping the needy by taking from the haves is the heavenly law, and it has nothing to do with my benevolent nature."

One day it was said that a rich merchant had given a deposit of one thousand taels of silver to the weaver Zhou Jia. Lazy Dragon decided to steal the money. However, he got drunk and got into the wrong house, one that belonged to a poor family that had only a big table in the room. Looking about, Lazy Dragon detected nothing else. Since he was already inside the house, he was unable to find a quick way out, so he lay prostrate under the table and listened to the husband and wife talking over a meager dinner. Sad and gloomy, the husband said to the wife, "We have no way to pay our debts. I'd rather die." The wife said, "Why are you talking about dying? You'd better sell me in order to survive." Then they sobbed. All of a sudden, Lazy Dragon jumped out, and the couple was terrified. Lazy Dragon said, "Don't panic, you two. I'm Lazy Dragon. I heard people talk about a rich merchant around town, but entered your house by mistake. I see you are suffering from poverty. I'll give you two hundred taels of silver to help you start a business. Don't take your own life." The husband and wife had learned of his name before, so they saluted to him and said, "If you are so kind to us, we can survive!" Lazy Dragon left and a watch later a big thud was heard in the room. The husband and wife stepped forward to look. On the floor was a cloth bag holding two hundred taels of silver. This was the silver that Lazy Dragon had stolen that night after the rich merchant left with the weaver. The husband and wife were overjoyed. They set up a memorial tablet to him and worshipped him throughout their lives.

A man, who had been a close friend of Lazy Dragon in childhood and was reduced to poverty later, stumbled across Lazy Dragon one day. The pauper in rags was embarrassed to meet his former friend, so he raced past him holding a fan to shield his face from view. Lazy Dragon grabbed him by his clothes and asked, "Aren't you Mr. So-and-so?" The pauper



一贫至此，明日当同你入一大家，取些来付你。勿得妄言。”贫儿晓得懒龙手段，又是不哄人的，明日傍晚，来寻懒龙。懒龙与他共至一所，乃是士夫家池馆。但见：

暮鸦撩乱，碧树蒙笼。

万籁凄清，四隅寂静。

懒龙分付贫儿止住在外，自己竦身攀树，逾垣而入。许久不出。贫儿屏气吞声，蹲踞墙外。又被群犬嚎吠，赶来咋啖，贫儿绕墙走避。微听得墙内水响，倏有一物，如没水鸬鹚，从林影中堕地。仔细看看，却是懒龙，浑身沾湿，状甚狼狈。对贫儿道：“吾为你几乎送了性命！里面黄金无数，可以斗量，我已取到了手。因为外边犬吠得紧，惊醒里面的人，追将出来。只得丢弃道傍，轻身走脱。此乃子之命也。”贫儿道：“老龙平日手到拿来，今日如此，是我命薄。”叹息不胜。懒龙道：“不必烦恼，改日别作道理。”贫儿快快而去。

过了一个多月，懒龙路上又遇着他，哀告道：“我穷得耐烦了。今日去卜问一卦，遇着上上大吉，财爻发动。先生说：‘当有一场飞来富贵，是别人作成的。’我想，不是老龙，还那里指望？”懒龙笑道：“吾几乎忘了，前日那家金银一箱，已到手了。若竟把来与你，恐那家发觉，你藏不过，做出事来。



was flurried and replied, "I'm too embarrassed to see you, my friend." Lazy Dragon said, "You're in such a deplorable state, let's go together tomorrow to visit a wealthy family and obtain something for you. But you mustn't tell anybody." The pauper knew Lazy Dragon was a master hand and knew he was a man of his word. The next evening, he went to see Lazy Dragon. They arrived at a manor, which belonged to a senior official. The green trees were enveloped in the fading darkness of the evening and quietness reigned over the region except for the disorderly cries of crows in the trees.

Lazy Dragon asked the pauper to wait outside, while he climbed up a tree and got inside by crossing over the wall. He didn't come back out for quite some time. Holding his breath, the pauper squatted by the wall waiting. A few dogs kept by the family ran over and barked at him. He had to move away along the wall. Suddenly he heard the sound of water splashing inside and saw something like a cormorant diving from the wall and dropping to the ground in the dark woods. Going closer, the pauper saw it was Lazy Dragon, completely wet through. Lazy Dragon said to the pauper, "I almost lost my life for you! There's a huge amount of gold in the house and you can measure it by the bushel. I stole some gold from the room, but the dogs started barking annoyingly and the host was awakened. For fear of being caught by the host, I dropped it by the path and fled over the wall. I'm sorry it's your bad luck." The pauper said, "You're experienced and never fail to make it. Today it's indeed my bad luck." He sighed disappointedly. Lazy Dragon said, "Don't worry. I'll come again and get it some time later." The pauper went home in low spirits.

One month later Lazy Dragon ran into the pauper again on the street. The pauper implored him saying, "I'm so poor that I went to the fortune-teller today. I was told that I will have good luck and get some wealth. The fortune-teller said, 'There will be a windfall coming to you and someone will bring it to you.' I thought that if it is not you, who else?" Lazy Dragon laughed and said, "I had almost forgotten the chest of gold and silver that I took the other night. But I thought if I handed it to you immediately, you might not be able to hide it and the loser might discover

所以权放在那家水池内，再看动静。今已个月期程，不见声息，想那家不思量追访了，可以取之无碍。晚间当再去走遭。”贫儿等到薄暮，来约懒龙同往。懒龙一到彼处，但见：

度柳穿花，捷若飞鸟。

驰波溅沫，矫似游龙。

须臾之间，背负一箱而出。急到僻处开看，将着身带宝镜一照，里头尽是金银。懒龙分文不取，也不问多少，尽数与了贫儿。分付道：“这些财物可勾你一世了，好好将去用度，不要学我懒龙混帐，半生不做人家。”贫儿感激谢教，将着做本钱，后来竟成富家。懒龙所行之事，每多如此。

说话的，懒龙固然手段高强，难道只这等游行无碍，再没有失手时节？看官听说：他也有遇着不巧，受了窘迫，却会得逢急智生，脱身溜撒。

曾有一日走到人家，见衣橱开着，急向里头藏身，要取橱中衣服。不匡这家子临上床时，将衣橱关好，上了大锁，竟把懒龙锁在橱内了。懒龙出来不得，心生一计，把橱内衣饰紧缠在身，又另包下一大包，俱挨着橱门，口里就做鼠咬衣裳之声。主人听得，叫起老妪来道：“为何把老鼠关在橱内了？可不咬坏了衣服！快开了橱，赶了出来。”老妪取火开橱，才开得门，那挨着门口包儿先滚了下地。说时迟，那时快，懒龙就这包滚下来头里，一同滚将出来，就势扑灭了老妪手中之火。老妪吃惊，大叫一声。懒龙恐怕人起难脱，急取了那个包，随将老妪



it. So I dropped it in the pond of the family that night to see what would happen. Now a month has passed and nothing has happened. That family may have given up searching for it. You can have it without getting into trouble. I'll go and get it for you tonight."

The pauper waited until dusk. He came to see Lazy Dragon and they went there together. Lazy Dragon entered the residence and came out moment later, carrying the chest on his back. They rushed to a quiet place and Lazy Dragon took out his magic mirror for a light. The chest was full of gold and silver. Lazy Dragon did not touch it, nor did he count it. He simply gave all of it to the pauper and said, "This fortune should be large enough for you to spend in your whole life. Use it wisely. Don't be like me, Lazy Dragon, getting by from day to day without being financially established half-way through my life." The pauper was grateful and expressed his thanks. With the money he started a business and later became rich. This is only one of many good deeds that Lazy Dragon performed.

Readers, you may wonder, was Lazy Dragon so remarkable in his career of stealing that he never slipped? He did occasionally find himself landing in trouble. But he was capable of quickly finding a way out of his predicament.

One night he stole into the home of a family. Seeing the closet open, he slipped into it to pilfer the clothing. However, the family shut the closet door and locked it before going to bed. Lazy Dragon was thus enclosed in the closet. But he hit upon an idea. He wrapped himself up in the clothes, and made a bundle of them that he set inside by the closet door. Then he produced the sound a mouse chewing on the clothes. The hostess of the house called an elderly woman servant and said to her, "Why did you get a mouse shut in the closet? It may damage the clothing. Let it out and drive it out of the room." The elderly servant picked up the light and moved to the closet. No sooner had she opened the door than the bundle of clothes rolled out. Almost at the same moment Lazy Dragon rolled out with the bundle and snapped off the light in her hand. The servant was astonished, letting out a cry. To prevent the family from being aroused, Lazy Dragon clutched the bundle and shoved the woman at the same



要处一拨，扑的跌倒在地，望外便走。房中有人走起，地上踏着老嫗，只说是贼，拳脚乱下。老嫗喊叫连天。房外人听得房里嚷乱，尽奔将来，点起火一照，见是自家人厮打。方喊得住，懒龙不知已去过几时了。

有一织纺人家，客人将银子定下绸罗若干。其家夫妻收银箱内，放在床里边。夫妻同寝在床，夜夜小心谨守。懒龙知道，要取他的。闪进房去，一脚踏了床沿，挽手进床内掇那箱子。妇人惊醒，觉得床沿上有物，暗中一摸，晓得是只人脚，急用手抱住不放，忙叫丈夫道：“快起来，吾捉住贼脚在这里了！”懒龙即将其夫之脚用手抱住一掐。其夫负痛，忙喊道：“是我的脚！是我的脚！”妇人认是错拿了夫脚，即时把手放开。懒龙便掇了箱子，如飞出房。夫妻两人还争个不清，妻道：“分明拿的是贼脚，你却教放了。”夫道：“现今我脚掐得生疼，那里是贼脚？”妻道：“你脚在里床，我拿的在外床，况且吾不曾掐着。”夫道：“这等，是贼掐我的脚。你只不要放那只脚便是。”妻道：“我听你喊将起来，慌忙之中，认是错了，不觉把手放松，他便抽得去了，着了贼见识，定是不好了。”摸摸里床，箱子果是不见。夫妻两个，我道你错，你道我差，互相埋怨不了。

懒龙又走在一个卖衣服的铺里，寻着他衣库，正要拣好的卷他。黑暗难认，却把身边宝镜来照。又道是：

隔墙须有耳，门外岂无人？

谁想隔邻人家，有人在楼上做房，楼窗看见间壁衣库亮光一



time. She stumbled, as Lazy Dragon flashed through the door. Some people of the family came and tripped over the elderly woman servant, mistaking her for a thief. They gave her a good beating. She yelled in pain as servants rushed in with lights from outside. They then realized they were beating their servant and stopped the beating. But Lazy Dragon had vanished a long while before.

Once a weaver received some silver from a customer for the weaving of a few bolts of silk and gauze. The husband and wife stored the silver in a treasure box and set it on the bed by the wall. They went to sleep on that bed, paying particular attention to the box at night. Lazy Dragon heard of the silver and decided to steal it. He sneaked into the room. With one foot on the side of the bed, he reached into the bed to get the treasure box. The wife awoke and felt there was something on the side of the bed. She touched it with her hand and recognized it to be a man's foot. So she held it tightly and called to her husband, "Get up! I've grabbed a thief's foot." Immediately Lazy Dragon picked up one of the husband's feet and gave a pinch. Feeling the pain, the husband cried, "It's my foot! It's my foot!"

Realizing she was wrong, the wife let go, and Lazy Dragon shot out of the room with the treasure box. The husband and wife shouted at each other. The wife said, "I held the thief's foot in my hand, but you wanted me to let go of it." The husband said, "No, it was my foot. Your pinch is still hurting. How could it be the thief's foot?" The wife said, "Your feet were on the other side of the bed. I grabbed a foot on this side of the bed. Besides I did not pinch." The husband said, "In this case, it must be the thief who pinched my foot. But you should not have let go of his foot." The wife said, "When I heard you yelling, I was shocked. I thought I was mistaken, and so I released it. He fled. Since a thief came, we must have lost things!" They reached for the box, but it was gone. The husband and wife then complained against one another for most of the night.

That same night Lazy Dragon went to a clothing store to rob it. But it was too dark to see clearly. So he took out his magic mirror to light the way. An old saying goes, "Walls have ears and doorposts have eyes." He did not know that a husband and wife were making love on the second floor of the house next door. They saw the flash of light in the neighboring



闪，如闪电一般，情知有些尴尬。忙敲楼窗，向铺里叫道：“隔壁仔细，家中敢有小人了！”铺中人惊起，口喊“捉贼”。懒龙听得在先，看见庭中有一只大酱缸，上盖蓬蓆。懒龙慌忙掀起，蹲在缸中，仍复反手盖好。那家人提着灯各处一照，不见影响，寻到后边去了。懒龙在缸里想道：“方才只有缸内，不曾开看。今后头寻不见，此番必来。我不如往看过的所在躲去。”又思身上衣已染酱，淋漓开来，掩不得踪迹，便把衣服卸在缸内，赤身脱出来。把脚踪印些酱迹在地下，一路到门，把门开了，自己翻身进来，仍入衣库中藏着。那家人后头寻了一转，又将火到前边来，果然把酱缸盖揭开看时，却有一套衣服在内，认得不是家里的。多道：“这分明是贼的衣裳了！”又见地下脚迹，自缸边直到门边，门已洞开。尽皆道：“贼见我们寻，慌躲在酱缸里面。我们后边去寻时，他却脱下衣服，逃走了。可惜看得迟了些个，不然，此时已被我们拿住。”店主人家道：“赶得他去也罢了。关好了门，歇息罢！”一家尽道贼去无事，又历碌了一会，放倒了头，大家酣睡。讷知贼还在家里，懒龙安然住在锦绣丛中，把上好衣服绕身系束得紧峭，把一领青旧衣外面盖着，又把细软好物装在一个布被里面，打做个包儿。弄了大半夜，寂寂负了，从屋檐上跳出。这家子没一人知觉。



store, and quickly realized something was happening there. They ran over to knock on the window, yelling, “Be watchful, my neighbor! You may have a thief in your house.” The store owner jumped up and shouted, “Stop thief!”

When Lazy Dragon heard the shout, he looked for a hiding place and found a big jar in the yard for storing thick soya bean sauce. It had a bamboo-mat cover. He ran over to the jar, took off the cover, jumped inside and stayed squatting there after he put the cover back on the jar. The family searched with lanterns, but they did not find anybody, so they went to the rear of the house. Lazy Dragon thought to himself, “They did not look inside the jar. If they don’t find anything in the rear, they will surely come back to check this jar. I’d better hide where they have already checked.” Then he realized, “I’m soaked through with soya bean sauce. If I climb out, I’ll surely leave a trace.” He took off his clothes and crawled naked out of the jar. Then he ran to the gate of the house and opened it, leaving a line of footprints on the ground. He turned around, ran back into the clothing storage, and hid himself there. The family found no one at the back of the house and so they went to check the jar. They found a set of clothes inside. Knowing these were not their own, they said, “It’s the thief’s clothes.” They also saw the footprints on the ground leading to the gate, which was left open. They all said, “The thief saw us searching for him so he hid himself in the jar. When we went to the back of the house, he took off his clothes and fled. It’s a shame we checked here too late. Otherwise we would have caught him.”

The store owner said, “We frightened him out of the house. It’s all right. Close the gate and go to sleep.” They thought the thief was gone. They stayed for another moment before they all fell into sound sleep, ignorant of the fact that the thief had not yet left. Lazy Dragon picked up a few of the best dresses and tied them around his body. He then put on an old blue overcoat. He selected some silk clothes and wrapped them up with a quilt, and rolled it into a bundle. It took him quite some time before he leapt out from under the eavesdrop, carrying the load of clothes, with the family still asleep.

As Lazy Dragon jumped onto the street, it was not dawn yet. He walked



跳到街上，正走时，天尚黎明，有三四一起早行的人，前来撞着。见懒龙独自一个，负着重囊，侵早行走，疑他来路不正气，遮住道：“你是甚么人？在那里来？说个明白，方放你走。”懒龙口不答应，伸手在肘后摸出一包，团圞如球，抛在地下就走。那几个人多来抢看，见上面牢卷密扎，道他必是好物，争先来解。解了一层，又有一层，就像剥笋壳一般。且是层层捆得紧，剥了一尺多，里头还不尽，剩有拳头大一块。疑道：“不知裹着甚么！”众人不肯住手，还要夺来解看。那先前解下的，多是敝衣破絮，零零落落，堆得满地。正在闹嚷之际，只见一伙人赶来道：“你们偷了我家铺里衣服，在此分赃么！”不由分说，拿起器械蛮打将来。众人呼喝不住，见不是头，各跑散了。中间拿住一个老头儿，天色黯黑之中，也不来认面庞，一步一棍，直打到铺里。老头儿口里乱叫乱喊道：“不要打！不要打！你们错了！”众人多是兴头上，人住马不住，那里听他？看看天色大明，店主人仔细一看，乃是自家亲家翁，在乡里住的。连忙喝住众人，已此打得头虚面肿。店主人忙陪不是，置酒请罪。因说失贼之事，老头儿方诉出来道：“适才同两三个乡里人作伴到此，天未明亮，因见一人背驮一大囊行走，正拦住盘问，不匡他丢下一件包裹，多来夺看，他乘闹走了。谁想一层一层，多是破衣败絮。我们被他哄了，不拿得他，却被这里人不分皂白，混打这番，把同伴人惊散。便宜那贼骨头，又不知走了多少路了。”众人听见这话，大家惊悔。邻



forward and bumped into a few of early risers. They saw Lazy Dragon walking alone with a heavy load at that early hour. Suspecting him of a crime, they stopped him and asked, "Who are you? Where have you been? Tell the truth and we'll let you pass." Lazy Dragon said nothing. Instead, he slipped out a cloth ball, like a feather stuffed ball, from under his elbow. He dropped this on the ground and ran away. The men swarmed around the object and saw it tied closely with threads. They thought it certainly must be something valuable, so they scrambled to untie it. They undid one layer after another, as if they were peeling a bamboo shoot. It was tightly bound. After they had untied quite a bit of it, they still saw there was no end to it. When they came down to a roll the size of a fist, they became suspicious, wondering, "What's inside?" They continued to untie it with much curiosity. In the end there were just rags and scraps of cotton strewn all over the place.

As they were in a hubbub, a group of people arrived, running, and shouted, "You stole our clothes and are dividing them among yourselves!" Before a reply could be given, the new arrivals began to swing their sticks and boards to beat the group of men. Unable to fend off the blows, the men scattered, leaving an elderly man behind. In the darkness his face did not show clearly, so they continued to beat the elderly man all the way back to the store. The elderly man yelled, "Stop! Stop! You're mistaken!" But the men were so excited they didn't listen to him. As daylight came, the store owner recognized the man to be his son's father-in-law, a man who lived in countryside. The store owner stopped the beaters, but the elderly man had already gotten a swollen face. The store owner apologized to him and set a table for forgiveness. He then mentioned the burglary that had taken place at night. The elderly man told him, "I was with a few friends coming this way before dawn. We saw a man carrying a big load, so we stopped him for questioning. He dropped a cloth ball and we scrambled to look at it. He took the chance and escaped. The cloth ball was nothing but rags. We were cheated and failed to capture him. When these men hit and struck indiscriminately, my friends fled. It's a pity that the thief is now well on his way."

When the men heard the story, they were surprised and regretted their



里闻知某家捉贼，错打了亲家公，传为笑话。原来那个球就是懒龙在衣橱里把闲工结成，带在身边，防人尾追，把此抛下做缓兵之计的。这多是他临危急智，脱身巧妙之处。有诗为证：

巧技承蜩与弄丸，当前卖弄许多般。

虽然贼态何堪述，也要临时猝智难。

懒龙神偷之名，四处布闻。卫中巡捕张指挥访知，叫巡军拿去。指挥见了，问道：“你是个贼的头儿么？”懒龙道：“小人不曾做贼，怎说是贼的头儿？小人不曾有一毫赃私犯在公庭，亦不曾见有窃盗贼伙扳及小人。小人只为有些小智巧，与亲戚朋友作耍之事间或有之。爷爷不要见罪小人，或者有时用得小人着，水里火里，小人不辞。”指挥见他身材小巧，语言爽快，想道无赃无证，难以罪他。又见说肯出力，思量这样人有用处，便没有难为的意思。

正说话间，有个阆门陆小闲将一只红嘴绿鹦哥来献与指挥。指挥教把锁镫挂在檐下，笑对懒龙道：“闻你手段通神，你虽说戏耍无赃，偷人的必也不少。今且权恕你罪，我只要看你手段。你今晚若能偷得我这鹦哥去，明日送来还我，凡事不计较你了。”懒龙道：“这个不难。容小人出去，明早送来。”懒龙叩头而出。指挥当下分付两个守夜军人：“小心看守架上鹦哥，倘有疏失，重加责治。”两个军人听命，守宿在檐下，一



rashness. The tale of the mistaken beating of the store owner's son's father-in-law spread among the neighbors and became the butt of ridicule. It happened that Lazy Dragon took his leisurely time to make the cloth ball when he had been hiding inside the clothing closet, and he carried it with him for the sake of misleading his pursuers in case he was discovered. This was one of many instances in which he used his wits to free himself from trouble.

Lazy Dragon became quickly well known for his remarkable stealing skills. The garrison commander Zhang, who was in charge of the local security learned about him. He sent patrols to bring Lazy Dragon to his office, where he asked him, "Are you the ringleader?" Lazy Dragon replied, "I don't steal or rob. How can I be a ringleader? No lawsuit has been brought against me in court. And I don't have any connection with thieves and robbers either. I only have a few skills and play one or two tricks occasionally on friends and relatives. If you find no offense in my deeds, lord, I'd like to offer to do any kind of demanding work for you in future." Seeing that Lazy Dragon was small and nimble and had a brisk tongue, the commander thought to himself, "With no stolen goods as evidence, I can't charge him." Furthermore, Lazy Dragon had offered service in the future. The commander found a possible assistant in him, so he rejected any idea of charging him.

As they were talking, a man called Lu Xiaoxian from Changmen arrived with a gift of a red-beaked green parrot for the commander. The commander had the cage containing the parrot hung under the eaves and said to Lazy Dragon with a smile, "I have heard that you are remarkable in your skills. In spite of your claiming playful conduct and a clean record, I doubt that you're completely free of stealing. Today I'll let you go without charge, but I want to test your skills. If you can steal this parrot tonight and return it to me tomorrow, I'll renounce any charges against you." Lazy Dragon replied, "That's easy. Let me do it and bring the parrot back to you tomorrow morning." Lazy Dragon kowtowed and took his leave.

The commander at once called two soldiers and said to them, "Watch the parrot closely. A slight negligence on your part will incur harsh punishment." With this order, the two soldiers stayed on the watch under



步不敢走离。虽是眼皮压将下来，只得勉强支持。一阵盹睡，闻声惊醒，甚是苦楚。夜已五鼓，懒龙走在指挥书房屋脊上，挖开椽子，溜将下来。只见衣架上有一件沉香色潞绸披风，几上有一顶华阳巾，壁上挂一盏小行灯，上写着“苏州卫堂”四字。懒龙心思有计，登时把衣巾来穿戴了，袖中拿出火种，吹起烛煤，点了行灯，提在手里，装着老张指挥声音步履，仪容气度，无一不像。走到中堂壁门边，把门砉然开了，远远放住行灯，踱出廊檐下来。此时月色朦胧，天光昏惨，两个军人大盹小盹，方在困倦之际。懒龙轻轻踢他一下道：“天色渐明，不必守了，出去罢。”一头说，一头伸手去提了鸚哥锁镫，望中门里面摇摆了进去。两个军人闭眉刷眼，正不耐烦，听得发放，犹如九重天上的赦书来了，那里还管甚么好歹，一道烟去了。

须臾天明，张指挥走将出来，鸚哥不见在檐下。急唤军人问他，两个多不在了。忙教拿来，军人还是残梦未醒。指挥喝道：“叫你们看守鸚哥，鸚哥在那里？你们倒在外边来？”军人道：“五更时恩主亲自出来，取了鸚哥进去，发放小人们归去的，怎么反问小人要鸚哥？”指挥道：“胡说！我何曾出来？你们见鬼了？”军人道：“分明是恩主亲自出来，我们两个人同在那里，难道一齐眼花了不成？”指挥情知尴尬，走到书房，



the eaves that night, not moving one step away from the spot. But later their eyelids began to droop as they battled sleepiness with difficulty. A spell of dozing seized them. Occasionally they were suddenly roused by slight sounds. It was indeed a rough time for them. Before dawn Lazy Dragon arrived on the roof of the commander's study. He pried open a few rafters and slid down into the room. He saw a soft silk cloak perfumed with a southern wood fragrance, a beautiful turban on a small table, and a hanging lantern with the characters "Suzhou Patrol" painted on it placed against the wall. An idea struck him. He put the cloak over his shoulders and the turban on his head. Then he slipped a lighter from his sleeve, pulled out the lamp wick and lighted the hanging lantern. With the lantern in hand, he walked in imitation of the old commander. He came to the door of the main room and opened it. Then he set down the lantern and stepped out walking along under the eaves in the dim moonlight. The two soldiers were struggling to keep awake. Lazy Dragon gently kicked them and said, "It's getting towards daybreak. Don't stay here any more. You're excused now." As he said this, he reached out to take hold of the parrot cage and then meandered back with it to the entrance to the inner quarters of the residence. The two soldiers were worn out with drowsiness, scarcely able to open their eyes. After hearing the order, they felt a complete release, as if granted a special amnesty. With no thought about the consequences, they departed.

Soon it was morning. Commander Zhang came and saw the parrot gone. Immediately he called the two soldiers, but they were not around. He sent for them. The two soldiers arrived, still drowsy. The commander shouted, "I ordered you to watch the parrot closely. Where is it now? Why did you come from the other direction?" The soldiers replied, "About the fifth watch, you, my lord, personally came out, took away the parrot and released us. Why are you asking us about it now?" The commander yelled, "Nonsense! When did I come out? It must have been a ghost you saw?" The soldiers answered, "There is no mistake about the fact that you personally came to us. We both were here. How could we both be wrong?"

The commander understood that something had gone amiss. He went



仰见屋椽有孔道，想必在这里着手去了。正持疑间，外报懒龙将鹦哥送到。指挥含笑出来，问他何由偷得出去。懒龙把昨夜着衣戴巾假装主人、取进鹦哥之事，说了一遍。指挥惊喜，大加亲幸。懒龙也时常有些小孝顺，指挥一发心腹相托，懒龙一发安然无事了。普天下巡捕官偏会养贼，从来如此。有诗为证：

猫鼠何当一处眠？总因有味要垂涎。

繇来捕盗皆为盗，贼党安能不炽然？

虽如此说，懒龙果然与人作戏的事体多。曾有一个博徒在赌场得了采，背负千钱回家。路上撞见懒龙，博徒指着钱戏懒龙道：“我今夜把此钱放在枕头底下，你若取得去，明日我输东道。若取不去，你请我吃东道。”懒龙笑道：“使得，使得。”博徒归到家中对妻子说今日得了采，把钱藏在枕下了。妻子心里欢喜，杀一只鸡，烫酒共吃。鸡吃不完，还留下一半，收拾在橱中。上床同睡，又说了与懒龙打赌赛之事，夫妻相戒，大家醒觉些个。岂知懒龙此时已在窗下，一一听得。见他夫妻惺惚，难以下手，心生一计。便走去灶下拾根麻骨放在口中，嚼得膈膊有声，竟似猫儿吃鸡之状。妇人惊起道：“还有老大半只鸡，明日好吃一餐，不要被这亡人拖了去。”连忙走下床来，



back to his study. Looking upward, he noticed that a few rafters had been moved. He decided that Lazy Dragon must have entered from up there. As he was pondering the matter, Lazy Dragon arrived with the parrot. Smiling, the commander walked over to Lazy Dragon and asked him how he had made away with it. Lazy Dragon recounted how he had posed as the commander by wearing the cloak and the turban and how he had taken away the parrot. The commander was delighted and praised him immensely. Later Lazy Dragon periodically offered a few gifts to the commander, while the commander never hesitated in entrusting him with personal requests. With this support, Lazy Dragon started to carry out his business easily. Since ancient times, all police officers have patronized thieves.

Even though Lazy Dragon was a thief, he liked to play tricks on people. One gambler, who had won a bet and was on his way back home carrying one thousand taels of silver on his back, encountered Lazy Dragon. Pointing to him, the gambler said jokingly, "Tonight I'm going to tuck this money under my pillow. If you can take it away, I'll treat you to dinner tomorrow. If you can't, you'll have to treat me." Laughing, Lazy Dragon said, "Okay, a deal."

Upon getting back home, the gambler said to his wife that he had won a bet and tucked the winnings under his pillow. His wife was joyous. She killed a hen and warmed wine. They had dinner together. The chicken was not completely eaten, so the leftovers were put away in the kitchen. Before going to bed, the gambler told his wife of his bet with Lazy Dragon about stealing the money. They slept in a state of alertness.

Meanwhile Lazy Dragon had been hiding outside the window, listening. Knowing that the husband and wife were rather vigilant, he realized he would have no chance to get the money while they were in bed. Then he suddenly hit upon an idea. He slid into the kitchen, picked up a chicken bone, stuck it into his mouth and chewed on it vigorously, making the sound of a cat eating the chicken. The wife heard this and said to her husband, "We've got half the chicken left. Tomorrow it can feed us for another dinner. Don't let that cat get it." At once she got out of bed and ran to the kitchen to have a look. Lazy Dragon by this time was already in



去开橱来看。懒龙闪入天井中，将一块石头抛下井里，“洞”的一声响。博徒听得，惊道：“不要为这点小小口腹，失脚落在井中了，不是耍处！”急出门来看时，懒龙已隐身入房，在枕下挖钱去了。夫妇两人黑暗里叫唤相应，方知无事，挽手归房。到得床里，只见枕头移开，摸那钱时，早已不见。夫妻互相怨怅道：“清清白白两个人，又不曾睡着，却被他当面作弄了去，也倒好笑。”到得天明，懒龙将钱来还了，来索东道。博徒大笑，就勒下几百放在袖里，与懒龙前到酒店中买酒请他。

两个饮酒中间，细说昨日光景，拍掌大笑。酒家翁听见，来问其故。与他说了。酒家翁道：“一向闻知手段高强，果然如此。”指着桌上锡酒壶道：“今夜若能取得此壶去，我明日也输一个东道。”懒龙笑道：“这也不难。”酒家翁道：“我不许你毁门坏户，只在此桌上，凭你如何取去。”懒龙道：“使得，使得。”起身相别而去。

酒家翁到晚，分付牢关门户，自家把灯四处照了，料道进来不得。想道：“我停灯在桌上了，拚得坐着，守定这壶，看他那里下手！”酒家翁果然坐至夜分，绝无影响。意思有些不耐烦了，倦怠起来。瞌睡到了，起初还着实勉强；支撑不过，就斜靠在桌上睡去，不觉大鼾。懒龙早已在门外听得，就悄悄



the yard. He tossed a rock into a well, and the sound of a plop was heard. The gambler was surprised and called, "Be careful. Don't slip and get killed in the well just for that small bite of food." He raced out of the room to look for his wife. Lazy Dragon then sneaked into the bedroom and took the money from under the pillow. In the darkness the husband and wife called and responded to each other. Assured that nothing had happened, they went back to the bedroom, hand in hand. But they saw the pillow had been moved a distance away on the bed. They reached for the money. It was gone. The husband and wife mumbled complaints against one another and said, "We were not asleep, neither us, and yet we failed to guard our possessions. Truly he made fun of us. It's ridiculous!"

The next morning Lazy Dragon came with the money, claiming his triumph. Laughing, the gambler took a few hundred pieces of cash from the money he had won, bought wine in a wine store and treated Lazy Dragon.

As they drank, they talked about the happening of the previous night, clapping their hands and laughing. The store owner noticed them and stepped over to ask why they were laughing. After being told the story, he said to Lazy Dragon, "I heard of your remarkable skills long ago. Now I'm convinced it's true." Pointing to a tin wine-pot on the table, he said, "If you can take this pot away tonight, I'll also treat you tomorrow." Lazy Dragon laughed and said, "That will not be difficult either." The store owner said, "But you're not permitted to ruin the door or windows. Just do whatever you can to get it from the table." Lazy Dragon said, "All right." Then he left.

The store owner had the door shut safely. Holding a lantern, he inspected the room carefully in order to make sure that there was no possibility for Lazy Dragon to enter in. He thought, "I'm going to let the lantern stand on the table and I'll sit by the table, watching the wine-pot. Let me see how he steals it!" He did sit there and stayed well into the night. Nothing happened. Then he gradually got seized with drowsiness. Finding it difficult to remain watchful, he struggled hard to keep from dozing off. At first he could barely keep his eyes open. But pretty soon he collapsed and reclined on the table in a sound sleep.



的扒上屋脊，揭开屋瓦，将一猪脬紧扎在细竹管上。竹管是打通中节的，徐徐放下，插入酒壶口中。酒店里的壶，多是肚宽颈窄的。懒龙在上边把一口气从竹管里吹出去，那猪脬在壶内涨将开来，已满壶中。懒龙就掐住竹管上眼，便把酒壶提将起来。仍旧盖好屋瓦，不动分毫。酒家翁一觉醒来，桌上灯还未灭，酒壶已失。急起四下看时，窗户安然，毫无漏处。竟不知甚么神通，摄得去了。

又一日，与二三少年同立北潼子门酒家。河下船中有个福建公子，令从人将衣被在船头上晒曝，锦绣璨烂，观者无不啧啧。内中有一条被，乃是西洋异锦，更为奇特。众人见他如此炫耀，戏道：“我们用甚法取了你的，以博一笑才好。”尽推懒龙道：“此时懒龙不逞技俩，更待何时？”懒龙笑道：“今夜让我弄了他来，明日大家送还他，要他赏钱，同诸公取醉。”懒龙说罢，先到混堂把身子洗得洁净，再来到船边看相动静。守到更点二声，公子与众客尽带酣意，潦倒模糊。打一个混同铺，吹灭了灯，一齐藉地而寝。懒龙倏忽闪烁，已杂入众客铺内，挨入被中。说着闽中乡谈，故意在被中挨来挤去。众客睡不像意，口里和啰埋怨。懒龙也作闽者说睡话，趁着挨挤杂闹中，



Lazy Dragon had been watching closely outside. So he now ascended the roof and moved one of the tiles. Quietly he lowered a hollow bamboo pole with a hog bladder fastened tightly to its end. Then he managed to put this into the opening of the wine-pot. The wine-pot, like those from most wine stores, had a bulging body and a narrow neck. Lazy Dragon blew air through the bamboo pole until the bog bladder ballooned, completely filling the pot. He then stopped the air from escaping by holding his hand over the end of the bamboo pole and slowly pulled the pot up. Then he moved the tile carefully back in place. The store owner woke up later. The light was still on but the wine-pot was gone. He jumped up to check around the room: The door and windows were perfectly shut. Absolutely mystified, he couldn't figure out how the wine-pot had been taken away.

On another occasion, Lazy Dragon was standing with a few young men in a tavern at Beitongzimen. They noticed a boat moored by the bank of the river. The young master of the boat from Fujian Province was having his servants dry some beautiful clothing and bedding on the boat. The clothing and bedding presented quite a spectacle, which drew the attention of the crowds. One quilt looked particularly striking because it was from fine Indian brocade. Envyng the young master's showing off of the possession, the young men said jokingly, "What can we do to take his quilt away and make fun of him?" They turned to Lazy Dragon and said, "It's time to let him know your skills! Don't tarry." Laughing, Lazy Dragon said, "Okay, I'll go and get it tonight. Tomorrow you can return the quilt to him and ask for a reward. We can then go and have a drink together." Then Lazy Dragon went to a washroom and took a bath. He came back to the riverbank to watch the boat. After the sounding of the second nightly watch, the young master and servants, satisfied after drinking, put out their light and turned in, all sleeping together on the floor of the boat. But Lazy Dragon had already seized his chance to steal aboard and join them. Speaking their local dialect, Lazy Dragon jostled and shoved, disturbing the men, who mumbled complaints. He pretended to fall asleep and uttered words in a Fujian accent. As he jostled and bumped them, he gripped the quilt and rolled it into a bundle. Then he



扯了那条异锦被，卷作一束。就作睡起要泻溺的声音，公然拽开舱门，走出泻溺，经跳岸去了。船中诸人一些不觉。

及到天明，船中不见锦被，满舱闹嚷。公子甚是叹惜，与众客商量。要告官，又不直得；要住了，又不舍得。只得许下赏钱一千，招人追寻踪迹。懒龙同了昨日一千人下船中，对公子道：“船上所失锦被，我们已见在一个所在。公子发出赏钱与我们弟兄买酒吃，包管寻来奉还。”公子立教取出千钱来放着，待被到手即发。懒龙道：“可叫管家随我们去取。”公子分付亲随家人，同了一伙人，走到徽州当内，认着锦被，正是元物。亲随便问道：“这是我船上东西，为何在此？”当内道：“早间一人拿此被来当。我们看见此锦不是这里出的，有些疑心，不肯当钱与他。那个人道：‘你每若放不下时，我去寻个熟人来保着，秤银子去就是。’我们说：‘这个使得。’那人一去，竟不来了。我元道必是来历不明的，既是尊舟之物，拿去便了。等那个来取时，小当还要捉住了他，送到船上来。”众人将了锦被，去还了公子，就说当中说话。公子道：“我们客边的人，但得原物不失罢了，还要寻那贼人怎的？”就将出千钱送与懒龙等一伙报事的人。众人收受，俱到酒店里破除了。元来当里去的人，也是懒龙央出来，把锦被卸脱在那里，好来请赏的。如此作戏之事，不一而足。正是：

牖传能发冢，穿窬何足薄？

若托大儒言，是名善戏谑。

懒龙固然好戏，若是他心中不快意的，就连真带耍，必要扰他。



muttered that he would have to go out for piss. He opened the boat door, walked out and urinated. Then he leaped onto the bank, without being noticed by the men.

When morning came, the quilt was found to be gone and an uproar ensued. The young master sighed sadly. He talked with his men, saying that to go to the law for the loss of the quilt was not worth the bother, but to give up searching for it was something he really hated to do. He offered one thousand pieces of cash to anyone recovering it. Lazy Dragon came on board with his men and said to the young master, "We have seen the quilt you lost in a place. If you give us the reward, which we can use to buy some drink, we'll bring it back to you." Immediately the young master asked one of his servants to get the money ready and said, "Once I get back the quilt, I'll give the money to you."

Lazy Dragon said, "You may have your house retainer come with us to get it." So the young master asked a trusted servant to follow them. They arrived at a pawnshop in Huizhou, where the stolen quilt was stored. The servant said to the owner, "This quilt was on our boat. How did you get it here?" The pawnshop manager said, "This morning a man brought it here. We noticed it was not made in this area, so we were suspicious. We would not lend money to him. He said, 'If you have doubts about it, I will bring a friend here as a guarantor, and then you can give me the silver.' We said, 'That will do.' But that man left and did not return. I figured the quilt had a suspicious origin. Since you say it's yours, you may take it away. If the man comes back, I will catch him and bring him to you." So they returned the quilt to the young master and told him what the pawnshop manager had said about the quilt.

The young master said, "We're away from home. It's good to have the quilt back. Why bother to catch that thief?" He gave the one thousand pieces of cash to Lazy Dragon and his men, who took the money and had a good time at a tavern. Lazy Dragon, of course, had talked to the pawnshop manager in advance so that he could leave the quilt there as part of his plan to claim the reward. There were too many such stories to tell.

Although Lazy Dragon loved to play tricks while stealing, he would not let anyone whose behavior annoyed him go without being disturbed,



有一伙小偷置酒邀懒龙游虎丘，船经山塘，暂停米店门口河下。穿出店中，买柴沽酒。米店中人嫌他停泊在此，出人搅扰，厉声推逐，不许系缆。众偷不平，争嚷。懒龙丢个眼色，道：“此间不容借走，我们移船下去些，别寻好上岸处罢了，何必动气！”遂教把船放开，众人还忿忿。懒龙道：“不须角口，今夜我自有处置他所在。”众人请问。懒龙道：“你们去寻一只站船来，今夜留一樽酒，一个榼及暖酒家火、薪炭之类，多安放船中。我要归途一路赏月色到天明。你们明日便知，眼下不要说破。”是夜虎丘席罢，众人散去。懒龙约他明日早会，止留得一个善饮的为伴，一个会行船的持篙，下在站船中回来。经过米店河头，店中已扃闭得严密。其时河中赏月，归舟吹唱过往的甚多。米店里头人，安心熟睡。懒龙把船贴米店板门住下。日间看在眼里，有米一囤在店角落中，正临水次近板之处。懒龙袖出小刀，看板上有节处一挖，那块木节囫圇的落了出来，板上老大一孔。懒龙腰间摸出竹管一个，两头削如藕披，将一头在板孔中插入米囤，略摆一摆，只见囤内米簌簌的从管里泻将下来，就如注水一般。懒龙一边对月举杯，酣呼跳笑，与泻米之声相杂，来往船上多不知觉。那家子在里面睡的，一



combining his tricks with ways of harming them.

Once a group of thieves invited Lazy Dragon to tour Tiger Mountain and to treat him to wine. They stopped their boat at the back of a rice store by the side of the Shantang River. The thieves usually went in and out through the store to buy firewood and wine. The rice store owner hated being bothered by men mooring their boats by the bank and going through his store, so he harshly rejected their request. The thieves argued with him, but Lazy Dragon winked at them and said, "Never mind. Since he will not allow us a way through, let's go down the river and find another store. Why should you be mad?" Then he told them to untie the boat. They were on the way again. The thieves, however, were still angry with the store owner. Lazy Dragon said, "Don't talk about it any more. I'll teach him a lesson tonight." They asked him about his plan. He said, "You should go and find me a ferry boat. Please leave me with a vessel of wine, things to warm the wine with, firewood and charcoal. Set them in the boat. I want to enjoy the beauty of the moon throughout the night on my way back home. You'll know my plan tomorrow. I'm not going to disclose it to you now."

After their feast at Tiger Mountain, Lazy Dragon told the thieves to leave and come back the next morning. He only asked that one man who was good at cooking and another who could row the boat stay with him on his trip back. As they neared the rice store, Lazy Dragon could see that it had closed for the day. At that time many boats sailed to and fro on the river, while people on the boats enjoyed the beautiful sight of the moon and sang songs. The family of the rice store owner were all asleep. Lazy Dragon moored his boat by the side of the rice store. During the day he had noticed a grain bin that was located in one corner of the store, close to the deck leading to the river. Lazy Dragon took out a knife and cut away at the bin. A piece of board on the bin came off, leaving a big hole. He pulled from around his waist a hollow bamboo pole and stuck one end of it into the bin, which he shook a little. Rice streamed down from the bin through the pole and into his boat like water falling. Lazy Dragon drank wine and enjoyed the beauty of the full moon, his laughter mingled with the gurgle of the rice rushing down. Other boats went past without



发梦想不到了。看看斗转参横，管中没得泻下，想来囤中已空。看那船舱也满了，便叫解开船缆，慢慢的放了船去。到一僻处，众偷皆来。懒龙说与缘故，尽皆抚掌大笑。懒龙拱手道：“聊奉列位众分，以答昨夜盛情。”竟自一无所取。那米店直到开囤，才知其中已空，再不晓得是几时失去，怎么样失了的。

苏州新兴百柱帽，少年浮浪的，无不戴着装幌。南园侧东道堂白云房一起道士，多私下置一顶，以备出去游耍，好装俗家。一日夏月天气，商量游虎丘，已叫下酒船。有个纱王三，乃是王织纱第三个儿子，平日与众道士相好，常合伴打平火。众道士嫌他惯讨便宜，且又使酒难堪，这番务要瞒着他。不想纱王三已知道此事，恨那道士不来约他，去寻懒龙商量，要怎生败他游兴。懒龙应允，即闪到白云房，将众道常戴板巾尽取了来。纱王三道：“何不取了他新帽，要他板巾何用？”懒龙道：“若他失去了新帽，明日不来游山了，有何趣味？你不要管，看我明日消遣他。”纱王三终是不解其意，只得由他。



noticing what was going on. The sleeping family of the rice store could have never found what was happening. As the constellations moved across skies, the rice stopped flowing. Lazy Dragon figured that the grain bin had become empty and his boat was full. He called for the boat to be released gently.

As he moved to a quiet place, the thieves ran up. Lazy Dragon told them about the incident, and they broke into laughter. With a cupped hand expressing his thanks, Lazy Dragon said, "Please share the rice among yourselves as a token of my gratitude for the wonderful dinner you gave me last night." He left without taking any rice with him. When the rice store opened, the family discovered its grain bin was empty, but they didn't know when and how the rice had disappeared.

Once in Suzhou a cylinder-shaped hat became a fashion and flighty youngsters all adopted the style. A group of Taoists from the White-clouds Temple, on the east side of the south garden, also each had bought one of these hats so that they could pose as laymen when they were out on a tour. One summer day they scheduled a tour to Tiger Mountain and rented a boat, with wine prepared. There was a man called Gauze Weaver the Third, who was the third son of Weaver Wang. On friendly terms with the Taoists, he often took part in such parties with the Taoists. But his inclination for petty gains and his lack of manners in drunkenness annoyed the Taoists. So they decided not to invite him on the tour this time. Gauze Weaver the Third, however, learned of their planned tour and resented their desertion of him. He found Lazy Dragon and talked to him about disrupting their tour. Lazy Dragon agreed to help him.

He stole into the White-clouds Temple and took away all the hats the Taoists regularly wore. Gauze Weaver the Third asked him, "Why didn't you take their new cylinder-shaped hats? Why did you take the Taoists' regular hats?" Lazy Dragon replied, "If they had lost their new cylinder-shaped hats, they would have given up their plan for tomorrow's tour. What could we do about them then? Don't worry. I know what I can do about them." Not understanding his intentions, Gauze Weaver the Third said no more.

The following day the Taoists, all dressed up like ordinary young men



明日，一伙道士轻衫短帽，装束做少年子弟，登舟放浪。懒龙青衣相随下船，蹲坐舵楼。众道只道是船上人，船家又道是跟的侍者，各不相疑。开得船时，众道解衣脱帽，纵酒欢呼。懒龙看个空处，将几顶新帽卷在袖里，腰头摸出昨日所取几顶板巾，放在其处。行到斟酌桥边，拢船近岸，懒龙已望岸上跳将去了。一伙道士正要着衣帽登岸潇洒，寻帽不见，但有常戴的纱罗板巾，压折整齐，安放做一堆在那里。众道大嚷道：“怪哉！怪哉！我们的帽子多在那里去了？”船家道：“你们自收拾，怎么问我？船不漏针，料没失处。”众道又各处寻了一遍，不见踪影，问船家道：“方才你船上有个穿青的瘦小汉子走上岸去，叫来问他一声，敢是他见在那里？”船家道：“我船上那有这人？是跟随你们下来的。”众道嚷道：“我们几曾有人跟来？这是你串同了白日撞偷了我帽子去了。我们帽子几两一顶结的，决不与你干休！”扭住船家不放。船家不伏，大声嚷乱。岸上聚起无数人来，蜂拥争看。人丛中走出一个少年子弟，扑的跳下船来道：“为甚么喧闹？”众道与船家各各告诉一番。众道认得那人，道是决帮他的。不匡那人正色起来，反责众道道：“列位多是羽流，自然只戴板巾上船。今板巾多在那里，再有甚么百柱帽？分明是诬诈船家了。”看的人听见，才晓得是一伙道士，板巾见在，反要诈船上赔帽子，发起喊来。就有那地方游手好闲几个揽事的光棍来出尖，伸拳携手道：“果是贼道



in civilian dresses, set out by boat to enjoy themselves. Dressed in black clothing, Lazy Dragon followed them onto the boat and squatted near the rudder area. The Taoists took him for a boat-hand, and the boatman thought he was a servant of the Taoists. So no one was suspicious of him. As the boat left the bank, the Taoists unbuttoned their clothes, threw their cylinder-shaped hats to one side and started to drink merrily. Lazy Dragon seized this chance and tucked those hats into his sleeves. Then he took out the Taoist hats he had stolen the day before and placed them where the cylinder-shaped hats had been. As the boat went under a bridge close to the bank, he leaped out onto the shore.

When the Taoists were ready to disembark, they found their cylinder-shaped hats gone and their regular Taoist hats neatly there in a pile. They shouted, "Strange! Strange! Where have our hats gone?" The boatman said, "You took care of them yourselves. Why ask me? My boat is safe. Nothing could have been lost." The Taoists searched again and there was still no sign of the hats. They asked the boatman again, "You had a short, black-dressed man on the boat earlier today, who just went onto the bank a short time ago. Bring him here and ask him. He may know where the hats are."

The boatman said, "I didn't have such a man with me. He came here with you." The Taoists yelled, "How could we know him? You must have worked together with that burglar to steal our hats. Our hats are each worth a few taels of silver. We won't let you go easily at it!" They seized the boatman, who protested by yelling at them. Crowds gathered on the bank to watch. One young man jumped onto the boat and asked, "What's happened?" Different stories were told by the boatman and the Taoists. The Taoists knew the man and thought he would put in a word for them. But on the contrary, the man rebuked them by saying, "You're all Taoists and you're supposed to wear Taoist hats on board. Now you've got the Taoist hats there. Why are you asking for cylinder-shaped hats? Clearly, you're making a false charge against the boatman." The watching crowds realized that these were Taoists, and believed that they were trying to blackmail the boatman into giving them cylinder-shaped hats. An uproar ensued and a few idling rascals stood out brandishing their fists and saying,



无理！我们打他一顿，拿来送官。”那人在船里摇手，止住道：“不要动手，不要动手，等他们去了罢。”那人忙跳上岸。众道怕惹出是非来，叫快开了船。一来没了帽子，二来被人看破，装幌不得了，不好登山，怏怏而回。枉费了一番东道，落得扫兴。

你道跳下船来这人是谁？正是纱王三。懒龙把板巾换了帽子，知会了他，趁扰攘之际，特来证实道士本相，扫他这一场。道士回去，还缠住船家不歇。纱王三叫人将几顶帽子送将来还他，上覆道：“已后做东道，要洒浪那帽子时，千万通知一声。”众道才晓得是纱王三要他。又曾闻懒龙之名，晓得纱王三平日与他来往，多是懒龙的做作了。

其时邻境无锡有个知县，贪婪异常，秽声狼籍。有人来对懒龙道：“无锡县官衙中金宝山积，无非是不义之财，何不去取他些来？分惠贫人也好。”懒龙听在肚里，即往无锡地方，晚间潜入官舍中，观看动静。那衙里果然富贵，但见：

连箱锦绮，累架珍奇。元宝不用纸包，叠成行列；器皿半非陶就，摆满金银。大象口中牙，蠢婢将来揭火；犀牛头上角，小儿拿去盛汤。不知夏楚追呼，拆了人家几多骨肉；更兼苞苴混滥，卷了地方到处皮毛。费尽心，要传



“These contemptible Taoists are outrageous! Let’s beat them up and send them to court!” The man gestured with his hand to stop them, saying, “Leave them. Leave them. Let them go.” Then he leaped onto the bank. The Taoists called for the boat to start, in fear of drawing further trouble. They had lost their cylinder-shaped hats and were exposed as Taoists. Their tour ruined, the Taoists beat a retreat in frustration.

Can you figure out who the man was who leaped onto the boat? He was Gauze Weaver the Third. After the stealthy replacing of the cylinder-shaped hats with the Taoist hats, Lazy Dragon told him about it and let him reveal the Taoists’ identity to disappoint them. Back at their temple, the Taoists were still blaming the boatman when Gauze Weaver the Third came in to return to them the stolen hats. He said to them, “When you go out for feast and show yourselves with cylinder-shaped hats next time, be sure to let me know.” It was not until now did the Taoists realize that Gauze Weaver the Third had poked fun at them. They had heard of Lazy Dragon long before and knew that Gauze Weaver the Third was a close friend of his. It was obvious to them that this was Lazy Dragon’s work.

At that time there was a county magistrate in nearby Wuxi who was notorious for his greed. A man came over to Lazy Dragon and said, “The Wuxi county magistrate has a huge amount of wealth which he came by through dishonest means. Why don’t you steal some of it and share it among the poor?” With this plan in mind, Lazy Dragon went to Wuxi. At night he stole into the office of the county magistrate and saw that it was indeed a treasure-house:

Chests lined up one after another, filled with bolts of brocade and silk, and shelves were loaded with a variety of treasures; piles of shoe-shaped ingots of gold and silver, not wrapped in paper, stood in packed lines; containers, half of them not made of pottery, were full of gold and silver; an elephant tusk was there that often found its use in a servant-girl’s poking of the fire; a rhino’s horn was used as a soup ladle for children; no one knows for how many generations the family had procured its wealth by bullying and breaking up other families; the fortune was also gathered as a result of seizing government property in an administration of disorder; every effort was made to hand down the wealth to future generations; yet the county magistrate was cheeky

家里子孙，觑着面，且认民之父母。

懒龙看不尽许多奢华，想道：“重门深锁，外边梆铃之声不绝，难以多取。”看见一个小匣，十分沉重，料必是精金白银，溜在身边。心里想道：“官府衙中之物，省得明日胡猜乱猜，屈了无干的人。”摸出笔来，在他箱架边墙上，画着一枝梅花，然后轻轻的从屋檐下望衙后出去了。

过了两三日，知县筒点宦囊，不见一个专放金子的小匣儿，约有二百馀两金子在内，价值一千多两银子。各处寻看，只见傍边画着一枝梅，墨迹尚新。知县吃惊道：“这分明不是我衙里人了。卧房中谁人来得，却又从容画梅为记？此不是个寻常之盗，必要查他出来！”遂唤取一班眼明手快的应捕，进衙来看贼迹。众应捕见了壁上之画，吃惊道：“覆官人，这贼小的们晓得了，却是拿不得的。此乃苏州城中神偷，名曰懒龙，身到之处，必写一枝梅在失主家为认号。其人非比等闲手段，出有人无，更兼义气过人，死党极多。寻他要紧，怕生出别事来。失去金银还是小事，不如放舍罢了，不可轻易惹他。”知县大怒道：“你看这班奴才！既晓得了这人名子，岂有拿不得的？你们专惯与贼通同，故意把这等话党庇他，多打一顿大板才好。今要你们拿贼，且寄下在那里。十日之内不拿来见我，





enough to claim to be the people's parents.

At the sight of the tremendous wealth, Lazy Dragon pondered, "The doors and gates are shut tightly and the watchmen's clapper and bell keep sounding. I can't take a lot away this time." Then a small, heavy box came into his sight. He figured there must be fine gold and silver in it. So he picked it up and carried it with him. Then he thought, "In a government office, the loss of such a fortune will surely draw a lot of suspicion to the innocent tomorrow." He took out a brush and drew a plum on the wall by a shelf. Then he quietly climbed under the eaves and got out onto the street from the back of the office.

A few days later the county magistrate examined his official savings and found the small box missing, which contained about two hundred taels of gold, equaling to over one thousand taels of silver. He searched everywhere and then saw a plum painted on the wall in fresh ink. Stunned, the county magistrate said, "Evidently, it was not a man from my office who painted it. Who has the guts to come to my bedroom to steal something and then calmly leave this plum drawing as a challenge? I'm sure he must be an extraordinary thief. I must catch him!"

The county magistrate gathered a group of capable runners in to look at the drawing. The runners were surprised at the sight of the plum drawing. "My lord!" they exclaimed. "We know this thief, but we can't catch him. He's the most remarkable thief in Suzhou, a man called Lazy Dragon. Wherever he goes, he leaves a drawing of a plum on the wall as a sign of his identity. He has super skills and leaves no traces of his stealing at all. Moreover, he is also a strong believer in brotherhood and keeps a large number of sworn followers. If you try to catch him, it may give rise to further trouble. In comparison, the loss of gold and silver is nothing. We'd better leave him alone, otherwise we'll run into trouble."

Flying into a rage, the county magistrate scolded, "You idiots! If you know his name, how can you say you're unable to capture him? You must have kept close connections with the thief, and are now saying these words to shield him. You deserve a sound thrashing! Now I want you to catch him. I'll postpone the punishment for you. If you can not arrest him within ten days, you will all die!" The runners dared not reply. The county



多是一个死！”应捕不敢回答。知县即唤书房写下捕盗批文，差下捕头两人，又写下关子，关会长、吴二县，必要拿那懒龙到官。应捕无奈，只得到苏州来走一遭。

正进阊门，看见懒龙立在门口，应捕把他肩胛拍一拍道：“老龙，你取了我家官人东西罢了，卖弄甚么手段，画着梅花？今立限与我们，必要拿你到官，却是如何？”懒龙不慌不忙道：“不劳二位费心，且到店中坐坐细讲。”懒龙拉了两个应捕，一同到店里来，占副座头吃酒。懒龙道：“我与两位商量：你家县主果然要得我紧，怎么好累得两位？只要从容一日，待我送个信与他，等他自然收了牌票，不敢问两位要我，何如？”应捕道：“这个虽好，只是你取得他的忒多了，他说多是金子，怎么肯住手？我们不同得你去，必要为你受亏了。”懒龙道：“就是要我去，我的金子也没有了。”应捕道：“在那里了？”懒龙道：“当下就与两位分了。”应捕道：“老龙不要取笑。这样话，当官不是耍处。”懒龙道：“我平时不曾说诳语，原不取笑。两位到宅上去，一看便见。”扯着两个人耳朵说道：“只在家里瓦沟中去寻就有。”应捕晓得他手段，忖道：“万一当官这样说起来，真个有赃在我家里，岂不反受他累？”遂商量道：“我们不敢要老龙去了，而今老龙待怎么分付？”懒龙道：“两位请先到家，我当随至。包管知县官人不敢提起，决不相累就罢了。”腰间摸出一包金子，约有二两重，送与两人道：“权当盘费。”从来说公人见钱，如苍蝇见血。两个应捕看见赤艳艳的



magistrate called in a writing clerk to compose the order of arrest, assigned two runners to the mission, and sent a report to the county governments of Changzhou and Wuxian. He had made up his mind to capture the thief, and the runners could do nothing but set out on the trip to Suzhou.

As they entered the gate at Suzhou, they saw that Lazy Dragon was standing there. Patting him on the shoulder, one of the runners said to him, "Old Dragon, why did you steal our master's treasure and leave a drawing behind? Now we have an order to arrest you. What should we do?" Lazy Dragon said, "I'm sorry to have bothered you two. Please come with me to the tavern. Let's sit down and talk about it." Lazy Dragon pulled them into the tavern and started to drink.

He then said to them, "Let's talk about this. The county magistrate is pressing you to catch me. Why should I cause trouble for you two? Give me one day. I'll send him a message. Then he'll definitely cancel his order and call you back. How about that?" The runners said, "It sounds good, but you took too much of his money, most of it gold, according to him. How can you make him give in? If we fail to bring you to him, we'll be in trouble." Lazy Dragon said, "Even if I wanted to go with you now, the money is not with me." The runners asked, "Where is it?" Lazy Dragon said, "I gave it to you two right after I took it." The runners said, "Don't try to fool us, Old Dragon. Government business is not something you can trifle with." Lazy Dragon said, "I don't usually talk nonsense. Go back to your homes and you will see for yourselves." Pulling on their ears, Lazy Dragon whispered, "Go and search in the tile cracks on your roof. You'll find it." The runners knew of his remarkable skills, so they figured, "If he tells the county magistrate the stolen goods are in our homes, we'll be involved in the case. What shall we do then?" So they said to him, "We're worried. We won't bring you with us now, Old Dragon. What do you want us to do?" Lazy Dragon said, "Please go home. I'll be there soon after. I can assure you that the county magistrate will never push you to arrest me and you'll be fine." As he said this, he took a pack of gold from around his waist, about two taels in weight, and divided it between them, saying, "Take it for traveling expenses."

An old saying goes, "A runner loves money just as a fly sticks to blood."



黄金，怎不动火？笑欣欣接受了。就想：“此金子未必不就是本县之物。”一发不敢要他同去了。两下别过。

懒龙连夜起身，早到无锡，晚来已闪入县令衙中。县官有大小孺人，这晚在大孺人房中宿歇，小孺人独自在帐中。懒龙揭起帐来，伸手进去一摸，摸着顶上青丝髻，真如盘龙一般。懒龙将剪子轻轻剪下，再去寻着印箱，将来撬开，把一盘发髻塞在箱内，仍与他关好了。又在壁上画下一枝梅。别样不动分毫，轻身脱走。

次日小孺人起来，忽然头发纷披，觉得异样。将手一摸，顶髻俱无，大叫起来。合衙惊怪，多跑将来问缘故。小孺人哭道：“谁人使促掐，把我的头发剪去了！”忙报知县来看。知县见帐里坐着一个头陀，不知那里作怪起。想着平日绿云委地，好不可爱，今却如此模样，心里又痛又惊，道：“前番金子失去，尚在严提未到，今番又有歹人进衙了！别件犹可，县印要紧。”亟取印箱来看，看见封皮完好，锁钥俱在。随即开来看时，印章在上格不动，心里略放宽些。又见有头发缠绕，掇起上格，底下一堆髻发，散在箱里。再简点别件，不动分毫。又见壁上画着一枝梅，连前凑做一对了。知县吓得目瞪口呆，道：“元来又是前番这人！见我迫得急了，他弄这神通出来，报



Seeing the shining gold, how could the two runners hold their avarice in check? They took it joyously, thinking to themselves, "Who can be sure that this is not part of the gold he had stolen from the government office?" They thus feared even more going with him to see the county magistrate. They parted.

Lazy Dragon set out at night and arrived in Wuxi the next morning. That evening he stole into the government office. The county magistrate had two wives and stayed that night with the elder one. The younger wife went to sleep alone. Lazy Dragon stole into the younger wife's bedroom. Lifting the bed curtain, he reached inside. He touched the younger wife's black hair, in a coil lock on top of her head. Lazy Dragon gently cut it off with a pair of scissors. Then he located the chest that contained the county government seal, managed to open it, and put the hair into it. He closed the chest and drew another plum on the wall. He then left without touching anything else.

The next morning the young wife woke up and found her hair loose. She was curious. When she stroked it, she found her topknot missing. She gave a yell, which immediately summoned a shocked group in the government office. They asked her why she had cried, and she said, "Someone played a trick on me and cut off my hair!" The county magistrate was called. He arrived and saw his younger wife look like a mendicant Buddhist monk sitting on the bed. He was confounded. Recalling her lovely dark hair and comparing it with her present state, he felt sorry and baffled, murmuring, "The gold was lost and the thief is still at large. Now I've had another break-in! I can lose anything but the county government seal!" At once he went to check his seal chest. He found the wrapping and lock intact. He opened the chest and saw the seal on the top shelf untouched. He breathed in relief. Then some of the hair sprang into his sight. He lifted up the top shelf and saw the skein of hair at the bottom of the chest. He examined the other things, which were all there as before. Then he saw a plum painted on the wall, which was exactly the same as the one found days before.

Frightened out of his wits, he said, "It's turned out to be the same man! I guess that, since he was closely hunted by my orders, he has used



信与我。剪去头发，分明说可以割得头去；放在印箱里，分明说可以盗得印去。这贼直如此利害！前日应捕们劝我不要惹他，元来果是这等。若不住手，必遭大害。金子是小事，拚得再做几个富户不着，便好补填了。不要追究的是。”连忙掣签，去唤前日差往苏州下关文的应捕来销牌。

两个应捕自那日与懒龙别后，来到家中。依他说话，各自家里屋瓦中寻，果然各有一包金子，上写着日月封记，正是前日县间失贼的日子，不知懒龙几时送来藏下的。应捕老大心惊，噙着指头道：“早是不拿他来见官。他一口招出，搜了赃去，浑身口洗不清。只是而今怎生回得官人的话？”叫了伙计，正自商量踌躇，忽见县里差签来到。只道是拿违限的，心里慌张，谁知却是来叫销牌的。应捕问其缘故，来差把衙中之事一一说了，道：“官人此时好不惊怕，还敢拿人？”应捕方知懒龙果不失信，已到这里弄了神通去了，委实好手段。

嘉靖末年，吴江一个知县治行贪秽，心术狡狠。忽差心腹公人，赍了聘礼，到苏城求访懒龙，要他到县相见。懒龙应聘



his power to send me a message. The cutting off of the hair was a warning to me that he could cut off my head. And by putting the hair in the seal chest he was telling me that he could also steal my seal. He is indeed an extraordinary thief! The runners advised me to leave him alone, and now I've realized now that what they said is correct. If I continue to hunt for him, I'll meet disaster. The loss of gold is a serious matter. I can make up for it by fleecing a few more rich families. However, I should stop pursuing this matter." He drew out a bamboo slip to cancel the previous command and summon back the two arresting runners.

The two returned home after they had parted from Lazy Dragon a couple of days before. As they were told earlier, each started searching on his own roof and found a pack of gold with the seal of the date and month in agreement with those for which the gold was lost in the government office. They wondered when Lazy Dragon had put them there. They were scared. With his fingers between lips, one runner thought to himself, "We did the right thing when we gave up our efforts to carry out the order to bring Lazy Dragon to the government office. Otherwise he would have made a confession about the gold's whereabouts and the stolen gold would have been found in our homes. Then we would never have been able to clear ourselves of the charge of theft. The problem we have now is how to report back to the county magistrate."

While the two runners were worried and talked with each other, a messenger arrived from the county government office. They became frightened, thinking that they would be punished for their failure to capture the thief. But it turned out that the messenger reported the cancellation of the order to arrest Lazy Dragon. The runners asked the reason. The messenger told them of the recent occurrence and said, "The county magistrate is terrified now. How can he press for fulfilling his order of arrest?" It then dawned on the runners that Lazy Dragon had kept his word and struck home his threat by using his powerful skills. Their admiration for him rose higher.

Toward the end of the reign of Jiajing, there was a county magistrate of Wujiang who was greedy, corrupt, cunning and cruel. One day he sent men with gifts to Suzhou to invite Lazy Dragon to meet with him. Lazy



而来，见了知县，禀道：“不知相公呼唤小人那厢使用。”知县道：“一向闻得你名，有一机密事要你去做去。”懒龙道：“小人是市井无赖，既蒙相公青目，要干何事，小人水火不避。”知县屏退左右，密与懒龙商量道：“叵耐巡按御史到我县中，只管来寻我的不是。我要你去察院衙里，偷了他印信出来，处置他不得做官了，方快我心。你成了事，我与你百金之赏。”懒龙道：“管取手到拿来，不负台旨。”果然去了半夜，把一颗察院印信弄将出来，双手递与知县。知县大喜，道：“果然妙手！虽红线盗金盒，不过如此神通罢了。”急取百金赏了懒龙，分付他快些出境，不要留在地方。懒龙道：“多谢相公厚赐。只是相公要此印怎么？”知县笑道：“此印已在我手，料他奈何我不得了。”懒龙道：“小人蒙相公厚德，有句忠言要说。”知县道：“怎么？”懒龙道：“小人躲在察院梁上半夜，偷看巡按爷烛下批详文书，运笔如飞，处置极当。这人敏捷聪察，瞒他不过的。相公明日，不如竟将印信送还，只说是夜巡所获，贼已逃去。御史爷纵然不能无疑，却是又感又怕，自然不敢与相公异同了。”县令道：“还了他的，却不依旧让他行事去？岂有此理！你自走你的路，不要管我。”懒龙不敢再言，潜踪去了。



Dragon accepted the invitation and arrived. He said to the county magistrate, "I wonder what I can do for you." The county magistrate replied, "I have heard that you're a well-known thief. I've got a top-secret mission for you to complete." Lazy Dragon said, "I'm nothing but merely a local rascal. Since you lower yourself to see me, I will be willing to do my best to be of your service." The county magistrate asked his men to leave them alone and he then said quietly to Lazy Dragon, "The imperial inspector is currently staying in my county and finding fault with me. I can't tolerate it. I'd like you to go to his office and steal his seal so he will lose his position. Then I'll be at ease. I'll give you a reward of one hundred taels of silver for your service." Lazy Dragon said, "Don't worry. I promise I'll bring his seal over here to you."

Lazy Dragon went to the office of the imperial inspector that night and brought the seal back. He presented it to the county magistrate, who was overjoyed and said, "A wonderful performance! You're a good match for the legendary figure, Red String, who stole the golden chest." Immediately he gave Lazy Dragon the reward of one hundred taels of silver and asked him to leave the county at once. Lazy Dragon asked, "I appreciate your kindness of giving me the handsome reward, but I wonder what you will do with this seal." Laughing, the county magistrate replied, "With this seal at my hand, the imperial inspector can harm me no more." Lazy Dragon said, "You've treated me with kindness. But I have to give you a sincere suggestion." The county magistrate asked, "What suggestion?" Lazy Dragon said, "When I hid myself on the rafter in the office of the imperial inspector, I saw him sitting by candlelight, perusing documents and writing government files rapidly. He is an intelligent man and you can't deceive him. I suggest you return the seal to him tomorrow, telling him that you recovered it during your nightly patrol but failed to catch the thief. The imperial inspector may be suspicious, but he will be grateful to you and afraid of you. In this case he will probably have to change the way he has treated you." The county magistrate said, "Nonsense! If I return it to him, he will definitely do the same as before. Go on your trip and leave me alone!" Not daring to say anything more, Lazy Dragon sneaked away.



却说明日察院在私衙中开印来用，只剩得空匣。叫内班人等遍处寻觅，不见踪迹。察院心里道：“再没处去。那个知县晓得我有些不像意他，此间是他地方，奸细必多，叫人来设法过了。我自有的。”分付众人，不得把这事漏泄出去，仍把印匣封锁如常。推说有病，不开门坐堂，一应文移，权发巡捕官收贮，一连几日。知县晓得这是他心病发了，暗暗笑着，却不得不去问安。察院见传报知县来到，即开小门请进。直请到内衙床前，欢然谈笑，说着民风土俗，钱粮政务，无一不剖胆倾心，津津不已。一茶未了，又是一茶。知县见察院如此肝鬲相待，反觉踟蹰不晓是甚么缘故。正絮话间，忽报厨房发火，内班门皂、厨役纷纷赶进，只叫：“烧将来了，爷爷快走！”察院变色，急走起来，手取封好的印匣，亲付与知县道：“烦贤令与我护持了出去，收在县库。就拨人夫快来救火！”知县慌忙失措，又不好推得，只得抱了空匣出来。此时地方水夫俱集，把火救灭，只烧得厨房两间，公廨无事。察院分付把门关了。这个计较，乃是失印之后，察院预先分付下的。



The next morning the imperial inspector needed the seal for his work. He opened the seal chest but found it empty. He called his men to search thoroughly, but it was to no avail. The imperial inspector figured, "I know who took it. That county magistrate knew that I was finding fault with him. This is his area and he has many people working for him. He must have asked someone to steal it. I've got an idea of how to deal with him!" He told his followers not to release a word of the matter, and wrapped up the seal chest as usual. He then quit observing his routine court office on an excuse of sickness, leaving all the government files in the hands of the inspection director. His faked illness went on for days. The county magistrate understood the imperial inspector's anxiety, and was pleased. However, the county magistrate felt that he had to pay an obligatory call on him to show his respect.

On hearing of the county magistrate's arrival, the imperial inspector told his servants to open a side-gate and let him in. The county magistrate was then shown directly to his bedroom. The imperial inspector chatted with him cheerfully about local customs and conventions, the handling of the government budget and grain levies, and shared his thoughts on each issue in an easy manner. Tea was consumed one cup after another. Finding the imperial inspector to be so honest and frank, the county magistrate was puzzled.

During their talk, the kitchen was suddenly reported to be on fire. The imperial inspector's team of personal servants, the gatekeepers and cooks all rushed in, calling, "The flames are raging. Please leave here, my lord!" In fright, the imperial inspector leaped up. He held the wrapped seal chest in his hands and gave it to the county magistrate, saying, "I will ask you to take my seal. Please keep it in your county's storehouse and send men immediately over here to put out the fire." The confused county magistrate could find no excuse to reject his request and so he carried the empty chest out of the room. When the local fire fighters arrived, the fire was extinguished. As a result, two kitchen rooms were destroyed but the offices were intact. The imperial inspector then called for the gate to be shut. It was a ruse that the imperial inspector had arranged after the loss of his seal.



1856

知县回去思量道：“他把这空匣交在我手，若仍旧如此送还，他开来不见印信，我这干系须推不去。”展转无计，只得润开封皮，把前日所偷之印仍放匣中，封锁如旧。明日升堂，抱匣送还。察院就留住知县，当堂开验印信，印了许多前日未发放的公文。就于是日发牌起马，离却吴江，却把此话告诉了巡抚都堂。两个会同，把这知县不法之事参奏一本，论了他去。知县临去时，对衙门人道：“懒龙这人是有关识的，我悔不用其言，以至于此。”正是：

枉使心机，自作之孽。

无梁不成，反输一帖。

懒龙名既流传太广，未免别处贼情也有疑猜着他的，时时有些株连着身上。适遇苏州府库失去元宝十来锭，做公的私自议论道：“这失去得没影响，莫非是懒龙？”懒龙却其实不曾偷，见人错疑了他，反要打听明白此事。他心疑是库吏知情，夜藏府中公廨黑处，走到库吏房中静听。忽听库吏对其妻道：“吾取了库银，外人多疑心懒龙，我落得造化了。却是懒龙怎肯应承？我明日把他一生做贼的事迹，纂成一本，送与府主，不怕不拿他来做顶缸。”懒龙听见，心里思量道：“不好，不好。本是我无干，今库吏自盗，他要卸罪，官面前暗栽着我。官



The county magistrate returned home and thought to himself, "He handed me an empty seal chest. If I bring it back to him, he will find it empty. Then I will not be able to clear myself of stealing the seal." Unable to think of a way out, he opened the chest by moistening the seal strips on the lid and put the stolen seal back into the chest. Then he wrapped it up again as usual. At the court session the next day, he returned the seal chest to the imperial inspector. The imperial inspector asked the county magistrate to stay with him, while he checked the seal. That day he used it on many government papers that he had not had a chance to seal before his sickness. The same day the imperial inspector gave his order for departure and quickly left Wujiang. However, he told the provincial governor in secret about the county magistrate's deed. They together composed an impeachment document against the county magistrate and presented it to the imperial court. The county magistrate was thus sentenced and stripped of his position. When leaving his post, the county magistrate said to his subordinates, "Lazy Dragon was farsighted. I regret that I didn't listen to him and so I've come to this ending."

Lazy Dragon's reputation for his superb skills reached far and wide and, occasionally, drew suspicion on him for various cases of theft, which got him into trouble. The government storehouse in Suzhou once lost ten silver ingots. The thief-hunting runners talked to one another and one said, "It's a mysterious loss. Could it be that Lazy Dragon stole them?" Actually Lazy Dragon did not steal them but, knowing he was suspected, he wanted to uncover the truth. He thought that the storehouse keeper might know something about it so he hid himself in the government compound at night. He hid himself near the bedroom of the storehouse keeper and heard him talking to his wife. The storehouse keeper said, "I stole the silver but Lazy Dragon is suspected of the theft. I've thus got a stroke of good fortune. However, how can Lazy Dragon admit the crime? I'll write an indictment tomorrow, listing all his deeds of crime, and present it to the Prefect. I don't think he will not become my scapegoat!" Lazy Dragon heard these words and thought to himself, "Too bad! Too bad! I didn't steal the ingots. But now the storehouse keeper wants to escape punishment for his offense by framing me up. Government officials favor



吏一心，我又不是没一点黑迹的，怎辨得明白？不如逃去了为上着，免受无端的拷打。”连夜起身，竟走南京，诈妆了双盲的，在街上卖卦。

苏州府太仓夷亭有个张小舍，是个有名极会识贼的魁首。偶到南京街上，撞见了道：“这盲子来得蹊跷！”仔细一相，认得是懒龙诈妆的，一把扯住，引他到僻静处，道：“你偷了库中元宝，官府正在追捕，你却遁来这里，妆此模样躲闪么？你怎生瞒得我这双眼过？”懒龙挽了小舍的手道：“你是晓得我的，该替我分割这件事，怎么也如此说？那库里银子，是库吏自盗了，我曾听得他夫妻二人床中私语，甚的是确。他商量要推在我身上，暗在官府处下手。我恐怕官府信他说话，故逃亡至此。你若到官府处，把此事首明，不但得了府中赏钱，亦且辨明了我事，我自当有薄意孝敬你。今不要在此处破我的道路。”小舍原受府委，要访这事的。今得此的信，遂放了懒龙，走回苏州出首。果然在库吏处，一追便见，与懒龙并无干涉。

张小舍首盗得实，受了官赏。过了几时，又到南京，撞见懒龙仍妆着盲子在街上行走。小舍故意撞他一肩道：“你苏州事已明，前日说话的怎么忘了？”懒龙道：“我不曾忘，你到家里灰堆中去看，便晓得我的薄意了。”小舍欣然道：“老龙自



each other. Besides, I don't have a clean record either. If he accuses me in court, how can I clear myself of the false charge? I may as well flee from here to avoid the torture of a beating on the false charge." He then set out at night for Nanjing, where he posed as a blind fortune-teller wandering the streets.

A man called Zhang Xiaoshe from the town of Yiting in Taicang region of Suzhou Prefecture was noted for his incredible ability to identify thieves. He went to Nanjing and ran into Lazy Dragon on the street. He thought, "This blind man looks suspicious!" Taking a closer look at him, he recognized him to be Lazy Dragon. He grabbed Lazy Dragon and pulled him into a quiet place, saying, "You stole the silver from the prefecture's storehouse. The government is hunting for you. But you ran here and are protecting yourself in this way. How can you fool me?"

Gripping his hand, Lazy Dragon said, "You know me pretty well and should clarify the confusion about me. Why do you also accuse me? The truth is that the storehouse keeper stole the silver. I heard him and his wife talking to each other about it. He's the thief, I'm sure of it. He wanted to shift the blame onto me by bringing a charge against me in court. I was worried that the government would listen to his false charge, so I fled here. Would you please go to the government office and present the truth in court? You'll receive the reward and clear me of the wrong. I will give you something as a token of my appreciation. But please do not reveal my identity here." Actually Zhang Xiaoshe had received the assignment from the prefecture government to investigate the loss of silver. With the truth of the crime revealed, he let go of Lazy Dragon and returned to Suzhou to report. The silver was then confiscated from the storehouse keeper's home, and Lazy Dragon was cleared.

Zhang Xiaoshe received the reward for his report on the thief. He then went back to Nanjing and saw Lazy Dragon again, who was still roaming the streets. He hit Lazy Dragon on his shoulder with his hand and said, "Now your wrong is righted in Suzhou. Why are you so forgetful about your promise to me?" Lazy Dragon said, "I'm not. Go home and search in your stove ashes. You'll have my gift." Delighted, Zhang Xiaoshe said, "Old Dragon never tells lies." Zhang Xiaoshe left Lazy Dragon and went

来不掉谎的。”别了回去，到得家里，便到灰中一寻，果然一包金银，同着白晃晃一把快刀埋在灰里。小舍伸舌道：“这个狠贼！他怕我只管缠他，故虽把东西谢我，却又把刀来吓我。不知几时放下的，真是神手段。我而今也不敢再惹他了。”

懒龙自小舍第二番遇见，回他苏州事明，晓得无碍了。恐怕终久有人算他，此后收拾起手段，再不试用，实实卖卜度日。栖迟长干寺中，数年竟得善终。虽然做了一世剧贼，并不曾犯官刑，刺臂字。至今苏州人还说他狡狴耍笑事体不尽。似这等人，也算做穿窬小人中大侠了。反比那面是背非、临财苟得、见利忘义一班峨冠博带的不同。况兼这番神技，若用去偷营劫寨，为间作谍，那里不干些事业？可惜太平之世，守文之时，只好小用伎俩，供人话柄而已。正是：

世上于今半是君，犹然说得未均匀。

懒龙事迹从头看，岂必穿窬是小人！





home. He searched the stove ashes and, indeed, found a pack of gold and silver. However, buried together with it was a sharp knife. Sticking out his tongue, Zhang Xiaoshe thought, "What a tough thief! He was worried that I would keep bothering him, so he gave me something to thank me and at the same time sent a knife to me as a threat. I wonder when he has been here to place these things. He's really so powerful. I'm afraid I will never bother him again."

After he met Zhang Xiaoshe a second time in Suzhou and learned from him about his freedom from any charge, Lazy Dragon was still worried that he might be the target of other people's attacks. Therefore he quit stealing and settled down to make a living by fortune-telling. He lived in Changgan Temple and died a natural death there a few years later. A lifelong, hardened and mighty thief, Lazy Dragon did not receive any government punishment, such as torture, beating or character-tattooing on the arms. Today the natives of Suzhou still talk a great deal about his deceptions and tricks in stealing. Among those who engage in petty theft, he can be considered an admirable outlaw. His behavior was quite different from that of government officials who, though imposingly dressed, were greedy double-dealers seeking wealth at the expense of moral values. It is a shame that Lazy Dragon could not have put to use his exceptional skills in launching secret assaults on enemy military camps or in working as a spy in times of war. How many exploits would he have achieved for the country? It is a shame that at a time of peace, when law and order reigned, he could only perform his skills on small matters and thus become a subject of anecdotes.

At present half of our population is virtuous and noble in character.

However, this saying may lack in accuracy.

A closer examination on Lazy Dragon's performance makes us wonder,

Is it true those who engage in petty theft must be vile knaves?



NOTES

Tale 30

¹ Wanhu, Brigade, a standard military unit theoretically comprising 10 000 soldiers under a Brigade Commander, most commonly the military headquarters at the Route (lu) level of territorial administration, subordinate to a Circuit (dao) command of one of several types. In theory divided into 10 Battalions (qianhu) of 1 000 soldiers each.

Tale 33

¹ Liu Bingzhong was a major minister of the early Yuan Dynasty. Before he became a minister, he was a talented versatile monk. While Kublai Khan was still a prince, Liu started to participate in confidential state affairs. After Kublai Khan became the emperor of the Yuan Dynasty, Liu drafted many historical institutions.

² A traditional play adopted from A Romance of the Three Kingdoms.

³ A play about how Wei Chigong, a Tang Dynasty general, rescues Emperor Li Shimin during the Luoyang Battle.

Tale 34

¹ The concubine of Zhang Yin, Military Governor of Wuning during the Tang Dynasty. In order to show her faithfulness to Zhang Yin, Guan Panpan remained unmarried and continued to live in Zhang's house for the rest of her life even after Zhang's death.

² Houyi, a hero in ancient Chinese legend who was good at archery. Legend has it that, in ancient times, there were ten suns in the sky. All the crops withered under the ten burning suns and people got nothing to eat. Houyi shot down nine of the ten suns.



GLOSSARY

- chi 尺 A length unit equal to 0.33 meter or 1.09 foot.
- cun 寸 A length unit equal to 3.33 cm or 1.3 inch.
- dan 担 A *dan* equals fifty kilograms.
- fen 分⁽¹⁾ A weight unit equal to one tenth of liang , i.e. formerly 0.11 oz (0.3 g) , currently 0.18 oz (0.5 g).
- fen 分⁽²⁾ A length unit equal to 0.33 cm or 0.13 inch.
- fen 分⁽³⁾ A unit of area. One fen equals 66.67 square meters.
- jin 斤 A weight unit equal to 0.5 kg or 1.1 lb.
- li 里 A length unit equal to 0.5 km or 0.31 mile.
- liang 两 A weight unit equal to formerly 1.1 oz (31.2 g), currently 1.76 oz (50 g).
- qian 钱 A weight unit equal to formerly 0.11 oz (3.12 g), currently 0.18 oz (5 g).
- qin 琴 An ancient stringed musical instrument.
- zhang 丈 A length unit equal to 3.3 meters or 10.9 foot.

[G e n e r a l I n f o r m a t i o n]

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封面
书名
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目录

卷三十	瘞遗骸王玉英配夫	偿聘金韩秀才赎子
卷三十一	行孝子到底不简尸	殉节妇留待双出柩
卷三十二	张福娘一心贞守	朱天锡万里符名
卷三十三	杨抽马甘请杖	富家郎浪受惊
卷三十四	任君用恣乐深闺	杨太尉戏宫馆客
卷三十五	错调情贾母置女	误告状孙郎得妻
卷三十六	王渔翁舍镜崇三宝	白水僧盗物丧双生
卷三十七	叠居奇程客得助	三救厄海神显灵
卷三十八	两错认莫大姐私奔	再成交杨二自 5 正本
卷三十九	神偷寄兴一枝梅	侠盗惯行三昧戏